



**FIGHT
FOR
SOCIALISM**
Progressive Labor Party

QUESTIONS FACING PROGRESSIVE LABOR

INCLUDING SUPPRESSED DISCUSSION OF TROTSKY

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Introduction

Today the international working class from the metropolitan countries to the colonial world are moving on the offensive against the capitalist class and its decadent system. In this period of world-wide crisis the question of who will hold political power is being raised. Socialism is not a long range solution but is more and more becoming a burning necessity for today. Either there will be socialism or the barbarism of fascism.

This struggle requires above all the independent mobilization of the working class internationally to take power. A mass disciplined party of the working class based on the experiences of nearly two centuries of struggle against capitalism must be built to lead this struggle to victory.

LESSON

There can be no substitutes--this is the central lesson not only of the victorious October Revolution but of the bloody defeats suffered by the working class in this century. All kinds of "fronts", "coalitions", "blocs" and "alliances" have in the past been thrown up by those who seek to prevent the independent mobilization of the workers and to keep them under the leadership of the middle class, thus tying the working

class to capitalism.

The American working class in particular has historically been tied to the capitalist parties through middle class reformism. Herein lies the deep contradiction between the immense power of the trade union movement and its failure to develop an independent political party.

It is the central task of the Marxist party today in the United States to break the working class from its traditional leaderships to build a political arm of the powerful organized workers movement as an essential and immediate part of the struggle for state power.

It is precisely this task which the centrists and revisionists refuse to take up--substituting "broad coalitions", "anti-war movements", "united fronts against fascism", "left-center coalitions." These forces consciously turn their backs on the working class and begin to look for new arenas and non-working class organizations in order to build anti-Marxist fronts.

ALLIANCES

By far one of the most dangerous tendencies in this direction is the Progressive Labor Party with its Workers-Student Alliances and its

Left-Center Coalition. These "alliances" seek to give a working class cover to middle class protest politics. On the campuses the Worker-Student Alliance means that by the students raising a few demands for a few campus workers and/or by demanding the subway fare be decreased or housing for community residents can continue their strictly student struggle under the guise of helping the workers. The Worker-Client Alliance has meant in practice that workers are asked on the basis of moral sympathy to join client demonstrations. In the meantime at the "point of production" in the welfare centers PL completely supports the trade union bureaucracy. PL supporters in the Social Service Employees Union in New York never uttered a peep against the sell-out contract which cut out 9,000 jobs and allowed for a tremendous speed-up.

This working class cover serves to divert the struggles today away from the working class, away from the trade unions and the fight for an independent political struggle by the workers. It seeks to keep the workers under the leadership of the middle class.

WORKING CLASS

Marxists begin with the understanding that the working class is the only revolutionary force in society. All other sections are mobilized behind the working class. It is only in the context of the independent mass mobilization of the working class on its own demands that we can speak of alliances and united fronts. The program of the working class is not, we repeat not, a matter of tacking on a few workers' demands to students' and clients' programs--it is a program which mobilizes the workers to

take the power.

The program of the working class is not something that can be sucked out of one's thumb to meet the immediate tasks at a particular campus or demonstration. Rather it is the product of the struggle of the Marxist movement for over a hundred years and the strategical experiences of the working class historically, its defeats as well as its victories. This body of experience is the most precious thing the working class possesses.

HISTORY

This is the nub of the question for Progressive Labor. Like the New Left, PL has no history. PL has had to erase over 50 years of struggle, 50 years of bloody battles by the working class internationally.

Basing itself not on the working class but on Stalin and the Stalinist bureaucracy internationally PL dares not confront history, for it was the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy internationally that led the working class to defeat. At each point PL would have to confront Trotskyism. Only Trotsky and the movement he built, the Fourth International which today lives only in the International Committee of the Fourth International, have been able to draw the lessons of these past struggles and it is only on this basis that a revolutionary party can be built.

It is the purpose of these articles to expose those, namely Progressive Labor, who use the language of socialism and communism but who in reality serve the capitalists and their allies in the middle class. An objective understanding of the historical and methodological roots and role of this tendency is absolutely essential in arming the workers and students for the tasks ahead.

1 Stalinism versus Trotskyism

Lenin once heaped heavy abuse during a discussion of the question of self determination on those "who had never learnt anything or even read any Party history," who thought it fashionable "going about in the nude. . . as far as knowledge of the Party and everything it stands for is concerned." Nothing could be more appropriate to describe the outlook of Progressive Labor. This is not, however, just a dislike for history and cynicism towards the experience of the working class, but represents a disdainful attitude towards theory in general.

Marxism is historical materialism. Marx did not develop his theory in isolation or based on what he saw even during his lifetime but on a study of the whole history of man. Marx and his followers in the labor movement spent years, decades, in studying every phase of the Paris Commune just as the Bolshevik Party took up the problems of the defeated Russian Revolution in 1905. The present cannot be understood unless the past in which it is rooted is understood.

We are often told by members of Progressive Labor that they do not have "time" for such matters, that they are too "busy" with "what's going on now." This is not just a question of the opinions of a few members but is evidenced in PL's press.

FORMULAS

PL seeks to substitute formulas and "Marxist-Leninist" double-talk

for theory. It evades problems and never gets to the roots of any question. For example, after nearly four years and many attempts PL still is incapable of giving a materialist understanding of the degeneration of the Soviet Union.

In the August, 1969 issue of Progressive Labor we are given an example of their approach to theory. "In the past we have made the serious error (that is being made today by others) of supporting struggle--any struggle. We were confused. . ." On the question of Cuba PL says: "It all seemed good to us and to other radicals."

Far more revealing however is their complete lack of understanding of method in dealing with the national question. Somehow or other they came to the belief that nationalism is reactionary but this is put not in the context of any real understanding of the discussion of this question in the Marxist movement or an attempt to deal with the question of self determination through an historical, political, socio-economic analysis. This is what we are told:

"We readily admit that it has been difficult for us to grasp the complexities of Lenin and Stalin on this question. We don't pretend that what we do or say is necessarily what they meant or did themselves. And we don't feel that quotations we present are the final authoritative answer on the national question. We simply ask you to consider these ideas and see how they apply to the American and the world scene.

"The important thing for us to see is how liberation can be accomplished. We should not consider Marxism-Leninism as a collection of ossified rules, but rather apply it creatively to present political circumstances."

In one fell swoop the editors have actually thrown Marxism-Leninism out the window. What PL says essentially is this: "We tried to read Lenin and Stalin but it was too hard, we just could not comprehend it, and anyway we cannot be bothered with these ossified rules. What really concerns us is our immediate needs now."

CONTEMPT

This contempt for theory, this ideological superficiality and theoretical sloppiness has a lot to do with Stalinism but absolutely nothing to do with Marxism and Leninism. There is an old saying in the Marxist movement, made by Lenin in fact: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand and hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity."

It is precisely PL's substitution of immediate gains and mindless activity for struggle based on serious theoretical analysis and principled politics which has put it in the position it has been in almost since its birth--correcting mistakes. This does not mean that Marxists do not make mistakes. But there are mistakes and there are mistakes.

Revolutionary theory, as Lenin said, is absolutely essential to the building of a party and the leadership of the working class. It is a guide to practice; it enables the leadership of the class to understand

developments and their movement; it enables them in some degree to exercise foresight to prepare the class for future struggles. Correct policies are essential for correct practice. Correct theories alone are not enough. They only really become "correct" and can only be developed in the actual struggles of the working class.

STRATEGICAL MISTAKES

PL however has not foreseen the inevitable results of developments on major strategical questions. This is something far more serious than tactical errors. It has been caught napping at each point and its "theories" have been created after the fact and with little or no regard for what it was saying yesterday.

So now four years after over a million workers, peasants and communist leaders were massacred in Indonesia. PL says it was wrong, but cannot probe the cause nor put forward a solution. This is true of Cuba, Algeria, not to mention Black Nationalism. Breast beating and apologies are not enough. The world class struggle where strategical mistakes mean the loss of life to millions of workers and the beheading of the leadership is not a confessional booth where, if you confess, your sins will be absolved. Absolution comes only through the struggle to learn from these mistakes, to take them up theoretically and to carry forward the fight.

This PL cannot do. We say PL will continue its zigzag path learning after the fact and that this policy can only lead to the defeat of the working class. It will be a fine day, after fascism has taken its toll, that PL announces it made mistakes.

This is the history of Stalinism. Defeat after defeat was suffered by the world working class--each time the Stalinist parties continued on their treacherous course.

If PL could face history it would see that history repeated itself in Indonesia. The same policies that Stalin carried out in China in 1927, which led to the defeat of the Chinese revolution and the murder of thousands of workers and communists in Shanghai, were carried out by the Indonesian Communist Party.

STALIN

PL cannot get to the bottom of these "mistakes" until it confronts Stalin. Thus it is totally incapable of dealing with not only the degeneration of the Soviet Union but also with the American Communist Party.

In its 1964 document "Road To Revolution" PL sees the origins of revisionism as a result of the CP's theory of "American exceptionalism." Separating the degeneration of the American CP out of its international context, PL does not explain why the same policies carried out by Browder were carried out by every Communist Party in the Comintern under the leadership of Stalin. The American party in that sense was not "exceptional."

In the same document PL allows itself a brief analysis of Stalin, taking up the attacks on Stalin by Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

"Both in content and in the manner it was presented this report had nothing in common with a serious Marxist analysis and evaluation of Stalin's true role. It did not place both his enormous contributions and his serious errors in their historical context, but offered instead a sub-

jective, crude, total negation of a great Marxist-Leninist and proletarian revolutionary. It did not examine the source of Stalin's errors, many of which were matters of principle and others in the course of practical work.

"This is not to say that Stalin's errors were not serious and without severe consequences. A heavy price is being paid both within the Soviet Union and in the international working class movement for errors contrary to socialist principles.

"Thus it can be seen that Stalin's errors and their sources are not being studied and corrected, but are only being opportunistically used. Stalin's contributions, which an overall historical evaluation of his life demonstrates to be primary, are being thrown out."

TRUE ROLE

Where then is this "serious Marxist analysis and evaluation of Stalin's true role?" Where is the analysis of "his errors in their historical context." What in fact were these errors and their historical and methodological roots for which the working class is paying "a heavy price?" Surely, if the working class has paid heavily, it is deserving of more than a paragraph or two about Stalin's inconsistency.

PL did not take these questions up in 1964 and has not tackled them since. PL merely uses Khrushchev's remarks as a cover to defend Stalin. Instead of a "serious Marxist analysis" PL sets up a tally sheet listing various abstract errors on one side and abstract good deeds of Stalin on the other side. These errors and deeds are completely removed from the actual struggles in which they took place, and the resulting consequences.

PL concludes that Stalin was a "great proletarian revolutionary."

What in fact was the historical experience of the working class in the days when Stalin was the leader

of the international Communist movement? What about China in 1927, Germany in 1933, France in 1935, the Spanish Civil War, the era of the Popular Front? "Truth," as Lenin said, "is concrete."

2 On Socialism in One Country

Unable to answer these questions, today PL is haunted by Stalin. In the August, 1969 issue of Progressive Labor in an article entitled "Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism" all of the chickens have come home to roost.

First PL states: "In the Soviet Union workers' political power has been overthrown. . . . Simply to ascribe this development to past bureaucratic practices begs the question The main problem has been that once socialism has triumphed in a particular country a new working class culture has not automatically taken the place of bourgeois culture There is nationalism that has flowered into a socialist state and helps turn socialism into its opposite or tries."

Secondly, the editorial goes on: "We say that self determination can be accomplished under socialism. . . . The slogan 'all class unity' is a cover-up for perpetuating capitalism".

Thirdly, the article admits: "We were confused by the concept of the two stage struggle, which claimed that first there is the battle for national liberation and then communists transform it to the battle for socialism. . . . Communists have no business advocating national lib-

eration movements that do not openly proclaim socialism as a goal."

PANDORAS BOX

Unknowingly in these three sections PL has opened a Pandora's Box raising some of the central questions which were taken up in Trotsky's struggle against Stalin--socialism in one country, the "bloc of four classes" and the theory of the permanent revolution. This is not to say that PL understands these questions in the least. In this article no sooner have they cleared up their "confusion" then they have reaffirmed it in the next paragraph. But to get to the heart of this matter, we must go back to the basic discussions on these essential fundamentals.

This is how PL describes the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky on the question of "socialism in one country," in "Road to Revolution II."

"It is not new to say that primarily by its own efforts a working class of any one country must defeat its own national bourgeoisie and establish its own working class state power. It is not new to say that primarily by its own efforts a working class of any one country must defeat its own bourgeoisie and build socialism. Stalin's historic struggle to defeat Trotskyism was precisely over this question.

Trotsky maintained that it was impossible for the Soviet Union by its own efforts to build socialism without the European proletariat winning state power. Yet Stalin, who fought to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat and to build socialism in the Soviet Union, NEVER took the position that this was possible without the support of the world proletariat, nor could the victory of socialism be 'complete'--'final' in the Soviet Union as long as the world bourgeoisie was not overthrown. . . .'

ALLIANCE

"Again Stalin indicated that the proletariat in the Soviet Union could overcome its own bourgeoisie by ITS OWN EFFORTS ONLY IN ALLIANCE WITH THE PEASANTRY AND WITH THE WORLD PROLETARIAT. He said:

"Only in alliance with the world proletariat is it possible to build socialism in our country. The whole point is how this alliance is to be understood. . . . The trouble with the opposition is that it recognizes only one form of alliance, the form of "direct state support..."

It is absolutely true that Trotsky contended that socialism could not be built in a single country without the spread of the socialist revolution.

PL does not deny the fact that Stalin contended that socialism could be built in one country. The question of the "final" and "complete" victory became for Stalin and the bureaucracy a cover for the logic of its perspective. In fact Stalin at various times proclaimed the "complete triumph" of socialism in the Soviet Union. At the Seventh-Congress of the Comintern, in a resolution of August 20, 1935, the bureaucracy contended "the final and irrevocable

triumph of socialism and the all-sided reinforcement of the state of the proletarian dictatorship is achieved in the Soviet Union."

SUPPORT

But the heart of this matter is elsewhere. PL contends that Stalin never took the position that this (victory of socialism in one country) was possible without the SUPPORT of the world proletariat." (our emphasis) The character of this support is included in PL's quote from Stalin. It becomes not a question as Trotsky posed it, the spread of the socialist revolution and the taking of power by the proletariat, but a question of "alliances" with the peasantry and world proletariat.

The purpose of these "alliances" is not a question of struggle for state power on the part of the working class internationally but for the defense of the Soviet Union against intervention from outside.

NEUTRALIZATION

Stalin contended that the Soviet Union could be defended without revolutions in other countries by way of the "neutralization of the bourgeoisie." Thus socialism could be built on the basis of a national state if only there is no intervention. It is from this conception that follows a collaborationist policy towards the international capitalists to avert intervention, thus guaranteeing the central task, the building of socialism in one country. The task of the parties in the Comintern then becomes auxiliary and a question of "alliances" with the working class the sole aim of which is to protect the Soviet Union from intervention and not to fight for the conquest of power.

This as PL correctly states is where Trotsky differed from Stalin and we might add where Marx, Engels and Lenin differed from Stalin. This is why Stalin and his cohorts did not dare raise this "theory" until after Lenin's death.

The very idea that socialism could be established in a single country is completely alien to the literature of Marxism as well as the entire history of Bolshevism.

MARX

Even before the epoch of imperialism and the export of finance capital, Marx and Engels arrived at the conclusion that the unevenness of historical development stretches the proletarian revolution through an entire epoch in the process of which nations will enter the revolutionary struggle one after another. The organic interdependence of the several countries, the development towards an international division of labor excluded the possibility of building socialism in one country. The epoch of imperialism has only deepened these contradictions. More and more the fetter of the nation state inhibits the growth of the productive forces. The socialization of labor occurs not just within one factory or even in one country but throughout the world, creating an international working class within an international economy.

The Bolsheviks recognized the possibility of a seizure of power by the proletariat in a single country, while capitalist rule still remains undefeated in the others. From April 1917 they fought for the taking of power in Russia and achieved this in October. But they never, never confused the "dictatorship of the proletariat" with the "establishment of socialism." They never maintained

that it was possible to build socialism in Russia, except through the international revolution. The dependence of the revolution in Russia was openly acknowledged by all leaders of the Bolshevik party (including Stalin before Lenin's death) in their writings and speeches both in the days of the October insurrection and afterwards.

LENIN

Lenin himself always proceeded from an internationalist point of view precisely because he understood the objective laws of capitalist development, beginning with the world economy and the international division of labor. Thus, he saw that the victory of socialism could only be achieved on an international scale --that the October Revolution would be in danger if the revolution did not spread to the advanced capitalist countries.

In March of 1918 Lenin warned: "This is a lesson to us because the absolute truth is that without a revolution in Germany, we shall perish." In April he said: "Our backwardness has thrust us forward and we will perish if we are unable to hold out until we meet with the mighty support of the insurrectionary workers of other countries."

In March, 1919 Lenin repeated: "We do not live merely in a state but in a system of states and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for any length of time is inconceivable. In the end one or the other must triumph."

In July, 1921 Lenin spoke again on this question to the Third Congress of the Communist International:

"It was clear to us that without the aid from the international world revolution, a victory of the proletariat

revolution is impossible. Even prior to the revolution, as well as after it, we thought that the revolution would also occur either immediately or at least very soon in other backward countries and in the more highly developed capitalist countries, otherwise we would perish. Notwithstanding this conviction, we did our utmost to preserve the Soviet system under any circumstances and at all costs, because we know that we are working not only for ourselves but also for the international revolution."

DANGERS

In 1922 Lenin warned against the dangers of having the gains that had been made in the Soviet Union taken away without the spread of the revolution. "We have not completed even the foundation of a socialist economy. This can still be taken back by the hostile forces of a dying capitalism. We must be clearly aware of this, and openly acknowledge it. For there is nothing more dangerous than illusions and turned heads especially in high places. And there is absolutely nothing 'terrible', nothing offering a legitimate course for the slightest discouragement, in recognizing this bitter truth; for we have always taught and repeated this ABC truth of Marxism, that for the victory of socialism the combined efforts of the workers of several advanced countries as necessary."

Lenin saw the main task of the Soviet Union as the struggle for the international revolution. At a Congress of the workers in the needle trades, he said: "We have always and repeatedly pointed out to the workers that the underlying chief task and basic condition of our victory is the propagation of the revolution to several of the more advanced coun-

tries."

Being a Marxist Lenin was more than just a man of word but also a man of deed. It was his understanding of the necessity for a world revolution not in the far distant future but as an immediate task for the day, that he spent half of his life building the Communist International.

THIRD INTERNATIONAL

Lenin began this struggle in 1914 in opposition to the betrayals of the Second International whose parties declared support for their respective bourgeoisies at the advent of World War II. After the October Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks did not sit back and content themselves with building socialism in one country but began to prepare for the building of the Third International.

