

PEACE AT ANY PRICE, NO! VICTORY FOR VIETCONG!

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Hands off the Vietnam Revolution!



Statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International on U.S. actions in Vietnam, adopted on February 21, 1965.

A Vietnamese holds a child burned by napalm jelly in a U.S. bombing of South Vietnam villages.

The International Committee of the Fourth International condemns the large-scale bombing attacks in North Vietnam by the U.S. imperialists in early February, 1965.

These actions are counterrevolutionary reprisals against the rapidly approaching complete victory of the revolution in South Vietnam.

The International Committee is in complete solidarity with the workers and peasants in Vietnam and the Viet Cong (liberation army) in their revolution against the corrupt capitalist regime in Saigon and its imperialist supporters. The interests of the working people in South-east Asia cannot be realised until the last vestige of imperialist intervention is removed.

The International Committee calls for the unrelenting support of the workers of all countries for the liberation army and for the actions of the Vietnamese workers, whose aim is to expel the American forces from South Vietnam and all imperialist forces from South-east Asia.

In this struggle for national liberation, the workers will find the road to their own power in these countries. Their struggles are part of the world socialist revolution.

The successful conclusion of the civil war in South Vietnam will complete the revolutionary victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. That victory demolished French imperialist rule over Indo-China, but the victory was cynically betrayed by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Geneva Agreement of July 1954 which partitioned Vietnam. The pretext for this "compromise" was that only this type of settlement could avoid nuclear war in the atomic age.

Subsequently the Geneva provisions for "free elections" and national unification have been ignored by the South Vietnamese dictatorship which has received the support of U.S. imperialism: the American forces in Vietnam are now 24,000 troops, together with a large naval and air striking force.

Meanwhile, the British Conservative and Labour governments alike have built up imperialist forces in Malaysia. Even this, however, has failed to prevent the present situation, where Saigon governments fall every few days and the Viet Cong controls 80 per cent of South Vietnam.

The counter-revolutionary reprisals of the Pentagon aim to intimidate the peoples of Southeast Asia and particularly the workers and peasants of Vietnam and of the Chinese Peoples' Republic.

Threatening "escalation" into a world nuclear conflict, Johnson and the U.S. ruling class hope to ensure the collaboration of Moscow and even Peking for a sell-out in

Vietnam, to save whatever can be saved for imperialism.

The workers of the world and the people of Vietnam can have no confidence in any wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

There must be no settlement through secret diplomacy.

The revolution in Vietnam will be victorious through the struggles of the Vietnamese workers and peasants backed by the solidarity actions of workers all over the world.

Those "socialists" who demand recall of the Geneva Conference or "new diplomatic initiatives", particularly the Communist parties of Western Europe and the left wing of the British Labor Party, are advocating a new sell-out like Geneva in 1954.

The present situation and its dangers, the large-scale bloodletting over the last 11 years, are the results precisely of the subservience of these opportunists to imperialism and to the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1954.

Now, as then, there is no way out except through the international working-class struggle. In every country and particularly in Britain and the USA, the workers must demand:

HANDS OFF THE VIETNAM REVOLUTION!

WITHDRAW ALL U.S. AND BRITISH TROOPS, WARSHIPS

AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT FROM SOUTH-EAST

ASIA IMMEDIATELY!

STOP BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM!

END THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR

U.S. IMPERIALISM!

NO SECRET DIPLOMACY!

ALL SUPPORT TO THE REVOLUTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM!

U.S. ESCALATES VIETNAM WAR TO FORCE

SELL-OUT DEAL AT BARGAINING TABLE

To understand the Vietnamese conflict, we must begin with an historical materialist approach. We must relate the current events to past developments. Reacting impressionistically to the latest events will not enable us to understand what is happening now or what may happen tomorrow.

