

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

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Re-Crete
the Fourth International

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Special Issue

Turmoil in the International Far Left

In the course of the 1980s the deepening world crisis of capitalism has compelled the major "left" forces to loosen their grip on the working classes. Stalinism has lost its economic luster, especially since the explosion of the Polish class struggle in 1980-81, and increasingly turns to openly capitalist reforms. Social democracy, tested in office in several European countries, has proved capable of

carrying out only rationalization and austerity on the bosses' terms. Reform unionism has tried to hold its own by making concessions to capital and has miserably failed.

As a result, the international far left has been undergoing a great flurry of soul-searching and reshuffling. A process of polarization is under way.

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'International Trotskyist Conference'

Maneuverism vs. Marxism

Half a century ago the newly born Trotskyist movement was in a tragically weak condition when the capitalist system collapsed into the most severe economic and social crisis in its history. Existing mainly as small groups expelled from the mass Communist Parties, largely isolated from the industrial working class, armed only with the revolutionary program it had rescued from the corruption of the Stalinist counterrevolution, the Fourth International nevertheless made heroic attempts to revive authentic communism within the beleaguered proletariat.

But the International was physically shattered under the combined attacks of Stalinism, Nazism and the bourgeois-democratic powers. It did not win the working class in any country to the program of socialist revolution fundamentally because of the preponderance of Stalinism within the workers' movement.

In its epoch of decay — the era of imperialism, world wars, revolution and counterrevolution — capi-

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Far Left

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To the right, some elements have openly abandoned their claim to revolutionary positions in favor of adapting to social democracy as the only hope against the bourgeois right; others lean on the shaky reed of Gorbachev-style Stalinist reforms. To the left, a variety of tendencies have been forced to recognize that the working classes cannot win through sectoral and nationalist strategies, and are re-examining long-held views and searching for new combinations.

The once powerful Maoist groupings have disintegrated; some have tried to move to the left and have at least succeeded in rejecting their former god, Stalin. Various "ultra-leftists" (defined negatively by their rejection of Leninist tactics aimed at challenging more backward workers who hold nationalist or trade unionist views) are moving to regroup despite outstanding differences over their positive program. Outdoing them all in proving the desperate need for a reexamination of fundamentals are the "Trotskyists"; petty bureaucratic machinations became the mode of life in this milieu during its post-war dark ages of "orthodox" degeneration.

This issue of Proletarian Revolution assesses the

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turmoil within the international far left. But it is selective. We concentrate on the pseudo-Trotskyists (although we are no closer to them than to other centrists) because our past heritage and common vocabulary, plus their greater volatility at the moment, makes possible a more penetrating intervention. And within this milieu our stress is on the Soviet-defensist organizations active in discussion around the "International Trotskyist Conference" proposed by the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP).

Other important discussions are taking place, notably the debate between the left-centrist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Britain and Lutte Ouvriere of France and within the right-centrist Mandeliste United Secretariat. But the WRP-Conference circles have given the most optimistic response to renewed outbreaks of class struggle in Europe and South Africa. Given the notorious Healyite and Morenoite histories of the major participants, this optimism could well be only a cynical ploy on the part of the leaderships. Unlike the perennial "downturn" theory of the SWP, however, at least it reflects pressure for fundamental change within the ranks.

The cause of the rightward degeneration of some brands of pseudo-Trotskyism, as well as the unprincipled maneuverism of the more left centrists, traces back to the blanket of cynicism that enveloped the entire milieu as a result of the workers' defeats after World War II. It means that, aside from hypo-

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Letter to GOR

How Not to Combat Centrism

The following document is excerpted from a letter written to the Gruppo Operato Rivoluzionario (GOR) of Italy in March by the League for the Revolutionary Party (U.S.) and Workers Revolution (Australia). It concerns the maneuvers and deals surrounding the International Trotskyist Conference discussed in the lead article in this issue.

This letter is inspired by the recent discussion in Rome between your representatives and one of us.

U.S. Peace and Freedom Party demo, 1984. Morenoites build petty-bourgeois party in California. Unprincipled bloc is no answer to WRP-Morenoite maneuvers.



Despite its brevity and informality, we regard the discussion as significant and wish to reemphasize the major points that [we] made.

We have no quarrel with your desire to prevent a merger of the ex-Healyite WRP (Workers Press) with the Morenoite LIT. The Morenoite leaders are dangerous charlatans with a long record of betraying the fundamental principles of Trotskyism. In their major base in Latin America, they have supported bourgeois politicians electorally and in propaganda. They regularly subordinate the vanguard party in favor of openly centrist and social-democratic blocs. In a word, the independence of the proletariat and its party are principles which they honor only in the breach. If the WRP were to collapse into their arms, that would represent a severe setback to the promising political openings initiated by that organization.

We know the Morenoites well in the United States. Here they present themselves through the petty-bour-

geois Peace and Freedom Party and "rank and file" trade union caucuses rather than as an independent revolutionary leadership. Their predominant wing prides itself on excluding opponent leftists from public events and on employing violence to do so when necessary. They have engaged in the most unprincipled bureaucratic internal factionalism; indeed, the two groupings which emerged from their squabbles acknowledge the complete absence of political differences, and each follows a policy of publicly ignoring the

other's existence. The documents of their faction fight as well as the adjudication by Moreno himself, which we have, are classic examples of Byzantine bureaucratism and petty-bourgeois corruption.

The fact that the LIT's representative working closely with the WRP in London is Leon Perez ("Nicholas"), the chief Morenoite manipulator in the U.S., is a further indication of the danger of a WRP-LIT bloc. Recent articles in Workers Press on the Simon Bolivar Brigade, including the attempt to smear Workers Power of Britain by amalgamating its left criticisms with anti-communist attacks from the Mandelite right, are already evidence of the LIT's success in inhibiting open discussion.

As we understand your position, you believe that the WRP has been moving left and that a WRP-LIT merger would end this development. For our part, we do not know whether the WRP as a whole has moved left, but we are aware of the animated political ferment

within and around it. We also believe that at least some elements of the group are now committed to a serious discussion of the profound crisis affecting all "orthodox Trotskyists," which most of the other tendencies are too pragmatic to even recognize. For us, the value of the new situation and the proposed International Trotskyist Conference is the WRP's openness to the probing of fundamental questions, as well as the pressure that this openness places on other orthodoxists to question their presumptions and rationalizations.

Therefore we share with you a common interest in opposing the impending WRP-LIT merger; our reasons overlap with yours but are not entirely the same. We are very concerned, however, that the course you have embarked upon with Workers Power and the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI) will serve only to aid the Morenoite maneuver.

As we understand it, the GOR and the RWP of Sri Lanka agree with the proposal by MRCI to establish a "bloc against centrism," as outlined in the January Workers Power. You consider it unfortunate that the Bolshevik Tendency of the U.S. and Canada has rejected this bloc. You justify your bloc on the grounds that it is necessary to prevent the WRP-LIT merger and that it will help you to escape your own political isolation. Further, you compare your bloc to the Bloc of Four espoused by the Trotskyists in 1933.

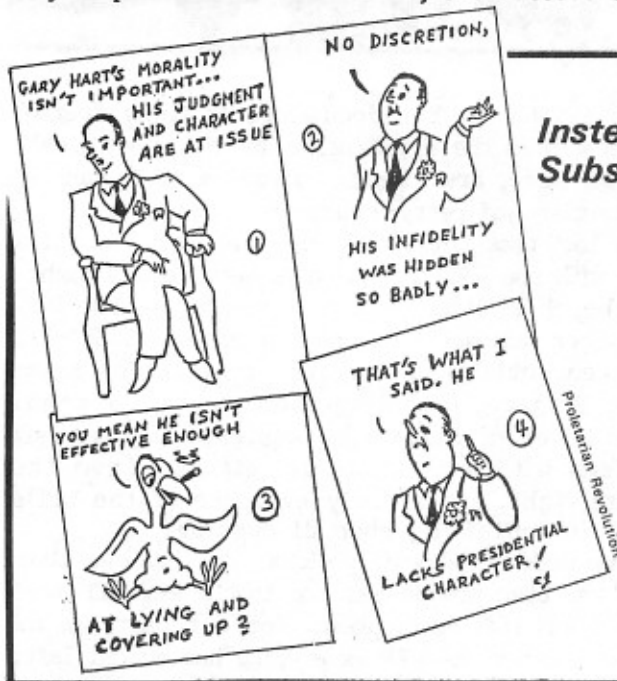
In fact, the MRCI proposal is sharply counterposed to Trotsky's strategy in the 1930s. The Declaration of Four in 1933 was a politically explicit document spelling out concrete principles; it is uncompromising on the need for the Fourth International, the centrality of the revolutionary party, loyalty to the proletariat as the revolutionary agency, the necessity of proletarian insurrection, the dictatorship of

the proletariat, and opposition to social democracy and Stalinism as well as the defense of the USSR as a workers' state. It was not a diplomatic document whose signatories agree to a deliberately vague wording in order to hide their differences. Subsequent practice showed that the SAP and others did not really agree with the stated principles; nevertheless, the Declaration's precise and truthful wording was critical in determining such disagreements and in exposing the growing centrism of the Trotskyists' bloc partners.

In discussing the Declaration, Trotsky pointed out that the degree of broadness required of such documents depends on historical circumstances. There was a difference, for example, between the very broad Zimmerwald statement and the narrower founding principles of the Comintern. By the same token, if the Declaration of Four was uncompromising and specific on questions of principles, how much more clarity and intransigence is necessary today compared to the 1930s! At that time, when the Stalinist international was a large and powerful force, commitment to the Fourth International was a sharp dividing line between revolutionaries and left-moving centrists, on the one hand, and the compromising right centrists, on the other. And despite all the Stalinist slanders, the meaning of Trotskyism was very clear to advanced workers who would listen.

Today, in contrast, adventurers and traitors of every sort claim the banner of the Fourth International. Many advocates of "Trotskyism" stand for policies that are only Stalinist or reactionary parodies. Far more specificity is required of a document to distinguish revolutionaries from capitulatory centrists.

In this light, comrades, the WRP's call for an



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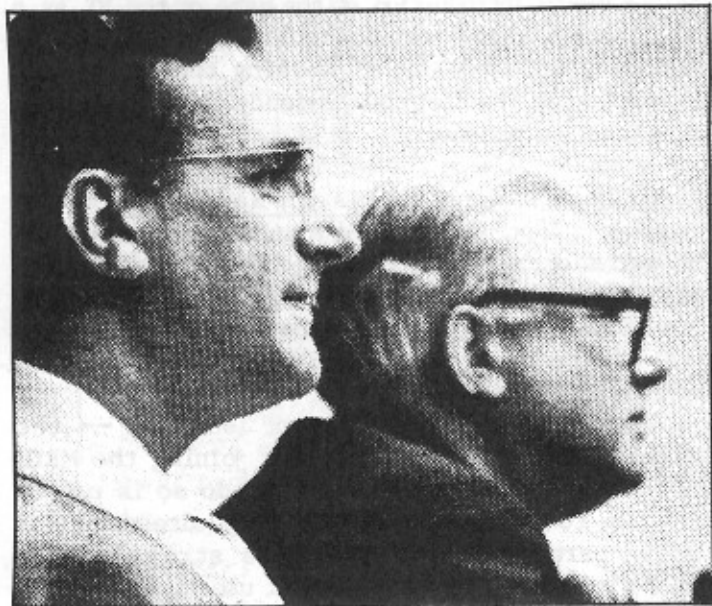
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International Conference must be taken as intentionally imprecise. Even more blatantly so is the LIT's response offering diplomatic agreement with that call. To make the distinction sharp between the revolutionary and the centrist approach, an oppositional statement must be far more exact on matters of principle and must offer concrete practical tests of its principles. But the MRCI's call for a "bloc against centrism" in no way measures up to this need.

What are the fundamental policies that characterize revolutionary politics in this period? What are the principled differences between revolutionaries



Left defensists still share same orthodoxist bed with hated USec leaders Mandel and Novak (above).

and centrists? The MRCI statement has nothing to say on either question. The absence of any stated basis for agreement is so glaring that the MRCI has no alternative but to list the names of the groups it has invited to join. But why these groups and not others? What do they have in common? How, in particular, do they differ from the Morenoites? No one can tell.

We note in passing that even the Morenoites thought it wise to find an allegedly principled basis for their maneuvers. Originally they tried to exclude the Mandelites from the International Conference by name alone. Then they reconsidered this openly unprincipled demand and chose to champion an important principle: the priority of fighting for the vanguard party in every country. Of course, the Morenoites themselves frequently violate this principle. But at least they, unlike the MRCI, can claim to have some basis for their selectivity. It speaks particularly badly for the MRCI that it cannot even match the Morenoites' fraudulent devotion to principle!

Perhaps you and the RWP and the MRCI will eventually produce a statement of principles for your bloc.

But it is hard to see what such a document could say on certain vital questions. It could not remotely compare with the Declaration of Four for clarity.

For example: can you in good conscience sign a statement on the necessity for proletarian insurrection against all forms of capitalist state power -- when your co-signer, Workers Power, rejects even a general strike against the British state as long as the Labour Party is in office? Secondly, can your bloc call for the Fourth International when the MRCI holds an ambiguous position? We recall that your journal once promised an article by Comrade Samarakkody criticizing the MRCI on this question. Finally, how can you adopt a clear position towards the class-collaborationist "anti-imperialist united front" strategy in the semi-colonial countries -- when Workers Power is for it and you know that it is wrong? Will you sign a diplomatic call for the revolutionary party in all countries when you know there is no common agreement on what this means?

Unprincipled Bloc

The Trotskyists at the time of the Declaration of Four learned in practice that their allies did not really agree with the revolutionary principles that they had put their signatures to. But you today know in advance what the MRCI stands for. If you agree to a joint statement that blurs these fundamental questions, you will be acting as diplomats, not revolutionaries.

