

The continuing struggle against Pabloism, the centrism of the OCI and the emerging crisis within the ICFI

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The following lecture was delivered by Samuel Tissot, a member of the Parti de l'égalité socialiste (PES), the French section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), and Peter Schwarz, a leading member of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP), the German section of the ICFI. It was delivered to the Socialist Equality Party (US) International Summer School, held between July 30 and August 4, 2023.

The opening report by WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman and SEP National Chairman David North, "Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Epoch of Imperialist War and Socialist Revolution," was published on August 7. The second lecture, "The Historical and Political Foundations of the Fourth International," was published on August 14. The third lecture, "The Origins of Pabloite Revisionism, the Split Within the Fourth International and the Founding of the International Committee," was published on August 18. The fourth lecture, "The Cuban Revolution and the SLL's opposition to the unprincipled Pabloite reunification of 1963," was published on August 25. The fifth lecture, "The 'Great Betrayal' in Ceylon, the formation of the American Committee for the Fourth International, and the founding of the Workers League," was published on August 30.

The WSWS will be publishing all of the lectures in the coming weeks.

As has been stressed in the school's previous discussions of the Trotskyist movement's struggles against Pabloism, the conceptions that will be reviewed in this lecture are not just wrong ideas in the abstract. Instead, they expressed very concrete class interests that pressed on the world Trotskyist movement under precise objective historical conditions.

In reviewing this period of the International Committee's history, however, it is also important to understand the unfavourable subjective factors facing the Trotskyist movement after the unprincipled reunion of the Socialist Workers' Party with the Pabloites in 1963.

By the mid-60s, the Socialist Labour League (SLL) in Britain and the International Communist Organisation (OCI) in France were the two remaining major sections of the International Committee (IC). At this time they also began to experience a significant national growth, which was not accompanied by gains internationally.

This led to the development of significant nationalist pressures. By 1966, it was possible for SLL leader Gerry Healy to conceive of international revolution as purely a byproduct of a successful overthrow of the British bourgeoisie, writing:

The Socialist Labour League now shoulders an enormous responsibility—that of constructing the mass revolutionary party which will lead the working class to power. By doing so it will inspire revolutionists in all countries to build similar parties to do

the same.^[1]

Subsequent events would show that the leadership of the IC's French section had also rejected the primacy of the IC over the national sections by this time.

Furthermore, the question of Pabloism within the Trotskyist movement had not been settled in the 1963 split. The class pressures Pabloism expressed, which was the domination of the working class by petit-bourgeois agents of imperialism—namely the Social Democratic, bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist political forces—still existed everywhere. These were the material anti-working class forces that continued to press on the IC despite its struggle against the reunification with the Pabloites.

During the 1960s, the OCI, led by Pierre Lambert, had retreated from its previously active role in the theoretical and political struggle against Pabloism. Although in 1963 it had correctly sided with the SLL in opposition to the reunification, it had not made any contribution to the theoretical struggle against the Pabloites during this crisis of the IC.

This was in contrast to the first international struggle against Pabloism a decade before, when Marcel Bleibtreu, the leader of the OCI's predecessor, then called the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI), had produced the first documents anywhere opposing Pablo after the latter's expulsion of the majority of the French section in 1951.

By the 1970s, the pressure to which the OCI ultimately capitulated was the alliance between the French Social Democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies, which dominated the mass working class membership of the trade unions in France. These forces founded the big business-backed Socialist Party (PS) in 1971, which the OCI supported as part of a "union of the left" electoral coalition.

Many of the OCI's members would later take on leading positions within the PS when it led the French capitalist state. The most significant of these was Lionel Jospin, who would later serve as French prime minister. Jean Luc Mélenchon, the leading figure of the French pseudo-left in 2023, also joined the OCI in this period.

The centrist degeneration of the OCI was not primarily the product of individual political mistakes or flawed personalities, but a consequence of the party's political unpreparedness for the mass struggles that erupted during this period.

After Europe was gripped with revolutionary struggles following World War II (1944-1953), a period of reaction ensued. But between 1968 and 1975, a massive wave of revolutionary struggles broke out in France and internationally.

As had been the case in the struggles immediately following World War II, the bourgeoisie was only able to survive due to the traitorous role of the petit-bourgeois agents of imperialism in the Stalinist bureaucracy and

Social Democratic parties.

This period saw the 1968 French general strike; the mass movement against the Vietnam War and collapse of the Nixon administration; the collapse of the fascist dictatorships in Greece, Portugal and Spain; the Prague Spring against Stalinist rule in Czechoslovakia; the fall of the Heath Conservative Party government in Britain; the West German student movement; the Canberra Coup in Australia; the bloody overthrow of Allende by Pinochet, backed by the US; the dollar crisis and end of the Bretton Woods agreement.

In this objective situation, the opportunities for the Trotskyist movement were huge, but so were the anti-working class pressures. This made the assimilation of the lessons of the struggle against revisionism (particularly the struggle against Pabloism) the central political question.

A criminal anti-working class political role was played by the Pabloites in France in May 1968. Alain Krivine's Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR) and Pierre Frank's Pabloite PCI ensured that the radical movement of the youth did not threaten the domination of the Stalinist bureaucracies over the working class, which was the critical political issue during this revolutionary struggle.

Instead, they declared that the students were a new revolutionary vanguard and promoted illusions in Castroism and Maoism. They led students on a series of adventurist actions that did not threaten the political domination of the Stalinist-run General Confederation of Workers (CGT) union or the French Communist Party (PCF).

At this time, the critical issue facing the OCI, as the French section of the IC, was an uncompromising political struggle to expose the reactionary role of these anti-working class forces and break the workers from Stalinist domination.

The Socialist Labour League (SLL) presciently warned the OCI one year ahead of May 1968:

There is always a danger at such a stage of development that a revolutionary party responds to the situation in the working class not in a revolutionary way, but by the adaptation to the level of struggle to which the workers are restricted by their own experience under old leaderships, i.e., to the inevitable initial confusion. Such revisions of the fight for the independent Party and the Transitional Programme are usually dressed up in the guise of getting closer to the working class, unity with all those in struggle, not posing ultimatums, abandoning dogmatism, etc.^[2]

So what was the level of struggle at this time? Two critical factors of the international situation created a huge amount of petit-bourgeois pressure on the IC. The first was the fact that the working masses were still politically dominated by the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies. The second was that across Europe and the US, a massive leftward-looking middle-class youth movement had arisen.

