

SWP

**discussion
bulletin**

Published by the
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE
NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK

Vol. 24, No. 1

January 1963

Contents

"TROTSKYISM BETRAYED"

Discussion article submitted by the:

National Committee of the
Socialist Labour League

35¢

Editor's Note

The document "Trotskyism Betrayed" has been submitted by the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League as a contribution to the discussion now in progress in the world Trotskyist movement.

#

TROTSYISM BETRAYED

The SWP Accepts the Political Method of Pabloite Revisionism

by the National Committee of the Socialist Labor League

1. The document "Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps" adopted by the Political Committee of the SWP on June 16 and 17, 1962, marks a new stage in the international discussion. For the first time the SWP has acknowledged explicitly the questions of principle which at the moment divide the SWP and the SLL.
2. A discussion on these questions must not be confined to the leading bodies of the SLL and the SWP, nor only to the leading committees of the IS and the IC. It must be extended throughout the ranks of every section of the world movement.
3. The SWP draft claims to "take for granted" that there are many things on which the SLL and the SWP have full agreement. The document goes on to deal with 'points of disagreement and misunderstanding'. One of these points of disagreement and misunderstanding is said to be the question of 'ways and means' of building mass parties of revolutionary Marxism. We must point out, however, that this discussion is not at all a question of listing points of agreement and disagreement: we are convinced that a whole difference of theoretical and political method is involved. This is acknowledged even by the SWP Political Committee document when it says that the SLL comrades give "primacy to the subjective factor". The international discussion now beginning cannot be simply a matter of clearing up misunderstandings and partial differences. Our opinion is that the method in the SWP document is a fundamental revision of Marxism and is different in no way from the revisions of Pablo which led to the split of 1953. It is difficult to see how the SWP leadership can claim to have agreement with the SLL "on many points" if in fact their document is correct in saying that we have an 'incorrect conception of the interplay between the objective and subjective factors in shaping the course of the revolutionary process.'
4. The basic difference in method as we shall show are centered upon the basic questions of Leninism, how to proceed to the construction of an international revolutionary party.

5. The fact that a new stage has been reached in this discussion is itself part of a new stage in the construction of these revolutionary parties of the Fourth International, for which the defeat of revisionism is necessary. In the advanced countries, the contradictions of capitalist economy are producing a great revival of proletarian class struggle. All over Western Europe, the strength of the organized working class stands in the path of the imperialists' plan to solve their problems at the workers' expense. Already in Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Spain militant industrial actions take place alongside a severe political crisis of the ruling class and its state machine. The imminent entry of Britain into the European Common Market, and the massive electoral turn away from the Conservatives, promise big class battles as the long-privileged position of British imperialism rapidly crumbles. The sensitivity of the US economy to all the contradictions of world economy and politics will make it very difficult for the imperialists to solve their internal economic problems. In all these advanced countries, the working class will show itself able to fight on a massive scale.

The ruling class prepares for these struggles by strengthening its military and repressive machine, and by subordinating the workers' organizations to the State, thus preparing to smash them. Extreme right-wing political tendencies in all the advanced countries keep pace with the revival of militancy. In these conditions the construction of revolutionary Marxist parties is a great historical responsibility. Only an organization based on theoretical analysis of these struggles and unswervingly committed to the struggle for power can answer the needs of the working class. It is at such times that the most tragic betrayals can take place, if the opportunists, Stalinists as well as Social-Democrats, are not defeated in the working-class movement.

6. The theoretical struggle is a vital part of this task. Only theoretical clarification of the new stage in the class struggle, a clear perspective of the working class as the only revolutionary class and of the advanced countries as the core of the world revolution, can form the basis for the revolutionary parties necessary in the coming struggle for power. The SWP criticism of the SLL starts from the Cuban revolution. In doing so, it reveals its whole mistaken method. We must begin from the need to establish Leninist parties in every country, and in the first place to defeat revisionism.

Revisionist ideas appear in the revolutionary movement as a result of failure to advance theory in preparation for concrete struggles for working class power. The pressure of the class enemy as it prepares for the struggle finds its reflection in this theoretical stagnation. All revisionism departs from the central ideas of the dictatorship of the working class and the need for independent working-class political parties to achieve this aim. Revisionism is an onslaught on the ideas needed by the working class to prepare its struggle for power. The SWP leadership has now arrived at a position where it delivers just such an onslaught on Marxism.

Its 'determination' to unite with the Pabloites and to attack the SLL are not surprising in this context. In 1953, as the crisis of Stalinism came into the open with the East German uprising, the Pablo group adapted Trotskyism to the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR and in the capitalist countries. Instead of seeing the upsurge of the workers as the objective basis for building revolutionary parties and the preparation of the political revolution, with similar construction in the capitalist countries, they centred attention on the concessions of the bureaucracy. The demands of the workers would be represented not by their own independent revolutionary leadership, but by their bureaucratic enemies, adapting themselves to 'mass pressure'. Had the whole movement followed this line, no successful intervention would have been possible in the next stage of Stalinist crisis in 1956. Now, in 1962, the SWP leadership makes approaches to the Pabloites because a similar adaptation is taking place. This time it is a much more serious adaptation. The workers of the advanced countries are entering big struggles. These will result in lasting defeats unless they become struggles for state power, for which Marxist leadership is necessary. Social Democracy and Stalinism are thrown into crisis by this new round of struggles. Capitulation to centrists or 'leftward-moving currents' at this stage amounts to a betrayal on a bigger scale than that of 1953. Apologies for the non-Marxist leaderships, assertions that petty bourgeois leadership can become Marxist 'naturally' through the strength of the 'objective forces' - these threaten to disarm the working class by disorientating the Marxist leadership. If capitulation to the centrists takes place now, preventing the working class from breaking with the Social Democrats, Stalinists and trade union bureaucracy, then the revisionists will have the responsibility for enormous working-class defeats

7. The Socialist Labor League is not prepared to go any part of the way with this revisionism, and will fight it to the end. Those Pabloites with whom the SWP proposes unification are in England working alongside adherents of the 'state capitalist' theory in the Labor and youth movements, and find themselves supported (against the Marxists) by opportunist groupings like Tribune and the New Left. In other words, as we need to prepare a revolutionary organization for struggle against the Social Democracy, which attempts to witch-hunt all left-wingers from the Labour movement, those trends with whom the SWP finds an affinity are compromising with the Labour bureaucracy. The connection between the revisionism of the Pabloites and of the SWP leadership on the one hand, and the fight to build revolutionary parties, is not an abstract one; this revisionism represents a definite offensive against revolutionary Marxism, in line with the interests of imperialism, which needs above all to prevent the new upsurge of the working class from finding a conscious expression and leadership. The problem is qualitatively the same in the backward countries. In Latin America, North and South Africa, in the Middle East and West Africa recent events show very clearly that it is the urban working class which now moves on to the scene. The organized workers in these countries seek their own independent politics and are bound to clash with the bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist leaders in their struggle against native and foreign capital. Only if this proletariat, through Bolshevik parties, places itself at the head of the peasant movement for agrarian reform, can imperialism be defeated in these countries. Without a perspective of class alliance with the workers of the advanced countries, such parties will not be successfully built. Trends like Pabloism and the recent revisionism of the SWP, with their impressionistic judgments about the central place occupied by the 'colonial revolution', about the tendency for Stalinism to play a 'progressive' role, about the 'superb' nationalist leaderships, and even, as in Algeria, about the necessity for agreement with the imperialists (see below) all these have a counter-revolutionary role in disarming the working class.