The First Congress of the Third International was held in March, 1919. In the "Manifesto of the Communist International" written by Trotsky and presented at this Congress, the CI outlined the task of the Communist movement: "We Communists, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the various countries of Europe, America and Asia who have gathered in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves to be the heirs and consummators of the cause whose program was affirmed 72 years ago. Our task is to generalize the revolutionary parties of the world proletariat and thereby facilitate and hasten the victory of the Communist revolution throughout the world."

The Manifesto ended with: "If the First International presaged the future course of development and indicated its paths; if the Second International gathered and organized millions of workers; then the Third

International is the International of open mass action, the International of revolutionary realization, the International of deed."

STRATEGY

The first five years of the Communist International during its Leninist period and before the rise of Stalin dedicated itself to the tasks of the struggle for state power by the working class internationally. It was not conceived of as an "alliance" of various national parties that came to exchange their experiences and proclaim solidarity for each other, or merely a collection of national parties. The Third International at its Second Congress laid down Twenty-one Conditions for admittance into the International making explicit the positions which the parties had to adhere to.

The new International was to be made up of parties which carried out a COMMON PROGRAM and STRATEGY according to the conditions which prevailed in each country. The first four congresses of the CI under the theoretical leadership of Lenin and Trotsky hammered out an international strategy and tactics. It is this material which must be studied by all Marxists for in it lies the basic strategical outline for the struggles in this epoch.

It is precisely this strategy which was destroyed by the policies of "socialism in one country."

Socialism in one country, however, was not just a theory developed by one man out of the blue but had real material roots in and was a reflection of the interests of a certain stratum of Soviet society. This stratum was the new Soviet bureaucracy. The roots of the bureaucracy lay in the conditions and problems which faced

the Soviet Union after the civil war. While the civil war had been won, many of the finest workers and communists had been either killed or had been drawn into the administrative aspects of work. Thus many lost contact with the masses and with the political developments.

The masses themselves were weary after the years of war and wanted rest. Many previous enemies of the revolution as well as careerists entered the party, many of these working through the most conservative members and leaders of the party.

The basis for the growth of this theory and for Stalinism was in the economic weaknesses of the economy carried over from Czarism and intensified by the years of imperialist intervention. Stalin who was generally disdainful of theory and long term goals, a man interested primarily with the everyday administrative functions of the apparatus became the spokesman for those in the party, for the government functionaries which administered the country's wealth, and the more prosperous peasants, all of which sought to guarantee privileges for themselves amidst the general scarcity.

The "theory" of socialism in one country was a guarantee that the new privileged strata would not be upset, their privileges sacrificed for the world revolution. The suppression of workers democracy and democracy within the party flowed out of this. The privileges could only be preserved through force through the elimination of those Bolsheviks who fought for the principles of Marx and Lenin.

The defeat of the revolutionary struggles in the period after October, particularly in Germany, and the ebb in the revolutionary tide in 1920 and 1921 reinforced the conservatism

within the party and the country.

However, the rise of the bureaucracy was not automatic. Lenin recognized the problem before his death and had begun a struggle against it. His chief target was Stalin. Lenin fought Stalin on two major questions. The first was the question of the state monopoly of foreign trade which was considered by the Bolsheviks to be essential to holding state power and towards the building of a socialist economy. Without this monopoly remnants of private capitalism and the peasantry would seek links to the capitalist market.

Stalin opposed this, thus putting forward a position which would open the door for world capitalism to link up with forces within the Soviet Union. After a heated battle on the Central Committee, Lenin won adoption of his policy.

GEORGIA

The second fight with Stalin was over the question of Georgia. Lenin on his sick bed sought the support of Trotsky against Stalin. The question of national minorities had been a central one in the October Revolution. In Georgia where the Mensheviks had influence, the revolution came only in 1921. Considering the years of oppression of the Georgian people by Czarism, Lenin approached the question of federation very carefully.

In a confidential letter to Trotsky, Lenin wrote: "I ask you urgently to undertake the defense of the Georgia case in the C.C. of the party. This case at present 'being shot at' by Stalin and Dzherzhinsky and I cannot count on their objectivity."

Stalin concerned only with the technical and administrative aspects of the federation conducted a brutal

campaign against Georgian nationalism and even attacked those Bolsheviks who were working for unification along the lines approved by Lenin.

Lenin took up Stalin very sharply: "Political responsibility for this whole truly Great Russian nationalistic campaign should be placed squarely on the backs of Stalin and Dzherzhinsky." Explaining his position on the question, Lenin said: "I have already written in my works concerning the national question, that an abstract conception of nationalism is absolutely worthless. . . . nothing so much impedes the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity as national injustice . . . It is for this reason . . . that we never treat the national question in a FORMAL MANNER, but always take into account the indispensable difference which should exist in the relationship of the proletarian oppressed (or small) nation with the oppressing (or large) nation (our emphasis)."

Contrary to PL's contention, Lenin and Stalin stood far apart on the national question. This was due to Stalin's disregard of Marxist method and his substitute of formal, abstract reasoning to justify his bureaucratic practices.

TESTAMENT

It was these two incidents which convinced Lenin that Stalin was politically unfit for the position of General Secretary. In January, 1923 he wrote his letter to the party which became known as his 'Testament.' As long as Lenin remained alive, his wife Krupskaya kept this document under lock and key. In 1924 after his death she handed it over to the Secretariat of the Cen-

tral Committee with the request that it should be placed before the party Congress. This was not done and after the reading of it to a selected few party leaders, the publication of the document was forbidden. Later its existence was made known by Trotsky. Parts of it were also used by Stalin himself, particularly Lenin's remarks about Bukharin.

In his 'Testament' Lenin wrote: "Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution." Lenin further called for the removal of Stalin from his post: "Stalin is too rude, and this fact, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority--namely, more patient, more

loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc."

Lenin's 'Testament' was just a warning. By the time Stalin had finished he had used his position as General Secretary not only to threaten the existence of the workers' state in the Soviet Union internally but also under his leadership the Comintern led the working class into a whole series of bloody defeats. In 1943 Stalin dissolved the Third International, the instrument which Lenin had spent most of his life building to lead the working class to victory internationally. This was the price Stalin paid for the "Grand Alliance" with Churchill and Eisenhower.

It was Trotsky with the Left Opposition who continued the struggle that Lenin had begun and who drew the lessons of the defeats, who developed the strategy worked out in the first five years of the Communist International in order to build a party which could lead the working class to victory.

3 Stalin the Man- Stalinism & Idealism

Progressive Labor today uses all the language of "Marxism-Leninism", but behind this facade lies its counter-revolutionary, anti-working class perspective. PL is a centrist tendency attempting to ride the middle of the road between reformism and a revolutionary strategy, between Stalinism and Trotskyism, to develop a new ideology. But there is no third ideology--there is only the ideology of reformism, of change

within the confines of capitalism without the international destruction of capitalist power or the revolutionary strategy of the struggle for power of the working class internationally.

The roots of PL's revisionism lie in Stalinism. PL, like its mentor Mao, represents an empirical break from Stalinism, a break from the logic of its collaborationist policies without confronting the origins of these policies. Mao broke from Stalin's sui-

cial line of support of Chiang Kai-shek much as PL split from the Communist Party. But neither Mao nor PL have ever repudiated Stalin and today PL continues to maintain that Stalin was a "great proletarian revolutionary". Without confronting the roots of Stalin's errors, both Mao and PL continue the basic outlook of Stalinism--of socialism in one country.

The zigs and zags of PL's line and the ideological mumbo-jumbo which changes from month to month are a reflection of its inability to come to grips with Stalinism, its attempts to create a halfway house.

STALIN THE MAN

In its original document "Road to Revolution I" which PL still publishes as a basis for "strategic ideas for revolutionary struggle in the U.S." PL separates into distinct and unrelated parts the "errors" of Stalin on the one hand and his "good deeds" on the other. PL concludes of course that his merits outweigh his demerits. This is a maneuver. Stalin is completely separated out of Stalinism. He is removed from his policies and their historical and material roots. This method is subjective idealism. Stalin's errors become merely a question of personal idiosyncracies, of confusion in Stalin's head.

PL refuses to grapple with Stalin as a representative of the growth of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. It considers the "bureaucratic practices" a minor question. As we have shown in the last article Stalin became the spokesman for the rising bureaucracy that grew up in the Soviet Union after October, a stratum that sought privileges within a backward economy and a situation of scarcity and within

the context of the defeat of the European revolution.

This bureaucracy rested and still rests in the Soviet Union on the basis of the Soviet social system of the nationalization of the land, the means of production, transport and exchange together with the monopoly of foreign trade. At the same time the bureaucracy usurped the political power of the proletariat in order to preserve its existence and its privileges. This, as Trotsky pointed out in his extensive analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union in the "Revolution Betrayed", is at the basis of the contradictory role of the ruling bureaucracy. It is forced to defend the material basis of its rule, the gains of October while at the same time threatening these gains by defending them not through the reliance on the struggles of the working class internationally but through collaboration and capitulation to forces hostile to the working class. The theory of socialism in one country is justification for the rule of the bureaucracy.

IDEALISM

Unable to face these questions PL is reduced to the most ridiculous absurdities and to idealism in approaching Stalin and the degeneration of the Soviet Union. PL sees this degeneration now as a question of nationalism and culture. Without probing to the political and economic roots of culture and nationalism PL must conclude that the problem lies not in material reality but in peoples' heads. Both culture and nationalism are a reflection of a system of social relations.

Nationalism and the inability to develop a high cultural level flowed from the preservation of the bureaucracy through collaboration with capitalism, through the policy of merely

defending the borders of the Soviet Union as opposed to the fight for international revolution and the inability to develop a socialist economy within a world capitalist system.

But to understand this, PL would have to go back to the theory of socialism in one country, not just to the individual Stalin but to Stalinism.

A real independent, objective Marxist analysis would mean that PL would have to confront the only tendency which has historically fought Stalinism and that is Trotskyism.

TROTSKY

It is becoming more and more difficult for PL to get away from Trotsky and the movement he built through the fight against the betrayals of Stalinism. We are living in a different period today with the perspective and program of Trotskyism being confirmed every day. This is the epoch of imperialist decay, the working class is moving to the offensive from the highly industrial countries to the colonial world, from France to Argentina. The question of capitalist restoration in the Soviet bloc countries has not been settled. As Trotsky pointed out, the working class will have something to say about it--this is the meaning of the struggles in Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, and China. The end to the isolation of the Soviet Union and China is an immediate task of today.

The international victory of the proletariat is on the agenda. Trotskyism is no longer an isolated tendency, forced into a propaganda existence by the defeat of the working class at the hands of the Stalinists. The Stalinist bureaucracy fed on these defeats while Trotskyism fought to analyze these defeats in order to strengthen the working class for its historical task.

Basing himself on the strength of the working class Trotsky continued the fight for the international socialist revolution and an International capable of leading it. He continued the fight against bureaucracy within the Soviet Union that Lenin had begun and provided the theoretical understanding of the complex nature of Stalinism and the degeneration of the Soviet Union.

PL does not DARE confront Trotsky. Its superficial dealings with the Socialist Workers Party in articles such as "FBI-CP-SWP Combo Tries Baiting Panther Trap" is merely a way to get off the hook. The SWP today does not speak for Trotskyism.

At the same time PL has had to hack away at Stalin. This comes not from a Marxist analysis of Stalin's role but from a pragmatic reaction to the logic of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and in Dimitrov's rehabilitation by the Black Panthers. Stalin just "does not work" these days among increasing numbers of workers and students.

ADMISSION

In the November, 1969 issue of Progressive Labor PL makes the following admission: "Revisionism did not magically appear after the death of Stalin. Revisionism is always preceded by a series of opportunistic policies and practices. The slow growth of uncorrected opportunistic errors inevitably leads to the apparently sudden appearance of counterrevolutionary revisionism. . .

"After the historic October Revolution, Stalin defeated the counterrevolutionary line of Trotsky, who said it was impossible to build socialism in the Soviet Union unless there was a proletarian revolution in western Europe. . .

"As long as the CPSU was committed to building socialism as a base to advance the world revolution, its national tasks merged with its international tasks. But this correct position was short-lived; Stalin deviated toward nationalism and great power chauvinism. In the nineteen-thirties the official line was that Soviet socialism had become irreversible."

In other words Stalin's position was correct as long as he was fighting Trotsky within the Soviet Union, his theory of socialism in one country was correct and then somehow or other in the 1930's Stalin "deviated." We agree with PL that revisionism does not "magically appear". It did not magically appear any more in the 1930's than it did with PL's earlier contention that it appeared with Khrushchev in the 1950's. The roots of Stalin's policies in the '30s, and in particular the Popular Front, lay in the development of the bureaucracy and its cover-socialism in one country.

In the period after Lenin's death to the expulsion of the Left Opposition, the bureaucracy threatened the dictatorship of the proletariat within the Soviet Union through its adaptation to the Kulaks and its refusal to take up seriously the measures of a planned economy and industrialization. In Britain Stalin urged on the British Communist Party an alliance with the left wing of the trade union bureaucracy in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee which prevented the CP from giving independent leadership to the workers, tying the party and the working class to the bureaucracy and paving the way for the sellout by these same bureaucrats and the defeat of the British General Strike. This alli-

ance not with the working class but with the reformist forces within the working class was a precursor to the Popular Front.

SUPPORTS STALIN

PL, however, must maintain Stalin against Trotsky. To bolster Stalin they attempt to enlist Lenin in his behalf. In an article 'Don't Be a Sucker for the Bosses, Nationalism Divides Workers' PL states:

"Stalin upheld Lenin's belief that socialism could be built in a single country. Lenin believed that uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even one capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and having organized socialist production, would stand up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states" ("The United States of Europe Slogan")

Now this is one quote from Lenin. It is not as if PL studied Lenin and developed this understanding. This is precisely the quote which Stalin used against Trotsky. Obviously Mort Scheer, the author of this article, dragged it up from Stalin.

The use of this quote is specious in other ways however. It is used to defend Stalin's position that socialism could be built in Russia. In the first place Lenin was not talking about Russia at all but about advanced capitalist Western Europe. At the time he wrote it in 1915 he was not

even talking about the socialist revolution in Russia but about a democratic revolution.

Secondly, Lenin was not writing here on the thesis of socialism in one country but was discussing a tactic--a slogan. He was concerned that the slogan of the United States of Europe might have given rise to the idea that the proletarian revolution must begin simultaneously, emphasizing that not a single country must wait for the other countries in its struggle. Surely if as Stalin contended this was the first time Lenin advanced the thesis, he would have spent more than a paragraph on it. Above all Lenin was a very thorough man.

Thirdly, Lenin was saying something quite different in this quote--that the working class in each country ought to win the power and enter upon the socialist construction without waiting. When he said the "victory of socialism" he was using this loosely meaning the victory of the socialist revolution or the dictatorship of the proletariat. The "victorious proletariat then, he says, organizes "socialist production." He meant here the dictatorship of the proletariat organizes the operation of the factories taken from the capitalists and that is all.

To give any other interpretation is to literally deny everything Lenin said, wrote and did, the program of the Bolshevik Party, the program of the Third International in its Leninist period, the program of the Young Communist League which Lenin approved not to mention Marx and Engels.

POSTIVE?

PL is not in the least concerned with a serious, consistent analysis

--Stalin must be maintained against Trotsky. The strategy of Stalinism must be kept intact even if it means discrediting Stalin himself a bit. Actually despite PL's attacks on Khrushchev's Revelations on Stalin at the 22nd Party Congress, PL is following Khrushchev's road. While Khrushchev attacked Stalin, he recognized some of his merits and in particular saw Stalin's fight against Trotsky as a "positive" contribution. Khrushchev's condemnation of the "Cult of Stalin" in no way represented a break from the outlook of Stalinism but was conducted in order to reinforce that bureaucracy's (which Stalin built) hold over a working class which had become increasingly hostile after its sufferings at the hands of Stalin.

We stand behind the protest of the surviving children of the Bolsheviks whose parents were brutally murdered by Stalin and who in 1967 on the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution addressed a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union condemning the attempts by the Breshnev-Kosygin leadership to rehabilitate the "merits" of Stalin.

"All the attempts to whiten the black deeds of Stalin raise the danger of a repetition of the hideous tragedy that struck our party, our people and the whole communist movement.

"How can one praise Stalin after all that our people and the international communist movement have suffered because of him?

"This adulatory praise shackles our movement, weakens our ranks, destroys our power and makes the triumph of communism impossible.

"It is impossible to forget and to justify the crimes of Stalin in the name of any of his services."

To whiten his black deeds, to raise a single merit for Stalin, is to apolo-

gize for the policies which led thousands of workers to defeat, which liquidated literally the entire Bolshevik Party.

PL wants its cake and wants to eat it too. While being critical of Stalin, it also whitens his deeds. It is this ambiguity that haunts this tendency. Fully facing up to Stalinism would mean facing up to Trotskyism and this would mean the dissolution of PL as a party and surely it is not about to dissolve. PL bases itself not on principled politics and a consistent revolutionary strategy, not on the objective needs of the working class, but on opportunism and maintaining the "movement." Thus it criticizes Stalin and pretends to put forward a third alternative.

This involves PL in the most dishonest theoretical games. Nothing is beyond these people. They attempt to enlist Lenin in support of Stalin. They even use some of Trotsky's theoretical formulations against Stalin's Popular Front tactics. This is embodied in their more recent attacks on the "stage" theory and "all class unity." Despite all their red book waving, when it becomes efficacious they are quite willing to throw even Mao to the winds. "We are not batonists," PL says, "the old C.P. always awaited Stalin's baton before they would adopt a new policy." PL uses this baton business in order to justify a completely eclectic method. History, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and even Trotsky make up a stockpile from which PL can pick and choose this or that line depending on what suits their purposes at any particular time.

While Marxism is not a dogma nor a matter of batoning, it is a method and a very consistent method. Lenin did not just pick and choose from

Marx and Engels but based his development of Marxism on the entirety of their work. Where there were new developments which Marx had not foreseen, Lenin explained these in detail relating them at all times to the basic theses laid down by Marx and Engels.

This continuity is a crucial question because it is an expression of the Marxist method, seeing reality and history in its totality in all its sides and its development not as isolated moments and facts. To ignore this continuity is to ignore the history of the working class and its development.

Pragmatically PL realizes the importance of this continuity and this explains not only why they have not totally rejected Stalin but also how a man like Arne Swabeck in joining PL can completely erase over 30 years of bitter struggle. Swabeck was one of the founding members not only of the Communist Party in the U.S. but also of the Trotskyist movement. In 1967 he was expelled from the party he spent most of his life building, the Socialist Workers Party. His expulsion was in fact a symptom of the degeneration of the SWP and its bureaucratic handling of all opposition within it. Swabeck writing to Gerry Healy, Secretary of the Socialist Labor League, shortly after his expulsion said the following:

"The revolutionary origin of the American Trotskyist movement CAN NOT BE QUESTIONED. During the early years it was able to combat the increasing Stalinist degeneration and at the same time participate on a modest scale in the class struggle and build up its working class contacts--a development that reached its highest stage during the Minneapolis strikes and the subsequent events." (Our emphasis) A year later in an

article in Progressive Labor on James Weinstein and the history of the Socialist Party (May, 1969), Swabeck attempts to establish PL's continuity with "Marxism-Leninism" by completely ignoring the "Stalinist degeneration" and the "revolutionary origin of the American Trotskyist movement." He skips over 40 years of history to declare that Progressive Labor represents the continuity of the Marxist movement.

