

# Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin

vol. XVII, no. 9

December 1973

60¢

## CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>LETTER FROM RICHARD MITTEN TO THE YSA NATIONAL OFFICE</u>	3
<u>LETTER FROM GEOFF MIRELOWITZ TO RICHARD MITTEN</u>	4
<u>THE LTF-- IS IT SIMPLY AN UNPRINCIPLED CLIQUE OR SIMPLY AN INEPT AMALGAM?</u> , by Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	5
<u>THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE USED TO BE DEFENDED BY THE SWP LEADERSHIP</u> , by Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	6
<u>COMRADE RENNHACK'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN</u> , by Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (At-Large)	8
<u>VIETNAM AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION</u> , by Mark Lause (Internationalist Tendency), Houston Local	9
<u>THE LTF AND THE NEW MASS VANGUARD OR MR. MAGOO "LOOKS" AT POLITICS</u> , by Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	15
<u>CANNON'S AMERICAN THESIS AND THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES DOCUMENT</u> , by Richard Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	18
<u>COMRADE MILT ALVIN VERSUS THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION ON THE QUESTION OF THE NEW MASS VANGUARD</u> , by Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	22
<u>ENTRYISM AS SEEN BY COMRADES HANSEN AND PENG-- A LITTLE HISTORY FOR THE RANKS OF THE LTF</u> , by Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local	24
<u>DEAD SKUNK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD: THE DECAYING CENTRISM OF THE YSA</u> , by Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill, N. C. (At-Large) and Paula Westfall, Bloomington Local (Internationalist Tendency)	33
<u>OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FROM THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY</u>	39
<u>LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO RICHARD MITTEN ON THE CONVENTION AGENDA</u>	41

Page 2 :

was blank in the  
original bulletin

- Marty April 2014

LETTER FROM RICHARD MITTEN TO THE YSA NATIONAL OFFICE

Rich Mitten  
Internationalist Tendency  
Chicago Local

YSA NO  
New York

Dear Comrades:

You will find enclosed in this package the following contributions to the YSA pre-convention discussion:

1. AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
From the Internationalist Tendency
2. THE LTF--IS IT SIMPLY AN UNPRINCIPLED CLIQUE OR SIMPLY AN INEPT AMALGUM  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local
3. VIETNAM AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION  
By Mark Lause, Houston Local
4. THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE USED TO BE DEFENDED BY THE SWP LEADERSHIP  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local
5. COMRADE RENNHACK'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN  
By Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill (At Large)

6. THE LTF AND THE NEW MASS VANGUARD OR MR. MAGOO "LOOKS" AT POLITICS  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local
7. COMRADE MILT ALVIN VERSUS THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION ON THE QUESTION OF THE NEW MASS VANGUARD  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local
8. ENTRYISM AS SEEN BY COMRADES HANSEN AND PENG--A LITTLE HISTORY FOR THE RANKS OF THE LTF  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local
9. DEAD SKUNK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD: THE DECAYING CENTRISM OF THE YSA  
By Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill (At Large), and Paula Westfall, Blomington (Ind.) Local
10. CANNON'S AMERICAN THESIS AND THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES DOCUMENT  
By Richard Mitten, Chicago Local

We understand that it is LTF tradition to sign for things, so we trust you will not mind signing and dating the reception of these contributions.

Comradely,  
s/Rich Mitten  
Internationalist Tendency

cc: file

December 16, 1973

LETTER FROM GEOFF MIRELOWITZ TO RICHARD MITTEN

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Sta.  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
December 17, 1973

Dear Comrade Mitten,

On December 16, Comrade Hedda Garza, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, delivered a package to the YSA National Office on behalf of the YSA Internationalist Tendency. This package contained ten different documents for publication in the pre-convention discussion bulletin. Seven of those documents were signed by you. Together they added up to 145 pages of manuscript copy, including many pages that were not typed in the triple-space format required for written contributions to the bulletin.

The next day, December 17, the final day for submitting written contributions to the discussion, the National Office received several more contributions from supporters of the Internationalist Tendency totaling nearly 200 more pages, many of them again typed in the incorrect format, making them much more difficult to be prepared for the bulletin.

This manner of proceeding on the part of the Internationalist Tendency can only be interpreted as an open provocation. The intent of this action was to make it impossible for the National Office to print your contributions, thus giving the Internationalist Tendency a dishonest "horror story" about the undemocratic procedures of the YSA leadership. Why else, for example, did you, the "National Coordinator" of the Internationalist Tendency, withhold seven separate contributions until the last possible moment? Obviously the primary consideration was not to get your views out to the membership as quickly as possible but rather to put an obstacle in the way of preparing the bulletin and thereby create a scandal about your views being suppressed.

We do not intend to respond to your provocation. The National Office has taken extraordinary measures and has placed four additional comrades on our staff to meet the final printshop deadline for our bulletins.

Your actions in reality show contempt for the membership of the YSA. (Not to mention the contempt it shows for the comrades who have to actually type the bulletin and prepare it for the printshop. At the very least you could have tried to conform to the guidelines of typing all documents at triple space.)

The Internationalist Tendency was not interested in bringing its views to the membership or allowing YSAers around the country to respond in the bulletin. Further proof of this is the fact that the counter-political resolution of the Internationalist Tendency was not submitted to the National Office until December 12, just five days before the final deadline of a ninety-day discussion.

The National Office had repeatedly explained in telephone conversations with you the problems that would be caused by the late arrival of the IT resolution. We explained that we had to receive your counter-resolution at least several days before December 11, the date that we would turn in to the printshop the last bulletins that would be printed in time to be mailed out to the locals. You assured us you would meet this deadline and agreed to make sure it arrived by December 8. You then simply ignored this agreement.

The facts in this matter are clear and the membership of the YSA can draw its own conclusions about the political seriousness of the Internationalist Tendency.

Comradely,  
s/ Geoff Mirelowitz  
YSA National Office

THE LTF--IS IT SIMPLY AN UNPRINCIPLED CLIQUE OR SIMPLY AN INEPT AMALGAM?

By Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

We have recently been informed that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction will not be able to present a counter political resolution for the American Trotskyists to vote on in preparation for the world congress. This added to the fact that the LTF has no alternative resolution to the IEC majority's document/resolution "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" and the fact that the only document which the LTF does stand on is the "Balance Sheet on Latin America," a document that is a lot of things, most of them bad, but is not a resolution, give the LTF three strikes at the bat. This faction, oft times referred to as fiction, poses itself as ready to replace the present leadership of the International but refuses to allow anyone to take it seriously since it has no line it can recommend to the cadres of the world movement as what to do next. Like a group of old fogies, they have written gobs of documents on what not to do, however, they reach an impasse when the questions of what line and what perspectives the world movement is to carry into the next two years. While this type of method might be all right for a group such as the late unlamented International Committee to Reconstruct the Fourth International, it is totally out of place for those who are, and have been, constructing the Fourth International.

It was announced to the comrades in Chicago (and I would imagine all over the country) that the LTF would be writing a world political resolution, as far back as May 1973. Just a week ago, the convener of the LTF in the Chicago area, announced, when questioned on the delay in the promised document, that no one need worry--it was on the way. However, it is now apparent that the convener, Comrade Pat Grogan, is not told what the leadership of the LTF is doing--that is assuming that the leadership of the LTF knows what it is doing. This inability to lead is ironical when one considers that Comrade Jack Barnes made such a big thing in his talk at the recent SWP convention about "The duty of a leadership is to lead." Possibly Comrade Jack was talking to himself, caught up in another of his now famous "Pollyanna-like pipe dreams."

Well, unfortunately talking to himself won't provide Comrade Barnes or his co-factionalists with resolutions that they can bring to the World Congress. We suggest that the problem might lie in the fact that Comrade Jack did not talk to his co-factionalists prior to their forming a faction so as to find out whether they had a common world-political view. For instance on questions such as "China"--"Maoism"--"Stalinism"--what are the collective views of Comrades Barnes, Moreno and Peng? Anyone familiar with the past views of these comrades knows that Comrade Moreno is out of place in this gathering. However, what is the relationship of forces inside the LTF? That is, how many votes does Moreno have and how many does Peng have? Well, there goes the Barnes-Peng position on China-Maoism and Stalinism as a recommendation in an LTF political resolution. Of course maybe Comrade Moreno

might be persuaded to change--since it seems he never holds any one position more than a year or two. But maybe this is not his year to change on this question?

Or what is the position on the Worldwide Student Radicalization Document, the political production of the Barnes SWP leadership? Here we would assume that it is Comrade Jack who is odd man out in the company of Comrades Moreno and Peng who prefer a more workerist type of propaganda. We get a certain indication of how things are looked at in the LTF when we look at the latest document on Women's Liberation that the SWP and LTF has recently put out for International consumption. Gone are the euphoric paeans to feminism, no talk about the commonality of the problems of the rich matron and her maid, no slogans such as "When Women Say the War Will End it Will End." While this document is still politically and theoretically incorrect, it reflects the fact that the LTF of Moreno is not buying the same things as the SWP leadership of Barnes. It becomes apparent from the reading of the press of the PST that feminism and the worldwide student radicalization are about as far removed from them as work in the trade unions (even of an economist variety) is from the conceptions of our student vanguardists headed by Comrade Jack. Certainly when one reads the writings of Peng they will find nothing to recommend the worldwide student radicalization orientation. Peng is for doing work in the class, except that he can't tell himself that it is not his co-factionalists of the SWP who abstain from it almost in principle--while his opponents, the International leadership carry it out in systematic fashion--or it would shatter his nice serene factional world.

Consider the positions of the LTF when it comes down to the Popular Front (so-called). The SWP of Barnes terms the Unidad Popular as a "classical" popular front, while Moreno sees it as a nationalist front which is anti-imperialist. Is there anything that makes it clear that what we have here is a "classical" unprincipled bloc? No wonder they have no resolutions--there is no piece of paper that is wide enough to fit them. The principled thing for the LTF leadership to do, and in particular Comrade Jack, would be to admit that they are unable to write a common resolution on the world situation--call a halt to their factional war against the International--or at least a detente--and go back to each of their sections and dissolve their factions and attempt the more modest tasks of learning some Marxist principles and give up for the time being any dreams of replacing the International leadership. While this might seem a hard thing for these comrades to do, their ability to recognize their mistakes (particularly when the absence of any political resolutions giving their collective views throws such a glaring light on their errors) would have the support of the majority of the world cadres of Trotskyism. It would also show that it is possible for this leadership to retreat from the world of Pollyanna-like pipe dreams where masses are

seen where they are not and vanguards are missed where they are all too apparent to those who inhabit the real world of 1973. OUT OF THE FACTION AND BACK TO THE

INTERNATIONAL.

December 17, 1973

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE USED TO BE DEFENDED BY THE SWP LEADERSHIP

By Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

We live in an era when it is common knowledge that a large amount of the populace is under some form of governmental surveillance. Modern technology and the decaying social system consort to drive all the rights of free speech, assembly and even thought away. That this is reflected even in the revolutionary movement was demonstrated with the printing of the Barzman letter by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency/Faction. Of course this is not on the same scale and does not have the same class basis as the crimes of the bourgeoisie. However, in some ways it is even more shocking in that one expects this sort of thing from the ruling class, but from your own movement--a movement to guarantee the fullest in human freedoms through a social system that can provide such, you don't expect it. Then to have it presented to you as something that just happened to wind up in Mary-Alice Waters' mailbox is too much. To be treated like an idiot by the ruling class is also expected, but by a group calling itself Leninist and Trotskyist? Is nothing sacred? It would have been more honest for Mary-Alice to have said, "Look at what we stole." Since everybody knows it anyway--why not admit it? Everybody likes the brashness of a common second story person much better than the hypocritical dishonesty of a Babbitt. Indeed it would have eliminated the cynicism toward the Party and YSA leadership that will occur regardless of tendency or factional alignment. Also, when a movement such as ours begins creating the atmosphere by such things as this it plays into the hands of the real Watergaters who are only too eager to swim like a fish in such a polluted ocean. The CP became a happy hunting ground for finks and feebies only after it was already corrupted by its leadership. The Barzman letter is a reality now--the damage has been done. It has been milked for every drop of factional gain that it could bring. Fools were taken in by it and I suppose some actually believe the assertions that it proves that "a secret faction" exists. This is poppycock but try to tell a person that thinks he is Napoleon that he is not--it is difficult. Today we have the Barzman letter and no IITF world political resolution and no alternative document on Europe. Somehow I think it would have been better politically, if the time and efforts of the IITF had been spent accomplishing political tasks rather than trying to prove that kleptomania pays off.

Certainly the method as taught to new comrades would have been superior. Teaching them that political questions are worked out politically and not by exposes of a Grade B type followed up with horror stories star-

ring Barnes and Kerry, is more in our interest as a revolutionary movement.

This unfortunately is not the first time such a thing has occurred in the revolutionary movement. In 1946, Gerry Healy, then a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (a member of a minority, we might add) wrote a letter to the SWP asking them when to form a faction inside the RCP. Felix Morrow saw a copy of the letter and sent it to the RCP majority leadership. Comrade Morris Stein, then National Secretary of the SWP, answered the letter from the RCP in which they protested the correspondence of Healy. I would like to quote the answer Comrade Stein gave the RCP at that time and which we remind our present leadership:

"In your letter you say that 'Comrade Healy has of course the right to correspond with leading members of the SWP if he wishes and to say what he likes, just as you have the right to correspond with Comrade Healy.' If you grant the right to carry on such correspondence--and that is a most elementary right which nobody can deny--then you must also grant the right to carry on this correspondence without the supervision or 'inspection' of the leadership, without any censorship. In a word, individuals in the world Trotskyist movement have the same right to carry on an uncensored personal correspondence as they have within the ranks of the national parties. When Morrow stole (discovered?--R.M.) Healy's letter to an American comrade and sent it to you, he violated this right. This practice of intercepting or stealing private letters from one comrade to another and using them for the purpose of discrediting the authors or the recipients of the letters can only have the result of suppressing such correspondence, or of impelling comrades to suppress the free expression of their views, in personal correspondence for fear of a 'scandal'...

"I have letters written to me in the past which, if I desired to make them public, would do serious damage to leading individuals of our minority faction. Never for a moment would it enter my mind to do this without the consent of the authors, because here again the price paid for such a factional advantage would be too costly. It would suppress a free interchange of opinion and criticism among comrades for fear that any time someone disagreed

with me I would expose their private correspondence.

"Once you have established the right to correspond, I repeat, you must also establish the right to correspond freely, and you must condemn anyone who interferes with such a free correspondence. Otherwise the 'right' becomes meaningless." (SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1946, p. 9)

We assume that comrades who were in the movement in

those days agreed with Comrade Stein. We also presume it was not simply for factional reasons. Why was no voice among them raised against the Barzman letter expose? What has happened to them since 1946 and what has happened to our movement since 1946 that such a thing could be permitted? This episode tells us many things about the leadership that they should prefer that we did not know? Whose mail will be next?

December 16, 1973

## COMRADE RENNHACK'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN

By Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (At-Large)

It is difficult to conceive of a more heart-warming and sincere document than Comrade Carl Rennhack's "Learning about Cliques the Hard Way" (Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 3). In the manner of a modern Horatio Alger, Comrade Rennhack gives us the moving story of a young man rent by doubts, misled by villains, but finally triumphing through the intervention of kind souls (substituting himself for Alger's Plucky Ned). Consider the story which he gives us: Comrade Rennhack was a member of the Lower Manhattan YSA; there he met Comrades Hedda Garza and Frank Manning of the IT. (A sinister note enters here, as Comrade Rennhack informs us that most of Comrades Garza and Manning's work is done in "Long Island, a reactionary part of New York State." Clearly, we sense, the two comrades are up to no good.) Comrade Rennhack is alone and friendless, beset by doubts and unhappy that the SWP has rejected him. Only the smooth-talking Comrades Garza and Manning are friendly to him, filling him with even more doubts and allowing him to cry on their shoulders. Comrade Rennhack seems in danger of being swallowed up by the evil Internationalist Tendency; but no! Enter Ginny Hildebrand, the new YSA organizer. Ginny is nice to Comrade Rennhack and he begins to repent; then comes the pre-convention discussion, and the scales begin to fall from his eyes. The final burst of revelation comes with the publication of the dread Barzman Letter, which shows him that Comrades Garza and Manning are a "part of a secret faction within the world Trotskyist movement." His salvation is complete; exit Comrades Garza and Manning, their attempt to win over Comrade Rennhack (for god only knows what reason) foiled. End of Story.

It is quite possible that this contribution by Comrade Rennhack will not be the worst of the current discussion period; it certainly ranks so far as the most trivial. What is the point of all this? Comrade Rennhack's testimonial would not be out of place at a revival meeting; it certainly has no place in a political discussion carried on by revolutionary Marxists regarding our tasks in the current period. What are Comrades Garza and Manning accused of? Of allowing Comrade Rennhack to come to them "as if looking for a shoulder to cry on?" Is Comrade Rennhack suggesting that the personal friendship which once existed between him and Comrades Garza and Manning was somehow a part of the nonsensical "secret faction" which skulks about the world, out to wreck the SWP? (One imagines a "Garza Letter," in which Comrade Garza reports to the International majority that "all is proceeding well with the recruitment of Comrade Rennhack." It's only too bad that Comrade Rennhack left the IT before we taught him the secret faction knock and whistle.)

The final absurdity of the Rennhack testimonial comes when he solemnly alleges that Comrade Garza referred to members of the so-called Leninist-Trotskyist Faction as "them." He adds (with a straight face): "One of Trotsky's major criticisms of the Workers' Opposition (WO) in 1921 was their referral to the Bolshevik leadership as 'they' and themselves as 'we.' Will the IT supporters go the way of the ultraleft WO? I hope not, but I can't guarantee that they will not" (p. 32).