8. In the whole theoretical trend of the SWP exemplified by the famous theory of the 'confirmation' of the concept Permanent Revolution, there is an acceptance of non-Marxist, petty-bourgeois tutelage over the masses, but in the guise of recognition of the 'strength' of the masses in pushing the politicians to the left. Theory has been degraded from a guide to action to a dead commentary on the accomplished fact.

Behind this there is a long theoretical stagnation, reflected in the failure of the SWP to go beyond a superficial criticism of the last round of revisionism, Pabloism and in the absence of any theoretical contribution by the SWP since death. It is in the construction of the revolutionary party in the USA itself that the necessity of defeating the SWP leadership's revisionism is most urgent.

In this reply to the SWP Political Committee's document, we emphasize the nature of the marxist method because we believe that the attack on this method by the present leadership will, if not defeated, prevent the working class from effectively struggling against imperialism in the great class battles now beginning.

9. The Political Committee draft distorts the position of the Transitional Programme in an attempt to brand the SLL international resolution as 'subjective'. 'The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International says that in our epoch "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership". The SLL reiterates this correct declaration. But their Resolution overlooks the fact that it is the conclusion from a prior consideration of "The Objective Prerequisites for Socialist Revolution"'. The SLL document in fact begins in the same way as the Transitional Programme, with a section on 'The Necessity for Socialist Revolution' and continues, 'it is upon this revolutionary crisis, with its dialectical relationship between the struggle of the workers in the advanced countries and of those oppressed by imperialism in the colonies and former colonies, that Marxists base their revolutionary strategy'. (Labour Review, Winter 1961, p. 86). Strangely enough, the SWP document chooses to quote this latter sentence in order to attack the SLL on another point (relations between underdeveloped and advanced countries) in the strategy of world revolution, but to ignore it in the consideration of the basic question of programme and method. Trotsky's emphasis on the ripeness of the objective situation for socialism served always to highlight the responsibility of leadership and to criticise the betrayals of the reformists and the Stalinists. To argue from the objective conditions in order to excuse the non-revolutionary leadership is a complete distortion of the Transitional Programme.

10. This point is worth discussing in more detail, since it underlies all the political differences. Like Pablo before them, the SWP spokesmen quote as justification of their attitude a phrase torn from its context in the Transitional

Programme, 'the orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus'. The whole document emphasizes the last sentence of this quotation to justify the view that historical forces and revolutionary tendencies will suddenly and automatically produce a leadership; in other words, that the bureaucratic apparatus will be defeated by 'the laws of history' whatever happens. But when Trotsky wrote this paragraph it was an expression of confidence in the possibility of creating a Marxist leadership on the basis of the objective conditions to overthrow the bureaucratic apparatus both in the USSR and in the international workers' movements. The last thing in his head was any idea that 'the laws of history' would get along without the conscious leadership of the class. The 'treacherous policies of the old workers' organizations' must be fought and defeated by the revolutionary party based on Marxist theory. Talk of the 'laws of history' accomplishing this as a process separate from the development of the party is an abandonment of the Marxist position on the relations between 'objective' and 'subjective'. Under the guise of correcting the SLL by quotations from the Transitional Programme, the SWP document in fact abandons the thesis of the crisis of leadership. It does not carry out any historical analysis of the real results in politics of the failure to resolve this crisis of leadership; had this been done it would have been impossible to disagree with the conclusion reached by the SLL international resolution, that the present relationship of forces in the advanced countries is to a great extent precisely the product of the crisis of leadership. To argue that this 'relationship of forces' somehow produces international revolutionary trends is sheer distortion of the Transitional Programme. This distortion inevitably extends into a revision of the whole history of Bolshevism; a revision which is necessitated by the SWP's current political attitude towards non-Marxist leaderships as the following quotation shows: 'If the revolutionary forces do not have a suitable leadership prepared in advance of their drive toward supreme power, they are compelled to create or re-create one in the process of the revolution. Even Lenin's Bolshevik Party had to be re-oriented by the April Theses and reformed between February and October 1917'. Lenin's life work in clarifying the basic theoretical issues and in constructing an independent revolutionary party through periods of reaction as well as revolution is mutilated and dragged into

the argument only in order to make even the 're-arming of the party' in 1917 an 'example' of the new theories discovered by the SWP. Somehow even the Bolshevik party must be made to have been 'created or re-created' in the process of the revolution. Such a distortion of history, and particularly the history of our own movement, is a sure indication of political degeneration.

11. The severity of the SWP document's conclusion that the SLL is suffering a 'subjective' deviation arises from their own departure in the opposite direction, that is, towards pure 'objectivity'. In fact, when the SWP document attacks our stress on revolutionary consciousness, this amounts to an evaluation which helps the class enemy. The anti-Marxists attack above all the possibility of the working class achieving political independence; the Leninist party is thus the central target. There must be a conscious construction of this party if the working class is to take power and build Socialism. From the outset, spokesmen of the IC pointed out to the Pabloites that their position on the Soviet bureaucracy and the 'irreversibility' of the revolutionary process could only lead to the conclusion that independent revolutionary leadership was unnecessary.

The SWP document, however, repeats the method of the Pabloites in dividing history into progressive and reactionary periods. Certainly there are major ebbs and flows of the revolution internationally, but each of these situations is appraised by Marxists from the point of view of revolutionary tasks; in no case do we begin from the reflection of the class struggle in the consciousness of petty-bourgeois politicians. Our starting-point is the objective needs of the working class, and the consequent tasks of the revolutionary party. Questions of alliances and relations with the tendencies axiomatically can only follow the clarification of these primary questions.

12. For all its claims to objectivity, the SWP in none of its documents for the last two years has made any objective economic and political analysis of the development of imperialism or of the Soviet Union. It is substituting for this a series of impressionistic estimates of these processes - 'The Stalinist monolith is fracturing,' the masses 'cannot wait' for the revolutionary party to be formed. Crass optimism takes the place of revolutionary confidence based on an analysis of capitalist contradictions and the power of the working class.

Whereas the SLL international resolution begins a serious analysis of new trends in the economy of imperialism and judges the various political trends in relation to this objective development, the SWP simply searches for examples to confirm the thesis that 'history is on our side'. Once it is accepted that the existing petty-bourgeois trends, either nationalist or Stalinist, will be forced by mass pressure to complete the proletarian revolution, to 'confirm the permanent revolution', then the way is wide open for the abandonment of the independent politics of the working class. This flows to irrevocably from the theoretical apologies for the petty-bourgeois leadership, that the longing of the SWP for unity with the Pabloites comes as no surprise.

In 1953, an SWP document correctly criticized the Pabloites' resolution 'The Rise and Decline of Stalinism', which claimed that the victory of the Chinese Revolution marked a new stage, 'basically marked by a relation of international forces favourable to the revolution and evolving on a global scale more and more favourably for the revolution. The revolutionary wave spreads from country to country, from continent to continent. It has recently reached the Soviet Union itself and the buffer zones.' Pointing out the consequences of this judgment, the SWP remarked 'If this is really so, it will have to be recognized that we have entered upon a qualitatively different epoch in which all previous political values would have to be revalued.'

The SWP's judgment of 1953 applies to its own position today just as precisely as it did to the Pabloites then. The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International based itself on the crisis of humanity brought about by the overripeness of capitalism for revolution. Was it wrong to raise the banner of the Fourth International in the 'unfavourable relationship of forces' of the 1930s? Were the defeats from 1933 to the present day due to an unfavourable relationship of forces? On the contrary, in a 'favourable' objective situation, the workers were betrayed by Social Democracy and Stalinism. The crisis of humanity resolves itself into the crisis of leadership - this thesis has in fact been abandoned by the SWP leadership, and it is sheer hypocrisy for the SWP document to quote the Transitional Programme in its support.

