

# VANGUARD newsletter

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Contents:	War and Revolution in Indochina .....	p. 37
	War and the Socialist Workers Party	
	--The Struggle Against Imperialist War	
	--Proletarian Military Policy .....	39
	The Stalinist-Gangster Tactics of	
	the Workers League	
	--CRFC Letters	
	--Youth and the Labor Movement .....	44
	The Spartacist League: Adaptation to the	
	Radical Petty-Bourgeoisie - Part II .....	49
	Labor Party or Workers Party? .....	51

## WAR AND REVOLUTION IN INDOCHINA

The shoddy pretense that the Nixon Administration is "winding down" the Indochinese war has been exploded by the US resumption of massive bombing in North Vietnam, its increased, also massive, bombing "support" to its South Vietnamese puppets and its precipitate dispatch of aircraft carriers to the Gulf of Tonkin and of additional fighter and B-52 bombing squadrons to its bases in Thailand and elsewhere in Indochina.

As a result, the April 22nd demonstrations against the war which had been organized earlier by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) in New York City and Los Angeles will probably see a larger turnout of anti-war marchers.

Once again, the NPAC, oriented around the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) will use a large turnout, with perhaps a sizeable labor contingent, to justify the liberal-pacifist programmatic basis on which it and the demonstrations have been organized.

The Communist Party's (CP) People's Coalition for Peace and Justice (PCPJ), organized on a similar basis, has decided not to support the NPAC demonstrations on April 22nd.

The liberal wing of the American ruling class came to the conclusion

years ago that a satisfactory deal could be worked out with world Stalinism to enable American and world capitalism to retain their remaining imperialist preserves, i.e., their "right" to continue to exploit and oppress the masses in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world.

US imperialism's new escalation of its predatory war against the Indochinese peoples demonstrates the complete validity of our judgment in the July/August 1971 issue of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER that:

"Despite the split in the ruling class...--which had encouraged the marches and demonstrations in the first place--the dominant section which controls the execu-

tive machinery of the capitalist state, has not changed its strategy, and had only responded to the popular hue and cry with tactical maneuvers.

" American capitalism's basic policy is still fixed on a complete military and political victory over the NLF and North Vietnam. It intends to fulfill its role as gendarme for world capitalist property relations in those parts of the world where the masses threaten its overthrow."

For the first time since the Tet offensive in 1968, North Vietnam and the NLF have mounted a large-scale and coordinated offensive against the forces of US imperialism and the Thieu comprador regime in South Vietnam.

In our January/February 1972 issue, we again made clear that VANGUARD NEWSLETTER stands for "the military victory of all forces of an underdeveloped country which struggles against imperialist oppression." We have also often stated our conviction, and again in our July/August issue, that US imperialism can only be defeated in Indochina through a coordinated and revolutionary struggle of the international working class for the victory of the Indochinese revolution as an integral part of the victory of the international socialist revolution. We proposed then and continue to call for a world-wide campaign:

1. boycott American products and blacklist all cargo which can be used by the American imperialists against the Indochinese.
2. demand that the Soviet Union and China give the Indochinese sufficient military assistance for defensive and offensive actions against US forces there.
3. call upon the masses in Indochina for a revolutionary struggle, which alone can end their quarter-century of bloodshed and suffering. A coordinated military offensive in all Indochina, not the limited defensive actions which wait upon a Soviet and/or Chinese counter-revolutionary deal! Not guaran-

tees to the 'national' capitalists and concessions to the landlords in a government of national 'concord,' but the program of the Permanent Revolution--the overthrow of capitalism, socialization of the means of production and the land by the working class at the head of the peasantry. Workers' power! The 'dictatorship of the proletariat!'

4. We call upon the revolutionary Marxists in this country to build a network of rank-and-file caucuses in the trade unions on our transitional program, which unites the racially divided working class in the struggle against special oppression, and which links their daily struggles, not only to the struggle against the American imperialist war in Indochina, but also to the socialist revolution."

The American working class has an especially important role to play in the struggle against the Indochinese war. It is clear at this point that a majority of American workers are opposed to the continuation let alone the re-escalation of the Indochinese war by the Nixon Administration. "Vietnamization"--changing the color of the corpses--was introduced in order to manipulate this growing opposition and keep it from interfering with the US imperialist program in Indochina. Now, with a clear majority of the ruling class insistent on an agreement with world Stalinism to maintain the international status quo and with presidential elections only months away, Nixon hesitates to order US ground forces back into combat.

However, the American and international working class will only begin to take class action against the Indochinese war when they understand that their immediate and fundamental class interests are involved. It is this level of consciousness for which the Marxist revolutionists strive and which will produce political job and strike action against the war.

The increased military effort of the North Vietnamese and NLF forces,

however, does not have a revolutionary purpose. It is directed solely toward forcing the representatives of US imperialism to resume the "peace" negotiations in Paris which they had broken off and to pry "more generous terms" from them, as the April 9th "NY Times" put it.

As we stated in our July/August issue, the "fundamental betrayal" of the Indochinese revolution had been codified in:

"...the 10 point NLF program, originated in 1960 and reaffirmed by the PRG /Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam/...in 1969...The earlier NLF and PRG programs guaranteed the maintenance of a capitalist and neutralist South Vietnam under a government of 'national concord.'"

We also stated at that time that:

"The program of the NLF and North Vietnam, the deal with American imperialism, blessed not only by the Soviet Stalinists but also by their Chinese counterparts, prepares greater misery, death and destruction for the masses in Indochina and Southeast Asia."

