

For the Fourth International

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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## *The Imperialist Conflict Over Ethiopia*

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### **PROGRAMATIC DOCUMENTS**

Vol. 1

Organ of the  
**LEFT WING**  
Workers Party U.S.A.

**10c**

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## THE OCTOBER PLENUM AGENDA

The Agenda for the 11th October Plenum recommended by the PC is entirely unsatisfactory and reveals the political bankruptcy of the leading and guiding body of the Party. We recommend to the Plenum that the agenda jointly adopted in the PC by the Cannon-Luste forces be rejected and the agenda presented by the minority be adopted.

The original proposal of these comrades represented a four point agenda:

- 1- The International Question ( New Orientation of the ICL)
- 2- How to build the Party ( including the SP orientation)
- 3- Internal Questions
- 4- Convention Arrangements

After our proposal these comrades added a fifth point, the Unemployment question.

The number of important points we want settled at this Plenum makes the agenda lengthy but that is no fault of ours. Most of these issues have been shunted back and forth from the PC to the Pittsburgh and the New York June Plenums and back again by the present majority which has used this method to avoid resolving political questions. The additional issues raised are done so in view of the fact that this Plenum should organize a discussion period in the party leading up to a convention within three months which must formulate positions on the important issues facing the class and the Party.

The following issues were disputed questions in the party before the Pittsburgh March 15 Plenum to which they were referred by the PC. That Plenum did not take them up and referred them back to the PC which referred them to the June Plenum. They went back to the PC. Now the PC doesn't want to take them up.

1. Trade Union Question
2. The Russian Question
3. Ethiopian - Italian Situation
4. War Question
5. Colonial Question
6. Negro Question
7. Organizational Questions
8. Labor Defense

In addition to these old disputed questions we have added the following:

1. The Present Situation
2. The Agrarian Question
3. Youth Question
4. Permanent Revolution.

All these questions must be taken up at this Plenum because:

- a. The majority of these questions are unsolved disputes that have been ignored by one or both previous plenums.
- b. Each point involves a concretization of an important section of the Declaration of Principles or involves important problems of the class struggle on which the Declaration of Principles has no position.
- c. Without a position on these questions the party cannot recruit and gain influence among those layers of workers who can be won primarily by answering these questions in theory and practice.
- d. The Political Committee and the Plenum must take a position on these decisive questions confronting the working class as the leading bodies of the Party. This Plenum must put an end to the policy of avoiding political responsibility. It must prove that it can lead or else it must be replaced by a leadership that can and will give Marxian answers to the Party and the class on the issues of the day.
- e. This is the Plenum which is to open a three month discussion period to end in a convention. Such a convention period can be opened up and maintained on a proper political level only by the Plenum's presenting its own and the minority positions to the membership.
- f. The agenda presented by the Cannon-Muste agreement negates all of the above points, excludes issues not already discussed and thus enables them to revolve the Plenum and the convention discussion primarily around the organizational questions, instead of the political questions from which the organizational questions flow.

It was clearly revealed at the Pittsburgh Plenum that organization steps and a political condemnation of the line presented by Basky, Cehler and Stamm was adopted without even considering the political issues involved. The June Plenum continued this line with the expulsion of Zack and Williamson and the attempt on the part of the Cannonites to expell the entire Left Wing. The June Plenum produced a stalemate in the Party and the leadership.

The third pre-Plenum period has been taken up with ideological preparation to complete the job, using as a basis

the Trotsky "advice", which is an attempt to substitute for the clumsy butcher methods of Cannon and Company, a surgeon's skill, calling for capitulation or expulsion of the Left Wing comrades who oppose the new turn of the ICL. On top of this we have the Cannon-Muste proposed agenda which is a curtain raiser for the steps to follow. We have no time to take up the political issues; we have time mainly for the organizational issues!

With Trotsky's letter and the ICL<sup>o</sup> turn of the Muste leadership on the "French turn" they can afford to take up the International question. One concession in our favor! With the pending split or expulsion in France, a left tactical zig-zag on the part of the "French turn" group, and the unfavorable situation in the SP of the United States, which is forcing the Cannon group to cover up their tracks and move in the direction of giving the SP fractions a split perspective, they can also afford to take up this question. Another concession we welcome! The unemployment question is a concession to the most active field workers. The other two points of the Cannon-Muste agenda are organizational.

We move the rejection of the PC majority agenda and the adoption of the PC minority agenda.

#### Agenda:

- 1 - War Question
  - a. War Theses
  - b. Italian-Ethiopian Situation
  - c. Question of Social Patriotism
  - d. American Imperialism
  - e. USSR
  - f. Permanent Revolution
- 2 - The new orientation of the ICL
  - a. Road to the 4th International
  - b. SP question.
- 3 - Colonial Question
- 4 - Negro Question
- 5 - Trade Union
- 6 - Unemployment
- 7 - Youth
- 8 - Agrarian
- 9 - Labor Defense
- 10 - Organizational Questions ( Party Structure )
- 11 - Internal Question and Convention Arrangements.

SUPPLEMENT:

The Plenum was scheduled to convene on Friday, October 4, at 8 P.M., but instead a "Plenum" of the Cannon-Weber-Muste forces convened and continued until Saturday, 3 P.M., in which time complete agreement was obtained on all points to be taken up at the Plenum against the left wing. Those issues upon which disputes between these three groups were sure to occur were excluded from the agenda. This enabled them to carry through their unprincipled bloc against the Left Wing. If the disputed issues, above listed, which were carried over since the Pittsburgh Plenum, were to be discussed and voted on the bloc would fall apart. In addition, the resolutions presented on the important questions were compromise resolutions, leaving out decisive issues in order to consummate the bloc.

After these three groups completed their bloc to the last dot they called a PC meeting in between the "real plenum" and the formal plenum which was open to the Left Wing members of the National Committee and the membership. The PC meeting changed the agenda by adding two points, the war question, and the trade union question. At the same time, within a few minutes the PC passed upon the resolutions adopted Friday and Saturday by the "real" plenum. We were handed their resolutions and practically ordered to vote on them within three minutes.

Just as the PC was convening comrade Muste handed Oehler the Was thesis and said here is a copy of the PC resolution. This was a curtain raiser to what had taken place. Within a few minutes comrade Cannon stated that we had no time to waste in passing the war resolution at the Plenum and it must be first on the agenda because it had already been set up for the New Militant, and was being run off the press. This was in opposition to comrade Schactman who knew it was a cut and dried affair and demanded that this question be placed further down on the agenda. Comrade West added (in opposition to Oehler's arguments) that there is no need for discussion on the war resolution. The resolution has been printed in the New Militant and curiously enough bears the date, October 4th!

Why did this unprincipled bloc add the war and trade union questions to the agenda on Saturday, October 5, after voting them down at the Monday PC meeting, September 30? Why did they pick only these two issues from our agenda and reject the others? Just as the addition of the unemployed question at the September 30 PC meeting concession to the NC members who were active field workers, so too, the trade union question was added for the two NC members who arrived from Minneapolis. If the Minneapolis comrades had been forced to return and report that the Plenum had not taken up trade union issues, while Minneapolis is involved in the outstanding fight of the country there would be hell to pay there.

By "trade union question" we mean the adoption of a T.U. thesis and taking up the practical, immediate work on the basis of the trade union line. By "trade union question" this unprincipled bloc means only immediate activity.

