

APF

Bulletin | Supplement

OF INTERNATIONAL Socialism

THE CRISIS OF AMERICAN SOCIALISM

HOW THE CRISIS DEVELOPED

The Postwar Restabilization of Capitalism

The American Committee for the Fourth International is dedicated to the task of rebuilding a revolutionary socialist movement in the United States. A new movement cannot simply be rebuilt from out of nothing. The first task of serious socialists is to seek to understand the causes of the decay of the old socialist organizations in the United States so that the new movement can incorporate all that was healthy in this movement and reject all that was sick and destructive.

The decay of the American socialist movement has taken place within a very difficult international context. Following World War II there was an outburst of revolutionary working class struggle in almost every country in the world. Armed workers and peasants were the major force in such countries as France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, French-Indochina. The dominant working class organization in most countries was the stalinized Communist Parties. These parties insisted that the struggle of the working class be subordinated to broader multi-class fronts including the bourgeoisie. As a result the enfeebled capitalist class was able to restabilize itself in the critical advanced industrial countries throughout the world. This restabilization of capitalism led to a prosperity and boom which ate away at the militancy of the working class and created the relative quiescence of the working class which was the major aspect of the world situation in the 1950s.

Of course the imperialists had to pay a price for this restabilization by granting to the USSR a buffer region under its domination on its Western and Eastern borders. The East European buffer was determined by the penetration of the Soviet Army, the struggles of the Yugoslav partisans and the deals made with the capitalists at Potsdam and Yalta. The Buffer to the East proved to be far larger than the capitalists had reckoned because of the collapse of the corrupt Chiang Kai-Shek regime in China and the victorious armed struggle of the Chinese Communist-led peasant armies. For all the great importance of these developments in Eastern Europe and Asia they did not lead to any serious revolutionary developments in the capitalist sector of the world which continued to be dominant.

Not only was this insured by the prosperity in the capitalist sector--itself partly attributable to the betrayals of the Stalinists after the war--but the Stalinists continued to oppose class struggle actions in this sector, vainly hoping for peaceful relations with the imperialists.

Impact on the Revolutionary Movement

This international situation had a dual negative effect upon the small revolutionary socialist forces in the 1950s. On the one hand what tenuous connections these groups had established with the working class were eroded away by the prosperity in the capitalist countries. On the other hand the expansion of Soviet influence into Eastern Europe and China, accompanied as it was by an uprooting of the capitalist social system and the creation of workers states that were deeply deformed by bureaucracy, led to illusions about the role of Stalinism. Revolutionaries closed their eyes to the betrayals of the previous period and the anti-class struggle policies of the Stalinists in the current period in the capitalist countries, seeing only the expansion of Stalinism. Having little faith in the ability of the working class itself to struggle for socialism, many looked to the Soviet bureaucrats to perform the revolutionary task for the working class.

Thus a shrinkage of the movement and disorientation within the ranks of those who remained was unpreventable. However, this process proceeded to a point where the main bodies of the Trotskyist movement had abandoned the revolutionary working class outlook of Trotsky and the very continuity of revolutionary socialism which goes back to Marx and Engels and the First International was threatened with being completely severed. This could have been prevented if only the Fourth International, following the death of Trotsky, had continued to develop theoretically. But this did not take place. The main body of the Fourth International contented itself with an orthodox repetition of Trotsky's past views while in the present it empirically fashioned revisionist views which denied in the concrete everything Trotsky had stood for.

So was born Pabloism. Michel Pablo and those around him in the international leadership of the Fourth International developed the thesis that the Stalinist parties would be propelled forward to carry through revolutionary tasks by the pressure of the masses. In this fashion Pablo envisioned a future of "centuries of deformed workers states" created by such Stalinist parties. The working class and its revolutionary vanguard had no other task left to it than to exert pressure on another force which would carry out the real revolutionary tasks of the epoch.

Quite naturally, considering the revolutionary traditions of the Fourth International, the development of Pabloism also led to the development of a resistance to this revisionism. The first to resist Pablo was the majority of the French section of the International. By 1953 the Socialist Workers Party, which had first supported Pablo's expulsion of the French section, went into empirical opposition

to Pablo and called for a new orthodox center for World Trotskyism. In this fashion the International Committee of the Fourth International was born. While for legal reasons the SWP could not affiliate with the IC it did lend its full political support to this body and was a major force in supporting it for the next decade.

