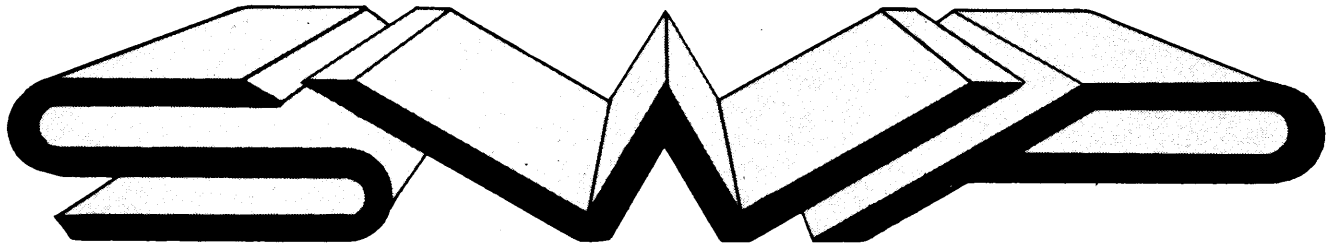


*Daryl*



# Discussion Bulletin

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LETTER FROM SWP NATIONAL OFFICE

March 26, 1973

The opening of this literary discussion on disputed international issues does *not* open the oral pre-convention discussion in the branches. The date for the opening of the oral discussion in the branches will be set by the Convention Call which will be issued by the National Committee at its plenary meeting April 29.

Contributions to the literary discussion on the world movement should be submitted in typed, triple-spaced format to the national office and should include title, author, and author's branch. Contributions should be typed 60 characters or less to a line to facilitate typesetting for the bulletin.

*TO ALL SWP MEMBERS*

Dear Comrades,

At its March 23 meeting the Political Committee decided to open the party internal bulletin to written contributions from party members on the international issues in dispute in the world movement. The opening of this literary discussion on the international issues had been previously authorized by the National Committee.

At a later date the Convention Call will open the party internal bulletin to contributions on all the other questions before the party convention in addition to the disputed international questions.

Comradely,  
s/Lew Jones  
SWP National Office

LETTER TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
ON THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL TENDENCY

January 19, 1973

Political Committee  
Socialist Workers Party

Dear Comrades,

This letter is to inform you of the formation of a political tendency within the SWP for the purpose of participation in the discussions preceding and the deliberations of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International. As cothinkers of the Fourth International, precluded from membership by reactionary United States legislation, the SWP receives fraternal participatory rights and we request that similar rights be accorded our tendency so that the most comprehensive discussion may occur. It is not possible for this letter to present a full statement of our views; what follows is simply an outline of our basic orientation.

### *I. The Transitional Program*

Following the political leadership of the SWP, sections of the International such as the LSA/LSO have begun a theoretical accommodation to reformism and an adaptation to a petty-bourgeois milieu. These departures from the historic lessons embodied in the Transitional Program are marked by the gradual ascension of a minimalist "democratic" program, especially in day-to-day practice, and concomitant with this, the substitution of a multiclass "sectoral" approach for a proletarian class outlook. While this opportunist movement stems in part from the isolation of the parties from the class, it has reached a point qualitatively wherein no tactical turn of these parties can correct the problem by itself.

The strong emphasis on democratic demands in the imperialist countries in place of a program stressing transitional demands and the allied uncritical stance toward bourgeois democratic movements in general taken by the SWP and its allies within the International, are based on a thoroughly incorrect understanding of the theory of combined revolution and its application to imperialist and colonial countries.

The root of this error is the fundamentally idealist notion that the spontaneous tendency of development of democratic movements is toward revolution. This represents a tragic and dangerous misunderstanding of the historical process of permanent revolution, especially in the colonial countries, and it leads to the party's abdication of its responsibility for intervening among the masses with a class line.

The SWP's idea that "consistent nationalism leads to socialism" when speaking of the oppressed nationalities within the United States, is one example of this conception. In the fight for the liberation of women, the SWP has adopted an overtly reformist position of restricting its propaganda to the simple reform of legalizing abortion. Again, the justification for this opportunism is that the struggle, in and of itself, will lead toward socialism.

Intermeshed with these theoretical deviations, the SWP has generated a "sectoral" analysis of social struggle.

Replacing the program of the class with a series of "programs" for each sector, it seeks to mobilize these multi-class constituencies independently of each other and without relation to the class. This confuses the whole outlook of the Transitional Program.

The purpose of our program is to provide a *system* of demands leading to dual power and culminating in the seizure of state power. No social layer or class, other than the proletariat itself, and most decisively the industrial working class, contains the human material and social weight required for such an undertaking. While certain demands pertaining to the special needs of distinct, oppressed groups and strata can and should be raised, to speak of a transitional program for any *single* oppressed group or social layer—such as students—creates deceptive illusions as to the objective conditions of class struggle and miseducates the ranks of the party.

The practical effects of this theorizing is the orienting of the party to these sectors instead of to the hard, serious work inside of the class. The youth orientation, which originated with the document "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization" has become an excuse for an exclusive and self-perpetuating student orientation which has failed to relate to young workers, soldiers or to youth of the oppressed nationalities or to train new cadre for eventual implantation into the class.

### *II. The Imperialist Countries*

The paramount task for the sections in the advanced countries during the epoch of the death agony of capitalism is the breaking of the grip of Stalinism and Social Democracy over the working class. A strategic orientation toward the class must be a priority of sections within the imperialist countries. The aborted revolutions of France (1968) and Italy (1968-69) serve to confirm this view.

At the same time, these events call attention to a new phase of class struggle in the advanced countries caused by a sharpening of the economic and social contradictions of world imperialism and characterized by a rise in the combativity of the working class and a generalized subsidence in the scope and importance of the student movement. The ability of the European and English sections to effect impressive gains over the last several years by shifting their orientations to the class in line with these changes has placed the International at an historic crossroads. For the first time, the International has the realistic opportunity of breaking out of its isolation and emerging as a mass party of the working class. Hence, the success of the turn taken by these sections has immense import to the whole International.

The difference in the pace of the working-class radicalization in North America should not obscure the fundamental similarity of the work confronting the SWP and the LSA/LSO to those confronting these other sections. The continuing abstention from work within the class by these parties can only lead to an inability to intervene in the proletariat in the battles ahead. A refusal by the SWP and the LSA/LSO to take advantage of the possibilities that open up to us in the coming period have the prob-

ability of plunging these parties back into decades more of isolation and thus may well result in an historic defeat for Trotskyism in North America.

### *III. The Colonial Revolution*

The perspectives for the colonial countries are generally set forth in the Transitional Program: the building of a Trotskyist vanguard and the mobilization of the working class and peasantry around both democratic and transitional demands toward the seizure of state power and the creation of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Today, numerous differences remain within the International in terms of applying our theoretical program.

In the case of Palestine, the position adopted at the last convention of the SWP, that is, for a "democratic secular state in Palestine," stands in contrast to the correct slogan, "For a Unified Socialist Mid-East." This particular formulation of the SWP neglects the obvious need to point for a socialist solution to the Palestine struggle. Worse yet, to call for a "democratic secular state" without specifying its class character amounts to calling for the establishment of a bourgeois state. Such ambiguity is more than reminiscent of the two-stage theory of revolution of the Menshevik-Stalinists. At the same time the uncritical support to Al Fatah given by the SWP demonstrated an adaptation to the bourgeois democratic leadership of that national struggle.

The pattern to these errors is demonstrated in connection to the differences on Bangla Desh. While the SWP restricted its calls to the "self-determination of Bangla Desh," the United Secretariat correctly called for "Forward to the United Socialist Bengal" and "Forward Toward the Indian Sub-Continent Revolution." The mistakes of the SWP in this regard echo the political error mentioned earlier; the conception that democratic or nationalist struggles automatically develop into conscious revolutionary ones without intervention by the vanguard party. The fact is that while all bourgeois democratic tasks cannot be completed by the national bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie is quite capable of taking the leadership of such movements away from the revolutionary class and seizing control of the state for its own class interests. This has been the most frequent historical variant. There is no substitute for the necessity of building Leninist parties capable of winning the leadership of the workers and poor peasants away from the national bourgeoisie and over to a socialist program.

In the case of Latin America, we cannot agree with either the stated position of the SWP or the International majority.

The position put forward by the SWP which advocates party building is poorly recommended both by the record of the SWP in the United States and by its sterile and mechanical nature. Intrinsic to the SWP's position is a transferring of their sectoral approach to Latin America, as their fraternal collaboration with the centrist PSA of Argentina shows.

We reject the positions of the International majority as well, but not for any pacifistic or legalistic reasons. We believe that the positions of the International majority, which envisage a continentwide strategy of armed struggle, represent an adaptation to guerrillaism.

The uneven social and economic development among the various Latin American countries does not necessarily

preclude any continent-wide strategy. But at the same time to call for any strategy on a continental scale before developing a clear concrete analysis and perspective of each of the Latin American sections and countries is to remain in the realm of impressionistic abstraction.

The policy of the majority is not based on the working class, but rather is a substitute for the class and hence is adventuristic. We wish to make it quite clear that ultimately armed struggle (as the adjunct of the mass mobilization of the workers and peasants) will be the only way for the revolutionary victory in Latin America. The lesson of the necessity of arming the masses is one which must be driven home to counter the reformist influence of Stalinism and Social Democracy.

