

VANGUARD newsletter

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BOLIVIA AND THE SPLIT IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

It had long been obvious that the divergent politics of the French from the English and American sections of the International Committee (IC) of the Fourth International, inadequately cloaked under the facade of formal unity, would eventually result in a split in that organization.

An open rupture has now taken place which evidently remains still to be organizationally completed.

The gauntlet was first thrown down to the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) by the Workers League (WL) in the US, in political solidarity with the Socialist Labour League (SLL) of England. The WL's "Bulletin" of August 30, 1971, at that time--evidently also in behalf of the SLL--published a sharp attack on the Bolivian Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) of Guillermo Lora, accusing it of functioning--along with Stalinists, Pabloists and other opportunists in the Popular Assembly--as a "left cover" for the Torres regime, thereby aborting a promising opportunity for the Bolivian working class to take power.

On September 22, the OCI bitterly denounced "all those who attack the POR..." as "conscious or unconscious" counterrevolutionaries and enemies.

The "Bulletin" of September 27th countered with a further attack on Lora, using as evidence an article in which Lora himself admits to illusions in Torres, in a belief

that his regime would arm the Bolivian masses.

In a declaration on October 12th, the OCI, POR and the Organizing Committee of the Communists (Trotskyists) from the Eastern European Countries headed by Balazs Nagy of the League of Socialist Revolutionaries (LSR) of Hungary openly criticized the SLL and WL for having "given into enormous pressure" in attacking the POR publically instead of conducting a discussion within the IC.

On October 24th, the SLL and WL, accompanied by its marginal organizations in Germany, Ceylon, Greece and Ireland, unleashed a full-scale attack on the OCI, throwing at it all the political and organizational grievances accumulated over the years. The OCI, at this writing, has chided the SLL for moving toward a split, and promises a full reply in short order. Its answer will, undoubtedly, help clarify the relationships within the IC and also bring into proper focus several obviously self-serving accusations by the SLL and WL.

Although the Bolivian defeat had

triggered the rupture, according to the SLL-WL declaration of October 24th, it is only being used by the OCI as a "smokescreen for the real issues." The SLL and WL, it would seem, would readily have continued in the IC with the OCI in spite of their differences with it over Bolivia, had it not been for the other "real issues."

The Bolivian defeat for us, however, is a qualitative nodal point: All ostensibly revolutionary organizations in Bolivia and throughout the world were tested there. We consider the Bolivian defeat to be a watershed dividing Marxist revolutionists from the opportunists of all varieties. The lessons learned from this defeat, in our opinion, must and will spur the reconstruction of a truly international Leninist and Trotskyist world party with, perhaps, some present cadres, who have come to understand the barrier which their so-called "Trotskyist" organizations became at a revolutionary moment.

In our September and October issues, although we strove for a comradely tone, we made clear our condemnation of the opportunist policies of Lora. Instead of preparing the working class for the seizure of power with the support of the peasantry, Lora's POR helped to politically disarm them. We made the point that a successful proletarian revolution in Bolivia at this historic juncture, would have leaped across Latin American frontiers to the advanced countries. We laid the Bolivian defeat at the doorstep of the IC on the grounds that it might have been averted if it had really been a democratic-centralist international. On the basis of the limited information then available, we could only pose the question of the role of the IC's sections in attempting to change the Lora POR's policies.

Evidence has since accumulated, not only from the "Bulletin", but also directly from Lora's "Masas" and OCI's "Informations Ouvrieres", from statements by Lora and in defense of Lora's POR, that the OCI not only justifies Lora's opportunist

ist policies which led to the Bolivian defeat, but also gives full support to his present line which compounds his earlier opportunism.

As our October issue stated, it would seem that the POR, which had been "instrumental in creating the Popular Assembly", took a classless approach to the "masses", and did not struggle for the hegemony of the working class. The Bolivian Stalinists could only adapt to the POR because of the latter's illusions in and accommodations to the Torres regime. The Pabloist disorientation on the Cuban revolution encouraged Lora to partially repeat in 1971 the disastrous Pabloist policies fatal to the Bolivian revolution in 1952.

These are the policies upon which the OCI places its blanket endorsement. It may have also helped to formulate or at least agreed to them, despite its episodic criticism of the Lora POR's accommodation to the Stalinists in the trade union federation, the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) which the SLL-WL October 24th declaration details. By embracing Lora, the OCI assumes full responsibility for policies which led to the Bolivian defeat. As though this were not sufficient, it has now endorsed the Lora POR's present even more grossly opportunist policies.

The Banzer military dictatorship is characterized by Lora as a "fascist government." This term, however, has a scientific meaning for Trotskyists. Trotsky long ago analyzed fascism as the weapon of last resort of the bourgeoisie by which a mass base, primarily petty-bourgeois, lumpen elements and also backward workers are used by the fascist surrogates to smash the organizations of the working class. But even Lora admits, in an interview which appeared in "Informations Ouvrieres", October 13-20, 1971, that the "fascists" have only been able to place:

"people in certain trade unions... agents /which/ are rejected by the entire class... The working class movement is in large part intact

...the struggle between the MNR and the Fascist Phalange...will be used by the military leaders..."

