



# **Bulletin**

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## **Behind U.S. Aggression In Vietnam**

The series of carefully planned "retaliatory" bombings of North Vietnam by U.S. Imperialism signifies that Johnson has decided to move toward a "solution" of that conflict. The U.S. policy which has existed since 1961 of the confinement of the "limited war" to South Vietnam without direct involvement of ground forces while trying to create a "stable and popular" South Vietnamese regime, can no longer be tolerated by the U.S. ruling class. Johnson's decision is a result of the recognition by most bourgeois politicians and analysts that, 1½ million dollars of aid per day notwithstanding, victory over the Viet Minh under present conditions of the struggle is virtually impossible; that even worse (for U.S. imperialism) there is the heightening of the chronic internal crisis in South Vietnam, making it increasingly more difficult to stand up against the forces of the National Liberation Front; and a recognition that some 90% of the South Vietnamese peasantry are in sympathy with the Viet Minh while in the cities there is mounting dissatisfaction, frustration and anti-American sentiment. Symptomatic of the situation are the recent reports that the 265,000 "strong" South Vietnamese army is plagued with constant desertions and permeated from top to bottom with demoralization and corruption.

The recognition of the abysmally futile situation has not, of course, led Uncle Sam to simply pack his bags and "get out." No -- while it is always possible for U.S. imperialism to make such tactical retreats under conditions of extreme duress, such a retreat could only come about as a result of great international weakness and grave domestic crisis facing the American ruling class. At this stage they are not even interested in considering such a retreat. This has left Johnson with two other basic policy alternatives: first, a firm and definite decision to throw in massive ground forces and open up a full scale with North Vietnam, i.e., to turn all of the Indo-Chinese peninsula into a Korean type bloodbath or worse; or -- as a second alternative -- to negotiate "from a position of strength" with the North Vietnam government, the Soviet Union, or even with the Chinese as former Secretary of Defense Gates has suggested.

#### US Attempts to Force a Deal

The latest news bulletins indicate that Johnson's "retaliation without extension" policy is still in operation. The aim of this "brinkmanship" policy is part of the strategy of building up strength in order to better be able to "negotiate from a position of strength" even though such negotiations may not be in the offing for some time. James Reston states this when he writes in the New York Times, Feb. 9, "The purpose of this American policy is now fairly clear. Washington is emphasizing by military strikes in North Vietnam that it will not tolerate a defeat in the hope that this will finally persuade the Communists to halt their infiltration and negotiate a fair and honorable settlement."

Translating the rhetoric into ordinary English, it reads: The U.S. will cease its attacks and threats of attacks on North Vietnam if, in exchange, Ho Chi Minh will arrange for the guerrillas to lay down their arms while a negotiated settlement which leaves South Vietnam under continued capitalist domination takes place. This is what Reston and the New York Times editors mean by a "fair and honorable" settlement. Needless to say, in order for Washington to "give up" its direct aggression against North Vietnam, it must first establish this aggression and at the same time try to avoid getting into another "Korea"! Such is the delicate tightrope walking policy of U.S. imperialism -- a policy fraught with the danger that in pursuit of its exploitative interests, the U.S. government will plunge us into a conflagration that could become a war of extermination against the Chinese workers' state itself.

We do not at all discount the possibility that U.S. imperialism, despite its lack of intention, will start an economically costly and politically hazardous general war in Southeast Asia. The latest U.S. military actions have raised this as an unlikely, but nevertheless real possibility. Even if this possibility does not become reality this time,

we must expose the hypocritical and fraudulent claims of Johnson and company that "our" interests are being undermined by Communist "aggression" and "infiltration." The truth, of course, is that the U.S. manufactured a "provocation" as part of a plan it has had for some time to bomb key North Vietnamese targets.

The bombings themselves are both military and political. While in themselves they hardly hurt the Viet Cong guerrillas, they pose, if continued, a distinct danger to the military defenses of North Vietnam as well as a weakening of support to the National Liberation Front. Thus, North Vietnam is faced with the threat of renewed attack and a necessity to rely more for military defense from the USSR.