On the war question it is a little different. On Monday the PC voted down our proposal to take up the war question as the first point on the agenda. On Wednesday war broke out! So on Saturday they agreed to place it on the agenda!! As true leaders of the working class they recognize an event after it falls down on their heads. But the resolution has an absolutely centrist position on vital aspects of the Ethiopian question. This record proves the bankruptcy of the Cannon-Weber-Muste unprincipled bloc. We will take up this resolution when we deal with the war question.

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### WAR THESIS

1. Imperialism, the highest stage in the development of Capitalism, is characterized by imperialist wars and civil wars. It is an epoch of wars and revolutions. The imperialist powers in order to maintain their existence must wage wars on a world-wide scale for hegemony over the world; on the other hand the proletariat exasperated by its growing misery, is driven into decisive struggles against capitalism. In spite of all the peace treaties, agreements and pacts for disarmament and peaceful solution of disputes, in less than two decades after the conclusion of the world war of 1914-1918, we are on the threshold of a new world war in which again millions of workers are to be sacrificed. The inherent contradictions of capitalism, the contradictions between the enormous growth of the productive forces and the limitations of the domestic and world markets, resulting in a world crisis, leaving no choice but war for the imperialist powers. The need for expansion of one imperialist power can be met only at the expense of the other, making the imperialist wars inevitable and inseparable from the capitalist system of exploitation.

2. Imperialist wars, increasing the suppression and exploitation of the colonial peoples, inflicting intolerable sufferings on the toiling masses of the imperialist countries, and making their oppression harsher and more cruel than ever, sharpen the class struggle. Therefore there is an inseparable connection between the war waged by an imperialist country, and the class struggle within that country, as well as between the class struggle of the workers and the struggles of colonial peoples against imperialist domination. Imperialism, arming the great masses of workers for its wars and at the same time increasing their misery, exploitation and oppression, creates against its own will the prerequisite conditions for a successful revolution of the proletariat. The task of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat is to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, that is, to lead the workers into a revolutionary struggle to defeat its own imperialist ruling class, by bringing about the military defeat of their own imperialist government, leading the workers, armed for

the imperialist war, against their own exploiters.

3. This task cannot be fulfilled unless the workers are liberated from the influence of bourgeois pacifists. The bourgeois pacifists, while they condemn the imperialist wars, are defending capitalism, thereby making their protests against war futile. They create illusion in the minds of the workers that war can be eliminated without overthrowing capitalism. Worse than that, in condemning All wars, they place the civil war (revolution) of the oppressed and exploited class against the ruling and exploiting class at the same level with the imperialist wars, thereby restraining the workers, to the extent of their influence over the working class, from turning their arms against their greatest and nearest enemy, the ruling class of their own country. The fallacy of bourgeois pacifism must be energetically combated and its influence among the workers annihilated.

4. Another and greater obstacle in the path of the proletarian revolution is the social patriotism of the Second and Third Internationals. Social democracy, in the world war of 1914, following its previous opportunist line, adopted the slogan of "defend the fatherland", which, in reality, means support of the imperialist robbers and a shameful betrayal of the working class. Under the pretext of defending the fatherland, social democracy had utilized its influence over the workers for the defense of their own oppressors and exploiters. As in 1914, so now, on the eve of a new imperialist world war, the opportunism of social democracy finds its logical conclusion, its completed form in social patriotism. Now, as in 1914, social democracy stands ready to offer its services to the imperialist government, to persuade the workers to play the role of cannon fodder in the coming world war for the interests of their exploiters. This readiness of the social democracy for a new betrayal of the workers is a living refutation of the contention that social democracy reformed itself or can be reformed. The workers must split away from it. It must be exposed and crushed as an enemy of the workers.

A still more dangerous obstacle in the path of the proletarian revolution is the Third International. As in the case of the Second International, the opportunism of the Third International, under the regime of Stalin, beginning with the opportunist theory of "Socialism in one country", completed its degeneration in its maneuvers with France and the League of Nations, and Ethiopia in social patriotism. Giving up the Marxian idea of the permanent revolution, that is, the extension of the revolution in one country to others replacing it with military alliances with imperialist powers as a defense for Soviet Russia, it calls upon its sections in the imperialist countries with which the Soviet Government allied itself, to stand by their imperialist governments in the coming world war. The Soviet Government, under the Stalinist regime, became an active participant in the League of Nations, controlled by the allied British-French imperialism, preparing for and participating in the coming world war on the side of British and French imperialism. The Third International plays the same role

of betrayal as played by Social democracy in 1914 and at the present time.

The social patriotism of the degenerated Third International must be exposed, its hold on the workers must be broken, its influence must be destroyed in order to free the path to the proletarian revolution, to achieve the task of turning the imperialist war into civil war.

5. The Communist International, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, emphatically rejected "the opinion that the workers could carry out a revolution without having an independent political party of their own". The International Communist League, under the leadership of Trotsky, has deviated from this fundamental principle. Starting from the correct premises that both the Second and Third Internationals degenerated beyond the possibility of reform, continuing with the equally correct conclusion that independent revolutionary parties must be organized and a new, Fourth International should be created, it made an opportunist turn, liquidating its sections into the parties of the Second International. Unless this opportunist turn, splitting up the revolutionary forces united in the ICL and confusing and alienating revolutionary forces outside of it, also confusing leftward moving workers in the Second and Third Internationals, is repudiated and corrected the ICL cannot be an instrument for the building of the Fourth International and will face the danger of further degeneration. In preparing ourselves for the great task in the coming imperialist world war, we should combat energetically both internationally and nationally this international policy of liquidation of revolutionary groups and parties into the Second International.

6. One of the major and most urgent tasks for the Workers Party of the US is to arouse the American working class to the imminence of the danger of war, and for the defeat of American imperialism in a war. It is the French-British and the Italian imperialism that contends for colonial domination over Ethiopia. But that does not mean that American imperialism is not interested in Ethiopia. Almost simultaneously with the enactment of the neutrality law (which proclaims a temporary neutrality) it came to light that British and American oil interests had obtained important concessions from Ethiopia. In the light of this fact it is indisputable that the neutrality law was meant as a cover for preparations for the entrance of American imperialism into the conflict at the most opportune moment. Expansion, gaining control of markets and political domination over colonial and semi-colonial peoples is a vital need of American imperialism. It cannot stand aside and fold its arms while imperialist groups are in mortal conflict for a re-division of the world. It is only a question of time when millions of American workers will be called to arms to make the supreme sacrifice in defense of the interests of the American exploiters. We must prepare ourselves by building the WPUS as the independent revolutionary party of the proletariat in the US; by combatting bourgeois pacifism and the social patriotism of the Communist and Socialist parties and the SP orientation of the ICL, by liquidating the SP orientation tendency in our party and by purging the Party of social patriotic elements.



THESIS ON THE CONFLICT OVER ETHIOPIA

1. The present war is moving in the channels of the war of 1914 - 1918. The war in the Gran Chaco, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and North China, the conflict in Ethiopia - these struggles over colonies, semi-colonies, sources of the materials and markets for the export of manufactured goods and capital. As in the first stages of the war of two decades ago, the conflict may be "localized" for a time. But in the end, war must involve all the imperialist powers. The world is already divided among them. Consequently, advantages secured by one imperialist power cannot be balanced by the acquisition of new colonies hitherto un-subjected, but must be secured at the direct expense of one or more of the imperialist powers with far-reaching economic, political and strategic advantages and disadvantages respectively throughout the closely knit fabric of world capitalist society. That is the lesson of the World War of 1914-1918 and the entire post-war period. The new war will be a world war.

