

TROTSKYISM VERSUS  
REVISIONISM

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

VOLUME THREE

*The  
Socialist Workers Party's  
road back to Pabloism*

NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS

# TROTSKYISM VERSUS REVISIONISM

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

*edited by C. Slaughter*

VOLUME THREE

*The SWP's road back  
to Pabloism*

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The documents published in these volumes have been collected from the journals, internal bulletins and correspondence of the Trotskyist movement over the period since 1951. The series is designed to provide the basic documentation of the fight within the Fourth International during that time. Editing of the text has been kept to a minimum: footnotes and bracketed explanatory notes have been added only for essential reference. In all other respects the documents have been reproduced as they appeared in the sources indicated below.

Each volume has a foreword introducing the reader to the main developments covered in it, with a glossary of names and an index provided as additional guides to the documents.

The sources used for the documents in this volume are as follows:

1. Bulletin of the International Committee, 1957
2. Internal Bulletin of the National Committee of the British Section, 1957
- 3, 4, 5. Internal Bulletin No. 3 of the International Committee of the Fourth International, 1961
- 6, 7, 8, 9. Internal Bulletin of the International Committee
- 10, 11. International Bulletin No. 5 of the International Committee of the Fourth International
- 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. International Bulletin of the International Committee of the Fourth International

## Note on sources

OF NAMES

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- 10, 11. International Bulletin No. 5 of the International Committee of the Fourth International
- 13, 14, 15 ,16. International Bulletin of the International Committee of the Fourth International

**17. International Bulletin No. 9 of the International Committee of the Fourth International**

**18. Resolutions of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Socialist Labour League, 1962**

**19. International Bulletin No. 9 of the International Committee of the Fourth International**

**20, 21. International Bulletin No. 11 of the International Committee of the Fourth International.**





# Foreword

THE

1954

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In the 20-year history of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the period covered by this volume is a decisive one. Pablo and Mandel had capitulated to the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1952-53. Stalin's death in 1953 triggered off the uprising in East Germany and revealed the profound crisis within the Soviet bureaucracy. It was of great theoretical significance that these objective developments failed to halt the degeneration of the Pablo group. Their inability to change course in response to them put it beyond doubt that their revisionism was of the most fundamental nature.

A careful study of the period following the split in the Fourth International (1954), documented in Volume Two of this series, reveals that the Socialist Workers Party leadership, having initiated the split itself with the 'Open Letter' of December 1953, rejected the proposal by the European sections of the International Committee to find immediate ways of renewing and deepening the discussions with the Pabloite revisionists. The purpose of such a proposal was to enable the whole revolutionary movement to make a development at the basic level of the Marxist method, a development of dialectical materialism. With knowledge of all the subsequent events, we can say that in a sense the SWP leadership here missed their final chance of paying heed to Trotsky's last warning: that if they did not devote a supreme effort to the conscious rejection of pragmatism and the struggle for dialectical materialism, they would themselves fall victim to that same pragmatism.

Because the SWP leaders remained within the grip of this pragmatic, idealist outlook, they found themselves helpless to make any effective intervention when the crisis of Stalinism reached its high point in 1956, when Khrushchev made his 'secret speech' to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and political revolution broke out in Hungary and Poland. For years the Trotskyist movement had exposed the real nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy and fought for the continuity of Bolshevism. Yet now, when this principled struggle was totally vindicated by events, the SWP and the Pabloites alike proved unable to win any forces from the crisis of the Communist Parties. Instead, they speculated more and more on the possibility of a process of reform of Stalinism. In one way or another, the forces to 'de-Stalinise' the USSR and the Stalinist movement would emerge from the splits in the bureaucracy itself. In fact it was nothing but the strength of the working class and the internal contradictions of 'socialism in a single country' which had produced these splits, and the central question was still that of building independent parties of the Fourth International, to prepare for the political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states as part of the developing world socialist revolution.

The SWP's reaction to the breakthrough of 1956 was the very opposite of what was necessary, and here began their pragmatic turn back to the Pabloites. Instead of deepening the lessons of the 1953 split, and checking them against the objective developments in front of the whole movement, the SWP leaders moved back in the direction of a merger with Pabloism in which they could bury all the questions at issue in the split.

Behind this was the crudely pragmatist notion that a show of 'unity' of the Trotskyist movement would provide a more attractive image for those who had been forced to break from Stalinism. But theoretical clarification of the basic questions behind the split was precisely what was needed to attract and build a Trotskyist cadre from the forces thrust forward by the crisis, dissident members of the Stalinist parties among them.

By 1963 the SWP had broken with the International Committee and arrived at agreement with the Pabloites. They had been completely unable to refute the case made by the IC, proving that the Pabloite position on Stalinism in 1956 was a continuation of Pabloism and not a departure from it (see the document *Under a Stolen Flag*). But they found in the Cuban revolution an issue which enabled them

to carry out the betrayal upon which they were bent. Castro and the July 26th Movement found an echo in middle-class radical circles which soon provided the necessary social and ideological ballast for Cannon's and Hansen's opportunism. Along with the Pabloites, they found good 'Marxist' reasons why the Cuban revolution must have unqualified support, right up to the point of liquidation of the revolutionary party. They twisted Marxist theory and the traditions of the Trotskyist movement in such a way as to characterise Cuba as a 'workers' state'. They pronounced this position on Cuba to be the 'acid test' for Trotskyists. Along this path they soon rushed through a 'reunification' with the Pabloites in 1963, the specific character of which was that all discussion of the split question of 1953 was excluded!

For Hansen and the SWP, not only was Castro defined as a 'natural Marxist' but there was even speculation that around Castroism there would crystallize a new International which would be the next historical step for the international working class. The Fourth International, according to these revisionists, no longer had the role assigned to it by Trotsky on its foundation — as 'the only revolutionary tendency on this planet!' — but was merely to 'assist' the new development.

In the documents in this volume can be seen the day-by-day battle against this betrayal. The superficial and impressionistic method of Hansen and Cannon is traced right through to its philosophical roots: pragmatism and idealism. By means of this principled struggle, the continuity of the Fourth International, of the Communist movement through Marx and Lenin, was assured, and Marxist theory was developed. Here the basis was laid for the subsequent struggle to understand correctly the development of the world capitalist crisis as the boom came to an end. The International Committee equipped itself, in this struggle, to counter successfully the gross capitulations of the Pabloites in the late 1960's when they found among students and intellectuals the revolutionary force to replace the working class. Above all, we have in these struggles between 1956 and 1963 the hard-won foundations of the fight for dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism. This has been the bedrock of the methods of building the revolutionary parties and training the revolutionary cadres of the International Committee.

The reader will find these issues hammered out in detail in the following pages. They constitute a record of the struggle to master theoretically a vital stage in the development of the world revolution:

from the open crisis of Stalinism in 1956 through the momentous upsurge of the colonial revolution in the late 1950's and 1960's, particularly in the Cuban Revolution. For the revisionists, these objective developments were the occasion for suppression of theoretical conflict, all in the name of 'unity'. For the International Committee, the battle to defeat revisionism was identical with the struggle to master these new developments, to deepen our theoretical understanding, and to prepare the cadre for the coming revolutionary outbreaks in Europe and America. The formation of the Socialist Labour League in 1959 and the first successes in winning the leadership of the Young Socialists in 1960-63 in Britain were the carrying of these theoretical lessons into practice. The thousands of new members who now come forward to join the national sections of the IC will find in these documents an indispensable basis for their revolutionary training.

# Chapter One

## After the Hungarian Revolution

As the major document in this chapter clearly shows, Pabloism confirmed beyond doubt its character of capitulation to Stalinism in its response to the Hungarian Revolution of October-November 1956. Cannon and the SWP decided to interpret the equivocations of the Pabloites as proof that they were returning to the position of Trotskyism. Document 1, *Under a Stolen Flag*, exposes the reality of the Pabloites' position.

Cannon and the SWP nonetheless set out independently of the International Committee to approach sections of the Pabloite International Secretariat for unification discussions — in particular, through correspondence with Leslie Goonewardene of the Ceylonese LSSP (Document 2a). Document 2e is the letter to the IS from the International Committee checking the attempts to stampede into such negotiations. (See also the Resolution of the International Committee, Document 1 in Volume One of this collection.)

**DOCUMENT 1**

*Under A Stolen Flag* by W. Sinclair,  
May 22, 1957.

*Introduction: The Fight Against Pabloite Revisionism*

DURING THE PAST thirty years world Trotskyism has been assailed by two basic trends of revisionism. Both of these concern the nature and role of the Soviet Bureaucracy, and in turn emerged during certain difficult periods of our movement's history.

The years of the middle and late thirties found our numerically weak international movement under constant pressure from the forces of imperialism then actively engaged in the preparation of war on the Soviet Union. Things came to a head in the autumn of 1939 when a large group headed by Professor Burnham and Max Schachtman opened an all-out attack inside the SWP of the United States, against the theory that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state, maintaining that it should not be defended in the event of imperialist attack. The bureaucracy, they claimed, was a new class — a bureaucratic collectivist class. This point of view was mercilessly opposed by Leon Trotsky and the record of that great struggle is to be found in the books, *In Defence of Marxism*, and *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*.

Trotskyism emerged from the second World War still isolated from the mass Labour movements, and weak numerically. Thanks to the treachery of Stalinism in Western Europe, the old capitalist politicians assumed leadership once again, with the Stalinist parties retaining powerful support amongst the working masses, particularly in France and Italy. In Britain, the Labour Party came to power and successfully headed off the mass movement against Toryism. A period of slow, painful work in building up our sections began, under

the most difficult material conditions. As in the years before the war, our movement had practically no financial resources, and a terrible shortage of cadres.

Then in 1947-53 came the period of the Cold War. The question was constantly posed: could we build revolutionary parties in time before war was upon us? During this period certain prominent individuals in the Trotskyist movement, headed by a man named Pablo — under combined pressures of European Stalinism and world imperialism — began to revise and reject the fundamental principles, criteria and method of analysis of the Trotskyist movement. The result of all this was a profoundly pessimistic world perspective and a false orientation based on a sceptical rationalization: the imminence and inevitability of the Third World War. This prognosis presumed not only the organic incapacity of the American and Western European working class to prevent such a war (and thereby dismissed its revolutionary potentialities) but conversely it also attributed to the imperialist bourgeois a power, homogeneity and stability which it did not possess. Trotsky's prognosis of Socialism or Barbarism was consequently replaced with the Pabloite schema of Barbarism first, Socialism afterwards.

Pablo developed the theory that since the next war would be against the Soviet Union, it would by its very nature be transformed almost immediately into an international civil war. Under these conditions, so the argument went, the Stalinist parties would move to the left and in certain circumstances could be expected to take the power as has happened in Eastern Europe and China. At first sight this looked reasonable enough, and it was not until Stalin died that the real face of the theory was revealed. In the summer of 1953 Pablo issued a draft document called 'The Rise and Decline of Stalinism'. In this he advanced the idea that sections of the bureaucracy in the USSR could unite with the Soviet masses and successfully re-introduce Soviet democracy.

When the East German uprising took place, Pablo opposed the withdrawal of the Red Army from Eastern Germany. It then became obvious that from the theory of 'international civil war' and the possibility of the Stalinist Parties taking power, Pablo, copying Isaac Deutscher, had now extended this theory into the USSR itself. For after all, if the bureaucracies of the CPs outside Russia could take power, why could not fundamental changes be introduced inside Russia by more 'left' or 'liberal' sections of the bureaucracy?



Like the theories of Burnham and Schachtman, Pablo revised the fundamental Trotskyist conception of the parasitic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and by implication ascribed to it a conscious and progressive historical role. Whereas the orthodox Trotskyist movement from its inception maintained that the bureaucracy must be overthrown by the Soviet masses under the revolutionary leadership of a regenerated communist movement in the USSR, Pablo now placed a question mark over this basic proposition, and the result led to a series of splits in the world Trotskyist movement.

In France, Pablo placed the PB and the CC of the French Section under the discipline of the IS, refused to allow the PCI to designate its own PB, forced a split in the party and bureaucratically expelled the orthodox, proletarian majority. Two months before the split which he consciously provoked, he registered the PCI with the Paris Police Department under the leadership of the minority nominated by him!

In Britain, Pablo assisted Lawrence to organize a secret faction behind the backs of the democratically-elected leadership of the section. When the overwhelming majority of this leadership rejected Pablo's policies, he utilized this faction in an attempt to blackmail the section into supporting his policy. He informed the majority that Lawrence was not subject to the discipline of the British section but to the discipline of the International, in other words, Lawrence could do whatever he pleased, provided it suited Pablo, who at that time was the only official of the International present in Paris. The first thing he did was to refuse to implement majority decisions regarding the policy of our weekly paper. This led to a split on November 24th 1953.

Three weeks later, on December 15th 1953, Pablo constituted the Lawrence group as his official section and assisted them to re-organize their ranks in an all-out effort to capture control over our paper. The fight continued over six months, and at the end the policies of both Lawrence and Pablo were decisively rejected.

Several weeks after this, Lawrence took Pablo's policy seriously about the possibilities of the Communist Parties doing the job: he disbanded his group, stating that there was no need for an independent revolutionary party in Britain.

From that day to this, Pablo has never uttered one word of explanation of Lawrence's conduct. The fact that in 1954 his entire 'British Section' collapsed is kept well in the background.

Instead he set out to build another 'section' as if nothing had happened. Anxious to get some support, he obtained agreement with

a small group of sectarians headed by G.\* Whilst, in true opportunist style, this group declare their opposition to Pablo in private conversation, they nevertheless manage to support him publicly in their journal 'Workers' International Review'.

This unprincipled alliance is directed mainly against the orthodox Trotskyists. It is designed to 'pressurize' us into an unprincipled unity by an all-out effort to confuse workers. In publishing the following document by Pablo † with a reply, we urge our comrades to study both with great care.

The gulf between Pabloite revisionism and ourselves grows wider and wider. We feel sure that this bulletin will be of important educational value for all the members of our organization.

### *Under a Stolen Flag*

The document the 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' is published by a body calling themselves the 'International Secretariat of the Fourth International'. In the name of the Fourth International they insidiously sap at its programmatic foundations.

Four years ago the same body published another document 'The Rise and Decline of Stalinism' which because of its revisions of basic principles, provoked a split in the world Trotskyist movement. It is hardly possible to find another four years in the past thirty which have delivered a more fruitful harvest of lessons for Marxists. They have been years which laid absolutely bare the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism, the utter corruption and parasitism of the Soviet Bureaucracy; which outlined clearly the nature of the political revolution necessary to cleanse the workers' states, and clearly indicated the forces which will carry that revolution through.

Pabloism however, has forgotten nothing and learned nothing from those years. 'Rise and Decline of Stalinism', 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' — the same method characterizes both. Four years have not cured the revisionist disease. In truth, the eclectic double-talk of the 'Decline and Fall' (1957) differs from the infamous 'Rise and Decline' (1953), only in that it is more miserably threadbare and more superficial in its analysis.

\* E. Grant (Ed).

† 'The Decline and Fall of Stalinism': originally included in the internal bulletin but omitted from this volume (Ed.).

The IS begins its 'Draft Theses' with the declaration '... the present theses do not take up again either the historical expositions or the structural analysis and definitions of the theses 'Rise and Decline of Stalinism', of which *they are neither a substitute nor a corrective, but a natural continuation and thus an integral part*'<sup>1</sup> p. 2 (our emphasis).

We must remark, in passing that Pablo and Co. show scant courtesy to the little group in Britain which made an unprincipled fusion with it last year. How now, Comrade G? You have justified your bargain — two professionals and a magazine, in exchange for a 'section' in Britain with a few 'principles' thrown in — by declaring Pabloism has changed. This shabby covering has now been torn away by none other than Pablo himself.

On page 1 of its thesis the 'International Secretariat' informs us that: 'The more and more dramatic events that have followed one another in the USSR itself, the Peoples' Democracies and in the CPs of the capitalist countries since the 4th World Congress, have completely and brilliantly confirmed the correctness of this analysis'. (Rise and Decline of Stalinism)

The major thesis of the 'Rise and Decline' was that the Stalinist bureaucracy was trapped between the drive of imperialism to immediate war and the ever-increasing mass pressure arising from the post-war revolutionary wave. Its 'objective basis' in the Soviet Union 'disappearing', this bureaucracy could no longer act in the same way as before. Conclusions which were essentially *apologetics* for Stalinism were summed up in the phrase which Lawrence, the British Pabloite leader, constantly and incessantly used: the bureaucracy 'has the will but not the capacity'. It has the 'will' for counter-revolutionary acts but not the 'capacity' to commit them. The 'Rise and Decline' put it: 'This new situation restricts more and more the capacity of counter-revolutionary measures of the bureaucracy'.

There was no possibility of any real concessions to imperialism by Moscow. The Stalinist parties would be pushed more and more to the left. Temporary turns to the right might take place but they would be eddies in the mainstream of development and result only because 'mass pressure has not reached its culminating point'.

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<sup>1</sup>Is an author of this document the same modest fellow who declared: 'Do you believe that I, who have predicted *perhaps alone in the whole world what would happen in Russia and the rest of the Stalinist sphere of influence this year 12 months ago, have "capitulated before Stalinism"*? I am the author of the first draft of the "Rise and Decline".' (Germain: letter to Breitman Nov. 15, 1953, Discussion Bulletin Feb. 1954) (Our emphasis)

Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union the 'Malenkov era' signified '*the beginning of the decline of the Bonapartist dictatorship*' (their emphasis). 'That regime can now maintain itself only by suppressing — temporarily or definitively — the most hideous aspects, that is to say the *most characteristic ones of the regime*' (our emphasis).

Thus a disintegration of Stalinism was taking place within the Soviet Union and within the mass Communist parties.

It is these arguments which we are told have been *completely and brilliantly confirmed!* *The more events expose it the more the IS beats its chest to cover the hollowness of its ideas.*

What are the facts? The bureaucracy which *could no longer make concessions*, has continued to direct its diplomacy towards a deal with imperialism! In the year following the publication of the 'Rise and Decline' it was entering into a compact with imperialism in an attempt to freeze the Indochinese revolution, enabling imperialists to maintain a toe-hold there. In line with the bureaucracy's wooing of French capitalism, the Stalinists in France voted for Mollet's emergency measures against the Algerian revolution.

It was the communist Parties which were to continue to move to the left, who followed the right wing directive of the 20th Congress and developed the 'theories' of the peaceful and constitutional road to socialism! And it was the regime whose most 'hideous aspects' were to be suppressed, the bureaucracy whose 'capacity for counter-revolutionary measures' was being more and more restricted, which launched the brutal attack on the Hungarian revolution!

The IS boasts that its analysis 'rendered our movement the only tendency in the international workers' movement capable of foreseeing and correctly interpreting the evolution of the world crisis of Stalinism'. We would ask: Gentlemen, don't you think you should take a little break from self-praise and explain the evolution of 'your movement' in America, France and Britain? What happened to Collins, Clarke, Michele Mestre and Co? They took your documents to their logical conclusion, broke all formal adherence to the Fourth International and ended as open Stalinist fellow-travellers. Collins' role today is to give the Stalinist party a boost, and assist its leadership in its most severe crisis, when whole layers of the party have broken with Stalinism. The IS pass by in silence the evolution of these tendencies, but Collins, Michele Mestre and Clarke built on the foundations of Pabloism. The method which produced these open Stalinist tendencies yesterday, is the method of the IS today.

*The disembodied Revolution*

The 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' substitutes for the political revolution a conception of irresistible *evolution* in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. To be sure, the IS writes often of the 'Political Revolution', it even elaborates a programme for it. The nature of that programme is itself revealing and we will return to it later. But what is the content of this Pabloite 'political revolution'? It is a process. More, it is an *irresistible process* — born from above, pressure from below, rifts between 'liberalisers' and 'Stalinizers' in the bureaucracy, and the growth of tendencies in the CPs which will lead the masses in struggle. It is the gradual peeling off of Stalinism like peeling the skins off an onion.

The process can swing back but, like a pendulum, it never returns to the point from which it started and will swing forward again. Thus: "The "liberalization" of the regime, temporarily braked after the fall of Malenkov, started advancing again during the preparation, the holding and the aftermath of the 20th Congress".<sup>2</sup> (Decline and Fall, p. 3)

And certainly a secondary place in this evolution is given to the masses. Their role is to be primarily one of pressure until, under the leadership of a section of the bureaucracy, they give the final spurt to the process towards socialist democracy, by finishing off the diehard faction among the bureaucrats.

The father of these theories, as has often been remarked, is Isaac Deutscher. The method is the same. Abstract generalizations are given the force of historical factors. There is a vulgar mechanical theory of the relationship between the material base of a society and its superstructure. Stalinism was the product of a certain set of objective circumstances, these circumstances have now changed and therefore we can expect 'a breathtaking reversal of the process by which the Soviet democracy of the early days was transformed into an Autocracy'. That is how Deutscher puts it in 'Russia after Stalin'. The IS limps along after him, with its 'liberalization', its 'new course' and so on — all implying a process of reform forced on the bureaucracy by

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<sup>2</sup>The quotation marks around 'liberalization' are those of the IS. All other words from the Deutscher school — democratization, de-Stalinization, new course, etc., it treats the same. What Marxist precision! If we were asked the difference between Deutscherism and Pabloism we could truthfully and briefly answer: Quotation Marks!

objective circumstances. Its so-called political revolution is not a dialectical leap but an evolutionary march.

The IS uses the term 'political revolution' as an abstraction. What we have is a *disembodied* 'revolution' *separate from its content of mass action*. Hence the confused formulations in the 'theses' dealing with the action of the masses in relation to the political revolution. 'Without a transformation of the *pressure* of the masses into *direct action* of the masses' we read on p. 7, 'the political revolution cannot succeed in the USSR' (their emphasis).

If we have the traditional conception of the political revolution which is, precisely . . . direct action — the above statement is a tautology. Without the political revolution of the masses the political revolution cannot succeed. But if the concessions of the bureaucracy, the 'battle for freedom of thought' at the 20th Congress etc., are all part of the 'political revolution'; if we conceive of the 'political revolution' as being, in fact, an *evolution* towards democratization then the statement means something.

Again, we are told of future developments in Hungary, 'Encouraged by a fierce *passive resistance* and an *unremitting mass pressure*, the revolution will again *take up its march forward*'. P. 16 (our emphasis). Obviously, the 'march forward' is the actions of the bureaucracy on which mass pressure is exerted.

The metaphysicians of the IS love to play with idealistic abstractions. Listen to these lines which are palmed off on us as 'Marxist analysis'. ' . . . *the battle for freedom of thought in the USSR won at the 20th Congress tremendous victories whose effects cannot be wiped out*. Filtering inexorably through all the cracks and crevices henceforth opened up in the shaking dictatorship, *the spirit of criticism, the spirit of rebellion*, will penetrate into the political field [the 20th Congress was non-political!] and will strike the spark of the political revolution' p. 5 (our emphasis). What lyrical poet was responsible for this piece of nonsense? Will someone please tell us what exactly is this 'battle for freedom of thought'? Like the twin spirits of rebellion and criticism, it appears to be creating untold havoc in the bureaucratic structure entirely apart from human beings.

We must admit, that posing developments in this way relieves one of the necessity of discussing concretely the nature and strength of the real forces at work. And that is what Pabloism avoids. It must spread cloudy words to bolster up its conception of evolutionary progress and of the decisive role of liberal tendencies among the bureaucracy.

What a mass of confusion is its analysis of the 20th Congress. First we are told that the 20th Congress 'witnessed the parallel development' of two tendencies. The IS makes the spectacular discovery that one of these is a 'proletarian tendency'! It is 'the proletarian tendency which is raising particularly the question of *equality* and which tends more and more to raise the question of the *administration of the plants*'. So writes the IS on page 4. The emphasis is theirs and they continue:

This tendency obtained important concessions at the 20th Congress (raising of low salaries, equalization of pensions, etc.) it skilfully seized on the 'struggle against the personality cult' to fight the principle of single command . . . It also obtained the recognition in principle (!) that the Labour code . . . must be revised. The attempts made by the Stalinist representatives of the economic bureaucracy (Kaganovitch and Bulganin) to introduce a reform into the salary system which . . . in reality reduced the overall pay of the skilled workers, were successfully combated. The proletarian tendency took its inspiration from the example of the Polish and Hungarian trade unions to demand a return of the unions to their genuine historical function<sup>3</sup>: the defence of the specific interests of the workers if need be, against the administration and the bureaucratically degenerated state.

Now the IS itself tells us later in its 'theses' that the 'CP of the USSR can scarcely be considered any longer a workers' party in the sociological meaning of the term (it is to a large extent composed of bureaucrats, as is confirmed by the statistics published on the occasion of its 19th and 20th Congress)'. p. 9. Yet the strength of the proletarian tendency at this Congress of bureaucrats was so great that it was able to win important concessions! Not only that, but this powerful proletarian tendency of bureaucrats fought consciously for a proletarian programme! It *skilfully seized* on the struggle against the personality cult to fight the 'arbitrary omnipotence' of the manager over the

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<sup>3</sup>What example? The 20th Congress took place before Poznan and before the Hungarian uprising! Later on (p. 9) the document talks of the masses in E. Germany, Poznan and Hungary using the trade unions 'for their own ends'. In fact these struggles were not expressed through the official trade unions, but in the streets, under the leadership of spontaneous organizations. In Hungary, particularly, the Trade Union Federation was isolated as an instrument of the bureaucracy. When after the revolution, the Central Workers Council organized a general strike, the Federation appealed to the workers not to strike as to do so would 'play into the hands of the counter-revolution'. Its appeal was ignored.

worker. It was 'inspired' by example to demand a return of the unions to their genuine historical functions etc.

As against this proletarian tendency is the 'tendency of the *most* conscious representatives of the *most* privileged layers of the bureaucracy'. p. 4 (our emphasis). And what successes has this tendency achieved? 'This tendency' we read on p. 4 'had scored points especially during the year 1955 . . . *but* workers pressure aiming at revising the Labour Code threatens to destroy part of those advantages. The bureaucracy [its most privileged layers?] demanded and obtained at the 20th Congress, the extension of the bonus system in favour of the administrative personnel. It is *asking* for a 'liberalization' of the Penal Code in economic matters and is obtaining particularly the right for each industrial enterprise to sell certain production goods'. (Our emphasis).

Tot up the balance sheet and it would certainly appear that the proletarian tendency had the better of it! With 'objective conditions' irresistibly forcing 'de-Stalinization' then certainly this 'proletarian tendency' may rapidly win over the majority of the bureaucracy. That is, given one thing — that the Pabloite cloud-cuckoo land bore any relation to reality.

But we haven't done with 'tendencies' yet. The 20th Congress, which 'witnessed the parallel development' of *two tendencies* on page 3 of the IS document, sees the bureaucracy *torn into 'various tendencies'* on p. 5.

'Under the pressure of the masses and of a discontent that was beginning to take on a political aspect, the leading nucleus of the bureaucracy was torn into various tendencies: *a tendency in favour of major concessions to the masses (Malenkov-Mikoyan?)*; *a tendency for stiffening the dictatorship (Kaganovitch-Molotov?)*; *a centrist tendency (Khrushchev-Bulganin)*'. The emphasis is ours, the question marks are the IS's very own. For a serious analysis they substitute a 'three card trick'. Instead of 'Find the Lady' however, it is 'Find the Liberal'.

And even now we are not done with 'tendencies'. On page 7 we meet up with a '*left faction within the liberal tendency*'!

What a welter of confusion is in these pages. What a terrible theoretical degeneration. To what childish nonsense are those reduced who exchange eclecticism and impressionism for Marxist method. Pabloism, however, is something more than confusion. Its theories would lay the Fourth International prostrate in face of historic opportunities, would drain away its firmness, and confidence —



in a period when the forces are maturing which will destroy the Stalinist canker. It does this by creating illusions in a faceless 'liberal section' of the bureaucracy.

One of the most important and even decisive sources for the crisis of Stalinism has been and still is the Chinese revolution. Unlike the Yugoslav CP however the Chinese CP leadership has attempted — *up till the present* — to maintain its differences with the Soviet bureaucracy within the framework of an unprincipled alliance which has retarded the crisis of Stalinism and undeniably bolstered up the Khrushchev regime. This unholy alliance revealed itself unmistakably during the Hungarian revolution. The Peking regime — in return for industrial aid and credits from the Soviets — placed itself unreservedly on the side of the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Kádár. This was a double blow against not only the working class of Hungary, but also the working class movement of the world. Firstly the Chinese CP justified the Russian intervention as 'righteous', secondly it threw all its prestige behind the bureaucratic national oppression of the Kremlin and the oppression of the working class so clearly illustrated by the suppression of the workers' councils. It is true that since then the Chinese leaders have had occasion to rethink their policy in Hungary, thanks mainly to the pressure of the revolutionary working class of China, who in the struggle for industrialization are becoming increasingly intolerant of bureaucracy and excessive centralism.