Only the revolutionary road leads

#### WAR AND THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

/The following are two more sections of the counter-resolution of the Communist Tendency (CT) in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), "Historical Roots of the Degeneration of the Fourth International and the Centrism of the SWP--For a Return to the Proletarian Road of Trotskyism." (Photocopies of all the CT's documents are still available from VANGUARD NEWSLETTER for \$1.50.)

/These sections concern themselves with the obligations of a vanguard party of the proletariat in the struggle against war. They do not represent the first salvos against the SWP's class-collaborationist and essentially pacifist politics in the antiwar movement, its main area of activity since 1965. Cde.

to genuine peace in Indochina and throughout the world. It is necessary to end capitalism to end imperialism and war. The perennial "peace" parades organized by the liberal and social reformists to put pressure on the Nixon Administration serve only to disarm and demoralize the anti-war forces. It is necessary to win the American working class to the revolutionary defeatist position of Lenin and Trotsky. It is necessary for revolutionary Marxists to work in the trade unions to build the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (CRFC) and to win the working class for the comprehensive and consistently revolutionary anti-war program which VANGUARD NEWSLETTER alone upholds. The maturing crisis of American and world capitalism causes the ruling class in every country to attack the living standards of its working class. It thereby prepares the way to unite the anti-war struggle to and as an inseparable part of the class struggle at home.

It is in the process of struggle for the perspectives and program of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER that an American section of the international vanguard party of Lenin and Trotsky will be built.

Fender, the CT delegate at the SWP convention (see Vol. 4, No. 1, of VNL for Cde. Fender's speeches) had, at the two previous conventions of the SWP in 1967 and 1969, carried on the polemic against the SWP's reformist approach in the struggle against war. (VNL plans to publish these documents at a future date.)

/Except for a few added details, Cde. Fender's documents were the basis for the CT's positions outlined below. However, one of the added details deserves some comment and correction. The first section below maintains that the SWP used the "single-issue" question as "a cordon sanitaire to exclude alien class influence" of the bourgeoisie, but that the gimmick failed and the "single-issue" busi-

ness was finally dropped. Actually the opposite is true. The "single-issue" approach is only the other side of the same coin of nonexclusion under which the SWP justifies the inclusion in the antiwar movement of a section of the liberal imperialist bourgeoisie and their representatives. While the SWP's nonexclusion is designed to allure and protect the petty-bourgeois pacifists and liberals, "single-issuism" is designed to repel and muzzle any tendency who might raise political issues that would drive these same pacifists and liberals away. The SWP had no trouble conveniently forgetting about "single-issuism" when the liberals or the pacifists raised issues such as anti-draft campaigns, when during the lulls--and the liberals were not around--the SWP needed an extracurricular activity to tide them over to the next peace parade or when, in response to a current vogue, it was more opportune to do so as with women's liberation.

Not only does "single issuism" provide a cover under which the SWP leadership can avoid any political struggle that might frighten its bourgeois allies, but it also provides a convenient excuse to hide the SWP's own lack of political struggle.

The SWP's chase after this will-o'-the-wisp of respectability is nothing new. To ingratiate themselves with those influenced by the Cuban revolution as well as with Castro and Co., the SWP leaders have continually apologized for the petty-bourgeois Cuban leadership and kept any political criticism they might have had, strictly to themselves for fear of scaring off all the spontaneously developing "unconscious Trotskyists" such as Fidel himself. The telegram of condolences to Mrs. Kennedy was only one more of many similar steppingstones touched by the SWP on its way to today's outright blatant opportunistic moves to gain favorable acceptance in the petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois milieus, such as the women's "liberation" movement, where even the fight for

free abortion on demand was considered too risky and, therefore, dropped in favor of a campaign against abortion laws--much more palatable in bourgeois circles.

The SWP like the CP of yesterday and today thinks that people can be fooled or tricked into playing a "progressive" or even "revolutionary" role and that the capitalists can be maneuvered into involuntarily forfeiting their "rights" to the "people," or more correctly, to "the vanguard mass movements." This objectivist approach permeates the whole of the political activity of the SWP and is tied in methodology to the guerrilla war and terrorist approach so prevalent today. All think that due to the "new" reality, the methods of class struggle and the building of a vanguard party, modeled after the Bolshevik party, can be discarded without compunction. While the guerrilla advocates substitute for the party a small group which is supposed to arouse the masses to revolutionary activity with their daring exploits and super-revolutionary calls to action, the SWP substitutes action and action alone by the greatest number possible and, therefore, organized strictly on the lowest--i.e., on a purely reformist--basis. The SWP sees its role as a mere coordinator of all the "mass vanguard movements" and as a centralized information clearing house for these movements. Both approaches are united in methodology in that they see their role as merely a technical one. The revolution is left to the sponteneity of the masses or perhaps to some divine inspiration. In reality, the revolution is abandoned.

In the antiwar movement--as well as in every other movement--the SWP maintains that it is not necessary to struggle for a conscious appreciation of capitalism or imperialism on the part of the masses. The antiwar movement is objectively anti-imperialist, as the women's liberation movement is objectively anticapitalist, merely because it is. The Stalinist NLF and the Stalinist regime in Hanoi are no longer considered to be Stalinist,

but objectively as revolutionary merely because they actively defend themselves against imperialist aggression. And those like Hartke, who identify with the antiwar movement, are unconsciously betraying their own class and objectively helping to advance the world revolution. From the early days of Fidel and the Cuban revolution, the "unconscious Trotskyists" have multiplied in geometric progression.