A year after that Swabeck in the

November, 1969 issue of "Progressive Labor" writes a whole article on the history of the trade union movement without mentioning the role of the SWP in those very important struggles in the 1930's.

This is the logic of PL's refusal to confront history and Stalinism, of its seeking continuity not in Trotskyism and in the working class but in Stalinism and the betrayals of the working class.

4 Popular Front or United Front?

Without getting to the roots of Stalinism, PL is incapable of developing a revolutionary strategy, a strategy that has its continuity in history from Marx and Engels and the First International, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party to the only force capable of drawing the lessons of the defeat of the working class in this century--the Trotskyist movement. Instead of a revolutionary strategy PL like other centrists attempts to substitute all sorts of "coalitions", "blocs", "fronts" and "alliances" which lack any kind of theoretical foundation, revolutionary tradition, or finished program and which are by nature ephemeral. The purpose of these alliances is to confine the program and the struggles of the working class within the limits of capitalism and bourgeois democracy.

"Alliances" of various classes on a reformist program sprinkled with revolutionary propaganda and rhetoric do not equal a revolutionary strategy. This is the program of Stalinism and the Popular Front.

In "Road to Revolution II" PL states the following on Stalin's policies during the thirties:

"The point is that there have been instances, and there will be more instances, in which different class forces work together in temporary and unstable alliances. But if each case is examined, it will be seen that a progressive aspect dominated the partial unity purpose. For example, during World War II the Soviet Union was in an alliance with the U.S. Both wanted the defeat of Hitler but each for a different reason. Since the defeat of Hitler was critical for mankind's progress to socialism, there was a basis for partial and temporary unity. And the result was that the socialist revolution did advance." (Progressive Labor, February-March, 1966)

DIMITROV

Here in one of PL's basic documents is a defense of the Popular Front policies of Stalin during the thirties. Lately, however, PL has

had to do a little backtracking as a result of the Panthers' revival of Dimitrov. In the August, 1969 issue of Progressive Labor in an article entitled 'FBI-CP-SWP Combo Tries Baiting Panther Trap,' they attack Dimitrov: 'In calling this conference BPP leaders have relied heavily on material from Georgi Dimitrov. Dimitrov's strategy of the Thirties is the C.P. strategy now. He said fascism was open terror against the people by the most ruthless section of the ruling class. Therefore communists must decide which are the 'progressive' capitalists and unite with them. . . We thought this old chestnut had died. We were wrong; it is being offered again by the BPP leaders. They would like to obscure things with quotes from Dimitrov.'

Clearly PL would like to obscure things by merely dismissing Dimitrov as an 'old chestnut'. Not one word is said about Stalin and the record of Dimitrov's policies in the '30's. Dimitrov was only a spokesman for Stalinism.

In the same issue, in an editorial 'Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism', the editors attack the conception of the two stage theory of the revolution and the conception of 'all class unity', the two principles on which the Popular Front was based and which Stalin himself developed during the early Chinese Revolution. PL even alludes to this: 'During the Chinese Revolution there were those who said that you couldn't skip stages and go from feudalism to socialism.' Still we have no mention of who those "those" were and no discussion of the Popular Front. PL in this article advocates 'Marxists-Leninists working within nationalist movements' and terms this a 'united front.' It also continues to defend

Stalin's "anti-fascist" front against Hitler: "Socialist leadership in the war against Hitler showed that socialism was not only powerful but was the most progressive force in the world."

In the August, 1969 issue of Challenge, PL again hits at Dimitrov - "The French Communists are hailed by Dimitrov. . . as 'setting an example to the whole world. . . of how to fight fascism. . . of how the tactics of the United Front should be conducted.' Yet within five years of Dimitrov's report, the Nazis controlled France without firing a shot! The 'anti-fascist united front' of France paved the road which Hitler took to Paris."

Two months later in the November 1969 issue of PL, PL finds that it just cannot completely separate Stalin from Dimitrov so we get a veiled attack on Stalin for his position during the '30's. Stalin we are told "deviated". "In the nineteen-thirties the official line was that Soviet socialism had become irreversible. Bourgeois nationalist culture then flourished. The great anti-fascist war became the Great Patriotic War in defense of the motherland. As part of a deal with the anti-Nazi imperialist powers, Stalin unilaterally dissolved the Comintern."

Still we have no analysis of the Popular Front. Does PL still hold the "socialist revolution did advance" through the alliance with U.S. imperialism? Clearly PL cannot come to grips with this question. In the same article that they denounce Stalin and two months after denouncing "all class unity", they proclaim the Popular Front policy: "A broad anti-imperialist united front based on the alliance of workers and peasants can and must be established. This alliance may include sections of the

national bourgeoisie, but certainly not as a leading force. . ." PL's Trade Union Program proposes building the same kind of "front" - "an anti-fascist, anti-racist Left-Center coalition."

No wonder PL wanted Dimitrov to be an "old chestnut". Is PL's formulation really different from Dimitrov's. Dimitrov posed it this way: "In the mobilization of the toiling masses for the struggle against fascism, the formation of a broad people's anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front is a particularly important task. The success of the entire struggle of the proletariat is closely connected with the establishment of a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand and the toiling peasantry and the basic mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie. . ."

UNITED FRONT

Despite all the squirming on this question and because PL cannot objectively confront the tactic of the united front - PL's conception of "a broad anti-imperialist united front" has a lot to do with both Stalin's and Dimitrov's Peoples Front but absolutely nothing to do with the united front tactic worked out at the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Communist International.

The tactic of the united front was developed in the context of the ebb in the revolutionary wave in Europe in a period of TEMPORARY retreat. The period was seen as one of preparation, of the Communists gaining the confidence of the masses by working for transitional demands and by assisting the working class to resist the attacks of the capitalists. This definitely did not mean submerging the party in mass movements, con-

cealing its identity or altering its organizational premises. The united front tactic was developed specifically for those countries in which important Communist Parties existed side by side with reformist parties and trade unions which held the leadership and loyalty of a large part or majority of the working class.

In other words the united front was a tactic developed for mass parties, and political organizations **BASING THEMSELVES ON THE WORKING CLASS**. It involved the relationship between the revolutionary party and the reformist parties within the working class. The tactic was an agreement between these parties which have **DIFFERENT** programs for joint action on specific issues. In this agreement there is absolutely no question of a common political program. Above all the independence and freedom of action of the Communist Parties had to be maintained.

The united front did not at all mean that the party should cease to struggle to establish its leadership of the class or to make completely clear the difference between revolutionary Marxism and reformism. But this difference was not to be made merely through propaganda but through **ACTION**. The task was to create **MASS** pressure which would force the reformist leaders to take part in joint action or explain why they would not. Through this struggle the situation would be created to win over part of the rank and file of the reformist organizations from their existing leaders.

The purpose of the united front and the tactics worked out at the Third Congress was not a matter of simply recruiting a few workers to the party through propaganda in a united front. The goal was: "the

formation not of small communist sects, trying by propaganda and agitation only to establish influence over the working masses, but participation in the struggle of the working masses, the direction of the struggle in a Communist spirit, and the creation in the course of experienced, large, revolutionary mass communist parties."

In the Theses on the United Front drafted by Trotsky for the enlarged plenum of the ECCI in 1922, he made absolutely clear the difference between the united front and a "Left Bloc" (a precursor to the Popular Front). "One of the most reliable methods of counteracting . . . ideas of the 'Left Bloc,' i.e., a bloc between the workers and a certain section of the bourgeoisie against another section of the bourgeoisie, is through promoting persistently and resolutely the idea of a BLOC BETWEEN ALL THE SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST THE WHOLE BOURGEOISIE." In relation to those who "seek to use the idea of the united front for agitating in favor of unification with the reformists" Trotsky said they "must be mercilessly ejected from our party."

This is a far cry from the tactics of Stalinism. During the period when a united front was desperately required in Germany to mobilize a united working class against Hitler and prepare for the struggle for power, Stalin opposed a united front with the Social Democracy which held the leadership of the majority of workers in Germany. The Social Democracy was termed "social fascist" and the German C.P. at one point even formed a bloc with the fascists against it. This enabled the fascists to divide the working class, to defeat it and come to power (See our coming series by Robert Black

"Fascism and the German Working Class")

It was only Trotsky in his extensive work on Germany in the period prior to the victory of Hitler that called for the united front, who said that without this struggle the Germany working class would go down to defeat.

POPULAR FRONT

From the suicidal policy of "social fascism" Stalin moved to the "Peoples Front." This front became not a united front of WORKING CLASS organizations for action against the bourgeoisie but a front of "people" of all classes including a section against another section of the bourgeoisie.

For Stalin this meant instead of mobilizing the working class against imperialism in all its forms including fascism through the struggle for political power by the working class, an "anti-fascist" struggle in defense of bourgeois democracy. Stalin formed an "alliance" with the "democracies", i.e., the U.S., England, France, against Germany. The price Stalin paid for these alliances was subservience of the Communist parties to capitalism and the agreement that the working class would be held in check.

The Popular Front took its toll in all the countries. In France the Popular Front Government of Blum composed of the Communist Party, Socialist Party and the Radical Party became the force with the full support of the French C.P. that put down the revolutionary strikes of 1936 and 1937. During the Spanish Civil War the Blum government, despite the fact that an overwhelming majority of the French workers supported the Spanish workers and peasants, refused to give aid to the Spanish Revolution.

refused aid even to the Popular Front government in Spain. The French C.P. at the most carried on careful propaganda asking the Blum government to "lift the embargo."

In Spain the price the workers and peasants paid for Stalin's alliances with the bourgeoisie was in blood. In Spain the Stalinist leadership first prevented the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants from achieving victory through a socialist revolution by supporting the liberal bourgeoisie under the guise that the struggle was not for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" but was "to defend the democratic republic." But then even the latter was subordinated to the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policy. When the French and British capitalists demanded a stable capitalist government based not only on the liberal bourgeoisie but also the big bourgeoisie behind Franco, the Stalinists went along. To this end the

Stalinists conciliated with the fascists and became the most ruthless exterminators of the revolution. Thousands of working class militants were murdered not by the fascists but by the counterrevolutionary Stalinist thugs. (See our upcoming series by Robert Black, "Thirty Years After--Lessons of the Spanish Civil War")

The Popular Front was no accident. It was the logical consequence of socialism in one country and the defense of the privileges of the bureaucracy. It was a very conscious policy and required not just the subjugation of the working class internationally but also the complete liquidation of the Bolshevik party by tortures, concentration camps, frame up trials and executions. Stalin literally decapitated the leadership of the Red Army, destroyed almost the entire military cadre that had gained its experience in the Civil War. This is how Stalinism defended the dictatorship of the proletariat.

5 Mao & the Bloc of Four Classes

Progressive Labor is stuck with the Popular Front and its toll. As with its approach to Stalin it finds some merits as well as demerits. Everything is "on the one hand" and "on the other hand". "Marxism-Leninism" is reduced to a middle course incapable of taking a clear, sharp stand on anything. PL establishes its line by trying to stick together bits and pieces of everything instead of making an independent scientific study of the whole.

First PL seeks to separate out the Popular Front and Dimitrov from

Stalin and Stalinism. It attacks Dimitrov and denounces the program of the NLF as "a variant of the Dimitrov 'popular front' theme of the 7th World Congress of the C.I." with "envisions of the peaceful transition to socialism". While denouncing the Viet Cong for receiving aid from the Soviet Union, it praises the Popular Front or alliance Stalin made with U.S. imperialism during the Second World War. According to PL, "socialist leadership" was given during this period and the "socialist revolution did advance".

On the other hand they are not completely satisfied with Stalin's line in the 1930's - he "deviated" - "as part of a deal with the anti-Nazi imperialist powers Stalin unilaterally dissolved the Comintern."

But PL still maintains that WW II was a "just anti-fascist war". It was correct for the American CP to support this "just anti-facist war" but the problem was that the CP "glossed over the class antagonisms".

The point is that the Popular Front and the conception of a "just anti-fascist war" were what glossed over "class antagonisms". The problem with the American C.P., says PL, is that it "did not help the working class understand the necessity to defend communists." The real problem of the American C.P., as well as the Popular Front as a whole, is that it prevented the mobilization of the working class against capitalism and for the struggle for political power. This exposes the centrist character of PL. They defend capitalism, defend the brake on the working class in its struggle for power under the cover of propaganda about "class antagonisms" and the "dictatorship of the proletariat". In other words it is correct to defend capitalism as long as you propagandize against it.

PL turns against "all class unity" and admits "we have learned that you cannot unite with the so-called liberal bourgeoisie." But then on the other hand they contend: "Communists strive for unity in the anti-imperialist struggle". Such unity can take place "around an immediate ANTI-IMPERIALIST PROGRAM-- 'U.S. Get Out of Vietnam Now!' or 'Smash the Imperialist aggressors!' (our emphasis). This unity can be 'with all who genuinely oppose the imperialist enemy, whether they are nationalists,

reformists or liberals.'" All of this is fine as long as "communists" propagandize against "nationalist and bourgeois ideology".

While PL attacks the Popular Front in France and Browder in the U.S., it continues to support Stalin against Trotsky. But it was Trotsky who fought against the Popular Front. How does PL stand on Trotsky's analysis of France in this period? Where does PL stand on the defeats in Spain? We can predict that they will be full square in back of Stalin, for it was in Spain that Stalin defended his crushing of the revolution on the grounds of wiping out "Trotskyism".

PL can pick away at Dimitrov but it cannot give up the Popular Front or "all class unity" because it is precisely on this basis that PL maintains its political bloc not only with Stalin but also Mao, and it is on this basis, as we will see in the rest of this series, that PL carries out its work.

NEW DEMOCRACY

Despite PL's railings, particularly in the August, 1969 issue of PL, against the "stage" theory and "all class unity", it is these premises upon which PL is built. In the November, 1969 issue of PL they reaffirm these conceptions:

"Mao Tse-tung developed the strategy of the Peoples Democratic Dictatorship, or New Democracy. He believed that to win victory over imperialism three weapons were essential: a well-disciplined party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of people, an army under the leadership of such a party, a united front of all revolutionary classes and all revolutionary groups under the leadership of such a

party.' "

Now the strategy of the "Peoples Democratic Dictatorship" and the "New Democracy" were in fact not developed by Mao but by Stalin and before him the Mensheviks, in the form of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants and the "bloc of four classes".

Stalin through his representative in China, Borodin, used these conceptions in order to justify the Chinese Communist Party's entry into and subordination to the nationalist Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek. Stalin and later Mao held that the revolution in China was a bourgeois democratic revolution. Stalin, following the Mensheviks' position after February in Russia, said that first China had to go through the democratic revolution. The instrument for this struggle was to be the "bloc of four classes" - i.e., workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The revolution in China therefore was to take place not through a Bolshevik Party but a "workers and peasants party" as Stalin named the Kuomintang. "We are convinced", said Stalin, "that the Kuomintang will succeed in playing the same role in the East and thereby destroy the foundations of rule of the imperialists in Asia." The Chinese Communist Party was ordered to enter the Kuomintang and submit to its leadership. Stalin's representative in China said: "The present period is one in which the Communists do coolie service for the Kuomintang". Stalin admitted Chiang Kai-Shek into the Comintern with only one opposing vote--Trotsky's.

LENIN

Stalin completely broke from Leninism on this question. Lenin had be-

fore February formulated the concept of the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" in relation to the democratic revolution. After the February revolution he abandoned this formulation and took up very sharply all those who wanted to continue it and to limit the program of the Bolsheviks to the democratic revolution. In April he fought this out with a whole section of the Bolshevik party including Stalin. Lenin said: "Whoever now talks only about the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' has lost touch with life, has, in virtue of this circumstance, gone over, in practice, to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; and he ought to be relegated to the museum of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionaries (or, as one might call it, the museum of 'old Bolsheviks')"

In abandoning this formulation Lenin stood firmly with Trotsky on the question of the permanent revolution. Trotsky's basic work on this question, "A Review and Some Perspectives" was in fact published by the Communist International in 1921.

Later, at the First Congress of the Communist International, Lenin again took up this question of posing the dictatorship in terms of 'democracy in general' and 'dictatorship in general' "without posing the question of the class concerned". Lenin said that this "non-class" and "above-class" presentation of the question was "an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle." In his remarks Lenin makes this crystal clear: "There can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois lamenta-

tions."

It is these lamentations that went out from Stalin, from Mao, and now from PL. The "People's Democratic Dictatorship" is nothing but the formulation of "dictatorship in general" or "democracy in general". "People" is not a class presentation of the matter -- the capitalists are people too, remember. PL wants to cloud the issue by stating that the "essence of a People's Democratic Dictatorship" is a "form of the dictatorship of the proletariat." But there is no third road--as Lenin put it--the dictatorship of the proletariat means precisely that and nothing else--any other formulation is reactionary and is a cover for the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."

This petty bourgeois road to revolution is completely tied up with the conception of the "united front of all revolutionary classes", the "bloc of four classes" or "all class unity". From Marx to Lenin, the Marxist movement never had any other conception outside of the working class being the ONLY revolutionary class. This is pointed out clearly in the Communist Manifesto: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class." The middle class and the peasantry, Marx and Engels said, were "conservative", even "reactionary". To become revolutionary, the Manifesto states, these classes must "desert their own standpoint" in order to place themselves with the working class.

Lenin even during the period when he spoke of the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" never equated their class interests. He continually warned that there would have to be a struggle against the peasantry. Above all, Lenin pointed out

the absolute necessity for the working class to organize separately from all other classes.

Lenin stated explicitly that there could never be a "fusion of the different classes or parties of the proletariat and the peasantry" or "even any sort of lasting concord". This he said would be "fatal" for the revolutionary party of the working class. The proletarian revolution could be carried through, according to Lenin, only on the basis of the working class organized in a separate party and on the basis of a working class program, leading behind it the other classes.

It was Stalin's rejection of this basic strategy, his tactics of the "bloc of four classes" which led to the bloody defeat in China in 1927, the murder of thousands of workers and communists at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek. Even after the defeat Stalin affirmed that his perspective had been correct.

In 1937 the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung again entered into a "bloc of four classes" with the Kuomintang to fight Japan. Mao gave full expression to Stalin's formulations: "Is the anti-Japanese national front merely a united front of the two parties-- the Kuomintang and the CCP? No, it is a united front of the whole nation.... The two parties are undoubtedly the leading elements within this great united front...." The revolution according to Mao was for the establishment of a "united democratic republic." The agreement imposed in the united front required that the CCP abandon its policy of overthrowing the Kuomintang and its land reforms and that it put the Red Army at the disposal of the Nationalists.

Chiang Kai-shek used the "united front" to direct most of his attacks against the Communists and not the Japanese imperialists. Chiang received the complete support of Stalin all the while. When a group of Kuomintang military leaders defected with 170,000 troops to the Communists, Stalin denounced it as a Japanese plot. But Mao welcomed the revolt.

