

## THESES OF THE COMMUNIST WORKING COLLECTIVE (LA)

### I. PABLOISM, INVERTED PABLOISM, AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

#### Pabloism

1. Following World War II, the International Trotskyist movement was thrown into a profound theoretical, political, and organizational crisis. Large numbers of Trotskyist cadre were physically destroyed through the joint efforts of the imperialists and Stalinists. World capitalism underwent a relative stabilization due chiefly to Stalinist and Social-Democratic betrayals of the revolutionary working class upsurge following the cessation of fighting. In addition, Stalinist and petit-bourgeois leaderships were successful in overthrowing capitalism and establishing deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and China. All these factors posed very sharply to the Trotskyist movement the problem of building independent proletarian vanguard parties.

2. The Pabloite revisionist trend emerged as an attempt to make the Trotskyist movement more "effective" by accommodating it to the existing "left" movements in the world. The role of Trotskyists was essentially confined to that of pressure groups upon these formations, integrating themselves into whichever forces seemed to have the most potential and hoping that these groupings, under the influence of the objective march of events and prodding by the Trotskyists, would be forced to adopt a revolutionary orientation. For this reason, Pabloism can be called a liquidationist tendency. Thus, during the 1950's Michel Pablo and his International Secretariat pursued such policies as liquidation ("deep" entrism) into the social-democratic and centrist parties of Western Europe, the national bourgeois and petit-bourgeois formations in the colonial countries, and the ruling Stalinist CP's of Eastern Europe.

3. Fundamental to the Pabloite world perspective is the theory, borrowed from Stalinism, that the world balance of forces has shifted in favor of socialism, resulting in a "new world reality" in which the tide of revolution is irreversible. For this reason, Pabloism can also be characterized as empiricist. This conception has gone through several variations. Around 1950, Pablo forecasted a Third World War, launched by imperialism to regain the upper hand, which would lead to the final downfall of capitalism and Stalinism. In 1953, the International Secretariat claimed that the isolation of the USSR had ended, eliminating one of the fundamental conditions for the bureaucracy's existence and leading to the imminent demise of Stalinism. More recently, the Pabloites have declared that the colonial world is the main center of revolution in the world, that the anti-imperialist struggles there are uninterrupted and irresistible, and that therefore the working class can come to power there with a "blunted instrument" instead of a Leninist proletarian party. Thus the problem of overcoming the crisis of proletarian leadership, the central problem of the world socialist revolution, is avoided, or else left to be resolved by the "objective process" going on in this "new world reality".

4. Although the Socialist Workers Party had broken with the Pabloites in 1953, by the early 1960's it became clear that the SWP was moving increasingly toward the revisionist methodology it had once opposed. This regressive trend most openly manifested itself in the SWP majority line on the Cuban revolution: support to Castro's governmental bureaucracy in the hope that Castroism would be transformed into Trotskyism. On the organizational level, the SWP's abandonment of a revolutionary proletarian line became definitive with the "Reunification Congress" of 1963, in which "minor" political differences were overlooked in order that the SWP could carry out an unprincipled reunification with the International (USec). In fact, the main political resolution passed at this Congress included all the basic theses upon which Pabloism was based: the change in the world balance of forces, the centrality of the colonial revolution, and the end of the USSR's isolation.

5. Since the 1963 Congress, it has become obvious that, although Pablo has been discredited, Pabloism the method dominates the entire USec. The European sections have carried the "colonial epicenter" theory to its conclusion and have called for armed struggle based on rural guerilla warfare and entrism into the Castroite organizations of Latin America. At the same time, the SWP has moved sharply to the right, becoming little more than a support group for black nationalism, petit-bourgeois feminism, bourgeois liberal pacifism and the Cuban bureaucracy. (This is true although now the SWP claims that the Cuban revolution has degenerated--implying it was once undeformed.) The main work of the SWP and its youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), is building anti-war demonstrations based on single-issue politics--a plainly reformist and Popular Front approach. Thus all tendencies within USec, from the ultraleftist adventurism of the European parties to the reformism of the U.S. section, adopt the liquidationist and empiricist Pabloite method.

#### Inverted Pabloism

6. Another international tendency which adapts to the methodology of Pabloism, despite proclamations of representing the only anti-Pabloite international trend, is the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), principally led by the British Socialist Labour League (SLL). The SLL, in its analysis of Cuba, uses the same objectivist premises of Pabloism and in so doing fails to grasp the critical difference between the establishment of a state, led by a Bolshevik-Leninist party, where organs of power are democratically administered by the working class (soviets) and the formation of a workers state which from its very inception is ruled by a Bonapartist bureaucracy. With this method they cannot adopt a correct attitude toward Stalinist and petit-bourgeois leaderships. They are forced, in order to maintain a firm "stand" against the Pabloites' capitulation to these leaderships, to categorically deny the possibility that, under certain conditions (the most important being timely material support from the Stalinist camp), these leaderships can in fact establish deformed workers states. This position leads them to conclude that Cuba is not a deformed workers state but some form of "statism" (despite the fact that the Castroite leadership of Cuba has expropriated the bourgeoisie, set up monopoly of foreign trade, and established the rudiments of a planned economy). From this it is

clear that the methodological approach of the SLL and its followers can be characterized as inverted Pabloism.