Comrade Rennhack, what other pronoun is there in the English language for those of us in the Internationalist Tendency to use to refer to members of the IITF? If Comrade Garza had used the word "us," considerable semantic confusion would have resulted. The difference between the Bolsheviks and the WO ran a bit deeper than their use of pronouns. In fact, many of his IITF comrades seem to have tumbled after us into the new of ultraleftism; in his "In Defense of the PST," for example (YS Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 3), Comrade Vaughn Hogikyan of the IITF says: "The IEC majority supporters slosh through murky water in their quest for reformists. They will learn that all they see is their own reflection" (p. 28). Ignoring the rather confused imagery, it would seem that Comrade Hogikyan has repeated our "us" and "them" mistake; worse, Comrade Andrew Pulley, in his "World Movement Report" (YS Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 2) speaks of the IITF as "we" and the IT as "they" on page after page (see, for example, p. 5). Are Comrades Hogikyan and Pulley doomed to follow us down "the way of the ultraleft WO?" Then who will be left in the YSA? (My own personal usage is to use "we" when referring either to the IT or to the actions of the YSA as a whole, and "they" when referring to the IITF, a group of which I am not a member and which I do not support.)

I would hope that Comrade Rennhack's letter marks the end of this sort of unvarnished nonsense. We have honest political differences which are serious and far-reaching enough without the resort to maudlin ramblings about how the IT done Carl wrong. The IITF has inevitably fallen back on slanders about "cliques" and "secret factions" and "unprincipled blocs" and every other excuse to avoid honestly and rationally discussing the issues at hand. Does Comrade Rennhack really want us to take turns dredging up atrocity stories (for we could tell him some stories about cliques which would, I suspect, startle him a bit)? I doubt it; I hope that the IITF leaders in the YSA likewise wish to avoid such a degeneration and seek to avoid future fables of the sort submitted by Comrade Rennhack.

December 16, 1973



## VIETNAM AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

By Mark Lause (Internationalist Tendency), Houston Local

This contribution should not be considered a line resolution of any sort for the Internationalist Tendency. It is our opinion that the discussion on Vietnam and the nature of the VCP is just beginning, and the attempt by the I/IF leadership to use their Vietnam "orthodoxy" as a bludgeon against the International majority can do nothing to clarify the debate on Vietnam. The following article, then, is a personal evaluation of the issues discussed, and does not represent the views of the Internationalist Tendency as a whole.

### I. Introduction

At the August 1973 convention, the SWP leadership made a last ditch attempt to appeal to Trotskyist orthodoxy, supposedly embodied in the tradition of the International Committee. On the defensive during the discussion of the American and European situations, and stalemated on Latin America, the Barnes leadership attempted to counter-attack with the Vietnam issue. It hoped to rekindle the factional lines and atmosphere which had surrounded the discussion on Stalinism during the 1953 split. While exposing this maneuver as a factional ploy, we should nonetheless deepen our understanding of the Vietnamese revolution and clarify the issues involved. At bottom, we are dealing with no less than the question of the proletarian revolution in one of its first concrete manifestations.

This discussion, of course, should not lead us astray from the concrete and urgent tasks of defending the Indochinese revolution in its crucial phase. We would refer comrades to the Internationalist Tendency's counter-political resolution presented in the SWP discussion for an evaluation of the current conjuncture in Vietnam, and the solidarity tasks of revolutionaries. In fact, a theoretical insight into the dynamics of the Vietnamese revolution and its leadership should enhance our ability to intervene effectively around this question. At the same time, the knowledge of the concrete developments in Indochina, that we can gain from the solidarity work, should be a valuable gauge of our theory.

The first and obvious question which arises in relation to Vietnam is: How has the Vietnamese revolution been able to persist against the tremendous array of imperialist might used there? And the second question for revolutionary Marxists: How could this have been achieved under the leadership of a party apparently of the same school as the CPSU, and definitely not a Trotskyist party? The attempt to reverse the first question, which the SWP leadership frequently makes, for internal purposes only, by asking instead, "Why is the Vietnamese revolution taking so long to win," merely postpones the problem. For after one has stated that there is no conscious revolutionary Marxist leadership, and that there are some unusually favorable factors, which also exist in other colonial countries, one is still left with the fact that, here, despite the concentrated repression, the masses have been led by this leadership to the consolidation of the workers state in the North, and to the threshold of decisive victory in the South.

Similar questions were raised in relation to the "social overturns" in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, and the buffer states. In each discussion, there were in general two trends at first. One resisted recognizing the real qualitative leap in the class nature of the state, because of its divergence from the norm of the Russian Revolution. The other grasped that aspect of reality, but eliminated the problem by short-sightedly adapting to the non-Marxist leadership. In the case of Vietnam, the Marxist discussion of the concrete unfolding of the revolution was initially overshadowed by the horror of the murder of the Vietnamese Trotskyists. Later, it was postponed by the apparent freeze in the situation, and finally by the urgency of the tasks of solidarity.

Shortly after the 1945 events, the Fourth International put out a brochure in French, by Ahn Van and Jacqueline Roussel, entitled "National Movements and the Struggle of the Classes in Vietnam." This pamphlet reiterated the basic Trotskyist understanding of the laws of permanent revolution applied to Indochina, as they had been programmatically developed during the 1930s. It did not include a full discussion of the meaning of the still recent events. Until 1954, there were some general articles dealing with the question. At the Third World Congress, the organizational report mentioned the transfer to Vietnam of several tens of comrades. As

whole, Trotskyists tended to analyze the situation in Vietnam through analogies with Yugoslavia or China. For example, Moreno, in his 1967 article on the Chinese Revolution, has a chapter on Indochina, indicating that the VCP was more Stalinist than the CCP, because of its ties to the French CP.

Most recently, with the likelihood of an NLF victory drawing closer, there has been a new round of discussion opened. The Sterne position tends to see a decisive break of the VCP with Stalinism, and basically approves of the VCP's current practice. It considers that the VCP aims at resisting bureaucracy in the North, and establishing the workers state over the whole country. Its criticisms mainly revolve around the VCP's failure to understand the development of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, to project a revolutionary International, and to institutionalize the workers' democracy through councils. The Horowitz position sees the VCP as a counterrevolutionary Stalinist party, unwillingly forced into the struggle. It questions whether the VCP intends to establish a workers' state in the South, and calls for its overthrow through political revolution in the North. In our opinion, both of these positions give a one-sided view of Vietnamese reality, and both are partially based on an undialectical understanding of Stalinism and the social dynamics of workers' states. This contribution is intended to advance an interpretation of the events in Vietnam, and present some generalizations of the laws governing the evolution of workers' states and their bureaucratization.

### II. The Proletarian Revolution in Vietnam and its Leadership

The question of determining the origins and nature of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and of the Vietnamese Communist Party, raises many of the same analytical problems, as the parallel discussions of Yugoslavia and China. However, it is important to understand the concrete historical situation we are dealing with, before mechanically applying the Chinese model to Vietnam. The point of this brief historical review is three-fold: first, to establish that the August Revolution of 1945 represents a qualitative dividing line in the history of the Vietnamese class struggle; second, that by 1960, the VCP's autonomous power base in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, had come to overshadow its subordination to Moscow; and third, that the VCP is still basically reacting to the interests of the Vietnamese workers' state bureaucracy.

#### a. The legacy of the past

The whole development of the Vietnamese revolution represents a classic illustration of the unfolding of the permanent revolution in a colonial country. In considering the period from 1944 until today, taken as a whole, and compared to other colonial situations, one fact stands out glaringly: the absolute weakness of the Vietnamese bourgeoisie. This overriding fact, which is decisive in explaining a whole series of special features of the Vietnamese revolution, can easily be traced to the nature of the Vietnamese pre-colonial society, and the character of French colonialism.

Contrary to the dogma of most North Vietnamese historians, trained in the Stalinist school of the five stage theory of human society (primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism), Vietnam, prior to the arrival of the French, was not a feudal economy. Rather, it can best be described as a society based on what Marx called the Asiatic mode of production, and which has been generalized by some Marxists into the universal phenomenon of the "tributary mode of production." It was a society based on a confederation of village communities collectively owning the land, and paying tribute to an Emperor and his mandarins, in exchange for services rendered, that is, the organizing of projects beyond the scope of the village, usually irrigation and colonization.

The dynamic of that society was for the mandarin class to attempt to assert control, and eventually private ownership, over the land, the product of which had temporarily been assigned to them. The result was periodic peasant uprisings to re-assert the rights of the community. In Vietnam, as compared to older Oriental Despotic societies, such as India, or even South China,

these anti-dynastic revolts were particularly successful in preventing any kind of substantial breakthrough toward private property, clear up to the French conquest. There was therefore no substantial Vietnamese trading class which could have taken advantage of French colonial rule and the breakup of communal ownership. As for the peasants, it seems that this communal tradition has blended with their new aspirations as pauperized farmers to strengthen the trend toward collectivization rather than re-distribution of the land. It would be interesting to examine the 1955 peasant revolt in Nghe An in this light, i.e., was opposition to restrictions on a more radical land reform, as Feldman and Johnson claim, or kulak-type resistance to rapid collectivization really involved?

French colonial policy toward Vietnam had the effect of putting the masses of Vietnamese peasants in debt to predominantly Chinese moneylenders, and eventually giant French banks. While a small proletariat, made up of rural workers on the rice and rubber plantations, and workers in the consumer, mining and transport industries did develop, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie remained completely thwarted. The first attempts at a Constitutionalist Nationalist Party, modeled on the Indian Congress Party, took place at the same time as the working class was moving toward the formation of a Communist Party. The main bourgeois nationalist party, the Vietnam Quon Dan Dang (VNQDD), had barely taken its first bold step against the French (the only one), the Yen Bay mutiny of 1930, when it was confronted with peasant revolts and strikes, led by the VCP, of 1930 and 1931. As for the petty-bourgeoisie, it only achieved semi-political forms of organization. In the cities, the Buddhists seem to represent their main vehicle; in the country, the sects, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, captured part of that sentiment. They vacillated between the bourgeoisie and the working class, much in the fashion of the Social-Revolutionaries during the Russian revolution. So we have a miniscule bourgeoisie, almost completely compradore, faced with an increasingly organized working class and pauperized peasantry. This was the situation that the second world war acted upon as a catalyst.

#### b. Formation of Viet Minh

Founded in February 1930, from the regroupment of the most advanced elements among the nationalist and working class movements, the VCP was to find itself fifteen years later ruling over all of Vietnam, through the Viet Minh government. Events since that time have basically been the history of the resistance to imperialist efforts to dislodge the regime established during the August Revolution, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It is necessary therefore to examine how the VCP came to establish the DRV, if one is to find the key to its activity since that time.

In contrast to Communist Parties in other colonial countries, the VCP, in its formative years successfully integrated the vanguard elements of the radicalized nationalist movement and burgeoning trade unions. In Algeria, for example, the CP remained an appendage of its French counterpart, while in Ceylon, it failed to win the

leadership of the independence movement or the unions. From the beginning, therefore, it was not a mere appendage of the CPSU, and could be considered a legitimate revolutionary party of the Vietnamese vanguard, although with the incorrect policies of the Stalin faction, which held sway in the CPSU and the Comintern. Thus, the Trotskyist policy of acting as a Left Opposition could be justified not only by international considerations, but also by the Vietnamese situation, which was one where the vanguard elements, mainly organized in the CP, were following the ultra-left course of the third period.

By 1937, however, the VCP had scuttled its initial program of full independence, a radical land reform, and a workers government, in order to support the French Popular Front government. This new policy, embodied in the VCP's break with the Trotskyists within the United Front group "La Lutte," was evidence of the transformation of the VCP, from a revolutionary party dominated by a pro-Stalinist faction, into a Stalinized party, serving the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy. This Stalinization did not occur without a struggle, in proportion to the VCP's real insertion in the Vietnamese class struggle, and responsiveness to its needs. A large split took place in the Saigon organization, led by Nguyen van Tao, who had worked in "La Lutte."

In the years that followed, the VCP's policy did not break out of the bounds of what could be considered a broad interpretation of the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Rousset considers that it was in this period that the VCP took its first steps away from Stalinism, in returning to the slogan of national independence, and to armed struggle, and in leading the August Revolution. Feldman, on the other hand, correctly points to the lack of any decisive break with Moscow's policy, but is himself blinded to the fundamental and lasting change which the establishment of the DRV represented, and is therefore at pains to explain the resumption of the war. Were the French merely objecting to an independent capitalist regime in Vietnam, similar to the one they had recognized in Syria and Lebanon? Or were they faced with different class forces? The latter seems to be the correct answer, but it requires a correct understanding of Stalinism as a working-class current, endowed with a dual, contradictory policy, reflective of the dual, contradictory interests of the workers' state bureaucracy toward which it is oriented.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact period (August 1939 to June 1941), opened the way for the adoption by the Viet Minh of an anti-French policy, which corresponded to the increased harshness of the war-time French colonial regime. Despite the French armistice with Germany, the Kremlin never considered the Vichy government a friendly regime. The PCF attempts to run a legal press were addressed directly to the German occupation forces. Furthermore, despite the Soviet-Japanese Pact (April 1941-April 1945), Japanese and Soviet diplomacy had experienced conflicts over Manchuria and China, and the Soviet Union supported the anti-Japanese efforts of Chiang and the CCP. A similar line applied to Vietnam, and recog-

nizing Japan as the most immediate danger, would lead to a policy of resistance against their French puppet.

From the outbreak of the war in September, 1939, the VCP seemed to have recognized these facts, and turned to a policy of national liberation and armed struggle against French rule, which included a few local attempted insurrections, and finally the formation of the Viet Minh in May 1941. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the return to an anti-fascist, pro-democracies verbiage had little actual impact due to the weakness of the Gaullist and bourgeois nationalist forces with which the Viet Minh sought an alliance. For example, the exemption of Gaullists and patriotic landowners from the land seizures applied to almost no one. Thus, due to maintenance of a Vichy regime under Japanese tutelage, the example of the Chinese armed resistance, and the non-existence of any equivalent to the Kuo-Min-Tang government, the VCP was seeking to develop armed units, based on a perspective of national liberation and insurrection against the colonial apparatus.

As a result, the Viet Minh was composed mainly of the Communist Party, its front organizations, the National Salvation Associations, and a few sects. It excluded the main bourgeois forces which were either collaborating with the Japanese or the Chinese, as the VNQDD was. When the Viet Minh truly acquired some substance after the March 9 coup, although its composition must have been predominantly peasant, it was this core and leadership which was decisive in giving it its class character. It could be compared to the Yugoslav partisans under Tito, the Proletarian Brigades, which excluded the Chetniks, and constituted an essentially proletarian force.

### c. The August Revolution

Due to the waverings of the French colonial administration as the Vichy regime in France was being replaced by the De Gaulle regime, the Japanese attacked the French on March 9, 1945, disbanded their army, and established an independent Bao Dai government, based essentially on the power of the occupying Japanese army. There has been substantial discussion among the Trotskyist sects about the correct policy the Trotskyists should have followed toward the provisional government set up after August, which they all characterize as being the equivalent of the Kerensky regime in Russia. We would contend that the period of the Bao Dai government, from March to August 1945, was the real equivalent of the Kerensky regime in Vietnam. It witnessed a continued disintegration of the traditional colonial administration, the defeat and demoralization of the Japanese armies abroad, the spread of a devastating famine, and a massive and thorough politicization of the Vietnamese masses, evidenced in the emergence of a plethora of political organizations. The Viet Minh reacted to this situation with the Historic Directive (adopted by the Enlarged Conference of the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party at Tu-son Canton, March 9), which took note of the favorable situation and set a line of preparation for insurrection against the pro-Japanese Bao-Dai - Tran Trong Kim government. During that period, nine provinces encompassing

one million inhabitants were liberated by the Viet Minh, real military units were established, and clandestine revolutionary committees were set up in the cities. In the South, the same process took place, but somewhat more independently of the Viet Minh, under the auspices of nationalists and Trotskyists. We would characterize this period, from March to August 1945, as one of emergence of dual power.

The announcement of the Japanese surrender was the signal for both a spontaneous insurrection, and a Viet Minh offensive. The Japanese forces were disarmed, the local administrations deposed, and replaced by the People's Revolutionary Committees, backed up by armed militias of workers and peasants. The exact details on the organizational form that the transfer of power took at the top level are not easily available. But it is clear that Bao Dai was forced to abdicate, and the Viet Minh Provisional Government took over the whole country. In Saigon, it had to maneuver to gain a majority of the Southern Bloc National Committee. Its policy of welcoming the British ran afoul of the Trotskyist class struggle line, and it liquidated their leaders. It did not, however, liquidate or attempt to liquidate the organs of proletarian power, but rather incorporated them into the Viet Minh. The VCP saw no contradiction between maintaining this new power, and following the deal agreed on by Stalin at Potsdam, although there seems to have been some distaste for the crassness of the French CP.

Rousset writes on page 144: "Such a dual power (as the one that lasted a few months in Russia, etc.--M.L.) has existed for nearly thirty years in Vietnam, almost without interruption" (Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien). On a formal, legalistic level, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which emerged from the Viet Minh take-over of all the local committees and armed units, was a bourgeois democratic republic. In actual fact, it represented the culmination of a successful insurrection, the resolution of a situation of dual power in favor of the proletarian force, allied to the peasantry. For one month, from the end of August to September, the DRV held the monopoly of supreme repressive power in its hands. It was driven out of Saigon and its outskirts by the British and French troops. The Viet Minh resisted this take-over by a call for a general strike which was massively followed (although the previous factional murders must have weakened a united response), and by armed struggle based on its military units. We see no qualitative difference between the Paris Commune, and the DRV, as it emerged from the August revolution. In neither case were property relations significantly altered. In neither case was the government a pure Marxist one. Yet Marx and Engels and Lenin and the whole Marxist movement have always called the Paris Commune the dictatorship of the proletariat, the first workers state. We see no reason why this characterization should not be applied to the DRV state.

The fact that this workers state was gradually driven out of Saigon in September 1945, out of Haiphong in January 1946, and out of Hanoi a few months later, did not change its class nature. In the same way, the Soviet workers state was reduced to a small territory between

Moscow and Petrograd during the civil war. In the consciousness of the masses, the DRV apparatus remained their creation, their protector, their arbiter, in a word, their state. This fact goes a long way to explain the endurance and heroism of the Vietnamese masses in their struggle, a struggle to defend and reestablish their workers' state over the whole country.

What was the political character of the VCP during the August revolution?

Rousset emphasizes the VCP's preservation of proletarian power. He sees their participation in the August revolution as evidence of a continuing break with the Comintern, (or Kominform). In particular, a speech by Giap in Hanoi, in March 1946, explains the VCP's policy at the Fontainebleau negotiations as comparable to the Bolsheviks' at Brest-Litovsk, to give space in exchange for time, while continuing to strengthen their army and administration. Feldman, on the other hand, emphasizes the conciliations embodied in the welcoming of the British into Saigon, the French into Haiphong and Hanoi, which he equates with a complete sell-out, in conformity with the Stalinist designs for the area.