After the war Stalin tried to get the Chinese Communist Party to negotiate an alliance with Chiang at the very same time that Chiang's army was attacking Communist strongholds. Mao broke from Stalin's collaborationist line realizing that there was going to be no possibility of a coalition with Chiang--either it was going to be the victory of the revolution under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party or the victory of Chiang and reaction. While Mao was denouncing Chiang as a "fascist chieftain", Stalin was praising him as a "democrat" and was supplying him with war goods which he used against the Communists.

BREAK

It was Mao's break with Chiang and with the policies of the "bloc of four classes" and the independent mobilization of the masses by the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army that achieved the great victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949.

It was Mao's break from Stalin's policies which directly led to the victory of the revolution in China. But this represented only an empirical break from Stalinism. After the Chinese Communist Party came to power, it began to establish a new bureaucracy and continued to put for-

ward the very same policies of Stalinism: socialism in one country, the democratic dictatorship and the bloc of four classes or the "new democracy." Theoretically Mao and the Chinese Communist Party defended the very perspective which if it had been followed in practice by the CCP would have led to the defeat of the revolution and the victory of Chiang.

It is only Trotskyism which today bases itself on the strategy that actually led to victory in China, and the strategy of world revolution which alone can guarantee the victory of the revolution in China.

Like Stalin, the Maoists today maintain the position that socialism can be built in China or has been built in China without the spread of the revolution to the advanced countries. Why is it that Mao has not called for the formation of a new international? Mao like Stalin seeks to substitute alliances with the nationalists rather than to mobilize the working class for the overthrow of capitalism.

INDONESIA

The same policy that led to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in 1927 was urged on the Indonesian Communist Party by the Chinese Communist Party--support to and a bloc with Sukarno who in turn opened the way for the generals and the massacre of a million people. Clearly Mao did not evaluate and draw the lessons of the very revolution he led. It is precisely the fact that Maoism cannot get to the roots of Stalinism (or even Maoism) that endangers the revolutionary movements under Maoist leadership and the future existence of the Chinese Revolution.

PL today admits that it made a mistake about Indonesia--this is almost five years later--but it cannot probe the causes or the basis for this defeat without totally rejecting Stalinism. Just as China of 1927 was repeated in Indonesia because of the Maoists' failure to grapple with these questions, so history can repeat itself again under the leadership of such forces as PL.

PL's bloc with Maoism is a bloc not with the actual practice of the Chinese Revolution but with the i-

deology which if implemented would have led to the defeat of that revolution--"alliances" with "liberals", with the middle class, hamstringing the working class under the leadership of reformist forces.

This political bloc, the bloc of four classes, and the fight for "people's democracy" as opposed to the fight by the working class independently for power, is at the heart of all of PL's actual practice-- all its "alliances and "coalitions".

6 Internationalism & Capitalist Crisis

Adherence to "socialism in one country," meant for Stalinism a complete break from the traditions of the Marxist movement, and in particular, from the program of the Third International in its Leninist period. It meant a return to the politics of the Second International--to a nationalist and reformist program. This called for the subordination of the working class and the communist parties to the reformist leaders from the trade union bureaucracy to the bourgeois nationalists through blocs, fronts and alliances.

This perspective stands in bold contradiction to the program developed by the young Communist International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The Third International in its Leninist period represented the highest expression of the class struggle and the development of an international strategy for the working class.

Lenin, as we have said, was not content to rest on the laurels of October but saw the primary task of

the working class in the Soviet Union to be the fight for the international revolution. The struggle to construct the Third International was begun by Lenin in 1914 against the betrayers of the Second International, who based their "socialist" programs on a national perspective, on reformism and collaboration with the bourgeoisie. The International was for these strictly "national" parties a gathering to exchange experiences and proclaim solidarity with one another with no common international party. The parties of the Second International did not renounce the goal of socialism or even Marxism; they just put that goal away for the rosy future.

Stalinism represented a return to the outlook of the Second International. The need for the international revolution was not openly rejected in its propaganda; it was just put into mothballs and thus removed from the practice of the parties of the Comintern. "The movement," i.e. building socialism in one country, became

everything; the "goal," i.e. the international socialist revolution became "nothing." During the Second World War the parties of the Comintern in the major capitalist countries were instructed to support their own "progressive" bourgeoisie. Stalinism threw aside all of the analysis and strategy for the socialist revolution which had been hammered out during the first five years of the Communist International.

NARROW NATIONALISM

PL today bases itself on "socialism in one country" and the narrow nationalist outlook that flows from it. The "American Exceptionalism" for which it attacks Browder and Lovestone in its basic document, "Road to Revolution I" is merely the logic of Stalinism's "socialism in one country." It is precisely "American Exceptionalism" that guides PL today. Because it has cut itself off from the strategy of the Third International, from an international program, it is left with impressions of the conditions and developments within the U.S.

Internationalism is for PL ("Road to Revolution II") "self-reliance" plus the slogan "Workers of the World Unite." Or better yet this is how Milt Rosen, Chairman of PL, puts it: "Internationalism, the support of the revolutionary process everywhere, the subordination of the local struggle to the over-all class struggle, is a sign of growing maturity. In the final analysis internationalism, the knowledge of the fact that the working class and the oppressed people are united in a common cause and against a common international enemy, gives the working class a great deal of leverage." ("Building a Base In The Working Class") In other words

internationalism is the "knowledge of" and sympathy for workers in other countries. This is a completely idealist and subjective conception and becomes the cover for "American Exceptionalism."

A narrow, pragmatic (or as Chairman Rosen puts it "common sense"), nationalist outlook is veiled underneath slogans of "Workers of the World Unite." Internationalism is reduced to various national parties or workers in various countries cheering each other on. Internationalism remains an idea or a feeling.

What is missing from all of this is an international strategy based on an analysis of the objective world and an international party to put this strategy into practice.

Marx and Engels saw the development of capitalism not as an isolated national phenomenon but as an international process. The "Communist Manifesto" was written as an international program. It contained much more than just the slogan "Workers of the World Unite."

LENIN

Lenin deepened this understanding with his work on imperialism. With the growth of monopoly capitalism and the export of finance capital, the national economies had become inextricably linked in an international system. Lenin saw Russia not isolated from the world economy but the weakest link in the chain. He saw this epoch as the epoch of wars and revolutions internationally. All the objective conditions for socialist revolution had been created. It was this understanding that laid the basis for the program of the Third International.

Trotsky in the Manifesto for the First Congress as well as in his other

works during this period outlines these developments in the context of World War I and the decline of imperialism. The program of the communist parties was based not on sympathy but upon a characterization of the present epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism. The international program was not seen merely as a collection of national programs or of their common features. Rather it was based on an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions. The national orientation of the proletariat flows only from an international orientation and not the other way around. This is the difference between proletarian internationalism and "socialism in one country."

PL uses Mao and China to hide what are really pretensions to internationalism. Neither PL nor its mentor, despite their propaganda, concern themselves with the real task of internationalism, building a party, an international leadership, capable of guiding the working class to power.

CRISIS

Having rejected an international strategy, PL can have no understanding either of the past, the present or the future. While it talks abstractly about the contradictions of capitalism it cannot relate these to the objective world.

Nowhere, we repeat nowhere, in all the seemingly endless copy of Progressive Labor and Challenge can we find a serious, objective historical analysis of capitalism and its development today. A serious analysis does not consist of merely quotes gleaned

from the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

The best it can offer for this period is that the crisis of U.S. capitalism is a product of the war. "The failure of the elections farce (Presidential elections), as we said previously, was caused by the inability of imperialism to disguise its crisis. The core of that crisis is the peoples war... The Vietnamese people's war severely battered the U.S. economy, developed the political consciousness of the American workers, brought many into actions in strikes against bad, war-induced working conditions, produced working class opposition to U. S. aggression. . ." (Progressive Labor, February, 1969).

The war is an expression of the crisis not its cause. The fight of the Vietnamese workers and peasants has deepened the political crisis of imperialism. Is PL saying that if the war ends, there will be no crisis? Is it not true that large sections of the ruling class in this country want a settlement in order to get their house in order to drive back the offensive of the working class in Europe and the U.S.?

We might add here that Miss Jewell's attempts in the November, 1969 issue of PL are not much of an improvement. She sees that war as the way in which imperialism has somehow avoided this crisis.

It is the same simple minded empiricism which prevents PL from having any understanding of the May-June events in France which according to PL ("Inside The French Rebellion" World Revolution, Summer, 1968) were sparked off or "helped along by a militant student movement," or even the struggles in the U.S. which in many cases they see as being sparked off by the "national" struggles of black workers.

REFLECTION

The Vietnam War, the May-June events in France, the struggles in the U.S., Czechoslovakia, and in fact all over the world are a reflection of the deepening crisis of capitalism. Capitalism has not remained the same since the days of Marx. The First World War marked the decline of imperialism, the inability of capitalism to develop the means of production progressively. The crisis today is in part an accumulation of capitalism's attempt particularly since WWI to overcome its historical crisis --the tendency towards the falling rate of profit.

Each step capital has taken in this direction has merely deepened the crisis of the system as a whole. All of the measures taken during the boom period after World War II to rebuild and expand capital are now coming home to roost in the form of a tendency towards a crisis of overproduction, a contracting world market, and a liquidity crisis. This is what underlies the severe monetary crisis, the recessionary policies of the capitalist governments, and the upheavals in the working class.

The international capitalist class must take on the working class to stave off this crisis. In the U.S., as in other capitalist countries, the impact of Nixon's recessionary moves are already being felt by the working class in the form of unemployment which rose to 4% in September and speed-up. Inflation continues to soar.

The strategy of the capitalists is to hack away at the power of the trade unions through unemployment creating conditions under which wages can be slashed and the standard of living of the working class lowered. This is why today the wage struggle and the struggle against unemployment take

on a new meaning--they pose directly the struggle not just against individual employers but against the state itself. These struggles pose the question of the need for the working class to fight for political power.

This is a different period. The boom of the '50s is over--reforms are not forthcoming. The working class must fight today just to maintain what they gained in the earlier period.

This present crisis poses not just the question of a recession but every measure that is taken to control the situation could very well act as a springboard for bringing the whole rotten structure down on the order of 1929. This is why new methods of struggle are required. There is no room for complacency and the talk of "long range" mobilizations.

It is this understanding that flows from the whole development of Marxist political economy from Marx, to Lenin, to the analysis made of this epoch during the first five years of the Comintern.

LONG RANGE

Cut off from this analysis PL cannot begin with an objective world view of the class struggle. Rather it begins subjectively--with Progressive Labor. Its perspective is designed to advance not the working class but Progressive Labor. Therefore the goal of socialism is conveniently pushed to the "long range." An objective analysis of the development of capitalism and the crisis today is replaced with idealism. For PL the fundamental premises for revolution are not social and economic but moral.

"The fight for socialism," says PL in the August, 1969 issue of FL,

"will probably take a long time. In the course of this struggle the workers will recognize socialism as the only course to their salvation." It sees no real crisis, so it sees no urgency in the present situation. Eventually the workers will just realize that socialism is a better idea.

This comes with all the accoutrements appropriate to the Salvation Army missionaries but hardly to the class fighters of Marxism. Communists become the preachers, even martyrs at times, "serving the people," bringing correct ideas but not struggle. Such an outlook is the out-

look not of a proletarian revolutionary but a middle class radical which sets himself above the class and seeks to do "a favor" for the workers.

All this insipid middle class whining is a cover for opportunism, for PL's refusal to take up the struggle to mobilize the working class for the struggle for power now. For this is precisely the task posed today. Capitalism faces today not just a "business as usual" situation, as PL would have it, but a crisis of breakdown on the order of 1929. The working class paid heavily then and it will pay even a dearer price this time.

7 On the "Center-Left Coalition"

It is in this period that PL seeks to hamstring the working class with the very policies which crushed it in the past. PL is preparing even more brutal betrayals by tying the working class through alliances and coalitions to the middle class and to the capitalists when above all what is required is this independent struggle against capitalism. It is the program of reform not revolution which underlies PL's "Trade Union Program" as well as its practice in the unions.

PL begins by saying in its recently published "Trade Union Program" (PL, August, 1969) that of course the "ultimate goal" is the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and that of course only the working class is capable of carrying this through. This, however, is "long range." With this aside, PL maps out its "main strategy" for today--the construction of a "Left-Center coalition to lead the working class."

At the heart of the "Left-Center Coalition" is the same methodological approach inherent in the conception of the "bloc of four classes" and the Popular Front or "Peoples Democracy." As Walter Linder describes it in the November, 1969 issue of Progressive Labor, it is "a coalition of revolutionary, communist forces along with the mass of workers ready to fight the bosses." Further elaboration of this coalition involves a mechanical, formal set of definitions similar to a complicated set of instructions for Chinese checkers. It is totally removed from the actual existence and development of the working class.

PL divides the trade union movement up into the Left, the Center, and the Right. The Center as defined by PL is made up of "the vast majority of workers; its leadership is militant, class oriented but non-communist." It is "ready

to fight for immediate demands. . . under rules established by the ruling class. Their struggle, therefore, is contained within the system and does not challenge it." The "Right" consists of such labor bureaucrats as Meany and Reuther but not all of the labor leaders. The Left is made up of "communists following a path of revolution, not reform, based on Marxism-Leninism."

What is missing from this description of the Left-Center-Right is political and programmatic content of these "forces" and of the "coalition." The Center is set up as something neutral standing between the Left and the Right. The Left-Center coalition is also considered neutral standing between revolution on the Left and reformism on the Right. This is the kind of reasoning Stalin used to justify the Kuomintang as a neutral arena for the struggle of the masses.

The political consciousness of what PL calls the Center is not neutral. As Lenin pointed out in "What Is To Be Done": "We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc." Similarly, Lenin repeats: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the ONLY choice is--either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no

middle course. . ."

While PL admits to this, the whole conception of the Left-Center coalition as a leadership for the working class denies it. The very conception of a "coalition" implies a completely external and separate relationship between the "left" and the working class, not an interpenetration of the two, and through this interpenetration a change. It remains a static relation. This is because PL cannot confront the question of changing the trade union consciousness of the "Center." The program of the coalition is the program of the center, the program of reformism, which PL contends must be the basis for leadership within the trade union movement.

BUREAUCRACY

By refusing to pose an alternative to trade union consciousness and making this the basis for leadership in the working class, PL ties the workers through its Left-Center coalition to the bureaucracy. By basing its coalition on the perpetuation of the consciousness of the center, it subordinates the working class to capitalism, and in this sense forms an alliance between the working class and capitalism.

This "coalition" is justified on a number of equally erroneous bases, all of which have as their aim restricting the working class as a whole within the confines of reformism.

First is the fact that "communists" are present in this coalition, although as PL makes clear they do not play a leading role. The role of the "Left" is to help the "Center" along the sidelines--"pointing out" little lessons and propagandizing on "political truths about the state." The "Left" cheers on the "Center" while at the

same time it uses it as a "base" to protect PL from "red-baiting" and as a fishing pond from which PL can recruit a few workers.

Secondly, for PL the workers must fight now on the trade union level and later the political. While PL attacks the "stage" theory, the whole basis on which the Left-Center Coalition is constructed is precisely this "theory." As Lenin once said: "When the 'ultimate goal' is pushed further and further away from our agitation, that is reformism."

Thirdly, and by far the most absurd of PL's contentions is that the working class has spontaneously come to political consciousness, has in fact broken from reformism. This is what PL contended after the last Presidential election. This was no more than a cover for its inability to pose a political alternative. "The main lesson," PL said in the February 1969 issue of PL, "is that more and more working people are giving up on elections. . . we were entirely right to place confidence in the working class, that we were right in expecting the elections to fail to provide window dressing for imperialist rule." Apathy is not going to lead the working class anywhere. It does not represent the conscious rejection of "imperialists rule" or the fight for an alternative to its rule.

PL's alternative "Don't Vote! Organize!" expressed its inability to pose this political alternative, to pose to the mass of the working class the need to take up the struggle for power. PL told the workers to organize, organize a more militant trade union fight. The question of how to take this fight to victory was left unanswered. The point is that the working class cannot defeat "the bosses," "racism," "strikebreak-

ing" the "sell-out leaders" without taking these struggles on the economic level onto the political level.

Fourthly, PL's perspective boils down to propaganda about the correctness of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" combined with the trade union struggle. This is not sufficient for raising consciousness. If that was all there was to revolutionary struggle the working class would have come to power long ago.

POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Lenin in his polemic "Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder" took up these latter two points in relation to the resistance of the Communist movement in Britain to working in the Labour Party. "Revolution," Lenin says, "is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses, and never by propaganda alone." Lenin points out that the "fundamental law of all great revolutions is that the masses must have their political experience." The "mere repetition of the truths of 'pure' Communism, are of no avail."

PL's "ultra-leftism" is hardly a question of their being over zealous about revolution, rather it is so much jitterbug to hide its refusal to take on the central task of the revolutionary party of raising the political consciousness of the working class as a whole for the struggle to take the power. This is not an easy task. PL has rejected it in favor of "alliances," "coalitions" which keep the working class subordinated to capitalism.

Contrary to PL's schematism, Marxism does not form "alliances" with the working class, but bases

itself on the working class as the only revolutionary force. The task of Marxists is to fight within the working class, within the trade unions, to organize the rank and file workers on the basis of a program which poses within the concrete struggles of today the necessity to fight for political power.

Such a program is a transitional program; it does not ignore the economic struggle but generalizes it, uniting the class from industry to industry on the basis of demands that confront the objective needs of the working class and poses the way to obtaining victory.

The conception of the transitional program is not new. It has its origins within the Marxist movement and in particular in the program of the Bolshevik Party. It was developed more fully by the Communist International during its first five years. It stood in contrast to the minimum program of the Social Democracy and the maximum program of the "Left Communists."

Here is how the Young Communist International posed it in "The Fundamental Problems of the Young Communist Movement" published in 1922: "Even in their contents our demands are absolutely different from the reformist demands put forward by Social Democracy. These people have drawn up a program in which they set forth their minimum demands, and in which they have allowed themselves to be guided by the principle of going out for only those that can be carried out under the rule of capitalism. We, however, in fighting for our demands, do not think it necessary to stop to consider whether or not they can find a place in the profit-making system of the capitalist class. Indeed we make a full turn about and make de-

mands of such a nature as will spell the doom of capitalism." These demands "are not to be considered individually, but as going to form a system."

At the same time these demands are part and parcel of the party's struggle for socialism: "All our agitational work and other activities are inspired by the consciousness that no lasting improvement can be brought about in the position of the masses of the proletariat and no reorganization of youth labor is possible as long as capitalism remains in existence. . . We raise these demands in order to take the working class through a struggle so that the masses of workers will realize, if they are to be able to live, the capitalist society must die."

This was the perspective of the international movement in order to lead the working class to power. Stalin tossed this strategy to the winds when he took up the banner of "socialism in one country." He replaced it with an alliance with reformism through the Popular Front.

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

Trotsky fought Stalin for the strategy of the early Communist International. He developed it in the light of the strategic experiences of the working class in the decades after. This work found its expression in the founding document of the Fourth International--the Transitional Program--"The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International."