An example is the apparently contradictory news reporting on the likelihood of negotiations. The New York Times reports one day that Washington, Moscow, Hanoi and Peking are all uninterested in negotiations. The next day it reports that privately one or more of these regimes is showing an interest in negotiations and is lifting conditions it earlier set before it would agree to negotiations. In a previous issue of the BULLETIN (Vol. 2 No. 5) we discussed the paradoxes of the Vietnamese conflict. These "paradoxes" and contradictions can only confuse and disorient those who want to end the war in Vietnam unless they attempt to understand what lies behind these paradoxes.

Secondly, we must take a class point of view, we must view the conflict through the eyes of the oppressed Vietnamese workers and peasants and the entire international working class, not through the eyes of the imperialists, trying to determine a "sane" policy for them. Many young people taking part in the March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam tend to slide into an attitude which seeks to compromise the interests of the imperialists and the Vietnamese people.

Past Deals Prepared Present Conflict

There are those who claim to be uninterested in past disputes and polemics, in Stalin's role, and so forth. But Stalin's role and the entire Stalin-Trotsky dispute play a decisive role in Vietnam. It was the Stalinists in 1954 and Stalin himself in 1945 who carried out policies based on the theories of socialism in one country and peaceful co-existence and prepared the present conflict by betraying the revolution at an earlier time.

The French had controlled Indochina for about three quarters of a century before World War II. In the wake of the war, the Japanese, who had occupied Indochina, surrendered to the Vietminh, the Stalinist-led resistance movement. The Vietminh controlled all of Indochina. But Stalin at Potsdam agreed to allow Indochina to remain in the imperialist sphere of influence. British troops occupied Indochina for a short time and then turned the country over to the French. The Vietminh offered no resistance. This is how Stalin betrayed the Vietnamese revolution after World War II. It was a pattern that was followed elsewhere, of course.

With the coming of the Cold war and a turn in Kremlin policy, combined with a policy of brutal repression of the Vietminh which the French carried out, the Vietminh began an offensive. The seven year war which ended in 1954 thus began. Again, by 1954 (as in 1945), the Vietminh controlled the vast majority of the country. The French acknowledged defeat, and the 1954 Geneva Conference was organized.

Again, for the second time in a decade, Stalinist

leadership betrayed the revolution. The Geneva Conference, with both the USSR and China agreeing, arbitrarily divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel, leaving the southern half of the country under imperialist control, as well as the rest of Indochina with the exception of the northern half of Vietnam. The big powers paid lip service to self-determination by scheduling a referendum on unification and elections for 1956. Needless to say, no election was ever held because the imperialists, with the U.S. by this time calling the shots in South Vietnam, knew that elections would mean the triumph of the Vietminh. The Geneva agreement also agreed on a general neutralization of Vietnam (both sectors) which the U.S. consciously sabotaged and violated. The Vietnamese people were of course not consulted about this decision or any of the others.

Thus both the Soviet and Chinese leaderships must bear responsibility for arranging and supporting the bartering away of the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. On the basis of this record supporters of the Vietnamese revolution are entitled to question the role of the Chinese and Soviet regimes in the present situation.

Escalation Is Calculated Sane Decision

The present bombings of North Vietnam and guerilla-dominated sections of the South, the brazen escalation of the war by the U.S. government, are a calculated decision of the imperialists. They have taken these steps because of the disarray of the Soviet bloc caused both by the present course of the Sino-Soviet dispute as well as by the continuing conciliatory line of the USSR. The Chinese attack the Russians for lack of resoluteness in the face of imperialist aggression, but they themselves offer nothing but verbal condemnation as well. The imperialists have only been able to make their moves because in essence the compromi-sist spirit of Geneva, the peaceful coexistence outlook which flows from the concept of socialism in one country, continues to dominate Chinese as well as Soviet policy.

