

# **EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS**

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## **TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

**Part I:**

## **THREE CONTRIBUTIONS ON POSTWAR DEVELOPMENTS**

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## **Introductory Note**

This is the first in a series of Education for Socialists bulletins containing documentary materials and historical articles on the history of the Fourth International. Future bulletins will include documents from the 1954 split in the world Trotskyist movement and the subsequent reunification of the Fourth International in 1963.

"From World War II to the Cold War," by Cliff Conner, and "The Fourth International from Split to Reunification," by Les Evans, are based on talks given by the authors to several branches of the Socialist Workers Party during the spring of 1973.

"Problems of Methodology in the 1953-1954 Split in the Fourth International," by Tom Kerry is based on a talk given in New York City on July 19, 1972.

# From World War II to the Cold War

by Cliff Conner

Trotsky's expectation of an imminent second world war and his estimate of its character led him to the conclusion that the Fourth International should be founded before the war broke out. The war was the most cataclysmic in world history, far surpassing even the first world war in that respect. It was followed by revolutionary upsurges all over Europe, and resulted in a significant weakening of capitalism on a world scale. In all of these respects Trotsky's prognosis for the course of the war, made in 1938-40, proved correct.

But the results of World War II were not as far-reaching as Trotsky had thought they might be. The foundations of the workers state—the Soviet Union—proved to be strong enough to withstand the ferocious Nazi onslaught in spite of the misleadership of the Stalinists. This was a tremendous victory for the world working class, but it also produced one of history's greatest ironies—it enhanced the prestige of Stalin and the Stalinist parties all over the world. In Trotsky's expectation, Stalin's efforts to preserve "peaceful coexistence" with Nazi Germany through the Stalin-Hitler Pact and at the expense of revolutionary struggle would shift the center of working-class opposition to the war elsewhere. The failure of the Stalinist parties to oppose the fascist regimes in the early stages of the war would result, Trotsky thought, in the revolutionary energies of the masses, provoked by war-time conditions, being channeled into the only party that uncompromisingly struggled against all the imperialist regimes—the Fourth International. Trotsky predicted Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union long before it occurred and he warned that Stalin's policies were dangerously weakening the workers state; for example, the destruction of the staff of the Soviet armed forces through purges and the disorganization of the planned economy. The treacherous role of the Stalinist apparatus in leaving the USSR vulnerable to the Nazi assault could, Trotsky thought, result in the growth of a revolutionary Marxist opposition that could effectively rally the Soviet masses to defend the workers state against Hitler.

But in fact, despite huge initial losses owing to Stalin's unwillingness to believe that his "ally" would break their nonaggression pact, the Kremlin managed to maintain the leadership of the defensive struggle in which the Soviet masses finally turned the tide of the Nazi invasion.

That resistance was not waged in defense of Stalin's repressive political dictatorship; it was motivated by the desire to preserve the social and economic foundations of the workers state that were instituted under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. In a very real sense, then, the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II was Trotsky's victory rather than Stalin's. But nevertheless, the Soviet triumph enabled the Stalinists to continue posing as heirs of Lenin and the October Revolution.

In Western Europe the Nazi blitzkrieg had demoralized and disoriented the working masses for several years, and their recovery came at a time when the Stalinists'

influence was strengthened by their identification with the heroic resistance of the Soviet masses.

After the war, the Red Army stood astride Eastern Europe, while in the West the revolutionary Marxists again found huge Stalinist movements blocking their paths. The entrenchment of Stalinism extended the crisis of proletarian leadership for a whole historical period. In particular, by preventing the workers of Western Europe from taking power, the Stalinists laid the basis for the stabilization of the capitalist system on a world scale. It was only the collaboration of the Stalinists in propping up the capitalist system in Western Europe that saved the day for the American policy-makers who emerged as the central leadership of world capitalism.

The reason the Fourth International was not able to develop mass sections with millions of members throughout the world and wasn't in a position to lead revolutions to successful conclusions cannot be ascribed to shortcomings on the part of individual leaders of the Trotskyist movement, nor can it be ascribed to any insufficiencies of its political program, it is ascribable to the mammoth obstacles in the objective situation.

The history of the Fourth International during the second world war reveals one significant victory—the survival of the International itself. The Nazis and the Stalinists dealt heavy blows to the organizations and threatened it with extinction, but its survival permitted preservation of the continuity of Leninist internationalism from the October Revolution to the present day.

The survival of the Fourth International through the second world war was by no means a foregone conclusion. Because of the war, communications between groups of Trotskyists in different countries became very difficult; in fact, contacts were completely broken for a time. But by 1942 Trotskyists who were active in the French underground had made contact with comrades in Belgium and the United States.

France was a gathering place for revolutionists who were in exile from all over Europe. After the Nazi occupation of France these people went underground. The Trotskyist movement there built a functioning underground group. They published 73 issues of *La Verité* in illegality—19 issues were mimeographed and 54 were printed—over a four-year period beginning in 1940. This same underground organization put out a paper in German called *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier), which they issued to German occupying troops, and they began to politicize the German soldiers.

This work was carried on throughout 1942 and part of 1943 until the Gestapo decimated the leadership of the French Trotskyists. Hundreds were arrested and murdered or deported to concentration camps. Eight members of the Central Committee were caught, and almost the entire leadership in Brittany was seized. Among sixty-five comrades arrested in Brittany were thirty German

soldiers who had joined the group.

In spite of this crushing blow, the comrades were able to reorganize and begin to function again; later in 1943 a temporary European secretariat was established. The Trotskyist movement in Europe actually grew during the war in spite of the fact that whole sections, the Danish section, for example, were completely liquidated by the Gestapo. The Greek section, too, which had been one of the strongest Trotskyist organizations before the war, was the common target of both the fascists and the Stalinists.

The repressions were worst in Europe and in the colonial world, but they weren't confined to those areas. In the United States, eighteen leaders of the Socialist Workers Party were imprisoned. Trotskyist leaders were also imprisoned in Britain.

In Latin America, the Argentine and Uruguayan sections came under attack by their governments. The comrades there had to fight for their right to exist and publish their newspapers.

In Ceylon, the leading comrades were imprisoned. They recruited their jailer to Trotskyism and fled with him to India and started a party there.

In Indochina there had been, before the war, a Trotskyist movement of considerable size and influence, especially around Saigon. The Stalinists had been dominant in North and Central Indochina, but in the south the relationship of forces between Trotskyism and Stalinism was more even. In the liberation struggle following the war, the Trotskyists fought along with the Viet Minh and even commanded some of the Viet Minh military units. But the Stalinists who led the Viet Minh captured the Trotskyist leaders and executed them in late 1945, effectively suppressed the movement, although small groups of Trotskyists continued revolutionary work for several years, despite the repressions. In China, the story was similar. Our comrades were murdered and imprisoned by the Chinese Stalinists led by Mao Tse-tung. The fate of many of them is still unknown.

A European secretariat was established about August of 1943 with French, Belgian, Greek, Spanish, and German Trotskyists participating. It began publishing *Quatrième Internationale* in mimeographed form in January 1944.

Perhaps the most significant action of this body was the organization of an international conference of European sections *during the war*—held in France in February of 1944, "within the very tentacles of the Gestapo," as one account described it. The news of this conference wasn't printed in *The Militant* until eight months later, indicating the difficulty of trans-Atlantic communications at the time.

The underground conference established a European Executive Committee and worked toward the building of functioning organizations in the European countries in preparation for the postwar revolutionary upsurge.

The Belgian Trotskyists, who had maintained an organization throughout the war and had published two newspapers—one in Flemish and one in French—sent representatives to the underground conference. The Greek, Spanish, and German representatives at the conference were from groups of Trotskyist emigrés in France. Three separate French groups attended the conference and fused

into a single organization there, becoming the PCI—Internationalist Communist Party of France.

At about the same time two British tendencies fused, forming the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain). These fusions were important, but they were not fusions of completely homogeneous groups. The fact that they weren't really homogeneous was to become clear in the future in the form of organizational difficulties and, finally, splits. But the main objective at the time was fulfilled: to consolidate the various Trotskyist groups as much as possible and at the same time to clarify the political program of Trotskyism; to reaffirm the international line of the movement. This was especially necessary because of the confusion caused by popular frontism, which was in the ascendancy in all of the partisan movements.

Meanwhile, in the United States, an internal dispute had arisen within the SWP during the war. A minority led by Felix Morrow and Albert Goldman was developing a conciliationist line toward Shachtman who had his own group called the Workers Party. In 1945, during this dispute, a leader of the Fourth International, Michel Pablo, made a trip to the U. S. and while he was here he raised the idea with Shachtman of possibly unifying his group with the SWP.

Morrow and Goldman made this a central issue in their inner-party fight. They were in favor of unity with the Shachtmanites and they promoted that goal energetically. The SWP met with representatives of Shachtman's group twice, but the negotiations bogged down over Shachtman's insistence on the right to publish an internal organ of his tendency inside the party—not a temporary internal bulletin, but a permanent one. The SWP took the position that this would lead to permanent factions and, eventually, to another split, especially since the differences that had led to the original split with Shachtman had not narrowed, but had widened. It would have raised again the questions of the nature of the Soviet Union and the character of a Leninist party.

At one point unity was agreed to by both groups but then Shachtman launched a public attack on the SWP. So the discussions were ended and Goldman quit the SWP and joined with Shachtman. Later, in 1946, Morrow was expelled by an SWP convention because he had been caught collaborating with Shachtman secretly even though he was still formally a leading member of the SWP. After his expulsion he joined the Shachtman group, and a number of his supporters left the SWP with him. In 1947 a faction around J. R. Johnson (C. L. R. James) in Shachtman's party split and joined the SWP. So this whole affair amounted to a minor regroupment.

Meanwhile, in Europe, after this period of consolidation had accomplished as much as could have been expected, a conference was held in April 1946, in Belgium. Trotskyists from twelve countries participated.

This conference elected a new Executive Committee and Secretariat, which was to begin functioning as a full-fledged international center. One of its main functions was to begin preparations for a world congress, including the drafting of line documents for discussion.

One of the documents produced was on the USSR; it generally reaffirmed the Trotskyist viewpoint of the Soviet

Union as a degenerated workers state. There were also documents on revolutionary perspectives in Europe and on the colonial struggles. It was significant that in spite of several years of broken communications between the SWP and the European comrades, these discussion documents were in close harmony with resolutions that had been passed a few months earlier by the SWP.

These documents were to lead to the Second World Congress of the Fourth International, which was held in April and May 1948 in France. Twenty-two organizations participated, representing nineteen different countries.

A great deal of discussion at the congress focused on the East European "buffer states." In Eastern Europe at the end of the war the Soviet army was in actual control and the imperialists were too weak to challenge its power. Stalin had illusions that the wartime alliance with the United States and Britain could last indefinitely but the imperialists had other ideas, which eventually led to the Cold War.

Stalin's illusions led him to promise, at Potsdam, that capitalism would not be overturned in Eastern Europe—that coalition governments would be established and private-property relations maintained. These coalition governments did actually function for about two or three years—from the end of the war to 1947, and in some cases 1948. But by 1948, under pressure of the Cold War and the Marshall Plan, the Stalinists had eliminated the capitalist elements in the governments and nationalized the means of production.

One country in Eastern Europe had an entirely different path of development from the rest: Yugoslavia. The discussion at the Second World Congress of the Fourth International began with Yugoslavia.

In Yugoslavia, the fight against the German and Italian invaders had clearly taken on the character of a civil war, where the struggle for national liberation was carried on by a partisan movement led by the Communist Party. Stalin ordered Tito, leader of the CP, to form a popular front with procapitalist forces, but Tito found that instruction impossible to carry out. The procapitalists, represented by a partisan group called the Chetniks, spent most of their time fighting on the other side—in collaboration with the Nazis against Tito's partisans. It was a situation like that in China, where Stalin ordered Mao Tse-tung to unite with Chiang Kai-shek to fight the Japanese, but Chiang Kai-shek kept attacking Mao's troops.

Tito's forces fought against the Chetniks and won. When they took power in Yugoslavia, they tried to please Stalin and the imperialist Allies by forming a coalition government with remnants of the bourgeoisie—the Tito-Subasich coalition—but it didn't hold up for more than a few months. The last two bourgeois ministers left the government in October 1945.

There had been no real basis for the coalition in the first place. It represented a dangerous opening for the Yugoslav capitalists to regain their political power, but the real power in the country was being exercised by the People's Committees under the leadership of the CP. The People's Committees had arisen during the civil war as organs of dual power. They came out of the partisan struggle and were solidly supported by the masses of Yugoslav workers and peasants. This social base, of

course, had irreconcilable conflicts of interest with the capitalist elements in the coalition government.

After the breakup of the coalition, a rapid process of economic transformation took place. Sweeping nationalizations were implemented, collectivization of agriculture was begun, a monopoly of foreign trade was established, a five-year plan was adopted, industrialization and electrification of the country got under way. In short, Yugoslavia became a workers state.

