

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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The Preconditions for an Authoritative World Congress

Adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat April 9, 1973

In view of the backlog of translations still to be done of documents submitted to the preparatory discussion for the next world congress and the number of documents already announced for presentation in the coming weeks, it appears unlikely that these can be placed in the hands of the rank and file before the conferences of the sections are held to choose delegates for the next world congress.

To overcome this difficulty and thus help to assure a fully democratic discussion and election of world congress delegates, the United Secretariat therefore unanimously recommends to membership of the I. E. C. postponement of the world congress. In accordance with the new date it also recommends that the final date for submission of material be set approximately three months in advance of the world congress. The United Secretariat is not bound to translate and publish material submitted after that date.

All national pre-world congress conferences should be rescheduled to be held as close to the world congress

as practical, but not earlier than 6 weeks before the congress.

Some comrades have expressed fear that the delay in translating documents might be part of a process that would bring into question the authoritativeness of the next world congress.

The United Secretariat is of the unanimous opinion that fulfillment of the following conditions, regardless of the date of the congress, will assure recognition of the statutory authority of the decisions of the next world congress by all sections, sympathizing groups and international tendencies of the Fourth International.

- 1) A fully democratic preparatory world discussion.
- 2) Translation and circulation at least into English, French and Spanish of all documents submitted before the final deadline.
- 3) The democratic election of delegates to the world congress.
- 4) Democratic conduct of the congress.

The New Situation in the Fourth International

A Statement by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency was formed as part of an effort to stem and eventually overcome the current crisis in the Fourth International. To this end a seven-point platform, adopted at the founding conference of the tendency in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8, 1973, was proposed to the members of the world Trotskyist movement. (See "Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 3, March 1973.)

New facts and developments in the past few months have shown that the crisis in the Fourth International is much graver than we estimated last March. Among other things, evidence has come to light that the IEC Majority Tendency has operated as a secret faction. Moreover, the faction includes a wing that is consciously pursuing a split course and that is driving toward holding an inadequately prepared world congress.

Against this threat to the unity of the Fourth International, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency decided at a conference held August 13-16 in Toronto that it must convert itself from a tendency into a faction, thereby making it possible to meet the deteriorating situation in a disciplined way. In the discussion at the conference, the following reasons for this decision were advanced:

The Course of the IEC Majority Tendency

The letter written by Comrade John Barzman from Europe to other supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party (see appendix) includes facts proving that the IEC Majority Tendency has been operating as a faction without declaring itself as such. Comrade Barzman reports, for instance, that at a meeting of the Steering Committee in Brussels in May, which he attended, it was decided that the supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency in the SWP would be granted three representatives on that body provided that they were "ready to accept *discipline*." (Emphasis in original.)

The decision to include these representatives, committed to acting under discipline, was kept secret from the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, the United Secretariat, and the membership of the Fourth International as a whole. In fact the very existence of a "Steering Committee" was never announced to the ranks of the Fourth International and its composition still remains secret.

It is to be noted that the Steering Committee of the IEC Majority Tendency decided to take this action and to "look with favor upon the formation of our tendency" in the Socialist Workers Party only after a report by Comrade Barzman. To become a member of the IEC Majority Tendency it was not sufficient for Comrade Barzman and those of his view to declare ideological agree-

ment with the platform of the tendency. The final decision remained with the Steering Committee and it was contingent on acceptance of discipline. These requisites for membership—a top leadership decision and agreement to accept discipline—are among the distinguishing marks of a faction.

The same practice was followed in weighing the application of Alan Jones, a central leader of the IMG and co-opted participant in United Secretariat meetings.

It was likewise followed in the case of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, a minority grouping in the Canadian section of the Fourth International, for membership in the IEC Majority Tendency.

As is clear from Comrade Barzman's letter, some of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency have developed such hostility toward those critical of the line adopted at the last world congress that they are prepared to split the Fourth International. Others are hesitant.

The lines of division in the IEC Majority Tendency on this question are indicated by Comrade Barzman: "Then a talk with Vergeat, who explained the unwillingness of Ernest, Pierre and Livio to be responsible or see another split of the International, because it would feed once again all the anti-Trotskyist gossip." "The French (Vergeat, Krivine, Stern) Pat Jordan, Ken Lewis want to start attacking SWP on its own ground. They want us to provide ammunition. Mandel realizes the SWP is not internationalist and would split over such interference, and he has a psychological block against a new split." "The French comrades strongly believe in full-scale offensive against SWP and have no illusions on the results of it."

Differences of varying depth exist within the IEC Majority Tendency. Those pressing for a split tend to disregard them, as Comrade Barzman reports: "Verla seemed to favor comrades going ahead to criticize Maitan without waiting for an official statement from the international majority. Krivine seemed to understand the possible risks of such a procedure. . . . Vergeat sees the international majority as the real place for discussion, the real international, is therefore not that concerned about homogeneity."

Vergeat, it appears, not only has no psychological block against a split; psychologically he has already carried out a split so that he views the secret faction of which he is a leader as the "real international" no matter what the differences between its components may be. This attitude indicates readiness to bury differences of a principled nature and to head toward an unprincipled split.

The facts disclosed by Comrade Barzman enable us to better appreciate the factionalism manifested in a series of recent actions undertaken by the IEC Majority Tendency.

In the IMG, for instance, their followers split into a

number of warring tendencies. The leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency decided to try to use the authority of the United Secretariat to intervene in this situation on the eve of a congress of the IMG. In a letter to members of his particular grouping in the IMG dated February 20, Comrade Peter Peterson disclosed that "a theses on the tasks of the IMG in the present crisis is to be elaborated by comrade Walter. *These will be on our line.* . . . The theses will also specifically criticise the line of the Eurifusion Conference Perspective Document [a document written by Alan Jones and Clarissa Howard], and the latter's political and theoretical positions will be blamed for the failure of the IMG to adequately relate to class struggle in Britain."

In accordance with this decision the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency wrote a document that manifestly supported one of the groups against the others, brought this into the United Secretariat without advance notice, and demanded an emergency vote.

A minority of the United Secretariat opposed the procedure as improper and argued against throwing the influence of the United Secretariat behind one of the groups, since under the circumstances it would represent an abuse of authority. These arguments proved unavailing against the prior decision of the IEC Majority Tendency to intervene in the British section in this manner.

Again in the case of Spain, the IEC Majority Tendency utilized its majority in the United Secretariat to favor the En Marcha faction in the Spanish section, which was intent on carrying through a split. This support has continued since the split, going so far as public backing of the group in the pages of *Quatrième Internationale*, the official organ of the International Executive Committee (May-August 1973).

A recent case was the organization of a tour of Australia for Tariq Ali in July-August of this year in which the Socialist Workers League, the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, was not consulted. The tour was conducted under sponsorship of the Communist League, whose walkout from the Socialist Workers League last year was condemned by the United Secretariat as an unprincipled split. The organization of a tour for Tariq Ali in such a crudely factional way was intended, of course, to help shore up the Communist League, which has been tending to disintegrate, and to give it assistance in its public struggle against the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Australia. The net effect, however, was to worsen relations between the two groups, injuring the Australian Trotskyist movement as a whole.

The factionalism evident in Tariq Ali's tour in Australia fits in with the perspective of an international split. The immediate objective of the tour was to strengthen the partisans of the IEC Majority Tendency in preparation for that outcome, otherwise the tour, which might well have been of considerable value, would have been organized in a normal way in consultation with the Socialist Workers League.

The attitude of the IEC Majority Tendency toward the Canadian section falls into the same pattern. The walkouts that began with the departure of Michel Mill (whose political positions are praised in the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency) have been soft-pedaled. Inordinate interest has been displayed in a small formation, the

Revolutionary Marxist Group, that has declared verbal support to the Fourth International but that has been maneuvering to win splitoffs from the section. The IEC Majority Tendency has put pressure on the Canadian section to fuse with this group regardless of the judgment of the leadership of the section as to the probable outcome of such a step. The factional interests of the IEC Majority Tendency, it appears, lie outside the Canadian section.

Another fact of considerable gravity, showing how the IEC Majority Tendency has operated, was the decision of its Steering Committee, revealed by Barzman, to "collaborate" in the production of documents to be submitted in the name of the "Internationalist Tendency" in the internal discussion in the Socialist Workers Party.

The Internationalist Tendency stands against positions held by the Socialist Workers Party that have met with approval in the past from the majority members of the United Secretariat. For example, the SWP analyses of the liberation movement of the Blacks and Chicanos were endorsed in the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." To collaborate with the Internationalist Tendency in writing its documents signifies that the majority members of the United Secretariat have switched positions on these questions. Of course, the majority members of the United Secretariat have a right to change their minds. The correct procedure, however, would be to make known to the United Secretariat and to the leadership of the SWP their shift in view as well as their decision to collaborate with their new cothinkers in the SWP, stating their reasons for this about-face. Instead, acting the way an irresponsible faction acts, they bypassed both the United Secretariat and the leadership of the SWP, reaching agreement in secret on these points with the Internationalist Tendency. This greatly exacerbated relations when it became known, arousing grave doubts in the SWP as to the objectives of the IEC Majority Tendency and of the Internationalist Tendency.

As a consequence of the secret agreement on collaboration, Comrades Peterson and Maitan, who were present as the United Secretariat representatives of the IEC Majority Tendency, approved the minority report on Latin America made by Comrade Richard Mitten of Chicago at the August convention of the SWP.

For his report, Comrade Mitten read from his article "In Defense of the International Majority's Perspectives for Latin America," which was published in the *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 35, July 1973. The article includes a far-reaching revision of the analysis adopted by the Fourth International on the overturns of capitalism going from Cuba clear back to Eastern Europe, including in passing the workers and peasants government that existed in Algeria from 1962 to 1965. (The pertinent points can be found on pages 2-3 and pages 8-9.)

In the same report, Comrade Mitten attacked the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina, as "reformist." He declared that the politics of the PST makes it "incompatible with membership in the Fourth International." (Page 16 in his article. Emphasis in the original.)

To make such a declaration is equivalent to demanding expulsion of the Argentine sympathizing section, echoing the demand made by the PRT (Combatiente), which recently walked out of the Fourth International. It is clear that psychologically Comrade Mitten has already expelled the PST. That both Comrade Peterson and Comrade Maitan explicitly supported the report on Latin America made by Comrade Mitten for their tendency at the SWP convention is an ominous indication that the IEC Majority Tendency has made a secret decision to recommend to the forthcoming world congress that the PST be excluded from the Fourth International. This would fit in with a course aimed at splitting the international.

Another grave fact should be noted. The United Secretariat has not discussed whether the internal debate in the Fourth International should be made public. Yet the European Tasks and Perspectives draft resolution has been issued to the public in various languages, including English, German, Swedish, and Italian. Who made the decision to do this? When? At what gathering? Plainly it was decided in secret by the IEC Majority Tendency. The move was a dangerous one. It established a precedent for the publication of internal documents by any group in the Fourth International. The logic of this is establishment of public factions in the Fourth International.

How Far Back Does It Go?

How long has the secret faction been in existence? As in the case of most such formations, this is difficult to determine from outside the grouping. In the secret letter sent out by Comrade Maitan under the pseudonym of "Domingo," attacking the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina, the author explains that at the time of the 1963 Reunification Congress the leading members of the former International Secretariat held the perspective of "progressive assimilation" of the Argentine component of the International Committee.

"The question arises," Comrade Maitan wrote, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentine section in the past. By hindsight we can conclude that we should have stimulated a discussion and complete clarification long before now. We note, however, that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation." ("International Information," Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972), *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, p. 169.)

The implication is that a similar attitude was held toward the International Committee as a whole. In contrast, the International Committee majority, which carried out the reunification in opposition to a minority led by Healy and Lambert, viewed the reunification as a genuine fusion between two public factions, both of which were part of the Fourth International. It did not view the reunification as the "integration" or "assimilation" of one group into the other. It followed that one of the prime tasks was to dissolve the former factions. The leaders of the International Committee who participated in the reunification in 1963 held that it would have been un-

principled to maintain the former lines of cleavage. In fact to have maintained the factions would have put in question the good faith of the two sides and the principled nature of the reunification. Therefore the leaders of the International Committee followed a policy of doing everything possible to break up the old formations and to reach genuine political homogeneity through a process of common action and discussion.

This view, as indicated by the Domingo letter, was not shared by the leaders of the International Secretariat. In secret they held the perspective of "progressive assimilation" of the other side. This meant in practice maintaining their former faction, or at least its core, without declaring its existence.

In view of the disclosure in Comrade Maitan's "Domingo" letter, we can now better appreciate the secret decision made by the majority at the Ninth World Congress with regard to recognizing the PRT (Combatiente) as the official section of the Fourth International in Argentina. Among themselves they recognized that the PRT was not a Trotskyist organization; but they hoped that by taking the "soft approach" of eulogizing the guerrillism of the PRT with which they were in agreement while remaining silent about its anti-Trotskyist politics they would be able to progressively assimilate the group. At the same time, by utilizing tactics of an opposite kind, they hoped to progressively cut down the PST and push it out of the Fourth International.

As we can see in retrospect, in the crucial question of relations with the Argentine section of the Fourth International, the majority leaders acted in the manner of a secret faction, not informing the delegates at the Ninth World Congress of their real views and calculations. This unprincipled way of proceeding helped pave the way for the subsequent disaster of the political and organizational disintegration of the official section of the Fourth International and the needless sacrifice of the lives of dedicated revolutionists. The outcome should serve as a severe object lesson on the evils of disregarding the norms of democracy in making crucial decisions.

On the more important questions that have arisen since 1969, they have continued to operate in the same way. We have cited the Domingo letter as one verifiable instance. Another was the "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)" sent last October by six members of the United Secretariat. (See *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 7, June 1973.) Neither the United Secretariat nor the International Executive Committee, which met shortly thereafter, was informed of this action. Meanwhile, the letter, as in the case of the Domingo missive, was given selective distribution to the rank and file in Latin America.

The "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)," it should be pointed out, in contrast to previous extravagant buildups and praise of the PRT's guerrilla exploits contains accurate criticisms of some of the policies and views of the PRT (but not of their carrying on guerrilla war as prescribed by the majority line of the Ninth World Congress).

The belatedness of the criticisms is explainable by the fact that the authors of the letter had stubbornly maintained their "soft approach" until very late in the day. When they grasped that the PRT was leaving the Fourth

International, they faced the embarrassing problem of explaining the blow to the ranks of the Fourth International. The "Letter to the PRT (Combatiente)" was a hastily improvised face-saving operation. The ostensible reason for the letter was that it represented an effort to convince the PRT. However the decision to engage in this action was made behind the back of the United Secretariat and without informing the International Executive Committee at its plenary session in December where the Latin American question, Argentina included, was on the agenda. The secret faction was very short-sighted. It put its own immediate interests ahead of those of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. Otherwise they would have done what was indicated—put the question of the PRT and what to do about its course on the agenda of the United Secretariat for joint consultation and decision.

Bit by bit the real views of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency appear to be coming to light. Their unavowed policy toward the La Verdad group following the 1963 reunification, as Comrade Maitan has revealed, was one of "progressive assimilation." Comrade Bill Massey, who was secretly co-opted onto the Steering Committee of the IEC Majority Tendency last May, recently disclosed the real attitude of the secret faction to the Socialist Workers Party. "The SWP," he said, "after ten years of reunification has failed the test to integrate itself into the world movement. . . ." ("The Barnes-Kerry School of Scandals, A Brief Reply to a Last Minute Horror Story," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 34, July 1973, p. 3.)

The SWP failed to "integrate itself"! Was that what the reunification was about? The formula of self-integration is but a variant of the "progressive assimilation" revealed in the Domingo letter as the real attitude of the former leaders of the International Secretariat toward the La Verdad group in Argentina. Bill Massey's disclosure indicates that they held the same attitude toward the Socialist Workers Party, a founding section of the International Left Opposition and of the Fourth International. It is further confirmation that their real attitude toward all the members of the International Committee who participated in the reunification was one of "progressive assimilation."

If this is the case, as is increasingly indicated, it would explain much about their course that has been difficult to fathom, such as their unilateral decision to demand votes on the tactic of entryism *sui generis*, practiced for seventeen years under their guidance.

Mounting Danger of a Split

As the situation now stands, it is evident that the danger of a split is very real. This has been pointed out by cadres on both sides.