This meant that during this period, the growth of the OCI was in a large part due to the recruitment of radical students and youth. This created petit-bourgeois pressure that could only have been overcome by a consistent struggle to clarify programmatic and theoretical issues.

At this time, the youth were heavily influenced by the theories of the Frankfurt School, particularly figures such as Hannah Arendt and Hebert Marcuse, who had been trained by subjective idealist philosopher and Nazi supporter Martin Heidegger. In France, these conceptions were crystallized in the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and the demoralization of Albert Camus' absurdism. These myriad theories all had one central theme: the rejection of the Marxist insistence on the working class as the essential, decisive and leading revolutionary force in contemporary society.

Many students and youth attracted to Trotskyism were also heavily influenced by black nationalism, the women's liberation movement and the peasant-based politics of Mao and Castro, all of which in one form or another ascribed the revolutionary role not to the working class, but to some other section of society. Many new members were recruited without being educated in the basic tenets of Trotskyism, let alone the struggle against Pabloism, particularly the lessons of 1953 and 1963. This left the OCI vulnerable to a rapid degeneration along nationalist and anti-working class lines.

As David North has explained:

To the extent that the implications and lessons of the 1963 split were not continuously studied and deepened, the political radicalization of the middle class during the mid-1960s, though essentially an anticipation of the revolutionary movement of the international proletariat, had a profound effect upon the SLL and ICFI. The growing pressure of petty-bourgeois radicalism found its expression within both the SLL and Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (as the PCI had been renamed), though in somewhat different forms.^[3]

These objective pressures combined with the isolation of the IC after 1963 to leave the OCI unprepared for its rapid growth in the 1968-75 period. This led to a centrist degeneration, the first theoretical expression of which was the denial of the significance of the IC's struggle against Pabloism.

The centrist drift of the OCI did not develop overnight and suddenly appear one day in 1971. The first signs of the OCI's future explicit repudiation of the struggle against Pabloism came in 1965, when Stéphane Just, a leading OCI member, published the first volume of his work *Defense of Trotskyism*.

While Just's work opposed the arguments of the Pabloite revisionists and supported the IC's defense of the Trotskyist programme, *it conceded that the Pabloites had successfully "destroyed" the FI and it was therefore necessary to "reconstruct" it.* Just argued that the size of the IC's membership was the measure of whether it existed or not.

He wrote:

It is necessary to have a precise view of what the International Committee is. It would be childish on its part to consider itself as an international leadership, for which it would be enough to proclaim itself as being the leadership of the International to be so. The International Committee of the Fourth International is not the Fourth International. This was destroyed by Pabloism.^[4]

On this basis, Just called for the "reconstruction of the Fourth International," to be led by the SLL and the OCI.

The political import of this position was that the struggle against Pabloism had no significance whatsoever. The struggles of the first part of the Third Phase of the Trotskyist movement—the 1953 Open Letter, the founding of the SLL in 1959, the struggle against reunification, the founding of the American Committee for the Fourth International, the betrayal of the LSSP—were all put to the scrap heap by Just.

On this basis, the struggle against revisionism could be dismissed and unprincipled political alliances with all kinds of political groupings could be justified. Throughout the 1960s, the OCI, led by union official Pierre Lambert, cultivated unprincipled relations with Workers' Voice (which

was to become Workers' Struggle, or LO) and other groups that were oriented to and a major part of the nationalist and Stalinist-dominated French trade union bureaucracy.

Indeed, having initially led the struggle against Pablo and Mandel in the early 1950s, by 1967 the OCI would explicitly deny the significance of the struggle against Pabloism, declare the Fourth International and the International Committee dead, and oppose the principles of revolutionary Marxism.

The history of the term “reconstruction” is contradictory. As with all words, its meaning changed over time and what it would come to symbolize was not initially clear to the Trotskyist movement. The SLL also used the term at this time, but not with the same anti-Trotskyist political content. The SLL’s conception of “reconstruction” had a diametrically opposed political content—namely, that the forces of the FI could only be built on the basis of the historical struggle against Pabloite revisionism, which the IC had led since 1953.

The resolution of the seventh annual conference of the Socialist Labour League, adopted on June 7, 1965, articulates this correct orientation:

The successful fight of the IC against revisionism and the work of its sections in constructing a leadership of the working class provide the basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.^[5]

In 1966, the IC held its Third World Congress, which met in London. At this event the class distinction between the two notions of “reconstruction” became clear. At the congress, two political groups in attendance, Workers’ Voice (Voix Ouvrière-VO) and the Spartacists, exposed their hostility to the IC and its struggle against Pabloism.

VO was led by Robert Barcia, alias Hardy, which descended from the Barta group, a centrist organization that rejected the founding of the Fourth International. Having significant organisational relations with the OCI, it had been invited as observers to the congress. It attended on the basis of its agreement with “reconstruction,” insofar as this entailed a denial of the continuity of the Trotskyist movement and the significance of the IC’s struggle against Pabloism.

The Spartacists, a section of ex-SWP members who were separate from the American Committee for the Fourth International, would also reveal their hostility to the IC through their rejection of a critical amendment to the congress resolution and their unprincipled conduct at the congress.

These groups only attended the congress due to their agreement with an initial draft of the congress resolution in which there was a reference to the “destruction” of the Fourth International by the Pabloites. In the course of the congress, it was recognised by the leaders of the SLL that this was an erroneous concession to forces hostile to the FI.

To address this, Michael Banda, working in collaboration with Gerry Healy, proposed the following amendment to the resolution:

Delete the sentence referring to the destruction of the Fourth International by the Pabloite revisionists, and substitute the following: “The Fourth International has successfully resisted and defeated the attempts of petty-bourgeois opportunism, in the shape of a hardened revisionist tendency which penetrated all sections of the Trotskyist movement, to destroy it politically and organizationally. The struggle against this tendency was and remains the necessary preparation for the rebuilding of the International as a centralized proletarian leadership.”^[6]

At this time the OCI voted for the SLL’s resolution, while VO and the Spartacists voted against it. A second resolution, which proposed a middle ground between the two positions, was submitted by the Hungarian delegate (named Varga) with the support of Cliff Slaughter. In effect, this was a concession to the “reconstructionists.” Varga’s resolution attempted to maintain unity with them by playing down the import of their attack on the Trotskyist movement’s struggle against Pabloism. This was also correctly rejected by the congress as a concession to the claim that the FI had been destroyed.