The starkest revelation of the unprincipled nature of your proposed bloc with the MRCI is the attempt to include the Bolshevik Tendency. The BT, as you know, supported General Jaruzelski's crushing of the Polish working class. It offered not only military support (technical defensive aid), which would have been bad enough, but "critical support" -- a measure of political endorsement. Is it conceivable, comrades, that you and the BT together could have written a declaration worthy of the Bloc of Four, perhaps including statements reaffirming your loyalty to the working class and your intransigent opposition to Stalinism?

The fact that your bloc will not include the BT is due, we are told, not to your principled rejection of the MRCI's proposal but to the BT's refusal to compromise its principles. We assume that they turned you down because of the Polish events. The pro-Stalinist BT considers Poland a political "acid test" -- as indeed it was, a civil war between the working class and the anti-proletarian, counterrevolutionary bureaucracy. At least the BT had the self-respect not to construct a paper compromise across the barricades, even though it stands on the opposite side from the working class. The BT's rejection, and only that, saved your bloc from a maneuver so dishonest that it would have matched anything the Morenoites might cook

up. Can you imagine the Morenoites blocking with pro-Jaruzelski forces at this Conference?

The BT also rejects the Leninist position of unconditional military support for the national liberation forces against British imperialism in Ireland. And as far as we know, it has not criticized the Spartacists' plague-on-both-sides position on the Malvinas war, either. What then could a bloc with the BT have said on the question of imperialism? In Britain especially, the MRCI would have been wide open to Leninist criticism on this point from the WRP.

As well, the WRP, with a quasi-endorsement from the LIT, has taken the position that Stalinism is a "thoroughly counterrevolutionary" force. As a formal statement, this has the advantage of coinciding with Trotsky's last conclusions on the subject, although in the history of the WRP it served as the cover for Healy's capitulation to Stalinism. As well, the WRP has no way of making its characterization of Stalinism as "counterrevolutionary" jibe with the creation of alleged workers' states by the Stalinists after World War II. This only shows that the WRP's Call was a compromising statement designed to conceal disagreements and avoid unexplored territory.

Workers Power, however, can only counterpose its feeble and outdated theory that Stalinism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that is only "predominantly" counterrevolutionary. From what we have seen of your position in the past, you do not agree with Workers Power on this point, which the WRP has chosen as one of the key questions it intends to fight for. Therefore, your proposed bloc, especially with the BT included, would have been an easy target for the attacks of the WRP and the Morenoites.

In sum, the "principled" nature of the agreement with your proposed allies is obviously questionable. This makes it extremely difficult for you to prove to advanced workers that your bloc is revolutionary while the WRP-LIT bloc is centrist. We have to ask ourselves: is this really your intention? Only further developments will determine whether you and your allies genuinely, but unthinkingly, hope to fight centrism from such an unpromising position — or whether you are really maneuvering to construct an unprincipled merger of your own under the cover of attacking the Morenoites' maneuvers.

On the other hand, you may see your link with the MRCI as a preparatory step in a process of fusion based upon agreement on principles, accompanied by only tactical differences. But that would mean that you have already made political capitulations so deep that you no longer have crucial differences with Workers Power. This would at least explain your reluctance to criticize MRCI where you disagree.

Such a method would still be wrong. At the time of the Declaration of Four, even though Trotsky

regarded that bloc as a preparation for possible fusion, the documents prove that he did not hold back criticism. He opposed propaganda blocs and "backstage diplomacy," and he called for "mutual criticism on the basis of full equality" — "in full view of the masses." If you have changed your views in the direction of Workers Power's, you have an obligation to explain the reasons for the change. All the more so when the BT is included: have your views on Stalinism really changed so much that you can envision a principled fusion with them?

Compare Trotsky's method, by the way, with the MRCI's casual introduction of the name of the BT as a bloc partner. There was no criticism of the BT for Workers Power's readers, no warning that they were speaking of a pro-Stalinist tendency. It was a classic backstage maneuver.

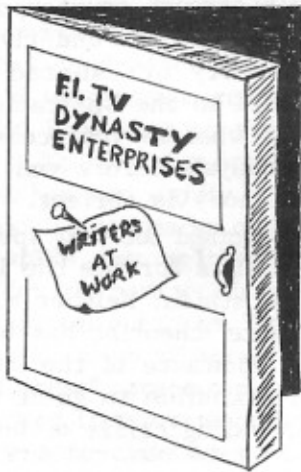
In the article on the WRP's proposed Conference in the latest issue of *Proletarian Revolution*, we too proposed a bloc. We proposed a principled and practical series of tests that challenge the primary methods of capitulation of post-World War II "Trotskyism." The spirit of our proposal is far closer to that of the Declaration of Four than is the bloc proposed by the MRCI.

Your desire to break out of isolation — the second justification you gave for joining the MRCI bloc — is laudable, but the way to do so is not by adapting to backwardness. The only alternative is active participation in the class struggle on a principled basis. This means adroit use of the united front: common action with anyone ("even the Devil's grandmother," said Trotsky) — but not political obfuscation. (We, for example, would willingly join in common action with the BT, especially since we regard them as honest opponents. But we would do nothing to encourage a myth of political agreement.)

In contrast to this approach, your proposed bloc with the BT reveals a certain maneuverism which is shared in common by both the third-campist and orthodox milieus of centrism. Such maneuverism is unfortunately inevitable, if one's politics are not anchored to the understanding that socialist revolution absolutely depends on the advanced revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat.

You will perhaps say that our method leads nowhere. The LRP and WP have no allies; no one would join a bloc with us. Possibly you are right about the immediate situation — but that says more about the centrist pseudo-Trotskyist milieu than about Trotskyist principle. We can reply only by citing Trotsky's reply to the misunderstood concern of the SAP:

"Comrades of the SAP often put the question: Why it is that, with correct principles, with a Marxist analysis of events and so forth, the Left Opposition remains so isolated? The answer is clear: because it lacks the skill of keeping



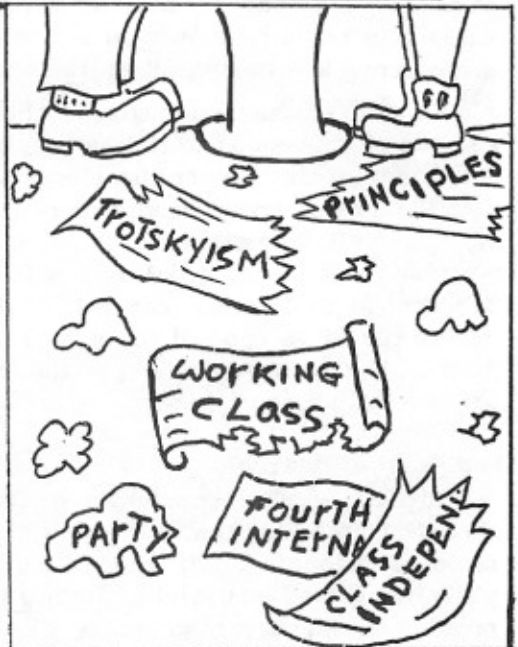
How's this? Jim, Michel, Ernest, Pierre & Gerry combine to settle Poppa's estate... Gerry, Pierre & Jim then break with Ernie & Mike. Meanwhile all the relatives are fighting over whether Uncle Joe, who ax-murdered Poppa, is a rat through & through who sometimes does good - or is he just sometimes a rat but O.K. on state occasions? Then Jim splits with Gerry & merges into a new cartel with Ernie... Meanwhile Joe's East European neighbors go through sex change operations when no one is looking... Soon Pierre & cousin Guillermo incorporate... only to divest each other... Back at the ranch, Nahuel leaves Gerry to merge with Jackie B. & Ernie. Then we break... for a commercial...



...next we see Jack call the cops on Nahuel who then forms a trust with Pierre... splits... At that moment, Gerry makes a heel out of himself with 26 women while Jack discovers that Leon was not his poppa & he is Uncle Joe's bastard child... The others, nervous about their own birth certificates,



get angry... Next, there is going to be a **BIG WEDDING**... orthodox of course... ...lasts until next episode... Well?



One Man's Family

quiet about its own principles and of adapting itself to different ones." (Writings 1933-34, page 202.)

An intransigent Bolshevik attachment to principle is preferable to opportunism as a way of reaching the masses when they go into motion. The current discussions, splits and fusions reflect the beginning of a mass, worldwide proletarian struggle. Under such circumstances centrists normally shift to the right, toward opportunism. However, the reformism and certainly the centrism of the masses are only transient stages in the deepening of the struggle — whereas

for the leaders they are long-term diseases.

We have no doubt that our program reflects the inherent material interests of the masses and that our isolation will be bridged as the struggle deepens. We are perfectly willing to maneuver, openly, in front of the masses and with them — the opposite of petty group manipulations behind their backs. This contrasts with the narrow organizational practices common on the far left: interminable mergers and splits that clarify nothing and compromise everything.

In your discussion with Comrade Paul you made

clear another aspect of your bloc with the MRCI: your unwillingness to bloc with us because we are not Soviet defensists. You insisted that the question is crucial and goes to the heart of contemporary politics; it reflects differing views of the very nature of capitalism in this epoch. All of this is true, as Paul acknowledged. In fact it was the LRP that insisted on these points in our discussions with you years ago, when you considered asking us to join your fraternal international tendency as a minority.

We have no complaint against you for not inviting us to join your bloc; it would be unprincipled for us to do so, as we have explained. But the situation does give us the opportunity to analyze what is revealed by the maneuvers of you and your allies.

Consider your position: you are willing to form a bloc (a pre-party bloc?) with supporters of the Stalinist counterrevolution against the workers -- while you oppose blocking with us, who support the workers revolution under Stalinism. It shows that you stand closer to the BT politically, even though in Poland you would have been on the opposite side of an armed struggle from the BT, on the same side with us.

As well, you also know that in the Polish events we made no concession to Walesa, nor to the Church, nor to any of the decentralist trends within Solidarnosc. We opposed every attempt to re-privatize property, whether it came from the state or from Solidarnosc; we fought every concession made by the state or Solidarnosc to Western capital. So in proposing a bloc to the BT as opposed to us, you are proving in practice that what you defend in the USSR is not just its forms of property.

Family of Trotskyism

In 1982, after Jaruzelski's military crackdown, the LRP pointed out that you and Workers Power faced a contradiction in holding your defensist position while opposing Jaruzelski (Socialist Voice No. 16, page 22). If Walesa had actually taken state power, we argued, you would have had to support a Stalinist struggle against him. You told us at the time that you thought our reasoning was far-fetched. You disagreed with the Spartacists and the line of the BT (and we assume that you still do) over whether the state apparatus was seriously in danger and whether arms should have been used against the workers. But now you confirm the justice of our old argument: your position will lead you to stand with the apparatus in the face of a genuine threat to its property, even when the threat comes from the proletariat.

Your choice of the BT over us also reflects your implicit acceptance of the "family of Trotskyism," a conception that both you and Workers Power nominally reject. It is clear that working with us would embarrass you in the defensist milieu (the "family") far more than a bloc with pro-Stalinist defensists.

On a related matter, you informed Paul that it was not a priority for you to debate the Russian question with us because of the importance of Soviet defensism. However, the very importance of the question should provoke you to develop your views in great detail, if not specifically through counterposition with ours. Your defensism and the underlying "deformed workers' state" theory are shared by tendencies ranging from Mandel to the Spartacists. You must at least determine what in your common theory contributes to their betrayals before you can have confidence that such a theory is correct.

Moreover, unless you have worked out your specific theory, how can you as Marxists foresee the line of development of the Stalinist states? Neither Mandel nor any other "workers' state" theorist has been able to do so. And given the importance of the USSR, this failure means that it is impossible to guide the advanced workers in the unfolding crisis of world capitalism.

Dangerous Fusion

From our point of view, of course, the more serious attention you give to the question -- at a time when the development of world politics is exposing further the weakness and anti-working class nature of the Stalinist system -- the more you will be forced to reconsider the orthodoxist assumptions that you are now so reluctant to challenge.

Both organizations signing this letter have come to respect you, comrades of the GOR, for your political hardness (even where we disagree), your commitment to the proletarian struggle, and your principled relations with ourselves. But false politics is a cancer that can destroy even the most strongly held principles. It appears to us that your willingness to collaborate with the MRCI's unprincipled bloc represents for you a retreat from the intransigence that we have credited you with.

We know that you understand that the world does not need another pathetic and dangerous fusion such as that of the WRP and LIT; it would simply break apart again and besmirch the name of Trotskyism even more. But further-left maneuvers of the same character are not useful either. If you fail to uphold the necessary intransigence today, the cost in the future will be tremendous. ■

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What Has Been Done to "What Is to Be Done?"

Several articles in this issue have described the "war of all against all" that constitutes the daily life of the various groups that call themselves Trotskyist. From time to time a truce is declared, and two or three of the groups merge. These amalgamations, however, signify only continuations of the war without principles by other means. Soon there will be new splits, new organizations, new battles.

For our part we disagree with the whole milieu on fundamental questions. Yet there is one question on which all of us all agree: the class nature of these "Trotskyist" groups themselves. We and they share the view that they are petty-bourgeois tendencies within the working-class movement.

Many readers will undoubtedly disbelieve us at this point, assuming that no left tendency would say that about themselves. Indeed, the groups do not say so directly, but they are perfectly explicit. Moreover, being "orthodoxists" and therefore socialistic lawyers, they do nothing without a precedent. They all manage to find a historical justification for their views in Vladimir Lenin's famous document, "What Is to Be Done?"

In this work Lenin argued that workers' ordinary consciousness, as developed in the class struggle, was inherently reformist and trade unionist; socialist consciousness had to be brought into the working class not by the class itself but from outside, by bourgeois or middle-class intellectuals. Lenin had learned this outlook from Karl Kautsky, then universally recognized as the leading "orthodox Marxist" theorist of the day.