Throughout this process the independent course of the Yugoslav CP met resistance from the Kremlin, but because the Titoists had firm control over their own armed forces, and had proved their fighting capacity in the revolutionary upsurge, Stalin viewed it as too risky to try to crush the Titoists quickly by brute force. Instead of a confrontation with Tito in 1945-46, then, Stalin pursued the more modest goal of bringing the Yugoslav party and state apparatus under Kremlin control. With the onset of the Cold War, Belgrade and Moscow found themselves in a common front against Washington—which did not prevent Stalin from continuing to try to undermine Tito. These efforts finally led to a violent confrontation in 1948.

Ironically in 1947 when Stalin established the Cominform, he headquartered it in Belgrade and held up the economic transformation of Yugoslavia as the model to be followed by the other East European countries. But in 1948, when Tito began campaigning for the formation of a Balkan-Danube federation of states, Stalin saw that as a challenge to Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe and expelled the Yugoslav CP from the Cominform. As the Tito-Stalin split deepened, the Kremlin's offensive of slander, economic pressure, and even military threats against Yugoslavia intensified.

During the same period, 1947-48, the transformations in other East European countries were taking place, but the process was very different. There the social transformations were being carried out, for the most part, not as a result of civil war and not primarily through mass action, but on the orders of the top bureaucrats with the power of the Soviet army at their disposal.

This whole process raised a basic problem for revolutionary socialists: what kind of countries were these unusual East European states? Were they workers states or were they capitalist? What was their class nature?

If they were workers states, how did that happen without the revolutionary action of the masses? If there had been social revolutions, how could they have been led by Stalinists, whom Trotskyists had characterized for years as counterrevolutionary *through and through*? There were a number of apparent contradictions that could not be ignored.

Another question was raised. Were these special cases or was a whole new stage in world history opening up wherein this process of revolution-by-bureaucratic-takeover could be repeated?

If Stalinist parties could lead revolutions, as one interpretation of the events could imply, where did that leave Trotskyism? Hadn't Trotskyists held that only *revolutionary* parties could lead an overturn of capitalism?

Another problem: Should Trotskyists support what was going on in Eastern Europe, or oppose it? If we supported it, should we join those parties that were carrying

it out or not?

In the Trotskyist movement in Europe in 1948-49, Michel Pablo and Ernest Germain took somewhat different positions on the question of the class character of Eastern Europe. Germain held that the East European countries, including Yugoslavia, were capitalist states. Pablo agreed *except* on Yugoslavia, which he said must be a workers state because there had been a civil war there. In the United States, the majority of the SWP generally agreed with Germain, but a minority led by Joseph Hansen and Bert Cochran disagreed. Hansen and Cochran held that *all* of the East European states were workers states deformed from birth. They were saddled with Stalinist bureaucracies, but their economic foundations were qualitatively the same as the USSR's, and they had to be considered workers states.

Some resolution of these differences had to be found. This question was not a semantic one or an academic dispute over abstractions. As Hansen put it, "the question of the class character of the state is the touchstone of the proletarian revolution and the heart of Marxist politics." What it boils down to is that if you can't determine whether a revolution has occurred or not, then you don't know what a revolution is, and that is a bad position for a revolutionary to be in.

The discussion on Eastern Europe was a model discussion in that it was carried out in a principled manner—the goal was always theoretical clarification, and not narrow factional gains. One example of this came at an internal debate that the SWP arranged between Joseph Hansen and George Clarke. Clarke was won over during the debate. He began defending the SWP majority position, but became convinced during the debate that Hansen's position was correct. Such a thing could never happen in a debate where the participants were motivated by purely factional considerations.

One of the key documents of this discussion came from the Seventh Plenum of the IEC (International Executive Committee), which was held in June 1949. Its title is "The Evolution of the Buffer Countries." (It is reprinted in the Education for Socialists bulletin *Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution*.) This resolution defends the idea that the East European states were "capitalist countries on the road toward structural assimilation with the USSR." Structural assimilation, the document said, meant "the abolition of national frontiers between the various buffer countries," either through direct incorporation into the USSR or the formation of a single East European state formally independent of the USSR. In any event, this "elimination of national frontiers" was considered the "decisive and fundamental" factor for the completion of structural assimilation. The historical model for a Stalin-ordered structural assimilation was the incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and parts of Poland into the USSR during World War II.

Pablo voted for this resolution of the Seventh Plenum that defined the East European countries as capitalist states, although he disagreed that Yugoslavia was in that category. And the National Committee of the SWP also passed this resolution at an SWP plenum later.

I make a point of mentioning that Pablo voted for this resolution because in a later dispute Tim Wohlforth

tried to claim that Hansen had merely adopted Pablo's position in this discussion. That is obviously untrue, because Pablo voted against Hansen on this question and only later, with the rest of the International, was won over to the position that all of the Eastern European countries were deformed workers states.

The document entitled "The Problem of Eastern Europe" by Joseph Hansen (also reprinted in the Education for Socialists bulletin mentioned above) is his answer to that resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the IEC.

Let's consider some of the arguments advanced during the discussion. I'm not going to try to give a detailed analysis of the merits of the arguments; just a brief outline. The Education for Socialists bulletin, and Hansen's article in particular, are very thorough on these questions. The article by Cochran (written under the name E. R. Frank) in the same bulletin is worth reading, too.

The first argument to be considered is this one: That a revolutionary mobilization of the masses is a *necessary condition* for overturning capitalism. This was first stated with regard to the East European discussion in a resolution of the Second World Congress in 1948. But the resolution contradicted itself, because it also acknowledged that there had been overturns of capitalism in some countries *without* revolutionary mobilizations of the masses having taken place; for example, in the Baltic countries and other areas that had become part of the Soviet Union as a result of World War II. The 1948 resolution called this "structural assimilation" and said that this was the only alternative way, aside from a revolutionary mobilization of the masses, that capitalism could be overturned. And with regard to the East European states, it made the judgment that they were not moving in the direction of structural assimilation. That is, that the tendency in Eastern Europe was in the direction of remaining capitalist states.

The next year, 1949, at the Seventh Plenum of the IEC, this last judgment was reversed. It was noted that "important changes [had] taken place in Eastern Europe during the year 1948," and that now the East European states seemed to be moving in the direction of structural assimilation into the USSR.

Nevertheless, the Seventh Plenum continued to maintain the line that Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the rest were still capitalist states, because obviously their national frontiers were still intact.

Again, Pablo agreed with all this, but he said that since there had been a civil war in Yugoslavia—a revolutionary mobilization of the masses—Yugoslavia was different and must be considered to be a workers state. The others were capitalist states, he said, even though the capitalists were no longer the dominant class there, because they had not gone through the process of civil war.

The basis for this position was a fear of falling prey to the old revisionist idea of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, of the type promoted today by the supporters of Salvador Allende in Chile.

But no one was trying to say that the transformation in Eastern Europe had been peaceful. It was extremely violent, but the violence was not *primarily* a result of revolutionary uprisings; it was a byproduct of World War II.

Why is it that a socialist transformation cannot occur

without violence? It requires the destruction of the state power of the former ruling class, the bourgeoisie! The capitalists, we know, never give up without a fight; they have to be defeated by force.

The virtual destruction of the power of the old capitalist ruling classes in Eastern Europe was accomplished by force during the war in two ways. First, in Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Greece, large sections of the ruling classes were physically obliterated by the Germans; by the Nazi invaders. The German occupation armies then played the dominant role as repressive force. When Germany was defeated, the Kremlin filled the political vacuums in most of these countries on the strength of the victorious Soviet army. The exceptions were Greece, where Stalin allowed the British to fill the vacuum leading to a rebuilding of the bourgeois order there; and Yugoslavia, where the Yugoslav CP filled the vacuum as a result of the civil war.

In the other East European countries the old bourgeoisies were driven from political power by a different process. In Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria the capitalist classes had allied themselves with Hitler, so they were not liquidated by the Nazis. But when Germany fell, these bourgeoisies were left with virtually no military or political support. The masses in these countries rose up in advance of the Soviet army (which they saw as a liberating force) in powerful upsurges against their discredited capitalist rulers. But the Soviet armed forces quelled these independent mass movements and disarmed and demobilized the workers and peasants. At the same time, the Soviet military forces themselves filled the power vacuum and, utilizing mass mobilizations to a limited extent, proceeded to obliterate the former ruling classes.

The point here is that the debilitation of the capitalist classes throughout Eastern Europe was not *primarily* accomplished by revolutionary mobilizations of the masses. Only in Yugoslavia was a mass upsurge the decisive factor.

It is important to note that this physical weakening of the bourgeoisies *in itself* did not make social revolutions in Eastern Europe; did not transform capitalist states into workers' states. Destruction of the capitalist ruling class is obviously a necessary precondition for a workers' state. But unless the bourgeois state is destroyed and the process of nationalizing the economy and outlawing private property in the means of production is begun, capitalist property relations will persevere and will spawn a regenerated bourgeoisie, as happened in Greece.

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Now, another group of arguments used as late as 1950 to prove that Eastern Europe was capitalist centered around the idea that the various states were "too small" to be socialist states. This was why "structural assimilation" was considered a necessary condition for their social transformation. But it was a peculiar argument, because the Trotskyist movement had always held that the Soviet Union was "too small" to be a socialist country. That's why Trotsky opposed Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" so vigorously. But Trotsky certainly never characterized the Soviet Union as a capitalist state for that reason.

The confusion here was between two different social structures: on one hand, the workers state; on the other hand, socialism. These are not the same thing. Marxists considered the workers state to be a transitional form between capitalism and socialism. So Hansen and Cochran pointed out in this discussion that they weren't claiming that Eastern Europe had completed the transformation to socialism, but that the transformation had begun. The first steps had been taken; the political power of the capitalist classes had been destroyed and capitalist property relations overturned. That meant that the states were no longer capitalist states, but were postcapitalist formations of the sort that Trotsky had called a workers state.

Trotsky's method had been to judge the class character of a state by determining what class was dominant — and not only politically dominant, not only which class controlled the government, but which class actually controlled the major means of production.

In Eastern Europe the initial steps toward nationalization began right after the war, but (excepting Yugoslavia) they were sharply limited by Stalin's program for the "People's Democracies," which did not include expropriation of the capitalist classes. With the onset of the Cold War, Stalin was forced to abandon his attempt to create "friendly" capitalist states along the USSR's border. On his orders, sweeping nationalizations were carried out between 1947 and the middle of 1949 that transformed the Eastern European countries into workers states.

Since the Soviet army held *de facto* power in Eastern Europe at the end of the war, would it not be more accurate to say that the countries there became workers states as early as 1945? After all, didn't Engels say that in the final analysis the state is "bodies of armed men"? The Soviet army did indeed play a heavy role in determining the nature of the East European states. But Engels's formula refers to the state apparatus as a guarantor of property relations. When one "armed body of men" is deposed and replaced by another, the final outcome depends on the class character and program of the new rulers. In the case of Stalinism, the power was in the hands of a petty-bourgeois formation with a pro-capitalist program.

No political confidence can be placed in such a transitional formation proceeding onward to the construction of a workers state through the decisive expropriation of capitalist property in the means of production if it is not guided by a revolutionary Marxist program. Hansen and Cochran refused to *predict* beforehand that Stalinism would in fact carry out such a transformation. It was only with the actual change in social relations that they concluded that the states of Eastern Europe had been transformed into workers states.

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The majority's most sophisticated argument, in Hansen's opinion, centered on the question of agricultural property in Eastern Europe. They contended that since these were predominantly agricultural countries, and since agriculture had not been nationalized in any of them, then the economies must be dominated by capitalist property relationships — and therefore, they must be capitalist countries.

The reply to this argument is worth studying. Hansen and Cochran argued that from Marx to Lenin to Trotsky, Marxist theory has never based its appraisal of the class character of the state on the property relationships in the countryside. Not that it's an unimportant question, but that it isn't the decisive question.

In any event, as more time passed and as the development of the East European phenomenon unfolded, it became obvious to all that the buffer states could no longer be called capitalist states of any kind. In 1951 the Third World Congress of the Fourth International was held and this discussion was concluded. In general, the Fourth International and the SWP majority had been won over to what began as the position of a small minority. That is, that the East European states were "deformed workers states," and that the criterion for making that judgment was the property relations upon which the states were based.

Some of the comrades who had held the position of the Seventh Plenum resolution came to the new conclusion by changing their earlier definition of structural assimilation and saying that it could happen, after all, without abolishing national frontiers between the buffer countries. Based on the revised definition, they said that what had happened was that structural assimilation had been *completed*, and that they had been right before when they said that the East European states were on the road to structural assimilation.

But they did grant that those who had characterized Yugoslavia as a capitalist state had been wrong. The Third World Congress passed a resolution on Yugoslavia acknowledging that the process there had been qualitatively different; that a revolution independent of the Kremlin had established the Yugoslav workers state.

The theoretical gains of this discussion were extremely helpful later on when the class character of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions came up for discussion. In particular, the question of how transformations from capitalist to workers states could come about without revolutionary Leninist parties was raised again in the discussions on China and Cuba.

Isn't that a refutation of the Transitional Program? In fact, it is not. The Transitional Program specifically points out that petty-bourgeois parties, including the Social Democrats and the Stalinists, could, under extreme circumstances—a world war, for example—lead a movement to the formation of a workers' and farmers' government that "would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat." ("Dictatorship of the proletariat," after all, is just another way of saying "workers state"; they are synonymous terms.)