The Banzer military dictatorship is clearly not fascist but rather a right-wing Bonapartist regime.

Lora, however, uses the "fascist" designation to justify the formation of an "anti-imperialist united front" on a reformist program. The October issue of "Masas" presents the Lora POR's program for a "Unification of the Forces of the Left" with the Stalinists, Maoists and assorted opportunists--Lora also includes "nationalists" ("Informations Ouvrières", Oct. 27-Nov. 3, 1971). It calls for a:

"struggle against the fascist regime...against yankee imperialism ...for the reestablishment of democratic liberties...for the respect of the conquests of the people and working class...to recover and restore autonomy of the university..."

At a later time, "a political front" is to be "constituted of all ...revolutionary and progressive parties..." (VNL emphasis)

The united front, which Lenin and Trotsky projected at the third World Congress of the Comintern, is designed to unite the working class under revolutionary leadership. The concrete transitional demands on which it was to be based bring the workers, still under reformist leadership, to the revolutionary Marxist party and program, to the proletarian revolution. The reformist leaders are forced into the united front for fear of exposure before their own members. But the Lora POR's "united front" continues the alliance with the Stalinists and other reformists, now on a neo-Menshevik program of the revolution in stages. In welcoming the "nationalist" and "progressive" parties into the alliance, the Lora POR builds, not a "united front" but a Stalinist-type "popular front", which can only prepare a greater disaster for the Bolivian masses. In the circumstances, Lora's statement about maintaining "a clear

view: the struggle for a workers' government" is nothing but a smoke-screen for reformism.

And the SLL and WL? As we pointed out in earlier issues, they cannot evade their heavy share of the responsibility for the Bolivian defeat by hastily washing their hands of Lora. It is a bit late for their sudden discovery that Lora's POR was never in the IC. On July 19th, the "Bulletin" acclaimed it as a member; on August 30th, it was no longer a member and had only "established contact" with the IC.

But did not the SLL, as a pillar of the IC, have the obligation of informing its "contact" of its opposition to the opportunist line on the Bolivian revolution and of proposing a revolutionary alternative? The complete absence of anything to this effect in the SLL-WL document justifies our belief that they only object to Lora's failure, and had not opposed the policies which produced it.

An examination of the "real issues", the charges of the SLL-WL against the OCI, do not add to the stature of the former, and, in effect, act as a boomerang. The SLL amendment to the OCI resolution at the Essen youth rally, which the latter organized in July, was opposed by it and voted down by a majority attending. In this broad youth gathering, the SLL insisted on a declaration that the parties of the IC--and, evidently, the SLL and its supporters in particular--were the "only" revolutionary parties! A representative of the NSA attended and voted against it in the company of the OCI and others. But what was the programmatic basis on which the Essen rally was called? Did not the SLL agree to it and participate on this basis? A delegate from the Spartacist League (SL) was permitted to attend as an observer. Some of these "real issues" are very weighty!

But there were other issues. At a pre-conference discussion, the OCI opposed the SLL's fraudulent misappropriation of "dialectical materialism" on the grounds that only "programme was the basis of

the building of parties." It also attacks the OCI, among other things, for not having critically supported the Communist Party (CP) candidate Duclos in 1969. Correct! But the SLL understood "critical support" to consist of demanding that Duclos pledge "a socialist policy"!

The OCI's past opportunist accommodation to the Algerian bourgeois nationalist MNA of Messali Hag is criticized for being of longer duration than the SLL's own! The OCI is correctly criticized for its inconsistency toward the "Arab Revolution." It has now shifted toward the SLL's position of hailing the peasant-guerrilla "Soviets" at Irbid as an expression of the proletarian revolution!

The OCI is also attacked for having an abstentionist position on Vietnam for calling for the "victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants" instead of "victory for the NLF", the formula under which the SLL and WL abandon the struggle against the Stalinist betrayal of the Indochinese revolution.

In addition, the SLL damns the OCI for a "capitulation to spontaneity" and for "liquidationism" for orienting to centrism at home and abroad under the slogan of the "united class front." The merit of these charges has now, of course, to be considered in the light of the OCI's Bolivian positions.

The IC must be characterized as a left-centrist organization. Throughout its existence, it failed to function as a Bolshevik democratic-centralist organization, but maintained a federated relationship which fell apart under stress as, for example, at Essen. The English and French went their own ways and forebore to criticize each other publically. The essence of politics was thus sacrificed to organizational considerations. Until quite recently, the OCI buried its disagreements on the war in Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli, French-Canadian and Black questions. The OCI has recently complained of the SLL's gangster politics in publishing IC internal documents, but the logic of its organizational opportunism

has also been reflected in actual acts of gangsterism, of physical violence by both the SLL and OCI against opponent working class tendencies. As we have shown, the WL has imbibed this spirit, even if it has not yet implemented it in practice.

