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PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY AND THE CUBAN STATE

By Jack Arnold

The party discussion concerning the class nature of the Cuban state, while serving as a very educational discussion, has also served to indicate that there are, united behind the majority resolution, some very diverse opinions on why Cuba is a workers state. Some of these viewpoints tend to distort and destroy some of the most basic concepts of our movement. Among these are the understanding of the workers state as the initial phase in the transition to communism, and flowing from that, an understanding of the need for a revolutionary socialist vanguard party.

Because of the basic nature of some of the transgressions on Marxist theory, I find it important to deal with material that some comrades may consider so elementary that they tend to overlook it. It is therefore necessary to urge comrades to pay careful attention to what are usually accepted values of our movement. In particular, I urge that the newer comrades, who may be unfamiliar with these ideas, consider them very carefully. Revolutionary politics must prevail over revolutionary euphoria!

The question of the nature of a workers state must be re-examined in view of paragraph 10 of the majority theses. This paragraph states, "When the capitalist holdings in the key sectors of the Cuban economy were taken over by the government, Cuba entered the transitional phase of a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule." Before we examine this fallacious and contradictory statement, it is necessary to examine the history of the concept of a workers state.

One aspect of the discussion on the nature of the Cuban state has been an attempt by members of the majority to present the idea that the Trotskyist movement has a theoretical "ideal" for the workers state, proletarian democracy, which does not necessarily come into existence with the birth of a workers state. So we must accept, they argue, the concrete reality, and consider Cuba such a state although it is "lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule." In their view, Cuba represents an approximation of theoretical expectations or ideals. This idea has been put forward on the N.Y. branch floor by numerous comrades attempting to rationalize the idea of a workers state lacking such rule, with the classical view in which the workers state is integrally tied up with proletarian democracy, or as Marx and Engels put it, "the proletariat organized as the state."

For that reason, it is essential to go into the history of the workers state concept, first in its early realization as a theory in the minds of Marx and Engels, as put forth by them in the Communist Manifesto, and in the concrete, as the bones of their theory took on the meat of reality with the establishment of the Paris Commune.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels spoke of the state power of the workers in general terms, never explaining precisely what workers power would look like. But in a later preface to the Manifesto, dated June 24, 1872, Marx and Engels point out that after the Paris Commune, certain sections of the Manifesto are now "out of date." One thing they assert was proved by the Paris Commune: The "working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." In Marx's view, the proletariat must not merely utilize the apparatus of the state, but must act to "break it up."

The lesson that Marx and Engels gained from the Paris Commune was that the proletariat had to substitute, in place of parliamentary government, a new state form, a form of state peculiarly adapted to the needs of the proletariat: the proletarian democracy.

The form of the Paris Commune was the first example in concrete reality of just what a proletarian state should look like. The Commune served as the embryonic example for the proletarian revolutions that were to follow it in 1905, 1917, and later, in the attempts of the workers in the deformed workers states of Poland and Hungary to reinstitute the proletarian democracy of non-deformed workers states.

It is appropriate to view the workers state in terms of its existence as a phase in the transition to statelessness or communism, a promise the theses holds out when it states, "When the capitalist holdings in the key sectors of the Cuban economy were taken over by the government, Cuba entered the transitional phase of a workers state..." Unfortunately, the second section of the sentence does not hold the promise of the first. I refer to the reference of the theses to the absence of workers control: "...although lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule."

I have no wish to quarrel with the idea that a workers state is transitional to communism, but I do wish to quarrel with the idea that a state "lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule," can be transitional to communism, or conversely, can be a workers state. We do know of a degenerated workers state and deformed workers states where transition has been arrested as a result of the formation of a bureaucracy, but which can resume their motion toward statelessness, provided that the workers of those states create political revolutions to regain, or, in the case of the deformed states, to achieve what they never had: proletarian democracy.

For Marx and Engels, the establishment of a workers state occurs at that point in a revolution at which the proletariat has taken control of the state. This course is carried out first by smashing the old bourgeois state apparatus, and secondly, by substituting for it a new form of state peculiarly adapted to maintain a state in the proletariat's own interests, the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the proletariat raised to the position of the ruling class. Instead of this view of proletarian rule being the primary factor in the establishment of a workers state, the theses substitutes the criteria of the degenerated and deformed workers states. Frances James quotes from the Communist Manifesto, in Bulletin #10, the following, which, however much she abuses it later, does refute this concept of economic criteria being primary in determining the existence of a workers state:

"We have seen...that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class..."

And just what is meant by raising "...the proletariat to the position of the ruling class..." is adequately explained for us in another segment of the Manifesto that is quoted by Comrade James. In addition, she clearly uses this section to repudiate the idea that economic factors, namely nationalization, are the basic determinants in the formation of a workers state.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments in the hands of

the state, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."

Here indeed is a clear refutation of any concept that a workers state comes into existence primarily or solely on the basis of nationalizations. In fact, Marx states quite the contrary, that the proletariat, having attained political supremacy...the proletariat organized as the ruling class...will then utilize its state power to "wrest" control of the means of production in its own interests. Please note, Comrades, Marx was so much more concerned with state power and its nature, i.e., proletarian democracy, that he relegates the matter of capital expropriation to a secondary position, i.e., to be achieved by degrees after the establishment of proletarian democracy. In place of this view the majority substitutes the criteria of the deformed states, criteria that are used to determine the extent of the course that reaction has taken in the Soviet Union or its extensions, the deformed workers states.

The expropriation of the means of production in the interests of the working class and peasant masses, by the proletariat, organized as the ruling class, is the first step in the elimination of class society and in that sense, the workers state becomes a transitional phase toward stateless communism. With the destruction of private property, the basis for vested interests apart from society as a whole are destroyed, and the former members of the bourgeoisie becomes reduced to the role of a tendency in society seeking to regain its former position. The state has become a new kind of state insofar as the destruction of the bourgeois or owning class allows the state to operate in the interests of the whole of society, rather than in the suppression of one class by another. The proletarian state, in order to represent the interests of society, must also be of a new kind in another sense; that is, it must be the most democratic of all previous states, i.e., it must be composed of the representatives of the whole of society.

Marx and Engels derived from the Paris Commune a clear understanding of how to guard against the state becoming an instrument of privilege for any caste, or nonworking -class tendencies that might remain in society or arise out of internal contradictions that result from the inheritance of socio-economic conditions created or never resolved by the previous rulers, the bourgeoisie. In such a case as Cuba, aside from the low industrial development of the country, various international pressures must be counted -- on the one hand, the attempts of imperialism to return the country to their domination through invasion and economic blockades, and on the other hand, from the Stalinist regime which seeks to preserve its own bureaucratic position in regard to the colonial revolutions to attempt a "peaceful coexistence" stabilization.

According to Engels, "...the [Paris] Commune made use of two infallible remedies. In the first place, it filled all posts -- administrative, judicial, and educational -- by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, with the right of these electors to recall their delegate at any time. And in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers...In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the imperative mandates to delegates to representative bodies which were also added in profusion..."

Any concept of a workers state that is "...lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule," if it has any meaning in reality, means that control of the state has been seized by a bureaucratic caste. Such a state goes under the title of deformed workers state. On the other hand, a non-deformed workers

state must have proletarian democracy, not only because Marx, Engels and Lenin said so, but for very practical reasons. Unfortunately, our National Committee now seems to think otherwise. For our theoretical forebears only the proletarian democracy is capable of oppressing the bourgeoisie, and at the same time, guaranteeing the rights of the population as a whole.

Who else but the workers in each factory and shop, in each farm cooperative or sugar mill, are capable of guarding their socio-economic and political rights. Is it the NC's point of view that some group of leaders not directly under the control of the mass can be sure to do this for them? Such a point of view must be rejected as nonMarxist and elitist.

Who else but the workers in each shop are able to determine how much they are able to produce, or are able to judge how much they need to live, or how far their living standard can be cut in order to defend their revolution against imperialism? For that matter, what better way can be found of assuring the workers that such cuts are in their interests, except to allow them to make such cuts, when and where they feel they are needed, themselves.

In the fight against imperialism, which will yet demand of the Cuban workers even greater sacrifices than those they have already made, proletarian democracy can only be regarded as one of the strongest weapons with which to defend the revolution. Insofar as the Castro leadership has failed to move in that direction, they have failed in their defense of the revolution, and that failure serves to indicate that there must be some differentiation between themselves and the Cuban proletariat.

Previously I quoted the statements of Marx used by Comrade James in an effective refutation of the majority concept that Cuba became a workers state with the extensive nationalizations. This she did to push another view of Cuba as a workers state -- to support the position of Comrade Deck, which Comrade James quotes as follows:

"I believe it was possible as early as October 1959 to characterize the Cuban state as a workers state and to characterize it on the basis of the objective development of the revolution and the institutions which it had thus far produced... the class character of the Castro leadership, I think, was finally decided when they made the decisive step of breaking with those bourgeois liberals who had the support of American Imperialism, who had the support of the counterrevolution inside Cuba... They associated themselves directly with the mass, turning to the mass while making the break with the liberal bourgeoisie. And then by October 1959 they established the fundamental base of the state by arming the masses as the special repressive force."

Before dealing with Comrade James' expansion of this basic concept of Deck's, let us examine this idea that the Castro leadership "established the fundamental base of the state by arming the masses as the special repressive force." Once again we find ourselves confronted with a viewpoint on the nature of the state that is alien to Marxism. No longer is the state an oppressive apparatus of the ruling class that sets up special bodies of armed men. Instead, the bodies of armed men, in Comrade Deck's and James' point of view, are the state. Let us see what Engels, writing in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," had to say about such matters.

In speaking of the characteristics of the state, he wrote: "...The second is the establishment of a public force, which is no longer absolutely identical

with the population organizing itself as an armed power. This public force is necessary, because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the cleavage of society into classes... This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men, but of material appendages, prisons, and repressive institutions of all kinds, of which gentile society knew nothing."

Writing in "State and Revolution," Lenin explains Engels, "... A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power..." He doesn't say they are synonymous, rather that one is the chief tool of the other. One comes into being as a result of the other. Lenin points out, "... A state is formed, a special power is created in the form of special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by shattering the state apparatus, demonstrates to us how the ruling class aims at the restoration of the special bodies of armed men at its service, and how the oppressed class tries to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving not the exploiters, but the exploited."