The differences have been widening and deepening. The political issues in dispute range from what attitude to adopt toward the Labour Party in Britain and the Union de la Gauche in France to assessment of the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The national question, ranging from Palestine to Quebec and the Black and Chicano movements in the U.S., has become involved. Tactical differences, which were sharp over the guerrilla orientation, became acute with the projection by the IEC

Majority Tendency of a line of "minority violence" in Europe, its adoption in practice in France and Spain, and its espousal by the IMG in relation to Ireland.

Comrade Mitten's report on Latin America at the August convention of the SWP brought into the debate a programmatic question as serious as the nature of the state.

While the minority at the 1969 World Congress characterized the guerrilla-war orientation as a concession to ultraleftism, the IEC Majority Tendency has characterized the politics of the PST as a whole as "reformist." The American members of the IEC Majority Tendency have not hesitated to say the same for the SWP. They have begun using the label "petty-bourgeois" as an epithet in characterizing the politics of the SWP. It is possible that the class roots of the positions of the two sides should be examined, but it should be done with scientific exactitude and not as an exercise in name-calling.

Some of the adherents of the IEC Majority Tendency (in Canada and Venezuela), losing all restraint, have characterized the politics of the LSA/LSO and the SWP as a "cancer." This frenzied factionalism is a subjective reflection of the political differences, which have deepened until they now involve questions of program.

There is an objective logic to this that cannot escape anyone concerned about maintaining the unity of the international. Of greatest importance in this connection are the political and tactical differences since they bear directly on day-to-day practice. Different estimates of methodological or sociological questions ought not to be nearly so explosive.

Forces of a centrifugal nature have become manifest in the form of splits in various areas. As early as 1968 the Argentine section split into the Combatiente and La Verdad groups. A split occurred in Peru in 1969. Last year there were splits in Australia, in Mexico, and in Spain. The split in Spain was particularly grievous, inflicting a serious setback to one of the most promising Trotskyist organizations in Europe. This year the Canadian section has been affected by walkouts of supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency.

Blame in these cases falls on the leaderships of the groups that split or on their backers who were either unable to restrain them or who gave them bad advice. Nevertheless, in general, the splits reflect the deepening differences in the Fourth International. It would be wisest to consider them as warning signs of what can occur on a more dramatic scale.

Decisive Action Required to Prevent a Split

In the first stage of the discussion following the Ninth World Congress, we who opposed the guerrilla orientation did not consider it necessary to organize an international tendency. We had confidence that the concrete experience of the class struggle would confirm the correctness of our position, that this would be recognized by the majority leaders, and that the error would be rectified at the next world congress.

The immediate problem, as we saw it, was to overcome one of the major defects of the Ninth World Congress—the inadequate preparatory discussion. It will be recalled that the documents became available at such a late date that many of the delegates had not read, still less discussed, them in their sections in advance of the congress.

They were not in position to grasp the implications of the "turn" toward guerrilla war. Thus the first job was to elucidate the conflicting views expressed at the congress. Concomitant with this, as time passed we noted the verification of events. As we then estimated the situation, we did not need to do more than utilize the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*.

This estimate was altered when it became evident that the majority leaders refused to recognize the lesson of events in Argentina and Bolivia. In addition there were alarming indications that under guise of applying centralism they were considering attempting to settle the dispute over orientation by mechanical organizational measures at the next congress. There were growing indications, too, that the next congress might not be a democratic one—the delay in translating documents, particularly into French, was scandalous. Concomitantly, in various sections the internal discussion has yet to be initiated in a serious way.

In light of the attitude of the majority, it was clear that a struggle would be required to gain time for the translation of documents and a fair presentation to the ranks of the Fourth International of the case for changing the erroneous orientation, otherwise a democratic and authoritative world congress could not be assured. Consequently a call was issued for the formation of a tendency. This was implemented last March with the formation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

Special attention is called to the fact that the name Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency accurately reflected the reality—only a tendency was formed. Any member of the Fourth International in good standing was free to join by simply declaring agreement with its platform and informing the leadership of the section of his or her decision. No group discipline was called for. The purpose of the tendency was to gain an adequate hearing for the points listed in its platform. No struggle to change the composition of the leadership of the Fourth International was projected.

It is true that confidence in the majority leadership had waned because of its resistance to recognizing the lesson of the events in Argentina and Bolivia, but it was felt generally by members of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency that the dialectics of the internal discussion could still convince the majority leaders of the need for a correction in orientation.

We have now decided to convert the tendency into a faction. The reason is the incontrovertible evidence that has come to light showing that the majority is operating as an undeclared faction. Applicants for membership in the IEC Majority Tendency are inspected as to their political credentials. They are obliged to accept discipline. Worst of all, the faction has concealed its true nature. Its obvious purpose is to use secret and undemocratic means to block the guerrilla, or "minority violence," orientation from being overturned at the next congress. To do that requires preventing a democratic discussion among the rank and file.

The statutes of the Fourth International provide for the formation of tendencies and factions. But this is on the basis of functioning openly. A *secret* tendency or faction is an unmitigated evil in a Bolshevik organization.

Operating behind the back of both the regularly elected leadership and the rank and file, it violates the most elementary norm of democratic centralism; that is, free and open access to information on the views, intentions, and actions of groupings within the organization. It lines up comrades without a hearing of opposing views. It invites the formation of counter secret factions. It fosters unprincipled blocs, power caucuses, and clique politics of the worst kind.

A secret faction disrupts the normal process of determining political orientations and of selecting the leadership. The atmosphere becomes charged with suspicion. Hypocrisy comes to the fore. Cynicism is cultivated. Principles are discounted in favor of personal ties. The possibility of unprincipled splits—or equally unprincipled unifications—becomes greatly increased.

The statutes of the Fourth International provide for the formation of open, declared tendencies and factions precisely in order to avoid the evils of secret tendencies and factions. We have heard that some comrades, who should know better, believe that the purpose of a faction is to prepare for a split. *That was not why the right to form factions was included in the statutes of the Fourth International.* Circumstances can arise in which the formation of a faction constitutes the best, if not the only, means to avoid a split.

In our opinion, this is the situation now faced by the Fourth International. The primary objective of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is to try to contain the centrifugal forces that have been gathering headway and to overcome them through a democratic discussion and decision to bring the Fourth International back on the course charted by Leon Trotsky.

To forestall any confusion or misinterpretation on the point, we want to make clear that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction is not a *public* faction. It does not project carrying its struggle to the public. It is an *internal* faction, formed in accordance with the statutes of the Fourth International.

We also want to make clear that we appreciate the individual abilities and collective contributions of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency despite the erroneousness of their present orientation. They have made valuable contributions in the past and we consider them capable of making new ones. If we win a majority at the next world congress, as we hope to do, we want that majority to be reflected in the composition of the incoming leadership so as to assure a change in orientation; but we are against excluding or demoting anyone. To the contrary, we will do our utmost to construct a strong center that includes them as integral components.

Need for Exceptional Measures

In our opinion, it is imperative to take exceptional measures to guarantee a democratic and authoritative world congress as outlined in the unanimous agreement passed by the United Secretariat last April.

The main requisite is to provide time for the translation of documents and their discussion in French, Spanish, and German in accordance with the responsibilities of the United Secretariat. In the case of French the situation

has been scandalous, as we noted above. Now a new complication has occurred. The French section has come under heavy attack from the class enemy and this makes it very difficult for the French comrades to catch up. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these tasks have not been accomplished. More time, it is clear, is required. Consequently, we again urge in the strongest way possible that the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency postpone the next world congress until these basic requirements have been met. There is no other way to organize a democratic and authoritative world congress as outlined in the April statement of the United Secretariat.

We would also urge the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency to regularize their situation by declaring their faction and making known its platform and the names of its leaders.

Agreement by the IEC Majority Tendency to postpone the congress and to form an open faction would help enormously, in our opinion, to relax the atmosphere and assure the unity of the Fourth International.

In connection with this, we announce our readiness to form a bloc with anyone, including members of the IEC Majority Tendency, on the single plank of doing everything possible to prevent a split. We propose specifically uniting in support of the United Secretariat's April declaration defining the requisites for a democratic and authoritative congress.

Platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

First of all we reaffirm the declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency which included the following platform:

1. For approval of the general line of the document "Argentina and Bolivia — the Balance Sheet."

2. For reversal of the Latin American guerrilla-war orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress).

3. For reversal of the projections of this turn in various fields as it became extended both geographically and programmatically following the congress.

4. For resumption by the leading bodies of the Fourth International of the method outlined in the Transitional Program to solve the problems we face in bidding for leadership of the proletariat in the class struggle.

5. For reaffirming the basic program, tradition, and practices of the Fourth International as they stood up to the time of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress), that is, specifically, of commitment to the Leninist strategy of building a combat party. The more revolutionary the situation, the more decisive becomes the role of such a party.

6. For democratic organization of the coming world congress. In addition to representation, this means specifically the translation and distribution of the documents in at least French, Spanish, German, and English well in advance of the congress so that the membership of the Fourth International can have adequate time to study, debate, and decide on them.

7. Against any moves that endanger the authority of the coming congress and the unity of the Fourth Inter-

national such as undemocratic selection of delegates, curtailment of discussion, or failure to issue, translate, and distribute resolutions and other documents on schedule.

On the above platform, we would now apply greater stress to point No. 3, that is, opposition to the extension of the guerrilla orientation. In the modified form of "minority violence," this orientation has been projected by the IEC Majority Tendency for Europe (and for other areas as well, to judge from some of the statements made by new adherents to this line in Canada and the United States).

It is also our opinion that the question of the Leninist method of party building, specified in point No. 5, is becoming more and more central in the debate.

To the above points, we now add three more:

8. For a change in the composition of the leadership of the Fourth International to assure a majority pledged to correct the guerrilla-war orientation and its derivatives such as "minority violence."

9. For observance of democratic centralism in the Fourth International as provided by the statutes.

10. For the general line of "The Underlying Differences in Method," by Joseph Hansen.

Structure of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

1. The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction has an elected International Steering Committee consisting of the following:

Argentina: Arturo, Capa, Fierre, Lorenzo, Marcela, Mario

Australia: Jamie Doughney, Jim Percy

Brazil: Antenor

Britain: Alan Harris, Tony Roberts

Canada: Alain Beiner, Al Cappe, John Riddell, Art Young

Chile: Juan Perez

China: Pent Shu-tse

Denmark: Torben Hansen

Germany: Dieter

India: see statement by Central Secretariat of Communist League of India

Iran: Ahmad Heydari

New Zealand: Tony

Peru: Hugo Blanco, Tuco

Spain: Alberto, Arturo

Sweden: Anders Svedin

United States: Jack Barnes, Peter Camejo, Joseph Hansen, Gus Horowitz, Benny Johnson, Andrew Pulley, Ed Shaw, Barry Sheppard, Mary-Alice Waters

Uruguay: Juan

Venezuela: Miguel

2. The International Steering Committee is empowered to act in the name of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

3. Members are required to observe faction discipline within the framework of the 10-point platform listed above.

4. Faction discipline does not transcend the discipline of sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International.

5. Members of the faction must conduct themselves in a completely loyal way in sections of the Fourth International or sympathizing organizations, maintaining their activities and financial obligations in an exemplary way.

How to Join the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

1. Send a letter to the International Steering Committee indicating agreement with the program and goals of the faction. All communications should be addressed to C. Adams, 305 E. 21st St., New York, N.Y. 10010.

2. Specify differences, if any.

3. The International Steering Committee will decide on applications, notifying applicants whether they have been accepted or rejected.

4. If your application is accepted, you are required to notify the leadership of the section or sympathizing organization of this fact.

August 17, 1973

Statement by the Central Secretariat of the Communist League of India

The Central Secretariat of the Communist League, Indian section of the Fourth International, has been aware that two of its members, Comrades Mohan Gan and Kailas Chandra, have been associated with the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency within the FI, with which the Central Secretariat has been in general agreement. We note that the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency has decided to convert itself into a faction within the statutes of the FI with the aim of better organizing its fight for its political views with the object of preserving the unity and integrity of the International. While we endorse the general line of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction statement entitled "The New Situation in the Fourth International," the two members of the Central Secretariat have decided to defer a decision on their accepting a place on the steering committee of the faction till the forthcoming plenum of the Central Committee when the entire question of differences within the International leadership will be

considered and a decision taken.

The Central Secretariat welcomes the declaration adopted unanimously on Sept. 19, 1973, by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International reiterating the need to discuss the present differences within the FI without undermining the overall organizational unity and integrity of the FI. We appeal to all national sections of the FI to conduct their internal discussions on their political differences in the spirit of the USFI declaration and desist from taking any steps that would create mutual bitterness and hostility. We strongly believe that every possible step should be taken to ensure that a split in the FI is averted since any organizational rupture would have disastrous effects on the international Trotskyist movement.

Sept. 27, 1973

APPENDIX: The Barzman Letter

(Reprinted from *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 27, July 1973.)

Paris, May 15, 1973

Dear Comrades,

I'm sending this letter just in case I don't get a chance to write again or phone in a while. I am due to leave for Brussels tomorrow morning for the meeting of the steering committee of the international majority tendency. I am supposed to present a report on the American Tendency but things are rather vague. After that, I am supposed to take a tour of Sweden, Denmark, Germany and maybe England, with Walter Davis, to agitate against the SWP, and acquaint myself with the situation in these countries. Then back to France for a few days before returning on May [?].

I stayed the first night at Alain Krivine's, who briefly told me that they were in the process of forcing Livio to put his name on a very self-critical document on Latin America. Livio was resisting, taking it very personally (. . .)! Alain encouraged me to emphasize the damage done in the U.S. by Livio; unfortunately I will have to improvise, as our tendency has not really discussed in what way our criticisms differ from those of Jo Hansen and those of we heard from Krivine.

Then a talk with Vergeat, who explained the unwillingness of Ernest, Pierre and Livio to be responsible or see another split of the International, because it would feed once again all the anti-Trotskyist gossip. He wanted me to meet with a Basque comrade of the E. T. A. to discuss the national question.

Then I had a meeting with Verla, she is heading up women's work in France. The Ligue is in the leadership of the M. L. A. C. (Movement for Free Abortion and Contraception) a movement open to men and women and calling for free abortion on demand. She explained that thanks to their success in this field they were now ready to take on the SWP, with a comparison with the Ligue's experience:

- attack the revision of the Marxist opposition to feminism

- attack the "inter-class" approach of the SWP

- stress working-class issues but no centrist socialist women's groups.

Both Vergeat and Verla were sympathetic to a reevaluation of the SWP's position on Black nationalism. They favor stressing the class issues in this respect.

On the differences within the I. T., Verla seemed to favor comrades going ahead to criticize Maitan without waiting for an official statement from the international majority. Krivine seemed to understand the possible risks of such a procedure. They seem to consider the I. T. as a bonus from heaven that they did not work to create. Vergeat sees the international majority as the real place for discussion, the real international, is therefore not that concerned about homogeneity. Vergeat wanted to arrange careful preparation for an international majority team to come to the U. S. A.

I then had a long talk with a young Chinese comrade from Hong Kong who is the leader of the youth movement there, a member of the section, and a supporter of the international majority. As the Maoists are totally uninterested in fighting British colonialism, they have hegemony over the movement. There may be a similar development among Chinese students in the U. S. He was recruited by Wang, the person Chen Pi-lan attacks in her article, and believes that he can transform the section and align with the majority, given time. He doesn't characterize Maoism as Stalinist, but says China became a workers' state in 1949, and that political revolution was immediately necessary.

Right now, I am wasting time. I should prepare a report on U.S.A. and a clear list of criticisms on Latin America. I think I will focus on the following points:

- the incorrectness of banking on a "breakthrough" in one country

- the over-estimation of the strength of the sections in Bolivia and Argentina and the need for political clarification in the ranks

- that while various tactics of armed struggle are perfectly consistent with Trotskyism, to put them all together (self-defense of the party, expropriations for the party, self-defense of mass movement, guerrilla bands) and to add that they can create a crisis, is an illusion.

Thursday May 17, 1973, midnight

Two days of international majority steering committee meetings and the U. S. are not even yet fully discussed.

On Latin America:

4 documents will be written —

1) a re-reading of the IX W. C. resolution which is considered ambiguous, and which failed to warn against militarist deviation. The issue is seen as: should the party set up a *military wing* completely subordinate to the political work of the party in the masses, to initiate and participate in armed struggle when conditions call for it? SWP says no. Int'l majority says yes! Then specific actions must be reviewed country by country, according to needs of class struggle and abilities of section.

