

A Letter to Trotskyists Throughout the World - 1953

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From the 25th Anniversary Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

To All Trotskyists:

Dear Comrades:

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, the Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sends its revolutionary socialist greetings to orthodox Trotskyists throughout the world.

Although the Socialist Workers Party, because of undemocratic laws passed by the Democrats and Republicans, is no longer affiliated to the Fourth International – the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky to carry on and fulfill the program betrayed by the Second International of the Social Democrats and the Third International of the Stalinists – we take interest in the welfare of the world-wide organization created under the guidance of our martyred leader.

As is well known, the pioneer American Trotskyists 25 years ago brought the program of Trotsky, suppressed by the Kremlin, to the attention of world public opinion. This act proved decisive in breaching the isolation imposed by the Stalinist bureaucracy on Trotsky and in laying the foundation for the Fourth International. With his exile shortly thereafter, Trotsky began an intimate and trusted collaboration with the leadership of the SWP that lasted to the day of his death.

The collaboration included joint efforts to organize revolutionary socialist parties in a number of countries. This culminated, as you know, in the launching of the Fourth International in 1938. The Transitional Program, which remains the keystone of today's program of the world Trotskyist movement, was written by Trotsky in collaboration with the leaders of the SWP and at his request was submitted by them for adoption at the founding Congress.

The intimacy and thoroughness of the collaboration between Trotsky and the leadership of the SWP can be judged from the record of struggle in defense of orthodox Trotskyist principles in 1939-40 against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition headed by Burnham and Shachtman. That record has had profound influence in shaping the Fourth International in the past 13 years.

After the murder of Trotsky by an agent of Stalin's secret police, the SWP took the lead in defending and advocating his teachings. We took the lead not from choice, but from necessity – the second world war forced the orthodox Trotskyists underground in many countries, especially in Europe under the Nazis. Together with Trotskyists in Latin America, Canada, England, Ceylon, India, Australia and elsewhere we did what we could to uphold the banner of orthodox Trotskyism through the difficult war years.

With the end of the war, we were gratified at the appearance in Europe of Trotskyists from the underground who undertook the organizational reconstitution of the Fourth International. Since we were barred from belonging to the Fourth International by reactionary laws, we placed all the greater hope in the emergence of a leadership capable of continuing

the great tradition bequeathed to our world movement by Trotsky. We felt that the young new leadership of the Fourth International in Europe must be given full confidence and support. When self-corrections of serious errors were made on the initiative of the comrades themselves, we felt that our course was proving justified.

However, we must now admit that the very freedom from sharp criticism which we together with others accorded this leadership helped open the way for the consolidation of an uncontrolled, secret, personal faction in the administration of the Fourth International which has abandoned the basic program of Trotskyism.

This faction, centered around Pablo, is now working consciously and deliberately to disrupt, split, and break up the historically created cadres of Trotskyism in the various countries and to liquidate the Fourth International.

The Program of Trotskyism

To show precisely what is involved, let us restate the fundamental principles on which the world Trotskyist movement is built:

1. The death agony of the capitalist system threatens the destruction of civilization through worsening depressions, world wars and barbaric manifestations like fascism. The development of atomic weapons today underlines the danger in the gravest possible way.
2. The descent into the abyss can be avoided only by replacing capitalism with the planned economy of socialism on a world scale and thus resuming the spiral of progress opened up by capitalism in its early days.
3. This can be accomplished only under the leadership of the working class as the only truly revolutionary class in society. But the working class itself faces a crisis of leadership although the world relationship of social forces was never so favorable as today for the workers to take the road to power.
4. To organize itself for carrying out this world-historic aim the working class in each country must construct a revolutionary socialist party in the pattern developed by Lenin; that is, a combat party capable of dialectically combining democracy and centralism – democracy in arriving at decisions, centralism in carrying them out; a leadership controlled by the ranks, ranks able to carry forward under fire in disciplined fashion.
5. The main obstacle to this is Stalinism, which attracts workers through exploiting the prestige of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, only later, as it betrays their confidence, to hurl them either into the arms of the Social Democracy, into apathy, or back into illusions in capitalism. The penalty for these betrayals is paid by the working people in the form of consolidation of fascist or monarchist forces, and new outbreaks of

wars fostered and prepared by capitalism. From its inception, the Fourth International set as one of its major tasks the revolutionary overthrow of Stalinism inside and outside the USSR.