7. This reaction of the SLL and its co-thinkers to Pabloism ultimately serves to reinforce the Pabloite current, for it cannot effectively deal with Pabloite accommodationism in a theoretical way. In essence both trends equate the deformed workers state with the road to socialism. Pabloism does this explicitly, by its support of Castroism and its one-time veiled support of the Chinese bureaucracy. The inverted Pabloites begin with the same premise, and are forced therefore to deny the fact of a social transformation in order to avoid giving this type of support. A correct Trotskyist appraisal of strategy and tactics toward these bureaucracies must start with the understanding that they are an obstacle to building socialism, thereby ruling out any possibility of support, however critical, to these leaderships, and removing the basis of the ICFI's Pablophobia.

### The Fourth International

8. With the development of capitalism into imperialism the basic tendency of capitalism to weld all areas of the world regardless of their level of development into a common economic system which dominates and subordinates to itself each of its parts is greatly reinforced. The hegemony of imperialism over world economy tends not only to level out the various stages of development of one area as compared with another, one country as compared with another, but simultaneously increases the differences between them and sets one up against the other--thus greatly aggravating the contradiction between the further development of the world productive forces and the national-state boundaries. This dynamic of imperialism inevitably leads to wars for the conquest and redistribution of markets and to the wholesale destruction of the productive forces on which human culture is based. The continued existence of imperialism thus threatens to plunge mankind into barbarism. It is on this basis, "on the insolvency of the national state, which has turned into a brake upon the development of the productive forces" (Trotsky), that the internationalism of communism ultimately rests.

9. The proletariat is the only class capable of destroying international capitalism and constructing a communist society which would forever eliminate all war, exploitation, and social inequality, thereby creating the conditions for the limitless development of human civilization. However, without the leadership of a communist party the proletariat cannot come to power and establish a genuine workers state in a single country. Further, the international proletarian revolution can only triumph if it is led by a revolutionary communist international, i.e., a world party of the proletariat. This has been completely verified by the experience of the October revolution and by the subsequent defeats the international proletariat suffered at the time when all the necessary conditions for successful world revolution were present except for a revolutionary international which could lead the insurrection. Finally, to attempt to construct a revolutionary party separate from, outside of, or opposed to the struggle to build an international can only mean capitulation to national narrow-mindedness which is inseparably linked

with reformism. Thus any communist organization which does not take the fight for the construction of a communist international as its strategic starting point must inevitably degenerate.

10. The Fourth International which was founded by Trotsky in opposition to the degeneration of the Stalinist Third International no longer exists. The advent of Pabloism has destroyed the Fourth International to the extent that revolutionary Trotskyism finds its programmatic continuity only in small disunited groupings scattered throughout the world and which for obvious reasons cannot lead significant sections of the working class in struggle. Consequently, the main international focus of revolutionary Trotskyism must be directed toward the conducting of programmatic discussions with these organizations in order to achieve the theoretical clarity necessary for an early regroupment which would result in an international revolutionary tendency which would thus become a pole of attraction around which future and more complete communist regroupment could take place. Only by using this method is it possible to start the rebuilding of the Fourth International along the lines of the 1938 Transitional Program.

11. To lay the basis for the complete reconstruction of the Fourth International, it is necessary to decisively defeat Pabloism through ideological confrontation in all arenas of the class struggle. Such a victory over revisionism would carry Marxist theory forward and thus provide the necessary foundation on which genuine international unity based on democratic centralism could be built. As for now, however, it is important to stress that the battle against Pabloism has not yet been won.

12. Although an international revolutionary tendency has not yet been fully crystallized, the process of revolutionary communist regroupment can and must be started. Sufficient clarity on the basic questions posed by Pabloism has to a large degree been reached thus opening up the possibilities for principled fusion of national and international organizations. It is to this task, to the rebuilding of the Fourth International through a process of revolutionary communist regroupment, that the Communist Working Collective is dedicated.

## II. STRATEGY IN THE UNITED STATES

### Crisis in Revolutionary Leadership

13. "The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened'; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." (Leon Trotsky)

14. Capitalism has long outlived its progressive historical functions; the historical conditions for socialist revolution were long ago achieved. However existant the general objective prerequisites,

there is lacking the subjective prerequisites, the revolutionary leadership essential to lead the working class to power.

15. Within the general period of capitalism's decay conjunctural crises regularly occur. This downward zig-zag pattern will continue until the proletariat seizes power and eliminates the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie will not fall from crisis, no matter how serious, but must be overthrown by the conscious action of the proletariat.

16. Unless a Leninist vanguard party is able to lead the proletariat to the achievement of its historical task, i.e., seizure of state power and elimination of capitalism, the proletariat will be crushed, as in Germany, by fascism.