2. Today, the struggle of the imperialist powers centers around Ethiopia. On all sides it is an imperialist struggle. The principal powers directly involved are the United States, Great Britain, Italy and France. Others, like Belgium and Japan, are directly concerned but to a much lesser degree. On the part of all the imperialist powers it is a struggle for the untapped mineral and undeveloped agricultural resources of the Country, and political and strategic advantages in the struggle against rivals deriving from the possession and (or) development of the Country's resources and exploitation of its people. Any settlement, whether arrived at by so-called peaceful means or war, will constitute only the juridical formula for the recognition of the "rights" of one or more of the powers to exploit the wealth and people of Ethiopia in behalf of imperialist profit.

3. In the imperialist world no people, not living in a revolutionary Soviet system, is free, whatever the form of its national government and its juridical status in international law. The Cubans are not "freer" than the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Algerians or the Moroccans. The independence of the Ethiopian people is a myth. Millions live in slavery or feudal serfdom. The absolute monarchy is the oppressive machine of the landowning class. Like the government of Chiang Kai Shek, or any other colonial or semi-colonial government, it is inescapably the agent of imperialism. It can be nothing else. To all intents and purposes it has been the agent of American imperialism. Tomorrow, as the result of changes in the relations of forces among the imperialist powers, it may become the agent of another or other imperialist powers. That is the source both of its strength and of its fatal weakness. No other role is possible for it. The struggle which it makes for independence is at bottom and at one and the same time a struggle for the right to suppress slaves and serfs - tomorrow proletarians - in the service of the ruling class, and the right to serve one imperialist power rather than another. The Liberals of the world range themselves on the side of Ethiopian independence in the juridical sense and become the unconscious or hypocritical agents of imperialism.

4. American imperialism began to penetrate Ethiopia in 1903. In 1916, the present incumbent of the throne overthrew his predecessor and became Regent. Later he was crowned. His policy from the beginning of his reign has been distinctly pro-American, culminating in May, 1927, in generous offers to American capital to establish vast plantations. In November, 1927, the J.C. White Construction Company was given the right to build a huge dam across Lake Tsana, headquarters of the Blue Nile. Still later, Standard Oil became actively interested and secured the enormous concession to more than half of the wealth of the country, which the State Department cancelled for diplomatic and political reasons. The process of "penetrating" Ethiopia has been carefully slow with the result that the present developments find American imperialism without a well-established base there.

The axis of American imperialism is her world-wide struggle against British Imperialism. The manoeuvres in Ethiopia were a phase of American imperialism's attempt to establish a base on the African continent, of which the Liberian episode was another phase. In the latter case, the motive was to break Britain's world monopoly in rubber; in the former it is oil and other economic considerations, and strategic considerations in connection with British possessions in Africa. And also India! For, some day, the American imperialist colossus must strike at that giant Achilles heel of the British Empire.

5. British imperialist interest is the converse side of the same medal. American owned oil piped to the Red Sea Coast would rival the Mesopotamian oil fields. Control of Ethiopia by America would establish a powerful and dangerous American base in the heart of British possessions in Africa and threaten British Somaliland from the rear, endangering British control of the Red Sea. American control of Lake Tsana would place at the mercy of British imperialism's greatest rival the very life of Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

6. Italian imperialist interest arises from her imperative necessity to attempt escape at all costs from the unbearable agony of the crisis which wracks her, which her narrow base makes extraordinarily acute and which threatens to culminate in internal social convulsions. Her objective is to seize Ethiopia, which is the hinterland of the sterile colonies on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, without which they cannot be made profitable, connect the Eritrean and Italian Somaliland colonies in a profitable African empire of her own, with obvious strategic advantages for further struggles against all her imperialist rivals.

Italian success in Ethiopia would present British imperialism with substantially the same dangers as does American entrenchment there. In addition, the brutal course of Italian imperialism threatens to arouse the colonial peoples of the earth and strikes thus, even if indirectly, at the very heart of British "civilization" and French. Hence, the great alarm of British imperialism and her stubborn resistance.

But while Italian success would threaten British Imperi-

alism it could be achieved only by liquidating American influence in Ethiopia and destroying or greatly limiting her still tenuous base there. Consequently, the interests of the great imperialist rivals, Britain and the United States, coincide temporarily at the point of opposition to Italian aggression, and is expressed in, among other things, the joint credit blockade of Italy. There is, however, a distinct tendency in British policy to "compromise" with Italy by giving Italy a small share of what she demands - at the expense of American imperialist interests.

7. French imperialist interest revolves around her struggle to preserve her hegemony on the European continent, maintain her colonial empire and weaken her rivals. French imperialism would not be adverse to limited Italian aggrandizement in Ethiopia at the expense of the interests of British and American imperialism, but open support of Italian aggression would entail the loss of British support against German imperialist expansion in Europe. Moreover, the repercussions of Italian aggression in Africa in her own colonies and on the tense class relationships in France make caution necessary for the Gallic warmongers.

On the other hand, open opposition to Italian imperialism will involve loss of Italian support in Austria against German capitalism and risk the same consequences involved in support of Italian aggression. A stunning defeat for Italy either diplomatically or in the field of battle would threaten Italian capitalism from within the revolution with incalculable repercussions in Europe and throughout the world.

Thus, the whole of French strategy and diplomacy lies in avoiding a conflict now and making the choice between Italian and British imperialism. Her support of Britain against Italy is more apparent than real. The essence of her conciliation lies in attempts to "reconcile" Britain and Italy by joint pressure on Italy and restraint of Britain, with advantages to herself at the expense of the United States. The terms offered to Italy give her a share of what she demands, gives Britain and France the decisive influence in Ethiopia through the League of Nations and practically wipes out the influence and hold of the United States.

8. All the imperialist powers are preparing feverishly for war, hypocritically masking their profit motives with the noblest and most altruistic motives, behind the cover of which they are trying to arouse a great wave of chauvinist sentiment. Italian imperialism has the most difficult job of all. As with Japanese imperialism in Manchuria, so Italian imperialism is forced, on pain of the direct internal consequences to challenge the treaties she has signed and the League of Nations and risk even the military opposition of her rivals. Consequently, the professed aims of Italian imperialism are the noblest: the abolition of slavery and the civilization of Ethiopia.

British imperialist interest coincide with the juridical formulae of the League of Nations. The diplomatic and moral

advantages which accrue to her are enormous. One of the most important is that she is able to canalize the passionate desire of the English workers for peace into support of sanctions and even imperialist war in the interests of peace! At the same time that Britain fights for the sacredness of the League covenant it sends 30,000 troops in a "punitive" expedition against the nomad tribes on the northwest frontier of India, with the support of British labor!

French imperialism is achieving the miracle of making her treacherous conciliation coincide with the juridical formulae of the League of Nations, thus making easier the work of the social patriots of the Second and Third Internationals, and the work of the revolutionary Marxists much more difficult. British hypocrisy is blunt and thick; the Gallic, subtle and skillful.

The United States has adopted a formal policy of neutrality. Neutrality in a great conflict is impossible for any imperialist power, least of all the United States, which has gigantic stakes in every corner of the globe. Moreover, inasmuch as neutrality is understood to mean no positive action, it is entirely misleading. Deliberate inaction is as much intervention in a situation on behalf of one or more contestants as is positive action. Furthermore, the United States is not inactive in behalf of its interests. Through Colson, chief adviser to the Ethiopian monarchy, American imperialism stiffens Ethiopian resistance, demanding that, as in the Gran Chaco, other peoples fight its battles. At the same time, American diplomacy behind the scenes, and the authoritative capital press, demand firmness on the part of Britain against Italy and French support of Britain.

