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Bulletin

OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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EDITORIAL

DEFEND THE DU BOIS CLUBS

The pressures of the Vietnam War and the Negro freedom struggle have so heated the atmosphere of American society that an "anti-communist" announcement by a high government official led to considerable violence.

March 4: Attorney General Katzenbach orders the W.E.B. Du Bois Clubs to register under the "communist front" provision of the McCarran Act.

March 5: While the police look on, an estimated 150 youth attack a small group of Club members at their Brooklyn headquarters. The police finally arrest a few -- Du Boisers!

March 6: National Du Bois Club headquarters in San Francisco's Black ghetto was destroyed by an explosion. Nobody has yet been arrested.

We must note the progression of significant social violence since 1954: While violence against the black people in the South and the Northern ghettos has become commonplace, it has been a long time since violence has been addressed to radical groups in this country. Just as in the past, we can expect renewed violence against striking workers in the future. Capitalist "democratic" governments have an old trick whenever they cannot win politically. They encourage "private" violence against their opposition.

The working-class youth who attacked the Brooklyn headquarters have been stupidly brushed aside as simply "hoodlums" by some who claim to be radicals. It is essential that revolutionaries approach youth such as these to win their support against Johnson's war-austerity plan. They must be told that they cut their own throats when they become stooges for the right.

But our education of any of them, and any others who will physically attack the left, must be a "practical" one also. We must have a united left defense organization which will mobilize itself for physical defense when any left-wing group is threatened. The working class will not believe that you are capable of organizing their defense until you prove that you can defend yourself.

The American Committee stands pledged to participate in the defense of the Du Bois clubs against legal and extra-legal attacks on their rights.

VIETNAM: PEACE AND POLITICS

The nationwide movement against the war in Vietnam can be considered to have been inaugurated as a mass movement with the April, 1965 March on Washington sponsored by the Students for a Democratic Society. Since then the anti-war movement held nationwide coordinated mass demonstrations last October; the Thanksgiving

conference of the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NCCEWV), and the SANE-sponsored march at that time which was supported by the student-based anti-war movement.

Now that another coordinated nationwide action is before us, with the March 26-27 demonstrations, the anti-war movement must ask itself what it has accomplished in the past year and where it is going.

First we must consider the character of the anti-war movement at its present stage. The movement, in terms of its active core, is still based almost entirely on the undergraduate and graduate students, as well as significant layers of the intellectuals. It has attracted some half-hearted support from broader sections of the liberal middle class, but its core remains the radical students organized in and around SNCC, SDS, and the NCCEWV. The movement's link to the Negro movement has thus far been limited to SNCC and its connections with the labor movement or the working class as a whole are almost nonexistent.

The anti-war activists are not merely for peace in Vietnam. Most of them already see the struggle against this war in broader political questions. If we reject the false advice and programs of the religious and moral pacifists (like CNVA) who would prefer that we remain above the battle, and of the right-wing pacifists (Student Peace Union) and the "anti-communist left" (Socialist Party, SANE) who would prefer that we advise American imperialism on how best to combat communism, we have no choice but to concern ourselves with politics and work out a theoretical and programmatic alternative to the pacifists and liberals.

We must recognize that the NLF struggle is political as well as military; it can be defeated politically as well as militarily, or by a combination of political and military means, and in fact to succeed it also needs more than military strength. This is not to underestimate the importance of military strength, which flows from massive popular support, nor the importance of material support which should be forthcoming in much larger quantity than it now is from the USSR and China.

While the NLF has shown that it can wage a determined struggle, it must also have the political strength to be able to deal with a prolonged military stalemate. Of course, if a revolutionary leadership came to power anywhere else, it could concretely come to the aid of the Vietnamese by overthrowing imperialist rule and thus multiplying the strain and pressure on the imperialists at present. Barring this kind of "concrete" revolutionary as well as military aid, we have no choice but to fear that the Vietnamese revolution may be bartered away yet again as it has been in the past, not because of any lack of determination on the part of the Vietnamese people, who have been fighting almost continuously for decades, but because of the lack of a revolutionary leadership.

The Role of China and the USSR

This is precisely why we must examine the political line of the USSR and China. The fact that the Soviet regime and

the Moscow-led Communist Parties oppose independent revolutionary struggle and seek to contain and limit it wherever it takes place, cannot be a matter of no concern to us. The theory of a bloc with the "progressive national bourgeoisie", and the betrayals of revolutions through deals with the imperialists, originated with Stalin. The role of the Communist Parties in particular countries became simply to carry out Stalin's part of the bargain, if one was arrived at, or in any case to seek to limit revolutionary developments. This was what happened in Spain, France, and Greece after the Second World War, just to name a few key examples. This was what happened for many years in China and Indochina, until the line was modified in order to assimilate these areas into the Soviet orbit for essentially defensive and nationalist motives.

Thus Soviet foreign policy and the nature of the Soviet Union itself, are not academic questions. It may be comforting to some to dismiss these difficult and "divisive" matters as of no importance to our work now, but as we have tried to show it is simply impossible to understand even the ABCs of the Vietnamese Revolution without confronting these questions.

We must also examine the role of the Chinese Communist Party. If we study the world situation, the contradictions between the CCP's revolutionary words and its actual policies in regard to Algeria, Japan, Indonesia and elsewhere is readily apparent. It is clear that the CCP owes quite a bit to Stalin in regard to both its domestic and foreign policy. We must consider the history of the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party in order to understand the role of Peking in the present situation.