2) a perspectives document for Argentina as the current one is considered inadequate, as it fails to explain the dynamic of how the PRT actions became dominated by the need to make more military actions, and so on. PRT is almost out of F. I. Five tendencies adding up to about 150 people are seeking the franchise. Possibility of getting a tendency in the P. S. T. Will criticize Moreno's economism in unions, and electoral opportunism. Will project no support to Campora, but possible defense against army.

3) a balance sheet of Cuba—critical but not political revol. Dorticos invited to Argentina.

4) perspectives for Chile. The whole international majority is down on Livio, who seems to be brooding, but there are many organizational details I don't know about L. A. sections. Mexicans are split. Everybody sees need to emphasize transitional program and method of party-building but Mandel and Frank are hesitating on taking on the SWP leadership in its own country.

Pierre Frank is writing an answer to Mary-Alice on the European question and this naturally leads to a debate over method. Frank & Mandel did not want to add another one, more general, announcing Novack (they have illusions about him). The French (Vergeant, Krivine, Stern) Pat Jordan, Ken Lewis want to start attacking SWP on its own ground. They want us to provide the ammunition. Mandel realizes the SWP is not internationalist and would split over such interference, and he has a psychological block against a new split.

There is a possible "third force" developing in some European sections, especially Germany, of comrades who reject the L. A. line. Ross is applying for int'l majority, has been hesitating, but will be let in. India is in a mess.

So far we were promised a team made of X, a French woman comrade in charge of int'l work and the abortion campaign, has been to YSA Minneapolis convention, very orthodox, will attack feminism, sisterhood, minimalism and failure to stress issues relevant to working-class women; Y you know him, and Z. They all have agreed to consult with us first. We must raise about \$1,200 for the trips and organize a tour of branches for mid July.

The following was resolved for U. S. A.:

1) The I.M. will accept *three* signers from our tendency in U. S. A., provided should be ready to accept *discipline*.

2) They look with favor upon the formation of our tendency—will collaborate with us on writing document, defend our democratic rights, and probably, if we make an adequate showing, will use it for world congress and a world document.

P. F. was upset by no representation of P. O. on N. C. At the U. Sec. meeting, Barnes promised a special "conference" (?) for mid-November, which would follow an oral discussion. and send delegates to world congress on the basis of *membership* votes for resolutions.

The French comrades strongly believe in full-scale offensive against SWP and have no illusions on the results of it. Mandel pins his hopes on a working-class radicalization in U. S. A., which would change SWP. Vergeant pointed out, even if a crisis in the SWP did develop then, they could not spontaneously develop an analysis; the American tendency must be supported and built. Swedish, Canadians, British agree. Livio, Swiss and German are in the middle.

Right now Mandel is reading our outline and half-draft. We are scheduled to discuss it tomorrow. This may bring some good ideas but I expect pretty heavy discussion.

The following were the suggestions after I read our tendency declaration: Pat J. said to take out the call to "all revolutionaries" as it implies we are calling on people outside the SWP. Ernest said to remove all references to SWP ties to F. I. as this would lead to the impression that SWP was violating Voorhis Act, and as majority would attack us for security risk. He said we had too much emphasis on armed struggle, should reduce that, and stress transitional program. He thought our *style* was too violent on the organizational questions, but recognized that was the American way of doing things. He said he preferred the irony of Massey letter to Sheppard. I have made the corrections and am sending you the copy. We should leave all the names that agree with the call.

I was told, but am unable to check, that the addendum to declaration of 19 I. E. C. members only includes the *Bolivian* balance sheet, and not Argentina, or just the *general* line of Argentina. If there are comrades who do not agree with *Germain* document's formulations, then they have a serious problem as they are probably *Kautskyites*. We cannot continue to entertain our *vague* criticisms that the document was vague, or had a guerrilla warfare line (which in fact it did not on the whole) and that this is a cover-up, but must *express exactly* what we disagree with. I was very embarrassed at the absence of any elaboration of our criticisms by ourselves. But I think most comrades will agree with *Germain*, and with the need for a military wing of the party (in the Comintern tradition) (and not just a defense guard against ultra-lefts) which is as much as we need to say.

I am due to go to Switzerland and IMG. The European comrades desperately need ammunition against the SWP. IMG situation seems wild, but Ross is being handled basically correctly as far as I can see. It would be good if you discussed with Canadian comrades. We have to put together a credible counter-political line and develop a stable internationally-oriented leadership. This is the first priority and will enable us to face any eventuality.

Vietnam, so far, is not part of tendency declaration, but there is increasing desire by Sterne to launch offensive on

—that treaty was modest advance and left *dual power*.
—that solidarity with NLF is key task, and SWP fails to do it.

—that NLF-DRV are fighting for a socialist revolution,
&

—that NLF-DRV are not Stalinists. He has a document under his own name coming out.

Comradely,
JB

Recommendations to the Delegates of the Coming World Congress

Adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat September 19, 1973

The fear has been voiced that the differences under discussion in the Fourth International and the organizations in sympathy with it could lead to a split. To counteract this danger and to strengthen the unity of our movement, the United Secretariat reaffirms its statement "The Preconditions for an Authoritative World Congress" that was unanimously adopted on April 9, 1973.

In addition, the United Secretariat unanimously recommends to the delegates of the Fourth Congress Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) that they adopt the following proposals:

1. That there be no expulsions or suspensions or application of disciplinary measures against sections of the Fourth International or any of its sympathizing groups.

2. That all sections and sympathizing groups be granted full voting rights at the world congress in accordance with the number of their members in good standing, as specified in the statutes of the Fourth International.

3. That the present temporary statutes of the Fourth International be adopted without change.

4. That in those countries where two or more groups exist because of splits or other reasons, the united moral authority of the Fourth International be brought to bear for the earliest possible fusion of the groups on a principled basis.

5. That only resolutions and counterresolutions on the

following points be placed on the agenda of the coming world congress for a vote: (a) the world political situation; (b) the question of orientation in Argentina; (c) the question of orientation in Bolivia; (d) European perspectives; (e) statutes of the Fourth International.

6. That the international discussion on these points be closed following the world congress for one year unless the IEC decides to reopen the discussion earlier.

7. That the following points be considered in commissions or panels at the coming world congress: (a) the "cultural revolution" and China; (b) youth radicalization; (c) women's liberation; (d) Middle East; (e) Vietnam; (f) Eastern Europe.

8. That votes on these topics not be taken at the coming world congress.

9. That the international discussion on the questions listed in point No. 7, excluding analysis of conjunctural events in Vietnam and Eastern Europe, be continued in literary form following the coming world congress in a monthly bulletin not to exceed 48 pages.

10. That the Fifth Congress After Reunification (Eleventh World Congress) be held within two years following the coming world congress.

September 19, 1973

On the Differences Over Vietnam

By Gus Horowitz

I. Revolutionary Strategy in the Antiwar Movement

[The first three parts of this contribution are taken from the oral report on Vietnam, whose general line was adopted by the August 1973 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.]

This report will concentrate on the debate over the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the broader questions that come into play in that discussion. But before getting into that, I want to spend some time discussing the debate over strategy in the antiwar movement.

This debate really reflects a fundamental difference over the role of the revolutionary party in the mass movement, which is one of the central points at issue in the discussion on the European perspectives document.

The SWP's antiwar strategy, from the outset, was based on the realization that there is no dichotomy between the interests of the world class struggle, and the interests of the revolutionary party. To the contrary, the party, as the highest and most conscious expression of the interests of the working class, has the duty to project the course of action that could best advance the class struggle as a whole—in this case, defense of the Vietnamese revolution. The degree to which we could do that was the degree to which we could help radicalize growing numbers of people and recruit to the party itself.

That is how we began, in working out our antiwar strategy. And, we believe, that while different conditions in each country require different tactical approaches, this starting point should have been the same everywhere.

From this starting point, the SWP's central line in the antiwar movement followed directly. Our goal was to mobilize the largest number of people against the Vietnam war in mass action independent of the ruling class. Our tactics were designed to carry out that aim.

Because of specific conditions in the U. S., these mass mobilizations did not take the form at the outset of strikes or mass GI antiwar actions, but rather protest demonstrations in the streets. As the war went on, antiwar sentiment deepened, the demonstrations grew larger, and protest action became more and more legitimate in the eyes of the masses—and the potential developed for even more effective actions. In May 1970, for example, had the huge student strikes spilled over into the working class as a whole—and this possibility was not far-fetched—it could have brought this country to the brink of a prerevolutionary situation. That possibility, unfortunately, was not

realized. Nor did the potential for GI antiwar action take shape on a mass scale. But major working-class or GI actions became possible. And don't think for a moment that the American ruling class didn't realize it.

The effectiveness of the antiwar movement, and the potential for it to deepen even further, was one of the central factors inhibiting the imperialists' ability to pursue the war as they had intended.

This was a confirmation of our line in practice, and a refutation of the alternative lines put forward by our opponents, which threatened to gravely undermine the effectiveness of the antiwar movement. The two main threats we had to contend with were: 1) that of being drawn off the streets and into class-collaborationist politics; 2) that of being diverted into isolated acts and adventures that would isolate the vanguard of the antiwar movement and steer the thrust of the antiwar struggle away from the masses.

We pegged both of these threats at the outset, and we fought them all the way. Small as our party is, we were the essential force in the antiwar movement that kept it on the mass-action course. And we are proud of that role. It was one of the tests of our capacity as revolutionists.

But if we had thought that the war was winding down in 1969, and antiwar activity wasn't too important any more, as some of the leaders of the present IEC majority thought at the time, or if we had followed IMG leader C. Howard's recent advice that our "primary thrust [in the U. S. antiwar movement] should have been to attempt to win over the *leftists*. . . ." (*SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 3 in 1973, p. 29), or if we had followed the line of Comrade Sterne's latest document (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7), which says that in France it was a positive achievement to "break out of the straitjacket of repetitive demonstrations less and less suited to the gravity of the U. S. escalation" and instead engage in what he calls a more "militant style of work" including "exemplary actions that remained small"—then the antiwar movement here would have floundered, and we would have failed the test of revolutionary leadership. No, the sage advice of our new-found experts on antiwar struggle doesn't sit too well with us. The validity of the SWP's line was tested and confirmed in life, and that is a lot better than all the glib playmaking of these Monday Morning Quarterbacks.

Now, the growth of this big antiwar movement had other effects. For one thing, it was the key factor in deep-

ening and broadening the radicalization in this country. Comparing 1965 with 1973, the change that has taken place is immense. The biggest factor in causing this radical change was the combination of opposition to the brutal war against the people of Indochina, in the last analysis a result of their heroic struggle, and the cumulative experience of protest actions against that war. These affected masses of people in the U. S. — deeply. No one should have any illusions on this score, and think it was this or that particular slogan that did the trick. No, these far bigger factors were the main thing.

The ultralefts thought that the way to radicalize masses was to go out with a handful of people shouting radical slogans and engaging in exemplary actions with the masses as spectators. They were wrong. We, on the other hand, brought large numbers of people, through their own experience, into increasing political confrontation with the ruling class. And that is what led to their radicalization. And that is precisely in accord with the method outlined in the Transitional Program.

We should also note that our correct policy in the antiwar movement helped build the party and changed the relationship of forces on the American left. This wasn't just a matter of numerical recruitment, but also of expanding political influence in the movement as a whole.

I remember the first big antiwar conference — the famous National Coordinating Committee conference held in November 1965. We headed up the left wing against a combination of Stalinists, pacifists, and others. It was a real knock-down, drag-out political battle. We lost the vote. The left wing didn't even win 30 percent. But we were elated. We regarded it as a great achievement. It was the first time ever on a national scale that we were able to put up a real serious battle against the Stalinists, and through this fight we laid the basis for all our subsequent work.

We've come a long way since then. In later years in the antiwar movement, the Stalinists didn't even attempt to mobilize against us at conferences.

It was our correct strategy in the antiwar movement, more than anything else, that has led to our growth, our catching up with our opponents, and our coming more and more into the center of the American left. By following the same type of strategy in the other forms of the class struggle, we are going to pull way out ahead of our rivals in the coming years.

In his political report at the December 1969 plenum of the IEC, Comrade Germain said that he had to agree with our mass-action strategy because it could have a material effect on the war, even though he thought that it meant sacrificing recruitment. He thought we could have recruited more by a vanguardist approach. That is wrong. We did not sacrifice recruitment. Not at all. Our approach brought us the greatest possible gains for the party. Anyway, if we had turned away from the mass-action line, in order to recruit people to some other line, we would have been recruiting on the basis of the *wrong* line for the class struggle. That would have been self-defeating. We don't have two lines — one for the vanguard and one for the masses. We attempt to win radicalizing forces to the correct line that should be projected to advance the class struggle.

Recently, our line has come under fire from some comrades in the SWP and other supporters of the IEC majority on the grounds that alongside our mass-action

perspective, we should have projected a line to organize the left wing of the antiwar movement.

Well, we did organize a left wing, composed of the most politically advanced, most conscious forces in the antiwar movement, a left wing that functioned as the spearhead of the movement and from which we won a considerable number of recruits.

Only it's not quite the people that our critics and advisors have in mind. We didn't orient to the SDS national office types, who abandoned the antiwar movement the day after their big march on Washington in 1965. They had the idiotic notion that since they couldn't stop the present war, they were going to carry out the more realistic and more radical task of organizing against the "seventh war from now." We didn't orient to the NLF-flag-carrying contingents, who thought it was more important to show how they personally felt than to appeal to the millions who might be able to affect the outcome. We didn't orient to the advocates of "minority-violence," who thought, like Comrade Sterne, that the "gravity of the U. S. escalation" required upping the ante, even if it meant "exemplary actions that remained small." To give them their due, they were partially right — their actions did remain small.

No, we organized a left wing that was more advanced politically than these other types. Its core was the Student Mobilization Committee, together with the National Peace Action Coalition in the most recent period.

The SMC was organized around four basic points: 1) mass action; 2) immediate withdrawal; 3) non-exclusion; 4) democratic decision-making in the movement. It was a rather large left wing, as befits a rather large movement.

Now, the antiwar movement wasn't always like we have known it in the past couple of years. For example, it was only after a few years of being in a minority that we were able to consistently win a large part of the antiwar movement to the demand for immediate U. S. withdrawal from Vietnam. And, even after this demand was generally won, we still had to fight continually to reaffirm it. The same for the other positions of the SMC and of NPAC.

Based on these points, the SMC and NPAC played a key role in spearheading the mass actions and keeping the movement going during election times and at other periods when the government's maneuvers threw a lot of antiwar activists off the track. It is true that on these occasions many SMCers were disoriented, but far fewer proportionally than other sectors of the antiwar movement; far fewer, for example, than the advocates of minority violence.

We should remember that although large numbers of people accepted these SMC and NPAC points — at least on occasion — there were varying levels of conscious understanding. Those who lacked a full understanding were often disoriented.

Take the demand for immediate withdrawal. This was accepted as the key slogan on a lot of demonstrations. But its full implications were understood by a relatively small number of antiwar activists; it was best understood by the key core of SMC activists, and their numbers grew as time went on. At bottom, this slogan expresses recognition of the principle of the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination, and the complete denial of any self-

proclaimed prerogatives for U.S. imperialism there. The SCM activist, who grasped that the immediate withdrawal demand was a principled demand and respected the right of self-determination, while the demand to "sign now" the proposed treaty contradicted this right, was on a high level. It's not an easy thing to understand. You have to be pretty advanced.

On this point, even Comrade Sterne himself doesn't quite get it. He thinks that "sign now" was correct! He doesn't even know that the difference was one of principle. He says it was just a tactical question.

Were the advocates of minority violence or the "NLF-contingent" people more radical than the SMC activists? They were not. Who do you think attended those SMC conferences? The overwhelming majority were radicalized young people who opposed American imperialism and wanted the Vietnamese people to win. But they also wanted to build an antiwar movement that could appeal to the millions and to the tens of millions and bring out as many of them as possible so that they could actually do something to help the Vietnamese people to win. And that was more important to them than carrying an NLF flag to express their own individual feeling, or bombing symbols of government or corporate power. They were on a higher political level than that. Those were the people we organized in a left wing, and those were the people we recruited to the YSA and the SWP.