No analysis of Chinese Stalinism, however, can be considered complete or even truthful which does not expose and condemn the role of the Peking leaders during the October Hungarian Revolution. From this standpoint the analysis of the Pablo clique stands condemned. They do not mention *once* the role of the Chinese CP or its notorious statement, 'More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' which provided the 'theoretical' justification for the bureaucracy. It is amusing — and also a little tragic — to contrast the exaggerated emphasis given to the October 30th declaration of the USSR with the absence of any reference to the Chinese statement. The document does not mention the changes in the Constitution of the Chinese CP, and the current of 'de-Stalinization' which is operating within it. All this is correct and we have no intention of disputing the current trend of 'letting all flowers bloom'. This however does not regenerate insidious Pabloism. A stopped clock, it is said, can be correct twice in the day. What is important for

our movement is that the present changes in China do *not* in any way obviate the necessity for a Chinese Section of the Fourth International. The constant and continuous persecution of the Chinese Trotskyites, the murdering of its leaders, and the refusal to rehabilitate Chen du Hsiu, founder of the progressive and Communist movement, in China, confirm and underline the necessity for a party based on the programme of the World Revolution. It is incumbent on the leadership of the Fourth International to state this clearly, unequivocally and without hesitation. Pablo deliberately refrains from issuing such a call. Why? To ask the question is to answer it.

### *Hungary and the Irreversible Process.*

'One of the most spectacular results of the Hungarian revolution was the Soviet declaration of 30th October' the 'theses' inform us, and go on to assert: '*This statement attempted to establish relations between the peoples' democracies and the USSR on a new basis, thus implicitly recognizing the element (!) of national oppression that the Kremlin had introduced into the mutual contacts among workers' states*'. The statement attempted nothing of the sort. The only way to establish relations between Hungary and the USSR on a 'new basis' was by the withdrawal of Soviet troops. In fact, under cover of its October 30th statement and its negotiations with the Nagy Government, the Kremlin prepared the second intervention and launched the attack on Budapest after cynically arresting the Hungarians, who were discussing putting relations on a 'new basis'.

The IS declaims:

Though the brutal intervention of the Kremlin in the Hungarian revolution opposes a scathing denial to the bureaucracy's protestations of good faith, its 30th October declaration will nevertheless be invoked against it every time that a tendency in the CP of the 'Peoples' Democracies' will try to free itself effectively from Kremlin tutelage. It will thus become, without the bureaucracy realising it, a new time-bomb which will blow to bits the relationships of subordination among Communist Parties and workers' states.

Of course, the masses will seek to use to their own advantage every concession or statement that the Soviet bureaucracy makes in self-defence. But the important lesson from the Hungarian events and the Soviet statement is that only the political revolution of the masses can resolve the national question in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

In the shadow world of the IS, however, this statement of October 30th enters as part of the de-Stalinization process. The implication is that it was a product of the liberalizers in the Kremlin. Now 'The immediate repercussions of the Hungarian revolution can stimulate a momentarily predominant faction in the Kremlin to 'harden' [note the quotation marks] its attitude toward the countries of the glaxis. *But the pressure of the masses cannot fail to continue to grow in these countries*'. National oppression must succumb to the ever-unfolding process! 'The process of transformation of relations among workers' states, of relations of national oppression and economic exploitation into relations of equality and fraternal collaboration is *irreversible*'. (p. 17 Decline and Fall) (our emphasis).

We are back to the essence of Pabloism, teleology replaces Marxism. History grinds onwards, irresistibly, to its predestined goal. And the role of the advance guard, the conscious revolutionary force? Can there be any place for it when the march of progress is irreversible? But wait! There is a task for it to perform: to persuade the Soviet bureaucrats not to resist the laws of history. The IS ends this central section of its document with the following sentence: 'The sooner the Soviet bureaucrats bow before this process, the more harmoniously it will be carried out. The more they resist it, the more it will lead to violent conflicts and sanguinary collisions'.

And this appears under the Fourth International! The more they resist the more it will lead to violent conflict. Absolutely so. The more the temperature drops the colder it will get!

The question, of course, is not what will be the results if the bureaucracy resists, but whether it will resist or not. It is that which the IS revealingly leaves open.

#### *The Political Revolution and its Leadership:*

'The formulation of a more detailed and precise programme for the political revolution by the Fourth International' is an 'urgent necessity', writes the IS. And do they give us such a programme? They do not.

Certainly we have a whole section which the authors have seen fit to present to us under the heading: 'The programme of the Fourth International for the Political Revolution'. But in the pages which follow is not a programme for the political revolution at all. There is what can only be described as a 'Draft Constitution for a Healthy

Workers' state', and advice (to whom?) on measures to prevent a future bureaucratic degeneration.

Of course, every Marxist is concerned with the general problem of the danger of bureaucratization in the working class movement and workers' states. But the fight against bureaucracy demands a concrete programme against today's concrete bureaucracy. But by laying down a general programme for *future* healthy relations the IS avoids a real programme for the fight against the *present* bureaucratic cancer of Stalinism.

A programme for the political revolution must begin from the necessity of organizing the masses independently of the bureaucracy. Compare the Pabloite 'programme' with that for the political revolution in the Transitional Programme. Here are no abstractions, but a programme for struggle. Its sentences are clear and sharp, ringing with a revolutionary hatred of the bureaucracy.

A programme for the political revolution must have as its central aim the building of a conscious leadership. It must be imbued with the ideas that the success of the political revolution and the social revolution in the west are intertwined. From this follows the need for that leadership to be firmly imbued with internationalism and to be part of a world movement.

For the IS the problem of leadership is dissolved in the 'irresistible march' which will throw up a leadership from Stalinism. It is true you will find a sentence on page 15 where it refers to the 'essentially spontaneous character of the 23rd October insurrection' in Hungary and 'the lack of a revolutionary leadership capable of quickly coordinating the proletarian forces'. But the leadership it sees lacking in Hungary is the leadership that was pushed up in Poland. 'The political revolution in Hungary', affirm the theses, 'burst out in far more favourable conditions than those that permitted the Polish revolution to win its first stage'. Among the favourable conditions listed is 'the lack of an alternative leadership resulting from the lack of a broadly based tendency in the whole party and the workers' movement'. (p. 15).

In other words, the irresistible and irreversible process skipped a stage of evolution in Hungary and went outside the party and the bureaucracy and therefore did not spontaneously generate a leadership as in Poland. Thus, for the IS, Hungary is an aberration, — the process, in the future will be patterned on Poland!

The IS take their inspiration, not from the real movement towards political revolution, but from their reflection. If we are to arrive at a correct perspective for the political revolution, then we must concretely analyse the East German uprising, Poznan and Hungary, from the point of view of how the mass struggle developed, what was its strength, what were its inadequacies. The first lesson is that, in their uprising against the bureaucracy, the masses will develop their own organizations, opposing them to the bureaucratic regime and all its agencies. This was shown most clearly and irrefutably in the Hungarian revolution, which developed to the stage of dual power with the setting up of a national network of Soviets. But the same lesson is to be drawn from the East German uprising which was organized not through, but against, the instruments of the regime — the party and the trade unions. In Poland, the Poznan strike and the mass upsurge which followed resulted in the setting up of workers' councils.

Hungary further revealed that the spontaneous development of the political revolution can carry it to a high level. It can unite the entire working class around democratic organs of the workers. But the first examples of the political revolution in real life, have also underlined the absolute necessity of a conscious leadership. A leadership that can carry the unity of the working class forward to the taking of all power by the Soviets; that can mobilize this class around a thoroughgoing programme to root out Stalinism; a leadership that understands, above all, that its political revolution will only be successful if extended to the Soviet Union and linked with the revolution in the west. Finally, we must add, a leadership that must fight all illusions in the bureaucracy — in Hungary this would have meant preparing the whole nation and the world working class for Moscow's bloody attack.

The IS implies the 'political revolution' in Eastern Europe will go through a stage of tendency struggles in the Communist Parties, which will end in mass action under the leadership of an oppositional tendency.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>What a welter of confusion in the analysis from which this conclusion is drawn. The author appears to have written it with both hands without his left knowing what his right hand was composing! On pages 8-9 you will find the following 'theses'. The bureaucratic apparatus in Eastern Europe is *completely isolated from society as a whole*. But the CPs, (which are part of that apparatus) are composed of the *majority of advanced workers active in them!* The apparatus *hangs desperately* on to the . . . principle of the monolithic party, *unable to tolerate the slightest fissure without risking loss of power*. But *tendency struggles can be launched more easily in these parties than in the CP of the USSR!*

Its whole perspective for Eastern Europe is summed up in the following paragraph on page 9:

Gomulka in Poland, Nagy in Hungary, tomorrow perhaps<sup>5</sup> HERNSTEDT or ACKERMAN in East Germany by becoming in the eyes of the masses symbols of the struggle for national emancipation are creating favourable conditions for a *renewal of popularity for the CP* (through its national tendency) and permitting the political revolution under oppositional communist leadership to mobilize national feeling in its favour.<sup>6</sup> This has occurred especially in a *classical* form in Poland. (Our emphasis.)

The role of Gomulka and Nagy, in fact, only assumes importance — and then temporarily, from the point of view of this whole period of political revolutions — because of the weakness of Fourth Internationalist leadership.

What really occurred in Poland? What is the political revolution under 'oppositional communist leadership' and does it provide the norm, the classical form, for the future?

First: the basic movements in Poland were those of the masses, beginning with the June 28th general strike in Poznan. The strike began around economic demands, but, in face of the resistance of the regime, developed into an uprising for national independence and workers' democracy. The Stalinist regime attempted to crush the uprising by similar means as those used in East Germany, even to the denunciation of the strikers as 'imperialist inspired', and the staging of a show trial.

Several factors combined to make the subsequent course of events different from those in East Germany. The 20th Congress has increased the crisis of the Stalinist regime, which in turn had given greater confidence to the workers. Popular support for the uprising continued to be expressed and a movement of criticism developed among students and intellectuals. The widespread but formerly suppressed feelings against the Soviet occupation were voiced more and

<sup>5</sup>How will this 'scientific precision' provide us with that 'precise programme for the political revolution' which the IS informed us was a burning necessity? Armed with speculations like these an attack on the bureaucracy can be paralysed. *Do not shoot, he may be a Liberal!*

<sup>6</sup>It is too tedious and lengthy a job to elucidate all the contradictions in this eclectic document. Comrades themselves can compare the above with the reference to Nagy and 'national feeling' on page 16.

more. The Polish bureaucracy was using Russian troops and the harshest measures of suppression. They called back Gomulka. A section of this native bureaucracy began to lean on the masses to counteract the demands of the Kremlin.

It remains to add that the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution undoubtedly was one reason why the Soviet bureaucracy finally made concessions to Poland.

What are the conclusions? That the urge to political revolution in Poland was from below, the motor forces were the mass discontent resulting in the Poznan strike, the setting up of the workers councils and the workers arming themselves. The tendencies in the CP were a reflection of that. Gomulka was flung to the top by it. The concessions granted were a by-product of the revolutionary activity of the masses.

The political revolution has not been carried through in Poland. The revolutionary developments of the masses were arrested by the compromise of the Soviet bureaucracy with Gomulka. What exists now is an unstable relationship of forces in Poland. Gomulka is balancing and improvising, between the workers, the peasantry, the Catholic Church and the Soviet Bureaucracy. The Natolin clique, the direct representatives of the bureaucracy, continues organized. Already Gomulka has been forced to make concessions to it, attempting to limit the activities of the workers councils. At the same time there exists the danger from the growth of capitalist elements seeking support in the peasantry.

To carry through the political revolution it is essential in Poland to have a conscious leadership. The major task is to utilize this period, when the workers possess a confidence after winning concessions by struggle in October and before, when the ferment is continuing among the students and intellectuals, to build that leadership.

And what of the IS perspective in the rest of Eastern Europe: tendency struggles in the CPs leading to a renewal of popularity for these parties and then an oppositional tendency from the bureaucracy leading the political revolution?

It is possible, in the particular circumstances now existing in Poland, for a period, to have a degree of discussion in the Polish CP although the Natolin clique is seeking to suppress it and the leadership refuses to lift the ban on factions. But only on the basis of eclectic confusion and falsifying the real nature of the CPs, can the IS argue that the next stage of development in the rest of Eastern Europe is the launching of tendency struggles.

What is posed by the argument of the IS — although, as usual, they do not draw their conclusions out openly — is that in Eastern Europe the ‘political revolution’ will flow through and transform the Communist parties. However, when we come down to concrete facts, of which the IS is so contemptuous, we find that a feature of the revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe is that the workers set up their own organizations, as opposed to the instruments of bureaucratic oppression.

Will there be now an ‘increase of popularity’ for the CP in Hungary? The real support for the Hungarian party was shown in the uprising — when it collapsed. The political revolution there did not unfold under the leadership of an ‘oppositional communist tendency’. In fact the uprising of 23rd October took place *despite* Nagy. Even when Soviet tanks were moving into Budapest the following day, Nagy was making appeals for the laying down of arms. Nagy, like Gomulka, was thrown off balance by the revolution. The relationship which quickly developed between the Nagy Government and the insurgent masses was one of dual power.

Of course, sections of the CP fought with the masses. But they entered into the Councils as part of a leadership being forged in the struggle against the Stalinist apparatus.

As to the future in Hungary, isn’t it clear that the organization of the future rising of the Hungarian working class will proceed underground among the masses, with the Communist Party more than ever isolated as part of the hated apparatus?

But Pabloism continues to speculate on the rise of new Nagys and new Gomulkas to save the masses. Nowhere, in this document, is there a mention of the necessity of building sections of the Fourth International in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. And it is here, according to the ideas expressed in the theses, that the fate of the world revolution will be settled.

At best, the IS would reduce the FI to a collection of political *commentators*, and superficial pro-Stalinist commentators at that. The building of the Fourth International can only proceed through rooting out its conceptions which are set down in these ‘theses’ with all the ambiguity and confusion which characterizes the Pabloite tendency. Pabloism once again shows here that it abhors precision, clarity, the drawing out of thought to the end. Marxism begins from what is, seeks scientific objectivity, but Pabloism covers truth with obscurantist phraseology.



Its very ambiguity and confusion is revealing. Half a truth is the whole of a lie, and those who are ambiguous on the principled questions of Stalinism are miserable apologists for the bureaucracy — however much they prate abstractly about ‘political revolution’ — like thieves crossing themselves while robbing the altar.

The IS has its formulae, its occasional phrases to cover up its departure from Marxism. They inform us they ‘considered the “new course” of the Kremlin not as a movement of self-reform by the bureaucracy, but as a movement of self-defence of it’.

Chatter about the ‘new course’ being self defence of the bureaucracy means nothing. The questions at issue are whether the moves of the bureaucracy are part of a simple evolution in the direction of democratization, or a measurement of the maturing forces of the political revolution, the prospects of which are bound up with the development of the masses, and the growth of their organization and leadership. Whether in face of all forms of self-defence of the bureaucracy — concessions and repressions — we expose the hypocrisy, counter-revolutionary nature and cynicism of Stalinism, and aim at rousing the masses against it. And finally, whether we undermine the struggles against Stalinism by minimizing these brutalities and counter-revolutionary activities, exaggerating its concessions, and peddling notions of a spontaneous process as a substitute for a struggle to prepare a leadership for the coming political revolution.

**DOCUMENT 2a****Letter from James P. Cannon to  
L. Goonewardene, March 12, 1957.**

Dear Comrade Goonewardene,

This is in answer to your letter of January 2 in which you propose the arrangement of a world congress to unite all the Trotskyist forces. While I respect the good faith which motivates your proposal, I do not think it is realistic in the present situation. Too much has happened and too many questions remain unresolved to warrant the hope that a quickly arranged congress could agree on decisions that would be generally satisfactory to both sides and binding on all participants. Taking all the factors into consideration, including the hostility and distrust which have been engendered, I am of the opinion that the reunification of the world movement, if it can be accomplished at all in the foreseeable future, can be accomplished only in stages. What is needed, as I see it, is a recognition that the different opinions regarding the causes of the split are pretty well fixed on both sides and are not apt to be changed by argument.

It is true that in the three-year period since the departure of Mestre in France, Collins in England, and Cochran-Clarke in the United States, the political pronouncements of the two sides appeared to come closer together than was the case in the period prior to the formal split. More particularly in the past year, since the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the positions taken on the most important questions of the day came even closer together. If the thinking of the two sides should continue to evolve in the same

way, then they both would have to consider the question of unity, not as a demagogic slogan to manoeuvre with, but as a project to be realized.

A consistent approach of both sides toward common positions on the political questions of the day would justify a deliberate and serious attempt at reunification, even if some of the important differences of general conception remain unresolved. It would not be wise to pretend that these differences do not exist or to try to get around them by ambiguous compromise formulations which would be subject to different interpretations. It would be better and more realistic to contemplate a possible unification for common political action, and to agree to disagree on some questions, allowing the test of events and clarifying non-factional discussion to bring about an eventual settlement.

There remains the organization question, if it is permissible to apply such a narrow definition to the different conceptions of the International in its present stage of development and the whole complex of organizational and administrative practices which played such a big role in exacerbating the conflict and finally precipitating the definitive split. As far as I can see, there has been no approach toward agreement in this domain. If one is seriously interested in the actual unification of the movement and not simply in talking about it for propaganda purposes, he will have to realize that this difference exists and come forward with some practical and realizable formula to deal with it.

The question is not what ideal conception of the International and its functioning one may have in mind, but rather by what forms and methods all the Trotskyist organizations in the world can be brought together, taking them as they are with their ideas and practices as they are at the present time. One can hope that with time and experience and argument, and the further development of our movement the conflicting opinions can be changed and modified and brought closer toward uniformity. But this agreement cannot be imposed at the present time by any formal decisions, and there is no possibility of a return to the *status quo ante* in this respect.

There is no way around this obstacle to unification except by means of a sweeping organizational compromise, which would permit the formal unification of the international movement before the dispute is settled. This organizational compromise cannot be left to the chance decision of a congress. It would have to be agreed upon beforehand.

So far, the International Executive Committee has merely talked about unification in a propagandistic manner, without making any concrete proposal as to how it could be brought about, taking the organizations of the International Committee as they are. The circular of the International Executive Committee, dated November, 1956, does state, however, that it believes a solution can be found for the organizational problem. I have indicated above my personal opinion of the form this solution would have to take in the present circumstances.

Yours fraternally,

*J.P. Cannon*

## DOCUMENT 2b

### Conditions and Guarantees for Reunification Proposed by James P. Cannon to P. O'D\*, April 27, 1957

- 1) The situation is not one of the Fourth International versus a small split-off therefrom, but of two equal halves of the International split right down the middle; and any solution must take this as its starting point.
- 2) Parity on the new IEC by prior arrangement to be jointly recommended to the coming World Congress.
- 3) Agreement, also to be jointly recommended to the coming World Congress, that no disciplinary action will be taken against any section until the following World Congress, except by general agreement (a more exact formula for the last phrase to be worked out).
- 4) In France the two parties to be given the alternative of fusion by agreement or of functioning as two official sections, with a coordinating committee acting in an advisory capacity to avoid conflicts and friction.
- 5) In other countries fusions to be recommended and attempted.
- 6) No group anywhere which has remained true to the principles of Trotskyism, as determined by a World Congress, to be excluded therefrom.
- 7) The IS shall be changed into an administrative body to conduct daily work and prepare political decisions for the IEC (it shall also have the right to issue declarations on historical events, such as those in Hungary).
- 8) The IEC and the International Committee create a joint sub-commission on a parity basis to arrange the Fourth Unification Congress.

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\* The Socialist Workers Party representative in Europe (Ed.).

**Preliminary Proposals for a Basis for Reunification  
Made by P. O'D. (for the IS) to James P. Cannon,  
April 28, 1957**

*(Subject to ratification by the International Secretariat and the International Executive Committee, and acceptance by the New Zealand National Committee and the International Committee).*

1. The IEC of the Fourth International continues to defend the concept of the International as a democratically centralized world party composed of national sections, and rejects any proposal to convert it into a federation of autonomous national parties loosely associated.

2. In view, however, of the present grave split, which spreads confusion and weakens the effectiveness of world Trotskyism, in view of the contention of many cadre elements of the sections which left the FI in 1953 that the degree of centralism then and now applied is excessive in the light of its present strength in numbers, cadres, and the authority of its international leadership, the IEC proposes two series of measures to aid reunification, to increase the representativeness of the international leadership, and to reassure the distrust expressed by the parties that left in 1953 that they would be, in any reunification, discriminated against or subjected to excessive centralism:

A. The full and effective participation of those parties in the International's organisms; and, as a minimum, the permanent presence of a leading member of the New Zealand party at the seat of the IEC and the IS, and his active sharing in the day-by-day work.

B. Two exceptional measures until the Sixth World Congress:

(i) An exceptionally large representation, in the sense of voting rights, considerably greater than that normally accorded on the basis of numbers, of the parties that left the international in 1953, at the Fifth World Congress, and a strong recommendation to that Congress that it give similar exceptionally large representation in the IEC that it elects.

(ii) A temporary revision of the powers of the IEC in favour of the World Congress, and of the IS in favour of the IEC, in the sense of a much lesser delegation of powers than has been the practice since the Second World Congress, details to be worked out at the Fifth World Congress (as a suggestion as a basis for the present discussion, a provision that the opposition of one-third of its members to an action by the IEC requires postponement of that action until it can be decided on by the next World Congress, and that the opposition of two of its members to an action by the IS requires postponement of that action until it can be decided by the next IEC).

3. Upon acceptance of these proposals, the present measure of suspension of the former sections in New Zealand, Canada, and Switzerland, where the situation is not complicated by the existence of a rival group, shall be lifted, and they shall immediately resume full standing in the FI, with all corresponding rights.

4. In the case of England, where two groups exist but do not have differences so fundamental as to preclude unification, a unification is to be arranged, and the unified group, recognized as the British section, is to resume full standing in the FI, with all corresponding rights.

5. In the case of France, where there are sharp differences between the two groups, a serious attempt at unification is to be made, with however special guarantees that the Lambert group does not destroy the long, patient, and fruitful fraction work of the section, and if unification is achieved, the unified group, (etc. as above), if despite all efforts, unification cannot be achieved, the French problem is to be put on the agenda of the Fifth World Congress and there decided by the usual democratic process of discussion and decision.

6. The already well-advanced preparations for the Fifth World Congress are to be continued, once the step described in Point III has been taken, by a parity commission set up by those sections and the IEC, the English and French sections to be associated in it as soon as the steps mentioned in Points 4 and 5 have been taken.

**DOCUMENT 2c**

Letter from James P. Cannon to P. O'D.,  
April 29, 1957

Dear Patrick,

I think we have gone about as far as we can go in our informal exploration of the possibilities of unification. The next step should be a formal consideration by your friends of the propositions we have drawn up and the transmission of an official answer to them. My letter to Goonewardene was approved by our Political Committee, as well as by all the NC members resident in Los Angeles before it was sent. Therefore it can be taken as a considered statement of our position.

The first question to be answered is whether this letter to Goonewardene is acceptable as a basis for discussion of concrete measures to bring about the unification. If the answer is 'no', then it would be useless to continue discussions until a counter-statement is proposed. If, on the other hand, my letter to Goonewardene is acceptable as a basis, then the next step is to consider the proposals we have drawn up to implement the general idea outlined in the letter.

The other night I gave these proposals to you verbally in a rather telescoped form. Here I will state them more precisely, as they have been previously considered and approved both by our Political Committee in New York and the NC members resident in California:

1. The International Committee and the International Executive Committee should draw up a joint 'Memorandum of Agreement' on the basic principles of our movement as laid down in the Founding Congress of 1938 and the political positions taken by both sides during the past year, and call for the immediate unification of Trotskyist forces in all countries, without waiting for a congress.



'2. The International Committees should then set up a joint sub-committee to prepare 'The Fourth World Congress of Unification' and to represent the present International Executive Committee and the International Committee in the political and administrative direction of all international work, pending the joint world congress.

'3. The "Memorandum of Agreement" should also declare that the united International committees obligate themselves to recommend to the Fourth World Congress of Unification that the new International Executive Committee, and whatever sub-committee it may set up, shall be constructed on a parity basis; that they endeavour to arrive at decisions by agreement and refrain from disciplinary actions or threats of same throughout the period while the possibility of harmonious collaboration is being thoroughly tested out in practice.

'4. In France the two organizations should be consulted as to their ideas of steps to be taken to facilitate to their co-operation as sections of the same international organization. If their decision is to maintain separate organizations for the next period, it should be suggested that a Liaison Committee of representatives of both parties be established, with a chairman who would be acceptable to both sides, to co-ordinate the activities of the two organizations and regulate their relations with each other. This Liaison Committee should be a consultative and advisory, not a disciplinary body.

'5. In all other countries where the movement is divided, a similar procedure should be followed to facilitate the fusion of the two organizations, allowing for proportional representation in the leadership of the united body'.

\* \* \*

I suggest that you forward these proposals to your friends, and that further consideration of the entire question on our part await a reply from them. The reply can be sent to Comrade Smith in N.Y. at an address which Tom will give you.

\* \* \*

I might add another point of clarification. The question of representation, whether it be more or less than we would normally be

entitled to according to the rules agreed upon at the time of the Second World Congress, is not of great importance to us. Because of the exceptionally difficult conditions imposed upon our movement at the present time — geographical problems, material difficulties, travel restrictions, etc. — our prime concern is about the question of organizational guarantees to effectuate the general proposals contained in my letter to Goonewardene.

Yours fraternally,

*James P. Cannon.*

## DOCUMENT 2d

### Letter from G. Healy to James P. Cannon, May 10, 1957.

*Adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee of the British Section of the Fourth International, May 13, 1957.*

Dear Jim,

We have just received copies of your communication dated April 28th — 30th. These are being immediately transmitted to members of the International Committee and a meeting will be arranged in June so that a full discussion can take place, after the sections have had an opportunity to discuss the matter thoroughly.

We do not see, and I am sure that you will agree, any reasons why our people should be stampeded into hasty conclusions. Because of our failure to appreciate the thoroughly revisionist character of the 3rd World Congress decision, we paid a heavy price, which resulted in the disruption of the French section, and a situation where in 1953 we found ourselves trapped inside Pablo's organizational set-up which in turn forced us to move swiftly and issue the 'Open Letter'. We now know that not everybody was ready for this sharp break and again we had to pay a price which would undoubtedly have been less, on an international scale, had we alerted ourselves in time to the revisionism personified by Pablo, Germain and Co. It would be very wrong now, if we were to get caught up in the exchange of organizational proposals no matter how well they are drafted on our side, and overlook the very deep-going political differences that exist.

We all know how the Chinese Stalinists supported the rape of Hungary and endorsed the Soviet intervention. They attacked the Yugoslavs and their spokesmen provided ideological cover for the worst types of Stalinist bureaucrats all over the world. In his latest

resolution 'Decline and fall of Stalinism' February 1957, Pablo treats the Chinese experience in the following way:-

The XXth Congress of the CP of the USSR, the Khrushchev Report, and the political revolution in Poland and Hungary, have had a profound influence on the CPs of all the workers' states — including that of China, where there was shown a *certain delay* in 'destalinization', explicable above all by the backward state of the country and the enormous objective economic difficulties *that the leadership of the Chinese CP must face*. But the *pressure* of the current of 'destalinization' was sufficiently strong to impose important decisions on the Congress of the Chinese CP, especially in favour of the right to tendencies, the right of minorities to defend their ideas within the Communist Party even after majority decisions, and even the need of tolerating several 'democratic' parties in a workers' state. These ideas will exercise a great influence on numerous communist parties, especially in Asia'. (our emphasis)

This is the classical Pablo line — not a word about the treacherous role of Chinese Stalinism in Hungary whose document 'More on the Historical experiences of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' was designed to counteract the growth of Trotskyist ideas amongst Stalinist dissidents. Re-read that paragraph and you can only conclude that its aim is to whitewash this treachery and boost up Chinese Stalinism in the colonies. Pablo is well aware of the opportunism of our Ceylonese leadership and true to type he is pushing them along. It is impossible for us to remain silent on this matter. Furthermore we have to take into account that the LSSP leaders have moved further away from the orthodox Trotskyist position since 1954. At his Fourth Congress Pablo included a few of their amendments and they capitulated. They are now further away from us politically than at any time previously. For example, the Trotskyist dominated Ceylon Federation of Labour sent the following May Day Greetings to the Russian Trade Unions:

Ceylon Federation of Labour sends you and Soviet people fraternal May Day Greetings and pledges support against all imperialist threats to your country.

N.M. Perera, President.

Not one word about Hungary and the revolutionary fighters in the

USSR. Instead it lends aid and comfort to the Stalinist bureaucracy which in turn will use this to maintain its hold over the Soviet masses.

Turn to the next page of the same document (*Decline and Fall of Stalinism*) and read the last paragraph:

The immediate repercussions of the Hungarian revolution can stimulate a momentarily predominant faction in the Kremlin to 'harden' again its attitude toward the countries of the 'glacis'. But the pressure of the masses cannot fail to *continue to grow* in these countries. The fermentation of national independence and the autonomy of the CPs toward the Soviet CP cannot fail to 'break up' a large part of the youth and of the communist militants themselves. *The process of transformation of relations among workers' states, of relations of national oppression and economic exploitation into relations of equality and fraternal collaboration is irreversible.* The sooner the Soviet bureaucrats bow before this process, the more harmoniously it will be carried out. *The more they resist it, the more it will lead to violent conflicts and sanguinary collisions.* (Our emphasis).

Here you have the double talk of the 3rd Congress brought up to date. With all the bitter experience of the Hungarian Revolution at our disposal, once again a question mark is placed over the role of the bureaucracy in the political revolution. How can you build mass Trotskyist Parties with such a policy. And in fact Pablo doesn't believe that you can. Study the document from the first page to the last and you will not find a single call for the construction of Trotskyist Parties in the USSR, China or Eastern Europe. Was that not one of the main reasons for the split in 1953?