13. In our communications with the SWP we provoked a strong reaction by daring to suggest that talk about 'confirming the permanent revolution' without the revolutionary party was

nonsense. In practice, however, both the Pabloites and the SWP find themselves prostrate before the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in Cuba and Algeria, which they have chosen to regard as the touchstone of revolutionary politics. Our view of this question is not opposed to that of the SWP simply in terms of who can best explain a series of events. It is a question rather of the actual policy and programme of Trotskyist leadership in these backward countries. The theory of permanent revolution is, like all Marxist theory, a guide to action; analysis becomes the pointer to the need to organize an independent and determined working class and its allies in the peasantry for their own soviet power. 'Confirming the permanent revolution' is not an accolade to be conferred by Marxists on approved nationalist leaders, but a task for which Marxists themselves have the responsibility. We find it difficult to comment on the SWP's complaint that we failed to recognize that any other line on Cuba would have made things more difficult for them in the American radical movement. We are less impressed by the fact that the SWP 'drew the favourable attention of a whole new layer attracted by the Cuban Revolution including such significant figures as C. Wright Mills', than by the fact that their theoretical position is a revisionist one, and if adhered to will lead to the liquidation of the SWP as a Trotskyist party. The very fact that the SWP document resorts to such criteria should be a warning signal.

14. The failure of the SWP spokesmen to provide an objective analysis of the role of the nationalist leaderships; their reliance on impressions of the strength and 'progressiveness' of the nationalist movements, a consequence of the theoretical stagnation of the SWP, has also led to a falsification of the historical truth about the relations between consciousness and the development of the revolutionary movement. Lenin's implacable opposition to all opportunism and compromise on principles, his insistence on analysing the economic roots of all political difference, his lifelong insistence on the primary importance of political clarification before organizational steps - all this is ignored, in order to justify the SWP's present orientation. Their document says 'Experience has shown conclusively that the way to bring together wider forces is through collaboration, fusions and unifications with leftward-moving currents freshly radicalized by the class struggle.'

'Limiting our review to the twentieth century, the history of Lenin's Bolshevik Party involved more than splits. It also

involved the unifications and attempted unifications with other tendencies in the Russian Social Democracy, including the Mehsheviki. Five years after 1912 when the Bolsheviks first constituted themselves as an independent party and in the midst of the 1917 revolution they merged with Trotsky and his Inter-District group -- a fateful decision which helped pave the way for the victory in October. Even after the conquest of power, the Bolsheviks held the door open for any signs of a revolutionary turn by the Left Mehsheviki or the Communist Anarchists." In fact, Trotsky and his followers joined the Bolsheviks and for the rest of his life Trotsky defined better than anyone else the great significance of Lenin's work in preparing the Bolshevik party for 1917. The document devotes one paragraph to the foundation of the Communist International. It abstracts from the process a single feature which appears to support its case: "The Communist parties of Germany, England the U.S. were all formed after the First World War, not by molecular accretions to the single original nucleus, but by fusions of a number of groups, none of which had originally been Bolshevik." nothing at all is said here about the strict conditions on programme and Bolshevik organization, above all on Soviet power, which the Communist International insisted upon for its affiliated bodies. Lenin's contribution in this discussion, with the hard-hitting criticism of all those trends which wanted the same kind of affiliation to the Communist International as had been possible to the Second International are completely ignored by the SWP document.

Trotsky's own words shed an interesting light on this part of the discussion.

"It was not flexibility that served (nor should it serve today) as the basic trait of Bolshevism but rather granite hardness. It was precisely of this quality, for which its enemies and opponents reproached it, that Bolshevism was always justly proud. Not blissful "optimism" but intransigence, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand's breadth of independence -- these are the essential traits of Bolshevism. This is what the communist parties of both the West and the East must begin with. They must first gain the right to carry out great maneuvers by preparing the political and material possibility for realizing them, that is, the strength, the solidity, the firmness of their own organization."

(Third International After Lenin, p. 141; obtainable from Pioneer Publishers, New York.)

The reason for this distortion is to be found not in the ignorance of those who wrote this document nor in the unavailability of the relevant documents but in the present political line of the SWP. This line is one which wants "unity" of all Trotskyist forces, but without clarification of differences or a thorough examination of the roots of revisionism, and which abandons revolutionary criticism of "left" trends in the movement. This leads to a denial of the historical foundations of the communist movement. In their anxiety to present a unified and peaceful Trotskyist movement to "leftward-moving currents," primarily from the "Stalinist monolith," they are led to the distortion of the very political foundation upon which the reconstruction of the international communist movement depends. When the SWP tries to justify its present line by saying that Trotsky made approaches to "Left-centrist elements" it is once again selecting those "facts" which suit its case and neglecting other vital aspects of the process. The document itself acknowledges that Trotsky initiated this discussion after the basic cadres of international Trotskyism had been consolidated. In fact this consolidation, like the great theoretical transformations forced through by Lenin between 1900 and 1917, was a process of political clarification which had to be carried through, before any question of numbers, or of organizational mergers, could be considered. The position of the Trotskyist movement today requires above all this theoretical "consolidation." It is not possible to "forget" the split of 1953, a split which the SWP itself described as a fundamental breach based upon the complete departure from Marxism of Pablo and his followers.

15. It is not surprising that the basic methodological differences should find expression in sharp clash on matters of urgent political importance. The SWP's attitude towards the Algerian struggle, and particularly the condemnation of the SLL's characterization of the FLN leadership and its agreements with French imperialism, will serve as the best example. On this question it has to be said that the SWP now finds itself at the end of a long historical line, beginning with the Mensheviks and continuing through the Chinese Revolution to the post-war struggles of the Arab, African and South-East Asian peoples. It is no accident that the publications of the SWP have not contained a fundamental analysis of the Algerian revolution for some years. No article on Algeria has appeared in the International Socialist Review. Little has appeared since 1958 in The Militant on the national movement in Algeria. From our side, over a number of years an attempt has been made to analyse the nature of the Algerian war and revolution and to specify the

character of its leadership. In this process, mistakes have been made, but certainly we did not suddenly discover that the Evian agreement was a sell-out. We did not argue that the FLN had conducted the struggle against the French correctly up to a certain point and then blame it for making peace with French imperialism. The Algerian war did not end as it began; the men and movements involved were not the same at the beginning as at the end. We attempted to trace out the development of the elemental struggle of the Algerian peasantry and urban plebians led, as it was, by a narrowly-based, petty-bourgeois leadership subject to all kinds of international pressures. We foresaw, while the peace negotiations were going on last year, what the likely, indeed, inevitable outcome would be. We were prepared for the result and did not, therefore, have to exhaust our resources of vocabulary to turn the Evian agreement into a major defeat for French imperialism or to find excuses for the nationalists. We should, therefore, say that our criticism is not one merely of the Evian agreement, but extends to the conduct of the struggle by the FLN over the whole course of the war. It is not, of course, true that we overlooked the responsibility of the leaderships of the workers' movement in France for the Algerian tragedy; that has constantly figured in the treatment of the French crisis in our press. The Evian agreement was not the result only of these, or only of the FLN. A different policy, that is a really revolutionary policy on the part of the French working class movement, could only have been waged under different leadership, but such a change in leadership in France would have profoundly affected the Algerian movement. It would have swept the Ben Kheddas and Ben Bellas away like chaff in the wind. They have only survived because of the defeats of the French workers. The behaviour of the GPRA leaves little doubt that the talk of agrarian reform and even social revolution is no more than a blind. The Algerian petty bourgeoisie seeks to fill the place vacated by French colonialism, while continuing to be a loyal guarantor of the fundamental interests of French capital in North Africa. We see the Evian agreements as the expression of this willingness, in which the FLN leaders remain true to their nature. We cannot forget that the "centralist" leadership have never really desired more than this and that they have not stopped at assassination to strike down those proletarian elements in the nationalist movement who long ago pointed out where they were leading. The role of the revolutionaries is not to bow down before a leadership which has nothing to commend it except the ability to control, for the moment, the elemental forces of the Algerian revolution.