This vote did not fully resolve the differences between the French and British sections at this time. The OCI would note in later polemics with the SLL that it felt the issues raised by Just were unclarified at the Third Congress due to the more immediate issue of dealing with the conduct of Robertson’s Spartacists and the positions of VO. Later, it would become clear that the OCI’s support for the SLL’s amendment was only a temporary retreat, and it would soon return to the argument, defended by VO at the congress, that the Fourth International had been destroyed by Pabloism.

Nevertheless, the Third World Congress was an initial step forward in the struggle against revisionism. The content of the revisionist conceptions behind “reconstruction” became clear during the congress. The congress also demonstrated that groups like VO and the Spartacists were hostile to Trotskyism and would have to be actively opposed in order to build the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

Even though the OCI voted in favor of the amendment to the 1966 resolution, by 1967 it was becoming more clear that it was heavily influenced by petit-bourgeois pressures. This manifested itself in the form of a political reconciliation with the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies in France so as to expand its organizational work amongst them, which paralleled the basis on which VO functioned as a political tendency.

Initially, this centrist trajectory was expressed in the form of organizational differences within the IC between the OCI and the SLL, including disputes over the level of political activism and conflicts related to the organization of a joint publication. While complaints over such matters can be the result of a healthy striving for the expansion of political work, it soon became clear this was not the case with the OCI. Rather, the OCI’s differences expressed a centrist pressure to prioritize organizational gains, particularly in trade union work, at the expense of the struggle against revisionism and the clarification of political and historical issues within the IC.

The OCI began to parrot the arguments against the IC of VO, with which it still maintained organizational relations in the conduct of trade union work and newspaper production, that the FI had been destroyed, supposedly demonstrated by the IC’s petit-bourgeois composition. On this basis it was argued that it was more important to have the cadre assume working class professions and remove themselves from the intelligentsia than it was to engage in an active political struggle against revisionism. This argument was promoted explicitly by VO at a meeting with the OCI in March 1966, one month before the Third Congress of the ICFI.

At that meeting VO had stated:

In our opinion, the causes of Pabloism resided in the petty-bourgeois character of the organizations of the Fourth International.^[7]

In other words, Pabloism did not arise from class pressures rooted in objective events that were exerted on the Trotskyist movement after World War II—the relative stabilization of US and European capitalism and the expanded geopolitical position of the Stalinist USSR. Rather, it

was a product of the personal qualities of the leadership.

In the same document that cited VO's earlier statement, the OCI restated Just's claim that Pabloism had successfully destroyed the IC, a repudiation of its vote on the amendment at the Congress:

Having declared the bankruptcy of the Pabloite leadership, we cannot simply state that the Fourth International continues purely and simply, with the IC taking the place of the Pabloite IS. It was no little event, no little incident, that all the old leadership of the Fourth International capitulated under the pressure of imperialism and Stalinism, without any reaction from the major sections.^[8]

Finally, the OCI went on to conclude, just a year after supporting a resolution in defence of the IC: "The IC is not the leadership of the Fourth International."^[9]

Other revisionist conceptions also found their way into the OCI's politics, including skepticism toward dialectical materialism and contempt for the principles of democratic centralism. The political upshot was that the OCI did not need to build a Trotskyist party, based on a determined struggle against opportunism and with a program for the independence of the working class. Having thrown to one side the lessons of over a century of Marxist struggle, it could now enter into unprincipled relations with VO to achieve organizational gains in the French unions and bourgeois nationalist groups internationally, such as Guillermo Lora's Revolutionary Workers' Party in Bolivia.

In advancing these conceptions, the OCI had descended into centrism. This was the term used by the Trotskyist movement to describe what emerged as a "realist" opposition to the founding of the FI by Trotsky in 1938. Comrade North explained their central argument as follows:

While insisting that they [centrists] did not disagree with Trotsky's assessment of Stalinism, centrists argued that the launching of the Fourth International was a futile venture. They claimed that the Trotskyist movement was too small and isolated to "proclaim" a new International—apparently forgetting that Lenin issued the call for a Third International when his voice was all but drowned out by the chauvinist proclamations of the leaders of the Second International during the first years of World War I.^[10]

Three decades later, a centrist tendency had developed again, but this time from within the French section of the Trotskyist movement, arguing that the FI was so small as to make it non-existent as an independent political force, and that it therefore had to be "reconstructed" on a new, i.e., non-Trotskyist, basis.

In reviewing the split, the ICFI has explained the link between the OCI's call for "reconstruction" and its turn to centrism in the following terms:

The French insistence that the Fourth International had to be "reconstructed" was not merely a dispute over terminology. It suggested a political orientation toward centrist forces under the cover of an international regroupment, and thus placed the gains of the fight against Pabloite revisionism in jeopardy. By making concessions to those who claimed that the Fourth International was "dead" and had to be "reconstructed," it was declaring, if only implicitly, that the lessons of the past struggles against revisionism were not of decisive importance. Thus, it led directly to the

political swamp of centrism, where everyone could get together regardless of the political records of the tendencies they represented.^[11]

Against this centrist drift of the OCI the SLL defended the continuity of the Trotskyist movement. Despite the SLL's own significant political weaknesses at this time, and its failure to work through these issues with the French section in a principled way, it must be understood that *the SLL still played the critical political role in defending the continuity of the Trotskyist movement*. Without this struggle, the continuity of the Trotskyist movement embodied in the IC would have been lost.

The documents presented in Volume 5 of *Trotskyism vs Revisionism* show that the SLL defended the struggle against Pabloism and warned the OCI of the dire consequences of repudiating this struggle, particularly ahead of a period of revolutionary upheavals. In section four of its response, titled "The Fourth International is not dead," the SLL explained:

The fight for theory and for continuity, which was carried out and won by our two sections, proved the touchstone. The French comrades must, therefore, halt and reverse their new course ... [At the Third Congress] The OCI delegates voted for the SLL's amendment that the FI was not destroyed. It is not possible to go forward and build revolutionary parties except on this basis.^[12]

The SLL specifically referenced the importance of subordinating all forms of the party's political work to this programmatic basis:

Having insisted there [the Third Congress] on the continuity of the Fourth International, rejecting the formula "The Fourth International is dead" as a middle-class, pessimistic rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class and of revolutionary consciousness, we went on to formulate in the Commission on the tasks of the International Committee, the central principles of the type of Party we build, a bolshevik party. We stressed that all trade union work, youth work, etc. was subordinated to this task.^[13]

In this document, the SLL stressed the significance of the struggle against Pabloism:

It is a big mistake to see the long battle against Pabloite revisionism as an unfortunate gap... On the contrary, the living struggle against Pabloism, and the training of cadres and parties on the basis of this struggle, was the life of the Fourth International in these years. It contains the most important lessons of this whole period.^[14]

The SLL warned that "If the French comrades do not consciously start from this theoretical struggle, they will pay a heavy price."^[15]

These quotes are the most important evidence for the central historical argument of part one of this lecture: That the SLL was correct to insist on the struggle against revisionism as the "touchstone" of the IC's work in a developing revolutionary situation.