6. The need for flexible tactics facing many sections of the Fourth International, and parties or groups sympathetic to its program, makes it all the more imperative that they know how to fight imperialism and all of its petty-bourgeois agencies (such as nationalist formations or trade-union bureaucracies) without capitulation to Stalinism; and, conversely, know how to fight Stalinism (which in the final analysis is a petty-bourgeois agency of imperialism) without capitulating to imperialism.

These fundamental principles established by Leon Trotsky retain full validity in the increasingly complex and fluid politics of the world today. In fact the revolutionary situations opening up on every hand as Trotsky foresaw, have only now brought full concreteness to what at one time may have appeared to be somewhat remote abstractions not intimately bound up with the living reality of the time. The truth is that these principles now hold with increasing force both in political analysis and in the determination of the course of practical action.

Pablo's Revisionism

These principles have been abandoned by Pablo. In place of emphasizing the danger of a new barbarism, he sees the drive toward socialism as "irreversible"; yet he does not see socialism coming within our generation or some generations to come. Instead he has advanced the concept of an "engulfing" wave of revolutions that give birth to nothing but "deformed," that is, Stalin-type workers' states which are to last for "centuries."

This reveals the utmost pessimism about the capacities of the working class, which is wholly in keeping with the ridicule he has lately voiced of the struggle to build independent revolutionary socialist parties. In place of holding to the main course of building independent revolutionary socialist parties by all tactical means, he looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy, or a decisive section of it, to so change itself under mass pressure as to accept the "ideas" and "program" of Trotskyism. Under guise of the diplomacy required in tactical maneuvers needed to approach workers in the camp of Stalinism in such countries as France, he now covers up the betrayals of Stalinism.

This course has already led to serious defections from the ranks of Trotskyism to the camp of Stalinism. The pro-Stalinist split in the Ceylon party is a warning to all Trotskyists everywhere of the tragic consequences of the illusions about Stalinism which Pabloism fosters.

In another document, we are submitting a detailed analysis of Pablo's revisionism. In this letter we will confine ourselves to some recent tests that show in the decisive field of action how far Pablo has gone in conciliationism to Stalinism and how grave the danger is to the existence of the Fourth International.

With the death of Stalin, the Kremlin announced a series of concessions in the USSR, none of them political in character. In place of characterizing these as nothing but part of a maneuver aimed at further retrenchment of the usurping bureaucracy and part of the preparation for a leading bureaucrat to assume the mantle of Stalin, the Pabloite faction took the concessions as good coin, painted them up as political concessions, and even projected the possibility of the "sharing of power" by the Stalinist bureaucracy with the workers. (*Fourth International*, January-February, 1953, p.13.)

The "sharing of power" concept, promulgated most bluntly by Clarke, a high priest of the Pablo cult, was indirectly sanctioned as dogma by Pablo himself in an unanswered but obviously leading question: Will the

liquidation of the Stalinist regime take the form, Pablo asks, "of violent inter-bureaucratic struggles between elements who will fight for the status quo, if not for turning back, and the more and more numerous elements drawn by the powerful pressure of the masses?" (*Fourth International*, March-April, 1953, p.39.)

This line fills the orthodox Trotskyist program of political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy with a new content; namely, the revisionist position that the "ideas" and "program" of Trotskyism will filter into and permeate the bureaucracy, or a decisive section of it, thus "overthrowing" Stalinism in an unforeseen way.

In East Germany in June the workers rose against the Stalinist-dominated government in one of the greatest demonstrations in the history of Germany. This was the first proletarian mass uprising against Stalinism since it usurped and consolidated power in the Soviet Union. How did Pablo respond to this epochal event?