This cynical double hockkeeping enables the United States imperialists to draw behind them the workers of the country who want peace and cloak their gigantic preparations for war, by playing on their nationalist isolationist prejudices. It also enables the lynchers' government to enlist the support of the Negroes in the United States and her semi-colonies, whose racial sympathies are excited to fever pitch. This capitalist propaganda canalizes the revolutionary potentialities of the Negro workers and sharecroppers into the utopian movements for salvation in an African homeland of the order of Palestine. Garveyism has experienced a tremendous rise.

"Neutrality" is a part of the clever policy of American imperialism of "non-interference" in the colonial world: abrogation of the Platt amendment; "freedom" to the Philippines; withdrawal of marines from Haiti, etc.; while it attempts to fasten more securely on the necks of the Latin-American and other colonial peoples the yoke of its exploitation by means of investments, treaties and trade and indirect but absolute control of "free" semi-colonial governments (Cuba, Nicaragua, etc.).

Neutrality is necessary for American imperialism for yet another reason. Post-war history has richly demonstrated that alliances among the imperialist powers and groupings are

tenuous, uncertain and treacherous bargains. Each new important development has brought about new regroupments among the imperialist powers, new Judas-kissed alliances. That is the case now. The United States must have a free hand to strike new bargains according to the shifting winds of her fortunes. Should France succeed in reconciling Britain and Italy at the expense of the United States, or should the Lion of Judah find it necessary, in defense of the class rights and position of his class, to betray the "protection" of American imperialism for that of another power, American imperialism might have to execute a tactical shift in its policy and support Italian ambitions against decisive Franco-British imperialist control in Ethiopia. The policy of neutrality would permit it to make this shift without great loss of prestige among, or resistance by the bulk of the American masses,

9. The Soviet Union, in the hands of the Stalinist Bureaucracy, has ranged itself on the side of the French and British imperialists as a result of its policy of seeking to maintain the status quo. At the same time, as another phase of the same policy, it condemns as opponents of peace the oppressed national minorities of Europe. Tomorrow, it must openly extend this reactionary imperialist attitude to the colonies. In effect, it has done so already by its support of the cause of French and British imperialism in this conflict. The treachery of Stalinism coincides with the juridical formulae of the League of Nations.

10. The pacifists of all shades clamor for peace and reveal their impotence to struggle against imperialist war. Their opposition to Italian aggression on the basis of humanitarian sentiments makes them the agents of American, French, British, or other imperialist powers.

Their resistance to Italian imperialism boils down to this: that they defend the sacred "right" of the Ethiopian people to be oppressed by the monarchy and by American or French or British imperialism or even by Italian imperialism, but they deny to imperialism - today, Italian imperialism - the "right" to conquer this first sacred "right" by military force.

11. Defense, including military resistance, against imperialist aggression, is the elementary right and duty of any people or race. But it can be carried to a successful conclusion only if it is a revolutionary defense directed against all imperialist and all their agents. In Ethiopia that includes the monarchy and the landowning class.

The monarchy can be an ally in the struggle against imperialism, but it cannot lead the struggle through to the end. To defeat aggression it must arouse the entire people including the enslaved. At the point at which the struggle for freedom begins to turn against the monarchy and the class of which it is the representative, the latter will seek support among the imperialists against its own people. Revolutionary defense against imperialism must proceed through the channels of accentuating the class struggle in Ethiopia, preparing for the over-

throw of slavery, serfdom, and the monarchy.

12. It is a law of the Permanent Revolution that only the proletariat can lead this struggle to a victorious conclusion by uniting behind it all the oppressed, in the end, against all the oppressors. That applies to the entire world in the imperialist epoch, mother-imperialist and colonial countries as well.

But in Ethiopia there is no modern industry of consequence and only the rudiments of a proletariat. Does that signify that the Permanent Revolution is false? Not at all. It signifies that in the absence of an Ethiopian proletariat the task devolves directly upon the world proletariat. We cannot predict the form which the intervention of the world proletariat will take, the geographical point of origin, nor the national section of it which will directly assist the Ethiopians to emancipate themselves and industrialize their country. These things depend upon world developments and the progress of the world revolution.

13. To-day, the key to the problem is the revolutionary action of the world proletariat against imperialism, particularly the Italian and French against their own bourgeoisie, and the support of the oppressed peoples of colonial Africa and the world. The main ally the Ethiopians have against Italian imperialist aggression and for freedom from all oppression and exploitation, is and can only be the world proletariat. But the colonial masses of Africa, Asia and Latin America, can strike powerful blows in defense of the Ethiopian people, for their liberation, by struggling for their own freedom. Imperialism sits on a volcano. It can and must be blown off.

14. Neither the Second nor the Third Internationals can organize the international working class boycott of Italy, lead the struggle for the defense of Ethiopia, the liberation of its people, the freedom of the colonial peoples and the overthrow of capitalism. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie against the proletariat and the colonial peoples. Social patriotism is their official policy. They must be destroyed.

15. The organization of the boycott and concrete positive assistance to the Ethiopian people must be carried through against the Second and Third Internationals. The struggle for freedom is the task of the Fourth International, which must be built in irreconcilable struggle against social patriotism and the social patriotic organizations. The revolutionary Marxists all over the world must place in the very center of their work and agitation the right of the colonial peoples to determine their own existence, the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism as the only solution for imperialist war and freedom for oppressed colonial peoples, and pitilessly purge their ranks of all those who extend ever a little finger toward social patriotism. "A Socialist" (read revolutionary Marxist today) "of any of the oppressing nations...who does not recognize and does not struggle for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination...is in reality not a Socialist but a chauvinist." (Lenin).

16. One of the most important roles in this struggle falls of necessity to the Italian proletariat with the support of the peasant masses. The strategy of the Italian proletariat must be the strategy of Lenin: struggle in Italy for the liberation of Eritrea, Somaliland, Dodecanese Islands, Libya, mutinies in the army, revolutionary defeatism, civil war, soviets, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Unfortunately, there is no Marxist party in Italy. One must be created. That is the task of the Fourth Internationalists. Unfortunately, the tiny chromosome of that party, the Italian "section" of the International Communist League has entered the Italian Socialist Party to fight for organic unity of the SP and CP. We must begin again from the ground up - this time on Lenin's line - and we must work quickly.

On the French proletariat, too, falls a central task in the struggle against imperialist oppression and war. The delicate situation of French imperialism creates favorable opportunities for the revolutionary action of the French workers. The international position of its own bourgeoisie is one of the most important factors in the strategy of the revolutionary internationalists. Unfortunately, in France, too, there is no Marxist Party. The SP and CP have placed themselves unreservedly at the service of the Bourgeoisie. In France, too, the Marxist party must be created from the ground up against tremendous obstacles. For the embryo of that party, The French Communist League liquidated itself organizationally into the SFIO on the eve of the present situation, and has since pursued an opportunist policy in the question of building the Fourth International, which has vitiated and is nullifying its attempt to combat the social patriotism of the SFIO and CP. And, like them, but for different reasons, it has failed to raise sharply the question of the freedom of the colonies.