We do not take seriously its professions of revolution. All nationalist petty-bourgeois groups today pose as socialists and Marxists. The FLN is actually a coalition of tendencies, but though some of them have potentialities, we see no proletarian tendency. What we do see is a willingness for compromise, a fear of the masses, a desire to co-exist with imperialism, which may well make 'independent' Algeria no more socialist than Nasser And Bourghiba. Does the SWP wish to extend the accolade to these leaders as well? Considering the deep crisis of French imperialism in Algeria it had retreated in relatively good order, leaving its interests to custodians it has at length decided to trust. Some rightists think, of course, that Algeria will "go Communist" and attack de Gaulle for making the agreement with the nationalists. We think those who see in an "independent" Algeria under the FLN the last hope of keeping that country within the circuit of the capitalist world market to be more in line with the existing facts.

Of course, the situation in Algeria remains unstable. The survival of the FLN leadership is bound up, in fact, with its ability to carry out the terms of the Evian agreement. It is bound hand and foot by its relationship with world imperialism. This relationship prevents it from satisfying the social demands of the Algerian masses or from consolidating its power for a prolonged period. The need is for a proletarian movement against the FLN leaders, against the Evian agreement, to continue the struggle for independence: which means, for the masses, not only peace but also bread and land. We do not equate existing leaders with "the living movement," least of all in Algeria. Nor do we judge the movement from the existing leaders, which is what the SWP has more and more come to do.

16. It is necessary to clearly characterize the way in which this latest SWP document provides "theoretical" cover for the betrayal of the Algerian revolution. The SLL, it appears, is wrong to call the Evian agreement a sell-out. We should have recognized, says the SWP document, that the "main thing" is a victory for the independence struggle and a set back for French imperialism. This type of formulation is, of course, not new: it is the classical Stalinist criticism of the Trotskyist programme in backward countries. We note that in Section II, the SWP document quotes with approval the following sentence from the pages of The Militant - "The first step in Algeria is the consolidation of independence, the second must be the socialist transformation of Algerian society." Is this different in any way from the Stalinist "two stage" theory of the revolution in

backward countries? Would it be possible to find a clearer example in practice of the abandonment of the Permanent Revolution, an abandonment which is not made any better by the fact that the theory is said to be "confirmed"? The sentence which follows the above quotation, "The Marxists there will strive to fight together with the worker-plebians against the bourgeois elements in the nationalist camp in order to direct the revolution along the second course," amounts to nothing more than a habitual repetition of phrases which the SWP leadership do not as yet omit from their political statements. That this talk of "the fight against the bourgeois elements" is nothing more than revolutionary phraseology is clear from the document itself. A Marxist, it says, "should participate in the forefront of the revolution at each stage - including its nationalist stage in the colonial and semi-colonial lands." Such formulations can only disarm the most advanced workers. We are asked to "make alliances with the most combative elements among the leaders and the ranks while bringing forward their own program and proposals in contending for leadership." (Our emphasis). What this opposition amounts to is not an independent course towards working-class power, but a loyal opposition within the nationalist camp.

Lenin's words on some of these questions, as set down in the resolutions of the Communist International in 1920, need no commentary:

"A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. The Communist International has the duty of supporting the revolutionary movement in the colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties -- which will be truly communist and not only in name -- in all the backward countries and educating them to a consciousness of their special task, namely, that of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic trend in their own nation."

and

"It is essential constantly to expose and explain to the widest masses of the working people everywhere, and particularly in the backward countries, the deception practised by the imperialist powers with the help of the privileged classes in the oppressed countries in creating ostensibly politically independent States which are in reality completely dependent on them economically, financially and militarily."

17. It is all very well for the SWP document to say that "Between them Cuba and Algeria encompass most of the basic problems confronting the Marxists in the present stage of the colonial revolution," but what is entirely lacking in the SWP presentation is any attempt at an overall analysis of the experiences of nationalist movements and revolutions in backward countries. What does the SWP document mean by the phrase "encompass most of the basic problems"? It is a matter here not of good and bad examples, but of a whole process in which the mass struggle in under-developed countries has been contained by petty-bourgeois leaderships. Besides Cuba and Algeria -- and in order to understand both of these -- the experience of Iraq, Iran, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Bolivia, Indo-China, and many other countries must be taken into account. What would emerge from such a historical analysis is the true role played by those leaders of the working-class who have proceeded from the theory of "two stages." Stalinism, far from being "forced to play a progressive role," has in fact disarmed and betrayed the advanced workers in every one of these countries and has enabled a new bourgeois government to establish temporary stabilization -- which is all imperialism can hope for at the present stage. It is in this sense and this sense only that the "theory of Permanent Revolution has been confirmed." The SWP document calls the Evian agreement "a major victory for the Algerian people, for the Arab and colonial revolution." No attempt whatever is made at any general evaluation of this new animal, the "Arab revolution." Instead of a concrete analysis of the Egyptian, Syrian and Iraqi experiences, we have acceptance at face value of the claims of the Arab leaders themselves. Meanwhile their jails remain full of communists and militant workers. The SWP by this position, falls along with the Pabloites into conniving at similar results in Algeria.

ROLE OF THE WORKERS IN ADVANCED COUNTRIES

18. At this point it is worth reiterating our basic differences in method. The SWP condemns the SLL for "a loss of Marxist objectivity." Meanwhile it proceeds to ignore every one of the basic requirements of Marxist objectivity. A Marxist evaluation of any movement insists upon an analysis of its economic basis in the modern world. This must begin from the international needs of imperialism. Secondly the political tendencies must always be considered in their relation to the whole historical experience of working-class theory. The relation of our party to past trends in the socialist movement must be clearly stated, in working out its approach to the nationalist movements and the tasks of

revolution in the underdeveloped countries. The SWP ignores completely these requirements of an objective analysis. The method is in fact a collection of impressions.

It is in Section III, "The relations between the underdeveloped and the advanced countries in the strategy of the world revolution," that the SWP's departure from the Marxist method stands most clearly revealed. In the first draft of the 1961 international resolution of the SWP, the decisive role of the revolution in the advanced countries was omitted. The final version "corrected" this omission in the manner of the Pabloites referred to above. However, the first draft was a more correct expression of the actual policy of the SWP on all points of programme. The objective relationship between the advanced countries and the struggle in the backward countries is not analysed at all. The SWP resolution of June 1961 runs as follows: "The strategic necessity of the world revolution at its present juncture is to combine into one mighty movement these three titanic historical processes; the anti-capitalist struggles of the workers in the highly industrialized imperialist centres; the anti-imperialist movements of the colonial peoples; and the anti-bureaucratic movements of the workers, peasants and intellectuals in the Soviet countries." The latest political committee document only confuses still further this estimation, which amounts in fact to no more than a survey of the struggles in different parts of the world. It now appears that "the main area and most dynamic sector of the world revolution is today located in the underdeveloped countries where imperialism and capitalism are breaking at their weakest links. The mood of this sector stands out in sharp contrast with the prolonged passivity of the labour movement in the advanced industrial countries where imperialism retains its strongholds." This statement is followed by a sharp "attack" on those who assume the contrast to be permanent -- "They fail to grasp the meaning of the irregular rate with which the different constituent sectors of the anti-capitalist battalions enter into action or the central place occupied by the workers in the metropolitan centers in the over-all struggle for socialism." In the absence of any objective analysis of the state of the class struggle in the advanced countries since the Second World War, the formal stress on the decisive role of this sector in the SWP document, can only appear as a Utopian faith in the revival of the struggle in those countries. Along with this we find formulations which excuse the betrayals of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats in these countries, e.g., "The intolerable conditions imposed by imperialism upon the colonial masses have driven them into