Lenin as Gospel

In taking Lenin's view of 1902 as gospel truth for today, the orthodox believers, in fine legalistic tradition, overlook not only Lenin's subsequent opinions and Leon Trotsky's comments on the matter, but also the historical experience of the international working class.

Here, for example, is Trotsky's assessment from the late 1930s:

"According to Lenin's representations, the labor movement, when left to its own devices, was inclined irrevocably toward opportunism; revolutionary class-consciousness was brought to the proletariat from outside, by Marxist intellectuals. . . . The author of "What Is to Be Done?" himself subsequently acknowledged the biased nature, and therewith the erroneousness, of his theory, which he had parenthetically interjected

as a battery in the battle against "Economism" and its deference to the elemental nature of the labor movement." (Stalin, page 58.)

Several statements by Lenin support Trotsky's conclusion. One comes from a summary article about the 1905 revolution:

"At every step the workers come face to face with their main enemy — the capitalist class. In combat with this enemy the worker becomes a socialist, comes to realize the necessity of a complete reconstruction of the whole of society, the com-



What Has Been Done to Lenin has been to make him into a Kautsky.

plete abolition of all poverty and oppression." ("The Lessons of the Revolution," Collected Works, Volume 16, page 302.)

An earlier reference occurred during the 1905 revolution itself ("Social-Democracy" was the contemporary term for the revolutionary working-class party): "The working class is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic, and more than ten years of work put in by Social-Democracy has done a great

deal to transform this spontaneity into consciousness." ("The Reorganization of the Party," Collected Works, Volume 10, page 32.

We offered our explanation of these passages a few issues back:

"Lenin here was not saying the same thing as in 'What Is to Be Done?'. These passages reflect the new understanding he operated on for the rest of his life The working class is not simply spontaneously trade-unionist, it is spontaneously revolutionary. However, since the proletariat develops at different rates, if the most advanced workers do not intervene to lead the backward layers, then revolutionary consciousness will not be achieved by the class as a whole. Spontaneity is no answer; leadership by the revolutionary party, the proletarian vanguard, is decisive — the crucial question of our times. But leadership is a relation within the working class, not between intellectuals and proletarians. Building the Marxist party to lead the class is the only way to defeat the alien intrusion of petty-bourgeois ideology." (Proletarian Revolution, No. 23.)

Workers Blamed for Backwardness

Our comment occurred in a polemic against the British group Workers Power, which holds firmly to Lenin's outdated views in "What Is to Be Done?". (See their "Theses on Reformism," Permanent Revolution No. 1, page 49.) Our argument was sharply distinguished from that of Tony Cliff and the "rank and filist" spontaneists who misuse the later Lenin to idealize backward consciousness among workers. We showed that Workers Power, by a seemingly opposite route, still shared much of the Cliffism from which it originated.

Workers Power used Lenin's position to defend its line that the working class is to blame for the backwardness of its traditional reformist leaders. Both "new leaders, often of a militant left reformist variety" and "the entrenched, conservative bureaucracy," Workers Power holds,

"reflect the consciousness of the workers who elect them. As such they represent, and become the means of maintaining, the reformist limitations of the consciousness of these workers." ("Theses on Reformism," page 57.)

Orthodox Errors

A more garishly explicit presentation of the same position is that of the Spartacist Tendency:

"Socialist consciousness is based on knowledge of the history of the class struggle and, therefore, requires the infusion into the class-struggle process of socialist conceptions carried by declassed intellectuals organized as part of the

vanguard party. Socialist revolution does not occur through the intensification of traditional class struggle, but requires a leap from a vantage point outside bourgeois society altogether." (Marxist Bulletin No. 9, Part III.)

This exemplifies the petty-bourgeoisie's conceit that its own concerns and programs stand far above the greedy appetites and selfish interests of all classes in bourgeois society, the workers included. It was no leap at all for such a tendency to support the suppression of millions of Polish workers by the Jaruzelski regime in 1981. However bureaucratic the Stalinists might be, since they allegedly are situated "outside bourgeois society altogether," they have a far better grasp of socialist interests than mere workers can.

Marxism of the Middle Class

Another similar viewpoint is offered in the article "'What Is To Be Done'. . . In Historical Context," published by the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in the journal Tasks of the Fourth International, No. 1, dedicated to the WRP's proposed International Trotskyist Conference. The article was written by Tim Peach of the Australian Communist League, affiliated to the WRP.

Attacking the Healyite interpretation, Peach illustrates many of the "orthodox" errors that have been made in iconifying Lenin's essay. He also cites later writings of Lenin that warn against treating "What Is to Be Done?" as universal dogma, as well as the above passage from Trotsky. But he then goes on to ignore his own warnings: "Lenin showed that consciousness had to be brought to the working class from without." (page 27.) This is what Healy had been saying over and over again for decades.

Specifically, Peach understands that consciousness comes to the working class via the revolutionary party. However, for him as for all pseudo-Trotskyists, the ideology of the party is brought to it by revolutionary intellectuals outside the working class.

Trotsky said that workers could develop the socialist idea on their own, although the process could be speeded up by the help of the intellectuals. Further experience tells us that if the intellectuals do not break from their middle-class egoism, they will instead prove to be an enormous drag on the proletarian movement.

Trotsky also pointed out that every serious dispute within the workers' movement ultimately reflects a class difference. By their own arguments, our difference with the centrist milieu is just such a question. The issue of where socialist ideas come from is a vital part of the struggle to re-create the proletarian communist world view and the international party that embodies it. ■

Maneuverism

continued from page 1

talism has become totally reactionary. It respects no limits in defending its existence. It has learned from experience that its best preservative is fratricidal warfare within the working class itself. It particularly strives to corrupt the leadership of the most advanced revolutionary elements in order to destroy their effectiveness.

By the time of World War II the Communist Parties had replaced social democracy as the chief traitor in the heart of the proletariat. Strengthened by the usurped resources and prestige of the Soviet workers' state, the Stalinists stood firm as capitalism's defenders of last resort. They were the necessary instrument for dampening revolutionary consciousness, smashing workers' uprisings and locking the proletariat into dependence upon the bourgeoisie.

Today capitalism faces the overwhelming likelihood of another life-threatening crisis. This time, however, the ruling classes have no such bulwark. The Stalinist parties still exist, and in many countries still dominate working-class politics, but they are in a crisis of their own. The Stalinist system no longer appears as the wave of the future; it is socially conservative, economically stagnant and increasingly imitative of decadent Western bourgeois society. Nor has social democracy, the agency that rescued capitalism in the aftermath of World War I, regained any revolutionary credentials.

At the same time, once again the battalions of the working class are stirring. In Europe, South Africa and Latin America the mighty army is beginning to move, in greater numbers than ever. Today would seem to offer an unprecedented opportunity for the revival of Trotskyism.

'Trotskyism' Today

But the "Trotskyist movement" of today -- the multitude of national and international groupings claiming the Trotskyist heritage -- is in as great a crisis as Stalinism. Not only is it organizationally fragmented, but the strongpoint on which it was founded, its programmatic base, has rotted. The milieu as a whole can only be regarded as centrist, revolutionary in words (sometimes) but fundamentally reformist in practice. For most "Trotskyists":

1. The Transitional Program is not the replacement for the social-democratic "minimal program" as Trotsky intended but an alternative to the program of socialist revolution. The "workers' government" slogan has become not a tactical demand addressing a dual power situation but a strategic, centrist replacement for fighting for the overthrow of the bour-

geois state.

2. The proletariat itself is no longer the sole agent of revolution. Now every nationalist, Bonapartist and Stalinist pretender has his "Trotskyist" champions who see "anti-imperialist" coalitions, "workers' and farmers' governments" or other "democratic" stages as inevitable stepping stones to socialist revolution -- instead of the class-collaborationist obstacles they are. On top of this, almost the entire milieu accepts the idea that socialist consciousness must be imported from the middle class.

3. The anti-working class theory of "deformed workers' states" is gospel. This concept is supposed to account for the existence of alleged workers' states where the proletariat had not only not taken state power but had been crushed by the Stalinists in



The 'Prophet Armed' was never politically disarmed during his life. That task was left to 'orthodox' grave robbers.

the course of their construction of a nationalist and statified form of capitalism in place of the old bourgeoisie. It became in practice the defining characteristic of post-war "Trotskyism." The notion that Stalinism abroad could create socialist revolutions reflected capitulations at home to social-democratic and/or Stalinist reformist forces, which were now

judged capable of progressive as well as counter-revolutionary acts.

4. Most critically, the centrality of the proletarian cadre party is denied in practice -- in favor of building reformist parties, other mass non-Trotskyist parties, strategic "anti-imperialist" or "revolutionary" united fronts, or "rank and file" groups, as the road to power.

In sum, the great majority of self-proclaimed Trotskyists have abandoned Leon Trotsky's dedication to the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat and the political independence of the revolutionary party as the keys to socialism. Since the Second World War, people calling themselves Trotskyist have stood with the forces of order and repression whenever a revolutionary situation explodes. From Bolivia in 1952 and Hungary in 1956 to Portugal in 1974 and Poland in 1980, there have been Trotskyists siding with bourgeois nationalists, Stalinists or social democrats in opposition to the most advanced proletarian militants.

If comrades with a revolutionary communist spirit still call themselves Trotskyists, it is only because of the heritage of Trotsky and the struggles of the Fourth International decades ago. Since then the banner has been dragged through the mud, stamped on and parceled out to every charlatan who needs a red cloak to betray the proletariat once again.

In the past, Stalinist and social-democratic reformism gutted Marxism of its very meaning as the science of proletarian revolution and the struggle for communism. The capitulation of the pseudo-Fourth Internationalists to these forces has marked the further degeneration of socialist consciousness -- to the point where its once commonly accepted principles are now cynically derided as "sectarianism."

The fight to restore the Fourth International is a combined effort on two fronts. In order to re-create its own vanguard, the proletariat must step up its struggles beyond their present national and sectoral levels; the mass eruptions of 1968-69 were only a dress rehearsal. As well, revolutionaries have to wage an unrelenting fight to reassert the principles of Marxism, both its scientific and its working-class character, in counterposition to the bureaucratic and petty maneuvers which have typified the cynical "party building" games of the centrists in recent years.

The WRP's Conference

In this light it was of considerable interest that one of the worst of pseudo-Trotskyist outfits, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Britain formerly led by the corrupt Healy bureaucracy, renounced the crimes of its past and dedicated itself to the resolution of the "continuing crisis of the Fourth International." In January the WRP called for an International Conference in 1987 of "all Trotsky-

ists" to return to the fundamentals of Marxism, internationalism and working-class leadership (see our article "Re-create the Fourth International!" in Proletarian Revolution No. 28). At the same time a political ferment developed among the former Healyite groups, and a serious reconsideration of the most fundamental questions appeared possible.

However, the International Conference is shaping up to be something other than promised. Maneuverism, power plays and organizational combinationism are



Some 'orthodox Trotskyists' found good in Islam's Qaddafi; others in genocidal Pol Pot. No wonder they differ only on the degree of good in Stalin.

drowning the chances of any serious probe into the fundamental questions over which there is total disarray. The fine words of the WRP's conference call favoring "intensive struggle" over basic questions in order to face up to the crisis of Trotskyism have been emptied of their meaning. In their place are administrative barriers and political conditions tailored to a pre-determined outcome framed for the immediate organizational needs of the main sponsors. So convoluted have been the manipulations, behind the scenes and in public, that the Conference may not take place in 1987 as originally indicated.

This turn is not unexpected. As we warned, "the

calls to revive the Fourth International are being addressed by and to the very organizations whose theory and practice have been responsible for disorganizing and destroying it." We advised revolutionary workers to proceed with caution with respect to the WRP, given its unsavory past, and we repeatedly pointed out that the entire milieu was centrist, despite its pretensions to Trotskyism. With this outlook we applied to attend the Conference as observers in order to participate in the discussion and help move it forward.

Given our difference with the milieu on principled questions, there was no alternative. But we did have some hope that some elements had recognized that the failure of pseudo-Trotskyism to explain the direction of events could no longer be swept under the

clear. On the one hand they were described as the program which the WRP intended to fight for at a Conference which would be open to "all Trotskyists"; on the other, they could be taken as the basis for admission to the Conference itself. On this as on many other maneuvers surrounding the Conference, we have little or no inside information to base our judgments on, only our political experience and sense.

The Morenoite Response

The second interpretation of the ten points was left open to satisfy the International Workers League (LIT, its initials in Spanish), the Latin America-based organization founded by the late pseudo-Trotskyist faker, Nahuel Moreno — as well as, evidently, the LIT's supporters in the WRP leadership. The LIT



Mexican students on strike in February. Around the world, workers, peasants and students are again on the march. Struggle demands new revolutionary leadership.

rug. If the discussion had become serious then a polarization could have taken place around a leftward-moving current. Unfortunately the trend has been the opposite.

In our previous article we called attention to the ambiguity of the ten points in the conference call that constituted the WRP's political platform. Some of them had a refreshingly left-wing flavor; some were explicitly wrong in fundamentals, i.e., defense of the purported "workers' states." Others were kept deliberately murky, as befits the vacillating tradition of centrism. We noted that phrases which have been given opposite interpretations over the years were deliberately inserted without any explanation of the content intended, in order to permit centrist waffling.

The import of the ten points was also left un-

hopes to unite with the WRP without having to confront any profound questions of principle. Moreno's lifetime of political adaptation to Perón, Castro and the Sandinistas could hardly shine in the light of a serious re-examination of principles which made any pretense to Trotskyism.

The LIT responded to the WRP's call by announcing its "general" agreement with the ten points, and adding, "Of course, we could formulate them in a different way and some of them undoubtedly need further clarification." What precisely these different formulations or clarifications might be was left unstated so as not to interfere with the warm collaboration already under way.