History is Important

One of the most important lessons for the anti-war movement now, is that these questions are important, that whether we like it or not, history is important: it will not go away and leave us alone, and we must confront it and seek to understand it if we are seriously interested in the present and future. If we are to begin to understand these questions we must begin with a scientific approach, with a theoretical and historical method.

The movement must also concern itself with U.S. policy in Vietnam. As the BULLETIN has discussed, the escalation of the war must be understood as a response on the part of the decisive section of the American capitalist class to what it correctly defines as a serious threat to its world interests. American policy has little to do with Johnson's intelligence or lack of it. It is a product of some of the best brains in the service of imperialism, and we must counterpose to it a thoroughly anti-imperialist policy and program, and not a more moderate or more reasonable capitalist policy.

It is incontestable that sizable sections of ruling opinion in this country are very unhappy with Johnson's policy. But these critics, as has just been shown in Congress, will capitulate very quickly under pressure to present a united capitalist front, and, that they only represent a more moderate imperialist policy

but an imperialist policy nonetheless.

If we try to view the question somewhat more abstractly, we can get to the heart of the question of divisions in the ruling class. It is not that we deny the divisions, or even that we say that these divisions make no difference to us. Quite the contrary. A revolutionary leadership can and must know how to exploit the "softness" of those circles for whom Senator Fulbright and the editors of the N.Y. Times speak. We must not fall for any traps about coalition government and United Nations intervention. We must oppose this kind of "solution" uncompromisingly. At the same time, while we can conceivably seek to push these forces further to a point where a genuine retreat and defeat for the imperialists might be forced on them, it must be stressed that any schemes for coalition or UN control do not represent such a defeat for imperialism. The crucial thing is that the only way we can achieve even a partial victory by forcing a retreat upon the capitalists is not by ourselves solidarizing with these "softer" imperialists but by keeping up the same pressure which they have shown themselves in one way or another responsive to, by fighting for all-out support for the NLF and all-out opposition to any role whatsoever for US imperialism in Vietnam, and by building a workingclass movement of opposition to the war on this program.

The Thanksgiving Conference represented a serious step backward for the anti-war movement. The Socialist Workers Party succeeded in confusing the movement by raising the issue of the single issue movement, by ignoring and opposing the need for a working class orientation for the movement, and by trying to maneuver with the movement (see BULLETIN, Vol. 2, Nos. 20,21,22.) The majority at the conference in Washington and later at the meeting in Madison also tried to ignore politics. Lately the NCCWEV leadership has turned more and more to the right, banking upon the Congressional critics of Johnson's policy and even refusing to call for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops.

In rejecting history and theory in the guise of dismissing "the old disputes", many radical activists simply wind up embracing empiricism and old-fashioned American pragmatism. This approach tells them that it is not important to understand history because we rarely learn from our mistakes anyway. It also tells them that we need only concern ourselves with what we see before us right now. So if most people are very hostile to the radical idea of U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, let's drop it, the argument runs, even though we ourselves agree with it. If the workers are by and large apathetic or go along with the war at this point, let's forget about them and concentrate where we are getting an immediate response.

But we need a more scientific approach than this if we want to be able to do more than respond to events after they occur. We have to be able to anticipate developments. This is precisely what the BULLETIN has been trying to do in its application of Marxist method to developments in world politics and to the prospects for social and political struggle in this country.

The mass of the American population, including the

working class of course, are now in one way or another still going along with the U.S. war, although discontent is definitely rising, most rapidly in some of the layers of the population. The millions of workers who today may react with apathy or horror to the demand for immediate withdrawal will not therefore react any more warmly to the moderate demand for negotiations. The negotiations demand suits more the essentially conservative moods of a liberal section of the middle class as well as certain sections of the bourgeoisie, who want to preserve the status quo and do not want to risk war with the USSR and China if it is at all possible. The mass of the workers, if they can be shown that this is not their war, will naturally demand immediate withdrawal, and will not stop halfway at a negotiations demand which assumes that the imperialists have some valid rights in Vietnam to begin with.

The working class today does not oppose the war, but if they can be shown in the course of struggle that the wage freeze is connected with the war in Vietnam and that the workers and minorities here and the Vietnamese half way around the world have the same enemy, then they will oppose the war. Not only will they oppose this particular war, they will also be in a position to put an end to all such wars. A working class perspective does not represent an attachment to traditional formulas, but the only way we will put an end to the Vietnam war for good, and not be faced with the same war in a different location tomorrow or the day after.

The key to success for the anti-war movement is inits becoming more than an anti-war movement. We must see the necessity of going beyond the "demonstration stage." The anti-war movement must become a political movement and a working class movement.

WHY PL DISSOLVED M2M

Self-Destructive Move is Sign of Return to Stalinism

The dissolution of the May Second Movement marks a new stage in the crisis of Progressive Labor. Unable to withstand the intense government pressure, PL is retreating into a sect-like existence. The press has been cut back; the organization itself is beginning to fragment. Ominous signs of this process began last year with the campaign against "counterrevolutionary" Trotskyism and the failure of the national PLP Convention to engage in serious political discussion.

Both the decision to dissolve M2M and the manner in which this decision was carried out have further weakened PL. The youth movement plays an important role in the Leninist conception of revolutionary organization. A healthy youth movement develops a new generation of revolutionary leaders. It offers youth a forum in which to reexamine the Marxist program in the light of problems and questions of their own generation. It provides an arena for tactical and organizational experience. It provides an opportunity for not-yet-totally-committed socialists to participate in revolutionary politics.