The facts show that the above-mentioned concessions did not completely liquidate the gains of the August revolution. While the British were welcomed into Saigon to disarm the Japanese, they were resisted when they helped the French disband the Viet Minh government. Similarly, the populations and the Viet Minh army in Haiphong was exposed to the French reprisals, but was not disbanded: it retreated. The same was true with the occupation of Hanoi. So there is an undeniable discrepancy between the actual results of the VCP practice in Vietnam, and the guidelines laid down at Potsdam by Stalin, which included the occupation of Vietnam by the Chinese nationalists in the North, and the British in the South. Rousset considers this discrepancy sufficiently important to validate the hypothesis of a beginning break with Stalinism. However, even if we accepted this thesis that the VCP was no longer responding to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, that is that it was not only failing to follow directives from Moscow, but not even trying to base its actions on what it believed to be the desires and needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy, we must still consider the VCP as highly opportunist, bureaucratized party. Such a centrist party, when put in a situation of power, when confronted with the trends toward bureaucratization and privilege which inevitably would develop in the new workers institutions (party, army, front groups, local administration of liberated zones), would be incapable of resisting these trends, and would in fact become their mouthpiece. These inescapable deformations can only be checked by a conscious policy, based on the lessons of the Soviet experience of struggle against bureaucracy, the need for institutional workers democracy and internationalization of the revolution. It can only be checked by these policies being consciously implemented by a party rooted in the masses, free of the grip of the state bureaucracy, that is by a conscious Marxist party, a Trotskyist party.

It is not really clear, however, that such a break, comparable to the one even which led to the Tito-Stalin rift, existed in Vietnam. The Potsdam agreements laid out a kind of trusteeship by the occupants, leading toward independence. The return of the French was a first breach of this accord, which in general was drafted with little French participation. It seems that the VCP tried to adjust their policy to the new situation, which included Stalinist support to the French government, and its colonial ventures. The extent to which they believed in the durability of such a peaceful coexistence is open to question since they did preserve their own base of power, but they went through all the motions, and all the real concessions necessary to prove Stalinist good faith, much like Mao was doing in China, and Stalin in Eastern Europe. We would therefore be of the opinion that the FCP was still basically setting its policy in line with what it considered to be the basic policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, which clearly must be considered the hallmark of a Stalinist party.

It is necessary, however, to draw two points of differentiation from the Kerry-Horowitz-Feldman position. First of all, it seems to us that the Kerryesque view of Stalinism is contradictory. Of all the currents claiming to be Trotskyists, only the state capitalists view Stalinist parties as absolutely incapable of making revolutions; (the bureaucratic collectivists see them as capable of extending bureaucratic collectivism). In his "Anatomy of Stalinism," Tom Kerry defends his characterization of Stalinism as counterrevolutionary through and through (p. 4), while at the same time he and Horowitz admit to the possibility of all sorts of petty-bourgeois forces (even the evil Stalinists!) carrying out revolutions under exceptional circumstances. We would agree that Stalinists and even centrist currents can make revolutions (cf. Tito, Mao, Castro), but we must reject the concept that they represent a petty-bourgeois force. Rather, they must be seen as ultimately linked to the working-class, either through their origins, composition, and place within the political arena of their movement in the case of centrists (cf. Castro's army).

Another mistake which is explicit in Kerry-Feldman, and implicit in Rousset, is the attempt to make an ideological definition of Stalinism, to find some kind of theory (acid test) which, if it is held is an unmistakable sign of Stalinism, if it is rejected, implies a break with Stalinism. On page 10 of Anatomy, Tom Kerry writes: "The theory of socialism in one country is not Marxist, it's anti-Marxist. It's not proletarian, it's petty-bourgeois. It's not revolutionary, it's reformist. And any tendency in the world today that subscribes to this theory is, in my opinion, Stalinist!" If the German Social-Democrat Vollmar lived in the world today, that would make him a Stalinist. The theory of socialism in one country, like the theory of revolution by stages, peaceful transition to socialism, etc., is merely one of many facets of the ideology of petty-bourgeois or utopian socialism. Stalinism has no particular ideology. It borrows from petty-bourgeois socialism or from Marxism, depending on the bureau-

crazy's current needs. Feldman's demonstrations that the VCP still basically holds to the concept of socialism in one country, like Rousset's demonstration that many of their formulations represent a break from that theory, are only one and not the essential consideration in determining whether the party is Stalinist. For us, the essential criterion is that the party, as an organization with a definite and predictable social situation and political course, be basically oriented toward serving the interests of a workers' state bureaucracy.

#### The development of an independent power base

At the height of their war of reconquest, the French never effectively occupied more than the major cities and surrounding areas. Their attempts to create a new Bao Dai government met with utter failure, and they never developed a significant Vietnamese bourgeois police or army. The VCP had broken off negotiations with the French on the basis of the latter's bad faith, and organized the resistance to their expeditionary corps. The international left turn of Stalinism took place around 1948, in response to the cold war: Berlin blockade, departure of the CP from the French government, Chinese revolution and Korean war. The DRV was able to get official recognition and support from the "peace-loving peoples and governments." Toward the end of 1950 and early 1951, several massive attacks were launched on Hanoi, Haiphong, and the Red River Delta at great expense to the Viet Minh. At the local level, the VCP switched to a policy of radical agrarian reform around 1952-3. It is unclear whether there was a connection of cause and effect between the above two events. In any case, the repression against the Trotskyists continued, as a whole layer of them who had been recruited in France during the war disappeared under suspicious circumstances. With additional support from Red China, although probably not decisive, the Viet Minh was able to launch a forceful offensive against the French, which culminated in their defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

The Viet Minh went to Geneva with the goal of winning recognition for the DRV, the Free Khmer and the Pathet Lao. In the course of the conference, the Viet Minh, under pressure from Peking and Moscow, dropped these demands, and agreed to withdraw its regular units from the South. At that time, the International Committee considered this a clear betrayal by the Vietnamese Stalinists. A comparison with the situation in 1973, would show that on the whole, despite the absence of an American antiwar movement in 1954, the Viet Minh was in a better position then, given that the French were defeated, there was no Saigon regime, and the Viet Minh held an area estimated at 70% of even South Vietnam. The Geneva agreements clearly represented a major concession by the Viet Minh to the imperialists, a concession which was explained by the policy of winning reunification through elections. The Viet Minh claimed that this was a realistic possibility because they expected the United States to remain unable to intervene directly. Furthermore, they believed France would remain in a position to continue to block a U.S. take-over in the South. In fact, McCarthyism in the U.S., and France's

engrossed involvement in Algeria negated this expectation.

The U.S. began to re-build a puppet bourgeois state, beginning in Saigon, and gradually attempting to reconquer the countryside. Diem's land reform implied the re-establishment of rent and the payment of back debts, a policy which was, (not surprisingly) forcefully resisted. The VCP's policy was to counter the Diem regime with the demand that the scheduled elections be held. In the North, the means of production were nationalized rapidly after 1954. The official doctrine laid heavy stress on the construction of socialism in one country, meaning the consolidation of the North Vietnamese economy. Nothing like the Yugoslav break, or the Sino-Soviet split was yet developing.

Around 1960, a conscious reversal of this policy was taken. The local self-defense efforts of peasants and national minorities against Diem had tended to involve the lower cadre of the former Viet Minh, with the toleration of higher-ups. By mid-1960, the VCP was reconstituted in the South in the form of the Association of Veterans of the Resistance. By December 1960, the National Liberation Front was set up, with the goal of overthrowing the Saigon regime through armed struggle, and paving the way for reunification. This implied a policy decision which could not have been taken without the approval of the top leadership. As time progressed, more South Vietnamese cadres who had been in the North returned to fight, actual aid began to flow, more complex operations were conducted on a national scale: radio, union and other urban work, terrorism, regular units. In 1963, the main topic of education in the VCP was "study the August Revolution," in preparation for the involvement in the overthrow of Diem. There does not seem to have developed a political division between the PRP (People's Revolutionary Party) in the South and the Lao Dong (Workers Party) in the North. There was a time gap between the official approval by the Hanoi leadership of certain lower level actions and probably of more elaborated plans, but this did not develop into a political schism, as far as we know. The VCP, including the PRP and the LDP can be considered as a single party, and differences will probably emerge across geographical lines.

It is important to remember that this reversal took place at a time when the Soviet bureaucracy was pushing peaceful coexistence harder than ever, seeking deals with the U.S. At the same time, the Sino-Soviet conflict and Soviet support to Cuba must have given the Vietnamese CP sufficient leeway to pursue their independent course without fearing an immediate blockade like that of Yugoslavia. This independent course came to its fullest fruition with the call for a united front of the Chinese and Soviet workers' states in 1965, a call also endorsed by the North Korean and Cuban CPs. It is clear that in the eyes of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the liberation war in South Vietnam was merely another sore spot, that would contribute to obstruct and postpone the wished-for rapprochement with the U.S. imperialists. The reversal of the policy of peaceful pressuring of the Diem regime

must be seen as a sign that the Vietnamese CP was no longer responding to the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The question arises as to why the VCP set on the course of revolutionary overthrow of the Saigon regime, and reunification. A few comparisons will help to define the problem. The East German Communist Party (United Socialist Party) expended very little energy in supporting the West German CP; in fact, its efforts were directed at winning recognition for the partition of Germany. The North Korean CP has not used the various upsurges in South Korea since the armistice to launch any kind of revolutionary struggle in any way comparable with Vietnam. Part of the answer lies in the fact that Vietnam is simply much closer to the front line, much more exposed to imperialist attack, and therefore, much less inclined to accept the status quo. However, both China and North Korea, which were in the same position, have achieved a settlement with the USA. And Cuba, most exposed of all, is today playing a role, apparently as servile as that of Husak in Czechoslovakia. We believe that the answer lies in the origins of the DRV. As contrasted to East Germany and North Korea, the DRV was not imported through the Soviet Army, but the product of a genuine popular mobilization. The safety of the DRV has rested basically on its ties to the Vietnamese masses, and has therefore made the question of the liberation of South Vietnam a vital one for the preservation of the workers' state. The VCP, being intertwined with the DRV workers' state, naturally seeks to consolidate and stabilize its base. In our opinion, the VCP has the goal of establishing a workers' state over all of Vietnam and is actively pursuing this goal.

e. Is the VCP an "adequate instrument"?

The possibility of workers' states being established by "blunted instruments," under special circumstances, in particular in colonial situations should no longer be a point of contention. History has given sufficient examples of this phenomenon. What does need to be clarified is the possibility of increasing the efficiency of such an operation, through the conscious intervention of a perfected instrument. The present organizational norms of the VCP, the absence of workers democracy in the North, the program of the NLF, and the timid foreign policy of the VCP, all contribute to restricting the self-activity and confidence of the working class.

The VCP has established a workers' state in North Vietnam, and is capable of extending it over the whole country, and even of helping the establishment of workers' states on its borders. The extension of the workers' state over the whole of Vietnam seems to be its concrete goal at present. The Paris accords cannot be viewed as a sell-out. If the VCP was attempting to liquidate the bothersome Southern resistance, why not make sufficient concessions to satisfy the U.S.? Why risk another massive bombing campaign? Furthermore, events since the signing of the treaty indicate that this goal is still being pursued. The Cambodian resistance has been encouraged, although Sihanouk seems to be attempting to

play a middle road, keeping a distance between himself and the North Vietnamese. The liberated areas in the South have been consolidated, the fighting has continued, and the VCP is already denouncing the systematic violations of the Agreements by the Saigon regime, a campaign which is of course necessary in view of the facts, but which is objectively preparing the ground for a more massive resumption of offensive operations. This has involved implied criticism of Soviet policy, which seeks to hide the breakdown of the Paris agreements.

The conduct of the revolutionary war in the South, the vast popular mobilizations which it involved have obviously tended to reduce the margin of privilege enjoyed by officials, experts, managers, etc. It has also kept the VCP in closer touch with the masses. However, without a conscious understanding of the causes of bureaucratization and the means to fight it, such a situation must lead to a bureaucratically degenerated workers' state. Rousset claims that the VCP is conscious of the dangers of bureaucratization, and has repeatedly during the course of its history taken steps to combat it. However, the Vietnamese writings on bureaucracy are not qualitatively different from those of Mao, which basically corresponded to a conjunctural factional need, and actually resulted in a worsening of bureaucratic privilege since the cultural revolution. Even Stalin occasionally attacked bureaucrats who were becoming arrogant, and cut them down through purges. This, however, is no solution. The present leadership and cadre of the VCP are so closely immersed in the state apparatus of the DRV, that it is difficult to conceive how they develop sufficient objectivity to analyze the corrupting influence of their very function, and actually take steps to transform its relation to the masses.

Any elements which begin to seriously grasp the dimension of the problem will be led to advocacy of certain radical solutions: establishment of inner party democracy, workers' councils with policy-making discussion, stimulation of class-consciousness among the workers by the abandonment of the class-collaborationist program of the NLF, preparation of the international extension of the revolution by a clear break with Moscow and support to the revolutionary forces in the colonial as well as the advanced countries, support to the anti-bureaucratic forces in the other workers' states. It is difficult to measure the amount of repression which advocacy of such policies would unleash against a dissident in the VCP. We see the need for one thing, a much more detailed analysis of North Vietnamese society, and of existing rifts (pro-Moscow, pro-Peking, pro-Hanoi, pro-masses) within the VCP. However, it is obvious that the leadership of the VCP would not accept such proposals, and would therefore have to be replaced. Such must be the goal of a Trotskyist policy in Vietnam. Even if the VCP is capable of creating a workers' state in all of Vietnam, the interests of the world revolution would still require that the lessons and capital of this struggle be integrated into the consciousness of the world proletariat through the channel of a Vietnamese section of the Fourth International. This section would have the ulti-

THE LTF AND THE NEW MASS VANGUARD OR MR. MAGOO "LOOKS" AT POLITICS

By Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, so called, is not a body that is known for its ideological clarity or political unity. It therefore is not surprising that their ranks and spokespersons see the same thing in various different ways. Take the concept of the new mass vanguard for instance. This concept which was first put forward in the 1969 resolution of the Ninth World Congress "The New Rise of the World Revolution," a document that the now component parts of the LTF had no objections to and in fact voted for without amendment. Well, now this concept has them hopping in consternation. It cannot be because of the word new, for the leadership of the SWP and YSA love the word new. The new radicalization, the Unfolding New World Situation, The New Feminism, etc. are but a few examples of how our leadership loves the word new. There is nothing new about this word to the LTF. So too it is with the word mass, they used the word mass to describe any gathering over a couple. In fact they described things as mass movements where there were no mass movements at all. Witness the special discussion on the gay movement which went on for a couple of years in our movement. And what did the leadership that was responsible for the illusions in the first place decide several volumes and years later. There was still a possible mass movement but it had no national organization. No, mass is a word they embrace. Vanguard. Now this word is a traditional word for the Marxist movement and that would include its usage by the LTF as well. The revolutionary party has been described as the vanguard of the vanguard. Not as the vanguard of the masses but as the vanguard of the vanguard of the masses. Lenin and Trotsky continually spoke in their writings of the necessity of the party to win the vanguard in order to be able to give direction and to win the masses. Knowing that the working class was made up of several layers, some more advanced - some more backward, they posed the tasks of the party as first reaching the advanced layers - the vanguard if you will. So we would assume that those moderately familiar with the works of Lenin and Trotsky would be familiar with the term vanguard. Certainly this is not too much to expect from those who have given themselves the self-proclaimed title of "Leninist-Trotskyist" Faction. Then what is it that troubles our factionalists so.

They tend to take three different approaches to it, if we are to use their spokespersons as a guide.

Group Number One insists that the new mass vanguard does not exist. They would issue a Pathfinder pamphlet titled The Myth of the New Mass Vanguard. We would have to place this group into a category labeled "doltish" for

their lack of perception to reality.

The second category does recognize that there is a new mass vanguard but they are opposed to it. They would issue a pamphlet: The New Mass Vanguard and How to Fight It. This group would be characterized by its sectarianism. It sees masses of opponents here, there, everywhere. In fact they are not safe even in the meeting halls of the YSA - there are opponents there also and they are growing.

Now the third category is made up of those who recognize that there is a new mass vanguard and realize also that we should try to win it to our ideas. So far so good. However, they see that it has different component parts - different sectors if you will. So they decide that they must issue not one pamphlet but a whole catalogue of them, one for each sector. Now that would be a good pamphlet. They take the Transitional Program and proceed to issue a different transitional program for each sector. One for Blacks, one for Women, one for Gays (oops that's out - cancel), one for Students and so on. However, we notice that the more pamphlets printed the more they look the same. They all begin where the particular sector of the vanguard is and remain there. Since most are based on democratic demands -- Out Now - Community Control - Abortion Repeal, etc., this is where the sectors are and that's where we must be. We become with our pamphlets the best builders of the sectors. Now we can develop not only new transitional programs but new ideas to put in them. Ideas that Trotsky never would have thought of: Consistent Nationalism leads to Internationalism; Consistent Feminism leads to Socialism; Consistently, objectively anti-imperialist mobilizations of masses leads to a subjectively anti-imperialist consciousness on the part of the masses. This type realization of the vanguard does not require that we lead it either by raising its level of consciousness, since it will raise itself if it is consistent. Nor does it necessitate that we take initiatives in action since that might separate us from it--we liquidate ourselves into it.

The LTF leadership has in fact done just this in the antiwar movement, the women's movement, but not the Black movement or the workers movement--you see, they are suffering a crisis of leadership and when they begin to solve that then we can liquidate into that. The fact that we could consider that we might do something to solve the crisis of leadership does not occur to our leaders who are for doing "trade union" work in Argentina-Bolivia-Chile-Ireland-Spain-Greece, etc., but not here where it is really so difficult.