The fact that some social transformations have taken place under exceptional circumstances without the intervention of Leninist parties has never led us to the conclusion that Leninist parties are no longer necessary. To the contrary, in the strongest sections of the capitalist system, that is, in the advanced industrial societies, the necessity of revolutionary parties is more obvious than ever before. And their necessity in the colonial world has been thrown into sharp focus by the frequent crises in Latin America.

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Now, I want to step back again to 1949 to begin to trace another line of development within the Fourth International, leading up to 1951. In Yugoslavia, the break between Tito and Stalin in June 1948 led to a situation where the International began to look at the Yugoslav party in a different light. This, too, was a new phenomenon in world history—Stalinism had always been absolutely monolithic, but now there was a Stalinized regime in Yugoslavia taking an independent course.

The Yugoslav CP was designated as a *centrist* party by the Seventh Plenum in 1949. There is a qualitative difference in our conception between a centrist party and a Stalinist party. Stalinist parties are considered to be counterrevolutionary through and through. But a centrist party, vacillating by its very nature, theoretically has the possibility of taking steps that help advance the revolution. That was what was behind the Trotskyist movement's characterization of Stalinism in the 1923-1933 period as bureaucratic centrism. Our perspective was to fight to regenerate the Communist International in a revolutionary direction. We dropped that characterization after the bankruptcy of the Stalinist Comintern was definitively proved by the debacle in Germany. We no longer considered the Communist International capable of being pushed in a direction that would advance the revolution, and instead set about to construct a new international.

So the designation of the Yugoslav CP as "centrist" had some very important theoretical implications with regard to our analysis of Stalinism.

More recently, discussion on the nature of the Chinese and Vietnamese CPs has led the SWP to conclude that it is generally incorrect to conclude that because a Stalinist party has been forced under exceptional circumstances to participate in a revolution it has ceased to be Stalinist and can be regarded as "centrist." It is a fact that Stalinist parties have been *at the head* of revolutionary struggles that have ended in victory, but that is not the same as saying that the parties themselves helped advance the revolutionary process.

In China, the policies of the Chinese CP were consciously designed to *hold back* the revolution; to prevent the transformation of China into a workers state. Even the archetypal Stalinist—Stalin himself—was at the head of a victorious armed struggle that immensely aided the world revolution: the defense of the Soviet Union in World War II. But Stalin's political leadership throughout that whole period can only be characterized as counterrevolutionary. To call Stalin's role during World War II "centrist" would render the term meaningless.

A centrist party, according to the Marxist definition, is one that vacillates between reformist and revolutionary policies. Under bourgeois pressure the centrists' political program bends toward reformism; under pressure from the masses it can bend in a revolutionary direction. A Stalinist party, by contrast, defends the material interests of a well-defined petty-bourgeois social layer: the parasitic bureaucracy of a workers state. That is the determinant of its consistently antirevolutionary program.

As for the Yugoslav CP in 1949, it should be remembered that a non-Kremlin-oriented Stalinism was a brand-



new political phenomenon. And it did seem, for a short period, to be moving in a leftward, antibureaucratic direction. The "centrist" designation at that time, then, did not seem unreasonable, although in retrospect it can be seen to have been theoretically wrong.

The Yugoslav CP's "left turn" temporarily served Tito's interests in his defensive struggle against Stalin, because at that time Tito was trying to win the support of important sections of the West European working class; particularly within the mass communist parties in France and Italy. And his efforts met with some success. For the first time in decades, opposition currents appeared in CPs all over the world, and this was occurring under the banner of "Titoism." Needless to say, the Fourth International saw this development as an extremely fertile field for political work.

The Fourth International adopted a practical orientation of vigorous, active support to the Yugoslav workers state's democratic right of national self-determination. Fundamental political differences with Titoism notwithstanding, the Trotskyists launched an energetic campaign aimed at countering the Kremlin's attack against Yugoslavia.

And the Yugoslav CP accepted our collaboration in its effort to win a hearing among radicalized workers around the world. Representatives of the Fourth International visited Yugoslavia and held discussions on this matter with Yugoslav officials.

As a result, the International arranged to send work brigades of young people to participate in rebuilding war-devastated Yugoslavia and to gain a first-hand understanding of what was happening in that country. These youths would then return to their own countries and spread the truth about what they saw in Yugoslavia.

It was sort of a predecessor to the Venceremos brigades in Cuba.

In France, the Trotskyists organized more than 1,000 young people to go on these brigades. The SWP began to organize brigades from this country, but they were called off when the political direction of the Titoists took a sharp turn for the worse.

As we have seen more recently from our experience in the antiwar movement, the revolutionary party is able to function at its best when there is a concrete political issue to organize around. As a result of the Fourth International's active intervention in the Yugoslav developments, the Trotskyist movement grew in Europe.

But then, in the summer of 1950, the Yugoslav CP took a right turn that clearly revealed its fundamentally Stalinist nature. It gave up the strategy of appealing to working class movements abroad for support and instead, under pressure from the Kremlin on one side and the capitalist world on the other, it began to look toward the imperialist powers for a base of support. The most blatant manifestation of the Titoists' rightward swing came in the form of their official support to the UN "police action" in Korea, which, of course, was nothing less than a cover for US imperialist aggression against Korea.

But in spite of the ending of possibilities for Trotskyists to directly intervene in the Tito-Stalin split, the Yugoslav break with the Kremlin continued to be a factor of the first magnitude in world politics. It was the first crack in the once-monolithic Stalinist bloc, and the cracks since then have multiplied, spread, and deepened so that now several diverse poles of Stalinism are in conflict with each other.

## The Fourth International From Split to Reunification

by Les Evans

The Third World Congress of the Fourth International, held in Switzerland in August-September 1951, on the surface appeared to herald a new era of close international collaboration between the various sections. The major resolutions were passed virtually unanimously. The dispute over the class character of the East European regimes was resolved by an agreement among all the major sections and leading figures that these countries were indeed workers' states and not capitalist regimes on the "road to structural assimilation with the Soviet Union." The editorial on the congress in the November-December 1951 issue of *Fourth International* magazine, the predecessor of the *International Socialist Review*, hailed the gathering as "A Milestone in Internationalism."

Yet, two years later, before the next world congress, there would be a split in the International. It would last ten years. It would be a bitter fight. And the dispute would involve many of the fundamental programmatic and organizational principles of the world Trotskyist movement.

It would be a dispute over the character of Stalinism. Over what real perspective there was for building an international party or sections of an international party in particular countries. Whether there really was a possibility for socialist revolution in our time. And the nature of democratic centralism inside an international Marxist party.

For a number of reasons that I will come to, the split took place without an international discussion and almost to the moment of the split the appearance of unanimity and agreement tended to prevail.

What we were grappling with was the whole new situation which we had given a partial explanation of in the agreement on Eastern Europe. The Soviet bureaucracy had succeeded, by military bureaucratic means, in overturning capitalism in a whole series of East European countries. In the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions this went a step further. Here the anticapitalist revolutions were not simple byproducts of the military de-

fense of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany. Stalinist parties had actually led armed struggles, had taken power. This raised some very serious questions as to the nature of Stalinism. Does it have a revolutionary perspective? Can it under the pressure of imperialism, in an act of self-defense, play a revolutionary role that we would not have granted to it in the 1930s after the Spanish Civil War?

In the areas where we were working, especially in Western Europe, the grip of the Stalinist parties on the working-class movement remained unshaken. They had near total control of the trade-union movement in Italy and France. It would be very difficult for us to build mass parties in these countries, to break the Stalinist domination of the mass movement. In some countries we had suffered heavy casualties under the Nazi occupation, in some instances with the collusion of the Stalinists. We had no mass parties. We had not taken state power anywhere.

At the same time, the Cold War was beginning. American imperialism was launching a diplomatic offensive against the Soviet bloc. It was calling for the "roll back" and the "containment" of the workers' states. There was the possible threat of a third world war, directed first against China, and then by obvious implication, against the Soviet Union itself. We had to answer the question: was another war really about to break out, and if so, what would be the perspective for the Fourth International in that kind of a struggle between international imperialism and the Soviet bloc?

The European leaders of the International, and particularly Michel Pablo, the secretary of the International, began to develop their own thesis on the world conjuncture. This took place in several stages. There were differences of opinion among the European leaders, and it was not clear in the initial phase of the discussion what final conclusions Pablo would draw.

The first distinctive theory he put forward appeared in a document entitled "On the Class Nature of Yugoslavia" written in September 1949 (*International Information Bulletin*, December 1949). The central point of the article, the one that drew most attention at the time, was that here Pablo became the first of the European leaders to advance the same position taken by Joseph Hansen, who then represented a minority viewpoint within the SWP, that Yugoslavia was already a workers' state. Thus it appeared that the thrust of Pablo's position was in the same direction that the SWP was going.

But in passing, in a small section of the document, he advanced a special theory of his own on the *inevitability* of bureaucratic deformations in all revolutions that take place prior to the overturn of capitalism in the majority of the advanced industrial countries.

Pablo expected that there would be socialist revolutions in isolated countries, where power would pass into the hands of working-class parties. "But," he wrote, "this power will inevitably and rapidly become bureaucratized, and lead to a complete political expropriation of the proletariat if the revolution remains isolated in a country encircled by imperialism. Thus, in the historic period of the transition from capitalism to socialism we shall witness the rise not of normal workers' states, but of more or less degenerated workers' states, that is, states with strong bureaucratic deformations which can reach the

point of complete political expropriation of the proletariat."

Pablo also made a prognosis on how long it would take before we could expect to see the development of healthy revolutions led by revolutionary Marxist parties that would result in the creation of workers' democracy:

". . . in the whole historic period of the transition from capitalism to socialism, a period which can extend for centuries, we shall encounter a much more tortuous and complicated development of the revolution than our teachers foresaw—and workers' states that are not normal but necessarily quite deformed."

It could be argued that Pablo was merely generalizing the Yugoslav and Chinese experience. That is what happened in those two countries, where isolated revolutions were led by Stalinist parties and from the very beginning the workers' states that emerged were deformed; there were no institutions of workers' democracy. But in making a universal generalization of these experiences Pablo implied two conceptions that ran counter to the basic analysis of Stalinism made by Trotsky. First is the idea that Stalinism is historically *inevitable*. That the material objective conditions of backwardness in any underdeveloped country automatically produce Stalinism or its equivalent no matter what the quality of the leadership of the revolutionary party, no matter what their program, no matter what kind of institutions are created in the course of the revolution. Trotsky had explained the objective causes of the rise of Stalinism from the poverty and isolation of the first workers' state, which provided a base for the emergence of a privileged bureaucracy. But he never said that such a development was inevitable; only that there were very strong pressures for the creation of such a privileged layer of society, and a drive for such a privileged layer to take over the reins of government.

There is no *necessary* reason why a healthy, Marxist revolutionary leadership could not stave off that process of bureaucratization for an indefinite period, *if* the general course of the world revolution were on the upswing; if the revolution could be extended to other countries; if the morale of the masses could be held intact. Under favorable conditions there was no reason why an isolated workers' state should be unable to evade the kind of degeneration that took place in the Soviet Union, even for a prolonged historical period of time.

Second, in projecting a lifespan of "centuries" for the existing Stalinist regimes, and for new ones that had not yet even come into existence, Pablo was accepting implicitly that there would be no political revolution against Stalinism until capitalism had been overthrown everywhere. The Soviet and Chinese workers would not challenge those bureaucratic regimes as long as the threat of imperialism remained in the world. The West European revolution and even the American revolution would have to take place before there was any hope of a political revolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

That obviously raised a third question. If the political revolution is not going to take place until capitalism has been overthrown everywhere; if all the new regimes along the road to the overthrow of world capitalism are going to be deformed, Stalinist-type regimes, *who* then is going to make the revolution against imperialism and capitalism? Isn't it going to have to be the Stalinist parties? For whatever reason, because they have to defend themselves against reactionary attacks, because there is

a clash between imperialism and the Soviet bloc, out of reflex self-defense despite their program and their efforts to try to find class peace, the Stalinist parties would become, even against their will, the agency of the spread of world revolution.

The implications of this prognosis are extraordinarily pessimistic. They put in question the function and the necessity of an independent revolutionary party for a whole historical period. What would be the function of the Fourth International? Wouldn't it be merely to preserve the historical program of revolutionary socialism and workers' democracy and someday, after a century or so has elapsed, to lead the political revolution against Stalinism, which by then would have consolidated a worldwide social system? There wouldn't be very much it could do in the interim except to preserve some Marxist theoreticians and isolated propaganda circles. Suggested in this is a very dangerous adaptation to the claims of Stalinism to represent the most that can be achieved by the working class in our time.

Of course, all these implications were not so clear in 1949. Pablo was trying to draw a pragmatic estimate of what was going to happen. He had not yet drawn any theoretical conclusions on the nature of Stalinism, nor had he projected a program of action for the Fourth International flowing from the ideas he was developing. These things would come later.

The leadership of the SWP disagreed with Pablo's formulations, which had not yet appeared in the formal documents of the International, but only in passing in signed articles by Pablo. At this point the prime concern of the party was the construction of a new international leadership, to rebuild the European sections which had been largely destroyed during the war. The discussion over embryonic differences was held within the leading bodies of the party and of the International. There was an attempt made to persuade Pablo to withdraw his formulations, and at least not to try to impose them on the world movement by incorporating them in the resolutions of the International.