Do you want to know why we didn't organize separate contingents based around the "revolutionary line for antiwar struggle"? Because we were organizing the whole demonstration around the revolutionary line for antiwar struggle. We didn't have one line for the antiwar movement and another line for the revolutionists. We said: mass action and immediate withdrawal are the things that the revolutionary Marxists stand for. We made sure that the SWP was identified with that line. It helped us gain a hearing for all our ideas, especially from the most serious and most politically advanced sectors of the antiwar movement.

As a result of our policy, we were able to be a part of the leadership of real mass actions. That is no mean achievement for a small party like ours. Our leadership role was not primarily organizational, although we did our share. Our main role was political. We were the essential element which kept the antiwar movement headed in the direction best suited to the needs of the class struggle.

Now, I get the feeling that at least a few of our critics in the IEC majority think that if revolutionary Marxists are in the leadership of masses in this period, then there's got to be something wrong; that you can put forward the correct line for action at one point, be in a left-wing opposition around that line, but once you win a majority, the time has come to up the ante, raise some other presumably more radical slogans, so you can be in a left-wing opposition again. This is supposedly raising consciousness along the lines spelled out in the Transitional Program.

Everyone knows that our movement began as a Left Opposition. And we generally have to function that way today. But it's not a matter of choice. There is no virtue in oppositionism as a strategy, and it has nothing in common with the method of the Transitional Program.

I say that I get this feeling about some of our critics because of their vanguardist approach in the European perspectives document. If you begin from the presumed concerns of the vanguard, then oppositionism follows logically. But if you begin from the objective needs of the class struggle, then once you make some headway around the right line, you will want to keep driving forward along that line, drawing ever larger forces behind that banner.

The converse, vanguardist oppositionist line has received its clearest expression in the British International Marxist Group. I refer comrades to two documents: 1) an article by a top IMG leader, Comrade A. Jones, entitled "On the 'Theory' of Democratic and Transitional Demands and Other Stupidities." This is contained in the Fact-Finding Commission Report (*SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 2 in 1972); 2) the political resolution (Perspectives Document) passed by the IMG in May 1972, co-authored by Comrades A. Jones and C. Howard, another top IMG leader. This is published in *SWP Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 3 in 1972.

These documents put forward the theory that a transitional demand implies the overthrow of capitalism; that a mass movement around a transitional slogan is therefore impossible outside of a revolutionary situation; that therefore, in ordinary times, revolutionists are doomed to oppositionism. The way the IMG political resolution put it was: "We reject absolutely any conception of the party's relation to the class being in terms of calls to action or mobilizing the masses." (P. 65) Instead, the document stated, the task of the party is "to relate to the *already* active mass" (p. 64) as a left-wing opposition.

This approach has nothing in common with the Transitional Program and the tasks of the revolutionary party.

I don't know exactly what pressures can cause comrades to think in these terms. Perhaps the experience of European conditions, where Trotskyists generally have to function as minority oppositionists in relation to the much larger Stalinists and Social Democrats has led some comrades to make a virtue of necessity. If so, it certainly shouldn't be extrapolated to other countries — like the USA, where there is a better relationship of forces on the left.

I bring this speculation up only because some comrades who criticize us have taken the tack of accusing us of extrapolation. One argument we have heard was that in the United States, where you could actually affect the course of the war, the SWP mass-action approach was correct; but in Europe and elsewhere, you couldn't affect the outcome, so the key task was to use the war issue to recruit, and this necessitated more radical slogans and more militant tactics designed to appeal to the vanguard. Comrade Germain argued along these lines at the 1969 IEC plenum. And we have been accused of extrapolation when we disagreed.

Comrade Germain's position was wrong on two counts: first, the international antiwar movement could have an effect on the war, and it was the duty of revolutionists to do everything possible to build it; second, the task of the revolutionary party in recruiting is to recruit to the program that speaks to the needs of the class struggle as a whole. In other words, we try to win the most radical elements to the strengths of our program, rather than

adapting our program to their weaknesses and backwardness.

Comrade Sterne now offers us a more sophisticated version of Germain's argument. He says that in the U. S. we should have organized separate, vanguardist contingents in the demonstrations but it was correct to place our main thrust on the lines of mass actions and immediate withdrawal because 1) the U. S. was the aggressor, and 2) politics is more backward here. But in Europe where political life is more advanced, he claims that more radical slogans and more militant exemplary tactics could actually build the largest, most effective antiwar movement. And he cites a couple of demonstrations in France on the order of 15,000 or 20,000 to prove his point. He calls these mass demonstrations. And he says that demonstrations like these helped push the big workers organizations like the CP into stepped-up mobilizations and more radical slogans, for fear of losing the initiative.

I should say first of all, that we heartily welcomed the Ligue Communiste's resumption of antiwar activity. These demonstrations he cites are a step forward from the Ligue's neglect of antiwar work in the 1969-70 period. Comrade Sterne personally deserves a lot of credit for helping lead the turn back to antiwar activity.

But it is an exaggeration to call these mass demonstrations.

I do not presume to say what was possible in France. Perhaps these were the largest actions that could have been organized. But frankly, I doubt it. In any case, Comrade Sterne's overall line of approach tends to belie his claim that the goal of the Ligue Communiste was to mobilize the greatest masses, choosing tactics and slogans accordingly. To the contrary, his whole approach is much more consistent with the vanguardist, exemplary-action line that he advances vigorously.

We do not and never did propose extrapolating the specific features of the American antiwar movement all over the world. Tactics and slogans have to be united to the concrete national circumstances. But the basic starting point—that of advancing the class struggle as a whole, rather than beginning from the concerns of the vanguard—should be the same for all sections of the Fourth International. Once that is clear, tactics and slogans will follow accordingly.

There are a few examples of what was possible in other countries. In Britain, for example, the IMG set a real good example a few years ago. On October 22, 1967, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, in which the IMG played a leading role, brought out upwards of 50,000 people in London. And a year later, on October 27, 1968, there were 100,000 marchers. What might have been achieved if they had stuck to the same course for a few years, especially given the deepening radicalization in Britain? But the IMG leadership got disoriented by the turn of the last world congress, and abandoned the mass-action approach. And the British antiwar movement never came close to repeating these initial successes.

In Australia, by contrast, the comrades stuck to the mass-action approach. And even though this is a small country in terms of population, and the number of Trotskyists is small too, they were able to play a key role in the antiwar movement there. On a couple of occasions, there were more than 100,000 out on demonstrations in that country. The same for New Zealand, where on several

occasions there were demonstrations on the order of 30,000 in this country of two and a half million.

In Australia, the antiwar movement had a big effect. It forced the withdrawal of Australian troops, was a key factor in bringing the Labor Party to power, and set the stage for the beginnings of organized working-class antiwar action—a boycott by the seamen and dockworkers against U. S. shipping. Similar boycotts were initiated in Genoa, Italy, and Copenhagen, Denmark. If generalized, such international actions could have had a big effect on the war.

Other examples could be given. But I think that the main point holds: that the potential for large-scale international antiwar activity existed, going far beyond the far-left groups and individuals. The comrades of the Fourth International should study the experience of Australia and New Zealand, to see how the comrades there were able to maximize the realization of that potential and carry out the elementary duty of revolutionary Marxists in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

Comrade Sterne and the Internationalist Tendency in the SWP have raised other criticisms of our antiwar policy which I do not have time to go into here. Perhaps some of the delegates will speak on these points in the discussion period.

Now I want to move on to the question of Stalinism in Vietnam.

II. On the Nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party

What is the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party? Is it a Stalinist party, or is it some sort of revolutionary party, centrist party, revolutionary empiricist party, or whatever? The comrades who maintain that it is not a Stalinist party have not come up with a clear, consistent characterization of this party other than saying it is definitely non-Stalinist. The SWP, however, holds today, as our movement has held for decades, that it is a Stalinist party.

What do we mean by saying so? To answer this question, we should begin by examining how we analyzed the general features of Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Sociologically speaking, when we describe the privileged Soviet bureaucracy as Stalinist, we mean that it is a hardened antiproletarian social layer, petty bourgeois in composition and spirit. Because it is a petty-bourgeois layer of a new type, but not representing a new historical ruling class, Trotsky suggested calling it a caste, a parasitic petty-bourgeois caste fastened onto the workers state. In place of a proletarian program, the Stalinist bureaucracy promulgates policies alien to the working class—at home and abroad. These policies block the advance of the socialist revolution, that is, they are counterrevolutionary. The development of Stalinism in the Soviet Union led over time to the transformation of the Communist parties all over the world from proletarian parties seeking to advance the socialist revolution in their own countries into instruments of the petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracy.

There is an old joke that goes: "When Brezhnev sneezes, Gus Hall catches pneumonia." This expresses a good point, but it is not really adequate for a scientific description.

Stalinism is not reducible to pro-Moscow slavishness. It can encompass variations of different types. Two examples that come right to mind are the American CP's support to McGovern in the last elections, while Moscow supported Nixon, and the opposition within the French Communist Party to the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

These, of course, are two of the most subservient pro-Moscow parties. When you consider that Stalinist parties function in scores of different countries, under a variety of political regimes, and in situations of quite different levels of the class struggle, you would expect there to be variation. And when you further consider that there is no longer a single workers state and a single Stalinist bureaucracy, but several, and that these bureaucracies often have rival national interests, you expect even greater variation.

Perhaps there is an oversight on this score on the part of Comrade Sterne, in his discussion article on Vietnam (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7). He makes a point of the fact that there are divergences between the line of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the foreign policy of Moscow or Peking. So what? The line of the Vietnamese CP is subordinated first of all to the narrow interests of the privileged bureaucracy of North Vietnam, not primarily to Moscow or Peking. Hanoi, under direct fire from imperialism, naturally responded far more aggressively than the regimes in the other degenerated or deformed workers states — without, however, going beyond the political framework of Stalinism. The line of action of the Vietnamese CP in the South, as expressed in the program and practice it puts forward for the NLF and PRG, fits well within that framework.

One important thing to keep in mind is how a Stalinist party expresses its subordination to the interests of a privileged bureaucratic caste. It is not a simple matter of following orders — although that does occur. More fundamentally, this subordination is expressed through their program — their objectives, as envisioned and carried out. Stalinist parties, following the line of socialism in one country, do not advance a political line in the interests of the working class, but instead advance a line that subordinates the interests of the workers to those of the petty-bourgeois Stalinist bureaucracies. In the colonial and semicolonial countries, instead of the working-class program of permanent revolution, Stalinist parties put forward the petty-bourgeois Menshevik line of the two-stage revolution.

In many of the colonial and semicolonial countries, the Communist parties have become petty-bourgeois parties in composition as well as in program. That is what happened to the Chinese Communist Party, and to the Vietnamese Communist Party as well. Each became a peasant party with a petty-bourgeois leadership.

In the advanced capitalist countries, the Communist parties tend to be working class in composition, if they are large parties, while their program remains petty bourgeois.

On a world scale, Stalinism can be summed up as a petty-bourgeois tendency functioning in the workers movement. In that sense, and in that sense only, can Stalinist parties be described as workers parties.

Now, for such a party to break from Stalinism would require that it break in both program and practice from

the theory of socialism in one country and revolution by stages. We do not rule out this possibility. We do not say, once a Stalinist party, always a Stalinist party. To the contrary, as materialists, we expect that when a Stalinist party is caught up in a situation of ascending class struggle, particularly in a revolutionary situation, it will be affected by these developments. It can also be affected by the experience of defeats, which could cause its members to rethink their ideas. Centrist, and even revolutionary Marxist currents, could develop within these parties. In fact, they have often developed. The Trotskyist movement was built, in large part, by winning over individuals and groupings from the Stalinist parties. There have been many centrist splitoffs from the Stalinist parties too. But, in each of these cases, the break with Stalinism received programmatic expression. That was decisive. So far, no Stalinist party as a whole has broken from Stalinism, but under the pressure of great events, it is conceivable that a majority might break away.

The Vietnamese Communist Party has certainly been affected by the revolutionary upsurge there. And it is not far-fetched to think that at least a section of this party could reject the Stalinist program of that party. But this has not happened yet. The Vietnamese CP does not advance a program for socialist revolution in the South or workers democracy in the North. Not in its theory, not in its practice, which is in conformity with its theory.

There is no time here to go into a detailed account of the history and present practice of the Vietnamese Stalinists. A very good account is contained in the recent article by George Johnson and Fred Feldman, which I am sure the comrades here are familiar with ("On the Nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party," *International Socialist Review*, July-August 1973). The article is in the form of a lengthy critical review of Pierre Rousset's book on the Vietnamese CP. The *ISR* article is particularly valuable because it utilizes the Marxist method to analyze the historical origins and evolution of the theory and practice of the Vietnamese CP, placing it in the context of the rise and evolution of world Stalinism. There are also useful articles in the SWP pre-convention discussion bulletin by George Johnson and Don Gurewitz. I will confine my remarks to a few points.

Comrades Ernest Mandel, Livo Maitan, Pierre Frank, Sandor Tariq, and Delphin pay great tribute to the alleged advances in the political thinking of the Vietnamese CP. They say, in their second article on the PRT ("Some of the Fundamental Differences Between the PRT and the International Majority"), that despite some theoretical limitations, the Vietnamese CP has "grasped the dynamic of permanent revolution" and they state their agreement with Pierre Rousset's claim that this party has gone far in "rediscovering the principles of Marxism." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, p. 32) Comrade Sterne shares this opinion, and cites as proof a selection of a few lines from Le Duan — a few lines out of dozens, he says. In the SWP, this theme is echoed and even extended in a contribution by one of the members of the Internationalist Tendency, Bill Yaffe, who says that "the Vietnamese CP has produced some fine theoreticians like Giap and Le Duan who have eliminated all Maoist mechanicalism from their analytical

works. . . ." (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 24, p. 29)

Between the two theoreticians, I guess that Le Duan must be the finer, because he is the one always quoted by those who want to present the line of the Vietnamese CP in the most favorable light. Those who have read Giap can understand this.

The key work cited from Le Duan is his pamphlet, *Forward Under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution*, and the key lines cited are those which say that in the semicolonies "two roads open up—the road of capitalist development or an advance to socialism skipping the stage of capitalist development." And Le Duan advocates the latter. (Quoted by Comrade Sterne, *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, p. 9. See Le Duan, p. 24.) The comrades who cite these lines are not being completely honest. They take these lines out of context. Anyone reading Le Duan's pamphlet sees that he gives a precise meaning to this so-called skipping of the capitalist stage; it means, not socialist revolution, but diplomatic, military, and political alignment with the workers states. Le Duan says explicitly: "While the completely liberated Northern part [of Vietnam] has shifted to socialist revolution, the South has had to fight on . . . to achieve the national-people's democratic revolution." "The immediate and basic objective of the South Vietnamese people," Le Duan says, "is to achieve independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and prosperity, and to advance towards peaceful reunification of the country." (pp. 41, 43 in Hanoi's English-language edition of the Le Duan pamphlet.)

This is nothing but phrasing in leftist language what North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong put more bluntly a few months ago: "I re-emphasize the objective in South Vietnam is to fulfill the national democratic revolution, not the socialist revolution. When people said we want to press a communist administration on South Vietnam, they spoke stupidly." (*Daily World* March 7, 1973.)

I submit, comrades, that regardless of what some leaders of the IEC majority may say, this theory has nothing to do with grasping the dynamics of the permanent revolution. To the contrary, it is the Stalinist theory of socialism in one country, and the basis for the classical Menshevik program that the Vietnamese CP advocates for the NLF and PRG. To call it otherwise is to prettify Stalinism.

Now if you read a little further in this pamphlet by theoretician Le Duan, you can get a few other political insights. You learn, for example, that "the great successes achieved by the Soviet people over the past fifty years constitute the triumph of Marxism-Leninism, of the line of socialist construction of the Communist Party of the USSR." (p. 11) You learn, if you weren't already aware of it, that in the Soviet Union "for the working class, now masters of the society, economic construction and cultural development are a veritable 'revolutionary festival.'" (p. 15) You learn that the experience of the Soviet Union under Stalinism during these past decades provides the people of the world "vivid experiences and rich lessons, which help them find the path to their liberation." (p. 19) One of these lessons, the line of popular frontism inaugurated by the seventh congress of the Comintern under Stalin, was, in theoretician Le Duan's succinct words, "entirely correct." (p. 33)

Of course, Comrade Sterne says that popular frontism

is wrong. Comrade Sterne thinks that the Vietnamese CP made an opportunist slip-up in applying it in the 1930s, dropping the demands for land reform and independence in the process. But Le Duan says in his pamphlet that the application of popular frontism in Vietnam helped enhance "class consciousness." (pp. 37-38)

Another big advance made by the Vietnamese CP, according to Le Duan's pamphlet, was getting rid of the influence of what he calls "Trotskyite provocateurs." (P. 36) Recall, comrades, that the Vietnamese Trotskyists were murdered by the Stalinists because they advocated a revolutionary program designed to advance the socialist revolution.