### *IV. The Workers States*

The current discussion on China is of value chiefly in the adoption of a more correct analysis of the role of Stalinism and its Maoist and other national variants. The International majority evidenced in its positions a critical error in the consideration of Maoism as bureaucratic centrism. This position, if not corrected can only lead to illusions about other Stalinist leaderships which in turn could lead to projecting a course that would be detrimental to the building of the International. There is a certain tendency in this direction evident in some of the European sections' positions toward the leadership of the DRV/NLF and the Seven-Point Program.

The SWP while holding a substantially more correct position vis-a-vis Stalinism and correctly criticizing the Seven-Point Program, has demonstrated an unwillingness to build a movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and defense of the workers state of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

### *V. The Fourth International*

We support the proposal for the rapid building of a genuinely democratic-centralist International within the framework of the Proposed Statutes published by the IMG. In this context we hold general agreement with the view put forward by Comrades Krivine and Frank in their contribution to the discussion entitled, "Again, and Always, the Question of the International." On this point we must reemphasize the necessity of the leaderships of the various sections and parties of practicing an extensive internal democracy and to provide for the rights of minorities to participate both in leadership and in international discussions.

We also wish to point out the harmful practices of the SWP: its lack of solidarity with the Argentine section when under repressive attack by the Lanusse regime, the refusal in its press to acknowledge that the ERP-PRT is the section of the Fourth International in Argentina, its interference in the internal affairs of the IMG. All of these exacerbate the current differences in the International and foment a factional atmosphere. This only makes the working out of a correct solution to current differences more difficult.

Comradely,

s/Bill Massey (Oakland-Berkeley Branch)

s/John Shaffer (Houston Branch)

s/Don Smith (Chicago Branch)

cc: United Secretariat

International Majority Tendency

## THE ONLY ROAD TO REVOLUTION IS THROUGH THE PROLETARIAT

By Gerald Clark  
Oakland-Berkeley Branch

### Introduction

Any class-conscious worker interested in picking up the revolutionary cudgel for purposes of forging it into a tool for overthrowing the bourgeoisie, must first come to grips with the question of what *specific* tool is necessary to accomplish the job. Being a worker, and somewhat familiar with tools, he or she will soon discover after doing some preparatory reading of the Marxist manuals, that the *only* tool capable of taking on such a momentous task is one which is grounded in correct theory and tempered in the class struggle; flexible, but always prepared to move with swiftness and precision; and powerful enough to tackle the problem wherever it crops up. That tool is the Leninist combat party joined together with other parties around the world into the Fourth International — World Party of Socialist Revolution.

Today, the question of building a mass, proletarian World Party of Socialist Revolution must again be posed in all its urgency as the *central* task facing revolutionists throughout the world. From every corner of the world revolutionists, poor peasants, workers, and citizens of the "socialist" states, are looking for revolutionary leaders and revolutionary organizations capable of providing the leadership necessary to carry the masses forward to complete victory over capitalism and bureaucratism. But that's just the problem: The crisis of leadership of the proletariat — a problem first posed by the FI in 1938 — has never been more acute than it is today. And so it is here that we must begin, or begin again, to tackle this question of the right kind of tool to accomplish our work.

Without going into a long history of the FI here, it is noteworthy that for a group with such great responsibilities, the Fourth International is completely unprepared today to carry out revolutionary tasks. Rife with factionalism, broken up into many tendencies, and theoretically weak in some areas, the International is unrecognizable as the organization of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. The present political differences in the world movement, contrary to opinion, did not arise in 1969. The major differences date back to the 1951-53 period with the emergence of Pabloism as a liquidationist current in the Trotskyist movement and the resultant split. Today — 20 years after the split and 10 years after reunification — the same problems that were brushed over then (the nature of Stalinism, democratic centralism, Pabloism, entryism, etc.) are coming to the surface again. There is a lesson to be learned from all this, an old one: You can't solve political problems through organizational methods.

Although in different form, around different issues, the same problem of *political liquidationism* is at the root of the current differences on Latin America, Vietnam, China, and the European working-class movement. But in order to objectively appraise the situation inside the world movement today, we must try to understand the development of the FI since its inception, and especially since the 1953 split. By basing ourselves on this his-

torical development, we will be in a better position to grasp the politics behind the various tendencies which are now forming preparation for the Tenth World Congress. If we can familiarize ourselves with the International's history of internal struggle (a task that won't be easy because many of the documents are not available for all comrades to read) and combine it with a Marxist critique of the present conjunctural conditions, we should be able to achieve greater clarification of the political differences and avoid another unnecessary split. However, a split based on clearly defined *and divergent* positions would not necessarily be bad. On the contrary, it could represent a step forward provided, of course, one position was correct and revolutionary.

But unfortunately, the two main tendencies in the International pose *no* revolutionary alternative for the working class. Therefore, reaching political clarification will prove difficult and an organizational split more likely. It is with this analysis of the two tendencies that I find it necessary to submit to the world movement a *revolutionary* alternative for the workers in *opposition* to the two lines now being circulated. It is my hope that this document will provide more clarity in arriving at correct political positions so that we may go forward in carrying out our historic task — to overthrow world capitalism as soon as possible.

### The Nature of Our Epoch

The crisis of capitalism is forcing many contradictions to the surface once thought dead and creating excellent opportunities for Trotskyism to penetrate deeply into the working class. Over the past few years alone, great upheavals have occurred around the world, some of which have met the *objective* prerequisites for a revolutionary transformation of society. What was lacking in *all* cases was the *subjective* conditions for revolution: a mass revolutionary vanguard party. In Bolivia, Bangladesh, Chile, and Vietnam, either prerevolutionary or revolutionary conditions existed for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers governments. In Poland, the beginning of a political revolution erupted in 1970 which forced the Stalinists to make concessions to the workers and change the leadership of the Communist Party. In the advanced capitalist countries, in France, Italy, Great Britain, Spain, for example, the workers movement has seen a great revival which has yet to be defeated.

Even the imperialist heartland has not been immune from social struggles involving small sections of the working class, particularly the Black workers. The U. S. government has not been able to alleviate the social unrest at home and now, with the re-election of Nixon, more and more necessary social programs will be cut in order to finance an ever growing military budget for the purpose of furthering its imperialist aims.

The Summit Conferences between US imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracies, organized to maintain the sta-

tus quo in Vietnam and throughout the world, represent only a "paper tiger" before the living class struggle which will break through all such diplomatic agreements made behind the backs of the masses. No amount of paper and ink can eradicate the exploitation facing millions of people around the world—especially in Vietnam! The Nixons, Brezhnevs, and Mao Tse-tungs can drink all the toasts to peace they want but that will not bring peace to the world.

The rising international competition between national capitalist states is undermining all attempts at "peaceful coexistence." The international monetary crisis is only a harbinger of the worsening conditions capitalism can expect in the future. Because of this, *world* capitalism, taking the lead from the United States, is trying to shift the burden of inflation and military spending onto the backs of the proletariat. This attempt at intensification of labor has led to the establishment of an incomes policy in the United States and Great Britain. In Germany, to the *Konsertierte Aktion*. All of these policies are aimed at keeping wage demands down and profits up. In the U.S., this has led to some success; in Germany it remains to be seen. But in Great Britain, the country facing the worst economic crisis in its history, the working class and the unions are fighting back with strike action which has led to a call for a general strike. All the advanced capitalist countries face the same problem of soaring prices and inflation which continues to undermine any attempt at stabilization.

And investments in the deformed and degenerated workers states, in particular China and the USSR, offer the capitalist nations at most a temporary breathing spell. But in this area too there is competition, not to mention danger. In any event, the workers states cannot save capitalism any more than summit talks can preserve peace. Trade between imperialism and the workers states will most likely increase over the next few years, but so will imperialist competition. And who can predict when the next Vietnam war will break out, plunging capitalism into a greater social crisis than ever before.

Consequently, the outlook for proletarian revolution in the next period looks favorable. The applicability of the Transitional Program is becoming more and more apparent as we view with excitement the re-emergence of class consciousness and militancy among the advanced workers. No "new" theories and no "new" vanguard are necessary today. The program of the Fourth International is still valid and must become the program of the working class if socialism is to become a reality in this world. With a 35-year history of class struggle behind us, armed with the Transitional Program, Fourth Internationalists *everywhere* must begin again the uphill struggle begun by Trotsky to construct mass proletarian parties to lead the coming struggles for power. This includes countries like the United States where reactionary legislation prevents the organizational affiliation of the SWP to the Fourth International.

### *In Vietnam*

The struggle against imperialism in Vietnam has been continuous for almost 100 years. Beginning as a struggle for self-determination, the Vietnam war has been transformed into a *civil war* to overthrow capitalism as the only means to self-determination. The landlords and cap-

italists and their army on one side, and the workers and peasants and their army on the other. This war, fought directly by imperialism and its lackeys against the Vietnamese working class and peasantry, has shown up clearly the real face of "democratic" imperialism. Motivated from the start by its determination to stop the "spread of communism," the Imperialist Giant actively intervened in the Vietnamese revolution on the side of the most reactionary forces left in the country—in the name of *all* capitalist countries.

But the imperialists had little choice: defeat was imminent for the landlords and capitalists in South Vietnam. The National Liberation Front was winning military victory after victory. And it mattered little to US imperialism that the NLF's program was *not* specifically *anticapitalist*; it wanted no repeat of what happened in China and Cuba, both of which overthrew capitalism without specifically opposing it in their programs. Because of the contradictory nature of Stalinism, *which the bourgeoisie understands quite well*, no possibility of a NLF victory could be allowed in the South.