As was to be expected, Joseph Hansen has attempted to reap organizational advantages for the SWP by reprinting the SLL-WL documents in "Intercontinental Press" (IP) with extensive and, needless to say, tendentious footnotes appended.

In the IP of November 22, Hansen, the bellwether of opportunism in the SWP, takes "all the leaders of the rump 'International Committee'" to task for opportunism in Bolivia! With his usual concern for the niceties of principle and program, the chief worshipper at the shrine of the Bonapartist Castro become the stern opponent of Latin American guerrillaism, the present apostle of legalism and of accommodation to the petty and liberal bourgeoisie now holds up the Gonzalez Moscoso POR as a model Trotskyist organization. The Gonzalez POR, it seems, "repeatedly called for arming of the workers and for placing no confidence" in either the Torres regime or its predecessor.

The Gonzalez POR was "right" the way a stopped clock is right, twice a day! Under the influence of the Maitan-Mandel peasant-guerrilla line which Hansen had condemned, the Gonzalez POR took to the hills abandoning the working class. But the proletarian uprising, as Trotskyists learned long ago, is a culmination of the process by which the revolutionary party roots itself in the class and gains its support in the day-to-day struggle.

When the revolutionary crisis in Bolivia developed, the Gonzalez POR was without influence in the main trade union organization of the class, the COB, and in the evolving Soviet, the Popular Assembly. The Lora POR, because it retained its working class base, would have been able to provide revolutionary leadership, but the Gonzalez POR, not having won the confidence of the

workers, found that its incessant calls for armed struggle fell on deaf ears. The United Secretariat /U Sec/ of the Fourth International bears the responsibility for this disorientation.

In fact, the Gonzalez POR was so cut off from the revolutionary developments, that it was at first unable to grasp that the Popular Assembly was a form of "dual power". At the beginning, it was written off as a "national parliament."

The peasant-based guerrilla struggle which seeks to impose "socialism" on the "passive" working class, even if successful, can only end in a Bonapartist regime of a Castro or Mao type in power over the working class. Gonzalez, like Lora, ignored and continues to ignore the struggle for the hegemony of the working

class over the peasantry for the socialist revolution. This opportunism is at the root of the reformism of a Lora and the adventurism of a Gonzalez.

Hansen is the living proof of Lenin's correctness in his struggle against spontaneity in What Is To Be Done, in considering reformism ("Economism") and adventurism (terrorism) to have a great deal in common. Both abandon the struggle for a working class vanguard party. Hansen, it seems, like a chameleon, can take on the color of either at a moment's notice.

As we have stated, the test of a supposed revolutionary organization is the revolutionary moment. The Bolivian test was miserably failed by all organizations identifying with both the IC and U Sec.

LABOR AND THE STATE

The revolutionary Marxists have had to conduct a continuing struggle against "superstitious worship of the state" in preparing the working class for the socialist revolution.

To Marxists, the state is an organ of the ruling class to perpetuate its dominance. The capitalist state preserves capitalist law and order, i.e., existing property relations which include the right to extract surplus-value from the working class.

In a period of relatively peaceful development--as in the post-World War II period, or, earlier, in the latter part of the 19th century--the illusion that the state serves all of the "people", is the repository of all virtue, will be, generally, supported by workers. In a period of economic growth and with super-profits extracted from abroad, concessions can be made to the working class by the bourgeoisie of an advanced country. In these conditions, bourgeois-democracy seems to be indestructible.

As world capitalism goes into crisis, as the class struggle sharpens, workers begin to learn that the "impartial" protectors of the "people" are in reality the servitors of the ruling class.

The social and political equilibria become increasingly disturbed

as the economic crisis deepens. The democracy which had seemed so secure also becomes eroded. The ruling class can no longer afford to foster "anarchy". "All", i.e., the working class, the petty-bourgeoisie and even some of the smaller independent capitalists, must give up some "privileges" in order to preserve stability. It is necessary to strengthen the executive arm of the government to insure compliance.

Extra-parliamentary organs are created to enable it to deal with the refractory and to enable the state bureaucracy to intervene more directly into the economy--to try to re-inflate it through monetary and credit expansion, to "solve" the problem of inflation and to become more competitive in the world market at the expense of the living standards of the working class.

The quasi-judicial agencies which were set up in the first administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, i.e., the NRA with General Johnson in the saddle, the AAA, the HOLC, the CCC, etc., to deal with the crisis, testify to the tendency to Bonapartism

which then existed. Today, as Phases I and II of the Nixon Administration's "new economic policies" demonstrate, the tendency to Bonapartism in the US grows apace.

In The Class Nature of the Soviet State, Trotsky states the following:

"Historically, Bonapartism was and remains the government of the bourgeoisie during periods of crisis in bourgeois society. It is possible and necessary to distinguish between the "progressive" Bonapartism that consolidates the purely capitalistic conquests of bourgeois revolution and the Bonapartism of the decay of capitalist society, the convulsive Bonapartism of our epoch..."