Both the Chinese and Soviet regimes seek to defend themselves through primarily military and diplomatic moves, not through an international revolutionary perspective. The Chinese as well as the Russians are more interested in getting the diplomatic support of various neutralist leaders than in appealing for support from revolutionary forces around the world. These neutralist leaders, the 'radical' ones in particular, are the very ones who have been appealing to the imperialists to negotiate a settlement in Vietnam. They have been ignoring the aspirations of the Vietnamese people and the Chinese have demonstrated much more interest in the wishes of these neutralists than in the feelings of the Vietnamese.

Both Moscow and Peking have offered troops or

volunteers to the Vietnamese. These offers have a phony ring; it becomes more and more apparent that the Russians are seeking to undercut Chinese charges of revisionism and the Chinese are seeking to bolster these charges and embarrass the Russians, but neither are interested in challenging the imperialists or really helping the Vietnamese in a concrete way..

Just as in the Cuban missiles crisis, it is the entire past policy of conciliation which has laid the basis for the current moves. Even now, however, a firm stand against the imperialists would not have increased the danger of war, but on the contrary would have stayed the hand of the imperialists. The present moves of the U.S. are not desperate moves of direct preparation for a thermonuclear war; they are calculated moves which have been taken because the imperialists know that they have the initiative and are not seriously threatened by Soviet or Chinese retaliation. If it had been made clear that retaliation was forthcoming, the imperialists would definitely have been forced to retreat.

Meanwhile, Hanoi has made it clear through certain "neutralist" channels that, not only does it have no intention of calling for Soviet or Chinese troops, but also it is prepared to negotiate before the imperialists withdraw from Vietnam, in other words simply on the basis of a cease fire. Even so, it appears that the U.S. will ignore even this latest peace feeler as well as rising pressures for negotiation within the capitalist camp, in the hope of gaining an even stronger position for the eventual negotiations they have made quite clear they are preparing for.

The imperialists have been allowed to extricate themselves from an extremely weak position in Vietnam. They were faced with an increasingly deep internal crisis in South Vietnam as the civil war deepened and the Vietcong attracted greater support, with an inability to set up any sort of puppet government with any kind of stability; they were faced with the possibility of having to withdraw from Vietnam and admitting catastrophic defeat. They decided to bank on the political weakness and disarray of the Soviet camp which the Vietcong is politically dependent upon. They embarked on brazen military moves to create a stronger bargaining position. They have been allowed to carry out this maneuver and create a bargaining position based only on these military moves, since pro-imperialist forces in the country are to say the least extremely weak.

Cuban Crisis Repeats Itself

We have an instance of the Cuban missiles crisis repeating itself. There is in many if not most respects an exact parallel between the imperialist war moves in Vietnam and Kennedy's moves in the Cuban crisis of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years ago. In both cases the imperialists take shocking moves which raise the specter of World War III, even if this is more

apparent than real. The U.S. brinkmanship meets with general condemnation from the Soviet bloc, the Afro-Asian bloc, and large sections of "liberal" opinion in the West. But no one does anything. The imperialists are quite prepared to accept the negative aspect of their policy now as they have in the past. They are prepared to accept a certain amount of unpopularity, even a certain "uproar" in "public opinion" around the globe. They are sensitive, they are unhappy about this global criticism, but they are quite prepared to live with it if they can also achieve the main objectives of their policy, the strengthening through their audacious moves of an otherwise untenable position. Fighters against the war in Vietnam should stop trying to convince the State Department that its policy in Vietnam is insane; it is a clever and sane policy for the imperialists, and that is precisely why we must oppose it and expose it.

Johnson is applying in a more extensive way Kennedy's strategy in the continuing cold war, a strategy which is based on the USSR's fear of confrontation with the West combined with the sharpening Sino-Soviet dispute and the by no means clear line of the Chinese. If we want to seriously oppose the war danger we have to understand this strategy for what it is so that we can intelligently fight it.

