The Historical and International Foundations of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada): Part 7

Socialist Equality Party (Canada)
24 November 2026

Delegates to the Socialist Equality Party's founding congress held in Montreal from August 22 to 24 unanimously adopted a comprehensive document outlining the party's Historical and International Foundations. *It is being published on the* World Socialist Web Site *in ten parts. Click here to access the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth parts, respectively.*

The WSWS previously published a report on the congress, which marked a major milestone in the struggle to build the world party of socialist revolution, as well as the SEP Canada's Statement of Principles.

The US Workers League renews the struggle against Pabloite Opportunism

139. The close political relationship the Canadian supporters of the ICFI developed with the US Workers League, beginning in 1979, would serve as a crucial counterweight to the politically debilitating and increasingly malign influence of the WRP. The Workers League had renewed and developed the struggle against Pabloism in the aftermath of the split with Tim Wohlforth, its founding national secretary, who was thrown into political crisis as the middle class protest movement of the 1960s, in which the League had mounted a principled struggle for Trotskyism, waned and the class struggle intensified. In August 1974, Wohlforth admitted that he had committed a gross violation of the security of the movement. He had invited his personal companion Nancy Fields to an ICFI conference, attended by comrades working in illegality, without asking for a security clearance, although he knew she had family connections to the CIA. One month later, as an International Control Commission whose establishment he had voted for was set to begin its work, Wohlforth quit the League. He claimed his personal validation of Fields should have sufficed, and within weeks rejoined the SWP whose Pabloite politics he had denounced for the previous 14 years.

140. The WRP's retreats undoubtedly contributed to Wohlforth's own political disorientation, although it must be acknowledged that under Healy's leadership, the WRP initially played a pivotal role in reorienting the Workers League. Subsequently, however, the WRP and US Workers League developed along different and opposed class axes. While the WRP moved sharply to the right and based its practice on increasingly unrestrained tactical opportunism, the Workers League fought to place the struggle against Pabloism and to assimilate and rework the entire history of the Fourth International at the centre of a decided turn to the working class. This emphasis on the historical experience of the Trotskyist movement, within the context of the objective development of world capitalism and the international class struggle, emerged as the essential political characteristic of the Workers League. In its perspective resolution of November 1978, the Workers League stated, "The foundation for revolutionary practice, the indispensable basis for any real orientation to the working class from the standpoint of the struggle for power, is the thorough assimilation of the entire body of historical experiences through which the International Committee has passed since 1953. The training of Trotskyist cadre is only possible in the struggle to base every aspect and detail of the party's political work on the historical conquests of the International Committee, derived from the battle against revisionism."[107]

141. This approach was manifested in the central role the Workers League played in "Security and the Fourth International," the investigation the International Committee initiated in May 1975 into the circumstances surrounding the assassination of Trotsky. Security and the Fourth International was the ICFI's response to the revisionist opponents of Trotskyism's belittling of the need for security in the revolutionary socialist movement. Of especial significance was the response of Joseph Hansen. He had witnessed Trotsky's assassination in Mexico City as his secretary in 1940. Yet Hansen issued a statement in March 1975 denouncing Healy's concern about issues of security in relation to Wohlforth's actions as "paranoia." The investigation brought forward voluminous, hitherto unknown evidence of the campaign of murder and disruption the GPU mounted against the Fourth International, culminating in Trotsky's assassination, and exposed the extent to which the Pabloites had covered up these crimes for decades. Among its key findings was that Joseph Hansen, who had played the leading role in the SWP's break with the International Committee in 1963, had worked as an agent of first the GPU and then the FBI inside the Trotskyist movement as part of a network of agents. Despite the evidence uncovered by the ICFI, the response of the Pabloite organizations was uniformly hostile, as it cut across their opportunist relations with blood-soaked Stalinism. Security and the Fourth International was a political offensive on the part of the Trotskyist movement against the combined counter-revolutionary agencies of Stalinism and imperialism. Its findings remain crucial to the political education of the cadre of the ICFI and the working class.