/In sacrificing the conscious element, i.e., the Bolshevik party, in the revolutionary process, the SWP has turned its back on the last half-century of history, from the defeat of the 1925-27 Chinese

revolution through the rise of Hitler and the smashing of the Spanish proletariat to today, with the massacre of the Indonesian masses and the sellout of the French revolution of May-June 1968. In so doing, the SWP as well as all its political bed-fellows have sacrificed their own capability of leading a revolution. They satisfy themselves instead with the shabbiest organizational maneuvering, the old political shell games and pretentious diplomatic wheeling and dealing. But for this, all that is required is money, technocrats, cannon fodder and, above all, respectability.

### The Struggle Against Imperialist War

The struggle against imperialist war has always been the great test of a revolutionary party, and some of the most important writings of the great Marxists have outlined the correct strategy for this task.

The SWP, despite its smug feeling of self-congratulation, has failed the test.

From the beginning the party's position was inadequate. Despite this, due to the totally wrong character of all other alternatives, the leadership has been able to convince its members and the best of the radical youth that the party has been wholly right. The party has been advancing the idea of immediate withdrawal--correct in itself, but not enough--as the basis for the "objectively anti-imperialist" character of its "single-issue united-front-type coalition." These propositions deserve a little investigation.

The "single-issue" character of the coalition has been the backbone of the leadership's argument that the movement was not an evasion of revolutionary duty. If the program of the bloc was limited to the demand of immediate withdrawal, then everything was perfectly legitimate--no reformist demands were being smuggled in. What the "single-issue" business really was, only became gradually clear as the other "mass movements" began to develop. It was an artificial barrier which a centrist party erected to keep it from falling into the swamp of open

reformism. Due to its total inability to project and carry out a revolutionary program, the SWP needed a cordon sanitaire to exclude alien class influence. With the influx of petty-bourgeois elements into the party, the gimmick was bound to fail. Soon the antiwar movement took positions on everything from the draft to the Black movement and union struggles. But instead of taking these positions on a class basis, the party merely went along with a totally reformist outlook, and objectively, by abandoning the program of Marxism, subordinated this movement to that "soft" wing of the exploiters, which wanted out of the Vietnam misadventure.

Several other points are connected with this evaluation of the nature of our participation in this movement. The movement obviously is not a "type" of united front, by definition, since this involves only the participation of working-class organizations, but neither is it formally a "Popular Front" as it is often called. This phrase poses the question too narrowly and too specifically. The most exact description of the essence of this formation is best given in Trotsky's words. "The matter at issue in all cases concerns

the political subordination of the proletariat to the left wing of the exploiters, regardless of whether this practice bears the name of coalition or left bloc (as in France) or "People's Front" in the language of the Comintern." (our emphasis-- "China and the Russian Revolution")

Closely connected with this is the question of nonexclusion. Originally this policy was used, correctly, to fight against red-baiting against us and as a justification for blocing with anyone who would agree on a common action. It has gone far beyond this now and is used as a principle to demand the inclusion of liberal bourgeois speakers and representatives, at all times, as spokesmen for peace. This only legitimizes the deceit of the ruling class and furthers the illusions they perpetrate. Nonexclusion has become the means by which the leadership has cemented an alliance with the liberal imperialists. As a consequence the party is unable to correctly handle the union bureaucrats who have followed their capitalist masters into the antiwar movement. Instead of utilizing the opportunity to reach workers and destroy the fakery, as in a real united front, the tactic has been to build them up and actually strengthen their hand.

Just as all the so-called "radical" programs to end the war are in reality based on students, etc., and thus are just so much hogwash, so must a real program for revolutionaries look to the proletariat. The Transitional Program shows the way. The party, rooting itself in the proletariat, in the factories and the armed forces, must struggle to win the proletariat to a "subjectively" anti-imperialist consciousness. Only revolution can end war for good, and if this war is ended on the terms desired by the liberals then the next war is already near. A program for struggle would include, in addition to immediate withdrawal: workers' control of war industries, confiscation of war profits and the expropriation of war profiteers, public works to employ war workers, open diplomacy and other appropriate slogans. Factory antiwar committees

would be the organizing base for such a program, as well as for the political mobilization of the class in opposition to the capitalist class and its war. Such must be our perspective, and not the futile pacifist actions we are now engaging in--like the April 24th "Youth Festival-cum-Rites of Spring."

### Proletarian Military Policy

Along with the abandonment of the rest of our program on the struggle against the war has gone the Proletarian Military Policy (PMP), which was a concrete expression, under American conditions, of the Leninist policy on military training and conscription.

This policy was counterposed to the pacifist program of ending the war by ending the draft, and to the control of conscription by the imperialist government by demanding that the government finance training in the military arts in camps which would be under the control of the trade unions. The idea was to try to make a bridge between the level of the masses who saw the need for learning how to wage war in an epoch of violent upheaval, and the future possibility of turning the army against the imperialist government. It was designed, as well, to ensure that no repetition of the disastrous policy of draft resistance, which isolated the radicals of WWI, would occur, and had the additional benefit of increasing the prestige and strength of the trade unions as organizations of the working class.

The present party leadership, which would very much like to forget that there ever was such a policy, has concocted several stories to justify its rejection of proletarian methods for pacifist ones. These stories can be summarized as follows: 1) WWII was basically an "inter-imperialist war," and consequently that tactics of Marxists in the period of counterrevolutionary colonial wars must be different; 2) the party made an adaptation to the backwardness of the workers; 3) there was no movement against conscription, so we simply

adjusted our tactics--today things are different. There is a certain division of labor on points 2 and 3. The slicker advocates of the present line combine them in a sort of "times-have changed" routine, while the more vulgar peace-nik elements simply claim that the stupid workers led us astray. All these arguments and all their variants are false to the core. The first is simply the grossest kind of petty-bourgeois moralistic breast-beating. Even when we exclude the question of Russia in WWII, we are faced with the interesting case of it being alright for American workers to fight German and Japanese workers and peasants, and not alright to fight Vietnamese workers and peasants. Maybe we fought WWII to "defend Democracy?" The reality of the situation, of course, is that the party's abstentionist policy of having comrades at Columbia rather than Khe Sanh, has left the spontaneous GI revolts largely leaderless, and has hindered the defeat of US imperialism.