There we have it -- the ruling class forms a state and then, in order to enforce the rule of their state in their interest, they create special bodies of armed men to carry out that task. The task of the proletariat is to destroy the state, and with its bodies of armed men, and to replace them with an organization "...capable of serving not the exploiters, but the exploited."

The proletariat destroys the state and its apparatus, and in the process of doing so, organizes itself as a body of armed men. It becomes a "self-acting armed organization of the population," insofar as it destroys the bourgeoisie as a class and constitutes proletarian democracy as its mode of operation. In a word, the militia and the government become one.

Comrades Deck and James forget, it seems that the workers state acts in the interests of the whole of society, once it has destroyed the bourgeoisie as an economic class. They forget that the armed workers return to the condition (as they once were in primitive classless society) of being a "...self-acting, armed organization of the population..." insofar as they are part of and controlled by the population, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class.

Then, in order to prove the "special" position, Comrade James quotes Trotsky writing in an article entitled, "Not a Workers, Not a Bourgeois State," in Internal Bulletin #3 of December 1937.

"B. and C. [James Burnham and Joseph Carter] themselves remark in passing that in its dependence on objective and subjective conditions, the rule of the proletariat 'is able to express itself in a number of different governmental forms.' For clarity we will add: either through an open struggle of different parties within the soviets, or through the monopoly of one party, or even through a factual concentration of power in the hands of a single person. Of course, personal dictatorship is a symptom of the greatest danger to the regime. But at the same time, it is, under certain conditions, the only means by which to save that regime. The class nature of the state is, consequently determined not by its political forms but by its social content; i.e., by the character of the

forms of property and productive relations which the given state guards and defends."

Comrade James applies this to Cuba in an attempt to support the "special" Deck point of view. She says, "The question, then, is what forms of property and productive relations the Cuban state power guards and defends and at what point in the development was the state coming to the defense of workers and peasants control of land and industry. It is not a question of noncapitalist productive relations dominating the economy, but rather a question of which form of property and productive relations the state guards and defends in a transitional period of social revolution."

Either Comrades Deck and James believe that the Cuban state, acting through the workers and peasants militias, was defending, in October 1959, the forms of property and productive relations that might be achieved by a workers state, or they believe something far more dangerous, that in October 1959 we could attribute to the Castro government the level of consciousness expressed in the programs of the Bolshevik party when it came to power in October 1917 under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. It becomes apparent that Comrades Deck and James do not believe that the Castro government was defending, in October 1959, the economic forms of a workers state. For if they did they would not quarrel with the majority concept that economic criteria are the bases for determining the existence of a workers state. They would merely attempt to advance the date at which the workers state was established. Instead they go to quite a bit of trouble in an attempt to establish criteria that are quite different.

In view of this approach the only conclusion to be drawn is that Deck and James do credit Castro with the consciousness of a revolutionary socialist. This course is most dangerous and is a strong indication that there is within the party a tendency that assigns the leading role in revolutionary struggles for socialism, not to the proletariat and its vanguard party of revolutionary socialism, but instead to petty-bourgeois empiricists whose whole course has been one of facing up to each subsequent problem with no consistent theory and having to work out the answer at each historical juncture without the aid of a unified body of theory.

But this is not left to us as the only indication of where this line of thought tends to go. In her article, Comrade James raises the question of the class nature of the state of Guinea. She indicates this when she states, "Now, what criteria will we use when we begin to discuss the nature of the state in Guinea and in the future state of Algeria?" Obviously Comrade James believes there is something new about the class nature of the Guinean state that warrants discussion. I wonder when she will submit a document for the consideration of the NC which proclaims Guinea a workers state!

While we must not forget to keep an eye on the future development of such a line of thinking, let us go back and find out where Comrade James has gone astray. If they serve no better end, the theoretical manipulations of Comrade James should serve as a good example of just how not to bolster a pet theory, a theory that does not match reality. In this case the lesson might be stated thusly, "Don't go searching through Marxist publications for a phrase here or a paragraph there that seems to reinforce your theory. Marxist theory is not made up of a bunch of laws that may be applied here or there as one wishes but rather is an integrated class conception of the movement of history and no part can be separated out to support a 'special' view without doing grave harm to the whole theoretical body." Let us see how this piecemeal conception of theory leads Comrade James

into the alley of self-contradiction.

What Comrade James has done is to inadvertently stumble into the error of the majority. In search of points to support a different position she utilizes Trotsky's criteria for determining, if in decline or thermidor, the state of the S.U. could, in any way, still be said to defend the economic class interests of the proletariat. In the article by Trotsky that Comrade James has quoted he was writing about the Soviet Union after a degeneration or descendant phase of the proletarian revolution had set. In determining the nature of the state, Trotsky sought to determine if the bureaucratic state apparatus was still acting to defend the basic achievements of the proletariat, achievements that had meant the dissolution of the bourgeoisie as a class through the expropriation of the means of production.

As a result of mechanically attempting to transpose Trotsky's teachings from a different historical context to Cuba, Comrade James now finds (whether she knows it or not) that Cuba is a workers state, not on the criterion utilized to characterize the Soviet state in October 1917 (that criterion being the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat), nor on her own criterion of armed bodies of men, but instead on the basis that Trotsky used in determining that Russia was a degenerated workers state, i.e., a dictatorship over the proletariat by a bureaucratic caste. Our comrade has shifted all unwittingly to the criteria of the majority. She does this through the mechanism of asserting that the militias in Cuba as armed bodies composed the state, and then quoting Trotsky in reference to state nature being determined by what those armed bodies defend. All this she transposes to Cuba at a time when there had not yet been an expropriation of the main elements of bourgeois property.

On one hand Cuba has to depend for its existence on the Soviet bureaucracy whose record for selling out revolutions is a very long one. Indeed, this is being written as the bureaucracy seeks to sell out the struggles of the Laotian people and others both at the conference in Geneva and in the personal meetings between Khrushchev and Kennedy in Vienna. On the other hand Cuba faces the pressure of U.S. imperialism with only a fraction of the resources the October revolution had to go on. In addition it lacks the features that could most insure the continued forward progress of the revolution; a proletarian democracy and a Marxist vanguard party. With such a democracy there would be some assurance that internal contradictions and social differentiations arising from them could be kept to a minimum. In addition the leadership of a conscious Marxist party would insure that effective measures would be taken to extend the revolution throughout Latin America through the building of a revolutionary organization of a hemispheric nature.

Cuba, not being an extension of the USSR, insofar as it does not have an economy integrated with that of the Soviet bloc, and also not having the political rule of a Communist party, is in a very unstable condition of existence.

The NC majority and the Deck position have one thing in common. Neither of them see that a non-deformed workers state must necessarily be a proletarian democracy. Seeing Cuba as a workers state they can find no immediate need for a workers party aside from the present leadership of Fidel Castro. For them the Castro leadership has done everything correctly and so they trust it to introduce from above the forms of proletarian democracy. The PC addenda to the theses, calling for the institution of proletarian democracy through constitutional reforms bears this out.

Section VI in effect calls upon the present government to dissolve itself in favor of a "...government...established on the basis of workers and peasants councils..." This concept of calling on a government apparatus to hand down to the Cuban people the forms of their own democratic government is a thoroughly non-Marxist conception as hundreds of years of history will testify.

In section VII the addenda suggests that in view of "new developments... the best course would be formal organization of a mass revolutionary party... to run the government under the new constitution."

In section VIII they state, "The leadership /the NC means the present heads of the Castro government/...will naturally be accepted as the bona-fide leadership of such a mass revolutionary party at its formal organization..."

In reading the addenda one might come to the conclusion that the only "new reality" the NC majority sees is the one in the SWP where a group of the comrades, the minority, has taken on the task of exposing the Cuba theses for what it is, an incorrect assessment of the nature of the Cuban revolution leading to a series of greater and more dangerous theoretical deviations. For the majority the process through which a political party of the working class is organized is reduced to mere formalization, to the decree of a government that now says that a party exists. Lost, if you accept the majority view, is the entire process that educates and tempers the membership of a revolutionary party. The majority doesn't even see a need to indicate what sort of party this is to be. Is it to be a mass workers and peasants party, an idea thoroughly discredited historically, or is it to be a party of the working class complete with the wisdom of the Marxist movement? If so how is it to get this? All we are told is that it is to have as its leadership the empiricism of Castro.

Such a party is a negation of reasons for its existence. This kind of thinking on the part of the NC leads directly to the liquidationist attitude of Comrade James who will now see Guinea, maybe Ghana, and who knows, what other bourgeois nationalist states as workers states.

As for the Cuban Trotskyists? The NC easily disposes of them. They are merely to take their place in this undefined mass party along with all other tendencies supporting the Cuban revolution. With this regroupment attitude toward the formation of a Cuban party the majority sees no independent role for them in fixing the program of this party, nor do they see any independent role for them in its organization.

Adoption by the party convention of such a theses and addenda can only open the door for our party to travel down the many byways that surround Trotskyism, but byways that are decisively non-Trotskyist.

June 5, 1961

CHINA AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

By James E. Boulton

"Of course, one may speak only conditionally of a realization of the revisionist caricature of Marxism, applicable to a definite historical period. The way out of decaying capitalism, however, will be found, even if after a great delay, not upon the road of the automatic collapse but upon the revolutionary road."

L. Trotsky, "The Only Road," page 79.

Since the crisis in which Comrade Trotsky underscored the essential role of the revolutionary party, the river has gone under the arch and out to meet the tide. At mid-century an entire flotilla of Balkan, Baltic, Asiatic, and now Caribbean states have joined the fleet of workers states in transition to the world socialist reorganization of society.

The mightiest of these -- the Peoples' Republic of China -- which has canopied fully one-third of the earth's populace under the flag of international socialism, is described in the authoritative resolution of the American Trotskyist party and its international cothinkers, as a phenomenon along the road of "automatic collapse." And this in despite of the astonishing achievements in the spheres of planned production, social organization transcending the narrow limits of the Kremlin bureaucracy (the communes), and ideological rearmament of the world communist proletariat in the struggle against the revisionist crimes of Stalinism. (See "Long Live Leninism," Peking, 1960.)

"The Revolutionary Road," in Bolshevik language, has always meant and can only mean the intervention of a conscious revolutionary leadership to effect the conquest of state power in the unfolding class struggle. The very justification for the existence of a Marxist social science as the instrument of the organized socialist proletariat lies in the reciprocal relationship between the subjective factor and the objective factor in the social process of revolutionary change.