The transitional program is based on the class struggle in this epoch. It raises such demands as the 30 hour week, the escalator clause, nationalization of basic industry under workers control, defense guards, and the for-

mation of a workers government to carry out this program.

In the U.S. this program is posed in the context of the fight for a labor party. The mass of American workers have not taken the step taken by workers in every major capitalist country, of politically breaking from the capitalist parties and forming their own party. The demand for a labor party is the means of overcoming the contradiction between the development of a fantastically powerful trade union movement and its inability to develop a political arm in opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties. The fight for the labor party on the basis of the transitional program, a socialist program, is the way to drive a wedge between the working class and capitalist politics. This political consciousness is what lays the basis for the formation of a MASS revolutionary party.

To abstain from this political struggle is to leave the working class under the grips of capitalism. The gap between the small forces of the vanguard and the necessities for independent political struggle posed by the situation facing American workers cannot be overcome simply by urging workers to support it. It is in the process of the struggle by the working class for a political alternative, that the revolutionary party is built. It is not a question of two stages but part of the same process.

While PL recognizes the contradiction between the power of the unions and their limitations, it can pose no way of overcoming this contradiction. In its "Trade Union Program" it states: "This dual character of U.S. trade unions--tremendous class struggle alongside an inability

to move beyond the capitalist system --has marked the last 100 years."

This is correct but what is the alternative: "Something more than trade unionism is needed to lead the battle against the ruling class all the way, to a new system." PL cannot tell us what this "something more is."

"Understanding the necessity for the long range goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat" and propagandizing about it is not enough. The working class learns only through political experience in struggle.

PL cannot come to grips with this task so it zigs and zags from opportunism to ultra-leftism. Trotskyism is the only tendency which bases itself on the strategy of the Transitional Program, on the strategy which led to the victorious October Revolution and was developed for the international working class by the early Communist International. This is the only alternative. PL has refused to confront Trotskyism. It has taken the road not to revolution but to betrayal through its bloc with Stalinism.

The "Left-Center coalition" is the reflection within the working class of Stalin's and Mao's "bloc of four classes", "Peoples' Democracy", or the Popular Front. To make a "bloc" with the working class means to subordinate the interests of the working class to the interests of other classes. Such a bloc can be made only on the basis of the present consciousness of the class, trade union consciousness. It is precisely upon this false consciousness that the bureaucracy rests in the trade unions. The "Left-Center coalition" means a bloc with the trade union bureaucracy and the subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie.

8 PL's Program & Role 8 In the Unions

The difference between a transitional program and the reformist program of Progressive Labor can be shown if we look at PL's actual program and practice in the trade unions.

In the October, 1969 issue of CHALLENGE, PL attempts to deal with the crisis in the construction industry. PL sees the problem as a "scheme" of "Big Business" to utilize non-union labor to replace union labor. "If all the workers are union workers, the work can be shared out fairly." PL contends that if all the labor is union "there will be more work to share out." "Don't forget," says PL, "there is a rising need for construction."

What exactly does PL think is the meaning of the 75% cut in construction expenditures by Nixon? Does PL contend that this cut represents Nixon's recognition of the "rising need for construction" or that this is going to mean that "there will be more work to share out." Above all this cut will mean a slash in jobs, union and non-union, in construction.

Already lay-offs have started on the construction sites, working conditions are deteriorating rapidly, inflation has cut away at the wages. Racial discrimination is used on the job to keep the workers divided. The blacks are often given the worst jobs and are used as a threat by the employers against the white workers. The union bureaucracies have perpetuated this situation.

Nixon's cuts will mean that more

bitter attacks are in store. These cuts are combined with the plans not only of "big business" but the government to destroy the power of the unions. Secretary of Labor Schultz has demanded an all out war against the construction unions, to lower the wages and create conditions under which fewer and less skilled workers will be necessary. In the cards is a plan to chain the unions to the government through a tri-partite board including the government, the bosses, and labor whose purpose it will be to police the "inflationary" wage demands. This is combined with the attempts to take the training programs out of the hands of the union and put them in the hands of the government to break down the skills and train workers who will do all jobs, using unskilled workers to do skilled work at unskilled wages and increasing the productivity of the workers.

But the major question in implementing these policies is the power of the unions. The chief part of the scheme of the government and the employers is a good dose of unemployment to weaken and eventually destroy the unions by setting employed workers against unemployed.

PL absolutely ignores this attack. It lies to the workers when it says that "there will be more work to share out." Nixon's cuts have made that clear enough. There cannot possibly be a fair sharing of the work, union and non-union combined under conditions of rapidly increasing unemployment.

These attacks are not confined to construction alone but face the working class as a whole. The capitalists in all countries are taking measures to control a crisis which is heading the capitalist economy to breakdown. This is the meaning of Nixon's recessionary policies and Pompidou's austerity measures. Unemployment jumped 0.5% in September, 1969 alone and will continue to rise. Unemployment is both a result of the attempts to slowdown the economy and at the same time is a conscious policy of the employers and the government to drive down the working class. All the wage control schemes the governments in the capitalist countries have attempted to institute have proved futile as the working class continues its offensive.

Through unemployment the employers and the government hope to remove the impediment of the trade unions in order to slash wages, take a whiplash to the workers who are on the jobs, and destroy completely the independence of the working class from the state. Racism will become the heat to ignite the fire to divide the workers, the employed and unemployed, and enable the government to smash the unions. Only through these attacks on the working class can the capitalists attempt to save their fast declining system.

It is this crisis which underlies the conflicts between the Negro and white construction workers and between the black unemployed and the unions in Pittsburgh and Chicago, and also between the Teamsters and Longshoremens on the West Coast and between the dockers on the East Coast.

While PL may not want to face up to the crisis and the growing threat of unemployment, the workers are

experiencing it. On the construction sites the black workers legitimately fear that they will be laid off first. The white workers see the struggles by the black nationalists as threatening their jobs. The unemployed see the unions as their enemy in preventing them from getting the jobs they need. Racism is used by the employers and the government and encouraged by the policies of the construction unions to keep the workers divided and avoid the confrontation with the real enemy.

STRATEGY

What is required is a strategy which confronts these attacks and can unite the workers, black and white, employed and unemployed. The only demand that addresses itself to the real problem of unemployment, the only demand that can unite the workers is the demand of JOBS FOR ALL through the THIRTY HOUR WEEK at a full weeks pay. The plans to slash wages and the soaring inflation must be countered with the demands for big wage increases and an escalator clause. To the attempts to destroy working conditions, we must demand union control over conditions in the shops. If the bosses and the government have to cut back, if they cannot run industry to meet the needs of the working class, we say nationalize basic industry under workers control.

The policies of "Big Business" are the policies of the government. The fight on the basic economic demands of wages and jobs of necessity involves a confrontation with the government. This cannot be met through the fights of the workers in individual shops or simply on an economic level. The fight must be a political confrontation. Labor must build a powerful political weapon, a

labor party, to fight for their interests.

This is the kind of strategy that is necessary not only for construction workers but for the working class as a whole. It is within the framework of this strategy that all the specific demands for any particular industry can be raised. It is within the context of this program that a real assault on racism can be made through uniting all workers and unemployed around a program that welds together their interests, which does not counterpose the interests of one section of the working class against another.

Because PL has no understanding of the crisis it has no strategy for uniting and mobilizing the class as a whole in an offensive against the attempts by the government and the employers to make them pay for a decaying system. Its program for construction is based on false premises--that there is no crisis, no real threat of unemployment. It avoids the basic confrontation on jobs, wages, and working conditions and in so doing perpetuates the divisions between workers.

NATIONALISM

Despite all its admissions of past errors and all its attacks on the black nationalists, it continues to see the struggles today through the eyes of black nationalism. Thus instead of seeing the conflicts in construction as a result of the crisis and the attacks on the working class, PL sees it as a question of a racial conflict between a "large pool of non-union black workers" and unionized white workers. In other words they ignore the basis for these eruptions, the attacks on the class and the CLASS STRUGGLE.

PL begins not from the struggles and interests of the class as a whole but from the false consciousness of the expression of this struggle and the specific interests of the black workers. It begins therefore as the nationalists do by separating out the situation facing the black workers from the class struggle as a whole and from a classless analysis.

Basically PL has not changed its position on black nationalism one iota. (See the basic analysis of PL's position in the pamphlet by Tim Wohlforth, "New Nationalism and the Negro Struggle"). It maintains its support to black nationalism by refusing to take a clear, unequivocal stand against it. This organization is basically opportunist; it is spineless. It always wants to stand in the middle of the road and this it contends is "Marxism-Leninism." To the question of PL's attitude towards the current expression of the Negro struggle in the form of black nationalism, it gives in its own words "a dialectical 'Yes and No'." This is done through the formula: "We do not deny the national aspects of the oppression of the black people, but we emphasize the fundamental class basis of oppression. That is why we say that the black liberation movement will be national in form and working class in content."

Now we repeat dialectics is not a middle of the road outlook between on the one hand "yes" and on the other hand "no." This is eclecticism and leads to taking no position on anything.

This little formula enables PL to keep one foot in the door of the black nationalist movement while at the same time not taking responsibility for the obviously reactionary character and results of this movement.

In practice it maintains the very "national form" it attacks in its continued support and demand for black caucuses. One of the major problems PL saw in the Pittsburgh dispute was that the black workers have been unable "to organize themselves into a black construction workers' caucus to fight for their interests." This caucus must be as national in content as it is in form organized on the basis of the special interests of the black workers as opposed to the white workers.

DIVISIONS

While PL calls for a united union, they seek to maintain the divisions on the basis of black caucuses. All of this is done to avoid the fact that the interests of the workers whether black and white are the same and that what is required is the mobilization of the working class as a whole against the real problem--capitalism.

PL cops out of the basic struggle on jobs, wages, and working conditions by posing the main fight as the "Fight Against Racism." "Fighting racism" says PL, "is the key element in the struggle." This reduces itself to two things--one is to continue the divisions through black caucuses and the other is nothing but phrasemongering about fighting racism.

Phrasemongering about fighting racism becomes a substitute for PL's confronting the basic class struggle and posing concretely the real solution to eliminating racism--the fight by the working class for socialism--and the basis for a real fight against racism now within the working class--the program to unite all workers in a common class economic and political struggle for power. The fight against racial discrimination must be con-

ducted within this framework.

We can see the whole implementation of this outlook in PL's work in the Social Service Employees Union in New York. At the heart of their policies here are the same problems which are posed in PL's analysis of the crisis in construction and its program.

SSEU

PL's role in the SSEU is of a two prong character. First they serve as a left cover for the bureaucracy, supporting every single one of its sell-outs and betrayals. The only circumstances under which it confronts the leadership is over the defense of its members who have been victimized or in defense of its isolated adventures in various centers. The second prong is its activities in the Worker-Client alliance to divert the struggles away from the basic questions facing the workers and the political struggle against the City and State governments.

When supporters of the Workers League fought within the SSEU for affiliation with the AFL-CIO they were opposed by the joint force of PL allied with the union leadership and the black caucus. This was opposed even after the SSEU had been totally defeated in its strike in the summer of 1967, largely because of its isolation from the other workers in the department in the AFL-CIO and the rest of the labor movement. The bureaucracy together with PL and the Black Caucus were not concerned with the interests of the workers but only with preserving their privileges and the SSEU as an arena for "left" propaganda and recruitment. When the WL supporters took this fight to the ranks in the form of a petition drive, they were opposed by PL and

the leadership. When it was clear that the ranks wanted affiliation and supported the WL's drive overwhelmingly, the leadership and FL jumped on the bandwagon.

JOB CUTS

This past winter the City announced that the upcoming SSEU contract would have to include the elimination of 9,000 jobs from the Department. Clearly, this represented the movement by the government to deal with the growing economic crisis by making the working class pay through unemployment and the attacks on the working conditions in the shops. These job cuts came at the same time of the budget cuts affecting all City and State services.

PL, oblivious to this crisis and the resultant attacks on the workers' basic living and working conditions, became the more virulent spokesman for the bureaucracy's complete acceptance of these attacks and the elimination of 9,000 jobs. Committee for a Decent Contract, supported by the WL, was the only force in the union that fought against these cuts.

PL's main spokesman in the union became the hatchet man for the bureaucracy in launching a brutal witchhunt against the members of this Committee. The Committee was attacked by PL's opportunist for attacking and embarrassing the leadership when the Committee called on the ranks at a membership meeting to vote down the job cuts and for denouncing the leadership when it prevented the vote.

PL defended the job cuts in a leaflet on the basis that you cannot fight on "structural changes," the real solution lies in "revolution." The other reason was that the cuts would not mean lay-offs. PL ratio-

nalized this with the conception that welfare workers are somehow different than other workers--they "serve the people" and therefore cannot fight job cuts. The real question PL said was getting more money for the clients. This business about welfare workers being different is precisely the garbage the government uses against all public employees. What PL is saying and they say the same thing in their construction program is you cannot fight these job cuts now, you cannot fight unemployment, you will have to wait until PL mystically without a struggle brings socialism to the working class. So while they were distributing leaflets calling for "revolution" outside the union hall, they were completely supporting the sell-out betrayals of the bureaucracy inside the hall.

IMPACT

The real impact of this betrayal is now being felt by the workers within the centers. As more workers leave and are not replaced, each worker has more and more work. The bureaucracy in the union has refused to do anything about the situation. After the Delegates Assembly had passed a motion for a very limited work action, this action was called off at the next meeting without even calling a membership meeting. The calling off of this action was supported by PL. One of its members, however, conveniently left the room during the voting.

PL has refused to confront not only the bureaucracy but the political struggle against Lindsay and the City by refusing to pose independent political struggle by the trade union movement against Democratic and Republican parties. PL despite all its supposed concern for the clients

refused to take up the political battle necessary against the budget cuts.

WORKER-CLIENT ALLIANCE

As a substitute for this basic class struggle on the attacks facing the working class and for the political fight which is required to beat back the government's policies, PL hides behind its Worker-Client Alliance.

PL's rationalization for this alliance is that the attacks on the workers stem from the attacks on the welfare clients' grants, and that the workers should have sympathy for the clients. The purpose of the alliance is to get the workers out on the picket lines of demonstrations called by the WCA on the basis of the clients demands for things such as "School Clothing Now." Workers demands are attached to the demonstration.

While PL is conducting these demonstrations the real attacks remain --the situation facing the workers in the centers as a result of the job cuts and the budget cuts being fully implemented. These futile adventures of PL's have not solved a thing or posed the way forward.

At the heart of the Worker-Client Alliance is the bloc of four classes through which the program of the working class is subordinated to the shortrange interests of other classes and the real confrontation with capitalism avoided. The workers and clients are seen as equal forces. PL makes clear that the clients must be in leadership of the Worker-Client alliance. This alliance subordinates the interests of the workers to the interests of a peripheral section of the working class--those who are temporarily unemployed--and the lumpen proletariat. The interests of this section of society are determined by their removal from the basic re-

lationship between capital and labor, from their removal from the productive process. They are in no sense an independent force apart from the workers and the capitalists. Their demands, their program and their struggle do not confront the basic struggle between the working class and capitalism. This basic struggle is raised at the point of production.

The Worker-Client Alliance is a cover for avoiding the real struggle against the bureaucracy, the employer, and the government. This is combined with PL's campaigns around the victimization of the members of the WCA as a result of the WCA actions in the centers and the victimization of one of its members, Doug Weller, by the Administration.

FIGURE FLATTERY

This campaign within the SSEU is similar to PL's similar work in Figure Flattery and is behind the actions PL is brewing in the San Francisco Phone Workers struggle. These campaigns consist of isolated adventures to get the workers to support "communists." After a few demonstrations or picket lines combined with propaganda, the struggle in the union is ceased. We have not heard a peep about Figure Flattery since the campaign over the firing of militants. No doubt in a few months PL's struggles in the San Francisco CWA will be over.

We say these workers must be defended to the fullest. However, PL's aim in these campaigns is something else--they are used as an excuse to avoid the necessary fight in the unions. Wally Linder in his article, "Don't Abandon the Workers" writes the script for these shows. Having Communists in the unions, Linder contends will make the

bosses attack the communists and the workers. "Certainly the bosses will try anything to dislodge communists from leadership. . . And, of course, murder has never been an unthinkable last resort for bosses. But it is JUST SUCH A FIGHT that can force a discussion among the workers about the value and role of the communists in the working class."

This PL says raises the political consciousness of the working class

because the workers feel sympathy for the victimized or even dead "communist." This is idealist rubbish fitting of the martyrs of the church but not "communists." We can only say that if the Bolshevik Party had proceeded in such away, there would have been no October. It is clear that PL would rather decapitate its leadership or its members rather than to wage the fight to mobilize the working class in a political confrontation with the capitalists.

9 Worker-Student Alliance or Revolutionary Party?

Progressive Labor has found its "road to revolution" in Stalinism and the perspective of "socialism in one country". This "theory" was the cover for the rejection of the strategy laid down by the first four congresses of the Communist International of the international struggle of the working class for socialist revolution. The theory of "socialism in one country" was translated in practice into the subordination of the working class, and the program of the working class to take power, to the leadership and program of the middle class and the bourgeoisie through the Popular Front and the "bloc of four classes".

Progressive Labor today carries out the logic of this outlook by substituting alliances and coalitions between the working class and middle class forces for the construction of a revolutionary party based on the working class and with a working class program for political power. PL's "strategy" is to build a middle class student movement justified with a

working class cover. PL's road is a centrist road, attempting to find some middle ground between revolution and reform; between the working class and the capitalist class.

This is what lies behind all its endless forms of the Worker-Student Alliance. With a dialectical NO we say the WSA is neither working class in form nor working class in content. It represents blocs of the working class with the middle class on the basis of a middle class reformist program.

These alliances have gone through various periods of development, depending on what "works" in any particular area or situation. PL puts it this way: "In the past, we have allied with workers by supporting strikes or by launching pro-working class on-campus struggles." These alliances PL sees as "temporary". The latest form of the alliance, the "campus-worker student alliance" is seen as more permanent.

The original use of this "student-worker alliance" was based on the

conception of students going to join the picket lines of strikes near their campus in support of the workers and then to try to get workers to support student struggles on the campuses. The "political program" of this alliance was: "to demand that the U.S. get out of Vietnam now; that no one be drafted for Vietnam; to support the just struggles of each other for better conditions on the job and on the campus." ("A Program for Action-Workers-Student Alliance" by Jeff Gordon, Progressive Labor, Feb.-March, 1966.) On this basis PL sent eight Columbia students up to a G.E. strike in Schenectady and more members of the WSA at the University of Maryland joined the picket line at the Curtis Brothers Furniture Co., in Washington, D.C.

This conception was also behind the WSA's "summer work-in" in which students go into the factories to get summer jobs in order to observe "the exploitation of workers". "The main emphasis," PL says in the August, 1969 issue of Challenge "is not to organize or preach to the working class, but to get a deeper understanding of the problems workers face, their ideas, and their power in struggle. While doing this students will also talk to workers about racism, the student movement, the war, etc." PL has one warning for this work: "It is crass arrogance to suggest that students will organize workers who have been on the job often for years and who know much more about it than we do."