What was the reality of the situation on conscription in 1940? The party did not in its propaganda oppose the introduction of conscription before its adoption, despite significant opposition to a peacetime draft from the "America-Firsters," the radical movement in general, John L. Lewis and his section of the bureaucracy and many plain citizens. The draft law of 1940 passed by one vote. The OHIO (over the hill in October) movement, which encouraged mass desertions, spread rapidly at first. The party, however, stood firm against all those who wanted to go along with the crowd, despite the ravings of the Shachtmanites who called our policy "social-patriotic." The party based its stand on the clear and irreconcilable position of Trotsky, who was largely responsible for the inspiration of our position. Trotsky said, "We can't oppose compulsory military training by the bourgeois state just as we can't oppose compulsory education by the bourgeois state." This is not an isolated quotation but is a good example of

his thoughts on the question during his last year. (cf. Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1939-40). The party leadership, of course, not being formalists, are not at all troubled by their departures from Trotsky.

The Proletarian Military Policy, nonetheless, was not just dreamed up by Trotsky in 1940. It was the continuation of the line laid down by Lenin in his polemics against the centrists and reformists of the Zimmerwald movement. Prior to WWI the Social-Democracy had proposed the establishment of a people's militia as a means whereby militarism and war could be prevented. This fantasy of peaceful substitutionalism was destroyed by the shock of the war. During the discussions among the Zimmerwaldists, an alternative was proposed to this now discredited theory. This alternative was--"disarmament!" Lenin reacted violently to this form of pacifist hogwash and in two articles--"On the 'Disarmament' Slogan" and "The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution"--demolished these idealistic conceptions of the nature of war and society. He pointed out that imperialism, not weapons, was the cause of war, and that the only way to end war was to end the system that produced it. Consequently proletarian militarism had to be opposed to bourgeois militarism. As concrete steps to this end he proposed the drafting of women, the election of officers, and, especially, the setting up of military training under the control of workers' organizations, as well as full civil and economic rights for soldiers. He fiercely fought against draft-dodging, whether individual or "mass." This is the root of the 1940 adoption of the PMP.

There is no great gap between 1915 and 1940. This outlook was continued in the theses on "War and the International" in 1934. It was clearly stated as a transitional demand in the Transitional Program of 1938, which says nothing about "abolishing the draft," "capitalist" or otherwise. What the Transitional Program does say is crystal clear; "...we must tear

from the hands of the greedy and merciless imperialist clique... the disposition of the people's fate. In accordance with this we demand: ...military training and arming of workers and farmers under the direct control of workers' and farmers' committees." In 1940, in the "Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution," this position was further enunciated. Nor was the PMP abandoned after the war, to which it was supposedly a subjective reaction. In a 1946 polemic against the Workers Party (International Informational Bulletin, Vol. VIII, no. 10, August 1946) it was described as a major difference between the SWP and the Shachtmanites. Even in 1948 when conscription was reintroduced, we advocated the PMP although in a rather abstract way. It was not until 1953 that we abandoned this policy, but we would not vote on this question until 1969. (It seems that this puts an interesting light on the question of "adaptationism." When was the working class more social-patriotic--in 1940 when we adopted the PMP, or in 1953 when we abandoned it? When was the party more susceptible to petty-bourgeois pressure--on the eve of WWII, or in the period of "McCarthyite-Fascism?")

The question of a correct policy on conscription is no longer a question of great urgency for our movement. The bourgeoisie literally hungers and thirsts for a voluntary army. They must demobilize the present army which every day threatens them more and more. The Gates Commission has shown the ruling class that it can be done. When they say they want "no more Vietnams," they are not lying. They do not; they want more Santo Do-

mingos! And with a relatively small, cheap, elite, cadre-type army they can have them. This is the significance of the experimental TRICAP (triple capability) divisions which combine armor, airmobile infantry and helicopters into juggernauts which are not designed for use against students. The ruling class says "volunteer army." We say "abolish the draft." The juxtaposition makes it clear that our present policy objectively supports the bourgeoisie in its desires. The situation now, as well as all our traditional analysis, demands the adoption and implementation of the Proletarian Military Policy.

All the party's documents state that members will enter the armed forces if drafted. What actually happens is something else. A comrade about to be drafted sends a letter to his draft board informing it of his political beliefs and affiliations, supposedly to provide future legal cover. If this does not have the desired effect, then it is followed by a press conference, and then by a demonstration. After all this, if a comrade is inducted, he enters the army as a marked man. Everything is done, short of any illegality, for SWP'ers and YSA'ers to avoid their revolutionary duty. Trotsky once said, "If the leaders seek to preserve themselves, that is what they become--dried preserves." This practice of the SWP shows its total unwillingness to leave behind a comfortable milieu and to penetrate into an arena where the proletariat is to be found. The hard and difficult work is avoided, just as with the unions. It is another manifestation, more hypocritical and despicable, of the party's wish to turn its back on the working class.

#### THE STALINIST-GANGSTER TACTICS OF THE WORKERS LEAGUE

∟We publish below the "Open Letter to Workers' Organizations" of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (CRFC), its letter to the National Secretary of the Workers League (WL), Tim Wohlforth, and the leaflet, "Youth and the Labor Movement"

whose distribution precipitated the gangster-like behavior of the WL toward CRFC members.

∟The growing rise of political and physical gangsterism by tendencies within the broad American revolutionary movement, against their



political opponents on the same side of the class line, should be a matter of deep concern to all who consider themselves to be revolutionists.