If a confirmation for the main historic estimates of prewar Trotskyism, the shattering of Stalinism and a resurgence of world social revolution in the wake of the Second Imperialist World War, was abundant in the succession of revolutions from Yugoslavia through China and Budapest to Cuba, the unity of this world revolutionary process has met with organized hostility in a considerable sector of the world Trotskyist movement. And it is this profound current in our movement which opens up the danger of party liquidation.

The armed victory of the Yugoslav Communists in 1946 was understood by the world Trotskyist movement not as a confirmation of Trotsky's main prognosis for the fate of Stalinism in the wake of World War II, but as a commencement of a new era of historical automatism. The revolution was unacceptable, and an insufficiency of purely empirical data with which to confirm our revolutionary norms left the Yugoslav Revolution in the lurch until the main blows against Stalinism had been delivered.

By 1947 a methodological departure in the work of international Trotskyism had gathered steam. There began the progressive elaboration of an idea that the world revolution continues to advance under a counterrevolutionary Stalinist leadership trust-funded with an effective revolutionary action, bequeathed by the Russian October 1917.

What the present party majority has failed to acknowledge, along with the defectors of 1957, Marcy et al, is the indissoluble link between the explosion along the buffer (Hungary, Poland, East Germany) and the rupture of Stalinist hegemony in the formation of workers brigades and peoples committees by the Yugoslav Communists in 1946. Now the second magnificent thrust along the road to world socialism, the second great revolution of our epoch, was sealed in the armed victory of the Chinese Communist party for 1949. Its force has upset all hitherto established relations and norms the world over.

By this alone the mercenary forces of imperialism were checked at the Austro-Hungarian border. Surely the worker Communists of Hungary had demonstrated their capacity to accredit the revolutionary tasks at home. Some Stalinists and some Trotskyists saw only the imperialist danger within.

To search for the class struggle in sociological norms abstracted from history in spite of the proletariat is to deny the unity, lodged in consciousness and the revolutionary leadership, between the subjective and objective processes in history.

If we can only describe the stamp of Stalinist training in these events, the programmatic inadequacies, the crimes against internationalist principle and solidarity, the bureaucratic shortcomings, or if we respond to the vacillating enthusiasms of the world bourgeois intelligentsia; we blind ourselves to the incompatibility of Stalinism with social revolution.

II. Automatic Collapse and the Russian Revolution

An implicit danger in the theory of "automatic collapse" is a revival of the vulgar Social-Democratic theory on the nature of the October Revolution, reducing the conquest of proletarian state power under the leadership of a conscious Marxist directorate to a well-timed putschist conspiracy decisively abetted by the German Foreign Ministry.

The primary target of those ideological systems which reduce the role of the revolutionary consciousness invested in the vanguard party to a negligible and even accidental role, is scientific socialism itself as propounded in the party schools from Marx through Trotsky. Social and political systems are once again elevated to the realm of rational choice and ripped from the integument of evolutionary processes and revolutionary dialectics.

A remarkable documentation by Z.A.B. Zeman, "Germany and the Revolution in Russia 1915-1918" (Oxford University Press, 1958), exposes the extent, scrupulously detailed in selected documents from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry, to which the German high command did consciously intervene in the developing revolutionary situation in Russia prior to and through 1917. The fantastic role of the adventurer Parvus (Dr. Helphand), as 1905 revolutionist and agent of the liberal Hohenzollern foreign ministry, is finally afforded a full documentary confirmation.

Having undertaken extensive long-range political and military preparations to transport all Russian emigres as "partisans of peace," with especial attention to the Bolsheviks and Trotsky, the German state department sought to co-ordinate its military operations on the Eastern front with the developing revolutionary events and agitation!

Indeed, the entire European enclave of German ministries seethed with "revolutionary activity." Banking heavily upon Lenin and Trotsky, German state intelligence preoccupied itself with the "revolutionary" estimates.

Let us admit this instructive excerpt from page 67: Telegram No. 1328, dated Berlin, 26 July, 1917, and entitled: "The Chancellor to the Foreign Ministry Liaison Officer at General Headquarters":

"With reference to telegram No. 52751 from Operational Department to Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften, I request that General Ludendorff be told the following: Compliance with secret Order I a 4000 given to Eastern Command and Army Group Mackensen would mean a new offer of peace to Russia, or would at least be interpreted as such by Russian press and public opinion in Russia. I do not consider present moment suitable for such a step. If our counter-offensive is strong enough to make those now in power in Russia fear its continuation, then they, or in the event of their removal, their successors, will try to make contact with us of their own accord. If it is not strong enough, then these steps, which, in addition bear the stamp of extreme haste, will only have harmful effects. I should therefore be very grateful if the intended statement could be temporarily shelved, and if General Ludendorff could give me an opportunity to express an opinion before he formulates new principles for propaganda at the front. We must be very careful that the literature with which we are aiming to further the process of disintegration inside Russia does not achieve the directly opposite result."

The German Foreign Ministry has a will of its own and that will is irrevocably counterrevolutionary. It would be both more loyal and more correct to say that the strategic orientation of the Bolshevik party, deriving from the split of 1903, Lenin's elaboration of the "April Theses," "State and Revolution," and his brilliant fusion of Trotsky's party in September, secured the victory for the Russian October.

III. The "Reconstructed" Theory of Permanent Revolution

Nevertheless, the theoretical literature of American Trotskyism on the Chinese Communist conquest of state power and its fulfillment of basic tasks in the planned economy, seeks to lodge the decisive factor in history outside of the revolutionary party, hastily described as "Stalinist" and "counter-revolutionary." To American imperialism and the State Department are imputed the mystical quality of compelling the counterrevolutionary Chinese CP to spite itself, in wholly novel and revolutionary ways.

Comrades A. Swabeck and J. Liang have made an excellent summation, by contradistinction, in characterizing the Maoist Communists of China as "an adequate instrument of revolution."

If the enormous conquests in all spheres of cultural growth, including the party life itself, directly challenge the mechanical view of Roberts, Weiss and Hansen, a purely empirical comparator -- data evaluation in terms of standardized norms -- is implemented to wrest the revolutionary fulfillments from their integral place in the relationship of the CCP to Chinese social and economic progress.

What is entirely unacceptable in the formally precise argumentation of Dan Roberts (D.B. Volume 21, No. 3, 1960) is expressed in the empirical method

of conceding, in response to forceful prodding, such evidence substantiating the theory of permanent revolution. The while Roberts renounces the task of lodging these monumental events and socialist achievements in the revolutionary process of history. Does the bare qualification of China as a "workers state," produced by a bureaucratic entrapment in the vise of the Russian October and imperialist pressures on the regime, suffice to account for the distinctly anti-Stalinist characteristics of the Chinese Revolution in all of its phases?

Verily, an entirely new construction of the theory of permanent revolution is propounded. Unable to solve the problems of production, peace, social stability, abundance, and state organization within the framework of Stalinist precepts, bourgeois property relations and planning methods; a Chinese peasantry divorced from the proletariat undertakes to rectify the bureaucratic tyranny and force the Chinese Communist party yet another step along the road to state power, socialism, and even internationalist principle! Such wizardry and resource would best serve itself by dispensing with the party altogether. Really what role does the Chinese party perform apart from its routine of Stalinist bureaucratic indulgences?

Every victory, fulfilling a socialist solution to the contradictions inherent in the clash of modern productive forces with their imperialist integument, every advance is subjected to the data-comparator; then finally allowed under the banner of Stalinism and credited to a party leadership hostile to the proletariat and its tasks.

The revolution rolls on, despite the hostility of the armed state power and its anti-Marxist regime! Widespread evidence of bureaucratism, where a Spartan, Barcelona-type egalitarianism would presumably be the revolutionary norm, is adduced by Comrade S. T. Peng, (D.B. Volume 23, No. 4, March 1961). A plethora of motor cars, good food, and "extraordinarily pretty women" at state functions, are introduced by Peng along with even more serious abuses. Kronstadt's abound and history is not made out of the whole cloth.

Now it is just possible that broad layers of the Chinese Communist cadres are not all they should be. There is a Spartan norm; and conceivably Mao and his cohorts pulled a fast one turning over a new and fancy leaf after emerging from the caves of Yen-an.

It will be enough if the regime pursued a circumspect equalitarianism during the lean years leading up to the Chinese October. That is what we are discussing. How does a modern revolution come into being? Along the road of "automatic collapse" and a vacuum filled by the inexhaustible reservoir of Stalinist bureaucrats, or under the banner of a party with an adequately Marxist leadership?

Empirical precision without a fusion of the party, both in theory and practice, with the objectively evolving revolutionary forces of our time, will get us nowhere. In this connection a criticism by Comrade Maki, a Chinese comrade, in the International Information Bulletin for March 1952, is much to the point and relates the question to the history of our Chinese comrades:

"We have been too absorbed in abstract theories, and have paid too little attention to the objective development of these events. We have not sufficiently taken into account the peculiar combination of the concrete conditions, nor have we measured the subjective and objective significance of the existing movement

in the present situation, nor made a scrupulous analysis of the relative weight of the diverse tendencies in the present movement. We have only sketchily applied one or two abstract principles to the concrete events. As the movement does not conform to our idealized norms, we shrug at it with contempt. Despite the fact that the sky and earth have been turned upside down, we disdainfully remark, 'No way out,' and turn our heads back to work in a small circle, quietly awaiting another revolutionary storm which would burst forth outside of this existing movement."

This formula for the admission of realities at the servants' entrance, where the front portal is reserved for membership, has become downright dangerous as a theoretical instrument and impractical as a basis for action in the Party of World Socialist Revolution.

From the point of view of method, Marxist analysis is thus reduced to sheer ritualism. Nothing more is necessary once we have demonstrated the correspondence between the realities and our data comparators. We may then decide to either accept or reject them. Has Cuba met the test? How conscious was Castro?

And for example, the party crisis over Cuba, which for all practical purposes swims in the orbit of world planned economies, and emerges out of the armed revolutionary action of the Cuban people; the party crisis derives from an inability to comprehend the internationalist role and power of the Chinese Communist leadership. The Kremlin bureaucracy is held in check and goes to the Kennedy Summit with the guns of Peking radar-scoped upon its back. Not only has Cuba been put on rations by the Soviet bloc, but the world experience in socialist organization and construction has been put at its disposal.