But like most of imperialism's tactics in this epoch, the objective conditions for US involvement in Vietnam were not the best. By 1965, when the United States became heavily involved in the war, the struggle for Black equality was reaching its heights, which had a tremendous effect on young students who joined their struggle in the thousands. The militancy of the Blacks carried over into the initial protests against the war which coincided with many aspects of the Black struggle (an end to racism, more money for social services not war, against drafting Blacks to fight the war, etc.). Black people, for the most part, were opposed to the war from the start. "Why should we defend democracy in Vietnam when we have none at home?" they asked. The bourgeoisie was unable to give an answer.

The ongoing Black struggle for equality, the emerging student radicalization which gave rise to SDS, the desire for peace expressed by the electorate in the 1964 election of Johnson for president, and the growing inflation stimulated by military war spending, provided all the preconditions which gave a mighty impetus to the movement against the war on the part of the North American people. Growing ever larger as the war carried on, encompassing millions of people at one point, the antiwar movement spread throughout the world and spurred on the radicalization of many more people, in particular the students.

In contradiction to this whole process, with minor exceptions, the North American working class—the key to ending the war, racism, and oppression—hardly stirred from its 25-year lapse into acquiescence. Lacking any base in the trade unions, revolutionaries involved in the antiwar movement had little effect on the organized working class leaving that area of work to the labor bureaucracy, which kept a tight grip on the rank and file.

Inspired by the growing worldwide movement against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the NLF was able to achieve impressive victories in the fields as well as moral support from millions of people who demonstrated their solidarity with the goals of the revolution. The main material support came from the USSR and China. However, this support was inadequate. Neither country would provide enough military supplies to allow North Vietnam to

defend itself when the United States Air Force launched its worst attacks on any country in the history of warfare. This policy of China and the USSR flows from their identical approach to imperialism and the building of socialism in one (their own) country: peaceful coexistence. This reactionary policy reached its counterrevolutionary glory with the Sell-Out the Vietnamese Revolution Conferences held in Peking and Moscow with Nixon, the anticommunist, last year. The pressure on the Vietnamese Stalinists to end the war quickly was very great after these conferences. But that's only part of the story.

From the beginning of the war, the Stalinists in the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution have refused to call for socialism in Vietnam. Adhering, as they do, to Stalin's theory of revolution in stages, the leaders of the NLF/PRG believe they are fighting for national liberation in order to establish a democratic state in Vietnam "free" from imperialist aggression. Their demands go no further than setting up a popular front government based on bourgeois property relations. In this sense, the recently signed Vietnam Accords *do not* contradict the program of the NLF/PRG. And in this sense, the Accords represent a victory not for the Vietnamese revolution but for imperialism and its lackeys in the South because they guarantee capitalist relations there.

What next? The only road open to revolutionaries fighting in Vietnam is to call for the continuation of armed struggle until the final victory over capitalism. The ideas of peaceful coexistence must be replaced with the ideas of the permanent revolution and socialism. Stalinism, and all its counterrevolutionary manifestations, must be fought against in Vietnam and elsewhere. The program of the NLF/PRG is a program for popular frontism, and consequently, a program of defeat for the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Only the Transitional Program and the call for workers, peasants, and soldiers councils as the basis for a workers and peasants government in all Vietnam can overcome the present impasse and move the struggle forward to socialism. A revolutionary party of workers is needed in Vietnam to lead the masses forward against popular frontism! against peaceful coexistence!! against capitalism!!!

### *In Latin America*

There are two main tendencies in the FI on the Latin American question: (1) the majority, which supports guerrilla warfare "linked to the mass movement"; and (2) the minority, which opposes guerrilla warfare as a strategy and counterposes to it "mass" work. The differences are very great over this question and may even be irreconcilable. But, like all important political questions which people differ over, this question must be viewed in its historical context too.

With the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1960, the two tendencies which existed in the world Trotskyist movement at the time (which also happens to be pretty much the same two which exist today with the exception of Healy's group and Pablo's group) reunited into the United Secretariat of the Fourth International around agreement on the Cuban question. This *unprincipled* bloc resolved none of the political differences between the two groups which had existed since the split 10 years before. They both agreed however that a *healthy* workers state had been established on Cuban soil. And they both recognized

that this had been accomplished without a mass vanguard Trotskyist party leading it. Moreover, it had been accomplished by the use of guerrilla warfare as opposed to a revolutionary working-class party.

However, the minority drew no hard-and-fast conclusions. It gave support and encouragement to the guerrilla fighters in Latin America but maintained a "wait-and-see" attitude as far as the Cuban model being repeated elsewhere. In the United States, Guevara and Castro became heroes. Even though Castro was openly advocating guerrilla warfare for all of Latin America, the SWP-YSA hailed him as a revolutionary fighter. Guevara's face—after he was killed—began appearing all over the literature and meeting halls of the YSA as an example for the youth to learn from. Because of this past record, it seems strange today to listen to Comrades Hansen and Camejo criticizing "Castroism" and "Guevarism" as petty-bourgeois adventurism, when not too long ago they had nothing but praise for these "revolutionary fighters."

The minority, or more exactly, the SWP, which fraternally supports its political positions, adapted to Castroism and still adapts to it today. We can still see examples of this hypocrisy with regards to guerrilla struggles in Africa, which the SWP and Hansen supports. The SWP makes no criticisms of the African guerrillas for fear of jeopardizing their Black work in the United States. Instead of educating the youth on the incorrectness of guerrilla warfare as a strategy, the SWP-YSA gives its stamp of approval for guerrilla warfare in Africa thereby miseducating the young comrades on a very important question facing the world movement.

The majority of the United Secretariat, on the other hand, did draw some hard conclusions from the experience of the Cuban revolution. They asked themselves the obvious question: "If a socialist revolution can be made through guerrilla warfare in one country—Cuba—why couldn't it be successful in other underdeveloped countries?" Their answer was "yes," it could be possible. Where the minority stopped short, the majority continued on and laid the basis for the completely capitulationist position they now hold. Where the SWP adapted to Castroism *post-revolution*, the majority of the U. Sec. adapted to Castroism *pre-revolution*. Where the SWP only praised Castro and his achievements, the U. Sec. wanted to *practice* Castroism.

By incorrectly generalizing the unusual experiences of the Cuban Revolution and applying them on a continentwide scale in Latin America, the majority has revealed its petty-bourgeois adaptation to nonrevolutionary currents in the workers movement. Its method and approach not only throws out the window the Transitional Program, which it has little use for anyway, but adopts a totally un-Marxist position on how revolutions are made. On this score the SWP is absolutely correct. The idea that a small and determined group of dedicated revolutionary warriors, armed to the teeth with everything except the Marxist method, can lead the masses in revolution by going underground and setting an example for them to follow, is not only anti-Marxist, it is suicidal! It's not that the workers are afraid to lay their life on the line; they have done that much too often in the cause of revolution. Not at all. It's just that Marxism teaches the workers to make the revolution themselves, to put trust in only their own class organizations, to be one with the



masses which only they are capable of leading to socialism. Revolution requires more than just a few heroic fighters. It requires powerful, mass working-class organizations with courageous revolutionary leaders at their head. The strategy proposed by the U. Sec. majority can only lead to defeat and demoralization. It must be rejected!

But what about the minority document, "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," supported by Blanco, Camejo, Hansen, Lorenzo, and Moreno? It must be stated frankly that it is *in principle* correct. The criticisms of the guerrilla strategy, the criticisms of Castroism, the lessons of Argentina and Bolivia, the criticisms of the PRT (Combatiente), and the need to build mass revolutionary parties throughout Latin America, all are correct positions from a Marxist standpoint. But, the weakness of the document is that it offers no clear-cut orientation for day-to-day mass work in Latin America. Remaining on a broad, general plane, the document offers as an alternative to guerrilla warfare "mass" work. That's all! Just "mass" work. It calls on revolutionists to "link up with the mass movement" but doesn't tell us which one: the students? the peasants? the trade unions? all three? Nor does it tell us on what political basis we should link up with the masses. At the last world congress we were told to turn toward the "youth." Today we are told to turn toward the workers in Argentina; toward the peasants in Peru. And what will be our program? The Transitional Program? A series of democratic demands? A struggle for abortion? Students rights? All of them?

By supporting everything that is Leninist and opposing everything that is un-Leninist, the minority can speak out of both sides of its mouth and still be heard. These comrades are able, for example, to quote approvingly from Comrade Peng's document "Return to the Road of Trotskyism" without any reference to his statement urging the Fourth International to turn its face immediately toward the proletariat and sink deep roots into it. Or of Comrade Peng's views on the student movement, which he considers as secondary and subordinate to the proletariat and cannot be considered a basis for building revolutionary mass parties. Comrades Hansen and Camejo disagree with this analysis of course, but see no problem in throwing a few quotes around. After all, no specific orientation is presented in the minority document which Comrade Peng might disagree with.

Nowhere in the document does it call for a turn toward the proletariat. Nowhere in the document does it emphasize the urgency of building mass proletarian parties rooted in the Latin American working class. Nowhere in the document does it correct the theoretically false position the FI and the SWP has on Cuba. Nowhere does it give a correct appraisal of Comrade Blanco's work in Peru. Nowhere in the document does it take up the "central task of the transitional epoch"—the creation of mass revolutionary parties in Latin America as sections of a democratic-centralist Fourth International. By failing in this, the document must be considered inadequate.