This light tone belies the fact that the subjects under discussion are not petty issues but life-and-death questions. In contrast, it was always Lenin's

and Trotsky's method to avoid "diplomatic" formulations (i.e., lies) and say openly what they meant. Since proletarian consciousness is the chief question for building the vanguard party, the purpose of programmatic declarations is to clarify issues and bring out all possible differences — not to blur them over in a false show of amicability. The LIT prefers not to allow others to judge for themselves whether its "different" wordage is substantive or merely hair-splitting.

In fact, the LIT's "agreement" with the ten points is a fraud. Most blatantly, consider the Morenoites' record with regard to the WRP's point 10: "Condemnation of the method, inherited from Stalinism, of slanders, violence and frame-ups designed to silence and drive out political opponents." Our article in this issue on the antics of the U.S. Morenoites shows them using these very methods, hardly condemning them, within their own organization.

Likewise, the WRP's 5th point demands:

In Praise of Solomon

Our story takes place in 1985, when the Internationalist Workers Party, the U.S. adherents of the Morenoite International (the LIT), underwent a bitter and violent faction fight. As a result the group was split into two, and the once-United States were divided between the competing tendencies. The details of this miraculous divorce and custody settlement are unseemly in the extreme, and should not be told to anyone who might thereby mistrust the Morenoites' claim to unsullied, unstained Trotskyism.

The tale might appear to be a macabre farce were there not decent Trotskyist cadres who get caught up in such horror stories. Nevertheless, the Morenoite story has a morally uplifting conclusion owing to the "great authority" of the international leader that enabled a momentous conflict to be rationally resolved.

Normally in analyzing organizational splits within the socialist and working-class movements we would concentrate on the political issues at stake; all else is secondary. In this case, however, judging by the several documents we have seen, there was really nothing that might be called politics to confuse the real issues. Sorry to tell, these include: Who stole the dues? Which side included the "lumpen elements," "maniac factionalists," swindlers and cheats — even "police advisers"? Who used "gangster methods" to beat up whom?

On this last question, for example, the majority asserted that three of its leaders were brutally attacked by one member of the minority; the minority had it the other way around, and further claimed that the majority comrades were all much taller and heavier.

The World Congress of the LIT, which had to settle these disputes, was faced with a major dilemma. On the one hand, the report of the International Control Commission was severely critical of Comrade Nicholas, the main party leader. Nicholas was shown to have held "a bureaucratic conception of the party," to have acted as the leader of the majority faction rather than the party as a whole, and to have used his close links with the International for purely factional reasons.

This sounds convincing enough, but it could not

be allowed to be decisive. After all, as the report put it,

"A balance sheet of the faction fight ... wouldn't be such if we limit ourselves to make an exhaustive criticism of the methodological mistakes of its leadership in the leading of such factional struggle."

Of course it wouldn't. A balance sheet, after all, has to be — well, balanced. The minority had to be found guilty too.

Only the Maximum Leader could resolve the problem. As the report tells us, "During the World Congress, Cde. Nahuel Moreno, after agreeing with the main points of the report ..., contributed new elements with which we agree and for this reason we include them in the present balance sheet."

Moreno's contribution was worthy of a Solomon. When the minority called two members of the Political Bureau "thieves," he commented knowingly, "This is their statutory right." On the other hand, he pointed out, "Nicholas will say that [it is] because they are maniac factionalists. This is his right."

How could anyone decide when such fundamental rights are in conflict? Moreno had the solution: "I think it was inexperience."

Inexperience, however, was not equally balanced between the two sides. It was the minority comrades who were still wet behind the ears, even though their main leader had been in the movement for some thirty years.

There was then no alternative for Comrade Moreno but to bring to bear his years of experience in such matters:

"Nobody is going to convince me that in any political bureau in the world half of its members stand up saying to the other half 'all of you are police advisers' and then 'let's continue the meeting,' because a phenomenal mess will start immediately."

Moreno had found the key to the dilemma: "Due to lack of experience, the comrades of the faction (CLF) were the ones who provoked the mess and the actual crisis existing in the North American section." That

"Rejection of any formulas which imply a leadership role for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces, or equality between them and the working class in the tradition of Stalin's 'bloc of four classes,' as a liquidation of the political independence and hegemony of the working class."

The LIT's history of chameleon-like adaptations to just such bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces proves its contempt for the WRP's condition in practice. Its representative in London working out of

the WRP's mailing address, Leon Perez, is directly responsible for one such adaptation. This is the statement on South Africa by the Political Bureau of the International Workers Party (IWP -- one of the LIT's two U.S. sections), titled "For a Black Government" (Working Class Opposition, July 1985):

"We call for a Black government of the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the independent Black unions."

is, the minority caused all the trouble by protesting against Nicholas' bureaucratic behavior.

Inspired by Comrade Moreno's intervention, the Commission drew its conclusion. The minority was guilty of two fundamental errors. One was "liquidation of leaders." As the Commission put it, "For the International, the defense of the leader and militant cadre is a principle" (betrayal of the working class excepted, of course). Consequently, "there was a discussion with the faction on their attacks against the leadership, recommending it to be careful."

The minority's other error was "the more serious one": it had asked the international leadership to intervene. The idea of "an International that intervenes in the [national] sections, reorganizes their leaderships, sanctions their leaders, modifies leadership teams or takes a position in favor of an organizational grouping against another" would be "the Pabloist or Zinovievist conception." Among Trotskyists, you see, "The sections are a product of the natural developments of the cadre and the class struggle that no International in the process of formation can alter."

In other words, don't even think of calling for international democratic centralism, comrades of the minority -- especially if you wish to criticize your leaders.

Lest the reader come away with the feeling that an injustice has been committed, that the International was biased in favor of the leadership faction, the report sums up with a quotation from Marx: "Nothing human is foreign to us." It adds, "We say the same thing in relation to the situation in the North American party."

What a liberating thought. There was no need to expel anyone! Anything human -- bureaucrats, thieves, maniacal factionalists, police advisers, you name it -- could stay in the party. They just had to be careful whom they criticized.

But there was a further problem. Although the party had to stay unified, bad tempers had already flared up, and the "phenomenal mess" that Comrade Moreno had so wisely foreseen after the fact was already in existence.

Again it was time for Solomon. In its Protocol of Functioning, the World Congress kept both factions

(the minority Collective Leadership Faction and the majority, simply called the Leadership) in a united organization by the simple but brilliant device of dividing up the turf. The CLF got New York, Chicago and "50 percent of the area of Los Angeles where the main work among Latinos is concentrated." The Leadership was awarded places like Hollywood, San Francisco and Philadelphia, its own chunk of Los Angeles, "and the Peace and Freedom Party."

Control of the party publications was awarded to the winners. But "if the CLF sells more than 500 WCO's or 700 EB's of each edition, it could have another comrade incorporated into the Editorial Board."

Naturally, additional precautions were necessary. "We will try at all times to see that the activities of the CLF and the leadership do not interfere with each other."

As well, presumably to help him overcome his thirty years of inexperience, "the place in the Central Committee of comrade Harry is to be used by comrade Harry whenever he wants to be present and when he doesn't want to be present he doesn't have to do so." To encourage him, we suppose, "Any kind of accusation, factional struggle, mutual recruitment or attacks of any kind will not be allowed."

And most important, the Protocol demanded that none of this be made public.

If you, dear reader, have begun to suspect that the International did somehow intervene into the affairs of a national section, that it was perhaps reflecting just a smidgin of Zinovievism or (don't even think it) Pabloism, then be reassured: the Protocol was signed only by representatives of the CLF and the IWP Leadership, and no one in the International raised a hand to make them do it.

Our story has a happy ending. Time proved that the baby couldn't be stitched together again, so the two sides have functioned independently with distinct names, competing newspapers and separate phone lines to Buenos Aires. They never mention each other, and no one would know that U.S. Morenodom is a divided movement -- unless they happened to read two papers.

And if you too keep quiet about this sordid development in an otherwise strong, healthy and principled organization, no one need ever know. ■

Now the IWP thinks that AZAPO is a "non-capitalist organization of the Black working class of Azania." We have shown that both its claim to socialism and its self-definition as a working-class organization are debatable (see Proletarian Revolution No. 25). But AZAPO aside, not even the adaptable LIT would deny that the ANC is a petty-bourgeois nationalist organization. And calling for the ANC to be part of a bloc, in which it is by far the largest and most politically powerful component, is precisely a formula that gives a leadership role to bourgeois or petty-bourgeois forces. As the WRP itself has put it,

"Yet who is the world bourgeoisie to rely on to keep capitalist relations intact in South Africa? Certainly a black petty-bourgeois nationalist government, like in most parts of Africa, would be an attractive alternative to the white racist rulers (and we have no doubt that given the chance, the African National Conference would gladly fill that role)." (Workers Press, March 14.)

Tactics aimed at splitting the ANC's ranks from their anti-working class leaders are one thing; advocating what could only be an anti-working class government is another. By calling for a "Black government" — not a black working-class government — overwhelmingly dominated by the ANC, the LIT stands clearly on the wrong side of the class line.

There is no question that the Morenoites, who have backed bourgeois government of various stripes in Argentina as well, cannot honestly accept the WRP's fifth point. And the centrist WRP itself is at best equivocal. A Workers Press article (April 18) called for a "workers' united front" to include not only the workers' unions and committees but also organizations like the United Democratic Front (UDF) — and outfit even broader than the ANC, represented by the international liberal bourgeoisie's hero, Bishop Desmond Tutu. There can be practical united fronts with the UDF and ANC on many questions, but not a "workers'" front, unless the class line that the WRP correctly sees as critical is to be obliterated.

New Restrictions

Underneath all this flim-flam the WRP has been actively cooperating with the LIT. After Moreno's death in January, the WRP press treated him as a hero of Trotskyism, and since then this worshipful attitude has deepened. In contrast, last fall the WRP's representative travelling in the United States fought for a more open Conference of orthodox defenders — against the arguments of the Morenoites. We are not privy to the depth of the apparent disagreements within the WRP, but in any case the leadership has now moved quickly to resolve the ambiguities. We wonder if comrades in the WRP's ranks, who have recently faced revelations about their party's horrific past and have asked probing questions about

its causes, are so impatient to endorse the shotgun wedding obviously being prepared with politically dubious elements.

Already the pre-Conference planning meetings have been narrowly restricted, and there are indications that the Conference itself will be too. On March 23, the WRP sent a letter to organizations that had expressed interest in the Conference, "reaffirming" what it had never stated clearly in the first place: that the Preparatory Committee would be limited to "those who declare agreement in principle with the 10 points" of the WRP's call. And on April 1 (appropriately enough), it issued another document adding further conditions:

"The organisations participating in the Preparatory Committee must be those who recognise themselves and each other as part of the continuity of the Fourth International and the struggle to build Trotskyist organisations."

The wording here is a little odd, which is unavoidable under the circumstances. Normally no group

The image shows the front page of the **DAILY NEWS** newspaper. At the top, it says "NEW YORK, THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1969" and "49 Pages". The main headline is in large, bold, black letters: **TROTSKY IS DEAD**. Below the headline are two photographs. The left one shows a man with a white bandage wrapped around his head, covering his eyes. The right one shows a group of people, including a man in a suit and hat, looking towards the camera. Below the photographs are two short captions. The first one says "↑ Trotsky Death Weapon" and the second one says "← Dying, He Blamed Stalin".

Stalin murdered the man but not what he stood for. That task was left to Trotsky's epigones.

interested in reviving the Fourth International would hesitate to accept itself as a legitimate part of the Trotskyist tradition. On the other hand, a group like the WRP which has just discovered that its former

leaders had repeatedly committed treason might justifiably hesitate to recommend its own past "as part of the continuity of the Fourth International." Until recently the WRP had the decency to condemn the heritage of its departed corrupt leadership. Are we to assume all the self-criticism has now been forgotten?

In any case, the real aim of the new restrictions is to exclude all those who have principled criticisms of the Morenoite LIT. That is the function of the cute phrase "and each other." Leave aside the difficulty of recognizing in advance the bona fides of unspecified other groups. To join the Preparatory Committee you clearly have to accept the Trotskyist "continuity" of the Morenoites, even though the Morenoites can "declare" their agreement with the ten points only because, as Stalin astutely observed, paper will take anything written on it.

Two-Level Conference

Indeed, the restrictions have aroused the ire of other, more left, centrists, for whom the LIT's history of unprincipled blocs and cynical posturing is too much to swallow. Whereas the WRP has been apologetic over its crimes, the Morenoites (now accompanied by the WRP) still celebrate theirs.

The new restrictions can be taken to imply exclusion not only from the Preparatory Committee but from the Conference itself. For the April 1 letter continues: "Agreement on the ten points in the Call is a minimum basis for a discussion among Trotskyists." Since the Conference is called precisely to "discuss" the crisis of Trotskyism, those who find the ten points inadequate or even partially wrong could be automatically banned.

However, what the WRP now appears to have in mind is a sort of two-level conference. One level is open to "all Trotskyists," as originally advertised. The other level is for the "continuity Trotskyists" who can accept the WRP's ten points (or the LIT's unknown alternatives), plus the mutual admiration provision. In brief, the Conference that once promised to be an opportunity for revolutionaries to confront the corrupt history of opportunism in Trotskyist guise, now seems designed only to supply an audience to witness the marriage of the LIT and WRP (with a few smaller tendencies thrown in for spice).

Undoubtedly even the "open to all Trotskyists" level is still being debated behind the scenes. The Morenoites' main claim to principled behavior is their attempt to exclude the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec), the followers of Ernest Mandel, because of their rejection in practice of working class political independence. The LIT has a justifiably bitter feud with the USec (see below), but it is hardly a dispute over principle. Whereas the WRP leaders must still need the facade of an open conference because many members have yet to be con-

vinced that their present dancing partners are the only true Trotskyists worth talking to.

The model for this split-level conference is supposedly the Paris Conference of 1933. Here a dozen heterogeneous left groups attended, motivated in various ways by the deepening crisis of the Socialist and Communist Internationals. To cut through the confusion, and to help separate revolutionists from centrists, the Trotskyists organized a programmatic bloc of four tendencies as a step towards building the Fourth International (see the letter to the Italian GOR from ourselves and the Australian WR in this issue).