The fact is, of course, that the LTF here in the States does not believe in any work toward the working masses. Their conceptions are still as Comrades Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard stated in 1971:

"They (the Proletarian Orientation Tendency) also attack the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International" and our evaluation of the 1968 May-June revolutionary upsurge in France. They single out for attack Comrade Hansen's "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America" (IIB, No. 3 in 1969), which outlines the position of the SWP on the issues before the last World Congress of the Fourth International. Comrade Hansen's document centers on the central need to orient the world movement towards the radicalizing youth primarily the student youth at this stage of its development, as the next key step in increasing the cadres of the world Trotskyist movement. We reject ultraleft shortcuts flowing from the inexperience of young cadres. This was especially noted in our position on Latin America. Apparently the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency disagree. If we understand them correctly in 'The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation,' they stand for elevating colonization of unions from a tactic to a general strategy not only in the United States, but in every Trotskyist party in the world and NOW!" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 19, July 1971, "The Real Meaning of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency" by Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard, p. 12)

The fact that Barnes and Sheppard either assume that everyone else is stupid or that they themselves suffer from instant amnesia is reflected in the quote just given. In the beginning of the quote they state that they recommend the "Worldwide Youth (Let's call it by its right name--Student) Radicalization" document. They further state that they also recommend that the Trotskyist movement "orient the world movement towards the radicalizing youth, primarily the student youth at this stage in its development." If this is not a worldwide--that is, multi-continental strategy--then nothing is. Barnes would have been correct if he had limited himself to criticizing the mechanical approach of the PO document "For a Proletarian Orientation" because of its overemphasis on trade union work in this country. The fact that that document drew most of its lessons from the Hansen-Dobbs-Kerry orientation of 1953 resulted in its somewhat sterile orthodoxy--that is, the strategy of the worldwide student orientation--based almost solely on the limited experiences of the comrades in the US. Furthermore, the conceptions of these comrades, led by Barnes himself were to prove to be wrong or as Jack Barnes succinctly termed it, a bunch of "Pollyanna like pipe dreams." That the Barnes of 1973 still holds the same ideas is reflected in the fact that the "Worldwide Youth . . ." document is still being pushed forward as the main perspectives document by the LTF for the world movement. In fact it is the only perspective that the LTF offers. Overlooked is that the world situation of 1969 was totally different than 1973. From the point of view of the IMT we have seen the ascent of the

proletarian struggles, particularly in Europe. But even for Barnes the world is different. He states that the detente is the biggest change since the Cold War. This can be found in his document the "Unfolding New World Situation." Yet what does he offer as a perspective--a document written over 5 years ago. Is the Barnes' LTF incompetent, simply, or are they incompetently simple?

That Barnes does not stress this orientation for Argentina is not a political change on his part but a factional necessity. Comrade Moreno, who has changed from being a Castroist focquista to an electoralist economist, still has not adopted the worldwide student orientation--USA for the PST.

The present outlook of the LTF is to break up the new mass vanguard into sectors and then to propose a separate orientation to each sector. For instance, Moreno orients toward the trade unions in Argentina on an economist program. Barnes orients toward the students in the US on a student program (this is a bit of an exaggeration since the amount of student work being done in the US is pretty slim). Neither utilizes the program of the Transitional Program in their orientation. One, Moreno is an economist--Barnes is a neo-economist. Moreno goes to the workers with a trade union program--Barnes goes to the women's movement on a feminist program--the Blacks on a nationalist program--the students on a student program--the antiwar movement on an antiwar program that is implicitly anti-imperialist, but explicitly antiwar. If Barnes were to make an orientation toward the working class, and the next period may force him to do that (not without great difficulty with many whom he has miseducated--nor without great difficulty stemming from the lack of any previous orientation in that direction) he will do it on an economist program. (When we use Barnes, we mean the central leadership of the SWP not simply Comrade Jack.) It is this methodology which is in large part the motor force for the differences within the Trotskyist movement. The SWP leadership is unable to put forth a transitional approach--a revolutionary Marxist approach--a political approach toward that which they orient toward. They opportunistically liquidate the program in going into any movement they orient toward. Then when sectors of advanced layers of those movements rise above the limitations of the conceptions of the movement--the Barnes leadership in true sectarian fashion term them as incurable ultra-lefts and refuse to give leadership to this more advanced--if not always correct--layer. The real harm done by sectarianism is the failure of a Marxist leadership to provide leadership for the vanguard elements and thereby leave that task to others who are not equipped politically to carry out the task.

When the anti-imperialist wing developed in the movement here, the SWP should have had an orientation that would draw this wing to our banners. The SWP, because of its adaptationism failed either to provide or to develop itself as a leadership in this manner, and we saw not only the Maoists but the CP misdirect this vanguard current. The same was true in the women's movement where the SWP restricted itself simply to the reformist



abortion repeal movement and allowed the most militant woman be misdirected by others. The Black movement is different in that we never really were in it and thus were unable to have any affect on it since the death of Malcolm X. What we see in this approach is the two sides of the coin operating in tandem--opportunism and sectarianism. If pursued this will leave the SWP and YSA (what is left of it) to drift into the role of a Trotskyist sect in a world already occupied by the spin-offs of our movement: Workers League-Sparticists-Class Struggle League, etc. Maybe Barnes feels that he will be better

than they, but the fact is that even at best we would wind up as an OCI (Lambertist) or SLL (Healey) group--vying with the other sects only in whether we could shout louder than they on the dangers of Pabloism and the Fourth International. We urge the comrades to pull back from this abyss and reorient the Party and YSA to the Fourth International under whose direction and collaboration we can relearn the methods of the Transitional Program and prepare a revolutionary party that can lead the coming American Revolution.

December 17, 1973

By Richard Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

The American Thesis, or more correctly the "Theses on the American Revolution," which was presented by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and adopted at the Twelfth National Convention of the SWP held in Chicago, November 15-18, 1946, was one of the more important documents in the history of American Trotskyism. It has recently been reprinted in Cannon's Speeches to the Party and so it has not only a historic interest but a current one also. It was written in the midst of the post-war labor upsurge and projected a revolutionary orientation for the American Trotskyist movement at that time.

These theses played a role in two political fights within the Party: the one with the Goldman-Morrow Tendency and the Cochran Tendency. Morrow did pick up one weakness of the Theses--that was he, as opposed to the writers of the Theses, saw the possibility of the capitalists to stabilize their situation in the post-war world and thereby to find a way out of the crisis. He foresaw the role that the American imperialists would play in coming to the aid of the European capitalists, who were severely damaged by the effects of the Second World War. Of course it must also be noted that the Stalinists played no small role in betraying the proletariat of Western Europe and thus aiding the imperialists in escaping a grave crisis.

The role of this document in the Cochran fight reflected a certain weakness on the leadership of the Party under Cannon to acknowledge the conjunctural errors of the American Theses and thereby cling to its perspectives, long after their immediate relevance had vanished. While it might be maintained, and in a certain sense it would be true, that this document was a tremendous reaffirmation of the historic mission of the American working class, it is also true that Marxism does not depend on acts of faith but cold scientific analysis as its guide to action.

1. It would be interesting in light of the present dispute over the IEC majority resolution "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," to study the methods of the American Theses and the companion document "The Coming American Revolution," a speech by James Cannon delivered at the Twelfth National Convention of the SWP in reporting on the American Theses. We are unaware of any critical analysis of these documents by the Party leadership since then and therefore would assume that there is no disagreement with the methodology of these documents. If we are wrong on this, we would ask that this material be brought to our attention for our benefit.

2. One of the most oft-repeated charges against the IEC resolution on Europe is that it is apocalyptic. Let us look at the American Theses in this regard. The source I am using for these two documents of the 1946 convention of the SWP is the Pioneer Publishers pamphlet

of April 1947 which contained both the Theses and the Cannon speech to the Convention.

"The overwhelming preponderance of American imperialism does not exempt it from the decay of world capitalism but on the contrary acts to involve it more deeply, inextricably and hopelessly. U.S. capitalism can no more escape from the revolutionary consequences of world capitalist decay than the older European capitalist powers. The blind alley in which world capitalism has arrived and the U.S. with it, excludes a new organic era of capitalist stabilization. The dominant world position of American imperialism now accentuates and aggravates the death agony of capitalism as a whole." (Theses, p. 3, emphasis added)

Further:

"The prosperity that followed the First World War, which was hailed as a new capitalist era refuting all Marxist prognostications, ended in an economic catastrophe. But even this short-lived prosperity of the Twenties was based on a combination of circumstances which cannot and will not recur again." (Theses, p. 5, emphasis added)

In short the Theses held that an economic catastrophe would overtake the American imperialist economy in less than 11 years, that is, the time between 1918 and 1929. Continuing on this resolution stated:

"The following conclusion flows from the objective situation: U.S. imperialism which proved incapable of recovering from its crisis and stabilizing itself in the ten-year period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War is heading for an even more catastrophic explosion in the current post-war era. The cardinal factor which will light the fuse is this: The home market, after an initial and artificial revival, must contract. It cannot expand as it did in the Twenties. What is really in store is not unbounded prosperity but a short-lived boom. In the wake of the boom must come another crisis and depression which will make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison." (Theses, p. 9, emphases added)

In this paragraph, the Theses cut the time for the crisis to take place in less than 11 years. Since it would not last as long as the expansion of the Twenties, we assume that the prediction in this resolution voted on by the SWP was in ten years or less. But as we shall see it was a prediction of far shorter range than even that. The resolution was not a mere economic forecast but drew the political conclusion that:

"The workers struggle for power in the U.S. is not a perspective of a distant and hazy future but the

realistic program of our epoch." (Theses, p. 10)

The framers of this resolution took into consideration the fact that the situation in other parts of the world might be stabilized while at the same time not changing the forecast referred to above in any qualitative manner:

"But even should the revolution in Europe and other parts of the world be once again retarded, it will by no means signify a prolonged stabilization of the world capitalist system. The issue of socialism or capitalism will not fully be decided until it is decided in the U.S. Another retardation of the proletarian revolution in one country or another, or even one continent or another will not save American imperialism from its proletarian nemesis at home. The decisive battles for the Communist future will be fought in the U.S. (Theses, p. 11)

The last part of the Theses states:

"The hopeless contradictions of American capitalism inextricably tied up with the death agony of world capitalism, are bound to lead to a social crisis of such catastrophic proportions as will place the proletarian revolution on the order of the day." (Theses, p. 16, emphasis added)

In his speech to the Twelfth Convention of the SWP, Comrade Cannon laid out the time perspective he felt was realistic in the projection of the American Theses. It was not a period of 11 years, 10 years or even 4 to 5 years, but 2 to 3 years:

"Our fundamental theses on the American Revolution do not tie themselves to the economic prospects of the next month or the next year. They deal exclusively with the long range inevitable outcome of the present artificial prosperity. From the point of view of our theses it makes no difference whether the deep-going crisis begins in the early spring of 1947 as many bourgeois economists are predicting; or six months later, as many others think; or even a year or two later, as is quite possible in my opinion. Our theses do not consider immediate time schedules, but the general perspective. That is what we have to get in mind first. (The Coming American Revolution, James P. Cannon, p. 26, emphasis added)

Now to those blessed with hind-sight, it is not profound to point out that the American Theses and Cannon's predictions were conjuncturally mistaken. His economic analysis left something to be desired. However, he was not the first Marxist to be wrong in making an over optimistic prediction. The question that is raised is why this conjunctural analysis was held onto for so long and why it was defended with such vehemence seven years later in 1953 when it was surely no longer acceptable as a conjunctural projection. The analysis that the Thesis was based on was wrong; the method of projection from that

analysis, however, was not. If the analysis was correct, the SWP would have been correct in the assumptions of the tasks the Party faced within the given perspective of the resolution. Therefore the "apocalyptic" or "irreversible" formulations of the Theses would in no way justify opposition to it. Comrades of the YSA today should consider the fact that the leadership of the of the IITF and their main spokesperson in this regard, Comrade Mary-Alice Waters, state their agreement with the analysis of the general economic-political and social situation as projected in the IEC majority document on Europe. But they base their opposition to it on the basis that it talks about 4-5 years when the decisive class battles will be fought. What they should explain to us is whether they disagree with the method of Cannon in 1946 which from a careful study of the American Theses and the "Coming American Revolution" was very similar. Can we assume that their resistance to the IEC document is similar to those whom Cannon at that time excoriated for their lack of faith in the destiny of the working class and an undue faith in the ruling powers. Caught up in the routinism of existence in a society which has seen several decades of quiescence of the industrial proletariat, our IITF comrades, encased in the past, separated from Europe by more than the vastness of the ocean, see everything in the light of their own limited experiences. While the class struggle takes place in Europe in a manner unparalleled in human history, the IITF leadership rejects the conceptions that the period opened up in May 1968 in France will see the decisive battles fought in the next four to five years. Instead this faction puts forth the "Worldwide Student Radicalization" document written over five years ago and based strictly on the experiences of the American student comrades in a period of boom economic conditions. To say, as we already see the on-coming economic recession right here in the US, that this "Worldwide Student Radicalization" document is still applicable as the major guide to orienting our world movement and our European sections only underlines what the vast number of cadres of the Fourth International already know--that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is being misled by those who live in the past with their Pollyanna-like pipe dreams to keep them warm against the harsh realities they can neither understand nor cope with.

One basic ability that is indispensable for Marxists is to note the fact that things change. For the leadership of the IITF who came out of the student milieu in a period of ascent brought on by the civil rights movement, the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution, it was natural that they would be colored by their own experiences and origins on the campuses. However, they have failed to notice the lull in the movements they themselves said were "irreversible"--the "student movement," or more correctly the antiwar movement, the feminist "movement," etc., and in addition fail to notice the changed economic conditions which brought these largely student composed "movements" into being. They fail to be able to cut through the myopia of their own narrow experiences to see that we are entering into a new situation where the center stage will be occupied by the working class in battle for its survival against the

attacks of the bourgeoisie. This battle has already begun on the world scale and this is what the IEC majority document on Europe attempts to deal with. Rather than seriously seeking to aid in this process (even by proposing an alternative political line) the IWF leadership tries to dodge the issue totally and retreat into the past when the campus was the center stage and when they were student youth. More and more, one can draw the conclusion that this factional leadership does not understand where it came from, does not understand where it is at present, nor where it is going. For those in the Faction we urge that they ask for a transfer and get off this vehicle which is being driven by a driver mesmerized by his own pipe dreams that can only wind up, if not corrected, in a nightmare of disillusion for those who follow along.

3. One other criticism that has been made by Mary-Alice is the lack of projected tactics in the document on Europe. We think that Cannon answered this question very well back in 1946 and we would invite Comrade Waters to consider his words:

"You will note in your reading of the theses that secondary questions of tactics and even of strategy, with all their importance are left out. And this is not by accident or negligence, but by design. The theses deal only with analysis and perspectives--and with these only in the broadest sense--because that is the fundamental basis from which we proceed.

"Tactical questions and even questions of great strategical importance--such as the alliance of the labor movement and the Negro people, the role of the returned war veterans, the relations between the workers and the poor farmers and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the question of fascism and of the labor party--these questions with all their great subordinate importance are left out of the main theses for separate consideration in other documents. They will be considered at another time in the convention, because the correct answer to all of them depends in reality on a correct answer to the main question of general perspectives posed in the theses of the National Committee.

"Of course, a general line, a general perspective does not guarantee that one will always find the right answer to derivative questions, the secondary issues. But without such a general orientation, without this broad overall ruling conception, it is quite hopeless to expect to find one's way in tactical and strategic questions.

"The theses have been criticized already by people who deal exclusively in 'the small coin of concrete events.' We have been criticized because we 'do not mention concrete tasks' and 'pose no concrete problems.'

"That is true. But what is wrong with that procedure?

"We are Marxists; and therefore we do not begin with the small questions, with the tactics, or even with the strategy. We first lay down the governing line from which the answers to the secondary questions derive.

"Those who preoccupy themselves primarily with tactics reproach us for our procedure, and allege that it reveals the difference between their political method and ours. That is quite correct. We proceed from the fundamental to the secondary; they proceed by nibbling at the secondary questions in order to undermine the fundamental concepts. There is indeed a difference in method. ("The Coming American Revolution," Cannon, p. 19, emphasis added)

The method outlined here by Cannon is comparable in every regard to that found in the resolution "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe." The criticisms he levels at the critics of the perspectives in those days are as if they were written in direct answer to Mary-Alice's "criticisms" today. It is unfortunate that those who had learned or more aptly were taught this method by Cannon--never learned it or have forgotten it. It has made it impossible for them to teach it to those like Mary-Alice who "deals in the small coin of concrete events" and criticize because the IEC majority "do not mention concrete tasks."

If Cannon and the American Theses can be criticized and it can for a faulty analysis, its perspective was and is the manner in which a serious Marxist leadership functions. Consider what Cannon would have said to those who said 'we agree with the analysis but we have some criticisms about the lack of concrete tactics and slogans. We also think that in posing the Coming American Revolution you are posing the irreversible turn.'

4. Mary-Alice and her cofactionalists are gravely concerned with the problem of ultraleftism. In fact they raise this concern so often that one cannot be faulted for thinking that they see it as the main danger facing humanity today. Obviously they were not the first to allow their fears of change to panic them in this manner. Cannon in relating the growth of the labor movement in the 1930s states:

"If someone had predicted in 1932 at the depths of the crisis that in ten years time 10 million new workers who had never known unionism would organize themselves into industrial unions of the most modern type and demonstrate their ability to force the absentee owners of the steel and auto and rubber and other mass production industries to come to terms and not even to dare to attempt to break the strikes--the skeptics would have said: 'This is fantasy. This is ultra-left radicalism.'

"But it happened just the same."

In conclusion, the IWF presents us with no alternative to the IEC resolution on Europe--just their laundry

list of criticisms and skepticism wrapped up in the pessimism drawn from their own disillusioned perspectives of a few years ago. Failing to understand the lessons of the past as seen in the words of Cannon, they lose faith in the future even when it greets them in the present and they repeat the cliches of yesterday which have already given up the ghost (the "Worldwide Student Radicalization" document). In essence the line of the

ITF is reflected rather well by what they offer as the perspectives for our European sections to follow--nothing--nothing at all.

Out of the Faction and into the International.

December 16, 1973

By Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

The question of the new mass vanguard and the relationship of the sections of the Fourth International to it has been one of the prime differences in this discussion. It has been charged that a certain layer, at least, of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction realizes that there is a new mass vanguard and that they know that we should relate to it--even if they do not quite understand as to how. However, the bulk of the LTF has posed the question that there is a dichotomy in relating to the vanguard and relating to the masses. They contend that we never relate to the vanguard but always to the masses. This also rationalizes the orientation of the LTF to each struggle on the minimal or the democratic program. However, let us see what a leading member of the LTF stated two years ago on this question--it is not only quite correct but quite instructive not only on the vanguard but on the disease of factional blindness and factional laryngitis.