If a Bonapartist regime proves incapable of resolving the crisis, if the threat to the bourgeoisie's rule grows more menacing, it will, at a certain point, adopt the fascist solution. The fascist surrogates are allowed to expropriate the bourgeoisie politically in order to secure capitalist property relations. Class "peace" is then ensured for a long time as all workers' organizations are destroyed and the trade unions incorporated into the state apparatus. Having played out their role as "labor lieutenants of the bourgeoisie", the trade union bureaucrats are "discharged". They are shipped off to the same concentration camps as the revolutionists who were unable to lead the proletariat to victory.

The "leaders" of American labor, Woodcock of the United Auto Workers, Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters and Meany of the AFL-CIO have once again shown their incapacity to lead a struggle even to maintain the workers' living standards. Their occasional verbal militancy, as for example, the theatrical display of discourtesy by Meany to "his" president at the recent AFL-CIO convention, is necessary to convince the distrustful rank-and-file that their "leaders" are fighting for their "rights." But, as their basically docile acceptance of the Phase I 90-day wage-"price" freeze and of

Phase II seats on the boss-dominated Pay Board demonstrates, the class-collaborationist bureaucrats are incapable of such a struggle.

They may yet be able to wheedle slightly better terms by appealing to the liberal politicians in the Democratic Party. But the maturing crisis of capitalism will no longer permit the American ruling class to give concessions even to the "aristocracy of labor" for long.

The fighting spirit of American workers who have known no serious defeats for a generation, has been demonstrated in demands which some lesser trade union bureaucrats have voiced--for a political general strike, and even for a new party of labor--to stop the capitalist state from destroying the gains which the workers have won! The workers are also demanding that their "leaders" get off the Pay Board, i.e., are demanding the independence of their unions from the state!

And this is the working class which petty-bourgeois radicals of all schools have written off as too conservatized to accomplish its task of overthrowing capitalism!

As Trotsky points out in Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay:

"Impossible are the independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stock holders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution. In this sense, the program of transitional demands adopted by the last congress of the Fourth International is not only the program for the activity of the party but in its fundamental features it is the program for activity of the trade unions." (VNL emphasis)

This conception is the heart of

the "Program and Perspectives For the American Revolution" which our newsletter set forth shortly after its initiation in August 1969.

We understood that the crisis of American and world capitalism would result in a sharpening of the class struggle. We developed a "program of transitional demands" to achieve "revolutionary trade unions."

The possibilities for building a rank-and-file movement, which we called for at that time, have not only greatly increased today, but is more clearly necessary to defeat the present capitalist offensive against the working class in the process of transforming the trade unions into "organs of proletarian revolution." It is as part of this process that the demand for a general strike can be realized.

The rank-and-file or "left wing" caucuses would be able to unite Black and white workers by a struggle against all forms of special oppression in the context of the struggle for the immediate and fundamental interests of all workers.

This alternative revolutionary leadership would call for a labor

party, not on a reformist but on the "Transitional Program."

A sliding scale of wages and hours (30 for 40), eliminating all super-exploitation, and a system of public works to end unemployment! The nationalization, i.e., expropriation of industry under workers' control! Organization of the unorganized and unemployed! A workers' militia to defend their organizations from attack by fascist hirelings!

The road to "dual power", to the socialist revolution and the working class in power, begins in the workplace. Our perspective is for the rank-and-file national caucus movement to develop into the factory committees and workers' councils at a revolutionary moment.

It is to the construction of this essential movement that the energies of revolutionists should be devoted. It is in fulfilling this perspective, which VANGUARD NEWSLETTER originated and alone upholds, that the party of the proletarian revolution can be built. The alternative can only be an intensification of Bonapartist tendencies in the state apparatus with fascism in reserve.

CHINA AND THE UNITED NATIONS

The imperialists' overall strategy after World War II has been to isolate and destroy the workers' states.

Tactically, they have leaned heavily on military means, as Korea, Vietnam and NATO, among others, so eloquently testify. But for several years now the imperialists have had to reconsider this approach primarily due to the impending world crisis of capitalism. The bourgeoisie can no longer "afford" the luxury of its past military boldness and a diplomatic offensive is substituted in its stead.

It is in this context, rather than in that promulgated by the SWP, that China's entry into the United Nations (UN) must be seen. The November 5, 1971, issue of the "Militant" states that China's entry "is a dramatic reflection of the shifting balance of world forces." This position is a form of objectivism which sees the development of the

revolution outside of revolutionary consciousness. The "balance of forces on a world scale" are supposedly "shifting in favor of socialism" without and in spite of revolutionary program and leadership. Such a view denies the necessity of a revolutionary party and relegates the advancement of the revolution to mysterious and inexplicable forces.

Thus was explained Castro and the Cuban revolution--Castro was ordained an unconscious Trotskyist due to the irresistible forces inexorably pushing him down the path of "permanent revolution." By the same token one must see the UN delegates bewitched by the same forces when they raised their hands in favor of China's entry. It is in this context of seeing the advancement of the revolution through irresistible, objective forces, and

only in this context, that one can view, as does the "Militant", China's entry into the UN as a "victory for the world revolution everywhere."