Instead of clearly voicing the revolutionary political aspirations of the insurgent East German workers, Pablo covered up the counter-revolutionary Stalinist satraps who mobilized Soviet troops to put down the uprising ("...the Soviet leaders and those of the various 'People's Democracies' and the Communist Parties could no longer falsify or ignore the profound meaning of these events. They have been obliged to continue along the road of still more ample and genuine concessions to avoid risking alienating themselves forever from support by the masses and from provoking still stronger explosions. From now on they will not be able to stop half-way. They will be obliged to dole out concessions to avoid more serious explosions in the immediate future and if possible to effect a transition 'in a cold fashion' from the present situation to a situation more tolerable for the masses.") (Statement of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. Published in *The Militant*, July 6.)

Instead of demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops – the sole force upholding the Stalinist government – Pablo fostered the illusion that "more ample and genuine concessions" would be forthcoming from the Kremlin's gauleiters. Could Moscow have asked for better assistance as it proceeded to monstrously falsify the profound meaning of those events, branding the workers in revolt as "fascists" and "agents of American imperialism," and opening a wave of savage repression against them?

The French General Strike

In France, in August the greatest general strike in the history of the country broke out. Put in motion by the workers themselves against the will of their official leadership, it presented one of the most favorable openings in working-class history for the development of a real struggle for power. Besides the workers, the farmers of France followed with demonstrations, indicating their strong dissatisfaction with the capitalist government.

The official leadership, both Social Democrats and Stalinists, betrayed this movement, doing their utmost to restrain it and avert the danger to French capitalism. In the history of betrayals it would be difficult to find a more abominable one if it is measured against the opportunity that was present.

How did the Pablo faction respond to this colossal event? They labeled the action of the Social Democrats a betrayal – but for the wrong reasons. The betrayal, they said, consisted of negotiating with the government behind the backs of the Stalinists. This betrayal, however, was a secondary one, deriving from their main crime, their refusal to set out on the road to taking power.

As for the Stalinists, the Pabloites covered up their betrayal. By that action they shared in the Stalinist betrayal. The sharpest criticism they found themselves capable of uttering against the counter-revolutionary course of the Stalinists, was to accuse them of "lack" of policy.

This was a lie. The Stalinists had no "lack" of policy. Their policy was

to maintain the status quo in the interests of Kremlin foreign policy and thereby to help bolster tottering French capitalism.

But this was not all. Even for the internal party education of the French Trotskyists Pablo refused to characterize the Stalinist role as a betrayal. He noted “the role of brake played, to one degree or another, by the leadership of the traditional organizations” – a betrayal is a mere “brake”! – “but also their capacity – especially of the Stalinist leadership – to yield to the pressure of the masses when this pressure becomes powerful as was the case during these strikes.” (*Political Note No.1*)

One might expect this to be sufficient conciliation to Stalinism from a leader who has abandoned orthodox Trotskyism, but still seeks the cover of the Fourth International. However, Pablo went still further.

An Infamous Leaflet

A leaflet of his followers addressed to the workers at the Renault plant in Paris declared that in the general strike the Stalinist leadership of the CGT (main French trade-union federation) “was correct in not introducing demands other than those wanted by the workers.” This in face of the fact that workers *by their actions* were demanding a Workers and Farmers Government!

Arbitrarily separating the Stalinist-headed unions from the Communist Party – evidence of the most mechanical thinking or evidence of deliberate design in covering up the Stalinists? – the Pabloites declared in their leaflet that so far as the significance of the strike and its perspectives were concerned “this point only concerned the trade union secondarily. The criticism to make on this point does not apply to the CGT which is a trade union organization, which must first and foremost act as such, but to the parties whose role it was to point out the deep political significance of this movement and its consequences.” (*Leaflet To the Workers’ Organizations and to the Workers of Renault*, dated September 3, 1953. Signed by Frank, Mestre, and Privas).