It would be wrong to assume that Pablo's political line in terms of method has changed. The rank and file members of his groups are undoubtedly impressed by the revulsion of CP and ex-CP members against Stalinism. They instinctively tend to approach this situation with the basic ideas of orthodox Trotskyism. Pablo's double talk pays lip-service to this, but his basic revisionist method remains.

The change in Pablo's line therefore does not at all imply a change in his political methods. In the preamble to his document *The Decline and Fall of Stalinism*, which is to be submitted to his so-called Fifth Congress, it states:

The thesis *Rise and Decline of Stalinism*, adopted by the Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International, applied to the analysis of the dynamics of Soviet Society the general conclusions that the Fourth International had drawn from the revaluation of the world situation carried out at its Third World Congress . . . . .

That is why the present theses do not take up again either the historical expositions or the structural analyses and definitions of the thesis *Rise and Decline of Stalinism* of which they are neither a substitute nor a corrective, but a natural continuation and thus an integral part.

When you consider that it was the document *Rise and Decline of Stalinism* which sparked off the split in 1953 and that Pablo reaffirms it at a time when he is calling for unity, it is perfectly logical, if we understand that we are here dealing with a tendency which substitutes empiricist and eclectic methods for Marxist analysis. Pablo continually covers up his revisionism with declarations with which we have no disagreement. It all depends on the pressures around when he writes his document. We had 95% agreement, as it were, at the 3rd Congress, but it was that odd 5% which did so much damage to our movement.

Recently we have been reviewing the internal documents of our world movement since the end of the war, and it is quite clear that an objective study of that period is extremely important for the education of our cadres in the future. Pablo and Germain's double-talk has had some terrible effects in the miseducation of our comrades on the Continent, and this cannot be put right simply by declaring that the objective situation since the 20th Congress is very much in our favour. The Marxist education of our cadres has to take into account how Pablo and his tendency developed just as you were able to do in the books dealing with the struggle against Schachtman and Burnham. The objective situation is not sufficient by itself to do this. All sorts of tendencies ranging between opportunism and sectarianism are now raising their heads amongst those who are leaving the CP. Whilst a united Trotskyist movement could be an important rallying centre, nevertheless if its basis rests upon lack of clarity and slurred-over differences, a new crop of disastrous splits may well develop once again, even though we are working in a favourable objective situation.

It is extremely difficult for empiricists of the Germain-Pablo school to become Marxists. People like this, or globe trotters of the P. O'D. variety cannot build the revolutionary parties of the future; on the contrary, these parties can only be built up in constant theoretical struggle against such tendencies, and if anyone can be assisted this is the only way to do it. The revolutionary cadres of the future must be thoroughly educated against impressionistic double-talk, otherwise our movement will flounder during critical periods. Experience teaches us that there is no greater ideological trap for inexperienced

people than the type of two-faced politics at which Pablo and Germain are past masters.

We think therefore that the International Committee must theoretically prepare itself without any organizational hindrance. Even if Pablo and Co. accept every one of your points, members of the IC have the duty and responsibility to complete the preparation of their documents on world perspectives and to submit them for the discussion. A World Congress should not be rushed without adequate political preparation. Whilst this should be done in an objective fashion, everybody should have the right to speak out and get things clear. This does not mean giving way to bull-headed factionalism, but facts are facts, and you cannot get round political differences by tactical plausibilities. Progress internationally can develop only from a firm political foundation. The British Section will never agree to anything which may cut across essential clarification. We have had our basinful of that sort of thing over Lawrence when Pablo and Clarke were jointly managing the Paris Office. Time and again we hushed things up about his pro-Stalinist behaviour as Editor of the *Socialist Outlook*, on a request from the Pablo centre. 'Don't be too harsh with the comrade', they said, 'he is sensitive, well-meaning but a little confused'. In the interests of unity we listened and by God we paid a bitter price. The 'sensitive' Pablo lamb turned out to be a raging Stalinist lion when the class pressures forced him on, and he almost disrupted the entire patient work of seven years. Ironically enough, this same Lawrence who fully supported the Soviet intervention in Hungary is now preparing to get thrown out of the Labour Party and join the Communist Party, when every self-respecting militant is preparing to leave it.

If we assume without qualification that the present favourable political situation can greatly help in checking the disintegrating splits which characterized our movement in its isolation, this could lead to a one-sided and erroneous conclusion, in just the same way as the 'mass pressure' theories of Pablo and Germain during 1953. The strengthening of our cadres is decisive in this present period and this can only be done in a thorough-going education around the problems of revisionism. That is the most important conscious role which our movement has to play.

The talk of 'two groups' in Britain in the manner engaged in by P. O'D. is nonsense. Our group is the British Section, from which the Pablo group headed by Lawrence split off in 1953. During last year

Pablo recruited Grant, formerly Haston's 'theoretician' in the RCP, and a man named Fairhead, who deserted to the Stalinists in 1949; re-appeared in 1953, and once again broke with the movement in 1954 on the grounds that it was led by tyrants and was finished. His declaration at the time stated that from then on he was going to listen to 'good music' and read Kafka. He is now working full-time with Grant, the wage of both being paid by Pablo from Paris. This small group is now seriously split on a number of questions concerning the Labour Party. It has not recruited a single member of the CP to our knowledge. Its sole activity is trying to rally old die-hard sectarians who left when Haston took off. The main basis of recruitment is that Pablo will give them special protection in a fused group — in other words he will set them up as his faction. They openly say this in conversation.

We would like, therefore, to amend your statement: — if your terms are accepted the British Section will be fully recognized and after that consideration can be given to the Grant group on a proportional representation basis, if they want it that way. We will not be placed in the same category as this phoney group; nobody should have any illusions — we will not permit anybody to disrupt our work here. We are always ready to unite with any group on a principled basis, but we are not repeating the Lawrence episode.

We realize in writing all this to you that, to use an English phrase, we are 'carrying coals to Newcastle'. The movement here has been largely educated on the rich experiences of the SWP in its long struggle for principles. We would like to believe today we are reaching a position where we can help our American comrades as a result of the favourable conditions under which we work. Since the Pablo split we have gone forward as never before in our history. The sharpening of our principles which was a direct gain from the split, greatly helped us and politically tuned up our movement so that it was able to take full advantage of the 20th Congress. For the first time in our history we are assembling a first-class intellectual cadre, alongside trade union factions which are steadily increasing their influence. *Labour Review* is a foretaste of things to come from Britain. We shall, we believe, in time win over the most important dissident elements from the CP. Our annual Congress in a few weeks time will record important gains for our movement over the past year.

For some time now the propaganda resources of Pablo and Germain have been assiduously spreading the story that they can only negotiate



direct with Cannon. Our section and the International Committee are looked upon as some sort of hangers-on to the New Zealand section. The visit of P.O'D. is designed to strengthen such gossip. This 'big boss' conception of negotiation is typical of the 'cultism' in general. Because of this the International Committee and the New Zealand section must march in step together, especially since there appears to be an obvious attempt in Pablo's terms to separate the Swiss, New Zealand and Canadian sections from ourselves and the French. Nothing can or must be decided without the fullest discussion. I am sure we will have your co-operation towards this end.

One final point. We are completely opposed to a return to the old Pablo conception of international organization: the draining of national sections' resources so that some globe trotter could stiffen up Pablo's faction in some small group thousands of miles away; the constant spate of meetings in Paris which meant sections raising funds to send representatives; innumerable appeals for help so that we could go on lifting ourselves up with our bootlaces, with all this taking place at a time when the national sections had little or no resources. Our international work must be organized on a realistic basis in line with the resources of sections and not along lines which tend to imitate the old Comintern.

With best wishes,

*Burns.*

**DOCUMENT 2e****Resolution of the 13th Congress of the  
British Section, June 1957***The Situation in the World Trotskyist Movement*

(1) The 13th Congress of the British Section of the Fourth International considers that the International unification of tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist, with the International Committee of the Fourth International (orthodox Trotskyists) must be based upon fundamental agreement on the principles and programme of the Fourth International as elaborated by the late Leon Trotsky and the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International. This means the rejection of all forms of revisionism of the State Capitalist, Schachtmanite, and Pabloite-Deutscher varieties, and the acceptance of the principle that it is necessary to build sections of the Fourth International in all countries in the world dedicated respectively to the overthrow of Imperialism, and the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies. Any form of organizational unity without basic political agreement would only lead to a further series of splits which would greatly hamper our international growth and development.

(2) Congress therefore recognizes that the attainment of unity must of necessity allow adequate time for discussion of the differences which exist, leading to the preparation of a World Congress. It charges the incoming National Committee with the task of making a written analysis of the post-war political positions of our World Movement and the elaboration of a basic document on world perspectives in collaboration with the sections affiliated to the International Committee.

(3) Congress maintains that the immediate practical side of a political unification must be taken in stages. It proposes to the International Committee that a parity committee consisting of the International

Committee and Pablo representatives should draw up a memorandum of agreement on the issues where there is basic agreement. This joint body should constitute the leadership of the World Movement and its primary task would be to prepare the Fourth World Congress of Unification. It would recommend to this Congress that for the next period the International leadership to be a parity leadership on all committees which would lead by persuading individuals and sections rather than by invoking the discipline of statutes. Only in this way will possibilities of principled unity of the Fourth International be realized.

**DOCUMENT 21****Letter from G. Healy to the International Secretariat, July 10, 1957.**

Dear Comrades,

The International Committee has taken note of the visit of your representative O.P. to the SWP, and various suggestions which have been made towards reunification.

In our opinion a successful reunification is essentially a political question, and a realistic approach in this direction must take into account the important political differences which exist between our respective tendencies. The International Committee is absolutely opposed to the slurring over of these differences, and it believes it is entirely possible for the political issues to be studied in an atmosphere free from the antagonisms and bitterness of the past. We must face the situation as it is now, bearing in mind the very favourable period ahead for the World Trotskyist movement.

The International Committee is firmly of the opinion that there can be no return to the organizational relations of the pre-split period. It believes that the unification must be tackled in stages and considers the proposals of JPC and our English section a positive step towards this end. It regards, however, the counter proposals of Comrade OP and your IEC as unacceptable.

We have taken note of your request for a parity committee to discuss terms, but we feel that this is much too premature, until we obtain agreement at least in principle on the basis provided by the JPC and English proposals.

In conclusion, we believe that the contribution of Comrade Sinclair should be considered as discussion material, and your reply will also be circulated inside the sections affiliated to the International Committee.

Fraternally,

*Preston*

Secretary, International Committee.

## DOCUMENT 2g

# Resolution of the Political Committee of the SWP submitted to the International Committee

### *The Present Stage of the International Unity Discussion*

1. The recent correspondence about conditions for the unification of the divided forces of the Fourth International was initiated by the January 2, 1957 letter of Goonewardene, Secretary of the LSSP, to Cannon, National Chairman of the SWP. The answering letter of Cannon to Goonewardene under date of March 12, 1957 proceeded from the assumption that, while a number of important differences remain unresolved and cannot be resolved by argument at the present time — with good will on both sides, a unification of forces for common political action on the most important problems of the day might be accomplished, and was designed to further that end.

This letter, and the subsequent letter of Cannon to Patrick, dated April 29, 1957 expressed the deliberate and considered opinion of the leadership of the SWP as to the only possible premise and procedure by which unification might be realized on a workable basis in the foreseeable future, with the necessary provisions incorporated in the agreement to guard against the danger of a new conflict and split. These two letters, both of which were approved by the Political Committee of the SWP at the same time, constitute a single entity — the first letter setting forth the general premise for a serious discussion of a possible unification, taking all the realities of the situation as they are — the unresolved differences, and the hostility and distrust which have accrued from the conflict — and the second letter outlining the organizational proposals which follow unavoidably from the premise.\*

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\* *N.B. The letter of Cannon was approved by the Political Committee of the SWP, and no question whatever arises of any prior consultation or agreement with the International Committee, which learned of the approaches only afterwards.* (Ed.)

2. While it is possible, of course, that the five proposals of the letter to Patrick could be modified or changed in some matters of detail, or that other points could be added, it is the opinion of the PC that any substantial change, contradicting the nature of the organizational compromise aimed at by the proposals, would nullify the general premise set forth in the letter to Goonewardene and leave us without an acceptable basis for the continuation of the discussion. Similarly, any actions deliberately taken by one side or the other in opposition to the premise laid down in this letter, would have to be understood in the same sense.

3. The conversations between National Committee members of the SWP and PO, which have been represented as 'unity negotiations', were in reality not negotiations at all and could not have been, since the basis for joint consideration of a possible unification had not yet been agreed upon. These conversations were necessarily restricted, as stated in the Cannon letter to Patrick under date of April 29, to an 'informal exploration of the possibilities of unification'. (Moreover, the SWP hasn't the slightest intention to conduct 'negotiations' independently of the International Committee).

Since these conversations led to nothing and could lead to nothing in the circumstances, Patrick was asked (in Cannon's letter of April 29) to get a direct answer from the IS as to whether the Cannon letter to Goonewardene 'is acceptable as a basis for discussion of concrete measures to bring about unification'. And this was followed by the statement that 'if the answer is "no", then it would be useless to continue discussions until a counter-statement is proposed'.

4. The reply of the IS, addressed directly to the leadership of the SWP under date of May 7, avoids a direct answer to this direct question. Instead of that, proceeding as if the letter to Goonewardene did not exist, or was of no consequence, the IS simply offered some 'concessions' to the forces of the International Committee, for which they have no need and still less interest; plus a gratuitous lecture on the principles of international organization, and the Socialist International and the London Bureau — which was not needed either, since all concerned have long ago been instructed in these matters by teachers of the highest authority.

The May 7 letter of the IS, in the opinion of the PC, implicitly constitutes a total rejection of the basic premise laid down in the letter

to Goonewardene, according to which a possible unity could be realized only by way of *an agreed upon compromise* on the organizational question. The essence of such a compromise which could be acceptable to the forces of the International Committee, as stated in the April 29 letter to Patrick, would have to consist not of 'concessions' which have no meaning and no value, but of *organizational guarantees*. The May 7 letter of the IS contains no guarantees whatever and consequently provides no acceptable basis upon which negotiations for unification could proceed.

6. Subsequent communications from the IS to the International Committee, including the latest letter under date of July 18, offer nothing to change the stalemate. Consequently, as far as correspondence is concerned, the discussion of the question of unification has not moved forward by a single step since March 12, the date of the Cannon letter to Goonewardene. Moreover, on the field of action, it appears to the PC that several steps backward have been taken. The unrestrained and disruptive factional campaign launched against the British section of the Fourth International by the improvised group headed by Grant, the former associate of Haston, simultaneously with 'unity' propaganda, stands in flagrant contradiction to the latter and calls into question the good faith of its proponents.

The tendentious and falsified polemics over past conflicts which cannot be resolved by argument at the present time, and which the letter to Goonewardene proposed to lay aside for future consideration in a calmer atmosphere, after unity had been effected on the political action of the day, obviously sharpen the situation and push the prospect of unification backward. These actions, and the attitude expressed in them, plus the failure of agreement on the necessary organizational compromise, raise the direct threat that any formal unification effected in such an atmosphere would provide only the springboard for another bitter conflict and split.

The PC of the SWP does not believe that any good could come to our international movement from that and will not recommend it. Neither do we see how any constructive results can be gained by a continuation of the discussion of unification unless and until these two road blocks are removed.

**DOCUMENT 2h****Extract from a letter sent to the International Secretariat by the British Section, July 6, 1957.**

The Thirteenth Annual Congress of the British section of the Fourth International, which was the most representative gathering our movement ever held in Britain discussed in the most objective fashion this problem. A resolution was unanimously passed which declared:

Congress maintains that the immediate practical side of a political unification must be taken in stages. It proposes to the International Committee that a parity committee consisting of the International Committee and IEC representatives should draw up a memorandum of agreement on the issues where there is basic agreement. This joint body should constitute the leadership of the World Movement and its primary task would be to prepare the Fourth World Congress of Unification. It would recommend to this Congress that for the next period the International leadership be a parity leadership on all committees which would lead by persuading individuals and sections rather than by invoking the discipline of statutes. Only in this way will possibilities of principled unity of the Fourth International be realized.

We feel that this is the best way to face up to the problems as they really are, and we hope that upon reflection you will agree with us.





# Against 'Unification'

st exchanges between the National  
WP, as the SLI began the fight  
at of the SWP into Pablosism. The  
at the SLI and its collaborators in  
at every stage for the widest  
the disputed fundamental ques-  
(Document 3) reminds the SWP  
'Open Letter' of 1953, and draws  
that Pablosism can no longer be  
ism. In the letters of the American  
(7), the SWP can already be seen  
, using this to suppress discussion  
and resorting instead to underhand

## **DOCUMENT 3**

### **Letter of the National Committee of the SLL to the National Committee of the SWP, January 2, 1961.**

Dear Comrades,

As we write, events in Belgium, following hard upon the developments in Japan and in Britain, are giving the lie to the Pabloites' defeatist assertion that the 'epicentre' of the world revolution has shifted from the advanced capitalist countries. The main importance of the colonial revolution is revealing itself to consist as we have always claimed, in its impact on the metropolitan centres of imperialism, in the stimulus it would give to the revived struggle of the workers in these countries.

The resolution for the forthcoming Pabloite congress in which the struggle in the advanced countries is written off in favour of the colonial revolution was drafted by Germain, leader of the Pabloite movement in Belgium. The Pabloites were evidently taken by surprise by the general strike in Belgium, although the strike in the Borinage should have forewarned them. The remoteness of the Pabloites from the actual course of history is ludicrously (but tragically) revealed by the present position in Belgium.

We are entering a period comparable in significance to 1914-1917 and it is as vital now as it was then to break sharply and clearly with all sorts of centrist tendencies within our own ranks. If we are to fulfil our revolutionary duty in the coming years as the Bolsheviks did, we have to follow the example of Lenin, not that of Luxemburg, in not merely criticizing but also uncompromisingly separating ourselves from all sorts of contemporary Kautskys; first and foremost, from the Pablo gang.

It is now over 7 years since you addressed a letter to Trotskyists throughout the world concerning Pabloite revisionism and its disastrous effects upon the Fourth International. In that letter you outlined 'the fundamental principles on which the Trotskyist movement is built' as follows:

- 1) The death agony of the capitalist system threatens the destruction of civilization through worsening depressions, world wars and barbaric manifestations like fascism. The development of atomic weapons today underlines the danger in the gravest possible way.
- 2) The descent into the abyss can be avoided only by replacing capitalism with the planned economy of socialism on a world scale and thus resuming the spiral of progress opened up by capitalism in its early days.
- 3) This can be accomplished only under the leadership of the working class in society. But the working class itself faces a crisis in leadership although the world relationship of social forces was never so favourable as today for the workers to take the road to power.
- 4) To organize itself for carrying out this world-historic aim, the working class in each country must construct a revolutionary socialist party in the pattern developed by Lenin; that is, a combat party capable of dialectically combining democracy and centralism — democracy in arriving at decisions, centralism in carrying them out; a leadership controlled by the ranks, ranks able to carry forward under fire in disciplined fashion.
- 5) The main obstacle to this is Stalinism, which attracts workers through exploiting the prestige of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, only later, as it betrays their confidence, to hurl them either into the arms of the Social Democracy, into apathy, or back into illusions in capitalism. The penalty for these betrayals is paid by the working people in the form of consolidation of fascist or monarchist forces, and new outbreaks of war festered and prepared by capitalism. From its inception, the Fourth International set as one of its major tasks the revolutionary overthrow of Stalinism inside and outside the USSR.
- 6) The need for flexible tactics facing many sections of the Fourth International, and parties or groups sympathetic to its programme, makes it all the more imperative that they know how to fight imperialism and all its petty-bourgeois agencies (such as nationalist formations or trade-union bureaucracies) without capitulation to Stalinism; and, conversely, know how to fight Stalinism (which in the final analysis is a petty-bourgeois agency of imperialism) without capitulating to imperialism.

These fundamental principles established by Leon Trotsky retain full validity in the increasingly complex and fluid politics of the world today. In fact the revolutionary situations opening up on every hand as Trotsky foresaw, have only now brought full concreteness to what at one time may have appeared to be somewhat remote abstractions not intimately bound up with the living reality of the time. The truth is that these principles now hold with increasing force both in political analysis and in the determination of the course of practical action.

You went on to state:

These principles have been abandoned by Pablo. In place of emphasizing the danger of a new barbarism, he sees the drive towards socialism as 'irreversible'; yet he does not see socialism coming within our generation or some generations to come. Instead he has advanced the concept of an 'engulfing' wave of revolutions that give birth to nothing but 'deformed', that is, Stalin-type workers' states which are to last for 'centuries'.

This reveals the utmost pessimism about the capacities of the working class, which is wholly in keeping with the ridicule he has lately voiced of the struggle to build independent revolutionary socialist parties. In place of holding to the main course of building independent revolutionary socialist parties by all tactical means, he looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy, or a decisive section of it, to so change itself under mass pressure as to accept the 'ideas' and 'programme' of Trotskyism. Under guise of the diplomacy required in tactical manoeuvres needed to approach workers in the camp of Stalinism in such countries as France, he now covers up the betrayals of Stalinism.

Our section fully supported these principles and the political evaluation of Pablo which flowed from them. The greatest danger confronting the revolutionary movement is liquidationism, flowing from a capitulation either to the strength of imperialism or of the bureaucratic apparatuses in the Labour movement, or both. Pabloism represents, even more clearly now than in 1953, this liquidationist tendency in the international Marxist movement. In Pabloism the advanced working class is no longer the vanguard of history, the centre of all Marxist theory and strategy in the epoch of imperialism, but the plaything of 'world-historical factors', surveyed and assessed in abstract fashion. The resolutions of the Pabloites for their forthcoming international conference are very explicit on this point. The present stage of the world revolution, according to them, is particularly characterized by the growing strength of the workers' states and

the great power generated by the colonial revolution; the struggle in the advanced countries, because of changes in the character of modern capitalism, is relegated to a definitely subordinate position. Here all historical responsibility of the revolutionary movement is denied, all is subordinated to panoramic forces; the questions of the role of the Soviet bureaucracy and of the class forces in the colonial revolution are left unresolved. That is natural, because the key to these problems is the role of the working class in the advanced countries and the crisis of leadership in their Labour movements.

A correct revolutionary orientation towards these questions is now a vital and urgent necessity, because in Japan and Britain there have begun great struggles which raise directly before the organized working class the issue of class leadership. In each case these issues are forced by the special manifestations of imperialism's latest crisis in these particular countries; the struggles around them will inevitably intensify and will spread to the other imperialist countries, including the USA. Any retreat from the strategy of political independence of the working class and the construction of revolutionary parties will take on the significance of a world-historical blunder on the part of the Trotskyist movement. In Britain we have seen the results of Pabloite revisionism in Pabloite actions since the formation of the Socialist Labour League and the current policy crisis in the Labour Party and we are more than ever convinced of the need to build a Leninist party absolutely freed from the revisionism which Pabloism represents.

It is because of the magnitude of the opportunities opening up before Trotskyism, and therefore the necessity for political and theoretical clarity, that we urgently require a drawing of the lines against revisionism in all its forms. *It is time to draw to a close the period in which Pabloite revisionism was regarded as a trend within Trotskyism.* Unless this is done we cannot prepare for the revolutionary struggles now beginning. We want the SWP to go forward with us in this spirit.

In November 1953 the British Pabloites, organized by Pablo, split from our movement and did everything possible to disrupt it. This led to a prolonged faction struggle which lasted almost six months for the control of our paper the *Socialist Outlook*. The sharpness of this struggle and the irresponsibility of the Pabloites greatly assisted the witch-hunt which followed in July 1954 when that paper was banned by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. At that time we were dealt a hard and bitter blow by the Pabloite revisionists. A few months later, as you know, the leaders of Pablo's movement in

Britain wound up their organization, and eventually they joined the British Stalinist Party. Pablo has never at any time made a political examination of this development. He contented himself by simply noting in his journal *Fourth International* that his ex-followers were joining the 'most sectarian party' in the world.

In 1956 the publication of the Khrushchev speech opened up possibilities for the enlargement and development of our movement on a scale that we had not experienced since the period of the second world war. As you know we recruited some important cadres from the Communist Party and YCL. It was, of course, understandable that some of those who joined us at that time should find difficulty in assimilating themselves in our ranks. These difficulties began to show themselves when Peter Fryer left our movement in August 1959. Some weeks later we had another defection on the part of Peter Cadogan, who thought he could attack the Socialist Labour League publicly through the channels of the Fleet Street press and still remain a member. Finally, there was Brian Behan who proposed the ultra-left theory that the Labour Party was a capitalist party and that we should have nothing to do with it.

During the course of these difficulties Pablo made numerous visits to England, where he endeavoured to encourage the greatest amount of factional disruption inside the Socialist Labour League. His publications presented the viewpoint of Cadogan and Fryer. He invited them to his Sixth Congress. He circulated a vicious and libellous document written by Fryer. He vehemently denounced the formation of the Socialist Labour League, and when we were under attack from the witch-hunters his followers either remained silent or, in some cases, joined the witch-hunters against us. You will recall how the Pabloites wrote up gloatingly the Marcyite walk-out from the SWP. These people everywhere play the role of hyenas and jackals in the movement.

During the last few months the political position of the renegades whose break with us was welcomed and encouraged by Pablo has become extremely clear. Peter Fryer has written an anti-Communist book called 'Twice Bitten' and was busy recently trying to find a publisher. Peter Cadogan advocates the theory that there is state capitalism in the Soviet Union and opposes on all possible occasions the building of the democratic-centralist revolutionary party in Britain. His latest demand is for freedom of speech for Mosley. Brian Behan is still only in the early stages of his development, but he has

already travelled far and fast. He has repudiated Trotsky and Trotskyism 'because of Kronstadt'! — and is now working in collusion with the anarchists under the slogan: 'Keep politics out of the trade unions'.

Of course, Pablo was not concerned with the political evolution of such people when he urged them to attack the Socialist Labour League. He was merely concerned with weakening the only organization in Britain which consistently fights for a Marxist policy and upholds the principles elaborated by Trotsky and the Fourth International which he founded. Pabloism plays a directly counter-revolutionary role in British working-class politics.

We consider that the position of Pablo in relation to Britain arises from the same revisionist course which lay behind the split in the Fourth International in 1953. We disagree entirely with those comrades who claim, as comrade Hansen did in his letter to Kolpe of June 2, 1960, that 'the political positions have tended to converge still further'. On the contrary, we consider that experience has thoroughly confirmed your view that the 'lines of cleavage . . . are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally'; and we have had more than ample experience of the Pabloites' policy of seeking to 'muzzle or handcuff' orthodox Trotskyists (your letter of November 1953).

In preparation for his Fifth Congress in 1958 Pablo again affirmed the central thesis of the Third World Congress which preceded the split of 1953. He said:

The liquidation of Stalinism is on the agenda . . . The antagonism between capitalism and socialism cannot but lead to a war-revolution, i.e., an armed class struggle on the world scale. An economic or political crisis of large dimensions may be the immediate cause of the conflict. (We consider that war has been technically possible for imperialism since 1954).

In the course of the process leading to the war-revolution, and during the latter, the proletariat in the countries where its recognized leadership is Stalinist will tend to regroup itself around the CP. This leadership may put forward a revolutionary policy under the pressure of the masses. Parallel with this, trends of opposition to Stalinism will appear in the Communist Parties, doubtless on a more or less 'centrist' basis to start with .

Nothing had changed then, so far as Pablo's thinking was concerned. At that time, during the discussion around the parity commit-



tee, we had occasion to write that in our opinion the political differences were even greater than at the time of the split in 1953. Significantly, in contrast to our experience in Britain, where we advocated an orthodox Trotskyist policy, Pablo made no gains of any importance from the Communist Party here as a result of the 1956 crisis. It was our very firmness on the question of Stalinism and its prospects that helped to clarify those ex-Stalinists whom we won in 1956-57 and who have become loyal and valuable members of our organization. They also appreciated that we, unlike the Pabloites, were working consistently towards the establishment of a revolutionary Marxist party, the need for which they understood.

An editorial in the latest issue of Pablo's journal *Fourth International*, Autumn 1960, outlines the tasks in Britain as follows:

The central task of British revolutionary Marxists consist in regrouping, inside the Labour Party, all these scattered forces of the Labour left — without being sectarian or ultimatic, without artificially imposing on them a 'leadership' parachuted from outside — around a programme of transitional demands, in order to take by assault first the 'dominant positions' of the movement itself and then a series of 'dominant positions' of capitalist society as a whole.

The prospect of building a revolutionary Marxist party has completely disappeared so far as the Pabloites are concerned. The reference to parachutists in this passage is generally understood here to refer to the SLL and its orthodox Trotskyist outlook and method.

The situation in Britain has changed tremendously since 1953. From the trade unions has come a powerful movement to the Left which has succeeded in radicalizing the Labour Party to an extent not experienced before in its history. We are poised on the brink of a split between the forces of the Left and the Right. The witch-hunt against the Socialist Labour League in 1959 was part of the preparation for this showdown. The formation of the Socialist Labour League strengthened enormously the ideological and organizational basis of our movement. Whilst in the initial stage of the witch-hunt we suffered some casualties through expulsions from the Labour Party, nevertheless, we have been able during the past year not only to make good these losses but in addition, to organize an important campaign around the defence of Clause Four and the promotion of a policy for implementing this clause. This has brought our comrades into closer relationship with some of the Left centrists in the 'Victory for

Socialism' organization, whom we can influence and from whom we can recruit.