By its intervention in May 2nd then, PL aborted a necessary revolutionary process, but even were this not the case, the arbitrary manner in which it was effected can only damage the movement. The revolutionary party has not only the right but the responsibility to intervene politically in the youth movement, but to substitute organizational control for thorough political discussion is to abandon principled politics.

M2M clubs were invited to send delegates to a meeting to discuss the future of the organization. Not until they got to the meeting were they presented with the proposal to dissolve May 2nd, by the PL caucus within the movement. While the caucus had secretly adopted its position in advance of the conference, delegates were completely unprepared. Under the circumstances they could hardly offer effective opposition. Particularly as they had no opportunity to discuss the proposition in their own clubs.

This undemocratic procedure has unfortunate parallels in the past. The Communist party was infamous for its caucus politics. CPers were known for out-organizing independents, out-talking them, out-staying them and out-voting them. This is not to say that it is impermissible for revolutionaries to form disciplined factions. The issue is that such factions must never act to suppress democratic processes, which means the fullest possible clarification of all political questions. To substitute organizational maneuvers for honest debate is not Leninist politics but dirty politics.

Why PL Chooses Suicide

Several hypotheses have been raised to explain PL's action. The claim has been made that PL felt that May 2nd was becoming too independent and therefore uncontrollable. It has also been suggested that PL is becoming organizationally conservative in response to its pressing defense needs. If this is the case they will find such a policy to be self-defeating. PL explains its policy as one more step in a turn towards Students for a Democratic Society. Since SDS already exists as a student protest movement there is no place for M2M. We cannot subscribe to this thesis. PL gave up leadership of the anti-war movement to SDS. It is now prepared to abandon the entire youth movement.

SDS is going through a severe crisis, partly because of its amorphous character. As an ill-defined radical protest movement it contains non-socialist and vaguely socialist, as well as left wing socialist youth. It can in no sense compete with the function of a revolutionary socialist youth movement--or even a radical anti-imperialist youth movement as M2M proclaimed itself to be.

This is not to say that M2M should not have concerned itself with SDS. Obviously M2M should have sought the widest possible active collaboration with SDS, but without abandoning or diluting its own program.

Implicit in PL's evaluation of the situation is its conception of a youth movement. It becomes apparent that what PL sought from M2M was not the development of a revolutionary socialist

youth movement but an organization like SDS but under PL's control. When M2M failed to attract a sizable section of the uncommitted youth, PL gave it up and sought greener fields.

A Parallel from the Past

One is reminded again of the Communist Party and the Progressive Party. In 1948 the CP expected Henry Wallace, the "peoples" capitalist, to attract a sizable section of the liberal vote. Their hopes were smashed when Harry Truman outflanked Wallace to the left. After a lethargic campaign in 1952, the CP gave up even the semblance of independent politics for greener pastures-- the Democratic Party. They withdrew from the Progressive Party and in NYC from the American Labor Party, leaving the independents without any political alternative to capitalist politics.

Progressive Labor was formed in opposition to the American Communist Party. Yet from its inception it was cursed with the taint of Stalinism, because Progressive Labor never seriously analyzed its own past. Rather than developing a serious analysis of the social-economic perspective in this period, rather than understanding that the real task of class-struggle politics lies in development of the united front, rather than honestly facing Trotskyism, the only political theory which explains the degeneration of the Soviet Union, Progressive labor substituted instead a combination of adventurism and opportunism. Young PLers on the one hand were deceived into believing that by their own actions they would be able to electrify the masses--in a period when only a vanguard can be won over by a process of serious theoretical confrontation. At the same time PL borrowed doubtful glory from the Chinese and such erstwhile friends as Sukarno. For real proletarian politics PL substituted hero worship--Malcolm, Fidel, Mao. PL was foredoomed to the crisis it now faces.

At this time, several May 2nd clubs have expressed their determination to continue to build the movement. In NYC a group, also connected with the Free University, has already formed the American Liberation League.

If the American Liberation League is to avoid the pitfalls of its parent organization it will have to decisively reject the politics of Maoism as well as the organizational methods of Stalinism.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN GHANA

Lessons for American Radicals

A few years ago, a score-odd heads of state of "new nations" provided hero-symbols for the New Left in the United States. "See," the New Left's anti-ideologues proclaimed, "the success of these leaders proves that the Old Left, with its labels and doctrines, is hopesessly out of date." They argued that one need only a "guts-reaction" and a Castro-like turn to the "communities" of poor peasants or urban impoverished.

Now, one by one, these heroes of only yesterday have mostly fallen. Castro still occupies his office, but has ceased to be likely hero-material by virtue of his recent turn to a life of open political crime. The majority, like Ben Bella, Sukarno et al, have been deposed as a nation wearied by their incompetence did nothing. Now, in Africa, with the overthrow of Ghana's Nkrumah, of all of the New Left states of a few years ago, only three, Mali, Guinea and Tanzania, remain.

The lesson to be drawn in each case, including that of Nkrumah, may be summarized: "New Left-ism," by virtue of its incompetence, leads to the frustration and disaffection of its supporters (as, "in the community") and even its own ranks. Unless a real left seizes the leadership of the movement and the state, in time, brushing aside the New Left bungles, the victory of the counterrevolution is inevitable. That is the history of Algeria, the history of Indonesia, of a score of Latin American and African states.

How Nkrumah Brought His Own Downfall

There is no doubt of Nkrumah's incompetence. His entire plan for "socialist" reconstruction was based on a growing, massive debt for imperialist loan-sharks! His "Seven Year Plan" benefitted no one but the very larvae that were to overthrow him, the petty capitalists, the bureaucrats and the army. The only tangible evidence of a modern economy seen by Ghana's workers and villagers was an oppressive tax burden and galloping inflation.