There is also a relationship between the reaction of the Socialist Workers Party to the Cuban missiles crisis and its reaction to the Vietnam crisis now. At the time of the missiles crisis, after initially taking a clear line which exposed the betrayal of the Khrushchev leadership as well as the viciousness of the U.S. moves, the Militant retreated, even going so far as to welcome the moves of Khrushchev as moves for peace for which we should all be thankful, instead of exposing how the Stalinist policy of peaceful coexistence had led to the latest betrayal of the Cuban revolution. In the present situation the SWP shows the same pacifist type of approach in its general solidarity with the Morse-Gruening criticism of the State Department policy, and its complete lack of criticism of the Soviet and Chinese action or rather lack of action in relation to Vietnam.

What conclusions can we draw concerning our fight against the war in Vietnam? If we reach an understanding of the real roles of the various participants, of the real aims of the imperialist aggressors and the reasons for the wavering and temporizing of Moscow and Peking, we can then form certain judgments on how to fight against the war. While we don't oppose negotiations in principle, we understand that it is at the conference table that the Vietnamese revolution has been and can again be sold out, not because negotiations in principle are impermissible but because those who will be negotiating for the revolution are not particularly interested in advancing the revolution and will betray it in the interests of a diplomatic deal. We must thus oppose secret diplomacy on Vietnam, oppose negotiations at least until imperialist troops get out of Vietnam, and concentrate on demanding that the U.S. get out of Vietnam and leave the

Vietnamese to decide their own fate. If there is to be any negotiation in the future, let it be the true representatives of the Vietnamese revolution who do the negotiating.

NOT PEACE AT ANY PRICE

BUT VICTORY FOR VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

"We are not talking about peace. We are talking about participating in class war. We hope the Vietcong will hammer the daylights out of the Americans. We are for the defeat of the Americans in Vietnam. We are for the complete rout of the Americans and of all British troops who take part in colonial wars for their masters." (THE NEWSLETTER, April 3, 1965). This statement, by Gerry Healy, National Secretary of the Socialist Labour League, (the organization of British Trotskyists) was made at a recent London protest meeting before "a large audience of predominantly Young Socialists, workers and students."

While pacifists, moralists and some socialists may consider Healy's statement "unreasonable" or "shocking," what is really "shocking" to us is that in the United States we have not heard any similar public statements at any protest rallies nor seen this sentiment expressed in the press of the various socialist and Marxist groups. Yet who can deny that the view of Vietnam as a "class war" in which one must take a partisan position, is the only stand consistent with Marxist-Leninist politics? Behind this approach is the understanding that Johnson's terrorist policy in Vietnam is not based on some new "misunderstanding" of a "madman", but is rather a new stage in a carefully worked out strategy to win this class war against the Vietnamese revolution in particular and the world socialist revolution in general. Johnson's strategy of "escalation" may be "new," but its intent is a continuation of the same "old" aim of political domination of Indo-China which has motivated U.S. imperialism since the demise of the French. The apparent "irrationalities" of the current phase of U.S. policy in Vietnam are examined in detail elsewhere in this issue and in the BULLETIN of March 8, 1965.

Our understanding of U.S. policy is that the current strategy in Vietnam, while necessarily based on a "calculated risk", is as sensible a strategy to defend the short and long range material interests of capitalism as the Johnson administration is able to come up with. What we oppose about this policy is not that it "can't win" or "won't work" (the complaint of the liberals and reformist socialists) but on the contrary that the Johnson policy has possibilities of succeeding in extricating U.S. imperialism from what otherwise might be a disastrous defeat (for the bourgeoisie) in southeast Asia. We oppose Johnson's policy and his entire administration because we support the struggle

of the Vietnamese N.L.F. and all anti-capitalist struggles of workers and farmers throughout the world. We agree with Healy that this is a "class war" and that the fundamental question is "which side are you on."