If, as a matter of course, we rule out the possibility of socialism on one island, the immediate perspectives of development for Cuba are bound up with the relationship of forces within the world socialist camp, and especially by the fortunes of the internationalist leadership within the Chinese CP. What is the depth of this sea?

IV. The Chinese Communists and Leninist Democracy

Never, since the days when the old warrior of October, Leon Trotsky, held the floor in direct debate against the Soviet compradors, has the Kremlin been challenged so forcefully as at the Bucharest Conference of June 1960 -- and on the precise question of party democracy.

We will quote an observer for the U.S. State Department, Edward Crankshaw, from an article in the Atlantic Monthly for May 1961, entitled "Khrushchev and China:"

"But even more serious in Moscow was the totally unprecedented Chinese attitude toward the unspeakable sin of fractionalism. When the Russians accused the Chinese Party of trying to start a fraction it marked the peak of the quarrel. It is the sort of accusation made only in the last resort, and when it is made the comrades hold their breaths and the world, for a moment, stands still.

"But what happened this time? Did the Chinese tremble? Did they in desperation deny the charge with all possible indignation? Not a bit of it. Teng Hsiao-Ping declared coolly that China had a perfect right to form a fraction.

Lenin, he said, when he was preparing to split the Social Democratic Party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, had himself established a precedent by forming what was at first a minority fraction in order to win a majority successfully in the end. There was nothing to be said after that: it was a declaration of war."

Khrushchev "had to accept a definition of co-existence, which by all accounts he would have preferred to leave undefined:" to wit, "Peaceful co-existence of countries with different social systems does not mean the conciliation of the socialist and bourgeois ideologies. On the contrary, it implies intensification of the struggle of the working-class of all Communist Parties, for the triumph of socialist ideas." (The Conference Resolution)

The very fact that the Chinese could make the decision to challenge Moscow on the organizational question speaks volumes.

But what of the regimen in China, in the party life there, the empirically minded comrades from Missouri will ask? Apart from the impossibility of any growth of Marxist dialectic on the soil of Soviet bureaucratism (see Khrushchev for style -- Report at the 20th C.P.S.U. Congress) let it be remembered that E. Germain, then reigning Literary Secretary of the Fourth International, debated the nature of the Yugoslav state in 1950 by data comparator. He asked, finally: "What of the Peoples' Committees? How do they function?" In sixty pages he never did succeed in answering the question on the class character of the Yugoslav state and its regime.

V. The Methodological Trap and Liquidationism in the SWP

Out of the Second World War and its aftermath, three definable organized tendencies within the SWP elected to take the road of abandonment, having failed to recognize the Trotskyist prognosis in its fulfillment.

The first of these, led by Morrow and Goldman as party theoreticians, defied reality to the extent of refusing to recognize the resurgent world revolution as it emerged in resistance to German imperialism during the war. These gentlemen scholars rocketed off into limbo, declaring the revolution done for, at the Party Congress of 1947, setting the stage for the firing of satellite clusters throughout our world movement. Their contact with the class struggle had never gone beyond the journalist's desk and the lecturer's forum!

With the elaboration of party theses defining the revolutionary conquests in Yugoslavia and China, along with the Stalinization of the buffer, exclusively in terms of objective criteria, in a categorical denial of the breakdown of Stalinism, Bert Cochran formed an alliance with Michel Pablo in 1952, to liquidate the American party.

For the Cochranites the role of the revolutionary vanguard had ceased to be the decisive factor in history. The fusion of the military Communist parties in Europe and Asia with the armed populations in contests for state power had never reached them as a confirmation of Trotskyist outlines for world development

On the contrary, a clear declaration of the transcendent power of imperialist economic forces and the Soviet administrators of planned economy relieved them of their revolutionary duty. The right-sectarian deviationists adopted the concept of automatic collapse of world Stalinism and severed their connec-

tions with world reality in October 1953.

By 1958, under the leadership of Sam Marcy, the method of lodging history in this imperialist-Stalinist juggernaut, of refusing to recognize the transformation along the road to Trotskyism of certain Communist party leaderships under the impact of the world revolutionary process, of abrogating the unity and interaction on a world scale of objective developments and consciousness; this method fulfilled itself again in the left-sectarian split in the winter of 1959. In a tizzy over the excesses of the regroupment, their sensitivities compelled another group of Trotskyists into oblivion.

Clearly the world revolution is very much alive and the Leninist-Trotskyist heritage is an indispensable requisite to further progress.

VI. The Touchstone Questions

Two questions of touchstone import have come out of World War II and the wave of revolutionary shocks that have revised the face of the globe. These are the class character and origin of the Chinese State, and the class character and historical content of the Hungarian-Buffer Revolution. It may be that to these can be added a third or prior question: What is Stalinism in the post-War II period since the military defeats on the terrain of the USSR and the military victory of the Yugoslavs over the collaborationists and German bourgeoisie?

The confusion in the party of theoretical Marxism is underscored in the attempts by "authorities" on "sociological norms" to rob the historic role of the working class of its life content -- the class itself -- to deny for China "any ponderable role" and relevance of the working proletariat to the emergence of a "workers state," to deny for Hungary, at least, the revolutionary content in the direct mass intervention of the class in the administration of things on an armed basis.

It is true that the workers are not always going our way. But by and large, taking a quick glance at history, the armed intervention of a whole class against an oppressor has the quality of wisdom and virtue.

This sizable error is dependent upon two propositions:

(1) The Soviet bureaucracy defends in its own way, and on an ever more progressive scale, corresponding to the growth of production and culture, the conquests of the October Revolution of 1917.

(2) All social struggles, post-War II, are subordinate to the determinate character in the antagonism between decaying imperialism and Soviet statification.

It follows presumably, and certainly for good mechanics of the Marcyite school, that wherever the Soviet Bonapartists and American imperialists are joined in relation to social-political struggles, the objective role of the former is determinately progressive. Moreover, their bullets have a friendly message. In the same ambush we find a view that wherever imperialism is broken against a communist party, the latter is determinately counterrevolutionary!

The laboring classes, provisionally construed here as all oppressed sectors of mankind, the human root ("for us the root is man" in the words of Karl Marx) are reduced to an abstraction locked within the concept of antagonistic property forms and imperative categories expressing these property forms.

In China the multi-millions of armed landless peasant candidates for the labor market, are denied their inheritance as "proletarians" by reference to the classical conception of peasants as petty bourgeoisie. In Hungary and similar spots the proletarians are unclear in their understanding of the progressive class character of Stalin tanks.

One way or another, the oppressed workers are eliminated from the historic scene in favor of more ideal objective considerations.

Marxism as "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class-struggles" gives way to the pre-empting role of empirical criteria in the antagonism between property forms. Moreover, a number of people have pointed out that there are grave risks in favoring the class struggle. And just because Soviet property relations are productively advantageous; and just because the workers, not to mention their wise leaders, do not always recognize their best interests.

It should have been understood in our movement that wherever an exploiting class, or a privileged sector, compradors and bureaucrats of the progressive class have outlived their social usefulness, the objective needs of history combine with the subjective aspirations of the oppressed classes. They become revolutionary with varying chances of success, depending upon the varying stages of consciousness within the leadership of the contending forces.

The emergence of new workers states, and the emergence of revolutionary mass struggles on the terrain of the USSR and planned economy are in all instances viewed as mutually antagonistic processes. Comrades Roberts, Weiss and Hansen labor the absence of a Trotskyist programmatic leadership within the Chinese working class and Red Armies. The left sectarians, Grey and Marcy, cannot countenance workers councils without the Trotskyists in the Hungarian Revolution.

Anathema to all is the idea that the two processes, social upheaval on the terrain of ancient imperialism and social upheaval on the terrain of modern nationalized economy are integral to each other.

That the military defeats for Stalinism on the soil of the USSR and the military-revolutionary victory over the fascists in Yugoslavia confirmed the prognosis of Trotsky for the outcome of War II, falls short of being grasped.

Obviously, if there are going to be any more revolutions against world capitalism, or any transformations on the terrain of the USSR, these would do well to find efficient expression in the programmatic leadership of Trotskyism. But, as I have mentioned before, the Trotskyists have been often enough grounded. Nevertheless, the revolution has materialized in a number of instances to do us the service of confirming important prognosis.

In paragraphs 19 and 20, page 4, of his document, "The Issues in the Hungarian Revolution," Comrade Dobbs restates explicitly the Leninist idea that revo-

lutionary struggles may commence, develop leadership, and, I imagine, go on to victory without an advance programmatic certification:

"We must see the political revolution in its dynamic as a living movement. When large masses are sent into revolutionary motion by events the struggle becomes rich with potential for the development of political class consciousness that will find its supreme expression through the forging of a revolutionary party. Such a party will begin to take form in the Soviet sphere during the course of the struggle itself. In Hungary the cadres for the party are already being assembled, especially in the Workers' Councils. The Hungarian Communist Party literally disintegrated with large sections of the ranks and secondary strata of the apparatus going over to the insurrectionary workers in the struggle against the bureaucracy." (Parenthetically, has not this process undergone considerable growth in China? J.E.B.)

"It is true the Councils lack what in the last analysis is the most fundamental instrument of all, a revolutionary Party to give conscious political leadership. It is true that lack of a revolutionary party seriously impairs political consciousness and gives rise to mistaken policies. It is true that creation of the revolutionary party remains the central task of the political revolution. Yet it is barren schematism to contend, as do the comrades of the minority, that there must be a full-fledged revolutionary-socialist party before the political revolution can begin, or else the insurrectionary struggle is bound to go in the direction of bourgeois restoration."

Where is the Trotskyist leadership, the clear line and the best guarantee for socialism? Time schedules, even for the USAF, run into inclement weather, and the railroads are always disappointing, urging the point for American Trotskyists: who is next where Stalinism crumbles with each advance of the oppressed classes the world over?

Trotskyism, if anything, is internationalist and belongs to the modern proletariat whose incompatibility, in its whole evolution, with Stalinism, finds affirmation where the CP has been compelled along the road of struggle, in the prostration of the European-American CPs, in the explosions along the buffer.

It will be well to forget the long life and credits to American imperialism and Soviet bonapartism. They have been taking a beating and stability is the least of our worries. The main task is to get on the proper, Marxist side of the barricades wherever they are undergoing construction. Trotskyism has a role to play again in the lands where the dead dreams go, in the citadels of imperialism.