Such a growing dependence of North Vietnam on the Soviet Union, far from being opposed by the U.S., is being facilitated as a part of Johnson's developing strategy of "negotiation from a position of strength." On the one hand, Soviet policy has been moving toward military commitment in defense of North Vietnam and greater "support" for the Vietnamese national liberation struggle, in an effort to undercut the influence of the CCP in Asia and the colonial areas. But, the overall policy of Moscow is to come to terms with U.S. imperialism at the expense of the world revolution. There is no doubt that Brezhnev-Kosygin, in line with their continuation of the line of "peaceful co-existence" (as originated by Stalin and developed by Khrushchev), will make every effort to use the Vietnamese crisis as a bargaining point in summit talks with Johnson which they are so anxious for.

Johnson knows this and is counting on it. Accordingly, there is a tendency in U.S. policy at the moment to try to hold back long enough to give Moscow room to maneuver. This is made clear in a release in the New York Times of Feb. 9: "The Administration has been acting on the assumption that Mr. Kosygin was surprised and probably angered by the Vietcong raids. Normally they would expect a Soviet leader to caution the North Vietnamese against any underestimation of Washington's mood ... Such a reaction is still expected here and that is why the Administration sent a special message to Moscow yesterday to explain the raid as retaliatory and not as a move to expand the war. A pause now would further stress that message."

'Tain't really nothin' fellas

United Nations, N.Y., Feb. 8--  
A Soviet source said here tonight that the United States air raids on military installations in North Vietnam had not increased cold war tensions.

He said that as far as he could see, they were a continuation of what had gone on in the past.

Senior Soviet representatives would not go so far in their comments as to say that the latest raids did not matter, but they showed no concern about them.

## Revolutionary Struggle Goes On

Meanwhile, as the threats and counter threats are made against a background of diplomatic maneuvering and tightrope walking, the forces of the National Liberation Front are not sitting on their hands waiting for the United States to decide what actions are to be "retaliated" against. There is still a civil war going on -- a war which makes the "dirty war" of France against Algeria look almost clean in comparison. The "solution" now being considered by Johnson which formally ends the war but maintains some sort of capitalist control is only a "solution" in the interests of imperialism. The struggle of the National Liberation Front must be defended in every way possible. Essential to this defense and necessary to its ultimate victory, is the long struggle to bring the working class to power in the advanced capitalist countries, especially in the U.S. American imperialism is indeed a real tiger with real claws but the claws can be removed if the tiger is first caged.

### THE REBELLION IN SELMA, ALA.

#### Negroes Struggle for More than Voting Rights

Ten years after the school desegregation decision, 21 months after the Birmingham events, 18 months after the March on Washington, and eight months after the Mississippi murders of civil rights workers -- the Southern Negro struggle continues.

Now the struggle is centered in the black belt counties in Alabama, particularly in the city of Selma in Dallas County and in nearby counties. In Dallas County there are just over 15,000 Negroes of voting age and 14,500 whites of voting age. In nearby counties the Negro majority is even greater. Yet in Dallas County approximately 9500, or 2/3 of the whites, are registered to vote, and only 335 Negroes, or about 2% of those eligible.

The struggle in Selma has centered around demands for the right to vote. In the course of the campaign, however, it has become clear that much more is involved. It is a protest against the entire system, even if the demands thus far have been limited and there has been none of the explosiveness that characterized Birmingham.

#### A Policy Crisis

As of Feb. 10, nearly 3,500 arrests had been made in Selma in several weeks of demonstrations. The vast majority of the Negro population, especially the youth, have participated in the movement. The courage and determination of the participants has been amply demonstrated. But it cannot be denied, even as the movement spreads to other counties in the area, that it is confronted by a tremendous policy crisis.

This crisis is revealed in the juxtaposition of two headlines in the New York Times. One story reports, "Dr. King to Seek New Voting Law." The news analysis alongside this by a Times correspondent is headed, "Demonstrations Protest a Long History of Oppression, Not Just Voting Curbs."