The OCI's claim that the existence of the Trotskyist movement was to be determined on a purely numerical basis was an attack on the Fourth

International as it was conceived by its founder, Leon Trotsky. Against the claim that the size of the FI's cadre made it insignificant, the SLL stressed that the Fourth International existed only insofar as it defended the program and heritage of Trotskyism.

In this polemic, the SLL correctly pointed out that the OCI was departing from Trotsky's own insistence on this fact in the conclusion of the Transitional Programme:

The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being "proclaimed." It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. *Outside these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name.* If our International is still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, programme, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres." [Emphasis added by the SLL]^[16]

To which the SLL added:

There is not the slightest question of Trotsky preferring to wait until the "leadership of a definite section of the class" has been established before the International "exists." The criteria are—doctrine, programme, tradition, and the incomparable tempering of the cadres.^[17]

Indeed, if one were to concede that the Trotskyist movement was destroyed by Pabloism in 1953, then what was its status after 1945, after almost an entire generation of European revolutionaries had perished in the concentration camps? Or when the Fourth International itself was founded in the late 30s, as tens of thousands of Left Oppositionists were being murdered in the Soviet Union? Not to mention of course, the murder of Trotsky himself in 1940.

Throughout all of these tragic events and historic crimes, the "doctrine, programme, tradition," and the emphasis on the significance of the "tempering of the cadres," continued in one unbroken historic chain. To deny the significance of the IC's successful struggle against Pabloism is the first step toward the denial of the significance of the Trotskyist movement itself.

The central political issue in the dispute over "reconstruction" was an adaptation to the Stalinist and Social Democratic trade union bureaucracies. While the OCI initially supported the correct position at the Third Congress, its refusal to engage in a fierce political and theoretical struggle against petit-bourgeois tendencies—especially against VO in France and bourgeois nationalist regimes internationally—laid the foundation for its repudiation of Trotskyism in the context of a massive upsurge of revolutionary struggles internationally.

The Trotskyist movement is only able to struggle for a revolutionary perspective on the basis of the continuity of its program, which includes the defence of historical truth and materialist philosophy, and its insistence that the working class is the leading and decisive revolutionary class in the epoch of imperialism. As David North explained over 40 years ago in "Trotskyism as the development of Marxism:"

The history of Trotskyism cannot be comprehended as a series of disconnected episodes. Its theoretical development has been abstracted by its cadre from the continuous unfolding of the world

capitalist crisis and the struggles of the international proletariat. Its unbroken continuity of political analyses of all the fundamental experiences of the class struggle, over an entire historical epoch, constitutes the enormous richness of Trotskyism as the sole development of Marxism after the death of Lenin in 1924.^[18]

In the split with the OCI, it was this unbroken continuity that was defended by the SLL.

The SLL's defense of the continuity of the Trotskyist movement amidst the OCI's degeneration into centrism is a critical episode in the history of our party. It provides crucial lessons for our political practice in the third decade of the 21st century, as we enter the Fifth Phase in the history of the FI.

We once again face a rapidly growing and radicalizing movement of the working class and youth on every continent. Imperialist war, mass death in the pandemic, and declining living standards have driven massive struggles against Macron in France and strikes involving millions of workers internationally.

As a statement from our European parties published on the WSWS on February 10, 2023 explained: An objectively revolutionary situation had arisen across the continent. The identification of the 2020s as the decade of socialist revolution was not wishful thinking, but a scientific prognosis of the advanced crisis of contemporary world imperialism. In the last three years, this analysis has only been strengthened day-by-day by the march of events.

Today, unlike the period under discussion in this lecture, the Social Democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies either exist in a much weakened form or have been destroyed by the forces of history. Nevertheless, this does not mean petit-bourgeois pressures to adapt to the political level of current struggles have ceased to exist.

As is seen in the controversy over "reconstruction" in the mid-1960s, seemingly superficial differences over terminology, philosophy or history can have behind them anti-Marxist conceptions that are the expression of the pressure of alien class forces on the Trotskyist movement.

All sorts of tendencies develop in the midst of revolutionary situations, even amongst the leadership of the revolutionary party. We must understand that these can only be combated on the basis of an untiring campaign for the assimilation of the lessons of the our movement's history.

This means above all else the defence of the Trotskyist program, through which our movement has fought to liberate the working class from the influence of bourgeois forces for a century. Only on this basis can the revolutionary party, our party, rise to the historic tasks laid before it in the 21st century and lead the international working class in a socialist revolution.

The centrist orientation of the OCI, which found its sharpest expression in its denial of the continuity of the FI and its repudiation of the significance of the IC's struggle against Pabloism, led to political disaster. When a revolutionary wave of tremendous force erupted in France in 1968, the OCI, instead of leading it, was swept away by it.

Analyzing this experience in "How the WRP betrayed Trotskyism" the ICFI wrote:

Under conditions of the upsurge of the working class and student youth in France in 1968, these centrist vacillations assumed immense importance in the political development of the OCI and the ICFI. The French organization, which had for years been struggling to simply pay its bills and establish a presence within the labor movement, suddenly grew like an inflated balloon. ... However, the OCI leadership of Lambert and Just adapted to the

petty-bourgeois elements, such as Charles Berg, who flooded into the movement. Before long, the right-wing tail was wagging the Party dog. ^[19]

Within three years, the OCI was transformed into a pillar of bourgeois rule in France and a rotten centrist organization internationally. There are tremendous lessons involved here on how our party must prepare for the revolutionary period ahead.

The political storm that erupted in 1968 and brought France to the brink of social revolution developed under a surface of political reaction.