NOTE: The question of when a Communist party becomes a non-"Stalinist" party, of the conditional evolution in opposite directions for the military CPs of the backward countries and the parliamentary CPs of the advanced countries will be discussed in a subsequent article.

June 8, 1961

WHAT THE DISCUSSION ON CUBA IS REALLY ABOUT

By Tim Wohlforth

What the orthodox Trotskyist minority in the party has been seeking from the very beginning of this discussion is the utmost political clarification of the important questions in dispute in the party. We feel strongly about our ideas and therefore we have formulated them strongly and with sharpness. We recognize that the majority comrades likewise feel strongly about their ideas and therefore sharpness on their part in replying to our criticisms is completely understandable.

It is not the sharpness in tone of Comrade Hansen's reply ("What the Discussion on Cuba is About") that we object to. What really bothers us is that it is now quite clear that the one thing Comrade Hansen does not want is political clarity. He has therefore attempted to sidetrack the whole discussion before the convention by dragging in a very smelly herring. He characterizes our desire to see the workers running the show in Cuba as -- capitulation to the pressures of the bourgeoisie!

We are sure that the level-headed comrades in the party will not be swayed by such a substitute for political discussion. The comrades know us -- they know us personally and they know us well. We have worked together to build a fighting Marxist youth movement and we have worked together day and night in defense of the Cuban Revolution. Some of the leading Fair Play activists are supporters of the minority point of view within the party and these comrades need to apologize to no one for the work they have done in unconditional and loyal defense of the Cuban Revolution. The comrades may disagree with us -- may feel we are quite wrong and possibly too sensitive about centrism. But the comrades know that one of our weaknesses does not happen to be "a certain responsiveness to the pressure of the Social Democracy."*

We feel that Comrade Hansen owes -- not us so much -- but the whole party and the world movement an apology for resorting to such an attack. We intend, regardless of provocation, to continue to present our views on the burning questions facing our movement -- to continue a political discussion.

And now we turn with relief to the serious political discussion. It is easy for the comrades to lose the central thread of the dispute in what is becoming a rather mountainous quantity of written material. (Sometime before this discussion is over I feel that all the comrades should express their appreciation for the truly magnificent job the NO staff has done in handling this material!) I will therefore attempt to treat in summary fashion what we consider to be the central questions in dispute and how we view these questions on the eve of the convention. The real issues in dispute are: (a) our conflicting attitude towards the Castro leadership; (b) our conflicting concepts of the revolutionary party; (c) our conflicting concepts of proletarian democracy and how it is to be instituted; and (d) a discernible drift within the party away from the fundamental conceptions of orthodox Trotskyism. All these questions are quite closely linked and when viewed together a certain political pattern emerges. The majority's attitude towards the revolutionary party and proletarian democracy are derivative from its attitude towards the Castro regime. The majority's attitude towards Castro, towards the revolutionary party and towards proletarian democracy are but the most profound political expression of the drift away from the fundamentals of orthodox Trotskyism.

(A) Our conflicting attitude towards the Castro leadership: The SWP majority stands alone (with the possible exception of the Canadians) among groups who claim to be Trotskyist throughout the world in its evaluation of the Castro leadership. No other Trotskyist party takes such an uncritical position -- seeks such an absolute identity with the leadership, total submersion into it. All other Trotskyists take some form of critical attitude towards the Castro regime, recognizing that this regime has at least some interests separate from the working class and that it bases itself on a governmental apparatus independent of the working class. It is this aspect of reality, as we have repeatedly stated, that the majority refuses to see. Rather it sees a complete identity of interests between the working class and the Castro governmental apparatus; it therefore quite correctly (if you grant the first assumption) seeks to completely identify with the Castro regime and bases its entire approach to the Cuban Revolution on this complete identity. The minority's "hesitation" in completely identifying with the Castro regime is now attacked by Comrade Hansen as a result of bourgeois pressures. Comrade Hansen must logically conclude then that all Trotskyists the world over also are giving in to bourgeois pressures. No matter how much Comrade Hansen tries he cannot escape from the reality that the present discussion is a world-wide one and must be approached as such.

This conception is a very dangerous one -- far more dangerous than the slanders directed against us. By identifying the revolution and the working class completely with the (at best) centrist leadership of the revolution and by characterizing those who continue to insist on at least some form of political independence from this centrist leadership as giving in to bourgeois pressures, it is but an easy jump to a conception which Comrade Hansen is not the originator of -- that independence from the centrist leadership is in and of itself counter-revolutionary! This was the FLN's theory when it shot at the MNA; this was Mao's theory when he imprisoned the Trotskyists; this was Ho Chi Minh's theory when he assassinated the Trotskyists; this seems to be Comrade DeBruce's theory when he stated in the New York Branch that the minority comrades would be in jail if they were in Cuba (luckily this is not yet Castro's theory as he still grants the Cuban Trotskyists their freedom even though they are pushing an independent working-class line in Cuba today -- on this issue Fidel seems to be to the left of some of the party members). Comrade Hansen, if we interpret him correctly, seems almost prepared to make this jump in the section of his article explaining why it would be wrong for the party to openly advocate proletarian democracy in Cuba.

We reject a concept of complete identity of the revolution and the working class with Castro. We feel that Castro is a great revolutionist and that he is far to the left of the Stalinists; we favor a positive approach to Castro and those around him; we offer critical support to Castro as against the Stalinists and other agents of bourgeois pressure within Cuba. But we insist on the independent identity of the Marxists in Cuba regardless of what form this takes. We do not at all rule out that it may take the form of a principled entry tactic but we insist that those undertaking such a tactic be independent from and critical of the Castro leadership insofar as it undertakes actions which are not in the best interests of the class. Further we feel that the Castro leadership is no substitute for the establishing of a mass revolutionary Marxist party to lead the revolution further and to deepen it through the establishment of proletarian democracy.

(B) Our conflicting concepts of the revolutionary party: The revolutionary party has taken quite a beating during the current party discussion. As I made

clear in my article "On the Revolutionary Party," what is at issue here is not whether we must raise the banner of the open party in all countries and under all circumstances. Rather what we seek is that the essential unique identity of the Trotskyist vanguard be preserved at all times and that all tactics must be judged on the basis of whether or not they will lead to the strengthening of this vanguard. This means a complete rejection of any concept that the Trotskyists are to act only as a pressure group on others, or as ideological spokesmen as distinct from organizational leaders of the class.

Since writing my article the comrades of the majority have attempted to introduce into their approach towards the Cuban Revolution the concept of the revolutionary party. Let us see what happens to the concept of the revolutionary party in the process. In the second of Comrade Hansen's polemical articles on Draper he introduces his concept of the revolutionary party. He projects that the revolutionary party is to be built in Cuba through the fusion of the 26th of July Movement with the Communist Party (PSP). This concept is incorporated into the PC "Addenda" to the "Theses" in the form of a call for the organization of a "mass revolutionary party" which is to include "all...political tendencies supporting the revolution" and is to be led by Castro and his associates. What remains vague is what the political program of this "all-inclusive" party is to be, other than that it will not have a Trotskyist program (though it is to include the Trotskyists as one of its constituents).

It is apparent that this proposed revolutionary party is not a Leninist-type vanguard party with a Trotskyist program but rather some transitional organizational form of quite an unclear political nature. The majority has not stated whether it feels that such an "all-inclusive" party is sufficient in and of itself to fill our "norms." They have so far refused to advocate the ultimate formation of a mass Trotskyist party.

The advocacy of such a party (without making clear its program) at this particular time in Cuba is quite dangerous for there presently is a move, that has already gone quite far, to merge the Castro movement with the Stalinist party. Leo Huberman states in the June Monthly Review: "There will be soon, a union of three groups into one united revolutionary party -- the left elements of the July 26 Movement, the Directorio, and the Communist Party." What is our attitude towards such an amalgam with the Stalinists? Do we unconditionally support it or do we specify what we feel should be the political basis for any such unity? There is a real danger involved here if one feels as we do that the Castro leadership is to the left of the Stalinists and that the Cuban Stalinists still are Stalinists -- which means that they will utilize their influence within such a combined party for counterrevolutionary purposes. The comrades of the majority must explain their attitude toward this concrete political process in Cuba itself. Is the Cuban PSP no longer Stalinist? Then say so and prove it! Is Stalinism no longer counterrevolutionary? Then say so and prove it! If neither of these are true then it is the task of Trotskyists to oppose this merger and to support Castro as against the Stalinists. Where do you stand, comrades?

To reiterate where the minority stands -- we feel that the construction of a mass Trotskyist party in Cuba (as well as elsewhere) is essential to the healthy development of the Cuban Revolution. Without such a party we clearly state that degeneration of the revolution is inevitable. We do not rule out entry tactics nor do we reject transitional slogans which call for the formation of a mass revolutionary party with a principled political program but which is not yet a

Trotskyist party. However we view such a party as a transitional step in the direction of the formation of a mass Trotskyist party and not as a substitute for such a party.

(C) Our conflicting concepts of proletarian democracy and how it is to be instituted: To us the concept proletarian democracy is second only in importance to the concept of the revolutionary party. The organization of the vanguard is more important than the organization of the class as a whole but the vanguard can only rule for a short time without the organization of the class as a whole. This is the lesson of the Russian Revolution -- this is what Trotskyism is all about.

By proletarian democracy we mean establishment of the institutional forms through which the working class exercises its dictatorship. These forms are soviet-type organs of workers power. Proletarian democracy is the exact opposite of bourgeois democracy for the very simple reason that the proletariat has an oppositional relationship with the bourgeoisie. Anyone who does not recognize this distinction -- anyone who refuses to advocate the former for fear it will be confused with the latter -- is not a Marxist. It is the Trotskyist view that the direct wielding of power by the working class strengthens the class in its struggle against the capitalists rather than weakening it. It is our conviction that the working class can defend its own interests better than an uncontrolled bureaucracy or governmental apparatus can. Thus, despite the accusation by the Stalinists that we were being counterrevolutionary, we advocated the political revolution in the USSR throughout the Second World War for we felt that the establishment of true workers democracy in the USSR would help its defense against the imperialists rather than weaken it.

