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RADICAL LABORISM VERSUS BOLSHEVIK LEADERSHIP

The Organization Problem of the S.W.P.

by Richard Kirk and Clara Kaye

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP

Thirteen years have elapsed since the fight with the Cochranites. Until 1961, the stewardship of the SWP was nominally held jointly by the current regime and the Weiss group leaders. With the elimination of the Weiss group, the Dobbs-Kerry group entrenched itself and established a political monopoly of the leadership.

What are the principal achievements of the existing leadership since consolidating themselves?

1. The withdrawal from Cuba defense work and from trips to Cuba designed to break the travel ban.

2. The reduction of the once-independent youth to a chattel of the SWP national office, and the prolonged insulation of these youth from the ferment around them in the general student movement.

3. The removal of all minority representation on the Political Committee, the avowed intention of destroying all minority formations, pockets and opinions in the Party at large, and the tidal wave of expulsions on ephemeral grounds and in an unprecedented compulsive manner.

4. Recurrent disasters in our relations with the northern Negro struggle and an absolute self-segregation from the southern struggle that is indefensible, especially on the incredible organizational grounds of "no forces available."

5. Rejection of obvious and principled opportunities to enlarge the Party through serious fusion, regroupment or united front tactics.

6. Chronic organizational and political intimidation of all spokesmen for the emancipation of women.

7. Ignominious default in regaining ideological hegemony over the radical movement, rationalized away by the canard of an absence of qualified personnel to accomplish this.

3. Refusal to assume organizational initiative of any kind in any mass movement, and the corollary of elevating basic organizational tasks of the Party (fund raising, sub drives, paper sales) to the plane of political crusades, thereby reducing Party life to internal maintenance plus election campaigns.

It is time to inquire into the nature of a leadership which has basically undermined the interventionist and democratic traditions of the Party, and yet appears before the Party with complacency and with an organizational Resolution that validates everything it has done and then proceeds to shake the big stick at the remaining Party dissidents.

What is wrong with the regime?

An analysis of its history and modus operandi leads inescapably to the conclusion that the present leadership is Radical Laborite in character and not Bolshevik.

It is Laborite because it believes that socialist politics on an extended scale will develop exclusively through the medium of a Labor Party based on the unions. It is Radical because of the powerful residue of the traditions of revolutionary socialism in the Party.

In its social origin, the regime derives from the militant AFL unionism of the thirties, and its vision does not basically project beyond the trade union upsurge of the distant future that will lead to the Labor Party. This myopia lends an anti-political cast to its view of reality.

Not typical syndicalists, nor anti-party in the Cochranite sense, the regime nevertheless does not intervene decisively in the real political life of the time, so long as the arenas of struggle and motion remain outside the labor movement and sometimes opposed to it. The regime permits participation in other movements (in a grudging response to pressure from Party branches in the field) but the "participation" proposed by the Center is a follow-the-leader adaptation to the prevailing winds of whichever movement strikes its fancy at a given time. When controversy develops, as it must, within these movements, the word is usually, "Get out!"

Furthermore, the rigidly unionistic framework of the regime's long-range strategy results not only in non-intervention but in a deep-rooted anti-theoretical habit.

As a consequence of the single-minded unionistic-laboristic blueprint for revolution, the Party has become increasingly constricted, rigid, conservative and turned-inward. This produces, in turn, deepening errors of theory, program, strategy and tactics in those areas demanding the greatest familiarity and precision of evaluation: the colonial revolution, youth, the Peace movement, the Negro struggle, the labor movement, women's emancipation and revolutionary regroupment.

The chief characteristics of the Radical Laborites, then, are fourfold: they are non-interventionist, contemptuous of theory, union-bound in strategical orientation, and politically unstable in their reactions to any given juncture.

A. Non-Interventionism.

Exclusively focusing on the strategic variant of the Labor Party, the leadership is generally impervious and insensitive toward non-unionistic facets of the class struggle, and where it must evaluate the radical developments of any stage, it is inconsistent and ambivalent, apparently disinterested in fundamental (rather than reportorial) conjunctural analyses and the tactical shifts (other than inspection tours) indicated by them.

The regime recognizes struggles other than large union upheavals for general propaganda purposes only. Somewhat like the SLP clinging to its fetish of Socialist Industrial Unionism and riding out a half-century with election campaigns and journalistic commentary, the SWP seems resigned to a pattern of reporting and general socialist education.

The vital problems and needs of the newly developing vanguard groups in the country are treated superficially; outside of correctly urging them to independent political action, The Militant has no more advice for them than the National Guardian, which approves them all, or the Weekly People, which is contemptuous of them all.

What should Malcolm X have done? What should SNCC-MFDP do? SDS? PL? What next for the teach-ins? What program for women? Doesn't anybody have to do anything before the unions move? Evidently not. Evidently no current development involves urgent political problems, demanding direct intervention, initiative and agitation by the SWP.

Today's real and potential mass movements are considered

interesting but secondary and subordinate phenomena and their groping leaders are either followed by the SWP with an uncritical blindness which sometimes borders on adulation or are viewed with excessive political suspicion and competitive organizational mistrust.

Compounding the error, the regime also neglects probes into the unions, preferring to wait until the time is more patently promising. Comrades working in unionized shops are instructed NOT to appear as "union politicians" but to concentrate on recruiting to the Party. Not only is this a false polarization of interdependent activities, but the logic involved would force the Party not to conduct election campaigns on pain of being labelled "Establishment Politicians" -- an accusation frequently made against us which we constantly have to explain. And today we must explain it again to the party leadership: wherever we are, we are revolutionary politicians working within extant structures in order to either change their policies or overthrow the structures themselves. If it is tactical to work within the framework of the bourgeois state via election campaigns, how downright sectarian it is to fear the guilt-by-association charge engendered by working within the framework of the degenerated class organs of the proletariat -- the union movement!

We are not spectators of the internal union processes from within the unions; wherever our organizational participation in the local provides us a rostrum for principled propaganda and agitation, we would be foolish to abjure it.

It is significant that the Political Resolution stresses our "propagandistic" nature and tasks, while the Organizational Resolution mentions the multitudinous areas of participation and intervention supposedly characteristic of our Party and evidently supposed to be maintained. But this is a liturgical chant only. Business will proceed as usual, and intervention will be cooled off and discouraged wherever possible. The present projected "intervention" in the youth anti-war movement, for instance, will produce as lasting results and political continuity as did our participation in FPCC, CAMD, FNP, etc. because the orientation to mass work is either politically wrong or tactically superficial.

B. Anti-theoretical.

Coming forward in the struggle against the petty-bourgeois

intellectual opposition in 1941, and having helped to defeat it, the present leadership gradually converted the thrust against the petty-bourgeoisie into a rejection of all theoreticians in politics.

It tolerates "theory" on "foreign" issues which do not deeply concern it -- China, Cuba, the International -- and on questions of abstract philosophy, which are not troublesome as long as they remain abstract. But any encroachment upon its domestic territory by a minority viewpoint is promptly labelled -- intellectual! The word has become synonymous with "oppositional" and with "petty-bourgeois" and is tantamount to an insult.

The dialectical connection of the Leninist concept of worker-Bolshevik, Marxist-intellectual, organizer-theoretician, etc. has been summarily split by the regime and the separate parts reassembled into new units. Theory/ideology is now the exclusive function of the regime, while the ranks and the organizers are expected to work at sub drives, fund drives, forums and campus activities, period. Naturally, this "leave the thinking to us" law results in very little thought by anyone at all.

Minorities are answered not with logical political disputation, but with muddying, distortion and fabrication of the issues, with invective, and with personal-organizational attacks. Political arguments used to be serious and educational experiences for the entire party membership; today, any consistent or persistent theoretical, strategic, or tactical difference provokes a reflex characteristic of the labor officialdom, echoing its intolerance, prejudices and Billingsgate idiom.

Contempt for theory breeds an inability to tolerate criticism; both traits are expressed in the anti-intellectualism of the radical laborites.

C. The Dobbs-Kerry leadership is the second major tendency closely associated with labor unionism to appear in the SWP in the post-war period.

Between the present leadership and the Cochranites, an obvious affinity existed, indicated by the reluctance and tardiness of their break with Cochran. However, an important difference exists between these two tendencies.

The Minneapolis Teamsters and Sailors Union of the Pacific (and Marine Firemen) were the first two mass bases won by the SWP, and they produced the present leadership of the Party.

These unions, not as socially and politically advanced in terms of overall program and ideology as the newer CIO unions, nevertheless were extremely militant in their pursuit of job benefits and against government intervention in the unions.

They were therefore among the first objectives of the employer-government drive to housebreak the labor movement -- the Teamsters came under fire immediately before World War II and the SUP shortly after the War. The union hierarchies joined forces with the bosses and the State to drive out radical leaders from the unions. The struggles which ensued forced a sharp and decisive break between the SWP and these unions, and cut off the present central leadership from its point of mass support.

The Cochranites, on the other hand, were still more or less firmly entrenched, mainly in the UAW, in 1951. They were propelled away from the Party because they had a mass milieu and mass base to lean on and to escape into as the witchhunt became general.

D. The Question of Centrism.

Of recent years, several opponents of the leadership both within and without the Party have characterized the majority as Centrist. The prevalence of the use of this term requires an evaluation of the regime with respect to a definition of this term.

The Dobbs-Kerry regime does reveal definite political deviations from revolutionary criteria.

1. The regime certainly flirts with reformism.

a. Their approach to the Negro question is reformist, most glaringly revealed in the propositions that All-Black political action is the solution to the race question in the North, and that "Troops to the South" will raise the political level of Negroes there.

b. They have substituted the 30-40 slogan for Trotsky's sliding scale of wages and hours. While 30-40 is an important demand to press, and may obviously have positive consequences, it still does not necessarily constitute a bridge from reformist to revolutionary consciousness; on the contrary, it may become a means of strengthening reformism at a given stage. And

in sectors of the economy undergoing automation, the 30-40 slogan doesn't scratch the surface of the problem.

c. Negatively, the very barrenness of the P.C.'s current Political Resolution, which is void of either conjunctural analysis or revolutionary perspective, holds the door open to further flirtations with reformism.