After the vicious assault on WL "Bulletin" salesmen by members of the Movimiento Pro Independencia (MPI), armed with knives and lead pipes a year ago, the WL appealed to "working class, minority and youth organizations" to oppose "physical attacks" on other "working class" tendencies and to support their right "to present their views and to sell their literature" against "government or hooligan attacks." Its appeal also called for the defense of the WL from the MPI's charges that it and "Trotskyists" in general are "agents of the CIA or FBI." We answered its appeal by stating our agreement in our April, 1971, issue on "...the need to prevent and condemn the Stalinist gangster tactics, which MPI has resurrected from the '30's..."

We then went on to state our conviction that, "...the use of threats and physical violence by any working class tendency against another such tendency" is "a confession of political bankruptcy..."

The WL had been informed by letter of CRFC's intention to rally support for the demonstration at Foley Square on March 29th and its desire for a CRFC representative to address the assemblage--a request that was ignored. At the demonstration, not overly zealous rank-and-filers, but leaders of the WL not only used the threat of physical violence against CRFC members, but in fact did use it. Cde. Lowy was twice seized by the arm. He and others were informed that their leaflets would be "torn up" unless the distribution was stopped. CRFC members and the supporters whom they had brought and who had been welcomed until then were at this point "expelled" from the demonstration.

Having failed to intimidate the CRFC comrades, who calmly continued their distribution, the WL leadership had its cadre inform the Young Socialists (YS) and the politically unsophisticated youth--the majority,

it seems, had never even heard of Trotsky--that the CRFC leaflet was opposed to the demonstration, that they were not to read it and even went so far as to knock the leaflets away! The SWP was similarly treated.

The WL, in fitting accompaniment to its hooliganism, thus cynically continues its "deliberate policy of deceiving the workers movement whenever it seems convenient or profitable," as we pointed out in June, 1971. Our readers will recall that at a meeting with our delegation at the WL headquarters a year ago, Wohlforth had threatened one of our members "at some distance and in the language of the gutter" with having "his nose broken if he ever returned" there and then denied that the incident had occurred.

The WL also continues the practice, which we reported in our April, 1971, issue, of determining "the norms for discussion or the rules of conduct for meetings" on the basis of its petty-bourgeois' property rights," e.g., its headquarters, its demonstration. The exclusion from a demonstration or open meeting of a working class tendency which supports the purposes for which it has been called and, even more so, attempts to prevent it from distributing leaflets or selling literature are unprincipled acts directly borrowed from the arsenal of Stalin's anti-Trotskyist campaign.

The WL's decision to use Stalinist methods against opposing tendencies in the revolutionary movement was clearly foreshadowed in the third installment of Lucy St. John's series, "Toward a History of the Fourth International" in the "Bulletin" of December, 1971, in which she inveighed against,

"the rat groups like Spartacist, Fender, Marcus, Turner, Treiger, IS, VO, etc." (our emphasis)

The WL, in using the language of hooliganism, serves notice on its opponents that it has read them out of the revolutionary movement, has stamped them, as the Stalinists did the Trotskyists in the '30's, "enemies of the working class" and for

the very same reason. By erecting a wall of hatred and physical violence against other tendencies, it hopes to "protect" its newly gathered "flock"--recruited to the YS and WL on the shallowest political basis--from its opponents' ideas.

Marx, in The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, corrects Hegel's remark that historical events occur twice by adding, "the first time as tragedy, the second as farce." The Stalinists of the '30's and '40's could hold their members in the objective conditions which then obtained, by utilizing the banner of October along with political and physical violence against the Trotskyists. The WL, in attempting to use the International Committee (IC) and dialectical materialism as fetishes along with Stalinist-gangster methods, will only repeat its history today as "farce."

By aping the conduct at Essen of the Socialist Labour League and the Organisation Communiste Inter-

nationaliste--member organizations of the IC now at odds--the WL confesses that it is politically bankrupt, that its erratic political line cannot withstand a searching examination, that its members and supporters are not able to cope with the positions of its opponents.

It also confesses that the beating of Ernie Tate, of the International Marxist Group in England for selling a pamphlet critical of the SLL and its secretary, Gerry Healy, was by no means accidental, Healy to the contrary notwithstanding.

We also serve notice on the WL that we intend to defend our right and that of all other political tendencies on our side of the class line to distribute leaflets and sell literature at demonstrations in front of its and others headquarters and at public meeting places.

We offer a united front to all other working class tendencies against the use of gangster tactics in the workers' movement.

#### CRFC Letter to Working Class Organizations

Dear Comrades:

April 17, 1972

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter sent by our organization to the Workers League after an incident on March 29 in which members of the CRFC were threatened by the leaders of the WL for distributing leaflets at their Foley Square youth unemployment demonstration.

We would appreciate a statement of support if you agree with our commitment to a free dissemination of ideas between socialist organizations. We also enclose a copy of the leaflet found so objectionable by the WL.

The CRFC is a united front of workers' organizations and working class militants concerned to build rank-and-file caucuses in the trade unions.

The addresses of presently participating organizations are as follows:

New York Revolutionary Committee,  
98 3rd Ave., NY, NY 10003

Socialist Forum, GPO Box 1948,  
NY, NY 10001

Vanguard Newsletter, PO Box 67,  
Peck Slip Station, NY, NY 10038

Fraternally,  
Malcolm L. Kaufman, Secy-Treas.

#### CRFC Letter to Workers League National Secretary, Tim Wohlforth

Dear Comrade: April 2, 1972

The absolutely barbaric and uncalled for behavior exercised by your organization against members of the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses at your Foley Square demonstration last Wednesday, March

29th, requires on my part an expression of the strongest possible objection.