China's entry, in fact, strengthens the world counterrevolution, just as did the Soviet Union's entry into the League of Nations in 1934. Speaking some seven years earlier, Stalin still echoed the traditional Leninist views of the 3rd International on the League of Nations:

"The Soviet Union is not a member of the League of Nations and does not participate in its work, because the Soviet Union is not prepared to share the responsibility for the imperialist policy of the League of Nations, for the 'mandates' which are distributed by the League for the exploitation and oppression of the colonial countries, for the war preparations and military alliances which are covered and sanctified by the League, preparations which must inevitably lead to imperialist war." (New International, 1934, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 5)

The League of Nations was branded the Black International and referred to by Lenin as a den of thieves. A struggle against the League was made obligatory in the 21 points drawn up by the 2nd Congress of the 3rd International as criteria for membership.

The United Nations, like the League of Nations, is nothing more than a diplomatic instrument used to maintain and further the "peaceful" expansion of the exploitative interests of finance capital. The imperialists have now allowed China into the UN as a part of their change in tactics necessitated by the capitalist crisis. They need to refurbish the UN's image with China's presence and to use China and the UN as a cover to contain the rising of the masses resulting from the crisis. Because of their "shifting of the balance of forces" theory, the SWP sees a victory for imperialism as "a victory for the world revolution." The entry of China into the UN, like the entry of the Soviet Union into the League of

Nations is in the interest of preserving the status quo at the expense of the world proletarian revolution.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations came after the defeat of the German proletariat and was based upon a complete loss of faith in the world revolution. The 3rd International had become a political corpse. The Chinese bureaucracy likewise does not depend upon the world proletariat as its only effective ally and has no conception of building a revolutionary international. Instead, the bureaucratic caste of China follows in Stalin's footsteps in an attempt to build "socialism in one country" by diplomatic wheeling and dealing.

In its attempt to break out of the isolation imposed upon it by imperialism, the Maoist bureaucracy has, through its diplomatic maneuvering, come to ally itself with the most counterrevolutionary campaigns.

The fascist coup in Indonesia is directly attributable to the bureaucracy's policy of "peaceful co-existence" with the Sukarno regime. Similarly, in the interest of diplomacy, Peking supports Yahya Khan's government of Pakistan against the liberation struggle of Bangla Desh, as well as the Bandaranaike government's crushing of the recent youth revolt in Ceylon. The most reactionary figures, such as the Shah of Iran, are extolled as the great friends of the Chinese people--all in the interest of "socialism in one country", i.e., in the interest of the counterrevolutionary bureaucracy.

The entry of China into the UN is of the same dye. The Chinese bureaucracy will now lend its name, if only by proxy, to an even greater sundry of crimes perpetrated against the rising masses of the world searching for a way out of the capitalist crisis.

Does the SWP maintain that the invitations of the Yahya Khan's, Bandaranaike's, etc., for diplomatic ties with China in order to help them crush the rising masses, are also "victories for the world revolution?"

The development of the capitalist crisis coincides, not by accident,

with the development of the crisis of the bureaucracies in the workers' states. The intensification of the class struggle throughout the world, flowing from the capitalist crisis, aggravates the contradictions between the bureaucracy's attempt to protect its own privileges and the struggles of the masses to improve their own lot. The necessity of the bureaucracy to stabilize itself at the expense of the Chinese and world masses, then, forces the bureaucracy more and more into an alliance with imperialism to contain the rising masses. Part of the framework of this alliance is China's seat in the UN. China's entry into the UN, therefore, is consonant not only with the interests of imperialism but also with the counterrevolutionary needs of the Chinese bureaucracy itself.

The Chinese bureaucracy will continue its diplomatic maneuvering in the UN in the same vein as it was conducting before entry. The Bonapartist bureaucracy resting as it does on a workers' state on the one hand and imperialism on the other, will try to delicately balance between the two with diplomatic deals aimed at preserving the status quo.

Imperialism, on the other hand, will not only use the Chinese bureaucracy to help it contain the masses but will, as well, use it to divide and weaken the workers' states in order to open them up--one way or the other--for the expansion of finance capital.

Trotsky made the point in War and the Fourth International that:

"Taken on a historic scale the

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND TROTSKYISM

∕ We reprint below the section on "Women's Liberation" from the major resolution of the Communist Tendency (CT), a tendency which was bureaucratically expelled from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) shortly after its August 1971 national convention.

∕ As we indicated in our last issue, we intend to publish a number of other sections from that resolution,

antagonism between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely deeper than the antagonisms which set individual capitalist countries in opposition to each other. But the class contradiction between the workers' state and the capitalist states varies in acuteness depending upon the evolution of the workers' state and upon the changes in the world situation."

Should the developing world proletarian revolutionary upsurge be defeated, a direct onslaught upon the degenerated and deformed workers' states would be on the agenda.