2. The political reflex of the leadership to critical events and shifts is demonstrably non-revolutionary.

a. Forceful intervention by Comrades Cannon and Graham was needed to rectify the hands-off Third Camp policy adopted at the outbreak of the Korean War.

b. The political line during the Cuban missile crisis was at best ambivalent, and at worst bordered upon joining the anti-Soviet hysteria, only from the "left."

c. The regime betrays an obsession with "security" (as in the Cuba trips) which more often than not attempts to mask an unsure policy. Their unseemly concern with respectability occasionally veers toward panic, as evinced after the Kennedy assassination, revealing a marked instability, impressionism, and legalistic defensiveness. The reductio ad absurdum of this approach was performed by youth when it issued national mimeographed instructions to its convention delegates forbidding them to "shack up" because of "security."

d. The disinterest in and hostility towards any movement for women's emancipation reveals only one facet of a basically non-Bolshevik tradition created by the present leadership.

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Do these enumerated weaknesses add up to Centrism?

Trotsky defined centrism as an unstable political formation in motion between reformism and Bolshevism. The source of motion in centrism is to be found largely in external social forces which exert both reformist and revolutionary pressures.

But the one thing which clearly characterizes the organizational policy of the SWP leadership is its ability to insulate itself from all external pressures by means of a rigid sectarianism. Isolated from both the reformist and revolutionary pressures exerted by the mass movements, it is subject to the direct pressure of the capitalist class, with no counter-pressure from the mass movements. The effects of this pressure, however, have been thus far insufficient to cause motion in the SWP; rather, a certain stagnation grips the Party and its leadership.

If and when the SWP majority relates itself to the existing mass movements, and permits itself to feel and react to the contradictory and alternating pressures there generated, a true and definitive political character will emerge. Life will show whether the present indefinite state of the solid core of the majority signifies centrism. Everyone, in fact, will be tested under these conditions.

Meanwhile, we do not see that the political designation of Centrism has an important bearing on the problem of party leadership in the SWP. More important at this moment and decisive for the future is its sectarianism, its self-insulation, its irrational suspicion of new vanguard formations -- particularly anything emanating from the CP milieu or the South, and its insensitivity to the problems and struggles of the most oppressed.

These traits derive not so much from centrist faults as from their Laborite character operating in the period of a degenerating labor movement.

Actually, the regime has not changed very much in the past two decades; vast changes in the objective situation have simply exposed another side of its character.

II. THE LABORITE REGIME OPERATES WITHIN THE STRATEGY OF THE HOLDING OPERATION.

This is a state of suspended animation which freezes program and cements the cadre for a decades-long cliffhanging until the resurgence of organized labor -- the main question -- is at hand. Then, the Party is supposed to drop down to terra firma and move in. The present "tightened - up" propagandistic activism is only a new form of the basic holding operation, designed to make it palatable to energetic youth.

This self-paralysis and self-segregation, this marking time and treading water, is constantly being disturbed by the pressure of changes, turns and crises provided by everyday events. The economy gyrates in abrupt swings and cycles, social relations shift, and political repercussions accumulate; the rhythm of revolutionary politics, like that of life, is the rhythm of the see-saw. But the regime will not be provoked into altering its freeze-in; it equates programmatic firmness with the posture of the spectator and tries to modulate and modify the significance of every development to fit its own longrange timetable.

Its perspective and schedule, however, based on a concept of relatively uneventful evolution, leave no room for relating to the leaps and twists of the real political world. The regime hopes to see a growth in the Party from small to big to bigger, and then, someday, on to Power. Unfortunately, such a smooth and predictable progression is not in the nature of things, as the German social-democracy came to learn. Behind the welfare-state facade of U.S. capitalism lies a voracious imperialism, the Mississippi police-state, the Viet Nameese war, etc., all producing cataclysmic reactions. It is possible to keep one's head and one's balance only if the chronic imbalance and inbred surprises of the system are appreciated and anticipated as the norm. The regime is thrown and disoriented at virtually every new and unexpected juncture because it is not geared to dialectics, materialism or political flexibility.

The very nature of monopoly capital lies behind the swift sequence of widely varying conjunctures. A fixed program that does not grow, and a petrified longrange strategy that persists no matter what, are the results of a contempt for the "passing parade" of reality. The SWP today has asserted its superiority over the basic laws of political motion: it promises that hanging on, hanging tough, waiting it out and letting the struggle come to us, is sufficient for eventual victory.

In a revolutionary period, we expect the masses to intervene in their own destiny. We expect a revolutionary party, however, to be doing this all the time.

III. NON-DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM.

A non-interventionist regime conducting a Holding Operation can maintain itself only by increasing centralism and lessening democracy.

A long history of internal conflicts lies behind present SWP organizational principles and procedures.

The expulsion of Field, who thought that the Party would permit him to adapt opportunistically to the pressure of the mass movement, established the authority of the Party over its mass workers. The expulsion of Zack reinforced this principle and established the right of the P.C. to intervene directly in the branches.

The debate with Oehler over the "French turn" (entry into the Socialist Party in France and subsequently elsewhere) established the polar unity of organizational flexibility and programmatic firmness as the required foundation for relations with centrist groupings.

The struggle against Abern isolated and exposed the disease of clique politics and organizational combinationism.

The consuming and paralyzing daily battles with the Schactmanite petty-bourgeois opposition necessitated formalizing internal discussion by placing constitutional limitations on it.

The fight with Morrow established the Control Commission.

The main thrust of our advances toward democratic centralism was to acquire a much-needed degree of centralism. However, this centralism is now in the hands of an anti-political tendency which uses it to reinforce its monopoly of leadership. Our heritage and tradition of democracy, the other part of democratic centralism, are being steadily eroded.

A. One example of the ongoing erosion of democracy is to be seen in the practices of the Nomination Commission.

Conceived by Comrade Cannon as a bulwark of the rank and file to protect itself against a self-perpetuating leadership, it has turned into its opposite. It has become a means through which the central leadership entrenches itself and its friends without having to take responsibility for proposing this. The Commission perpetrates vendettas against opponents, who may suddenly be dropped from the National Committee without any discussion or explanation occurring; previous understandings with large voting blocs account for this phenomenon. It contemptuously ignores the form, procedure and spirit of the proposal which created it.

B. The Control Commission has also changed character.

Shortly after the last Convention, a lengthy Control Commission report was submitted of an investigation of considerable duration, undertaken quite a while before the Convention. This "investigation," of the Milwaukee Branch, was conducted largely by Political Committee appointees. The actual members of the Control Commission, however, dutifully signed the report, although they themselves did not investigate, interrogate witnesses

or determine the direction of interrogation. No report was made to the Convention of this investigation.

The Control Commission behaves as a non-responsible body, i.e., not responsible to the Party. It is incumbent upon an ^{out-}going Control Commission above all other bodies in the Party to make a full report of its activities to the Convention. But had this been done, there might have been an objection from even majority supporters to the unusual procedure of the Political Committee relegating to itself the function of the Commission.

C. The War Against Minorities.

In his speech to the New York Branch on the expulsion of Robertson, Comrade Dobbs claimed that the expulsions (which had provoked widespread criticism from all sectors of the Party) illustrated Comrade Cannon's dictum that principle has a primacy over organizational questions. These are more or less empty words. What Cannon meant was one thing. But all the words appear to mean in the new context is that the leadership believes itself justified by tradition to expel anyone it can first outvote on political questions.

An even more disturbing proposition was placed before the Party in this speech. Comrade Dobbs justified the expulsion on the grounds that it had been a mistake in the first place for Robertson to be allowed into the SWP. We do not invite enemies into the Party, he said, and he thereby announced in effect two important organizational objectives:

1. Establishment of the principle that any kangaroo court proceedings constitute a fair trial, because the real purpose of the "trial" is to rectify the mistake that allowed an enemy to exist within the organization. And how is enemy status determined? By whom the majority can outvote. And since any minority can be outvoted, any minority can be the "enemy" -- solely by virtue of being a minority. The logical outcome of this new principle is obvious: no more minorities in the SWP.

2. The Robertson expulsion was calculated to be an epitaph on the political grave-stones of those "politically irresponsible" elements who "invited" the enemy into the party in the first place.

In this sense, Robertson was a more or less innocent bystander, representing only a vehicle for the repudiation of Regroupment, the old Cannonism, and Murray Weiss.

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An unprecedented number of threats and disciplinary actions against members of various minorities, on clearly secondary grounds, and often for unclear and even spurious reasons, have occurred from coast to coast:

1. Preventing a leading comrade from giving a public talk. (Comrade Swabeck.)
2. High pressure "suggestions" from various Branch leaderships that worker comrades resign.
3. Threats of expulsion or being dropped for "lack of activity." This is prevalent in many Branches.
4. The censure of an entire branch (Milwaukee) for expelling a common thief.
5. Expulsion for privately expressing disloyal thoughts. (Robertson members.)
6. Expulsion for giving an unavoidable press statement, or for "unauthorized" participation in a mass demonstration. (Robertson members.)
7. The recent action of the Detroit Branch in placing Comrade A. Phillips on charges for failure to participate in a sub drive at a time when he was conducting a long and bitterly fought struggle in his local union -- and at the very outset of the pre-convention internal discussion in the Party. This reveals what is projected for the future:
 - a. No minority opinion to be tolerated.
 - b. The class struggle decreed as outside the area of Party "activity." Proletarians will become increasingly unpopular in the SWP.

D. The New School of Socialist Discipline.

As discrimination and prejudice against political minorities and unionists harden, and as a strange new organizational climate prevails in the Party, young activists are being trained to become Branch organizers of a different and special type. Organizational "hard-liners" and super-activists, they are encouraged to transform their Branches into tightly controlled "combat" units, ruthlessly stripped of all "fat", "deadwood" and dissidence.