But the maneuver of the WRP and LIT does not quite measure up to its alleged model. Not only have the WRP and LIT sidestepped the significant question of a common political declaration without reservations, by which their revolutionary claims can be judged; as well, the WRP is building both the narrow bloc of those who (more or less) agree with it -- and also the confused Conference as a whole!

The key difference is this: Trotsky had to face the fact that buried among the varied spectrum of centrists of his day were people whom the class struggle was forcing to the left. The task of the vanguard party was to pose the decisive political questions in order to help these elements find their way to revolutionary communism. Today, the WRP is posing questions in a diplomatic, imprecise way in the futile hope of anchoring centrism more firmly in its current swamp.

From Healy to . . . Healyism

Putting the Conference aside for the moment, the possibility of a WRP-LIT merger is discouraging. To break from Healy and then to embrace Morenoism is no step forward at all. Indeed, the similarities are striking. Politically, both Healy and Moreno were "anti-Pabloites" who made full use of the methods and conceptions of Pablo. Organizationally as well, the Morenoites — like Healy — have been charged with using and threatening violence within the working class, even within their own organizations. Charges should not be automatically accepted at face value, but there have been enough made from different sources to warrant investigation — especially by the WRP, which boasts of having broken from Healyism.

In criticizing the restrictions that the WRP is imposing on the Conference, we in no way mean to suggest that they are designed to exclude ourselves in particular. Given our hostility to the notion of any "family" of Trotskyism that includes its historical betrayers, plus our rejection of the pseudo-theory that the present-day Soviet Union and its imitations are still workers' states of any kind, we are hardly a major interest of the Conference organizers. What is likely is that the increasingly restrictive steps are aimed at other members of the Soviet-defens-

ist Trotskyist family whirling like dervishes around the Conference.

Here is a sample of the dancers and their latest steps, based on accounts that have come our way. In December the Italian GOR held a conference to cement its relations with the Sri Lankan RWP of Edmund Samarakkody. In its report, the GOR denounced the British Workers Power group and its international affiliates, the MRCL, for sectarianism. (La Voce Operaia, February 1987.) In February, according to a brochure issued by the Austrian IKL, the GOR and RWP signed a declaration with the WRP and the GOCQI of Michel Varga, affirming the continuity of the Fourth International through the Healy-Lambert International Committee of 1953-1972; we have not seen this declaration ourselves and so cannot vouch for the IKL's interpretation. Later in February the WRP revoked its agreement with the GOR/RWP, obviously because it had found greener pastures in Morenoland. Then the GOR assented to the MRCL's call for a bloc on no stated principled basis "against centrism" at the WRP's conference (see our previous issue).

Squalid and Dishonest

As we pointed out last issue, Workers Power has handed the WRP a powerful weapon in their dispute by denying the counterrevolutionary essence of Stalinism. The WRP replied with a dangerous maneuver: in line with its approach to the LIT, it denounced leftists who criticize the Simon Bolivar Brigade -- the armed contingent led by the Morenoites in 1979 to aid the Nicaraguan Sandinistas against the Somoza dictatorship. Part of the WRP's defense of the Brigade is correct: in one of the slimiest episodes in its history, the USec, which the Morenoites were part of at the time, labeled the Brigade "ultraleft" and shamefully defended -- even abetted -- its expulsion by the Sandinistas.

On the other hand, the politics of the Brigade have been criticized from the left by a number of tendencies, including our own: the Bolivarists gave not just military but also political backing to the petty-bourgeois Bonapartist Sandinistas. The WRP (Workers Press, February 28) published a letter on the Bolivar brigade signed by Ralf Carls of the Gruppe Arbeitermacht, Workers Power's German affiliate. The letter denounced the United Secretariat for its role and then went on to criticize the Morenoites for hiding their own opportunism behind the Sandinistas' attack. In its reply, Workers Press (March 14) lumped Carls' left criticism together with an attack from the right by Bernie Hynes, a USec supporter, labeling them both "appalling slanders."

The WRP charged Hynes and Carls with "squalid" and "dishonest" abuse of the Bolivar brigade because they "relied on lies and misinformation" and "misrepresented the crucial political questions at stake in

Nicaragua." But all the evidence cited to back up these charges comes from Hynes' letter alone; Carls' criticism, although confusingly presented, was aimed from a different angle. The WRP's unjustifiable amalgamation of the two is a return to the squalid and dishonest methods of Healyism.

One source for critical historical information on the Morenoites, by the way, is the Spartacists' Moreno Truth Kit, a pamphlet denounced by the LIT and the WRP as "filled with a plague of quotes taken out of context, distortions, defamations and straight lies." (Working Class Opposition, February 1986; Workers Press, April 4, 1987.) We know the Spartacists commit defamations and lies; in this pamphlet, however, their quotations are accompanied by frequent photocopies of Morenoite declarations of faith in Peron, Castro and other bourgeois and petty-bourgeois figures. If the LIT and WRP want to make their charges of lying and distortion stick, they have no choice but to name chapter and verse to try to refute what they can. Their problem is, of course, that the Spartacists' overall case is true, and it is backed up by other sources as well. When you can't refute the truth, your only recourse is invective.

If the WRP turns out to have expelled Healy only to adopt the equally corrupting methods of Moreno and his followers, its promised openness to political reconsideration and theoretical development will have come to nought. A conference whose real purpose is to provide an audience for the unification of the WRP and LIT is worthless; it would represent only one more of the endless series of futile attempts to put the shattered forces of pseudo-Trotskyist centrism back together again. Recent history proves that each announcement that a new "Fourth International" has been cobbled together is simultaneously an announcement of the inevitable forthcoming split.

The real tragedy of such an outcome would be that another golden opportunity for reviving the legacy of genuine Trotskyism will have been lost. Revolutionary leadership must be offered on a mass scale to the fighting workers wherever the crisis of capitalism is making the proletariat explode. In the face of this task, the continuation of Healy-style maneuvers constitutes a despicable betrayal of the workers.

The Revolutionary Alternative

The only way to fight all this unprincipled machination is to stand for a principled program. That is why we have challenge all those who see themselves as revolutionaries combatting centrism to adopt certain essential points, which we reprint here from our last issue. We do not propose these as an ultimatum, nor are they a full revolutionary program. But they do strike out against the major ways in which "Trotskyist" centrists have crossed the class line in the post-World War II decades. We will be happy to collab-

orate with any who genuinely want to break with sterile "orthodoxy" and fight for the independence of the proletariat and its international party.

In an effort to prevent people from rushing into unjustified blocs and mergers in the dark, we publish here three additional articles. One is the letter to the GOR already mentioned, concerning the bloc proposed by Workers Power and the MRCI. Second is an account of the vicious faction fight waged by the

Morenoites in the United States in 1984-85, and how it was resolved through bureaucratic and un-Leninist procedures by Moreno. Third is an analysis of Morenoite policies in Nicaragua, ranging from the days of the Bolivar Brigade to the present. It shows that the LIT, when tested by the pressures of revolutionary conditions, operates not as a Trotskyist proletarian party but in the miserable tradition of Pabloism from which it claims to have broken. ■



British miners' strike was source of the WRP's explosion. Growing workers' upheavals are the basis for destroying centrism and creating an authentic world party of revolution.

LRP's Seven-Point Challenge

1. Rejection of popular-frontism, the strategy of political support to bourgeois parties and governments (even those in conflict with imperialism): no political support to even the "shadow of the bourgeoisie," as Trotsky insisted in regard to Spain in the 1930s; no alliance with the Bolivian MNR in 1952; no coalition government in Ceylon in 1964; no political adherence to the ANC in South Africa today.

2. Independence of the proletarian party in the struggle against imperialism: renunciation of the strategy of "anti-imperialist united fronts" as in China in 1925-28; proletarian military blocs with but no political support to the Chinese Maoists in 1949, the Cuban Castroites in 1959 and the Bonapartist Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the petty-bourgeois nationalist rebels in El Salvador today.

3. Opposition to the liquidationist position of "multi-vanguardism" and for the construction of Trotskyist working-class parties in all countries: neither the Cuban Communist Party nor the Sandinista Front nor the Salvadorean FDR-FMLN represent the vanguard party.

4. Opposition to strategic entrism: no long-term entry into social-democratic or Stalinist parties as advocated and carried out by Pablo,

Shachtman and their followers in the 1940s and '50s; opposition to the present-day long-term entrism into the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party, the Australian Labor Party,

5. No permanent blocs, united fronts or political support to social democracy: the use of all working-class weapons, including the general strike, against social-democratic as well as conservative and liberal governments; no permanent electoral support to the mass-based reformist parties, e.g., no vote for British Labour in 1979 or the French SP in 1981; in the U.S., no support for the Democratic Party or any of its politicians even if they run as "independents."

6. Independent parties to carry out the proletarian revolution under Stalinism: in Hungary against the Nagy government in 1956, in Poland against the reformist Walesa leadership in 1980-81, etc. The proletarian program for a democratic centralist workers' state against Stalinism opposes all decentralist economic schemes (including those of "self-management").

7. Founding the Fourth International on international democratic centralism: no colonialist bureaucratic facsimiles like Healy's or the Spartacists; no petty-bourgeois decentralist and undisciplined blocs like Mandel's.

Reformism and the Russian Question

The following article, originally titled "Martin Thomas and the Decline of Socialist Organiser," was written by Mick Considine in July 1986 during the faction fight inside the Australian Socialist Fight group that led to the formation of Workers Revolution, the new organization fraternal to the LRP. Details on the founding of WR and our joint tendency statement appeared in our previous issue.

Comrade Considine demonstrates here the close affinity among the theory that the Stalinist states are bureaucratized "workers' states," the "bureaucratic collectivism" theory developed by Max Shachtman in the 1940s and the "state capitalism" of Tony Cliff. We have pointed to this phenomenon more than once in this magazine. See for example the article "New Twists on Old Theories of the USSR" (No. 25), comparing the theories of Cliff and Ernest Mandel.

Back in April 1981, Socialist Fight published an article by Martin Thomas, a leader of what is today the [British] Socialist Organiser Alliance [SOA]. It was entitled "Class Nature of the USSR," and polemicized against the "state capitalism" of Tony Cliff and British SWP/IS.

Martin's article is not of interest today because it in any way challenges arguments I have put forward to support a state capitalist analysis of the USSR. As comrades will be aware, I have a radically different analysis from that of Cliff. Taken as a whole, Martin's article is terrible, with its untenable conclusion that Russia remains a workers' state (albeit somewhat "deformed").

Nevertheless, there is one interesting feature of Martin's article, given positions taken by Comrade Clive of the SOA and some Australian comrades in the course of the current debate in our own organization. This is that, despite the centrist politics of the 1981 article, it does make some correct points which neither Clive nor his Australian supporters agree with, today.

A contrast of how these two points were covered by Martin and Clive in their respective articles will tell us a lot about the degeneration of the Socialist Organiser Alliance.

In the older article by M. Thomas (Socialist Fight No. 2), we read:

"The USSR has indeed accumulated means of production quickly. It is also true that capitalism accumulates means of production far faster than all previous societies. But to conclude from that similarity that the USSR is capitalist is a purely formal argument. The healthiest workers' state would also accumulate means of production

fast — not as fast as the USSR in the 30s, but faster than modern capitalism."

However, in Clive's comments on my analysis, we find:

"The program of the Left Opposition was for slower growth, less industrialization than that eventually undertaken by Stalin. If rates of growth are the proof positive of a workers' state, Stalin's workers' state must logically have been a better one than Trotsky's would have been. ...

"Considine's criteria, therefore, are not good ones. It is true that Trotsky tends a bit toward the 'growth rate' argument in The Revolution Betrayed. But a) Trotsky was starved of facts, and b) he hadn't seen capitalist development since 1945 as we have done.

I have commented elsewhere (see "Max Shachtman Rides Again!") on the serious misrepresentation of my position which is reflected in these quotes from Clive. My purpose in quoting them now is to show the contrast between the SOA of today and the same organization of yesteryear.

As the extract from Martin's article shows, the comrade clearly favored accumulation in the USSR and for any workers' state, in no uncertain terms. A weakness in his argument is the implied acceptance of a nationally bound workers' state, when he says that the healthiest workers' state would also accumulate rapidly, though not as rapidly as 1930s Russia. On the contrary, a healthy workers' state — a non-isolated workers' state — would accumulate like mad as compared to Russia. But that is a small problem compared to the Clive of today on the desirability and necessity for accumulation, as well as an understanding of the USSR in the 30s from a revolutionary perspective.

As I put it in "Max Shachtman ...":

"Clive misses everything. In The Revolution Betrayed Trotsky didn't tend 'a bit' toward the growth rates 'argument.' He emphasized it. He said that if a workers' state didn't prove itself able to accumulate at a greater rate than capitalism it would have failed to demonstrate its superiority as a more advanced system. In this he was only reiterating Marx and Lenin. What would be the point of a workers' state if it couldn't demonstrate greater accumulative ability than reactionary capitalism in this epoch?"

Towards the end of Martin's article, the comrade aptly criticizes Cliff's "theory" for the way it "leads to fatalism in relation to the 'Third World.' Logically it gives the Stalinist bureaucracy more credit than they are due, presenting them as a new ruling class which has opened up a

whole new dynamic epoch of social production. If the state capitalist theory [of T. Cliff] were applied as a consistent theory, rather than as a moral protest tricked out with scraps of Marxism, then it would lead to the conclusion that the USSR should be defended as against 'private capitalism,' because it represents a higher form of social production."