It is, however, the work amongst the youth which has been most decisive. We had recently the national youth conference where between 150 and 170 young people launched our youth paper as a national paper of the Young Socialists. The Gaitskellites' reply was a further witch-hunt which is now in full swing. There is every indication that this struggle against the socialist youth will merge with the general struggle against the Left in the Labour Party. It has already roused many Labour Party members to realization of what a wrecking task the Gaitskellites are engaged upon. The youth movement is therefore today a potentially great force in the radicalization of the adult movement.

We have, in fact, made considerable strides forward in our Labour Party work since the formation of the Socialist Labour League. Pablo's 'deep entry' theory flows from his whole revisionist course. It is not a question of a mere tactical misunderstanding; it springs directly from the basic reasons for the 1953 split.

The type of policy that Pablo advocates for Britain today would dissolve our movement in the marsh of centrism. That is why his few remaining disciples stumble from one crisis to another. The political yardstick of Pabloism is not his letter of congratulation to you on the presidential campaign but his policy for such an important political situation as exists in Britain today.

Even now, while the SLL campaigns for the release of Pablo, the Pabloites still continue to help the witch-hunters against our youth paper. When our comrades go into action in Young Socialist branches with resolutions opposing the ban, the Pabloites propose counter-resolutions asking the Labour policemen at Transport House 'for information'! Of course they are being defeated wherever they show their faces, but the political lines which they pursue remain as clear to us now as they were in 1953.

During the past seven years we have outlined in the Open Letter of comrade Sinclair to Germain and in the *Labour Review* editorial of August 1959, our political estimation of the evolution of Pabloism. We believe that these statements are correct and we stand today by the main political arguments set out in these articles.

In his letter to the Indian comrade Kolpe (a man who was prominent in the organization of a demonstration outside the Chinese embassy in Bombay as a protest against the Chinese 'attack' on Tibet)

comrade Hansen writes in a most apologetic way about the behaviour of the British comrades; in doing this he dissociates himself from our editorial in the *Labour Review* of August 1959. 'Personally', he writes, 'I would agree with you that this article was not well conceived'.

Comrade Hansen thought it necessary to mildly repudiate us in his letter to Kolpe, without having sent a copy of this correspondence to us in advance. Naturally Kolpe will have sent such a document to the Pabloite Germain. It is equally to be understood that Pierre Frank's greeting to the SWP on the occasion of the Presidential election is a sign that we may be once more on the eve of new 'unity' manoeuvres.

The political purpose of these, so far as the Pabloites are concerned, will be another attempt, as in 1957, to split the SWP from the Socialist Labour League.

It is our opinion that a considerable amount of time has already been wasted in this type of abortive unity discussion. What is needed in the international movement today is a political statement by the orthodox Trotskyists of where we stand on the great problems of the day. Without this international political declaration, it will be impossible to rebuild the international movement. This can be clearly seen from the crisis which exists in Ceylon and in our own movement in the Argentine. The development of a most promising movement in Japan can only be continued on the basis of such an international reaffirmation of principles. If there are any in the Pabloite ranks who are disturbed by their experiences of Pabloism, then they too can be assisted forward politically in this way only.

This international document must be followed up by a series of articles analysing the revisionist course of Pabloism. It is a vital pre-condition for the development of the Fourth International that we break finally from all traces of such revisionism. If we do not make this break now, then our movement will, in the opinion of the SLL, suffer its most severe crisis in a period of its greatest opportunity.

It is well-known internationally that the Socialist Labour League is deeply indebted to the great and constant political assistance given to it in the past by the Socialist Workers' Party. Unfortunately, because of the laws in your country you have in recent years been prevented from actively participating in the international work of the Trotskyist movement, but you have made it possible for our movement in Britain to avoid many of the difficulties experienced during the early, formative years of the SWP in the USA.

We believe that the political collaboration of our two sections

constitutes a major factor in the international movement, but we must now speak frankly. We cannot agree to the type of political argument engaged in by comrade Hansen in his letters to Kolpe. We cannot under any circumstances agree that the political differences between ourselves and the Pabloites are growing less. We were disturbed by the article by Murry Weiss in the latest *International Socialist Review*, by the recent editorial in the *Militant* on the Russian Revolution which skated over the question of the bureaucracy; and by your presentation of developments in Cuba, which recalls Frank's characterization of that country as a workers' state.

In a few weeks we shall be sending you a draft resolution on international questions. We urge you to discuss this resolution and let us have your opinions. We especially need to know your opinions on Pabloism at the present time. Arising from such joint work we propose the preparation of an international congress of all orthodox Trotskyists as soon as it can possibly be arranged.

We want your political assistance in preparing this conference, although we appreciate that you cannot participate in it because of the laws of your country. An international bulletin should be established forthwith to open an international discussion amongst the orthodox Trotskyists of all countries.

We feel that if this is done our movement will quickly recover the political initiative which was provided by your open letter in 1953.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours fraternally,

*National Committee of the Socialist Labour League*

## DOCUMENT 4

### Reply of the SWP Political Committee to the letter of the Socialist Labour League, February 6, 1961.

To the National Committee  
Socialist Labour League

At its January meeting our National Committee reviewed the problems of world Trotskyism, and in particular the seven-and-a-half-year split in its ranks. All those attending received a copy of your letter of January 2 on this same question and carefully considered the views you put before them.

After discussion, the National Committee accepted a report expressing the following views which it directed our Political Committee to convey to you:

1. We see nothing substantially new in the world Trotskyist movement since 1957 which would require us to reconsider the position reached in common with you at that time on the need and desirability of unifying the international forces of Trotskyism on a principled basis.

A way of achieving this was suggested by Comrade Cannon in his 1957 letter to Leslie Goonewardene; namely, a parity arrangement that would guarantee the rights of both sides, thus permitting a central leadership to attempt comradely collaboration in an atmosphere free from the possibility of organizational manipulation.

This proposal was, unfortunately, rejected by the comrades of the International Secretariat. Still worse, it was deliberately misrepresented as an attack on the principle of democratic centralism. And instead of following a policy aimed at alleviating organizational frictions, they engaged in a series of unprincipled factional manoeuvres,

particularly in Britain, that greatly sharpened relations and made unification unrealistic as an immediate practical goal.

The IS followed this course in accordance with concepts that led to the split in 1953 and which would, under present limitations of the movement, tend to establish a monolithic international organization disposed to intervene excessively in the internal life of competent national leaderships. We oppose this concept of a monolithic structure, this arbitrary way of functioning, and this practice of substituting tactical prescriptions for principled political leadership — and not only in the case of the IS but wherever they may appear.

2. We believe that the chief existing differences between the IS and ourselves — and the main obstacles to unification — come from (i) our conflicting conceptions on the internal life of the world movement and (ii) the purpose and practice of entrism. We differ with the IS on the ways and means of constructing national parties and of building the international movement and administering it at the present state of its development. We are opposed to the concept that makes the international centre nothing but a literary and technical apparatus operating outside all control. But with a parity arrangement, it should be possible to discuss these and the remaining political differences and come to conclusions about them in a democratic manner. In stating this, we are not reaching a new conclusion but simply again expressing the view which we reached together with you in discussions beginning in 1957 and which were reaffirmed as recently as a year ago.

3. The developments in England since 1957 brought into sharp focus our differences with the IS leaders on how to build national revolutionary parties. The reprehensible actions and attitude of the IS leaders — which have effectively blocked unification — flow from their tactic of permanent and passive entrism in certain countries. Their refusal to support the Socialist Labour League in its life-and-death struggle against the witch-hunters not only violates the elementary principle of class solidarity but reveals the insincerity of their protestations about the desirability of unity. Leaders eager to promote the unification of the revolutionary vanguard would not have hesitated a moment to make clear their solidarity with the largest group of Trotskyists in that part of the world. That is why we have viewed the attitude of the IS leadership toward the Socialist Labour League as a crucial test of their sincerity in advocating unity.

4. Under such circumstances, the efforts of the IS leaders to counterpose the 'reasonable' American Trotskyists to the 'wild' English Trotskyists and to praise the one at the expense of the other can only be taken as a divisive manoeuvre which has no chance of success.

5. Despite this unfavourable record of the actual attempts to reunify world Trotskyism, we remain firmly convinced that unification would be very advantageous for the world movement if it can be effected on a realistic and workable basis along the lines we have previously indicated in our proposals of 1957.

Great new opportunities for Trotskyism, signaled by such events as the Cuban Revolution, the freedom struggles in the Mideast and Africa, the upsurge in Japan, the Belgian general strike, etc., are now opening before us. If our movement were united we could take much better advantage of them and achieve a much faster rate of growth in many areas and on a much more solid foundation than is possible with a movement split into factions warring over issues which they are unable to make clear to the socialist-minded working-class vanguard. This is felt among members of both sides in the Trotskyist movement, increasing the insistence that the problem be solved one way or another. A recent instructive instance in this regard being the experience in Japan.

6. Consequently we consider the line of freezing and attempting to deepen the division between the two groupings of the world movement and stepping up the organizational struggle against the Pabloite 'centrists, revisionists and liquidationists', as urged in your communication, to be politically unwarranted and not in consonance with the most imperative needs of the world Trotskyist movement. In fact it plays into the hands of the rabid factionalists on the side of the IS who are in reality opposed to unity and who advance the slogan of unity only as a 'clever' factional manoeuvre.

As indicated above, we have no reason to deny our differences on political and organizational questions with leading members of the IS and we have not concealed them. But we cannot agree with your opinion that our political differences with the IS have increased to the point of irreconcilability. On the contrary, we have noted nothing since the question was last discussed with you that would indicate we should revise the view that the political differences on some key questions have diminished to the point where unification is possible

and justifiable and that we must make it our responsibility to follow policies that will facilitate this objective.

It might be added that even on the basis of the appraisal you advance in your letter of January 2 on the differences between the two Trotskyist tendencies, the course you propose is, under present circumstances, not necessarily the best suited to struggle against the influence of incorrect ideas within the international movement. For example, the Japanese comrades, who from their own experiences are no less opposed than you or we are to the organizational concepts and practices of the IS, urge unification as the best means of effectively combatting Pabloism. We believe that their experiences and their views warrant the closest attention and study not only for what they reveal about the desirability of unity but also as one more warning that the older, more experienced sections must give active guidance in seeking the best possible solution to the problem.

7. We agree with you that a thorough discussion of these and other international questions is overdue and should now be undertaken. We await with keen interest your draft resolution along with the documents promised by the Japanese comrades and those that may be forthcoming from other countries. As a contribution to the discussion, we intend to offer documents stating our own views on the major questions. Among these will be a more detailed reply to many questions raised in your January 2 letter.

8. We are certain that this discussion can be conducted in the friendly spirit of close collaboration that has marked our common work for the past seven and a half years; and, for our part, we will do our utmost to maintain that spirit and to oppose any tendency towards factionalism that might arise in our own ranks should the differences that have now appeared prove to be sharper than might be at first expected.

Fraternally yours,

*Political Committee,  
Socialist Workers Party*



## DOCUMENT 5

Letter from James P. Cannon to Farrell Dobbs  
January 9, 1961.

Dear Farrell,

I just received your letter of January 6 with the enclosed mimeographed letter of the SLL to the SWP. After reading this document, I then reread your letter of December 29 on the international question and the enclosed material, including the two letters from Germain, the letter from Japan and the letter from Frank. I also went back and reread the correspondence between Joe and the Indian comrade Kolpe.

My first definite impression is that the situation in our international movement is more complicated and, to a certain extent, more confusing than it appeared to be when we made our major effort to promote unification in 1957. In such circumstances, the first rule of political wisdom is to go slow. The last thing we should want to hear at the Plenum is any panic-mongering cry for 'unity' by some magic device which would only make matters worse.

A soundly based and thoroughly prepared unification would undoubtedly help the advance of our movement on a world scale. But the idea that this can be achieved by a suddenly-called 'congress' is a childish illusion. There is nothing magic about congresses. They can only put the formal seal of ratification on agreements that have been previously arrived at in the course of experience and discussion. At any rate, that's what Trotsky thought about congresses, as he explained to impatient comrades many times between 1933 and 1938, and I fully agree with him.

In my opinion, 'negotiations' with the IS people are out of order now. The letters from Germain and from Frank read to me like an exact duplication of the shabby manoeuvres of 1957, as though these people had not learned a single thing from the experience. And the belated approval of our election campaign and our campaign for Cuba are somewhat insulting. The activity of the SWP during the past year has been no better and no worse — simply no different — than all its previous conduct has been 'in the fortress of American imperialism'.

And our conduct during the past year has been no better in any way, from the point of view of revolutionary integrity and courage — again simply no different — than that of the Socialist Labour League. It is offensive for the IS people to single us out for belated praise, while continuing their strikebreaking attitude toward the British Trotskyists, as though they take us to be peasants who can be manipulated by a little flattery.

The next thing on the agenda for us, as I see it, is discussion and consultation with the International Committee affiliates. We should not publish any of these communications from the IS, or authorize any negotiations with them, until agreement has been reached after discussion and consultation in the International Committee. And then and thereafter, discussions and negotiations with the Pabloites, if conditions appear to make such appropriate, should be conducted specifically in the name of the International Committee.

Fraternally,

*James P. Cannon*

## DOCUMENT 6

### Letter of the NEC of the Socialist Labour League to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, May 8, 1961.

Dear Comrades,

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

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

This conception seems to us to be directly contradicted for instance, by the contribution of comrade Stein in the discussions on Cuba:

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

Placing oneself on the side of revolution, from a Marxist point of view, means concentrating one's fire and one's effort on the side of the independent action and power of the working class as the only force capable of defeating imperialism. In the colonial revolutions since the war the Soviet bureaucracy has supported bourgeois-national parties in retaining hegemony over the liberation movements. Its control of the Communist Parties, with the policy of 'two stages' of the revolution, has helped these bourgeois parties to use the masses without fear of the latter imposing their own demands and leadership on the struggle. Even if the bourgeois revolution in Cuba has been forced by US policy to step beyond the normal bounds of the social measures of a bourgeois revolution, and even if this had been accompanied by a system of dual power (we will not say workers' power, since that is surely obviously not the case), this exceptional result of a particular situation would certainly not justify the implication of Comrade Hansen's remarks in opening the New York discussion, to the effect that it is necessary to reassess our whole attitude to China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the USSR.

We must express our apprehension that this approach on the part of some members of the SWP National Committee indicates a retreat from the position taken up against the Pabloites. The essence of the Pabloite method was to begin from a so-called 'objective', in fact a purely contemplative, standpoint and weigh up the 'objective forces' (or 'world reality') — and then to draw superficial and purely adaptive conclusions from this. What difference is there between Comrade Stein's remarks above and the Pabloite revisionist theory of the Stalinist parties 'projecting a revolutionary orientation'? Does not Comrade Hansen's reply to Draper fall into exactly the same error when he shrugs off the dangers of CP influence in Cuba, and expresses the opinion that the Cuban CP will become part of a 'mass revolutionary socialist party'? In our opinion, certain tendencies which appeared during the 'regroupment' phase after 1956, are crystallizing into dangerous revisions. In his 1958 article on the future of the USSR

(ISR, Summer 1958) Comrade Hansen, in his anxiety to make a bridge to Sweezy and Huberman, glossed over the need for a political revolution in the USSR. He did this by suggesting that an accumulation of the types of reforms suggested by Sweezy and Co. might amount to the same thing in fact as a political revolution. The essential omission was that of a revolutionary Marxist *party* in the USSR, able to lead the workers to reconquer Soviet democracy *themselves*. Once again we cannot escape the similarity with the Pabloite approach: Comrade Hansen's reply to Draper does not talk about the need to *overthrow* the bureaucracy but about the 'melting of the iceberg of Stalinism' since the war. Comrade Weiss echoes this in the NC discussion: 'The Trotskyist concept of a political revolution is being borne out in one aspect in the process of destroying Stalinism. The signposts are the 20th Congress, Hungary, Poland, the Chinese revolution'.

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

2. *On the question of the Permanent Revolution.* An essential of revolutionary Marxism in this epoch is the theory that the national bourgeoisie in under-developed countries is incapable of defeating imperialism and establishing an independent national state. This class has ties with imperialism and it is of course incapable of an independent capitalist development, for it is part of the capitalist world market and cannot compete with the products of the advanced countries. In national liberation movements the workers' organizations must follow Lenin's slogan: 'March separately, strike together' against the foreign imperialists and their immediate collaborators. Following Marx, we say: support the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties insofar as they help strike common blows against our enemy; *oppose* them on every issue in which they want to stabilize their own conditions of existence and their own rule.

While it is true that the stage of 'independence' reached by countries like Ghana, and the national independence movements led by men like Mboya of Kenya, acts as a stimulant to national liberation movements in other countries, the fact remains that Nkrumah,

Mboya, Nasser, Kassem, Nehru, Soekarno, and their like, represent the national bourgeoisie of their own countries. The dominant imperialist policy-makers both in the USA and Britain recognize full well that only by handing over political 'independence' to leaders of this kind, or accepting their victory over feudal elements like Farouk and Nuries-Said, can the stakes of international capital and the strategic alliances be preserved in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

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

periods. A proletarian party, let alone a proletarian revolution, will not be born in any backward country by the conversion of petit-bourgeois nationalists who stumble 'naturally' or 'accidentally' upon the importance of the workers and peasants.

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

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

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

There is no road to working-class power except the smashing of the bourgeois state and the workers' own organs — Soviets, workers' councils, etc. — controlling the national life. This is true in the advanced countries and in the colonial countries. This is the task not only in the USA but also in Cuba. Some comrades in the SWP NC discussion have criticized the approach of the Latin American comrades who advocated in their resolution the correct policy of workers' and peasants' councils, arming the workers, and so on. These criti-

cisms suggested, for instance, that such a campaign would be seen as counter-revolutionary by the Cuban masses and by the Castro leadership. Once again, all Marxist method and all revolutionary experience are overthrown by this approach. If these comrades stop and think, surely they must agree that in a revolutionary period such as that in Cuba today, it is precisely a question of finding methods of the working class solving the problems of internal and external defence and of the economic life of the country. The tactics of a revolutionary party will be to present the road to workers' power in terms of methods of solving these problems *in a class way*. Once again, Lenin's leadership of the Bolshevik party in the period of dual power is exemplary in this respect. Was not he too isolated and condemned, yes, as a counter-revolutionary, when he called already in March for the preparation of measures which would lead to the overthrow of the party). Such parties, comrades, have to be constructed and fought for, as your own rich experience has taught us in Britain.

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

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

Yours Fraternally,  
*National Executive Committee of the  
Socialist Labour League*



## DOCUMENT 7

### Correspondence of James P. Cannon, May 1961.

May 10, 1961

Joe Hansen, New York, N.Y.

Dear Joe:

Here are my first reactions to your draft of the international resolution:

1. The optimistic accounts of the increasing strength of the non-capitalist countries and the rising tide of the colonial revolution are not sufficiently counterbalanced by a factual and realistic account of the retrogression of the radical workers movement in Europe since the early postwar period, and the deadening conservatism of the labour movement in the United States in particular. It is not enough to mention these weighty factors; they must be reported in detail and emphasized. Otherwise, they get buried under the weight of material devoted to the favourable developments in the noncapitalist countries and in the colonial sphere. This can give a false impression of our view of the total world situation.

The Stalinist and Stalinoid delusions, that socialism will gradually creep over the world by the gradual strengthening of the Soviet-China bloc and the extension of the colonial revolution, can at best be characterized as cheerful idiocy. In reality, it serves to sabotage and betray the revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries. Thereby it helps the trend not toward the world-wide victory of socialism but toward destruction of the world in an atomic war.

Our resolution must frankly and unambiguously declare that the socialist transformation of society depends upon the proletarian revolution in the imperialist centres; and that nothing short of a genuine revival of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist centres can prevent the war or stop it before it gets out of control. The

recent events in Japan and Belgium and, to a lesser extent, in Britain are signs of a new upsurge of labour radicalism. But so far they are only signs. The overwhelming weight of developments since the early postwar period has been on the other side.

A recitation of these cold facts in the resolution is necessary to balance the document and bring it closer to a true analysis of the actual situation as it stands at present. This need not prevent us from drawing optimistic conclusions as to the general perspective. But this optimism must not appear to be derived entirely, or even mainly, from the advances in the Soviet and colonial sectors standing by themselves. We must see them rather mainly as important factors which, sooner or later, must contribute to the revival of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist centres. Everything will be decided there. We must state that flatly.

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2. I am completely dissatisfied with Chapter 8 of the draft resolution on *The Fourth International*. Personally, I am extremely doubtful whether we should deal with this problem with specific reference to the Fourth International in the general resolution. It would probably be better to deal with this question separately, as an internal matter.

In any case, the resolution deals with the problem of the Fourth International far too smoothly and optimistically. The reference to 'organizational and political differences' on page 46 can give the impression that these are minor difficulties which will be solved in passing. As I see it, this is not really the case at all. The eight-year split in itself testifies to the deep-going nature of these differences; and the failure of previous attempts at unification to make an inch of progress simply reinforces that conclusion. (The Pabloites treated the unity question in 1957 as a shabby manoeuvre, while the British accepted our proposal with tongue in cheek and deliberately sabotaged it in practice).

It is true that the Pabloites reacted differently to the Polish and Hungarian events in 1956 than they did to the French General Strike and the German uprising in 1953; and earlier they had backed away from the pro-Stalinist tendencies which they inspired and fostered in France, Britain and the US in the same year. But, on the other side, they seem to be spelling out their liquidationist policy of 'deep entry' more precisely than ever before, so as to assign future leadership

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indefinitely to different centrist and dissident Stalinist formations. And there is no evident modification of their conception of the 'International' as a small literary circle which acts both as a substitute for functioning, self-governing parties in the various countries and also as a police agency to disrupt and split national sections which try to do some thinking for themselves on the tactical problems of their own countries.

Now we have a new development in what appears to be an outbreak of neo-Oehlerite frenzy in Britain, which can hardly fail to bring them into sharp conflict with us.

In the face of this, how can we talk of the 'the Fourth International' as an international organization which has only a few 'differences' which need to be ironed out? The fact of the matter is that we now have three fairly distinct tendencies — our own, the Pabloites and the British — with three distinct conceptions about some fundamental questions of politics and party organization and party building. We think, as we have always thought, that even these differences could be discussed within a single international organization, if adequate guarantees against disruptive police measures are provided. But the two other tendencies are opposed to unification on that basis.

In view of that, I think it would be far better to deal with the international organization of the revolutionary vanguard in the resolution only in a general way, without specific reference to the Fourth International as such. If we are ready to deal with it at all at present, it should be done in a separate resolution. And, in that case, if we deal with the differences, we should deal with them explicitly and state our own position clearly on every point.

Fraternally,

*J. P. Cannon*

P.S. I will write separately about Cuba. I agree with what you say, only more so. The only *revolutionary* policy for Cuba is to *recognize* the revolution there, as it is and as it is developing as a *socialist* revolution — and to *identify* ourselves with it, and to act as a part of it, not as scholastic wisecracks standing outside the living movement.

May 12, 1961.

Farrell Dobbs,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Farrell:

The breach between us and Gerry is obviously widening. It is easier to recognize that than to see how the recent trend can be reversed. In my opinion, Gerry is heading toward disaster and taking his whole organization with him. The position they have taken on Cuba is much worse than a political mistake. Their approach to the question is not revolutionary, but scholastic, as is the case also with the position of our own minority. And what is worse, if that is possible, it is not objectively motivated.

The arguments already brought forward in the Plenum discussion, restrained and limited as they were, were sufficient to deprive this position of any support among those who are familiar with our political method. But even if not a word had been said, the course of events since the Plenum knocks the props from under the hasty and superficial assumptions of people who don't know a socialist revolution when they see it. The Cuban revolution itself, in all its developments since the Plenum, has pretty well solved the problem debated at the Plenum. And, unfortunately, the course of events cannot fail to deal heavy blows to the political prestige and authority of those who leaped before they looked. That's part of the overhead cost of playing with ideas and realities.

It is clear beyond dispute now that what began as a national democratic revolution, under the leadership of middle-class intellectuals, has developed into a thoroughgoing socialist revolution. And even this momentous and indisputable fact is only half the story. In the process, the middle class intellectuals at the head of the movement, who began as national democrats, have themselves developed into socialist revolutionists, proclaiming themselves as such and acting accordingly. And they must be supported as such.

From now on, discussion of the next necessary steps in the Cuban revolutionary process — the formal organization of a revolutionary socialist party and the formal construction of a representative workers' government, based on workers' organizations, must be discussed

from these premises, which are not merely assumptions but realities. We must state frankly that the Cuban revolution is our revolution. We must identify ourselves with it, and work within it, and offer our criticisms, suggestions and proposals for the next steps — as a part of the revolution as it is, with the leadership as it is. Anything else would be wiseacre scholasticism, or worse.

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This is a fundamental question — the question of a socialist revolution. All other considerations must be subordinated to the adoption of a clear and definite position on the Cuban revolution by the Convention.

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More than that, I don't think we should take the formal negative arguments on the 'Cuban Question' at face value. That appears to be only a peg designed to serve other purposes not frankly disclosed. But the simple fact that people should take the most burning, the most actual problem of revolutionary policy at the present moment as a peg in a factional manoeuvre for undisclosed aims is in itself a merciless condemnation of their whole approach, their whole method. The hysterical hue and cry about Pabloism is in reality aimed at us and designed to scare us away from the objective consideration of new realities in Cuba. The Oehlerite chatter about the independent revolutionary socialist party is in reality designed to imply that we have abandoned the central purpose of our existence and our work and struggles all these years, and to scare us away from an objective consideration of realities and relations of forces in each particular country and how to work within them to build the cadres of the future party.

We are informed that the building of new revolutionary parties and a new international is the central problem of our epoch. We know that. Those who don't know that we know it, should be reminded that we joined with Trotsky and other co-thinkers in proclaiming that very idea in 1933 after the German debacle. The same idea was made the central point in the Transitional Programme written by Trotsky and introduced in our name at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in 1938. But the proclamation of the need of the

revolutionary party didn't create it; it only created the preliminary cadres. And these cadres can thrive and expand only if they know how to take the real situation in each country as they find it and adapt their *tactics* accordingly.

If new revolutionary or semi-revolutionary forces won't come to us, we have to go to them. Everybody in our party is, or ought to be, familiar with the various tactical turns taken along this line since 1933 under Trotsky's guidance in France and the United States in the middle and late thirties, and later in England in the late forties. Can anyone in his right mind imagine that with the present relation of forces in the world labour movement such tactical experiments all lie behind us?

This question has burning actuality right now in Cuba. It arose again in the United States to a limited extent after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. There are disturbing indications that the question can be arising again in Britain.

The trouble with taking a false position on great questions in order to serve some factional local or national momentary interest, real or imagined, is not only that it eventually weakens the authority of the leaders who play this self-defeating game. Another result is that whole cadres become miseducated and disoriented while the sly factional game is being played and they are unable to turn around when the leaders recognize the consequences of their own folly, if they do.

From reading the Newsletter in the recent period, I get the definite impression that the SLL is off on an Oehlerite binge. This can lead to an impatient demand from the ranks for the Trotskyist cadre in Great Britain to cut loose from the Labour Party and its left wing, and to form an independent Trotskyist party and be done with it. I cannot imagine a better way to put the Trotskyist cadres in Great Britain in a corner.

I hope I am reading the ominous signs in the British movement wrongly. But in any case a sectarian-factional policy shall not be imposed on the SWP under any *circumstances* whatever. If we face this problem squarely and call it by its right name, I have no doubt that the Convention will be as nearly unanimous in its decision as was the recent Plenum.

Fraternally,

*James P. Cannon*

May 15, 1961.

Joe Hansen,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Joe:

I just received your Special Delivery letter of May 12. I am glad to hear your opinion that the drafting committee will check the resolution to see that an overall balance is established along the lines of my previous letter. This is very important, in my opinion.

On point 2. of my letter of May 10. The fact, as you say, that 'we have not really seen our way through to the end on this and that naturally leaves an element of uncertainty' — seems to me sufficient reason why we should deal with the question of international Trotskyist organization in the resolution only in the most general terms. This resolution will be read very carefully everywhere and we must be careful that no misunderstandings are created.

When I wrote my letter I was aware, from previous information sent to me, that the Pabloites are in trouble with their programme of permanent 'deep entry'; and that many of their Latin-American sections do not practice it according to the Pabloite formula. I was referring rather to the programmatic statements issued by the Pabloite centre. That is where the real Pabloism is actually represented. We must not give the impression, even by implication, that we are in agreement or close to agreement with them on this most important question. The danger of optimistic general talk about unity is that it may create the impression that unity is near at hand and will be easily realized. That, as I see it, is far from the case.

We believe, as the Transitional Programme of 1938 states, that the basic task everywhere is to organize revolutionary parties of the class-conscious vanguard, and their international union. We don't believe that an international literary centre, issuing pronouncements and programmatic declarations, can be a substitute for such national organizations. There can be no serious question of agreement with the Pabloites until this is explicitly stated. They haven't done that yet, far from it. As far as I have been able to read their documents since the split, couched as they usually are in hazy formulations which can be read one way or another, the trend of their thinking since the split has been in the other direction.