Comrade Milt Alvin of Los Angeles has for many years been a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He has served long years as a member of the National Committee and then on the Advisory Committee of the SWP. In the present debate he has been a spokesperson for the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and has continued as such after the formation of the faction. Therefore in quoting him we are not just picking some LTFer at random--this comrade is a leader and justifiably so, if we check his credentials.

Let us see how Comrade Alvin looked at the question of how the Trotskyist movement should relate to the vanguard and then comrades can judge whether this is an unprincipled faction--or not. (Unless perhaps Comrade Alvin is the leader of a minority in the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on this question--however, comrades who have recently quit that group say they know of no principled minorities within it.)

This is taken from SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 18, July 1971. In a contribution titled "Party Building and Trade Union Work" by Milt Alvin, Los Angeles Branch. The contribution was based on a speech Comrade Alvin made in debate with Comrade Lauren Charous of the Proletarian Orientation, in the L.A. Branch on July 11, 1971.

Comrade Alvin on the Role of the Party and the Vanguard

Comrade Alvin states on page 8 of this bulletin:

"One of the lessons learned long ago by our movement is that the road to the masses is through the vanguard and that trying to jump over the vanguard or going around it is a futile exercise and leads nowhere. In Cannon's books you can read the record of Albert Weisbord, who was for going directly to the masses and by-passing the vanguard which

in those days was in the Communist Party. Similarly, the Oehler tendency in our movement wanted to ignore first the Muste-ites and then the radicalizing youth of the Socialist Party, both of these representing vanguard elements in the mid-1930s. Fortunately our party did not follow these sectarian prescriptions and as a result, removed two important obstacles to the growth of the revolutionary movement in this country, the American Workers Party and the Socialist Party, as well as increasing our numbers.

"If the Trotskyists and ex-Trotskyists in Spain had done as we did, and as they were urged to do by Trotsky himself, they could have won to their ranks many thousands of Socialist youth who were rapidly becoming revolutionary and looking for better associations than their parent organization, the Socialist Party, provided. Unfortunately, they took the wrong road in this case and made no effort to join with this promising and developing tendency. This S.P. youth was the Spanish vanguard in the 1930s. As a result, the Communist Party of Spain at that time smaller in size and less influential than the POUM, the party closest to us, stepped into the situation, won over this youth and for the first time the Communist Party appeared on the scene as a sizable force in the Spanish events. You can put this down as one of the main causes for the defeat of the Spanish Revolution and at the same time draw the lesson that it is important for us to know where the vanguard is at any particular stage of development. (page 8)

Further, on page 11, Comrade Alvin states:

"To build a genuine revolutionary party in the United States it is necessary to gather in our ranks the vanguard of that revolution to come, or at least, the decisive section of the vanguard. We are convinced to the marrow of our bones that this is absolutely necessary and that it will be impossible to build the kind of party we need unless we can bring into our party whoever happens to make up this vanguard when the revolutionary crisis comes.

"It is impossible to predict just who will make up this vanguard, to predict concretely. What is possible and what we have done and propose continuing to do is to work among vanguard elements wherever and whenever they appear. When vanguard elements arise among the workers in the unions or such organizations as may be formed in the future out of the ranks of the workers, we hereby pledge, we promise and we even guarantee that we will be there. We will try to win over these workers and become influential among them." (page 11)

Clearly Comrade Alvin saw the necessity to relate to the vanguard. We assume that if it is a mass vanguard,

he would state that it is even more necessary to relate to it. The fact that it is a vanguard that we have not seen before in the same form, would not stop our orienting to it, since we make no fetish on forms. So why does Comrade Alvin's faction oppose to the point of faction this concept?

We must assume that it is either factional blindness that has brought this situation on or a disagreement not on the question of relation to the vanguard but which vanguards to relate to and how. That is Comrade Alvin and the LTF did not mind relating to a vanguard that was limited, mainly because of the objective situations, to the students but with the change in the objective situations which more and more brings the workers into this vanguard, the LTF rebels at the notion not only of relating to workers but of the conception of relating to the vanguard at all. What we think we see is a rather classic case of a leadership which refuses to make a turn in the changing objective situation and then starts to go back and revise some of its traditional concepts. In 1971 still seeing the vanguard as students only, the LTF (components) could accept the orientation to the vanguard. Now that the objective situations have matured and changed and it is no longer a student vanguard but increasingly a worker vanguard they turn around and start driving away into the oncoming traffic of their own traditions.

While the above is part of the explanation for this situation it is not the whole explanation. What is also at root is that the methodology is also at stake. The methodology of the LTF is to politically liquidate it-

self into any sector of a vanguard that they are able to relate to. Failing to relate to Blacks or workers in any manner at all--with the exception of propaganda--they only liquidate politically on paper. But with students and the movements that were primarily made up of students in their inception--the antiwar movement and the women's movement--they were able to liquidate politically not only on paper but in action. The result of this is the stress put on being the best builders of whatever movement we tried to effect and leaving the concrete duties of trying to raise the level of political consciousness to others less well equipped. In time because of the emergence of vanguards in these movements--which does not depend on us--we had no effect on them and were not looked to for leadership--since we were indistinguishable from the movement we had politically liquidated ourselves into. It can be pointed out that we maintained our organizations--the Party and the YSA. True, but they had little or no political relationship to the movements we entered and came to be looked at as simply organizational devices we would use to take control of the movements for not only to fight against opponents but to fight against the emergence of a vanguard itself, which we characterized as an opponent and treated it in the same manner. Opportunism finds its mate in the sectarian organizational maneuvers of the LTF. This is not a fluke, reality takes its revenge on those who throw away the tools of Marxism and the concepts of the Transitional Program--the program of revolutionary Marxism--a program of action not simply of propaganda. OUT OF THE FACTION AND BACK TO THE INTERNATIONAL.

December 16, 1973

By Rich Mitten (Internationalist Tendency), Chicago Local

Much has been said in the current discussion concerning the tactic of entryism. Comrades Delphin and Vergat and Comrade Jebrac have written rather critical evaluations of it and give what I consider the most helpful and politically concrete understanding of it. However, there have been other voices, those of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, which sound indistinguishable from the Healyites and Lambertists when they discuss this matter. This is, of course, no accident, since our ranks have not been educated on this question at all and if they know anything about it -- which most don't -- they are the views dredged up for factional gains of those who with Healy and Lambert made up the International Committee -- a group which split off from the Fourth International in 1953, and then after going through 10 years where that committee was largely ineffectual and impotent, the SWP correctly withdrew its political support from it and gave its political allegiance to the Fourth International. The Healyites and Lambertists remained outside and proceeded to split with each other, always using the same explanation for their more recent splits as were given for the original split in 1953 -- the fight against Pabloite Revisionism. Also in this nether-nether land of sectarian opportunists is the Lora Group in Bolivia which was, along with Healy-Lambert-Peng, a part of the original International Committee supported by the SWP. Lora in 1952 had been a leader in the section of the Fourth International in Bolivia. He supported the wing of that party which joined the bourgeois government of the MNR and took ministerial positions, though not in the most direct manner, he called for an "organic united front" with the MNR government. A government that ruled in the interests of the bourgeois state. It was left to the group of trotskyists under the leadership of Hugo Gonzalez Moscosco to carry on the struggle for revolutionary Marxism in Bolivia - a task they have carried out in an exemplary manner despite the slanders coming from all parts of the now dispersed International Committee. I mention this in relationship to entryism because despite all the criticisms, true and false, concerning this tactic - no one has ever charged that it was a tactic to either join or form an "organic united front" with a bourgeois government, as the Bolivian section of the International Committee did do in actuality. It would take a certain level of Stalinophobia that we heretofore have not given even the LTF credit for to think that joining or forming united fronts with bourgeois governments is preferable to joining Communist Parties--that is, parties led and controlled by Stalinists. Perhaps they would explain? Can we expect to see more of this, around possibly the Moreno concept of the "anti-imperialist" front, which encompasses parts of the comprador

bourgeoisie? Or the Broad Front of Uruguay, where the Moreno-offspring, the PRT-U, joined a popular front of the most classical type and even ran their candidates on the same ballot as a bourgeois general. Is this a novel way of reaching the military with our propaganda? The PRT-U comrades even became the best builders of that popular front. What kind of entryism is this? Certainly for Marxists it is sui generis. In fact it knows precedents of the type, only committed by renegades to the revolutionary movement. If the LTF leadership would spend some time studying its own history both in its IC days and more recently, it would have less time to distort the history and accomplishments of such Trotskyist groups like the POR-Combate. Perhaps Comrade Camejo would explain the value of Lora's "organic united front," Comrade Hansen its methodology, and Comrade Barnes the electoral strategy of the PRT-U and how Moreno educated these comrades. Is this the same education that the ranks of the PST are receiving?

A. Comrade Hansen on Entryism - Two years after it began.

The tactic of entryism of course was devised and used by the Marxist movement prior to 1951, but we will restrict our contribution to this period since this is where the LTF spokespersons were traumatized by it. The entryist tactic was devised at the Third World Congress of the FI in 1951 (the split in the FI took place in late 1953 with the appearance of the Open Letter of the Socialist Workers Party). The letter was written by Comrade Joseph Hansen, so we will use him as our source, he thus being accepted as kosher or orthodox in these matters. Now the speech of Comrade Hansen that we take this material from was not made in 1951 right after the Third World Congress when there might have been some confusion - but after - in 1953. To be specific, it was in March, the 21st day - 1953 and then reprinted in SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol. 15, 7 April 1953. This was about six months prior to the split letter of Comrade Hansen which denounced Pabloism and all of its forms. Keep this in mind as you listen to Comrade Hansen discuss Pablo - keep also in mind the fact that the Bliedtrau-Lambert grouping that Hansen discusses here was the group that was quickly designated as the French section of the International Committee - that pitiful attempt of a replacement for the Fourth International.

In this speech/document titled "The Challenge to Our Orientation," Comrade Hansen has a chapter titled, "The Real Views of Our Co-Thinkers." We will quote this chapter of Joe Hansen in full - to give the real views of Joe Hansen, circa 1953.:



## The Real Views of Our Co-Thinkers

If you were to single out any single item that might be classified as the main stock in trade of the faction announced by Comrade Bartell it is the claim that they represent the real position taken by the Third World Congress. They are particularly insistent that they are promulgating the genuine views of Comrade Pablo. However, they face a slight difficulty here in convincing people who have not already been deeply committed to the faction. The leadership of the world Trotskyist movement, including Comrade Pablo, do not conduct themselves in the manner of an unprincipled faction reluctant about putting down its views in black and white. The program adopted by the Third World Congress exists in the form of written documents and needs no disciples possessed of the "inside dope" to tell you what was really voted for. Comrade Pablo likewise has put down his views in black and white for anybody to read. He likewise needs no personal messenger to tip you off about his real opinions.

In my article, "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," I tried to demonstrate that neither the Third World Congress nor Comrade Pablo had altered the basic Trotskyist conception of the character of Stalinism. Today I would like to consider briefly the views of our co-thinkers on the tactical problems facing the world Trotskyist movement.

The main fact about the world situation recognized by the Third World Congress was the speed with which American imperialism is preparing for another world war, a war in which the imperialist powers constitute a coalition against the Soviet bloc and the colonial revolution. This fact had already been recognized by the Socialist Workers Party, as you can judge for yourself by reading the political resolution of our 1948 convention.

In 1948, when we recognized this, we did not draw any tactical conclusions from it for Trotskyists in other countries. The Third World Congress, meeting in 1951, did.

In view of the extraordinary speed of the war preparations and the unfavorable relation of forces facing world imperialism, the Third World Congress saw great dangers facing many sections of the Trotskyist movement -- as well as great opportunities if correct tactics were followed. The main danger is sectarian isolation from the masses. The great opportunity is the possibility of coming to the head of revolutionary upsurges in a relatively short period of time. Under the impact of war, the masses are bound to start moving; but because of the short time span, they will begin moving within the organizations to which they now adhere. In other words, the time for testing their current leadership and finding a new leadership is very short. This means that if you are separated from the masses and remain in isolation you can be by-passed. Moreover, the opportunist leadership of the masses can be expected to go considerable distances in response to pressure from the ranks -- and in the case of the Stalinist bureaucracy even give an impulse to the class struggle. This makes it difficult to expose them but it also opens up big possibilities for us if we are present when a revolutionary impulse occurs.

Under "Orientation and Tasks of the Fourth International," the Congress went down the list country by country suggesting the tactical orientation that should be followed in the period we are now in. The general line, as explained by Comrade Pablo is that "we must be capable of finding our place in the mass movement as it is, wherever it expresses itself, and to aid it to rise through its own experience to higher levels." (FI, 1952, p. 172.)

Three main variants of this line correspond to the differences in leadership of the masses in the various countries. First of all, those countries where the masses are under social-democratic leadership, Britain, Germany, Canada, etc. There, entries are called for by our forces. This tactic had already been applied in Britain long before the Congress, as everyone is aware, and it has already proved its correctness beyond dispute.

Analogous to this variant is the one in those countries where the masses are under Stalinist leadership, France, Italy, China, etc. But here the entry is of a special kind because of the character of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In France, for example, while orienting into the Stalinist-led movement, some of the comrades remain outside to help the work from this vantage point, while the press remains independent but supplements the work of the comrades inside the Stalinist organizations by writing its articles with their special needs in mind. This necessary way of working is called an entry sui generis, the French comrades being able to understand Latin better than us; we would only call it an entry of a special kind.

The third main variant is advised where the masses are not under social-democratic or Stalinist leadership and it is possible for the party to function independently. This is the variant we have followed since 1937.

Now if you agree with this tactical line then you are in agreement with the Third World Congress and Comrade Pablo on this question.

All of you, I am sure, have heard plenty of quotations about Comrade Pablo's position. I will not repeat them today. But permit me to give you one concerning the third variant that seems to be missing from the repertory of Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists: "In those countries where Stalinism is practically non-existent or exercises weak influence over the masses, our movement will strive to become the principal leadership of the proletariat in the years ahead: in the United States, England, Germany, Canada, in all of Latin America, in Australia, Indonesia, perhaps in India. The main immediate future of our movement (Pablo's emphasis) resides far more in these places than in countries where the Stalinist influence still reigns. Certain of these countries play a key role in the international situation and because of the conditions of their economic development remain favored countries for socialist construction: the United States, England and Germany. The future of Stalinism is barred in these countries. (My emphasis.) The development of our movement in the United States in particular would influence the entire course of the international workers' movement and would accelerate the crisis and decomposition of Stalinism." (International Information Bulletin, March, 1951, pp. 17-18.)

This was written by Comrade Pablo as part of the preparatory discussion for the Third World Congress. Everything he has written since indicates that he holds firmly to this position at the present moment.

#### IV.

I will now turn to my fourth and last point; a correction of some false propaganda on the danger of sectarianism that is being disseminated in the party.

According to Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists, those who are trying to defend the proletarian orientation of our party represent a clear and present danger -- the danger of inertia, of sectarianism, of Stalinophobia, of fear of being tarred with the brush of Stalinism, a fear that is "extremely unbecoming to revolutionists in the country that is the bastion and power-house of world counter-revolution and in which the Stalinists are a hounded, persecuted, despised movement." (I.B., Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 22-23.) In Comrade Bartell's opinion, "To seek for dangers of Stalinist conciliationism, of 'softness' toward Stalinism under these conditions is absurd." (p.23)

I do not regard these charges as a "frameup" but as a political challenge which I will try to answer on a political level.

#### Who Are the Sectarrians?

It is true enough that opposition to the tactical line adopted by the Third World Congress takes the form mainly of sectarianism.

In Britain, opposition to the line would obviously take the form of resistance to entry in the Labor Party where the workers in the great mass happen to be at present. As a matter of fact, the British Trotskyists had to go through a sharp struggle before they succeeded in applying this tactic.

In France, opposition to the line would obviously take the form of resistance to entry in the Stalinist-led organizations where the workers in the great mass happen to be at present. And in fact, our French co-thinkers underwent a split when a considerable part of their movement resisted undertaking this difficult and onerous tactic.

What form would opposition to the line take in America? It is obvious, it seems to me, that it would take the form of resistance to the day-to-day difficult work among the proletariat that constitutes our main orientation. How easy it is, and even pleasant, to sit in New York working out good advice for our Chinese comrades about risking their heads in order to carry on the necessary but exceedingly difficult day-to-day work required there! It is not even too unpleasant advising the French Trotskyists about the need to roll up their sleeves and not mind the slop-pail chore of working among Stalinist-dominated organizations. But the American workers -- in their political backwardness, their relative conservatism, their resistance to the world concepts of Trotskyism -- that's a different matter! We are suddenly faced with the terrible problem of "finding a political milieu in which to operate" (Bartell, Report and Tasks, p. 8) and of

course the Compass Clubs "are the most satisfactory places for work since they meet regularly, and their sole activity is political discussion." (p.8)

When you spot such an attitude in our party, you have spotted sectarianism -- the genuine unadulterated article made in the USA.

True enough, it takes an opportunist form. It looks toward the green pastures of the Stalinist petty-bourgeois circles and even babbles about the revolutionary side of Stalinism and the possibility of American Stalinism taking a revolutionary course -- but haven't we always been taught that opportunism and sectarianism are only two sides of the same coin? We need only note that Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists have provided us with a fresh living example of this phenomenon for the benefit of the newest generation of students of Marxism.

### The Bleibtreu Tendency in America

In his hasty and ill-considered first attempt at a reply to my article, Comrade Frankel asked whether "Hansen is an opponent of the conceptions of the World Congress in the French style. . ." He did not answer the question directly, stating that he would reserve it for "a full examination at a later time." Nevertheless, he implied that I am an opponent of conceptions of the Congress in the French style, that my document leaves me "in a very equivocal position" and other comrades "may have drawn their conclusion."

Pursuing this line of attack, he cited some arguments of the Bleibtreu faction and even quoted from the correspondence between Daniel Renard, a leading member of this disloyal grouping, and Comrade Cannon.

I will not charge Comrade Frankel with attempting to make an amalgam here but instead thank him for bringing up this instructive example from which all of us can learn something.

The Bleibtreu faction in France agreed with the general line of the Third World Congress in words just as the Cochran-Bartell-Clarke-Frankel faction does in America. But when it came to applying the French form of the proletarian orientation, they balked, just as Bartell and the rest balk at applying its American form.