142. An important advance made by the US Workers League in this period and one that proved immensely helpful to the supporters of the ICFI in Canada was the clarification of the revolutionary significance of its Labor Party tactic. This tactic—which retained revolutionary validity under conditions where the unions were still mass bureaucratic workers' organizations—was not a demand addressed to the union bureaucracy. It was a means of fighting for independent class politics and the socialist consciousness on which it must be based, so as to advance the struggle for socialist revolution. The Workers League was thus implacably opposed to the creation of an NDP or British Labour Party-type bourgeois workers' party—that is a new instrument for politically suppressing the working

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class—and all opportunist conceptions that the working class must inevitably pass through a reformist halfway house before being "ripe" for revolutionary politics. "In emphasizing the need to step up the campaign for the labor party," declared the party's 1977 perspectives resolution, "comrades must never forget that the decisive issue is the building of the Workers League and its transformation into the mass revolutionary party. We fight for the labor party from this standpoint alone."[108]

143. In developing the closest political collaboration, the US and Canadian Workers Leagues were reviving the best traditions of the Trotskyist movement in North America, dating back to the joint decision of Cannon and Spector to fight to win their respective Communist Parties back to the program of world socialist revolution and, subsequently, to found the Communist League of America (Opposition) as a single organization. Under the leadership of the US Workers League, the two organizations elaborated a response to the nationalist split from the UAW by its Canadian unit in 1985 that incarnated a socialist-internationalist perspective, and that was in direct, if unstated, opposition to the WRP's opportunist maneuvers within the trade unions. However, only through the split with the WRP would conditions be created for tackling and resolving key questions of revolutionary perspective relating to the struggle to win the working class in Canada to the program of world socialist revolution.

The Capitalist Counter-Offensive

144. Despite the militancy and global scope of the revolutionary upsurge between 1968 and 1975, the working class was unable to break out of the straitjacket of its old organisations and advance a socialist solution to the crisis. The social democratic and Stalinist parties, assisted by the Pabloite tendencies, systematically dashed promising revolutionary opportunities, defusing, disorienting and suppressing the mass working class struggles that threatened bourgeois rule. The consequences of the political treachery of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats found their most terrible expression in Chile. The "Popular Unity" government, led by the "Socialist" Allende and backed by the Communist Party, opposed factory and land seizures and politically and physically disarmed the working class. They insisted the army was the "people in uniform" and invited General Augusto Pinochet and other military leaders into the cabinet, from which they prepared their September 11, 1973 coup and the slaughter of thousands of revolutionary-minded workers and leftists. The critical issue remained the crisis of revolutionary proletarian leadership.

145. The lack of an independent political perspective allowed the bourgeoisie to seize the initiative, restabilize its fragile global order, and launch a counter-offensive against the working class. Politically, this counter-offensive was heralded by the election of the Thatcher Conservative government in Britain in 1979 and the Reagan administration in the US in 1980. Faced with a declining rate of profit, the bourgeoisie moved to intensify working class exploitation. Rule through Keynesian-style policies of national economic regulation, social-welfare measures and other limited concessions to the working class was repudiated once and for all in favour of privatization, deregulation, and a systematic assault on the social rights of working people. To break the working class' stubborn resistance to inflation-driven wage cuts and facilitate capitalist restructuring and consolidation through the shutting down of less profitable sections of industry, the US Federal Reserve Board drove up interest rates to record levels to produce the biggest slump and sharpest rise in unemployment since the Great Depression. Then, less than six months after assuming office, Reagan, with the full complicity of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, fired all 11,000 striking PATCO air traffic controllers, initiating a rampage of state-backed strikebreaking.

146. In Canada, as around the world, the bourgeois counter-offensive encountered determined working-class resistance. But at every point these struggles were sabotaged by the labour bureaucracy, which was shifting ever further to the right. In 1976, the same CLC convention that sanctioned a one-day nationwide general strike to protest Trudeau's wage controls—the first, and a half-century later only, such action in Canadian history—initiated, with its call for "tri-partism" (systematized state-big business-union collaboration), the bureaucracy's turn to corporatism.

Two years later, the CLC connived in the Trudeau government's breaking of a militant postal workers' strike, with its leadership giving the government private assurances that it would actively oppose any and all efforts to rally support for the postal workers. Three years before Reagan fired the striking traffic controllers, Trudeau threatened to fire postal workers en masse when they defied strike-breaking legislation, ordered union offices raided and imprisoned Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) President Jean-Claude Parrot.