But, and here we come to another difficulty from the other side in the international workers' movement, and the numerical weakness of the Trotskyist cadres, that new parties, in the real sense of the word, can be created by simply proclaiming them. All kinds of flexible tactical operations will be required in a long process to reach that goal. But the goal will never be reached if the aim is not stated.

The necessity of creating a new leadership was stated in the Transitional Programme, and then repeated and explained *as a process* in the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in 1940. (This latter document is worth a re-study from this standpoint). I don't think we should undertake at present anything more than a general statement of our conceptions of the international and of the building of national parties as explained in the Transitional Programme and in the Manifesto of 1940, which has guided our course all this time.



Much more to the point at the moment is a clear and explicit statement of our position on the Cuban revolution. In the light of the May Day declaration that the 1940 Constitution is out of date; that the revolution has definitely become a socialist revolution; and that it will require a new constitution — our Cuban resolution should be brought up to date. The new developments should be the take-off for explicit statements in our Cuban resolution somewhat as follows:

First, the projected new constitution should provide for a representative workers' government based on workers' organizations or councils.

Second, stemming also from the May Day declaration, our Cuban resolution should declare that this representative workers' government has to be led by a mass revolutionary party, formally organized and open to the most conscious and active revolutionary fighters.

Third, the leadership of this party at its formal organization cannot be any other than that of the present leadership of the revolution and the defence of the country against the invasion.

Fourth, the new constitution should provide for a regime of genuine workers' democracy, in which all tendencies supporting the revolution have full freedom of expression and association.

Fifth, the Trotskyists, organized as a propaganda group, representing the tradition and unbroken continuation of revolutionary theory



and practice will take their place as a definite tendency, like all other tendencies supporting the revolution, within the new revolutionary party.

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Strangely enough, these definite proposals may conflict with some sectarian tendencies not only of our own Latin-American co-thinkers but also of the Latin-American Pabloites. But a clear and explicit statement of our position, along the lines of the above proposals, from the SWP which has consistently defended the Cuban revolution under the most difficult circumstances, should carry considerable authority. It might open the way for possibly better consultation and collaboration with the Latin-American Trotskyists of both camps.

That, in my opinion, can be a more effective step towards a possible future unification than anything else we could do at the present time.

Fraternally,

*James P. Cannon*

May 22, 1961

To the Political Committee  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Comrades,

I have carefully studied the PC minutes of May 3. The remarks of Morris Stein, Murry and Bob Chester on the world movement are very much along the line of my own thinking. I also agree with the remarks of Dobbs to the effect that our international resolution now being drafted, giving a positive statement of our own views at the present time, is the best way to begin our contribution to the international discussion.

I think it should be frankly presented as such — as our contribution to the international discussion — and, consequently, as Farrell indicates in his remarks, that it will be subject to possible modification later on in the light of that discussion. That is simply another way of saying that we are willing to learn as well as to teach; that we do not begin a discussion with ultimatums.

I am not entirely sure right now, but I incline more and more to the idea that this international resolution, as it eventually may be adopted by the Convention, should be published in our magazine. We want to reach the widest possible audience in all sectors of the international movement. This will not be possible if we simply pass it back and forth among a few people in mimeographed form.

The 'fragmentation' of the international movement, which Murry spoke about in his remarks, is in my opinion, not entirely, nor even mainly, a negative manifestation. It appears to me that the whole international movement, in all its branches and affiliations and independent sectors, is in a process of fermentation and re-examination of the problems of party building. That puts a serious discussion on the agenda. And that, in turn, can lead to a broader eventual unification of the international Trotskyist forces, and others who do not yet recognize themselves as Trotskyists.

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with Stalin and Bukharin, the Trotskyist Left Opposition made a bloc with them and gained a much broader base as a result.

Trotsky's method in creating the first cadres of the international Left Opposition, after his deportation to Turkey in 1929, was to draw clear lines of demarcation for the new movement; and then to build it, not only by splits, but also by unifications with other oppositional groups. And then, after the original cadres of international Trotskyism had been consolidated, Trotsky initiated a new series of discussions and negotiations with left-centrist elements in independent parties and others still remaining within the parties of the Second International.

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Trotsky never envisaged the Fourth International as a monolithic, purely Trotskyist organization, but as a broad revolutionary movement in which we, orthodox Trotskyists, might possibly, under certain conditions and for certain periods, be a minority. He stated this explicitly in one of his letters prior to the Founding Congress in 1938. He proposed that Chen Tu-hsiu, who at that time was in sharp conflict with our Chinese section over some important questions, should be invited to be a member of the International Executive Committee.

The internal regime of our international movement during the lifetime of Trotsky never tried to enforce monolithism. That began with Pablo. The Discussion Bulletins of our international movement throughout this period show that differences of opinion on the most important questions arose again and again and were freely discussed. A large part of our education in fact was derived from these discussions.

The recognition of the Soviet Union as a workers state, and of the obligation to defend it against imperialist attack, was a central principle of our international movement all the time. This characterization and this attitude was challenged time and again, year after year, and freely discussed without expulsions or threats of expulsion.

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In the classic battle of 1939-40 with the Burnham-Schachtman

faction, they were about as wrong as it was possible for a faction to be in America under conditions of that time. Schachtman thought we were engaged in a 'polemic' and conducted himself like a high school debater scoring points. He didn't really know that he was dealing with a question of a revolution and that it was dangerous to play with such a question. He didn't know it because he didn't feel it.

It was a red hot question for us at that time, just as the Cuban Revolution is at present, because public opinion was being mobilized every day by all the imperialist agencies against the Soviet Union. It was particularly reprehensible for Schachtman to choose that period to wash his hands of it. But despite this deep and terrible difference on such a burning question as one's attitude toward a revolution in existence, Trotsky did not advocate a split, not even if we should turn out to be a minority in the Convention struggle. The split followed only after the minority refused to accept the Convention decision.

That is still not the end of the story. *Seven years later* we conducted serious negotiations for unity with the Schachtmanites, despite the fact that they had not changed their position on the Soviet Union in the meantime. Those who may be playing with the idea of a 'monolithic' party and a monolithic international will have a hard time finding any support for it in the teachings and practice of the Old Man.

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I suppose all the participants in the present discussion know that the American Trotskyists made a fusion with the Musteites in 1934, and then joined the Socialist Party in 1936. But it should not be forgotten that these tactical turns, which contributed so greatly to the expansion of our movement in members and influence during the Thirties, were not smoothly accomplished. We first had to settle accounts with the Oehlerites. They gave us very stern lectures about the principle of the independent revolutionary party and accused us of liquidation, betrayal and other assorted crimes. The Oehlerites diagnosed our position incorrectly, as further developments amply demonstrated. But when a real threat of liquidationism confronted us in 1953, we showed that we knew how to recognize it and how to deal with it.

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All this is part of the experience of the past which should be borne in mind, and even studied, in the present period. The real problem, now as then, is not to recognize the necessity of new parties and a new international — we have known that for a long time — but rather how to build them and broaden them into a strong revolutionary force.

Fortunately, the problem now under discussion is not academic. It centres, at the moment, on Cuba and the Cuban Revolution and the leaders of this revolution. In exceptional circumstances, these people have changed Cuba and changed themselves. They have carried through a genuine socialist revolution, and armed the working population, and defended the revolution successfully against an imperialist-backed invasion. And now they openly proclaim themselves socialist, and say the 1940 constitution is out of date and that a new constitution is needed.

In my opinion, that's pretty good for a start — and I am talking here about the leaders as well as the masses who support them. If such people are not considered as rightful participants in a discussion, and possible collaborators in a new party and a new international — where will we find better candidates?

Trotsky, in the middle Thirties, initiated extensive discussion and collaboration with left-centrists who only talked about the revolution, and even that not very convincingly. The Cuban revolutionists have done more than talk, and they are not the only ones on trial from now on. We are also on trial. What would our talk about revolution be worth if we couldn't recognize a revolution when we see it?

Fraternally,

*Jim*

# Chapter Three

## The Pabloite politics of the Socialist Workers Party

In the Summer of 1961, the SWP National Convention agreed on a political resolution (Document 8) which could leave no doubt in anyone's mind of the course towards the Pabloites undertaken by the SWP leadership. In the 'Comments' (Document 9) immediately communicated to the SWP by the SLL, the leadership of the British section sought to check this course and raise the discussion to the level of the Marxist method. At the root of the SWP's political positions, the SLL NEC insists, lay an abandonment of the fight for dialectical materialism and a refusal to bring theory and practice into conflict.

## DOCUMENT 8

### The Socialist Workers Party's resolution on the World Situation, 1961

#### *The Struggle between the Socialist and Capitalist Camps*

The most pressing task facing humanity is to emerge from the anarchy of capitalism to the planned order of socialism, completing the process begun with the 1917 Russian Revolution. The overhead cost of delaying this task for four decades has included depressions, cultural stagnation and slaughters on a global scale. To these has now been added the hazard of a war of nuclear destruction which could wipe out all the higher forms of life.

The working masses in various parts of the world, under the impulse of intolerable pressures, have repeatedly initiated struggles pointing in the socialist direction. These have resulted in the conquest of state power in a number of countries and in the establishment of powerful working-class organizations in others. What has prevented a decisive victory over international capitalism has been inadequate and even false leadership. The need to construct founding document of the Fourth International in 1938, has gained in acuteness in the succeeding twenty-three years.

The central feature of such a leadership is understanding of the profundity of the issues at stake and the most resolute determination to bring them to a favourable outcome. An additional requisite, which at certain points can prove decisive, is accurate judgment in the field of tactics and strategy. This involves more than gifted insight. Tactics and strategy must be based on objective conditions; that is, changes in the ebb and flow of the class struggle which are summed up in the relative strengths of the socialist revolution and the capitalist counter-revolution.

*Four Major Stages*

Since the turn of the century, the struggle for socialism has passed through four major stages:

(a) 1900-1917. A preparatory period that witnessed the development and testing of the theory of permanent revolution, which opened to view the actual pattern of the world socialist revolution, and the role of the revolutionary party, which offers the proletariat the most effective political weapon. High peaks in the class struggle were the 1905 Revolution in Russia, 1910 Revolution in Mexico, and 1911 Revolution in China. These initiated the epoch of proletarian uprisings, agrarian revolt and nationalist anti colonial rebellions in which we now live. The appearance of workers councils in the 1905 Revolution demonstrated that the inherent tendency of socialist revolution is towards the deepening and expansion of democracy on a new class basis and new correlation of social forces.

(b) 1917-1923. The first big breakthrough. The triumph of the October 1917 Revolution and the consolidation of the Soviet Republic marked the beginning of the end for capitalism. Of the many great lessons, the most significant was the demonstration of the importance of revolutionary leadership. As against the victory of the Russian Revolution under Lenin and Trotsky, defeats occurred in the rest of Europe. The Social Democracy was thrust into power by the 1918 Revolution in Germany, but its leaders rejected the mandate to take the road to socialism and instead helped re-stabilize capitalism. They betrayed the interests of the world working class. The task of reconstructing a leadership capable of profiting from the experiences of 1900-1918 was begun by the Bolsheviks with the organization of the Third International in 1919. However, the breathing spell given by the Social-Democratic betrayal enabled world capitalism to recover sufficiently to isolate the Russian Revolution and prevent its extension for a time.

(c) 1923-1943. The prolonged isolation of the Russian revolution led to its degeneration, the Stalinization of the Communist parties and the dissolution of the Third International in 1943. Uninterrupted major defeats of the workers movements promoted the spread of reaction, especially in its malignant fascist form in Europe. The



defeats in Great Britain in 1926; China, 1927, 1933; Austria-Hungary, 1934; France, 1937; Spain, 1937; culminated in the launching of the second world war and the attempt by German imperialism to crush the first workers state.

(d) 1943-1961. The new revival of the international revolution, a period still continuing. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad in 1943 marked the turning point which led to the defeat of German imperialism, an event of immense significance. The overturn of capitalist property relations throughout Eastern Europe, in the wake of the Soviet advance to Berlin, broke the wall which imperialism had erected around the Russian revolution. The Yugoslav Revolution, leading to the rupture with Stalin in 1948, signalled the end for Stalinism. The downfall of Mussolini in 1943 and the re-entry of the Italian proletariat on the political arena marked the revival of revolutionary forces in Western Europe. This promising beginning was set back by betrayals in Greece, Italy, France and Belgium which saved capitalist rule in Western Europe in the face of a mighty upsurge of the colonial revolution in India, Indochina and Indonesia. The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, coupled with the setback of American imperialism in Korea in 1952, definitively altered the world relation of forces in favor of socialism. This was followed by the sweep of colonial rebellion throughout the Middle East and Africa. A new high point was reached in Latin America with the victory of the Cuban Revolution and the subsequent establishment of the first workers state in the Western Hemisphere. Workers and students demonstrations in Japan in 1960 and the Belgian general strike as the year closed indicated renewal of proletarian struggle in the imperialist countries.

### *Three Sectors of the World*

Where do we stand today? What is the present relation of forces? What are the greatest deterrents to the further progress of the socialist revolution? What has to be done to overcome them?

From the standpoint of historical, socio-economic and political development, the contemporary world is divided into three distinct spheres: the imperialist strongholds, embracing the highly industrialized countries from Japan to West Germany under the leadership

of the main capitalist power, the United States; the workers states from East Germany to China where the leadership of the Soviet Union still holds, more or less, on all the main questions; and the colonial countries extending from Asia, through Africa to Latin America.

In these main sectors, the levels of development and therewith the principal immediate tasks of the revolutionary forces, vary considerably.

The peoples of the Soviet zone have passed beyond capitalism but remain dominated by privileged, uncontrolled bureaucracies formed in the Stalinist school. Their central task is to develop their economies and culture, end bureaucratic rule and establish the equalitarian social relations and democratic political structure of a healthy workers state. Planned economy has proved its superiority over capitalist anarchy beyond all dispute so far as the bulk of mankind is concerned. The re-institution of the proletarian democratic forms fostered under Lenin and Trotsky would enable economic planning to reveal enormously greater powers. By ending the dictatorial rule of the bureaucratic caste and giving the world a new example of proletarian democracy in action, the workers would add immeasurably to the defensive strength of their states and encourage the rest of the world to hasten in transcending capitalism.

In colonial countries still stagnating in precapitalist, meagrely developed, or lopsided capitalist conditions, the principal task is to throw off the political and economic chains of the foreign imperialists and indigenous oligarchies and set up workers' and peasants' governments. These can carry through the long overdue tasks of the bourgeois-democratization of the armed forces, elimination of illiteracy, more advantageous relations with the world market, etc.) while moving forward, as far and as fast as circumstances permit, to end capitalist relations, change the state structure and grapple with the problems of the transition to socialism. (industrialization, economic planning, etc.) as in China and Cuba.

The workers in the imperialist countries have to end the rule of monopoly capitalism, take over the means of production, create democratic workers regimes which will eliminate the threat of nuclear destruction, plan the national economies in collaboration with other countries, and move toward a socialist federation that will enable all mankind in short order to unite its productive forces in a planned economic community of nations.

### *The Main Determinants*

The current world situation is determined by four major factors: the decline of the imperialist camp; the growing strength of the Soviet bloc; the irresistible spread of the colonial revolution; and, last but by no means least, the relative immobility of the labour movement in the centres of imperialism.

On net balance the struggle on a world scale since World War II has been proceeding in favour of the workers and their allies. They have been gaining ground and making headway at the expense of the imperialists. The relation of forces remains advantageous to their cause.

This is most dramatically demonstrated in the loss of prestige and power suffered since 1945 by the mightiest member of the imperialist coalition. After the defeat of the Axis powers, US imperialism emerged paramount in economic, military and diplomatic strength. To most people, it appeared then that the US would retain this pre-eminent place unchallenged for an indefinite period. Some Wall Street propagandists boasted of a Pax Americana that would endure like the Roman empire for a thousand years.

Fifteen years later, however, its pretensions to economic political and moral supervision of the world are being questioned from Korea to Cuba.

This decline in the relative power of US imperialism has been accompanied, and in part produced, by the growing ascendancy of the Soviet bloc. This has been manifested in many domains. The economic superiority of the US is being overcome, more rapidly than expected, by the progress of planned economy in the workers states. The rate of economic growth in the Soviet Union not only remains higher than that of the US, but the internal contradictions of the capitalist system have prevented American economy from even running at full capacity (production is currently around only seventy-five per cent) while cyclical 'recessions' and automation have steadily swelled the army of permanently unemployed workers. In the military field, the Soviet Union leads the world by far as in production of engineers, doctors, physicists, chemists, mathematicians, etc. It is thus rapidly moving into position to take the world lead in basic research and discoveries in these fields. In the diplomatic arena, since the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union has displayed growing boldness

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### *The Accumulation of Forces*

Objective forces are accumulating for a major breakthrough in the class struggle in the West. Some run deep below the surface without drawing much public attention; others make spectacular headlines. As they gather, they can coalesce at a certain point and set off the chain reaction unleashing the pent-up energy of the industrial workers in the great industrial and metropolitan centers.

The most basic force is the economic decline of capitalism. The prosperity that has instilled passivity in the workers is not normal. Much of it has been based on repairing the damage of World War II, on shoring up reactionary regimes and battered or decrepit capitalist sectors, and on preparing for World War III. An economy that must depend on such means to assure jobs, including production of nuclear weapons, intercontinental missiles, poison gases and deadly bacteria, is basically unhealthy. The workers, deep down, sense this and are uneasy over it. Despite the long prosperity the working class still feels economically insecure. Unemployment, both the acute kind due to cutbacks and the chronic kind due to automation, involves more and more workers. Inflation continually undermines wage gains so that it becomes an unending battle simply to maintain living standards. A comparable situation exists in regard to working conditions. To this add the hazards of sickness and old age, especially in a country like the United States which, for all its wealth, has notoriously inadequate social benefits. How much slowly accumulating economic pressures can lead to an explosive situation was graphically illustrated in the case of Belgium at the end of 1960 when a proposed capitalist program of increased austerity for the working class touched off a strike wave of such extent and intensity that it shook the government.

In the United States, where no labour party exists, the working class finds that its economic interests tend more and more toward decision, in important issues, on the political arena where it lacks its own representatives and defenders. This constantly raises the question of independent political action. The struggle of minority groups for economic and social equality likewise tends to take a political

direction and to ally itself with the labor movement. Once the impulsion toward formation of a labor party takes hold, as it already has across the border in Canada, it can develop at extraordinary tempo and go very far. In Britain, where a powerful labour party exists, the absence of independent policies and the lack of militancy in fighting for the economic and social interests of the working class foster radicalization of the party, tending to push the Left-wing tendencies to the fore. The same holds for the mass Communist and Social-Democratic parties of Western Europe.

The upheavals in the colonial world have a direct economic effect on the imperialist centers. The flow of super profits is slowed down, the lucrative foreign holdings are placed under national control and even nationalized. This not only weakens the monopolists but narrows their field of safe investment and increases the tendency of the old capitalist powers to choke on the surfeit of accumulated capital. New dislocations are thus added to the contradictions capitalism faces at home.

The unending succession of revolts also has a cumulative psychological effect on the working class in the imperialist centers. The incessant cry that it is all due to 'communist conspiracies' loses plausibility. The suspicion grows that the imperialist propagandists are lying and that whatever the truth may be about 'communism', there must be good reason for people in the colonial areas to feel and act the way they obviously do.

In addition, the action of the masses in the colonial countries sets example after example of militancy. This begins to sink in. It is reinforced exposure and ridicule of imperialism, by explosions of revulsion like the stoning of Nixon, and by direct appeals for sympathy and support that touch the deepest chords of human solidarity among the workers. The truth begins to cut its way into popular consciousness.

This altered relation between the colonies and the imperialist centers is one of the prominent features of the 'new reality'. The sharpest reversal occurred in the case of Japan. The colonial area in which she was most deeply entrenched — North China — not only won its freedom, it became a component of a planned economy. An American who has felt the impact of tiny Cuba's rebellion on the United States has a basis for visualizing how developments in huge China reverberate in neighbouring Japan.

In Europe, imperialist France has been hammered by unending

colonial rebellions since the end of World War II. The stubborn heroism of the Indo-chinese and Algerians has not been lost on the French workers. The climate in France, despite the seeming passivity, is definitely not propitious to fascism, as the April 1961 failure of the colonialist and army plotters indicates. The successive shifts to the right in French politics can be reversed with stunning speed as the long chain of colonial revolts finally crosses the Mediterranean and fires the French workers. In Belgium the loss of the Congo at once sharpened class relations when the capitalists, in their customary way, attempted to maintain their assets column at the expense of the workers. The disintegration of the British empire, now proceeding at swift pace in Africa, will have similar ultimate consequences in Britain despite all the sagacity at the disposal of the world's most politically adroit ruling class.

As for the United States, Cuba is only the harbinger of what is in store as the peoples of Latin America, in defiance of Wall Street's 'Monroe Doctrine', write their own doctrine of national sovereignty and economic emancipation. This revolutionary process in the vast extending from Lower California to Patagonia will repeatedly shake the American workers if they have not already been aroused by other events from their lethargy.

The Soviet successes likewise penetrate into popular consciousness. At first it seemed utterly incomprehensible to Americans that the Soviet Union could, on its own, duplicate the feat of producing an atom bomb. It was widely accepted that the success must be due to 'spies' who 'stole the secret'. This fatuous belief weakened when Soviet technology speedily developed the hydrogen bomb. It was knocked out completely when the Soviet Union put the first sputnik into orbit, then proceeded to hit the moon, take photographs of its far side, launch a space ship to the sun, then Venus, and finally put the first man into orbit around the earth. Such achievements help convince pragmatic Americans of the potentialities of planned economy. How else to explain how a country that did not topple feudal Czarism until 1917; that suffered the destruction of two world wars, a civil war and three catastrophic invasions; and was hampered by bureaucratic mismanagement and totalitarian practices, could nevertheless take a world lead on the frontiers of technology within four decades?

The impact upon the colonial peoples of comparable Soviet gains in the fields of mass education, public health and sports is a topic of continual concern in the capitalist press. More observant editors

might feel still greater concern over the fact that the Soviet achievements have not gone unnoticed among the workers of Western Europe and even the United States. Planned economy is in the world to stay; its superiority over capitalism is sinking into the thinking of wide layers of workers in the imperialist sectors, whatever their reservations concerning the lack of democracy in the Soviet zone.

Finally, the threat of nuclear war permits no thinking person to rest. It is true that many, seeing no effective way to stop the drift in that direction, try to block from consciousness their fear of a contest in which each side demonstrates with what dispatch it can deliver its stockpile of hydrogen bombs to the other. But the fear is there nevertheless; and few days go by in which the media of mass communication fails to bring it to the surface by reports of one or another belligerent action. Figures of the stature of Einstein, Schweitzer, and Bertrand Russell, as well as leading nuclear physicists, insistently express their concern over the gravity of the danger.

This fear and uneasiness have led to increasingly bigger demonstrations against the danger. The demonstrations began under pacifist leadership which seeks to channel the protest into prayer and supplication to the powers that be to pay heed and reform themselves. The goal is utopian but the desire of the demonstrators for peace is not. Like other social protest movements that have begun in seemingly mild and innocuous ways, the demonstrations against nuclear war can become radicalized and take militant class forms. A significant sign is the tens of thousands of mothers marching in the parades. The appearance of women in numbers in the field of political action is a classic sign of the rise of revolutionary temper among the masses. Another significant sign is the youthfulness of the majority of participants and their dedication to the cause of peace.

### *Importance of the Youth*

Revolutions are carried forward mainly on the shoulders of the youth. The generation of the postwar world appears destined to make the greatest revolutions in human history. Many got their baptism in great demonstrations like the one in Bogota in 1948 or those that swept Western Europe in 1945-47. Still younger contingents came into activity in Cuba in 1958 and 1959 and in the mass actions last year in Japan, South Korea and Turkey that gave a foretaste of what is to



come. In the 'sit-ins' today in the US the new generation is reviving American radicalism.

Campuses the world around are alive with new currents. Here the intellectuals, sensitive barometers to the rise and fall of social pressures, meet students in search of the truth. Here, on the ideological front, the battles of the coming revolution are anticipated in argument and debate over issues that at times appear remote from the living class struggle. But the discussions over 'humanism' and 'alienation' lead directly into such problems as war and peace, the struggle for equality, the relation of democracy to socialism. Discussion leads naturally to action, a tendency reinforced by the rise in number of students from working-class families. Actions begun under student auspices can be taken up by far more powerful forces. It is noteworthy that both the Hungarian workers uprising and the Cuban Revolution began with ferment among the intellectuals and dissent on the campus.

Another symptom of greatest importance is the appearance of young socialist and communist-minded radicals. The most politically alive sectors of the Zengakuren movement, for instance, are ardently studying Marxist ideology, including Trotskyism. The development of the Zengakuren movement only bears witness in a spectacular way to what is occurring around the globe as the new generation grasp the import of the great issues of our time and turns in the direction of revolutionary-socialist politics.

It is true that dangerous countercurrents exist, especially in the United States where such reactionary and even fascist-minded organizations as Youth for Goldwater and the John Birch Society have made headway. These are symptoms of incipient class polarizations. In fighting reactionary tendencies, the youth wins its political training and prepares for the class battles to follow.

Still to be heard from is the decisive sector of the youth — the new generation of industrial workers. They will begin coming into action, as they have in the past, when the class struggle flares in picket lines and in demonstrations of the unemployed. Young workers, combining the energy of youth with the mature outlook of wage earners, and directly linked to the industrial process and the older generation of workers, are in strategic position to assume leadership as the revolution develops. Their role in sparking the Belgian general strike shows what bright promise exists among their ranks.

*The Search for Leadership*

Any number of negative signs — such as the danger of nuclear war, unemployment in wealthy United States, racial discrimination, endemic hunger in Asia, Africa, and Latin America — testify to the depth of the crisis of leadership that has faced humanity since the eclipse of revolutionary socialism in 1924. At the beginning of the end of this crisis, the phase we are living in right now, objects stand in a strange half light. Leaderships are thrust forward that in the logical sequence of history have been superseded; they are compelled to meet tasks that belong to a different class; but they handle these in a way that presents the world with all kinds of deformations, partial steps, and unexpected combinations. In 1938, for instance, the Mexican bourgeois government expropriated the oil industry and placed it under workers management. Peron in Argentinian and Nehru in India both introduced Five Year Plans. Nasser took over the Suez Canal. The most spectacular case to date is the Cuban Revolution in which a petty-bourgeois leadership, beginning with a bourgeois-democratic programme, followed the dialectical logic of the revolution instead of the formal logic of their own programme, and ended up establishing the first workers state in the Western Hemisphere and proclaiming it an example for all of Latin America.

What is the meaning of all this for revolutionary socialism? Some have proclaimed that it signifies a Marxist leadership is not necessary, or that at best a Leninist-type party can only accomplish the inevitable with greater quickness and efficiency. Even if this were true, it would not prove the lack of necessity for such a party. 'Quickness' and 'efficiency' may prove to be the essence of the matter in blocking the plunge into nuclear war. But the truth is that the facts speak with greatest eloquence of the necessity for an international party of the kind that Lenin and Trotsky set out to build in 1919.

The masses, particularly in the colonial areas, feel the desperation of their situation in the keenest way. They are completely unable to wait until a revolutionary-socialist party is constructed before they move into action. Since such parties do not exist, except as small nuclei, the masses, following a well-known law of politics, push into power whatever leadership of national scope happens to stand to the left of the ruling party. In default of socialist leadership — a default due to the decades of betrayal by the Social Democratic and Communist Parties — nationalistic bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forma-

tions of all hues occupy left positions and are much stronger than they would be if they were flanked by revolutionary-minded proletarian parties. That a Mossadegh can be thrust into government power and nationalize British oil holdings thus in no way signifies that the Iranian masses can count on bypassing the task of building a revolutionary-socialist party. On the contrary, it testifies to the ripeness of conditions for formation of such a party and the need for it to assure swift and sure success. Mossadegh's downfall and the return of Iran's oil industry to the British colonialists demonstrated how vulnerable the masses were without a combat party.

Not even the Cuban experience nullifies this conclusion. In fact, it powerfully reinforces it. The Cuban leaders were compelled by life itself to recognize that their revolution is no historical exception and that Marxism applies in the Caribbean, too. With what forcefulness experience has spoken in the Cuban revolution!

In contrast to the defeat in Iran, which dampened party-building prospects. Cuba, which took the lead in opening the socialist revolution in Latin America, may well open a new phase soon in party building. The very necessities of the Cuban revolution point in this direction. Cuba has demonstrated what a fatal error it would be to cross off in advance a revolutionary-minded petty-bourgeois formation simply because it begins with a petty-bourgeois outlook. It is clear that such formations, in some of the colonial countries at least, constitute a source of recruitment for the international revolutionary-socialist movement.

Bourgeois nationalism, such as that represented by Nehru, Quadros and Cardenas, offers no new problems despite its current strength. The main line of approach, worked out by Lenin, is to recognize it as an allied force in the struggle against imperialism but one in which the proletariat places no political confidence because of its unreliable and wavering character. Correctly appraised, the growth of bourgeois nationalism in the world today — along with its radicalism in some areas — is an important sign of the decay of imperialism and of the immense opportunities opening up for revolutionary socialism in the colonial areas.