The masses must be warned of the counterrevolutionary danger being posed by the alliance between the Stalinist Chinese bureaucracy and imperialism. This alliance is in no way a "victory for the world revolution," but rather, an assassin's bullet aimed at its heart. The SWP's whitewash of the nature of the Chinese bureaucracy and the meaning of its entry into the UN, only displays its own disorientation.

Its position is only another example of the SWP's accommodation to the Stalinist and social-democratic bureaucracies in general.

The Chinese bureaucratic champions of the "third world" at the UN have no more in common with Marxism and Leninism than the Soviet counterrevolutionary spokesmen for their "socialism in one country." The one positive contribution that revolutionists can hope for is that it will now be more possible to expose the Chinese bureaucracy as a counterrevolutionary force.

"Historical Roots of the Degeneration of the Fourth International and of the Centrism of the SWP--For a Return to the Proletarian Road of Trotskyism", as well as from its discussion bulletin statement, "The International Situation: An Initial Assessment". As we also indicated at that time,

"...the programmatic positions of

the CT comrades are entirely consistent with those of VANGUARD NEWSLETTER."

✓We welcome the opportunity to present the CT's position on the Woman Question as an overdue statement, essentially, of our own position. We believe that the CT has resurrected the essential revolutionary Marxist position on this question, which the social-opportunists who parade themselves as "Trotskyists" have, overtly and covertly, abandoned in their eager adaptation to the petty-bourgeois Feminist movement.

✓Engels succinctly stated the Marxist position on women's liberation, which the CT has reaffirmed and further advanced, in the following excerpt from a letter to Gertrude Guillaume-Shak, written on or about July 5, 1885:

"Equal wages for equal work to either sex are, until abolished in general, demanded, as far as I know, by all socialists. That the working woman needs special protection against capitalist exploitation because of her special physiological functions seems obvious to me. The English women who championed the formal right of members of their sex to permit themselves to be as thoroughly exploited by the capitalists as the men are mostly, directly or indirectly, interested in the capitalist exploitation of both sexes. I admit I am more interested in the health of the future generations than in the absolute formal equality of the sexes during the last years of the capitalist mode of production. It is my conviction that real equality of women and men can come true only when the exploitation of either by capital has been abolished and private housework has been transformed into a public industry..."

✓The SWP had once adhered to this position, had once fought against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as, in essence, the "right" of

women "to be as thoroughly exploited by the capitalists as the men". It abandoned this principled position to the petty-bourgeois Feminist movement. We have pointed out on other occasions that it has adapted to all petty-bourgeois movements, including Castroism, peasant-guerrillaism, Black and Chicano nationalism, pacifism, Stalinism and "gay liberation".

✓According to a June 1970 bulletin of the Women's Bureau of the US Department of Labor, married women constitute 40% of the labor force. Approximately three-fifths of the 31 million women workers are married and living with their husbands.

✓It should be remembered, however, that, historically, the value of labor-power, the cost of the "means of subsistence"--food, clothing, shelter and necessary education--meant not only that of the worker, but also that of his family. It is a measure of the increase in exploitation of the working class that the modern "means of subsistence" can only be acquired when both the husband and wife of a majority of households work.

✓That women are super-exploited is readily admitted today even by bourgeois economists. According to the Labor Department, women working full time in 1955 received 64% of the wage or salary income of men; in 1968, 58%. While the Feminists direct their attention to reforms, which, as the CT shows, primarily benefit their "educated 'sisters'", the super-exploitation of women workers increases, particularly that of minority women workers.

✓The struggle against the super-exploitation of women as a part of the struggle against all forms of women's special oppression--the fight to protect the woman worker "because of her special physiological functions", to enable the married women workers to function in industry in the first place, to prevent the capitalists from more thoroughly exploiting women and to preserve "the health of the future generations"--this struggle is integral to that of the proletarian revolution. The program of the CT for women's

liberation is directed toward this goal.

✓The demand for "conscription and military training for women under trade union control"--which must be understood at the present time as a general and not an agitational demand--must also be understood in the context of the struggle against war, not on a pacifist, but on a

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In the women's liberation movement, as in other areas of our work, the party has adapted to petty-bourgeois political currents.

We base our line on empirical observations, many times correct by themselves, yet fail to understand the deeper molecular processes occurring among the working masses. This is in spite of the fact that we still retain, in words, the essential points of the traditional Marxist analysis of the nature of women's oppression. In action, however, the party is attempting to lead women in a struggle for their emancipation under the banner of Feminism. Herein lies a fundamental contradiction. The liberation of women and Feminism are not the same thing. In fact, Feminist ideology is bourgeois and is thus antagonistic to the liberation of women, despite the party's interchangeable use of the terms.