147. In 1983, when teachers rebelled against the PQ government's imposition by decree of wage-cutting public sector contracts that gutted work rules, and defied strikebreaking legislation, the Quebec unions isolated and strangled their struggle. Moreover, as they were doing so, Quebec Federation of Labour President Louis Laberge was negotiating with the PQ government the tax changes needed to create a union-controlled investment fund, the Solidarity Fund, a move cynically described by Laberge "as a more revolutionary step for labor than starting a workers' party." Forty years later, the FTQ's Solidarity Fund is far and away the province's biggest source of venture capital. Later that same year, the labor bureaucrats smothered a burgeoning general strike movement in BC. The NDP, the ostensible "party of labour," opposed the Operation Solidarity strike from the beginning, on the grounds that a political strike was "undemocratic." As for the unions, they shut down the burgeoning strike movement against the Social Credit government's battery of anti-working class laws not because it lacked popular support, but because it threatened to bring down the government.

148. On the eve of the PQ launching its frontal assault on the working class, the Revolutionary Workers League (one of the successor organizations to the LSA) lauded it as the "present leadership" of the "national liberation movement," a party that has taken "so many actions directed against imperialism," and whose "base" is "the living forces of the nation, the workers, farmers and youth." And when mass working class struggles erupted against the René Lévesque-led PQ government the next year, the Pabloites sought to turn workers' anger away from the petty bourgeois nationalists, by claiming that in imposing capitalist austerity the PQ had stumbled into a federalist plot.

The Workers League's critique of the WRP

149. Beginning in 1982, Workers League National Secretary David North advanced a comprehensive critique of the WRP's abandonment of the program of permanent revolution and sought a discussion within the International Committee's leadership to clarify key questions of revolutionary theory, strategy and perspectives. North's critique was first elaborated in "A contribution to a critique of G. Healy's 'Studies in Dialectical Materialism'," and further developed in a report to a February 1984 IC meeting, and in correspondence with Slaughter, the IC Secretary, and Banda, the WRP's General Secretary.

150. North began his criticisms by exposing Healy's distortion of dialectical and historical materialism as they had been developed by Marx and Engels in a decisive break with the idealism of Hegel. This exposure was critical for two reasons. First, because the promotion of a so-called

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"struggle for the dialectical method" entirely divorced from the study of the development of the world capitalist crisis and the class struggle had been used to suppress political discussion within the WRP and provide a pseudo-Marxist cover for its ever more vulgar opportunist politics. Already at the time of the split with the OCI, Slaughter had sought to separate philosophical method from programmatic issues, declaring that the SLL had learned "that a thoroughgoing and difficult struggle against idealist ways of thinking was necessary which went much deeper than questions of agreement on programme and policy."[109] This directly contradicted Trotsky's insistence that "the significance of the programme is the significance of the party" and that a revolutionary programme consisted of "a common understanding of the events, of the tasks …".[110] Second, in answering the WRP's false counterposing of "method" to Marxist class analysis, North was defending what had been an important advance made by the British Trotskyists in opposing the SWP's desertion of the ICFI for the Pabloites. That is, their demonstration of the connection between the SWP's petty bourgeois liquidationist politics and the pragmatic, impressionist method on which they were based and justified.

151. Having demonstrated that Healy's philosophical conceptions constituted a reversion to the subjective idealism Marx had overcome in his critique of the Young Hegelians of the 1840s, North turned to an examination of the WRP's adulation of bourgeois nationalist regimes in the Middle East and Africa, and cultivation of unprincipled relations with "lefts" in the Labour and trade union bureaucracy. "A vulgarization of Marxism, palmed off as the 'struggle for dialectics'," explained North in the conclusion to his "Contribution to a Critique," "has been accompanied by an unmistakable opportunist drift within the International Committee, especially in the WRP. … Marxist defense of national liberation movements and the struggle against imperialism has been interpreted in an opportunist fashion of uncritical support for various bourgeois nationalist regimes."[111]