Morse Accepts U.S. Aims; Disagrees on Means

In their opposition to the Vietnam war, most of the American left fails to go beyond the liberal-pacifist framework of "moral revulsion" over U.S. policy. The liberals from Morse to Javits all accept the goals of the war ("American Interests") but disagree with the administration over the means to be pursued. It is not surprising that of all the U.S. "radicals", the "Communist" Worker is the most ardent supporter of all those openly capitalist politicians and spokesmen who are now critical of the administration's Vietnam policy. The Worker of March 30, 1965 approvingly headlines a statement by 16 Democratic Congressmen who criticized the use of gas in Vietnam because it might result in "a legacy of deep resentment against the U.S. throughout Asia." Needless to say, these congressmen along with their senatorial counterparts and the CPUSA all did their best to elect Johnson over the "warmonger" Goldwater last November. To add the finishing touches to the fantastic "nirvana" of popular front unity, the Worker editorializes against the New York Daily News for "a witchhunt against the Worker and the Communist Party for opposing the war in South Vietnam as though The Worker has no right to join with the New York Times, the St. Louis Post Dispatch and many other newspapers in opposing the war in Vietnam."

One of the most prevalent "arguments" put forward by liberals and "leftists" alike is reflected in the National Guardian editorial of March 27, 1965 which argues that, as a result of its Vietnam policy, "Our government is already earning for itself--and for all of us-- the revulsion and hatred of the people of the world. The only way to restore America's standing in the world is to protest with all the vigor at our command these reprehensible and evil acts." This concern with America's "standing", the "revulsion" of world public opinion, etc., does not differ qualitatively from the "socialist" advice to the state department which Norman Thomas and his friends have been giving for many years as to the most humane way to fight Communism.

Militant Understands Nothing

We were amazed to read in the same issue of the Newsletter that quoted Healy's statement, that Joseph Hansen, spokesman for the Socialist Workers Party and editor of its newspaper, The Militant had attacked the British Trotskyists for capitulating to imperialism over the war in Vietnam (see the Newsletter, April 3, 1965). The irony of Hansen's argument (which, as the Newsletter shows, is based on a series of lies) is that his newspaper, the Militant, has not approached the Vietnam situation as a class war--as a partisan of the

armed struggle of the Vietnamese people. The Militant has described Johnson's policy as "mad", rather than explaining it as a logical course for defending the interests of U. S. imperialism.

While the Militant has paid more than ample attention to the views of Senator Morse on Vietnam and to reports of various bourgeois politicians and newspapers around the world -- the Militant has said hardly a word in criticism of the lack of response by the Russians and Chinese to Johnson's brazen bombing of North Vietnam. If pressed, we are sure that the Militant would not deny that a class war exists in Vietnam. But if this is the case, one would expect the Militant to concentrate on building support for Vietnamese liberation among American workers and attempting to explain that the policies of Johnson and the Democratic Party are opposed to the interests of the American workers. This is just as true in Vietnam, as in Selma, Alabama, as in Harlem, as in Detroit, Michigan.

Typical of the Militant's attitude is the article by George Saunders, April 5, 1965, which expresses indignation over Johnson's arrogant "defiance of world opinion" which, it turns out, is largely the opinion of various capitalist and social democratic politicians including "governments allied to Washington." In reading this article, one might get the impression that Johnson's policy is a product of the psychosis of a group of utterly insane politicians in Washington. But one would certainly never get the impression that the Johnson policy is a policy related to the defense of the interests of the U. S. capitalist class. The best we can say for the Militant is that its abandonment of a class analysis on Vietnam is consistent with its abandonment of a class analysis in general, and its complete lack of concern with leading the working class.



THE QUESTIONS FACING THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR MOVEMENT

Will PL Deal With Its Growing Problems Politically

Or Will It Resort to the Same Methods as the CPUSA?

The coming National Convention of the Progressive Labor Movement is an event of the greatest importance not only for PL members but for all, whatever their affiliations, who sincerely desire to build a working class revolutionary movement in the United States and throughout the world. From April 15th to 18th in New York City Progressive Labor members will be addressing themselves to the task of how to transform PL into a serious Leninist party and to extend its influence among the masses. In the course of this effort PL members will have to grapple with problems which face all who seek to build a revolutionary movement. Thus their efforts are of the greatest concern to all revolutionaries and every serious revolutionary has a responsibility to contribute his or her ideas to Progressive Labor members at this time whether or not they are PL members. It is in this spirit that we are writing this article.