In place of that, the program Le Duan puts forward is the non-proletarian line of "people's war," bypassing the working class in the cities, conducted under the banner of a two-stage revolution, the present stage going under the name of national people's democratic revolution. Far from being at odds with "Maoist mechanicalism," as Comrade Yaffe thinks, it is very similar to it. It represents an obstacle to the proletarian revolution, and is in no way a departure from Stalinism.

The program of the Vietnamese CP clearly expresses the subordination of the interests of the socialist revolution in the South to the needs of a narrow-minded bureaucratic leadership in the North. That explains the limits put forward in the program of the NLF and PRG on the agrarian revolution, and the absence of a clear program of proletarian demands designed to mobilize the urban workers for their own class interests against the bourgeoisie.

It is not ruled out that the momentum of the revolutionary struggle that has been unleashed will go beyond these limits. Comrade Sterne, for example, admits that there is an "evident gap existing between the moderation of the objectives set down in the programs of the Vietminh [earlier] and the NLF [today]" and the depth of the agrarian reform that has developed. (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, p. 9.) This testifies to the necessity—and possibility—for the masses to break with the obstacle represented by the Stalinist program of the Vietnamese CP. Comrade Sterne, however, reads into this that the stated position of the Vietnamese CP is just a clever tactic designed to conceal their real, pro-socialist aims. That is an apology for Stalinism that we have heard many times before, and we reject it.

When you think about it, Comrade Sterne's attempted reconciliation of the Stalinist program of the Vietnamese CP with Trotskyism is quite a job. He explains it in a marvelous phrase: He says, the Vietnamese CP's "rediscovery of the strategic principles of permanent revolution has been accompanied by the use of the tactical formulas of the bloc of four classes . . . and a misunderstanding of the essential nature of Stalinism." (p. 11)

What is the political meaning of such a statement? It is adaptation of Trotskyism to prettify Stalinism. If persisted in, it will lead to political disaster. And it is not only Comrade Sterne who should take heed.

III. The Broader Theoretical Question

The major argument used to defend the position that the Vietnamese CP is not Stalinist is that it led a revolution that ended in the establishment of a workers state in North

Vietnam, and it is not possible for a Stalinist party to do such a thing. This view is expressed by Comrade Sterne in his article, and also by Comrades Maitan, Mandel, Frank, and the others in their second article on the PRT (Combatiente). (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, p. 32.)

The issue posed here is very important, and it raises theoretical questions that go beyond Vietnam. Similar questions are posed by the post-World-War-II social overturns—in Eastern Europe, North Korea, Yugoslavia, China, North Vietnam, and Cuba. In each of these cases, the transformations from capitalist states to workers states were headed up, not by proletarian revolutionary parties, as we had previously insisted were necessary, but instead by petty-bourgeois leaderships. How can this be explained? How can a non-proletarian leadership—an alien class leadership—be at the head of a revolution that ends in the establishment of a workers state?

Of course, these examples are all distinct, and there are several important differences to note. In Yugoslavia, China, and North Vietnam, the overturns came about after a thoroughgoing revolutionary upsurge headed by parties that we had always previously characterized as Stalinist parties. Furthermore, in China and Vietnam, we had analyzed these parties not only as petty-bourgeois in program, but in composition as well. In Eastern Europe, with the exceptions of Yugoslavia and Albania, the end of the war resulted in the occupation by the Soviet army; capitalism was overturned after a few years, primarily through military-bureaucratic means directed by a petty-bourgeois leadership. Then, of course, there is Cuba, where a workers state was established after a revolution, but under a radical, *non-Stalinist* petty-bourgeois leadership.

In the discussion over these questions in the world Trotskyist movement there were many false starts taken in attempting to solve the theoretical questions that were posed. Each of these false starts led to a dead end.

For example, there was the notion that Stalinism in power equals a workers state, and variations on this theme. This approach is untenable for several reasons.

For one thing, it attributes to Stalinism a proletarian content that we have always rejected. It implies a false identification of Stalinism with the workers state, whereas our entire analysis of Stalinism shows it to be in complete contradiction to the workers state. Stalinism represents the interests of a petty-bourgeois parasitic growth on the workers state and is antiproletarian to the core.

At least one leading supporter of the Internationalist Tendency in the SWP—Don Smith—has evidently fallen into this error. In *SWP Discussion Bulletin* No. 24, Fred Feldman reports that Comrade Smith expressed the view that "Stalinists have a dual nature," in the last analysis being "an instrument of the workers." In bulletin No. 32, Lee Artz from Detroit also reports hearing these views expressed by Don Smith. Comrade Smith should think out this position very thoroughly. The attempt to maintain it consistently would lead to the rejection of the heart of the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism.

Gerry Healy, the leader of the SLL [Socialist Labour League in Britain], also started up the false trail that began with the sign that Stalinism is in some way proletarian. It led him to ludicrous extremes in relation to Cuba. Since, according to Healy, only a "proletarian" formation can head up a revolution that overthrows capitalism, and since in Cuba the Castro leadership was

clearly petty-bourgeois, then the conclusion was obvious: the Cuban revolution did not occur. Had Stalinists been in the leadership, Healy would have agreed that a workers state was established in Cuba. Those who disagreed with Healy's views were castigated as hidebound empiricists making a fetish out of facts.

Comrade John Barzman also seems to be going through a few theoretical gyrations, based upon the notion that Stalinism in power equals a workers state. According to an article by Stephen Clark in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* No. 33, Comrade Barzman has stated in the discussion that if the Cambodian guerrillas were to come to power, with Sihanouk as head of state, it would be a workers state, but naturally of a special type. Barzman said it would be a "feudal, monarchical workers state, based on capitalist property relations." Well, I was a little confused by this, and I wonder if Comrade Barzman can explain it a little more fully in his presentation. I'm sure all the comrades here would stand to gain by the new theoretical insights that Barzman's characterization promises.

The comrades of the IEC majority who hold a different position—that is, they deny the possibility of Stalinist parties being in the leadership of revolutions that overthrow capitalism—also end up in a dead end. In fact, they have no consistent analysis, not any that I have seen. Bits and pieces of an explanation emerge here and there, but nothing is clearly spelled out. Yet there are some very big problems posed by the notion they hold.

One problem is posed by Yugoslavia. In the post-war discussions in the Fourth International, an unsatisfactory position was offered in the resolution adopted by the Third World Congress in 1951. The resolution said that because the Yugoslav CP had headed up a revolution, from 1941 on it had "ceased to be a Stalinist party in the full meaning of the word." That was a rather imprecise characterization. Later on in the document, it was described as a "semi-Stalinist" party during this period. Then the resolution said that with the Tito-Stalin break, the Yugoslav CP had become a *centrist* party marked by "right-opportunist deviations." (See "The Yugoslav Revolution," published in *Education for Socialists bulletin Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution*, pp. 58-59.)

The subsequent evolution of the Yugoslav CP would seem to pose some problems in maintaining that position. The comrades of the IEC majority don't seem to have written anything much reassessing this position—except for what Comrade Mandel wrote in 1965. Tom Kerry quoted from Mandel's letter in his *Education for Socialists* bulletin entitled *The Anatomy of Stalinism*. Mandel wrote that in order to "conserve the notion of the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism" he had insisted against Pablo "upon the need to characterize the Yugoslav CP as a left centrist party. . . ." during the 1940s. (p. 6) How and when this party changed is left unexplained—if indeed Comrade Mandel thinks it has changed from being centrist, he doesn't say. And as far as conserving the notion of the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism is concerned, Comrade Mandel himself is rather inconsistent. In the October 31 letter to the PRT, signed by Comrades Mandel, Maitan and others, it says that before coming to power, the Maoists were linked to the tradition of the October Revolution through the agency

of Stalin's Comintern! (*IIDB* Vol. X, No. 7)

Another problem is posed by the overturns in the rest of Eastern Europe. No one in our movement challenges the fact that the leaderships there were Stalinist, and that the decisive policy questions resided in Moscow. In the postwar years, after a long discussion, the International was able to assess the transformations basically correctly. But it now appears that some loose ends on the theoretical side were not satisfactorily settled by the discussion at that time. I say this because of the implications of a few passages in the Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam adopted by a majority at the December 1972 IEC meeting. This resolution, in one place, points out that in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and China the "presence of bourgeois ministers in the central government did not prevent the socialist transformation. . . ." Note the inclusion of Czechoslovakia, especially because this passage is followed by the comment that the "decisive thing is the nature of the state, that is, the class character of those who control the armed forces." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 6, p. 22.)

Nothing more is said, but, as I read it, the implication is that the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army meant ipso facto the qualitative leap to a workers state—that is, sometime around 1945. This fits in with the theme that Stalinism in power equals a workers state. Comrades Steve Clark and Dennis Brasky from Chicago report in *SWP Discussion Bulletins* nos. 31 and 33 that several members of the Internationalist Tendency there have drawn precisely this conclusion and now contend that the previously held Trotskyist analysis was wrong in saying that the transformations in Eastern Europe came several years later. It would be interesting to know if the IEC majority also draw this conclusion, which is implicit in the Vietnam resolution.

The implication for Vietnam, of course, is that the PRG in power equals a workers state. That is what the Internationalist Tendency says explicitly in their political resolution. They say that the PRG, whose continuity with the Viet Minh is self-evident, is only a popular front on paper (whatever that means) and that the smashing of the Thieu regime would leave state power in the hands of the proletariat. (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, No. 18, p. 17)

No, it would not. It would certainly make the transformation to a workers state much easier, but it would not guarantee it. The very example used, that of the Viet Minh, disproves the contention. No workers state was established in 1945 when the Viet Minh took power—unless Comrade Barzman's approach is valid. In that case, with Bao Dai's presence, it was a feudal, monarchical workers state based on capitalist property relations.

Nor were workers states established in East Europe in 1944-45.

The Marxist theory of the class character of the state cannot be reduced to the simple formula of "bodies of armed men." That is not sufficient in analyzing the degenerated or deformed workers states. What is decisive is the character of the property relations that the armed forces defend. In Eastern Europe, although the old bourgeois armed forces had been crushed, capitalist property relations were not overthrown for several years. Only when the means of production were nationalized and other steps taken were workers states established. And, we should note, that although this was accomplished primarily through

military bureaucratic means, it was accompanied by varying degrees of mobilization and intervention by the workers.

That process did not occur in Vietnam in 1945, even though the Vietnamese CP was in power, and was the key reason why the imperialists were able to reestablish their position, forcing the people of Indochina into a hard and prolonged struggle that has now lasted for nearly three decades.

Nor were workers states established everywhere in East Europe under the Soviet occupation. Not in Austria. Even though the Soviet army remained the dominant power in a good part of Austria for several years, the means of production were not nationalized, and when the Soviet army withdrew, no social counterrevolution was necessary for the capitalist class to reassert its hegemony.

Another very big problem posed is that of Cuba. The Fidel Castro leadership was clearly a radical petty-bourgeois leadership—not dissimilar from many others. I do not think that this fact is open to question. Castro himself has stated it. What class did the bodies of armed men represent in Cuba when the Fidelistas took power in 1959? You can't say that a workers state was established there immediately without saying the same thing about Algeria. No, the old bourgeois armed forces were destroyed, but the state for a while still defended capitalist property relations under a coalition government that at first included bourgeois ministers, among them the president—Urrutia. In July 1959, Urrutia was ousted; by the fall of 1959, the coalition government came to an end; and Cuba now had a workers and farmers government. The increasing hostility of the imperialists and the indigenous pro-capitalists had forced the Castro government to respond by taking increasingly radical measures and placing growing reliance on the mobilization of the workers and peasants. The process culminated during August-October 1960 in the expropriation of capitalist property and the establishment of the workers state.

It is to the great credit of the Castro leadership that it responded in this direction. But it would be wrong for us to alter the facts retroactively and say that the July 26 Movement of Fidel Castro was something other than a radical petty-bourgeois leadership.

An analogous process took place in China, with the qualitative transformation to a workers state occurring in 1953, after a period of several years in which China had a workers and farmers government. Similarly, I believe, in North Vietnam. The Vietnamese CP leaders themselves place the date for what they call the "stage of socialist revolution" at 1956, rather than in 1954 when the Geneva accords were signed. (See Le Duan, p. 50.)

Now, all of these developments have to be fitted into a consistent analysis.

The Cuban Revolution provided confirmation of the theoretical approach that we had begun developing, first in relation to the transformations in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe, then in relation to China. There is no time here to recapitulate that in detail. But there are three elements of our analysis that should be pointed out.

First is the recognition of the fact that in the absence of a Leninist party, and in face of the rottenness of the old bourgeois order, petty-bourgeois leaderships, including the Stalinists, can go further than they originally intend. In the Transitional Program Trotsky foresaw that pos-

-sibility. But Trotsky did not believe that petty-bourgeois leaderships could actually take the process through from a workers and farmers government to a workers state. He had expected that proletarian revolutionary parties could be built rapidly and do the job. Well, on several occasions, this has not occurred. Leninist parties were not built in time, and the petty-bourgeois parties were able to carry the process through. This is a fact, and there is no way to avoid it.

The second point to note is that a key element in several of the transformations was the forming of workers and farmers governments. A workers and farmers government occurs in a situation in which the old bourgeois armed forces are considerably weakened or broken, governmental power is in the hands of some combination of petty-bourgeois and workers parties, but capitalist property relations are not yet destroyed. This is an inherently unstable and temporary situation. But given the weakness of the bourgeoisie, as in Cuba, China, or North Vietnam, the workers and farmers government, even headed by a petty-bourgeois party, could be led to mobilize the proletariat, nationalize the means of production, and carry out the other measures bringing about a workers state. This is not an automatic process. The experience of Algeria proved the converse.

Thirdly is the exceptional nature of these postwar developments, from the historical point of view. The Trotskyist movement had foreseen that the end of the war would bring about tremendous revolutionary upheavals. But for specific historical circumstances, this did not lead to the rapid growth and development of Leninist parties which could stand at the head of these revolutionary developments and lead them forward. Instead, there was a long historical detour. World Stalinism was temporarily strengthened. The revolutionary potential in the key advanced capitalist states was stifled under Stalinist leadership. The central thrust of the world revolution shifted to the colonial world; and in a few cases, successful revolutionary upheavals were headed up by petty-bourgeois leaderships. The Cuban revolution showed that petty-bourgeois currents other than the Stalinist—and better than them—could take the lead. And each of these cases required going beyond the initial objectives envisaged by these inadequate leaderships.

But these were exceptional circumstances, not the model for the major battles still to come. World events in past years have shown a tendency to shift back to the more classical pattern of socialist revolution first illustrated by the Russian revolution. And for these developments, the construction of mass Leninist parties is absolutely necessary.

Finally, one point of possible confusion or misunderstanding should be cleared up. What do we mean when we say that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary? We mean, as I explained before, that it represents the interests of a petty-bourgeois stratum hostile to the working class. Stalinist policies, reflecting the interests of this antiproletarian social layer, inhibit the advance of the socialist revolution. But experience has shown that they cannot always block it.

Stalinism subordinates the interests of the world working class to the needs of the privileged bureaucratic castes in the workers states. In general, this means their promulgation of reformist policies, which, in the last analysis,

work to uphold bourgeois rule. But Stalinism is not identical to bourgeois liberalism. Sometimes the Stalinists—including the Moscow-based Stalinists—are forced to take measures that place them in fighting opposition to the capitalist class—although even then, they do not conduct such struggles with the same methods and aims as revolutionary Marxists.

Comrade Stephen Bloom, in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* No. 5, proposed a useful analogy. He said that "if we acknowledge that a [Stalinist] leadership acts as a brake on the revolutionary process, it is not necessarily a corollary that this brake must stop the motion of the vehicle entirely. In some cases it might merely cause a slowing down or distorting of the revolutionary motion, without causing it to lose its momentum completely. Faced with unusually ripe conditions for revolution, even this lesser momentum could be enough to create a social transformation." (p. 11)

The impulse to redefine Stalinist parties as some sort of centrist formations if they should assume power can create havoc with theoretical consistency. Vietnamese or Chinese or Yugoslav Stalinism, once held to exist, a fact verified by theory and practice, suddenly vanishes—and retroactively to boot. But it can just as mysteriously reappear.