### The Bolshevik-Leninist Party

17. "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class." Only the proletariat is capable of leading all the oppressed and through proletarian revolution eliminating classes and class struggle.

18. In order for the proletariat to see itself as an independent force capable of overthrowing the capitalist system it must break with the bourgeois ideology of the capitalist system that encourages passivity and maintains the heterogeneous nature of the class, i.e., setting one section of the class against another.

19. The essential understanding of the capitalist structure as a whole and the social relationships between all classes, i.e., socialist consciousness, can only be initiated into the working class from without.

20. "Organization is the only weapon of the working class." (Lenin) Therefore, what is needed is a revolutionary party with a program and strategy based on the theory of dialectical materialism.

21. The primary task of the revolutionary party is organizing the working class to seize power by developing socialist consciousness, uniting the divided forces, and leading the working class to power.

22. The party is a conscious vanguard in revolutionary action representing the general interests of the working class.

23. A revolutionary party is an organization capable of lending energy, stability and continuity to the political struggle.

24. It is essential that the revolutionary party be a democratic-centralist organization composed of a selected membership of revolutionaries dedicated to Marxism.

25. Members of the revolutionary party are trained to become professional revolutionaries. This concept was first developed by Lenin.

26. The tasks of the party are to basically apply the strategy and tactics of the first four congresses of the Third International and the Fourth International to the American experience.

27. Inseparable from the Leninist conception of a party of professional revolutionaries is the existence of a central political organ, i.e., a regular party press. This organ openly expresses the political line of the party.

28. The main purpose of the party organ is that of a collective organizer. To insure flexibility in adapting to changing conditions of struggle and respond to fluctuating moods of the masses. It will serve to weld together the diverse forces and will guide the revolutionary movement in practice.

29. The existence of a regular party organ will strengthen and consolidate the movement by reporting with a consistent line the news of the labor movement to dispersed regions.

30. Our forces are small, so there can be no pretensions that we are presently capable of leading systematic mass movements. Today the main activity is one of propaganda and not of agitation and conquest of the masses.

31. The immediate tasks are struggling with and winning over present participants in the revolutionary movement, including individuals, but primarily through intervention in ostensibly revolutionary organizations.

32. The main tactics of building a party at this time is one of regroupment. This process is carried out by intervening in left organizations with a revolutionary line to create splits, then fusing on the agreement of a common revolutionary program.

33. As the contradictions of world capitalism intensify bringing about renewed militant class struggle, the various political tendencies based on the petit-bourgeoisie are thrown into disarray. As the need for a working class alternative becomes more evident, conditions become favorable for developing a Leninist vanguard party by intervening in ORO's with a revolutionary program.

34. Along with propaganda certain exemplary practical work is necessary. The purposes are developing cadre, gaining experience in the trade union movement and other arenas to begin to build roots in the working class, and "most important, serve to focus and concretize our propaganda line". (MB #9 part II)

#### Transitional Program

35. The purpose of the transitional program is to link the conscious demands of the working class to the realization of the need for proletarian revolution.

36. The Transitional Program eliminates the distinction between the old minimum and maximum programs. Social Democracy divided its program into two parts, separating the democratic tasks from the socialist tasks. The Transitional Program proposes one program that defends the democratic rights of the workers as necessary steps in educating, preparing and leading the proletariat to a socialist revolution.

37. The Transitional Program consists of a system of transitional demands reflecting the present conditions combined with the level of consciousness of the oppressed masses, and which if carried out would result in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

38. The proletariat is educated and wide layers of the class are brought into the revolutionary movement through a systematic process of engaging in struggle for demands which cannot be won without stepping outside of bourgeois means of struggle.

39. In contradistinction to abstract slogans of calling for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist revolution, the Transitional Program guides the proletariat through class struggle to the realization of the need for socialism.

#### United Front

40. The task of the communist party is to lead the proletarian revolution. In order to summon the proletariat for the direct conquest of power the communist party must base itself on the overwhelming majority of that class.

41. There is a constant need for united action of the working class against capitalism. Communists must support and build this unity of action for the defense of vital interests of the working class.

42. To build the United Front, the communist party presents to the various tendencies and parties of the labor movement a program for joint action based on the conscious needs of the majority of the class. This tactic publicly pits the rank and file of the reformist organizations against their leadership for the purpose of winning this rank and file to the leadership of the communist party. Dragging the reformist organizations into the arena of class struggle, publicly confronting them with the issues of class struggle, mercilessly exposing their inevitable betrayals, and thereby breaking the masses from them is the only way to gain actual leadership of the class.

43. The communist party must not subordinate its independence or its program to the united front. It must demand freedom of criticism and struggle within the united front. The slogan is "March separately, strike together."

44. We must wage an irreconcilable struggle against all Popular Fronts or blocs between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The Popular Front subordinates the independence of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie, sacrificing the revolutionary program for certain

minimum demands which are acceptable to the capitalist order. An example of a Popular Front is the SWP's NPAC, which puts forth a program of a so-called "independent perspective" based on the classless demands of "self-determination for Vietnam" and "Out Now", and includes representatives of the capitalist class (Senator Vance Hartke).