Comrade Pablo and his collaborators called Bleibtreu to order, raising the question of Bleibtreu's orientation. The response of this faction in France should prove an eye-opener, especially to some of the comrades here in New York. You can get a taste of it for yourself by reading Daniel Renard's letter to Comrade Cannon, published in the International Information Bulletin of November 1952.

Listen to Renard's response when his orientation is challenged: "The truth is that whatever the spheres of activity of our party, nothing has given rise to the slightest criticism by any of the leading bodies of the International regarding remissness in applying the line laid down by the last World Congress." Like Comrade Bartell, when he was challenged on orientation, Renard demanded concrete criticisms of "spheres of activity."

Then like Comrade Bartell, he cites some of the spheres of activity: In youth work, application of the line "has called forth no important criticism." In trade union work the same situation, and Renard tries to show that Comrade Stevens -- pardon me, Comrade Pierre Frank -- a member of the National Contact Commission, was in "complete agreement" and therefore shared responsibility. Finally, in the central organ of the party, where application of a wrong line would surely show if anywhere, no concrete criticisms were offered by Pablo.

". . . if the leadership had really desired to carry out a different line," says Renard, "this would have revealed itself not accidentally in episodic and piecemeal cases, but in the entire activity of the party, in all spheres, daily, and at every step. Examples of such an undisciplined attitude would be so numerous that there would be no difficulty in presenting a great many of them." That's Renard speaking, not Comrade Bartell.

Now note another striking parallel. In France the devil who is pressing the proletarian orientation is Comrade Pablo. Consequently this orientation is known there as "Pabloism." And the Bleibtreu faction, wanting to carry out the American tactic in France seeks a patron saint whom they can use to fight "Pabloism." Naturally they scan the American movement where such a figure might be found and their eyes light on Comrade Cannon to whom they write, hoping for support.

In America the devil who is pressing the proletarian orientation is Comrade Cannon. Consequently this orientation has more or less become known over the years as "Cannonism." Observe closely now. Comrade Bartell and his co-factionalists, apparently wanting to apply a French tactic in America, or a reasonable facsimile of it, seek a patron saint whom they can use to fight "Cannonism." Naturally they scan the European movement where such a figure might be found and their eyes light on Comrade Pablo whom they begin presenting as if they had his support.

In the case of both Bleibtreu and Bartell, we are dealing with a sectarian grouping. They are sectarian because they resist applying the tactic fitted to the peculiar conditions of the country they live in. The resistance is to day-to-day work in the proletariat as it is and not as we wish it or as it was in upsurges of the past, or as it will become in the future. In both cases an attempt is made to carry out an orientation that takes the party away from the masses. It is done under guise of supporting the conceptions of the World Congress while in reality applying a tactic in conflict with those conceptions.

The parallel between the Bleibtreu faction in France and the faction which has risen in the SWP is a deadly one. Let me again express my gratitude to Comrade Frankel for calling it to my attention. It gave me among other things the opportunity to show by example what I mean by giving a political answer to a political challenge.

("The Challenge to our Orientation," Joe Hansen, pp. 31-36)

We trust that after having read this portion of a speech given by Comrade Joe Hansen, two years after the origin of the tactic of entrism sui generis, and six months before the split in the Fourth International, that comrades will want to go back and read about the history of the International and the party. If this performs the task of allowing the comrades who form the ranks of the LTF to be more circumspect in taking everything their leaders tell them about our history it will have been worth very much. In reading this period of party history, we are reminded that those who spoil the wells from which the cadre get their history are performing a most treacherous deed.

Not only does Hansen distort the positions of Comrade Bartell (as the subsequent unofficial party historians have done) but the amalgam he makes between what has become known as the Lambertist (Blietreu grouping) and Bartell was absurd, when you then consider that Hansen six months later joined forces politically with this group which he, as you have read above, termed "disloyal." Bartell never recommended carrying out an entrism tactic in the Stalinist Party. He, as the New York Organizer, recommended making an orientation to the Stalinist milieu in New York City only in order to break the ranks away from Stalinism. The ranks at that time were in a dissident frame of mind and certainly this was true of the periphery of the CP which is and has always been relatively larger than in other parts of the country. The fact of the matter is that the party took up the orientation of Bartell just a couple of years later, when if anything the situation was even less inviting than when Bartell first proposed it. For a true picture of this chapter in party history--and thus YSA history--we urge comrades to go back and read all the documents of this period.

Secondly, the proletarian orientation that Hansen poses as the alternative to Bartell was never carried out. The period which was one of great reaction was not the best period for it--we might add. However, this was one of the issues in the dispute: Whether to go to the masses or to the vanguard elements who could be reached. The leadership of the SWP maintained the masses approach. Here we find a similar methodological debate to one which is being raised today concerning the new mass vanguard. The world situation today is quite different--that period was one of reaction, while today is one of upsurge. However, the leadership acted in the same manner, that is as a propaganda group. One other difference is that today there is not even the rhetorical proletarian orientation, but this is explained in the change in composition of the party leadership since that time. Today the leadership is thoroughly immersed in an orientation that reflects its own past experiences, limited as they are.

The many spokespersons who have flailed the international leadership over this question of entrism have never explained the attitude of their own leadership at the time of the world congress in 1951 or in the period right up to the split two years later. They have never ex-

plained the material background of the tactic nor the fact that the SWP leadership agreed with not only entrism sui generis but the analysis of the world situation that promoted this tactic. That is the immediate imminence of the Third World War between the capitalist states and the Soviet Union. Also the blaming of the International for the expulsion of the Blietreu (Lambert) faction in the French section is another distortion made by supporters of the LTF. In actuality the SWP leadership, though prevented from holding membership in the FI because of the Voorhis Act, fully supported this expulsion as did the British section led by Gerry Healy. Those who opposed it were Ernest Germain, Livio Maitan, Comrade J., from Germany and Peng Shu Tse. The SWP leadership also played a role in bringing about a split in the British section at an earlier period which placed a minority led by Healy in control of the British section. We raise these issues because of the wealth of distortions that have been contributed to the discussions by the "historians" of the LTF.

Now that we have seen the attitude toward entrism just prior to the split in the International, on the part of a leader of the LTF, it would be worthwhile to look at the views of another leader of the LTF, five years later, in 1958, as to how he evaluated how entrism was carried out and also how the International Committee of Healy-Lambert-Lora and Peng, supported by Hansen, carried out its functions. The source of this evaluation is Comrade Peng.

This material is taken from a letter of Comrade Peng to Comrade James P. Cannon dated April 20, 1958. It concerned Peng's desires for reunification of the Trotskyist movement which Peng assumed Comrade Cannon also desired and which Gerry Healy opposed. Healy is referred to as Burns.

Peng's letter is 17 pages long and is too long to quote in full--so I will be open to the charge of quoting out of context or being selective. To this I can only urge those who are serious to get the entire letter and read it for themselves and judge for themselves. For those in the leadership of the LTF who disagree I would urge that they publish the entire letter if they feel I distort.

Commenting on the situation in France Peng writes:

"In France, within the Stalinist Party (the strongest one outside the bloc of the Soviet Union) an organized left opposition has been created for the first time in over two decades. This opposition has published its bulletins, putting forward the demand for democratic discussion within the party, and examining the origins of Stalinist ideology. Most important of all; a great number of the members of this opposition are seeking and reading Trotsky's works and Trotskyist publications, and some among them have come to complete agreement with Trotskyism in its ideology. But on the other hand, owing to the division among Trotskyists, it

is not only impossible to co-ordinate Trotskyists' action in a systematic intervention in the crisis of the Stalinist party; on the contrary, confronting the mutual attacks between hostile Trotskyist groups, especially in face of the Stalinophobe tendency (represented by the group led by Lambert) many belonging to the left opposition who agree or sympathize with Trotskyism become confused or even troubled. For instance, a militant of the left opposition once said to another militant who already adhered to a Trotskyist organization: 'Disputes and splits have been occurring among the Trotskyists themselves, so even if we agree with Trotskyism, what shall we do, in which Trotskyist organization shall we enter?' This feeling and hesitation is quite natural and rather general. Consequently, although there are a number of young militants who have already entered Frank's (Pierre Frank--RM) organization the result of the active work done by the latter in the movement of a left opposition, yet there are still many CP militants, who are in ideological agreement with Trotskyism and could easily be in our movement, who adopt an observer's attitude and even become demoralized. This constitutes not only an obstacle for the development of our movement, but objectively helps the bureaucratic leadership of the Stalinist party to ease the tension of its crisis." p. 2)

"The crisis existing in the Italian Stalinist party has of course its own characteristics, but its dimension has attained a greater proportion than in the French Stalinist Party. Numerous oppositional factions appeared in the party. Despite the fact that great confusion reigns in these groups, ideologically and politically, there exists a unanimous demand for democratic discussions within the party, criticism and opposition to the bureaucratic leadership. This situation is undoubtedly the best ground for the development of our movement in Italy. But, unfortunately, owing to the division of our movement it has not been possible to intervene effectively, this intervention being most necessary. In view of this, not only Livio's group belonging to the I.S. has been in favor of reunification, but the group who supports the I.C. is also firmly for reunification." (p. 2)

As can be seen from Peng's writings the situation in these two major CP's was a fertile ground for entry work as laid out in the tactics of the Third World Congress in 1951. Let us see how the entry was being carried out, according to Comrade Peng of the LTF.

"In reality, the best explanation can be furnished by turning to the tactics adopted by Frank's (Pierre Frank--RM) group in France in their work within the Stalinist party. As you know, according to the 'Entrism' discovered by Pablo, we Trotskyists, in ingrating ourselves into the Stalinist party, have only to push the leadership of this party to the left to have responded to the pressure of the masses than it would enter on the road of revolution. But in the

last two years, the tactics employed by Frank's organization in their work within the Stalinist party is rather the opposite. Their influence of Trotskyist ideas has caused the rank and file masses in the Stalinist party to struggle against its bureaucratic leadership, and their principle objective is to win over all revolutionary militants and to crush this party. It is precisely so that they have played an important role in the movement of left opposition within the Stalinist party and have influenced and drawn a considerable number of young militants into their organization. This is precisely the traditional position of Trotskyists towards the Stalinist party. Unfortunately, our Lambert group, having adopted an extremely sectarian attitude towards the left opposition within the Stalinist party, have gained very little from the crisis of Stalinism," (p. 4)

On page 10 of this letter Peng makes a rather interesting comment, particularly in light of the fact that the LTF is opposed to a democratic centralist international. This was directed against Pablo, but it would be the height of factionalism on my part to think that Comrade Peng meant this for only one particular individual rather than as a general rule:

"In a word, there is no material basis for our International to become bureaucratic. If we strictly observe and practice the principles of democratic centralism, we will not only avoid bureaucratic arbitrary actions, but also unprincipled splits." (p. 10)

The fact that Comrade Peng allies himself with a faction that is clearly (witness Comrade Hansen's last document) against anything but a federated International --reflects a factional bent on his part that is unfortunately not quite a new development in his actions. On page 11, Peng states that:

"It is true 'we are completely opposed to the return to the old Pablo conception of international organization,' that is the over-concentrated power in the general secretary-ship. (not simply limited to the 'draining of national section resources') And at the same time, we should refuse absolutely to have our international organization become a loose and inactive organization similar to the Second International, and which has been the true picture of the I.C. during the few years it has existed." (p. 11)

Could anything be more damning for a leader of the International Committee to have to admit that it functioned more like the Second International than a Leninist International? Yet when one studies the positions put forward by the LTF it is understandable where the conceptions came from. While Peng in this letter puts the blame on Healy (who undoubtedly deserved his share of it) what was the leadership that taught Healy his lessons doing--that is the SWP leadership? Surely they

must have realized that the international they supported was functioning like the "Second International." Why no protest? And today when they propose going back to functioning like the Second International, why does Comrade Peng not differ with them? Listen to how he describes this International Committee and see if this is the future you recommend for the Fourth International. (If you do not want this--then you have a difference with the conceptions of the LTF):

"During the four years of the existence of the I.C., it accomplished almost nothing, except in the earlier period when it engaged in the anti-Pabloist movement. On the other hand, it is far from a position of political leadership. For example, it issued no proclamation or resolution on such important historical events, the Russian 20th Congress revelations. (A French comrade was assigned to write a draft of the resolution at the I.C. meeting of March 1956, but it has never been written) What a 'Conception of the International!' It was formally decided at the I.C. meeting of Nov. 1956 that the World Congress would be convened in the summer of 1957, (I was assigned to draft the political resolution, which was sent to England in Jan. 1957, but they delayed publication till Aug. 1957), but was cancelled by the I.C. secretary without announcing any reason. Again, what a 'Conception of International Organization!'" (p. 11)

According to Peng, the I.C. after four years was able to do almost nothing. It was good in the beginning when it had the faction fight with Pablo but after that died down so did the political activity of the I.C. Let this be a warning to those members of the LTF who, caught up in the factional war they declared last August, forget that you can't live on factionalism forever. It is almost ironic to hear Peng mention that the I.C., which had such prolific writers as supporters as Comrades Hansen and Novack, to say nothing of Kerry and Dobbs, couldn't even get proclamations out on historical events. Does this sound familiar? The present leadership of the LTF can't even write documents or resolutions giving their positions in a faction fight that they consider a war. Perhaps Comrade Kerry who sarcastically berated Comrade Ernest Germain for his ability to write resolutions, ought to tell us why he prefers no resolutions so much better, since he has a history in that department. Here is a further picture of the type of organization Hansen-Kerry-Novack and Dobbs supported internationally:

"In a word, the I.C. is not a workable set-up but is very slovenly; there is no office like the I.S. to

work in collectively; no publications in which to issue propaganda material and put forward our slogans; no internal bulleting to exchange opinions and information among all sections. As far as I.C. meetings are concerned, they are not only always not held in time, but also little discussion of political questions. The resolution for preparing the World Congress was not even formally discussed. And worse there is no preparation work done before meetings (especially the preparation of the political documents), and very often the resolutions passed in the I.C. meetings are never carried out. (for instance, several discussion drafts written by the New Zealand section for the I.C. have neither been discussed by the I.C. itself nor has a decision to translate them into French and German for discussion among all the sections which was made at an I.C. meeting been carried out. The I.C. neglected this matter completely)." (p. 11)

Comrades of the LTF, is this the type of organization you wish to return to? Call a halt to the factional war that Comrade Jack Barnes declared last August. Call an end to your faction: a faction without political perspectives is doomed to failure before it starts. A faction that cannot do anything but propose to reject resolutions without providing its membership, its sections, and the world movement as a whole, with an alternative perspective is not any more serious than the I.C. turned out to be. Comrade Hansen berates the conceptions of a democratic centralist international proposed by the IMT (and Trotsky before them we might add) and yet look what he offers, a theoretical replica of the I.C. Comrade Barnes talks about the important political differences yet cannot even write a resolution giving the positions of his faction that aspires to lead the International. The reflection of the future is seen in the past of the I.C. thru the mirror of the conceptions of the LTF. No World Congress's under the I.C.--Constant delays under the LTF. No resolutions under the I.C.--No resolutions under the LTF. Factional war under the I.C.--Factional war under the LTF. Look at the leadership of your faction: Barnes, Peng, Moreno, all with their different orientations. How many resolutions can they ever agree on? Does the Second International have to be repeated again? Out of the faction and back to the International. How can you have a democratic world congress when the LTF refuses to give its views? How can the YSA vote for the LTF when it is denied the views of the LTF? An irresponsible faction cannot lead the International forward. Tell the LTF leadership to end the war and to bring their troops home now.

December 16, 1973



## DEAD SKUNK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD: THE DECAYING CENTRISM OF THE YSA

By Butch Hutton, Chapel Hill, N. C. (At-Large) and Paula Westfall, Bloomington Local (Internationalist Tendency)

To put things in perspective at the outset, we did not expect great things from the YSA political resolution. The junior LTFers of the YSA National Executive Committee are greatly hampered by being forced to rely on their own rather meager intellectual resources, unable to draw on the impressive rationalizations of Joe Hansen, the eloquent demagoguery of Peter Camejo, or the pseudo-scholarly flood of material from George Novack and Evelyn Reed. By no stretch of the imagination, however, were we prepared for the absolute sterility of this year's draft resolution; the rather extended "lull" in the student movement and the collapse of the SWP and YSA's "mass movements" have left the LTF leadership of the YSA with nothing to do but stubbornly insist that everything we did was entirely correct and that we will continue to do the same. A political resolution should assess past activity, evaluate shortcomings, reasons for them, and how to correct them, and provide guidelines for the future. The 1973 "Draft Political Resolution" substitutes smug back-patting for assessment, admits no errors, only inferentially admits shortcomings (through repeated pious hopes to do better) without giving the vaguest reasons for them, and provides only the broadest generalities for the future.

This document is not intended as an exhaustive analysis of the "Draft Political Resolution;" it is rather a first reaction to the more apparent shortcomings of the NEC document.

### The Vietnamese Revolution and the Antiwar Movement

The crucial sentence in this section of the document is the argument that "For more than eight years, the struggle of the Vietnamese masses for national and social liberation was the focal point of the world revolution." The vital word here is "was;" while to masses of people around the world the struggle of the Indochinese people remains a central source for inspiration, to the YSA the revolutionary struggle in Indochina has receded into the past, into something we used to be into. It should be recalled that last year we were told that with NPAC and SMC kaput, we would be able to put forth "our own face" on Vietnam; instead, we have discovered that the YSA has buried itself under "single issue" campaigns for so long that it no longer has its own face. Reporting on Vietnam has been virtually absent from The Militant and Young Socialist, except for occasional snide articles culled from the New York Times. While this should be the period in which the YSA would be organizing campaigns (even on a modest level) explaining the necessity of the victory of the socialist revolution in Indochina, the YSA has remained stubbornly inactive, at least on a national level. Comrades have had to turn to the Guardian to discover that fairly large and militant Indochina-related

demonstrations have taken place. The masses have lost interest in the war, we are told, and so once again the "vanguard" trails away despondently in their wake. (The resolution does say that "we should take advantage of every available opportunity to oppose the intervention of US imperialism in Indochina." It also lists a number of things we will "continue to demand"; the record of the last year indicates that the first statement is little more than cover for inactivity, while the second statement is little more than a pious recitation of issues, omitting crucial questions of how, when, where, and to whom we will demand them.)