If the strength of radical nationalist leaderships in the colonial areas is due largely to the default of both the Social-Democratic and the Communist parties, the continued existence and even revival of the Social Democracy is due to the default of Communism that occurred in the years of Stalin's dictatorial rule. From the historical point of

view, the Social Democracy was finished when it betrayed the proletariat in World War I. It gained a new semblance of life only because militant workers turned in revulsion from Stalinism. But nowhere has it opened up any new perspective. It continues to do what it did in World War I — tie its followers hand and foot to bourgeois democracy, no matter how decayed. In Germany this has become so crass that the party has officially given up any pretense to Marxism.

Due to a big base of socialist-minded workers in some countries, however, the Social Democracy displays contradictory tendencies. Against the rightist pole represented by Germany, Holland and Scandinavia stand center and left formations which are quite strong in Britain and Belgium. These sectors of the Social Democracy are in ferment today. The ranks, who stand in the militant vanguard of the working class, are moving toward the left. Their leaders, tied to the right wing to one degree or another, feel pulled and torn. The division reflects a sharpening of class relations that portends a new wave of struggles. The most dynamic sections of the left-wing Social-Democratic workers will find their present inclination to move in the direction of revolutionary socialism strongly reinforced by coming events.

In the United States, the Social Democracy is so reduced in size, influence and energy that it has been forced to retire from electoral activity. The completely ossified right wing runs things with an iron hand; however, differences over the Cuban revolution and its defence have cropped up, primarily among the youth.

What happens to the movement in and around the Communist parties is incomparably more important in world politics than the final fate of the Social Democracy, despite the latter's weight in countries like Great Britain. The Social Democracy, linked to the conservative trade-union bureaucracies of the Western powers, shares their basic outlook and deep-seated disinclination toward an independent course in opposition to capitalist rule. The Communist parties are linked to the conservative bureaucratic caste of the Soviet countries, which, in turn is bound to the planned economies. The difference, which at first sight appears a minor, has proved to be a crucial one.

Despite the decades of efforts under Stalin and his heirs to reach an accommodation with the capitalist rulers comparable to that of the trade-union bureaucracy, 'peaceful coexistence' has proved to be utopian. One reason for this is that while the capitalists have found the

labour lieutenants indispensable to their rule, they cannot accept the Soviet bureaucracy on the same basis. The Soviet bureaucracy is linked to a different social system which offers a permanent challenge to capitalism. So long as the Soviet Union was isolated, Roosevelt was, for example, able to coexist profitably with Stalinism. But they cannot endure an expanding Soviet economic system. The capitalist class as a whole, especially its leading American sector, makes little distinction between planned economy and those who live off it in a parasitic way and those who defend it by revolutionary-socialist means. American imperialism is committed to destroying the Soviet system as a whole, including the bureaucracy, and opening up these fields to capitalist investment and exploitation. Historic experience has revealed that the Soviet bureaucratic caste tends to act differently from the trade-union bureaucracy of the West when the chips are down. The German trade-union bureaucracy, for instance, sank before the assault of fascism with scarcely a murmur. The Stalinist bureaucrats sacrificed their German representatives in similar style but when the Nazi invasion occurred and their own heads were on the block, they recovered from their shock and fought back with desperation. The consequences were immense as the world is now well aware.

But the fate of the planned economy is also decisive for the fate of the caste in a different way. The successes, which tend to first strengthen, ultimately undermine the bureaucracy. As in other fields, the increased health of the host is no favorable augury for the parasite. To understand the 'new reality'; that is, the difference between now and Stalin's time, it is essential to bear this in mind.

In four areas relations are now much more complex and difficult for the bureaucracy. First, the working class at home is far stronger numerically and culturally. Its self-confidence is higher as are its expectations and its impatience. With Stalin's death, it looked for big concessions and has gained a considerable number. The same general strengthening of the working class is to be found throughout Eastern Europe as the uprisings in East Germany, Poland and Hungary testify. Secondly, the Soviet Union is no longer isolated internationally. The victory over German imperialism, the sweep into Eastern Europe, the victory of the Chinese Revolution, broke the capitalist ring of containment — one of the main conditions for the growth and the power of the bureaucracy. The rapid recovery from the destruction of the war and the great gains which have made the Soviet Union second only to the United States in world power have placed com-

pletely new diplomatic weapons at its disposal. This has broken down another condition for bureaucratism — the international weakness of the Soviet Union. Thirdly, the extension of planned economy to other countries brought into being rival tendencies within the bureaucratic structure itself. Moscow can no longer simply lay down the law without thought of contradiction; it must consider the interests and the opinions of Peking, Belgrade, Warsaw, etc. Fourthly, the rise of the colonial revolution has brought a host of problems ranging from the opportunity of fostering 'neutralism' to the difficulty of exorcising the specter of a socialist revolution which might touch off a great movement in the Soviet Union for a return to the proletarian democracy of Lenin and Trotsky.

Just as the Soviet bureaucracy in yielding concessions at home, never loses sight of the essence of the matter — its own power and privileges; so abroad it retains its policy and objective of a deal with the imperialists through 'peaceful coexistence' at the expense of revolutionary struggles. But in this 'new reality' of enormous pressures, inviting openings and deadly dangers, the Soviet bureaucracy has had to revise and adapt and shift its line. Many parallels can, of course, be found in Stalin's shifts and adaptations, but the differences are exceedingly important. The left turn in 1929, for instance, was forced by the crisis of the regime, brought on by kulak pressure, and was calculated primarily as a blow at the Trotskyist Left Opposition which had warned of the kulak danger. The left turn which Khrushchev began initiating in 1958, even as he stepped up his summitry blandishments, is calculated to avoid being outflanked from the left; but it is forced by pressures from Peking and by revolutionary pressures of the national independence struggles in Algeria, Africa and Latin America. The consequences of a left turn in these circumstances can have completely opposite consequences from those calculated by Stalin.

Even Moscow's repeated efforts to straddle an issue like the Algerian conflict ran into resistance Stalin never experienced in the latter years of his rule. The Chinese Communist party, holding state power, objected and its objection carried sufficient weight to finally wring a concession in the substantial form of moral and material aid to the Algerians.

Likewise in wheeling and dealing with 'summitry', Moscow has lacked the free hand Stalin enjoyed. Peking has justifiably been reluctant to approve a summit conference from which its representatives

are excluded, and it has vetoed at least one projected conference.

On questions of war and peace, the nature of imperialism and the role of the colonial bourgeoisie, the criticisms of the Chinese, regardless of their real motivation, have resounded throughout the ranks of the Communist parties and beyond.

Thus what we have been witnessing in the past fifteen years is the expansion of planned economy, the temporary strengthening and then break-up of Stalinist monolithism. This took spectacular shape in 1956 at the Twentieth Congress with Khrushchev's repudiation of the Stalin cult and his confirmation of many of the crimes of the tyrant.

The hypnotic trance that served for ideological cement was broken. The American Communist Party, for instance, which had banned factions for so many years, became riddled with groupings. They proved incapable of effectively challenging the old leadership and went in various directions, some to the Socialist Workers Party, the bulk into political passivity or, still worse, into the Democratic party where they had already been working for years in behalf of alleged antimonopoly candidates. A similar process occurred in Britain, with larger numbers finding their way to the Trotskyist movement. The Canadian Communist Party suffered great reduction in size. In Hungary the downfall of the Stalin cult was a key factor in touching off the workers uprising in 1956. Significantly, a big section of the Hungarian Communist Party swung to the side of the proletarian rebels and was prominent in the workers councils that were formed.

In countries where the Communist Parties managed better to hold together, the shock nevertheless opened the minds of the rank and file to critical thought. They are now much more prepared to attempt to estimate situations and issues for themselves and to weigh the positions of other radical tendencies on their merits instead of simply brushing them off without a hearing. Many of them have become aware of great gaps in their knowledge and, in trying to make these up, are even doing a little bootleg reading in Trotskyist writings. The fact that Peking, Moscow, and Belgrade feel forced in their ideological disputes to refer to 'Trotskyism', even if sometimes only by innuendo and most often by misrepresentating the real Trotskyist positions, helps the process along. The ranks of the Communist parties, as Trotsky long ago forecast, will provide some of the most important forces in the world-wide reconstruction of the revolutionary-socialist movement.

A completely new force must now be taken into account — the Cuban revolution and its leadership. Havana wields immense independent influence throughout Latin America. With the defeat of the invasion sponsored by the White House in April, the prestige of the Cubans rose high on the world scale.

Not least of the areas in which this holds true is the Soviet zone where the Cuban revolution has appeared as a bright light in the nightmarish darkness of Western Hemisphere politics. With what gratitude the Soviet and Chinese and East European workers look to the valiant Cubans who began the socialist revolution in Latin America under the very nose of the imperialists who have been brandishing the atomic bomb since 1945!

The Cuban revolution gave every Communist party in the world, and above all the Cuban Communist party something to ponder. A handful of determined revolutionaries demonstrated that power can be won without Moscow's approval. They demonstrated it without the help and even against the opposition of a strong Communist party. The bypassing of the Communist party opened up a new vista throughout the world on the possibilities of overcoming the obstacle of Stalinism in constructing revolutionary parties.

It showed other things, too. Among these was the swiftness with which revolutions in colonial countries can pass from the bourgeois-democratic to the proletarian stage under a leadership that is not hampered by Stalinism. Another was the demonstration that the appearance of this new leadership did not at all weaken the Soviet Union. Instead, it strengthened the defences of planned economy. It was fresh and dramatic confirmation of the Trotskyist position that the best defence of the Soviet Union lies in extending the revolution and spreading planned economy into new areas. The aid granted by Khrushchev to the Cuban revolution did more to strengthen the Soviet Union and the cause of world peace than all the years of angling for a live-and-let-live understanding with the 'summits' of imperialism.

### *The Fourth International*

The imperative necessity for building a proletarian combat party, discerned and put into practice by Lenin, has not lost any of its urgency since the founding of the Third International. All the great events since have served only to reinforce the correctness of Lenin's



views. Now mighty forces, gathering on a world scale, project creation of such parties in the very process of revolution,

All the elements are at hand — the basic program developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the example of successful revolutions as well as the lessons of catastrophic defeats, the existence of powerful workers states, the swiftening tempo of events, the radicalization of great masses, the upsurge of class struggles, the flaring of revolutionary contests throughout the world, major crises in the imperialist sector, the disintegration of Stalinism, the appearance of revolutionary currents that turn inevitably toward Marxism.

The cadres centered around the Fourth International are witnessing the verification of the program and prognoses which they have so stubbornly defended during these difficult decades. They have every reason for the greatest optimism over the perspectives now opening up.

The Fourth International, 'the world party of socialist revolution', was founded in 1938 under the guidance of Leon Trotsky two years before he was assassinated by an agent of Stalin's secret police. Trotsky had concluded that the Third International demonstrated in 1933 that it had died as a revolutionary organization when it joined with the Social Democracy in Germany in permitting Hitler to come to power without a struggle. The Socialist Workers Party, which played a key role in founding legislation in the United States forced it to withdraw. However, the Socialist Workers Party remains completely sympathetic with the emancipating socialist aims of the Fourth International and has remained keenly concerned in a fraternal way over its welfare. The Canadian Trotskyists share this position.

The Fourth International seeks to provide the international working class with the fullest possible understanding of the great issues of our time and its own historic destiny in settling them. To this end the Fourth International puts the truth first, no matter how bitter or dark. From the day it was founded, it has done its utmost to see clearly and to speak honestly. It has done this at great cost in martyrs and in persecution from all sides. To be a consistent representative of the truth in our times is not easy.

The world Trotskyist movement does not consider itself a sect or faction with interests separate and apart from those of the working class as a whole. Its interest is in articulating the long-range experience and historic aims of the proletariat and in doing as much as lies within its power to provide revolutionary-socialist leadership in

immediate struggles. It makes no pretence at holding a patent on Marxist thought. Its contributions are offered freely in the best spirit of science and it approaches the contributions of others in the same way.

A substantial body of cadres has been assembled on all continents by parties adhering to the Fourth International. In some countries like Japan these cadres are primarily young students and workers without long political experience. In other areas like Britain where followers of Trotsky have been active for decades, they are deeply rooted in the class struggle. Important nuclei have joined the Fourth International throughout the colonial world, particularly in Latin America. At present the organization as a whole faces internal difficulties due to organizational and political differences — these have been of adverse effect in some sections. However, it is to be hoped that they can be worked out satisfactorily in the coming period.

The key problem today for the socialist revolution as a whole as indicated above, is to unite the anticapitalist, anti-imperialist and antibureaucratic struggles, into one great emancipating movement. The Fourth International, besides participating directly in each of these struggles, plays an indispensable role in drawing them together on the ideological plane. Its historic contribution has been a program that consciously expresses and unites the long-range interests of the working people in all three sectors of the world. It remains weak in forces and finances but the ideas it represents are destined to become the living reality of tomorrow.

The process of fusing the struggles in the three sectors will undoubtedly prove relatively protracted although great successes in one sphere can speed up action in the others, thereby drawing them closer together at a more rapid pace.

In the Soviet zone the high rate of growth of the productive forces, increasing the relative abundance at the disposal of society, will stiffen the demands of the workers. The perspective is a more or less steady maturing of the conditions that will finally make possible the displacement of bureaucratic rule and the restoration of proletarian democracy. The bureaucracy will not undergo self-liquidation — but on the other hand no quick or early explosions are likely to occur.

In the colonial world, events are proceeding at a much swifter pace as the revolutionary wave widens and deepens. Here a new set of difficulties comes to the fore among nations like India, Indonesia, Egypt and Ghana which have not progressed beyond the bourgeois-

democratic stage. The task is to break through these limitations and take the path blazed by China and Cuba. As the most dynamic sector at present, the greatest immediate revolutionary opportunities lie in the colonial area today.

In the industrially advanced sphere, deepening economic and political crises are jolting the working class out of its apathy and immobility. When radicalization will occur cannot be forecast with certainty. It is clear only that the ultimate effect of the long delay will be to give the struggles when they do break enormous depth, speed and decisiveness in altering the balance of world forces. Every foothold gained by the revolutionary-socialist movement now in the United States, in Great Britain, in Japan, Western Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Holland will receive tremendous amplification in the days to come. In this sector the main tactic to be recommended to revolutionary socialists is continued dogged perseverance.

From all indications, a great new period of revolutionary advances is opening. To the generation now entering the political arena has fallen the historic destiny of winning the final victory of socialism over capitalism.

## DOCUMENT 9

### Comments on the Socialist Workers Party's resolution by the NEC of the Socialist Labour League, June 1961.

#### *Where we stand*

It is necessary to 'prove' now by the practical work of the revolutionary parties that they are sufficiently conscious and organized, and that they have sufficient contact with the exploited masses, and determination and ability to utilize the crisis for a successful and victorious revolution. (*Lenin*)

The outstanding weakness of the SWP draft resolution is its failure to approach the question of testing or 'proving' the correctness of a political line by the method of Marxism outlined here by Lenin.

The Fourth International laid its main emphasis on the *crisis of leadership*: its analyses have been, and must continue to be, based on the concrete experience of the working class and its organizations. Extended commentaries on the theme 'History is on our side' are not merely a waste of time — they positively retard our work, encourage a bowing before spontaneity and help prepare great defeats for the working class. Despite its intentions, the effect of the SWP resolution is to do just that. It threatens to disarm the revolutionaries of the Fourth International. It suggests that the masses can carry out a revolution without a Marxist leadership and under non-Marxist leadership, which will then become enlightened as to the real role it has been playing, after the fashion of Che Guevara. How could this happen? Because Marx discovered the objective laws of historical development, so how can men do other than obey the laws of Marxism? The SWP resolution says that the Cuban leadership followed the 'dialectical logic of the Revolution' rather than the formal logic of their own position (!) In that case all that is required is that they look back over their experience and acknowledge it. If they then conclude that they are in reality building a socialist society, they shall merit an addendum to the resolution. This 'dialectic' is an entirely new species

— it is a monster. It is our comradely duty to inform the writers of this resolution that each one of them has a digestive system which works even if they do not understand the laws of physiology!

It is, of course, easy to talk about 'leadership' in a general sense or to link it abstractly with 'the profundity (!) of the issues at stake' or 'accurate judgment in the field of tactics and strategy'. However, correct leadership is inseparable from theory; without a *revolutionary* revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. Theory and movement are forged together in the heat of the class struggle through the medium of the revolutionary party itself. For Marxists the crisis of the old leadership expresses its bankruptcy from the standpoint of the proletariat and therefore the urgent need to develop a new leadership equal to the needs of the situation created by the decay of capitalism. The new leadership is the party of a new type, the Bolshevik party, which is the prime need in all countries as part of a world movement. While this fundamental principle is not explicitly rejected in the SWP resolution, it is hedged round with superfluous phrases and truisms, with the final effect of obscuring the decisive issue.

#### *What are our principles?*

Leninism is Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and revolution. Proceeding from the conclusion that monopoly and the dominance of finance capital, the export of capital on a gigantic scale, the conflict for the redivision of the world between the capitalist powers, had brought the system to its final stage and so placed the working class in the active role of executioner, the Third International took as its task the completion of the battle engaged in Russia in October, 1917.

Following the degeneration of the USSR and the transformation of the Third International into a tool of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, Trotsky founded the Fourth International. In founding it he proceeded from the detailed analysis of the strategy and tactics of the Communist International since its inception as well as from the situation of the capitalist world then plunged in deep economic and political crisis. He re-affirmed that capitalism could no longer develop the productive forces for the benefit of humanity, and that the preparation of the active force of revolution, the party of world revolution with close ties with the masses, was the great task of the epoch. Far from the Leninist analysis of imperialism leading to the conclusion

that the processes of history could be left to work themselves out to the advantage of the proletariat, it emphasized the urgency of developing in the proletariat the consciousness and fighting power necessary to enable it to resolve the great dilemma — Socialism or Barbarism?

Marxists cannot estimate the world situation from the same perspective as the Stalinists, in which the working class is reduced to the passive guardian of some historical inevitability which will eventually present us with socialism: this is only a new version of gradualism. Our international programme flows from a searching analysis of the actual experience in struggle of the working class, of the way in which the various tendencies, including our own, which compete for its allegiance, have come through the test of the class struggle. Theory, for us, is not a set of maxims to be periodically checked against experience, but a living guide to action, constantly renewing and enriching the experience of the working class, guiding its practice and concretely expressed in organization and tactics.

The proletariat is the first class in history which is capable of acting historically with scientific consciousness of its revolutionary role. All previous revolutionary classes have needed ideological disguises for their true interests and have achieved historical results very different from those intended. Only the proletariat needs to grasp its *real* economic and international interests, to understand the relation between short-term and revolutionary struggles, if it is to achieve power. The socialist economy which expresses these interests by its very nature cannot grow up within capitalism, requiring only sufficient consciousness to overturn outworn political forms or anachronistic privileges. This was the situation in previous transitions from one social system to another, as classically shown in the rise of the bourgeoisie and capitalist property relations within the womb of feudalism. It was not necessary for the bourgeoisie to size up the total social situation in order to come to power and thus complete the dominance of the property relationships of capitalism. But for the proletariat to carry through the transition to socialism such a level of consciousness is inescapable: that is what Marxist theory is for. If it were otherwise Marxism would only have academic interest as the most accurate explanation and prognosis, or be a kind of booster to the 'objective forces'. That is why, in 1917, Lenin had to insist, against many of the Old Guard, that instead of mouthing phrases about the confirmation of the Bolshevik programme the need was to adopt a new programme of explanation and organization of the working class itself

to carry through the tasks still to be achieved. Between the opportunists, offering support to the Provisional Government, and the sectarians with nothing better to offer than the cry of 'down with the Government', Lenin prepares the party for going 'deeper and deeper into the masses themselves'.

*What is the 'new reality'?*

To turn to the SWP resolution is to find that scant respect is paid to these principles and lessons of history. Take the series of questions — 'Where do we stand? What is the present relationship of forces? What are the great deterrents to the further progress of the socialist revolution?'

Such questions only make sense if they are related all the time to the task of building parties. In the resolution the talk about 'tasks' is related i) to 'the peoples of the Soviet Zone'; ii) in the colonial countries no social force is mentioned; iii) 'the workers in the advanced countries'. The final ends posed may be impeccable, but they remain purely abstract if they are not related to the means of achieving them. Who will execute these tasks? Not 'peoples' or even 'the workers'. Marxists say that in the absence of revolutionary parties they will not be executed, that the intervention of the conscious factor is a *sine qua non*. Otherwise the assumption is bound to be that the task will get done somehow by somebody else.

What this resolution largely does is to compile a summary of the objective forces on our side, as though these could ensure the victory of socialism. In reality the construction of the party is not just a task, not something which is subordinate to objective forces, but the primary task for those claiming to be Marxists. To ask where do we stand without assessing what has been accomplished in the building of a world movement is to slip away from basic premises. Indeed the greatest deterrent to the further progress of the socialist revolution can be briefly characterized: it is *dependence on spontaneity*.

Again, to talk of 'titanic historical processes' and so on, is so much verbiage unless the role of conscious leadership is all the time stressed. Especially is it impossible to combine these *struggles* (why 'processes'?) in the colonies and former colonies, in the USSR, China and Eastern Europe, in the metropolitan countries of imperialism until they *consciously* exist as separate movements. We do not want to become 'world citizens' nor do we bow down to some abstract internationalism which always ends up in the most pitiful petty-bourgeois

parochialism. The task is to build in each sector, and in each country, according to the needs of the situation; this is a concrete task and must be stated in concrete terms.

If this task is not placed first, and actually carried out, the 'interacting processes' of the SWP resolution may interact for ever; the 'combination' effected between them, in such a case, will be wars, repression and division of the world working class rather than the 'combination' which we and the SWP desire. Victories will become defeats; the advances made by the workers and peasants will rapidly give way to bases for the renewed rule of agents of imperialism. The identity of interests of the workers of the world must, therefore, be tackled in a practical way; only then can the dialectical relationships between the different sectors be utilized, i.e., through consciousness leading to practice.

Even as a statement of 'reality' there is much in the section entitled 'Interacting Processes' which needs to be questioned. Surely 'the apathy of the workers in the West' rests on the long line of betrayals by the old leaderships which they have experienced. If a revolutionary leadership had been able to assume leadership of the class the crimes of Stalin, etc. could not have discouraged the workers. It is perfectly correct to say that 'Stalinism operating through the intervention and influence of the Communist Parties, plays a direct role in holding back the progress of the international revolution'. This *counter-revolutionary* role needs to be examined more fully, the reasons for this *conscious* role on the part of the leaders should be stressed and the impossibility of winning over the genuine revolutionary workers in the Communist Parties without an implacable struggle against the bureaucracy and eventually the smashing of the apparatus made perfectly clear. Otherwise the way is left wide open for the assumption that the Communist Parties (or Khrushchev) can 'move to the Left' and that the Italian Communist Party *could* accomplish a revolution (under Togliatti?!) by 'displaying one tenth the revolutionary energy of the Cubans'. The whole experience of the European mass Communist Parties is relevant here and the role of such clandestine parties as that of Spain is equally instructive. The reasons for combatting Stalinism have to be made clear and by Stalinism is meant the actual theory and practice of the Communist Parties the world over.

The relationship between the nationalist movements and the imperialist powers is wrongly stated and can lead to dangerous courses of action being pursued. Our position on this has been briefly stated in



the letter of May 3rd and in other documents. The nationalist bourgeoisie has won concessions, for itself, using the threat of a real popular revolution in line with imperialism's adaptation to the challenge of the national revolutions in the backward countries. In no case can they carry forward even the national democratic tasks which correspond with the bourgeois revolution in the advanced countries. They do not 'inspire' but *repress* genuine 'progressive' struggles which threaten their rule — as such struggles are bound to do — often at the behest of the imperialists. Of course their position is shot through with contradictions; we must give them conditional support (knowing that it is the support which the rope gives a hanged man) whenever they are forced to fight the common enemy, but we should not be deceived about the nature of the 'extremely radical steps' which they may at times be forced to take.

### *Socialism v. Capitalism?*

The trouble with that section of the SWP resolution entitled 'The Main Determinants' is primarily that no clear distinction is established between 'determinants' and components of the world situation. These 'determinants' are stated to be as follows:

the decline of the imperialist camp,  
 the growing strength of the Soviet bloc,  
 the irresistible spread of the colonial revolution,  
 the relative immobility of the Labour movement in the centres of imperialism.

One is bound to ask, on reading this:

why does the imperialist camp decline?  
 why is the Soviet bloc strong and why does it grow stronger?  
 why does the colonial revolution spread 'irresistibly'?

and

why is the Labour movement in the centres of imperialism relatively immobile?

These questions must be asked because the statements in the resolution are descriptions of states, not their determinants at all. Only

when we begin to tackle the questions which follow from them do we get to *determinants*. And, because we have taken the determined as the determinants, we may be taken by surprise by turns in the situation which could not occur if they really were determinants. Not only is the conscious factor of the revolutionary movement left out, but these 'irresistible' movements are subject to ebbs and flows. The imperialist camp does not decline automatically; in fact although it is historically doomed in the long run, it can temporarily stabilize itself, buy off the colonial bourgeoisie, inflict defeats on its own working class and corrupt their leaderships. If we take these 'determinants' literally we may simply fold our arms and wait for the process to work itself out instead of resisting the still active and virulently dangerous forces of imperialism.

'On net balance the struggle on a world scale since World War II has been proceeding in favour of the workers and their allies'. That is comforting — but it makes the 'relative immobility' of the workers in the advanced countries all the more paradoxical. Perhaps, however, there are some items missing from the balance sheet. It is more accurate to say that a potentially more favourable situation exists but that the crisis of leadership has not been resolved and that until this missing item, a decisive one withal, is tipped into the scales, more defeats may take place. The resolution tries to resolve the problem by phrases. The greater whole, it states, is the 'economic, social and political content on a world scale between the upholders of the old order and the billions of people who stand to gain through socialism. In this international arena of the class struggle the situation is more complex and undecided'. We question the title of the document — 'The Struggle between the Socialist and Capitalist Camps': where is the socialist camp? Do these anonymous billions make up the 'socialist camp'? In fact the majority of these billions are *peasants* — how are they to be brought to fight in the socialist cause? Do we need to cite *What Is To Be Done?* on the difference between trade union and socialist consciousness? It does not surprise us that the working class has been mainly engrossed in routine struggles, under the spell of Social Democratic and Stalinist misleaders. It is only under the rarest conditions that the masses rise to the heights from which, for an instant, they can glimpse their historic role — and precisely at this rarest moment, if the leadership is not prepared, the movement slips back again to its routine called 'apathy'. What we have here is 'a

negative feature' — but whereas the SWP resolution applies this phrase to the 'pronounced political lag in the West', we should apply it more precisely to the smallness of the revolutionary vanguard. Where as the SWP resolution matches a certain pessimism as regards the working class in the advanced countries — while admitting its key role — with a blind optimism as regards 'objective forces' and the 'new reality', we express revolutionary optimism as regards the building of the revolutionary vanguard and its ability to lead the working class together with a firm refusal to be lulled into a false optimism that 'history is on our side'.

We are sure that the SWP does not intend to give this impression; it is one which seeps through from a certain looseness of method, the adoption of the position of the detached observer and the choice of phrases which correspond to this approach. To say, for example, that 'The chief problem is how to loosen the deadlock, break the stalemate, by overcoming the passivity of the workers in this decisive sector of the international class struggle' (i.e., the advanced capitalist countries) may at first glance seem unexceptional. But it assumes that the working class is like some muscle-bound giant in a deep sleep who has to be prodded into action by some artificial stimulus. The class struggle is not like this. It cannot be waged from outside or by people parachuted in, by the 'agitators' depicted in the capitalist press. It has to be waged by a movement built into and from the class, closely bound to it. Periods of apparent 'passivity' can be the most important periods from the point of view of the class struggle, because they are periods of preparation, of theoretical penetration and the building of cadres. It would be wrong to conceive our tasks in such a period as being one of finding the right gimmick to break down the apathy of the workers. The mood of the working class can change quite suddenly in response to the shifts to which imperialism is obliged to resort to maintain its threatened position, as was shown outstandingly in Belgium. At such moments the leadership is decisive: all the preparatory work of the preceding period of apathy is put to the test. That is why we criticized so sharply the work of Germain in Belgium: suddenly there was revealed the stark fact that, by working on a mistaken basis, he had not built an alternative leadership able to carry forward the struggle of the Belgian workers around a transitional programme. In fact he had sought shortcuts, spectacular successes and a live-and-let-live position in relation to the centrists which condemned his group to impotence in the strike.

'The upheavals in the colonial world have a direct economic effect on the imperialist countries'. At times this is true. The whole sense of the capitalist arrangements with the national bourgeoisie in the former politically-dominated areas however is to avoid 'direct economic effects' by keeping open the outlets for surplus value from the exploited workers and peasants. It is true that instances can be cited of national bourgeois governments taking over foreign capitalist property, or, more usually, holding out for a bigger cut of the surplus value for itself (e.g. Venezuela), but the general picture is *not* one of declining investment fields and reduced super profits in the past decade. It is true that contradictions sharpen, in the underdeveloped countries — where national income rises more slowly than population growth, where the native capitalists wax rich among dire poverty for the masses and where the old imperialist monopolies continue to dominate the economic scene — and in the metropolises themselves where some interests have to accept cutbacks, where new policies have to be adopted and applied and so on. Intensive investment in those fields which are profitable for the capitalists has largely made good the losses of the war, the loss of areas which have joined the Soviet bloc and the expropriations by some of the new national governments. It would be a mistake to underestimate the adaptive power of imperialism, the complicity of the national bourgeoisie in its continuance and the aid it receives from such bodies as the United Nations. If this is a 'new reality' it is not at all the one which is depicted in the resolution. Despite Cuba, who can say that as now, in the rest of Latin America the statements made in the resolution apply to US imperialism in that area? Who can say that, in Africa, British and French imperialism have smaller investment fields than in the past and are choking on a surfeit of capital? Even West German capital participates in the 'new reality', finding outlets in India, Greece and the Middle East and continuing to develop its overseas trade.