The present campaign for "tightening up" the Party is being undertaken at the Branch level by this new stratum which never had a chance to learn the real meaning of democratic centralism and which has been taught to equate 'centralism' with monolithism and 'democracy' with social-democratic all-inclusiveness.

The new youthful activist-leadership energetically procures revenue, organizes literature distributions and keeps Branch wheels turning. All of this is highly commendable, necessary and basic. However, they have been endowed by the majority leadership with virtually unlimited authority over all areas of party activity in quite a few branches, and their high-handed methods are being unfortunately endorsed by some "old-timers" -- another new term of contempt -- who are intimidated by the image of omnipotence projected by the new leaders.

These new super-disciplinarians operate in the ideological image of the central leadership and attempt to emulate it in every way. They are largely, nevertheless, of a petty-bourgeois character, stemming from an essentially middle-class student origin. Consequently, the purge atmosphere they exert against "non-activists" (usually political dissidents) tends to introduce a class friction into Party relations similar to that developed by Gould, Glotzer, et al -- the hard core of the petty-bourgeois intellectual opposition in 1940. But one key difference prevails: the present student youth leadership, in mimicry of the majority leadership, tends to be an anti-intellectual petty-bourgeoisie.

This is not to say that the mis-educated young socialists in the SWP are responsible for the regime. They are its captives. The central leadership, and its close supporters, have ordained the course of the Party, and it is they who control the party. An ingenuous youth may counter the charge of the SWP making a satellite out of a youth movement with the rejoinder "But the youth runs the SWP!" Nevertheless, the youth in its present form has been molded by the SWP and the excesses of the youth -- its sterility, rigidity, conservatism and harshness -- are clear harbingers of things to come in an SWP finally rid of the last vestige of "disloyalty."

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Outside of the distortion and demagogic manipulation of organizational minutiae involving minority members, the organizational practices of the leadership do not often appear to be "illegal." But a higher criterion than formal legality exists: the dialectics of democracy and centralism in the service of a revolutionary policy, i.e. principled politics. There are no Constitutional provisions which defend the Party against unprincipled politics in the leadership, yet this is the fundamental organizational basis upon which a regime must be judged.

IV. UNPRINCIPLED POLITICS.

The present organizational document before the Party, purportedly drawing the lessons of the last period, studiously ignores the most tortuous organizational convulsion of the decade: the destruction of the Weiss group, and how and why it was virtually driven from the Party.

The fundamental politico-organizational axis of internal Party life since the Cochranite split in 1953 (aside from the Marcyites, who were a party unto themselves) was the reciprocal relation between the central leadership and the Weiss group, and their counter-relations with the Wohlforth-Robertson group.

Any resolution on organization which avoids discussing this conflict is an abstraction. The present Resolution does not scratch the surface of the organizational question in life, except to re-exhibit the leadership's flair for evading concrete reality.

The "Weiss group" comprised virtually an entire generation, at that time a younger generation, in the secondary leadership. They were loyal activists with a deep theoretical interest, particularly in the relation between theory and practice. They stood for principled politics and for interventionist tactics.

The relentless annihilation of this group, and its reduction to the status of non-persons in Party history, are the crowning achievement of the present regime and the basis of its consolidation and impetus. This effective purge is supposed to be a demonstration of superior politics -- how to achieve the organizational conclusion of the destruction of an opponent in a "soft" split. Yet not one word about how this marvel was accomplished appears in the Resolution.

What are the words? They exist and they aptly describe the process. Unprincipled organizational combinationism. An old malady of American Trotskyism, this practice has hardened into a habit of the central leadership and has become typical of its relations with Party minorities ranging from Cochran to Wohlforth.

Basically unconcerned with theory and program, the regime cynically consummates organizational deals with its political opponents at the expense of its political allies.

A. Unprincipled Politics in the Cochranite Fight.

The Weiss group was in the forefront of the struggle against Cochran after he declared war on the fundamentals of Trotskyism. Comrades Dobbs and Kerry at this time were in close organizational

alliance with Cochran. Even though they were in basic political agreement with Weiss and rejected Cochran's revisionism, they refused to defend the Weiss group "intellectuals" and "professional revolutionaries" who Cochran was fiercely attacking.

Instead, Comrades Dobbs & Kerry helped organize the Cochran faction in at least the Seattle Branch, where Dobbs, in person and on the scene, conferred official approval upon the factional organization of an absolutely unprincipled combination of Cochranites, Bartellites, and Marcyites, and then proceeded to encourage them to undertake a power struggle against the Branch leadership on straight organizational issues. He even promptly reported back to the appalled majority faction this bestowal of his blessings on an anti-party group, justifying it on the grounds that his national post demanded that he be "fair, impartial and democratic."

Only after nationwide resistance to Cochran-Clarke was generated by the secondary leadership and Party membership did the central leadership reluctantly break its unprincipled bloc and help repel Cochran's struggle for power.

B. Unprincipled Politics in the Fight with Wohlforth.

3 years later, when Wohlforth and his anti-Cuba faction were leading the youth, Comrades Dobbs & Kerry consummated an organizational agreement with him which prohibited any opposition to him from youth comrades loyal to the Cuban revolution and in support of SWP policy on Cuba. In spite of this unwarranted deal between the leadership and Wohlforth, many youth comrades felt they had to defend the Cuban resolution within the youth as they entered into a struggle against Wohlforth.

Comrades Dobbs & Kerry threatened disciplinary action against the loyal youth for breaking the calm of their bloc with Wohlforth. Challenged by Comrades Weiss and Dan Roberts, and prevented from pursuing their unprecedented course by the Plenum of the National Committee (1961), they withdrew their charges against the majority youth. But in a shocking revenge maneuver, several supporters of the loyal SWP youth were eliminated from the National Committee by means of the silent blackballing technique used by Dobbs-Kerry adherents on the Nominations Commission.

When Wohlforth was finally isolated in the youth through open discussion of the Cuba question, the majority spokesmen who had initiated the fight and were the logical candidates for youth leadership were by-passed. A new leadership was

erected, the chief criterion being loyalty to the SWP regime.

This signified the end of the organizational independence of the youth, the end of the attempt to develop a self-reliant youth leadership, and the end of the Weiss group as a result of its demoralization over the unprincipled tactics wielded against it.

C. After this disgraceful "victory," possibilities for the continued exercise of unprincipled politics were by no means exhausted. The post-script to the history of the Weiss group was the final relations with Wohlforth-Robertson.

The main grievance of the Political Committee against this minority was that they were agents of Healy. Robertson then split from Wohlforth because he refused to take orders from Healy. Did this not create a new and more favorable relation between Robertson and the PC? By all the criteria of principled politics, it should have. But Wohlforth was willing to maneuver with the PC and he had informed on Robertson on petty matters, to camouflage his continuing ties with Healy.

So Robertson was expelled and Healy's agent remained, until in his own good time he chose to be expelled.

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The fundamental modus operandi of the regime -- unprincipled politics -- has a 13-year old history and is now deeply ingrained. It is connected to, and a product of, the grim antagonism of Comrades Dobbs-Kerry to the Weiss group.

V. WHAT WAS THE SOURCE OF THE ANTAGONISM TO THE WEISS GROUP AND WHY WERE THE DIFFERENCES SUPPRESSED SO LONG BY BOTH SIDES?

A. The Differences.

Not until after the eradication of the Weiss group were any hints of political differences between the two groupings manifested in the major Resolutions of party gatherings. At the 1963 Convention, Comrade Myra Tanner Weiss presented amendments to the Political Resolution. But long before this, there existed differences and shades of difference which the Weiss group minimized or repressed in the interests of attempting to build a unified collective leadership on fundamental questions after the Cochran split.

The sources of friction were threefold.

The Weiss group held to theory as the fundamental guide of the party.

Objectively, their interventionist tactics and bent constituted resistance to the Holding Operation.

They were spokesmen for women's emancipation in society and in the Party.

On all three counts, the anti-politicals considered them a menace.

1. Theory.

The Weisses were teachers of basic Marxism; they taught a respect for theory and for the worker-Bolshevik concept of the Party member. They wanted a Party of revolutionary intellectuals, of thinker-doers. This led to a concern with maintaining a constant relation between theory and practice, and between strategy and tactics. This in turn led to a habit of leadership accountability and responsibility, in the sense of Trotsky's constant demand upon leadership to be self-critical about itself.

This tradition has vanished from the National Office. As impressionism and eclecticism replace theory in the SWP, the doctrine of leadership infallibility and immunity from criticism prevails. The need for leadership to regularly present a candid and complete balance-sheet on past policy and performance is honored only in the breach. Political errors of the Dobbs-Kerry leadership are either ignored or incorporated into Party doctrine as vindicated appraisals.

2. In regard to the Holding Operation, the Weiss group characteristically sought SWP influence within any leftward-moving currents.

This required strategical talent, but such talent was typical of Party leadership in the formative years of our movement. Flexibility, alertness to opportunity and initiative were the political skills bred by early Trotskyism.

The 1956 Regroupment Campaign symbolized this spirit of the old "Cannonism," but the real and lasting gains achieved by that campaign were written off by the present regime precisely because of its hostility to any such turns. --It wants no more maneuvers and negotiations with groupings -- large or small, centrist or revolutionary. It orients only to untainted individuals without dangerously lurid pasts.

3. The defense of women's rights is a particularly irritating matter to the regime. To raise it exposes the non-communist character of the leadership, which wishes to build a Party in which the average worker will immediately feel at home.

Writing about race prejudice in the Party, Comrade Vernon said white radicals are justified in creating that type of Party climate in which white workers would feel at home, even though Negroes are repelled. (White Radicals and Black Nationalism, p. 19.):

"Radicals are fully aware of the politically reactionary aspects of American policies and condemn those aspects of American life which they can pinpoint as direct products of capitalism per se, but are basically in harmony with what passes for American culture, and identify with the American (i.e. white) people. They had better. Their job and goal is to get closer to and fuse with the American workers and people, and this requires being American."