In Clive, however, we read that:
"our tendency has explicitly repudiated the notion that the [Stalinist] states are progressive. On the contrary, we have described them as counter-revolutionary. ... Nor do we agree that the social systems are progressive: they are systems based upon the atomization of the working class .. "

Like the Shachtmanites at the point when they broke from the Fourth International, comrade Clive adds that the SOA:

"assigns no progressive role to the bureaucracy. We recognize that Stalinists, revolutionary



Berlin 1919: Karl Liebknecht shortly before Social Democrats killed him. Pseudo-Trotskyists seek resurrection of counterrevolutionary reformist pestilence.

against capitalism, are simultaneously counter-revolutionary against the working class."

Once again, the Clive/SOA of 1986 is answered by the Martin Thomas of 1981. Apart from the fact that comrade Clive still insists upon the label "workers' state," he is quite obviously here describing a new epoch of social production, in which the Stalinist states are neither capitalist nor progressive from a proletarian point of view. In other words, they are a third form of society. All that's left of our opposition to Stalinism in this analysis is (to paraphrase Martin's 1981 words against Cliff's methodologically

similar view) "a moral protest tricked out with scraps of Marxism," which, if applied consistently, "would lead to the conclusion that the USSR should be defended against 'private capitalism' because it represents a higher form of social production."

Martin also drew out the practical consequences of such "third campism" in his old article, arguing accurately that:

"It would demand of communists that we reject Marxist analysis as outdated, study the perspectives of the new epoch, and reconsider whether communism is possible in the new future (or, for that matter, ever.) ...

"It provides a theoretical basis for the disdain for 'Third World' struggles, seeing state capitalism [by which they mean a 'new' form of society--MC] as their inevitable outcome ..."

Clive, of course, explicitly rejects Lenin's characterization of this period as the epoch of imperialism — i.e., of capitalist decay. He states:

"Industrialization in the whole world, including those countries we all agree are capitalist, has been immense since World War Two."

This implicit "new form of society" analysis leads Clive and the SOA straight to the same sort of "disdain for 'Third World' struggles" which the Cliffites have long been notorious for. Remember Gardiner's contempt for international questions? The SOA majority position on Ireland is also indicative of the same attitude. If capitalism in this epoch is capable of the feats of production Clive attributes to it (it's not — see "Max Shachtman ..."), we can no longer regard it as the fundamental source of Ireland's or Russia's problems. If imperialism does not act as a fundamental brake on production, then it too is potentially progressive. Only, it's just not progressive enough — barbarous, vicious, but not counter-revolutionary inherently. Of course, neither Clive nor the SOA is this bad yet, but this is the logic of their position.

Related to a reassessment of imperialism comes a reassessment of reformism. Historically, for Bolsheviks, reformism and social-chauvinism stem from the labor aristocracy. That is the material basis, the vantage point in society, which leads it to the reformist world view. If the linkage to counter-revolutionary imperialism (which is the source of the aristocratic/middle strata layers) is destroyed, then the reformist misleaders become simply goodies and bad-dies, conspirators and progressives-who-aren't-quite-progressive-enough, etc. In short, the revisions now being made all relate back to the adaptations being made in the labor movement.

Once the gains of 1930s Russia are attributed to capitalism (Cliff), or you dream that they can be matched by the capitalists today (Clive), or deny that it was the mechanisms bequeathed to the workers'

state by the revolution which permitted such a build-up, then you have made the question of social revolution into a moral preference rather than a working-class necessity. Once you do this, you reflect the current hegemony of cynicism toward the working class — the view of those "socialists" who believe that the working class failed them.

Such are the arguments which Martin Thomas of 1981, if we could transport him to the present time, might make against the Clive (and Martin Thomas) of today. And he'd be right, just like Trotsky was right

Far Left

continued from page 2

critical rhetoric, the great majority of self-styled Trotskyists have no confidence whatever in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. This cynicism must be dispersed if it is not to stand in the way of mass upheavals which in their practice are moving way beyond reformism; doing so requires an unrelenting campaign by genuine Trotskyists. Together with our sister organization, Workers Revolution of Australia, we are dedicated to this task.

LRP Statement

As an overview of our attitude to the milieu, we reprint below the statement of Sy Landy, National Secretary of the LRP, at a November meeting in New York addressed by Chris Bailey of the WRP.

"We believe that Comrade Chris is sincere when he says the WRP wants a serious, no-holds-barred international discussion to clarify the fundamentals of revolutionary Trotskyism. We believe that the ferment in the WRP is real, although we do not yet know enough to evaluate its direction. The past has been pretty horrible; practice will tell where the WRP is going.

"The WRP says the discussion must tackle fundamental questions. Good. We say the fundamental question to be explored is the political destruction of the Fourth International in the post-World War Two period. What we abandoned was the first principle of the International Left Opposition — the political and organizational independence of the working class and its vanguard. Trotsky said, correctly, that you could march under only one flag — that of communism — not also under the banners of petty-bourgeois nationalism, counterrevolutionary reformism or counterrevolutionary Stalinism.

"Healy capitulated to the politics of Khomeini, Ghaddafi, Saddam Hussein — and to Livingston, Knight and the other left reformists and national chauvinists of the Labour Party.

"But look at the rest of the so-called Fourth Internationalists. There is Moreno, who has twice now wrapped himself in Peron's flag and has never aban-

in the 1930s, when he attacked the first wave of "third campists" for giving up on the working class, in the guise of giving up on the USSR before the working-class conquests had been thoroughly eradicated.

The fact that, despite all their traditional weaknesses and centrist evasions, it's possible to mobilize good arguments from the positions of our British comrades' past is yet another sad commentary on how far the comrades have degenerated.

How long will it be before the SF majority admits to this degeneration? ■

done that method. His representative from the [LIT] chairs this meeting. Another sponsor here is the WSL, tied to Thornett in Britain whose political differences with Tony Benn are barely distinguishable and who today is merging with British Mandelites. The Mandelites, of course, only take time out from their deep burial inside reformist parties to tell us that class collaboration in a popular front in Nicaragua was the path to social revolution there.

"One does feel sorry for the Mandelites' organizational allies, the American SWP, who, while openly abandoning Trotskyism, are accused by yesterday's playmates in the Australian SWP of sectarianism for not understanding Ho Chi Minh's need to murder the Vietnamese Trotskyists. The U.S. SWP is slow but they'll get there too. And the Spartacist League lauds Jaruzelski and marches under the flag of the Yuri Andropov brigade!

"These 'defensists' are no less capitulatory than the open deserters led by Tony Cliff and the late Max Shachtman.

"We make no claim of orthodoxy; we leave that cover to you. We say the Stalinist nations represent statified capitalism and that today such an analysis is the only way to maintain Trotsky's class intransigence and his understanding of reformism and counterrevolutionary Stalinism. In claiming that the Stalinists led the socialist revolution and created workers' states in East Europe and elsewhere, you reflect class adaptation at home. You surrender belief in the revolutionary capacity of the working class in favor of the cynicism that allowed Healy to flourish.

Healyism, disgusting as it was, is hardly bizarre in a milieu which for the most part accepted Pol Pot's Cambodia as a workers' state, no less!

"We understand why the WRP is unable to offer us full participation in your projected world conference. We have never asked for it. We both recognize that the barrier between us is one of principle. We intend to participate as fully as possible as observers in your discussion process. We hope that authentic revolutionaries across the world will be able to come together again in a re-created principled Fourth International — as opposed to the present centrist outfits that speak in the name of Trotskyism." ■

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Number One, May/June 1987



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Marxism Mystified

The "Russian question" is absolutely crucial for Marxists. If you are fighting to get rid of capitalism you need an alternative, and the USSR presents itself as one. But Soviet society, once the beacon of socialism for the workers of the world after the 1917 revolution, has since suffered through reaction and counterrevolution. Its economic and social conditions no longer hold hope for anyone. If our expectations of revolution and socialism are to be believed, we have to be able to explain what happened to the Soviet workers' state and why. That is why this magazine has given so much attention to the question since our first issue.

Any book that claims to deal with the "Russian question" ought to be looked at. Such a book is The Soviet Union Demystified, by Frank Furedi, identified in the book only as a British professor. Although the book doesn't say so, it is heavily endorsed by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) of Britain — sold at its bookstalls and reviewed glowingly in its press ("The best buy of 1986"). A work by a party claiming to give revolutionary leadership to the working class, above all one that promises to use the Marxist tools of analysis, is all the more important.

In any case, the Soviet Union could use some demystification. We have shown in many articles that its social system is a form of stratified capitalism, based on the exploitation of wage labor but deformed by the remnants of the Soviet workers' state that the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped half a century ago.

Few "Marxists," however, understand this. If we look only at the parties and groups descended from Trotskyism like the RCP, most consider it to be a degenerated workers' state (as Trotsky did in the 1930s) but ignore the enormous events that have transformed the USSR since then. Others say it is a new form of class society neither capitalist, socialist, nor transitional from one to another. There are even those who call it socialist.

What then do the RCP and Furedi call it? They insist that it doesn't fit any of the categories mentioned so far, not even the "none of the above" option made famous by Max Shachtman. In a book claiming to expose the mystery of the Soviet Union, you would think the question of what it is, as opposed to what it isn't, would be a matter of some importance. But it is completely ignored.

We have to figure out Furedi's view from indirect evidence — to demystify Furedi, in fact. What, for example, does he say about class roles in the USSR? He talks about the working class a lot, so we know he

thinks Russia has one. He criticizes the bureaucracy a lot but insists that it is not a class (page 179). Just where the bureaucracy fits in is not clear. It's a "political order," he explains, something like a caste — but is it part of the unique working class or not? Furedi doesn't say.

Nevertheless, the bureaucracy is concerned about class struggle: "The silent class struggle ... represents an objective threat to the power of the bureaucracy" (page 206). But that just deepens the mystery: class struggle between what classes? We're told of only one — the workers. A class struggle with only one class on the scene is like a football game with one team. The workers should have no trouble winning, but somehow they're still on the bottom. Someone, some class, is class-struggling against them.

If Furedi were a Trotskyist, he might reply that for Trotsky in the 1930s, there was already a class struggle between the workers and the ruling Soviet bureaucracy, even though the bureaucracy was still part of the working class. This was possible because the bureaucracy embodied the danger of capitalist restoration. Furedi, however, has no such dynamic interpretation. He holds that the ruling bureaucracy has nothing in common with capitalism.

Moreover, if there is a genuine working class in the Marxist sense, it has to be part of a capital-labor relationship. Furedi avoids the word "exploitation" but he clearly describes the fact that the Soviet working class is exploited. And exploitation is a relationship between two classes, not just one. Further, if the exploited class is a proletariat, the exploiting class can only be capitalist in some sense — an internal bourgeoisie, an incipient bourgeoisie, international imperialism, etc.

Furedi has come face to face with Shachtman's problem: if the producers are workers, what are the exploiters? Shachtman toyed for a while with the notion that the workers were really slaves, but the workers themselves showed that idea to be ridiculous. So he withdrew to the terminology of proletarians exploited by non-capitalist collectivist bureaucrats — which makes as much scientific sense as cows having ducklings.

In order to argue that the Soviet system is completely uncapitalist, Furedi takes up Marx's law of value in order to show that it does not apply in the Soviet system. He succeeds in proving only that he doesn't understand the first thing about it. "Marx's theory of value," he writes, "was designed to explain the distribution of labor-time in capitalist society"

(page 68). But he also says, "The invisible hand of the market, the so-called law of supply and demand, regulates the distribution of labor-time and the products of labor" (same page).

This parallel wording shows that for Furedi, Marx's law of value and the law of supply and demand both are supposed to regulate the distribution of labor time. That is, for him they are the same law -- or at least they do the same thing and are therefore equivalent.

This has nothing in common with Marx. The law of value is determined in production, not the circulation of commodities. Marx showed that supply and demand regulate the selling price of a commodity but hardly its value. In confusing price with value, Furedi is stating plainly that he is looking only at the surface of phenomena -- the opposite of what Marxism has to do if it is to demystify anything.

If the law of value doesn't regulate the Soviet economy, what does? Furedi isn't sure. "No regulating mechanism exists in the Soviet Union" (page 105). "There is certainly a basic contradiction between the modes of economic regulation in the Soviet Union and in the West" (page 246) -- which implies that there is a regulating mechanism, even though it isn't capitalist. All that we can safely conclude is that there is a grave contradiction in Furedi's thinking. If you've got no mode of regulation, it can't be in conflict with someone else's.

Nevertheless, throughout the book he does discuss a certain regulating mechanism: he calls it "spontaneity," or the spontaneous distribution of labor time. "Spontaneous or unconscious forces are the socially mediated way in which nature-imposed necessity is experienced by society" (page 101).

How does this spontaneity work? In Marx's analysis of capitalism, the law of value governs what appears to be spontaneity, blindly but effectively. And not just under capitalism: wherever there is no conscious organization of labor, the law of value creeps in, in one form or another. In pre-capitalist societies it takes a primitive form; only under capitalism is it fully developed. In a workers' state transitional from capitalism to communism, value would operate in an increasingly restricted form, as proletarian consciousness gradually gained strength. In brief, for Marx spontaneity and the law of value were one and the same thing.

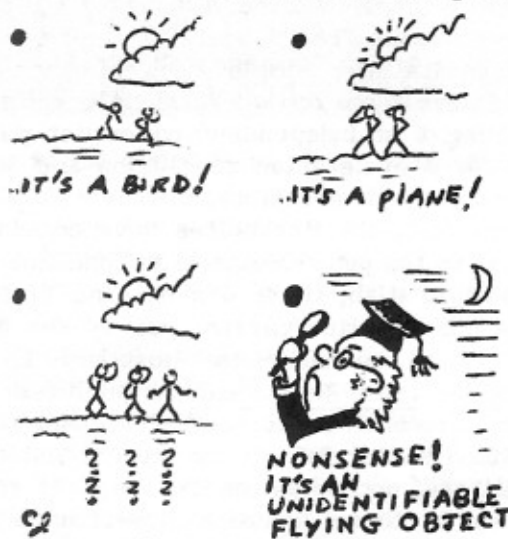
Furedi expels the law of value from the gate of Soviet society only to find spontaneity flying in the window. Obviously he can't recognize the law of value when he sees it everywhere; he doesn't know what it is. Fair enough: lots of people don't. But most don't go to the trouble of writing books to prove it.