Comrade Hansen feels differently about this. He feels that for the working class to exercise its direct rule in Cuba would not help -- it would hinder the defense of the revolution. You see, you need "maximum centralism" (a good idea as long as it is the working class that is doing the centralizing). Central to this concept of Comrade Hansen's is a feeling that somehow advocating the direct rule of the working class in Cuba would be detrimental to the defense of the revolution -- in fact to so advocate the direct rule by the working class is giving in to bourgeois pressures. This is not a Trotskyist approach. We must reject it now as we have always rejected it in the past when it was raised by apoligists for the Kremlin.

However, it is an important step forward that the PC has added to its "Theses through its current "Addendum," a clear call for the institution of proletarian forms of rule in Cuba. But we must take note of how the comrades seek to institute these forms. It is to be done by Castro through a Constitution! ** Workers power is something that must be struggled for from below by the workers themselves -- not handed down from on top by the government through a constitution. Our task is to direct our appeal for workers democracy to the workers themselves rather than begging that the government do the job for the workers. Let us not transform soviets from a fighting demand of a class into a constitutional amendment!

Comrade Hansen's attitude towards the institution of workers power is closely related to this concept of the Cuban state and his uncritical attitude towards Castro. This finds expression in two new concepts introduced by Comrade Hansen in his latest article: (a) the destruction of the difference between the norms for determining a workers state and those for determining a deformed workers state; and (b) his discovery of a new theory of "inversion." He denies that we

apply separate norms in determining a deformed or degenerated workers state and for determining a workers state. He reasons that since we called China a deformed workers state and it certainly was the product of a revolution in ascendancy it is false to make such a distinction between the norms for ascending and for descending revolutions. What Comrade Hansen ignores is that we viewed China within the context of its intimate relations with a descending revolution -- the USSR. China was from the very beginning a highly contradictory phenomenon -- containing elements of both an ascending revolution and a descending one. Essentially we must understand that the Thermidorean influence of Stalinism was extended into China through the medium of the Chinese CP which prior to its coming to power in all of China already was a deeply Stalinist party basing itself on a huge bureaucratic apparatus which controlled large sections of China. Thus the ascending revolution of the masses was distorted from on top by the extension of the neighboring Thermidor of the descending Russian Revolution. The final effect of these two contradictory forces was that the revolution was never completed. We therefore concluded in our 1955 resolution that a political revolution was necessary before China was to become a healthy workers state. Thus, as I said in my article on proletarian democracy, the difference between the norms for a deformed workers state and a workers state are substantial enough to require a political revolution to get from one to the other! Comrade Hansen, in his denial that these differ "in principle," is continuing the process of eating away at our orthodox concept of a political revolution which he started a few years back in his ISR article on Huberman and Sweezy which upset the British so.

Comrade Hansen notes that his theory of the Cuban state implies an "inversion of sequence." You establish a workers state without forms of proletarian rule and without a revolutionary party. You then propose six months later, that the government establish proletarian forms through a constitution and begin the process of regrouping a revolutionary party. In many ways this theory reminds one of watching a Charlie Chaplin movie run backwards. Everything is reversed -- everything is confused in a looking-glass world. Hansen's "inversion" theory raises many more questions than it purports to answer. We urge the more serious among the supporters of the majority to ponder over these questions. Essentially the problems facing you are of two types: (a) to what extent is this "inversion" pattern possible in other countries and under what conditions; and (b) how does one incorporate such an "inversion" theory into our general theoretical framework and does such an incorporation raise questions as to the necessity for the construction of mass Trotskyist parties as a precondition for the establishment of a healthy workers state? If you refuse to answer these questions and rest your case on a theory of "Cuban exceptionalism" all you will be doing is destroying the basic methodology of Marxism itself. To state that we must work out a separate theory for each revolution and have no obligation to relate our theoretical conclusions that we draw from one revolutionary experience to those we draw from another revolutionary experience is to fall into the trap of empiricism and pragmatism -- to refuse to generalize. The fact that the comrades of the majority have yet to grapple seriously with these questions is a sign of the theoretical decay of our movement -- a phenomenon not unrelated to the other questions in dispute, in fact a phenomenon which underlies the whole dispute.

(D) A discernible drift within the party away from the fundamental conceptions of orthodox Trotskyism: It is quite natural that the discussion in the party has centered mainly around the question of Cuba. This is a new revolution and it is in their interpretation of new revolutionary events that all political trends meet their test. Anyone can remain "orthodox" by repeating by rote

positions worked out years ago. The real challenge is to analyze a new revolutionary event and to do so by utilizing the basic methodology of Marxism.

However the discussion in the party must also be put into the proper perspective of the discussion now going on in the world movement. Here the discussion deals primarily with Pabloism. This world discussion is quite intimately connected with the political process now going on within the American party. The view of the majority on Cuba expresses in the most extreme fashion the drift of the party over the past few years away from the orthodox Trotskyist positions it reaffirmed in the 1953 split and in the direction of Pabloite conceptions.

This political drift has not proceeded evenly, affecting to the same degree every political position of the party, and thus it has not resulted in the development by the SWP of a consistent Pabloite position. In fact the general empirical approach of the party has prevented it from developing a consistent theory of any kind as I have pointed out earlier. This explains the anomalous situation which some majority comrades have questioned us on: How can you accuse the SWP of being soft on Pabloism and at the same time claim that the Cuban Pabloites have a better line than the SWP majority?

On the Cuban question the SWP majority has gone even further than Pablo to the point where it today openly urges liquidationism on the Cuban Trotskyists, and has gone further than Pablo in its call for the subordination of all independent working-class struggle to the petty bourgeois Castro leadership. On the other hand, the Cuban Trotskyists stand to the left not only of the SWP but of the Pabloite center and have displayed at least some tendency to resist Pablo's deep entrism.

On other political questions the picture is much more confused. The present majority World Resolution includes a number of formulations of orthodox Trotskyist ideas as well as several Pabloite concepts. Therefore it is a hybrid document which aims to cover up, not to clarify, the differences between Pabloism and orthodox Trotskyism. Its main weakness is in what it does not say rather than what it does say. I have therefore formulated a number of amendments which remove some of the worst Pabloite formulations and replace them with a positive reaffirmation of our orthodox Trotskyist view on the nature of the postwar period, on Stalinism, on the national bourgeoisie, on the party, and on Pabloism itself. Comrade Hansen in his discussion article simply rejects the question of Pabloism out of hand as "wild accusations" and refuses to deal with any of the questions we have raised. He has an opportunity to prove that these accusations are indeed unfounded by voting for the amendments I have presented. These amendments are a test of the extent to which the Pabloite formulations on the Cuban question have had the effect of eating away at our whole world view -- at our most central political principles.

There has been a certain tendency during the Cuba discussion of many of the comrades to think in terms of the Pablo-Sweezy view of the postwar world. This is a one-sided view which sees socialism being established through the extension of the workers states and the colonial revolution with the advanced working class standing by the sidelines watching. There are some formulations in the majority resolution which counter this view but there are others which reinforce it. My amendments are aimed at making it explicitly clear that the world today is dominated by capitalism and that the working class will not have the decisive power in the world until it resolves the crisis of leadership -- until we are able to build mass Trotskyist parties.

An even more common view during the discussion has been the Pabloite conception that somehow there now exists a "New World Reality" which makes it impossible for Stalinism to play a counterrevolutionary role and opens up the possibility of the Stalinist parties being transformed into revolutionary parties by mass pressure. This concept is implied in the sections on the PSP in the "Theses." My amendments are aimed at making it absolutely clear that we still view Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary force and that we do not underestimate the dangers this trend presents to the revolutionary movement as a whole.

Comrade Hansen's approach to the Latin American Conference which I discussed in my "Revolutionary Party" article, displays a certain tendency to see only the "positive" side of the national bourgeoisie and to underplay the necessity for the working class in colonial countries to organize independently of the national bourgeoisie and to seek to seize the leadership of the colonial revolution from the national bourgeoisie. My amendments on the national bourgeoisie are aimed at reaffirming the essential lessons of the permanent revolution on this vital question.

Above all the position of the majority on Cuba brings into question the need for the construction of Trotskyist parties the world over. We must watch carefully any signs of a generalizing from the Cuban experience manifested in a tendency to underplay the need for revolutionary parties in other lands. Perhaps the most significant sentence in the entire resolution appears in the first paragraph on page 18: "Now mighty forces, gathering on a world scale, project creation of such parties in the very process of revolution." We must state clearly and emphatically that the revolutionary cadre must be created prior to the revolutionary outburst if this party is to have a serious chance of coming to power. This is the great lesson of the defeats in Europe after the 1917 Revolution and the working class paid too great a price in learning this lesson for us to forget it now. If no other amendment of mine is passed I hope that my amendment on this point will pass for we must root out any illusions that the objective revolutionary process itself will create the revolutionary leadership almost automatically. Nothing could do more in urging liquidation on our comrades in colonial countries than this concept. We must start now in every country of the world to assemble the forces of the revolutionary Marxist cadre and no short cuts can be found to substitute for this difficult process.

All the questions in dispute ultimately lead us back to the central question -- Pabloism. The experience of the last seven years has proven graphically that a refusal to deal politically with and struggle against a revisionist tendency in the world movement has led the SWP itself in the direction of revisionism. For the SWP to right itself it must squarely face up to the question of Pabloism, recognize it as a basic revision of orthodox Trotskyism, of Marxism, and seek in unity with the orthodox Trotskyists of the IC to counter it politically. Current attempts of the majority to jump over this stage of coming to terms with the political crisis in the world Trotskyist movement -- to in effect ignore it and chart an "independent" course of world-wide regroupment schemes -- will not succeed. No matter how much the leadership seeks to prevent a discussion of Pabloism; no matter how much it seeks to turn its back on this political crisis, the crisis will haunt it until it must face up to it and come to terms with it one way or another. That is the real choice before the SWP today -- to return to orthodox Trotskyism or to drift towards Pabloite revisionism. It is in order to facilitate a correct resolution of this question that an orthodox

Trotskyist tendency is emerging within the SWP. No amount of smoke screens, smelly herrings, and provocations will prevent us from carrying out this essential task of political clarification.