In 1958—after a coup attempt by French officers in Algeria—Charles de Gaulle established the Fifth Republic, which concentrated power in the hands of the president. The OCI had an extremely pessimistic assessment of this event. It interpreted it as a Bonapartist coup and moved its work largely underground.

De Gaulle's regime was undoubtedly reactionary. But under this regime a rapid social transformation was taking place. Sponsored by the state, massive industries developed in the areas of automobiles, aircraft, aerospace, arms and nuclear power. France, after the war still dominated by agriculture, was transformed into a leading industrial nation. Within two decades, two-thirds of French farmers left the land and moved into the cities. Together with immigrant workers, they added a young and militant social layer to the ranks of the working class, difficult for the trade union bureaucracy to control.

The general strike of May-June 1968 was preceded by a student rebellion that originated in the United States and Germany, from where it spread to France.

The student movement was dominated by the anti-Marxist conceptions of the New Left. Rather than regarding the working class as a revolutionary class, they saw workers as a backward mass fully integrated into bourgeois society via consumption and the media. In place of capitalist exploitation, the New Left emphasized the role of alienation in its social analysis—interpreting alienation in a strictly psychological or existentialist sense.

The “revolution” was to be led not by the working class, but rather by the intelligentsia and groups on the fringe of society. For the New Left, the driving forces were not the class contradictions of capitalist society, but “critical thinking” and the activities of an enlightened elite. The aim of the revolution was no longer the transformation of the relations of power and ownership, but social and cultural changes such as alterations to sexual relations.

The Pabloites completely dissolved into this petty-bourgeois milieu. Ernest Mandel declared the students to be the new revolutionary vanguard. Pierre Frank, the leader of the Pabloite PCI, claimed that the petty-bourgeois groups leading the student protests demonstrated “a very high political level in a revolutionary Marxist sense.” In fact, they were thoroughly anti-Marxist.

Alain Krivine, the leader of the Pabloite Revolutionary Communist Youth (JCR), had no noticeable political differences with the anarchist Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the Maoist Alain Geismar, and other student leaders who were prominent in the events of 1968. They showed up side by side in public meetings and in the street battles in the Latin Quarter. The JCR itself was, as one historian noted, “more Guevarist than Trotskyist.” It was closer to Che Guevara than to Trotsky.

After a brutal police attack on protesting students at the Sorbonne University in Paris on May 11, 1968, with hundreds injured and arrested, the working class intervened. The unions felt obliged to call for a one-day general strike against police violence.

They immediately lost control. A wave of occupations spread across the country. Everywhere red flags were hoisted, and in many factories the management was held captive. The actions affected hundreds of factories

and offices. Workers' and action committees were formed in the occupied factories and surrounding areas.

A week later, the entire country was at a standstill—hit by a general strike, although neither the trade unions nor any other organizations had issued a call for such a strike. Ten million of France's 15 million-strong workforce were involved in the action.

De Gaulle left the country to meet his top generals in Germany. Finally, the Stalinist CGT trade union saved his regime. It negotiated an agreement that put workers back to work in exchange for massive social concessions by the government.

The Pabloites played a central role in covering up for the betrayal of the Stalinists. They never challenged the dominance of Stalinism over the working class and refrained from any political initiatives that would exacerbate relations between the working class and the Stalinist leadership.

While the Stalinists denounced the student leaders as left-wing radicals and provocateurs, politically speaking, they were quite able to live with them. The anarchist-inspired street battles in the Latin Quarter contributed nothing to the political education of workers and students and never posed a serious threat to the French state.

The general strike in France triggered a wave of international class struggles that lasted for seven years and swept across large parts of Europe and the world, including Britain, Germany and Stalinist-ruled Czechoslovakia. In Spain and Portugal, the fascist dictatorships were overthrown.

Unlike the Pabloites, the OCI did not dissolve itself into the student movement. It did work and recruited at the universities. The emphasis of its political work, however, was towards the working class and the factories.

But its repudiation of the continuity of the Fourth International disarmed it in the face of petty-bourgeois pressures. The OCI was attracting many new forces, mostly youth and students. But it did not educate them on the basis of the struggle against Pabloism. It recruited them on the basis of an ambiguous centrist tactic.

The OCI itself summed up its political line during the strike as follows:

The strategy and tactics of the proletariat in the struggle for power ... consisted in the struggle for the united class front of workers and their organizations, a struggle which in May 1968 took the specific form of the slogan for a national general strike committee.^[20]

The ambiguous formula “united class front of workers and their organizations” blurred the irreconcilable conflict between the working class and the Stalinist and reformist organisations. A “general strike committee,” as conceived of by the OCI, would have been dominated by the various trade union bureaucracies and would never have conducted a “struggle for power.”

During Hitler's rise to power in Germany, Trotsky had called for a united front of the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party. What he proposed was a practical defensive alliance against the Nazis, not a mixing of political banners. When the Stalinists and Socialists later formed a united front in France, Trotsky warned:

The united front opens up numerous possibilities, but nothing more. In itself, the united front decides nothing. Only the struggle of the masses decides.^[21]

The call for a “Workers’ United Front” was the central slogan of the OCI in the ensuing period. By 1971, it meant unconditional support for the “Union of the Left,” the alliance of Social Democrats and Stalinists led by François Mitterrand, which would be the main instrument of bourgeois rule in France for the next three decades.

Mitterrand was an unscrupulous political operator who could work with the far right as well as with the far left. He began his political career in a fascist organization opposing the Vichy regime from the right. He then was a civil servant in the Vichy regime, and finally established his own resistance movement in competition with the movement led by de Gaulle and the Stalinists.

In the Fourth Republic, as a bourgeois politician, he belonged to 11 different governments. At the height of the Algerian War, when thousands of resistance fighters were tortured and murdered, he was minister of the interior and minister of justice.

Under de Gaulle’s presidency, Mitterrand reinvented himself. He understood very early that de Gaulle, an anachronistic figure in his seventies, would not be able to control a rapidly growing working class. He looked for a way to integrate the Communist Party, which controlled the CGT trade union federation and was still the most influential party in the working class, into the government.

In 1965, Mitterrand ran for president against de Gaulle as the joint candidate of the “Left” and received 45 percent of the vote in the second round. In 1971, he hijacked the leadership of the Socialist Party, which had been formed a year before by merging the moribund Social Democrats with several other groups. In 1972, he initiated the Union of the Left, an alliance with the Stalinists based on a joint government program. Nine years later, in 1981, he was elected President of France, a post he held until 1995.