With the opening of the Korean War in 1950, which gave weight to the thesis that American imperialism was preparing an imminent attack on China and the Soviet Union, Pablo began to reveal that these formulations had not been accidental. They were part of a developing theory on the nature of Stalinism and the role of the Fourth International. He began to spell out a coherent world view. This was most fully developed in a document entitled "Where Are We Going?" written in January 1951, some eight months before the Third World Congress. I want to summarize Pablo's thesis in some detail.

1. World War II and the colonial revolution, particularly in China, have shattered the prewar equilibrium of world capitalism. Therefore imperialism had no choice but to prepare a new world war to regain the territories it lost. This was no longer a speculative question or a hypothetical assumption. There was no point in debating whether or not there would be such a war but only how soon it would take place.

2. Imperialism was not yet ready for war. It hadn't completed its rearmament program. It hadn't yet whipped the American working class into line, which was the function of the McCarthyite witch-hunt. But it would only take a few years, two or three years at the most, before

the war preparations were complete. Therefore there was not much time to prepare to meet the changed situation that the outbreak of war would create.

3. The failure of American imperialism to win an immediate victory in Korea showed that the world balance of forces had turned to the disadvantage of imperialism. This meant that in a global test of strength, imperialism was likely to emerge the loser.

4. When the war broke out it would inevitably become "an *international civil war*, especially in Europe and Asia. These continents would rapidly pass over under the control of the Soviet bureaucracy, of the Communist Parties, or of the revolutionary masses." (*International Information Bulletin*, March 1951, emphasis in original.)

5. Here Pablo brings in one of the catch phrases of the dispute that was to take place. He wrote: "War under these conditions, with the existing relationship of forces on the international arena, would essentially be *Revolution*." (Emphasis in original.) Pablo here coined the term "war-revolution." The next phase of the world revolution would be provoked by a counterrevolutionary war by American imperialism; and war and revolution "are approaching each other more closely and becoming so interlinked as to be almost indistinguishable." (Emphasis in original.)

6. Under the impact of war, the mass of the European and Asian workers would remain loyal to the organizations they already knew, that is, the Stalinist parties. Any possibility of breaking that tie and establishing a new mass workers' party would be undercut by the objectively revolutionary role played by the Stalinists in defending the Soviet Union from imperialist attack. This would guarantee that the workers would not break from the Stalinists at least for the duration of the war.

The thesis is at least consistent. The revolution will not be extended by the internal class struggle, the particular dynamics of radicalization in each country, and the fight for Marxist hegemony in the workers' movement to provide a revolutionary leadership. Instead revolution will be forced into existence by an external factor that will instantly radicalize workers who are not now in the process of radicalization. The victory of this revolution depended on a second external factor: Pablo's expectation that the Soviet bureaucracy, despite its peaceful coexistence policies, would have no choice but to seek to overthrow capitalism in Europe.

What was at issue here was a question of estimate of what was going to happen. *If* the United States declared war; *if* the Soviet bureaucracy reacted as it had in Eastern Europe; and *if* the masses did not break from the Communist parties in the process; and if all three of these variables fell into place in just that way, then there was reason to believe that this particular schema would in fact be realized. There could be no theoretical objection to it. It was a possibility.

That was not the level on which disagreements developed with Pablo. We never said that this was a theoretical revision of Trotskyism, or that his projection was totally impossible. What we argued was that this schema was not the most likely one. Nor was it one on which the International should stake its whole political future. The very fact that the United States had been stalemated in Korea was a sign that American imperialism appeared to be ready to back off from the prospect of launching

an imminent world war. The Kremlin was making every effort possible to try to find a modus vivendi with Washington.

We began to develop our differences with Pablo in preparation for the Third World Congress of August-September 1951. A discussion of Pablo's draft Theses for the congress began in the SWP Political Committee in February 1951 and was carried on until the end of March. This discussion was summarized in a Political Committee memorandum dated June 5, 1951, entitled "Contribution to the Discussion on International Perspectives." Following are some of the essential criticisms made of the world congress draft resolution:

"The direct counter-revolutionary role which Moscow has played and continues to play will not fade into the background in the event of war. On the contrary, it will come to the fore whenever and wherever independent mass movements threaten to pass beyond the control of the Kremlin or the parties it dominates. Regardless of the effects upon the defense of the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy will not countenance independent mass movements, and, least of all, oppositional ones. If the Kremlin feels that such independent movements jeopardize its interests it will not hesitate to repress them.

"Unfolding revolutionary movements may in certain circumstances sweep the agents of the Kremlin along and they will seek to head them in order to control them. It is necessary to warn that the more such movements tend to sweep over their heads, the more openly will the Stalinist bureaucracy tend to collide with them and seek to crush them.

"While the greatly aggravated and steadily worsening international situation considerably reduces the chances for a deal between the Kremlin and the imperialists, the possibility of such a deal still remains. . . . Such moves as Togliatti's bid to the Italian bourgeoisie demonstrate that the Kremlin has far from lost hope for a deal. . . .

"The analysis of how the Stalinist parties may conduct themselves during wartime in capitalist countries tends to be one-sided in the theses. It is stated that in certain circumstances such parties may be compelled to outline a revolutionary orientation. This is not excluded. But the contrary is likewise not excluded. In certain circumstances the Stalinists could and would even in the midst of war work to strangle revolutions. This variant ought to be emphasized no less than the other. . . .

"In harmony with what has been said it is further necessary to emphasize that the tactical orientation does not imply any conciliation with Stalinism. . . .

"While the immense revolutionary upheavals which the outbreak of global war would provoke in the imperialist sectors is correctly emphasized, it should be pointed out that such a war would likewise aggravate the latent conflicts and arouse independent mass movements against the Kremlin's dictatorship in the areas it dominates. . . .

"The perspective of 'deformed workers' states' as the line of historical development for an indefinite period ahead should not be recognized in the theses implicitly or explicitly. . . .

"The central political feature of the world situation today is the crisis of the proletarian leadership. It is imperative to reaffirm this proposition of our Foundation Theses. Everything hinges on the resolution of this historic task. The objective conditions for its fulfillment are

now ripe but the task will not be resolved automatically or mechanically or independently of our intervention and policies."

Here in embryo are the SWP's positions on all the major issues of the fight with Pablo, although it was not at all clear at the time how hardened the differences expressed by Pablo were or what practical conclusions they would lead to. In general this discussion was pursued at the leadership level. In the summer of 1953, however, Joseph Hansen wrote a series of articles for *The Militant* explaining why the war plans of America's rulers had been set back and deferred to the indefinite future. Pablo objected. He argued that the democratic-centralist character of the International prohibited publication of articles in the press of sections or sympathizing groups contrary to the views of the International Secretariat, even on questions of conjunctural estimate which are not, properly speaking, "line" questions. In order not to exacerbate the internal situation in the world Trotskyist movement, the series in *The Militant* was halted.

At this point I want to say something about Pablo's political method. In some ways his methodology is more important than his particular conclusions, or his attitude toward Stalinism. At the root of Pablo's expectations, expressed in his schema for the political future, there are several assumptions that run counter to traditional Marxist method.

1. There is an overestimation of the degree to which objective conditions alone can substitute for a conscious political leadership and for a revolutionary party. Pablo saw conditions as so ripe for revolution that there was no way in which any of the multiplicity of forces in motion could deviate from the particular course of development that he foresaw. The United States would have to launch a war. The Stalinist parties would be forced against their program to carry out objectively revolutionary actions. In effect this downgraded the importance of a revolutionary leadership and of the revolutionary party. The revolution is to be made by a fatalistic objective process that moves the revolution forward despite the programs and intentions of all its participants.

We have always recognized that there are periodic spontaneous revolutionary outbreaks by the working class. We know that the workers, even without leadership, can make a bid for power. But without a revolutionary leadership they cannot consolidate that power and establish a workers' state. That was not where our differences with Pablo lay. We did not disagree that objective conditions can provoke revolutionary situations. Nor did we deny that Stalinist or other petty-bourgeois parties could, under exceptional circumstances, come to power in a revolutionary upsurge.

Pablo went further than this and assumed that objective conditions could force hardened organizations like the Stalinist parties to act against their own program and special interests; and that this would happen not only under exceptional circumstances as in China and Yugoslavia, but as a general rule.

2. The other side of the coin is an underestimation of the actual role played by the revolutionary party. If, as Pablo assumed, 99 percent of the conditions for a successful revolution were provided by the unconscious machine of objective circumstances, then what role is left for the conscious revolutionary leadership? Obviously it

is very small; to apply pressure at strategic points. It does not require a mass organization that directly leads the masses in struggle. Pablo was to propose that the way this was to be done was to enter the Communist parties. They were going to play an objectively revolutionary role even if no Trotskyists were on the scene. All that was required was that there be a few Trotskyist cadres in each of the Communist parties to give them a push to the left.

Pablo never said that the CP leaders would be transformed into Leninists. But he did argue they they could fulfill their revolutionary function if they went as far as becoming centrists and that the Fourth International should devote its major energies to the process of their conversion. The Cochranites, the American followers of Pablo, put forward this thesis more crudely than Pablo did. They advanced the slogan that Stalinism "could no longer betray."

In January of 1951, when Pablo wrote "Where Are We Going?", he had not yet worked out the practical consequences of his theory. He had not yet proposed a course of action to the International. The leadership of the SWP agreed up to a point that his view of the impending apocalypse was a possible variant in the world situation. It did not agree that it was a certainty. The SWP Political Committee submitted a series of critical amendments to the documents that were adopted by the Third World Congress in 1951. It is necessary to describe the situation inside of the SWP and in the United States in order to explain what happened to some of those amendments.

A subterranean factional line-up was taking place within the Socialist Workers Party that included a grouping that was evolving in the same direction as Pablo. A significant layer of the young party leadership was beginning to react to the pressure on the party resulting from the McCarthyite witch-hunt and the isolation of the party from the mass movement. We were being witch-hunted out of the unions. Members were being fired from their jobs for their Trotskyist affiliations. The circulation of the *Militant* dropped sharply. The finances of the party were in decline. The party began to lose membership. It was a period of retrenchment. And, of course, there was deep disappointment on the part of people who had been leading big struggles in the postwar strike wave of 1945-46. A number of people in the party began to give up the perspective that it was possible to build a revolutionary party in the United States. They began to call, first privately and later openly, for abandoning the structure of a party, for cutting back and riding out the period of reaction by becoming a simple propaganda organization, not running candidates, not participating in election campaigns, not calling ourselves a party, publishing a magazine but not a newspaper. In effect they proposed to become a Marxist discussion circle.

There were two wings in this grouping. They were moving in opposite directions, but they had agreement on this common estimate of the poor prospects for the SWP. There was a group in the Detroit area who were well-known union militants. Some held union posts, mainly in the United Auto Workers. They were led by Bert Cochran, who had risen to prominence in the early struggles of the UAW. As their ability to maneuver and operate

inside of the unions became more and more constricted they began to make their peace with the Reuther bureaucracy in the UAW. The Reutherites were liberals, civil libertarians. The Cochran grouping began to evolve the theory that the Reutherites were more radical than the ranks of the workers, who were backward, racist, and indifferent to the class struggle. They began to look for a niche where they wouldn't be singled out in the witch-hunt. It was embarrassing for them to run as candidates of the SWP. It called attention to their radical ties. It made it more difficult for Reuther to accept them in the apparatus. If they could just limit their public radical activity to contributing an occasional article to a socialist magazine it wouldn't create such difficulties for them. They were not interested in Stalinism. Stalinism was anathema to anybody involved in the union movement. They had no interests in finding a way to improve their relations with the American CP.

The other wing, which was led by George Clarke in New York, were people who sympathized with Pablo. It was a group of organizers, intellectuals, and writers. They began to orient strongly toward the Communist Party and circles close to the CP such as the *National Guardian*. George Clarke was then the editor of the *Fourth International* magazine and he was the party's representative in Europe. As the witch-hunt mounted still further, the government began denying passports to radicals. It became more and more difficult for people to travel to Europe, and finally Clarke was one of the very few leaders of the SWP who had still not been banned from traveling abroad. The party was dependent on his reports to interpret what was meant in practice by this or that formulation included in documents and articles published in Europe.

Clarke reported very favorably on the progress being made by the European sections, on the ferment which was supposed to be taking place in the ranks of the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties, and on the gains our European comrades were making in work around these parties.

Clarke was the SWP's fraternal delegate to the Third World Congress in 1951. He was in Europe at the time the Political Committee was considering the resolutions. He passed a first set of amendments on to the authors of the main resolution. He decided against submitting a second set of amendments. He explained afterward that the SWP's amendments were so out of keeping with the new world reality that it would have been embarrassing to submit them and so he "burned" them.

It was extremely difficult under these circumstances to determine how many, how serious, and how hardened the emerging differences really were.

The key issue over which the split was to occur was the movement's practical orientation toward the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties. Pablo in his report to the Third World Congress adopted a cautious formulation on this. He proposed a combination of independent work and entry work aimed at reaching workers in Social Democratic and reformist trade unions, and "activity directed toward [the Stalinist] parties, organizations and the masses they influence, including work within these parties."

There could be no objection in principle to doing work inside any mass organization, including inside a mass

Stalinist party. Trotskyists work in labor parties, in Stalinist-controlled unions, and in mass reformist organizations of all kinds.