The whole system, the economic situation, the issues of jobs, housing, and schools -- every aspect of the Selma Negroes' attempts to live a decent life -- is involved in this movement, just as it is in the Northern struggle. On top of the class issues the added burden is placed of the police-state atmosphere, the disenfranchisement of millions of people, the contempt with which the Southern Negro in particular is treated all of his life. But the movement cannot be limited to simple reforms on any one of these issues, like voting.

The reformist policy of the King leadership has placed the Selma movement in an impossible situation. Because the reforms demanded are not seen as part of an overall revolutionary struggle against the system, the granting of some minor concessions by the racists, or phony moves by the Federal government, or talk of new legislation in Washington to protect voting rights, has the effect of demoralizing some militants and of disappointing even some of the secondary leaders of King's SCLC. There is the inescapable feeling that they are pawns being manipulated, that they are still unable, after these years of struggle, to determine their own destiny.

For the moment, this is certainly true. They cannot determine their own destiny precisely because, whether they realize it or not, Rev. King has left all of this up to the government in Washington which seeks to make a deal with the racists at every opportunity, which is not interested in nor capable of leading any fundamental social change in the North or South.

This frustration is also behind the explosion which took place in New York on Feb. 5, when some SNCC supporters tried to enter the U.S. Courthouse in Lower Manhattan and a fistfight with U.S. deputy marshals ensued.

#### Needed: A Revolutionary Strategy

In the course of the struggle, the militant fighters, especially the youth, can learn how it is possible to take their destiny into their own hands. In forging a revolutionary strategy to accomplish what are revolutionary demands, they must break from the doctrine of non-violence, which is described in the following, almost accidentally perceptive way by a New York Times correspondent:

According to the theory of nonviolence the national conscience will be aroused, the local white man will be conscience-stricken, and the oppressed will gain a measure of freedom. In the past, the practical effect, however, has

been that the white man, like Pharoah, has promised the black man his freedom, not out of a change of heart but in order to get rid of the plague.

And later, in discussing the Negroes' reaction of disappointment at the federal court order making it easier for Negroes to register, the correspondent says: "What the Negroes had hoped for was more Federal pressure and increased harassment of the local white men until something more was done. Just what had never been defined." (our emphasis)

The Negro militants, of course, must decide themselves what their demands are, and not just place some vague hopes in federal intervention.

Selma shows that, notwithstanding the phony civil rights legislation, the struggle in the streets must and will continue.

- It also shows once again how the King policy of non-violence, reformism, and subordination to the federal government gets the movement nowhere. The enthusiasm, spirit, and courage of the Selma civil rights activists could accomplish a tremendous amount if it were channelled by a militant workingclass leadership along the lines of 1) a complete break with capitalist politics and toward independent political action, 2) a break with the policy of turning the other cheek, towards self-defense against the racist murderers and torturers, and 3) a break with the reformist outlook which only demoralizes the militants and the formulation of a revolutionary transitional program on jobs, housing, and schools, as well as voting rights, and linking the Southern and Northern struggles.

The building of this kind of leadership on this kind of program is the most crucial task for the success of the struggle.

SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT:

I. CEYLON, HANSEN AND EXPULSIONS

The entry last year of the LSSP majority into a coalition government with the capitalist Bandaranaike SLFP was an event which marked a qualitative step in the development of the Fourth International. The issue was no longer the implied betrayal of the working class in the formulations of the international documents of the Pabloite United Secretariat and its allies, the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party. Now a major section of the Fourth International had betrayed the working class in the classic way the Second International betrayed during World War I and the Third International betrayed in the period of the 1930s when it also entered capitalist governments.

Central to the desertion of the LSSP was an international outlook that these leaders shared with the Pabloites and the SWP. The LSSP failed to understand the growing crisis of international capitalism and the developing possibilities for the building of a revolutionary movement in the advanced and colonial countries on the basis of the working class. Seeing themselves thus isolated in an underdeveloped country they more and more looked to their own petty bourgeoisie and through this formation the capitalist class. They had slowly been transformed into reformists.