In these statements we see the complete abandonment of everything Trotsky taught us about the role and the responsibilities of the trade unions in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism.

Then the Pabloite leaflet “criticizes” the French Communist Party for its “absence of line,” for simply placing itself “on the level of the trade union movement instead of explaining to the workers that this strike was an important stage (!) in the crisis of French society, the prelude (!) to a vast class struggle, where the problem of workers’ power would be posed in order to save the country from capitalist swindling and open the way to socialism.”

If the Renault workers were to believe the Pabloites, all that the perfidious French Stalinist bureaucrats were guilty of was a trace of syndicalism instead of a deliberate betrayal of the biggest general strike in the history of France.

Pablo’s approval of the policy of the CGT leadership seems scarcely credible, yet there is the inescapable fact staring one in the face. In the biggest general strike ever seen in France, Pablo blandly puts as “correct,” a French version of Gompers’ bourgeois policy of keeping the unions out of politics. And this in 1953!

If it is incorrect for the CGT leadership to advance political demands in consonance with objective needs, including formation of a Workers and Farmers Government, then why is the Socialist Workers Party demanding of the present-day Gompers’ of the American trade-union movement that they organize a Labor Party? A Labor Party that would aim at putting a Workers and Farmers Government in power in the United States?

Pablo’s rubber-stamp OK appears in a still stranger light when we remind ourselves that the CGT leadership happens to be highly political. At the slightest gesture from the Kremlin, it is prepared to call the workers out on no matter what wild political adventure. Recall, for instance, its role in the events initiated by the anti-Ridgway demonstrations last year. These Stalinist trade-union figures did not

hesitate to call for strikes to protest the arrest of Duclos, a leader of the Communist Party.

The fact is that the CGT leadership revealed its highly political character once again in the general strikes. With all the skill of years of perfidy and double dealing, it deliberately tried to head off the workers, to stifle their initiative, to prevent the workers’ political demands from breaking through. The Stalinist trade-union leadership consciously betrayed. And it is this course of betrayal that Pablo calls “correct”.

But even this does not complete the account. One of the principal aims of the Pabloite leaflet is to denounce French Trotskyists who conducted themselves in the Renault plant during the strike as genuine revolutionists. It specifically names two comrades who have “been expelled from the Fourth International and its French Section for more than a year.” It states that this “group has been expelled for reasons of indiscipline; and the orientation which it has followed, especially in the course of the last strike movement, is opposed to that actually defended by the PCI (French Section of the Fourth International).” The reference to the “group” is actually to the majority of the French Section of the Fourth International which was arbitrarily and unjustly expelled by Pablo.

Has the world Trotskyist movement ever before heard of such a scandal as officially denouncing Trotskyist militants to Stalinists and providing rationalizations to the workers for an abominable Stalinist betrayal?

It should be noted that the Pabloite denunciation of these comrades before the Stalinists follows the verdict of a workers’ tribunal acquitting the Trotskyists in the Renault plant of slanders leveled at them by the Stalinists.

The American Pabloites

The test of these world events is sufficient, in our opinion, to indicate the depth of Pabloite conciliationism toward Stalinism. But we would like to submit for public inspection of the world Trotskyist movement some additional facts.

For over a year and a half, the Socialist Workers Party has been engaged in a struggle against a revisionist tendency headed by Cochran and Clarke. The struggle with this tendency has been one of the most severe in the history of our party. At bottom it is over the same fundamental questions that divided us from the Burnham-Shachtman group and the Morrow-Goldman group at the beginning and end of World War II. It is another attempt to revise and abandon our basic program. It has involved the perspective of the American revolution, the character and role of the revolutionary party and its methods of organization, and the perspectives for the world Trotskyist movement.

During the post-war period a powerful bureaucracy consolidated itself in the American labor movement. This bureaucracy rests on a large layer of privileged, conservative workers who have been “softened” by the conditions of war prosperity. This new privileged layer was recruited in large measure from the ranks of former militant sectors of the working class, from the same generation that founded the CIO.