The CRFC supported the general goals of your demonstration and participated in the march. When we sought to distribute copies of the leaflet "Youth and the Labor

Movement" in a peaceful and non-disruptive manner, a WL marshall, on your instructions, harassed and physically intimidated Comrade Thomas Lowy. Other members of the CRFC were similarly menaced and were told that they were barred from the demonstration. This, in spite of the fact several of those threatened belonged to Social Service Employee Union local 371 and had accepted an open invitation made by Ronold Roberts, a member of your organization, at a membership meeting of that union on March 23rd.

This type of political crime demonstrates the sheerest hypocrisy. Following serious assaults on several of your members by the MPI (Puerto-Rican Pro-Independence Movement) last year, you wrote the following in an open letter dated 12 April and addressed to all "working class, minority, and youth organizations,"

"The Workers League proposes... that all organizations reject and denounce all physical attacks on other tendencies in the working class movement; that we specifically affirm the right of all tendencies to freely present their views and to sell their literature; that we oppose all government or hooligan attacks on these rights."

In my capacity as corresponding secretary of the then New York Branch No. 2 of the Socialist Reconstruction I responded to your open letter, commenting in part,

"We stand with you in the belief that all working class organizations must have the right to openly espouse their views, sell and distribute their literature, and conduct any number of forms of agitational activity. Only open discussion and dialogue can lead to the development of theory and program that can take the working class to victory over the moribund capitalist system."

Unlike yourself, however, Comrade Wohlforth, we mean what we say. We

do not support workers' democracy for cheap organizational advantage. We support it as a matter of principle. The same cannot be said for the Workers League; otherwise the organization would not have engaged in criminal acts similar to those that it condemned less than a year earlier.

In the same letter quoted above, I discussed the origins of political hooliganism,

"It is hardly accidental that most of the groups engaging in gangsterism are dominated by Stalinist ideology. The Stalinists' theoretical bankruptcy and their history of betrayal of the international working class leaves them with a position that cannot be defended through argumentation but instead only through physical intimidation. Needless to say, there is no better proof of the shallowness of Stalinist politics than their refusal to participate in political discussion and their frequent resort to violence as a substitute."

If you object to portions of our leaflet then the principled thing to do would have been to criticize us publicly in your press or to have at least engaged us in a private conversation that afternoon. But your actions can lead us only to the same conclusion drawn when you were attacked by the Stalinist-influenced MPI. Hooliganism can mean only one thing--confession of political bankruptcy.

It is up to you, then, to clear your record and remove any doubts as to the integrity and character of your organization. An immediate apology would demonstrate a return to the principles outlined by the WL in 1971. We await that apology.

For workers' democracy,  
Malcolm L. Kaufman, Secy-Treas.

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The continuation of the article on Ireland will appear in our May issue.

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# YOUTH AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Someone once said that you can judge the quality of a society by the way it treats its youth. The truth of this can be seen in our own country. American society is rotten to the core. And so is its treatment of youth. Lousy schools. Education unrelated to real needs. Poor recreational facilities. Filthy neighborhoods and housing. Little opportunity for advancement. Very high unemployment. Low pay and dog work when jobs can be found. Forced servitude in the war machine. Such are the conditions of life of working class youth generally. For black, Puerto Rican, and Chicano youth, who suffer a special oppression, the problems are even more intense--with unemployment conservatively estimated at 50% and higher.

Out of the alienation and despair of such deplorable conditions has come an even greater evil--the massive drug addiction of so many brothers and sisters. What can be said about a society that drives its children to heroin as a temporary (and often fatal) means of escape? Nothing good. There are many reasons for condemning American society, but there is no stronger one than what it has done to its youth.

Condemnation, however, is not enough. The American system must go. We must build a new society that will give young people all they need to live happy, meaningful lives. But how can we do this?

The Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (CRFC), an organization of militant trade union workers, believes that the labor movement is the key to such a change. The working class has the power to crush the American system, take control of the country, and begin building a new society. But rank and file workers are being side-tracked from this power. The trade union bureaucrats (many of whom make as much money as corporation executives) tell workers that unions are only concerned with the narrow interests of their members--not the working class as a whole. These bureaucrats pit blue collar worker against white collar worker, employed worker against unemployed worker, black worker against white worker, female worker against male worker, and young worker against old worker. All this is designed to preserve the so-called "American way of life", which means the system of oppression and exploitation. These bureaucrats are our enemies. The labor movement is the key to a new society, but these bureaucrats must be driven out of our ranks before the key can be used to unlock the door.

This is what the CRFC is struggling to do. Our goal is to build rank and file organizations within all the unions and in all the major workplaces of the nation. A struggle against the special oppression of black, Puerto Rican and Chicano workers is needed to unify the working class as a whole. Racism must be driven from the labor movement and society. Decent jobs for all, equal pay for equal work, and equal opportunity for every worker is what the CRFC is fighting for. By organizing the rank and file within the labor movement around these demands, we can begin to transform this movement into a force for change.

I want to hear more about the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses  
 PO Box 303, New York, N.Y. 10001

NAME.....  
 STREET.....  
 CITY.....STATE.....ZIP CODE.....  
 voluntary labor

## THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE:

### Adaptation to the Radical Petty-Bourgeoisie - Part II

The character of the Spartacist League (SL) as a petty-bourgeois formation has long been clear in its continuing failure over several years "to meet the criterion of revolutionary practice," as the present series demonstrates.