In the summer of 1964 we raised this question within the SWP and for this reason we were summarily suspended from the organization. Following this the SWP went to great lengths in trying to escape blame for the development in Ceylon. The International Socialist Review printed long articles by Peng Shu-tse and Ernest Germain accusing the Socialist Labour League of falsification in blaming the SWP and the Pabloites for the action of the LSSP majority. The current ISR contains a lengthy article by Joseph Hansen, the key international spokesman of the SWP, which repeats the accusations of Peng and Germain.

Now the truth has come out. Joseph Hansen, giving an international report on behalf of the SWP leadership at the recent SWP National Committee Plenum, presented the real position of the SWP and its allies on this question. He attacked the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) which broke away from the reformists for voting against the capitalist government. It seems by thus voting along with the right wing capitalists to bring down the bourgeois government of Ceylon the LSSP(R) was acting in an "ultra left" way.

It is thus clear that Joseph Hansen would have had the LSSP(R) members in parliament vote in such a way as to directly or indirectly maintain the traitorous Bandaranaike government in power! Clearly this is the only way Hansen's position can be interpreted. In reality, then, Hansen's policy is in essence no different from the policy of the reformist LSSP. While Hansen may oppose their action in entering the government he now clearly favors the LSSP acting in such a way as to maintain this government in power. Nothing shows more clearly the real centrist character of the SWP than this statement of Hansen's. As Hansen has been the architect of the international line of the SWP for some time now we can only assume that his views are the views of the SWP leadership as a whole.

Now it is understandable why the United Secretariat has failed to take disciplinary action against Colvin DeSilva and Leslie Goonewardena despite the constant urgings of the LSSP(R). They have failed to do this because DeSilva's and Goonewardena's actions in the Ceylonese parliament in support of the Bandaranaike government reflect the real position of the United Secretariat and the SWP.

We wish to bring to the attention of our readers a recent statement by P. V. P. Kulatilleke, a worker-member of the LSSP(R). This statement, which was reprinted in the SLL newspaper, the Newsletter, is a polemic against Dr. Osmund Jayaratne, formerly the representative of the LSSP on the United Secretariat and more recently a deserter from the ranks of the LSSP(R) who has joined the reformist LSSP. Since Jayaratne's views are identical with those of Hansen, Comrade Kulatilleke's comments are a fitting answer to Hansen's attack on the LSSP(R):

"Dr. Jayaratne laments the fact that the two LSSP MPs last December used their vote in Parliament to bring down the coalition government.

"He does not have the honesty to admit that the coalition collapsed because the leaders of the government did not understand, and moreover, refused to solve, the crisis which confronted them.

"Dr. Jayaratne must realize that our comrades did not vote for an anti-socialist administration (which was what the other opposition parties wanted), but because they recognized the formation of the coalition as a betrayal of socialism.

"It is obvious that no honest socialist, no worker with an atom of class-consciousness would endorse or defend the three principal objectives of government policy outlined in the second Throne speech, namely, the creation of a government press dictatorship, the penalizing of religious minorities by making Buddhism a state religion and the exclusion from political life of a large section of the working class from Ceylon under the Indo-Ceylon agreement.

We also note that the SWP Plenum formally expelled our group from the SWP. We were not even informed that the plenum was to be held, much less invited to attend to defend ourselves. It is perhaps fitting that a plenum which formalizes the expulsion of a group which first raised within the SWP the SWP's responsibility for the betrayal in Ceylon should offer such incontrovertible proof of our accusations through the mouth of Hansen.

The SWP is now being racked by a deepening crisis. The SWP leadership is far more aware than we of the extent of demoralization and disorientation within its own ranks. The life of the very organization created through tremendous effort over 30 years of struggle is now at stake. Below we print an article by an SWP member which shows clearly the present course of the SWP leadership in dealing with this crisis. Incapable of politically digging to the roots of the crisis, the leadership is now resorting to organizational devices. This will only hasten the demise of the SWP unless the SWP rank and file take hold of the situation and demand a full political accounting from the leadership. Time is fast running out.