The other side of this was the fight during the San Francisco State dispute to get the striking oil workers to support the "Third World" struggle there.

In other words the students go to the workers as students, observe their problems, support their strikes and

maybe propagandize a bit about the war and the student struggles and racism. The POLITICAL content on which this alliance is based is clearly the trade union consciousness (which is bourgeois consciousness) of the workers and the reformist consciousness of the students!

"CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS"

PL makes this clear when they say: "It is the aim of the revolutionary party-the Progressive Labor Party-to struggle to build working class consciousness among the vast majority of the students." "Class consciousness" PL defines as the understanding by workers "that all bosses are the same and are the enemy of the workers. A class conscious worker also understands that it is only through the unity of all workers that workers can win a decent life for themselves."

What PL describes here is trade union consciousness or the understanding by the working class of the need to struggle to better its conditions within the confines of capitalism.

The Worker-Student Alliance here is a bloc with the working class on the basis of trade union or reformist consciousness. The struggle for the working class to go beyond trade union consciousness is subordinated to this bloc. The purpose of it is to maintain the working class at its present level of struggle, to prevent the working class from gaining what Lenin termed "class consciousness", the understanding of the need to struggle for power.

There cannot be any other content to this "alliance". Students as students represent the middle class. To contend that students can somehow gain "class consciousness" by rubbing shoulders with the workers, by observing them being exploited and

feeling sympathy for them is middle class idealist rubbish. This represents, as PL put it, "crass arrogance", it means that the role of students is to pander to the false consciousness of the working class.

The only way for students to become "pro-working class" is by subordinating themselves to the leadership and program of the working class BY JOINING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. They become "pro-working class" not by being students but by being members of the party, by fighting for the program of the party, by building the party.

The youth have a vital role to play in the building of the revolutionary movement. Within the revolutionary party students can make important contributions to the development of theory, the penetration of the working class and the training of a Marxist leadership within the working class. However, these contributions are made not on the basis of being a student but on the basis of being a member of the party of the working class, and carrying out the tasks of the party wherever he is.

On the campuses the major task is to build a Marxist cadre primarily through the fight against the revisionist tendencies. The middle class tendencies which breed on the campuses find their way into the working class. The revolutionary party cannot be built without a bitter struggle on the campuses as well as in the working class against revisionism, against Stalinism and reformism.

Through the Worker-Student Alliance, PL seeks to subordinate the revolutionary party, the real leadership of the working class, to the students and to the spontaneous struggles of the working class. It blatantly belittles the role of the party whose task it is to develop socialist con-

sciousness in the working class. This consciousness cannot be developed by the students, by the workers in their struggles, or a bloc of the two. It can only be brought, as Lenin put it, "from without", from the revolutionary party.

STUDENT POWER

The most recent form of this arrangement is the campus worker-student alliance. According to this formulation the students support the campus workers' trade union struggles. This we might add is a degeneration in a sense of the first formulation in that it enables the students to pretend they are fighting for the working class by never leaving the campus. This alliance is nothing more, absolutely nothing more than the attempt by PL to give its strictly student power struggle on the campus a working class cover.

In the third form the "worker" part of this formula is filled with struggles which are supposedly "pro-working class" and which the students fight for on the campus. This includes support to black nationalist struggles on the campus, such as PL-WSA support to the "Third World" students' demands at San Francisco State last winter. This was all justified on the basis of "fighting racism". PL held that by supporting black nationalism the students were supporting the working class. It used the same kind of rationalization during the Columbia struggles in which PL sought to perpetrate the conception that the strictly student struggles were working class because they raised demands against the expansion of Columbia into the ghettos, against the eviction of local residents.

More recently this conception has been the basis for PL's very unprin-

pled alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party in Cambridge, Mass. Peace and Freedom by the widest stretch of the imagination is not a working class party. It is a middle class reformist formation. PL, the WSA and P&F have been engaged in a "Rent Control Referendum Drive." The August, 1969 Challenge poses it this way: "A fight is shaping up between the working people and students of Cambridge, Mass. and the U.S. ruling class." This is supposedly the implementation of PL's WSA program: "Less Talk, More Action, Fight Racism."

PROTEST POLITICS

What PL contends are "pro-working class" struggles are nothing but middle class reformist protest politics based not on the working class but the "people" and the "community". These terms are used to hide PL's rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class and its substitution of a popular front or bloc of various "revolutionary forces". The working class is seen only as something to help the other struggles along--the students, the blacks, the "community".

The "community" fight, the clients fight, the fight against racism, all become substitutes for the political struggle for power by the working class under the leadership of the revolutionary party.

PL attempts to fight what it calls "economism" and to raise "political consciousness" with something far below the level of "economism" or trade union struggles - that is middle class reformist politics. This is the way Walter Linder puts it in the November, 1969 issue of PL: "Communists must bring socialist ideology to the working class. To do

this they must discuss issues that go far beyond the bounds of the trade union structure: solidarity with workers in other countries (proletarian internationalism); the need to ally with students and revolutionary intellectuals; the need to struggle on fronts other than factory--committees, schools, on questions of taxes, services, and all the other areas in which the bosses exploit the working class and ultimately the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat."

LIQUIDATIONIST

The point PL completely misses is that the basic confrontation between labor and capital is what raises the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is the heart of "socialist ideology". While the working class shares with other sections of society the evils of capitalism such as bad housing, schools, hospitals, racial discrimination, high taxes, etc., the source of these problems lies in the contradiction between capital and labor and can only be solved through the struggle of the working class against capitalism. The basis of this struggle lies in the factories where the working class is organized together and is pitted directly in a class battle.

It is the CLASS STRUGGLE and the party leadership of that struggle PL seeks to avoid by substituting the students "pro-working class" confrontations on the campuses and in the communities, by its refusal to fight in the unions for a program to unite the class in the fight against the employers and the government. It substitutes "long range" propaganda about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and "mass struggle" and "mass action" for an independent political struggle by the working class

on the basis of a working class program which can unite behind it all other sections of society to destroy capitalism.

PL's politics are liquidationist through and through, they are a modern version of Bernsteinism. Through the collection of economic struggles on immediate demands and propagandism, the "people" will eventually come to socialism. PL in this way reduces the struggle below the political level at a time when capitalism and the state must be opposed and overthrown precisely by the workers

politically organized behind the revolutionary party. It is only this political struggle led by the revolutionary party which can unite behind it other sections of society for the solution to all the problems under capitalism.

Behind the worker-student, worker-student-teacher, doctor-patient-worker, worker-client, campus worker-student, ad absurdum alliances lies PL's rejection of the role of the REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. This is the key behind all its "strategy and tactics".

10 On Serving Betrayals to the the People

Revolutionary theory and strategy cannot be developed or built outside the Marxist movement. There is no third ideology. The continuity with Marx and Engels, with Lenin and the Bolshevik Party and with the first five years of the Communist International is contained only within the Trotskyist movement in the program and practice of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Marxist theory and revolutionary strategy was destroyed within the Comintern by Stalin. Stalinism rests today like a bloody axe over the working class in the perspective of the Stalinist parties, in the perspective of Maoism and all its idealist hangers-on within the student movement. PL stands four square on this outlook.

In fact PL's "strategy and tactics" have absolutely nothing to do with "Marxism-Leninism". PL has rejected the only theoretical and practical basis on which the revolutionary party can be built. Its middle of the

road, on the one hand and on the other, is a rejection of the basic premises of Marxism--dialectical materialism.

PL has nothing but contempt for revolutionary theory. It is in fact training a whole generation of youth steeled in anti-theory conceptions. This is expressed in their slogans for the WSA - "Less talk, more action, fight racism". Bobby Seale at the Panther convention expressed this same attitude very clearly when he remarked that the "movement" should not have any more of this "ideological jive".

A revolutionary party cannot be built without revolutionary theory. The practice of the working class party in every sphere of work must be guided by this theory.

"Socialism in one country" marked the break with Marxism. Stalinism meant a break with dialectical materialism and the substitution of opportunism & empiricism in order

to defend the interests and privileges of the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

It is upon these traditions that PL seeks to build a movement. Here is how Milt Rosen, Chairman of Progressive Labor Party, describes the method in "Build A Base In The Working Class": "The correct line is very hard to achieve. Errors are bound to occur. The work must be evaluated continuously to achieve the right mix. To use an unscientific term, you need common sense." Unscientific indeed!

HOMESPUN

This homespun "theory" of Mr. Rosen's is nothing but American pragmatism, or basing practice on "what works". Common sense or pragmatism stand to Marxism and dialectical materialism as capitalism stands to the working class. Common sense is the philosophy of the Henry Fords; its predominance in the working class has tied the working class in the U.S. to capitalism.

According to Rosen, the party develops theory by throwing in all sorts of ideas obtained from the "people", mixing them up in a big pot, and then running them up the flagpole to see how they work. "All these differences of opinion," says Rosen "reflect the various trends among the people. These differences don't fall out of the sky.... That's why you need the collective: to throw all these ideas into the hopper. The collective sorts it out and puts it together, and tries to make a scientific plan based on the various experiences that we all have had."

This soup is served up in combination with various "truisms" such as the "dictatorship of the proletariat". This method has absolutely

nothing to do with Marxism, and absolutely nothing to do with science. You can no more build a revolutionary party than a surgeon could perform open heart surgery on this basis. Marxism is not a dogma, a set of slogans: it is a living science, a method. Marxism cannot be learned by Milt Rosen or Walter Linder probing their experience or rubbing shoulders with the "people". This is the method of pragmatism, "what works for me" and subjective idealism, turning into yourself for the answer. Marxism is not intuition.

OBJECTIVE

Marxism is an objective science, based not on the experiences of this or that individual, but on an analysis of the real, material world, probing beneath the surface of events to the underlying processes. Armed with theory, the revolutionary party is able to intervene within the class struggle to change the existing reality. It is in this process that theory is developed. It is through the struggle, the unity, the interpenetration of opposites that the process is taken to a higher level.

For PL, theory is reduced to slogans, and practice to the experience of various individuals which is put into a "hopper". The role of the party or "collective" is to do the mixing.

It is no wonder that PL has made so many mistakes! It is no wonder why with all its efforts, it is unable to change the consciousness of the working class, to take the struggle to a higher level. It is this method which lies behind its adaptation to the trade union bureaucracy, the black nationalists and the students. It is no wonder that PL has been wrong about every major question since its ori-

gins, including the premises upon which the organization is based--Stalinism.

SELF CRITICISM

PL seeks to cover its mistakes with the method of subjective idealism in the form of "self-criticism". This becomes the blanket excuse for all of PL's errors. Needless to say they can no sooner "correct" their mistakes on the basis of this method than they can develop a correct program. "Self-criticism" bases itself on the conception that if you look inside yourself, you will find the truth. The logic of this is the mess we recently saw at Woodstock.

This "self-criticism" is the epitome of middle class arrogance. These people in PL stand outside the class struggle and history, and breast beat about the mistakes that have cost the working class in blood, in lives, and in leaders. PL can very well sit back and apologize for Stalin and its mistakes about Stalin--but the working class paid for those "mistakes".

Are we going to hear from PL a few years from now: "We were wrong, we admit we were confused, unemployment is a problem and a danger. We apologize to the millions who are now suffering."

The working class does not need enemies like the trade union leaders when it has "friends of the people" like Progressive Labor. What PL says is that it makes no difference if the working class is defeated under its leadership as long as it apologizes.

PL has rejected the central task - to build a disciplined democratic centralist party based on the working class, built within the working class and capable of leading the working class to power.

It substitutes a personal clique

for a combat party.

It substitutes pragmatism for Marxist theory. Instead of building a party within the working class on the basis of a POLITICAL program to raise the consciousness of the workers in struggle, it proposes to build an organization outside of the working class, standing apart from it and based on personal ties with individual workers.

PERSONAL

Rosen puts it this way: "Developing personal-political ties with our fellow workers is one of the MOST POLITICAL THINGS WE CAN DO." (Rosen's emphasis) He adds "of course"--"along with the raising of our line." The point is PL has no program for the victory of the working class, no program to raise the political consciousness of the working class. Instead of developing a Marxist cadre to fight within the working class for a political program, PL advocates developing a corps of Salvation Army troops who go out to "serve the people".

PL does not begin at all with an objective analysis of the crisis and the situation facing the working class. It does not begin with the objective needs of the working class or a program for state power. This is how they can produce a whole pamphlet entitled "Build A Base In The Working Class" without discussing the crisis of capitalism and the program necessary to lead the working class to power.

Rosen says in this treatise: "While I have been greatly encouraged by the growth of PLP, it still doesn't sustain me, yet, as much as other experiences in my life....I have seen all sorts of people 'come through' for me and others under all sorts

of difficult circumstances....I really believe, in my bones, that the workers and students will eventually 'come through.' We say unequivocally that you cannot build a party on the basis of how it satisfies personally this or that leader or upon the BELIEF "in your bones" that the workers and students will "come through".

All of PL's alliances and coalitions are an excuse to avoid the difficult task of penetrating the working class and building a party. These formations are substitutes for the party in order to advance not the interests of the working class but the opportunist interests of Progressive Labor.

The best service PL could do for "the people" is to carry out the logic of its "self-criticism" by criticizing itself out of existence and putting an end to the "mistakes" which can only lead the working class to disaster.

The crisis today within the working class is a crisis of leadership. The objective prerequisites for socialism have existed now for many decades. The leadership for the coming revolutionary struggles can only come from the Trotskyist movement. This movement has been built in the bitter struggle against the betrayals of Stalinism. It alone represents the continuation and development of Marxism.

This leadership requires the construction of a revolutionary party based on the working class and constructed within the working class by a cadre trained in Marxist theory and steeled in struggle. It is not simply a question of immersing itself or its members in the workers movement, but the party fighting within the working class to raise the political consciousness of the class through a program which poses the question of power within the concrete developments of the class struggle, a transitional

program. This means not just presenting correct ideas and communist truisms to the working class but intervening on the basis of revolutionary theory to change the class struggle. It is only through this struggle that a party can be built, can develop theory and advance the working class on the road to state power.

We are not talking of a small propaganda group which "serves the people" but a mass party of the working class that is capable of overthrowing capitalism. This party cannot be built outside of an international movement and a common international strategy.

LENIN AND TROTSKY

This is the era of Lenin and Trotsky, the era of the Leninist International and the Transitional Program. Trotskyism for many years was forced to live in isolation as a result of the defeat of the working class internationally at the hands of Stalinism. But we are living in a different period, in the period of the rising offensive of an undefeated working class internationally. Trotskyism is the program not of defeat and betrayals but the program for the victorious struggle of the working class.

It is this understanding and this struggle which has laid the basis for the launching of the first Trotskyist daily paper in the world by the Socialist Labour League, the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, and the launching of the weekly Bulletin by the Workers League.

This powerful weapon of the revolutionary party is dedicated to the unceasing struggle against all those pretenders and betrayers of the working class such as Progressive Labor.

The revolutionary party will be built by smashing these false leaders. Progressive Labor is going to find it more and more difficult to get away with their "mistakes" whether it is in the unions or on the campuses.

The Workers League says that socialism is not a "long range" solu-

tion but is on the agenda for today. The only alternative to fascism and the defeat of the working class is the victorious socialist revolution. The road to revolution is the road of Trotskyism. This is the road of the Workers League in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International.

11 Suppressed Discussion of Trotsky

WE ARE REPRINTING here three documents from the internal struggle within Progressive Labor Party. The first two documents by "Comrade X" and Mort Scheer were contained in an internal discussion bulletin published by PL in November, 1969.

This discussion was initiated in a PL National Committee report in which the leadership revealed that they had "come to a disagreement with the Chinese over one important aspect of revolutionary strategy—the universal significance of the so-called new democracy, and whether nationalism can be revolutionary."

While PL was to maintain its uncritical approach towards China, the discussion was opened by the leadership in order to arrive at a line. As Milt Rosen puts it in the introduction to the discussion bulletin: "Hopefully, by the end of the discussion everyone's participation should help the leadership arrive at the best possible position on the development and the future of our party and the international communist movement."

In other words by throwing everyone's ideas into "the hopper" the PL leadership hoped to come up with a strategy.

What was inevitable, and what Rosen did not foresee, was that there could be no discussion of "revolutionary strategy" without confronting the central historical question facing the international working class--the question of Trotskyism versus Stalinism.

This is the importance of Comrade X's document, which correctly points out that clarity cannot be achieved on the question of nationalism and the popular front without setting the record straight on Trotsky. But it is precisely this clarity the leadership of PL cannot afford. The question of Trotskyism is the one question that does not fit into the "hopper". It is this question that PL has refused to confront from its original split with the Communist Party. And it is this question that today is ripping at the seams of PL.

STRAIGHT

It is significant that the Only article which is answered in the internal bulletin is the article by Comrade X and that the answer by Mort Scheer is put in the bulletin before Comrade X's. Scheer sets the record straight for the ranks who have tried to get at the roots of revisionism--in PL Stalin and Stalinism are to be maintained at any cost.

Scheer's reply is a collection of all the slanders, lies, and distortions straight out

of the books of the Communist Party. It is almost word for word a copy of Hyman Lumer's recent article in **Political Affairs** (Sept.-Oct., 1969) "50 Years of the Communist Party USA 1919-1969." These same distortions have been dealt with in the current series in the **Bulletin** by Fred Mueller "Stalinism and Trotskyism in the USA."

SUPPORT

It is not just that Scheer got his training in the American Communist Party but PL has never broken from the CP and stands only as a left expression of that party. While today it attacks the liberals and talks about the "dictatorship of the proletariat", its "alliances" and "coalitions" based on a reformist program, its refusal to pose the break of the American working class from the capitalist parties amount to one thing and one thing only--"political support" to capitalism and the capitalist class.

Scheer raises one question which reveals the central weakness of Comrade X's document: If Trotsky had "a correct Marxist-Leninist line" how could he have played "a generally counterrevolutionary role?" Comrade X opens himself to this because of the way in which he approaches Trotsky. Comrade X attempts to separate out Trotsky and his correct analysis of Stalin's betrayals in Germany, France, and Spain as well as within the Soviet Union from Trotskyism and the Trotskyist movement. Trotsky's analysis is abstracted from his struggle to construct a new leadership for the international working class, the founding of the Fourth International and its program.

You can no more separate out Stalin and his "mistakes" from Stalinism and its historical role than you can separate out Trotsky's correct analysis from the role of the Trotskyist movement. Trotsky at each point saw the development of theory and his struggle against Stalinism as central to the construction of a party. The theoretical gains made by Trotsky became the basis and armaments for the working class in the building of an international party capable of leading the working class to power.

The separation of theory and practice poses the greatest difficulties for Comrade X who actually has to admit that "even

this aspect (Trotsky's "counterrevolutionary role") of Trotsky's history should be tempered, now in light of the role that the Communist Parties of this period played then and play today." Comrade X's separation of theory from the party based on that theory leads him to further problems in confronting China and PL. He contends that Mao "resurrected" Lenin and Trotsky's fight for internationalism and that Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution "is the embryonic form of the PL theory of nationalism and the Mao Tse Tung theory of revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." But Comrade X then cannot explain why the Chinese today base themselves on the perspective of "socialism in one country" and "still have a petty bourgeois line on international revolution.