45. The so-called United Front from below rejects any unity between the Communist Party and the reformist working class organizations. Refusing to approach the leadership of the reformist organizations with proposals for a joint struggle the 'United Front from below' precludes unity of the class and isolates the workers within or supporting the reformist organizations from communist leadership. The 'United Front from below' was the greatest factor in determining the defeat of the German working class by fascism.

### Soviets

46. "Soviets is the highest form of the united front under the conditions in which the proletariat enters the epoch of fighting for power."

47. The soviet is based on all strata within the working class. The demand of the soviet is that the workers organized in the soviet should take state power. The struggle within the soviets is over the question of how the workers can take power. Here again the communist party does not subordinate either its organization's independence nor its program but fights to win the entire working class to its program.

### Factory Committees

48. Factory committees are elected by all factory members and by their very existence pose the question of dual power within the factory. They generally develop in time of continued class struggle, i.e., work stoppages, etc.

49. Through the factory committees the workers gain a sense of dealing with the conflicts with management themselves rather than relying upon the labor bureaucracy.

50. The importance of factory committees is that they directly reflect the interests of workers and transcend the distinction between the organized and unorganized. By their very existence they pose the question of who rules in the factory.

### TRADE UNIONS

51. Trade unions are the organizations based on the workers consciousness that unity is needed to struggle against the employers in order to secure a better existence under capitalism.

52. Only through struggle for the communist program within the trade unions can communists expose union bureaucrats and win the majority of the class. To turn one's back to trade union work or sectarian attempts to build pure red trade unions represents capitulation in the struggle for the leadership of the working class and a betrayal of the revolution.

53. Communists must also oppose syndicalism and trade union fetishism resulting in attempts to subordinate either programmatically or organizationally the revolutionary party to trade unionism and to the interests of professional labor bureaucrats.

54. Policy towards trade unions must be based on the fact that labor bureaucrats represent the class enemy inside the proletariat and trade union membership represents in general the better paid minority of the proletariat. Demands must be put forward to link the organized with the unorganized and unemployed.

55. Trade unions have a contradictory nature. They are organizations of the working class which must be defended and strengthened. On the other hand the labor bureaucracy represents the principal agent of the bourgeoisie within the labor movement and must be overthrown. The trade unions must be won to communist leadership and be used for proletarian revolution.

#### Tactics of Communists Inside Trade Unions

56. The primary slogan for work within trade unions is for complete and unconditional independence of trade unions in relation to the capitalist state. Independence must be defined in class terms. "Independence from the influence of the bourgeoisie cannot be a passive state. It can express itself only by political acts, that is by the struggle against the bourgeoisie. This struggle must be inspired by a distinct program which requires organization and tactics for its application. It is the union of program, organization and tactics that constitutes the party. In this way, the real independence of the proletariat cannot be realized unless the proletariat conducts its struggle under the leadership of a revolutionary and not opportunist party."

57. The second slogan is for trade union democracy. Independence from the bourgeois state is a prerequisite for actual trade union democracy. Gone forever are the days of neutral trade unions. The choice of trade unions is either fulfilling the role of political police for the bourgeoisie or struggling on the basis of a revolutionary program. The fight for independence of the working class and democracy within trade unions must be on the basis of a transitional program relating the conscious needs of the masses to the goal of seizing state power.

58. The CWC opposes any interference of the bourgeois state into union affairs. Workers must "clean their own houses" and not rely on so-called neutral government commissions in fighting for union democracy, i.e., forced arbitration, congressional investigations into corrupt union practices, etc.

59. The principal method of working in trade unions is building communist-led fractions within the locals of the various unions. These fractions will put forth transitional demands and actively struggle for the leadership of the union on the basis of these demands.

60. Since a majority of the proletariat is unorganized and is drawn

only episodically into struggle it is necessary to demand that the existing labor unions organize the entire working class.

61. In a period of labor upsurge ad hoc organizations must be built embracing the organized, unorganized and the unemployed, i.e., factory committees, strike committees and soviets.

### Strikes

62. The greatest weapon the working class possesses short of political revolution is to withhold their labor power, to strike, a right won through years of struggle.

63. The bourgeoisie has never accepted the right to strike and has outlawed sitdown strikes, wildcat strikes, and sympathy strikes. Through court injunctions the bourgeoisie has periodically suspended the right to strike. The initiative for strikes has been taken away from the union membership and a system of class collaboration between the capitalists and the union bureaucrats has been substituted. It is necessary that the membership fight to regain control over strike action.

64. Strikes concretely expose the capitalist dependence upon the working class and the class nature of the bourgeois state. Ultimately strikes pose the question of political power of the workers.

### Transitional Demands

"Shorter work week with no loss of pay, sliding scale of wages"

65. "The two basic economic afflictions, in which is summarized the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system, that is, unemployment and high prices, demand generalized slogans and methods of struggle." (Leon Trotsky) The capitalists' and reformers' answer is to place the burden on the 'back of the workers'. Today we see calls for 10 hour days and wage controls. Our reply must be "Employment and decent living standards for all."