152. Developing this analysis further in early 1984, North explained in a letter to Banda that the International Committee "has for some time been working without a clear and politically-unified perspective to guide its practice. Rather than a perspective for the building of sections of the International Committee in every country, the central focus of the IC's work for several years has been the development of alliances with various bourgeois nationalist regimes and liberation movements. The content of these alliances has less and less reflected any clear orientation toward the development of our own forces as central to the fight to establish the leading role of the proletariat in the anti-imperialist struggle in the semi-colonial countries. The very conceptions advanced by the SWP in relation to Cuba and Algeria, which we attacked so vigorously in the early 1960s, appear with increasing frequency within our own press."[112]

153. The WRP leaders, abusing the authority they had within the ICFI as a result of the pivotal role they had previously played in opposing the Pabloite opportunists, systematically sabotaged the attempts of North and the US Workers League to raise these critical issues within the leadership of the Fourth International.

The WRP leadership excluded the Sri Lankan and Australian sections, by arbitrarily choosing not to invite them, from a February 1984 IC meeting that had been called at the Workers League's express demand to present a report elaborating its criticisms before the world movement. In response to that report, Healy, Banda and Slaughter threatened—not for the first time—to sever political relations with the Workers League if it did not withdraw its political criticisms. The report, prepared by North in consultation with the Workers League leadership, deepened its critique of the WRP's neo-Pabloite line, rooting it in the IC's 30-year struggle against opportunism. It emphasized the need to critically examine the IC's work over the previous decade. "We are strongly of the opinion that we have steadily drifted away from the positions for which we tenaciously fought for more than 20 years after the original split with Pablo."[113] North then reviewed in detail the opportunist alliances the WRP had established in the Middle East, and the unexplained shifts in its political line occasioned by the maneuvers and lurch to the right of bourgeois-nationalist movements and government leaders it had hailed as "anti-imperialist." North singled out for particular criticism the WRP's support for Saddam Hussein's repression of the Iraqi Communist Party, the praise given to the Iranian regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and the uncritical support for the leader of the Libyan Jamahiriya, Muammar al-Gaddafi. He also pointed to the opportunist relations that the WRP had established with sections of the Labour Party, including Greater London Council head Ken Livingstone, and the trade union bureaucracy. The WRP's suppression of any discussion of these essential questions of political perspective ultimately had devastating consequences for the organisation.

154. In the summer of 1985, the WRP was shattered by a factional brawl and organizational crisis that was the outcome of its decade-long retreat from the Trotskyist principles upon which the Fourth International had been founded. The crisis exploded in the wake of the defeat of a 12-month-long coal miners' strike during which the WRP had placed its political and organizational resources at the disposal of the National Union of Mineworkers' bureaucracy headed by Arthur Scargill. It was triggered by allegations of serious personal misconduct against Healy, which the WRP leadership initially sought to conceal from the WRP membership and the IC.

155. The political and theoretical critique that David North had developed between 1982 and 1985 of the WRP's neo-Pabloite politics made it possible for the IC delegates, once apprised of the crisis, to come to rapid agreement that the source of Healy's corrupt practices, and of the WRP's political disorientation and organizational hemorrhaging was the "ever more explicit separation of the practical and organisational gains of the Trotskyist movement in Britain from the historically and internationally grounded struggles against Stalinism and revisionism from which these achievements arose."[114]

156. On October 25, 1985, the ICFI adopted two resolutions: one that expelled Healy from its ranks and the other on the crisis in the British section.

"The ICFI," declared the first, "has no intention of denying the political contributions which [Healy] made in the past, particularly in the struggle against Pabloite revisionism in the 1950s and the 1960s. In fact, this expulsion is the end product of his rejection of the Trotskyist principles upon which these past struggles were based and his descent into the most vulgar forms of opportunism. …

"In place of his past interest in the complex problems of developing the cadre of the international Trotskyist movement, Healy's practice became almost entirely preoccupied with developing unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders and with trade union and Labour Party reformists in Britain."[115]

157. The latter resolution identified the source of the political crisis convulsing the WRP in the "prolonged drift of [its] leadership away from the strategical task of the building of the world party of socialist revolution towards an increasingly nationalist perspective and practice."[116] The ICFI resolved that the WRP re-register its members based on the explicit recognition of the political authority of the ICFI and the subordination of the British section to its decisions.

The WRP breaks with the International Committee

158. Banda and Slaughter initially supported the IC's intervention, but it rapidly became apparent that they did so for their own factional purposes.