## II. SWP PLENUM STIFLES INTERNAL DEMOCRACY

by an SWP Member

Time is running out on honest revolutionaries within the Socialist Workers Party who wish to live up to the principles of the Fourth International. If SWP leader Tom Kerry has his way the coming (Labor Day weekend) convention of the party will turn the organization into a caricature of the Stalinism which Leon Trotsky dedicated the latter part of his life to fighting. Kerry's proposed organizational code was presented to the January 30 session of the party's National Committee Plenum. Preview copies circulated for NC members are filled with liberal imitations from both Stalinist and trade union bureaucrat's organizational practices. Provisions include an absolute gag on criticism and other discussion of party political activity between biannual Conventions; gag measures go so far as to censor private discussions between individual members.

Despite the complete break with Leninist principles of democratic centralism, the Kerry "code" came as no surprise to members and other close observers of the SWP's degeneration in recent years. Kerry, echoed by Dobbs, promised to set up a commission to produce just such a code a year ago. The waves of expulsions from both the SWP and YSA and other suppressions of political discussion in both organizations have given accurate forecast of what the next formal step toward degeneration would be.

Many members who still consider themselves committed to revolutionary socialism have so far been unwilling to oppose this liquidation of Trotskyism because of their fear of the bitter internal struggle which would ensue. However they are allowing their party to be destroyed by default. No party can survive as anything but an impotent sterile sect without continuing free and full consideration of ideas. The development of revolutionary theory must be a continuing organic process. If this document is past theory within the SWP will become reduced to a misunderstood misapplied stock of old quotations from Trotsky overlaid with a "new" liberal ideology, as in the infamous period of the Kennedy assassination.

The organizational degeneration of the SWP, like that of the Bolshevik Party under Stalin, is the inevitable and direct consequence of the Party's belief in the almost indefinite economic and social stability of imperialism in the advanced countries. The political side of this Stalinization of the SWP is most clearly documented by Hansen in the Winter 1965 issue of the International Socialist Review. In his article Hansen bases the world perspectives of socialism on "four main facts." First, no successful revolutions in the advanced countries; secondly, victorious revolutions only in countries where capitalism is least developed. Thirdly, the failure of the working class to take the lead in revolutions in backward countries. Fourthly, the failure of any Leninist-type

party to lead a successful revolution since 1917. The SWP's pose of "defense" of the Cuban Revolution is only a political charlatan's cover for its loss of confidence in the possibility of socialist struggles in the USA for the indefinite future. It is this pessimism which impels the SWP to avoid any relationship with the Progressive Labor Movement, and also to abstain from participation in the heroic struggles of radical youth in the South. The only fragile connection of the SWP press with American Socialism is its pose of sitting on the sidelines and urging Black men to spill their blood while the SWP's white radicals cheer them on--from a safe distance. While the SWP is not Stalin's Communist Party, the organizational and political degeneration of both organizations have the same fundamental causes and forms.

Some observers within and outside the SWP have deluded themselves with the hope that the influx of young members would bring with it the fresh waves of political optimism that are evident in the radical youth vanguard across the nation. The fundamental error in this optimism is the YSA; the Young Socialist Alliance has become like the old Communist Party youth and front organizations--it is a screening organization which tends to ensure that only the most morally and politically corrupted young radicals are permitted to be "promoted" to membership in the SWP. While a few healthy elements manage to circumvent these precautions, they are generally admitted only when they combine distinctive personal talents for apparatus work with proven habits of strict obedience to the slightest whims of leading SWP cliquists. It is these corrupted youth--as Kerry explained at the 1963 Plenum session a year ago--who are the main social force behind Kerry's proposals to Stalinize the SWP organization. Such young, corrupted middle class elements bring into workers' organizations the same conception of organizational "law and order" which their right-wing kind introduce to fascist organizations. What is proposed inevitably from this source is not workers' discipline but the natural "Bolshevism" of the Bonapartist.