66. We propose a sliding scale of wages, an automatic rise in wages in relation to every increase in consumer prices.

67. Unemployment is the greatest danger to the proletariat. The proletariat is faced with its own disintegration. The unemployed are cut off from their class organizations and production. If allowed to continue in isolation they are potential recruits for fascism. The organized proletariat must offer clear-cut revolutionary solutions both programmatically and organizationally.

68. We demand a shorter work week with no loss in pay. This is based on the assumption that the productive forces are capable of full employment. All available work should be divided up amongst all those desiring to work and be paid at their previous highest standard of pay. The capitalists are responsible for unemployment, they have to pay for it.

### "Abolition of business secrets"

69. We demand that individual industries open their books to their workers. This would reveal the amount of national income appropriated by the exploiters, show corrupt practices and oppose the bankruptcy of the capitalist system

### "Workers control"

70. Generally the slogan of workers control over production relates to a revolutionary period and coincides with the rise of soviets. The demand for workers control arises when the capitalists are unable to produce without the consent of the workers but the workers are temporarily unable to seize state power.

71. Workers control is dual power in the factory and directly corresponds to the dual power of the soviets.

72. By exerting control over production the workers learn skills for the future proletarian state.

73. Workers control is only a transitional measure which must directly proceed to the revolutionary nationalization of industry.

### "Expropriation of separate groups of capitalists"

74. In a transitional period it is also important to demand the expropriation of certain key industries, vital for national interests, i.e., corporations holding monopolies on raw materials, war industries, etc.

75. The differences between this transitional demand and the reformist slogan of nationalization are:

- a) we reject indemnification
- b) we agitate against reformist nationalization schemes which actually serve the interests of capital
- c) we call upon the masses to rely upon their own revolutionary strength
- d) we link expropriation with the seizure of power by the workers
- e) we demand expropriation of industry under workers control

76. We demand the expropriation of the private banks and credit system to create a unified system of investment credits. If state power is in the hands of the proletariat, this system would operate by rational planning corresponding to the needs of the entire people.

### "Imperialism and war"

77. Communist policy must be based on an uncompromising attitude toward imperialism. It is necessary to publicly expose such abstractions as "defense of the fatherland", collective security, national defense, etc., as formulas which subordinate the fate of the working class to the interests of imperialism.

78. We call for labor strikes against the Indochina War.

79. We demand confiscation of military profit and expropriation of war industries under workers control.

80. We demand complete abolition of secret diplomacy.

81. The basic slogan is for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution.

### Workers (or Labor) Party

82. The slogan of the workers party has immediate significance. The widespread appeal of Wallace within the working class demonstrated a desire of large sections of white workers to break with the Democratic and Republican parties. If a party had existed with a working class program much of this dissent could have focused on integrated class struggle rather than racism and demagoguery.

83. The slogan of a workers party must be a slogan to polarize the class around a revolutionary program. The party is built on the working class through struggle against the bourgeoisie and its political police, the trade union bureaucracy. We do not call for but struggle against a reformist workers party.

84. The slogan of a workers party is used to expose the labor bureaucracy. Because of the opposition within the unions a few bureaucrats support the idea of a labor party, qualifying this support by saying that now is not the time. At the same time these bureaucrats are desperately seeking to get deeper within the bourgeois parties. We call upon these labor fakers to fulfill their promises around a revolutionary program.

85. During a period of intense class struggle when the labor bureaucracy is faced with its own destruction there is the possibility that certain labor bureaucrats will form a labor party. This would create an enormous convulsion within the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy. The purpose would be to politically contain the revolutionary movement of the workers. We would not support such an attempt and would enter the reformist party with a revolutionary program in order to split it along class lines.

86. We would base ourselves on the revolutionary movement of the workers and use our position within this party to oppose any attempt to betray this movement.

### III. THE NATIONAL AND BLACK QUESTION IN THE U.S.

#### The National Question

87. The national question arose with the bourgeois mode of production.

88. The nation-state is the natural political-economic unit of early capitalism.

89. "A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." (Stalin) All these characteristics must be present for a nation to exist.

90. The determining characteristic of a nation is its common economic life with regard to itself and its separate economic life with regard to other nations.

91. The national question exhibits two tendencies under capitalism. First, the formation of nations, the emergence of national movements, and fight against national oppression and the formation of national political states. Second, the breakdown of national barriers, the extension of international intercourse into a world market and a worldwide economy leading to the assimilation of nations.

92. Both tendencies are universal laws of capitalism. The first tendency predominates in the early phase of capitalism; the second predominates in the later phase of capitalism when conditions have become ripe for socialism.

93. The formation of the first nations in western Europe coincided with and were a result of the developing productive forces which had outgrown their local, feudal integument. These nations were welded together out of local tribes and various races and formed the first modern political states--nation-states.

94. The formation of political states in Eastern Europe and Russia exhibited a belated and combined development. These states were multinational in composition with the later developing, weaker nations oppressed by the earlier developing stronger nations.