While Mao broke empirically with Stalin in 1939, he never broke from Stalinism and built a leadership based on the preservation of the bureaucracy's privileges and the subordination of the international working class to "building socialism in one country." Unlike Lenin and Trotsky who fought throughout their lives to construct an International based on the victory of the working class in every country, Mao has substituted for the construction of an international party, alliances with bourgeois nationalists such as Sukarno and in Pakistan.

LOGIC

The logic of Comrade X's method is reflected in the role and contribution of Arne Swaback to the discussion bulletin. Swaback was one of the founders of the American Communist Party and the Trotskyist movement in the U.S. He played a leading role in the Trotskyist movement in the 1930's when it led the working class against the policies of the Communist Party. When Swaback was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party, which had long since rejected Trotskyism, he turned not to the Trotskyist movement in the International Committee of the Fourth International but to PL. Swaback turned to PL because he did not probe the roots of the degeneration of the SWP and its adaptation to Stalinism.

Today Swaback, a renegade from Trotskyism, becomes the henchman for Stalinism. At a time when whole sections

of PL are raising questions about the "New Democracy" and its relationship to the popular front, at a time when Trotskyism is being raised within PL, Swabeck becomes the greatest defender of Stalinism. His article, while attacking the popular front and the role of the American Communist Party, defends uncritically the "New Democracy" and does not even mention Trotsky. Essentially Swabeck becomes Scheer's real back up man and stands with the PL leadership against those who are seeking to get at the roots of revisionism. This is but one more example of how revisionism in the Trotskyist movement bolsters Stalinism.

NO COMPROMISE

The point is there can be no compromise between Stalinism and Trotskyism. While Comrade X sees that PL has eclectically picked bits and pieces from Trotsky's analysis, the foundations of PL and its program today are based on Stalinism. This is made abundantly clear by Mr. Scheer.

Facing up to the questions of Trotskyism and Stalinism would destroy the whole basis for Progressive Labor's existence, just as Trotsky's whole struggle against Stalin posed the destruction of the bureaucracy in the workers state. Just as Stalin had to liquidate Trotsky and the entire Bolshevik party to carry through his counterrevolutionary policies, so has PL had to crush all opposition within PL, opposition which poses the question of Trotskyism.

EXPELLED

This is the meaning of the third document which we print here. This document was submitted by Juan and Helena Farinas in PL as an answer to Mort Scheer and as a contribution to the internal discussion. Only a few days after this document was submitted a vicious slander campaign was opened up inside PL by the leadership against these two comrades. Within a few short weeks these comrades had been expelled. In a letter to the ranks of PL these two comrades described their work in the party:

"Both of us came close to the party through the Vietnam Referendum Campaign in the summer of 1967. After that

we began to work on the paper, helping the former editor, Ramon Rodriguez, in the lay-out and paste-up. Around the fall of 1967 we were asked to become candidate members and joined the specially formed club in Spanish Harlem, where we moved. In November 1968, Rodriguez abandoned the paper and the party, leaving for Puerto Rico. Thus the responsibility for Desafio fell on our shoulders. The December 1968, issue was the first to come out under our responsibility. In addition to that both of us worked in the garment center and belonged to the garment center club. About five months ago Juan went to work in Columbia University, to work with the WSA, and was transferred to the so-called Intellectuals club, to discuss his differences. Helena then took over the main responsibility of the paper. Up to the time of our removal from the paper and expulsion we have been doing this work. We feel that overall we have done good work for the party to the best of our abilities. During these last two and a half years we were never negatively criticized. On the contrary, we were always told that the paper had improved tremendously both in content and in form. We do not claim to have been "100% pure Bolsheviks" or that there is no room for improvement in our work, but neither were we sucking our thumbs or collecting cucumbers during this time."

Despite Milt Rosen's statement in the introduction of the discussion bulletin that "No one should feel constricted from airing their point of view" and despite the fact that it was the leadership itself which had opened up discussion on "New Democracy" and the People's Front, disciplinary actions were taken against these two comrades. First they were removed from responsibility from the paper. On March 5th they were informed that the Steering Committee of the Party had decided to expel them on the grounds that they held "Trotskyite" positions. They were denied even the basic right of appeal. After their expulsion they fought to stay in the party and appealed to the rank and file for support. In their appeal they explained the real basis for their expulsion:

"In our opinion this action of the party's leadership fully confirms what is said in Juan's document. This action proves that the party's leadership, despite its

feeble 'criticisms' of Stalin and its struggle against the revisionism of the Communist Party, has fully inherited that party's methods of dealing with internal political differences: organizational maneuvers and expulsions instead of principled political struggle, Stalinism instead of Leninism."

It is no accident that this struggle within PL should come to the fore today. As the working class comes forward internationally and the central question of leadership is posed, all of the lessons of the struggle between Stalinism and Trotskyism are raised. It is Trotskyism which bases itself on a strategy for the victory of the working class against all the betrayals and defeats of Stalinism.

Comrade X on Trotsky

IN RELATION TO the current issue of **PL Magazine** there are several points I would like to make. I will make them in a form capable of being published as a letter to the editor if you wish.

The current issue of **PL Magazine**, though putting forth a correct position concerning the burning issues confronting revolutionaries today, is so hopelessly sectarian that it can be of use only to those who already agree with its basic premises. Every article is theoretical. Most are highly polemical. There is not a single article on concrete organizing activities discussed in a positive way.

In particular the article on the Panther convention is nothing more than rhetoric and name calling without any concrete analysis. No one who did not already know all the facts could possibly form any arguable opinion of the CP-Panther alliance by reading this article. Such

This is why today to secure their stranglehold on the working class and the youth, the Stalinists must resort to the old slanders against Trotsky and to the methods of the Moscow Trials. This is the meaning not only of the expulsions of Juan and Helena Farinas from PL but the cowardly, hooligan attacks by a gang of SDS and PL members on a member of the Young Socialist Alliance in Boston.

But all of the expulsions and hooligan tactics cannot prevent the youth of today from seeking out the real history of the Marxist movement, the lessons of Trotsky's struggle with Stalin, and the continuity of Lenin's struggle in Trotskyism. It is here the youth will find the strategy for the struggles of today.

articles are worthless. Even the argument that people are not supposed to be reading such an article isolated from someone who is working with them politically and who can go into the details with them is invalid here because this kind of name calling without any resort to real analysis only turns "center" people off.

The other articles aren't bad but in the absence of any positive, constructive base-building articles, a reader would get the impression that PL is just a bunch of theoretical gadflies whom no one can satisfy.

There is a further point of fact that should be clarified regarding the article on nationalism. An error is perpetuated in this article regarding Trotsky's views which at this date in history is no longer excusable. At a time when PL's criticisms of the Communist International under Stalin's domination differ in no way from the criticisms Trotsky was making all along; at a time when Trotsky's analysis of, and struggle against bureaucracy in the fledgling socialist state is receiving vindication in the counter-revolution following Stalin's rule and in the cultural revolution in China; at a time when Trotsky's struggle against nationalism is being confirmed in the views of PL on nationalism; the record should be set straight. Not just for the

sake of accuracy but because a correct understanding of the history of this period is essential.

It has been difficult to evaluate ideas objectively before this time, both because of the incredible rewriting of history that took place under Stalin and because of the generally counter-revolutionary role that Trotsky and his followers played following their defeat in the Communist International. However, our judgment of even this aspect of Trotsky's history should be tempered, now, in light of the role that the Communist Parties of this period played then and play today. For it could be cogently argued that had the Parties followed the correct line in that period the victory of fascism in Spain and of Hitler in Germany might have been prevented. This is not just Monday morning quarterbacking for Trotsky's prescriptions for the Parties were stated at the time and, as mentioned above, his advice (see *The Only Road For Germany* 1932) is essentially similar to the conclusions that PL has come to in its allusions to that period, the so-called "Third Period" of the Communist International characterized by dual unionism in the USA, the defeat of the Chinese in the last encirclement (leading to the Great March) the refusal of the German CP to form a united front with the social democrats, etc. We shall return to this point later.

In the article on nationalism, Mr. Scheer quotes "The Year 1917" by Trotsky. When Trotsky's articles on the Revolution were published by the Communist International and translated by Louis Fraina in the US, Lenin personally wrote "The American Comrade was wholly right in publishing a big volume containing a series of articles by Trotsky and me and thus giving a handbook of the history of the Russian Revolution." This quotation is important because one of the devices that Stalin used to obscure what the policy of socialism in one country meant was to rewrite history so that it seemed as if Lenin, too, believed in this petty bourgeois "ideal".

Mr. Scheer then quotes from Lenin, supposedly in support of Stalin, from the article published in 1915 "The United States of Europe Slogan". Needless to say, if one does not know the context of the article, nor the use of the term,

socialism, by Lenin, one can decide whatever he likes about what Lenin was saying. Lenin was not talking about a "finished socialist society, threatened only by outside intervention", which is what Stalin claimed could be done, but about the dictatorship of the proletariat being achieved in a separate country. In 1915 the debate was not over whether a finished socialist economy could be built in one country; no one, even Stalin, would have argued that. (Stalin, in fact, didn't even argue that in the first edition of *Foundations Of Leninism* in 1924. It was only in the second edition, several months later that he rediscovered "Leninism".)

LENIN

Lenin's views on this question in 1915 were well-known as are his views up to the day of his death. "The task of the proletariat", wrote Lenin in 1915, "is to carry through to the end the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, in order to kindle the socialist revolution in Europe. This second task has now come extremely near to the first but it remains nevertheless a special and second task, for it is a question of different classes co-operating with the proletariat in Russia. For the first task the collaborator is the petty-bourgeois peasantry of Russia, for the second the proletariat of other countries."

The second point we must elucidate is what in those days was meant, in general, when discussing "socialism". "Socialism is the organization of a planned and harmonious social production for the satisfaction of human wants. Collective ownership of the means of production and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not yet socialism but only its political premise. The problem of a socialist society cannot be abstracted from the problem of the productive forces, which at the present stage of human development are worldwide in their very essence. The separate state, having become too narrow for capitalism, is so much the less capable of become the arena of a finished socialist society." This is the way Trotsky put it and it was in complete accord with the thinking of the entire Bolshevik leadership when Trotsky was Lenin's closest collaborator; that is from 1917 to the time of Lenin's death.

In fact, in an attack on those who said

that the Bolsheviks shouldn't have seized state power because of the lack of correspondence between the political and economic prerequisites of socialism, Lenin wrote: "It would be an irreparable mistake to declare that once the lack of correspondence between our political and economic forces is recognized, it 'follows' that we should not have seized state power. Only people in a glass cage reason that way, forgetting that there will never be a 'correspondence', that there cannot be, either in the evolution of nature or in the evolution of society, that only by way of a series of attempts--each one of which taken separately will be one-sided, will suffer from a certain lack of correspondence--can complete socialism be created out of the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of all countries."

Mr. Scheer finally quotes Stalin as saying "The question of completely building socialism in the USSR is one of overcoming our own national bourgeoisie, the question of the final victory of socialism is one of overcoming the world bourgeoisie." Isn't it obvious to all, especially now after Mao has resurrected (unconsciously) Lenin's and Trotsky's theories of the inevitable continuation of the class struggle in socialist society, isn't it obvious that this statement of Stalin's is a perversion of the entire concept of internationalism derived by Marx from the objective development of the relations of production up to this time. This artificial and mechanical distinction between our bourgeoisie and the world bourgeoisie is precisely a form of petty bourgeois nationalism. It is simply the other side of the coin from those who argue that "we can defeat the world bourgeoisie using our bourgeoisie." Isn't it to be expected that one who believes that one can "completely build socialism in the USSR" would turn the Communist International into an agency for the defense of the USSR even if that meant halting revolution or uniting with the bourgeoisie after 1935, or going it alone before. (Even though the former policy, i.e. the Third Period Policy, appears radical in form (red trade unions, etc.) it is really petty bourgeois adventurism in essence. And similarly, the United Front reflected opportunism.)

Those international policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which by this time had eliminated all of the "old Bolsheviks",

that is the Leninists, was mirrored by its flip flop policy domestically. Until 1928, in an alliance with Bukharin, Stalin denied the real danger of the Nepmen, bureaucrats, and class stratification in the countryside. During this period Trotsky published the New Course (1923) which could have been used by Mao as a handbook for the cultural revolution. He advocated planned industrialization with a growth rate of 20%, ridiculed by Stalin as utopian. Preobrazhensky advocated using the surplus of the farms to finance industrialization in The New Economics. He was accused by Stalin of advocating exploitation of the peasants.

Then, in 1928, having wiped out the left, Stalin borrowed all their ideas and, five years after he should have begun, conducted a collectivization drive and industrialization drive, the effects of which are still reverberating. This drive was conducted in his typical heavy-handed petty bourgeois adventurist, bureaucratic spirit and though it demonstrated the superiority of socialist planning and organization (which Trotsky never denied that it did) it resulted in such tremendous contradictions in the economy and political life of the country, that the inevitable result, as Trotsky predicted, was a counter-revolution led by Stalin's own bureaucrats. In fact, Stalin himself by 1939 was not even concealing his petty bourgeois nationalist position as his report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU in 1939 indicates. This speech didn't even bother with the old "Hail Marys" such as the dictatorship of the proletariat or criticism and self-criticism which he learned too well from Lenin not to mention now and then...in the past.

DICTATORSHIP

Why is it important to re-do all these post mortems, to dig poor Mary Jo out of her grave? Because from 1905 on Trotsky was putting forth the line of either the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the current era in every country. From that year on he showed how using the concrete problems affecting each country, the proletariat could lead the masses to power. In April 1917 Lenin concluded the same and reoriented the entire Bolshevik Party in this direction. From October 1917 to 1924 Trotsky's theory of permanent

revolution (which is the embryonic form of the PL theory of nationalism and the Mao Tse Tung theory of revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat) was published throughout the world by the Bolsheviks and by Lenin's Communist International. Under Stalin, who, from a broad historical point of view, is the Liu Shao Chi of Russia, this Marxist theory was wiped out in the greatest historical rewriting campaign of all time in which all who did not agree (because they knew differently) were wiped out.

We must not forget that had Liu won, China would not have become capitalist or even revisionist overnight and PL and other good revolutionaries would have supported China, and rightly so, as they supported Russia. History is not made to order and that is one mistake Trotsky made. However, we must understand why

what happens happens. We must understand why a petty bourgeois bureaucracy was able to pose so long as the defender of the proletariat in Russia. We must understand the forms of the class struggle in socialist society and Trotsky's writings, second only to Mao's, provide insight into this question.

Most important we must understand the crucial and central importance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian internationalism. The concept of "socialism" in one country (that is "Complete socialism" as Stalin described it) is in direct opposition to these concepts. It is because of basic confusion on this point that the Chinese still have a petty bourgeois line on the international revolution. And it is in Trotsky's writings that we can find the best and earliest analysis of this question.

Mort Scheer on Stalin

ONE OF THE serious consequences of the revisionist takeover of the CPSU and the subsequent transformation of the first socialist state into a reactionary bourgeois dictatorship has been the resuscitation of Trotskyism. The complete negation of the positive contributions has been swallowed hook, line and sinker by many young revolutionaries and even comrades within our party.

The negation of Stalin was a central aim of the counter-revolutionary revisionists at the 20th Congress of the CPSU. It was essential for them to negate Stalin in order to negate his contributions and Marxism-Leninism. A correct summation of the positive and negative aspects of Stalin's leadership is necessary, not only because Stalin's works are

worthy of serious study but also to draw the correct lessons and both avoid and combat the counterrevolutionary Trotskyite outlook.

The accompanying letter by a comrade on this question reveals a number of the confusions, absurdities and counter-revolutionary features of Trotskyism.

1. The letter says that "PL's criticisms of the Communist International under Stalin's domination differ in no way from the criticisms Trotsky was making all along;" This view is completely false. While it is true that we are very critical of the weaknesses and serious mistakes in theory and practice of Stalin's leadership, our criticisms are within the framework of regarding Stalin as a Marxist-Leninist leader and the Soviet Union under his leadership a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Trotsky on the other hand viewed Stalin, the CPSU leadership and the Soviet government as counterrevolutionary obstacles that must be overthrown. Hence, the main aspect of the Stalin leadership in Trotsky's view is just the opposite of our view.

This point is no minor matter. The failure to differentiate between the main and secondary aspects will inevitably lead

to two contradictory opposing lines. This is true with regards to all political questions--it will lead to confusing friends for enemies and enemies for friends. Trotsky's error vis-a-vis Stalin's leadership was to make secondary questions into primary questions. The main task with regards to a correct revolutionary line on the establishment of the first socialist state was to defend it from all its enemies internal and external. Stalin did this while Trotsky objectively united with the imperialists who also were striving to overthrow Stalin's leadership.

The comrade in his letter admits that Trotsky and his followers generally played a counterrevolutionary role. How then can he characterize the political line of Trotsky as generally correct and Trotsky's analysis as being the best earliest writings on the question? How does one play a generally counterrevolutionary role with a correct Marxist-Leninist line. Nonsense. The comrade doesn't understand even the ABC's of what he is talking about. This can be seen when he says that "even this aspect of Trotsky's history (his counterrevolutionary role) should be tempered, now...etc". How can one dismiss a generally counterrevolutionary history as merely an aspect of one's work? Doesn't he understand that when we assess forces to be counterrevolutionary that they are no longer friends but enemies.

ROUTED

2. The historic debate on the question of building socialism in a single country was brilliantly defended by Stalin. Trotsky was completely routed ideologically, politically and organizationally. History has proven that it is quite possible for a single country to completely build a socialist society. Almost a half century has elapsed since the Trotsky-Stalin debate was laid to rest.

Does anyone think that the Chinese communists should not have the perspective of completely building socialism? Does this mean that it will be a finished socialist society? Not at all. This wasn't the essence of the debate, but rather it was precisely the belief of Trotsky that socialism could not be built in the Soviet Union because as he said "The problem of a socialist society cannot be abstracted from the problem of the productive forces

etc." Trotsky believed (and others) that without a proletarian revolution in western Europe where the productive forces were more advanced than in backward Russia, that the Soviets could not possibly survive or build socialism without the direct proletarian state support of these countries. Rather than characterizing Stalin as the Liu Shao Chi of Russia, it was Trotsky's theories that Liu emulated (see **Peking Review #38** on the question of socialism and the theory of productive forces).

Stalin correctly defended the idea that by self-reliance and the political support of the world revolutionary proletariat the Soviet Union could completely organize socialist production and rapidly build up the socialist productive forces. While many mistakes were made, this was proven to be fully correct. That is why in China today the slogan is to grasp revolution and promote production, i.e., the priority is given to politics and revolutionary ideology and not to productive forces. To give priority to the productive forces (as Trotsky and Liu does) is not dialectical materialism but mechanistic materialism and leads to an economic determinist theory of history.