This cautious orientation was modified at the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Fourth International in February 1952. Here for the first time the tactic of "deep" entry into the Stalinist parties was adopted or, as it was called by Pablo, entryism *sui generis*—of a unique kind. What was unique about it was that unlike entry work done in the past in labor parties or Social Democratic parties, which were usually sufficiently loose so that we could maintain our own press, the Stalinist parties were so tightly disciplined and bureaucratically controlled that if all our members engaged in entryism we would have no way to maintain a Trotskyist newspaper. Hence, *sui generis*, a few comrades would remain outside to publish a Trotskyist newspaper or magazine directed at the members of the Communist party we were working with.

The motivation for this entry flowed from the whole thesis that Pablo had been developing up to this point. The war was imminent; the Stalinist parties were going to lead a revolution; and the Fourth International had to get rooted in the Stalinist parties in order to be able to influence the left currents that would automatically begin to arise in their ranks when this whole situation broke.

You can get a feel for the kind of frantic atmosphere that pervaded the International Secretariat from Pablo's report to the February 1952 plenum of the IEC. He said:

"The situation is *prerevolutionary all over in various degrees and evolving toward the revolution in a relatively brief time. And this process from now on is in general irreversible.*" ("The Building of the Revolutionary Party," excerpts from Michel Pablo's report to the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the FI, February 1952, *International Information Bulletin*, June 1952. Emphasis in original.)

He has staked almost everything on this one possible line of development. He proposed that we enter the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties; bury our entire membership there; and do this for an indefinite period. "*We are entering them in order to remain there for a long time banking on the great possibility which exists of seeing these parties, placed under new conditions, develop centrist tendencies which will lead a whole stage of the radicalization of the masses and of the objectively revolutionary processes in their respective countries.*" (Ibid., emphasis in original.)

Presumably if these parties were on the road to taking power we would stay in them afterward in order to promote a left wing. It was from within the Stalinist parties, then, that the cadres would come for the anticapitalist revolution, and for the political revolution against Stalinism as well.

It was difficult to evaluate the entry maneuver from a distance. It was a tactical question and not a matter of principle. We had carried out entry work before. In the 1930s the American Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party. We spent more than a year in the SP and came out doubled in size. It was a very fruitful experience. In Europe at the same time a similar entry was carried out in the Socialist Party of France, and in other countries as well. There were precedents for this kind of tactic.

There were certain obvious risks in such a maneuver. A faction inside an opponent organization is subjected to great pressures. If the faction has a clear goal, trying to reach a specific group moving in their direction; if this goal is accomplished within a reasonably short time, and the entry is terminated; then the entry maneuver can be considered a success. If on the contrary entry is made into an opponent organization with unreasonable expectations as to how revolutionary its leaders are; if your own cadres are not solid; if there is a political adaptation to the program of the hostile organization; then the results can be the absorption of your members into the group you have entered.

There was a serious problem in what Pablo had proposed. The Fourth International had never before considered carrying out entry work for an indefinite period in a hostile organization, particularly in such tightly controlled organizations as the Communist parties. The only experiences the Trotskyist movement had had with the entry tactic prior to Pablo's proposal of "deep" entry were of relatively short duration. Pablo's proposal was qualitatively different. It was also different from long-term fraction work which we were familiar with in trade unions and in the Social Democratic British Labour Party. (or in Canada today, in relation to the Social Democratic New Democratic Party). The dangers of the assimilation of cadres in a hostile organization are substantially minimized in fraction work where the Trotskyists retain their independent organizational existence.

In 1952 there was no evidence that any significant current in the Stalinist or Social Democratic parties was moving toward our program. There was no radicalization taking place; just the contrary. It was a period of reaction. Pablo's whole entry perspective was predicated on the expectation that World War III, which hadn't happened yet, was going to radicalize the ranks of the Stalinist movement, and *then* would come the recruitment and the setting of specific goals.

Even under unfavorable circumstances an entry might produce some gains if the cadres proved to be solid enough. Moreover, no one—including Pablo—visualized even a long-term entry as lasting more than several years. The time limit was set by the supposedly onrushing new war.

While watching the evolution of this tactical turn in Europe in the spring and summer of 1952, the party got a glimpse of another side of Pablo's method: his conception of democratic centralism and the application of international discipline. This took place around a dispute in the French section, the largest and most important section in Europe. The majority of the ranks and of the leadership of the French party, the PCI (Internationalist Communist Party), rejected the turn toward deep entry in the Communist Party. They denounced it as a capitulation to Stalinism. Their principal leaders were Bleibtreu, Pierro Lambert, and Michel Lequenne. They argued that the tactic had been decided by a plenum of the International Executive Committee and not by a world congress and therefore was being imposed without any discussion in the ranks of the world movement. Because there had been no discussion around documents defending and opposing entryism they urged that the French party not be compelled to carry out the plenum decision until and unless it was approved by the upcoming Fourth World Con-

gress in 1954. Pablo replied—and formally under the statutes of the International he was correct—that the plenum had the authority to act in the name of the International and that the French leadership were breaking discipline by not immediately implementing entryism.

At the plenum disciplinary measures were imposed on the French party. These guaranteed that a democratic congress of the French section would be held later in 1952. But in exchange they required that Bleibtreu, Lambert, and Lequenne pledge themselves to carry out the entryism line in some form. Then, in a sharp departure from the traditions of the Trotskyist movement, the IEC voted to reorganize the leadership of the French section. A parity commission was set up which appointed a new Political Bureau for France. The elected leadership was reduced to a minority, with a direct representative of the International Secretariat casting the deciding vote. Pierre Frank, who along with Mestre led the pro-Pablo minority in the French party, was appointed Political Secretary of the party. Then the representative of the International Secretariat, Albert, clarified the meaning of the democratic congress that had been promised. In a letter to the Bleibtreu-Lambert-Lequenne tendency in the spring of 1952 he wrote: ". . . the essential function of the 8th Congress of the [French] party is not to listen to the expression of agreement or disagreement with this line but to apply the line. That is the way democratic centralism is applied on an international scale. . . . Whatever the decision of the 8th Congress of the party, the line to be applied after the Congress will be that of 'entryism *sui generis*.'"

Albert further warned the French majority that if they dared to submit a political document to the French party congress disputing the entryist line, all of their representatives would be removed from the leadership even if they pledged to carry out the entry tactic when the congress was over.

At the end of June 1952 Pablo expelled the majority of the French section from the International.

Even at this point the issues remained unclear. The split Pablo had imposed on the French section had taken place apparently over a tactical question. We were troubled by Pablo's supercentralist conception of international procedure but there were reasons to give credence to the political charges he leveled at the Bleibtreu-Lambert-Lequenne grouping. Pablo replied to their charge that he was adapting to Stalinism by claiming that they were Stalinophobes who had succumbed to bourgeois patriotism in the midst of an international offensive by imperialism against the Soviet Union. In similar periods in the past—the capitulation of the Social Democrats in World War I, the desertion of Marxism by Shachtman and Burnham on the eve of World War II—this had been the sharpest danger in the Marxist movement. Certainly in the United States, in the middle of the McCarthyite anti-Communist crusade, the party had far more reason to be on the lookout for Stalinophobia than its contrary. The bourgeois attacks on the Stalinists were going on throughout the world so it seemed reasonable to accept Pablo's claim that the French majority were moving to the right under this pressure. It was a difficult point to verify because we were in no position to talk to either side in the dispute directly and there had as yet been no test of events to verify the contending claims.

It was shortly after this that the fight with Cochran and

Clarke broke out in the open in the SWP. This happened first in the New York branch at the beginning of 1953. Mike Bartell, a staunch supporter of Pablo, was New York organizer and he had a majority of the executive committee behind him. He proposed to divert branch work into the Stalinist milieu. He privately explained to branch members that this proposal was motivated by the expectation that the American Communist Party and its periphery would stand in the forefront of the American revolution. The opposition to Bartell in New York City was led by Harry Ring and Dave Weiss.

A literary discussion was opened in the national party and documents started to pour into the party internal bulletin. The issues were fought out and the political direction of both the Cochran and Clarke wings of the minority faction were made clear and debated at length. In May a plenum of the National Committee was held where the views of the Cochranites were defeated. They received about 20 percent of the votes. A truce was declared at the plenum. The political differences remained sharp but an agreement was reached that the majority and the minority would work together to build the party in its present form and that the divergent estimates of Stalinism would be brought up again at the next party convention and discussed further.

In the course of the fight, Clarke claimed that his position on Stalinism—that it could no longer betray, that it was objectively the revolutionary wave of the future—represented the position of the international leaders, especially of Pablo. Pablo had never said many of the things that Clarke was saying: that the Soviet bureaucracy would reform itself, that a revolutionary international was unnecessary, and that the SWP shouldn't act like a party. Quite naturally the leaders of the SWP majority wanted to know if it was true that Pablo held the same views without as yet committing them to writing. Moreover, they wanted to know if Pablo was organizing the opposition in the SWP with the aim of provoking a split in the party. A letter was sent to Pablo inviting his comments on these questions. He declared himself neutral in the internal affairs of the SWP. As long as the SWP leadership adhered to international discipline, he said, he had no intention of fostering factional groupings inside the American party.

In the early summer of 1953 it became clear that the Cochran-Clarke group had no intention of honoring the truce it had agreed to at the May plenum. The supporters of the minority began to put their attitude toward the party into practice and to systematically withdraw from party work. They continued to proselytize for the liquidation of the SWP and suited their actions to their words by withholding their sustainers and dues from the party as a demonstration of no confidence in the organization. It became clear that this was a grouping that was determined to get out of the party and out of politics as rapidly as possible and that it would not wait for the next party convention to do so.

Meanwhile some important events took place that gave the party a test of what Pablo's real attitude was toward Stalinism. In June the first workers' revolt took place in the Soviet bloc in East Germany. Soviet troops were sent in to crush the workers' uprising. Pablo failed to call for the removal of Soviet troops. He approved of the workers' actions, but put the great weight of his press coverage

on the concessions the bureaucracy had granted under pressure, ignoring the suppression of the upsurge by the Kremlin's armed forces. The Clarke grouping took a similar position on this. At the same time a general strike erupted in France, and Pablo's line was to endorse the efforts of the Stalinist union leadership to limit the strike to economic demands and suppress the demand for a workers' government.

*The Militant* came out clearly on the side of the West German and French workers.

The Political Committee began to prepare for a fight in the International. Here the International Secretariat had crossed the line of principle. It was no longer simply a matter of differing estimates of the course of world politics. Pablo had sided with a section of the Stalinist bureaucracy against workers' upheavals in two concrete situations. The Political Committee's intention was to await the publication of the International Secretariat's draft resolution on Stalinism for the upcoming Fourth World Congress and to submit substantive amendments or to issue a counter-resolution as a basis for discussion. Pablo's document, released in August 1953, was entitled "The Rise and Decline of Stalinism." Here for the first time in an official draft of a congress resolution there appeared the whole Pabloite thesis, which had been restricted in the past to articles signed personally by Pablo. (Already under pressure from the SWP, the Pablo forces drew back from the most extreme formulations—the phrase "centuries of degenerated workers' states" does not appear in the document.)

Two things became quite clear in the course of the summer. Pablo was, despite his denials, maneuvering to build the Cochran-Clarke grouping; and the Cochranites were set on an imminent split course in the SWP and were a liquidationist tendency that had no intention of even attempting to build a rival party once they got outside the SWP. When this picture became unmistakably clear, it produced a considerable shock in the leadership of the party. It put the whole impending discussion in the International in a different light.

The Political Committee majority had operated on the assumption that the emerging lines of difference with Pablo were differences within a world leadership committed to building a homogeneous International. And further that, when it became necessary to take the dispute to the ranks of the International for a discussion and a vote, that there would be a comradely discussion and a democratic world congress.

The realization that Pablo was attempting, before the first document had been submitted to the International discussion, to overturn the orthodox SWP leadership or even to split the party, called for a profound reevaluation of what the party was dealing with. The International Secretariat's resolution on Stalinism shed a new light on the split in the French section the year before. The French case was not an isolated example. Similar splits were taking place in other sections.

If Pablo was prepared to engineer a split in the SWP, which had the most experienced cadre and the most solid traditions of any party in the world Trotskyist movement, behind the backs of the party leadership; and if in doing so he was throwing the support of the International Secretariat behind a grouping that was deserting Trotskyism entirely; what must be happening in the weaker and more

inexperienced sections that the SWP had little contact with? How could an international discussion be conducted if the world movement was being bureaucratically lined up and split before the pre-congress discussion had even opened? How could we reach the ranks of the European sections with our documents when these would never get past the little committee that Pablo controlled, which insisted on acting in the name of the International without any effective participation by the leaderships of the sections?

The SWP leadership decided that a purely routine discussion could not affect the process of splits that Pablo had set in motion in the International. A dramatic gesture was required to convey to the members of the whole world movement how seriously the SWP leadership took the dangerous liquidationist course Pablo had set out on. It was decided to form a faction in the International; to declare the faction publicly, not just in the internal bulletin; and to place the authority of the full National Committee of the SWP behind the call. A plenum of the NC was announced for November to discuss the situation in the world movement and to draft a resolution on the fight.