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Once they recognized that the ICFI was determined to effect a real break with the WRP's nationalist-opportunist politics and would not permit the WRP to continue to pursue its own activities and alliances behind the back and outside the control of the international movement, Banda and Slaughter rapidly moved towards a split. Slaughter fraudulently claimed that the IC and all its sections had undergone "equal degeneration," a formula aimed at justifying rapprochement with the Pabloites and Stalinists. On November 26, 1985, he acted on this lie at a WRP public meeting at London's Friends Meeting House, where he shook hands with the notorious Stalinist Monty Johnstone.

159. In December 1985, the ICFI voted to suspend the British section after an international control commission report revealed that the WRP leadership had established mercenary relations with bourgeois regimes in the Middle East. The WRP delegates, with the exception of Dave Hyland, the representative of a pro-IC minority within its Central Committee, voted against. The suspension of the WRP was a seminal event in the history of the Trotskyist movement, through which the primacy of the world party and its leadership, the IC, over its national sections was reasserted and re-established.

160. In late January 1986, the WRP Central Committee formally declared that the ICFI was not the world party of socialist revolution and repudiated its previous commitment to limit membership to those who recognized the ICFI's political authority. Less than two weeks later, on February 8, 1986, the WRP leadership held a rump congress from which all supporters of the IC were excluded with the support of the police. The WRP's split with the ICFI was politically based on a document authored by Banda and published on the eve of its congress. Titled *27 reasons why the International Committee should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built*, it was a diatribe against the Fourth International's almost five-decade struggle for the program of world socialist revolution.

161. The central issue in the split—the irreconcilable conflict between proletarian internationalism and all forms of petty-bourgeois nationalist opportunism—was explained in a letter sent by the Workers League Political Committee to the WRP in December 1985: "During the past three months, the Workers League has stated repeatedly that the political crisis within the Workers Revolutionary Party can be overcome only through the closest collaboration of the British section with its international comrades. Unfortunately, after years of systematic miseducation under Healy there are many comrades within the leadership of the WRP who view the International Committee with contempt, and consider the appeals of the IC for genuine collaboration and consultation as an unwarranted intrusion into the life of the British section.

"References to the 'subordination of the WRP to the International Committee' evoke a hostile response from some comrades. Of course, we are not dealing with the subjective weaknesses of individual members. The existence of powerful nationalist tendencies within the WRP is a political reflection of the historical development of the working class in the world's oldest imperialist country. Insofar as they are recognized and consciously fought these tendencies can be overcome, and the responsibility for waging this struggle falls upon the leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

"The great danger that we now confront is that anti-internationalism is being encouraged by the leadership. The national autonomy of the Workers Revolutionary Party is being counterposed to the authority of the International Committee as the leading body of the World Party of Socialist Revolution."[117]

162. Answering Slaughter's claim that internationalism consists in "laying down … class lines and fighting them through," the Workers League letter continued, "But by what processes are these 'class lines' determined? Does it require the existence of the Fourth International? Comrade Slaughter suggests—and this is the explicit content of his entire letter—that any national organisation can rise to the level of internationalism by establishing, on its own, the 'class lines and fighting them through'."

The Workers League's letter went on to expose the class origins of Slaughter's position: "Compare Comrade Slaughter's definition of internationalism … with that of Trotsky: 'Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and practical reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces and the world scale of the class struggle.'[118] Herein lies the foundation of proletarian internationalism and the necessity of its organised expression in the World Party of Socialist Revolution. No national organisation, no matter how loudly it proclaims its adherence to Marxism, can develop and maintain a revolutionary perspective except through constant contact and collaboration with international co-thinkers. Democratic centralism is an essential component of that collaboration. … Those who rail against the subordination of national sections to the international movement upon which [the Statutes of the Fourth International] insist ignore the fact that the price of 'independence' is subordination to the pressures of the national bourgeoisie and world imperialism."[119]

163. The stand taken by parties and individual leaders on this seminal question would prove decisive in determining their future evolution. While the ICFI and its sections made pivotal political and theoretical advances in the split's aftermath based on their defence of proletarian internationalism, those who sided with the national opportunists shifted at a staggering pace to the political right. By the time Healy died in 1989, he had become a self-avowed supporter of CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and his capitalist restorationist program of glasnost and perestroika. Just months after penning his *27 reasons*, Banda repudiated any formal association with Trotskyism, issuing a document in which he declared his admiration for the "proletarian Bonaparte" Stalin. Within less than a decade, the group led by Slaughter was acting as a cheerleader for US imperialism and NATO in the Balkans with its "Workers' Aide for Bosnia" campaign and promotion of Bosnian and Croatian national-separatism as the realization of "self-determination."