He was answered by the 1963 minority (Revolutionary Integration, p. 40.) as follows:

"Vernon is both stunningly right and fortunately wrong. He is right in his enumeration of the qualities estranging Negroes from us; he is wrong in thinking our bad habits are good socialist tactics.

"We are isolated from the white working class. We are isolated because of our revolutionary program and principles. No amount of conformity to cultural mores or anything else will prevail until objective conditions force a change in working class opinion. However, our concessions to the general illiberal folkways of white America do estrange us from its key victims -- Negroes, women, youth -- leaving us very isolated indeed."

Lenin warned that the revolutionary party must not encompass any of the backward prejudices of the proletariat. He called upon men and women Bolsheviks to heed the plight of oppressed women and aid them in the Party and in society.

Almost alone among SWPers, Comrade Myra Tanner Weiss heard this call and responded to it, educating and re-educating members of all generations in regard to the vital theoretical, political and organizational significance of the woman question. Her reward, of course, outside of the gratitude of the few, -- was the hostility of the many, accompanied by demagogic downgrading in typical male chauvinist style. This approach of blatant insult and condescension is most effectively undertaken by women defenders of the regime, as was best exemplified in the article An Answer to M.T. Weiss' "Comments" by Hedda Garza in the Internal Bulletin, No. 29, 1963.

This is how the SWP deals with the comrade who was its leading female spokesman for twenty years. The SWP does not educate against male chauvinism, it agitates against real women leaders.

B. The "Soft" Split.

The gap between Weiss and Dobbs-Kerry grew out of the unspoken question, "What kind of a Party shall we aspire to be?"

The old communists, Lenin and Trotsky, aspired to build parties from among those who hate capitalism, want to destroy it and will fight for freedom and fraternity in and out of the Party.

Bolshevik circles were always marked by a distinct atmosphere of equality. Workers, intellectuals, men, women, different nationalities, the aged, the youth, and adherents of many diversified viewpoints on many issues all lived together in mutual respect and collaboration. The leadership was clearly multi-tendencies, and operated collectively. Democratic centralism was the glue that held them together, and democracy was never sacrificed to centralism until the necessities of War Communism clearly demanded it. Indeed, the disputatious argumentativeness of Russian Bolsheviks was an international joke, but these are the people who led the first successful proletarian revolution.

The atmosphere of equality repelled those who could or would not accept this criterion for Party membership. In the SWP, however, Bolshevik practice is reversed and everything stood on its head. An essentially revolutionary group, the Weiss-group, was driven from the SWP precisely because the Dobbs-Kerry leadership faction would not tolerate equality with even more-or-less vague tendencies within the leadership.

The Weiss group was simply demoralized by discriminatory treatment and unabashed vindictiveness. It was possible for them to virtually fall apart under the persecution because of two factors:

1. They never analyzed the political character and social background of the very leadership that was factionally organized against them, and they thereby helped prepare their own demise and demoralization.

2. For all their devotion to theory, they could never bring themselves to look critically upon party doctrine, which included Negro Nationalism and the label of "secondary" applied to both the Negro and Woman questions.

About a year after the Cochranites left the Party, the Branches suddenly received a National Office communication signed by Murry Weiss, then functioning in the central New York leadership, to the effect that he was calling upon his supporters, who perhaps constituted a clique, to disband; he "repudiated" any past unconscious leadership of a clique.

What specific pressures and rationalizations evoked this Darkness At Noon "confession" and self-slander can only be surmised; in general, however, this capitulation was predicated on the conviction that unity on the Political Committee must be maintained at all costs, and that to raise any issue other than the most obvious and elementary which-side-are-you-on question was diversionary and disruptive. At bottom, he had no confidence in the necessity and the ability of the National Committee or the Party ranks to call the regime to order.

Comrade Weiss' reluctance to speak out until it was too late stemmed from his lack of a clear-cut programmatic differentiation, his commitment not to rock the boat, and an attitude of futility about the possibility of change within the Party. Certainly, the methods and program of the regime are supported by the majority. This is due to the facts that (1) the clique politics of the regime are obscured by the peculiarity that the clique is the regime, and (2) the erratic conjunctural and episodic reflexes of the leadership appear to have the blessings of the founders of the Party.

But the discussion of controversial ideas within the Party cannot be repressed forever, and it cannot always await the pleasure of the leadership before discussion is possible. The lid will blow, as yesterday's disputed or suppressed "secondary questions" become the burning issues of the day (as they usually do). When the preservation of leadership unity congeals into the paramount organizational method of varying tendencies within that leadership, Leninism is no longer a living reality in the movement and internal education comes to a dead halt. It is not the open discussion of controversy that breeds centrifugal tendencies, but precisely its repression on organizational grounds.

The SWP is paying the price today for the myopia of that sector of the leadership which recognized the incipient dangers to the party, but instead of giving serious analytical thought to them, willingly became the instrument of an window-dressing for the suspect regime.

When Dobbs-Kerry saw the opportunity to establish a less independent machinery of control of the party -- the Weiss

group became superfluous and had to go.

The "soft" split -- the secret, puzzling, non-event split -- will haunt and taunt this Party indefinitely until it is understood.

C. The Concealed Years: Transitional Stage to the New Course.

The issue of the soft-split has been easily and readily relegated by many to "past history," as if Party history played no conditioning role in the character of the organism today. Newer and younger comrades are taught to view SWP history as interesting but irrelevant, and comrades with more seniority have long allowed the masquerade of a consensus to play on, even when they recognized departures from principled traditions and practices.

The analysis of the real differences between Comrades Weiss and Dobbs-Kerry serves to inform and remind us that the past epoch has indeed been relevant. It was one phase in the process of the SWP, an interim marked by growing counter-currents to the predominant trends of the pre-Cochran epoch. These counter-currents have now crystallized.

The nature of the Weiss group was a negative indication of the nature of the Dobbs-Kerry group. The latter inoculates the membership against those very traditions of American Trotskyism which demonstrated in life how a small, but correct, Bolshevik party could grow and prosper. Devotion to theory, programmatic clarity, scientific conjunctural analyses, interventions, fusions, splits, principled politics and organizational flexibility -- all are consigned these days to the realm of old junk, necessary perhaps in the dim past when all we supposedly had to do was sit in cellars, read the books, and clarify theory, but outmoded today when what is needed is "Action!"

And of what bold thrusts does this new Action consist? Literature promotion, fund drives, and a tightened organizational structure devised to confine and isolate those who oppose the new course. Evidently nothing more than this Action is needed, because our coming leadership of the American proletariat is ordained.

Action? Even words have been changed to connote their polar opposite meanings.

Our leadership, alas, is not ordained, and it depends precisely upon what we do. What the SWP is doing now, apart from the basic tasks of drives, elections and education, is

wrong -- wrong in strategy, in tactics and in evaluation of life both within and beyond 116 University Place.

The regime may keep its eyes glued to the AFL-CIO ball, but radical life moves outside and around the unions, bypassing and outstripping them for the present as viable organs of mass action. New areas of real action emerge in the country, and new serious contenders for radical leadership appear. The Party is faced with new problems and new opportunities, but these are largely ignored. The Party is likewise faced with the need to confront and settle long unresolved and even unnamed disputes.

But when the living history of the Party becomes substance not for illumination and education, but for awkward silence and distortion, it is increasingly apparent that the concealed years and the unreported struggles contain the clue to the real political nature of the regime, the barrenness of its program and the blatant deviationism of its organizational policies.

VI. THE ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTION.

The Political Committee's Organization Resolution, subject and product of a special Plenum, provides the legal groundwork for administrative practices already in effect. The document is a mopping-up operation, formalizing the high-handed methods typical of the regime.

One of the myths promulgated by the leadership is that it is "unprincipled" to criticize them on organizational procedures (1) so long as political differences do not exist, and (2) so long as political differences do exist!

There is no precedent for this fantastic formula anywhere in the revolutionary movement. The very real and tested law of principled politics that organizational grievances not be raised ahead of an in place of extant political differences has become thoroughly distorted.

In the fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1940, Trotsky and Cannon promised to deal minutely with the organizational question AFTER the political issues were resolved, and this they proceeded to do. Still, an aura of suspiciousness surrounds organizational proposals and objections arising from outside the central leadership itself. Members of the Party objecting to violations of past practices are told, in effect, to develop a faction on the question of Outer Mongolia or keep quiet, because organizational criticisms are always supposed to represent deeper or unconscious political differences.

So the ranks are prevented from criticism if they do not have political differences, and conversely, if an avowed political faction or minority raises organizational questions or protests organizational practices which they believe are injurious to them, they are promptly damned for "obscuring" the political questions and "introducing" trivia.

It is time to take issue with the falsity and hypocrisy and downright unfairness of this nonsense. The insistence on programmatic issues taking precedence over administrative issues arose from pre-factional situations where anti-party political tendencies refused to reveal their full program and had to be smoked out. No such minority has congealed in the SWP since 1953. Every faction in the past decade has explicitly and directly announced its points of ideological differences.

Existing factions have every right to voice their opinions about the regime, to complain or to criticize administrative conduct without being demagogically condemned for so doing. Furthermore, comrades who believe themselves in political agreement with the majority, or who do not know what, if any, programmatic differences exist, have not only the right but the responsibility to express themselves critically on organization matters at any time.

It is significant that some minority factions, like the Marcyites and Johnsonites, both politically further from the majority than any of the contemporary minorities, never voiced objections to the methods and practices of the regime. Indeed, they had no cause to; the leadership always bent over backwards to accommodate and incorporate them in the Party and in the leadership, and to extend every democratic avenue of expression to them.

These fortunate minorities did not abuse their privileges, either, and generally behaved with restraint and respect for rules.

Similarly, comrades in the past decade have seriously questioned one or a number of practices of the regime and never developed political differences.

The Organization Question is not just and not always a reflection of and a link to programmatic questions. It also has an identity and a character of its own. The Party has a right to judge the leadership on this question alone. It is neither honest nor principled for any leadership, whether on a national or branch level, to demand of a critic that he anchor his objections in Capital before he can be heard, or

that, if his objections are indeed anchored there, he is unwarranted, petty or extraneous if he raises any protest over administrative issues.