There was not enough time to organize a full convention of the party, but the plenum was thrown open to the entire membership. Coincident with the windup of an election campaign, a rally was called in New York a few days before the plenum to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of American Trotskyism. It was to show to the outside world and to the members of the party that the SWP remained convinced that it was possible to build a Leninist party in the United States and that it believed there was something to celebrate in the twenty-five years of party-building experience we had gone through since the expulsion of the Trotskyists from the Communist Party in 1928. The Cochranites boycotted the rally. Not one of their supporters attended.

The first item of business of the plenum was the boycott. The leaders of the Cochran-Clarke grouping were suspended. The second point on the agenda was to approve an open letter to the world Trotskyist movement, which was published in the November 16, 1953 issue of *The Militant*. The open letter did not propose a split in the International. It outlined the party's disagreements with Pablo, and then limited itself to two relatively restrained demands: it called for the formation of a public international faction to fight Pabloism within the International; and it called for Pablo's removal as secretary of the International. The public faction was named the International Committee of the Fourth International. Such a move stepped deliberately beyond the norms of an ordinary internal discussion. But it was not a declaration of a split in the International and was never regarded as such by the participants in the November plenum. The split would come later, at the initiative of Pablo, at the world congress of the Pablo faction in 1954.

The Pablo faction, citing the formation of a public faction as grounds, expelled the supporters of the International Committee at its 1954 "World Congress." The SWP, however, did not view the situation in the same way. The International Committee of the Fourth International, which the SWP was instrumental in founding, was not a rival Fourth International. The party regarded the International Committee as an international faction and did not read the "Pabloites" out of the Trotskyist move-



ment. There were, of course, very sharp polemics and no concessions were made on Pablo's revision of basic Marxist principles.

In practice there was little contact between the two wings of the International during the almost ten years of split. In large part this was due to the witch-hunt imposed by the American government. For a number of years it was impossible for party members to get passports to go anywhere outside the United States. The Political Committee assigned Joseph Hansen to attend the Fourth World Congress in 1954 to explain why the SWP had issued a public declaration against Pablo's line, but he was denied a passport and was unable to go. It was not until 1958 that Farrell Dobbs was able, for the first time since the split, to go to Europe and have discussions with both factions. Regular visits and discussions did not become possible until 1960.

In the interim, two international factions existed in the Fourth International: the International Secretariat led by Pablo, Ernest Germain, Pierre Frank, and Livio Maitan; and the International Committee of the Fourth International with which the SWP was in fraternal solidarity and which included the majority of the British and French Trotskyists led respectively by Gerry Healy and by Bleibtreu-Lambert-Lequenne.

The world movement was about evenly split. The majority of the European sections went with Pablo except for Britain, France, and Switzerland. The Latin American Trotskyists were divided. The majority in Argentina, Chile, and Peru supported the International Committee. The pro-Pablo forces, headed by Posadas, had groupings in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and a few other countries.

The Bolivian section, which at the time of the split was the largest Latin American Trotskyist party, remained neutral and did not take part in the debate. The Ceylon section, while formally adhering to the International Secretariat, in practice followed the same course as the Bolivians. Most of the English-speaking groups, including the Canadian section, joined the International Committee, as did the Chinese Trotskyists in exile led by Peng Shu-tse, and a scattering of small groups elsewhere.

The majority of the International Committee, particularly the Socialist Workers Party leadership, did not view the split as definitive, despite their strong opposition to the Pablo leadership, but saw it as a faction fight in progress and left open what the final resolution of the dispute might be.

Our experience with such fights in the past, particularly the examples of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks or the evolution of the Shachtmanites after they left the Socialist Workers Party in 1940, might have led some comrades to believe that the fundamental differences uncovered in the break with Pablo would prove unbridgeable and would grow deeper with time. In this case that was not so.

The party observed a political retreat by the International Secretariat from the most extreme positions of conciliation with Stalinism almost from the moment of the split, despite the organizational reprisals taken against the supporters of the International Committee. The depth of Pablo's adaptation to Stalinism was tested at the "Fourth World Congress" when the most extreme of the liquidationist tendencies fostered by Pablo tried to entice their mentor into abandoning the Fourth International. Mestre of France and Lawrence of England walked out of the con-

gress to join their respective Communist parties. George Clarke, who had the "franchise" as the representative of the American supporters of the International Secretariat, put a motion on the floor to dissolve the Fourth International on the grounds that it served no useful function and that it was pretentious for such small forces to claim to be an international revolutionary party. When his motion was defeated, he too walked out of the congress. The Ceylonese delegates placed several amendments on the floor that embodied some of the criticisms of Pablo's line put forward by the SWP. These were passed.

Pablo himself made a noticeable retreat. But, even more important, the shock of the split combined with the unfolding of the political revolution in Eastern Europe and the ebbing of the threat of an imminent world war, was to lead figures such as Germain, Frank, and Maitan on the side of the International Secretariat to break with Pablo. They eventually formed a distinct tendency within the so-called Pabloite camp.

Further events resolved one central question that remained undecided at the time of the 1954 split: that was whether Pablo's political adaptation toward Stalinism was motivated by a fundamental revision of our characterization of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary force in the workers' movement, or simply flowed from Pablo's conviction of the imminent inevitability of a third world war. By the end of 1955 when the war threat had clearly abated for the time being, the International Secretariat also drew back from its projections that revolutions would be led by Stalinist parties. By 1956 their public line had become very close to that of the International Committee, and the leadership of the SWP concluded that, on the political positions on which the two sides stood, continuation of the split could not be justified. It was time to consider reunification.

This estimate was confirmed by the reaction of the International Secretariat to the Hungarian Revolution of October 1956. Far from sidestepping the question of the Soviet invasion or hailing the "concessions" granted by the bureaucracy as Pablo had done after the German events of 1953, the International Secretariat gave its full support to the Hungarian workers' councils. The resolution adopted by the "Fifth World Congress" of the Fourth International—that is, of the Pablo faction—in 1957 was unequivocal on this point. It declared that in Hungary there were assembled "all the *objective* elements for a rapid and brilliant revolutionary victory, capable of raising the whole world revolutionary movement to a higher level." Further, the resolution rejected the notion, previously advanced by Pablo, that the political revolution would be carried through by a new centrist tendency arising from within the bureaucracy. It said that what was lacking in Hungary was "a revolutionary leadership capable of quickly coordinating the proletarian forces and guiding them rapidly toward the constitution of a democratic and independent republic based on the [workers'] councils." ("The Decline and Fall of Stalinism" in the Education for Socialists bulletin, "*The Development and Disintegration of World Stalinism.*")

It is true that the International Secretariat continued to pursue its policy of deep entry in the Communist and Social Democratic parties of Western Europe, long after the motivation for this tactic—the supposedly imminent war—had become outmoded. But the SWP did not view this as a sufficient reason to maintain the split when basic

political agreement had been reached on the nature of Stalinism. Why, then, was reunification delayed for another seven years, until 1963?

In fact, the split had set in motion centrifugal tendencies in both the International Secretariat and the International Committee that were moving away from the basic positions of Trotskyism, either in the direction of opportunist adaptation to reformist politics, or in the direction of sectarian abstention from real struggle. On the side of the International Secretariat, Pablo, although he retreated from his positions on the inevitability of Stalinist-led revolutions, adopted an attitude of political adaptation toward a whole series of forces, from the Kremlin bureaucracy to certain of the "radical" nationalist bourgeois regimes in the colonial world. By the mid-1950s Pablo represented only a minority tendency within the International Secretariat. He was opposed at all costs to reuniting with the forces of the International Committee and the SWP and did everything he could to sabotage efforts in that direction.

At the same time a symmetrical phenomenon was taking place in the ranks of the International Committee. The split with Pablo had taken place over real questions of strategy and tactics for our epoch: the attitude the Fourth International should adopt toward mass movements led by reformist, Stalinist, or other non-Trotskyist forces; the possibility of building revolutionary Marxist parties to overturn capitalism; the kinds of demands that should be put forward to bridge the gap between our small revolutionary groups and the unorganized masses.

The answers given to these questions by Pablo were wrong, but they were not the only possible wrong answers. Pablo sought a shortcut to the revolution through political adaptation to larger forces with nonrevolutionary programs. Within the International Committee in the years of split there arose tendencies that sought to insure themselves against such contamination through sectarian denunciation of every movement that was not explicitly Trotskyist. These currents were led by Pierre Lambert in France and the Socialist Labour League of Gerry Healy in England, whose American supporters are now organized in the Workers League of Tim Wohlforth. During the years when leaders of the SWP were unable to travel abroad, Healy and Lambert controlled direct dealings with the members of the International Secretariat. They sought by every means possible to obstruct and sabotage efforts at reunification. Healy in particular set a tone of virulent denunciation of the "Pabloites" in his press that made discussions of unification highly difficult, if not impossible.

The SWP began to have differences with Healy and Lambert over the character of the colonial revolution. They were disposed to denounce as betrayers the leaders of any anti-imperialist struggle who were not dyed-in-the-wool Marxists. Trotskyists, of course, are always opposed to any reformist or procapitalist tendency even when it is engaged in a progressive struggle, but in the opinion of the SWP the weight of the party's intervention should be aimed at opposing imperialism and defending the right of self-determination of people who are struggling despite the inadequacy of their leadership. Healy and Lambert tended on the contrary to dismiss the importance of the whole postwar colonial revolution because it did not result in the creation of new workers states outside of China, North Vietnam, and North Korea. The decisive test of

the depth of these differences came with the Cuban revolution of 1959. Although the Castroist July 26 Movement had petty-bourgeois origins and a program limited to bourgeois-democratic reforms, under the pressure of imperialism and because of the extraordinary honesty and intransigence of the Cuban leadership, the revolution moved to the expropriation of capitalist property in the summer and fall of 1960.

Both the SWP and the International Secretariat hailed the creation of a new workers state in Cuba. Healy and Lambert rejected this view, characterizing Cuba as a "state capitalist" regime and denouncing Castro as just another Batista or Chiang Kai-shek.

For the SWP this was the "acid test," as Joseph Hansen called it in a document at the time. It was the measure of whether a self-proclaimed Trotskyist party could recognize a revolutionary reality or not. The victory of the Cuban revolution and the common recognition of its nature and its importance provided a further common basis for a principled reunification of the two factions of the Fourth International.

Healy, thinking to find fresh obstacles to reunification, actually facilitated the process. He proposed that the International Committee and the International Secretariat set up a parity committee to arrange discussions and decide on common projects. This was welcomed by both sides. The parity committee was set up and its existence of approximately one year paved the way for a principled reunification.

However the success of the work of the parity committee was not welcomed by Healy and Lambert. Healy, in particular, sought to slow down the process. But the lack of political justification for maintaining the split was becoming more and more glaring.

The Political Committee of the SWP issued a statement on March 1, 1963, entitled "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement." This document outlined the areas of principled political agreement between the majorities of the International Secretariat and of the International Committee. It was officially adopted as the basis for unity at the Reunification Congress held in Italy in June 1963. Inasmuch as Healy and Wohlforth have endlessly repeated since then that the reunification was carried out without a discussion and was an unprincipled capitulation to the "Pabloites" by the SWP, it is worth summarizing this document which Healy has never published or answered.

"While substantial differences still remain," the statement said, "especially over the causes of the 1954 split, the area of disagreement appears of secondary importance in view of the common basic program and common analysis of major current events in world developments which unite the two sides." There followed a specific list, of which these were the main items:

1. The present world crisis is at bottom a crisis of revolutionary leadership, which must be resolved if capitalism is to be overthrown and world socialist planning instituted.

2. The delay in the world socialist revolution is due basically to the incapacity and betrayals of the Social Democratic and Stalinist leaderships of the working-class movement.

3. The aim and purpose of the world Trotskyist movement is to build new mass revolutionary Marxist parties

around a program of transitional demands and employing Leninist organizational methods to recruit and train a cadre. When an "entry" tactic is employed, "it should be the norm for those engaging in it to maintain a sector of open public work, including their own Trotskyist publication."

4. "The bureaucratic reformist and Stalinist machines do not use the organized strength of the working class to overthrow capitalism where this is possible."

5. In the bureaucratized workers states, "The Leninist forces are . . . faced with the need to organize revolutionary Marxist parties to provide leadership for the working class in exercising its right to overthrow the dictatorial rule of the bureaucratic caste and to replace it with forms of proletarian democracy. This signifies a political revolution."

6. The recognition of Cuba as a workers' state.

7. On de-Stalinization: "The Khrushchev regime has no intention of dismantling the bureaucratic dictatorship a piece at a time; its aim is not 'self-reform' but maintenance of the rule of the caste in face of mounting popular pressures."

8. The colonial revolution "is now playing a key role in the world revolutionary process." Further, "It is impossible in these countries to solve the historic problems of social, economic, and cultural liberation and development without overthrowing capitalism as well as breaking the grip of imperialism."

9. "Guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semicolonial power."

10. "Since the close of World War II, imperialism has

methodically prepared for another conflict, one in which the capitalist world as a whole would be mobilized against the workers states, with the Soviet Union as the main target." This can ultimately be prevented only by the American socialist revolution.

On the basis of this document, the majority of the International Committee decided to go ahead with the reunification.