revolt before the workers in the metropolitan centers were prepared to settle accounts with their own capitalists." What should have been said here is that the outright betrayals of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats, their consequences in the rise of Fascism and the carnage of the Second World War, the collaboration of the reformists and the Stalinists in the restoration of European capitalism after 1945, made it possible for capitalism to remain in existence despite the organization and will to struggle of the workers in the advanced countries. Only a prepared struggle against these tendencies and the construction of an independent revolutionary party can guarantee the prospect of victory in the mass struggle now beginning in the advanced countries. Once the problem is posed in this way there results an entirely different political orientation from that of the SWP. The present "relationship of forces" is a product of past betrayals and not of the strength of imperialism in the advanced countries. The road forward will be found through the qualitative analysis of what produced the present "relationship of forces" and of the forces which can change it. The SWP document talks about "irregular rates" for the different sectors, ending with a conception of the "central place occupied by the workers in the metropolitan centers in the over-all struggle for Socialism" (our emphasis).

19. We are asked, once again, to start from the main thing, as with the Algerian "victory." "Even authoritative defenders of capitalism admit that since the end of the Second World War the socialist movement has been gaining at the expense of international capitalism. Today one-third of the human race has thrown off capitalist relations, and this trend is continuing. The impressive successes of the Soviet bloc in many fields and the advances of the colonial revolution have considerably weakened imperialism and shifted the balance of class forces on a world scale to its detriment."

Hastening to correct any impression that they had changed their position on the vital importance of the struggle in the advanced countries, a final version of the SWP resolution was drafted in June 1961. Although the SLL is accused of undue stress on leadership and of being "subjective," nevertheless the SWP resolution runs as follows:

"The confinement of revolutionary advances to the less developed parts of the world, together with the pronounced political lag in the West, has set its stamp upon our entire period. This negative feature, the most important element in

the current reality, involves the citadels of imperialist power as well as the proletarian forces that must be mobilized to take them." (Our emphasis.) One is bewildered by the statement that "this negative feature" is "the most important element in the current reality" after having already read that the general trend is one in which "the Socialist movement has been gaining at the expense of international Capitalism." Our stress on the importance of revolutionary consciousness in resolving the crisis of leadership is a positive and optimistic stress starting from the objective contradictions in capitalism. The SWP resolution can only find the advanced countries "a negative feature" as "the most important element in the current reality." This presents no guide to any kind of way forward. Instead it says, "the chief problem is how to loosen the deadlock, break the stalemate, by overcoming the passivity of the workers in this decisive sector of the international class struggle." What is missing is any analysis of the class struggle, the economic contradictions, and the role of leadership in Europe and America. Instead, as in the Pabloite documents since 1953, we find abstract evaluations of the relative importance of the various sectors of the world labour movement.

It is true that this section of the SWP political committee document is followed by a section "How can mass parties of Revolutionary Socialism be created?" But as we have seen above it is precisely on this question that the false method of the SWP degenerates into distortion of the history and classical positions of Bolshevism. All this section adds to the points already considered is a potted history which the SWP document generously describes as "objective proofs from a long and honourable record." This is supposed to show that it is really unthinkable that the SWP could possibly have abandoned the perspective of constructing revolutionary parties -- all we can say about this particular contribution to the discussion is that it might help in clearing up what the SWP leadership means now by the word "objective."

CUBA

20. Our differences on Cuba are only part of these general and fundamental disagreements. The SWP document states that a "workers" state has been established in Cuba, a consequence of the first victorious Socialist revolution in America.

It is interesting to compare this evaluation with that of the Pabloites, who share the view of Cuba as a workers state. We have given our estimation of the Pabloite position in the Labour Review (Vol. 7, No. 1).

The SWP political committee has now announced its determination to unite with the Pabloites, on the grounds that political differences are now minimal. Does the SWP see Pablo's position on Cuba as part of this "coming closer together"? We see it, on the contrary, as the logical conclusion of the capitulation of the Pabloites to petty-bourgeois tendencies subjected to such strong criticism in the SWP's Open Letter of 1953. Here again the SWP comrades have not considered Pablo's line on Cuba in relation to his whole approach to the Permanent Revolution and the struggle in backward countries. As we have pointed out elsewhere, the Pabloites have abandoned Lenin and Trotsky's positions on independent working-class action and organization, subordinating themselves to "progressive" nationalist leaders.

21. The determination of the SWP and the Pabloites to consider Cuba a workers state, or, to quote the SWP document, "an uncorrupted workers regime," is another example of the departure from Marxist method. The SWP document tries to present the differences over Cuba in a false way, accusing the SLL of not recognizing the workers state in Cuba only because the revolution there was not led by a Trotskyist party. The SWP, not misled by such "subjectivism," bases itself on other "criteria." The discussion in the 1930's on the class character of the USSR, and particularly the struggle against Burnham and Shachtman for the defense of the USSR as a workers state, are an essential background to the question of Cuba. But it is ridiculous to think that the question of the Cuban state can be resolved abstractly by "criteria" from this earlier discussion, even at the end of which Trotsky was still saying that the last word had still to be said by history. Trotsky and the Fourth International adjudged Russia a workers state because in the October Revolution the armed workers, organized in Soviets, took the State power, which they then used to expropriate the capitalists and to defeat the counter-revolution. The peasant revolt was able to expropriate the landlords because the successful proletarian revolution guaranteed their initial conquests. (Incidentally, does anyone in the SWP leadership think that the proletariat would have been able to retain the state power without the leadership prepared in the Bolshevik party? Who organized the Red Army and the great dynamic relationship of people to government which was preserved

through the Civil War? Does the SWP think that a Marxist leadership to carry out these tasks would have been thrown up "in the process of the revolution itself"?).

22. For reasons which have been well analysed in our movement, these victories of the proletariat degenerated. Trotsky fought a long battle against those essentially petty-bourgeois trends in the movement who used this degeneration to absolve them from the defense of the workers state. In defending the USSR as a workers state, Trotsky himself considered that the social and economic conquests of October were still intact. The bureaucracy which usurped the government power in the social economy of Russia was a parasitic group and not a necessary fundamental class. Its power was unstable, based on a temporary relation between the proletarian revolution in backward countries and the continuing existence of imperialism in the advanced countries. Trotsky's basic definition still holds: the conquests of October are still intact. The power of the bureaucracy remains unstable and parasitic. It is clearer now that it was then that the Stalinist regime was not a new type of society destined in a makeshift way, taking into account the special historical problems of the isolation of the revolution in a backward country. The states established in Eastern Europe in 1945 were extensions of the Russian revolution by the military and bureaucratic methods of the Stalinist leadership. They were possible under the circumstances of special difficulty for imperialism and the chaos in Europe consequent on the defeat of German capitalism. In fact the betrayals of international Social-Democracy and Stalinism restricted the advance of the revolution to Eastern Europe (and later China). This perpetuates the essential conditions of the survival of the bureaucracy in the workers states. There was by no means the same dynamic in the foundations of the deformed "workers states" as there had been in Russia in October 1917. Our movement's characterization of all these states was not simply a question of applying "criteria" like nationalization to the finished product.