Thus, although our movement had always held in the 1930s and 1940s that the Chinese CP was a textbook example of a Stalinist party, Comrades Maitan, Mandel, and Frank insisted at the last world congress in sticking to their old error of calling it bureaucratic centrist in retrospect. Now, we learn, in an offhand phrase in their second article on the PRT, that in China there exists a bureaucratic caste—the very hallmark of Stalinism and in absolute contradiction with the notion of bureaucratic centrism. (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, pp. 32-33) Where did this caste come from, and how did it spring up so suddenly? The comrades do not say.

Today we are told that the Vietnamese CP is non-Stalinist. Will we be told tomorrow about the bureaucratic caste in Hanoi?

And what about the pro-Peking Communist parties of other countries? Were they also bureaucratic centrist parties four years ago, or were they centrist formations like their mentor? And have they now just become Stalinist parties? Did the Japanese Communist Party, once pro-Moscow, then pro-Peking, switch from Stalinist to centrist, and is it now switching back again?

No, the method of retroactive characterization is inadequate and must be rejected.

I want to conclude by saying that the discussion on these questions has proceeded very unevenly in the Fourth International. In fact, I do not think there is any record of a thorough discussion on this in the International as a whole since the initial discussion in the post-World-War-II years. The discussion suffered greatly because of the 1953-54 split. It began first with the China discussion, and continues with the Vietnam discussion.

We think we have some valuable contributions to make on these questions on the theoretical side. While comrades like Mandel, Maitan, and Frank have written very little on these theoretical questions, we in the SWP have discussed them at great length, over many years, and we have developed what we think is a coherent, consistent explanation of the very complicated developments. The

explanation is not simple; it could not be, because the questions are complex. But it is a clear and consistent explanation, totally in accord with the Marxist method. I only had time to indicate some of the main lines of our thinking here. Comrades can refer to our earlier documents republished in the educational bulletins on Cuba, East Europe, and China, and to the recently published draft resolution on China submitted by a minority of the United Secretariat and the accompanying article by Les Evans (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 13.) I recommend that special attention be paid to the writings of Joseph Hansen, who did the groundbreaking theoretical work on these questions.

We have discussed these questions many times before in the SWP. A vote in favor of this report will indicate a reaffirmation of the position that we have developed over the years in past conventions.

We regard the position we have worked out as a valuable contribution to the world Trotskyist movement. It is a theoretical conquest worked out over several decades. And we will not light-mindedly throw it away and substitute bits and pieces of impressionistic theoretical hodgepodge that Comrades Maitan, Mandel, Frank, Sterne and company propose to us.

[Note: An explicit rejection of our theoretical assessments is contained in an article by Richard Mitten, the Internationalist Tendency reporter on Latin America, in *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 35. See pp. 2-3, 8-9—GH, September 1973.]

IV. Can Stalinists Fight?

[The following is an excerpt from the oral summary to the report on Vietnam to the 1973 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.]

Given the clear fact that the expressed political program of the Vietnamese CP has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism, and given the theoretical problems posed by saying it is non-Stalinist because it led to the creation of a workers state, there seems to be one other argument which Comrade Sterne and his cothinkers fall back upon to base their case.

This is the idea that a Communist party cannot be at the head of a revolutionary upsurge, "without," as Comrade Sterne puts it, "beginning to break with Stalinism in practice and at least partially in theory." (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 7, p. 10) Or, to put it more bluntly, Stalinists can't fight. Therefore, those who fight cannot be Stalinists. In his presentation here at the SWP convention, Comrade Barzman indicated some sympathy with this line of argument.

This argument is rather puerile. The ability to conduct a struggle is obviously a prerequisite for a revolutionary party. But it is not a characteristic that distinguishes revolutionary Marxists from other political currents. Stalinists, and also Social Democrats and various other petty-bourgeois currents, have often headed up mass struggles, and they will again in the future. Look at the Austrian Social Democrats in 1934, who called a general strike against the fascists and brought the workers out in struggle arms in hand. Or look at the petty-bourgeois Algerian FLN, or the Palestinian resistance organizations.

The Stalinists in Spain were at the head of the masses during a vast revolutionary upsurge in the 1930s. It was

the center of attention of world politics at the time, just as Vietnam has been in recent years. It helped create vanguards; and the military operations were vigorous, and quite well organized. But this heroic struggle went down to defeat because the Stalinists, in deference to Moscow's diplomatic objectives, kept it confined to the limits of defending bourgeois democracy.

Or look at the Stalinists in India in the late 1940s. After Moscow launched a left turn, the Indian CP initiated a huge peasant war, primarily in the Telengana area of Hyderabad. The peasants seized land and distributed it, forced reduction in land rents, stopped the brutalization of the landless, set up local people's administration, courts, and militias. The movement involved hundreds and hundreds of thousands of peasants who at times were in control of vast areas: it went far, far beyond anything the current-day Naxalites tried. But this whole movement was conducted under the political banner of Stalinism, in its Maoist, bloc-of-four-classes form. It eventually fell apart—slowed down by its political weaknesses and crushed by the ruling class.

The Indian experience was not unique. The Stalinists initiated and conducted guerrilla wars and peasant wars in several Asian countries during this period, including in Vietnam.

One of the greatest struggles waged in defense of the working class was the battle to defend the Soviet Union against German fascism in World War II. This massive struggle was carried out under the leadership of Stalin. And it gave a real impulse to independent workers actions in other Eastern European countries—for example, in Poland and Finland at the outbreak of the war. Trotsky described this in *In Defense of Marxism*. Similarly, and on a greater scale, at the end of the war. Nevertheless, these mobilizations were constricted within the confining limits of the Stalinist political line.

What distinguishes revolutionary Marxists from Stalinists is that the program we put forward for the workers struggle helps advance it, not retard it.

If Stalinists could not be at the leadership of masses in revolutionary struggle, neither would they be able to carry out their pernicious role of betraying such struggles.

There is a very dangerous political corollary to the notion that armed struggle ipso facto implies a break with Stalinism. It elevates the gun above politics, and usually at the expense of politics. It can lead to a political adaptation to those who fight, but with a wrong program. In Vietnam, it can lead to adaptation to Stalinism. In Latin America, it can lead to adaptation to Castroism.

The similarity of the error of the IEC majority in both cases is worth noting in this regard.

V. The Meaning of the Vietnam Accords

[The next two points are excerpted from the article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Vietnam," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 31.]

The Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam that was adopted by a majority at the December 1972 plenum of the IEC characterizes the Vietnam accords as representing an advance for the revolution, although not guaranteeing its success. Comrade Sterne's personal contribution reaffirms this position and attempts to explain this assessment, while also attempting to refute the contrary view.

Comrade Sterne's analysis of the present relationship of class forces in Indochina is not only wrong, but self-contradictory. Let us consider some of his arguments.

Comrade Sterne accuses us of starting off "from a reduction of the relationship of forces to its international side alone" and points out that "while the international relationship of forces has in fact *deteriorated* and is *relatively* unfavorable, the relationship of forces in Indochina itself . . . has evolved *positively* in recent months as it has in recent years." (IIDB, volume X, no. 7 page 6. His emphasis. This article by Comrade Sterne was written in April 1973.)

First of all, it is simply not true that we have ignored the increasingly favorable advances of the Indochinese liberation fighters vis-a-vis the puppet regimes prior to the accords. In fact, we pointed to *precisely* that fact as the setting for the accords. Our position was summarized by Barry Sheppard in *The Militant* on February 9 and February 16, 1973. He said the following:

"The weakness of Thieu's army was once again revealed in Hanoi's offensive last spring [1972]. . . . Thieu's armies began to crumble and flee before the revolutionary advance. The Nixon administration now admits that only massive U.S. intervention in the form of bombing and the mining of North Vietnamese ports saved the day for Thieu. The offensive again demonstrated that Vietnamization was not enough to preserve the Saigon regime."

But it was not enough to say that. Barry Sheppard went on to round out the estimate:

"Political pressure [by the imperialists] had to be mounted to secure an agreement that would guarantee to Washington's satisfaction that Hanoi's troops could not attack the Saigon army. The alternative, Nixon threatened, would be sustained, massive bombing that would 'wipe out' North Vietnam. . . . Under the combined pressure of Washington's military attack, Moscow and Peking's refusal to provide adequate aid, and political pressure from Moscow and Peking, Hanoi finally accepted the cease-fire accords under terms they had previously rejected. These accords leave the Thieu regime in control of the major cities, keep Vietnam divided, and contain other conditions Washington has forced on the Vietnamese." (Published in the Pathfinder Press pamphlet, *The Meaning of the Vietnam Accords*, page 7.)

This was the background to Washington's deals with Moscow and Peking at the expense of the Indochinese revolution. While it is true that Washington agreed to remove its troops and stop the bombing, and that this was a concession reflecting a failure by Washington to achieve all of its original aims, the *overall* impact of the accords reflected a setback to the revolution. In return for this U.S. concession, Hanoi and the PRG had to give up *more*—including restraining their military operations under threat of renewed U.S. bombing and re-escalated U.S. intervention. The accords signify that the U.S. imperialists do not have an iron-clad guarantee of preserving a capitalist Indochina in the period ahead, but they certainly do feel that they have a better than even chance.

Despite this setback, we do not characterize the accords as a definitive blow to the revolution at this stage. "The next stage in Vietnam will be marked by instability. The

accords reflect the fact that the liberation forces have been unable to achieve national liberation and reunification, and also that they have not been crushed. Two powers continue to exist in South Vietnam—the Saigon regime of the landlords and capitalists, and the liberation forces based upon the peasants and workers. Such a situation is inherently unstable. One or the other of these forces must eventually predominate. The outcome can only be decided by struggle." (Sheppard, page 7.)

One of the key factors in determining the outcome, of course, is the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party leadership. Our estimation that it is a Stalinist leadership reinforces our estimate that the situation has become more unfavorable, because we cannot have confidence that the Vietnamese CP will do everything possible to advance the socialist revolution. To the contrary, its inclination will be to make unwarranted concessions to the procapitalist forces. Hanoi's portrayal of the setback as a great victory, its involvement in secret deals over Laos and Cambodia, and its reaffirmation of its goals as precluding socialist revolution in the South at this stage, lend disquieting confirmation of this view.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter resolution, on the other hand, look with confidence to the Vietnamese CP as a non-Stalinist leadership determined to do everything possible to advance the socialist revolution. The Sterne-Walter resolution says that "the balance of the last fifteen years clearly demonstrates this party's tenacious commitment to the overthrow of the bourgeois state in South Vietnam." (Page 23, IIDB, vol. X, no. 6.) This view reinforces their optimistic assessment of the meaning of the accords.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter resolution see the decisive point in the accords to be the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the end of the massive U.S. bombing of the North. This colors their view of the background to the accords. For example, the Sterne-Walter resolution pictures the accords as stemming from an initiative by Hanoi and the PRG "to win through negotiations a withdrawal of imperialist troops from Vietnam." This places the emphasis wrongly. The accords stemmed primarily out of the pressure of imperialism on the revolution, and not the other way around.

The U.S. had to make concessions, reflecting the failure of its attempt to win a crushing victory, and it had to give up the hope of rolling back the workers state in the North. But greater concessions in the given situation were wrung from Hanoi and the PRG. This explains the almost universal opinion in U.S. capitalist circles that the terms of the settlement were, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "quite favorable" and that the U.S. had attained its "minimum objectives." Or, put more crudely by the ultraconservative New York *Daily News*, "In essence, Hanoi accepted the proposal Nixon made last May 8, when he ordered intensified bombing of North Vietnam and mining of northern harbors."

Newsweek magazine said that Nixon "hung tough, and although in the end the President had to give a little too, he managed to wring more concessions from Hanoi than even the most ardent supporters of his war policy have thought would be possible." The *Christian Science Monitor* said that the settlement "is not as satisfactory as successive American presidents probably would have liked,"

but viewed the settlement with favor because it "preserves a non-Communist government in South Vietnam. There is a fair chance that some kind of non-Communist government—although not necessarily president Thieu's—will survive in that tortured land." (For a roundup of bourgeois press opinion see *Intercontinental Press*, November 6 and November 13, 1972, and February 5, 1973.)

These views seem to represent the consensus of bourgeois opinion, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. Are the capitalists all deluding themselves? Perhaps. But given their near unanimous estimate, and the international breadth of their consensus, the burden of proof would seem to be on Comrade Sterne.

It is true that Moscow and Peking have hailed the accords as a victory. But they would have said so in any case. And a "victory" in the eyes of Moscow and Peking means a victory for peaceful coexistence, and need not have anything at all to do with whether the socialist revolution has registered an advance.

Hanoi has also hailed the accords as a big victory. But we should not forget that they spoke in the same terms about the Geneva agreements, which are very similar to the present accords, but which our movement regarded as including unwarranted concessions. Furthermore, Hanoi's concept of victory does not at all include the conditions that Trotskyists consider essential for such a characterization.

For revolutionary Marxists, the problem of assessing the accords as a victory or a setback is not reducible to the question of whether direct U.S. intervention is eliminated. The central question for us is whether the social revolution is advancing. In this regard, Hanoi's assertion of victory must be viewed in the light of its other statements, such as the one on March 6, 1973, by Pham Van Dong, the premier of the DRVN. He hailed the accords as a "great victory" saying that they created favorable conditions "to build socialism in the DRVN and to improve the living standards of our people." But for southern Vietnam, his point was the following:

"I re-emphasize the objective in South Vietnam is to fulfill the national democratic revolution, not the socialist revolution. When people said we want to press a communist administration on South Vietnam they spoke stupidly. It is clear that our perspective is this: the construction of socialism in North Vietnam and the successful realization of the national democratic revolution in South Vietnam will, step by step, lead toward the peaceful reunification of our country." (Quoted by Joseph North in Hanoi, published in the American Stalinist *Daily World*, March 7, 1973.)

In this light, we can understand the consensus of opinion among Nixon, Thieu, Brezhnev, Mao, and Pham Van Dong—all hailing the accords as a victory, while at the same time agreeing that its likely effect in the immediate future will be the preservation of capitalist property relations in the South. For capitalists or Stalinists this is perfectly consistent with the assessment of victory. But for Marxists, it is not.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter IEC resolution take the contrary view. Comrade Sterne's summary assessment of the accords is as follows: "The U. S. A. finds itself deprived of the use of its main offensive instrument in Vietnam—the direct military intervention of its forces (although

the B-52 bombers are still intervening daily in Cambodia). At the same time the revolutionary forces remain intact and can wield a powerful offensive weapon—the political struggle of the masses (see further on). *It is in this sense, that the January 27 accords mark an imperialist retreat.*" (Page 7, his emphasis.)

What about Thieu's massive army, financed and equipped by U.S. imperialism, and in control of the cities? Comrade Sterne disposes of this problem with the back of his hand: "How can anyone think that the puppet army can do tomorrow what it failed to do yesterday when it had the 550,000 men of the U. S. expeditionary force and American air and naval cover?" (Page 7.)

This would be reassuring, *provided* that we could be confident that the Vietnamese CP leadership was preparing to continue and intensify the revolutionary struggle. But there is no indication of this. To the contrary, the indications are that they are preparing for a stage of demobilization, as one of the conditions forced upon them, and the main reason why the imperialists could agree to withdraw troops and stop the bombing.

Strangely enough, Comrade Sterne's own article is very contradictory on this point. He says ". . . the Vietnamese fighters had to agree to suspend their general military offensives before the Thieu regime was definitely destroyed" (page 7). He says that while they have maintained their forces, ". . . the Vietnamese have in fact agreed to suspend their military offensives as the price they had to pay for a halt in the escalation. . ." (page 8). He says that "a general offensive by the revolutionists would probably enable Nixon to relaunch the escalation today" and that "the Vietnamese fighters have sought and still seek to avoid a head-on clash with the Americans (during the withdrawal of their troops) as well as an all-out collision with the puppets" (page 17).

Is it not clear from Comrade Sterne's own words that the Vietnamese liberation forces felt compelled to dampen the military struggle considerably? Must we not assess the withdrawal of U.S. forces in that context? Comrade Sterne seems to miss the connection.