Progressive Labor as it has been over the past year or two cannot survive. This PL's own leadership at least partially realizes and thus their decision to call this convention with its obvious aim of solidifying in one fashion or another the cadres it has attracted over the past period. The problem is that PL has grown precisely because of its combination of revolutionary activism with a certain political and organizational amorphousness which allows people with diverse ideas and diverse purposes to exist side by side. However its organizational and political amorphousness is threatening its ability to carry out revolutionary struggle, especially under conditions of increased police persecution--itself the result of its success in carrying out meaningful struggles.

The way in which Progressive Labor has grown by recruiting all kinds of elements and not having a clear political line to act as a cadre selecting agent has brought about a serious crisis inside the organization which can when combined with the external pressures of the bourgeoisie, destroy the organization if it does not take strong action at the present convention. Thus we feel that the solution to PL's problems lies not in utopian attempts to perpetuate its unstable amorphousness but in its consolidation in a progressive rather than reactionary way.

Let us briefly look at the problems facing PL. Its central problem is that lacking a clear working class line which is based on a solid understanding of Marxist theory, PL has been subject to non-working class pressures which have distorted its political line and its concrete work and in addition have made the transformation of newer forces it

is recruiting into serious revolutionaries all but impossible.

The Phillip Luce Affair

This is reflected most intensively in the recent Luce Affair. This is a matter which goes far deeper than the individual weaknesses of one person. Phillip Abbott Luce was until recently a prominent leader of Progressive Labor from out of the student movement. He was the major organizer of two trips to Cuba and this fall was made editor of Progressive Labor, the organization's national monthly. Yet, in a statement issued on March 30, the PLM National Steering Committee has this to say about Luce: "The national steering committee of the Progressive Labor Movement yesterday expelled Phillip Abbott Luce, after a two-month investigation proved conclusively that he is a heroin user, a thief, and a police agent." We reiterate, this is no ordinary rank and file PL member or sympathizer being discussed, but someone whom the leadership itself thrust into a position of great responsibility.

Some indication of the meaning of this event can be gotten from looking at what happened to Progressive Labor under Luce's editorship. Prior to coming under Luce's domination this magazine devoted itself primarily to the American working class struggle and reflected a fine class line in its analysis of trade union developments and the struggles of the minorities in this country. Luce transformed the magazine into a petty bourgeois one. Working class struggles were given little attention. Instead primary attention was given to petty bourgeois-led struggles in the colonial countries and of course absent was any concept of working class leadership of these struggles. Thus the magazine began more and more to express a political strain which is deep inside PL -- the concept of petty bourgeois revolutionism.

Luce's prominence inside PL came at a time when middle class student and ex-student elements came into the organization in large numbers. These student elements were given no clear working class outlook as PL had no clear political and theoretical line upon which it could educate such people. Even in local clubs in the ghetto these petty bourgeois elements began to dominate.

Some of these students and ex-students were rebelling from the "establishment" in a sick, reactionary way. That is, they were separating themselves not only from bourgeois society but from the masses by living bohemian lives and through personal escapism. Such is the breeding ground for dope addiction. As long as we live in a sick society the sickness of dope will be with us. But such sickness cannot be tolerated inside a revolutionary movement. It cannot be kept out by any other way than the transformation of the organization itself into such a serious political organization that the sick petty bourgeois elements find the

organization quite alien to them. Luce's personal sickness is a reflection of a general social sickness which has found some roots inside PL precisely because of a political sickness.