Similar strictures can be applied to the treatment of the USSR. We would refer once again to the letter of May 3 and to the SLL resolution on the USSR, both of which insist on the counter-revolutionary nature of the bureaucracy, on its inability to carry out a process of self-reform, on the fact that Khrushchev's rule does not mark a break with Stalinism (a 'new reality') but continues it under the conditions of economic expansion and popular pressure and that revolutionary parties must be built in the Soviet bloc.

### *Consciousness and Revolutionary Leadership*

The impression that the SWP is peering around for signs of a break in the 'apathy' of the workers is confirmed by what it does *not* say about the peace movement and the youth. It is not that what is said is wrong. But there must be a more detailed characterization, one which does not recoil from hurting feelings, if necessary, by revealing shortcomings — and which, above all, poses concrete tasks. It is all very well to say that the working-class youth will be coming into action — as though this takes place independently of revolutionary work among the youth on the programme to win large numbers for the vanguard party. To do this it is necessary to break with the implied conception of an abstract consciousness — of workers, of youth, of women, etc. — upon which events impinge. This reduces classes and definite social groups within the classes to the role of newspaper readers. For example, if workers are affected by what they read of planned economy it is not because they conceptualize the difference between plan and market, between socialism and capitalism, but because as participants in the capitalist production process they come up frequently against the anarchy of the market, the despotism of capital, and experience the wage system in their flesh and bones. Actually they may be very far from any consciousness of socialism and yet receptive to what they hear about the successes of Soviet planned economy. In section VII of the SWP resolution some of the sources of the preceding weaknesses stand revealed. To start with, revolutionaries do not 'search' for leadership, they build it. They look at the leadership of the national bourgeoisie to expose it, however 'revolutionary' it may be. But if such leaderships, contrary to all Marxist teachings, take on, and actually carry out, 'tasks that belong to a different class' (i.e., the proletariat) it is not surprising that the day came when one such leadership 'ended up establishing the first workers state in the Western Hemisphere' — and presumably the only workers' state neither deformed nor degenerated then existing in any part of the world! Actually, of course, the thought behind this conclusion is teleological: you begin with Cuba — a workers' state — and then re-write the history of Mexico, Argentina and Cuba and revise theory into the bargain!

What is the theory behind the 'new reality'? Masses become impatient, cannot wait for the formation of revolutionary socialist parties under proletarian leadership, push petty-bourgeois leaders to the

fore, which carry to completion the historical tasks of the working class. In a series of cases (Mexico, Argentina, etc.) the process proved abortive, in Cuba it did actually go the whole way: 'The Cuban leaders were compelled by life itself (!) to recognize that their revolution is no historical exception and that Marxism applies to the Caribbean, too'. It does indeed, and on the basis of Marxism, as we have argued elsewhere, Castro remains a petty-bourgeois leader, poised in bonapartist fashion on disparate class forces, and compelled to take measures which are not essentially different from those of his predecessors and, despite his own or others' phraseology, quite well suits the interests of the Cuban petty bourgeoisie and part of the bourgeoisie and can provide the conditions for the growth of capitalism, initially of a highly statist kind, in Cuba. We naturally recognize the need to defend the Cuban revolution against the counterblows of American imperialism, but we refuse to partake of the SWP's illusions as far as the Castro leadership is concerned. We do not think in any way that it has carried out proletarian tasks, we do not think that Cuba has become a socialist or workers' state — far less do we generalize the experience of Cuba to other parts of the world. We do not preclude recruitment from the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia — in fact it is clear that in so-called backward countries, this section must provide a large proportion of the leadership, just as happened in pre-revolutionary Russia. But they must come as recruits to a disciplined Marxist party. We neither seek nor expect the transformation of the existing petty bourgeoisie nationalist leaderships into Marxist cadres, even if, like Monsieur Jourdain, they spout Marxist prose without knowing it!

A more decided critique of the petty-bourgeois leadership in the colonies and former colonies is called for. But a full and sharper treatment of all other tendencies — Social Democracy, Stalinists, Centrists, Pabloites — is also necessary. There needs to be full confidence in the tenets of Marxism itself, of which Trotskyists are the only consistent exponents today. There is no point in conciliatory 'modesty' towards other tendencies, however 'close' they may appear to be. Some discussion of the experiences of 'regroupment' is also called for in this connection. In all this the building of the revolutionary party must be kept in view as the paramount tasks. As Marxists we see the other trends in the Labour movements as having a specific social and class character: and if we find a sliding in our own ranks we seek its class character. For instance, it is not good enough to say that the

'Social Democracy was finished when it betrayed the proletariat in World War I. It gained a new semblance of life only because militant workers turned to it in revulsion from Stalinism'. It also had a social base, which was not finished in 1914, and which accounts for its tenacity in a number of West European capitalist countries, i.e., the centres of imperialism.

The so-called '*left turn*' of Khrushchev is dealt with in such a way that it can leave the way open for accepting that the bureaucracy, under certain conditions and pressures, could act in a way contrary to its nature. We find here evidence of eclecticism: classic re-statements of our position coupled with the illusions of the '*new reality*'. We wish to see the evidences of the latter expunged. We do not see the Soviet bureaucracy as part of the '*objective forces*' which further the world revolution, but as a brake on the revolution. We do not share the estimation which the resolution makes of the world effects of the Cuban Revolution in the Stalinist movement. We do not see the bureaucracy as undermining itself in an automatic process. It does not help in winning recruits from the Communist Parties to say that in Cuba the revolution passed from the bourgeois democratic to the proletarian stage under petty-bourgeois leadership! We need to educate such people in the theory of the permanent revolution by patient explanation, not by posing a travesty of it based upon a misinterpretation of an isolated experience. In this respect the resolution passes from revisionism to sheer speculation when it sees in the Cuban Revolution a strengthening of the defences of planned economy and of world peace. Khrushchev, for one, doesn't think so and is still bent as the resolution elsewhere points out on '*its (the bureaucracy's) policy and objective of a deal with the imperialists through 'peaceful co-existence' at the expense of revolutionary struggles*'. That could include Cuba.

### *The Fourth International*

On the Fourth International it suffices to say that a distinctive theory and practice marks it off from all other trends including those who, under the leadership of Pablo, use its name.

It is one thing to pose the need for the creation of parties. But it must be done correctly, not by statements that '*mighty forces, gathering on a world scale, project creation of such parties in the very process of revolution*'. If such parties are not created these mythical

forces, or more properly, spontaneous movements, will go down to defeat, from which leftward moving bureaucracies or petty bourgeois 'unconscious' Marxists will be unable to save them.

The 'difficulties' to which the resolution refers are obviously those which follow the split with Pablo in 1953. They must be taken up so that we know where the SWP stands. The differences with Pablo cannot 'be worked out satisfactorily in the coming period' by ignoring them, as if hoping that they will become so attenuated that they will disappear for all practical purposes. If this is the SWP view, as has previously been indicated, we do not share it.

Nor apparently, do we stand on the same ground when it comes to building a world movement. The SWP states that 'The key problem today for the socialist revolution as a whole (!) . . . is to unite the anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-bureaucratic struggles into one great emancipating movement' (the only thing we can be thankful for here is that anti-monopoly is not added to the other three 'anti-s'). We do not seek to draw together on the ideological plane without specifying more clearly *what* we bring together. In fact the matter can be stated more simply: we are for the creation of revolutionary parties, as sections of the Fourth International, in the advanced countries, in the underdeveloped countries and in the Soviet bloc. We do not seek to united into our ranks heterogeneous elements from other movements or seek to harmonize the movements which already exist; while we march with them as long as we have a common enemy we stand on our right to criticize them from our own firm programmatic basis. We intervene, where possible, in spontaneous movements building a relationship with the class able to give it direction and purpose by the introduction of Marxist leadership posing the transitional programme. In the meantime we unremittingly prepare such intervention.

We would not like to give the impression that we hold to the thesis that there is some rough equality between these three sectors as far as building sections of the world movement and the struggle for power is concerned. We would firmly pose the principle that the advanced capitalist countries hold the key to all permanent advance. We would support this briefly by the following considerations:

- i) the inability of the movement in the undeveloped countries to grow without active support from outside in the period of the struggle for power: proletarian parties still have to be built in all the main countries:



ii) the need for economic assistance from the advanced countries if workers states are to be built in the less developed countries — thus a lag in the revolution in the former will condemn the latter to defeat;

iii) the impossibility of killing imperialism by cutting it off from its areas of exploitation and without decisive struggles in the advanced countries is just as unrealistic as the idea that the Soviet bloc will prove its superiority in 'peaceful competition', opening up vistas of a peaceful transition to socialism;

iv) the fact that the political revolution in the USSR etc. cannot succeed in isolation, but that the workers in the imperialist countries must settle accounts with their own ruling classes, before or while it is taking place.

Subject to these considerations, the principle of the interdependence of these struggles is completely valid and it is unnecessary to illustrate it in detail.

Because we are convinced of the supreme importance of the struggle in the advanced countries — where, indeed, the possibilities of building the cadre and making adequate preparation are more favourable than in the other two sectors — we find the emphasis on the colonial revolution and the absence of any real analysis of the situation in the USA and the American world sphere profoundly disturbing. It savours of a certain pessimism as to the possibilities of a breakthrough in the USA and in Western Europe. This, coupled with some of the phrases about the apathy of the workers and an implied dependence on spontaneous movements can have as its obverse side the laying of *blame* on the workers, which follows from, and leads to, a circle sectarianism on the part of the 'revolutionaries' who do the blaming. After all, if the task of building the party is not regarded as immediately practicable or important, that can arise from a lack of confidence in the working class in the advanced countries — while the *real* struggles are believed to be taking place in the offshore islands.

The impression is given that what is needed is some special kind of militancy, 'the principle of militant struggle' which has apparently been discovered by Fidel Castro from 'life itself' but which appears in none of the works which Marxists use as their tools. This kind of outlook, in our opinion, leads us back to the major and underlying weakness of the whole resolution: leadership, theory, consciousness.

In the SWP resolution leadership and theory are but poor relations of a set of 'favourable circumstances' or 'objective forces'. This is a retreat from Lenin's and Trotsky's verdict on the character of our epoch, and from Marx's dialectical method. When Lenin developed his ideas against the Mensheviks in Russia he was conscious of a similar difference. ' . . . Instead of indicating precisely how the proletariat at the given moment should push revolutionary development further forward (push it further than the constitutional bourgeoisie would be prepared to go), instead of advising definite preparations for a struggle against the bourgeoisie when the latter turns against the gains of the revolution — instead of all this, we are offered a *general description of the process, which does not say a word about the concrete tasks of our activity*. The new Iskra-ist method of exposition reminds one of Marx's reference to the old materialism which was alien to the ideas of dialectics. Marx said that the philosophers had only *interpreted* the world in various ways, our task is to change it. The new Iskra-ists also can describe and explain the process of struggle which is taking place before their eyes tolerably well, but they are altogether incapable of giving a correct slogan for this struggle. They march well but lead badly, and they degrade the materialist conception of history by ignoring the active, leading and guiding part in history which can and must be played by parties which understand the material prerequisites of a revolution and which have placed themselves at the head of the advanced classes'. (Lenin's Selected Works, Vol. III, p.68.)

We might refer the writers of the SWP resolution to the specific point made here by Lenin about the attitude of the proletarian party to the government carrying through the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution, and suggest that still today the important thing is not to place any reliance on the extent to which various sections of the petty-bourgeois leadership will be prepared to go, but to prepare the force of the working class to make itself the determining element in the situation. This contrasts strikingly with the resolution's comments on the Cuban revolution, which is regarded as confirming the prognosis of the Permanent Revolution somehow naturally, quite ignoring the fact that the theory is one of the role of the working class itself, and that this role could be fulfilled only by a party like Lenin's, which Trotsky only came round to accepting in 1917. The important task in Cuba is the construction of such a party with a programme of workers' councils, as the only leadership capable of going beyond the

bourgeois revolution and preventing a new understanding with imperialism rather than an extension of the revolution.

But more important in the above quotation from Lenin is his insistence on the dialectical method, on what Marx called 'favourable objective circumstances' is by no means a cause for expecting the political tendencies of Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalism to move closer towards a revolutionary position. In point of fact it makes the counter-revolutionary role of these tendencies even more pointed and dangerous. The development of imperialism goes ahead with ever greater unevenness; the great difficulties caused by the colonial revolution place the imperialists in need of a period of stabilization to prepare the next big phase of export of capital. Their agents for the achievement of this relative stabilization are the colonial national leadership to whom state power is handed over, the Stalinist parties controlled from Moscow, who play the role of restraining the proletariat with the false strategy of 'two stages' in the national revolution, and the social democrats of the advanced countries who play a prominent part in 'educating' and 'organizing' the trade union and administrative bureaucrats of the new regimes. All of these opportunist groupings lend their support to the United Nations and its subsidiary organizations, tools of imperialism in stabilizing the conditions of future imperialist expansion. Only a *political* estimate of these various forces can avoid an underestimation of the nature of the imperialist enemy at this phase. We have to proceed from a political characterization of the role of all these forces in relation to the imperialist system as a whole, and not from hasty judgments about the influence of events like the Cuban Revolution on individuals or groups within these tendencies. At particular stages of development of the struggle, such influences can be important; but they are always tactical considerations, and assume significance only in relation to the consciously constructed proletarian vanguard with its independent analysis and course of struggle. We believe that such an approach would give us an entirely different sort of resolution from that produced by the writers of the SWP draft.

The above remarks are only an expansion of the idea that humanity's present world crisis can be summed up in the crisis of working-class leadership. Precisely because the uneven development of imperialism presents it with great problems, so does the conscious element, the proletarian leadership, shoulder even greater and more urgent responsibilities. The softer our line towards those political

elements whose role is to support imperialism, the greater the danger that imperialism will remain in existence — ‘there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie’ — and that humanity will be destroyed. All theorising about the ‘struggle between socialism and capitalism’ must be concrete and political in character. If it is not then it shows an isolation from the actual experience and struggle of the working class, for it is the activity of that class which will overthrow capitalism, and nobody else whatsoever. It would be difficult to exaggerate the dangers involved in the elaboration of programmes which in any way cultivate the impression that imperialism’s defeat is a spontaneous process. Lenin once said that a few days can decide the fate of capitalism at certain stages of its development. Any encouragement of ideas of spontaneity in the revolutionary vanguard may find us being by-passed by historical opportunities which will not return for many a year; as we know these lost opportunities confront us with prospects of death and extinction for the forces of the revolutionary party.

★            ★            ★

It may be that we have misinterpreted some of the points contained in this resolution, or that we have read more into its formulations than was intended by its authors. We would point out that our criticisms should be read in the light of our own documents, especially the resolution on International Perspectives and the letter to the SWP of May 3. Our contributions are intended to aid clarification; if there is room for ambiguity on basic principles then obviously that will have to be taken into account when the document is redrafted. We shall be very happy to discover that our misgivings are groundless and that the range of difference which, on the face of it, appears to exist between us, is narrower than this resolution has led us to believe.

*National Executive Committee of  
The Socialist Labour League*



## Chapter Four

# The stampede to 'Unity' and the fight for political clarification

No sooner were the preliminary exchanges over, and the convention resolution of the SWP published, than the International Committee became the target of unprincipled manoeuvres by the SWP and its collaborator within the International Committee, S. T. Peng, who maintained relations with the Pabloites in Paris on the SWP's behalf. (Document 10.)

This chapter shows the principled efforts of the IC to establish at every point the political basis of the alignments, so that the cadres of the Trotskyist movement could gain the maximum benefit (Documents 11, 12, 13, 15). This effort was maintained against the most squalid manoeuvring and against the attempts of the SWP leadership to quash discussion, internationally and in its own ranks (see Document 14).

## DOCUMENT 10

### *On the suggestions and proposals on the unity of the world movement*, by S. T. Peng May 8, 1961.

Since the communication of last summer between Indian comrade Kolpe and American comrade Hansen on the problem of unity of the world Trotskyist movement, and later comrade Pierre Frank's greeting to the SWP on the occasion of the presidential election, the British comrades anticipated: 'We may be once more on the eve of "unity" manoeuvres'. Especially after the Japanese comrades formally proposed the unity of the world Trotskyist movement at the end of last year (Kyoji Nichi's letter to Tom Kerry), the British comrades felt the unity manoeuvre might be coming. Therefore, in the name of the National Committee of the SLL, they immediately wrote a letter to the NC of the SWP at the beginning of this year, absolutely denying the possibility and advisability of unity and expecting the latter to go forward with them in the same spirit. But the SWP, in its reply to the SLL, February 6, 1961, reaffirmed its position of approval of unity. As a result, the problem of unity is once again on the agenda.

In the IC meeting on February 25-26, 1961 we specifically discussed this problem, but were unable to draw any clear and concrete conclusions. I then proposed, since delegates from only a few sections attended this meeting (besides myself, only delegates from Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland were present), it would be imperative to send all the documents and letters concerned (such as correspondence between the SLL and the SWP) on this vitally important and controversial problem to each section for a serious discussion and, then, to make a final decision based on the opinion of a majority of sections. I then expressed my intention to write a more detailed

uggestion for each section to use as a reference of discussion on this problem.

That the viewpoint of the British comrades is to rule out entirely the possibility and advisability of unity can be seen in the following quotation:

We are entering period comparable in significance to 1914-1917 and it is as vital now as it was then to break sharply and clearly with all sorts of centrist tendencies within our ranks. If we are to fulfil our revolutionary duty in the coming years as the Bolsheviks did, we have to follow the example of Lenin, not that of Luxemburg, in not merely criticizing but also uncompromisingly separating ourselves from all sorts of contemporary Kautskys; first and foremost from the Pablo gang (SLL's letter to SWP on January 2, 1961, page 1).

The British comrades have thus asserted that members of all sections under the IS, the so-called 'Pablo gang', are centrists of the Kautsky type and that 'we have to follow the example of Lenin . . . in not merely criticizing but also uncompromisingly separating ourselves . . . from the Pablo gang'. If this is so there would certainly be no basis for any unity move.

The British comrades declared further: '*It is time to draw to a close the period in which Pabloite revisionism was regarded as a trend within Trotskyism.* Unless this is done we cannot prepare for the revolutionary struggle now beginning. We want the SWP to go forward with us in this spirit'. (Ibid. p. 3; underlined original).

Since the British comrades have suggested 'to draw to a close the period in which Pabloite revisionism was regarded as a trend within Trotskyism' and want the 'SWP to go forward with' them 'in this spirit', it is equivalent to saying that not only today, even in the future, there is no possibility of unity between us and all sections under the IS.

If the British comrades' assertions and suggestion were right, then a series of questions such as the following would be posed:

After the IS held its 'Fourth World Congress' in June, 1954, why did comrade Burns, the organizer of the British section, discuss the unity problem (in July) with a Ceylonese delegate to the Congress and accept the latter's proposal of forming a parity committee to carry on the unification? When the French comrades were determined to oppose this proposal, why did comrade Burns insist on the need for



unity discussions and propose asking the consent of all the sections of the IC for a final decision? In the IC meeting in November, 1954 (after each section had expressed its approval of unification) comrade Burns even proposed some concrete conditions for the unity talks with the IS and to elect three delegates for carrying out this mission. Even more important; when comrade Bloch, himself, who was at that time secretary of the IC, refused to function as a delegate for this unity talk, comrade Burns even proposed that he resign as the secretary of the IC (comrade Burns then assumed the post) — was the 'Pabloite revisionism' or the 'centrist tendency' represented by the Pablo gang' not clear or not yet ascertainable then?

In fact, 'Pabloite revisionism' was clearly revealed in the IS's June 1954 congress (the so-called Fourth World Congress). Livingstone, Mestre and Collins, vigorous supporters and close collaborators of Pablo's revisionism, openly suggested at that congress the liquidation of all Trotskyist independent organizations in order to enter deeply into the CP and SP etc. and proposed to disband the Fourth International organizationally and only to keep a theoretical organ. (I have cited Livingstone's opinion at that Congress in my article 'Pabloism reviewed').

Because Livingstone and company had developed Pablo's revisionism to its logical conclusion — to liquidationism — not only were most delegates at that congress surprised and determined to oppose them but even Pablo himself, for the sake of maintaining the general secretaryship, did not dare to support his ideological collaborators and turned to oppose them. Thus the draft resolution 'The Rise and Decline of Stalinism' was revised, i.e. Pablo's undisguised concepts of revisionism and liquidationism were deleted. This showed that the struggle waged by our orthodox Trotskyists (spearheaded by the SWP) against Pablo's revisionism and liquidationism since the end of 1953 achieved a very huge result. Due to our resolute struggle against Pabloism, we had a direct impact on each section of the IS, the foremost was the Ceylonese section (shown in the LSSP's criticism and revised resolution on the 'Rise and Decline of Stalinism' published in April, 1954), so that there occurred within the IS an outstanding differentiation. On the one hand, Livingstone (a delegate from the American Cochranites), Collins and Mestre etc., developed Pablo's revisionism and liquidationism to such a conclusion as to depart from Trotskyism; on the other hand, a great majority of sections, headed by the Ceylonese section, more or less

retained the basic position of Trotskyism. *So under these circumstances, it was possible for us to discuss unification with the IS. Our acceptance of the proposal for unity discussions (i.e., the proposal following the meeting of Burns and the Ceylonese delegate) was based just on this condition. Otherwise our acceptance of the unity talk would have been an unprincipled manoeuvre!*

Therefore, I must now point out: when comrade Burns consulted with the Ceylonese delegate on the unity question on July 5, 1954, and agreed to the latter's suggestion, and resolutely demanded the IC's acceptance, *had he not recognized the above mentioned change of situation, i.e., that Pablo's revisionist thinking had, more or less, been cleared off or revised within the IS, then his act would have been unprincipled. Even had he recognized the above changing situation, his insistence at another IC meeting in 1955 on the break-off of the unity talks would also have been unprincipled or arbitrary, simply because he did not ask the consent of each section before he insisted on the break-off of the unity talk. Furthermore, if comrade Burns did not admit that our anti-Pabloite struggle caused a deep differentiation in the IS (such as Livingstone and company breaking with the Ceylonese delegates in the IS's June 1954 meeting and Livingstone later leaving the Trotskyist movement), then it would be equivalent to say that he refuses to acknowledge the great significance and achievement of the anti-Pablo's revisionism struggle waged by our orthodox Trotskyists.* When we re-discuss the unity problem today, we should pay close attention to and review carefully the experiences and lessons drawn from this first abortive attempt of the unity movement.

The SLL's letter to the SWP (January 2, 1961) conclusively declared: 'During the past seven years we have outlined in Comrade Sinclair's open letter to Germain and in the Labour Review editorial of August 1959, our political estimation of the evolution of Pabloism. We believe that these statements are correct and we stand today by the main political arguments set out in these articles'. The so-called 'political estimation of the evolution of Pabloism' is what British comrades asserted in the summer of 1957: 'the gulf between Pabloite revisionism and ourselves grows wider and wider'. ('The struggle against Pabloite revisionism', page iii). This was the 'main political argument' they employed to object resolutely to any talk of unity in the second unity moves in 1957. According to this kind of 'main political argument', they now would certainly say: 'We cannot agree to the type of political argument engaged in by comrade Hansen in his

letter to Kolpe. We cannot under any circumstances agree that the political differences between ourselves and Pabloites are growing less'. Hence I think it is necessary here to review what the British comrades called 'a unity manoeuvre', the second unity move in 1957.

First of all, I should like to point out that that unity move was not a 'unity manoeuvre', but rather a serious one. At least it was more serious than the unity move waged after consultation between comrade Burns and the Ceylonese delegate in July, 1954. Under the impact of Khrushchev's revelations at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the Polish and Hungarian revolutions, and under the strong pressure of the rank and file of each of its sections, the IS had to seek unity with us in order to cope with the new situation. In his letter to Comrade Cannon, comrade Goonewardene, the secretary of the Ceylonese LSSP, demanded the reopening of the unity talks. Comrade Cannon, in his reply to the Ceylonese comrade (March, 1957), acknowledged that the political positions of both sides had been growing closer since Cochran's, Collins' and Mestres' renouncement of Trotskyism and later developments and, therefore, the preliminary conditions for the possibility of unity were present and he was in favour of unity. Subsequently, the IS assigned comrade Patrick as a special delegate to go to the USA to have a direct talk with comrade Cannon. As a result of that, comrade Cannon, representing the SWP, made concrete proposals for the unity discussion. ('Conditions and guarantees for reunification proposed by Cannon to Patrick'). But this proposal was resolutely objected to by the British comrades (comrade Burns' letter to Cannon in May, 1957). As a result, this unity movement was interrupted again.

In his open letter to Germain — a criticism of the latter's 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' — comrade Sinclair did not give any substantial evidence of what the British comrades emphasize: 'That the gulf between Pabloist revisionism and ourselves grows wider and wider'. After Germain put up his argument against him (see 'An unprincipled manoeuvre against Trotskyist unity') comrade Sinclair made no further reply. This is equivalent to tacitly admitting that his own position is shaky. As a matter of fact, the concepts contained in Germain's resolution 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism' which comrade Sinclair criticized, are much more progressive than those contained in the resolution 'Rise and Decline of Stalinism', although Germain's resolution contains some vague and wrong concepts, and suffers from a certain pedantry. For instance, the question of our attitude toward

the Soviet Union was the central one that led to the 1953 split. Here is what the resolution says:

We thus considered the 'New Course' of the Kremlin not as a movement of self-reform by the bureaucracy, but a movement of self-defence by it. While promoting and even hastening the awakening of the movement of the masses by its objective consequences, especially by the division that it created from the top to the bottom of the bureaucratic ladder, the 'New Course' was not, we considered, a substitute for, but rather a preparatory phase of, the political revolution of the masses against the bureaucracy. (See the resolution 'Decline and Fall of Stalinism', page 2, reprinted in *The Struggle Against Pabloite Revisionism* published by the British comrades).

The above question revealed that the IS got rid of the central concept of Pablo's revisionism, i.e. the concept asserted by Pablo that the Soviet bureaucracy can be self-reformed under the 'New Course'. (See Pablo's *The Post-Stalin New Course* published in the Fourth International March-April, 1953). This concept should not be looked on as moving away from us, but rather one that is closer to us. Therefore, we can say that comrade Cannon's judgment that 'the political positions on both sides have been growing closer' was based on facts. (Comrade Hansen's letter to Kolpe just repeated Cannon's judgment made in 1957). This, at the same time, also reveals the claim emphasized by the British comrades that 'the gulf between Pabloite revisionism and ourselves grows wider and wider' lacks any factual evidence. Therefore, we can say that the British comrades' determined opposition to unity talks, just as their insistence on the unity talks at first, and the cancellation of it later during 1954-55, is unprincipled and self-contradictory.

Have the political positions between the IS and ourselves, since 1957, grown closer or 'wider and wider'? On the viewpoint and attitude toward a great many big events such as the Algerian War, the Chinese People's Communes, the Cuban Revolution and the General Strike in Belgium not long ago, there no doubt exist some differences. But these differences also exist within our ranks. Considering such principled questions as the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy and the political revolution, the historical tasks of the Fourth International, and the revolutionary function of the Trotskyist party in each country, the positions between ourselves and the IS, if they have not grown closer, have, at least, not grown wider and wider.

The SLL's letter to the SWP has also strongly criticized Germain's

position on the general strike in Belgium. It said: 'The remoteness of the Pabloites from the actual course of history is ludicrously (but tragically) revealed by the present position in Belgium'. As a consequence, we spent half the time of the IC meeting in February, 1961, listening to a report on and discussing the already ended general strike in Belgium, severely denounced Germain's position taken in this general strike. No doubt Germain's position in this general strike was wrong and pernicious, because he confined his policy to supporting the Left wing of the Socialist Party and never raised any revolutionary slogans and programme (such as the setting-up of factory committees, arming the workers and forming a Workers' and Farmers' government etc.) to push forward the general strike, while the trade union leaders and the Left wing of the Socialist Party completely confined the strike within the legitimate bounds of parliamentarianism. This position should be censured and reviewed and from it some lessons drawn. The major lesson is the bankruptcy of Pablo's 'deep entry policy'. But we cannot therefore, draw the conclusion that Germain is a centrist — a contemporary Kautsky — and that we should, once and for all, 'break sharply and clearly with' him, and can never again seek any unity with him and other Pabloites. If one has to use the wrong position taken by Germain in the general strike in Belgium as an excuse for refusing reunification, I cannot but make a contrast by pointing out the position we took towards the Algerian war.

When the IC meeting was discussing the resolution on the Algerian War in November 1955, I emphasized that the struggle against French imperialism in Algeria was not uniquely Messali's party but was proceeding through many regional groups spontaneously organized and rallied together (such as those in the name of National Liberation Front). But my opinion was not accepted in the IC meeting. In the 'Resolution of solidarity with the Algerian struggle for national liberation' passed at that meeting, there is a paragraph as follows:

It hails the Algerian National Movement, which, operating under the most stringent conditions of illegality, wages an intransigent fight against imperialism under the leadership of the working masses. In the person of Messali Hadj, the oppressed and exploited of the world possess a living symbol of this struggle'.