The youth are supported in these Bonapartist organizational proposals by the other sick social layer of the SWP, the social layer represented by Kerry himself. These old hands are that section of pessimistic old radicals spiritually linked to the most backward and privileged older layer of the organized trade unions. It is this unprincipled alliance of social layers within the party that constitutes the present political majority and the effective force behind Kerry's motion to Stalinize the SWP. Unfortunately, those elements who consider themselves defenders of Leninist orthodoxy have lately shown nothing in the way of the guts native to those who would challenge the US ruling class; only a handful of opposition tendencies, themselves threatened with early expulsion and systematically excluded from party leadership or activity, offer a protesting voice against Kerry's complicity in this fresh political assassination of Leon Trotsky.

THE MEANING OF THE WHITMORE CASE

It Is the System, Not a Few Cops, Which Is At Fault

Now that the Whitmore case has achieved a certain amount of notoriety, and it appears that this particular frameup has been successfully stopped, certain questions deserve to be answered. These questions are correctly and eloquently posed in the February 2 issue of Challenge, weekly newspaper of the Progressive Labor Movement.

If not for the crusading of Challenge and a few isolated individuals on the Whitmore case, we are entitled to wonder whether the NAACP would ever have entered the case, and indeed, whether George Whitmore, Jr. would even be alive at this time.

Challenge raises many questions about the case which point up the responsibility of the District Attorney, the grand jury, the entire court system, and the mass media in the railroading of Whitmore, and not just certain individuals in the police department. It sums this up as follows: "What kind of system of government is it that will permit--and in all of these cases (other frameups) actually perpetrate--such constant brutality, lies and injustice?" And, further, "The Whitmore case is just one example of a whole system of injustice. It is an exception to the frameup rule--especially for Afro-Americans and Puerto Ricans--only because the facts have begun to come out. But it is a serious blow to the profit class in spite of their frantic efforts to cover up their exposed parts. They depend on frameups and police terror in order to frighten working people out of complaining too loudly."

It is important that this truth be stated now, when the daily papers and other mass media are trying to show that a few overzealous cops may be at fault, but not the system itself, and when the NAACP attorneys are lending themselves to this whitewash effort.

Instead of stating this, however, the Socialist Workers Party newspaper, the Militant, limits itself in an article and editorial to reform demands which it has raised often in the past, a police civilian review board and the abolition of capital punishment. The Militant, as usual, is incapable of drawing any lessons about the class enemy and confines itself to demands which any dedicated liberal could make. The abdication of the SWP is getting so scandalous that we can only urge once again that militants in the SWP wake up and struggle against the degeneration as revealed in its increasing indistinguishability from liberalism.

At the very least we must achieve the understanding expressed by this closing statement of the Challenge editorial: "The only sure criminals are the money men who run the courts, cops and jails of this sick capitalist system. And the only sure justice will come when working men and women are organized enough and strong enough to take it."

ON THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

Part II -- International Roots of CPUSA's Revisionism

Role of Cannon and Foster in Resisting That Revisionism

As we noted in the first part of this article, Progressive Labor, while understanding that the CP has been a party of reform since the early 1930s, fails to relate the development of revisionism within the CP to the evolution of the Stalin leadership of the USSR and the Stalin-controlled Comintern. The roots of revisionism in the United States CP lie in our opinion in the development of revisionism within the USSR itself. Here we will explore what lay behind these developments.

The roots of this international revisionism are to be found in the crisis which rocked the Bolshevik Party in the 1920s. At that time it was seized by a great debate between those who advocated a line of building "socialism in one country" and those who saw the preservation of the workers' state intimately linked with the overthrow of capitalism elsewhere in the world. Those who favored "socialism in one country" -- the Stalin faction most consistently -- soon began to advocate a revisionist course for Communist parties in other lands. Clearly the role of CPs elsewhere became nothing more than one of supporting the current diplomatic maneuvers of the USSR which more and more sought to live within the capitalist world rather than transform that world.