There is another possible clue to Furedi's theory: his program for the workers' class struggle. If we knew it, we could deduce what sort of theory under-

lay that program. But Furedi offers no program. He is satisfied with a bit of historical cheerleading. "History has shown," he tells us (page 207), "that the forward march of the working class cannot be held back for long simply by force of arms."

That's good to hear, but the fact is that the "history" so glibly invoked is the history of workers under capitalism! If the Soviet Union isn't capitalist, what good is the history of capitalism for analyzing it? Conceivably the Soviet ruling "order" has different methods than the capitalists' for holding back the workers' forward march. After all, the whole point of showing the USSR is not capitalist ought to be to apply new methods to its analysis -- not to dig up old formulas that don't apply.

Indeed, Furedi is scathing when others do that: "Marxists who designate the Soviet Union as 'state capitalist' have no inhibitions about using the cate-



Marxist Scholarship to the Rescue

gories of Capital because of the apparent similarities between capitalism and Soviet society" (page 83). This, he says, is a "violation of the principle of historical specificity." If that's the case, what does it mean to talk of class struggle when there's only one class? Or to pontificate about what "history has shown" when it's the history of a different form of society? Of course, Furedi has a tough time being historically specific; he can't even name the society he's talking about. It takes gall to criticize those who try.

There are other gems in this book, but that's enough. Furedi has no name for his "demystified" society, no coherent picture of its class struggle, no conception of the "spontaneity" that governs it, and -- worst of all for an alleged Marxist -- no program for combatting it. It has nothing to do with a Marxist investigation and smells badly of the worst sort of academic posturing. Not recommended. ■

Nicaragua

continued from page 32

maneuvered to cement an alliance with Nicaraguan capital in the vain hope of winning the friendship of American imperialism.

Ousting troublesome leftists was part of the regime's policy of containing the mass struggle that had brought it to power. Land seizures were reversed, bearing arms was made illegal, and the Sandinista Workers' Federation (CST) was set up by the regime to rein in factory struggles that had already begun.

There have been many regimes like it in Latin American and other countries exploited by imperialism. Mexico under Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s was a well-known example analyzed by Leon Trotsky himself. The communist attitude toward such regimes is clear: no political support whatever; military and technical aid against attacks from imperialism and its allied internal capitalists; complete organizational and political independence for workers' unions, militias, etc.; building of an independent communist party to prepare for a proletarian revolution and set the stage for a real workers' state.

In contrast, the Morenoites have consistently capitulated to the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the FSLN. To begin with, there was nothing Trotskyist about the political line carried out by the Bolivar Brigade, despite the Sandinistas' hostility. The book Nicaragua: Reforma O Revolucion? was published by the Colombian Morenoites to defend the Brigade. It says:

"The Simon Bolivar Brigade had been constituted for military, not programmatic, support to the FSLN, and it cohered around a class-struggle policy, as is indicated by its identifying slogan: 'That's how it must be: Sandinistas to power.'" (p. 527; all page references are to this book.)

In other words, the Morenoites accepted in advance that the FSLN, not the working class, would be the post-revolutionary rulers. True, they criticized the Sandinista program of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, but calling for the Sandinistas to take state power themselves constitutes political, not just military, support.

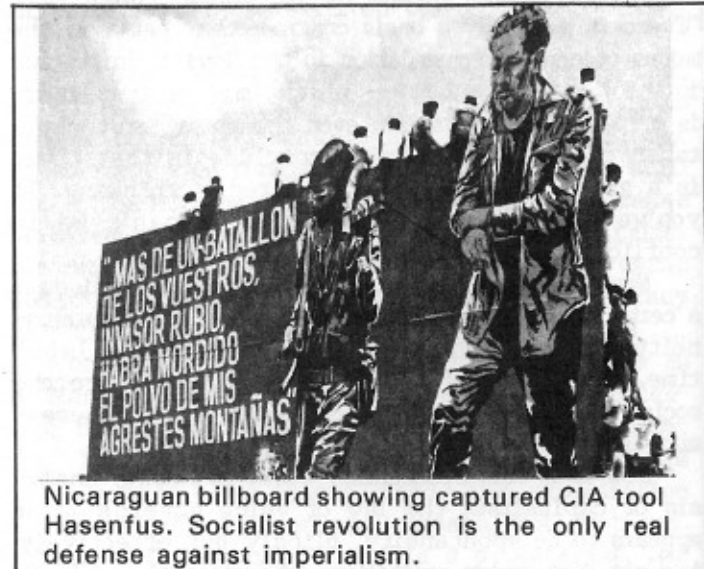
Their "class-struggle policy" meant urging the Sandinistas to oust the traditional bourgeoisie from their coalition government with the FSLN, not warning the working class that the Sandinistas' own class interest was counterposed to that of the workers and peasants. The Morenoites talked of proletarian power, but only to help bolster Sandinista rule; the workers' chance would come in the indefinite future.

In the tumultuous months after the uprising, the Brigadistas were forced to admit that the Sandinistas were moving Nicaragua in a counterrevolutionary direction. That still did not prevent them from continuously campaigning for an FSLN government.

To justify their devotion to the Sandinistas, the Morenoites have to redraw the class line. The fact that Nicaragua is a semi-colonial country becomes an excuse for assuming that the main class division falls between the petty-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, not between proletariat and bourgeoisie. And from this they conclude that a government of the Sandinistas alone would signify the oppressed masses in power.

"The FSLN is not a 'national bourgeois' party but rather a petty-bourgeois organization in a semi-colonial country that has not completed the national democratic and agrarian tasks. In those conditions the slogan 'break with the bourgeoisie, take power' corresponds to the movement through which the masses can put forward the question of a government without bourgeois representation and of their own power." (p. 620.)

The Morenoites see proletarian interests represented within Sandinism. The point is not that indivi-



duals cannot break from petty-bourgeois nationalist politics and join a proletarian revolutionary force, but that the Morenoites do not counterpose the two political ideologies and social classes. Pretending that Sandinista power is equivalent to proletarian power is a treacherous deception of the workers.

Sandinism and the Revolution

Not only do the Morenoites see the Sandinistas as a vehicle for social revolution, but they also equate Sandinism with the entire revolutionary movement in Nicaragua. Thus they say that "the FSLN,... due to peculiar conditions of Nicaragua and the international situation, had become the people's vanguard against the Somozan dictatorship and against imperialism, which was sustaining it." (p. 514.) What's more: "Precisely because we have been among the first — and from well before the fall of Somoza — to call for support of the FSLN's armed struggle and

'Don't do what I did,' says Castro to Ortega, 'do what I say.' Morenoites say 'do what Castro did.' Trotsky believed communists should do and say proletarian revolution.



leadership against Somoza's tyranny, precisely because we are and shall be among the first to recognize the historic merit of the leaders that head it, that is why we tell them neither to halt there nor to retreat." (p. 423.)

The tendency to identify Sandinism and its elitist petty-bourgeois leadership with the mass revolutionary struggle was further shown by the Brigade's habit of affixing the name "Sandinista" to its own acts. Listing the accomplishments for which the real Sandinistas kicked them out, they include:

"The formation of 92 unions or factory committees, in order to constitute the Sandinista Federation of Workers. These were the first unions of the CST, and starting with these the central and the coordinating body with workers' representation was really created. The unions were formed starting with minimal demands, tasks of control and defense of the revolution. The importance of this activity stands out if we keep in mind that a month after the expulsion of the Brigade, seventy percent of the unions of Managua are represented by what we organized!" (p. 528.)

The Brigadistas boast further of their "establishment of a Sandinista government in the Atlantic Zone of Bluefields," stating that "the military and political participation of the BSB was decisive for the consummation of the triumph of the Sandinista revolution." (p. 528.) Thus the Morenoites not only supported the Sandinistas' coming to power but actually aided in setting up the state that emerged.

State power in the final analysis rests on armed force. In Nicaragua the Somocista army was replaced by the Sandinista army, but its class content remained bourgeois. The Morenoites themselves pointed

this out in the period right after the overthrow when the workers were being forceably disarmed:

"The Panamanian National Guard, the same one that is in charge of repressing the workers in its country, is involved in all wings of the Sandinista Army, the Sandinista Air Force, and is even in the Military Intelligence. To no normal or ordinary person would it occur to think that these assassins trained by Torrijos, inheritors of anti-communist methods from the Yankee bases in the Canal, now are dedicated in Nicaragua to preparing a revolutionary army that tomorrow or the day after could defend the interests of the workers and peasants against the bourgeoisie and imperialism." (p.470.)

This was not just "bureaucratization," as the Morenoites called it, but a clear class policy against the workers and peasants. The article goes on to detail the involvement of the Panamanian government in setting up the new army and police, with both the influx of "qualified" Panamanians to Nicaragua and the training of Nicaraguans in Panama.

The Morenoites in their Brigadista phase always fell short of counterposing a workers' militia to the Sandinistas' "vanguard" guerrillaism. Today they still refuse to treat the army as a bourgeois army. A working-class policy in Nicaragua means no confidence in the pro-bourgeois government, even for military defense. It means support for arms and material aid to the unions, the only mass working class organizations in Nicaragua, but not arms to the FSLN -- which the very next day may turn them against the workers. The PRT fails to make the class distinction clear, sometimes calling for money to the unions but generally just "to Nicaragua" (as in its 1986 May Day

slogan, "Request every union in the world to send one dollar per member for Nicaragua.")

Is the State Friend or Foe?

Although the Morenites formally regard Nicaragua as a bourgeois state, they refuse to treat it as such. However, they do not, like other pseudo-Trotskyists, call the FSLN regime a "workers and peasants government"; nor do they hide behind the nonsensical "indeterminate" class category expounded by the Spartacist Tendency. In effect they act as if Nicaragua was a bureaucratized workers' state without troubling to make any theoretical clarification.

For example, regarding the severe lack of medication in Nicaragua, an article in the PRT newspaper blamed bureaucratic disorganization for the waste of medicine and food supplies:

"These tremendous losses result from the existence of an encrusted social wound in the state apparatus: the bureaucracy.

"Sometimes the bureaucracy, to a greater or lesser degree, acts like an enemy that destroys the basis of the revolution. From within the state apparatus it creates great problems for the revolution; it sabotages supplies, production, the health of the Nicaraguan population. For this it deserves to be treated as a wing of the counterrevolution." (El Socialista, October 1986.)

The problem is not the result of class rule and the existence of a bourgeois state but of bureaucracy alone. The Morenites do not call for smashing the state apparatus on which the bureaucracy depends. To remedy the crisis they call for an investigation by the trade unions — without warning that the regime would block any intervention except for a face-saving "investigation" by the government itself.

One of the Sandinistas' services to capital is the "extended work-week," whereby workers are pressured to work extra days without pay in both state-owned and private enterprises. There is no clearer evidence of the Sandinistas' bourgeois orientation, especially since the profits extracted have been used to pay off the national debt to imperialist bankers. But the PRT approaches it as a democratic question, bringing up the underlying class issues only to warn the rulers that the workers might make trouble:

"In the first place the PRT doesn't oppose the workers' deciding, voluntarily and in a democratic manner, to donate their work on Saturdays and Sundays. However, we oppose the "extended work-week" being institutionalized administratively. It is one thing for the workers to discuss and decide voluntarily to work more, and another for this work routine to be imposed bureaucratically by MITRAB or the plant administrations.

"In the second place, apart from intransigently defending the democratic right of the workers to

decide to work voluntarily or not, it is worthwhile to ask if it is more convenient to cut the privileges of the capitalists before demanding more sacrifices from the working class. ...

"The working class in Nicaragua puts up with low salaries, problems of lack of provisions, etc. In these conditions, we shouldn't donate our work to the capitalists but rather cut [their privileges] in order that in that way the people might feel that their sacrifices and voluntary work are going to the defense funds. This is our position." (El Socialista, No.69, November 1986.)

What the PRT overlooks is that the question isn't one of reducing bourgeois privileges but of abolishing class exploitation. There can be no equality of sacrifice under capitalism. On the same subject, in an article "Fighting Union Demanded in the Chapulin Plant," the PRT states:

"We are informed that the union and the Administration are institutionalizing the weekly voluntary work days without consulting the workers through rank and file assemblies in which the majority of personnel decide democratically when they are going to work voluntarily. Instead of elevating the consciousness of the workers, this produces a generalized rejection of the union."

Thus the Morenites advise the Sandinista trade unions that if they don't get the workers democratically involved in agreeing to their own exploitation, the workers will increasingly reject these pro-capitalist unions. Reporting on a sewing factory where only 150 out of 850 workers showed up for a voluntary work day, they played the role of advisers to the Sandinistas and the bosses, not the workers:

"The workers are conscious of the need to elevate production in this time of economic crisis and the imperialist war of aggression, but the administration doesn't fulfill the minimal conditions in order to make the workers' sacrifice easier."

The Morenites rely on the Sandinistas' good graces because their hopes rest with Bonapartism, not the masses. Revolutionaries ought to campaign directly against the economic brigades and all forms of speed-up and productivity drives, not ask that they be made more democratic!

The problem is not just with the PRT but with the Morenito international as a whole. Consider the resolution of the International Secretariat of the LIT, "Defend Nicaragua!" (Working Class Opposition, October 1986.) Nowhere does it state that a revolutionary party and the socialist revolution are needed to defeat imperialist threats.

In fact, the resolution avoids sharply defining the class questions in Nicaragua altogether. It continues the strategy of placing all programmatic demands upon the Sandinistas in such a way as to appear to be giving "advice" to the latter, thereby

building illusions that the Sandinistas will carry them out. It does not call for factory councils, soviets, a general strike, an armed working class or anything else around which the working class could struggle as a class to win its own demands.