If this were not enough, that "great socialist genius," Nkrumah, had to heap insult upon injury. The trade unions were virtually suppressed; the opposition left was given over to the ministrations of the state security police. Worst of all, Nkrumah's criminal insults, were the multiplying, fabulously costly monuments, "prestige projects," constructed to advertise the greatness of Nkrumah. In an economy starved for the most essential means of production, in an economy beset by a constant, crippling balance of payments deficit, with multiplying tax burdens, soaring inflation, one multi-million dollar "pyramid" or "Taj Mahal" after another greeted the unshod, underfed Ghanaian as he emerged from his disease-infested shack.

1966 was the year payment fell due on a substantial portion of Ghana's \$1 billion foreign debt. Nkrumah not only pleaded inability to pay, but demanded millions more, that he might proceed with such productive investments as a new "sports palace." The imperialist loan-sharks responded to this in a manner agreeable to their nature; they "foreclosed."

The "foreclosure" was simply arranged. The U.S. State Department, for example, has considerable experience in making such collections in Latin America. One has one's ambassador entertain the colonel-commander of a barracks situated near the capital city, or the contact is made through a CIA-type intermediary. If the colonel is a "true patriot," that is to say profoundly moved by his nation's Dun & Bradstreet rating, and if the popular discontent is evident enough, reasonable assurances from the State Department's representative usually secure the result desired by the Wall Street bankers.

If the colonel in residence is hesitant, would rather not initiate the coup d'etat, then, as in the case of U.S. Ambassador John Peurifoy in Guatemala, a fascist adventurer's private army may be financed to spearhead the proceedings. In Ghana, no Castillo Armas was required; a General in charge on the scene, Ankrah, was obviously persuaded to carry out foreign imperialism's bidding.

The Ghanaian workers neither opposed the overthrow nor, had they been opposed to it, were they armed. One might have thought that the "great" Nkrumah would have drawn certain lessons from the fate of Patrice Lumumba and Ben Bella. One might inquire: Why did he not train and arm the working-class as a precaution against the treachery of his military machine? The day for Nkrumah to do that passed years ago. If an armed Ghanaian working class had had the leadership to defend Nkrumah now they would have ousted him years before!

In fact, the leaderless workers and villagers seem to have hailed the military coup d'etat. Later, they will regard the recent events in a different light; but, for the moment, lacking a program for social reconstruction of their unhappy country, their only concern was to rid themselves of the oppression they knew--Nkrumah's. Competent foreign capitalists, whom the Ghanaian workers may have no doubt know how to operate industries, seem--for the moment--a welcome alternative to the hopeless bungling which they associate with their wretchedness.

A Page from Russian History

A passage from Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution stands as a most appropriate prophecy of the course of the past decade's events in Ghana: "...The masses go into a revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction, but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old regime. Only the guiding layers of the class have a political program, and even this still requires the test of events, and the approval of the masses. The fundamental political process of a revolution thus consists in the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis--the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximation. The different stages of a revolutionary process, certified by a change of parties in which the more extreme always supercedes the less, express the growing pressure to the left--as long as the swing of the movement does not run into objective obstacles. When it does, there begins a reaction: disappointments of different layers of the revolutionary class, growth of indifferentism, and therewith a strengthening of the position of the counterrevolution..."

Russia's New Left head of state, Kerensky, roughly comparable to Ghana's Nkrumah, Algeria's Ben Bella, Indonesia's Sukarno, also faced a coup from the right in the conspiracy of General Kornilov. Who saved Kerensky?--the Bolsheviks! Who deposed Kerensky?--the Bolsheviks! And if the Bolsheviks had not seized state power in Russia in November, 1917, some Nasution, some Boumediene, some Ankrah of Russian origin would have succeeded just as these "patriotic" military agents of a foreign power have succeeded so

conspicuously during the past twelve months of Asian and African history.

In the Ghanaian revolution, the masses never progressed beyond the "guiding layer" represented by Nkrumah, the oracle of the African New Left. (One may be absolutely certain that whoever proposed a Leninist alternative to Nkrumah for Ghana would have been greeted with howls of contempt by the New Left, the charge of "counterrevolutionary" by the Maoists and "sectarians" by the SWP.) Yet, it was the bungling program of that New Left which not only failed to attack the objective problems of the Ghanaian revolution, but which led Ghana ever more deeply into the imperialist trap.

The basic fault with Nkrumah, the tragic flaw of the entire New Left, from Kerensky, through Ben Bella, Sukarno, Nkrumah, and SDS, is that it attempts to "make a revolution," "construct socialism" within the framework of imperialist institutions, as Nkrumah attempted to "construct socialism" in Ghana on the foundation of financial aid from imperialist loan-sharks.

In the end, the clue to the reactionary victory in Ghana is not just Nkrumah's incompetence, but the lack of a Bolshevik leadership, a party of Lenin and Trotsky, to kick this African Kerensky into his proper place, the rubbish barrel of history, in time.

The Leninist Alternative

Indonesia and Ghana are fresh new evidence of the impossibility of solving the economic problems of a backward country within a national framework. Within the small states of ultra-backward: ultra-Balkanized Black Africa "socialism in one country" is a particularly cruel farce. Those "socialist" countries which seem to offer an exception to this law, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, would long since have followed the path of Sukarno and Nkrumah but for the industrialized Soviet Power. The fundamental difference between these countries and the New Left states is that the former have taken their economy out of the imperialist market proper and have based their economy on trade relations and aid principally from the Soviet Union, have enjoyed a certain degree of military-political protection under the umbrella of Soviet Power.