The spectacle of a regime branding an organizational protest from a minority with a real or suspected grievance as "disruptive" is the sheerest hypocrisy. The regime has the responsibility of answering criticism, admitting or denying it, and has no right to "reject" it. It may postpone discussion of the issue, but to turn majority-minority relations into diplomatic-style gamesmanship is to reduce leadership responsibility for its organizational practices into nothingness.

Most Branch organizers know this, and know as well that they are capable of plenty of mistakes, excesses, myopias, and general underachievement! Still, they are accountable for their leadership. That the central regime should somehow stand exempt from the criteria and norms of judging leadership, and assume the mantle of absolute organizational and procedural inviolability from criticism, taking exception to the form rather than the content of criticism, is a mockery of the democratic centralism they claim as their guide.

Finally, in addition to Organization having an identity of its own, it is a political question. Still, highly politicalized comrades tend to denigrate it as worthy of their attention and intervention because of its second-class status. Exclusively concerned with wondering if their organizational objections have deeper political roots, they completely forget that the organizational practices of the leadership may have deeper political causes than the leadership cares to reveal. It may well be that the new adventures in expulsions, suspensions, censures, threats, etc. are powered by a different concept of the Party and of SWP program on the part of the leadership, concepts that the regime obscures by presenting Convention resolutions on program and organization which appear, in most cases, to reiterate traditional positions of the Party.

Surely, a regime that openly threatens to get rid of -- certain branches and individuals -- even "active" ones! -- and warns that it will "clean up" certain areas and "eliminate factionalism" for all time is a regime to whom the following question may validly be addressed:

"Comrades, just what is your fundamental political program and strategy for the SWP? How can Party organizational practices change so radically without being rooted in undivulged new policies and perspectives?"

* * * *

It is apparent from the new Organizational Resolution that the regime isn't quite sure how far to go in proscribing factions -- nor, for that matter, is it sure what kind of an organization it is presiding over.

The Political Resolution tells us that the SWP isn't even really a party, but is still a propaganda group; whereupon the Organizational Resolution promptly transforms us into a combat party mobilized to take the state power.

The Political Resolution tells us our tasks are propagandistic; but the Organizational Resolution decrees more centralism so that we can more effectively penetrate the mass movement.

It is difficult to know whether cynicism or schizophrenia is at work here; in any event, one can only admire leaders who not only defend their position, but who defend two mutually exclusive positions with equal zeal.

In regard to factions, page 15 of the Organizational Resolution assures us that "The right to organize tendencies and factions is safeguarded." Very nice, quite exemplary, properly traditional. But hold on -- pages 16 and 17 describe in Grand Guignol terms exactly what you can expect after you have exercised this dubious "right." A faction cannot be politically justified, we are told, unless it conducts a power fight! Furthermore, if differences are so fundamental as to justify the organization of a faction, then the faction "must" conduct a "showdown fight for control of the party."

This is fantastic. Not only does the regime have the right, now, to commandeer private factional correspondence, it further has the audacity to presume to order factions to conduct "war against the party" on the pain of being labelled "politically unjustifiable" if they don't!

This is to serve notice on the majority that the Seattle Branch of the SWP REFUSES to undertake a power fight, and if this be disloyalty to the new "Organizational Character of the SWP" and self-imposed proof of a "disruptive" and "degenerate" nature, let the Political Committee act forthwith.

Factions, then, are evidently still legal, but are politically immoral, unwise, unnecessary and provocative by their very nature. Faction members are not necessarily criminals (unless they refuse to incite splits) but they are definitely irresponsible fools and knaves, and ordained to quickly become anti-party cliques.

The Progressive Labor convention, so scorned by The Militant, was much more consistent. Because factions are evil, they said, they are prohibited; in place of them, "criticism and self-criticism" shall prevail. The Militant dismissed this as "Stalinist garbage." But what alternative avenue of criticism does the PC propose, for PL or for itself? If factions are anti-party and if individual criticism is garbage, what are the approved avenues of criticism?

We are repeatedly told in the Organizational Resolution that "ample room is provided for the expression of dissident views." Where? When? How? The Convention every two years decides policy for all questions that will arise during the next two years, even surprise events that haven't happened yet, like the Kennedy Assassination, Cuban missile crisis, etc. Since criticism can only be advanced and ostensibly discussed during one 3-month pre-convention discussion period every two years, then anyone planning ahead as to how to best intervene in this discussion with a minority viewpoint is a factionalist, because he is organized and/or because he hasn't changed his mind since the last convention when he was only a tendency.

Furthermore, while anyone may certainly express dissident views at the Convention, hardly anyone can get them discussed objectively and on their merits. Distortion and insult have displaced political debate in the SWP.

In life, then, no real room is provided for objective and serious dissident expression and debate. All critics are promptly slandered and pilloried and obscenitied. For many long years, the SWP had the enviable and unique reputation of being a democratic centralist party that allowed factions and factional life. Today, opposition on any question whatsoever has been rendered so suspect and disgraceful and dangerous to its holder that scenes like the following are commonplace:

A Party leader speaks in diametric opposition to a PC Resolution at a national convention. Then, to the bewilderment of some unsophisticated delegates, he votes FOR the PC Resolution -- because, as he says, you just don't vote against the leadership.

So much for the regime's habit of pointing with pride to the "overwhelming" majority vote and the "minute" votes garnered by minorities. In life, to vote against the regime, in order to register your opinion, is intolerable disloyalty disqualifying comrades from first-class party citizenship. The "ample room" for critical expression is equivalent to the choice of the last meal by the condemned man.

The current regime forces dissenters into becoming tendencies, and tendencies into becoming factions. The only alternatives are abject capitulation despite one's convictions, individual withering away, or, ironically, that very phenomenon about which the regime waxes so righteously indignant -- the growth of cliques. The history of the Communist Party should serve warning on the SWP -- where factions and political disputes are either overtly or in effect prohibited, cliques proliferate, serving as private formations for the discussion of burning party issues.

The absurd contention that factions mean power fights constitutes a political frame-up and should be summarily removed from the Resolution. It is designed to prejudice any discussion of political questions raised by an organized minority. It illustrates one of the fundamental characteristics of the regime: when faced with political opposition, create a hysteria in the Party over secondary organizational questions. This will prevent any necessity of having to defend policy in the "objective", "responsible" and "educational" manner piously advocated by the Resolution, but this process will attain the same objective -- an "overwhelming" majority vote.

Both Lenin & Trotsky bequeathed to us the unchallengeable right to organize factions for the express purpose of trying to influence and persuade the membership and the leadership to alter or adjust Party policy. There is not one word in the doctrine of Bolshevism to the effect that the majority is by nature correct and the minority by nature wrong. Yet, according to the present Organizational Resolution, "basic differences with the party line" are caused by "alien class pressures...ideas, moods and motivations at odds with our program and traditions...nervousness translated into exaggerated criticism of the party..." And then "those who develop basic political differences also develop an urge to throw off restrictions imposed upon them by the party's organizational concepts. They become antagonistic to democratic centralism." (Pages 4 & 5.)

This "analysis" of minorities is not only a shameful generalization, it is a shabby political mistake. It assumes that nobody knows that Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Cannon were frequently in minorities and it equates party line with absolute truth and minority opinion with absolute "capitulation to alien class pressures." That the regime really believes this is obvious; but that the entire Party believes this is unbelievable. Surely, even among those who have not become so "disoriented" as to organize factions, somebody has absorbed the rigorously self-critical spirit of Marxism:

If Marx and Engels were alive today they would certainly have nothing but biting contempt for the suggestions that the merciless criticism which was their sharpest weapon should never be turned against themselves. Their real greatness does not consist in the fact that they never made a mistake, but in the fact that they never attempted to persist in a mistake for one moment after they had recognized it as such.

Karl Marx by Mehring

The Organizational Resolution buries this spirit once and for all, for not only has the Dobbs-Kerry regime never made a mistake, they are self-described as generically incapable of making any. The majority, therefore, by supporting them, will always be historically right.

There aren't enough Organizational Resolutions in the world to continually suppress the factions forced into being by such a hallowed leadership. In The History of American Trotskyism, Comrade. Cannon writes that:

Once a movement has evolved through experience and through struggle and internal conflict to the point where it consolidates a body of leaders who enjoy wide authority, who are capable of working together and who are more or less homogeneous in their political conceptions, then faction struggles tend to diminish. They become rarer and are less destructive. They take different forms, have more clearly evident ideological content and are more instructive to the membership. The consolidation of such a leadership becomes a powerful factor in mitigating and sometimes preventing further faction fights.

The consolidation of such a leadership is devoutly to be wished; it has obviously not yet materialized in the SWP.

THE FRAGMENTATION OF WORLD TROTSKYISM

by L. Marcus

I. THESIS

The world is now wading into the onset of a new general economic and social crisis. Except in one feature, the world has never been riper for the impending victory of socialism; that feature is the absence of an established revolutionary leadership prepared to lead this struggle.

The lack of leadership does not take the form, so much, of the smallness or isolation of existing revolutionary cadres; small cadres can multiply furiously in influence and organizational resources during the coming months and years. The real problem is that in most countries even the rudimentary seeds of a qualified cadre do not exist.

The question of socialist victory thus depends upon the measures we now take to create a qualified beginning for the necessary cadres in all countries. This, in turn, requires a program of world socialist victory within which perspective each national cadre can find its particular tasks and particular place.

This struggle must not be approached simply as a question of increasing the memberships of existing organizations. Many existing organizations are "revolutionary" only by virtue of their excellent intentions respecting tasks they absolutely fail to comprehend; many organizations' excellent intentions are, in fact, only a ceremonial posture without present practical content. In most instances we must shelve the question of organization itself until a more fundamental question has been resolved: the question of the political, theoretical quality of the cadres.