The relative security and stability of their living conditions have temporarily paralyzed the initiative and fighting spirit of these workers who previously were in the forefront of all militant class actions.

Cochranism is the manifestation of the pressure of this new labor aristocracy, with its petty-bourgeois ideology, upon the proletarian vanguard. The moods and tendencies of the passive, relatively satisfied layer of workers act as a powerful mechanism transmitting alien pressures into our own movement. The slogan of the Cochranites, “Junk the Old Trotskyism,” expresses this mood.

The Cochranite tendency sees the powerful revolutionary potential of the American working class as some far-off prospect. They denounce as “sectarian” the Marxist analysis which reveals the molecular processes creating new fighting regiments in the American proletariat.

Insofar as there are any progressive tendencies within the working class of the United States they see them only in the ranks or periphery of Stalinism and among “sophisticated” union politicians – the rest of the class they consider so hopelessly dormant that they can be awakened only by the impact of atomic war.

Briefly, their position reveals: Loss of confidence in the perspective of the American revolution; loss of confidence in the role of the revolutionary party in general and the Socialist Workers Party in particular.

Features of Cochranism

As all the sections of the world movement well know from their own hard and difficult experiences, pressures exist far greater than prolonged war prosperity and the sweep of reaction such as has been bearing down upon us in the United States. But the factor that sustains cadres under the most difficult circumstances is the burning conviction of the theoretical correctness of our movement, the knowledge that they are the living means for advancing the historic mission of the working class, the understanding that to one degree or another the fate of humanity depends on what they do, the firm belief that whatever the momentary circumstances may be, the main line of historic development demands the creation of Leninist combat parties that will resolve the crisis of humanity through a victorious socialist revolution.

Cochranism is the substitution of skepticism and theoretical improvisations and journalistic speculation for this orthodox Trotskyist world outlook. It is this that has made the struggle in the SWP irreconcilable in the same sense that the struggle with the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in 1939-40 was irreconcilable.

The Cochranites have manifested the following features in the course of the struggle:

1) Disrespect for party tradition and the historic mission of the party. Hardly an opportunity is lost by the Cochranites to denigrate, ridicule and preach contempt for the 25-year tradition of American Trotskyism.

2) A tendency to replace principled Marxist politics with unprincipled combinations against the party “regime.” Thus the Cochranite faction is composed of a bloc of contradictory elements. One group, centered mainly in New York, favors a kind of “entry” tactic in the American Stalinist movement.

Another group, composed of conservatized union elements, centered primarily in Detroit, sees little to be gained by turning to the Stalinists. It bases its revisionist outlook on an over-estimation of the stability and lasting power of the new labor bureaucracy.

Also attracted to Cochranism are individuals grown tired, who can no longer stand the pressures of the present adverse conditions and who are looking for a plausible rationalization with which to retire into inactivity.

The cement binding this unprincipled bloc is common hostility to orthodox Trotskyism.

3) A tendency to shift the party away from what our main arena must be in America, the politically unawakened workers of the mass production industries. The Cochranites, in effect, dropped the program of transitional slogans and demands which the SWP has used as a bridge toward these workers and argued that the majority in continuing this course was adapting itself to the backwardness of the workers.

4) A conviction that all possibility of the American working class coming forward in radical opposition to American imperialism before the Third World War is ruled out.

5) Gross experimental theorizing with “left” Stalinism that boils down to the extravagant belief that the Stalinists “can no longer betray,” that Stalinism includes a revolutionary side which makes it possible for the Stalinists to lead a revolution in the United States, in

the process of which they would absorb Trotskyist “ideas” so that the revolution would eventually “right itself.”

6) Adaptation to Stalinism in the face of new events. They support and defend the conciliation to Stalinism found in Pablo’s interpretation of the downfall of Beria and the subsequent sweeping purges in the USSR. They repeat all the Pabloite arguments covering the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in the great uprising of the East German workers and the French general strike. They even interpret the turn of American Stalinism toward the Democratic Party a mere “right oscillation” within a “left turn.”