95. In the greater part of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the national question took the form of a colonial question with the dominant Western powers (including Japan) inhibiting the independent political-national development of the colonies.

#### Solution of the National Question

96. The right of self-determination means the right of political secession. This right can only have meaning in connection with a material foundation which can guarantee genuine independence. For this reason the right of self-determination has been applied exclusively to nations and some pre-national tribal formations and not simply to any groups with some special interest.

97. The right of self-determination is applicable to those nations which are forcibly contained in a multi-nation state and is in essence a transitional slogan to international consciousness.

98. The right of self-determination found its greatest applicability in Russia and Eastern Europe. It served in Russia to undermine the national bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations, defeat the Great Nation chauvinism of the Russian workers, grant equality to minority nations, and thereby solidly weld together the workers of all nations of the Tsarist state into a single multi-national workers state.

99. In the colonial countries, solution of the national question requires a struggle for independence and the right of self-determination has little significance.

100. In the advanced capitalist countries the application of the right of self-determination has relevance wherever oppressed nations, no matter how small, are to be found. We disagree with those tendencies that assert that self-determination may be applied to every group, class, caste, or sex with specially defined needs or interests; we also differentiate ourselves from tendencies which 'a priori' deny the existence of a national question in the advanced countries and confine this question to the colonies.

101. The resolution of the national question in the imperialist epoch is bound up with the worldwide ascension to power of the working class. Without worldwide revolution, successful revolution in a single country will inevitably degenerate and be reversed and self-determination will become a hollow phrase.

### Blacks and the National Question in America

102. Prior to the Civil War, the American political state embraced the American nation and an embryonic multi-racial Southern nation..

103. The national question was resolved through unification and assimilation by the more progressive system of Northern capital, aborting the maturation of an independent Southern nation.

104. The potential sources for national development during Reconstruction were rooted, not in the former landed aristocracy, but in the multi-racial peasantry located primarily in the Black Belt (former plantation South) and in the small farmers in the surrounding territories.

105. No such development occurred. The centuring-long gestation typical of Russian development never existed among the Southern peasantry. The very existence of the Southern peasantry (including the former slaves) emerged only after capital had established its hegemony over the whole of the Eastern regions of the United States. Further, the racist divisions of the peasantry effectively prohibited a "peasant war" and national unity; the historic associations of any form of "Southern" independence with reactionary rule and outmoded economic forms tended to discredit a separatist solution.

106. This path of development was essentially excluded by the industrialization and mechanization of agriculture. The consequences of these technological developments has been the dispersion of the Negro population through a series of mass migrations to Northern and Southern cities. Instead of national development, the pattern of segregation has been repeated and institutionalized in the big city ghettos.

### The Racial-Caste Question in the United States

107. "From their arrival in this country, the Negro people have been an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom of this society." Today, "the Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising

the most exploited layer of the American working class." (Spartacist)

108. The Afro-American was denied the classical avenue of national development through the amalgamation of races and tribes. The Negro people were forcibly extracted from their tribal development, shipped to the South, deliberately divested of their social and cultural heritage, and taught the common language--English--and a mode of life to fit their new slave status in the American economy.

109. The Negro slaves formed a racial-caste-class stratified horizontally at the bottom of the plantation economy.

110. The period of Reconstruction marked the beginning of Negro class differentiation within a continuing although challenged framework of caste separation. This process was considerably arrested after Reconstruction with the institution of Jim Crow and with 75% of all Negroes remaining as tenant-farmers on the old plantations.

111. The Black Belt area of the South, comprising the old plantation lands, is not now and never was a nation. The area is multi-racial with a slight but declining Black majority. It is part of the common economic life of bourgeois America, sharing a common language and culture, and consisting of territory contiguous with the North and West.

112. A big Black bourgeoisie did not develop in the South. Instead a miniscule, racially identifiable bourgeoisie restricted within the confines of a common economy did barely emerge. The absence of a bourgeoisie is a further condition militating against a strictly national development.

113. The existence of a bourgeoisie would not necessarily have constituted the Negroes as a nation so long as the other criteria were not fulfilled. Under those conditions, the caste hypothesis would still prevail with this modification: the Negroes would constitute a caste differentiated into classes parallel but subservient to the "superior" white racial caste. In this instance a Black capitalist class could give impetus to what might become a national movement.

114. The impulse to a separate national existence may conceivably arise under the following circumstance: "It is possible that fascism will come to power with its racial delirium and oppression and the reaction of the Negro will be toward racial independence." (Trotsky) If this circumstance is coupled with a weak and irresolute proletariat and a Black petit-bourgeoisie (a much smaller stratum than among the Jews of Europe) gains leadership, then a Black Zionism would develop. Since this condition stretches the limits of our hypothesis, we conclude that:

115. The solution to the Negro Question does not lie in the direction of independent statehood and the absence of a nation makes the right of self-determination inapplicable.