Comrade Sterne himself says that although the military struggle will subside, the Vietnamese liberation struggle will now advance to the *political* struggle and the struggle for the cities. Although he does not say so explicitly, he implies that the military demobilization will have little effect on the political struggle. This is certainly open to question.

The Sterne-Walter resolution correctly outlines a series of immediate issues around which the potential for political struggle exists. But the resolution goes on to assert confidently: "All indications are that the cadres of the NLF and the Vietnamese CP are systematically preparing the South Vietnamese population for this mass political struggle" (page 23).

If only it were true. But if it were the case, it would imply an immediate and escalating confrontation with the Thieu regime—militarily as well as politically—a confrontation that would go far beyond the framework of the accords. It would mean that the Vietnamese CP was preparing to take the initiative in *breaking* the accords. This conflicts with its hailing of the accords as a victory, and its stated goal to fight for the *implementation* of the accords, which include limitations on the inextricably com-

bin political and military struggle.

To the contrary. It seems likely that the Vietnamese CP leadership is faced with a different problem. The Thieu regime, backed up by Washington, is already moving quickly to implement those central provisions in the accords that are to its advantage, while systematically violating the contrary provisions—for example, its stalling on freeing the political prisoners and its military operations to win back some PRG-held territory. It already appears that the Vietnamese CP will be faced more and more with the problem of how far to respond to the initiatives of the Thieu regime. This was to be expected, of course, and is strikingly similar to the situation after the 1954 Geneva agreements.

Furthermore, in regard to the prospects for political struggle, Comrade Sterne's own words do not buttress his optimistic view.

— "Active before 1968 and in 1969-70, the urban movement has been paralyzed since the election of Thieu as president and subjected to an all-embracing and ferocious repression. The accords by themselves will not loosen this vise of repression; they only favor the emergence of a mass political struggle capable of confronting it" (page 17). But how?

— ". . . the repression remains, and aside from the improbable case of the Saigon regime progressively disintegrating, the puppet apparatus will break down only when confronted with a social and military force that needs to be prepared in order to act" (page 17). But the latter, Comrade Sterne has just finished explaining, has to be held back for fear of renewed U. S. escalation.

— "While we cannot hope—aside from an exceptional case—to see the apparatus of the Saigon regime break up without a military offensive and/or an insurrectional uprising, we cannot expect either to see a progressive development of the urban movement unless the repressive apparatus begins to come apart" (page 18). ???

I assume that Comrade Sterne is not so foolish to think that the Thieu regime and U. S. imperialism will really live up to the provisions in the accords for loosening the repression. His argument seems to boil down to reassuring us that the PRG's consolidation of the rural liberated zones and its promise of renewed political work in the cities despite the pervasive repression are decisive. It is on slim grounds like these that he bases his claim that the accords must be viewed as an advance for the revolution.

His optimism seems a little less than authoritative, when one notes how he repeats several times in his article that the struggle may prove very long-lasting indeed. In this regard, at least, Comrade Sterne's article, written in April 1973, is a little more cautious than the Sterne-Walter resolution passed by a majority of the IEC in December 1972.

The Sterne-Walter resolution, for example, said that the revolutionary offensive in Vietnam will develop along lines "that make an interruption in the political struggle less than likely" (page 22). And shortly afterward, on January 21, 1973, by a majority vote, the United Secretariat passed a motion saying that despite any concessions that the Vietnamese may have had to make to imperialism, and despite the inadequate international support, these "in no way undermine the capacity of the rev-

olution to maintain its momentum in South Vietnam." (*Intercontinental Press*, February 5, 1973.)

Statements like these seem more like revolutionary braggadocio than serious analysis by a leadership body of the Fourth International. Perhaps as time goes on the reality of the setback in Indochina will introduce a little more realism into the analyses made by supporters of the Sterne-Walter position on Vietnam.

In any case, as events unfold we should see more definitive confirmation of what they signify. I would be happy to be proved wrong, but I am afraid that the assessment of the accords as a setback will be proved correct.

Another important question closely tied to any analysis of the meaning of the Vietnam accords is that of our assessment of the detente itself. Implicit in the Sterne-Walter analysis is a gross underestimation of the magnitude of the betrayal by Moscow and Peking, and the capacity and willingness of the Stalinist regimes to repeat this betrayal in other areas of the world.

Comrade Sterne raises the question: "At a deeper level, there may be a difference in our estimation of the relationship of forces now prevailing between the world revolution and counterrevolution" (page 6).

We do not hold the opinion that a decisive shift has taken place on a world scale to the advantage of the counterrevolution. But the detente does imply that the competition between Moscow and Peking to gain favors with imperialism will lead them to play a much more open and direct counterrevolutionary role. They will find new ways to use their pressure and influence to the detriment of the world revolution. Vietnam was the first such example. We should not let our solidarity with the revolution blind us to this fact. Revolutionists, and in the first place revolutionists of the Fourth International, will have to contend with this problem, and be aware of it in order to best counteract these counterrevolutionary pressures—in an overall situation in which the class struggle will continue and intensify.

VI. Two Questions of Principle

Another important difference is over the question of whether or not it is permissible in principle to lend political support to a coalition government with capitalists or to lend political support to a program that includes concessions to imperialism in violation of the right of self-determination. The long-established Marxist position has been principled opposition to such policies. By principled opposition we mean that our theory shows and the experience of history has proved that there are no circumstances whatsoever in which a coalition government with capitalists can benefit the socialist revolution. Similarly for bending the principle of support to the right of nations to self-determination. All experience has shown that such developments, no matter what tactical justifications are advanced to rationalize them, mislead the working class, and put a roadblock in the path of the revolution—even given the best relationship of forces. It would require the utmost care in analysis and firm proof before we could consider altering such well tested and validated principles. The price for a mistake would be too high.

We have always assumed that there was clarity on this point in the Fourth International. But now it has been called into question.

Differences on this issue first arose around the question of the seven-point program of the PRG, which includes the provision for a coalition government with the capitalists. On October 21, 1972, the Central Committee of the Ligue Communiste, following the lead of Comrade Sterne and others, voted overwhelmingly for a resolution deciding to lend political support to this program.

The rationale given in the Ligue resolution was that the "implementation of the principal points of the PRG proposal," especially its first two points calling for an end to direct U.S. intervention and the dumping of the Thieu regime, "would give the PRG power in South Vietnam." The resolution said that the PRG's seven points were flawed and were open to criticism, but in essence they were a diplomatic maneuver designed to offer the American imperialists a face-saving compromise "to hide the size of its defeat from the eyes of the world." For these reasons, the Ligue resolution concluded that "we must popularize the proposals put forward in the negotiations and demand that a positive response be made to them. This is how our support for the seven points must be understood. We show in this way that our support of the Indochinese revolution is unconditional but not uncritical." The resolution, to be sure, also said that "we don't center our activity around support for the PRG's seven points, but rather around the slogan 'total support until the final victory.' That's also why we fight for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Indochina without regard to the dates and extensions put forward by the PRG." (Translated from the French. All emphasis in the original.)

This position is dead wrong on two counts:

1. It violates the principle of uncompromising support to Vietnamese self-determination. We cannot support concessions wrung from the Vietnamese by imperialism—even if these are concessions that the Vietnamese felt they had to make, even if a revolutionary Marxist leadership would have had to make big concessions, and even if it were true that they were only concessions designed to enable the imperialists to save face in defeat.

We recognize that the Vietnamese fighters, who are the ones subjected to imperialist murder and Stalinist treachery, may well have had to make concessions of one or another kind. But revolutionary Marxists, especially in other countries, and particularly the Fourth International as a whole, can never lend credence in any way to the idea that the imperialists have the right to extract such concessions. Our task is to call for the immediate and complete end to all forms of imperialist intervention in Vietnam, and for support to the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination.

No tactical arguments can override these political considerations. Furthermore, it is simply not true that lending support to a program that includes concessions to imperialism gives greater aid to the revolution than sticking to principled support to the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. Demanding that the U.S. accept the PRG's negotiating position is neither more militant nor more beneficial to the revolution than demanding that the U.S. withdraw immediately and totally.

The Ligue Communiste Central Committee resolution

also made a grave error in confusing support to the Indochinese revolution with support to the inadequate program put forward by its leadership.

2. It violates principle to call for support to a program that includes the provision for a coalition government with capitalists, as the PRG program does.

Our task, as Trotskyists, is to educate the masses about the fact that such a coalition is an obstacle. Even if the PRG's seven points had been accepted by Washington, the transformation to a workers state would not have been automatic. (It wasn't automatic in Algeria, in China, or in Cuba.) A great obstacle yet to overcome would have been the presence of capitalist functionaries in the government and the still existing, though weakened capitalist state apparatus. It would not have been an insurmountable obstacle, of course, but it would have been an obstacle nonetheless. And the Stalinist program of the Vietnamese CP leadership would not have been helpful in overcoming such an obstacle.

During the debate on this question within the Ligue Communiste Central Committee, Alain Krivine put forward an amendment which was politically weak, but at least headed in the right direction. His amendment stipulated that the Ligue Communiste did not support the seven-point program of the PRG in its totality, especially the provision calling for a government of national concord. His amendment was supported by a significant part of the Political Bureau, including Pierre Frank. But it was defeated overwhelmingly: 6 for, 46 against. This one-sided vote can only testify to the terrible miseducation on this principled question that must have prevailed in the Ligue Communiste for a long time.

This confusion and miseducation on principle persisted and deepened when the accords were first announced on October 26, 1972, with provisions for even more concessions by the Vietnamese. When Thieu and Nixon then held out for even more, the Ligue Communist leadership raised the demand that Washington "sign now" ("Nixon must give in"). Rather than focusing on the principled demand for immediate and total U.S. withdrawal, and refuting Washington's self-proclaimed right to extract concessions from the Vietnamese, the Ligue Communiste raised a demand that implicitly accepted the legitimacy of these imperialist imposed accords! The immediate withdrawal demand, however, was not only principled, but in the given situation would have helped put the most pressure on imperialism to retreat.

The leadership of the SWP was very concerned by these developments and determined to support initiatives at the upcoming IEC meeting to clarify the principled questions involved. Given the importance of the issue, it was a test of the leadership capacity of the IEC to help the Ligue Communiste leadership correct its error.

At the IEC a very brief motion was introduced by Comrades Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Stateman, and Thérèse—a minority of the United Secretariat. Their motion dealt with this question of principle in the context of the nine-point accords, which had been announced in the meantime, but were not yet signed. The motion included the following two points:

"The program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government includes the call for a coalition government—that is, a government including bourgeois forces—in South

Vietnam. The Fourth International differentiates itself from any support to the call for a coalition government. As differentiated from the program of the PRG, the Fourth International projects its own program of democratic demands and transitional demands, in accordance with the theory of permanent revolution, to carry out the democratic and socialist tasks of the Indochinese revolution. . . .

"We are opposed to any conditions forced upon the Vietnamese in the current negotiations. We will support no demands, such as 'sign the nine-point agreement' (directed against Washington), involving support of conditions that violate the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination and that constitute obstacles in the path of the revolution." (IIDB, volume X, no. 6.)

This resolution was very brief and was designed to call for a vote on only these fundamental principles. It deliberately did not include a political assessment of the present situation or of the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party. These latter points were taken up in Comrade Stateman's oral report, which was submitted to a separate vote. We had hoped that the IEC would pass this resolution, even if it defeated Comrade Stateman's report or passed additional resolutions including other points. There would have been nothing contradictory about the IEC majority supporting this principled resolution, while still adhering to the political assessment that the accords were favorable for the revolution or that the Vietnamese Communist Party was not Stalinist. We could then have had a debate over these other questions, while achieving clarity on principles. This would have helped correct the error of the Ligue Communiste. But this principled resolution was defeated by the IEC majority! The resolution that was passed by a majority of the IEC, including comrades from both sides of the dispute in the Ligue Communiste, deliberately sidestepped

the issue of principle. The Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam did state its "principled opposition to any coalition government with the bourgeoisie," but it did not take a stand on whether or not it was permissible to lend support to the nine points of the accords, which included a provision for just such a coalition government. And, Comrade Sterne, co-author of the IEC majority resolution, reiterated in his oral presentation that he thought it was correct to lend political support to the PRG's seven-point program and the nine-point accords, and to call for "sign now" as a key demand of the antiwar movement.

Thus, the IEC majority failed in its responsibility to introduce clarity—i.e., political leadership—and instead helped foster confusion and miseducation on this question. The confusion and miseducation persists to this day. This is clearly illustrated in Comrade Sterne's contribution to the IIDB, written in April 1973. On pages 15-16, in his section entitled "The Debates in the Majority," he points out that some of the supporters of the IEC resolution on Vietnam did not support the "sign now" demand. He says that this difference merely reflected a minor difference in antiwar *tactics* or in analysis of the relationship of forces. And he argues that a question of principle is not even involved!—he calls such talk abstract. Thus this Marxist principle—i.e., an ABC for our movement because it is a lesson learned and reaffirmed through the experience of decades and decades of working-class struggle—is casually given the back of the hand by the co-author of the resolution passed at the last IEC.

It is ironic that this is the position of a comrade who berates the SWP for our alleged refusal to advance slogans designed to raise the consciousness of the antiwar vanguard. On this question, at least, one of our first tasks must evidently be to raise the consciousness of the majority of the IEC of the Fourth International.

Sept. 20, 1973

The SWP's Role in the Antiwar Movement

By Geoff Mirelowitz

In the course of the present discussion leading up to the next world congress of the Fourth International, several leading comrades in the world movement have raised serious criticisms of the work carried out by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Primarily these criticisms revolve around the SWP's and YSA's orientation toward building a mass action antiwar movement in the United States.

Comrade Germain in his document entitled "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" says, ". . . we wonder whether e. g. in the mass antiwar movement, which the SWP has helped to organize in such an exemplary way, it wouldn't have been necessary to combine a general united front approach toward mobilizing the maximum number of people for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam, with a more specific propaganda directed to a more limited vanguard . . . which, incidentally would have helped recruitment among vanguard elements too." (IIDB Vol. X, No. 4, emphasis in the original.)

Comrade C. Howard, a central leader of the International Marxist Group, goes much further. In a report given to a meeting of the IMG National Committee, January 25-26, 1973, Comrade Howard says, among other things:

"In our opinion its [the SWP's] primary thrust should have been to attempt to win over the *leftists* to revolutionary Marxist positions. (It would be totally incorrect to imagine that the Weathermen development was inevitable. In our view it was an impatient response to the political weakness of the antiwar movement.) This would have strengthened the antiwar movement. Why? Because without doubt the SWP was the largest organized force on the extreme left to participate in the mass mobilizations. A correct political orientation on its part would have drawn to its ranks the best politically conscious militants within the antiwar movement and would have projected the movement on a broader anti-imperialist trajectory. . . .

"If large sections of the antiwar movement did not ascend from a simple antiwar consciousness, part of the blame has to be laid fairly and squarely with the comrades of the SWP. Thus their inability to politically educate the antiwar movement (except in a wrong and totally negative way against the 'ultralefts') meant that after the heaviest bombing of the war in December 1972, NPAC was incapable of an immediate and emergency mobilisation." (SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 3 in 1973, emphasis in the original.)

Finally, the most thorough and serious criticism comes

from Comrade Sterne in his document entitled, "The Debate on Indochina" (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 7).

This is a wide-ranging document which covers many sides of the debate on Vietnam from the character of the Vietnamese leadership, to the nature of the January 27 Paris accords, to the orientation of the organizations of the world Trotskyist movement towards building the antiwar movement in the United States, in Europe and throughout the world. I do not intend to take up every point raised by Comrade Sterne in his contribution. He raises many points in which his position is at odds with the established positions of Trotskyism, in my opinion. However, I would like to concentrate on a section of his document in which he criticizes the orientation of the SWP and the YSA towards the antiwar movement, entitled, "Four Criticisms of the SWP."

Let me briefly recapitulate the four criticisms raised by Comrade Sterne.

The first criticism is that the SWP advocated what Sterne calls the extension of our "NPAC policy" to the entire world movement.

In his second criticism Comrade Sterne argues, "The slogan 'Out Now!' not only became the main slogan but *virtually the only one*." (Emphasis in original.) Furthermore, he says of the other demands raised by NPAC relating to the nature of the Thieu regime, political prisoners in South Vietnam, etc., "This theme was *present* in the activity of NPAC but was completely *overshadowed*." (Emphasis in original.)