The Reunification Congress in 1963 set up a new leading body of the International, the United Secretariat, to supersede both the IS and the IC. Healy and Lambert were invited to participate in the united International without giving up their differences. They rejected the offer, refusing even to send observers to the congress. For a lengthy period they maintained the fiction that they still represented the International Committee. This rump organization, dedicated to the task of "reconstructing" the Fourth International, went through a split of its own in the fall of 1971, when Lambert and Healy parted company over their respective estimates of the conduct of their ally in Bolivia, Guillermo Lora, in the events preceding the Banzer coup in August of that year.

On the other side, Posadas left the International Secretariat in 1962, prior to the reunification, and set up his own "Fourth International," mainly confined to a few small groups in Latin America. These have been on the decline in recent years.

Pablo participated in the Reunification Congress, but took his leave of the International in 1964. Today he heads a group called the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency, which has declared that it has no ties with the Fourth International and does not claim to be a Trotskyist organization.

Thus the great majority of those in the world who call themselves Trotskyist have been represented by the reunified Fourth International since 1963.

## Problems of Methodology in the 1953-1954 Split in the Fourth International

by Tom Kerry

Let me state, at the very beginning, that in my view the basic political character of the dispute in the 1950s derived from a manifestation of doctrinaire schematism that made no allowance for historical variations, with the tactical rigidity that flowed therefrom.

In reading again recently the material of the Cochran fight, I note that Cochran dates the origin of the dispute to the East European discussion, which began in the immediate post-war period (1946-1947), and continued right on through the Third World Congress of 1951. It was the Third World Congress of 1951 that adopted the resolution on the class character of the East European states, after a long and in my opinion very fruitful discussion.

To give the devil his due, Cochran is partly correct. The East European discussion did constitute a part of the post-war development, that entered into the "new world

reality" about which we heard so much from the Cochranites following the Third World Congress. This "new world reality," under which the "Old Trotskyism," the "Ossified Trotskyism," as the Cochranites put it, was presumably unable to make the requisite adjustment.

Let me review briefly the issues in the East European discussion, and the character of that dispute which was finally resolved by unanimous resolution at the Third World Congress. The discussion over the class character of the states in Eastern Europe after World War II, really began in earnest after the start of the Cold War, when the coalition regimes arbitrarily established by the Stalinists were summarily dismissed, and the Stalinists took over complete control.

In my opinion it would be more correct to date the origin of the struggle to the Third World Congress and

its aftermath rather than to the pre-congress discussion. Because in the pre-congress Eastern Europe discussion, the differences, and the lines of division were not the same as those developed after the Congress.

The pre-congress controversy was a very rich discussion which ended in virtual unanimity; no differences on that particular question remained in the international movement so far as my memory serves me. I can't recall any serious differences over the final resolution of this controversy, to wit: that these states were deformed workers states, and the world Trotskyist movement extended its policy of defense against imperialist attack to these states, as it had previously done to the Soviet Union.

In order to understand the dispute that broke out after the Third World Congress, we have to go back to the post-war developments, and examine the "new world reality" as it developed after World War II. Stalin's post-war reality—for he also had his view of the new world reality—was based on the pacts between the victors in the war at Yalta, Teheran, Casablanca, Bretton Woods, etc., etc. In a whole series of meetings, most of them secret, the victors carved out spheres of influence, parceled out the spoils of the war among themselves, and arranged for a division of the booty among the victorious partners in the military conflict.

Eastern Europe was awarded to Stalin as Russia's sphere of influence, with the understanding that the states there were to be ruled by coalition governments. That was part of the understanding, part of the agreement. These governments, of course, rested upon capitalist property relations.

In addition, coalition regimes were established in France and Italy. The Communist Party, which played a prominent role in Partisan movement in France and the underground in Italy, was the only cohesive political force in those states after the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini. There was no other political force capable of preventing the Stalinists from taking power in Italy and France. They voluntarily surrendered power to these coalition regimes in deference to the pacts established by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt.

On the basis of these pacts, the Stalinists proclaimed that the world had entered a period of permanent peace; that there just wasn't going to be any more war. There was not going to be any more war, you see, because the "Allies" had so cemented their wartime relationship, had so artfully, adroitly and sagaciously divided the world between themselves; had so bound themselves to honor their holy alliance for all time that war, as a means of resolving political, economic and social conflict in the world, was ruled out forever.

Stalin had already dissolved the Communist International in 1943 in deference to the war alliance. And to underscore Stalin's vision of the new world reality, the American Communist Party proceeded to dissolve itself.

The dissolution of the American Communist Party was followed by a declaration that it was no longer necessary to have a Communist Party in the United States. And it really wasn't!

For, if there was to be permanent peace in the world, if the Yalta and Teheran agreements superseded the class struggle on a world scale, then what possible use was there of a "Communist Party" in these United States of America? Instead they spawned a "Communist Political

Association." And, of course, like the American Stalinists always did, they went one step further than Stalin. He proclaimed the epoch of permanent peace. With the class struggle being supplanted by Stalin's peaceful coexistence, the American Stalinists began whooping it up for a permanent no-strike pledge. That is, they called upon the unions in this country to enter into agreements with the employers, committing themselves to a no-strike policy; not only for the period of the agreements, but forever, if you please.

In the National Maritime Union, in which we had a number of members at the time, I recall that the question arose: If there are going to be no strikes, and if there is going to be eternal peace and perpetual harmony between employers and employees, then what purpose, what possible function would the union perform? Well, that didn't faze the Stalinists hucksters.

One of their pitchmen wrote an article which was printed in *Colliers* magazine, entitled: Readin', Writin', and No Strikin'. Its main point was that the National Maritime Union was being converted from a union engaging in struggles with the employers for wages, hours and working conditions to a union that taught "readin', writin' and no strikin'." Yes, not exactly the three R's—but the next thing to it—the two "R's" and an S. I'm not pulling your leg. You can look it up in *Colliers* magazine in 1945, 1946, somewhere around that time.

Like the Communist Party, the unions were to be converted into educational institutions. To teach the masses the joys of peaceful coexistence!

Well, it wasn't long before this glittering coexistence bubble burst. The inherent contradictions between the two incompatible systems soon engendered controversy and conflict which quickly erupted into fierce antagonisms.

In Greece, a revolution erupted which was strangled by the Stalinists because, you see, Greece had been allotted to Britain's sphere of influence.

In China, they tried by hook and by crook to seduce Chiang Kai-shek into a coalition regime. But he would have no part of it. So, civil war raged in China.

In Vietnam, the Vietnamese had begun the resistance which soon erupted in revolutionary war against French imperialism.

The revolutionary flame blazed fiercely in the whole colonial world. The masses were in revolt, and the imperialists placed the blame at the door of the Kremlin. Incorrectly so. Stalin did his damndest to dampen the conflagration where he couldn't douse it completely. But the mass movements were too sweeping, too all-embracing, to be easily contained.

So Stalin's erstwhile partners decided to put a little heat on him. The ineffable Winston Churchill came over here at the invitation of "Hiroshima Harry." In collaboration with Truman, he made a speech in Fulton, Missouri, about the "Iron Curtain"—the famous "Iron Curtain Speech," which ushered in the period of the Cold War. (I'm compressing this account in order to provide, in outline at least, the objective conditions in which the Third World Congress convened.)

Churchill's Fulton, Missouri, cold war speech was followed by the launching of the Marshall Plan, the plan to rehabilitate, refurbish and reestablish the tottering capitalist structure in Europe and on a world scale.

U. S. imperialism emerged from the war as the bulwark of the entire capitalist world order. It had a monopoly on the atom bomb. Practically all the gold in the world was flowing into Fort Knox. Washington had at its disposal the most powerful military establishment the world had ever seen.

Economically Washington and Wall Street were supreme. All of their capitalist rivals had been crushed during the war, victors as well as vanquished. British imperialism, an ally, emerged from the war in very shaky condition. French imperialism was tottering. Italian capitalism and Japanese imperialism existed only by the grace of Wall Street and Washington handouts. The United States was the one big power in the world that was maintaining capitalism as a world system. And it had the atom bomb to back up its hegemony.

It was this cold war offensive of Anglo-American imperialism that impelled the Soviet Union to resort to defensive measures to preserve the positions it had won. And one of these measures was the dismissal of Stalin's coalition regimes in Eastern Europe. I say dismissal advisedly. I don't want to dignify Stalin's phony coalition regimes by using the word overturn. There was nothing to overturn. The Soviet army had occupied these territories. These coalition regimes were arbitrarily put into power. They had no base in the population, no army or police force of their own. All it took was a little flick of the wrist by the Red Army generals and they were gone. They disappeared virtually overnight.

It was this event, that is, the elimination of these coalition regimes, that sparked an accelerated discussion over the class character of the East European states. The question was then posed: What kind of states are these? Before, under the popular front type coalition regimes which maintained capitalist property relations and capitalist property forms, there was really very little controversy. We designated them as basically capitalist regimes. Or, somewhat ambiguously, as "transitional" regimes. But now, with Stalin's capitalist partners thrown out of the governments, and with steps taken toward nationalizing property and moving toward Soviet property forms, the question was once again raised of the class character of these states.

If you recall, Trotsky had said that in the event of a war, in the event of Red army occupation of territory contiguous to Russia, failure on the part of the Soviet Union to assimilate this area into the Soviet state and to establish the same property forms as existed in the Soviet Union, would sharply pose the question of the class character of the Soviet Union.

We had often used the analogy of the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon was compelled, in his military conquest of Europe, to impose upon those states he conquered the economic and political forms established by the French revolution. For feudal Europe that meant capitalism.

So, Trotsky argued, the Stalinists would be compelled, by virtue of the property forms and property relations established by the October revolution to "export," in quotation marks, revolutions to those states occupied by the Soviet army. There was no question in the case of the Baltic states, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia. Those states were assimilated into the structure of the Soviet Union. Property relations were Sovietized, or socialized, and

capitalist property forms were eliminated when they became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

This was not done in Eastern Europe. This did not happen in the case of the Eastern European countries. And so the question of structural assimilation as the perspective of the further development of these states was posed. Meanwhile, so long as they retained their character as "independent" states, it was agreed to designate those states as "deformed" workers states. "Deformed," instead of "degenerated," to underscore the fact that they were deformed at birth and never did have any existence as healthy workers states.

This dispute, I repeat, over the character of the states in Eastern Europe, was finally resolved at the Third World Congress. The resolution of the Third World Congress, printed in the November-December 1951 issue of *Fourth International*, beginning on page 198, on the class character of Eastern Europe, was called "Class Nature of Eastern Europe." [This resolution appears on page 53 of the Education for Socialists Bulletin, *Class, Party and State and the Eastern European Revolution.*] That resolved the dispute over this question.

The discussion had been further complicated by the Yugoslav development which culminated in the Tito-Stalin split of 1948. Yugoslavia, seeking to promote a Danubian Federation, that is a federation of the Balkan states, in order to establish a base for socialist planning on a much more adequate scale, met with the fierce resistance of Stalin. The Kremlin's interest was better served by keeping those states atomized. To discourage the project, Stalin attempted in his own gentle way to discipline Tito.

But he soon found he got more than he bargained for. Tito had come to power on the basis of a surging revolutionary movement, different than that of the other Eastern European states. During the invasion of Yugoslavia by Germany, a civil war had developed in which the Stalinist forces under Tito led the partisan movement against Hitler and against the Chetniks, a bourgeois nationalist movement. The partisans emerged victorious and took the power. After an extremely abbreviated experiment with a coalition government, Tito proceeded to oust the capitalist representatives and established a workers state.

Stalin's differences with Yugoslavia led to a tremendous campaign against Tito by the entire Stalinist world apparatus. From Tito the hero, he was dubbed Tito the traitor. So far did they go, that they even elevated him to rank with Trotsky, the devil incarnate in the lexicon of Stalinist demonology.

But the Yugoslavs stood up against Stalin and his whole bloody gang. They maintained their power and emerged as an independent entity in Eastern Europe. This was the first rift in the Stalinist post-war monolith. It indicated some of the problems created for the Kremlin when national Stalinist parties shook loose from the Soviet bureaucracy, and established their independence on the basis of control of their own national state. We later saw the explosive character of these problems in the Polish uprising in Poznan, in Hungary in 1956, and later in Czechoslovakia. And the end is not yet!

The Stalin-Tito conflict erupted in 1948. In 1949 we had the Chinese revolution, and in the same year the Soviets tested their nuclear weapon. And then, in 1950, the Korean

war erupted. It soon led to the first serious post-war world confrontation when MacArthur marched the American troops to the Yalu river. It appeared as the initial stage of an invasion of China. An American attack on China would inevitably involve the Soviet Union.

It seemed as though the world was teetering on the brink of World War III. But a Third World War of a distinctly unique character. Both the previous world wars were interimperialist wars. This coming war, when it broke out, could not possibly be an interimperialist war, but a war of the capitalist powers against the countries of the Soviet bloc. And so it took on both the character of a military holocaust and a world class conflict. It was this, the dual character of the threatened war that served as the axis for the elaboration of the political line at the Third World Congress.