Feminism is the idea, in essence, that women, because they are women, must and can effect a basic change in society. It denies the fundamental Marxist proposition that social power derives from the relationship to the means of production. If it is not our policy that women, as women, can change society, then why is the Feminist movement a "revolutionary struggle in its own right"? (YS Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 14, No. 1)

We understand that the thrust of women's liberation is against bourgeois society in general, and the "nuclear family" in particular, but that is not the point. No movement outside the working class is truly revolutionary in its own right. (Even the struggle of oppressed national minorities cannot be "revolutionary", i.e., come

revolutionary basis. The working class must be prepared to take state power and to defend that power against the resistance of the ruling class. Workers must, in other words, be trained in the art of war. Women workers, now 40% of the work force, are not only able to, but will demand that they be trained to fulfill this responsibility.✓

to fruition in a successful revolution, unless it is under the leadership of the working class.) This is because the proletariat is the only social force capable of actually solving the problems of women. No other class, caste, oppressed sex, etc., is equal to this task. If the party does not mean "revolutionary" in this sense then it is only playing with words.

This does not mean that the party should oppose organizing women as women, or that there is no progressive role for non-proletarian women.

"We must have our own groups to work among them, special methods of agitation, and special forms of organization. This is not bourgeois 'Feminism'; it is practical revolutionary expediency." (Clara Zetkin, My Recollections of Lenin)

It is also true that communists hate,

"...yes, hate everything, and will abolish everything which tortures and oppresses the woman worker, the housewife, the peasant woman, the wife of the petty trader, yes, and in many cases the women of the possessing classes." (Clara Zetkin, Lenin on the Woman Question)

In carrying out the party line, however, these familiar postulates have been turned into their opposites.

The historic attitude of Marxists towards Feminism is far different from the present policies of the SWP. This new Feminism which the SWP supports is commonly called

"the second wave", yet there is no record of the revolutionaries of an earlier generation supporting the first wave. In the party's edition of Rosa Luxemburg's writings there is not one article that praises Feminism, or that even mentions it. This reflects the common attitude of the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democracy--total opposition to Feminism. It was the opportunist wing that was always attending suffragist congresses, multi-class, equal-rights conferences, and ladies' pink teas. The revolutionaries sought to win the most oppressed sectors of society, in this case women, on a class-struggle basis by means of special organizations with a socialist program. The emancipation of women could not be achieved by subordinating the class questions to the interests of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois Feminists who sought, as always, to use the workers to accomplish their own narrow and essentially reactionary goals. The Theses of the Comintern dealt firmly with any wanderings from the class line, and flatly stated that it was "impermissible" for Communist women to form any alliances with "bourgeois Feminists". (Third Congress of the Comintern, 1921; Theses on Work among Women).

This is also the orientation of the Transitional Program and continued to be our position until it became opportune to jump on the band-wagon. Once again the SWP has dropped the class line and followed the path of alien class ideology. The "second wave", like the first, is just all wet.

The "revolutionary expedience" of special forms of organization for women has been turned into a strategy for women's liberation. The fact that we recognize that all women suffer a special oppression in class society, has been used to justify building multi-class coalitions. The logic of these coalitions, in turn, has inevitably meant that we have watered down our program for women's liberation.

A prime example of this process

can be seen in our new "struggle" for the repeal of abortion laws. Here, having discovered that the representatives of the bourgeoisie in the coalitions dislike the slogan "free abortion on demand", we have capitulated and are now undertaking a national campaign for repeal of abortion laws, thus tying ourselves into the reforming of the system. First, we will repeal the old laws and then, later, we will get free abortion on demand. This is not a revolutionary policy. It is simply the Menshevik program of revolution by stages in a pure form--reform by stages.

The benefits of this kind of reform are unevenly distributed, to say the least. The women workers, a super-exploited section of the working class, together with the women of the minorities and the poor, receive least from it. How many ghetto residents can afford the \$350-400 it costs for a legal abortion in New York? The party's super-concern with making abortions legal, reveals a covert desire to accommodate itself to those prosperous women who, while able to obtain an illegal abortion, feel uncomfortable about it. This campaign, by making abortions moral, merely serves to console those women who least need it. Proletarian women need no "moral" victories. They need the simple democratic right of free abortion on demand.

Moreover, the whole question of abortion has been posed incorrectly. It is not the task of a revolutionary party to involve itself whole-hog over something which is, however desirable, only a concession. We can work on it, we can support it. But our tasks lie in organizing women workers around our transitional slogans, i.e., in the ranks of the women workers, not in a milieu of liberals, Malthusians and utter reformists, where the present party leadership feels most at home.

Recently the party has discovered yet another "vanguard" in "gay liberation". Under the pressure of the petty-bourgeois women's and student movement, we have become

ardent admirers and supporters of this "revolutionary" struggle. We are told, in defense of this tail-ending, that a whole mass of workers are gay. So what? This is of no significance unless the leadership sees the demands of homosexuals as being transitional--that is, as leading to the overturn of capitalism. And this is merely ridiculous. The radical change in sexual mores in this century proves that there is no sexual preference that cannot be legitimized and accepted under capitalism. For communists, nothing more is required than that we should defend the democratic rights of homosexuals and support them against victimization. In the party, we need only assure that no comrades are discriminated against because of their sexual preferences. It is well to note that it was the present party leadership, in many cases with the utmost hypocrisy, that changed the party's traditional Leninist policy on the membership of homosexuals to one of exclusion.