However, the Socialist Workers Party had little to oppose Pabloism with except a reiteration of Trotsky's views of the 1930s. Orthodoxy is not enough. One must be able to do more than repeat past positions; one must absorb the Marxist method which led to the creation of the past positions and apply this method to the new world situation. Failing to do this the SWP, a decade after its split with Pabloism, re-united politically with its former enemies on the basis of the Pabloite program.

This time it was not simply Stalinism that was looked to as the revolutionary force. Rather it was hoped that petty bourgeois forces in the colonial world like Castro and Ben Bella would lead the revolution creating workers states in their wake. As with Pablo's position in 1953 there was no role for the working class and its revolutionary vanguard except to pressurize these other petty bourgeois forces into action. The SWP succumbed to the same method which had destroyed the Pabloites as revolutionaries a decade earlier.

This time there was a rebellion within the Fourth International also. Leadership of the rebellion fell quite naturally to the British section of the International Committee, the Socialist Labour League. The SLL had grown in the period of the late 1950s into the largest Trotskyist organization in Europe. In fact it contained as many members as the Pabloite forces had on the entire European continent. It had won over an important section of Communist Party workers and intellectuals during the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution. It continued to recruit significant numbers of industrial workers, largely young workers. It gained important influence among the young working class membership of the British Labour Party. This solid growth in the working class was attributable to its consistent defense of a revolutionary working class line against revisionism and in turn these young workers and intellectuals gave the SLL both the forces and the confidence in the class necessary for a serious international struggle against revisionism when it cropped up again in a new form.

The SLL received the strong support of the French section of the IC which had suffered the most under Pabloism in the earlier period and which, like the SLL, had experienced some solid growth in the more current period. A group in the Socialist Workers Party consistently struggled for the views of the SLL and French day in and day out since 1961. It is this group which was recently suspended from membership in the SWP because of its principled political struggle, which today makes up the American Committee for the Fourth International.

OLD RADICALISM IN THE NEW SITUATION

The Decline of American Imperialism

The method of impressionism is a very simple one. The impressionist starts with current surface trends. He then projects these trends indefinitely into the future. But the future is not a simple projection of the present. It is rather the result of deeper internal contradictions beneath the surface appearance. The impressionist of the 1950s projected into the indefinite future both the temporary stability of capitalism in the advanced countries and the expansion of Stalinism into buffer areas during the immediate postwar period. This outlook, still held by many radicals today, is not being borne out by the events of the 1960s.

Stalinism rather than continuing its expansion not only has remained pretty much where it was in 1949 but moreover has exhibited deep signs of disintegration. The Hungarian and Polish events of 1956 showed the determination of the workers in the workers states to throw off bureaucratic rule while the current Sino-Soviet struggle shows the internal disintegration of the bureaucracy.

World capitalism also is beginning to show its deep internal contradictions. The capitalist camp is breaking apart into rival economic blocs fiercely competing with each other for the remaining capitalist world markets. In every advanced country the capitalists are resorting to intensive speed-ups and costly automation to maintain their overall profits. As a result of this the working class is increasingly being forced into struggles on the industrial front. This is the meaning of the Belgian general strike in 1961, and the more recent strike waves and industrial strife in England, France and Italy. Moreover, the capitalist camp as a bloc is going through a period of deep economic stagnation as its rate of growth continues to decline.

These general trends in world capitalism are beginning to have their effects in the United States as well. A permanent pool of from five to six million unemployed has been created. Try as they will, the capitalists have proved incapable of doing anything about this. Almost every trade union faces a dual problem of automation eating away at jobs together with a deterioration of working conditions for those remaining on the job.

These beginnings of economic crisis in the United States find their sharpest expression among that section of the working class which is in the most oppressed condition. It is these economic and class facts which combine with the race question to give such dynamism to the Negro struggle. The struggle of the Negro people is but a precursor of struggles of all workers in the United States which are already being prepared by the decay of capitalism.

These new world conditions provide both an objective situation within which a new working class vanguard can be built as well as bring forcibly forward the deep necessity of creating such a vanguard. The impressionists and the revisionists are quickly being bypassed by world events. They are the product of the sick past of the socialist movement of the 1950s. The task of building a new movement demands that their ideas be totally expurgated from the movement of the future.

The Socialist Party and the Communist Party

All over the world the social democratic parties have been bankrupt for so long that no one expects them to be anything but bankrupt. In Europe these parties have survived primarily because of their bureaucratic base in the trade union movement and their electoral machine. In the United States the Socialist Party has no electoral machine at all and the trade union bureaucracy relies on the Democratic Party and thus has no need for them. Thus the Socialist Party barely exists.