23. These historical considerations are not irrelevant to the dispute over Cuba. Trotsky insisted that his discussion and definition of the USSR were to be taken historically, and in relation to the world struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. [At every stage of his eleven-years-long work toward a "definition" of the USSR, Trotsky insisted on a rounded, critical perspective and not simply on the "normative" method of applying definition criteria. The SWP method is the opposite, taking certain "criteria" from the discussion of one particular manifestation of the revolutionary struggle in one part of the world

as a unique stage in the development of the world revolution. They apply this criteria to another part of the world a generation later, to a particular sector at a particular stage of the struggle.] Thus nationalization and the existence of workers militias are sufficient to make Cuba a "workers state" and to make the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution. This "normative" method is the theoretical cover for the practice of prostrating themselves before the present instable and transitory stage of the struggle -- the victory of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalists -- instead of starting from the perspective and tasks of the working class. The objective basis for such a perspective would have to be an analysis of the present relation of classes and parties in Cuba and Latin America, in relation to the struggle against American imperialism. Our essential differences with the SWP on this question is, therefore, not over the "criteria" of workers states. We do not accept such a framework for the discussion; if, in fact, we had defined a workers state by the existence or non-existence of Trotskyist parties then this would be a lapse into "subjectivism," but we have not done this. We have tried to understand and discuss the Cuban question in terms of our own analysis of the economic position of Cuba and the evaluation of the present struggle in Cuba and the rest of America. We are in no circumstances prepared to join in the adulation of the "superb" leadership of the Cuban revolution. We are in no circumstances prepared to liquidate the Trotskyist leadership in organizations like the IRO of Castro and the Stalinists in Cuba. The only possibility of holding on to the gains so far made in the struggle against imperialism is through the building of workers councils and the extension of the revolution into Latin America. Only a Marxist leadership can orientate the Cuban masses for these two aims. Neither the July 26th movement nor the Stalinists will take up either of these slogans.

24. What does a "workers state" mean in concrete terms? It means the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in one form or another. "It is only the domination of a class that determines property relations..." (Lenin: Report to the Ninth Congress of RCP (B)).

Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba? We reply categorically NO! The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship. But what is even more significant is the absence of what the SWP euphemistically terms "the institutions of proletarian democracy" or what we prefer to call soviets or organs of workers power.

This is the paradox which lies behind all the so-called "democratic and socialist tendencies of the Cuban revolution." To substitute a workers militia for soviets does not help. Workers militias without soviets are no better, no worse than soviets without workers militias.

We would refer the SWP comrades to Lenin on this subject. Referring to the dictatorship of the proletariat, this is what he wrote:

"Only he is a Marxist who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is where the profound difference lies between a Marxist and an ordinary petty (and even big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the real understanding and acceptance of Marxism should be tested,"

and on the question of Soviets:

"the ... revolution is one continuous and desperate struggle, and the proletariat is the vanguard class of all the oppressed, the focus and center of all the aspirations of all the oppressed for their emancipation! Naturally, therefore, the soviets as the organs of struggle of the oppressed masses reflected and expressed the moods and changes of opinions of these masses ever so much more quickly, fully and faithfully than any other institutions (that incidentally, is one of the reasons why soviet democracy is the highest type of democracy)". (Our emphasis) Lenin in "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky."

The SWP comrades have discovered a new type of democracy -- different from soviet democracy -- symbolized by Castro and typified by the Havana declaration. What is the class content of this democracy? And in what way does it substitute for Soviets?

In our opinion, the Castro regime is and remains a bonapartist regime resting on capitalist state foundations. Its bonapartist nature is determined by the fact that the working class, because of the Stalinist misleadership, is unable to take and wield state power -- while on the other hand the big comprador-bourgeoisie which supported Batista is too weak and decimated to retake the power in the present period.

Castro continues to lean upon the working class and peasantry in the struggle against the latifundists and their agents in and around Cuba. He is helped in this task by the

economic concessions made to the workers and peasants. But it is the peasantry who have benefited most from the Castro regime. It is to this group and the urban petty-bourgeoisie that Castro turns and will turn for aid whenever there is a threat from the left. Castro balances between contradictory and antagonistic class forces. This is what explains the smallness of the ruling clique, the absence of democratic discussion, the instability of the regime marked by recurrent splits and purges and the mystique of the Castro cult.

The regime, however, is a variety of capitalist state power. The Castro regime did not create a qualitatively new and different type of state from the Batista regime. What it did do was to clear out the old judges, administrators, bureaucrats, diplomats and policemen and replace them with people who supported Castro. The old institutions were filled with new personnel. His present honeymoon with the Stalinists is dictated by the expediency of creating a staff of reliable administrators and functionaries. The attack against Escalante was motivated by a desire to keep power centralized in his own hands and not by hostility to bureaucracy or any other such thing.

The "militia" is subordinate to Castro's state -- not to soviets, not even to a constituent assembly. In this sense they do not constitute workers power or even dual power.

The nationalizations carried out by Castro do nothing to alter the capitalist character of the state. In this case there is a close analogy with Nasser's Egypt. Faced with intense competition in the struggle for the Middle Eastern and African markets, the Egyptian bourgeoisie -- the most rapacious of the Arab bourgeoisies -- has been forced to undertake a series of nationalizations of a state capitalist variety. In the summer of 1961, Nasser nationalized by decree the entire banking and insurance business, the shipping lines, the cotton processing industry, 96 big commercial and industrial firms and the entire press. He established state control of the buying and selling of all cotton. He set up a monopoly of the entire import trade and reduced the maximum land holdings by half. There is not a single industrial, financial or commercial firm which is not owned, directed or partly owned by the state. Yet Egypt remains an integral part of the capitalist world and is no more a workers state than imperialist Britain. It remains an extreme example of state intervention in a capitalist economy.

A basic criterion for a workers state in the economic sphere in an underdeveloped country is the nationalization of

the land and thorough political measures by the ruling power to prevent the growth of the kulaks. Neither in Egypt nor in Cuba has this been done. On the contrary, in Cuba Castro has recently promised (under the impact of the food crisis) to give the land back to peasants. So long as land remains alienable, so long will petty-commodity production continue and so long will Cuba remain a capitalist nation.

Despite or rather because of all the economic and social changes that have taken place in the last two-three years, Cuba has witnessed, not a social revolution which has transferred state power irrevocably from the hands of one class to another, but a political revolution which has transferred power from the hands of one class to another section of that same class. In the course of such a transfer, substantial concessions have been made to the working masses, but these concessions do not transcend the limits of capitalist rule and exploitation. In this context it is childish nonsense for the SWP leaders to declare that Cuba affords "fresh confirmation of the correctness of the theory of the Permanent Revolution."

Here is what Trotsky says on this subject:

"No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution." (our emphasis). (The Permanent Revolution, p. 153, 1962 edition.)

Thus Cuba constitutes, in fact, a negative confirmation of the permanent revolution. Where the working class is unable to lead the peasant masses and smash capitalist state power, the bourgeoisie steps in and solves the problems of the "democratic revolution" in its own fashion and to its own satisfaction.

Hence we have Kemal Ataturk, Chiang Kai Shek, Nasser, Nehru, Cardenas, Peron, Ben Bella -- and Castro (to mention a few).

That is why the Socialist Labour League fights for the construction of a Marxist party based on the working class

and armed with the finest and latest weapons from the arsenal of Marxism. The first task of such a party would be to establish the political and theoretical independence of the working class from the capitalist class, its state and its ideological servitors. This implies complete organizational and political independence from that bureaucratic fusion of Stalinism and Castroism which is the Unified Revolutionary Party. Only on such a basis can a really revolutionary struggle for working class power be waged.

In conclusion we state that such a policy does not inhibit the struggle for the defense of Cuba against imperialist attack, nor does it prevent episodic alliances with the Castroite forces in the struggle against the latifundists. On the contrary, it would immensely facilitate the tasks of defending Cuba and defeating landlordism.