#### Solution of the Racial-Caste Question

116. The end to racial-caste oppression lies in the struggle of the

entire working class to abolish capitalism and build an egalitarian socialist society.

117. Due to his position in the productive process, his militancy, and his experience in the class struggle and the struggle for equal rights, the Black industrial worker will play a pivotal and leading role in the struggle of the working class as a whole for socialism and racial equality.

118. The fight for complete equality means the elimination of racial segregation, discrimination and prejudice. It means full equality at the workplace and in society in general. It means the abolition of the ghetto. These goals, though democratic in character, cannot be fully attained except through the overthrow of capitalism by the working class. Therein lies the permanent character of the Negro people's struggle for freedom.

119. The demands for "self-determination for Black communities" and "Black community control", while rooted in the severe racial oppression of the ghetto, actually serve to divide the working class, sow illusions about the state and thereby facilitate the continuation of bourgeois rule. While consistently upholding democracy for racial minorities, we must expose the divisive and utopian character of these slogans.

120. We support democratically achieved mutual assimilation. We oppose "forced assimilation" by the American bourgeoisie based on the superior white caste values. Without the intervention of the working class, an integration movement led by the bourgeoisie and stressing pacifism and reformism will only produce its nationalist antipode.

121. The factories and the armed forces (workers in uniform) are the most integrated sectors of American society. This adds still another reason why the creation of the proletariat by capitalist production prepares the seeds of its own destruction.

122. "A transitional organization is needed at the point of production and in the process of labor, where black and white workers come into contact in their class role, to prove in action that unity against the class enemy is possible and necessary, and to make available to the working class struggle the immense revolutionary potential of Black workers." (Spartacist)

123. It is essential that a single, unified, multi-racial vanguard party of the working class be forged which will act as its General Staff in battle against the well organized and powerful American bourgeoisie. It is also important that such a party devote special attention to the development of Black Trotskyist cadre.

124. A successful international socialist revolution will lay the basis for an eventual fusion of the various peoples and races into a human species elevated to a far higher plane in the evolutionary scale than we can yet imagine.

## IV. THE WOMAN QUESTION

"According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This again, is of a two-fold character. On the one side, the production of the means of existence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings, and of the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand of the family on the other." (Engels)

Women in Pre-Class Society

125. The root of women's oppression lies in primitive communal society with the division of labor based on woman's biological function.

126. The tasks of each sex in the division of labor differed according to the specific tribe or clan. Generally, men played the roles of hunting, fishing, mining, etc., and both sexes participated in horticulture with a limitation on the woman's side. However, because of women's procreative functions, the lot always fell on her concerning childbearing, child-rearing, and general domestic tasks. The household was the general sphere of women's activity.

127. However, the situation of the female's biological state did not directly lead to oppression. At a time when childbearing was necessary for the drawing of the human race out of ape existence, woman's fertility was a valuable asset to the clan and highly spiritualized. Women's role, usually very hard, was so not only because she was a woman, but because she was a savage and a barbarian, where humanity in its lower stages was still struggling for survival and attempting to produce a stable existence with a low productivity of labor.

128. Men's role outside of the home gave them the position of warriors and protectors of the nucleus of the clan, i.e., the kinship groups based on descent in the female line.

129. On the whole in primitive society, women were respected and accounted for not because of any moral code or idealism, but in so far as their usefulness corresponded to the economic structure at any time of a given community. "The significance of the biological factors has varied in different eras, depending upon the economic, social and religious organization of society and the extent of its scientific and technological knowledge." (B.J. Stern)

130. With the rise of technology and the development of private property on the man's side (the surplus of social wealth in cattle, slaves, tools, etc.) the division of labor between the sexes, previously elementary and determined by the struggle for existence, had now taken a new form when carried into civilization. The man's sphere increased as the woman's decreased; the domestic labor of women became an extremely menial and unproductive job, relegated to

the background and dependent on man.

131. With the break-down of the clan and kinship groups, resulting from the growth of private property, came the growth of the state needed for the suppression of the new social class--the slaves.

### The Family and Class Society

132. With the domestication of animals, the development of agriculture and the advent of private property came the need to transfer this property through inheritance. From this flowed the transition to the male line of descent, the paternal law of inheritance and the monogamous form of the family. In order to insure the wife's fidelity and thereby the paternity of the children, she was delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband.

133. Under class society the development of the productive forces during the period of rising capitalism assigned to women, young persons and children of both sexes a brutal but decisive role in large-scale industry. Because they formed a cheap, unskilled labor force, they were employed by the capitalists to break down the high paying craft industries, the bulk of which were men.

134. The struggle of the working class to remove women and children from their super-exploited position resulted in concessions from the bourgeoisie. The restrictions made on female and child labor constituted a progressive step in the developing factory system.

135. The development of large-scale industry laid the basis for the destruction of the economic dependence of women on the family.

136. Capitalism is dependent upon the bourgeois family as a system of isolated cells in order to insure the continued exploitation and subjugation of the proletariat.

137. Just as the productive forces pound against the national boundaries of capitalism, the family as an isolated unit is a fetter on the productive forces where only socialization will allow them to further advance.