As we have shown, the January 25th meeting at which the Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (CRFC) was initiated produced additional confirmation of the SL's nature. It, at that time, rejected the proposal of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER and SOCIALIST FORUM for a transitional organization to unite workers on the objectively necessary class program for "the independence of the unions from the state" and "an independent workers' party based on the rank-and-file" in which all organizations having agreement with these goals would be free to fight for their entire program.

Incapable of developing a strategy and tactics for the construction of a working class vanguard party, the SL responded to our proposal with the subjectivism typical of the petty-bourgeois milieu, as we have shown, concerned solely to pursue its "organizational interests in the narrowest organizational manner."

We stated in our last issue that, in correspondence with its petty-bourgeois practice, the SL's theory is "'adjusted'" at "critical testing points."

The issue of Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistani war was one such point. At the January 25th meeting, the SL's representatives villified VANGUARD NEWSLETTER for having deceived its supporters in stating that it alone had presented:

"a consistently revolutionary Marxist position in preparation for the 'interbourgeois Indo-Pakistani war.'"

"'Workers Vanguard' called for revolutionary defeatism" before VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, we were indignantly told. "You are engaging in the same sort of fraudulent misrepresentation as the Workers League!"

What are the facts?

A review of our several articles on Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistani war from April to December, 1971, will prove that we never claimed to be the first to raise or to have held a monopoly on the slogan, "revolutionary defeatism." What we did say in December should be clear enough except to the willfully blind. It is not enough simply to raise a slogan! It is necessary to prepare the revolutionists and the working class beforehand for a real revolutionary defeatist policy, i.e., the proletarian revolution which seeks the overthrow of domestic and international capitalism.

We were, of course, aware that not only the SL, but also the International Socialists (IS) and even Tariq Ali of the British International Marxist Group (IMG) had called for the "revolutionary" defeat of both India and Pakistan.

The IS and IMG, however, were, at the same time, calling upon the revolutionary Marxists to desert the workers for the peasant-guerrilla Mukti Bahini controlled by the Indian army and its bourgeois dependents in Bangladesh. The IS's "Workers Power" considered the Mukti Bahini to hold "the key to a revolutionary solution." Tariq Ali raised the banner of a "united Socialist Bengal" to be achieved, it seems, in a re-edition of the Maoist victory in China through the peasant-guerrilla struggle.

And how did the SL respond to the disorienting voices of pseudo "revolutionary" defeatists? By silence! The SL's "Workers Vanguard," it seems, was unable to find any space in its October and November issues to discuss the Pakistani oppression of Bangladesh. In December, while raising the slogan "revolutionary defeatism" for the Indo-Pakistani

war, it maintained a diplomatic silence on the Mukti Bahini and thus avoided posing the responsibility of revolutionary Marxists to remain with the proletariat and to win the largely peasant national liberation movement to its program. The SL's two-paragraph statement on the front page had to be compressed, it would seem, to make room for the evidently much more important photograph of Indian tanks and troops! Its article in January 1972, after India's victory over Pakistan and its occupation of Bangladesh, took an equivocal position toward the "loosely knit" Mukti Bahini.

We believe our statement made in December 1971, and which we now repeat, to be entirely valid:

"...we have been alone in publicly opposing the separation of the Bangladesh revolutionists from the proletariat and their submergence in the peasant-guerrilla movement.... We instead called upon them to work to win the national liberation movement to their banner."

We know of no other organization which advanced this position. If a more knowledgeable reader should find to the contrary, we will be pleased to print a correction.

Our article continued, as follows:

"We called for 'revolutionary fraternization' and for the use of 'the artillery of the land question' against the Pakistani 'peasants in uniform.'"

"We raised the Leninist position on the national question, the unity of the masses of the oppressor and oppressed nations. We called upon the revolutionary Marxists in Pakistan to fight for the right of Bangladesh to independence and to unite it to their own 'class struggle and to the land question in overthrowing the military dictatorship in a socialist revolution.' We called upon the revolutionists in Bangladesh to raise the need for a 'socialist federation of the entire sub-continent united by the international

socialist revolution to the advanced countries.' We called for an international working class campaign against the maneuvers of both the imperialists and the counterrevolutionary Stalinists.

"We called, in other words, for 'the Permanent Revolution, a socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class at the head of the peasant masses ...linked to the international socialist revolution.'"

We believe that our SL critics attempted to vulgarize and misrepresent our position in the hope that they would thereby obscure the SL's political spinelessness toward the Mukti Bahini. To have called upon the revolutionary Marxists in Bangladesh, as in Pakistan and India, to secure, preserve and restore their roots in the working class would, no doubt, have seemed too "prosaic" a task to student radicals as against the "stirring" siren song of social-opportunists for everyone to get into the "loosely knit" Mukti Bahini guerrilla "pool."

But perhaps the SL's silence was not "diplomatic" after all, but only a regrettable oversight? An SL partisan might wrathfully demand, "Why do you insist on placing the worst interpretation on the SL's unfortunate "omission?" Because we have witnessed other such opportunistic "omissions" for the "benefit" of the student milieu!

On the guerrilla struggle led by Che Guevara in Bolivia, for example. In preparation for an article in the March-April 1968 "Spartacist," the theory and practice of the ill-fated operation which ended in Guevara's murder was discussed in the SL's political bureau. Cde. Turner, then a member, had insisted that the preface to the "Theses on Guerrilla Warfare" state that Guevara was an important component of the privileged Cuban Bonapartist bureaucratic caste which had risen to power on the backs of the peasants over the workers, in addition to the other points then being made-- the need for "Marxists...to remain ...with the proletariat," many guer-

rillas being "dedicated and courageous fighters."

James Robertson refused! Turner, it seems, wanted to make it "impossible" to reach student radicals, who were at that time--it is true--deeply immersed in the cult of Guevara.