* This is not the first time that such slanders have been directed against orthodox Trotskyists. Pablo characterized our party as capitulating to bourgeois pressures because it stood firm in its view of Stalinism and rejected Pablo and Clark's "New World Reality." To see how a Marxist dealt with such charges see Appendix A at the end of this article which quotes James P. Cannon on "Stalinophobia." In order to show the comrades exactly how we give in to bourgeois pressures I have appended a letter which Jim Robertson sent to the YSA NEC just following the imperialist invasion of Cuba (Appendix B). As an example of our "responsiveness" to the Social Democracy I refer interested comrades to Martha Curti's article "Social Democrats Flirt with Counter Revolution" which you will find in the May 1961 Young Socialist.

** The May 25th New York Times reports that Carlos Olivaros, Cuban Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs, stated in Brazil that there "were no active studies" of any constitutional changes.

June 9, 1961

APPENDIX A

"What is Stalinophobia? Is it hatred of Stalinism; fear of this 'syphilis of the labor movement' and irreconcilable refusal to tolerate any manifestation of it in the party? Not at all. That has been our attitude toward Stalinism from the very beginning; and anybody who feels differently about it is traveling in our party under false passports.

"Is it the opinion that Stalinism is not the leader of the international revolution but its mortal enemy? No, this is not Stalinophobia; that is what Trotsky taught us, what we learned again from our experience with Stalinism, and what we believe in our bones.

"The sentiment of hatred and fear of Stalinism, with its police state and its slave labor camps, its frameups and its murders of working-class opponents is healthy, natural, normal and progressive. This sentiment goes wrong only when it leads to reconciliation with imperialism; and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to that same imperialism. In the language of Trotskyism that, and nothing else, is Stalinophobia."

-- James P. Cannon, page 47 "Stalinist Conciliationism and Stalinophobia," Internal Bulletin, Volume 15, No. 12, May 1953.

APPENDIX B

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST AND CUBA DEFENSE

(The following suggestions on the nature of the next issue are part of a letter from Jim Robertson from Bloomington, Indiana, April 18.)

About this Cuba invasion business in relation to our Young Socialist: I don't know when the next YS will be out, hence the exact form of coverage of the transparent imperialist invasion attempt, but it absolutely seems to me that nothing whatever ought to be allowed to mess up the YS line which had better have all the raw unsoftness of a rusty, jagged knife blade.

I was genuinely surprised at the Yankee all-or-nothing gamble; at this point, as expected, the counterrevolutionary effort seems to be getting its just desserts. Now the big point is, an American failure would generate a revolutionary impulse, breaking outside Cuba into Latin America generally and particularly in the Caribbean area. I would imagine that the Trotskyists in Peru, Chile, Argentine, Bolivia, Uruguay are at this instant calling strikes and boycotts, calling for an international brigade, etc.

Especially because the clear lessons of the current crisis and warfare demand it, let's load the YS with rough and political stuff. Even recruitment-wise it will pay off among the indignant, impotent young Cuba supporters. We must avoid at all costs a soft, schmaltzy treatment of the invasion, utterly national in tone with external support cited as mere solidarity -- feeling, enthusing.

So let's have a bold, bloody over-the-masthead headline about Yankee Imperialist Rape or Solidarity with Every Soviet-supplied Bullet Entering the Bodies of CIAists, or similar. As for coverage: A lurid documentary of the build-up and record of American direction and the role of the U.S. prostitute press. Heavy on Latin American actions and Trotskyist demands. Exposure of Soviet diplomatic temporizing, calls for military aid, calls for Concentration Camps in Cuba under workers control, etc. A slash at YPSL-liberal-Draper for whining about Cuban deformations as part of a combined action in a crime of historic proportions by their ruling class (these rotten scum who chauvinistically blame, e.g., Russian people for merely standing aside over Hungary). The imperative to American radical youth to join the Bolshevik-Leninist YSA toward crushing imperialism in the nest. Etc.

As you can see I'm turned on. So are our forces and friends in Chicago and Indiana.

Jim

A NOTE ON THE CURRENT DISCUSSION -- LABELS AND PURPOSES

By James Robertson

A discussion proceeds at several levels. In a review of the debate in the Fourth International and Socialist Workers Party on Yugoslavia and the East European Buffer Zone generally and also on China, principally over the years 1949 through 1952, preliminary to the internal explosion of the FI in 1953, the power of hindsight after ten years provides a brilliant confirmation of the existence of several layers to a discussion, their mutual interactions and outcome.

Faced with the new and unexpected development of Stalinist parties winning civil wars, creating new states and struggling against domestic capitalism and world imperialism, all of the participants scrounged around to come up with a most extensive assortment of labels and an incredible number of pages of plausible supporting arguments. The governmental regimes were variously bourgeois, Bonapartist, transitional, workers and peasants, and workers. The states were state capitalist, degenerated bourgeois, transitional, peasants, deformed workers, and undeforming workers in their class character. The Stalinist parties in power during the transformations were petty-bourgeois, peasant, workers and peasants, and working-class. To top things off leading proponents of these views were hopping from one position to another. Among the starting line-up, on one side Cochran, Hansen and Pablo were eager to assign a proletarian quality to the developments, while Wright, Bleibtreu, Germain and Peng were resisters.

Most of the literary exchanges and resolutions were at an objective level, that is external in several senses to the Trotskyist movement. There was a clash of emphases and evaluations on the nature of the disputed reality and from these analyses, conclusions were drawn in such a way as to preserve maximum formal consistency with established Trotskyist doctrine. There were both correct and mistaken evaluations. Eventually the participants zig-zagged their way to the conclusion (now incontestible from within the basic programmatic framework of Trotskyism) that the resulting states were and are "deformed workers states" meaning that in their essence they are identical with the Russian degenerated workers state. The rights and wrongs at this level were related to, but not identical with the more covert and also evolving question -- what did the crystallizing tendencies want, what were they seeking to achieve?

The verdict on this too is in, through the Leninist criteria of measuring words with deeds. Some comrades sought to strengthen and renew the political armament of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the Trotskyist movement, others sought political generalizations to facilitate accommodation and subordination to other movements and forces.

And over the Cuban question the same underlying issue is posed -- what do you want, comrades? Take the use of the transitional demand "the workers and peasants government." It is transitional right enough, that is it is a bridge, but bridges go two ways. Either the workers and peasants government is the central demand of the Trotskyists in urging the workers and peasants to take power into their own hands through their mass organizations -- i.e., the struggle for soviet power (this is the use the Cuban Trotskyists put it to); or it is a label to apply from afar to the existing government and thus serve,

not for the first time, as an orthodox sounding formula to side-step the consummation of proletarian revolution and to justify revolution "from above" by leaders "one of whose principal difficulties is imbuing the working people with a sense of revolutionary social responsibility."

In short, is the Cuban revolution to pass forward over that bridge to soviet power or is an American SWP majority to go backwards?

June 11, 1961

May 8, 1961

To: THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Dear Comrades:

We are glad that you will be preparing a general resolution for your convention on international questions. As our own conference takes place this month (May) we feel it is in order to ask you if we can take it there is fundamental agreement on the following points, which are central to our document and which we regard as basic essentials of Trotskyism.

1. Stalinism and the workers' states. Whilst recognizing the changes made since the Chinese Revolution and the death of Stalin and the 20th Congress, we are convinced that power is held by the Stalinist bureaucracy in these countries. Because of the absence of sections of an international revolutionary party, in the USSR and Eastern Europe since 1956, the bureaucracy has been able to adapt its rule despite the great political crisis of that period. The task remains: the construction of such parties, which can mobilize the masses for the overthrow of the bureaucracy. Stalinism is a counterrevolutionary force, the greatest obstacle to the working class' solution of its crisis of leadership. This necessitates a bitter struggle against the Stalinists in every country. In the service of the bureaucracy the Stalinist parties will collaborate in the betrayal of revolutions where necessary for the interests of that bureaucracy in coming to an arrangement with American imperialism. We must be under no illusions, for example, about the reasons for Khrushchev's support of the Cuban revolution. Acting in accordance with the contradictory and dual nature of the bureaucracy, he regards that revolution as fundamentally a bargaining counter in his overall strategy of accommodation to imperialism. This conception seems to us to be directly contradicted, for instance, by the contribution of Comrade Stein in the discussions on Cuba:

"And by the force of circumstances -- not the least of which is the Chinese Revolution -- the Soviet Union is compelled today, instead of playing a counterrevolutionary role -- it's compelled, out of self-defense of interest, say what you may, to place itself on the side of revolution."

Placing oneself on the side of revolution, from a Marxist point of view, means concentrating one's fire and one's effort on the side of the independent action and power of the working class as the only force capable of defeating imperialism. In the colonial revolutions since the war the Soviet bureaucracy has supported bourgeois-national parties in retaining hegemony over the liberation movements. Its control of the Communist parties, with the policy of "two stages" of the revolution, has helped these bourgeois parties to use the masses without fear of the latter imposing their own demands and leadership on the struggle. Even if the bourgeois revolution in Cuba has been forced by U.S. policy to step beyond the normal bounds of the social measures of a bourgeois revolution, and even if this had been accompanied by a system of dual power (we will not say workers' power,

since that is surely obviously not the case), this exceptional result of a particular situation would certainly not justify the implication of Comrade Hansen's remarks in opening the New York discussion, to the effect that it is necessary to reassess our whole attitude to China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the USSR.

We must express our apprehension that this approach on the part of some members of the SWP National Committee indicates a retreat from the position taken up against the Pabloites. The essence of the Pabloite method was to begin from a so-called "objective," in fact a purely contemplative, standpoint and weigh up the "objective forces" (or "world reality") -- and then to draw superficial and purely adaptive conclusions from this. What difference is there between Comrade Stein's remarks above and the Pabloite revisionist theory of the Stalinist parties "projecting a revolutionary orientation"? Does not Comrade Hansen's reply to Draper fall into exactly the same error when he shrugs off the dangers of CP influence in Cuba, and expresses the opinion that the Cuban CP will become part of a "mass revolutionary socialist party"? In our opinion certain tendencies which appeared during the "regroupment" phase after 1956, are crystallizing into dangerous revisions. In his 1958 article on the future of the USSR (ISR, Summer 1958) Comrade Hansen, in his anxiety to make a bridge to Sweezy and Huberman, glossed over the need for a political revolution in the USSR. He did this by suggesting that an accumulation of the types of reforms suggested by Sweezy and Co. might amount to the same thing in fact as a political revolution. The essential omission was that of a revolutionary Marxist party in the USSR, able to lead the workers to reconquer Soviet democracy themselves. Once again we cannot escape the similarity with the Pabloite approach: Comrade Hansen's reply to Draper does not talk about the need to overthrow the bureaucracy but about the "melting of the iceberg of Stalinism" since the war. Comrade Weiss echoes this in the NC discussion:

"The Trotskyist concept of a political revolution is being borne out in one aspect in the process of destroying Stalinism. The signposts are the 20th Congress, Hungary, Poland, the Chinese revolution."

