

Problems of the peace movement: TROTSKYITE FRIENDS OF NIXON'S TRICKERY, by Mike Zagarell, National Education Director, Young Workers Liberation League.

President Nixon's refusal to sign the peace treaty agreed upon before the elections has set off a new level of mass opposition to the Vietnam war. Not since Nixon first came into office has he stood so exposed to tens of millions of people around the world.

Millions of people in the U.S. now know that this war could have been definitely over October 31, the day that was set to sign the treaty. But it is not over because Nixon went back on the promise he made before the elections. The demand to sign the treaty is putting Nixon in the spotlight of world criticism. This is why Nixon is now doing everything possible to make us forget that a peace treaty was ever agreed upon.

In his opposition to the treaty, however, Nixon is not alone. He has found new friends in the Trotskyite "Socialist" Workers Party (SWP) and the Young "Socialist" Alliance (YSA) which openly attack the peace treaty and refuse to do anything to force Nixon to sign it.

Throughout the country the SWP and the YSA are going into peace meetings and demanding that the peace movement forget about the treaty and continue with business as usual.

While the SWP gives different reasons than Nixon for opposing the treaty, the effect is the same: to take Nixon off the hot seat and to return the peace movement to its position before Nixon's public betrayal. In this campaign the Trotskyites have already imposed their position on the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) and the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) both of which they control, and are now trying to impose it on the whole peace movement.

Absurd Objections

The main argument of the Trotskyites is that the Vietnamese are selling out. The Trotskyites, sitting safely in their comfortable offices, think that the Vietnamese shouldn't make any concessions.

Andy Rose, Chairman of the Young "Socialist" Alliance, states:

The main points of the agreement, as they can be pieced together, include significant concessions forced from the Vietnamese. The terms leave the Vietnamese revolution in grave danger..." (Young Socialist, Nov., 1972, p. 5)

The Trotskyite position is not opposition simply to too many concessions. They oppose any concession made by the Vietnamese, even the most minute.

For example, SWP leader Fred Halstead, speaking of the demand by the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) that the U.S. set a terminal date for withdrawal states:

"That's a concession.. Where is the concession? It simply lies in the period of time between immediate withdrawal and whatever date is set, two days from now, six months, one year or whatever. The U.S. has no right to be in Vietnam for any

length of time." (Militant, Oct. 27., 1972, p. 14)

In other words, even if the U.S. agreed to withdraw troops two days from now, the SWP would oppose it. The Vietnamese must give no concession, not even two days!

The "no concessions" demand is, of course, absurd on the face of it. With such a concept, no worker could negotiate a parade permit with the police until socialism. It is a standard which no people in their right minds could practice and which is not practiced by the Trotskyites themselves. By demanding "no concessions" the Trotskyites show only that they are prepared to "fight" on to the last Vietnamese.

The fundamental and most decisive concessions in the 9-point agreement are made by U.S. imperialism. They are agreement to withdraw all forces from Vietnam, acceptance of a coalition government which puts the anti-imperialist forces in the dominant position in Vietnam, and an acceptance of the territorial integrity of Vietnam and its eventual re-unification. It is precisely because this agreement is not beneficial to U.S. imperialism that Nixon now refuses to sign it.

The point, of course, is not whether the Vietnamese have given some concession. The point is the total effect of the agreement. Does it forward the movement for peace and independence of Vietnam? The answer to that question is obvious to everyone in the world except the Trotskyites.

That is why the whole world is fighting to force Nixon to sign the agreement... everyone but the Trotskyites!

The Trotskyites try to hide their position by saying that the Vietnamese have every right to make whatever concessions they want, "but the victim's friends have no right to approve the results of the crime." (Ibid) In other words, the Vietnamese can negotiate any agreement with the U.S. they want. But don't ask the peace movement to fulfill its responsibilities and impose this agreement on Nixon!

Chauvinism -- Trotskyites' Hallmark

The Trotskyites say they support self-determination in Indochina. But it is clear that the Trotskyites believe that the Vietnamese should have consulted them before they supported the treaty.

The Vietnamese have been fighting for over 30 years despite bombings and mass genocide. Yet the Trotskyites have concluded the Vietnamese are "betraying the struggle."

What could be more absurd and arrogant!

The Real Issue

To this day the SWP and YSA staunchly support Trotsky's long-discredited theory of permanent revolution. The basic idea behind this disproved theory is that socialism cannot be built in one country. In essence, the Trotskyites believe that any peace agreement short of socialism in the U.S. will be a sell-out.

What this means practically is that while the SWP and YSA

pretend to be for peace they really are not. That is, they do not believe the Vietnamese can win peace and independence until after the SWP leads a revolution in the U.S.

This is the meaning of the Trotskyite concept that "out now" is a "transitional demand." To the Trotskyites, a transitional demand is one which people want now but which can only be won under socialism.

The convenient logic of this position is that any agreement is a sell-out and that the Vietnamese must keep fighting so that the SWP can grow like parasites off the peace movement. Of course, the SWP rationalizes this by saying that once in power they will end the war.

Anti-communism

The Trotskyites are embarrassed to attack the Vietnamese freedom fighters directly. So they try to use anti-Communism, particularly anti-Sovietism, to hide their long-standing hatred for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) and the PRG of South Vietnam.

They do this by implying that the Vietnamese don't want to sell out but that they are under "pressure" from the Soviet Union. But try as they may to hide their position under anti-Sovietism, their full position slips out.

The Trotskyites do not simply oppose this agreement. They oppose any and every agreement ever made for peace in Indochina.

Fred Halstead states: "On three occasions since the 1945 August revolution and the founding of the DRV -- that is since the Nationalist Revolution took control of the entire country -- the imperialists managed to get back in and carry on a counter-revolutionary war. On these three occasions the imperialists used the cover of an agreement they had wrested from the leadership of the movement." (Militant, Oct. 27, 1972, p. 13)

The position of the Trotskyites is clear. According to the Trotskyites, the Vietnamese are sell-outs, always were sell-outs and always will be sell-outs until they embrace Trotskyism.

Recently, the Trotskyites have not hesitated to pull out all the stops in their slanders against the PRG. At the very moment when Nixon and General Thieu are spreading the lie that the PRG intends to murder its opposition if a settlement is reached, the Trotskyites join in telling of how Trotskyites were "murdered by Stalinists in the Viet Minh" because they opposed the leadership of the liberation movement. (Ibid)

New Standards

It is now clear that the Trotskyites, while participating in the peace movement, have no real desire for an immediate peace settlement.

It is precisely because of this position that the Trotskyites have been declared renegades throughout the world peace movement.

Of all the nations in the capitalist world, our peace movement in the U.S. has the greatest responsibility. It is time that we begin to examine new and higher standards in the peace movement.