138. The family is the main social institution of women's oppression.

139. The nature of capitalism prevents the release of the potentialities of new technology and social institutions for relieving the burdens of the masses of women. Women today remain the childbearers and are in the main individually responsible for the rearing of children and the fulfillment of household duties.

140. The inherent contradictions of monogamous marriage give rise to adultery and prostitution as part and parcel of the double sexual morality which allows to the man, in marriage as well as before, what the woman for economic reasons must be denied.

141. In the present period of decaying capitalism, women in the main constitute part of the reserve army of the working class. When they

are engaged in production, working women frequently are super-exploited--that is, being paid less for the work identical to that performed by men and first to fire, last to hire.

142. The degree of exploitation and oppression suffered by non-white women is double in capitalist society because they are women and at the same time part of a color-caste minority; if they are working women they are additionally subjected to class exploitation on the job.

143. Throughout history, class lines have cut across sex lines. Within each class, however, women have been at a disadvantage as compared with the men, i.e., women occupy the position of an oppressed caste within each class. Women of the ruling classes, however, have enjoyed privileges denied to the men and women of the oppressed class.

### Proletarian Revolution and Socialism

144. The emancipation of women is not possible except through communism.

145. The movement for the liberation of women is bound firmly with the working class movement for revolution and at the same time has its own separate quality of dealing with women's special oppression. Only by the annihilation of the power of the bourgeoisie can women begin to transform their position in society. "The proletarian cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women."

146. The socialist revolution is impossible without a large number of working women taking part in it.

147. Proletarian women in production, like working men, possess a great economic power as commodity producers. Housewives--"domestic proletarians" play the role of maintaining the bourgeois system of private domestic industry, thus their position in the economy does not wield direct power as that of working women. The drawing of housewives into productive labor is an important part of the revolution.

148. Women in the "democratic" countries, such as the U.S., are not liberated, but the class differences and forms of oppression are all the more clear and distinct. "All 'democracy' consists in the proclamation and realization of 'rights' which under capitalism are realizable only to a very small degree and only relatively." (Lenin)

149. The family must inevitably wither away with the wholesale transformation into socialist economy and the raising of the standard of culture and education of the working class. "You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it." (Trotsky)

150. The replacement of the family is not possible except on a level of the productive forces high enough to accommodate for child-care centers, laundries, social dining rooms, etc. on a mass scale to liberate women from domestic work.

151. A large conscious effort on the part of the masses is needed for the transformation of the family.

152. Socialism means the abolition of classes and the complete equality of men and women. Socialist economy means the dissolution of generalized want and the disintegration of the family.

153. The Russian Revolution attained a great step forward in the role of women by completely abolishing legal inequality and striving to develop social institutions to destroy the family.

154. Stalinism betrayed women in the Soviet Union. While upholding proletarian property relations of nationalized industry, expropriation of the capitalists, etc., the political rule of the bureaucracy implemented the Thermidor in the family as a "base for bureaucratic and authoritarian aims." (Spartacist) Because of the low economic and cultural level in Russia and the hostile forces acting on the proletariat, Stalin's theory of "Socialism in one country" served to consolidate the family and retreat to bourgeois models under the guise of the "new proletarian family." This policy is characterized by the CPUSA's position on the family.

155. It is necessary to fight Stalinism while still upholding the proletarian gains of October. In all Stalinist countries, only the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy will bring the working class back into political power and reinstate a revolutionary perspective on the emancipation of women.

### Strategy

156. In order to insure the fulfillment of the revolutionary work of the Communist International and of its parties, it is essential to construct an international communist women's movement.

157. "We must rouse the broad masses of women in capitalist countries to consciousness and should for that purpose strive to build a non-partisan international women's congress." (Lenin)

158. The development of revolutionary consciousness among the broad masses of women and the winning of these women over to the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the communist party can be achieved only through a nationally based women's transitional organization.

159. Such an organization must be based on a transitional program and transitional demands which will bridge the gap between the objective conditions and the needs of women, and the class struggle for state power. The proletarian vanguard party must afford the women's transitional organization political leadership.

160. In this period, which is marked by a rising consciousness among women, it is imperative that the vanguard party intervene in the women's liberation movement with an alternative organization i.e., women's transitional organization and transitional program. The decision to participate in existing women's organizations is a tactical question and rests on programmatic points.

161. The relative backwardness of women in society as a whole requires special attention to developing women cadres within the party.

162. Whether or not to admit men into a women's transitional organization is a tactical question rather than a principle. However, we must include male cadre in those party fractions assigned to deal with the organization of women.

163. The struggle against feminist tendencies i.e., the need for a separate strategy of women's revolution as a means of abolishing the sexual oppression and exploitation of women, is a struggle against the main obstacle in the women's movement. The fight for the emancipation of women must be indispensably linked with the principal aim of the workers' dictatorship. By supporting feminism, a petit-bourgeois trend, the SWP continues to hamper the development of a working class orientation in the women's liberation movement.

--adopted 19 August 1971