The position of British imperialism also creates opportunities for effective revolutionary action. But here, too, there is no revolutionary party. The British Trades Union Congress has voted for sanctions, that is: for war against the rivals of British imperialism. The Labor Party has also voted for sanctions. The Fourth Internationalists are dispersed in the ILP and the Labor Party. In England as in Italy, we must begin to create the revolutionary party from the ground up.

17. In the United States, we have the Workers Party, which must pose as its main task, in connection with the conflict over Ethiopia, the struggle of the peoples of Latin America, the West Indies, the Philippines, Hawaii, Liberia and Ethiopia for the right to determine their own existence free from intervention in any form or shape by the United States. And, above all, we must pose in the very center of all our work and agitation, the struggle of the doubly exploited and persecuted Negro race in our own country for equality and freedom. The struggle for the freedom of the colonies would be a hypocritical mockery of Marxism and the Permanent Revolution if we did not struggle for the liberation of the Negroes in the United States. At the same time, it is necessary to sharpen the struggle against all forms and agents of opportunism,

particularly the trade union bureaucrats, which is preparing to lead the organized workers into the war on the side of American imperialism.

18. Concretely, that means we must put on the agenda of the Party and the entire movement for the Fourth International, the great unsolved theoretical questions of the American Revolution - the Negro question and the Latin American revolution; speed the movement for the Fourth International in the western hemisphere through its centralization by an international conference, a campaign to unmask the hypocrisy of American imperialism and its agents in the working class, and reveal its role in the colonial world and the Ethiopian conflict and its bestial suppression of the Negroes within its own borders, a merciless, systematic war against the Second and Third Internationals and their American prototypes around the issue of social patriotism and the colonial question; a conference in the United States against imperialist war and social patriotism to initiate united front action to organize a boycott against Italian imperialism; give concrete aid to Ethiopian resistance. In this way, we can extend the base of the Party generally and among Negro workers in particular and improve the revolutionary quality of the Party.

LEFT WING WFUS

October, 1935.

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Motion:-

1. In view of the immediate threatening imperialist war the Workers Party Plenum goes on record favoring the immediate calling of an international conference to fight against war and social patriotism.
2. On the adoption of this proposal the Plenum will wire Contact Committee for the Fourth International (copies to all left groups) proposing that they arrange to have their revolutionary groups in France which oppose Social Patriotism and stand on the defeatist position to take the initiative and call the international conference.
3. We propose the conference be held in Paris, Nov. 1st, 1935
4. That the call be sent to all working class organizations with special emphasis on the groups and parties which have adopted the position of the Fourth International, and second for the groups and parties that have rejected the Second and Third Internationals, and stand to the left of these two Internationals.
5. Such a conference is needed at once to:
  - a. Prepare concrete boycott of Italy and to give material aid to the Ethiopian masses.
  - b. To expose the imperialists and their agents and to create a rallying center for the independence of the working class from the imperialist masters.
  - c. To speed up the establishment of the Fourth International by crystalizing the revolutionary forces around the decisive questions of the day - War and Social Patriotism.

Fesky, Ochler, Stamm, Streeter



THE CENTRIST RESOLUTION ON THE WAR QUESTION OF  
THE UNPRINCIPLED CANNON-MUSTE-WEBER BLOC.

(1) The centrist opportunist character of the line of the leadership of the Party on the vital question of the imperialist war, which has already begun with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, can be clearly understood by considering their resolution, published in the NEW MILITANT of October 5th, in connection with ours which they voted down and refused to publish in the NEW MILITANT (which we publish in this issue). A comparison of the two resolutions will show that theirs is nothing but a statement of generalities. There is no concrete analysis of the conflict from the point of view of the interests of the leading imperialist powers, especially that of "our" own bourgeoisie. Consequently, there is no discussion of the new alignment among the chief imperialist powers and their satellites, which is taking place around the Ethiopian conflict, which is vital for the policy of American imperialism and for the American revolutionary movement. Our resolution makes a concrete analysis of the roles of Italian, French, English and American imperialism.

(2) There is no analysis, discussion or statement in the bloc's resolution of the interest and role of American imperialism in this conflict. Consequently, there is no exposure of, no key with which to expose concretely American imperialism's "neutrality" and colonial policies. And as a result, the resolution fails to define our tasks as revolutionists in connection with the struggle.

By its total failure to raise to the center of political propaganda and action the struggle against the hypocritical "neutrality" and colonial policies of American imperialism, the resolution lays the basis for a chauvinist policy. Failure to expose and struggle against the "neutrality" policy is failure to combat the wave of national chauvinism which the American imperialist state is raising under the screen of neutrality and gives objective support to the social patriots in the labor movement generally and in the Workers Party. Our resolution lays the political basis for a campaign to expose the role of American imperialism.

(3) The bloc's resolution makes no analysis of the class structure and class struggle in Ethiopia in relation to the present conflict and its perspectives. There is no analysis or discussion of the role of the oppressing and downing class and its "executive committee", the monarchy, from the point of view of its present temporary progressive role as an ally in the war of defense, and its past and tomorrow's treacherous and reactionary role as agent of imperialism. The lessons of the Chinese Revolution, the laws of the Permanent Revolution in the colonial sphere are erased - by omission. The resolution's defense of Ethiopia in this vital sector of the international proletarian revolution is, therefore, indistinguishable from the "defense" of outraged humanitarianism, bourgeois liberalism, and Negro nationalism. The resolution fails to lay a basis for combatting the great wave of national chauvinism which is sweeping the Negro masses of this country and which enables the lynchers' government to draw the Negro masses behind it, thus facilitating its war preparations. This failure is, of course, a reflection of the opportunist policy of the leadership of the Party in avoiding a solution of

CENTRIST RESOLUTION ON WAR QUESTION -2-

the Negro question and attacking the Left Wing which advanced one in theory and practice. Our attempt to put the Negro question on the agenda of three Plenums was blocked by the Cannon-Weber-Muste forces. Our resolution, which concretizes the lessons of the Chinese Revolution in terms of the Ethiopian conflict, was voted down by the bloc.

(4) The centrist character of the resolution appears clearly in the question of revolutionary scientism. The words themselves are not used in the resolution of the bloc. Our resolution states the Leninist concept clearly. This is a highly significant fact. It is necessary to bear in mind that we are not discussing an article for popular consumption which might require simple English. Even in that case one should think twice before using substitutes for the classic terminology of Marxism. The full significance of this omission can be realized only when it is understood that what is involved is a resolution which should seek every means to make its ideas clear. The established names and terms are not the smallest asset in this respect. Failure to use them can mean only a concession to backward prejudice, which in reality is the first step, or can become the first step, in an attack on the idea itself.

That is the case with this resolution. The concept itself as a clearly defined idea is missing. There are formulations which can be interpreted to imply the idea. But these formulations can also be interpreted against the idea. In short, we have here typically centrist formulac. A few quotations from the resolution will make it clear: "The W.P. calls for the defense of the Ethiopian peoples against Italian aggression, for the defense of the USSR, for unrelenting struggle against the coming imperialist war. But for this defense and this struggle, the W.P. calls at the same time for the sole means by which they can be, in fact, conducted: for the independent and autonomous action of the working class - - - - It is the independent sanctions of the working class; its own boycotts, strikes, defense funds, mass demonstrations, that can aid the battles of the Ethiopian peoples - - - - for the defense of the USSR and the struggle against the approaching world war, it is only the independent action of the working class together with its allies under its leadership which gives hope to the working and exploited masses - a struggle not in collaboration with the bourgeoisie through the national state, but in ever sharper attack against the bourgeoisie and the national state. The struggle against war - - - - is an integral part of the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. The struggle against imperialist war means the day by day building of working class strength, means - - - the intensification of class conflict and the preparation to turn the imperialist war into a civil war for the overthrow of the bourgeois state and the victory of the workers." (Emphasis in the original).