Whatever influence the new turn in the world situation has had on the SP has been on its youth organization. Even here the SP has been unable to put together a youth movement with any stability. To the extent the SP exists at all it exists through centrist youth who proclaim a deep disdain for the SP itself. Thus in recent years the SP affiliate, the Young Peoples Socialist League, has experienced a serious decline both in membership and influence while the main initiative even on the college campuses has gone over to more radical formations.

The Communist Party has experienced a similar fate as the SP though for somewhat different reasons. Ever since the Hungarian events the Communist Party has been losing members far faster than it has been able to recruit them despite opening opportunities.

In addition its line on the American question is so totally rightwing that it would be incapable of recruiting the younger generation even if it weren't for the deep crisis in the international Stalinist movement. No young radical in his right mind is interested in joining an organization in order to be sent in to the Democratic Party to lick stamps for the capitalists. There is hardly a country in the world where the Communist Party carries less weight than in the United States--even within the small confines of the radical movement.

The SWP and the Negro Struggle

Faced with a new situation which opens up tremendous opportunities for the rebuilding of a revolutionary working class movement both here and abroad the SWP has been thrown into a deep crisis and has been incapable of giving any serious leadership to the newly radicalized forces that are coming into being. While the period of the 1950s eroded the proletarian base of the SWP, the period of the 1960s has opened up numerous possibilities for rebuilding that base. The SWP has been incapable of taking advantage of those possibilities.

This can be seen most clearly in relation to the Negro struggle. There is a tremendous need for a serious working class oriented leadership in the Negro struggle. Such a leadership must of necessity recognize the needs of the Negro people to conduct their own struggle in their own way understanding the Negro's mistrust of the misleadership of white liberals. Such a leadership thus must recognize that there exists a strong national element to the Negro struggle. However, such a leadership must also recognize the underlying working class content to the Negro struggle. The Negro struggle is essentially a struggle of an oppressed race which also, by and large, is part of an oppressed class. The racial element requires the independent organization of the Negro people while the class element provides the means of uniting the Negro struggle with the struggle of the working class as a whole.

The SWP has for years been totally isolated from the Negro community. It has contented itself with an ingrown propagandistic existence. With the eruption of the Negro struggle the SWP made a move in the direction of doing something in the Negro movement. However, this move was essentially a propagandistic one. It did nothing to really become involved in the struggles of the Negro people but rather contented itself with sitting on the sidelines commenting upon developments in the Militant. These comments themselves showed a deep disorientation. The SWP has completely and uncritically adapted propagandistically to the Black Nationalist section of the Negro leadership. Thus it has emphasized the national element in the Negro struggle to the complete exclusion of the class element.

However, the Black Nationalists, despite their progressive side, have been incapable of giving real leadership to the Negro masses. When the uprising broke out recently in Harlem, rather than giving the Negro masses leadership, the Black Nationalists quickly joined in with the Urban League and the NAACP in a "unity" committee designed precisely to divert the revolutionary energies of the Negro masses.

The recent uprisings were also a test for the SWP itself. While the Negro people were being beaten with clubs it did nothing but comment from the safe distance of Union Square. But it could do nothing else for it had failed to

even try to build up a base in Harlem in the previous period. Without such a base there was little it could do even if it had cared to.

The relationship of the SWP to the struggles of the Negro masses in the South shows the same disorientation. Not only has it abstained from these struggles but its propagandistic line in the Militant has contributed to the disorientation of the Southern Negro struggle. Each time the Negro masses reached a high point of direct struggle against the white ruling class the SWP called for--Federal troops. Federal troops are the direct armed representatives of the capitalist state. Such troops could and would only be utilized to preserve the capitalist dominance over both Negro and white. Such troops would be used at least as much to prevent Negro demonstrations for equality as they would be used against the racists. Their aim would be to preserve "orderly processes" which the SWP declared such a faith in following the Kennedy assassination.

The SWP and Its International Co-Thinkers

This deep disorientation of the SWP has had its reflection internationally as well as nationally. The SWP's attempts to reunify the forces of the Fourth International on the basis of a Pabloite program have led to a further disintegration of the International and the outright betrayal of revolutionary principle in Ceylon.