Working Class Gets Lost

This political sickness finds expression in other ways. There exists within PL a number of dedicated working class Marxists who understand the absolute central and critical necessity of developing now a revolutionary cadre within the trade unions. However, their work has generally been given weak support within PL. Not only is nothing done to infuse the student elements with an understanding of the importance of developing roots in the class, even the community work done by branches in the ghettos lacks this understanding. In these clubs the ghetto poor are seen as an undifferentiated mass and there is little recognition that the organized working class must give leadership to the more diffuse and disorganized sections of the masses. Young Negroes and Puerto Ricans who join PL are not being properly encouraged to root themselves in industry no matter how hard this is and to organize their shops into unions if they are in unorganized shops, as so many of the small shops in New York are.

This classless "community" approach is precisely what lies behind the growth of deep pro-nationalist views on the Negro question by the members of the Harlem branch of PL. If these comrades really understood that the American capitalist system was already in a crisis which in time would bring about the mass radicalization of the working class as a whole -- Negro, white, Puerto Rican, Mexican -- they would be able to resist succumbing to the temporary dominance today of nationalist moods in the militant Negro masses. They would understand that by raising class issues today inside the ghetto they would be preparing for a common struggle of the class as a whole against the capitalists instead of aiding in any fashion the capitalists in pitting one section of the class against another.

The growth of nationalist tendencies within the Negro cadre of PL is a sign of the political and theoretical confusion of the leadership as a whole. Thus we see petty bourgeois student elements, rather than being transformed into serious working class revolutionaries, bringing with them into PL some of the greatest sicknesses of bourgeois society. We see fine Negro cadres, rather than bringing a working class outlook to disoriented but revolutionary pro-nationalists, succumbing to that nationalism. We see trade union cadres feeling themselves not really at home in the organization, not getting proper encouragement, their national monthly being taken over by the petty bourgeois elements, etc. No matter from what angle one looks at PL one is struck by this growing disorientation of the organization brought about by the political confusion of its leadership.

PL's International Line

The international line of Progressive Labor cannot help but encourage its disorientation. Maoism internationally is essentially a reflection of a petty bourgeois revolutionism. The Chinese pay little attention to the development of a working class movement in the advanced countries. Their whole perspective is one of support to petty bourgeois national movements in colonial countries. Of course they are for giving such tendencies real support while the Brezhnevists do not do so, but at the same time they lack a clear class line. Just recently the Maoist CP in Ceylon switched from semi-opposition to open support of the bourgeois Madame Bandaranaike slate in the Ceylonese elections. In Japan where the Maoists are in the majority they oppose a clear class struggle on the part of the Japanese working class for power. In Indonesia they support the bourgeois Sukarno government -- and so on and on.

There is a grave danger that with its growing internal problems and the growth of external police pressure PL will seek more than ever to tie itself to the Chinese tail. This may well be the cause of its current rash of "anti-Trotskyism" which we will discuss shortly. But the PL rank and file has to realize that the solution to its problems lies in actually confronting these problems politically here in this country. To seek to circumvent them through an international tailing of the Chinese could quickly transform the group to one no more significant than "Hammer and Steel" or the POC.

On Factions, Tendencies and Groupings

Milton Rosen's discussion article on the organization question in the January-February issue of Progressive Labor is a danger sign that the Progressive Labor leadership will seek to "solve" its internal problems in a reactionary way -- a way which could well lead to the destruction of the organization as a revolutionary instrument. Instead of groping with the political and theoretical problems in a political and theoretical way, Rosen is reverting to the method of those who expelled him a few years back -- the leadership of the Amercian CP. Factions, tendencies and groupings are to be barred inside PL if Rosen has his way. "Trotskyites" are forthwith dismissed as "counterrevolutionary" without so much as a sentence devoted to documenting this pretty damn serious charge.

The irony of it all is that Rosen is proposing that PL adopt the very same provision by which his group was expelled from the CP! While inside the CP Milt Rosen and his supporters like Mort Scheer, Jake Rosen and Fred Jerome raised a serious political criticque of the CP and its revisionist policies. The CP leadership was unable to answer Rosen's criticisms so it summarily expelled him and his supporters for -- "factionalism".