Today, we hear again paraphrases of Marx's: "A single step of the real movement is worth a dozen programmes." To such misguided views we must reply as Lenin did, in What is To Be Done?: "To repeat these words in the epoch of theoretical chaos is sheer mockery... Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This can not be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism is combined with absorption in the narrowest forms of practical activity."

In each country where the tiniest fragment of a real revolutionary leadership exists, that leadership is compelled to adopt the founding perspective of Leninism: "...our party is only in the process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it has not yet settled its reckoning with other tendencies in revolutionary thought which threaten to divert the movement from the proper path."

Some leaderships of nominally "Trotskyist" organizations have deluded themselves that their organization, their organizational pretensions, represent

the finished germ-form of the qualified revolutionary party. They also delude themselves, for similar reasons, that history has settled their "right" to hegemony, that the historical "reckoning with other tendencies" is an accomplished fact. Since Trotskyism has proven itself to be correct, since they are the "heirs" of Trotsky, etc., the struggle to prove Trotskyism is no longer necessary. That is, of course, to emasculate Trotskyism, to reduce it from a method to a mere dogma, a finished body of doctrine.

Quite the contrary course is imperative. The struggle for hegemony of science is an unending struggle, in which science must constantly prove itself afresh in the domain of new movements, new situations -- even against organizations and tendencies which have been confronted a hundred times before. Absolutely nothing is settled for us, even when the dictatorship of the proletariat is an accomplished fact.

This course does not limit itself to the world outside "Trotskyist" organizations. To cling exclusively to yesterday's formulations is itself a reactionary manifestation; the dynamics of economic, social, political movements in the "outside world" are refracted into the party itself, even in the frequently disguised forms of the severest adherence to traditions, "orthodoxy." To those centrists in our movement who would seek to impose "ideological homogeneity," we must refer Lenin's warning: "Under such circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an 'unimportant' mistake, may give rise to the most deplorable consequences, and only the short-sighted would consider factional disputes and strict distinction of shades to be inopportune and superfluous." The most intensive internal, factional struggles for the right method, correct estimation of the current situation, etc., are an essential means for building qualified cadres from the human materials accessible to us for this selective process.

If Trotskyist cadres will begin by taking their situation for what it is -- our tininess, the idiocy of exaggerated organizational pretenses -- we know that our first task is to seek ideological hegemony over the radical intelligentsia and proletarian vanguards. We must rid ourselves of the delusion that we are the "natural heirs" of Lenin and Trotsky, and, instead, become their successors in this period by the means with which they approached their period. We must begin with the most advanced theoretical grasp of current history and its tasks. We must sharpen and contend for this comprehension and for Marxist method in all arenas of intellectual and proletarian ferment; we must expose and destroy the ruling ideas which intellectuals and workers in our countries accept, and replace those ideas with our Marxist method and our comprehension of the nature and tasks of our period.

This means to put an end to calling for "socialism" as if that word automatically subsumed the right program. We begin by defining socialism concretely in terms of the economic basis, superstructure, etc. of our time, in terms of the issues which do and must come to excite the popular concern. We must give "socialism" a practical content for our time and our situation.

This means putting an end to public platform rebuttals which begin and end with reference to the marvellous explanations to be found at our headquarters. Our first task is to make socialism understood as a natural, concrete solution to the problems of life of the workers and their allies.

In every country each revolutionary cadre is faced with this conflict. Since the socialist transformation is not a national question, since the correlation of forces respecting the class enemy is a world question, a purely national view of socialist tasks and perspectives is idiotic. Yet, the attempt to substitute a world perspective for the absence of a national perspective is, if anything, a thousand times worse than to devalue the world question. This conflict disappears with revolutionary practice; for, a cadre which grapples with its national question sufficiently is qualified to understand revolutions abroad and the world situation. First, by understanding what the socialist revolution in its own country means, it can understand revolutions in other countries. Secondly, by considering the socialist victory at home as a practical question, that cadre is compelled to take into account the correlation of world forces which determine the tactical possibilities "at home."

In a very few places, as with the Socialist Labor League in Britain, it is possible for Trotskyist organizations to undertake certain limited organizational confrontations. At first glance, the SLL has extraordinary organizational advantages over most of its fraternal and other, "nominal", Trotskyist organizations. However, this is not purely a matter of the size, discipline, etc., of the organization, as the fissioning of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in Ceylon demonstrates. In all cases, the qualifications of the basic cadre are first and foremost. Internal theoretical development, serious internal factional struggles, struggles with opponent groups, and theoretical struggles for hegemony among the workers and intelligentsia are the universal condition -- the precondition and constant concomitant of organizational gains. Theoretical hegemony must precede organizational gains -- in much the same manner as the propaganda of the revolutionary movement must bombard the enemy's bastions in advance of the march of the main body of socialist cadres.

We must "understand the causal sequence of events, and in that process find our place." We must understand our time, our situation, what we are, and the path to becoming what we must. This is a time for throwing off all silly political shopkeepers' pretensions, all petty organizational larceny. We must set ourselves to acknowledging what we are and what we must do.

II. THE FRAGMENTATION OF WORLD TROTSKYISM

It was the decades long perspective of our movement that the fracturing of world Stalinism would produce the emergence of Trotskyist hegemony over the radical vanguard. That perspective was soundly based and does not admit of any correction in principle on the basis of intervening developments. Yet, we have to account for the discrepancy between a theoretically correct

perspective and the reality which has ensued. In 1956-58, the awaited fracture of the Stalinist monolith occurred, later aggravated by the Sino-Soviet split. Today, in apparent contradiction of our perspective, the most conspicuous feature of organized world Trotskyism is its disorganization.

Present day organized Trotskyism is divided into three main parts. To the north, so to speak, the International Committee of the Fourth International. To the south, the Latin American Bureau. In the center, in more respects than one, the United Secretariat, enjoying the moral support of the Socialist Workers' Party. Of the once prized parties, the LSSP is a shambles and the SWP itself hangs by the thread of a small minority above the chasm of centrist "ideological homogeneity" -- monolithism.

This fragmentation itself, an apparent tinny counterpoint to the centrifugal developments in Stalinism, raises the question whether the failure of Trotskyist organizations does not indicate that most of these institutions have ceased to be Trotskyist in fact.

It is convenient for leaders of some of these organizations to attribute such problems to "objective" developments. This is not, some of them assert, the time for Trotskyism to seriously intervene in mass movements; this is the time for a "holding operation", after the fashion of monks preserving the purity of their doctrines away from the corrupting influences of the secular world. This convenient excuse disappears if we separate from the small numbers of the radical vanguards the question of the political quality of the existing cadres.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of world Trotskyism has been most recently accelerated not in conditions of deepening reaction and isolation, but exactly the opposite conditions. Since the 1957-58 U.S. recession, which exacerbated the material conditions of life throughout the colonial world, there has been a general increase in the intensity of crises and radical ferment in almost every part of the world. (The economic problems of imperialism have inevitably been refracted, through world market laws, even into the internal economy and social life in the Soviet and Chinese 'blocs'). While objective developments have played a critical part in the problems of world Trotskyism, they can not be considered as the immediate cause.

The fissioning of Trotskyist organizations has not occurred merely because of the post-war period of reaction, but has been mainly accompanied and characterized by, in recent years, the inability of most Trotskyist leaderships to comprehend the pre-revolutionary developments, imperialist crises, etc. They were unable to grapple effectively with new revolutionary developments here, radical milieu there, because they did not comprehend the pre-conjunctural developments which underly these manifestations, give them content and further direction.

The immediate root of the persistent fission of world Trotskyism in the past decade is this: the leadership of Trotskyist organizations generally, instead of continuing Trotskyist practice, have taken the position of the imprudent heirs of "Trotsky" waiting to have their inheritance descend upon them. Trotskyist organizations have tended to assume the role of the "faithful" gathered on the mount to be collected in the "second coming." In place of the practice of Trotskyism -- the attack on present developments with Marxist method, active programmatic intervention in real movements -- they have degraded their real heritage to a mere tradition, and the theoretical achievements of the past into mere dogma, a collection of slogans and formulations invoked as if they were the propitiatory recipes of a "red mass" or a witch doctor's abacadabra.

Real Trotskyism, 1940, is nothing but Marxism brought up to the degree and form of practice required by 1940. Trotskyism, 1940, could not be Trotskyism in 1965 unless the same method were applied to replace the formulations of 1940 by those appropriate to a new period of history, just as Lenin and Trotsky perpetuated Marxism by continuing Marxist methods in practice. Most Trotskyist leaderships have entirely failed to grasp post - World War II developments, but have merely attempted to apply the outward feature of Trotsky's formulations mechanically to new events for which they were never intended to offer any solutions. Nothing has really changed for them since 1940; year after year represents, for them, nothing more than a quantitative step downward of capitalism in an "Epoch of Imperialist Decay." They have abandoned the conjunctural method of Trotskyism entirely for a secular theory of gradual capitalist decline, whose most concentrated expression was Pablo's "centuries of degenerated workers' states."

Since these leaderships had abandoned Marxist method in treating Marxism, 1940, as fixed dogma, they abandoned at the same stroke the task of a Marxist analysis of both the world and their own national situation. Each Trotskyist organization necessarily came to regard its local situation as the fabled blind men each regarded the leg, tail, trunk, etc., of the elephant. Since such parties could not think or speak in common world-political terms, a unity of conception was impossible; the attempts to artificially maintain a single edifice of world Trotskyism thus was foredoomed to fail exactly as the legendary Tower of Babel.

III. THE "SPLIT" WITH THE SOCIALIST LABOR LEAGUE

The most revealing recent development in the fragmentation of organized Trotskyism is the SWP's break of fraternal relations with the British Trotskyists, the Socialist Labor League.