The third criticism is that the SWP and the YSA aligned their activity completely with NPAC and carried out no independent political campaign of socialist explanation about the events in Indochina. "This" says Sterne about the SWP, "has generally led it to present the Indochinese revolution more as a mere struggle for self-determination than a social revolution, a permanent revolution."

The fourth criticism has two sides. On the one hand Sterne writes of the SWP, "It did not advance more radical *slogans of its own*, and more particularly it has not advanced a slogan of open solidarity with the *Indochinese revolution*." He then goes on to say, "Finally it has not initiated activities of its own based on its slogans that would have enabled it to draw in part of the more advanced layers of the antiwar movement. . . ."

The Strategy We Advocated

Comrade Sterne claims that the SWP and YSA advocated an "NPAC policy" for the entire world movement. What we advocated was the general strategy of building united front coalitions that could organize mass antiwar

actions on a consistent basis. In other words, we favored an application of the general strategy of the united front developed by Lenin and Trotsky with modifications to adapt it to the concrete realities of today.

We did think that all the sections and sympathizing groups of the International should attempt to carry out work in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. We did favor a general approach for the entire world movement that consisted of three basic parts.

First, we thought antiwar work should be done consistently. In some of the European sections following the May '68 events in France and the October '68 antiwar demonstration of 100,000 in England, Vietnam work was given a low priority for over two years. We opposed this.

Second, we favored an application of the general united front approach described above.

Third, we favored an orientation towards the masses, an orientation of trying to build the antiwar actions in such a way as to involve the largest possible number of people in action against the war policies of U. S. imperialism.

In arguing for this basic orientation we specifically had to argue against the kind of thinking put forward by Comrade Germain in the political report to the December 1969 meeting of the IEC. In explaining why the antiwar movement outside the U. S. could not reach and involve the masses Comrade Germain said, "But in the rest of the world . . . the antiwar movement in these countries is not a product of the immediate needs and demands of the broad masses, but a result of a process of *political radicalization* of the vanguard. For French revolutionists, Italian revolutionists, German revolutionists, there does not exist any possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, except by making an immediate victorious socialist revolution in their own country. For them, the key question is therefore one of inserting themselves in the general trend of political radicalization, and contributing to the maturing and political clarification of the vanguard." (International Information Bulletin No. 1 in 1971, emphasis in original.)

We disagreed with this. We argued that in France, Italy, Germany and other countries, antiwar actions *would* make "an immediate, direct contribution" to the struggle of the Vietnamese, right now, before the "victorious socialist revolution" in these countries. We said that the key question, all over the world, was attempting to mobilize the largest possible mass actions in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

However, we did not attempt to "impose an NPAC policy" on the world movement, in the sense of mechanically applying tactics used in the U. S. to other countries. What we did say was that tactics in each country should be aimed at building the antiwar movement to be as broad and massive as possible in the given situations in different countries.

Some Factual Errors and Distortions

Some of the criticisms raised by Comrade Sterne are either factually incorrect or a complete distortion of what the SWP and the YSA actually did.

Comrade Sterne says that we did not carry out an independent campaign of socialist explanation of the events in Indochina, and explain the dynamic of the permanent revolution there. That charge is simply false. Throughout the course of the revolution in Indochina the Socialist Workers Party has put forward a consistent socialist analysis every week in the pages of *The Militant*, *International Socialist Review*, and other publications. We have consistently explained the permanent revolution in Vietnam, that the struggle is both a struggle for national liberation against imperialism, for the completion of the democratic tasks such as land reform, and for socialism. We have explained that the struggle cannot succeed without overthrowing capitalism and establishing a workers state.

Anyone reading the pages of *The Militant* could not possibly draw any conclusion other than this: The Socialist Workers Party stands completely behind the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and in support of the struggle of the Vietnamese masses for national and social liberation. Nothing about *The Militant's* coverage was neutral. It has been a consistent socialist analysis that continues today and will continue until the complete victory of the Indochinese revolution.

In the course of analyzing the struggle in Vietnam and putting forward our socialist position, we in the SWP have had to polemicize with the Stalinists and others who claimed that the Vietnamese revolution would be a two-stage revolution. For example, these forces claimed that the Paris accords represented the victory of the first stage of the Vietnamese struggle. We had to polemicize against this view. In opposition to it we explained once again in the pages of *The Militant*, of the *International Socialist Review* and of the *Young Socialist*, the dynamic of the permanent revolution in Vietnam.

This campaign of socialist explanation has permeated the work of the SWP and the YSA for many years. In addition to our regular publications we have published several pamphlets on Vietnam. At the inception of the antiwar movement we sold over 20,000 copies of "War and Revolution in Vietnam." Recently, "The Meaning of the Vietnam Accords" has been published. For many years our election campaigns have all addressed themselves to the struggle in Vietnam as the central issue. In the past as well as recently we have conducted tours of leading spokespeople of the SWP and the YSA speaking on the struggle in Vietnam.

The Nature of the 'Out Now' Demand

In the other criticisms raised by Comrade Sterne there are several substantive political differences over how to build a mass action movement in defense of the Vietnamese. One of these differences is over the nature of the demand that we raised in the United States. Although Comrade Sterne does not reject the "Out Now" demand completely, he obviously feels that it is inadequate. He says, in criticizing our approach, that the SWP "did not advance more radical *slogans of its own* . . ." (emphasis in original).

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to review the SWP's analysis of the "Out Now" demand in order to answer Comrade Sterne's criticisms.

In the antiwar movement in the U. S. it is definitely correct to say that the SWP and the YSA raised "Out

Now" as the central demand that should be raised by the antiwar movement, *and as the central demand supported by revolutionary socialists* in concretizing opposition to the imperialists' war here in the U.S. What are the reasons for this?

First, the "Out Now" demand is a principled demand that recognizes the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. It is clearly aimed directly at the imperialists in Washington.

Comrade Sterne is correct when he says that we fought for "Out Now" to be the central demand of the movement. One reason we favored it as the central demand is because it keeps the fire on imperialism.

Comrade Sterne is also correct when he says in referring to the political prisoners in the South, "It is the U.S. however, that in the last analysis bears the responsibility for their fate." That is exactly the point of the centrality of the "Out Now" demand. It points the finger of responsibility clearly at the imperialists in Washington in such a way that the masses in the United States can easily understand, and therefore act. That is why, while raising other demands such as "release the political prisoners," this was done in the framework of the centrality of the "Out Now" demand.

Second, the "Out Now" demand is not a neutral demand. It clearly and unequivocally places all the blame exactly where it belongs: at the doorstep of the imperialists. It completely rejects the idea that the North Vietnamese workers state or the liberation fighters in the South bear any of the blame. Its thrust is in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

Third, the "Out Now" demand is completely defeatist in relation to U.S. imperialism. In so many words it says that the U.S. government should give up its attempt to dominate Indochina in any way. Certainly there can be no question that if the "Out Now" demand was met (and it has obviously not been met), that that would be a defeat for U.S. imperialism.

Finally, the "Out Now" demand was capable of mobilizing masses of people in action against U.S. imperialism. We are revolutionary politicians. We do not formulate our slogans according to some abstract schema. In building a movement against imperialist war we attempt to tailor our demands so that they are directed against imperialism and so that they can mobilize people in action against imperialism. The "Out Now" demand did this. The fact that hundreds of thousands of people are not demonstrating today against continued U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not due to some weakness of the "Out Now" demand but is rather due to the objective situation that can not be overcome through changing the demand.

During the course of the antiwar movement we in the SWP have been involved in many debates over which demand the movement should raise. Many of the ultralefts in the United States insisted that we should raise some other "more radical" demand rather than, or along with "Out Now." We rejected that proposal. Other demands, such as "Victory to the NLF," would not have had the same radicalizing effect as "Out Now." The "Out Now" demand did have a radicalizing effect precisely because it was capable of bringing people into action against imperialism.

What Kind of Actions Should We Have Organized?

In addition to questioning the demand supported by the SWP to mobilize masses against the imperialist war, Comrade Sterne also charges that the SWP has carried out no independent activities to draw in the "advanced layers." What is really behind this charge?

What Comrade Sterne presumably is getting at, is that the SWP and the YSA should have been building "Support the NLF" contingents or independent "Support the NLF" actions. For example, to take an instance which would be the most favorable from Sterne's point of view, the contingent of 10,000 people on November 15, 1969, who split off from a demonstration of several hundred thousand and rushed the Justice Department armed with NLF flags. This presumably is the kind of action that Comrade Sterne, and other leaders of the Mandel-Maitan-Frank tendency think that the SWP and the YSA should have organized.

Had we adopted this orientation we would have made a serious political error that would have affected the entire development of the mass action antiwar movement in the United States. Had we put the efforts of the SWP and the YSA into building these contingents *there would have been no mass demonstrations to build contingents in!* Comrades Sterne and Germain do not seem to grasp this basic fact. They think that we could have combined these two approaches. The two are mutually exclusive.

Anyone who is familiar with the history of the American antiwar movement knows that it was the intervention of the SWP and the YSA which kept the movement on the track of building mass actions. Comrades Sterne and Germain admit this in their documents. But this was done through a *fierce struggle* against those who attempted to foist "Victory to the NLF" or other "more advanced" slogans on the antiwar movement, or attempted to divert it in other ways.

It was no accident that those who supported the ultra-left "Victory to the NLF" actions also opposed building mass demonstrations for "Out Now." Comrade Sterne's idea of presumably building both "Victory to the NLF" actions as well as mass demonstrations is wrong. We opposed building these kinds of actions whether they were separate from or "contingents" in mass mobilizations against the war. In either form they were of no value in building a mass antiwar movement—they were obstacles to doing that.

These actions or contingents had no effect other than to tend to isolate the antiwar movement from the masses of Americans. They were of no value at all in drawing in the millions of working people, Blacks, Chicanos, and others that the antiwar movement was trying to reach. They were not even of any value in drawing in American students.

Had we adopted the orientation suggested by Comrade Sterne and others there would have been no November 15, 1969, no May 1970 events, no April 24, 1971, no April 22, 1972, as we knew them, as nonexclusive mass actions independent of the capitalist parties. There would have been no consistent mass action movement had it not been for the intervention of the American Trotskyists fighting to build and maintain such a movement.

How to Involve the Advanced Layers and Who Are They to Begin With

Despite the fact that we rejected the orientation suggested by Comrade Sterne and others of the IEC majority, we did involve the most politically advanced elements in the antiwar movement and, Comrade Germain's tactical advice notwithstanding, we also recruited many of these people to the YSA and the SWP.

It is necessary to start by determining who makes up these "advanced layers" as Sterne refers to them. Apparently, what we in the SWP have understood to be the advanced layers of the antiwar movement and the advanced layers that Comrade Sterne is presumably referring to, are two different things.

As far as we're concerned, the advanced layers of the antiwar movement have been those activists who worked consistently to build mass demonstrations to defend the Vietnamese revolution. These activists, who numbered in the thousands, in their overwhelming majority were for the victory of the Vietnamese liberation fighters. They were no less radical or revolutionary than the advanced layers that presumably Comrade Sterne refers to, those who split from mass actions and waved NLF flags.

However, the advanced layers that built April 24, that built April 22, that were the real leadership of the May events, these real advanced layers understood that the most effective way to defend the Vietnamese revolution was to build a mass action movement that could work to draw in the masses of Americans who had the power to reverse the imperialists' war policies. These advanced layers were those who wanted to involve the masses in antiwar actions.

But who does Comrade Sterne see as the advanced layers? Presumably, he sees the ultralefts who had to be fought tooth and nail every step of the way in the fight to maintain the antiwar movement. He sees the ultralefts who disrupted mass demonstrations, attempted to seize the speaking platforms and who then split off from these mass actions when their attempts were repulsed by the marshalls who were organized by the action coalitions which built the demonstrations. He sees the ultralefts who, as has been clearly proven by the Watergate revelations, as often as not were infiltrated and sometimes led by agents-provocateurs. We have had some experience with these people. They were not in the vanguard. They were the rearguard. They were obstacles to building the antiwar movement.

However, we even involved the advanced layers that Sterne is talking about. By fighting against these ultralefts in a consistent and uncompromising way and working to build the mass actions which they opposed, we even brought these "advanced layers" into many mass actions, albeit kicking and screaming. We involved the advanced layers that Sterne sees by fighting them politically, not by adapting to their incorrect ideas.

We also recruited from among the real advanced layers. Over half of the present membership of the SWP and the YSA came from the advanced layers that were made up of the most consistent fighters against the war. We also recruited many people from among the advanced layers that Sterne is talking about, people who initially

disagreed with our strategy for building the antiwar movement.

We recruited these advanced layers, of both types, by winning them to our antiwar perspectives and to our revolutionary socialist program. Not by bending our program or our line in the antiwar movement to their "concerns" and incorrect ideas. We do not have one program for the masses and another program for the advanced layers. We have one program. It is oriented towards the masses and based on their needs. On the basis of that program we win the most advanced elements to our organization and train them in the Leninist method of reaching the masses. The intervention of the SWP and the YSA in the antiwar movement has been an exemplary example of how to do that.

Did We Tailend or Did We Lead?

Comrade Sterne concludes his section of criticisms of the SWP with the following paragraph: "Finally, while the SWP took a leading role in animating the antiwar movement, it has remained *politically* in its wake, incapable of meeting the needs of the advanced layers of the movement." (Emphasis in original.)

Comrade Sterne evidently has difficulty in distinguishing between the head and the other end of the antiwar movement. The Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance have consistently been in the leadership of the left wing of the antiwar movement. At every step of the way from the inception of the antiwar movement we have been in the leadership of those fighting to maintain the movement as an independent, mass action movement built around a principled demand. This was a fight that continued throughout the course of the antiwar movement. All along the way our strategy was challenged by one opponent after another. All of them at times reflected one or another of the arguments raised by Comrade Sterne.

We had to fight against those who, from the left, claimed that the antiwar movement's demands and actions weren't radical enough. Against these forces we argued that the antiwar movement was objectively anti-imperialist and in the interests of the masses of Vietnamese and the masses of Americans, and that to be effective it had to involve masses of people.

At other times we had to fight against those who, from the right, insisted that the movement should call for "Sign Now" or should support the 7-point negotiating position of the PRG. (Often these were the same forces who had claimed that the antiwar movement was not radical enough.) Against these forces we argued that U.S. imperialism has no right to negotiate anything in Indochina and that the antiwar movement has an obligation to point that out and fight for that concept.

We also fought against those who wanted to turn the movement into a vehicle of support for some Democratic Party politician, who wanted the movement out of the streets and into the "mainstream" of capitalist politics. We fought against those who wanted to substitute small individual acts of civil disobedience for mass actions. We fought against those who said the movement could never involve GIs. The list could go on and on listing

the different battles we waged with political opponents of every variety to maintain the antiwar movement as a mass action movement that could attempt to involve the *masses* of American people.

We were not left politically in the wake of the movement, we were in the leadership of the movement. We did not tailend the movement. Tailending would have meant doing what Comrade Sterne suggests we should have, adapting our position to his "advanced layers." This we refused to do. We fought the "vanguard" that Sterne orients toward every step of the way and the history of the antiwar movement bears out the correctness of our strategy.

We maintained our principled political position because we had bigger game in mind than Comrade Sterne evidently had. We built the antiwar movement in the way we did because we wanted to involve the masses, the millions of American working people with the power to end the war. That's what the SWP was out to accomplish in the antiwar movement. Not to simply "win over the leftists" as Comrade Howard suggests (although we did that too as a result of orienting towards the masses).

We were able to help organize some very large actions involving hundreds of thousands of people although we did not yet accomplish our ultimate goal of involving masses of American workers. However, this prospect of tens of millions of American people joining the antiwar actions is part of what hamstrung the ruling class.

Almost all of the actions the antiwar movement organized were basically vanguard actions. Even the May events of 1970, which were mass actions of American students and did begin to involve other forces, were only a taste of what we were out to accomplish. Because of the change in the course of the war, due to the monstrous betrayal of Moscow and Peking, we did not get a chance to accomplish that goal. However, we think that it was possible. We think that it could have happened. However, the only way it could have happened was through the correct political intervention of revolutionary socialists.

In the end this is what the difference with Comrade Sterne is all about. We were out to build a mass antiwar movement. Comrade Sterne and the other leaders of the IEC majority seem to be oriented in another direction.

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