Exactly as in the case of Bangladesh, the SL avoided saying what is! In both cases, it would seem, it "adjusted" its principles--only a

"little bit," to be sure--on the grounds of the pedagogical requirements of the oh-so important student radical milieu. "Adjustments" of this sort, no doubt, occasion little conflict in the SL of today.

Another example? The 1968 SL internal struggle over the implementation of Turner's "Memorandum on the Negro Struggle."

(to be continued)

### LABOR PARTY OR WORKERS' PARTY?

The Committee for Rank and File Caucuses (CRFC), as our readers are aware, is a united front against the anti-labor offensive of the ruling class on a two point program: the "independence of the unions from the state" and "an independent workers' party based on the rank-and-file.

VANGUARD NEWSLETTER, one of CRFC's founders, has regularly and often called before for a "labor party based on the unions." Some of our readers may have concluded that the change in the form of this demand also represented a change in its essence. Have we not shifted away from an independent party based on the trade unions to one independent of them? We hasten to assure them that the "workers' party based on the rank-and-file" holds exactly the same meaning for us as the "labor party based on the unions."

Why then was the form of this demand altered? We believe with Trotsky that pedagogical adaptation, e.g., modification of a slogan to meet the psychological requirements of workers, on the basis of a firm adherence to principle, is not only entirely appropriate, but also essential to win them to the revolutionary Marxist program and party.

It has become necessary to change the form of the labor party slogan in order to restore and re-emphasize the original revolutionary quality which Trotsky has imparted to it, to differentiate his and our conception of the labor party from that of social-opportunists, of right and left centrist organizations, e.g., the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Workers League (WL).

It should be clearly understood that, as a master of the dialectical materialist method, Trotsky would

not and did not conceive of the labor party slogan as timeless and eternal. The main question for him was, would the formation of a labor party be a step forward for the working class toward the socialist revolution or not?

In 1932, Trotsky meant by a "labor party," as he stated, a "party of the working class," not "a labor party in the specific British sense." At that time, he was concerned with the possibility that an "intermediate" party might become a barrier to the development of the vanguard party. In 1932, it should be recalled, the Trotskyists, the Left Opposition, considered themselves expelled members of the parties of the Communist International. The Communist Party (CP) in the US, in spite of the stupidities of the "third period," numbered several thousand. In addition, Trotsky foresaw the world crisis of capitalism maturing at a different and slower rate in the US, with its powerful productive plant. The possibility therefore existed that, under correct leadership, the CP would have had time to win the American working class to its banner. Under these circumstances, the labor party would have been a backward step.

In 1938, Trotsky called upon the American section of the Fourth International to actively work for the creation of the "intermediary" labor party. Why? Because, as the influx of workers into the CIO and

also the AFL had demonstrated, the depression had succeeded in awakening the class spirit of the American workers, which the CP was to channel into the "New Deal."

The movement of the class--the objective factor in respect to the revolutionary Marxist party, the subjective factor--was, however, proceeding at a rate far exceeding that of the vanguard party by then organized as the SWP. It was necessary for the Trotskyists to fight for a new form in which revolutionary consciousness could be accelerated, as required by the objective situation, if they were not to find themselves in "splendid" sectarian isolation.

What if a labor party in the "British sense," i.e., under the control of the labor bureaucrats, had emerged at that time? Would the Trotskyists have entered it? It is necessary to pose this question in relation to the concrete conditions, but as Trotsky posed the situation, it would have been necessary to be "part of the movement." The Trotskyists would, therefore, have fought within it for a revolutionary perspective and for a program which would enable the workers to be won to a revolutionary vanguard party.

The growing crisis of world capitalism is making clear that the present epoch is one of "imperialist decay." The whip of the capitalist anti-labor offensive under these conditions intensifies the class struggle and once again makes the opening of a political avenue of struggle, i.e., an "independent party of the working class," a particularly acute question.

In his discussions on the labor party, Trotsky called for the struggle for the Transitional Program as the basis for the program of the labor party. As is clear from an unfinished article published posthumously, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," he also saw it as the program for "the activity of the trade unions" in making them into "revolutionary trade unions."

But, as James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman also made clear in their discussions with Trotsky, neither understood how the struggle for a

labor party could be conducted on a revolutionary programmatic and not a reformist and parliamentary basis and, therefore, were not able to understand how the labor party slogan could be reconciled with the struggle for the Transitional Program in the trade unions.

For the SWP, even in its revolutionary period, the labor party based on the trade unions--the slogan has been abandoned "at this time" for petty-bourgeois Black and Chicano nationalist parties--could only come into being through the mediation of the left-wing of the labor bureaucracy. The WL, which does actively raise the labor party slogan today, also understands it in the exact same way as does the SWP, as our article, "War and the NPAC Convention" in the July/August 1971 issue has shown.

In posing the labor party question abstractly, without proposing a concrete form such as rank-and-file caucuses on which to build a labor party, this slogan can only be an appeal to the labor bureaucracy to carry out this task. And in fact, the "Bulletin" has euphorically hailed all bureaucrats who demagogically talk about a labor party in the "British," i.e., in the reformist "sense."

For ourselves as for Trotsky, the struggle for the special transitional demand, an "independent party of the working class," an "independent workers' party based on the rank-and-file" or a "labor party based on the trade unions"--whatever formulation is chosen--is a constituent part of the struggle for a transitional program in the trade unions in order to transform them into "revolutionary trade unions."

We no more seek, than Trotsky sought, a vehicle for the labor party in one or another wing of the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." We and the other participating organizations of the CRFC base ourselves solely on the "rank-and-file" of the trade unions in creating a transitional organization linked to all the "exploited masses" and able to conquer state power under the leadership of the revolutionary Marxist party.