After the Stalinist betrayal of the post-War revolutionary movements and situations, after the imperialist recovery that followed, every actual and

nominal Trotskyist organization began to be infested by a variety of alien political tendencies, all based on conjunctural pessimism. The most famous of these factions were, in the SWP, the so-called "Cochranites," and in the Fourth International, the so-called "Pabloites." Because the Cochranites and Pabloites wished to separate themselves from Trotskyism at a far more rapid rate than many others of the same tendency, the Cochranites were expelled from the SWP, and a break in fraternal relations between the SWP and Pablo ensued. What forced the split with Pablo was his continued moral support for the expelled Cochranites, however, comrade Cannon and other SWP leaders gave as the reasons for the necessary break a list of the deepest political differences. That brings us to 1953-54.

In 1961-62, the leadership of the SWP began pressing for a restoration of fraternal relations with the Pablo groupings... behind the back of the SWP membership. In this discussion Joseph Hansen introduced the thesis that the real reason for the 1953 split was purely organizational. This, of course, was not very considerate of Hansen, since, by asserting this, Hansen was accusing comrade Cannon of being a political mountebank, i. e. the sort of person who introduces political arguments only as a cover-up for cliquist organizational maneuvers. Worse, Hansen proclaimed as his own morality that body of principles previously made world-famous by U. S. organized crime, a principle adopted by every actual and potential trade union bureaucrat inside and outside the SWP: "stand by and applaud while we chop to pieces those persons in our 'territory' with whom you are in agreement."

Hansen and his collaborators proved themselves to be exactly such political gangsters soon enough. In the SWP itself there had appeared a minority which was in political agreement with the SLL. The split with the SLL was inevitable, provided only that the leadership of the SWP would go along with Hansen's unprincipled politics. The split occurred. Hansen and Company gave as their reason for the break with the SLL, the "Cuban Question." The political reason given was hardly irrelevant, but we must remember that Hansen had just repudiated the political reasons given for the 1953 split. This raised the question whether the political differences with the SLL might prove, later, to be as worthless as Hansen had labelled the 1953 political resolutions. Hansen stated that organizational considerations were basic. What might these be? Applying the logic of 1953 (as seen by Hansen in 1961-62) to 1962-63, there existed in the SWP a minority in political agreement with the SLL -- a minority which Hansen & Company were proceeding to decimate, isolate and expel. By Hansen's logic, the real reason for the split with the SLL and the expulsion of the Robertson and Wohlforth minorities lies in the domain of pure unprincipled politics.

Cuba -- The "Acid Test"

It is a truism of our movement that a clique is simply an unprincipled

combination. However, in all serious work exactly such truisms must be discarded. No social formation can exist without a lawful basis; its existence rather demands that science uncover the lawful premises manifest, however remote they may initially appear to be. Every social formation has a lawful social and therefore ultimately principled political basis. If it is not necessary to exert enormous scientific labors on such questions respecting incidental formations within organizations, nothing less than the most intensive search for principled bases is demanded when cliquism, political gangsterism, become the dominant feature of organizational life in socialist institutions.

Nor is there ever a complete dishonesty in a clique's representation of its political positions. If ideology misrepresents reality, ideology itself is determined by the very reality it attempts to conceal. It is not sufficient to call Hansen a liar respecting 1953 or 1963; his statements have exactly the same degree of ultimate truth that exists in religious delusions; they represent 'truth' as it exists in Hansen's present ideology.

For example, Hansen's account of the break with Pablo does represent the point of view of a large section of the leadership of the SWP -- particularly that section that dragged its feet against Cannon's efforts to come to grips with Cochranism. The issue for Cannon's reluctant collaborators in the Cochran fight was not Cochran's politics -- which they shared -- but Cochran's proposals to dilute the organizational hegemony of the existing SWP party apparatus. That is, a section of the 1953 political majority had broken with Cochran, not on the political question, but on the organizational question. If Hansen today chooses to identify himself with that latter grouping, he enjoys the advantage of a certain element of truth in his representation of the 1953 break. He is saying that he supported Cannon's 1953 political theses merely as a pretext for his own organizational hatchet work. He says, in effect, "Do not hold me responsible for Cannon's political differences with Cochran and Pablo; I merely supported these theses because it was expedient for me to do so."

In the break with the SLL Hansen enjoys a greater degree of this kind of 'honesty'. In this instance the political pretext for his organizational opportunism is a "theory" of his own concoction, his peculiar interpretation of the Cuban Revolution. Furthermore, there is a real connection between his "theory" of the Cuban Revolution and his break with the SLL. If we examine Hansen's theory of the Cuban Revolution closely we shall uncover the principled basis for existence of the clique he represents. We shall see that his political gangsterism is not something exogenous to his politics, but that political gangsterism flows directly and necessarily, lawfully, from Hansen's political principles.

In examining this more closely, we come to the real reason, the principled basis, for the present fragmentation of world Trotskyism. We move from the abstract principles which we have cited to explain this to the

concrete form in which these principles are currently manifest. Cuba is, in a perverted way, the "Acid Test" of revolutionary politics today. The fact that the Cuban Question should figure so prominently in the past five years process of fragmentation demands, in any case, an explicit explanation; it is not difficult to find the lawful basis for this manifestation.

The Conjunctural Basis for the Cuban Revolution

The Stalinist betrayal of the revolutionary situation in Western Europe in particular at the end of World War II gave U. S. imperialism the basis for recovery from an otherwise impending post-war economic crisis. As the revolutionary flow was thus turned by Stalinism into a revolutionary ebb, U. S. imperialism, through the Marshall Plan and coherent arrangements, converted Western European ruins and cheap skilled labor into the basis for two decades of extended U. S. reproduction.

By 1957 the material basis for a continued increase in the rate of capitalist expansion as a whole was becoming exhausted. The effect of this contraction in the rate of real extended reproduction for imperialism as a whole was necessarily most acutely manifest in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, which exist in the world market as producers of primary materials of production for the advanced capitalist countries.

At the same time, the U. S., as a capital and credit-exporting nation, suffered the internal contradictions of speculative cancer and the failure of the ruling class to take enough surplus value out of the hides of the working class to compensate for its credit expansion and exports of capital. So, in respect to the colonial world and to the domestic economy of the U. S. itself, the 1957-58 recession represented a turning point, the onset of a period of convergence upon a new general capitalist crisis.

The 1957-58 slump did not become a depression simply because Western Europe and Japan (mainly) had not yet reached the limits of their rate of national economic expansion. If the rate of expansion of the capitalist system as a whole had declined, there was still a very powerful basis for the particular expansion of capitalism in the U. S. and Western Europe on the basis mainly of the "Common Market." In the longer view, the decline of European expansion, which must occur (1957-58) in about a decade, would lead to the objective conditions for a probable general crisis.

However, while the U. S. and Western Europe still had almost a decade of continued prosperity for their capitalists and a large proportion of their populations, the conditions in the colonial and semi-colonial world were of a conjunctural character. Their internal economies were generally being exhausted of the basis for growth of circulating capital required to feed and clothe the populations. In sum, the conditions for a bourgeois democratic revolution (nationalism) which would supply

protectionism for native capitalists, peasants, workers existed as a spontaneous "force" in almost all of these countries.

The conjunctural conditions of the semi-colonial world presented U. S. imperialism with this grave contradiction. Faced with the impending end to the basis for post-war imperialist expansion, U. S. finance capital desperately required an alternative to the impending contraction of Western European expansion. That basis could only exist in the "South". The U. S. financiers required a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Latin America, etc., for the purpose of opening up the internal markets of the semi-colonial and colonial countries for imperialist investment. This meant settling the land question, creating the material basis in the form of a productive peasantry for primitive capitalist accumulation.

For this reason the U. S. financiers supported revolutions against the old juntist-latifundist gangs, including the Cuban Revolution! The Cuban Revolution was not something that could be engineered; it could only come into existence on the basis of the appropriate material, conjunctural conditions. The U. S. imperialists could only hope to control the leaderships of such a revolution, to confine these revolutions to bourgeois-democratic limits. If they could be successful in this policy, imperialism had a real basis for escaping the impending general crisis.

However, the experience of the Cuban Revolution quickly provoked a fundamental change in U. S. foreign policy. It would never again ignore the laws of permanent revolution as it had in Cuba in 1959! That decision was made by the beginning of 1960, a fact of which we have subsequent bloody demonstration in the assassination of Lumumba.

Thus the Castro leadership had this contradiction. On the one hand it epitomized the existence of a general conjunctural situation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, while, at the same time, its victory represented a model of colonial revolutions that could not be repeated.

For Trotskyists, the Cuban Revolution as an objective development represented a great gain in the strategic relationship of world forces. It signalled the time for the most active intervention in the conjunctural conditions of the colonial and semi-colonial world. But, to mistake the situation, to hold up Cuba as a model to be "tail-ended," amounted to a betrayal of the revolutionary forces.

The basic issue of the Cuban Revolution is the failure of Trotskyist leaderships to put that revolution into its conjunctural context, to develop the strategic perspective which I have just summarized above. This is a very important concrete demonstration of the abstract analysis of fragmentation I have given before.

Cuba and The Russian Question

Hansen's conceit that Cuba poses an "Acid Test" is plainly mixed up with Hansen's efforts to substitute Cuba for Russia in a purely algebraic abstraction from the old Trotskyist formulations on the Russian Question. There are two fallacies in this aspect of Hansen's position.

First, one's position on a revolution in another country is not in itself a significant test of one's political tendencies or viability. Such a test is useful only in a world of commentators, not the domain of living men who have to make actual revolutions in the countries in which they live. The first and fundamental test of a revolutionary socialist party is its commitment to the socialist revolution in its own country as a realistic task of its period of history.

The significance of the Russian Question in 1940, for example, was that, for specific historical reasons, it was decisive in distinguishing between revolutionists and centrists in the U.S., and in the S.W.P. in particular.

Secondly, just to the degree that the Russian or Cuban Question has any decisive significance, those questions cut two ways. We refresh Hansen's memory: Trotskyism has been in mortal combat with Stalinism for some time, during a period in which Stalinists paved the way for exactly the formulations with which Hansen now attacks the Socialist Labor League.