The OCI played a central role in promoting Mitterrand’s career. As early as 1970, he was a featured speaker at a mass rally organized by the OCI on the centenary of the Paris Commune.

In 1971, dozens of OCI members were sent into the Socialist Party to assist Mitterrand, while they continued to work under the discipline of the OCI. In fact, they were invited by Mitterrand to join the Socialist Party.

Charles Berg, who has since made a very successful career as a film producer under the name Jacques Kirsner, has recently publicly testified about what happened in 1971:

A few months after the Epinay congress [where Mitterrand hijacked the SP leadership], I was informed that Mitterrand would like to see the AJS national secretary. I hesitate. I mention it to Lambert, who orders me to go, deeming it unnecessary to discuss it with the Political Bureau at this stage. At the time, our relationship was excellent. We spoke every day.

I end up at Lipp’s [a restaurant in Paris] with the first secretary of the Socialist Party [Mitterrand], all others outside. ... He congratulates me on AJS’s progress—the February 1, ‘70 rally obviously impressed him. Let’s not forget, back then, the PS, organizationally, wasn’t much. And then at one point he explained to me that against “the Stalinists on the outside and the petty-bourgeois on the inside”—i.e., the CERES—he wouldn’t mind if some of the AJS militants joined the PS publicly, “flag unfurled,” creating a tendency.

I tell him that this state of affairs could not last long. He agrees with me. “When the differences are too great,” he says, “you’ll leave.” I add, “Or you’ll expel us!” He laughs and nods. I promise a quick answer.^[22]

The most famous among those entering the Socialist Party was Lionel Jospin, who joined the OCI in the mid-1960s. While still a member of the OCI, he was one of Mitterrand’s closest collaborators. From 1997 to 2002, Jospin was prime minister of France.

Another member of the OCI, who joined the Socialist Party in the 1970s, was Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the present leader of Unsubmissive France.

Furthermore, the OCI controlled the major French student union and the trade union federation FO, both of which played a major role in promoting Mitterrand. Pierre Lambert met every week with FO leader André Bergeron, and his wage and the wage of many other OCI leaders were paid by FO.

In their international work, the OCI leaders were increasingly disdainful toward the International Committee. They proceeded to establish their own international operation based on dealings with centrists all over the world.

Among their most unprincipled relations were those with the Bolivian POR, led by G. Lora. Lora had supported Pablo in 1953 and had a long history of collaboration with bourgeois nationalists.

In August 1971, the Bolivian army staged a coup that resulted in the overthrow of the “left” military regime of General Torres and the destruction of the Popular Assembly. Having supported the Torres government and expected that the military regime would supply the working class with arms in the event of a coup, Lora was deeply implicated in this political disaster.

When the Workers League, with the agreement of the SLL, published a critique of the policies of Lora’s POR, the OCI called a meeting of its international faction in Paris and issued a statement that denounced the SLL and the Workers League for capitulating to imperialism by attacking the POR publicly. Moreover, it wrongly claimed that Lora was a member of the ICFI.

A month before the Bolivian coup, the OCI organized a youth rally in Essen, Germany on a completely centrist basis. It invited representatives of the Spanish POUM, which played a major role in the defeat of the Spanish proletariat, the American Robertsonites and the US National Students Association, which had received CIA funding.

When the British Young Socialists presented a resolution to the rally that called on youth to devote themselves to the struggle for the development of dialectical materialism, the OCI voted publicly against it.

On October 24, 1971, the ICFI majority, led by the SLL, publicly declared a split with the OCI.

There is no question that its characterization of the OCI as a centrist organization was politically correct. However, unlike the struggle with the Socialist Workers Party, the split was carried out without an extensive discussion within the ICFI or among its cadre in the national sections.

It was conducted like a divorce by mutual consent. Both sides declared it completed before any serious discussion had begun. Unlike in 1953 and its aftermath, when numerous documents were drafted and discussed in the entire membership of the ICFI, and in 1963, when the US comrades waged a patient struggle inside the SWP for another year, there was no serious effort to resolve the political issues. The SLL made no systematic attempt to win support in the French section, as the ICFI would do successfully in the British section during the 1985-86 split with the WRP.

In “How the WRP betrayed Trotskyism,” the ICFI commented:

Under these conditions the split—considered from the standpoint of the education of the cadre of the International Committee and the clarification of the most advanced sections of workers all over the world—was decidedly premature. It represented a retreat by the Socialist Labour League from the international responsibilities it had assumed in 1961 when it took up the fight against the

In the end, the OCI did not enter the PS “flag unfurled,” but secretly.

degeneration of the Socialist Workers Party.^[23]

Soon the SLL would claim that the split took place over the question of dialectical materialism, and not over questions of program and perspective. The “Statement by the ICFI (Majority),” March 1, 1972, insists:

The split actually occurred on the question of the place of Marxist theory as the foundation of the revolutionary party.^[24]

The “Manifesto of the Fourth Conference of the ICFI,” April 14, 1972, states:

The break has taken place over the most fundamental issue of all. What was at the root of the degeneration of Pabloism—the Marxist method.^[25]

This was a false polemic. However necessary the critique of the methodological roots of centrism, the issue of dialectical materialism neither exhausted nor superseded the fundamental political and programmatic questions that remained to be addressed.

The one-sided emphasis on the question of method and epistemology became a means of evading a discussion on central political issues, under conditions where differences within the ranks of the British section itself were mounting.

Later, dialectical materialism gave way to an idealistic interpretation of the dialectic by Gerry Healy, which served as a cover for the political degeneration of the British section. But that is the subject of Lecture 10 of this school.

One thing should be emphasized, however. While the SLL declared philosophy to be the central issue in the split with the OCI, it paid virtually no attention to the ideological offensive against Marxism that had its center in France and grew in intensity after 1968. Sartre, Althusser and Bernard-Henri Lévy, not to mention Foucault and many other representatives of postmodernism, are now a major influence in every university in the world.

It was only after the split with the WRP that the ICFI—in the polemic against Steiner and Brenner—tackled these important issues.

Why did the SLL retreat from its international responsibilities and carry out the break with the OCI with a political haste that could only leave a legacy of confusion?