164. The only politically viable tendency to emerge from the wreckage of the WRP was that led by Dave Hyland which, after gaining access to the documents written by North in 1982-84, fought for political clarification under the IC's guidance and discipline. Following the WRP's February 1986 split from the ICFI, the Hyland group, which included much of the WRP's working-class cadre, founded the International Communist Party, the forerunner of the SEP (UK), the ICFI's British section.

165. The 1982-86 split brought to a conclusive end the three-decade-long civil war in the ICFI by reestablishing the political control of the genuine Trotskyists over their own organization. Based on the lessons of the split, the ICFI would develop the program and strategy of world socialist revolution amid and in response to profound economic, political, and geopolitical shifts.

166. The Workers League of Canada's unanimous support for the ICFI during the split with the neo-Pabloite WRP and the contributions it subsequently made to the political and theoretical exposure of the WRP renegades were seminal to its development as a genuine Trotskyist party, oriented to the fight to win and mobilize the working class on the basis of the program of world socialist revolution. Based on the lessons of the split and working under the political guidance and authority of the ICFI, its Canadian supporters were able to clarify key questions vital to the struggle to forge the political independence of the Canadian working class and make socialist internationalism the axis of its struggles. Critical in this regard was the delineation and elaboration of the programmatic foundations of the struggle for proletarian internationalism against "left" Canadian and *indépendantiste* Quebec nationalism.

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The objective significance of the split

167. The split with the WRP and the decisive reassertion of genuine Trotskyist control over the ICFI were a reflection and anticipation of profound changes in the economic and political structures of world capitalism that would soon blow apart the post-Second World War order. The strength of the Workers League's critique of the WRP's national opportunist politics was that it was in theoretical-political alignment with these changes. This does not mean that the victory over the WRP opportunists was inevitable; it had to be consciously fought for and required the reassimilation and reworking of the entire history of the International Committee and the Trotskyist movement since its founding, which as a whole constitutes the continuous struggle to defend and develop the program of world socialist revolution against all forms of anti-Marxism. The fact that a large section of the international cadre had been won to Trotskyism in the 1960s and early 1970s through a systematic struggle against Pabloite revisionism accounted for the relatively rapid political realignment within the IC that occurred during and in the immediate aftermath of the split. Crucial to the political rearming of the ICFI were the publication of: *The ICFI Defends Trotskyism 1982*-86, a compendium of all the documents from the split with the WRP; *How the Workers Revolutionary Party Betrayed Trotskyism 1973-85*, an exhaustive examination of its national-opportunist political line and practice, and *The Heritage We Defend*, which in refuting Banda's lies provided a comprehensive history of the strategic experiences of the Trotskyist movement since the death of Trotsky. Collectively they constitute a comprehensive analysis of the political, historical, and theoretical issues raised by the split with the WRP, and have since served as the basis of the training of the cadre of the ICFI.

168. The years following the split witnessed a renaissance of Trotskyism as the ICFI defended and developed the program of world socialist revolution under conditions of dramatic political, geopolitical, and economic changes within world capitalism. The political rearming of the movement necessitated the elaboration of international perspectives based, as Trotsky had insisted, on the primacy of global economy and the world political system "taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions" over their particular manifestation in any given nation-state, and on the primacy of international proletarian strategy over national tactics.[120] This did not involve just a restatement of the Fourth International's Trotskyist program, but a creative and profoundly revolutionary development of socialist internationalism in response to a new stage in the world capitalist crisis. Key elements in this were: a Marxist analysis of the globalization of production; a reappraisal of the national question and the demand for national self-determination in light of the vast economic and political changes over the course of the imperialist epoch; and an evaluation of globalization's implications for all nationally-based programs and organizations, from the Stalinist regimes to the social-democratic parties and the trade unions.

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