NATIONALISM

3. The comrade in his letter says that to differentiate between one's own national bourgeoisie and the world bourgeoisie is a "mechanical and artificial distinction and is precisely a form of petty bourgeois nationalism." This is the kind of absurdity that muddleheaded Trotskyism can lead to. Hasn't the comrade ever heard of the question of the contradiction between imperialist powers? Is there only an undifferentiated world bourgeoisie? Doesn't the struggle against nationalism in the first place mean struggling to defeat one's own national bourgeois class which is the class force that generates nationalism? Nationalism and chauvinism doesn't exist in the abstract but takes on particular forms such as American nationalism or chauvinism, British nationalism, Russian, etc. etc. How can one struggle against nationalism without an understanding that national bourgeois classes exist in reality, even if they don't exist in the thinking of comrade X.

Such muddleheadedness not only reveals

complete ignorance of what the struggle against nationalism means but also reveals complete ignorance of the revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The seizure of state power by the proletariat takes place in the process of smashing the state power of one's own bourgeoisie. In the case of an imperialist oppressed country in the process of smashing the state power of one's own bourgeoisie backed up by the imperialist bourgeoisie. Comrade X not only has an abstract understanding of nationalism but also of the question of state power by his ridiculous objection to the requirement for Marxist-Leninists differentiating between one's own national bourgeoisie and the world bourgeoisie.

4. Comrade X believes that when the proletariat wins state power it should not have the perspective of completely building socialism. He says that such a perspective inevitably means selling-out the world revolution. It means no such thing. The outlook of completely and thoroughly building socialism in China today does not mean that its inevitable that the Chinese will sell-out the world revolution. This of course is possible. Nationalism is a grave danger as well as revisionism, everywhere including China.

Marxist-Leninists don't combat nationalism by abandoning the perspective of completely building socialism when they have won state power. On the contrary they must see this as an international task to advance the world revolution. As Lenin said "The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists, having organized socialist production, would stand up against the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in these countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states."

COMPLETE

The point is that the proletariat having won state power either must strive to thoroughly destroy the bourgeoisie politically, economically, and ideologically i.e. have the perspective of thoroughly and completely building socialism or it (proletarian state power) will be des-

troyed. To accomplish this aim requires continuous class struggle and the outlook that this is not an end in itself but a growing strategic base for the advance of the world revolution. Trotskyism puts forth the perspective of defeatism of the impossibility of building socialism in a single country such as the Soviet Union, China, etc.

5. The Trotskyites and comrade X put forth the myth that Trotsky led Lenin. Comrade X says that from 1905-1917 Lenin did not have the outlook of either the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that it was only in April 1917 that Lenin adopted Trotsky's line and oriented the Bolsheviks according to it. This is a complete fraud. It is true that Trotsky opposed Leninism throughout that entire period. Trotsky was a centrist and not a Bolshevik; he allied with the Mensheviks against Lenin. He attacked Lenin's thesis of the possibility of the victory of the proletariat in a single country when Trotsky wrote: "Without waiting for others we begin and continue the struggle nationally, in the full confidence that our initiative will give an impetus to the struggle in other countries; but if this should not occur, it would be hopeless to think—as historical experience and theoretical considerations testify--that, for example, a revolutionary Russia could hold out in the face of a conservative Europe..." These words were directed against Lenin in 1915 not Stalin and Trotsky accused Lenin, not Stalin at that time, of national narrowmindedness. It was Trotsky who claimed to adopt Bolshevism and Leninism in 1917, not Lenin who adopted Trotskyism.

STALIN

6. Stalin defeated Trotsky because Stalin defended Leninism against Trotskyism. In the period of the great debate, the questions were openly and thoroughly debated throughout the entire party. Trotsky was completely demolished and isolated. Stalin's line in this period was a mass line, a class line, a revolutionary line and an internationalist line. Trotsky's line was defeatist, sectarian, and counterrevolutionary and that's why he became isolated and routed despite the fact that he had achieved a certain prestige when he allied with Lenin during the

October revolutionary period.

Stalin in the course of his leadership made serious mistakes which deserve a thorough examination, but this can never be done correctly with the Trotskyite outlook. Over the past period, the world communist movement has witnessed another debate, between the Chinese Marxist-Leninists and the Khrushchevite revisionists. Revolutionaries throughout the entire world have recognized that Mao Tse Tung has defended revolutionary Marxism-Leninism against counterrevolutionary revisionism. Of course this doesn't mean that Mao is immune from error any more than Stalin was, but it would be absurd for Marxist-Leninists to turn to the revisionists today as an answer to any of Mao's errors or to turn to the Trotskyites and Trotsky to guide revolutionary

struggles.

Comrade X should give thoughtful reconsideration of his attempt to link our party's line to Trotskyism. Those sincere revolutionaries who in the past took this road unfortunately as Comrade X admits played a counterrevolutionary role and continue to do so today. PL will not take this path. We are Marxist-Leninists not Trotskyites.

This response was dashed off rather quickly. How widespread Comrade X's thinking is in our party I'm not aware of. I would suggest that Comrade X and others should familiarize themselves with the works of Stalin on the question of Trotskyism, such as **Once More on the Social Democratic Deviation in our Party**, Sel. Wks., Vol. 9.

Desafio Editors Answer Scheer

(Some cuts have been made in the following article for space considerations.)

BY JUAN P. FARINAS

I THINK THAT the main issue raised by the present line of the party on nationalism, as put forth in the editorial of the August, 1969, issue of PL magazine and in Mort Scheer's article, and the discussion of it in the internal bulletin is the issue of Trotskyism vs. Stalinism. I share comrade X's opinion that the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin is no Monday morning quarterbacking but that it touches on every one of the issues raised in the two documents mentioned before (the two stage theory, New Democracy, Popular Front, nationalism in the Soviet Union and in the international communist movement).

Stalin was the acknowledged

leader of the international communist movement for close to 30 years. As such his leadership, policies, theories and views have left an unerasable imprint on the movement and humanity. An evaluation of Stalin's true role in the international communist movement is indispensable for our party.

Even though our party has not attempted to make such an evaluation, it is clear from the little material written on the question that the leadership considers Stalin to have been a "proletarian revolutionary", and even though the leadership of the party recognizes some of the most obvious "mistakes" of Stalin it still tries to maintain Stalin against Trotsky.

Speaking of Khrushchev's criticisms of Stalin our party said: "It did not place both his enormous contributions and his serious errors in their historical context, but offered instead a subjective, crude, total negation of a great Marxist-Leninist and proletarian revolutionary." Further on it is stated: "In initiating and repeating their violent attacks upon Stalin.

the present leadership of the CPSU sought to undermine the influence of this proletarian revolutionary among the people of the Soviet Union and throughout the world. In this way, they prepared the ground for negating Marxism-Leninism, which Stalin defended and developed, in order to introduce their own revisionist line." In comrade Scheer's contribution to the internal discussion, which, I might note in passing, is the only one devoted to answer any of the other contributions, he says: "While it is true that we are very critical of the weaknesses and serious mistakes in theory and practice of Stalin's leadership, our criticisms are within the framework of regarding Stalin as a Marxist-Leninist leader and the Soviet Union under his leadership a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

This attempt to maintain Stalin against Trotsky is clearly expressed in comrade Scheer's article **Don't Be A Sucker for the Bosses, Nationalism Divides the Workers** (PL, November 1969). In this article it is admitted that revisionism in the Soviet Union has its roots in the Stalin period, that Stalin "deviated toward nationalism and great power chauvinism", and that "gross violations in the practice of democratic centralism" were perpetrated. Yet it is held that "Stalin upheld Lenin's belief that socialism could be built in a single country" and that "Stalin defeated the counter-revolutionary line of Trotsky."

In order to defend Stalin and provide him with the alleged support of Lenin, comrade Scheer drags up a quotation from **The United States of Europe Slogan**, making Lenin turn over in his mausoleum on Red Square for the millionth and one time. Comrade Scheer speaks in his contribution to the internal discussion about some Trotskyist "fraud", but let me tell you right now, if there ever was a fraud this quotation IS IT. First of all, Lenin was not even talking about Russia but about Western Europe, since the perspective of the Bolsheviks at that time was for a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. Second, the quotation is part of one paragraph only in the whole essay on the slogan, and it is extremely difficult to believe that Lenin would deal so superficially on such a subject. Third, this quotation would negate the whole life and work of Lenin who, along with the rest of the Bolshevik Party, Marx, Engels and

Trotsky, always proceeded from the international character of the socialist revolution and socialism. But let Lenin speak for himself.

In April, 1906 Lenin said: "The Russian revolution has enough forces of its own to conquer. But it has not enough forces to retain the fruits of its victory... In order to prevent a restoration, the Russian revolution has need, not of a Russian reserve: it has need of help from outside. Is there such a reserve in the world? There is: the socialist proletariat in the west."

At the end of February, 1922: "But we have not finished building even the foundations of socialist economy and the hostile powers of moribund capitalism can still deprive us of that. We must clearly appreciate this and frankly admit it; ... for we have always urged and reiterated the elementary truth of Marxism—that the joint efforts of the workers of several advanced countries are needed for the victory of socialism."

These quotations show clearly that "socialism in a single country" never crossed Lenin's mind, but we have to consider a few other things as well: Trotsky's views were expressed quite some time before the October Revolution (as far back as 1905, as a matter of fact). If Lenin held that socialism could be built in a single country, and Russia at that, why then didn't he himself struggle against Trotsky on this question? Why did Lenin and the Bolshevik party immediately set themselves the task of building the Communist International, especially when they were in the middle of a civil war? Why did the question of "socialism in one country" and the struggle against "counterrevolutionary Trotskyism" come up SEVEN YEARS AFTER the October Revolution and only after Lenin was safely and quietly dead?

The truth is that "socialism in one country" was the theory of the bureaucracy which arose in the Soviet Union after the revolution due to the isolation of the Russian revolution as a result of the failure of revolution in Western Europe, to the killing of thousands of the best elements within the Bolshevik party during the Civil War, and to the fact that the party, being the only legal party in the country, attracted all sorts of careerists and opportunists after it seized power. This theory of "socialism in a single

country" meant just that: that socialism would remain in the Soviet Union ONLY. Since the main task was the building of socialism in the Soviet Union the function of the international communist movement was to prevent foreign intervention and not to seize power. Thus, in the words of Trotsky, "the Communist International is down-graded to an auxiliary weapon useful only for the struggle against military intervention."

SLANDER

In his attempt to maintain Stalin against Trotsky, comrade Scheer uses that favorite Stalinist weapon: SLANDER. Throughout his contribution comrade Scheer sticks the adjective "counterrevolutionary" next to Trotsky's name, as if doing so would make it so. Making one of the most worn out and discredited arguments in the Stalinist arsenal of slanders against Trotsky, comrade Scheer writes: "Trotsky's error vis-a-vis Stalin's leadership was to make secondary questions into primary questions. The main task with regards to a correct revolutionary line on the establishment of the first socialist state was to defend it from all its enemies internal and external. Stalin did this while Trotsky objectively united with the imperialists who also were striving to overthrow Stalin's leadership."

This statement shows three things: 1) The complete ignorance about the Trotskyist movement on the part of comrade Scheer. Had he bothered to look around he would have found that practically all the elements that left the ranks of the Fourth International and the SWP, while this party was still a Trotskyist party, did so precisely because of their unwillingness to defend the Soviet Union unconditionally. As Trotsky himself put it: "What does 'unconditional' defense of the USSR mean? It means that we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy. It means that independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the USSR, if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism."

2) It shows comrade Scheer's own outlook. Stalin's leadership of the Bolshevik party is seen as something given and unquestionable, without bothering to examine, or even mentioning, how Stalin became Lenin's successor as leader of the party. Do we need to remind comrade Scheer

that it was Lenin himself who recommended Stalin's removal from his position as secretary general of the Party? Doesn't comrade Scheer know that in order to consolidate his power Stalin had to annihilate, not only politically but physically, too, the general staff of the Bolshevik Party, that he had to do so because those people represented the continuity with Bolshevism, with Lenin, which Stalin shattered into pieces?

And 3), That time works wonders, even with a die-hard Stalinist such as comrade Scheer. Comrade Scheer says that "Trotsky objectively united with the imperialists." Times were when the world Stalinist press meekly repeated every ridiculous and stupid accusation against Trotsky, covering themselves forever with shame. Times were when Trotsky was not an "objective" ally of the imperialists but a direct servant of Hitler and the Mikado, when a man like Zinoviev was forced to "confess:" "My defective Bolshevism became transformed into anti-Bolshevism and through Trotskyism I arrived at fascism. Trotskyism is a variety of fascism, and Zinovievism is a variety of Trotskyism." And "The trials brought to light the fact that Trotsky-Bukharin fiends, in obedience to the wishes of their masters—the espionage services of foreign states—had set out to destroy the Party and the Soviet state, to undermine the defensive power of the country, to assist foreign military intervention, to prepare the way for the defeat of the Red Army, to bring about the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R., to hand over the Soviet Maritime Region to the Japanese, Soviet Byelorussia to the Poles, and the Soviet Ukraine to the Germans, to destroy the gains of the workers and collective farmers, and to restore capitalist slavery in the U.S.S.R." But that was 30 years ago, and that amount of time can make it difficult for anyone, even comrade Scheer, to gulp that one down.

Further on comrade Scheer uses the other favorite Stalinist argument against Trotsky, that is, using Trotsky's disagreements with Lenin before October in order to belittle, discredit and attack Trotsky's contributions after the October Revolution. But with this argument the Stalinists all over the world have had a very hard bone to contend with. That bone is the October Revolution. It is

true that for some time before the revolution Trotsky maintained a conciliationist position as regards to the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, but being so the case, and if he was such a "counterrevolutionary," why then did the Bolshevik party allow Trotsky to JOIN the Party (not "ally" himself with Lenin, but join the Party?) Why was he allowed into the Bolshevik Central Committee? Why was he allowed to play such a prominent and important role in the insurrection itself, to organize the Red Army, and to conduct the most important task, at that moment, of the revolution, namely, to conduct the Civil War? It seems altogether nonsense that the Bolsheviks would entrust a "counterrevolutionary" with the defense of the Revolution.

METHOD

Establishing one of his central arguments comrade Scheer says: "Stalin in the course of his leadership made serious mistakes which deserve a thorough examination, but this can never be done correctly with the Trotskyite outlook." This brings us to a very fundamental question for our party: the question of method.

It is no secret to anyone that our party has changed its position on a number of important questions, the most recent being nationalism. The reason why these corrections had to be made is that our analysis was incorrect to begin with, that is, the way these things (Cuba, the "revolutionary nationalists," community control) developed did not accord with our analysis of them. I think this is due in great part to the anti-theory and anti-historical outlook of the leadership of the party. One way this outlook expresses itself is in the fact that after the party has changed its position, either no analysis whatsoever is made of the reasons, the methodological and ideological roots of those "mistakes," or it is skated over in the most superficial manner.

For instance, in the **Black Liberation Program** it is stated: "In the past we in the Progressive Labor Party have been guilty of creating illusions about Black nationalists and nationalists. In our early period we were one-sided; because we supported the resistance of nationalists like the Muslims and Robert Williams, we viewed them as generally good. We

failed to understand that nationalism is reactionary, and that this is its main aspect. We made similar errors internationally. We were wrong in evaluating Ben Bella, and then Boumediene. We were wrong in our evaluation of Sukarno."

But, unfortunately, there is more. In the editorial of the August, 1969 (yellow) issue of **PL** magazine, this anti-historical outlook is glaringly expressed. This editorial expresses publicly for the first time the party's new line on nationalism in a more or less systematic way, and precisely because of that is this anti-historical outlook so glaring. The editorial states that one of the fundamental reasons for the triumph of revisionism in the Soviet Union was the "fervent nationalist bent involved in Soviet culture and thought," "that the concept of 'two-stage struggles' is wrong," that "Dimitrov's" "Popular Front" was and is also wrong, that there were people in China "who said that China had to have capitalism first" and that "you couldn't skip stages and go from feudalism to socialism." Yet there is no historical and concrete analysis of these things. How and when did these concepts and policies come about? Who was responsible for their coming about? Who was it that was for a "two-stage" struggle in China? How did the "two-stage" struggle and "Dimitrov's" Popular Front become part of "Marxism-Leninism?" And, above all, was there no opposition at that time to these policies? None of these questions are even considered. I don't mean that our party should have come out with a three volume book on the subject, but I feel that it is completely inadequate and dangerous to treat such an important subject so superficially.

Of all these examples there is one that won the first prize in the superficiality contest hands down! That is the handling of the Popular Front question. In the editorial it is stated: "It envisions the peaceful transition to socialism. The theory is first to win the victory of the popular front and then move somehow to socialism." In the article that follows the editorial of the same issue it is said of the Popular Front: "We thought this old chesnut had died."

But comrades, let's be frank with ourselves, just what the hell has the Progressive Labor Party ever said, writ-

ten, or done to make the Popular Front an "old chestnut" or make it "die?"

Another manifestation of the anti-theory and anti-historical outlook in the party is the question of self-determination, particularly as it relates to black people in the U.S., and its relation to socialism. As one of the comrades writes in the internal discussion bulletin, our party has changed the meaning of the concept of self-determination, as traditionally used by Marxists, but it has not explained why it does so. Our party has never made a study to determine whether the black people in the U.S. constitute a nation or not. That, it seems to me, would be the central question if one is to speak of self-determination for the black people at all. The position of the party that "Nationalism flowers in a situation where self-determination means something other than socialism. We say that self-determination can only be accomplished under socialism" in fact means that we oppose the struggle of colonial nations for independence, or should I rather say, that is what those words come out to mean, independently of what the leadership may want them to mean.

Yet another example of the disdain for theory and history on the part of the party's leadership is the question of Trotskyism itself. We can look for a serious (even for one not so serious) analysis in the pages of *PL* or *Challenge* from now until doomsday and what we'll find is "Trotskyite" this or "Trotskyite" that, but never anything more. It seems to me that if Trotskyism were so "counter-revolutionary," as comrade Scheer claims it is, our party should have devoted some more attention to it and made a thorough analysis of it so that no new comrades be led astray by such foul ideology. But no!

Apparently: "there is no time" for such things.

As I said before I feel that in great part this disdain for theory and history on the part of the party's leadership has been the cause of the failure to analyze correctly a number of important situations and developments, and as such it absolutely cannot be seen as something irrelevant to the party's work, because if it is not corrected it will mean that our party will continue to do what it has been doing in the past: correcting its mistakes. No one needs to be reminded that a mistake in policy can very well be the very last mistake of a party. I'd say the Indonesians know something about that. In other words, it is not enough to write "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in every sentence to be a Marxist party. To get there one must be able to analyze the situations and processes that are going and not just raise orthodox and almost sacrosanct slogans ("dictatorship of the proletariat," "class struggle," "revolutionary seizure of power," "Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought", etc.), which are, precisely because of their orthodoxy, empty and meaningless. I think, and in this agree with Chairman Milton, that the internal discussion bulletin is a step forward, toward a better understanding on the part of all of us of what Marxism is really about

NOTE: I would like to suggest to the comrades that they should, besides familiarizing themselves with the works of Stalin on Trotskyism, also read Trotsky on Stalinism, particularly, *The Draft Programme of the Communist International*, *A Criticism of Fundamentals*; *The Permanent Revolution*; *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*; and *The Stalin School of Falsification*.





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