Before the SWP was able to complete its reunification plans in 1963, the entire Latin American sections of the Pabloite international split off under the leadership of Posados. This deeply disoriented group calls for preventive nuclear war by the USSR against the West. No sooner had that section of the IC which was close to the SWP merged with the Pabloites than a new struggle between a faction led by Michel Pablo and another faction led by Ernest Germain and Pierre Frank developed. The Pablo-led faction supported Krushchev in the Sino-Soviet dispute while Pablo himself was in the employ of the Algerian government. The Germain-Frank faction, supported by the SWP, felt closer to the Chinese and within Europe had developed a deep adaptation to the left wings of the Social Democratic parties. The Pablo faction has recently been suspended from their international, jocularly called the "United" Secretariat.

No sooner had Pablo been suspended from this "united" body than a new crisis developed in Ceylon. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), the largest Trotskyist group in Asia, had been evolving in the direction of parliamentary "socialism" for over a decade. During this whole period the European Pabloites collaborated closely with the right-wing leadership of the LSSP.

More recently the crisis of capitalism within Ceylon had reached a point where Madame Bandaranaike needed

some representative of the working class in her capitalist cabinet in order to try to talk the working class into concessions necessary for the survival of capitalist rule on the island. So N.M. Perera and other LSSP leaders were invited to join the coalition government. This they did with the support of the bulk of the LSSP membership.

Faced with this outright betrayal the Pabloites together with the SWP refused to give full support to the left wing opposition within the LSSP made up primarily of militant trade unionists. Rather they supported a small center group led by Colvin DeSilva and Leslie Goonewardena. This group supported Perera's line but with typical centrist reservations. When the chips were down the left wing split away and formed the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) while DeSilva-Goonewardena stuck with Perera. More recently this center group has openly supported the bourgeois government in parliament. The "United" Secretariat was forced to expel the entire Perera group but so far has refrained from expelling their centrist supporters who are still members of the executive committee of the "United" Secretariat.

Thus the SWP and its international collaborators have been deeply implicated in a betrayal of revolutionary principle of the most classic sort. Their international formation is going through a deep process of disintegration. This disintegration is only at its beginning stages. Both within the SWP and within the "United" Secretariat there will inevitably be many more splits because it is impossible to build a serious movement on the basis of revisionist views which see no real role for the movement one is seeking to build.

THE NEW RADICALISM AND ITS PROBLEMS

Progressive Labor and the New Generation

While the Progressive Labor Movement is a very small organization its significance goes beyond its membership. This is because both its strengths and its weaknesses are generally shared by the new young revolutionaries of other political persuasions in the United States. The independent militants in CORE, the young sympathizers of the black nationalists, the dissidents in and around YPSL, the younger members of the SWP--all these forces share with PL a desire towards revolutionary action, a certain hostility towards the conservatism of the old radical formations, but also a general lack of concern with the development of Marxist theory in a serious way.

While Progressive Labor originated as a rebellion inside the CP against its conservatism, especially on the American scene, and a sympathy for the position of the Chinese, its present strength flows primarily from the newer young revolutionaries it has been able to attract. It attracts these young people because it views itself as an organization

of serious militant struggle in the mass movement. It not only advocates "doing something" for the Puerto Ricans--it reaches out and organizes them on a local basis in the Lower East Side of New York City. Rather than contenting itself, as the SWP does, with "sympathy" and "understanding" of the problems of the Negro in the ghetto, PL has entered the ghetto and carried on consistent work there for some time now. Such activity--and we can add also its more student oriented work in the defiance of the Cuban travel ban and its protests against American imperialist actions in Vietnam--not only has given PL at least the beginnings of a modest base of work among minority peoples in New York but also has attracted students and others who want to connect themselves in more than words with the struggles of the masses.

Pervading all its work is thus a greater connection with the most oppressed section of the working class. This concrete work is a reflection of a much clearer working class line on domestic questions than any of the older socialist groups. It opposes any kind of support for the Democratic Party. It refused to "rally to the flag" at the time of the Kennedy assassination. It opposes the slogan of sending Federal troops to the South, having a clear understanding of on whose side the bourgeois state really is.

However, Progressive Labor has not broken from the older radical formations in one important respect--the development of Marxist theory. PL proceeds in the old American tradition of empirical action first without giving serious consideration as to exactly where one is heading: how what one does today is related to the past development of the movement and how it will lead to the rebuilding of a movement tomorrow both here and internationally.