This meant that during the period when the USSR was seeking an alliance with the "liberal" imperialists like France and the U. S., the French and American CPs were urged to support this liberal bourgeoisie and not to struggle to overturn it. By 1939, Stalin saw that his policy had not really defended the USSR so he quickly switched his alliance from England-France-U.S. to Hitler and the Axis. Once again he was seeking to defend the USSR through relations with another section of the capitalist world and not through struggling to overthrow capitalism. In 1941, the Germans marched into the USSR and Stalin was caught by surprise. He switched his alliances once again and lined up with England-U.S.-France. After the war Stalin sought to prevent the renewed encirclement of the USSR by the imperialists by propping up capitalist governments in Western Europe which he hoped would be friendly to the USSR. In the United States, where this kind of line was clearly out of the question, Stalin urged upon the American C.P. a line of mobilizing a liberal-based opposition to the U. S. anti-Soviet foreign policy around Henry Wallace.

In every case Stalin was seeking to defend the USSR through relations with one or another sector of the capitalists. In no case was he seeking to defend the USSR through the extension of revolution. Thus we see that the "old" debate of the 1920s between Stalin and Trotsky lived on in real events up to the present time. To understand the revisionist course

of the American Communist Party Progressive Labor members must go back to this "old" debate, to the very roots of a revisionism that was international in scope.

### Stalin and Proletarian Democracy

The concept of "socialism in one country" was also closely linked with what PL calls Stalin's "error" on "proletarian democracy." This whole concept was the ideology of a contented conservative bureaucratic stratum which had grown up inside the USSR. As long as the USSR remained isolated from revolutionary overturns in other countries its development could not help but be distorted. On the one side privileges were given to the bureaucrats and on the other hand the workers lived in deep poverty.

With the death of Stalin there was no real break in the continuity of leadership. Khrushchev and those around him were around Stalin. Brezhnev and those around him were around Khrushchev. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev are all products of and spokesmen for the conservative bureaucratic stratum which continues to rule the USSR.

Revisionism in the United States CP and in every CP of the world thus has its roots with this degeneration of the USSR. This revisionism cannot be rooted out of the revolutionary movement here nor anywhere else unless and until revolutionaries fully grasp an understanding of this degeneration. It is for this very current and practical reason, and not for any sectarian considerations, that we urge PL members and supporters to read the works of Trotsky. Surely no one else has even attempted a revolutionary critique of the degeneration of the USSR.

We know that there is great prejudice against Trotsky on the part of those PLers who went through the Communist Party. But we only ask that you not take the word of those in the CPUSA who obviously have betrayed you but read Trotsky yourself and make your own independent judgment.

### Foster and Cannon

There is another important aspect of the degeneration of the CPUSA. It is one thing to note the roots of this degeneration in the degeneration of the USSR. But we also must seek to understand why the American party did not seriously resist this revisionism when it first confronted it. How was it that a party with a feel for the American working class went along with Lovestone's theory of American exceptionalism? Why was it that after Lovestone was dumped no one--including Foster--opposed the reinstatement of Lovestonism by Browder during the 1930s?

The key--here, we feel, lies in the nature of Foster, Cannon and the so-called "Americanized" section of the early CP. These people represented a direct link between the new

CP and the older American working class radical traditions. This was both their strength and their weakness. It was their strength for the obvious reason that they sincerely sought to build a Marxist movement in the United States based on a real understanding of the American working class and flowing from this understanding a conviction of the revolutionary potential of this working class to struggle and overthrow capitalism here in our own country.

The weakness lay in the very nature of American radicalism which these men represented within the CP. American radicalism from its very origins has been deeply anti-theoretical, provincial and empirical. These men had no real understanding of Marxist theory, no knowledge of the development of the class struggle in other countries, no deep concern with the revolutionary movement as an international formation. When either Cannon or Foster went to the USSR in the 1920s their sole concern was with the American question. All the other great questions then being debated within the International were Greek to them. Neither, therefore, had any understanding of the great crisis which was brewing within the USSR and Comintern, a crisis which was to destroy the American CP as a revolutionary organization.

Of course their evolution after 1927 was different. Cannon, deeply concerned with the Comintern's role in foisting the Lovestone regime on the CPUSA and also having no real perspective for a future role in the leadership of the CP, went over to Trotsky. Foster, incapable of understanding what was happening, stuck to every twist and turn of the Comintern and lost in the process his original revolutionary perspective of the American workers.