The YSA and SWP should be organizing a nation-wide support campaign for the Indochinese Revolution, aimed at mobilizing support for the revolution to the extent possible and at recruiting conscious revolutionaries who solidarize with the struggle. Instead, we print slanders of the VCP in our press and leading members of the YSA assert that we are not for victory to the NLF because the NLF is "Stalinist."

### The Coup in Chile

This section of the resolution is permeated with words such as "tragic defeat" and "bloody pogrom," "crushing" and "slaughtering." Our goals are to "defend the victims of this savage coup" and "defend the democratic rights of the political exiles and Chilean political prisoners." There is not one word about the continuation of the struggle, not one phrase of encouragement to the militants who are organizing resistance to the Chilean fascists. The role of the Chilean people is apparently limited to being slaughtered, while the role of the YSA is to say "Tsk, tsk" and use the events as a club to beat the CP with. USLA demonstrations have refused to utilize slogans supporting the armed struggle and comrades in Washington, D. C., were censured for daring to use slogans passed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; to do this, USLA has had to ride roughshod over its independents, provoking resignations of such militants as Paul Sweezy and James Petras. (Once again, we had to read the Guardian to discover that Petras and Sweezy had resigned.) The Militant went so far as to disembowel an interview with MIR comrades reprinted from Rouge, slicing out every reference to armed resistance, on the grounds that this was "playing into the junta's hands," the implication being that the MIR is too stupid to know what to say. While various Congressional liberals have called for an end to the junta, the YSA is not permitted to use slogans calling for its overthrow, apparently because this would "narrow the base" of support, eliminating the countless thousands of people who are against the killing but support the junta.

## Internationalism

The most accurate statement in the entire document comes here: "Internationalism has always been the cutting edge between revolutionary socialists and reformists." Of course, such a statement is incredibly ironic coming from the leaders of the YSA, whose most important "internationalist" activities have been their feverish efforts to wreck the Fourth International. (The stated goal, of course, is only to purge the "centrist muddleheads"--to use Tom Kerry's words--from the International leadership and replace them with "real Bolsheviks," like Mary-Alice Waters, Ross Downson, Kay Goodger, and Nahuel Moreno. The difference here is in intent, not effect..)

The "continued defense" of our French comrades is a bad joke. Although a handful of small demonstrations were organized at the outset, this has been followed by near-total inactivity; the Chicago fraction assigned to this work, for example, has not met in two months. Within the YSA, much more emphasis has been placed on attacking the former Ligue Communiste for indulging in "adventurism." The logical culmination of this was the statement by a leading Chicago comrade that, after all, the fascists of Ordre Nouveau have a "right to speak," too. Some support.

## Watergate and PRDF

Watergate does, in fact, indicate the bankruptcy of the bourgeois political system. It is thus essential that, in the words of the resolution, we stress the "need to overturn this entire rotten capitalist system and establish a workers government." It is unfortunate that we have not, in fact, propagandized for this. The YSA should be organizing a campaign to explain the concept of a workers government and a soviet system, especially to workers, and should organize a campaign with other revolutionary currents to oppose selective repression. Instead, the only article on this in The Militant asserted that by forming a labor party the American workers could elect a workers government (like Harold Wilson?). The consequences of a labor party victory were described in terms reminiscent of the Second Coming of Christ.

The major focus of our Watergate work has been the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF). While we recognize that revolutionaries should use whatever levers the bourgeois system provides, we view PRDF as perhaps the most idiotic venture the YSA has yet engaged in. There are various reasons for this: (1) PRDF does not raise consciousness because it implies that the remedy for repression by the bourgeois state lies in judicial action by that same bourgeois state. This was pointed up by a statement by the Detroit regional organizer, who said that PRDF would inspire people all over the country to sue their state and local governments. We at least hope that the Party and the YSA do not expect that a bourgeois court is actually going to find the President of the US guilty of violating the civil rights of a Marxist-

Leninist Party and give the party \$27,000,000. If they do, the problem is more serious than we thought. (2) PRDF mobilizes no one. The resolution expresses the hope that PRDF will "win the broadest support possible." It even goes on to view PRDF as "an important vehicle for involving students and other supporters of democratic rights." This is absurd. A court suit by its very nature involves a rather limited number of people; at most, larger groups can cheer and shout encouragement. Are we to expect that students will say, "Gosh, that certainly is a fine court suit; I think I'll join the YSA." (Or perhaps we aim to recruit Ramsey Clark, Eugene McCarthy and other "signers.") The SWP and YSA have consistently overemphasized, to the point of idiocy, the support which PRDF can develop and is, in fact, developing. For a Eugene McCarthy, the signing of a PRDF support statement represents about two seconds of effort; it indicates no continuing activity at all. The SWP and YSA leaders, however, sit in their air-conditioned offices, counting the signatures, and persuading themselves that they are building mass support. The plain simple fact is that perhaps 95% of the populace is totally unaware of the PRDF suit; coverage outside of The Militant and Young Socialist has been notable by its absence. (We expect that the NEC will respond to this by citing a series of one-paragraph articles from the Dubuque Times and similar papers, or a one-line article from page 74 of the Sunday New York Times. The assessment stands.) (3) The PRDF campaign is a near-criminal waste of human and material resources. We are constantly told how small our forces are, how limited our resources, and yet we are cheerfully squandering them in this campaign. In this respect, a court suit to end harassment and abolish the attorney general's list would be defensible--but not a nationwide campaign of attractive brochures, speaking engagements all over the place, and the stress on PRDF as perhaps the major focus of activity. (4) On top of everything else, PRDF is thoroughly sectarian. Although it bears the name "Political Rights Defense Fund," it is actually the "SWP Defense Fund"--there has been no attempt to form a broad genuine coalition with other left organizations (who have suffered similar harassment), even those (such as the Panthers) who have been the objects of near-genocidal campaigns from the government.

## Black Struggle

Again we have to be blunt. The number of Blacks and other non-whites in the SWP and YSA remains at an abysmal level. Unless and until this is altered, the YSA has not the slightest justification to "aspire to help provide the revolutionary leadership needed for the struggle to abolish capitalism..." The draft resolution tacitly admits we might have had some slight problems here when it speaks of a "central campaign for every YSA local... aimed at recruiting more Black youth to the YSA." Similar hopes have been expressed for every convention for the past few years; the effect has been about nil. After a few years of this, it would seem to be essential for the YSA leadership to pause and ask: "Why is this so? What are we doing

wrong?" Instead, the 1973 resolution presents nothing but more of the same; why, we feel obliged to ask, is 1974 going to be different from 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972 and 1973? If, for some reason, Black people are going to orient toward us more favorably, what are the objective reasons for this? We also have to pose the question: why have the CP/YWLL, the Workers League/Young Socialists, and PL/SDS been a great deal more successful than the YSA, the "youth vanguard," in attracting non-white members? We can suggest several reasons: (1) These organizations, unlike the YSA, were able to link antiwar and other activities to racial oppression. SDS, for example, built demonstrations around "US Out of Vietnam, Cops Out of the Ghetto," while the CP stressed both antiwar and racial issues in its slogans. Only the SWP and YSA argued that this "narrowed the base of support," and insisted on the right of racists to be in the antiwar movement. (2) These organizations have recognized that very large numbers of young Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and other racial minorities are not college students, but workers. (We will deal later with the relationship of the YSA to young workers.) (3) If only for the most opportunist reasons, these groups have recognized that nationalism does not have a hold on the Black masses, that it attempts to provide a sense of identity between Black workers and Black bourgeois (and petty-bourgeois) politicians, as opposed to unity between Black and white workers; they have learned to distinguish between Black nationalism (or Chicano nationalism) and the growth of Black or Chicano pride and sense of identity. And the Black and Chicano membership has grown, while the SWP and YSA, for all their loud support of Black nationalism, have been unable to root themselves to any extent in the Black community.

### Chicano Struggle

A year or two ago, one would have had to search long and hard to find references to the United Farm Workers struggle in The Militant or the YSA press. When NPAC, WONAAC, and SMC sank, however, the SWP and YSA saw UFW support as a new field to recruit from. Suddenly we were the "best builders" of the UFW support work. As usual, the approach was made in a tail-endist uncritical fashion; there is not a single word of criticism of the disastrous policies of the Chavez leadership. (After all, most Chicanos regard Chavez as a hero, right? So why should we "divorce" ourselves from the masses? The idea that Chavez' vast popularity might make it all the more essential for us, as Marxist-Leninists, to point out his shortcomings, is, of course, never considered.) This is true even when the UFW leadership is engaged in sabotaging vital work; while the draft resolution states (correctly) that the YSA should (and does) call for "an end to the racist immigration laws and witch-hunt deportations of Latino workers," there is not a hint that Chavez has opposed the struggle to end such laws.

La Raza Unida Party is also endorsed in an uncritical fashion. There is no attempt to deal with trends within LRUPs, to state which tendencies we support and which are

reactionary. La Raza Unida Party is simply to be supported wholesale as "the nuclei of potential mass Chicano parties." (The fact that several of the parties are on the verge of a split between left forces and de facto supporters of the Democrats is not mentioned at all.) In general, this portion of the resolution is a reflection of the incredible SWP and YSA policy of a "party for everybody," a policy which reached its logical (if ludicrous) culmination in the call by our Rhode Island campaign for an independent Portuguese political party and "Portuguese Control of the Portuguese Community." (Who comes next? Serbs? Greeks? Swedes?)

Just as there is no attempt to explain why we have so few Black comrades, there is no attempt to deal with our rather limited number of Chicanos.

### Women's Liberation Movement

WONAAC was a debacle; everyone in the movement (at least) knows it except the LTF leaders of the SWP and YSA. A dubious attempt to transfer NPAC to the women's movement, it enjoyed a narrow base to begin with and shrank as it went along. Each conference was less representative than the one before, as independents fled in droves. The WONAAC leadership (i. e., the LTF SWP and YSA comrades) attempted to "broaden" the appeal by knocking out more and more demands. The original demands of the August, 1970 demonstrations were reduced to the three WONAAC demands; these in turn were reduced de facto to one (repeal of all anti-abortion laws) as even "No Forced Sterilization"--a vital demand in Third World communities--was downplayed. All this was to no avail; aghast at the heavy-handed tactics of the WONAAC leaders, women streamed away. Many WONAAC affiliates had a working nucleus of 5-10 women, almost all of them in the SWP and YSA. At the low point of the organization, as it neared total disintegration (spurred on by the walk-out of most of the independent WONAAC staffers) the Supreme Court essentially legalized abortion. The SWP and YSA then proudly asserted that WONAAC "played a role in setting the stage for this victory." In point of fact, abortion was being beat down by reactionaries in state after state; in New York, for example, only Nelson Rockefeller's veto saved the day.

Fresh from the WONAAC disaster, the LTF leaders of the YSA turn to other areas. Unfortunately, they groan, "no single issue has emerged as a new rallying point." (Far be it from us to suggest one, of course.) For lack of anything better to do, apparently, we have moved on to the ERA, engaging in the most openly reformist lobbying efforts. While we acknowledge that critical support of the ERA could have some educational value (especially through stressing the limitations of such bourgeois reform measures), we must add; (1) While the draft resolution savagely denounces the CP for raising the "false argument that the ERA would hurt women workers by eliminating protective labor laws," there is not the slightest hint that we, too, used to oppose the ERA on precisely the same grounds. Why did we

change? How could we have been so wrong before? Is it not, for that matter, a little cavalier to brush aside such objection so easily in view of nullifications of protective legislation which have already occurred, after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act? (2) We must educate people to the basic fact that equal rights for women will not be obtained under capitalism, ERA or no ERA. The US is actually the exception among capitalist nations in lacking such a provision in its constitution; the constitutions of West Germany, South Korea, and Taiwan all contain such provisions, for example, without the oppression of women changing in the slightest.

A final word is necessary here about the attempts by the SWP and YSA to ally themselves with the National Organization for Women (NOW). Typically, the LTF has defined any and every group of women to its left as crazy "ultralefts;" as this involves virtually all women who consider themselves Marxists, the YSA and SWP have (of necessity) turned to the likes of NOW. NOW is a thoroughly bourgeois organization, led by middle-class professional women. (Ironically, the program passed by the last NOW convention is "ultraleft" by LTF standards.) We have long since given up hope that the LTF will recognize the validity of the Marxist-Leninist position in regard to bourgeois feminist organizations; we feel obliged to note, however, that in its joint work with NOW on the ERA, the YSA has become almost hopelessly enmeshed in petition campaigns, lobbying, and button-holing legislators. This is the way to socialist revolution?

### "Opponent" Tendencies

This is perhaps the strangest section of the draft resolution, both for what it includes and what it omits.

For some reason the NEC has seen fit to include a section on the YPSL, a near-defunct clique of apprentice union bureaucrats. The resolution states that YPSL "stands far to the right of most radicalizing young people." In point of fact, YPSL stands to the right of most non-radicalizing young people as well; it is to the right of the Young Democrats and can scarcely be considered an "opponent" group in any sense (except in the sense that YAF is an opponent); there was no reason to include this group at all.

Even more important are the omissions: where, for example, are the Workers League and the Spartacists? Both of these organizations, which claim to be Trotskyist, have (in spite of their esoteric stances on many issues) experienced recent growth which is in marked contrast to the stagnation of the SWP and YSA; additionally, while the YSA has attempted to recruit at the positively lowest political level imaginable (invariably stressing that membership doesn't mean much and requires no work--"This isn't the Party;" etc.) the WL and Spartacists have attempted to attract more advanced cadre. The Workers League in particular claims to have had success in recruiting non-whites; is this true? How does the NEC account for it? Is the omission of the

WL and Spartacists perhaps due to embarrassment on the part of the YSA?

The portion of the YWLL omits questions concerning the ability of that group to recruit Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans; similarly, the YWLL has claimed a very large percentage of young workers. The NEC does not attempt to evaluate this; do they still hold their incredible stance of a few years ago that the attempt by the YWLL to do proletarian work marks a "retreat" from "real struggles?"

The section on Maoism is the most inadequate. The LTF has downplayed the possibility of a Maoist party for some time, though a considerable number of young activists seem to be attracted to it; the inclusion of the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, Black Workers Congress, and I Wor Kuen in particular would seem to give the group a potential Third World base. Both the Revolutionary Union and the October League have experienced recent growth; the OL in particular has worked to establish a base among Black workers (especially in Atlanta). The resolution notes (correctly) that the Maoists are reviving old slanders about Trotskyists and that the YSA will work to refute them; it also adds that the YSA will work to "expose" China's misdeeds. This is a worthy task, but in a number of cases it seems that the LTF has moved to counter old Maoist slanders of Trotskyism with new slanders about China. We can scarcely hope to win away young Maoists with uninformed drivel such as "China Today--Report of a New Zealand Engineer," (IP, November 5) in which a person who unfortunately is a member of the Fourth International's LTF-run sympathizing group in New Zealand rambles on breathlessly about how his three weeks in China proved to him that "their world is very narrow compared to ours" (i. e., compared to people in capitalist New Zealand), that management of factories is the same as in capitalist states, that "the whole of Chinese society is very introverted," that doctors "felt oppressed by the party cadres," and that (horror of horrors!) there is no freedom of religion. The article --which is unfortunately typical-- is a disgrace, studded with errors on every page. As long as articles on China are assigned to comrades who have little or no qualification other than reading a couple of pamphlets and a skill for vituperation, the YSA can forget about winning young revolutionaries from Maoism.

### Our Press

Do we really have to say anything here? Even LTF comrades have admitted to us their unhappiness with the Young Socialist, the YSA's answer to insomnia. Young Socialist articles seem to fit one of two categories: they parallel articles in The Militant, the major difference being their more striking mediocrity (shown, as an example, by Malik Miah's intriguing description of the Chilean MAPU as "representing... the capitalists") or they are of the "Why Chuck Henshaw Gave Up Sky-Diving to Join the YSA" variety. The first serve no purpose at all; the second serve primarily

as an in-group gadget to bind new recruits to the YSA by letting them see their names in print. The articles about local campus struggles are just as bad as they were in the old Young Socialist Organizer, when their grotesque self-congratulatory tone and general incoherence made the YSO unread even by loyal members. YS's only other function seems to be to review pamphlets put out by the YSA. (The reviews tend to be a bit gushy.) Before we work to expand YS sales we should ask ourselves why anyone would want to read it and if this is the best we can do.

### Socialist Election Campaigns

Somewhere student government elections may well be an important means for getting out socialist ideas; we suspect, however, that this is the exception. The draft resolution states cheerfully, "Our student election campaigns in the past year have been successful in both presenting our answers to the most immediate questions facing students and at the same time projecting our overall strategy for revolutionary change." This would be easier to believe if we had not read the YS for the past year, reading every local's rapturous descriptions of their own efforts. Just once, we would like a local to admit, "This campaign was an utter disaster. No one pays any attention to student government elections, anyway, and most of our flyers wound up on the ground. At our mass rally eight or nine people showed up. We finished fourth, behind two liberals and a lunatic running on the Flying Saucer ticket. We recruited one person, who would have joined anyway." We suspect that such a description would be far more accurate than what we have been forced to read.

### Regional Expansion

The regions were first created in 1969; since then, they have been shuffled around a lot, but no fundamental change in them has taken place. They remain under the leadership of a regional organizer and regional committee appointed by and made up entirely of comrades from the regional center. In 1969 it was argued that it was not yet time to set up democratically-elected regional committees. It apparently is still not yet time, as no one in the NEC even feels obliged to discuss the matter. In their absence, we bring it up: when will this bright day come? What changes must take place in the YSA as it is today to justify such a change? Can the plan be perhaps tried out first in a region with a number of well-established locals?