A great deal of space is taken up in the document of criticisms of the PRT (Combatiente), and correctly so. But, a few words should also be said about the PST, the group Moreno now belongs to. This group, originally called the Argentine Socialist Party (PSA-Coral), emerged as a left-wing split from the Argentine Social Democracy.

Late in 1971, the PSA and PRT (Moreno) fused into the PST and is now involved in running candidates for election organized into a "Workers Front." This Front is composed of individuals and parties opposed to capitalism and Peronism. Its orientation is toward the organized working class (90 percent of the workers) and is opposed to all bourgeois parties. It calls for socialism in Argentina.

Now, much of this work is supportable. And any revolutionist in Argentina today would probably be involved in the Workers Front as long as it attracted workers to its organizations. However, as revolutionary internationalists, it would be our task to explain to the workers that elections are only one tool—and not the best one—to overthrow the bourgeoisie, that both before and after the election farce we must organize into revolutionary groups in the trade unions around a revolutionary program. We would explain that only a revolutionary party rooted in the Argentine trade unions will be capable of overthrowing Peronism on the road to overthrowing the capitalist state. We would be responsible for explaining the lessons of Bolivia to the workers; and the lessons of Vietnam too! As Trotskyists, it would be our task to explain to those involved in the Front the need for a revolutionary international, whose aim it would be to overthrow world imperialism. We would explain the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution as it applies to Latin America, the falsity of the theory of socialism in one country, the reactionary role of popular frontism in Chile and Vietnam, etc. In other words, as revolutionaries, we would operate in the Front as known communists, fighting for the creation of a Leninist combat party as the *only* road to revolution in Argentina.

But this does not appear to be the case with regards to the PST. The PST is in an electoral bloc with other parties and individuals who are responsible to no one but themselves, and offers no criticism of these people and their politics. Its aim appears to be to get a few people elected without offering the masses a fighting program for *post*-election struggles. In fact, their attitude toward the election itself is theoretically incorrect. In a recent interview with Juan Carlos Coral, leader of the PST and its presidential candidate, published in the February 12, 1973, issue of the *Intercontinental Press*, he was asked what his party's position was on (a) the armed forces; (b) the Catholic church; (c) the role of the trade unions; (d) education; (e) the economy; and (f) foreign policy.

On the armed forces, Coral said, ". . . We [a workers and people's government] will impose popular control over the armed forces and stop them (!) from being an army of occupation defending ideological frontiers. We will make them into the armed instrument of the people. Along the same lines, we call for community control of the police in the neighborhoods. . . ." (p. 157) Apparently Comrade Coral has not read our Transitional Program. The TP, which Hansen and Camejo wish to intervene with in Argentina, calls for the establishment of workers militias as the only way to defend the interests of the working class. It also calls for doing revolutionary work in the army (which the minority calls for in Bolivia) as a way of undermining that army and completely *destroying* it. Not "popular control" (why not workers control Comrade Coral?) over the bourgeois armed forces *after* the PST gets *elected* to the government, but the smash-

ing of the reactionary armed forces *before* the revolutionary masses *overthrow* the government. Not "community control" of the police Comrade Coral, but the disarming of the police by revolutionary workers detachments as a means of breaking them up. A bourgeois army and police force can never become the "armed instrument of the people," as Coral would have us naively believe. In Cuba, which Coral supports, the bourgeois army and police were routed and broken up by the masses, not put under "popular control." On this very important question Coral and the PST reveal their Social-Democratic background with no strain at all.

On the Catholic church, Coral offers only pious indignation that the state has been supporting the church all these years. Not a word about the reactionary role of this institution and its function of keeping the people pacified and consequently blinded to the class nature of the society under which they are forced to starve.

On the trade unions, Coral offers us a few democratic reforms as a substitute for a class-struggle program. In its program, the PST calls for a sliding scale of wages *without* a sliding scale of hours, thereby failing to address itself to the solution of unemployment. There is no mention of how the workers should struggle in the trade unions against the state, the fascists, etc. Conspicuously absent is any mention of the war in Vietnam and how to defend the Vietnamese revolution. Nor is there in the PST program or the program of the Workers Front any mention of the need for an international organization to fight imperialism and organize workers struggles worldwide.

As regards the economy, the presidential candidate of the "Trotskyist" PST put forward the correct position on nationalization of basic industry without compensation, but incorrectly tied it to workers control. If a revolutionary party "wins control of the government," and establishes a workers state, the question of workers control over industry is no longer applicable. Workers control over industry is a transitional demand made upon a *bourgeois* state and should not be made upon a workers state, deformed or otherwise. Our demand for workers democracy in all workers organs of class rule should suffice to effect workers control over industry and the state. Unless Comrade Coral feels his "workers and popular government" will be a *bourgeois* government, his use of the concept is erroneous.

His attitude toward foreign policy also falls far short of being considered Trotskyism. Coral states his party's intention of resuming diplomatic relations with Cuba, and ". . . We will develop close fraternal ties with all our sister countries (?) struggling against imperialist exploitation, and Chile first of all." Marvelous! If the "Trotskyist" PST wins control of the government (through elections, we presume!) in Argentina, it will establish friendly relations with bourgeois countries "struggling against imperialist exploitation," and bourgeois "Chile first of all"! No call for socialist revolution in Chile, at least not as long as "comrade" Allende is in office!

#### *In Cuba*

As an important part of the Latin American question, Cuba and the Cuban Communist Party must be re-examined by the Trotskyist movement in light of the present differences within the Fourth International. It was point-

ed out earlier that the International Committee, which the SWP fraternally supported and the SLL belonged to, and the International Secretariat, which the present European leaders belonged to, reunited in 1963 to form the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on the basis of general agreement on Cuba; that is, both groups recognized that a workers state had been established in Cuba by 1960-61. However, they characterized the Cuban regime as a *healthy* workers state—not Stalinist and not deformed. Consequently, the SWP and the United Secretariat do not call for a political revolution in Cuba, and do not call for the creation of a Trotskyist party there.

This position was criticized by a group inside the SWP called the Revolutionary Tendency which agreed that a workers state had been established in Cuba—but a *deformed* one, not a healthy one. This position, which I agree with, argued that only on the basis of workers democracy, practiced through some form of Soviet power, could a healthy workers state be established. In such a case, of course, we would not call for political revolution. The Castro regime was, the RT said, a petty-bourgeois political current resting on nationalized property relations. That because of the weaknesses of the Cuban bourgeoisie, the non-intervention of U. S. imperialist troops, and the power of the mass movement in support of the guerrillas, Castro and his forces were able to come to power and nationalize industry as the only means to consolidate this power.

For the European leaders, the position of support for the Castro regime offered no serious problems; it flowed logically from their previous positions on Yugoslavia, China, and Algeria. But for the SWP, a *qualitative* break with its previous revolutionary positions was necessary. This break was made with its adoption of a liquidationist position on Cuba. By dropping the essential Leninist criterion of workers organizations in control of the workers government as the way to define a *revolutionary* government, the SWP united with the European leaders in throwing out the window one of the most important sections of the Transitional Program. Lenin and Trotsky insisted, in opposition to every other current in the workers movement, that any revolutionary government of the working class must be based on Soviet-type organs of workers democracy. Because without these organs, they said, the working class would not be able to express its revolutionary program, and therefore, its desire for a revolutionary workers government.

The events in Cuba since 1960 have borne out the criticisms made by the Revolutionary Tendency. The CCP has never held a national convention; no Soviet-type organs of *workers* control exist or have even been created by the Castro regime; there has never been a general election in Cuba; the people, once armed, have been disarmed and have no means to change their government leaders; the CCP allows for no other parties to exist and no factions to exist inside the party; and the Trotskyists have been repressed as have certain Stalinists. Castro and his regime supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia and now supports Stalinist betrayals around the world. It supports Allende's regime, the junta in Peru, and the Vietnam Accords. Here lately, the Cuban regime has, in typical Stalinist style, suppressed intellectual freedom in the interest of defending the revolution against "coun-

terrevolutionary ideology." The list goes on and on.

Why, then, is Castro's regime still defended both by the SWP and the European majority? The answer has little to do with the fact that Castroism did not emanate from Stalinism. Stalinism, after all, is first and foremost a program and a method arising out of the workers movement as a result of the degeneration of the first workers state. As a viable political current (resting on the gains made from the October revolution), Stalinism was nurtured by the pressures of bourgeois ideology and the backwardness of the Soviet Union's economy. Stalinism is not, as Comrade Maitan would have us believe, a purely Russian phenomenon arising out of peculiar historical conditions and having since passed away with the death of Stalin. It is still alive and kicking in Moscow, China, and yes, now Havana. It's an actively *counterrevolutionary* force wherever parties and groups are willing to work and implement its politics; even in Vietnam. Because it is an active political force in world politics, Stalinism, drawing most of its strength from Moscow and Peking, can affect other working-class parties and tendencies in the direction of adapting to the bourgeois order, as it has done. On the other hand, because it is dynamic and alive, Stalinism is also capable of moving left, away from open class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and even into armed conflict with the bourgeois state if necessary. That is the case in Vietnam today. This is the contradictory nature of Stalinism which we must constantly be aware of.