In just this respect Hansen makes two fundamental errors. First, he attempts to substitute economic forms -- nationalized property, monopoly of foreign trade, etc. -- for the social content of a workers' state. Second, even while abandoning the class struggle for purely abstract economic forms, he puts himself in opposition to Trotsky on exactly the questions of economic forms.

The ABC of Marxist conceptions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, unchanged by leading Marxists since Marx first presented this in 1846, is the unity of the class as a class for itself: the industrial proletariat. This means that the institution of state power in a workers' state can be nothing but the soviet form, the united front of the proletarians.

Revisionists, such as the U.S.'s "Maoists", have attempted to reduce the question of the proletariat to a tactical question. To these Maoists, the role of the working class is reduced to a purely military question. To Marx and the Marxists the issue is whether we have, in fact, a dictatorship of the proletariat or whether the "same old crap" begins all over.

The relationship between the proletariat and workers' power was

most clearly defined in the early years of the Soviet Union, particularly during the NEP period, the period of the deepening conjunctural conflicts between the working class and the peasantry.

The historic mission of the working class is not a tactical consideration -- it is not a question of which class has the best combat potential for establishing nationalized property, etc. The historic mission of the proletariat -- the industrial proletariat -- lies entirely in the division of productive labor imposed by capitalist development upon that class. No other class in society, by its nature, is capable of representing the social force for socialist accumulation; every other class in society, by itself, by its nature, represents a tendency for capitalist restoration -- whether in the Soviet Union, China or Cuba. Particularly in backward countries like the Soviet Union, the political character of the state depends entirely on the effectiveness with which the proletariat as a unified class for itself consciously suppresses the restorationist tendencies inherent in the peasantry, etc.

The nature of revolutionary proletarian class institutions is the objective side of the workers' state. The decisive subjective side of this same state is the struggle between bourgeois and socialist ideology. As long as the workers are organized only in trade unions, factory committees, etc., their ideology necessarily reflects the bourgeois mode of production, is bourgeois ideology. Only when the class is unified for itself, consciously, has state power as a class conscious of its power, does the subjective struggle for socialist hegemony go to the side of the workers' power. It is not the workers as we meet them in trade unions that are revolutionary; it is the workers absolutely transformed through the united front that are the historic revolutionary social force. Only workers so organized are capable of socialist ideology.

For these objective and subjective reasons the decisive feature of a workers' state is a particular form of organization of the industrial proletariat, the soviets. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat, a unique form of the continuing class struggle that must follow the seizure of state power.

The degeneration of the U.S.S.R. posed a ticklish question for just this reason. That degeneration was preceded and accompanied by the decimation of the soviets, so that the essential social content of workers' power ceased to exist. At the same time, the social forms (not the content) of a workers' state persisted. This could be simply treated, historically and analytically, as a degenerated workers' state. Even the extension of Soviet forms to the Baltic states and Eastern Europe did not require the confusion that the post-war Trotskyist discussion of these states incurred; these were simple extensions of the Soviet system. However, the Yugoslav, Chinese and Cuban revolutions did pose a qualitative problem. Instead of the spread of deformed social forms of

workers' power by simple extension of the Soviets' power, deformed workers' states arose more or less independently. (Separating their coming-into-being from the strategic significance of the Soviet Union for their survival.) Here we have encountered an ideological extension of the economic and political forms of the U. S. S. R., by means other than simple physical extension of Soviet borders. Here we seem to have a factual substantiation of Pablo's "centuries of degenerated workers' states."

What is obvious is this. Trotskyists confused the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism with the ability of "Stalinist" forms of state organization to reproduce themselves.

Hansen verges close to the right track in suggesting that somehow the "Law of Permanent Revolution" explains this process. (If only he stayed on that track.) The independent national capitalist development of colonial and semi-colonial countries can only occur today through the state as an instrument of primitive accumulation. National capitalist struggles of this kind are in inevitable conflict with the main centers of imperialism, and must, even as national capitalist revolutions, tend to replicate grotesque forms of the natural struggle between advanced and backward national capitals. In every one of these struggles the Laws of Permanent Revolution pervade. In three exceptional conjunctural situations, post-war China, wartime Yugoslavia, Cuba, this process has gone to its logical conclusion in the elimination of the ties of the national petty capitalists to the main centers of imperialism. Distorted, incomplete manifestations in this direction have occurred in the nationalist capitalist revolutions in Indonesia, Egypt, Algeria, etc. The existence of the Soviet Union (and now China) is itself a strategic factor of great weight in determining the actual course of these developments -- as was conspicuously the case in Cuba, or in post-war Yugoslavia. Under these conditions, where there is a lack of Leninist leadership, a lack of organization of the working class in united fronts, etc., deformed workers' states have occurred by exception. That is to say, not in Indonesia, not in Egypt, in Syria, in Iraq, in Iran, nor in Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico, etc. The defeats of aspiring revolutions vastly outnumber the victories!

Unfortunately, many Trotskyists tended to equate the epithet, deformed, with an automatic call for the overthrow of the regime. This mechanical equation runs into particular difficulty in the case of Cuba. There, it is my personal view, the form of criticism of the regime should (for the present) take the route of the Left Opposition; it is not demonstrated that at least a significant section of the Castro leadership, including Castro himself, would not go over to the support of the workers' soviets if this form should emerge. In Cuba, we should call for a change in the form of the regime, but on a programmatic basis. Exactly what this program should be we can not determine completely; however, there are conspicuous questions on which we can not in principle, remain silent. That is to say, exactly how we should

approach the concrete question of changing the form of a deformed workers' state is always a particular issue, a distinct tactical question, admitting of no sweeping formulations. If we are serious, we are always determined to put our program forward in the most effective way; we do not, like the Socialist Labor Party in the U.S., adopt a sectarian tantrum of abstinence against all forms which do not agree with our preconceptions.

This same logic applies to Vietnam. There is no real problem for a Marxist in determining exactly how and to what degree we support these revolutions.

Cuba & the Socialist Labour League

Hansen has tried to make the absence of Soviet forms in Cuba a merely trifling peculiarity of that revolution. We have already identified the points which show that the character of a workers' state is entirely determined by its social content, i.e. soviets, a definite form of organization of the working class. These errors of Hansen's might be classed as a commentator's blunders, since Hansen's views have very little (less than infinitesimal, in fact) bearing on the future of the Cuban Revolution itself. On this point Hansen and the present SWP leadership are even a much smaller historic factor than the Monthly Review.

The practical issue emerges when Hansen & Company propose that all "orthodox" Trotskyist organizations adopt the Cuban Revolution as the center of the Trotskyist program for this period. To this effect, Hansen offers four main points:

- (1) During this period there is a perspective for a prolonged postponement of the socialist revolution in all the advanced countries;
- (2) Socialist revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are being made by forces other than the working class;
- (3) Socialist revolutions are occurring without a Leninist party;
- (4) The Cuban Revolution is the model of colonial socialist revolutions to come; that colonial revolutions (in an "Anaconda" tactic) will bring down capitalism in the main centers -- in the bye and bye.

What does this say for Hansen & Company's perspective for socialist struggles in the U.S.A.? Can there be any doubt that this thesis is quite unacceptable to the British Trotskyist SLL, a Leninist party engaged with its national working class in a struggle toward a socialist revolution in Britain

(an advanced capitalist country) in this period. Any British Trotskyist would regard Hansen's ilk in Britain as nothing better than a fink.

That is the real issue of the Cuban Revolution. The issue is not whether one defends Cuba against imperialist intervention -- in which the SLL scarcely needs lessons from Hansen & Company. The issue is: what pretext does Hansen's analysis offer to ex-Trotskyists to conceal their abandonment of a socialist perspective for their own country.

The case of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party illustrates the practical political implications of Hansen's thesis. It is well known that De Silva and others despaired of conjunctural developments in the advanced countries for this period. On precisely the basis of Hansen's American Exceptionalism, De Silva saw the situation of socialist Ceylon as hopeless before imperialist might. Ceylonese Exceptionalism -- which Germain so aptly characterizes as such -- is nothing more nor less than the hindside of Germain's -- and Hansen's -- American (and European) exceptionalism.

IV. TOWARD THE RESURGENCE OF TROTSKYISM

If our party wishes to disassociate itself from just charges of centrism, of capitulationism, it will repudiate Hansen's counterrevolutionary line and withdraw its endorsement from all of the political gangsterism perpetuated in the SWP and abroad in the name of Hansenism.

While our party, the Socialist Workers Party, has deteriorated in recent years, has veered to ever-greater distance from Trotskyist practice, the British Trotskyists, the Socialist Labour League has rejuvenated its cadres with the best elements drawn to Trotskyism from the British CP after the Hungarian events. As this cadre has developed it has turned effectively toward the proletarian youth of its own country and laid the foundations for the strongest national Trotskyist party in history. Whatever particular criticisms any Trotskyist might wish to reserve for the SLL on this or that question, the viability, the political quality of this party is a bench-mark which other Trotskyist groupings have yet to equal.

We Trotskyists in the U.S.A. are, of course, prevented by law from actively intervening in the world movement. If we could legally intervene, what we have to contribute politically at this moment would be marginal. We can only hope that while we are rebuilding our own shattered cadres that the SLL will undertake to rebuild the shambles of present world Trotskyism into the fighting force that comrade Trotsky foresaw.

We in the SWP can do two immediate, concrete things to contribute to the renaissance of world Trotskyism.

First, the task of repudiating Hansenism is inseparable from the political job of developing a realistic perspective for the socialist revolution in the United States in this period of history. Only that will stop the process of political decay in our leadership and ranks.

Secondly, we must repudiate the political gangsterism of the past four years, and, as a palpable part of that, repudiate the expulsions of the SLL's political co-thinkers from our ranks. That latter act will restore our party to the practice of principled internal political life, in which the continual process of struggles among factions and tendencies will ensure the organic means by which a Leninist cadre evolves in quality of its human material and in the sharpness and appropriateness with which its programs are defined.

Repudiate Hansenism! Repudiate the expulsions of the Spartacists and Wohlforth tendency! An end to centrism in the leadership of the SWP!

New York, August 9, 1965