Any state which seeks to establish "socialism" within the imperialist world market--i.e. depending on aid and trade from imperialist sources--must become a captive economy of the imperialist system. Because of the low productivity of its people, such a backward country must receive trade and aid from the advanced countries at such a disadvantage that the imperialist countries effectively milk the internal economy of the "socialist" nation, finally reducing it to bankruptcy and the objective conditions favoring a counter-revolution.

This is not an argument against colonial revolutions by workers and farmers with a socialist leadership; quite the contrary. These objective considerations nonetheless impose definite tasks and policies upon the revolutionary leadership.

A "socialist" state in a backward country can only exist as an historically temporary state of affairs. Each such revolution is, in fact, a step toward a true socialist solution to its own national problems as it advances the conditions for socialist revolution in the advanced countries, even as the Vietnamese people's struggles advance the objective and ideological conditions for socialist struggle in the U.S., Britain, the Western Continent and Japan. Each such revolution contributes toward that same solution as it advances the conditions for socialist revolution in other backward countries to the same end.

But, and this cannot be over-stressed, until the socialist revolution sweeps into the advanced countries, the policy of the "socialist" backward country must be that of a holding operation. The conditions of life of the national working class and its allies must be protected and advanced by every possible means within this limitation; this, in itself, will generally constitute a significant improvement in the conditions of life of the people by contrast with those offered by continued imperialist rule. But the very existence of such a state means a perpetual state of total economic, political, military war between it and the imperialists. Every means will be employed, depending upon the objective situation, to overthrow this revolution or starve it out of existence.

That is to say, the conquest of power in a backward country settles no final questions; it is merely a strategic victory of the world's working class in one important but secondary aspect of a continuing, permanent state of war between the imperialists, on the one hand, and the workers, farmers and students, on the other.

The only policy for a "socialist" revolution in any country, backward or not, is based on a perspective of world socialist revolution. The imperialist powers have raped the backward countries for over a century of all the means required for the autonomous economic development of those countries at a pace that will meet the needs of their growing populations. (The British rape of India is the classic prototype of this side of economic history.) Only by gaining access to that stolen wealth, now situated mainly in the greatest thief nation, the United States, can the predicament of the other countries of the world be solved; without access to that wealth a socialist solution in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Africa, Latin America, etc. is impossible. Any leadership of a revolutionary movement in a backward country that does not grasp this most ~~ess~~ essential point, which does not therefore make the world socialist revolution the cornerstone of national policy, is a menace to the very movement it leads.

In such a holding operation, the workers, farmers, students in these countries cannot maintain their national independence, cannot maintain even a semblance of rational economic development without sacrifices. The imperialist blockade and other devices of total war will sharpen that inherent problem of isolated backward economies. Such necessary sacrifices can be obtained and effectively employed only if the workers and peasants understand these as sacrifices for their own future and their children's; such conscious sacrifice is impossible unless it is based on an historic perspective of a world socialist revolution sweeping into the advanced countries. Any

regime which approaches the problems of life, as Castro, for example, does, pragmatically, on a day-to-day basis, is absolutely incapable of understanding this problem or of sustaining the level of mass consciousness required to secure these sacrifices without bloody repressions like those threatening to emerge in Cuba at this very moment. Only a revolutionary leadership, with the internationalist perspectives of Lenin and Trotsky, can approach a solution to these problems of the holding operation.

But the question of theory is no mere abstraction. The central concrete question of theory is the historic role of the working class, not merely the national, but the international working class. Like the New Left in this country, Ben Bella-ism, Sukarno-ism, Nkrumah-ism, has been based on a rejection of the role of the working class. In each case, these new Kerenskys have based their regimes on petty bourgeois radical elements like themselves, the ex-members of the New Left who staffed the state bureaucracy, the army, who blended into the ranks of a new layer of petty capitalists; they based their regime on those very becoming-reactionary middle class layers of the New Left that later sold out to U.S. Imperialism and overthrew them.

The New Left is, as Trotsky indicates, a certain stage of a new period of radical ferment in each period of national and world history. New Leftism, by its nature an infantile stage of radicalism, brings to the radical movement not only large numbers of recruits but also the anti-intellectualism, pragmatism, and disdain for the revolutionary capacities of the working class peculiar to capitalist ideology. In the revolution that fails, as in Indonesia, Algeria or Ghana, the leftward movement is fixed--aborted--at the infantile stage typified by the Kerenskys, Ben Bellas, Sukarnos, Nkrumahs. The very incompetence, the failure to break definitively with bourgeois ideology, of such movements and regimes make them the easy prey of the first serious counterrevolutionary adventurer to appear in force. Most important of all these faults, because of the New Left's lack of confidence in the revolutionary capacity of the working class, it bases itself on the radical layers of the middle class, the peasantry and the urban lumpenproletariat, those very social layers which betray it at the first reactionary turn.

The history of nations and the history of movements in the United States are entirely interconnected in this respect. Unless the New Left is superseded by real Leninism, the victory of reaction is inevitable. That is the lesson of Ghana for radicals in the United States.

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SPARTACIST INVADES LOUISIANA!

With an effect rivaling that of a fire-breathing dragon entering a medieval castle, Albert Nelson of the Spartacist touched off a furious response by the local reactionary establishment when he spoke at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge on February 8.