If, today, you read the Third World Congress documents—in the light of subsequent historical development—they sound a bit weird, but they didn't at the time. The major Third World Congress documents proceeded from the premise that war was on the order of the day; that war was imminent; that war was inevitable; not as an historical prognosis but as an immediate perspective. A leading Cochranite, I recall, writing in *The Militant* even predicted the date on which war would break out. The month of June 1953, was to witness the actual Doomsday. This was the atmosphere in which the Third World Congress took place.

It was to be war *sui generis*, subsumed under the thesis of war-revolution. That is, according to the Doomsday blueprint, the outbreak of a military conflict would ignite from its inception the sharpest eruption of the class struggle. The war would spark the proletarian revolution, if not immediately, then very soon after its outbreak.

Let me quote George Clarke, one of the leaders of the Cochranite group, who was then editor of *Fourth International*. In an editorial in the World Congress issue entitled, "A Milestone in Internationalism" (November-December 1951, p. 164) here's what Clarke had to say:

"The epoch—our own—under consideration by the recent Congress of the international Trotskyist movement marks the *last phase* of this decline when wars and revolutions are being telescoped into one cataclysmic struggle, yes, into the final conflict between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between capitalism and socialism."

According to prophesy this was to be "the final conflict;" this the Armageddon; this the Apocalypse. And so you can readily imagine Clarke's dismay when he received a whole number of amendments to the resolution from the American party. We never learned until several years later that Clarke, our representative in Europe at the time, had received our amendments but did not submit them. In 1953 we were informed by Clarke himself that he had burned them. He, *our representative*, never submitted them at all, but later boasted he had burned them.

Let me quote Michel Pablo, the main reporter at the Third World Congress. His report was published under the title: "World Trotskyism Rearms." The Congress line was trumpeted as no less than a fundamental rearmament of the world Trotskyist movement. Pablo affirms, and I quote:

"a) With the Korean War capitalism has entered upon

a more precise and a more accelerated military and political preparation of a new world war: an armaments economy. Subordination of plans and ideas to military needs. New bases and alliances.

"b) This war is directed by imperialism against the USSR, the 'People's Democracies,' China, the colonial revolution, the international revolutionary movement.

"c) It is being prepared in a relationship of forces unfavorable to imperialism, which in all probability will remain unfavorable for some years to come. Imperialism having proved itself incapable of realizing the 'optima' conditions for the unleashing of the war and its victorious conclusion.

"d) In this case, a war unleashed by imperialism will rapidly become transformed into a civil war with revolutionary implications in the rest of the world, including the USA."

Pablo continued in this vein in one section of his report after another. If one should undertake to underline those sentences and sections that iterate and reiterate the war-revolution thesis, the result would be a markup of the entire page.

Here are a few abbreviated quotes to convey its flavor: "This time what is involved is the final struggle which brings an epoch to a close." (p.170) Again Pablo referred to "this apocalyptic struggle with its extraordinary difficulties and dangers."

But victory is assured. The theme of war-revolution runs like a thread through all of the reports and resolutions. And if it was true that the final showdown of war-revolution was imminent, then it followed as night the day, that time was of the essence. There was not time, you see, for the slow accumulation of cadre and the building of Trotskyist parties.

So, as part of the "re-armament," that task would have to be shelved. From the postulate of war-revolution, therefore, there flowed the tactic of entryism. Deep entryism. Entryism *sui generis*! Entryism into both Social Democratic and Communist parties, depending upon the particular circumstances in the respective countries.

There was nothing new about the tactic of entryism applied to centrist Social Democratic parties or to mass working class political parties of the type of the British Labour Party. But what was new to world Trotskyism was the proposed entry tactic applied to Stalinist parties in such countries as France and Italy. That was entryism *sui generis* with a vengeance!

The justification for entryism *sui generis* into the Stalinist parties was based entirely upon the war-revolution thesis promulgated by the Third World Congress. In his report to the Congress, Pablo explains:

"Concerning our work in countries like France and Italy, where the majority of the working class and of the peasant poor follows the CP, we have outlined an activity which is essentially directed toward the members of these parties and the masses they influence. And this obliges me, in view of the discussion and the disagreements which have broken out on this question especially in the French organization, to deal with the more general subject of our present attitude toward the workers and masses still under the influence of Stalinism.

"These workers these masses everywhere, even in countries where the CP represents a minority, and even an infinite minority, have a special interest for us that it

would be criminal to neglect for the two following considerations: Because of the quality, the revolutionary inclinations of these masses, who as a general rule are composed of the best, the most active, the most revolutionary elements in each country. Because, on the other hand, of our perspectives on the evolution of the situation toward war which will accentuate the leftward development of these masses and will inevitably impel them into revolutionary struggles, including struggles for power, and in any case into a revolutionary attitude in the event of war."

The tactic of entryism *sui generis* was deemed imperative because, as Pablo insisted, of the "irresistible march to the new war and to new gigantic revolutionary explosions."

As the days lengthened into weeks, the weeks into months and the months into years, it became evident that the war-revolution thesis of the Third World Congress was seriously flawed. Yet, in Europe, entryism *sui generis* continued — perhaps by inertia — with deplorable results.

While on this particular subject, it might be useful to spend a few moments discussing our own experience with the tactic of entryism. One of the great turning points in the history of Trotskyism came as a result of the victory of Hitler in Germany. Hitlerism took power without a struggle due primarily to the "Third Period" insanity of the Stalinists. It was this event that prompted Trotsky to declare an end to the period of our functioning as a faction of the Communist International and to proclaim the need for a new international, the Fourth International, and for independent sections of the world Trotskyist movement.

At this period the American Trotskyists were organized in the Communist League of America. In 1934 we carried through a fusion with the Musteite American Workers party to form the Workers party. While we acquired some forces as a result of the German debacle, we soon became aware that through some quirk of history, a substantial number of young militants had gravitated into the Socialist party. The American SP, under the impact of the German events, the domestic strike wave, the founding of the CIO and the radicalization of the American workers, had shed its right wing and emerged as a centrist formation under the leadership of Norman Thomas, who championed the concept of building an "all-inclusive" Socialist party.

With the turn by the Comintern to Popular Front politics the American CP embarked upon a concerted campaign to win over the SP to their class collaborationist line. The entry tactic, as devised by Trotsky and carried out by our party, was designed as a three-pronged offensive.

One—to enter the SP in order to fuse with the left-wing militants and win them over to Trotskyism.

Two—in the process, to smash the Stalinist drive to recruit these forces to Popular Front politics.

Three—to remove an obstacle to the development of the revolutionary party by eliminating a potential competitor.

We succeeded on all counts. And that on the basis of a short-term perspective. We had no illusions about the possibility of peaceful coexistence over an extended period of time with the centrist majority of the SP. We knew that sooner or later our fundamental programmatic differences would manifest themselves in irreconcilable political conflict. And that's what soon happened, symptomatically enough over the issue of Popular Frontism, in Spain and in the United States.

The continued growth of the class struggle left wing was viewed as a threat to the opportunist line of the right-

wing class collaborationists. The centrists were caught in the middle. Their prescription for reconciling the irreconcilable was to jettison the organizational principles of the "all-inclusive" party in favor of their version of the Leninist concept of democratic centralism. This sudden conversion was a bit too transparent. We said, no, we're against democratic centralism so long as the SP remains what it is.

Given its history and tradition, its political heterogeneity and composition, centralism in the SP could not possibly be democratic but could only take the form of bureaucratic centralism whose aim would be to gag the left wing while permitting the right wing to say and do what they pleased.

The fundamental prerequisite of the Leninist concept of democratic centralism, without which it can only be a caricature, is political homogeneity—that is, agreement on the basic principles, program and practices of revolutionary Marxism. Lacking such homogeneity, "democratic centralism" could only serve to foster dissolution and split. So, when we said that we were against democratic centralism for the "all-inclusive" hodge-podge of warring groups, tendencies and factions in Norman Thomas' SP, we were not joking.

Despite our warning, the centrists, under the prodding of the right wing, persisted in carrying through their centralist miscarriage. That was the beginning of the end of our entry experiment. First they banned the left wing caucus press and publications and even put a ban on the circulation of resolutions adopted by one local to other units of the SP, etc., etc. The "democratic centralism" gambit of the centrists accelerated the split and led to the formation, in 1938, of the Socialist Workers party.

How did we arrive at that name for our party? It was really very simple. When we entered the SP our group was called the Workers party. The result of our entry was a fusion between the left wing militants in the Socialist Party and the former members of the Workers party. It seemed that the natural thing to do to underscore the fusion was to combine the two and call the new organization the Socialist Workers Party. That's the origin of the name of our party.

So much for what may seem like a digression from our subject, but is, I think, an experience with instructive lessons for the present.

So that there would be no misunderstanding, Pablo insisted that entryism *sui generis* would in no way resemble the entry tactic of the 1930s. For one thing, he dismissed the very idea that there might develop splits in the various Communist parties. As he and his supporters foresaw the development, under the impact of war-revolution the Communist parties as a whole would move to the left, toward a revolutionary position.

The premise was for war-revolution encompassing the entire globe, with victory in the end going to those arrayed in the anticapitalist camp. With this perspective, deep entryism was projected for an entire historical epoch. This blueprint smacked a little of Pablo's previous thesis, presumably withdrawn, predicting centuries of deformed workers states. That was another reason for suspicion of the whole package and we went over the documents with a fine-tooth comb. But I have already spoken of what happened to our amendments when we submitted them to our representative in Europe.

Starting with the war-revolution thesis the Cochranites

in the SWP arrived at the point of picturing the **Stalinists** as a potentially revolutionary current in the world working class movement. Too impatient to wait for the predicted war-revolution to materialize they proceeded as though it was already a fact and began to act accordingly.

It was this aspect of the dispute that invested the controversy with such bitterness after it broke into the open upon Clarke's return from Europe. This, plus the knowledge that the Cochranite formation was an unprincipled bloc.

It was common knowledge that the Cochran wing had no illusions about Stalinism and even less inclination to move into that orbit. To the contrary, Cochran and his cohorts were beguiled by an altogether different vista. They gravitated toward the Reuther wing of the union bureaucracy. That was their pole of attraction. What the Cochran wing had in common with the pro-Stalinist Clarke-Bartell wing was that both were oriented toward the liquidation of the party. When they splintered soon after they were expelled from the SWP, they split into their two component parts.

Another factor that contributed to the bitterness of the faction struggle was the surreptitious role played by Pablo and his collaborators in Europe. The Cochranites kept insisting that they were the true, the genuine, dyed-in-the-wool disciples of Pablo in this country and the only authentic interpreters of the decisions of the Third World Congress. Pablo and Company said nothing! While we have made available all of the the written material, including correspondence circulated by the majority faction, the Pablo-Cochran-Clarke-Bartell group studiously refrained from doing so. Until this comes to light the entire history of that important episode in party history will remain incomplete.

In retrospect, the fundamental premise upon which the political strategy and tactic was based, proved false. The tactic of deep entryism and its derivative Stalinist conciliationism came a cropper. Nevertheless, deep entryism was continued long after the war-revolution thesis had been consigned to the limbo of political oddities.

We learned an important lesson from this experience, and we learned it the hard way. Beware of doomsday politics and the tactics that flow therefrom! Always leave room for historical developments and variations that have not been foreseen. All we can do, at best, is establish certain tendencies of development. It is possible to establish definite trends, likely courses of development, probable lines of development, in the prognosis.

But we have got to leave open the possible intervention of unforeseen factors which may require change and alteration in our tactics to conform to change and alteration

in the historical development.

I want to end this lecture with a few general observations. As you all know, there is a discussion going on right now in the world movement. And the differences that have arisen are of a very serious nature. But I don't want any comrade to go away feeling that we are heading into a repetition of the 1953-4 split in the International, because the situation now is altogether different.

And, in addition, no one should get the idea that we are going to walk out of the world movement. We're not going to publish a big blast and then walk out. We never did, and we will not now. No, we're going to have a discussion, and we're going to present our point of view, and do it as forcefully as we can. We're going to circulate our views throughout the world movement, and we're going to try to convince a majority, for we are convinced that the historical events have confirmed the correctness of our criticism of the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America, as well as on other disputed questions.

In revolutionary Marxist politics, in Leninist politics, the ultimate determination of who was right and who wrong in any given political dispute, is the test of events themselves. Lenin taught, and Trotsky after him, that the majority is not always right. That events decide! This is the corner-stone of democratic centralism.

It is this that distinguishes Leninist democratic centralism from Stalinist bureaucratic centralism. Under Lenin all that was asked of a minority is that they *accept* the decision of the majority until such time as events decide who was right and who wrong. Stalin just changed the one word "accept" to "agree," and therewith cut the democratic heart out of the Leninist concept. Under Stalin a minority, when such were permitted to exist in the very early days, was compelled to *agree* with the majority. A psychological impossibility but a bureaucratic necessity.

The determination of truth by the test of events is the great advantage that politics has over religion. One can argue without end over how many angels can dance on the point of a needle, or whether it is proper to make the sign of the cross with two instead of three fingers. There is no objective criteria for the resolution of such disputes. But in politics, events decide, and often without too long delay.

But there are those who, when displeased by actual historical development seek to ignore, or misinterpret, or twist the events into a preconceived mold. Such reasoning, like Alice in Wonderland, concludes that if events fail to conform to the prognosis, so much the worse for the events. And that, my friends, is another of the unfortunate byproducts of Domsday politics.