As a result of its principled struggle against Pabloite reunification, the SLL was making impressive gains in Britain during the 1960s. At a time when the Pabloites were liquidating into petty-bourgeois protest politics and acted as cheerleaders for Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism, the SLL was steadily broadening its influence within the working class and among the youth.

By 1963, the SLL had recruited the majority of the national leadership of the Labour Party Young Socialists and its newspaper. When the Labour Party expelled the Young Socialists leadership, the SLL made it its own youth section. In 1964, Healy proposed the launching of a daily Trotskyist newspaper, and in 1969 the first edition of the daily *Workers Press* appeared. The SLL established its presence in the factories and recruited outstanding artists.

When the ICFI—after the split with the OCI—met for its Fourth Congress in April 1972, it had not only consolidated its section in Sri Lanka and the Workers League in the US, but had also established new sections in

Germany and Australia. But while the SLL experienced the height of its organizational success, it was moving in a dangerous centrist direction. As David North explains in his biography of Healy:

... the conviction gradually took hold within the SLL leadership that the material growth of the British section, rather than the strengthening of its international political line, was the decisive precondition and essential foundation for the development of the International Committee; and from this flowed an incorrect and increasingly nationalist conception of the relation between the SLL and the International Committee of the Fourth International.^[26]

This conception was formulated as far back as 1966 in “Problems of the Fourth International,” written by Healy four months after the ICFI’s Third Congress, and which was already quoted at the beginning of the lecture.

There is another passage in “Problems of the Fourth International” that expresses the growing pressure to shift the struggle against the Pabloites onto the national axis of practical work in Britain. Healy presented a new and non-Marxist interpretation of the betrayal of the SWP.

He claimed that the cause of the SWP’s capitulation to Pabloism did “not lie in the difficult conditions of the cold war and the boom under which the SWP has been operating in the United States,” but rather in its non-revolutionary origins.

Trotsky’s theoretical genius flowed from the entire revolutionary experience of the Soviet Union, both in its triumph and degeneration. Cannon’s politics, on the other hand, were mainly derived during the period of Soviet degeneration and defeat for the international working class outside the USSR.^[27]

This was a concession to the centrist tendencies that had opposed Trotsky’s decision to found the Fourth International in 1938 on the grounds that a new International could only emerge as the product of a successful revolution. And it was a concession to Voix Ouvrière (VO), which refused to join the Fourth International because of its alleged petty-bourgeois social composition. It denigrated the historical significance of the theoretical activity of Marxists in the elaboration and defense of the international program of socialist revolution.

From an individual, psychological standpoint, Healy’s reaction was understandable. He perceived the capitulation of Cannon, whom he had admired and from whom he had learned, as a personal betrayal. In “Problems of the Fourth International,” his anger can clearly be felt.

And Healy possessed an iron will not to bow to petty-bourgeois pressure and to lead the working class to victory. He was able to convey this to a large audience. Those of us who knew him in the early 1970s clearly remember this.

Nevertheless, as David North explained, this was a wrong and dangerous conception, which steered the political axis of the SLL in a nationalist and centrist direction:

It reduced the world party to the mere sum of its national parts and replaced the collaboration of Marxists within a unified International with the emulation of the successes of one national group by another... The idea that the Fourth International would develop only as the by-product of the conquest of power in Britain was false. On the one hand, it rejected the dialectical interaction between the world crisis of imperialism, the international class

struggle and their specific expression in Britain; on the other hand, it denied that the organization of Marxists in any country is possible only as part of the World Party of Socialist Revolution.^[28]

And:

However important the advances of the SLL inside the British workers movement, the future of the International Committee and its British section required the deepening of the international struggle against Pabloite opportunism and the assimilation of its theoretical and political lessons. If anything, the degeneration of the SWP had demonstrated that neither a “proletarian orientation” nor an organizational break can, by themselves, settle accounts with revisionism. The prevalence of opportunism is a historical phenomenon with deep social roots; and that is why the struggle against it is such a protracted and difficult process.^[29]

The shift from the struggle against Pabloism to the national axis of practical work in Britain undermined the SLL’s powers of resistance to petty-bourgeois pressures:

The problem of Pabloite revisionism had not been, nor could it be, conclusively solved by the split with the SWP. The rejection of reunification did not inoculate the SLL and the ICFI against the ongoing pressures of alien class forces. To the extent that the implications and lessons of the 1963 split were not continuously studied and deepened, the political radicalization of the middle class during the mid-1960s, though essentially an anticipation of the revolutionary movement of the international proletariat, had a profound effect upon the SLL and ICFI.^[30]

The problems of the SLL intensified when positions of a clearly Pabloite character emerged within its leadership, which were not clarified politically so as not to jeopardize organizational successes.

Michael Banda showed an embarrassing infatuation with Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh and even Abdel Nasser, which was never systematically challenged. Slaughter evinced sympathies for the OCI’s position that the Fourth International needed to be “reconstructed,” and increasingly neglected his responsibilities as secretary of the ICFI. But Healy feared that open conflict in the SLL leadership would endanger the successes of the practical work, and the differences were swept under the rug. David North writes:

When it came to dealing with organizational problems—that is, the more superficial forms in which the deeper political issues find their casual day-to-day expression—Healy did not hesitate to deal ruthlessly with those who undermined the practical work of the party. But he preferred to avoid a direct clash over questions of program; and, in fact, Healy’s volcanic eruptions often served to divert attention from the source of the problems within the SLL.^[31]

Healy became increasingly convinced that he could either suppress or defuse problems through the development of what he called “new practices.” The daily newspaper was such a practice. Elder members of the German (and many other) sections remember with horror the Euro

marches. We spent months marching through Europe to campaign for a program that was essentially reformist.

At the time of the split with the OCI, the SLL itself was heading in a centrist direction. This is the reason why it was not willing to conduct a systematic and patient political struggle as it had done 10 years before.

This could have been corrected. But the new sections of the ICFI were too young and inexperienced at the time to openly challenge the mistakes of Healy, who enjoyed enormous authority because of the role he had played in the fight against Pabloite reunification.

The American Workers League and the Sri Lankan section had emerged in the struggle against reunification and the “Great Betrayal” in Sri Lanka. They were deeply rooted in the struggle against Pabloism, which enabled them to play the leading role in the struggle against the WRP from 1982 to 1986.

For the German and Australian sections, founded in 1971 and 1972, the centrist orientation of the SLL was a major handicap. Of course, they knew the main documents of the struggle against Pabloism, but these lessons did not form the basis for a systematic training of the cadre.