The reason Castro is still defended by the SWP and United Secretariat is because he and his regime represent the closest thing *in their eyes* to Trotskyism. The Cuban revolution and Castro represented a way out of the counterrevolutionary impasse imposed by world imperialism and Stalinism on the revolutionary workers movement after World War II. In the advanced capitalist countries, the working class had turned its back on the revolutionary vanguard and its program, and appeared to be uninterested in socialist revolution. The sights of the International and the SWP were then turned toward the "Third World," seeking in it leadership in the struggle to overthrow imperialism. Castro and the Cuban revolution were just what they were looking for.

The conclusion one should draw from all this is that the Cuban regime has succumbed to Stalinism and can no longer expect our uncritical support. A call for political revolution in Cuba and the creation of a revolutionary Trotskyist party is therefore the only correct position to take. What started out as a deformed workers state controlled by neither a Stalinist nor a Trotskyist party, the Cuban state has evolved since the latter part of the 1960s into a clearly defined Stalinist regime without, however, expressing the worst features of bureaucratic degeneration found in Moscow and Peking. The minority document on Latin America hints at such a position when it counterposes Leninism to Castroism in the field of political strategy and program, but it stops short. The minority tendency contradicts itself by continuing to support Castroism in *Cuba* but rejecting it throughout the rest of Latin America.

#### *On Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe*

The first impression one gets from reading the document, "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capi-

talist Europe (Draft Theses submitted to the 10th World Congress—4th Since Reunification)" by the United Secretariat, is that the Fourth International is finally taking Trotsky and Peng's advice and is turning toward the working class, (at least in Europe!) independently and consciously as a step in the direction of rooting the party in the proletariat; a task 35 years overdue! That is the first impression. But upon closer scrutiny it becomes evident that the document contains many theoretical weaknesses, superficial analyses and justifications for past errors which necessarily undermine its entire political thrust.

The first hurdle to overcome is that this document represents a change in the politics and methodology of its authors. Fortunately, the document itself provides us with an answer to that question. In response to the "youth radicalization" and working-class upsurges, especially the May events in France, the leaders of the United Secretariat have written a document which instructs the European sections to enter into working-class struggles and attempt to win a base in the working class (apparently the previous 20 years of work failed), and simultaneously, win leadership of the "new mass vanguard." The document anticipates major upheavals in the next 4 or 5 years in Europe and rules out the possibility of having enough time to build mass parties by then. Consequently, rather than missing the boat altogether, it proposes that our cadre enter the unions now and attempt to win hegemony over the "new mass vanguard" which will probably emerge as the revolutionary leadership of the working class when a revolutionary situation arises.

It's a neat little package. The central task in the period ahead is to simply win hegemony over the "new mass vanguard" and we have got it made. But wait a minute! What is this new mass vanguard? Well, it ranges from revolutionary Marxists and working-class youth on the left, to petty-bourgeois students and elements of the traditional organizations on the right. It is not "as a whole," revolutionary, and it is "very much a minority within the mass movement, and even more so within the organized workers' movement." We are also told "the new mass vanguard harbors within it numerous elements with a petty-bourgeois consciousness and ideology who, depending on the circumstances and the relationship of forces with the revolutionary Marxist organization, can at best (!) play a secondary role in the unfolding of the struggles, or at worst profoundly distort and pervert the forms and the results of these struggles." (p.13) Pervert! Distort! Who are these elements? Stalinists? Bourgeois agents? The document doesn't tell us.

And vague it must be because the authors are chasing their own tails. There is only *one* vanguard of the proletariat and it's not "new"; it's the organized Trotskyist movement. There is only one vanguard capable of leading the proletariat to power: the *organized* revolutionary proletarian party. It is the proletariat *as a whole* which we want to gain hegemony over, by defeating the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and every other opportunist group in the working class. It is the *trade unions* which we wish to penetrate and convert into revolutionary instruments of the workers. It is this force which is truly revolutionary and truly capable of genuine class consciousness. The leaders in Europe are not content with their liquidationist course in Latin America, now they want to transfer it to Europe by seeking some imaginary

"new vanguard" to lead them on the road to socialist revolution. In typical Pabloist style, they are trying to cover their "new" orientation toward the "new vanguard" by phrases relating to the need to root the FI in the proletariat. The only difference between the "old" turn toward the workers in 1951, and the "new" turn today is the temporary discarding of the entryist tactic. Twenty years ago it led to liquidation into Stalinism ("new reality"); today it will lead to liquidation into the "new mass vanguard." The form is different, but the effect will be the same.

But the document is weak in other areas too. Besides incorrectly posing the new orientation for *all* European sections, failing to take into account many important *national* peculiarities from country to country, the document attempts to analyze European economy in *isolation* from U. S. economy, the dominant imperialist nation in the world. The document gives the impression that a revolutionary process in one country of Europe would go unhindered by U. S. imperialism. This is false. European economy is tied to U. S. economy just as much as each European state economy is tied to all the other European state economies. The latest international monetary crisis, sparked as it was by the instability of the dollar, attests clearly to that fact. The deficit in the balance of trade in the United States in 1972—the largest in its history—had repercussions around the world, affecting trade relations with Japan, Germany, England, etc. No analysis of European economic conditions, and consequently, revolutionary processes, can be made adequately unless close attention is given to the North American economy and its imperialist policies. This is a serious error in the document.

What's more, the document gives an *incomplete* perspective for winning power in Europe in the next period. The sense of urgency which the document emits has caused its authors to leave out of their perspective the goal of establishing a United Socialist States of Europe as the culmination of Europeanwide revolutionary upsurges of the working class. Throughout the document the authors refer to the task of the new vanguard as "preparing the way for future explosions of mass struggles culminating in a system of dual power." The point is stressed over and over again that the task of revolutionaries is to establish *dual* power; not workers power, but dual power! The authors contend that this could be accomplished by concentrating on the demand for "workers control" and by creating organs of dual power centralized into a national system as a guarantee against a bourgeois victory and restoration of normal capitalist relations.

Well and good. But who will give these organs of dual power leadership, that is, if we expect to transform a dual power situation into a victory for the working class? It is not clear from the document that the revolutionary *party* will play this role. True, dual power is the culminating point of the transitional period, and the fate of society depends on the outcome. But the fate of society then depends on us—the revolutionary vanguard of the working class! The real test of our leadership also reaches a culminating point, which must be expressed in our demand for workers power, i.e., Soviet power! But when that stage occurs, when the mass movement enters into an *openly revolutionary* stage, we, the vanguard party, must be in a position to mobilize millions of workers un-

der our leadership acting through "organs of dual power centralized into a national system." With this understanding, any talk about making a revolution "in a few years" can only be described as petty-bourgeois adventurism or intellectual babbling from the sidelines.

The document is *correct* to want to orient toward the workers. But it doesn't prepare its own cadre for the mighty tasks ahead. It fails to correctly arm them with a revolutionary program and strategy. It claims adherence to some of the demands in the Transitional Program but casts them aside in Latin America, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Africa, etc. In effect, the document undermines the *internationalist* character of the Transitional Program and makes a mockery of Trotskyism as the most advanced political force in the working-class movement today. It cannot be considered a guide for workers in Europe or elsewhere. Comrades who wish to take up the struggle begun by Comrade Peng in 1969 to re-root the Fourth International in the proletariat, must not be fooled into supporting this document. Likewise, they must reject the approach of the SWP and its political supporters in the International. Remaining in a petty-bourgeois milieu is no alternative to the liquidationist course of the European document. Both, in fact, add up to the same thing.

A genuine turn toward the proletariat must be made by the Fourth International and made *now*. The strategy and program of the Transitional Program will be our guide. A strategy which puts the vanguard role of the proletariat first and foremost; a strategy which calls upon the revolutionary party to play the leading role in overthrowing capitalism; a strategy which makes clear the necessity to build mass revolutionary proletarian parties *worldwide*, rooted in the working class and acting in the interests of all workers and oppressed humanity. Only by this road will capitalism be overthrown for good. Only by this road will the World Federation of Socialist Republics be established.

#### *In the Middle East*

The revolutionary Marxist position on the Middle East question has three aspects to it: (1) our attitude toward the Israeli state; (2) our support of self-determination for the Palestinians; and (3) our general attitude toward the Arab states. All three aspects are interwoven into our general approach to the epoch in which we live and work and the theory of the permanent revolution which we apply to it. With the establishment of the Israeli state, however, the situation has taken on a new dimension which only the Trotskyist movement is capable of analyzing correctly. By taking a correct approach to these important questions, the Trotskyist movement stands to gain immensely in the eyes of revolutionaries the world over; and particularly in the Middle East.

The establishment of the Israeli state was opposed by the revolutionary Marxist movement in 1948 because it represented a reactionary force in the Middle East—Zionism—determined to carve out for itself a plot of land stolen from the indigenous population, the Palestinian people. By *displacing* the people living on the land, in alliance with the British imperialists, the Zionists were able by brute force to establish a state in Palestine dedicated to the continuation of capitalism and imperialist exploitation in the Arab East. It was clear then, as it is now, that Israel could not offer the Jewish people a

safe and secure homeland in Palestine; not if it meant creating more national oppression for others. The establishment of the Zionist Israeli state in Palestine rather than representing the granting of the right of self-determination to Jews, represented only a victory for world imperialism *against* the historical interests of the Jewish people in their long struggle for freedom. It wasn't long before the real oppressive nature of the Israeli state became apparent, manifested for the most part in its reactionary foreign policy carried out with the support of world imperialism.

The struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, and the struggle of the Arab masses in general against imperialism, progressive in its historical context, has been given a tremendous impetus by the continued existence of the Israeli state as a bulwark of imperialism in the Middle East. The rise of mass struggles throughout the Arab world testify to this fact and pose a real challenge for Trotskyism to penetrate these movements with our revolutionary program. But our support for these struggles is based on our understanding of the inability of the national bourgeoisies of the Arab states to bring about any fundamental change in the lives of the masses of people; particularly the problem of the Israeli state itself. The national bourgeoisies of the Arab states cannot solve the problems of the masses because they are tied hand and foot to imperialism. That is why they are willing to accept a "solution" to the Palestinian question by recognizing Israel's right to exist, so long as it stops its expansionist policies and returns the conquered land to the Arab people.

Because of our understanding of the theory of permanent revolution, it is incorrect to refer to the struggles going on in the Middle East as the "Arab revolution." There has been no Arab revolution! There is no class content to this term and, as Marxists, we have an obligation to be precise in our terminology. Against imperialism, we are always in favor of colonial and semicolonial countries. But, even then we still make a distinction between a working-class program and a bourgeois program. In the present political context in the Middle East, the struggle against imperialism goes hand-and-hand with the struggle against Arab capitalism and Arab reaction. By supporting the "Arab revolution" we are implying a two-stage revolutionary process: first *all* Arabs against the imperialists and Zionists; and second, *all* Arab workers and peasants against Arab capitalism and reaction. But there is nothing automatic about anti-imperialist struggle leading to anticapitalist struggle. For that matter, there is nothing automatic in *any* kind of democratic struggle against capitalism-imperialism, whether it be in a colonial country or in an advanced capitalist country.

The decisive factor in every struggle against capitalist oppression is the *subjective* factor, e.g., the ability of the revolutionary party to intervene and give leadership around a working-class program. In supporting the "Arab revolution" as opposed to the proletarian revolution, we fail to draw class lines within the Arab world and leave the Arab working class disarmed ideologically in their efforts to win the masses over to revolutionary ideas. Saying you are for socialism doesn't help much; aren't the Zionists for socialism too?

Therefore, our propaganda around the Middle East question must be based on a Marxist class analysis of the

different class forces operating there. We must define these forces and identify completely with *one* of them: the working class. We must come out clearly for proletarian revolution and socialism in the Middle East. We must call for, *and attempt to build*, revolutionary Trotskyist parties in every country where it is possible. Our revolutionary propaganda would also include criticisms of guerrilla warfare as a strategy for revolution in Palestine just as we criticize it in Latin America. No back-handed support to Fatah or any other guerrilla organization.

In Israel our tasks would be somewhat different. As revolutionary Marxists, our attitude toward the Zionist Israeli state vis-a-vis the Palestinians would be *revolutionary defeatist*. It would be our task to educate the Israeli workers to give support to the just struggle of the Palestinians for self-determination, just as in the United States we call upon the American workers to solidarize with the Vietnamese struggle. However, in the case of the Palestinians, self-determination does not mean separation in the traditional sense of the word. In reality it would mean the *substitution* or *replacement* of the Israeli Zionist state with a *single* Palestinian state of Arabs and Jews! This position flows from the above analysis of the nature of the Israeli state and its historical origins as a colonial-settler state. The only alternative to this position is to call for a workers state in Israel existing side-by-side with a Palestinian workers state. In other words, *two* states in Palestine: one Arab and one Jewish.

The problem with this position is that it accepts the premise that Israeli Jews have a legitimate *right* to be in Palestine, occupying territory once belonging to Arab peasants and workers. If this premise is accepted, something the Zionists have been pushing for, one must accept the original establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 as a progressive act; which means one must also deny the Palestinians the right of self-determination and work for a socialist Israel.

The demand for a workers state in Israel cannot be considered correct. The demand our comrades should raise *inside* Israel is for a *single, united socialist Palestine* of Jewish and Arab workers and peasants. Included in this demand is the call for the complete political, social, and religious equality for all. This demand would also be tied to our demand for a "United Socialist States of the Middle East!" as the only way to liberation of the Arab and Jewish masses from Zionist and imperialist exploitation. This is the only way to mobilize the Israeli proletariat independently of the Zionists in support of the Palestinian struggle and the struggle for socialism, which, as far as the Marxist movement is concerned, offers the Jews the only real hope for freedom and an end to their oppression as Jews and workers.

I think it's clear from this analysis that the demand for "a democratic, secular Palestine" must be rejected as an example of adaptation to bourgeois ideology and bourgeois democracy. The fact that some Palestinian organizations support such a demand indicates for us the prevalence of bourgeois ideology among the vanguard elements, and the need for revolutionary struggle against it. It cannot, however, be a reason for supporting the demand ourselves. The important thing is to support the *struggle* and the *rights* of the Palestinians, and put forward the correct, *class* demands for the masses depending upon their level of consciousness at each given stage of the



struggle.

The struggle for democratic demands do play an important role in mobilizing the masses in colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the Transitional Program makes allowances for them. But the TP also emphasizes the need to raise transitional class demands as a way to mobilize the proletariat *independently* of other classes, in conjunction with democratic demands. It is the responsibility of Trotskyists to raise transitional demands *now* in a propagandistic way, while never failing to engage in mass struggles around democratic demands when they arise.

The demand for "a democratic, secular Palestine" is, in reality, a demand for a democratic state in Palestine. Because Palestine is not a "stateless" abstraction; it's a piece of land located in the Middle East and is presently occupied by the Israeli state. No reference to a "classless" or "stateless" Palestine can suffice as a Marxist demand. In fact, most of the Palestinian organizations are in favor of a *state* in Palestine. For example, Al Fatah has written a document (1970) entitled, "Toward a Democratic State in Palestine," which clearly points out its position in favor of a democratic *state* in Palestine. The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine is for "a people's democratic Palestine state," and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is for "a democratic national state in Palestine." All three of the main Palestinian organizations call for a democratic, secular *state* in Palestine.

But even if the demand for "a democratic, secular Palestine" were changed to include "state," it would still be wrong from a Marxist point of view. Even though we support the Palestinians' right to establish any kind of state they wish, our task as Trotskyists is not to support a demand which will inevitably lead to the establishment of a bourgeois state. No! We must counterpose to this demand the demand for a Palestinian Workers Republic of Arabs and Jews, a Socialist Republic in Palestine! By supporting the demand for "a democratic, secular Palestine," just as supporting the "Arab revolution," we imply a two-stage revolutionary process is necessary in the Middle East to make a socialist revolution. This demand must also be rejected as theoretically false and unacceptable as a demand to be raised by any Trotskyist organization.

### *On Democratic Centralism*

The central task of the transitional epoch is to create mass revolutionary parties guided by the Leninist principles of democratic centralism and united into a world body of proletarian revolution—the Fourth International. Indeed, this question, the question of the International, is probably the most important question facing revolutionary internationalists the world over.

The political reasoning for a disciplined world body of proletarian revolution is abundantly clear: under a worldwide system of capitalist exploitation and plunder where the advanced capitalist nations are technologically equipped to put down revolts anywhere in the world within days; where capitalism is organized into international bodies and meets every day to plan further strategy to keep the masses in chains and continually oppressed; where imperialism ties into one whole all the non-communist market places, natural resources, and monies of the world—in order to exploit them. Under these conditions only a revolutionary vanguard organized into one central body, disciplined in action, and conscious of its tasks,

can challenge the imperialist monster and defeat it internationally.

The experiences of the Bolsheviks in Russia and the Third International from 1919 to 1924 attest to the correctness of Lenin's theory of organization for the vanguard party. The principles of democratic centralism worked out by the Bolsheviks over a 20-year period, beginning in 1903, proved far superior to all other methods of organization practiced by the Marxist movement up until that time. And today, *70 years later*, we can say with some experience of our own, that Lenin's theory of organization is still valid and requires no new revisions of its principles.

Codified in the original "Statutes of the Fourth International," the principles of democratic centralism are defined simply as "full freedom of discussion, complete unity in action." But what does this mean? Throughout the history of the Fourth International this has meant different things to different people; and different things at different times. For example, does "freedom of discussion" include the *right* of minorities to publish their views in the party press? Or does it include the right of sections to criticize other sections publicly? To what extent (if any) should "internal" questions be aired in public before the working class? Is "freedom of discussion" limited to mainly literary activity in between conventions, or does it also imply the right of the membership to discuss political questions of importance whenever it is necessary, including those questions which have just been decided by convention?

And what of party-youth relations? Are party comrades allowed to discuss political differences inside the party with non-party Trotskyist youth? And further, are party comrades allowed to bring up minority viewpoints in the youth organization if they are members of both?

"Unity in action," on the other hand, doesn't seem to pose a serious problem. Everyone agrees that unity in action implies the necessity of moving the party into action as one disciplined body under one central leadership. It means that no one in the party has a right to disrupt the activity of the party once an action has been called. At demonstrations, public forums, rallies, etc., only one line is put forth by all members of the party. This aspect of democratic centralism is most crucial in revolutionary situations because of the necessity of applying the full power of the proletariat against the enemy forces within the shortest amount of time.