Speaking with Dorothy Nance, New Orleans CORE activist, and Herman Carter of the Southern Student Organizing Committee, among others, Nelson was the center of controversy following the LSU Student Liberal Foundation sponsored teach-in. Within hours of Nelson's being

introduced as a politically undesirable discharge from the U.S. Army, and as a part of the ban-breaking 1964 Cuba trip, Baton Rouge Mayor-President W.W. Dumas called upon the Governor to send state police to arrest the 'communist speaker' (New Orleans States Item, 9 February). Describing himself as a communist, Nelson spoke in favor of a Viet Cong victory, against negotiations, for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops, and for military aid from the USSR and China to the NLF. During his presentation, Nelson dealt with questions ranging from Cuba's right turn to the Hungarian Revolution. The polarization of the audience and speakers was marked by applause given to Nelson's introduction and points made during his presentation by a surprisingly large and vocal minority, and by the dramatic walkout of a particularly reactionary professor, Dr. Raphael Kazmann, who was billed as a defender of U.S. policy at the teach-in.

Not only did the Baton Rouge Mayor call for the jailing of Nelson, but the introduction of communism to Louisiana prompted an extraordinary meeting of a local Klu Klux Klan chapter, a rash of cross burnings, and major news accounts for many days following Nelson's-tour. Of the three hundred or so who were participating in the teach-in were 15 or 20 "frat-rats" and ROTC enthusiasts. They were led by a particularly rabid leader of a campus Conservative club who wanted to atom-bomb Hanoi NOW. At one point, Nelson admonished him: since he was too scrawny to join the Special Forces, perhaps he could clench an H-bomb in his teeth and start swimming toward China as his part in the war effort. After Nelson spoke Kazmann demanded the microphone and with an emotion packed voice declared, "I have seen the face of the enemy!" to which someone shouted back, "Yeah, and he's human!" In answer to a question from the floor asking if he liked communism so much why had he returned from Cuba, Nelson replied, "To help make a revolution here, of course." After the teach-in even Nelson's protagonists said that they were glad to meet "an honest communist".

The Case of a Dishonest Communist
PLP's Ed Clark Writes on Baton Rouge Teach-In

Compare this account of the controversy still swirling over Baton Rouge to the consciously distorted version appearing under the by-line of Ed Clark in the March 2 issue of Challenge, New York publication of the Progressive Labor Party. The account which begins, "President Paul Jensen of the Student Liberal Foundation at Louisiana State University touched off a heated controversy by announcing the support of his organization for the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam," omitted any reference to Albert Nelson, Spartacist, or to practically all the events that set the Louisiana press wild for a number of days running. While Paul Jensen did make an excellent statement; a casual glance at Louisiana press clippings around the date of the Baton Rouge teach-in will give a more complete account of what happened: "B.R. MAYOR URGES ARREST OF RED SPEAKER", New Orleans States Item 9 February, 1966; "Albert Nelson of New York admitted he is a communist. Some say he advocated overthrow of the government during the meeting. Others say that he did not go that far."

"One LSU professor on the panel, a faculty advisor for a conservative student group, had enough and walked out."

"The incident drew fire from conservatives, veterans'

organizations and public officials who demanded everything from the arrest of Nelson to the imposition of restrictions of speakers at the university." (New Orleans States Item 12 February, 1966.)

What drove Ed Clark to write such a dishonest article? The piece is a minor but very indicative example of the political methodology that with increasing frequency has become typical of the Progressive Labor Party. (PLP recently publicly attacked Spartacist as "agents of imperialism.") Consequently, the latest example of the Stalinist press at work didn't surprise the New Orleans Spartacist group. Clark, who has cultivated a reputation among a number of activists as 'honest' and a 'good guy', became extremely bitter and vindictive after he was rebuffed following his unsuccessful attempt to insinuate himself into the political confidence of the New Orleans Spartacist Committee. Clark as a leading member of PLP had refused to dissociate himself from his organization's view that Spartacists were "agents of the government." After his attempts were rebuffed he promised that "you guys will pay for this!" Following the events in Baton Rouge, Clark informed Nelson that he intended to write an article on the teach-in, without referring to Nelson at all. He did it, and he did it at a price.

Apparently working on the premise that "trotskyite agents of imperialism" have no place in a teach-in, the "honest" Stalinist Clark erased Nelson as the central figure in the heated controversy over the teach-in of February 8 and filled the gap with militant statements made the following day by Paul Jensen. In order to do this Clark had to completely recreate the entire situation, writing an article that had little relation to reality. (Incidentally, to this day neither Progressive Labor nor CERGE, the Epton Defense organization, have acknowledged that James Robertson, editor of Spartacist was one of the original persons served an injunction banning entrance to Harlem, following the 1964 police riots, or that Robertson was one of those called before the New York Grand Jury as a result of the activity of Spartacist during and after the 'riot'.)

It has been said by someone who probably learned the hard way, "Never trust anyone who lies to you." The working class has learned a sad lesson with the latter-day Communist Parties, and other Stalinist formations. More than anything else, it has been the record of cynical betrayals, compounded by enormous deceptions and lies to the workingclass movement, that has made "Communist" a dirty word, equated with 'liar'. It would be thought that anyone belonging to an organization that ostensibly aspires to revolutionary leadership of the working class would examine the history--the Spanish Civil War, the Moscow trials, the Hungarian Revolution, the more recent Indonesian coup and ensuing slaughter of tens of thousands of communists--and see the political method of the lie as an important component of the reformist degeneration of the Communist parties throughout the world.