This was only corrected after the 1985/86 split. *The Heritage we Defend*, “How the WRP Betrayed Trotskyism” and other writings of the ICFI, which were translated and studied in the course of several summer camps, played a decisive role in rearming the cadre.

The German section grew out of a minority faction of the IAK (International Workers Correspondence) that had been built up by the OCI in Germany after 1963. The minority was in close contact with the SLL and Gerry Healy. It strongly opposed the subordination of the OCI to social democracy. The OCI had instructed the IAK in 1969 to enter entirely into the SPD, claiming that this bourgeois party could be forced to form a genuine workers’ government. This assessment was not shared by the minority. But the struggle against Pabloism played only a minor role in the split in Germany. Instead, the split was presented as the result of a conflict over dialectical materialism.

The SLL would pay a high price for its increasingly centrist orientation, which finally led to its destruction.

Six years after the split with the OCI, it held political positions no different from those of the Pabloites: It uncritically supported and developed mercenary relations with bourgeois nationalist movements like the PLO, the Gaddafi regime in Libya and even the Baathists in Iraq. It adapted to sections of the Labour Party, trade union and Stalinist bureaucracy. And it treated the ICFI more and more as an appendix to the British section, using it for its sordid maneuvers.

A milestone in the centrist degeneration of the SLL was the founding of the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1973.

David North writes in his biography of Healy:

The mass movement which Healy had anticipated did arise in the aftermath of the 1970 election of Edward Heath and the introduction of anti-union laws by the new Tory government. But the response of the Socialist Labour League was conditioned by the previous years of centrist downsliding: its adaptation to the petty-bourgeois radicalism of the 1960s was now complemented by an adaptation to the spontaneous militancy of the anti-Tory movement.

Instead of fighting to win the most advanced sections of the working class to the party on the basis of revolutionary socialist policies, the SLL watered down its program to accommodate the elementary hostility of the working class to the Heath government. And on the basis of a program limited to a call for the defense of “basic rights” and the election of a new Labour government, Healy proposed “the practice of transforming the SLL into a mass revolutionary party.” ...

Though it was not said, the essential content of this transformation was the conversion of the Socialist Labour League into a centrist organization.^[32]

The WRP was founded without any discussion in the ICFI. The new party was not based on an international strategy for world revolution, but on a tactic to bring a Labor government to power in Britain. Many of those who joined the new party didn't even know that they were joining an international organization.

As "How the WRP betrayed Trotskyism" points out:

In its content and underlying conception, the program upon which the WRP was founded had nothing whatsoever to do with Trotskyism. There was not a single passage which went outside the precincts of centrism. This was bound up with the essentially nationalist perspective with which the WRP was launched.^[33]

A few months after the WRP was founded, the demand on which the new party was based was realized: a miners' strike toppled the Tory government of Edward Heath and Labour returned to power. This triggered a crisis in the WRP. New members who had joined the party disagreed with the fact that the WRP was now opposing Labour and putting up its own candidates for the elections.

The WRP's failure to fight out the conflict with the OCI in 1971 was now being avenged. The OCI recruited Alan Thorne, the leader of the WRP's trade union work, who enjoyed international prestige because of a defense campaign the WRP had waged on his behalf. Thorne formed a faction that worked behind the party's back. Unknown to the party's membership, the OCI drafted its factional documents. This was a clear breach of party discipline that warranted Thorne's immediate expulsion.

However, as the ICFI pointed out in "How the WRP betrayed Trotskyism," it was

another matter entirely whether the leadership was politically wise in acting to expel Thorne on organizational grounds prior to an exhaustive discussion of the political differences, regardless of their origins. ... Despite his unprincipled methods, Thorne represented a large constituency within the WRP – for whose political confusion Healy and Banda were responsible and whom they now had to win to genuine Trotskyism. ...

The Thorne tendency represented powerful Social Democratic sentiments within the British working class—and an organizational settlement with those who articulated this tendency could only have an adverse effect on the work of the party inside the trade unions.^[34]

In the fight against Thorne, the WRP lost a large part of its working class membership. This had the side effect that petty-bourgeois elements the WRP had recruited among filmmakers, actors, and journalists—people like Vanessa and Corin Redgrave and Alex Mitchell, who had only a very superficial understanding of Marxism—played a far greater role in the party leadership.

When the Wilson Labour government began to attack the working class, the WRP performed an ultra-left shift. It now called for the overthrow of the Labour government it had previously campaigned to elect.

This led to a deep political, organisational and financial crisis, to which the WRP leadership responded by dropping all pretensions of fighting

Pabloism. It prostrated itself before the same forces that Pablo and Mandel and later Hansen and Lambert had embraced: bourgeois nationalists, reformists and Stalinists.

The lessons of the SLL/WRP's centrist degeneration are of central importance for today. To repeat the quote from David North's biography of Healy:

Neither a "proletarian orientation" nor an organizational break can, by themselves, settle accounts with revisionism. The prevalence of opportunism is a historical phenomenon with deep social roots; and that is why the struggle against it is such a protracted and difficult process. ...

This requires, above all, a continuous examination of the theoretical and political forms through which the pressure of alien class forces manifests itself within the ranks of the revolutionary party. It is only on this basis that the recurring tendency of layers within the Marxist party and its leadership to adapt to the petty-bourgeois agencies of imperialism can be counteracted.^[35]

Of course, our task is, to paraphrase Marx's theses on Feuerbach, to change the world and not only to interpret it in various ways. But by revolutionary practice we mean a theoretically guided practice, a practice based on a political perspective derived from a materialist analysis of the class struggle, a practice developed in a continuous polemic against hostile class forces.

The SLL's leading role in the international struggle against Pabloite reunification and the "Great Betrayal" in Ceylon paved the way for its political and organizational successes in the 1960s. It squandered these successes to the extent that it abandoned this struggle and concentrated on purely national and organizational tasks.

Gerry Healy, "Problems of the Fourth International" (1966)

Trotskyism vs Revisionism Volume 5 p.113

<https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/fi/tvsl/Trotskyism-Versus-Revisionism-Volume-5.pdf>

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David North, “Gerry Healy and His Place in the History of the Fourth International”, p.47

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[28] David North, “Gerry Healy and His Place in the History of the Fourth International”, p.47

[29] ibid. p. 46

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[31] ibid. p. 53

[32] ibid. p. 56-57

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