This theoretical weakness has serious implications for the present and future development of Progressive Labor. Already its domestic work is marred by a tendency to try to jump over necessary stages in the building of a vanguard in the United States by sheer audacity. Progressive Labor pays little attention to work within Negro organizations such as CORE or SNCC. But an important section of the future leadership of the Negro people can be fashioned through struggle within these organizations. One cannot simply stand aside from that struggle and pose oneself as an alternative to these organizations. One must participate with the young Negro militants in these groups as they seek to make these groups into effective instruments of struggle of the Negro masses.

Progressive Labor tends to view itself as already being the vanguard of the Negro, Puerto Rican and working class masses. But this is far, far from being the case. PL is a small group and only in New York City does it have any significant base. The process of creating a real vanguard movement in the United States is a difficult project and it cannot be solved by simply proclaiming as reality what one wishes reality to be. In the last analysis tendencies to

substitute one's small forces for the mass movement at its present level of development and to denigrate long term work in the mass movement are signs of a certain distance from the working class. This is understandable considering the social background of many of PL's young activists. But it must be consciously countered. It is a sign of a certain neglecting of theoretical development.

The theoretical weakness of Progressive Labor is posed in another fashion by its international outlook. While it has never made its position too clear generally the organization is in close sympathy with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). There is, of course, a solid empirical basis for this sympathy. The CCP, because of the world situation it faces, projects a line as against Khrushchev with far greater emphasis on the class struggle and revolutionary action. This international line of the CCP at the moment generally coincides with PL's militancy on the American scene.

However, in the long run the lines of the CCP and PL are bound to conflict with each other forcing either PL to bend its class line here or repudiate the Chinese. This can be understood if one looks beneath the surface appearance of the CCP line to what motivates it. The Chinese party does not simply represent the workers and peasants of China. Rather it represents a bureaucracy of the same essential character as Khrushchev's bureaucracy and this stratum has interests which put it into fundamental conflict with the interests of the working class. At present, however, the Chinese Communists find themselves isolated and under tremendous pressure from the imperialists. Khrushchev, in order to come to terms with the imperialists, has sacrificed the interests of the Chinese revolution. Peaceful coexistence is not at present open to China. The bureaucracy is thus empirically forced to take a more intransigent stand for purely nationalistic reasons.

This empirical stand is tailored to fit the interests of the bureaucracy rather than those of the world working class. Thus the Chinese uncritically support the CPs in Japan and Indonesia even though these particular CPs completely subordinate themselves to their national capitalist class. However, these parties are friendly to the Chinese party and furthermore the national bourgeoisies in these countries are willing to do business with China. France, which because of its rivalry with the U.S. also plays with the idea of deals with Mao as well as Khrushchev, is generally spared the attacks China piles on the United States and its satellites.

Even its call for "revolution" is not at all clearly a call for working class revolution. At the time of the recent Brazilian coup d'etat the Chinese advocated nothing more than a broad opposition front including the national bourgeoisie. At least Castro called for a peasant uprising. Neither Castro nor Mao expressed any interest in proletarian struggle.

The real nature of the Chinese regime can be seen in its glorification of the Stalin era and its support for the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. The Hungarian Revolution is the real touchstone of the political struggle in the Soviet Bloc countries. There the workers of Hungary were in the vanguard of a revolutionary struggle to topple the bureaucratic regime. There China to this day sides with the bureaucratic counterrevolution. China's sympathy for the Stalin era is not a matter of a hangover from the past. It has a much more solid basis than that. The Chinese bureaucracy genuinely feels a kinship for Stalin in a period when Stalin also was quite isolated and surrounded by the imperialists and not at all opposed to an adventuristic action here or there to harass an enemy not yet ready to deal with him.

Unless Progressive Labor makes some headway in clearing up its understanding of China this international confusion can have a serious impact on its domestic struggles. Much as the international revisionism of the SWP led to a further erosion of its class struggle outlook on the American scene, so it can be with Progressive Labor. But one cannot really begin to understand China today unless one has a deeper understanding of the origins of Stalinism in the 1920s and 1930s and the principled struggle led against the Stalinization of the USSR by Trotsky. The Progressive Labor Movement was born in a rebellion against the manifestations of Stalinism in the United States--the bankrupt policies of the American CP. It must go back to the origins of that manifestation if it wishes to prevent the disorientation of its own movement. This will require Progressive Labor members to study the works of Trotsky--in particular his Third International After Lenin and The Revolution Betrayed.