7) Contempt for the traditions of Leninism in questions of organization. For a time they attempted to set up “dual power” in the party. When they were rebuffed by the overwhelming majority of the party at the May 1953 Plenum, they agreed in writing to abide by the rule of the majority and the political line as decided by the Plenum. Subsequently, they broke their agreement, renewing their factional sabotage of party activities on a more feverish and hysterical basis than ever.

Cochranism, whose main features we have indicated above, was never more than a weak minority in the party. It would never have amounted to more than the most feeble and sickly expression of pessimism had it not been for the aid and encouragement it received from Pablo behind the backs of the party leadership.

Pablo’s secret encouragement and support was exposed soon after our May Plenum, and since then Pablo has been openly collaborating with the revisionist faction in our party and inspiring them in their campaign of sabotage of party finances, disruption of party work and preparations for a split.

The Pablo-Cochran faction finally culminated this disloyal course with an organized boycott in New York of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration of the party, which was combined with a wind-up rally in the New York municipal election campaign.

This treacherous, strikebreaking action constituted, in effect, an organized demonstration against the 25-year struggle of American Trotskyism, and, at the same time, an act of objective aid to the Stalinists who expelled the initiating nucleus of American Trotskyism in October 1928.

The organized boycott of this meeting was, in effect, a demonstration against the campaign of the Socialist Workers Party in the New York municipal election.

All who participated in this treacherous, anti-party action obviously consummated the split which they had long been preparing, and forfeited all right to membership in our party.

Formally recording this fact, the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Plenum of the SWP suspended the National Committee members who organized the boycott and declared that all members of the Pablo-Cochran faction who participated in this treacherous, strikebreaking action or who refuse to disavow it have by that fact placed themselves outside the ranks of the SWP.

Methods of the Comintern

Pablo’s duplicity in presenting one face to the leadership of the SWP while secretly collaborating with the revisionist Cochranite tendency is a method that is alien to the tradition of Trotskyism. But there is a tradition to which it does belong – Stalinism. Such devices, used by the Kremlin, were instrumental in corrupting the Communist International. Many of us had personal experience with all this in the 1923-28 period.

The evidence is now decisive that this way of operating is not an isolated aberration on the part of Pablo. A consistent pattern is apparent.

For instance, in one of the leading European sections of the Fourth International, an outstanding party leader recently received an order from Pablo, directing him to conduct himself as one “who defends until the

Fourth World Congress the majority line and the discipline of the International.” Along with the ultimatum Pablo threatened reprisals if his orders were not obeyed.

The “majority” to which Pablo refers here is simply the modest label he places on himself and the small minority hypnotized by his revisionist novelties. Pablo’s new line is in violent contradiction to the basic program of Trotskyism. It is only beginning to be discussed in many parts of the world Trotskyist movement. Not having been backed by a single Trotskyist organization, it does not constitute the approved official line of the Fourth International.

The first reports we have received indicate outrage at his high-handed attempt to foist his revisionist views on the worldwide organization without waiting for either discussion or a vote. We already have enough information to state that the Fourth International is certain to reject Pablo’s line by an overwhelming majority.

Pablo’s autocratic demand to a leader of a section of the Fourth International to refrain from criticizing Pablo’s revisionist political line is bad enough. But Pablo did not stop there. While trying to gag this leader and prevent him from participating in a free discussion in which the rank and file might benefit from his experience, knowledge and insight, Pablo proceeded to intervene organizationally, attempting to crystallize a minority revisionist faction to conduct war on the leadership of the section.

This procedure is out of the foul tradition of the Comintern as it underwent degeneration under the influence of Stalinism. If there were no other issue than this, it would be necessary to fight Pabloism to a finish to save the Fourth International from internal corruption.

Such tactics have an obvious purpose. They are part of the preparation for a coup by the Pabloite minority. Utilizing Pablo’s administrative control, they hope to impose his revisionist line on the Fourth International and, wherever it is resisted, to reply by splits and expulsions.