The defense of Cuba and Castro against imperialism is a tactic. Our strategy remains the overthrow of capitalism and the setting up of a real workers state with real workers power. This task still remains to be done in Cuba.

25. One final word on the section of the SWP document concerned with Cuba. The SWP political committee circulates among its members and presumably throughout the world movement the following criticism of the SLL: "On the other hand, the fallacious theoretical approach of the SLL to the Cuban Revolution has impeded practical activities. The SLL lost the initiative in Cuban defense efforts to centrist forces in England. The rejection of an Embassy invitation to celebrate the Cuban revolution on January 1, 1962 needlessly widened the gulf between the British Trotskyists and the Cuban Revolutionists. Recently the SLL has started promoting a 'Food for Cuba' campaign. This kind of solidarity action is sure to be appreciated by the hard-pressed Cubans. We hope this improvement in their practical work will be followed by reconsideration of their theoretical views on the Cuban Revolution." We cannot understand this pronouncement. No evidence is given for it, and we would like to know which "centrist elements" have gained the initiative in Cuban defense efforts. There have in fact been no such initiatives or efforts in Britain by anyone else except the SLL. Furthermore, in our efforts we have found the Cuban Embassy and their supporters in the Communist Party to be a major stumbling-block to any organized aid for the Cuban people. We hope that this section of the SWP statement will be withdrawn.

We will not dwell here on the questions which we have previously taken up with the SWP leadership concerning the supposed attitude of Castro towards revolutionary Marxism. It is enough to note that this repeats a fundamentally mistaken notion of the nature and role of consciousness which is at the root of the SWP revisionism. The SWP document looks at Cuba in isolation, despite its claims to see Cuba as a focus of all the important problems in the colonial revolution. The actual relations between the Cuban revolution and the world situation of imperialism and the world revolution are not examined. Cuba is taken in isolation and formal "criteria" of workers states then applied. The necessary result is "the worship of the accomplished fact."

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

26. Our emphasis on leadership, both in the underdeveloped and in the advanced countries, is perfectly justified by an examination of the facts. When the SWP speaks of the "prolonged passivity" of the workers in the advanced countries, what is it doing but finding another form of words to express the crisis of leadership? What is the reason for the failure of the workers in the advanced countries to come to the assistance of the colonial workers and peasants who have revolted "before the workers in the metropolitan countries were prepared to settle accounts with their own Capitalists but the crisis of leadership. Does the SWP want to blame the working class? Is it looking for a substitute for the working class in action as a force under revolutionary leadership? Yes, it tries to make the colonial movement, the "objective forces" and ultimately even the Communist Parties the substitutes for this. The talk about the success of the Soviet bloc, etc. reads very much like an adaptation of the Khrushchev line of competitive co-existence. In this respect some of the declarations of the SWP during its election campaign in 1960, as well as articles in the press on the USSR leave more than a suspicion that in the course of cooperating with fellow travellers since 1956 some of their war paint has rubbed off on to the SWP. Why is it that the Soviet successes are seen only in positive terms? Nothing is said about the conditions for the political revolution in the USSR. The counter-revolutionary policy of the Soviet bureaucracy remains a shackle on the world working class movement, holding back not only the workers in countries like France and Italy, but also in the underdeveloped countries like India and Indonesia. Support for the national bourgeoisie, like support for anti-monopoly coalitions, flows from a desire for a deal with world imperialism. We suggest that the SWP political committee re-read the

documents produced during the course of the struggle against Pabloism in 1953-4. When it speaks of the "narrowing of the political differences" with the Pabloites, we take it that this is done with full cognisance of the documents and articles which they have produced in recent years. Some of the crass mistakes of these effusions have been dealt with in our press and documents. To pick a way through all the erroneous nonsense, pretentious verbiage and arrant absurdities which masquerade as Trotskyism in the Pabloite publications is a task which we have great reluctance in assigning our comrades to. If the SWP finds the political differences have narrowed to the point where they are prepared to conceive of organizational fusion in the near future, we can only conclude that the change has come from the SWP and not from the Pabloites and that there has been a failure to get to grips with the theoretical problems of the Marxist movement.

27. We do not agree that the SWP or anyone else has "an impeccable record." What a claim to make! Only people who do not do anything politically necessary make no mistakes. We note with some amusement the petulance with which our serious and fraternal criticism has been received. Does it not occur to our American comrades that we are only referring to well-known dangers in the environment in which they are working and that it would be more than surprising if they were entirely blameless of the kind of flaw which we suggest has been present in some of their recent work? In any case, the best way to meet this criticism is for the SWP to draw up its own balance sheet of recent experiences, beginning with that of "regroupment" since 1956. We should also appreciate an examination of industrial and trade union work and the extent of the work carried on to draw closer to the most depressed strata of the North American working class, including the Negro people, the Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. We should be much more impressed by successes recorded here than by a parade of names of newly won friends from the ranks of fellow travellers, new lefts and other assorted radicals.

28. Having allowed their principles to become blunted as a result of some of their maneuvers within the context of American radicalism, the SWP has now decided that the Pabloites have in some way "corrected" their earlier revisionism by similar adaptations to the harsh world of events. This estimate ignores the need for consideration of the basic differences in method and not simply questions of program and organization which divided the SWP and the British Trotskyists

from the Pabloites in 1953. Marxist politics start from a theoretical analysis of the whole, and any "corrections" must flow from the conscious criticism of previous positions. The empirical adaptation to events characteristic of the Pabloites is the opposite of Marxist method. The SWP's conclusion, namely that the differences between us and the Pabloites have narrowed to a point where the breach can be healed organizationally, is only possible because the SWP has ended up with exactly the same method as the Pabloites themselves.

29. Moreover, because it can argue in this way, we must draw the conclusion that the SWP has not really understood Pabloism. Indeed, we would extend this criticism to the whole political treatment of Pabloism since the split. It treats it as an accidental, theoretical deviation using wrong organizational methods. It is not able to give an account of the social and historical roots of this deviation in Marxist terms, if only because, in doing so, it would expose its own weaknesses. Pabloism has not changed, or if it has, it has only become more crass in its theory and more bureaucratic in its organization. It is, in any case, now in a state of profound crisis. The Latin American Bureau is now in open revolt. In Europe a number of groups have broken away in the past year or find themselves critical of such practical aspects of Pabloism as "deep entry" in the Communist Parties or the conduct of Belgian Pabloite leaders during the General Strike. At this time, therefore, it seems particularly inappropriate for the SWP to assert that the differences have become narrower. If Pabloism has social roots and the SWP finds itself more and more in sympathy with it, the time has come to turn the searchlight of criticism into the SWP itself. The SWP has set a false course and is drawn irresistibly into the morass of Pabloite thinking. We propose to continue to combat Pabloism, as we have done consistently in the past, as a dangerous revision of Marxism. We now call upon the comrades of the SWP to take a good look at themselves and at the course they are following and to draw back before it is too late.

30. A warning signal was given in the Fall 1960 issue of the International Socialist Review in an article by Murry Weiss on "Trotskyism Today." Among its other faults this article managed to ignore completely the basic differences which split the Trotskyist movement in 1953. In other words, Weiss was already taking the course now belatedly pursued by the SWP -- that of covering up and minimizing the differences with the Pabloites in order to appear more attractive

to dissident Stalinist elements or to Castro or to anyone else who may be interested. Such an attitude to its own history is inexcusable. If a Marxist party which has a public and international split on basic political issues later sees this to be only a temporary misunderstanding, then this very fact would require us to make a thorough analysis of the process by which we came to make such a serious misjudgement. For a serious struggle against revisionism, Weiss and the SWP leadership substitute a pragmatist method of covering up differences to make alliances, which may temporarily "work."