But even though there are different interpretations of what democratic centralism means, and very serious differences do exist, as a method of organizing national Trotskyist parties and the International, it retains its force and applicability for today's tasks. Despite all the problems involved in creating a truly genuine democratic-centralist International, problems which are not new and were not new when Trotsky proposed the formation of the Fourth International, it really cannot be postponed for another day. Because as Lenin once said, "The strength of the working class lies in organization. Unless the masses are organized, the proletariat is nothing. Organized it is everything."

However, belonging to an international body such as the United Secretariat, with its long history of bureaucratic abuse of democratic centralism, one can understand the hesitancy of some sections to completely accept its discipline. In particular, because of the weakness of the

International, its history, its political positions, and its lack of authority in the workers movement, it cannot expect to have much success in imposing discipline upon small and unstable sections if those sections strongly disagree with the line being implemented. When such cases arise, as they already have, the International leadership must weigh its authority in the movement against the breach of discipline and make a decision as to what steps should be taken.

But, again, the *present* International leadership possesses no real authority in the movement to propose any drastic measures, unless it wants to cause a split. Freedom of discussion has not been carried out adequately enough to engender very much confidence in the decisions of the leadership. The rank and file of the International does not feel it controls the International, and in some cases, does not think it is relevant to its day-to-day work. In such an atmosphere, it would be dangerous for the leadership to try and impose strict discipline upon its sections.

While this may appear to be an argument *against* adopting democratic-centralist principles in the International, I assure you quite the opposite is the case. I'm only trying to describe the *actual* situation in the International today. The authority of the International leadership cannot be

strengthened by simply adopting a few statutes. In the final analysis, it's a *political* question. By rooting the Trotskyist International in the workers movement—and adopting democratic-centralist principles of organization is a prerequisite of that process—the authority of the revolutionary vanguard leadership will be enhanced both inside the International and the workers movement. By providing full freedom of discussion and criticism—because without it, the proletariat does not recognize the unity of action—an International leadership will become more viable and representative of all sectors of the movement.

"Without inner democracy—no revolutionary education. Without discipline—no revolutionary action." So speaks the Transitional Program. If we expect to resolve the crisis of the proletariat, the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, and expect workers—men and women—of all countries to place themselves under the political banner of the Fourth International, a democratic-centralist International truly representative of the world proletariat must be created. That is the only road to revolution.

March 20, 1973

### *RESOLUTION ON VIETNAM* By May Stark, Los Angeles Branch

As an effective revolutionary leadership, the Vietnamese Liberation Front should receive our political support, with of course, the right to criticize. The Liberation Front has led the Vietnamese people in one of the greatest victories in all history. This tremendous feat should be hailed by us as one of the landmarks of a tested and authentic revolutionary leadership. It should inspire us with tremendous confidence in the historical future of the continuing and deepening socialist struggle. A tiny, economically backward country, after 30 years of fighting has ousted the reactionary Titan of world imperialism. What further testimony is needed to show that history is on our side. In the face of momentous, breathtaking revolutionary advances which have startled the world with the audacity and courage of the people united with the leadership, we should be the first to solidarize ourselves with them, to hail them, and to give them unstinting support both political and organizational. To do less is not to live up to

our own Trotskyist heritage, which demands that our first duty is to recognize, identify with, gain support for and help extend the revolution. Our own degree of seriousness will depend on the position we take in reference to such an advance.

However, the reverse has been the case. *The Militant* has constantly predicted betrayal, has not identified with the Vietnamese leadership, has shown great skepticism in its treatment of the Vietnamese leadership, gave only begrudging partial admission that revolutionary advances have been made, and usually made no mention of the leadership at all. This is due to the association of the Vietnamese leadership with the Mao Tse-tung leadership which the party falsely characterizes as Stalinist.

Preferring to omit a political analysis of the Vietnamese Liberation Front, as a way of avoiding the contradictions flowing from a fundamentally false position, *The Militant* ends by confusing the readers and disorienting the mem-

bership. Vague generalities can in no way solve serious political problems. Rather, such a course leads to hopeless contradictions. To confuse a revolutionary victory with a betrayal is the most serious error a party can make, and it must be corrected as soon as possible. It is not a small tactical question like supporting one candidate or another for it involves nothing less than the nature and progress of the revolution in this period.

Indicative of the tendency of *The Militant* to slur over basic contradictions in favor of vague generalizations is its position on so-called "secret negotiations," which raises the question to one of bourgeois absolutes. Even in a trade-union struggle, at critical junctures in negotiations with the employers, the union leaders could justifiably agree to keep the reporters out. They are then duty bound to make a report to their membership. In accordance with this understanding, the Vietnam accords have been published. If *The Militant* makes charges of secret deals, they should be substantiated. We are against secret deals, but not against secret negotiations.

To demand complete openness in all negotiations is based on the bourgeois concept of abstract truth, not taking into account the class nature of the enemy. In 1918, in order to expose the imperialist aims of both sides in the war, the Bolsheviks published the secret treaties of the Tsarist government, thus providing an electrifying magnet for the revolutionary masses of Europe. However, dealing with this question in general has no class content. There is only the revolutionary side and the imperialist side. Under critical circumstances great latitude must be given to the leaders, just as democratic centralism can become mainly centralism for short critical periods. The criterion depends not on the practical agreements alone, but on the entire history and role of the leadership.

When *The Militant* of February 2, 1973, admitted that the Paris accords were a victory, it was difficult to reconcile this with previous prognostications of betrayal. The victory was therefore submerged under so many criticisms as to constitute not a victory, but a betrayal.

In speaking of the provisions calling for free elections, release of political prisoners and recognition of basic democratic rights, the article counterposes the need for civil war to settle the basic social questions, which no one denies, least of all the Vietnamese. This is nothing but complete immaturity. Is the revolution a process, and a protracted process at that, or just an action? It shows a lack of knowledge of the development of one phase of the revolution into another. It is the attitude of a student who tries to find a shortcut by studying theory in the abstract. Has it not been a major part of our work to strive to widen, protect, and deepen the democratic rights of the people as offering a more favorable arena in which to conduct the class struggle. Even the recognition of democratic rights is a serious concession won by the liberation forces, which they will know how to defend both militarily and politically. Democratic rights are not to be cavalierly dismissed with a wave of the hand. One of our basic maxims has always been that we have to be able to defend small victories if we are to fight for larger ones, and this is hardly a small victory.

The entire approach in *The Militant* is a condemnation of the leadership of the liberation forces without openly saying as much. The line is that the Vietnamese were forced into a betrayal by Peking and Moscow. However,

the Vietnamese leaders have shown their ability to stand on their own feet and not yield to any pressure.

The editorial repeatedly refers to the revolutionary forces based on the workers and peasants. Now who are these revolutionary forces? Why is there no mention of the political forces leading the revolution? Is this a leaderless revolution? This is manifestly impossible in the face of the day-to-day reporting of the strong leadership that exists. If the Vietnamese workers and peasants are winning revolutionary victories, under whose leadership have these victories been achieved? Obviously the leadership is genuinely revolutionary. In order to get around a dilemma created by a false position, based on no concrete evidence, an artificial cleavage has been created between the liberation forces and China. However the evidence is that the Vietnamese leadership is very close to China. They frequently go back and forth to China for consultation. All factors point to complete solidarity between the Vietnamese and the Chinese. Obviously this should necessitate a reconsideration of our position characterizing the Chinese leadership as Stalinist.

Another objection to the accords is that the U. S. still has a military base in Thailand. The demand for the withdrawal of troops from Thailand should be directed to the U.S. and not the Vietnamese. What *The Militant* is saying is that the Vietnamese should continue the war (easy and comfortable to say from here), not only to completely oust the Saigon forces, but to liberate the rest of Southeast Asia as well. This is not a genuine argument, as the Vietnamese do not negotiate for Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. They leave this to the people of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. The peace agreement settles only the war between the two powers. The meaning of the accords was to get rid of the American forces, so that they could continue the struggle on their own.

The front page *Militant* editorial of February 2, 1973, stated, "The agreement by the U. S. to halt the bombing and to withdraw its remaining troops from South Vietnam is a long-sought-for victory for the Vietnamese people. It is also a victory for the antiwar movement here and throughout the world. But imperialist intervention in Vietnam is far from ended." If this is a long-sought-for victory for the Vietnamese people, then China, along with the Vietnamese leadership helped to attain this victory. If we are honestly searching for a correct analysis, we must say so. In the last sentence, however, "But the imperialist intervention in Vietnam is far from ended," makes it appear as if the victory is questionable. Later the editorial states, "The Vietnamese, of course, have every right to negotiate and sign an agreement with the U. S. and Saigon. But we must not give support in any way to the conditions the U. S. imposes on them. Any attempt to paint these conditions as a "Victory" can only disarm and disorient the international antiwar movement and the defenders of the Vietnamese struggle for self-determination. Our job is to tell the truth about the conditions Washington, Moscow, and Peking have imposed on the Vietnamese people. We must prepare to continue mobilizing opposition to the U. S. war aims in Southeast Asia." Could there be any statement more confusing, full of errors and evasive. Although theoretically we admit the right of the Vietnamese to enter into peace negotiations, this attitude would in reality deny them that right. It would be like advising a union not to go back to work after a long



strike in which they won their demands, because the workers were still wage slaves. Further it actually blurs class lines by confusing the aims of the U.S. and Vietnam. This is a victory for Vietnam. As for the role of the U.S., under no conditions do we give it any support, no matter what role it assumes.