Of course Milt Rosen had a faction, or a tendency, or a grouping -- call it what you like. He had deep differences with the leadership and this forced him to form a grouping to fight within the organization for his views. Now Rosen is proposing to bar such groupings within his own organization. Is this not a repetition of the organizational errors of the revisionists, and a clear sign that Rosen and others in the PL leadership have not yet really broken from the revisionism of the CP?

Rosen seeks to justify his ban on factions by stating: "No revolutionary movement triumphed over a powerful enemy divided into such formations." But this simply is not true. We can think of one such example which is at least worthy of noting -- THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY. From the moment of its birth in 1903 to long after its triumph in 1917 the Bolshevik Party had numerous factions. In fact on the very eve of the insurrection one such faction, led by Kamenev and Zinoviev, actually broke discipline and revealed the plans of the insurrection to the public. Despite this indiscipline, which Lenin correctly opposed, Lenin did not propose the expulsion of these comrades but rather re-integrated them into the leadership of the party. A good deal of Lenin's writings were in fact factional writings. We are not saying that a party riddled with factions and thus paralyzed as far as external action is concerned is a healthy party. We only say, and here Lenin is completely with us, that the growth of factions is a sign of a deep political disorientation within a movement. This disorientation must be straightened out politically and not by organizationally outlawing factions themselves.

A truly cohesive party is created precisely through a process of internal struggle -- yes, factional struggle, combined with external struggle. If all we ever had to do was fight the enemy head on the building of a Bolshevik movement would be easy indeed. However, we must fight the enemies' views as they are expressed within our own movement at times through factions or tendencies. Nor is it always the case that the majority faction is the working class one. We found quite the opposite to be the case in our own struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party and Milt Rosen had a similar experience in his struggle inside the Communist Party. No party, no matter how well-intentioned the leadership, is immune from revisionism. The only guarantee of a healthy party is a healthy internal life, the right to organize factions.

Slanders Against Trotskyism

Now we come to this totally unsupported and unsupported charge that we Trotskyists are "counterrevolutionary". First of all no PL member can take this charge seriously as long as the leadership which makes the charge refuses to back it up by any attempt to prove this to be the case. Have we not had enough of such slanders from the CP? There must be a break with this kind of undocumented namecalling if we are

to build a serious revolutionary movement in the United States.

Our positions are clear for all to see. On every and all occasions we have fought for a working class revolutionary line. On every and all occasions we have defended the workers' states against imperialist attack and have broken with anyone who has refused to do this. Of course we have criticisms of the leadership of the workers' states. But so does PL.

This leads us to a most interesting point. The Progressive Labor leadership now considers the leadership of the USSR and a number of other workers' states and parties to be revisionist and even counterrevolutionary. Here in the U. S. it sees the American CP as revisionist and sees this revisionism as going back to the 1920s. But when the present leadership of PL was inside the CP supporting the CP and supporting the line of the USSR who was it that opposed this line and clearly exposed its revisionist character? It was the Trotskyist movement. So how can the PL leadership today simply dismiss our movement and our ideas as counterrevolutionary when we saw before they did the revisionist nature of the Krushchevites and their supporters in this country?

We urge Progressive Labor to reverse the present trend of the organization towards petty bourgeois politics. We urge Progressive Labor to reject any attempt to organizationally deal with political problems, to discuss seriously with us, and to bring together in common action all serious revolutionaries. Only such a course can save Progressive Labor as a revolutionary organization. It is these internal problems of PL and not the external police pressure which can destroy it. A theoretically and politically strong movement can stand up to police persecution and can in fact grow qualitatively in the process of struggling against the persecution.

In the meantime we intend to continue as we have in the past to aid PL in its struggles and to defend it from persecution. We also intend to continue to make our political criticisms of PL for we feel that this political process is as essential to the defense of PL as any concrete aid we can and will offer.

--American Committee for the Fourth International

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