It's true and probably fortunate that neither Ed Clark nor PLP are capable of sustaining political leadership in any arena of struggle. In a recent issue of Spartacist (Nov.-Dec. 1965 "Stalin Lives?") the reply to PLP's attack on Spartacist predicted that if the leaders of Progressive Labor persisted on this destructive course "they will shrivel into another Maoist sect, competing with the several already existing, irrelevant little bands of self appointed defenders of the
(cont. on p.20)

OPEN LETTER

to the

MEMBERS OF THE SWP

Dear Comrades:

Fidel Castro's speech before the Tri-Continental Congress attacking Trotskyism is without a doubt an event of major importance. This is not only because of what it reveals as to Castro's political character but also for what it implies theoretically for the Marxist movement. Your leadership has held one position as to the nature of the Castro leadership and we have held another.

Is it not now necessary to evaluate these two positions in the light of this latest declaration of Castro's to see which position is right and which is wrong? Your leadership has maintained since 1961 that the Cuban question was the key international question and invited Trotskyists throughout the world to evaluate the major division in our international ranks between the International Committee and the United Secretariat on this basis. Certainly, therefore, your leadership has a responsibility to make an evaluation of its line since 1961 and compare it with the line of the International Committee.

The March 7th issue of the Militant reprints a statement by the United Secretariat (published Feb. 1 in World Outlook) taking Castro to task for his slanders against Trotskyism. We have no doubt that this statement is expected to put an end to the matter as far as your leadership is concerned. Castro attacks Trotskyism. Your leadership answers these slanders. And so, we assume, we are to forget about the matter and proceed to our business.

Such was the response of your leadership in the summer of 1964 when as members of the SWP our group appealed to the Political Committee for a discussion of the Ceylonese events. The majority of the LSSP had joined a bourgeois coalition. Your leadership after the fact attacked the LSSP right wing for this action. Thus, we were told, the matter was closed and we were being "factional" in calling for any more discussion of the question. We were forthwith tossed out of the SWP and that was that.

We held then that the SWP leadership's disassociation with the LSSP's betrayal did not end the matter. The real question was why the LSSP acted as it did and what role the SWP leadership and its international supporters had played in the events leading up to the LSSP's counter-revolutionary action.

Comrades, think back to that period. Was there any discussion of the LSSP in the party prior to the betrayal? Did your leadership present you with anything other than glowing reports of

this "massive" party which you were urged to look upon as your international allies and supporters? Were you prepared in any way for the betrayal that was to take place?

We stated then, as you will remember, that without a serious evaluation of the events leading up to the LSSP's betrayal these events would be repeated once again. And so it is working out today in Cuba. Did your leadership give you any other than glowing reports on Castro's evolution? Were you prepared in any way for Castro's gutter attack on Trotskyism? Are you once again to be satisfied with an after the fact answer to Castro which in no way explains why Castro did what he did?

Events Must Be Understood, Anticipated

A revolutionary movement can be built in only way, that is with a Marxist understanding of world and national development. Such an understanding prepares the revolutionary to anticipate events. Those who tail events, who deplore Bad Things and hail Good Things after they happen are not Marxists. Rather than effecting history by their own conscious intervention they are nothing but a poor reflection of events, and like a ship without a rudder are buffeted around from event to event until the ship breaks apart on a reef.

Such will be the fate of your party, whatever are the good intentions and fine traditions of the comrades who make up the party. The question posed before you, comrades, is: does your party really understand the world around you and is your party capable of changing that world? Or is your party one more uncounscious force banging from pillar to post, always being surprised by the course of historical development?

Let us look at the statement of the United Secretariat and you will see concretely what we mean. It tells Castro: "Nothing can stop Trotskyism, the Fourth International. But your imitation of the Soviet and Chinese leaders in the employment of amalgams, of epithets like 'agents of imperialism', instead of political discussion, injures the Cuban Revolution."

These statements, if meant seriously, have important implications which are not dealt with in this statement or any other one published in the Militant. Castro is seen as acting similar to the Stalinist bureaucrats and injuring rather than advancing the Cuban Revolution. How is it that Castro acts in this way? Does it not indicate something as to the character and nature of the leadership of the Cuban government?

Castro: Identity or Contradiction

As you are well aware, it was our minority together with the comrades who are now in the Spartacist group, who consistently raised inside the party the position that the Castro regime represented a social formation independent of and at times oppositional to the working class of Cuba and thus to the needs of the revolution itself. Your leadership and their international allies saw Castro as an identity with the working class and with the needs of

the revolution. Your leadership held up Castro as the example par excellence of revolutionary leadership.

It was thus quite correct and natural for the Militant to quote Moreno in its January 31st issue as an example of a typical statement of its point of view: "We consider Fidel and 'Che' Guevara as the greatest victorious revolutionary leadership--speaking morally and politically--that history has given us since the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky."

The question you must ask yourself is how can it be that this greatest leadership since Lenin and Trotsky should "imitate" the Stalinists and "injure" the revolution? Can we as Marxists really believe that this action of Castro's can be understood in isolation without any development leading up to it? Your leadership never explained this development as it was taking place nor do they now even address themselves to this question. This is clearly a non-Marxist approach.

The latest statements of Castro do not come to us as a shock. They are the logical expression of a reality in Cuba we have discussed many times over the years since 1961. We can refer you to the August, 1965 issue of the Fourth International, in which our British comrades clearly analyze the reality of Cuban development and predict a further rightward evolution of the Castro leadership. In the September 20th, 1965 issue of the Bulletin we published the Cuban Government's "Preventive Notice No. 2" disarming the people. We saw this as part of a rightward move on the part of the Castro leadership. In our November 15th issue, we returned to the Cuba question, this time to discuss the meaning of Guevara's departure from the scene. We viewed this as "a further sign of the monolithic consolidation of government in Cuba." In our Jan. 31, 1966 issue we ran an article entitled "Cuba Attacks China--Turn to Right Follows Disappearance of Guevara."