All along it is the conscious role of the revolutionary party -- the vital "aspect" that is omitted. Other comrades in the same discussion repeat the same point in various ways; not one stops to consider the fact that precisely because of the failure to build a revolutionary international with sections in these countries, the bureaucracy achieved a re-Stalinization after each of the struggles -- Russia, East Germany, Poland and Hungary.

2. On the question of the Permanent Revolution. An essential of revolutionary Marxism in this epoch is the theory that the national bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries is incapable of defeating imperialism and establishing an independent national state. This class has ties with imperialism and it is, of course, incapable of an independent capitalist development, for it is part of the capitalist world market and cannot compete with the products of the advanced countries. In national liberation movements the workers' organizations must follow Lenin's slogan: "March separate-

ly, strike together" against the foreign imperialists and their immediate collaborators. Following Marx, we say: support the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties insofar as they help strike common blows against our enemy; oppose them on every issue in which they want to stabilize their own conditions of existence and their own rule.

While it is true that the stage of "independence" reached by countries like Ghana, and the national independence movements led by men like Mboya in Kenya, acts as a stimulant to national liberation movements in other countries, the fact remains that Nkrumah, Mboya, Nasser, Kassem, Nehru, Soekarno and their like, represent the national bourgeoisie of their own countries. The dominant imperialist policy-makers in both the USA and Britain recognize full well that only by handing over political "independence" to leaders of this kind, or accepting their victory over feudal elements like Farouk and Nuri-es-Said, can the stakes of international capital and the strategic alliances be preserved in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Comrade Hansen's article on the Mexico conference fails, in our opinion, to take a principled stand on the character of such states. It is not the job of Trotskyists to boost the role of such nationalist leaders. They can command the support of the masses only because of the betrayal of leadership by Social Democracy and particularly Stalinism, and in this way they become buffers between imperialism and the mass of workers and peasants. The possibility of economic aid from the Soviet Union often enables them to strike a harder bargain with the imperialists, even enables more radical elements among the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders to attack imperialist holdings and gain further support from the masses. But, for us, in every case the vital question is one of the working class in these countries gaining political independence through a Marxist party, leading the poor peasantry to the building of Soviets, and recognizing the necessary connections with the international socialist revolution. In no case, in our opinion, should Trotskyists substitute for that the hope that the nationalist leadership should become socialists. The emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves. Much of the current discussion on Cuba, it seems proceeds in this way: The Cuban masses support Castro; Castro began as a petty-bourgeois but has become a socialist; the public pressure of imperialist attack and of popular struggle may turn him into a Marxist, and already the tasks confronting him in defending the gains of the revolution have brought him "naturally" to positions indistinguishable from Trotskyism. In this approach, the fundamentals of Marxism are trampled upon. Even if Castro and his cadre were "converted" would that make the revolution a proletarian revolution? Have we forgotten Lenin's strictures in April and May of 1917 on the need to campaign, explain, and organize the majority of the working class to take power through Soviets? If the Bolsheviks could not lead the revolution without a conscious working-class support, can Castro do this? Quite apart from this, we have to evaluate political tendencies on a class basis, on the way they develop in struggle in relation to the movement of classes over long periods. A proletarian party, let alone a proletarian revolution, will not be born in any backward country by the conver-

sion of petty-bourgeois nationalists who stumble "naturally" or "accidentally" upon the importance of the workers and peasants.

All over the world the imperialists hope to retain their economic rule through the agency of bourgeois nationalist parties with formal independence, a state which makes possible the intervention of imperialist capital, the exploitation of labor and the expansion of the capitalist market. We must state clearly: workers' and peasants' soviets will be set up to overthrow the power of these classes, and for this a conscious revolutionary party must be built as part of the Fourth International.

3. With these questions of the future of the workers' states and the nature of the national bourgeoisie, there is connected the question of the nature of workers' power and the smashing of the bourgeois state.

The Declaration of the 81 Communist Parties, Moscow, 1960, indicates the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism in this respect. It envisages the possibility of and advocates the struggle for, "peaceful" and "parliamentary" roads to socialism in the capitalist countries. We are of course utterly opposed to this fatal illusion in face of the great bureaucratic military concentrations of modern bourgeois states, and we fail to see how an international movement with this perspective can be called by some SWP comrades as "no longer playing a counterrevolutionary role." The policies and programs of Communist parties are themselves "objective" factors in the world situation, they contribute to defeats and it is nonsense to ignore this, concentrating instead on the "objective" necessity for the Soviet bureaucracy to render aid to those anti-imperialist forces that do arise and break through. The method here is that of the 1914 German Social Democracy, of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and of the Pabloite revisionists. It is a method of cowering before the accomplished fact, of failing to begin from the revolutionary practice of the working class itself.

There is no road to working-class power except the smashing of the bourgeois state and the workers' own organs -- Soviet, workers' councils, etc. -- controlling the national life. This is true in the advanced countries and in the colonial countries. This is the task not only in the USA but also in Cuba. Some comrades in the SWP NC discussion have criticized the approach of the Latin-American comrades who advocated in their resolution the correct policy of workers' and peasants' councils, arming the workers, and so on. These criticisms suggested for instance, that such a campaign would be seen as counterrevolutionary by the Cuban masses and by the Castro leadership. Once again, all Marxist method and all revolutionary experience are overthrown by this approach. If these comrades stop and think, surely they must agree that in a revolutionary period such as that in Cuba today, it is precisely a question of finding methods of the working class solving the problems of internal and external defense and of the economic life of the country. The tactics of a revolutionary party will be to present the road to workers' power in terms of methods of solving these problems in a class way. Once again, Lenin's leadership of the Bolshevik party in the period of dual power is exemplary in this respect. Was not

he too isolated and condemned, yes, as a counterrevolutionary, when he called already in March for the preparation of measures which would lead to the overthrow of the bourgeois government? When he posed questions of organizing defense, rationing and control of the banks by the Soviets, Plekhanov and others accused him of "planting the banner of civil war in the Soviets." Let us beware of giving a counsel of liquidation to our comrades in the colonial countries. . . and in Cuba.

4. This brings us to our final point, the role of the revolutionary proletarian party. Above all lessons of over 100 years of working-class struggle the most essential is this: that only a "party of a new type," a party rooted in the working class, tested in struggle, firmly based in the theory of Marxism, and devoted in a disciplined way to the conquest of working-class power, can lead the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of proletarian dictatorship.

In this period of the death agony of imperialism, when the capitalist class is forced to plunge humanity to the brink of total destruction, is unable to rely consistently on the support of the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses in any part of the world, and finds its capacity for expansion hedged in at every turn -- at this point, then, when the development of the productive forces, in particular of the working masses, brings agonizing pressure to bear on the capitalist relations of production, then precisely the role of revolutionary consciousness is vital. Those who concentrate in an epoch like this upon the power of the "objective" and "basic" tendencies of modern society being "on our side" are not Marxists. Trotsky pointed out many times that when the contradictions in the economic base reach their height then the role of human actors in the superstructure becomes the vital link in the historical chain. This of course is the basic theory behind the Trotskyist emphasis on the crisis of leadership as the key to humanity's condition in the modern world.

All the earlier sections of this letter come to a meeting point in this question, and that is as it should be.

The Soviet working class will not remove the Stalinist bureaucracy from power without a revolutionary Marxist leadership. The colonial peoples will not free themselves except through the leadership of a proletarian party able to express the political independence of the working class. The revolution in the advanced countries requires the smashing of the bourgeois state machine in revolutionary struggles. Only a revolutionary party can prepare and lead such a struggle, as history abundantly shows.

No one in the SWP NC discussion openly challenges the necessity for a revolutionary party¹. We note, however, that apart from the

¹. There are, nonetheless, some disturbing remarks in the contributions of some of the youth comrades. Comrade Phelps, for instance, says that without Lenin's party the course of the Russian Revolution "certainly would have taken a different and longer, more hazardous,

minority, no one lays any great stress upon it or discusses specifically the construction of such parties in any of the spheres of struggle.

Without suggesting in any way that Cuba is the main question here (we are suggesting in fact that much bigger questions of political orientation and Marxist method are involved), we note that Comrade Hansen's speech on Cuba makes no mention of the revolutionary party there, and we can only assume that the July 26 Movement, or even the personnel of the Castro government, is to be the leadership of the party. Or perhaps the reply to Draper, which hopes for the "final emergence" of a mass revolutionary socialist party (a Trotskyist party). Such parties, comrades, have to be constructed and fought for, as your own rich experience has taught us in Britain.

Comrade Hansen's general remarks on the question of the party are most disarming: It is a question, you see, of the world party, whose growth is manifest all over the world as imperialism is rolled back. It is suggested that in places this process of emancipation of the working class will be achieved without such a party. Cuba is presumably one of these places. We have the awkward phenomenon, in Comrade Hansen's presentation, of "socialist consciousness beginning to appear" after the setting up of a workers' state! In our opinion, the discussion of the party at this abstract, "international" level is an evasion which avoids the concrete question of building such parties in each country. For Cuba, for instance, Comrade Hansen finds it possible to discuss the revolution without discussing the revolutionary party, with the exception of one short paragraph -- and from that paragraph the reader can only draw the conclusion that the July 26 Movement, given changes in its theory, is the revolutionary party. The "theoretical" discussion of the "necessity" of the revolutionary party seems in this case to be only house-organ stuff to keep good relations inside the party.

We are asking, then, if the SWP NC has fundamental agreement with us on these basic questions, as a foundation for the discussion of the specific social-historical situations in the world today.

Yours fraternally,

(signed) G. HEALY

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

course" implying that the role of the party is only to help the inevitable objective process to take place a bit cleaner, a bit quicker. Comrade Nora, in the youth discussion, says "Our prime task in this new situation is to make an approach to the Cuban revolution and its revolutionary leadership -- to make a bloc with the revolutionary leaderships in the colonial countries for the purpose of winning them over." (!)

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