#### Cannon Becomes Foster

In the end Cannon has ended up pretty much as has Foster. As long as Trotsky was alive, Trotsky gave to the American Trotskyist movement a deeper theoretical understanding of the degeneration of the world Communist movement and of all the great events that shook the world of the 1930s. But Cannon himself never developed independently as a theoretician and his followers in the United States were brought up more in Cannon's fashion than in Trotsky's.

So with the death of Trotsky the American Trotskyists were left with a void they never really succeeded in filling, positively. Revisionism crept into this void and the Socialist Workers Party's revolutionary outlook was also eroded away. Thus with Kennedy's death both the SWP and CP cowered in front of the bourgeoisie each repeating phrases about "orderly processes" which could easily be printed in the other's paper. While the CP carries things further by actually working in and for the Democratic Party, the SWP shows that it views the bourgeois government in the same general spirit when it calls upon the bourgeoisie to take its imperialist troops from Vietnam and send them to Mississippi!

Both groups thus seek to urge upon the bourgeoisie a "progressive" course rather than seeking to overthrow it. Both have become parties of "order." But it is an old order, an order which will soon pass. The forces that will play the crucial role in overthrowing this order are now beginning to come on the scene in the United States as well as elsewhere. We view the American Committee for the Fourth International as part of those forces. We also view Progressive Labor as an important part of those forces.

### Beyond the Cannons and Fosters

We must go beyond the Jim Cannons and the Bill Fosters. We must start where they started with a firm grasp of American conditions and a deep conviction of the revolutionary capacities of the American working class. But we must go beyond this by deepening our grasp of American conditions and rooting our revolutionary conviction in a Marxist understanding--an understanding of the historical process which has destroyed both the CP and SWP as revolutionary instruments; of the world crisis of capitalism, of the impact of this crisis in the United States; of the future potential of the American working class and what this means concretely for our work today. In the words of the Communist Manifesto we must represent the future in the movement of the present. For that we need theoretical development.

### EDITORIAL: FIGHT 'LIBERAL' WITCH HUNTERS

"Democratic" New York City under the "liberal" Wagner Administration has organized a special "Grand Jury" which must be the envy of every right wing fan of the H.U.A.C. (see Bulletin Vol.II #1) Elinor Goldstein, a student at CCNY who had visited Cuba on the student trip in 1963, is serving a 30 day jail sentence for "civil contempt" as a result of her refusal to cooperate with the "Grand Jury" in its attempt to blame the Progressive Labor Movement for the Harlem uprising of last summer. Branching out, the inquisitors have recently subpoenaed James Robertson, editor of the Spartacist.

The aims of the Wagner-Hogan inquisition are clear: "expose" and demoralize the PLM, hoping to tie them up with legal action and court cases; isolate the militants in the working class and Negro movements from revolutionary marxism. We believe that the aims of this "little HUAC" will be foiled. But action is necessary. We urge everyone who wants to oppose this phoney investigation to join in the demonstrations and picket lines called by CERGE (Committee to Defend Resistance to Ghetto Life, 1 Union Square, New York City) which has been organized to defend those who have been subpoenaed and co-ordinate the campaign against the inquisition. We are confident that CERGE will welcome all support and will become the vehicle for a real united opposition to this witch hunt.

# THE THEORY OF STRUCTURAL ASSIMILATION

A Marxist analysis of the social overturns in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China.

by Tim Wohlforth

Following World War II international events took a highly complex and contradictory turn. Potentially revolutionary situations in Europe and elsewhere did not lead to social overturns because of the traitorous role of the leadership of the working class. Capitalism restabilized itself over a large section of the earth's surface. But Stalinism extended itself into Eastern Europe and Asia leading to a complex form of social overturn. The theoretical problems emanating from these developments have never been fully understood by revolutionaries, leading to great confusion and the inevitable growth of revisionism from that confusion. "The Theory of Structural Assimilation" is an attempt to get at the roots of this confusion by developing the basic theories of Trotsky to encompass these post-war events.

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