Compare these formulations with the precise words of Lenin: "Revolution in war time is civil war. Transformation of war between governments into civil war is, on the one hand, facilitated by military reverses ('defeats') of the governments; on the other hand, it is impossible to strive in practice towards such a transformation without at the same time working towards military defeat. The 'slogan' of defeat - - - - alone means a consistent appeal to revolutionary action against one's own government in war time." (Lenin's emphasis). This is clear

CENTRIST RESOLUTION ON WAR QUESTION -3-

enough and is a sufficient demonstration of the centrist character of the resolution.

The formulations of the resolution mark a development to the right in the essential question of the struggle against imperialist war. Contrast the centrist ambiguity of the resolution with the formulation of the Declaration of Principles of the Party: "Under no circumstances, will the W.P. give any support, directly or indirectly, to any war conducted by the capitalist government of the U.S. On the contrary, it will actively fight such a war and work not for the 'victory' of the capitalist government but its defeat."

The October issue of the NEW INTERNATIONAL formulates the question correctly. In the article on the Ethiopian question there is to be found the following correct idea: "Defeatism, that is: the work for the defeat of their own government and thereby the preparation for converting the imperialist war into the civil war - there lies the task of the Italian proletariat - - - ." (Our emphasis). It is written from the point of view of the tasks of the Italian proletariat. But it is equally valid for the tasks of the international proletariat in all the imperialist countries when they become belligerents in imperialist wars, colonial expeditions, etc. It applies, of course, to the American proletariat.

What is said in the article is not said in the resolution. How explain it? Does it not disprove our criticism? No! Paradoxically enough, it proves what we say. The article was written in Paris by a foreign comrade in September before war broke out. The resolution was written by an American comrade in New York after war broke out. C.E.D.

(5) In one other question the resolution reveals its centrist character. The resolution concludes with this entirely correct idea: "The struggle against imperialist war is the struggle for socialism, the struggle for socialism is the struggle for the Fourth International, for the world revolution." This is generally and correctly understood to mean new parties in the capitalist countries. But in the section which discusses the relation of the USSR to the impending world war draws only this conclusion: "The struggle against imperialist war requires the constant exposure of the foreign policy of Stalinism." This is correct. But it is not enough. The resolution avoids the question of a new Marxist party in the Soviet Union. This evasion is only a continuation of the policy of evading that question which is a concession on the part of the Cannon leadership to right wing and semi-Stalinist elements in the Party, who are opposed to that idea, against the Left wing, which has been fighting for it. That is why there has been no propaganda in the Party press for a new party in the Soviet Union.

(6) The resolution as a whole lays a theoretical base for the opportunist line which the Party press has presented and will now continue to advance. The centrist character of the resolution can be fully appreciated only when studied in the light of the line presented in the Party press.

Let us take first the NEW INTERNATIONAL, the theo-

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particularly the trade union bureaucrats, which is preparing to lead the organized workers into the war on the side of American imperialism.

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Besky, Ochler, Stamm, Streeter

tical organ of the revolutionary Marxist, Fourth Internationalist force in the United States. The Ethiopian question has been on the agenda of world politics as a burning issue since February. In those eight months the NEW INTERNATIONAL has carried only two articles, one written in February was published in the May issue and one written in September appears in the October issue! Both were written by foreign comrades. The Workers Party has written nothing itself on the theoretical side.

The first article, written by a member of the International Secretariat of the International Communist League, advanced the following theses, which are not related to each other: (1) " - - - the nub of the present conflict must be sought - - - in the competition of these various powers (France, England, Italy) in assuring themselves the seizure of Ethiopian resources; (2) the conflict over Ethiopia is primarily a phase of the "Anglo-Japanese commercial struggle on the world market." The author raises a question as to whether Italy is not acting as an instrument to execute the Anglo-French-Italian treaty of 1906?! He speaks of the "operations which Italian Fascism has undertaken" with the complicity of France and England"!! There is no correction of this totally false analysis in any later issue, not even in the article in the October issue. The resolution likewise fails to correct this small error because it makes no concrete analysis of the conflict itself in failing to define the stakes and roles of the imperialist powers.

The article in the October issue waves aside entirely the question of the class struggle in Ethiopia in its relation to the present conflict: "It is not, in truth, a question of the Ethiopian slave trade nor of the social structure of this feudal monarchy." That is to say, it is not a question for those who have turned their backs on the colonial revolution and the Permanent Revolution. But for the slaves and serfs in Ethiopia, who are struggling for freedom and must confront the monarchy tomorrow and its inevitable treachery, and for revolutionary internationalists all over the world it is a very real and important question, in truth.

The author of this article is worthy to be the author of the resolution. With unruffled composure and criminally bad judgment he wrote (in Paris!) in September: "The interest that another imperialism may (!! ) have in the defeat of Italy need not be examined here. There will be time for that when the war has actually broken out." !!! Unless we are much mistaken, the author of this gem is also a member of the International Secretariat of the International Communist League. He wonder the French Bolshevik-Leninists in the SFIO received no directives from their international center for a struggle against the colonial policy of French imperialism and for the struggle against the social patriotic support of that policy by the bureaucracy of the SFIO!!

The line of the NEW MILITANT has been even more brazenly opportunist. When the conflict first became acute, the NEW MILITANT rejected articles on the subject written by comrade Williamson, because he was fighting with the Left Wing for a Marxist position on the Negro, Ethiopian and other questions. To be sure, the policy of rejecting material submitted by Left Wingers has not been confined to comrade Williamson. All of us have been impartially treated in this respect.

On July 13th, the NEW MILITANT carried the nearest thing to an official statement by the National Committee, a long agitational editorial, under a typically bourgeois liberal head, SHALL ETHIOPIA PERISH?

As in the resolution, which followed it by three months, there is no analysis of the role of any imperialist power, including Italy! The League of Nations is denounced in general and historic terms. The resolution at least shows that the comrades who piece together the Party's line wake up to the fact that the League is being used "to serve the ends of British imperialism." This idea is missing in the editorial. Nothing is foreseen. It is recognized only when it has come to pass.

Barron as it is of any concrete value the resolution nevertheless manages in a welter of words to present a false line on a very important question. The editorial lists three allies of the Ethiopian people: "the Italian workers and peasants"; "the workers of the entire world"; "the African masses themselves." The colonial and semi-colonial peoples of Asia and Latin America are omitted entirely! The relations in which the allies of the Ethiopian people stand to one another is not discussed. Consequently, the editorial fails to emphasize the elementary truth that the world proletariat is the decisive ally. On the contrary, the weight of the editorial falls on the "black and brown masses of the entire (African) continent" as the main ally. That is how Trotsky's epigones revise his teaching!

The NEW MILITANT of July 20th indulges in as neat a piece of Negro national chauvinism as can be found in the columns of the periodicals of the Garvey and other nationalist movements. Under a blatantly nationalist headline, AFRICANS CALLED TO THE COLORS, and an equally opportunist sub-head BETTER DIE FREE THAN LIVE AS SLAVES, SELASSIE SAYS, nationalism runs amuck. "Tribesmen of all Ethiopia are prepared to drop the ploughshare and seize the sword to drive back the Fascist marauder and preserve the independence of their nation. To a man, they responded to the battle-cry of Haile Selassie, who exhorted them with the appeal: 'Better die free than live as slaves!'" The rest of the article discusses the situation in Italy. So low has the NEW MILITANT sunk. The resolution not only does not correct the NEW MILITANT but provides a theoretical base for the continuation of this policy.