Inexcusable are charges of betrayal lumping the Soviet Union, the U.S. and China together. The same editorial accuses the Soviet Union and China of putting pressure on Hanoi so as not to endanger a supposed entente with Nixon, and of refusing to provide the Vietnamese with adequate defense. These accusations are conjectures which are presented without one iota of proof and therefore more reprehensible in view of the nature of those charges. As a serious political party, we should not make accusations that cannot be proved, no matter how they may fit a preconceived notion. It has been axiomatic in our movement, that if facts do not fit such notions, they must be replaced by serious analysis.

Lumped together, the serious political differences between the Soviet Union and China in the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute, which have increased in the past period, have been ignored. Again on the basis of vague generalities, which conceal fundamental, antagonistic forces, a false amalgam has been made, ignoring differences between a leadership (Stalin) which destroyed revolutions and a leadership (Mao Tse-tung) which led a revolution, and which continues to inspire the Vietnamese as well as the colonial revolution in general. The Sino-Soviet ideological dispute has been fully documented. To ignore it is to omit material which exposes a false line on China.

The accords are not a victory, according to Barry Sheppard in *The Militant* article of February 16, 1973, because, and I quote, "The actual course of events in South Vietnam will be determined by the living class struggle in Vietnam and on a world scale. The accords must be seen in this context. And, as we shall see, the road to victory for that struggle cannot be the road outlined in the accords." Further on he states, "The situation is highly explosive. After so many years of war and revolution, the South Vietnamese people face huge social problems. None of the basic questions, including land reform, national liberation, and reunification, which have been at the root of the war and which so many courageous Vietnamese died fighting for, have been resolved by the accords." Should the questions of land reform, nationalizations and reunification be a question of negotiations? Should we insist that American imperialists take part in the decision to give land to the peasants? On the contrary, this is a social struggle for the Vietnamese to decide. The accords sealed the defeat of U.S. intervention, and opened the way for a more favorable arena to continue the class struggle. Not to recognize this first victory as a step in the continuing struggle is to be infected with infantile ultraleftism. *The Militant* editorial of February 2, 1973, makes the same demand, "The accords do nothing to resolve the social, economic and political problems that have been at the root of the Vietnam war." The basic problems of the civil war were not, could not, and should not be brought to the negotiating table with U.S. imperialists. These are problems the Vietnamese have to solve and they know it. The same editorial continues to counterpose the unfinished civil war to the accords, in the sense that the accords represent a betrayal because

the social tasks still await completion. It states, "On the one side is the Saigon regime of the landlords and capitalists, backed by U.S. imperialism. On the other side are the revolutionary forces based on the workers and peasants. This is an inherently unstable situation. One side or the other will eventually have to predominate, and that can only be determined in struggle. The cease-fire accords announced Jan. 24th will not bring peace to Indochina. They signal a new stage of the civil war and of Washington's intervention." The article does not go to explain what is meant by an inherently unstable situation. For us this is an exceptionally favorable situation. This is dual power in the traditional Trotskyist and Leninist meaning. Trotsky explained in the *History of the Russian Revolution*, "The two power regime arises out of irconcilable class conflicts—is possible therefore only in a revolutionary epoch, and constitutes one of its fundamental elements." Trotsky goes on to explain that dual power is not a constitutional, but a revolutionary fact. The two power conflict in Vietnam now constitutes such a revolutionary fact. The Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam has a territorial base, is armed and has forced the enemy to give it legal recognition. This is dual power at the point where the revolutionary forces have gained the upper hand, wresting power from the enemy in combat. Can anyone say that the liberation forces did not want the power? Such an attitude would fly in the face of all the facts as we know them, namely the fierce determination to maintain the areas occupied by them, in spite of the savage saturation bombing by the U.S. It is our duty to explain the meaning of dual power and to show that it is because the Vietnamese are pursuing the class struggle that dual power exists, and that they are on the way to a struggle for complete victory. The correct explanation of this development will serve as an invaluable aid in the education of our members.

The main goal, which was to evict imperialism, was accomplished. Vietnam is liberated from colonialism. The liberation forces remain in the positions won; the people remain armed, and they retain complete power. Can anybody call this a small victory? This victory is real. American imperialism cannot return with impunity, just as it cannot with impunity attack the Soviet Union or China or Cuba. Of course all of the victories of the working people are imperiled as long as capitalism continues. We go so far as to say that the fate of mankind hangs in the balance between the collapse of civilization and the socialist future of man. However, it is perilous to confuse our long-range program with the present stage of the struggle.

At no time have we analyzed the political nature of the Vietnamese leadership, referring mainly to the heroic Vietnamese people. To ignore the leadership is not the Marxist method of arriving at the truth. The truth is ignored because of this leadership's close association with China, incorrectly characterized as Stalinist. Yet China and Vietnam led gigantic revolutions. With the premise that the Chinese leadership is Stalinist, the only conclusion one could draw is that Stalinism could lead revolutions. Thus, Stalinism, analyzed by Trotsky as the gravedigger of the revolution, became its opposite, the continuator of the revolution. By a formalistic application of the phenomenon of Stalinism to a completely opposite phenomenon at a different period, at a different part of the

world, the entire meaning of the concept has been distorted. The name remains, but the content has changed. Instead of following the contradictory developments as they unfolded in order to understand and learn how Marxism was applied under other times and conditions, these events were subsumed under a blanket condemnation of Stalinism. As a result preconceived notions which have nothing to do with dialectical materialism, the meaning of Stalinism has been made to fit these notions, rather than the notions changed to fit the facts. The Marxist method is to study the process as it develops out of its own contradictions, to read the literature and follow the concrete events, so that we can lead and predict. That a revolution is the antithesis of bureaucratism is something that everyone who has read Trotsky's works must understand if he is to understand anything.

Such a reversal of the basic meaning of Stalinism leads to two unfortunate results. Firstly, it clothes Stalinism in a progressive role. Secondly it makes it impossible for us to recognize and identify with the victories in Southeast Asia. First China, then Vietnam, and now Laos are viewed under a cloud of suspicion, and the victories hedged in with numerous qualifications. Rather than acting as participants, we act as critics from afar.

Most obvious in *The Militant* position is the degree of detachment evinced, as shown by the careful weighing of pros and cons, like a bookkeeping ledger where assets and liabilities are set side by side, and the results totaled. Dialecticians know that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Overriding all the factors on the debit side, is the overwhelming importance of the ousting of imperialism. Where is the elation, fervor, and exhilaration which should lift our party on the wave of a victory?

First and foremost should be the victory of the Vietnamese, their ousting of American imperialism, their holding of areas now occupied by them through an armed population, and the preparation for the continuation of the struggle for socialism in the next stage. The revolution cannot be accomplished all at once, especially against such a ferocious enemy as American imperialism. In South Vietnam, within the broad united front, the struggle for democratic rights and the distribution of land to the peasants continues, to be climaxed with the ousting of the American puppets. This is not to be confused or identified with the Stalinist two-stage theory, but rather with the two phases of the permanent revolution. Stalin's program was for an entrenched stable capitalist regime. The Vietnamese view their struggle for democratic rights as a transition to the socialist struggle. Not only does the protracted struggle of Vietnam and China splendidly confirm the basic Marxist concept of the permanent revolution, but the existence of dual power in Vietnam and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China show in the closest possible fashion the transition of the theory of the permanent revolution into action. It shows in the closest possible fashion the unity of theory and action.

The Vietnam liberation forces now stand at the point of dual power, prepared to struggle to complete the democratic revolution and from there go on to the completion of the socialist revolution. The thirty-year struggle leading from the anti-imperialist ousting of the French and American forces to the completion of the socialist revolution is a classic example of the theory of the permanent revolution.

That Mao-Tse-tung as well as the Vietnamese leaders understand and are guided by the theory of the permanent revolution as expounded by Trotsky is shown by both their writings and their revolutionary victories. If theory is a guide to action, the revolutionary victories have vindicated the correctness of the theory.

In speaking of the interrelation between the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, Mao states, "The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the democratic revolution. The ultimate aim for which all communists strive is to bring about a socialist and communist society—" (Vol. II, Selected Works, p. 331.)

General Giap, military leader of North Vietnam stated, "Our revolution must go through the stage of national people's democratic revolution and advance toward the socialist revolution, bypassing the stage of capitalist development." (Military Art of People's War, p. 163.) He further states, "It is this leadership (the Party) which has created all the conditions and provided all the guarantees to insure the transition from the national people's democratic revolution to the socialist revolution through a continuous revolutionary process. On this road the people's armed forces, which are in fact those of the laboring people—workers and peasants—are constantly animated with a highly combative and consequently revolutionary spirit and have all the necessary conditions to go forward and fulfill their task in the new stage, which is to become a *sure instrument in the service of the state of proletarian dictatorship.*" (underlined in the original)

The concept fully coincides with that outlined by Trotsky in the *Permanent Revolution*. He states "Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of 'peaceful' reforms. Revolutions in economy, science, technology, the family, morals and usages develop in complicated reciprocal action and do not allow society to reach equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution."

This is the basic concept that has served as a constant guide for both the Vietnamese and the Chinese. Both the protracted struggle of the Vietnamese and the Chinese revolutions, including recent developments in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, confirm the Marxist theory of the permanent revolution. A serious party study of these world shaking developments is imperative.

March 26, 1973