This Stalinist organizational course began, as is now quite clear, with Pablo’s brutal abuse of administrative control in his disruptive campaign against the majority of the French section of the Fourth International more than a year and a half ago.

By fiat of the International Secretariat, the elected majority of the French section was forbidden to exercise its rights to lead the political and propaganda work of the party. Instead, the Political Bureau and the press were put under the control of a minority through the Cominternist device of a “parity commission.”

At the time, we deeply disapproved this arbitrary action by which a minority was used to arbitrarily overturn a majority. As soon as we heard about it, we communicated our protest to Pablo. However, we must admit that we made an error in not taking more vigorous action. This error was due to insufficient appreciation on our part of the real issues involved. We thought the differences between Pablo and the French section were tactical and this led us to side with Pablo, despite our misgivings about his organizational procedure, when, after months of disruptive factional struggle, the majority was expelled.

But at bottom the differences were programmatic in character. The fact is that the French comrades of the majority saw what was happening more clearly than we did. The Eighth Congress of their party declared that “a grave danger menaces the future and even the existence of the Fourth International...Revisionist conceptions, born of cowardice and petty-bourgeois impressionism have appeared within its leadership. The still great weakness of the International, cut off from the life of the sections, has momentarily facilitated the installation of a system of personal rule, basing itself and its anti-democratic methods on revisionism of the Trotskyist program and abandonment of the Marxist method.” (*La Verité*, Sept. 18, 1952.)

The whole French situation must be re-examined in the light of

subsequent developments. The role of the majority of the French section played in the recent general strike demonstrated in the most decisive way that they know how to uphold the fundamental principles of orthodox Trotskyism. The French section of the Fourth International was unjustly expelled. The French majority, grouped around the paper *La Verité*, are the real Trotskyists of France and are so openly recognized by the SWP.

Particularly revolting is the slanderous misrepresentation Pablo has fostered of the political position of the Chinese section of the Fourth International. They have been pictured by the Pablo faction as “sectarians,” as “fugitives from a revolution.”

Contrary to the impression deliberately created by the Pablo faction, the Chinese Trotskyists acted as genuine revolutionary representatives of the Chinese proletariat. Through no fault of theirs they have been singled out as victims by the Mao regime in the way that Stalin singled out for execution the entire generation of Lenin’s Bolsheviks in the USSR, emulating the Noskes and Scheidemanns of Germany who singled out the Luxemburgs and Liebknechts of the 1918 revolution for execution. But Pablo’s line of conciliationism toward Stalinism leads him inexorably to touch up to the Mao regime *couleur de rose* while putting gray tints on the firm, principled stand of our Chinese comrades.

What to Do

To sum up: The lines of cleavage between Pablo’s revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally. The Pablo faction has demonstrated that it will not permit democratic decisions truly reflecting majority opinion to be reached. They demand complete submission to their criminal policy. They are determined to drive all orthodox Trotskyists out of the Fourth International or to muzzle and handcuff them.

Their scheme has been to inject their Stalinist conciliationism piecemeal and likewise in piecemeal fashion, get rid of those who come to see what is happening and raise objections. That is the explanation for the strange ambiguity about many of the Pabloite formulations and diplomatic evasions.

Up to now the Pablo faction has had a certain success with this unprincipled and Machiavellian maneuverism. But the qualitative point of change has been reached. The political issues have broken through the maneuvers and the fight is now a showdown.

If we may offer advice to the sections of the Fourth International from our enforced position outside the ranks, we think the time has come to act and to act decisively. The time has come for the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the Fourth International to assert their will against Pablo’s usurpation of authority.

They should in addition safeguard the administration of the affairs of the Fourth International by removing Pablo and his agents from office and replacing them with cadres who have proved in action that they know how to uphold orthodox Trotskyism and keep the movement on a correct course both politically and organizationally.

With fraternal Trotskyist greetings,
National Committee of the SWP

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>