31. Once again this crisis necessitates looking into our own history. Whereas in 1953 the SWP's Open Letter insisted that the Pabloites had broken with the very fundamentals of Marxism; they now say "In our opinion, three main reasons were responsible for the rupture nine years ago. One was an apparent tendency shown by the International Secretariat, under Pablo's direction, to conciliate with Stalinism and look upon the Soviet bureaucracy as capable of self-reformation into a political agency of the working class and to impose this view without prior discussion or authorization upon other sections of the movement. This tendency was most explicitly expressed by Clarke in our own party, by the IS failure to condemn the role of Soviet military intervention in the East German uprising, and by its attitude in the French General Strike of 1953.

"Second was its apparent conception that a small literary circle could constitute a full-scale authoritative international leadership superseding and substituting itself for self-governing parties in the various countries. This view and method of operating tended to prevent leaders and cadres in various sections from standing on their own feet.

"Third, the super-centralization of the IS resulted in arbitrary interference within those national sections which had leaders of different opinions accustomed to think for themselves on problems confronting their parties and the world movement. This was disruptive, provoking unnecessary splits."

Instead of a basic departure from all Marxist principles, we now find the Pabloite position characterized as "an apparent tendency" to conciliate with Stalinism, etc. Nine years later, the SWP lays most of the stress on organizational differences, forgetting the fundamental lessons of its own history in the 1930's. Organizational differences flow from basically different political positions. Once

the political differences of 1953 have been "cut down to size," they are easily shown by the SWP document to have disappeared in the course of the years. "Since 1953 significant changes have taken place.

"The first sign of a turnabout came in 1954 when the IS backed away from the pro-Stalinist tendencies it had inspired and protected in France, Great Britain and the U.S. This was certified by the break with Clarke, Lawrence and Mestre, three figures who pressed the IS line to its logical conclusion, the first abandoning Trotskyism, and the latter two joining the CP with their followers.

"Then in 1956, the IS reacted very differently to the Polish and Hungarian events than it did to the East German uprising and the French General Strike in 1953. They took positions substantially the same as the orthodox Trotskyists."

32. The facts are that Pablo and the IS defended Lawrence in his struggle with the majority in Britain even though at that time his course towards the Stalinists was clear and recognized by the majority. In fact when two of Lawrence's own members complained to Pablo about his course towards the Stalinists, Pablo, far from taking up the complaint, denounced these members of Lawrence. Clarke in America, Lawrence in Britain, Mestre in France all completed their development to Stalinism, and thus made their break with Trotskyism. It was only later that the IS denounced them. In any case the Pabloites and the SWP must surely examine the whole method and the nature of the revisionism which nurtured this capitulation to Stalinism. No matter how the SWP now estimates the events of 1954, they found it necessary along with other sections of the IC to circulate Peng's document against Pabloite revisionism in 1955. The criticism of Pabloism contained in this document is just as severe as those of the Open Letter of 1953. As for the position taken by the IS on the Hungarian and Polish struggles in 1956, here again history is being doctored. There was no basic difference in the IS statement concerning Hungary and Poland in 1956 from their statements on the East German rising in 1953. Commenting on the Soviet declaration of October 30th, 1956, they say, "This statement attempted to establish relations between the people's democracies and the USSR on a new basis ... The immediate repercussions of the Hungarian revolution can stimulate a momentarily predominant 'glacis.' But the pressure of the masses cannot fail to grow in these countries. The process of transformation of relations among workers states, of relations of

equality and fraternal collaboration is irreversible." In other words, while repeating phrases about the need for the working class to overthrow the bureaucracy, Pablo's own attitude towards this bureaucracy in fact disarmed the workers. The British section, therefore, did not agree in any way that the political differences were narrowed. Our experience of the British Labour Movement confirmed us in that opinion. The Pabloites not only failed to support us in the fight against the right-wing Social Democrats, they made unprincipled alliances with elements defecting from our own ranks, such as Fryer and Cadogan, who soon abandoned all claims to revolutionary socialism. We have stated elsewhere our views on the Pabloites liquidationism in the Algerian struggle. If the SWP is right in saying that "the political positions of the majority of the IS, a number of IC affiliated groups, and some Trotskyist organizations affiliated with neither side on most of the vital issues of the day, from the de-Stalinization process and the Sino-Soviet conflict to the Cuban Revolution, are so close that they are indistinguishable to any unprejudiced reader of their respective publications," we can only hope we are not included.

33. The SWP document tries to give the impression that the congenital sectarianism of the SLL led it to prevent international Trotskyist unity, e.g. "While the English and French representatives on the International Committee supported the SWP unity proposal (1957) in words they sabotaged it in practice." In the document "A reply to Comrade Peng" (July 1961) the National Committee of the SLL has dealt with this accusation which flows from a misunderstanding of our whole approach to international Trotskyist unity, and again this approach is part of our basic differences with the SWP. Organizational unity must follow political clairivication, and we insist on a thorough settlement of all revisionism whatever its source before any organizational fusions can take place.

34. The following extract from "A Reply to Comrade Peng" will clear up this question:

"Let us cite the facts and hope that in the course of this comrade Peng will at least learn something about the need for accurate reporting.

"The parity proposals of comrade Cannon arrived in England towards the end of April 1957. They had already been transmitted to the LSSP in Ceylon. We protested about this since we felt that it would have been far better to have them first of all discussed inside the International

Committee before they were sent to Ceylon. Later, in November 1958, during the Toronto meeting when we had a chance to talk the matter over face to face, comrade Cannon did agree that this would have been a more correct procedure.

"Our national conference in May 1957 was held simultaneously with a conference which Pablo had called to launch his so-called English section. He embarked upon a campaign of widening the split in Britain by an open attack against our organization. Nevertheless, we presented the parity proposals of the SWP to our conference and they were unanimously adopted. These were submitted to the Pabloite organization on June 7, 1957 (See Appendix). 5

"Whilst our doubts about the success of the proposals were increased by the fact that Pablo had launched an attack against us, we felt that the international movement was not fully aware of the pernicious role of Pabloism in practice, so we instructed comrade Sinclair to write a critique of the Pabloite document for his Fifth Congress. This document of Sinclair did not in the least interfere with our attitude towards the parity proposals. We felt and we still do today that these proposals must be backed by a clear political line.

"The first sign of difficulty we had so far as the SWP was concerned was when we received intimation during the summer of 1957 that there were comrades in the SWP who disagreed with our political criticism of Pablo. Here was the main reason why we held up our reply to Germain. We wanted time in order to see if it was not possible to obtain political agreement with the SWP.

"The International Committee met in Switzerland in early September 1957 and adopted the parity proposals. These were sent to the Pabloites in the same form as they were drafted by the SWP. Comrade Peng knows this because he was present at the meeting. We received no reply from the Pabloites apart from a brief acknowledgment,

"This is how matters stood until the Toronto meeting, in November 1958. The parity proposals were rejected by Pablo. Of course comrade Peng and some comrades in the SWP say that because the English organization raised political criticism they gave Pablo an opportunity to reject the proposals. Our reply to that is that if our own forces

are unclear on Pabloism, the parity proposals could have brought nothing but further splits."

35. The proposals made by the IC to the IS for the opening of international discussion in all sections of the world movement take on more urgency in the light of the SWP's criticism of the SLL. Our intention in making these proposals is not to arrive at any summit agreement between the leading committees of the IC and the IS, but to carry on an unrelenting struggle against revisionism throughout the ranks of all sections of both organizations. Only in this way can the Fourth International be reconstructed. We make no apologies for saying that we regard the defeat of the ideas contained in the document entitled "Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps" as a first necessity in this process.

Adopted by the National Committee of the
Socialist Labour League

21st July, 1962.