The American Committee for the Fourth International

The American Committee had its birth in a struggle inside the Socialist Workers Party for the principled class line of the Socialist Labour League and its supporters in the International Committee of the Fourth International. While at every moment actively working to build the SWP, we took every opportunity open to us to warn the SWP membership of the dangers to the future of the SWP as a revolutionary formation posed by its going over to revisionism internationally and its turning its back on the concrete struggles of the masses in this country.

At the 1963 Convention of the SWP, we put forward two major resolutions. One resolution condemned the proposal to reunify politically with the Pabloites internationally on the basis of the Pabloite line. Our group was the only one in the SWP to vote against this "reunification". Our position has been fully vindicated by the current disintegration of the "United" Secretariat and the betrayal of the working class in Ceylon. We also put forward a resolution urging that the SWP make work in the mass movement--in the trade unions, the Negro movement and the Puerto Rican community--its major

field of work. This resolution was rejected by the SWP majority which proposed to continue its purely propagandistic course. Our position has been fully vindicated by the eruption of the Negro revolution and the incapacity of the SWP to concretely intervene in this struggle in any way, shape, or manner.

More recently we issued an appeal to the Political Committee of the SWP to open a discussion in the party ranks on the international crisis of the movement. We made available copies of this appeal to our fellow party members. For this act, and this act alone, our group has been indefinitely suspended from membership in the SWP. Incapable of answering us politically the SWP leadership could only resort to organizational disciplinary measures. This organizational action of the SWP leadership in no way has solved the crisis within the SWP which continues to erupt. We continue to urge revolutionaries within the SWP to struggle to turn the SWP once again towards the working class both in its political line and in its concrete work.

We have not the slightest hostility towards the SWP as an organization nor its membership with whom we have worked in common for many years. We have an implacable hostility towards the revisionist political line the organization has adopted and towards that political tendency in control of the party which has disoriented the party with this line. The return of the SWP to a revolutionary course requires that the party rank and file struggle against the majority tendency in the SWP and fully break with the revisionism which has so disoriented the movement. Such a struggle will require that the rank and file develop itself theoretically and understand the methodological roots of revisionism.

We feel the closest identity with the new generation of revolutionaries in Progressive Labor, in the militant Negro organizations, in the SWP, and scattered here and there organized and unorganized. Everywhere we see a refreshing desire to struggle and to reach out and become a part of the struggle of the American working class and Negro people. But everywhere we see a tendency to neglect theory, a lack of interest in the difficult task of unravelling the mistakes of the past so that they will not be repeated in the future, and thus a natural slipping into an empiricism which can seriously disorient the practical work of the movement.

We feel that the special task of our group is to combine concrete work in the mass movement along side these young revolutionaries with an effort to bring the theoretical problems facing the movement to the attention of these revolutionaries. We view this process as an international one. All over the world workers face similar problems posed by the stagnation of international capitalism. All over the world the revolutionary movement is deeply disoriented. All over the world new forces are springing up which can build a new international revolutionary socialist movement. Thus,

while our group is barred from formal affiliation with the International Committee of the Fourth International by the reactionary Voorhis Act, we announce our complete political solidarity with the IC and fully support efforts to rebuild a revolutionary movement on an international scale.

The purpose of the BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM is both to provide a much needed Marxist analysis of domestic and international events of deep interest to the working class, and to contribute to a discussion of theoretical problems which must take place among revolutionaries to prepare us all for the next stage in rebuilding the movement. Our columns are open at all times to contributions to this discussion from any quarter. We invite our readers to write us their views on this statement and on our material appearing in our BULLETIN as well as on all the questions facing revolutionaries today.

--AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Lenin often castigated the so-called "Old Bolsheviks", even remarking on occasion that revolutionists on reaching the age of 50 should be consigned to the Hereafter. This grim jest contains a serious political thought. Each revolutionary generation becomes, after attaining certain limits, an obstacle to the further development of those ideas which it has served. Generally speaking, men are quickly drained by politics and all the more so by revolution. Exceptions are rare. But there are exceptions. Otherwise there would be no such thing as ideological continuity.

Today the theoretical education of the younger generation is our supreme task. This is the meaning of the struggle we are waging against the epigones who despite their seeming strength have already been drained ideologically.

--Leon Trotsky, Stalin
School of Falsification, pg.99.

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The FOURTH INTERNATIONAL is the theoretical organ of the International Committee of the Fourth International. It is published in Great Britain.

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