On August 31st, the NEW MILITANT wrote: "What is involved at the present moment is not an evaluation of the merits (!) or demerits (!! ) of Haile Selassie and his regime; what is important is that Ethiopia is a weak and backward nation which has a right in having its national independence safeguarded." How does this differ by one iota from the line of Negro national chauvinism of plain American bourgeois liberalism? Is Ethiopia under Selassie nationally independent? Is Cuba nationally independent? In what sense? Only in the juridical sense. Both countries are economic vassals of imperialist powers, as are all colonial and semi-colonial countries in the imperialist world. Only through the international proletarian revolution and Soviet republics can they attain real independence. But for that it is necessary to agitate against the "merits" of the Ethiopian monarchy and the class of which it is the representative. The

NEW MILITANT, like the resolution avoids entirely the important question of the problem of the struggle in Ethiopia against all imperialism and all its agents in the absence of a proletariat. Our resolution answers the question generally. It is impossible at present to predict the exact form of the solution. But it is necessary to apply the laws of the Permanent Revolution. The opportunist leadership of the Workers Party ignores the question; we answer it.

(7) The resolution is false in yet another important question: It falsely describes the present situation of the revolutionary internationalists as being superior to their situation in 1914. It bases this idea on two points: (1)\* the Second and Third Internationals have announced their betrayal beforehand; (2) "in 1914 the internationalists were an organized force in only one nation - - - Today, organized groups of revolutionary internationalists exist in nearly every nation, and are actively forging the parties of the Fourth International." - - - -

This reasoning is false. It is true that the Second and Third Internationals have announced their betrayal beforehand. And it is true that this should constitute a great advantage for the revolutionary internationalists. But this is offset by (1) the world-wide revolutionary defeats under Stalinism and the disintegration following the German debacle; (2) the growing movement for organic unity, which the resolution overlooks entirely, as does the policy of the leadership; (3) the decline and disintegration of the ICL around which revolves the struggle to build the Fourth International, decline and disintegration which are the direct result of its new orientation, of liquidating its organizations into the social democracy with the perspective of transforming it into an instrument of proletarian revolution. The opportunist leadership not only fails to combat this revisionist orientation but endorses it as the Party line, thus committing the Party to support an opportunist policy in the question of building the Fourth International. The situation is far from hopeless, but the sad truth is that the revolutionary internationalists are in a weaker position than Lenin was in 1914.

(8) The adoption of this resolution by the membership alone would signify the end of the WP as a revolutionary organization. Its adoption by the leadership stamps the leadership as opportunist, centrist. That will be the line of the Party press from now to the Convention scheduled for December 26-29th. Unless the membership repudiates and rejects all of the Third Plenum decisions: War question, French turn, SP orientation, internal question and the bureaucratic convention arrangements, the Party is doomed as a revolutionary organization. The opportunists and bureaucrats go full steam ahead toward ruin. Tomorrow, social patriots will sprout in the opportunist soil which they cultivate with their resolutions. Possibly, they will combat the social patriots. That would alter nothing essentially. They would be only the victims of their own opportunism. The labor movement is rich in such bitterly ironic contradictions.



CENTRIST RESOLUTION ON WAR QUESTION -7-

(9) In all of the questions on which the resolution of the unprincipled bloc gives a centrist position, our resolution gives a Marxist position. It is enough only to compare the two resolutions.

T. STAMM.

## THE NEW TURN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE IN THE LIGHT OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL PATRIOTISM.

To speak today of the imminence of imperialist war is commonplace. Liberals, pacifists, reformers, socialists and revolutionary Marxists all say that the war danger is at hand. But at this point they part company. Revolutionary Marxism does not agree with these other forces as to the struggle against war even though Marxists attempt to utilize them to the fullest extent in concrete action against war. At least one thing is sure: the war question is the crucial test by which to separate the revisionists from the revolutionary Marxists. All groups and programs are being put to the acid test by the events that are taking place since the German debacle.

Before war actually breaks out in armed conflict the most powerful forces within the camp of the working class are already exposed as social patriots. The experience of the vanguard and the class in the last world war period enables the vanguard to forecast now, more accurately, the groupings on the eve of the armed conflict about to take place. The Second International and the Third International have been tested and have been found wanting. The Stalinists have joined the social democrats in throwing to the winds the defeatist position so ably presented by Lenin and have adopted in its place the position of social patriotism.

To the parties and groups that have proclaimed the need of the Fourth International and are working in this direction this fact is well known. But this, in itself, is not enough. We must be sure that the forces rallying around the banner of the Fourth International are firm and clear on the war question. In a series of other documents presented by the Left Wing of the Workers Party we have dealt with the other aspects of the "French turn". Now, we want to examine the new turn of the ICL in the light of the struggle against social patriotism. This article is an introduction to the subject.

The new turn of the ICL, which liquidates its sections into the parties of the Second International, is negating the struggle carried on by the ICL against social patriotism. This aspect of the negative features of the new turn of the ICL is not as clearly marked as is the disintegrating effect this turn has upon the ICL itself and its attempt to build independent parties and the Fourth International. A revision or deviation from Marxism in one important question, if not corrected in time, will lead to errors in other fields. It is no accident that the followers of the new orientation in the different countries outstrip their leader, comrade Trotsky, in their opportunist road to the masses.

A glaring and ominous example! The Cannon caucus, the driving force in America for the "French turn", have already shown signs of weakness in the fight on the war question. Several of the outstanding examples, since the inception of the Party, against which the Left Wing has fought, follow:

On the heels of the fusion the Party received information that the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of Cuba was preparing for an insurrection. The Left Wing comrades presented a resolution and a series of motions to the Party on this question. Our analysis agreed with that of the Cuban comrades that a revolutionary situation was maturing, but we criticized the

program adopted by the Cuban comrades, especially their bloc with the petty bourgeois terrorist Young Cuba group.

The Cannon group, in the Political Committee, tried to push the question aside. After two weeks' discussion and attempts to get the Political Committee to act to aid the Cuban comrades, the PC finally passed a motion which, although correct in an abstract sense, took the teeth out of our resolution and motions. At this meeting Cannon and Swaback admitted that they did not even read the Cuban document. Shachtman and West tried to claim that we were "alarmist" and that they did not think the situation was as serious as we presented it.

After the motion was passed we were unable to obtain action on it. Articles for the Party press and confidential material to the branches were never printed or sent out. A proposed campaign was never organized. The revolutionary situation matured and the Workers Party under the Cannon leadership did nothing - was found wanting. Later, the convention of our Cuban comrades admitted most of our criticism and the International Secretariat of the ICL also had to admit the correctness of our position. But to no avail. The aid to the Cuban workers, as well as a CONCRETE way to fight WAR and AMERICAN IMPERIALISM in the UNITED STATES, was passed up. We have ample documentary material to substantiate our arguments, which we will publish in a subsequent issue.

The second important event that passed over the heads of the leaders of the Party was the Saar plebiscite. Shachtman was still waiting for articles from Europe when the vote for Hitler took place. Before the event and on the eve of the plebiscite, we demanded a national campaign. After arguing for weeks the most the Left Wing could get out of this was a mass meeting in New York and an article in the press by Eiffel which the editor, comrade Cannon, first held up for a week.