In our support of the Equal Rights Amendment we can see another adaptation by the party leadership to the petty-bourgeois milieu in which we work. In the words of "The Militant" of Jan. 23, 1943, the purpose of the ERA is:

"to try and smash the protective legislation for working women--under the hypocritical guise of emancipating them."

The purpose of the present attempt is no different, yet the party holds a diametrically opposite position. One would think that an honest party leadership, in simple decency, would inform its members of the fact of a complete turn about in policy, and yet this seems not to have happened. Despite this deceit, there have been some explanations for the present policy. The major one is that since "sisterhood is powerful", the white male capitalists would never dare take away past gains. This naive view has already come into conflict with the facts. Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act has already

been used to take away rights of labor. Raytheon Corp., with the help of the bourgeois courts, and the ever helpful IBEW, has succeeded in invalidating the Massachusetts protective laws, which remain only temporarily in effect. In one local restaurant, the waitresses placed a sign saying, "Thanks to women's liberation we only have a half-hour for lunch". We cannot let women workers confuse the liberation of women with bourgeois feminism. And yet, "The Militant" remains silent.

This silence lends consent. It is the silence of the accomplice. For over fifty years, trade unions and women workers have fought a bitter battle over how much surplus-value was to be extracted from women. The victories in this constant battle have taken shape in the form of protective laws. It is no accident that the ERA is supported by the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. In adapting to the petty-bourgeois Feminists who desire all the "opportunities" to make good that they can get, the party has, with a truly legalistic fetish, abandoned the women workers to the tender mercies of the capitalists. That this is the party's position can be easily seen. One recent example is the reprinting, without comment, of Bella Abzug's statement about the ERA and the Women's Equality Act ("Militant", 6/18/71, p. 11), which informs us that the latter proposal will,

"...ban discrimination...in the payment of wages for professional, executive, and administrative jobs..." (CT emphasis)

How nice! Women workers get nothing, but their educated "sisters" get a good deal from Bela the Feminist.

The purpose of the ERA is to increase the exploitation of women workers. This will be done by forcing them to lift heavy weights, thus increasing the labor done in a given period and by cutting rest periods, thus increasing production, as well as in other ways too numerous to mention. Perhaps the most vicious

aspect is the false "opportunity" for overtime. Overtime increases unemployment and strengthens the bargaining power of the capitalists. Further by enabling the capitalist to amortize his investment more rapidly, it counteracts the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Besides this, overtime really lowers the wages for the average working day, in order to temporarily raise them for the excess period, thereby compelling the worker to overwork in order to earn a living wage. The party instead of putting forward the sliding scale of hours--30 for 40--endorses this reactionary "right" as a step to the equality of women. It is not a matter of proving to men that women can work as hard as they; it is a question of denying the ruling class more profit extracted from the bodies and lives, sinews, tissues, and nerves of the workers. One really reactionary aspect of this "progressive" act lies in the fact that women, especially minority women, are largely unorganized. They will be unable to regain their lost protection by union action when the law no longer is in effect.

The party claims it is against the abolition of "really" protective laws, and that it favors their extension to men. A concrete test of the party's sincerity would be not to support the ERA, unless it specifically extended all benefits to men. But we hardly expect this. This claim of the party is merely a cover for its covert cheering of the abolition of "restrictive" laws. These laws mean nothing to our petty-bourgeois feminists disguised as Trotskyists, whose "sisterhood" is just a new name for class collaboration.

It should be clear by now that the feminist movement cannot, and does not want to, protect the gains of working women. The party has turned away from the obligations incumbent upon it, in order to gain the fleeting favor of the petty-bourgeoisie. It must be turned away from its course of reformism and onto the path of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Trotskyist program for women's

liberation must be directed primarily to and for, women workers. It should include both transitional demands and democratic slogans. The successful implementation of such a program requires that we be with the class, at their place of work. We must also advance the demands of housewives, who, because of the unpaid labor they perform, and because of their husbands' jobs, can be considered part of the working class, and must be expected to play a significant role in political action. For these women, we support all demands that would help eliminate the ceaseless drudgery of housework. We direct them, whenever possible, to enter the factories, to help organize the great mass of women workers, now mostly non-unionized. In other cases, we propagandize for them to form special organizations of struggle--committees on prices, strike-support committees, organizations for the unemployed. Women, as a super-exploited and oppressed section of the proletariat, must take their place at the head of their class.

The following demands are by no means intended to be a complete program for the emancipation of women, but only basic class demands which we must advance and struggle for among working women:

- 1) Jobs for all.
- 2) Equal work with equal pay.
- 3) Sliding scale of wages and hours, 30 for 40, double the minimum wage.
- 4) 24 hour child-care centers under workers' control, cost to be assumed by employer or state.
- 5) Free medical care--free abortion on demand, no forced sterilization, paid maternity leave, free access to birth control information.
- 6) Conscription and military training for women under trade union control.

These demands call for a class struggle perspective, which only a proletarian party with a proletarian program can carry through.