For us, then, Castro's latest slanders were not an isolated attack but rather the logical outcome of a development going on inside Cuba for a long, long time, a development which we fully documented as it occurred. We see this attack as a confirmation of the essential analysis of Cuba which we have adhered to since the founding of our tendency in January of 1961 as a minority inside the SWP.

If you comrades reject this analysis (see the Feb. 28, 1966 issue of the Bulletin for a more detailed exposition) then it is incumbent upon you and your leadership to show how current events disprove our thesis and prove the correctness of your thesis. We again repeat the central question in dispute: should we view the Castroite leadership as essentially identical with the working class and the revolution or as distinct from and in opposition to the interests of the working class and the revolution? If we hold the former view, then we must continue, as the SWP and its supporters have done in the past, to act simply as a supporting group to the Cuban leadership and Castroite forces in Latin America. If we hold the latter view then it is incumbent upon us to strive, as we have in the past, to build a movement independent from and in oppo-

sition to the Cuban leadership and its supporters.

Guevara and Responsibility

Now let us turn to the question of Guevara's disappearance. The Feb. 1st statement of the United Secretariat insists that it and its supporters have taken a "responsible" stand on this matter. They hold up Hansen's article in World Outlook (Oct. 15, 1965), "New Field of Battle for Che Guevara" as an example of this "responsible" analysis.

It is still unclear to us exactly where your leadership stands on this matter-- what do they consider a "responsible" analysis of Guevara's disappearance to be. The Militant never carried the Hansen piece though it reprints much from World Outlook. Instead the editors simply reprinted Guevara's letter to Castro without comment in the October 18th issue of the Militant. In it's Jan. 31st issue the Militant holds up Moreno's comments as the model for "responsible" analysis of this matter. Moreno denies that Castro's differences with Guevara could have had anything to do with his disappearance. "In our opinion", Moreno states, "as we characterize the regime and its leader, the persecution of revolutionary militants, of leaders, whether Cubans or foreigners, is excluded."

The Hansen article, which we expect few SWP members have read, does raise cautiously the possibility that there might have been a political motivation on Castro's part for Guevara's disappearance. Does the SWP leadership agree with Moreno whose "characterization" of Castro excludes any persecution of Guevara or do they agree with Hansen who does not exclude this possibility at all. But Hansen in the past has shared Moreno's characterization of the Castro regime. He stated in the May 8th, 1964 issue of World Outlook: "The Cuban Revolution is headed by independent figures who have displayed political talent and a moral stature not matched since the days of the Bolsheviks"-- almost word for word what Moreno stated in the article reprinted in the January 31st Militant! Does Hansen hold that someone of the political and moral stature of the Bolsheviks is capable of arranging the departure of a critic so as to avoid public debate with him? Or has Hansen changed his position on the character of the Cuban leadership between May 8, 1964 and October 15, 1965? If so, he certainly owes you, the party rank and file some explanations.

We raise these matters not to make debater's points but rather to show to you clearly the complete confusion that exists within your leadership here and internationally. We believe the roots of this confusion lie in an abandonment of Marxist analysis, of the Marxist method. This is why your leadership fails to understand the course of contemporary politics and is left confused at every new turn in the world.

There is only one way out for you if you wish to be revolutionaries. You must insist on a real explanation of Cuban events. If the leadership refuses to make a serious accounting of its past analysis of Cuba then you must make that accounting for yourself. Yes, it is necessary to go over the old polemics and discus-

sion bulletins and decide for yourself who was right and who was wrong. One cannot overcome mistakes of the past by ignoring them. A movement with a history it cannot account for will have no historic role ahead of it. In 1964 the leadership dismissed our appeals for a serious international discussion over the Ceylonese events and look what has happened now.

We Challenge Your Leadership!

We make a challenge to your leadership. We demand that they reprint for the enlightenment of the party public and interested revolutionaries not in the party, the major documents of the past dispute over Cuba and let the comrades judge who was right and who was wrong in the light of current developments. We also challenge the leadership to a public debate over Cuba at any time or place they may choose. If the leadership feels it can defend its position on Cuba it will accept this challenge. If not the comrades must make their own judgement of such a leadership.

-- American Committee for the Fourth International
March 17, 1966

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(cont. from p. 15)

Chinese-Albanian-Stalinist faith." But with the desperation of a doomed man thrashing about in quicksand, PLP continues on this course and sinks deeper and deeper into the swamp of lies and treachery that has consumed and wasted hundreds of thousands of workingclass militants before them.

Unlike PLP's forebears, the CPUSA, we do not simply gloat over the self destruction of a political organization. Progressive Labor's behavior can have no other effect than to isolate and demoralize its own membership as well as creating skepticism and mistrust in the minds of workingclass and student militants towards communist organization and struggle. All in all, a criminal waste!

#

WE GOOFED!

As our readers may be aware, we sometimes make proofing errors! But we outdid ourselves last issue. Several paragraphs were accidentally deleted from the article "'Independent' Politics in Chicago." The following is offered as clarification: The leaflet "Towards a Freedom-Labor Party" was written and distributed to the Chicago CIPA conference by the local Spartacist Committee. While it did not receive support as the conference itself, a small but significant opposition has been organized in the 9th Congressional District CIPA club which is following the general line of the leaflet.

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