In the meantime, the war in the Gran Chaco flared up anew and a whole series of articles and special documents from the comrades in South America on the scene were presented for publication. The bulk of the material only saw the editor's waste basket. However, the right-winger, was editor part of this time, but later under comrade Cannon, as well as Shachtman and West on the NEW INTERNATIONAL, the struggle against war fared no better.

By this time, the Ethiopian situation was in embryo. Over a dozen articles, presenting Marxian analysis and showing the relation of American imperialism to this conflict, were presented. All but about two of these articles reached the editor's waste basket! Later on and after the event, non-Marxian articles appeared in the NEW MILITANT on the Ethiopian situation. At the Pittsburgh Plenum the right wing and the Cannon caucus ridiculed the Left Wing comrades, and especially comrade Williamson, for their "alarmist" position on Ethiopia. They even went so far as to counterpose the picket-line to a discussion and fight on the Ethiopian question. In New York, the Cannonites carried this a point further and stated that comrades raised these questions about Cuba, Ethiopia, etc. - "about which they know nothing" - in order to get out of doing work in New York, and that one

strike in New York was worth all of this rubbish.

Only after the whole bourgeois press took up the Ethiopian situation, and after it fell down on the Party's head, did articles appear and a half-hearted attempt was made to get into the united fronts already started. The Party could have taken the initiative, but instead started writing articles that any bourgeois press could accept without editing.

On Cuba, Saar, Gran Greece, Ethiopia, and other issues, the Party could have presented the case before the event, and organized campaigns. Instead, by rejecting the position of the Left Wing (or by adopting motions under pressure that never were carried out), the Party acted only when the event was obvious to all. The Party usually trailed along with the general analysis presented by the average working class press.

What is said about the above questions relating to war can also be said about the Russian question after the Kirov affair. The contrast between the Oehler and Shachtman resolutions, published in INTERNATIONAL NEWS #6, on this point, tells the story in itself.

Since then there have been new developments in different parts of the world. Outstanding among them was the war threat when Germany left the League and began re-arming. Articles presented by the Left wing were again rejected and the NEW MILITANT carried no Marxian analysis of this event. "Factual" reports culled from the bourgeois press was the face of the Party to the workers on this issue.

For weeks, the NEW MILITANT failed even to mention the passing of the "neutrality" law by the Senate. A Marxian analysis of the meaning of this law and its relation to America's preparation for war is an elementary duty of the Workers Party. Not so under Cannon's editorship. The whole thing passed over the heads of the Cannonites as it does over the heads of others of their stock. Only in the last few weeks have there been passing references to it.

In this period of months, while the editors were suppressing CONCRETE articles dealing with different phases of the war question and war developments, they were carrying ABSTRACT articles against war.

Of the articles printed, some were forced through before the event. At other times, abstract articles on war replaced CONCRETE articles which were submitted and rejected, and at other times war articles appeared after the event on subjects upon which Left Wing articles were rejected months before. Further, many of the late articles are non-Marxian. One has only to refer to the series of recent articles on Ethiopia.

It will be argued by some that these 'incidents' are exceptions or isolated questions. That is not so. Consider the circumstances! The group that dominated the Party in this period (the past eight months) advocated the "French turn" and in the fight against war the policy of this group has not been the exception in the life of the Party but has prevailed since the fusion.

Consider, in this connection, how the Party handled the question of the Socialist Party of the U. S. To be sure, there have been occasional articles of criticism. From the Left Wing standpoint, however, these articles have strengthened the Cen-

trist leadership (Militants plus Zam and Gitlow) over the rank and file in the Militant and RPPA groups. Besides this important point, you will not be able to find in the Party press any systematic criticism of the Socialist Party (Militants, right wing, or otherwise) on the question of social patriotism. There is the issue that must be used to win the rank and file away from these centrist leaders - but not so under the Workers Party leaders who advocate the "French turn". The new orientation of the ICL enables Cannon and company to condemn the social patriotism of the Stalinists (correctly so) but warps their fight against the social patriotism of the Socialist Party. Such a "fight" helps such "communists" as Gitlow and Zam and prevents the Workers Party from reaping a harvest.

Our policy, which the left element in the SP also holds to, is to give the left a split policy. Cannon's line is to give them a policy expressed in his slogan "Deeper into the S.P." You cannot fight the social patriotic position of the SP when you do not give the left element a split perspective. This stultifying dilemma is the fruit of the "French turn".

Thus, from every angle, and specifically in this connection on the question of war and social patriotism (SP policy, American neutrality law, Germany, Kirov, Ethiopia, Gran Chaco, Saar, Cuba), the Workers Party under the domination of Cannon piles up its oninous self-indictment.

Just prior to the new turn of the ICL, the International Secretariat presented a draft thesis written by Trotsky, WAR AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL. This is dated January, 1934. We received it in the United States about the same time we heard the rumbles of the new orientation. We must repeat again what we said then about this draft. On two of the most important questions it is at fault. The position presented on the USSR and the League of Nations is unsatisfactory. The thesis leaves a loophole which justifies the position of Stalinism in joining the League of Nations. The theoretical premise for joining the League of Nations is contained within the thesis - the section dealing with the USSR and imperialist combinations. In this concrete situation - the joining of the League of Nations - the thesis must state clearly that it was a fatal mistake. The thesis fails to do this. To deal abstractly with imperialist combinations, when this concrete situation is involved, does not clarify the situation.

The sections dealing with Defeatism and the Imperialist War present a formula that does not in the clearest positive way present the defeatist position. This section must contain a clear-cut formula which states that our task in a war is to defeat our own imperialist power. We are informed that the section dealing with defeatism owes what left weight it has to the pressure of comrades such as Bauer and others who now oppose the "French turn".

In this section, the relation between the slogan for "peace" and "defeatism" is not brought out correctly and can therefore easily cause confusion. The slogan of "peace" should be subordinated to the struggle to defeat one's own imperialist government, but one cannot find this in the thesis.

Further investigation of the effects of the new orientation upon the struggle against social patriotism reveals more startling evidence. The literature of the ICL in the main stands on the position of defeatism. But the liquidation of its independent sections into the Socialist Parties in many countries, the opportunist road to the masses taken in other countries, where entry into the social democracy is not possible, and the advocacy of organic unity, negate the struggle against social patriotism.

It is one thing to have a correct position against social patriotism. It is of equal importance to see that the organizational steps, and the theoretical motivations which underly them, do not wash out the correct position.

Stalinism, in adopting the theory of socialism in one country, continued for a time to propagate correct Marxist formulae on many principle questions, but in the end its false position on the Permanent Revolution negated the correct formulae on other questions. So, too, the false position of the ICL on the road to the Fourth International is negating the steps toward the Fourth International and is laying a pitfall for the struggle against social patriotism. The new turn plays into the hands of the centrists and reformists of the Second International, thereby blunting the fight against war and the struggle against social patriotism. Unless the new orientation is corrected in time it will defeat the very purpose comrade Trotsky hopes to achieve in the shortest possible time and instead produce revisionism in the ranks of the ICL that will seal its fate forever. The correction of the new orientation does not call for a tactical change in France - the organizing of a new independent party. That is only one aspect of the problem. The ICL must repudiate the theoretical motivations of the new orientation and return to a Leninist policy.

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(Submitted to the Internal Bulletin of the Workers Party September 15; not published).