Sandinistas Changing Course?

The war conditions imposed by imperialism are the main force that welds the masses to the Sandinistas. Still, some class struggles have broken out. For example, last fall there were large-scale riots among slum-dwellers in Managua. In Leon, after a move to

that the regime has been forced to make.

While an amendment to the Agrarian Reform Law in January 1986 did distribute some land (abandoned and unused parcels), the more productive lands owned by the largest landlords are still protected. Since then the peasants have stepped up their occupations, a problem plaguing their self-appointed benefactors.

Roberto Coronel, vice-minister of agrarian reform, stated the Sandinistas' real views -- which the Morenoites prefer not to hear:

"The peasants who want land must respect the laws. ... We must not forget that in Nicaragua



CST Sandinista union conference, October 1986. Morenoite PRT representative Rene Tamariz (2nd left) asked Sandinistas for higher wages, but agreed that 'production and productivity must be elevated' in capitalist Nicaragua.

confiscate the goods of unlicensed vendors, over 2000 peasant women led a protest over economic conditions. A few days later there was a significant work stoppage at a sugar mill, protesting the closure of the commissary where workers could previously buy lower-priced necessities. There were also riots at Christmas at stores in Managua where toys were given out.

The LIT's 1986 resolution contends that the FSLN has recently made a significant move to the left and is abandoning its policy of accommodation with imperialism. "Today the highest Sandinista leaders are recognizing their errors," we are told. In its introduction, Working Class Opposition proclaims that "Past perspectives relying on Contadora, compromises, and the belief that a sector of U.S. imperialism really wants 'peace' in Central America are being reassessed -- even by top leaders of the Sandinistas."

To support this position, the resolution claims that Interior Minister Tomas Borge "recognized that it was 'an error of good faith' not to distribute the land to the peasants in 1979." The Morenoites accept Borge's confession at face value. They give credit to the rulers' enlightened attitude rather than to the pressure of the mass struggle for the concessions

there exists a mixed economy. If an occupation is considered illegal, ... the land must be returned to the owner" (Barricada, May 5, 1986, cited in Against the Current, Jan.-Feb. 1987.)

The claim that the Sandinistas have moved to the left is useful for justifying the Morenoites incessantly hailing them as the revolutionary agent, but it flies in the face of reality. In practice the PRT has had to oppose, however weakly, all significant Sandinista policies in order to present themselves as a left-wing tendency in Nicaragua.

To its credit, the PRT appears to have opposed the "institutionalization" of capitalist power via the adoption in January of the new Constitution that "guarantees the existence of political pluralism, mixed economy and non-alignment." There is also the small matter of the Declaration of Emergency that was reaffirmed when the Constitution was enacted. Among other things, it forbids the right to strike. Damaso Vargas, head of the Sandinista Workers Federation, stated, "The state of emergency protects the revolution from parties and unions that would use the right to strike to disrupt the economy." (The Militant, March 20, 1987.)

Yet in a letter addressed after the Hasenfus affair "to the left parties" (Communists, Socialists, Marxist-Leninists, and FSLN) as part of its campaign for a law to punish foreign mercenaries, the PRT was quite tolerant of the Sandinistas' repressive moves:

"Just as there exist laws that punish those who violate order and national security, the PRT considers that a law should be adopted that punishes these criminals ipso facto, without the necessity of bringing them to court. ..." (El Socialista, October 1986.)

Because the Sandinistas are Bonapartists, they will inevitably claim to speak for the masses, and in fact they are pressured by the class struggle to make concessions. But they are also under intense pressure from imperialism. They wrote a constitution that guarantees private enterprise and specifically rules out direct government representation by any mass organizations; they extended the no-strike law, and

escalated the productivity drive that demands sacrifices from the workers for the sake of private profit. This is hardly a move to the left.

If anything the Sandinistas are moving to the right. For example, they are increasingly reliant on the treacherous Contadora process, which aims to secure peace in Central America under U.S. military domination by reducing armament levels and arranging border controls. Under existing conditions this is totally unrealistic, and the U.S. is tightening its squeeze.

President Ortega accepted Guatemala's invitation to attend a Central American summit meeting in May. He has endorsed the incorporation into the Contadora negotiations of the new peace plan drafted by Costa Rican president Arias. This plan calls for dialogue with unarmed groups of the internal political opposition in Nicaragua, although not with their armed contra allies as the U.S. has long demanded. The failure

Marx's Bolivar Meets Moreno's Bolivar

Morenoite charlatany even attempts to rewrite history. Under the headline "Why they chose the name Simon Bolivar," the WRP reprints without comment a section of the LIT's explanation, which says in part:

"Simon Bolivar was the revolutionary leader for the liberation of most of South America from the Spanish Empire. ... He joined the independence movement in 1807 as an adherent of the French Revolution and opponent of Napoleonic reaction. From 1810 until the final defeat of the Spanish armies in 1824, Bolivar was the central political and military leader in the war for independence as well as the most advanced revolutionary thinker and politician of his day in Latin America."

(Working Class Opposition, February 1986; Workers Press, April 4, 1987.)

This is hagiography and hogwash. The idea that Bolivar was an opponent of Bonapartism is ludicrous. He strove for absolute power over the territories liberated from Spain. He denounced the idea of a republic, which he claimed his South American compatriots, unlike North Americans, did not deserve. "Elections," he wrote, "produce only anarchy." The Bolivian Constitution which he authored was modeled on Napoleon's consular dictatorship; it centered around a President-for-Life and a self-perpetuating legislature. Only mass resistance prevented Bolivar from fulfilling his program of personal dictatorship.

One Marxist who recognized Bolivar's true value as an "advanced revolutionary thinker" was Karl Marx. Marx wrote an article on Bolivar, denouncing him for Bonapartist policies that weakened the South American liberation struggle and contrasting his views with

the republican ideals of other independence leaders. In a letter to Frederick Engels in 1858, Marx called Bolivar "the most dastardly, most miserable and meanest of blackguards," worthy of comparison only to the contemptible Napoleon III. (Collected Works, Volume 40, page 266.)

(For details of Marx's assessment, see "Karl Marx and Simon Bolivar: A Note on Authoritarian Leadership in a National-Liberation Movement" by Hal Draper, New Politics, Winter 1968. Draper notes that Marx erred in some biographical and military matters -- but not in his hostile political evaluation of Bolivar.)

In this light we can understand why the WRP chose not to reprint another part of the Morenoites' explanation of their admiration for Bolivar:

"Bolivar's thinking was the most advanced and internationalist of the first Latin American struggles for independence, thinking that today is continued in proletarian internationalism of the most advanced revolutionaries in Latin America, the Trotskyists."

Internationalist Bolivar was, just like Napoleon: he was not satisfied with rule over only one country. But Bolivarism is a singularly inappropriate ideology for proletarian militants and especially for Trotskyists dedicated to the self-rule of the workers. The Morenoites do not actually offer their readers any example of the "advanced thinking" that they "continue" today. It would be embarrassing to try.

Nevertheless, the brigade's name was well chosen. Bolivar is an ideal hero for people who so often tail Bonapartists like Peron, Castro and the Sandinistas. The gulf between Morenoism and Marxism is immense. ■

of several previous Contadora schemes has led the Sandinistas to accept an even more dangerous and right-wing initiative.

For a Real Trotskyist Party in Nicaragua

The Morenoites are blind to the course the Sandinistas have been following consistently since the revolution (and even before). Thus they declare the petty-bourgeois Sandinistas capable of what Trotskyists, basing themselves on the theory of permanent revolution, understand can only be carried out by the working class: advancing the revolution to socialism:

"What we sincerely want — and what we believe the workers and Nicaraguan people must demand — is that they [the FSLN] also be the leaders of the second socialist revolution in America. They should put forward the slogan — today, seemingly, forgotten — of the glorious years of Castroism: 'Socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution.'" (p. 428.)

In the absence of a proletarian strategy, all the Morenoites can do is call on the Sandinistas to make Nicaragua "another Cuba"; the Bolivar Brigade did so in 1979, and the LIT continues to do so in its 1986 resolution. The PRT's May Day proposals, the resolution says, "would open the door to transforming Nicaragua into a new Cuba, that is to say, into the second free territory of America."

The call for "another Cuba" blasts the LIT's pretensions to be genuine Trotskyists. Trotskyism, the continuation of Marxism and Bolshevism, means the fight for the self-emancipation of the working class. The Castroism of the Morenoites is the opposite of this. But it is not their problem alone. The Trotskyist movement around the world became disoriented after the Stalinist takeovers in Eastern Europe and Asia; its fragments cast about for anybody other than the working class to make the socialist revolution.

For the Morenoites, this meant the nationalist middle-class leaders in Latin America, from Peron in Argentina to Castro in Cuba (still the all-time favorite) and today the FSLN. But the dream is hopeless; the FSLN will not make sweeping changes in Nicaragua along Cuban lines (much less bring the workers to power). They dare not challenge property rights and risk inspiring the workers to abolish private ownership in its entirety. Castro himself recognizes this and openly advises the Sandinistas against nationalizations, military aid to leftist forces in other countries, or anything else that would upset imperialism.

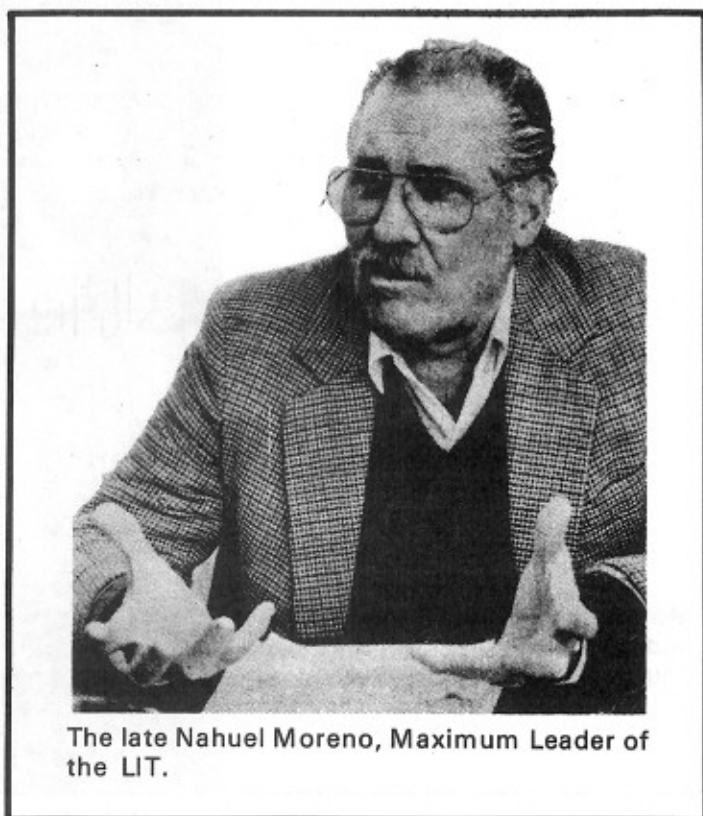
So the Morenoites find themselves being better Castrites than Castro, constantly coaxing the FSLN to move "left." They use their working-class base not to advance workers' consciousness of their own power and destiny but to pressure the petty-bourgeois FSLN to go further. The result would be only a statified

capitalist society like Cuba: nationally limited, politically oppressive and stultified, and economically stagnant. This is the best the Morenoites think the workers can attain — or deserve.

Another of the 1986 May Day proposals said:

"We call on the USSR, China and other socialist countries to donate the quantity of basic grains needed to feed the people and establish military and political coordination with all the workers, popular and guerrilla organizations of Central America to face imperialism."

Not only does this slogan throw Trotskyism out of



The late Nahuel Moreno, Maximum Leader of the LIT.

the window by calling the Stalinist states "socialist," it creates illusions in the Stalinist rulers abroad as great as those it encourages in the FSLN. The Morenoites cavalierly signed their agreement with the ten points of the WRP's call for an International Trotskyist Conference and therefore supposedly share the analysis that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through." But that doesn't prevent them from invoking the Cuban Stalinist model for Nicaragua or revolution, or from demanding revolutionary measures from Stalinist powers.

The nominally Trotskyist party in Nicaragua rests on politics that genuine Trotskyists can treat only with contempt. For the Nicaraguan masses, the Trotskyist posturing of the Morenoites is only an obstacle. It makes their fundamental task of building a genuine revolutionary party as part of a re-created Fourth International all the more arduous. ■

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Summer 1987

Pseudo-Trotskyism in Nicaragua

Morenoite Bolivar Brigade fought under the banner of the petty-bourgeois Sandinista FSLN.



The Nicaraguan revolution poses a critical test for organizations claiming the mantle of Trotskyism. One of the largest pseudo-Trotskyist outfits, the International Workers League (LIT) founded by the late Nahuel Moreno, is in the best position to prove its claim to revolutionary politics. It played a significant role in the 1979 revolution and since then has had a section in Nicaragua, the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT).

In 1979 the Morenoites formed the Simon Bolivar Brigade, an armed contingent from Latin American countries which fought alongside the Sandinista FSLN in the war against Somoza. Several Brigade members lost their lives in military action. As well, the Brigade won an intransigent reputation when it was expelled from Nicaragua by the victorious FSLN -- on the grounds that its members were interfering in Nicaraguan politics by (among other things) supporting

the formation of trade unions.

Given this experience and the fact that the PRT has had a small but real influence in the Nicaraguan working class, the Morenoites could have become a serious factor in advancing the revolution. But instead of drawing revolutionary lessons, they have proved to be a brake on the workers' struggle.

Sandinista Bonapartism

The key to dealing with the Sandinista regime is to understand that it is a form of left Bonapartism, balancing between the contending classes in order to preserve capitalism. Against the revolutionary acts of the workers and peasants, the Sandinistas have kept the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie alive; even now they proclaim their dedication to a "mixed" capitalist economy and the bulk of production is still in private hands. From the beginning the rulers have

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