### Young Workers

Almost the sole impact of successive opposition tendencies on the LTF leaders of the YSA has been the demagogic inclusion of references to the workers movement in YSA documents. The 1973 draft resolution is typical, stating that "The YSA is a revolutionary youth organization of high school and college students, young workers, and Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican youth;" it goes on to state that

"We aim to bring to our generation the lessons of more than a century of working class struggle." The first of these statements is bad enough, with its apparent indication that Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican youth form a separate category from students and workers. The second, however, is sheer hypocrisy in view of the YSA's exclusive student orientation. While the "deepest and broadest youth radicalization" on campuses has gone so deep as to be invisible, the LTF has stubbornly clung to its opposition to involve young workers in the organization. While it is taken for granted that Blacks and women would not remain in an organization which did not involve itself actively in their struggles, young workers are apparently supposed to be delighted to take part in an organization which relates only to the needs of students. While other organizations on the left attempt (with varying degrees of success) to implant themselves in the working class, the YSA's handful of authentic young workers are forced to occupy themselves with student government elections. This process is then described--in all seriousness--as bringing to "our generation" the lessons of working class struggle. The Russian Narodniks of the 19th century were justifiably criticized by Marxists of the period for sending students "to the people" in an artificial attempt to merge with the peasantry. Had the LTF been in existence in Russia, then they presumably would have been shipping revolutionary peasants to work on the campuses. One doubts that history would have smiled upon their efforts.

### Overall

The draft resolution is full of hopes that things will occur. We "aspire" to lead young people; we "want to talk to Black students;" we "want to bring our press and campaigns to Chicanos;" etc. On other occasions, flat predictions have been made. "The YSA will be able to reach many women with our Marxist analysis of women's oppression and reach new supporters for our ideas;" "the YSA will be able to popularize the socialist analysis of Watergate and win new adherents to the revolutionary socialist movement," and so on.

What is depressing here is that these same hopes and predictions have been made, in almost identical language, for the past few years. There is never the slightest attempt to see why we fell short of previous goals, in both our propaganda and direct intervention; it is considered sufficient to repeat them the next year.

Since 1970 the draft resolutions have gotten shorter, vaguer, and less helpful as a guide to action. The NEC appears to be churning them out of force of habit, as annoying inconveniences that will be ratified overwhelmingly regardless of how inane they are. This is not conducive to producing memorable (or even useful) analyses and the NEC has performed with commendable predictability. Roughly half of their document consists of padding or well-orchestrated pats on the back, as though sufficient repetition can turn a defeat into an inspiring victory. Most of the remainder is a listing of dozens of things we can always do if things work

out; they boil down to saying that if major demonstrations occur on almost anything (tuition, food prices, Vietnam, South Africa, Ireland, France, gay movement), the YSA will probably show up.

The stagnation of the YSA has become apparent in its lack of growth, its growing rigidity, the formalistic ritualism with which procedures are carried out, its growing lack of meaningful internal democracy. Buffeted back and forth by events beyond their control and understanding, the LTF leaders of the YSA have responded by putting forth a rigid screen of dogmas to protect them from reality. And there, trapped in sterile abstractions, the NEC sits: WONAAC had to succeed (according to LTF theory), so it was successful.

It should have encouraged women and given them confidence so, by god, it did. The VCP leadership (as "Stalinists") should logically have sold out the revolution so, appearances to the contrary, that's just what they did. We want to recruit Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and women, so we will. Q. E. D. The method is logical, consistent, and disastrous.

It is not yet too late to reverse the decay which has already set in in the YSA; but it is late, and the hour grows later. The "Draft Political Resolution" offers only more of the same sterile abstractions and disastrous policies as its immediate predecessors; it should be rejected.

December 16, 1973

OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

From the Internationalist Tendency

To the comrades of the National Executive Committee

Dear Comrades:

Your recent decision regarding the agenda for the upcoming YSA National Convention has prompted us to write this letter of protest. We feel that these decisions essentially amount to a stifling of political discussion within the YSA on the questions presently facing the Fourth International, and in fact calls into question the political basis of the fraternal delegation from the YSA to the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International. The Draft Political Resolution which you submitted to the YSA pre-convention discussion states that "The YSA supports the building of the world Trotskyist organization, the Fourth International, even though reactionary US legislation prevents us from belonging to it" (Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 1, p. 8). Unless it is your belief that the Fourth International can best be built by not fully discussing the issues which are presently dividing the Fourth International, then the agenda which you are proposing is nothing more than an exercise in political charlatanism.

The proposed agenda as it presently stands is as follows: (1) International Youth Radicalization, (2) World Movement, (3) Political Resolution, (4) Black Struggle, and (5) Organizational Report. The nature of this agenda can only be construed to be a limiting of the discussion on the international questions, and a curious parochialism, which we are opposed to, as we are to the agenda as it presently reads.

It must be recalled that the YSA National Committee, at its plenum last June, without any prior discussion within the membership of the organization, voted support to the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (now Faction). The crudeness of the leadership's hypocrisy on this matter we find only equal to the paternalistic and condescending attitude which it shows toward the rank-and-file membership of the YSA. We find, for instance, in the "Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency" the following point in their "platform:"

"7. Against any moves that endanger the authority of the coming congress and the unity of the Fourth International such as undemocratic selection of delegates, curtailment of discussion, or failure to issue, translate, and distribute resolutions and other documents on schedule." (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 3, our emphasis)

This is the declaration which you, along with the rest of the National Committee, voted for last June. Yet the agenda which you are proposing for the YSA National Convention totally contradicts the "Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency!" On the one hand, comrades, you state that you are against any "curtailment of discussion;" on the other hand, you do not allow for a full and democratic discussion of the issues in dispute in the Fourth International at the YSA National Convention. You must take the membership of the YSA for utter fools to attempt such crass factional maneuvers. But while you are composing your rationalization for this proposed agenda, in light of your alleged support for the "Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency," perhaps you could also explain to the membership why the documents of Comrade Verla on Women's Liberation and Comrade Sterne's reply to the "book review" of the International Socialist Review have not yet been translated and circulated by the leadership of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, the same leadership which so prides itself in denunciations of the international leadership for not printing or circulating documents, a charge we both know to be false. Or why it is that the LTF does not have documented positions on Europe or the World Political Resolution, when at the same time they are calling for a rejection of the perspectives of the majority.

However, beyond the glaring contradictions between the dirges which are so piously sung about democracy within the International by yourselves and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and the actual practice in your own organizations, there is also the question of the National Committee decision itself.

By unilaterally voting support for a tendency within the Fourth International, the National Committee must take the responsibilities which accompany such a decision. That is, if the ranks of the YSA did not get to discuss the af-

filiation of the organization to a tendency in the Fourth International prior to this decision by the National Committee, the least of which could be done is to let the membership of the YSA fully discuss the political positions of these same tendencies or factions after the decision was made. The agenda which you are presenting to the convention cuts across the right of the membership to discuss, even ex post facto, the decisions made by the National Committee, decisions which, we add again, the rank-and-file membership had no part in making. It is enough to make such a unilateral decision; it is qualitatively worse not to allow a full discussion of the merits of this decision after it has been made. This alone is cause enough to reject the proposed agenda. But there are other things to consider.

At present there are major differences within the Fourth International. These differences, at least for the international majority, have been codified in documents, although we are still waiting for the documents of the LTF on Europe and the World Political Situation. In the unanimous "Recommendations to the Delegates of the Coming World Congress," the United Secretariat has proposed that votes at the World Congress be on the following points:

"(a) the world political situation; (b) the question of orientation in Argentina; (c) the question of orientation in Bolivia; (d) European perspectives; (e) statutes of the Fourth International." (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 15, p. 15)

If a political basis is to be found for the LTF, then it must be on the question of Latin America (that is, in fact, the only issue which at the time of this writing has merited a document from the LTF). Given this alone, it would require that at least a special Latin America report be included on the agenda. You, however, do not include a Latin America report on the proposed agenda. Moreover, if you are proposing that the YSA comrades vote on the international questions -- Latin America, European Perspectives, World Political Situation -- then it is incumbent upon you to allow for the fullest discussion possible on these questions. The agenda which you are proposing for the convention is at best wholly inadequate, and in fact does not follow the guidelines set forth in the recommendations cited above.

The World Congress will be discussing and voting on the orientations for Latin America, for Europe and for the World Political Situation, and will have a panel on the International Youth Radicalization. The agenda which you propose not only does not coincide with the questions being discussed at the World Congress, it includes a major report on an issue which is not even on the agenda for a vote at the Tenth World Congress, in place of reports on Latin America and Europe, which are on the agenda. While we agree that a discussion on the Worldwide Radicalization of Youth and the Tasks of the Fourth International is desirable, it should not substitute for a discussion of the issues on the agenda for the World Congress.

The agenda which you are proposing to the convention also projects a Black Struggle Report. This too we feel is an important question to discuss, but we fail to see what qualitative change has taken place in the Black movement which requires a separate report to the convention at the expense of a discussion of the international questions. We are certain that the report and discussion on the Black question will be used to divert attention away from the troublesome international issues, and whip up hysteria in the membership against the "racist" positions of the Internationalist Tendency on Black Nationalism (if remarks of National Committee members in the local areas are to be used as a guide), but this does not alter the question we raise: What change in the Black movement requires a special convention report? You have not presented any documents on the questions of either the present state of the Black movement or on the question of nationalism as a basis of discussion, and as such the inclusion of a special convention report on the Black struggle in the absence of both a resolution and a motivation other than "we need a Black report," can only be interpreted as politically unserious. There are important differences within the International on nationalism, which should of course be discussed, but a discussion of these differences is not what you are proposing. It is Black Nationalism solely which is to be discussed, which, in light of the factors named above, does not merit a special convention report. And once again, this is done

in place of a full discussion of the international questions.

We therefore propose that the following agenda be proposed in place of the present proposal, and our delegates will move to this effect at the convention itself:

- (1) World Political Resolution
- (2) European Perspectives
- (3) Latin America
- (4) International Youth Radicalization
- (5) Political Resolution
- (6) Organizational Report

We propose, in addition to these reports, that there be panels or workshops on the Black Struggle; Chicano Struggle; Women's Liberation; and Trade Union and possibilities for work in the working class (this panel is especially important in view of the fact that the next period in the US will be characterized by a recession and the ramifications of this in regards to the struggles in the class should be of major concern to the YSA).

This matter of the agenda is a quite serious one. The "platform" of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, repeating that of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, makes central to their faction the need for democratic discussion in the International. It would be wise for you to follow the advice you are trying to give to the leader-

ship of the International. Milt Alvin has some words which should be considered, although he assures us that they were not intended for the SWP (and we assume the YSA):

" . . . those sections that have made all the material available to their memberships, held discussion and voted, would have to propose that those at the congress who have not taken these steps participate with voice but no vote." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 2, p. 8)

We hope that comrade Alvin can apply the same standard objectively to the leadership of the YSA, and while we cannot agree with his conclusion that the SWP has fully complied with his foreboding statement, we do think that you, comrades of the NEC, should seriously consider changing the agenda which you are proposing for the National Convention. If this is not done, it would raise serious questions as to whether the fraternal delegation from the YSA to the Tenth World Congress should be seated at all, because you will have neglected to allow for a full, complete discussion of the questions to be voted on at the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International.

Comradely,

s/Rich Mitten  
for the  
Internationalist  
Tendency

cc: Bill Massey  
United Secretariat  
International Majority Tendency

December 16, 1973



LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO RICHARD MITTEN ON THE CONVENTION AGENDA

P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
December 17, 1973

Richard Mitten  
Chicago

Dear Comrade Mitten,

We have received your "letter of protest" on behalf of the Internationalist Tendency concerning the agenda for the upcoming YSA convention. Your letter states, "The nature of this agenda can only be construed to be a limiting of the discussion on the International questions, and a curious parochialism, which we are opposed to, as we are to the agenda as it presently reads."

Your charge is false. The agenda that the National Executive Committee will propose to the pre-convention plenum of the National Committee takes into account the two main tasks facing our convention: 1) to take positions on the major issues facing the Fourth International and 2) to set the line for the YSA's activity over the next year. The NEC's proposed agenda consists of the following main points: International Youth Radicalization Report; World Movement Report; Political Report; Black Struggle Report; and Organization Report.

In the opinion of the NEC a discussion on the international youth radicalization is quite necessary at this convention. Not only is this an important issue in the current discussion in the world movement (and one that is related to other disputed questions such as the discussion of the world political situation and European perspectives) but there have been important developments over just the past few months (in Thailand and Greece particularly) that justify a discussion of this issue.

The YSA has had a very full discussion of the major issues in dispute in the world movement. The International Internal Discussion Bulletin has been made available to comrades for years and new documents have been made available as soon as they have been translated. Most locals have held separate discussions on Latin America, Europe and the World Political Situation, and in some cases on additional topics. In nearly every large local there have been debates on these topics in which both the Internationalist Tendency and supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction have been given equal time to present their positions. In addition the NEC organized an extensive tour of YSA locals for representatives of both the IEC Majority Tendency and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction to debate the differences in the world movement. All YSA comrades were invited to attend one of these debates and at least four hours was set aside in each local for this debate alone. The discussion that has taken place in the YSA is already more extensive than that in many sections of the Fourth International.

The democracy of the discussion is guaranteed by the totality of all of these things. The overall discussion

is not simply equivalent to the culminating discussion at the convention.

At the convention we will discuss all of the three major points that are on the agenda of the upcoming world congress (Latin America, Europe and World Political Situation) as well as the international youth radicalization. We will discuss these questions under two reports. We are prepared to recommend that the Internationalist Tendency be given equal time for counter-reports on these two points as well as others (although we have received no such request as yet). More than adequate time will be set aside for discussion. We currently plan to schedule five hours of discussion time for the world movement point alone. Following the summaries on this point the delegates will vote and take a position on the three major points that will be voted on at the world congress. Your charges of "curtailment of discussion" are clearly without any basis in fact.

There is another consideration concerning the agenda that you do not take into account. The YSA is not a section or sympathizing party of the Fourth International. The YSA is not and does not aspire to be a party; our organization is a youth organization in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International. The difference is not irrelevant. Youth organizations do not receive the same rights nor do they have the same responsibilities as sections or sympathizing groups. Sections and sympathizing organizations receive a certain number of votes (mandates) at the world congress based on their size. Youth organizations do not; they are invited to send a small leadership delegation that will have voice but only consultative vote.

Despite this different status, we have taken every necessary step to insure that the YSA will have the fullest possible discussion and, on that basis, will make decisions on all the major questions before the congress. But it is not necessary, as you erroneously imply, for the YSA to have a separate agenda point for every question on the world congress agenda. In fact, even many sections will not have such agendas.

The agenda you propose on behalf of the Internationalist Tendency does not take into account the additional needs of the YSA at this convention beyond deciding on the disputed international questions. You dismiss the need for a Black Struggle Report. You claim that it "will be used to divert attention away from the troublesome international issues . . ." and that "It is Black nationalism solely which is to be discussed, which, in light of the factors named above, does not merit a special convention report."

This too is wrong. You are so blinded by your own narrow factional interests that you evaluate the convention agenda solely from that point of view--"forgetting" that the Black struggle is a central area of work for the YSA. Furthermore you yourselves have raised serious differences concerning the YSA's support for Black national-

ism and our perspectives for Black work. You may feel that this "does not merit a special convention report" but the NEC feels otherwise.

We consider the national question and the Black struggle in particular a decisive question for revolutionaries in the United States. We feel that the questions that have been raised must be discussed and the line of the YSA decided on.

Finally, we have limited our proposed agenda to five major points. Given scheduling considerations, we feel that five major points are the maximum possible if we are to allow time for an adequate discussion. Your proposed agenda includes six major points which we think would not be practical given the limitations of time.

In your letter you also raise some extraneous points unrelated to the question of the agenda which should be answered simply to set the record straight.

You imply that the YSA National Committee somehow violated the norms of our movement by taking positions on the disputed international questions at the time of our plenum in June. In reality the opposite is the case. The YSA leadership would have been seriously delinquent had it not discussed the major political questions just as they were being discussed by the leaderships of all the organizations of the world movement.

Raising this matter is sheer demagoguery on your part. It is standard procedure in our movement for leadership bodies to take political positions prior to conventions. This is done in the bodies of the world movement as well. The International Executive Committee has already voted and taken positions on Latin America and Europe for instance. The United Secretariat has voted and taken positions on a wide range of other issues. All of this has been done prior to the world congress. There is nothing unusual about this nor is there anything unusual about the YSA National Committee discussing and voting on the international questions prior to our convention.

Because we knew of no member of the National Committee who supported the views of the IEC Majority Tendency we invited that tendency to send a representative to present its views to the plenum. The result was that a supporter of the IEC majority from Canada attended the plenum and gave two, equal-time counter-reports. Two days were set aside for discussion and the result was a unanimous vote in favor of the general line of the reports from the NEC.

At no time did the National Committee vote for the YSA to join the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency as you imply. Neither organizations nor leadership bodies can join a tendency--whether it's the LTF, the IEC Majority, Kompass or whatever. Only individuals join tendencies. The comrades in the national leadership of the YSA simply made their positions known on the disputed international questions, as it was their right and responsibility to do and they established a political line for the YSA as an organization.

On all questions of major political importance the YSA has a position. That position is decided either by a convention, a National Committee plenum or a meeting of the NEC. It is the right and responsibility of every convention to review these political decisions and make any changes or adjustments that the majority might feel necessary. Prior decisions by leadership bodies in no way impair democracy or curtail discussion by the membership. Regardless of decisions made by the National Committee the membership has the right to raise and discuss any questions during the written pre-convention discussion and has the full right to elect delegates to the convention. These elected delegates have the right to make whatever decisions they choose either upholding or reversing previous decisions made by conventions, NC plenums or the NEC. Your raising this matter to begin with serves no purpose other than to try to muddle the discussion of political differences.

In closing, one further distortion of the facts in your letter deserves correction. You state, "perhaps you could also explain to the membership why the documents of Comrade Verla on Women's Liberation and Comrade Sterne's reply to the 'book review' of the International Socialist Review have not yet been translated by the leadership of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction ..."

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction does not have the responsibility for publishing either the ISR or the International Internal Discussion Bulletin. We inquired about the charges you raise concerning the ISR (charges also raised by Comrade Bill Yaffee). Comrade Les Evans, the editor of the ISR has answered these charges more than adequately in his letter to Andrew Pulley which is printed in Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin Volume XVII, Number 8.

As for the IIDB and Comrade Verla's contribution. The comrades responsible for getting out the English language IIDB as a fraternal courtesy to the United Secretariat have informed us that the contribution by Comrades Verla and Tamara has not yet been printed because the translation has not yet been received. It was written in French and the leadership of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, took the responsibility for translating it (along with several other contributions) into English. When this translation is received it will be printed in the IIDB.

The final decision on the agenda of the convention will be made by the convention delegates themselves. You are of course free to make your proposals on the floor of the convention.

Comradely,  
s/Geoff Mirelowitz  
for the National Executive Committee

December 17, 1973