In my 'Declaration on the "Resolution of solidarity with the

Algerian struggle for national liberation" ' written on January 15, 1956, I made the following criticism of the above quotation:

This manner of mystifying Messali as the symbol of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited in the world is not at all what an international leading organ should do. Because judging both by Messali's record in the past and by his present actions, he does not deserve this most supreme honour, and we are even less able to judge as to how he will act in the future. Only great revolutionists, such as Liebknecht, are qualified to enjoy such praise .

Our resolution on the Algerian War (the only formal resolution passed by the IC in the past seven years on important world events) partially supported Messali's party and praised him as the 'living symbol of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited in the world'. But what is the consequence? The consequence is: the guerrillas which the Messalists led surrendered to French imperialism. And Messali himself gave up the struggle against French imperialism finally and demanded that the de Gaulle government call a round table conference to solve the question of the Algerian war. He has now become a pawn in de Gaulle's peace game with the FLN. Is it not enough to reveal the bankruptcy of our policy towards the Algerian War?

As to the resolution on the Algerian war, comrade Burns not only participated in drawing up the resolution, he also went to visit Messali Hadj to express our 'solidarity with the Algerian National Movement'. Michael Banda, a British comrade, even wrote a big article in the Labour Review, analysing, from the point of view of class relations, the national liberation movement in Algeria, concluding the Algerian National Movement (Messali's party) to be the only force representing the interests of the working class. But when the British comrades recently denounced the wrong policy of the Pabloites 'on the bourgeois national movement' in Algeria, they totally forget their more serious mistake they committed on the same 'bourgeois national movement'.

We should now say it openly that the position we took on such an important event as the Algerian war was, though no worse, at least no better than the position taken by the Pabloites on the general strike in Belgium. Before one makes an attack on somebody else's mistake, he should carefully review the same kind of mistake he himself has committed.

Today the British comrades select Germain as a symbolic figure of the Pabloites, as the target of their criticism, and they even hint that not only can they not seek any unity with this kind of 'Pablo gang', but we should be 'uncompromisingly separating ourselves from' him. This attitude is the same as that in 1957 emphasizing it was impossible to talk unity with Pablo. For instance, comrade Burns in his letter to comrade Cannon in May, 1957, said 'Pablo has not changed his political method' and he used this as one of the main arguments for his rejection of unity discussions. Therefore, in my letter to the IC members in June, 1957, I said:

*I personally deem it is most difficult for Pablo to change his revisionist viewpoints based on impressionism and his bureaucratic methods and manoeuvres in organizational matters. Nevertheless, we cannot refuse or delay the unification. Our object is not a few individuals like Pablo and etc., but the majority of the comrades in the national sections remaining with the IS who are loyal to the Trotskyist movement. (My emphasis)*

In my opinion, comrade Burns, in his reply to my letter, then posed the question as follows: 'If the majority within Pablo's movement are Trotskyists, how does it happen he gets away with his policies so easily?' To this question posed by comrade Burns, I gave the following rather detailed explanation in my long letter to comrade Cannon in April, 1958.

No political discussion was held before the split except in New Zealand where it extended about a year and a brief dispute in the British section, hence the dividing line was traced between orthodox Trotskyism and Pablo's revisionism. In France, the principal factor which led to the split was that: a great majority of the leading comrades of the International, including some of those who later joined and participated in the movement of the orthodox Trotskyists gave their full support to Pablo's views and measures, both politically and organizationally. Consequently, there was a lack of clear political understanding among the rank and file militants in the sections which the IS was able to control. Moreover, the extra-ordinary measures adopted by us (such as the open letter of the SWP and the constitution of the International Committee) though at that time compelled by the circumstances and even necessary, were, however, not easily understood by all the comrades of the International. It was under such very particular conditions that Pablo was able to get 'away with his policies so easily'. These facts must be patiently explained to the members of all sections.

I can give you a few examples in relation to the above. At first when the Chinese comrades received the 'open letter' of the SWP, a great majority among them agreed with the political position of this letter. But at the same time, they thought: to publish the 'open letter' before any documents were submitted to the sections of the International and before any political discussions took place was not in conformity to the principle of democratic centralism, and was, therefore, wrong. Regarding this, we have written long letters, enumerating in detail how Pablo controlled the international leading organ by bureaucratic methods and excluded opponents at his will, which rendered impossible any normal democratic discussion inside the organization; it was under such unusual circumstances that we were then convinced of the necessity of the 'open letter' and entered into the struggle. If there had not been a comprehensive explanation based on our own experiences, they would certainly have approved the political positions of the 'open letter', but remained sceptical or even in opposition to the organizational measures.

These two examples (another one was deleted here) show us that even some loyal Trotskyists and old militants who agreed politically with us, still had difficulty understanding and accepting the exceptional action in publishing the 'open letter' and expressed doubts or objections . . . I am therefore quite convinced that, if the great majority of the comrades of the sections of the IS could not follow the appeal launched in the 'Open letter' and still remained with the IS, it was mainly because they could not understand why we adopted this 'exceptional measure' before submitting a document criticizing Pablo's revisionism for internal discussion, to let them have an opportunity to discuss and to gain a clear idea about the differences in positions, and hence they became resentful.

If the document on Pablo's revisionism had been submitted to the whole International before the split, and a thorough discussion had been engaged in to enable a clear and fundamental demarcation between orthodox Trotskyism and revisionism, such as during the fight against Burnham and Schachtman's revisionism, the results would have been quite different. As Marxists, we have to deal with this kind of question the same as with other problems: to make objective analysis and evaluation, so as to avoid a purely subjective judgment that all those who agreed with us (on the exceptional measures of the 'Open Letter') are orthodox Trotskyists and those who were sceptical or did not agree with us are all Pabloites.

On the other hand, since there had been internal discussions in the New Zealand and English sections beforehand, there had been a certain degree of political differentiation; the Cochran and Collins



tendency was led by the logical development of their revisionist thought, initiated by Pablo to the ultimate anti-Trotskyist and pro-Stalinist conclusion, and have since completely dropped away from the Trotskyist movement. On the other hand, it was precisely for the reason that no political discussion had been engaged in before the split, that the great majority of the comrades in the sections, although remaining with the IS, continue to fight under the banner of Trotskyism.

There is another important point: those comrades who remain in the sections of the IS have for a long period been under the influence of Pabloism. There has been certain ideological confusion, the iron facts of historical events of the 20th Congress which proclaimed a liquidation of the 'cult of the individual' and Stalin's other crimes, the Polish and Hungarian Revolution, clearly exposed Cochran's Collins' and Mestre's anti-Trotskyist thoughts and validated the entire Trotskyist tradition, principle and programme, particularly our analysis and prognosis on the Stalinist bureaucracy. It is precisely for this reason that they unanimously demand reunification with us — this tendency is reflected in the motion unanimously adopted by the 'Fifth Congress' organized by the IS, in favour of reunification.

From the above explanation, I am able to affirm that the great majority of the comrades in the sections of the IS are not 'Pabloites', but they are the same as us, in general, loyal to Trotskyism, and are making a great effort in their struggle for our movement. They constitute quite a considerable number of cadres formed by our movement during long years, which are a part of the precious property accumulated by our movement, and will play the important role of a motor force in the progress of our movement in different countries. We should not simply blot them out under the name of 'Pabloites' simply because they remain in the sections of the IS, and refuse to unite and collaborate with them.

Although the above explanation was written three years ago, I still think it is correct and valid today. The above explanation and analysis appears to be much more important and necessary than ever especially when some people call the comrades in the sections of the IS 'Pablo gang' or Pabloites, are opposed and hostile to them, and refuse unity and to collaborate with them.

After having reaffirmed their judgment made in 1957 that the 'gulf between the Pabloite revisionists and ourselves grows wider and wider' and having ruled out any possibility and advisability of unity with any sections of the IS, the British comrades finally declared:

the amount of time has already been  
 a political statement by the orthodox  
 the great problems of the day. Without  
 on, it will be impossible to rebuild the  
 SL's letter to the SWP, p. 6). As a  
 ment, *Draft Resolution on International*  
 a 'political statement by the orthodox  
 the great problems of the day'.

comrades: During the first unity  
 had appealed to the IC to request  
 p a draft resolution on the interna-  
 ment by the orthodox Trotskyists of  
 tems of the day'. A series of draft  
 today', 'The Soviet Union Today',  
 id its Aftermath', and 'The Rise of  
 ritten. But these draft resolutions  
 ections of the IC. Even the IC itself  
 meeting of November 1956 again  
 on 'The Evolution of the Post-war  
 asks of the Fourth International',  
 es also drafted a resolution on the  
 on with regard to these resolutions  
 ones. They were put in the party  
 any discussion. Therefore, I have  
 that the emphasis by the British on  
 ent' is again a 'manoeuvre' to avoid

h review as to whether the 'Draft  
 ctives' can be considered a 'polit-  
 tskyists of where we stand on the  
 o want to make one point, i.e. this  
 ing and emphasizing a couple of  
 y a revolutionary party, does not  
 problems of the day', as the Chinese  
 unes movement and the impact of  
 iberation movement on both the  
 c. A 'draft resolution' as such may  
 end to its predecessors, but it may  
 sion after a discussion.

In his letter to comrade Cannon on February 6, 1961, comrade Burns said: 'They support the idea that what is necessary is the re-organization of the international movement and not so much reunification'. Here he meant the Indian comrades 'support' the British comrades' 'idea' of 'the re-organization of the international movement'. But the question is: who can 're-organize the international movement'? The IC? — or the SLL? In order to answer this important question, we have to review the past achievements of the IC.

In its past seven and a half years of existence, the IC was active and achieved certain results only in the early period (about half a year), since then it has gradually tended to inactivity and slovenliness, even to the state of paralysis. As far as politics is concerned, the IC has been nearly non-existent. Because in the past seven years, the IC has not made any formal resolutions on any big events, such as the liquidation of Stalin's 'cult of the individual' in the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist party, the Chinese People's Communes, the anti-Japanese-American security pact movement in Japan and the Cuban revolution, etc., other than the Algerian war. This resolution on the Algerian war, as I have pointed out above, unfortunately suggests bankruptcy.

On the other hand, the IC is not a workable set-up but a very slovenly one; there is no office like the IS to work collectively; nor is there any publication to issue propaganda material and to advance our political slogans. As far as the IC meetings are concerned, they are often not held in time, and there is little discussion on the main political issues. And worse yet, there is no preparatory work done before meetings . . . and very often the resolutions passed in the IC meetings are never carried out. The worst is that 'the functions of the International Committee', a resolution adopted by the International Congress in June, 1958, is still a piece of paper. An IC such as this can never carry out the great task of re-organizing the international movement. If we still let it continue to exist, it can only block the 'international movement' — hardly play a positive role.

Hence, I can say that at present it is only the reunification of loyal Trotskyists of all sections of the IC and the IS which can 're-organize the international movement' and rebuild the international leadership. To avoid discussing the 'reunification' and only to talk on the 're-organization of the international movement' is either an intentional manoeuvre to block the unity or empty, nonsensical talk.

Undoubtedly in their 'Draft Resolution on International Perspectives' the British comrades have more or less changed their attitude towards unity. For instance, the 'Draft Resolution' said:

The major task of building a revolutionary leadership on a world scale involves the re-organization of the Fourth International and therefore a *consideration of the Pablo group*'. (Draft Resolution, p. 25 my emphasis).

The sharpness and suddenness of the 1953 split resulted in considerable confusion in a number of countries. Even now there is evidence that some of this confusion still persists. It must be resolved as soon as possible. *Any attempts, however, to reunify the movement by organizational means will only result in further splits. The Socialist Labour League is not against unity, but it is against spurious unity which is not based on fundamental political agreement following a full international discussion*'. (ibid. p. 27, my emphasis).

The SLL now expresses that 'it is not against unity'. This shows that, under the pressure of the demand for unity, it has had to give up its originally anti-unity position that 'we have to follow the example of Lenin . . . in not merely criticizing but also uncompromisingly separating ourselves . . . from the Pablo gang'. This is certainly a step forward or a concession. But another question is posed in the wake of this announcement: who 'attempts' to 'reunify the movement by organizational means'? In other words, who suggests a 'spurious unity which is not based on fundamental political agreement'? The SWP? Or someone else among us?

So far as the SWP is concerned, its reply to the SLL on February 6, 1961 has made it clear that we should *unify 'the international forces of Trotskyism on a principled basis'*. (my emphasis). As for myself, as early as January, 1955, during the first unity moves, I wrote in my 'Pabloism Reviewed' that 'before we start with the reunification of our movement at the present time, it is necessary to have a complete and thorough review and clarification on this question in order to *reunify our International on a solid ideological basis of orthodox Trotskyism*'. I again made the above proposal on several later occasions. I believe that nobody among ourselves has ever attempted or is attempting to 'reunify the movement by organizational means' or to propose 'a spurious unity which is not based on fundamental political agreement'. Therefore, I would say that the British comrades' objection to 'a spurious unity' is either an excuse to cover up their erroneous

previous position of objection to unity (as expressed in their letter of January 2 to the SWP) or just 'to fire a shot without an aim'.

In order to show they really are for a true (not spurious) unity 'based on fundamental political agreement following a full international discussion', the British comrades had the following proposal:

The re-organization of the Fourth International must proceed immediately by the preparation of a *thorough-going discussion in which all sections affiliated to the International Committee and to the International Secretariat should submit resolutions and contributions which would be circulated throughout the international movement as widely as possible*. This discussion should begin not later than May 1961, and should be organized by the setting-up of a small sub-committee comprising an equal number of people from both tendencies, whose task would be to see that the various contributions are widely circulated and that the rank and file in all sections are given the opportunity of considering it. At the end of one year, a pre-conference of the international movement should be held in order to ascertain the measure of agreement or otherwise, that has arisen as a result of the discussion. New statutes for the international movement could then be put forward'. ('Draft Resolution on International Perspectives', the SLL's edition, p. 27; My emphasis).

The above proposal appears to be serious, democratic and concrete. But, in effect, it contains some contradictions which render the reunification unrealizable. For instance, it suggests 'all sections affiliated to the IC and to the IS should submit resolutions and contributions' for 'a thoroughgoing discussion' starting in May, 1961 and a year later, 'a pre-conference of the international movement should be held in order to ascertain the measure of agreement or otherwise that has arisen as a result of the discussion'. This is evidently attempting to change unity discussion into an endless debate in order to delay it indefinitely. Because, according to my past experiences in the IC, a great many draft resolutions were never discussed at its meetings and in its sections, it is likely that the discussion on the 'resolutions and contributions' submitted by 'all sections affiliated to the IC and the IS' will also either be indefinitely delayed or never carried out. To carry out such a wide and thoroughgoing discussion as suggested by the British comrades, we would have to have a powerful international organization. But, unfortunately, we do not have such an international organization at present. So the British proposal, if it is not a manoeuvre to delay the unity discussion, is at least an unrealized idea at the moment.

If the British comrades mean to discuss 'fundamental principles', then we would not need 'all sections affiliated to the IC and the IS' to 'submit resolutions and contributions' to proceed on 'a thoroughgoing discussion'. What we need is to set up a 'parity committee' under an agreement from both the IC and IS, or 'a small sub-committee comprising an equal number of people from both tendencies'. The function of this committee is to draw up a 'political agreement' acceptable to both sides based on our transitional programme and those principled questions which caused the 1953 split, then to send it to each section for their consent. Why did the British comrades not suggest such a straightforward and practical method? Because this method would speed up unification rather than delay it as they have wished all along.

To sum up, the unity proposals of the British comrades for the past seven years have been self-contradictory (such as insisting on unity in the beginning, then resolutely objecting to it, finally manoeuvring to block or to delay it at the time they are met with a strong pressure for unity) and lacking principle. The main reason is that their consideration of this unity question is based on a very narrow sectarian concept, not based on the interests of the whole world movement. For instance, in their letters to the SWP, they have enumerated many stories of their struggle with the Pabloites in Britain and their own achievements and etc., but they have not written a word on the damages our movement has suffered because of the split in the past seven years. Nor have they paid any attention to the development of the objective situation which requires the reunification of our movement and the wish and hope of a great majority of Trotskyists in the world urgently demanding a unity which will cope with the favourable objective situation. Therefore, I particularly want to awaken the British comrades to the need for changing their attention from a petty sectarianism to a wide internationalism. As to the contradiction between the split among our ranks and the objective conditions favourable to our movement as a result of the development of events in the past seven years, I made the following analysis in my letter to comrade Cannon cited above:

Our movement has gone through fifty years of the most painful struggles, and today it comes to a historical turning point, since the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU declared the liquidation of the 'cult of the individual' of Stalin, his personal dictatorship and other crimes, and particularly after the revolutions broke out in Hungary and Poland, an unprecedented crisis has been unfurling throughout the Stalinist parties, and has

resulted in a general and profound movement of polarization and disintegration. This new situation opens up for the Trotskyist movement an entirely new and favourable objective condition. This is recognized by all of us.

But under this favourable objective condition, a most serious obstacle lies in the way of our progress, and this obstacle is subjective: the spirit of our movement throughout the whole world. This state of things has already had a very bad influence in a number of countries and is preventing a real development of our movement there. Therefore, we are confronted with the absolute necessity for the reunification of our international movement under unprecedented favourable historical conditions, and delays can be tolerated no longer.

Three years have passed since the above words were written. But our movement, because of the continuing existence of the split, has not only been unable to leap forward by utilizing the favourable objective conditions; on the contrary, it has been stagnant in many countries, even moving backward. This is very regrettable. The objective situation has certainly changed a bit, but generally it is still favourable to our movement. Hence we need unification. The SWP has pointed out in its letter to the SLL on February 6, 1961:

Great new opportunities for Trotskyism resignalized by such events as the Cuban Revolution, the upsurge in Japan, the Belgian general strike, etc., are now opening before us. If our movement were united, we could take much better advantage of them and achieve a much faster rate of growth in many areas and on a much more solid foundation than is possible with a movement split into factions warring over issues which we are unable to make clear to the socialist-minded working-class vanguard. This is felt among members of both sides in the Trotskyist movement, increasing the insistence that the problem be solved one way or another. A recent instructive instance in this regard being the experience in Japan.

Here I want to point out the urgent situation of the Cuban Revolution particularly. As everybody is aware, the Cuban Revolution is the Western hemisphere's only successful national democratic revolution, marching along the socialist road and led by a non-Stalinist party. The future of this revolution is likely to develop into a proletarian socialist democratic system. But this revolution is situated in a critical circumstance: on the one hand there is a heavy pressure from American imperialism; on the other hand, there is the strong support of the Soviet bloc. Under such a subtle, special situation the regime

established by the revolution might be forced backward or destroyed, or evolve into a bureaucratic dictatorship of some kind of Stalinist type. The only way to avoid this possibility is to ideologically influence the worker and peasant masses and the revolutionary cadres there to form the Marxist revolutionary leadership. This important work influencing the revolutionary masses through the political programme of Trotskyism is possible only under a unified world Trotskyist movement, especially a united action of Latin American Trotskyists. But the present situation of organizational split and political diversification makes it so that not only can we not help the Cuban revolution in an effective way, but it is a bad influence on the revolution. For instance, on top of the Trotskyist groups in Latin America showing confusion and different opinions towards the Cuban Revolution, even the SLL and the SWP have shown a serious difference in their evaluation on the nature of the Cuban Revolution, its state and its leadership. Even worse: these different opinions have been openly published in their organs (*Militant* and *Newsletter*). This sorrowful phenomenon deserves our serious attention and caution. At the same time, it sufficiently proves how urgently we need to reunify our movement in order to cope with the immediately pressing events!

Lastly, when some at this moment still emphasize the differences that led to the 1953 split and even state that the gulf 'grows wider and wider' for the purpose of objecting to or blocking unity, I cannot but state that this split of 1953 was not unavoidable. That is to say that had we submitted a document to criticize Pabloism before the split and asked for a worldwide and thoroughgoing discussion with the International through the channels of democratic centralism, we would, I believe, possibly have wiped out Pablo's revisionism and his bureaucratic methods applied to our organization and even recalled his general secretaryship and still maintained our international unity. We did not do so. We suddenly published the 'Open Letter' and organized the 'International Committee'. This was too extraordinary a measure. As far as I was concerned, I did not know of this extraordinary measure beforehand. But I defended this extraordinary measure for the sake of strengthening the opposition to Pablo's venturesome revisionism and bureaucratic method. But considering the painful lesson and damages done to our whole movement in the past seven years after the split of 1953, I now have to declare: our movement in opposition to Pabloism was politically correct, necessary and successful. But in keeping with the Bolshevik principle and tradition of



democratic centralism, i.e., the organizational viewpoint of Bolshevism, the extraordinary measure taken then was a *mistake*. We are (heading the split and showing a bad example in the international movement) Trotskyists following Marxism-Leninism, not Stalinists who think they are always correct. We should draw lessons from past experiences, especially painful experiences, recognize a mistake and correct it in time. The only and positive way to correct this mistake at this juncture is to reunify as soon as possible the international movement which has been split for seven years.

I said in my letter to comrade Cannon three years ago:

Trotsky had been engaged in building a unified revolutionary international from the time he was forced to leave Russia in 1929, particularly after the defeat of the German Revolution in 1933. For this, he not only wrote a most perfect programme, but spent a lot of effort patiently convincing the groups in many countries to unify so as to form the foundation of a united revolutionary international (in his many letters to all the Trotskyist groups). If he was still alive, seeing the movement split under the present favourable situation, I believe, he would try his utmost to unify it without delay.

. . . It is imperative to unite all the Trotskyist strength by maintaining our political position, (which has been successful), that is, the orthodox Trotskyist position based on our transitional programme, in order to meet the immediate needs of the historical moment in this favourable objective situation.

I think it is high time to reunify our movement 'in order to meet the immediate needs of the historical moment in this favourable objective situation'. To this end, I propose the following measures as a procedure of realizing the reunification.

1. The IC should send to all its sections all the letters and documents concerning the unity question as soon as possible. After having received these letters and documents, each section should immediately hold a general discussion and make a decision to send back to the IC as soon as possible.

2. After having received the decisions on the unity question from each section, and if a majority of sections prove to be in favour of reunification, the IC should immediately call a meeting to discuss the practical steps for realizing unity.

3. The first step to carry on unity should be the IC taking the initiative to write a letter to the IS, suggesting the re-opening of unity talks. If it is agreeable to the IS, then the IC and IS should elect the same number of delegates to form a parity committee. The major functions of this parity committee should be as follows:

A. Discuss and draft a political agreement of unity, based on the fundamental principles of our transitional programme and those principled questions that led to our split in 1953, then send this agreement to all the sections for their consent.

B. Discuss a practical method to reunify sections in those countries where sections of both the IC and the IS exist.

C. Draft a political resolution on the international situation and the tasks of the Fourth International, and send it to sections of the IC and the IS for discussion, for the purpose of being adopted at the coming unified congress.

D. Examine the regulations of the International and spell out the functions, obligations and responsibilities of the international leading body and the mutual relationship between it and the sections.

4. In those countries where there exist two or more than two Trotskyist groups or sections and there is difficulty in unifying them, these organizations should be permitted to exist temporarily and their unification be discussed and solved at the unified congress. But a liaison committee must be formed among these separately existing organizations in order to exchange opinions on their external actions and to take a united policy and action.

5. During the time of the preparation for unity, if some important event happens in the world or big problem occurs in some section, the parity committee should declare its stand in the name of the Fourth International and solve the urgent problem facing the section.

6. The unified congress should take place within a certain time, not later than 1962.

## DOCUMENT 11

### Reply to S. T. Peng by the Socialist Labour League National Committee, July 8, 1961.

#### *A Reply to Comrade Peng*

The letter which the Socialist Labour League addressed to the National Committee of the SWP on January 2, 1961, marked a turning-point in the development of the International movement since the split with Pablo in 1953. Since it was written, a number of documents have been submitted by the SWP as well as the Socialist Labour League. The international discussion is under way and despite the important political divergencies revealed in the documents, it is bound to have a considerable impact on the future of international Trotskyism. It is in this context that we must examine the contribution of our Chinese comrade S.T. Peng 'On the Suggestions and Proposals on the Unity of the World Movement' (May 8, 1961).

To be sure comrade Peng has some harsh criticism to make of the Socialist Labour League. It is, he says, 'lacking in principle' and sectarian. We were, he claims, guilty of 'arbitrary' action in relation to the International Committee of the Fourth International in 1955.

The harshness of these characterizations contrasts sharply with his treatment of Pabloism. Whilst he has indeed some reservations about their political thinking, a casual reader would be forgiven for concluding that at worst the Socialist Labour League is as bad as they are, whilst in general the Pabloites are not nearly so bad as we paint them. (The kindest thing we can say about comrade Peng is that he is a comrade who through long enforced isolation has now lost almost complete touch with the life of the sections of our international movement. For many years due to the fact that he has been unable to

leave Paris, he has been isolated from the life of the sections both in the struggle for programme and in their disciplined forms of work). We are not objecting to his sharp attacks on the Socialist Labour League. We are sure that these arise not from any subjective hostility to the leadership of the League but to the political method of comrade Peng.

### *The Method of Peng and Pablo*

Comrade Peng is basically impressionist in his method of thinking. In 1953 as far as he was concerned, Pabloism led directly to Stalinism. Some years later, after the Hungarian revolution, when Pablo had included a few more double book-keeping clauses in his long-winded resolutions which spoke about the dangers of bureaucracy and the need to fight against it, he and others suddenly changed their tune and concluded that Pablo had seen the error of his ways and was drifting back to Trotskyism.

Our differences with Pablo are methodological and not based on changes or variations in his line due to this or that change in the objective situation. The impressionist becomes an eclectic in practice. When he writes his documents he resorts to double book-keeping. One set of books contains his real thinking at a given moment, whilst another contains the formulas for a way out just in case his real thinking is wrong.

It will be noted that all those comrades who today say that the differences with Pablo are not so great now, just in case they should be wrong, qualify their statements with all sorts of organizational measures. It is now perfectly clear that the parity committee proposal in 1957 was just such a measure, hence the sharp attack on the Socialist Labour League who want to discuss Pabloite policies. Peng and his friends are scared lest they be fooled twice by Pablo. Whilst they denounce the 'sectarians' in Britain they nevertheless want to leave the organizational backdoor open should they be caught in the same type of political crossfire as they were in 1953. Such a policy adds up to nothing more than political bankruptcy.

Impressionism and eclecticism, as a method, require more than a favourable change in the objective situation to correct them. Whilst even the most correct Marxist can be guilty from time to time of deviations towards impressionism and empiricism, nevertheless they learn through their devotion to Marxist theory to overcome these

errors. In other words, they learn consciously from their mistakes. There is no way out for the Marxist except to wage a relentless struggle against those who rely on impressionism and empiricism as a method. The correction of Pabloism must be a conscious act and not one which is determined by their apparent closeness to Marxism at different times. This does not mean that a Marxist is called upon constantly to wage a verbal or literary campaign against such revisionists. His struggle against them is a combination of a campaign around theory and the skilful use of the objective situation to verify it. In practice the impressionist and eclectic is forced to revise the dialectical method of Marxism. Whilst here and there he can attain some temporary successes, in the long run he is forced willy nilly to openly revise Marxism.

In 1953 the Pabloites opened the door for a section of their followers to join the Stalinist parties. They then retreated under the pressure of such events as the Hungarian revolution, but their retreat was not a change so far as their basic method was concerned. Here is where the whole mistake of the SWP and Peng arises. *They fail to see that the impressionist adaptation of Pablo to new situations does not mean a change in his method but is, in fact, a continuation of his method.* Here is where the main confusion comes in. In 1953, according to Peng, the differences were growing wider and wider, in 1957 after Hungary, they grew smaller and smaller. We regret to have to say it, but comrade Peng and those like him have never really understood the ideological methods of Pabloism. That is why, as we shall see, they now find themselves in a hopeless situation. Instead of denouncing the Socialist Labour League, it would be far better if they would try to learn something from the history of our movement. In saying this, we do not in any way want to convey the impression that the leadership of the Socialist Labour League is overlooking the very important lessons of the struggle of the SWP and the international movement. On the contrary, we value these most highly.

### *Some Experiences in the Fight Against Impressionism*

It is still a fact, however, that the main revisionist group which dominated the British Trotskyist movement for many years adopted as their ideological method, empiricism. Whilst in general they supported Trotskyism, they made up their policies as they went along on the day-to-day questions. Haston was a most 'successful' impressionist. His documents were masterpieces of eclectic thinking.

They managed to contain all eventualities. During the discussion about entry into the Labour Party, they combined the idea that it would not be necessary to enter, that one might have to enter and that it was certain that we should have to enter.

In the struggle against these revisionists, the British Trotskyists drew heavily from the history and educational experiences of our Canadian comrades. But we had to educate our cadres on the problems as they developed in Britain. If there was one thing Haston and Co. taught us it was around the vital necessity of the Marxist method. Before we became the leadership of the British movement, we went through many long years as a minority battling it out against the empiricists and impressionists. Looking back now these were most valuable formative years in the history of the British movement. We have been working with that political capital ever since.

We are not going to stand idly by and allow people to denounce us as sectarian and opponents of unity. The leadership of the British organization began as a minority tendency. In 1944 and 1945, we fought for a principled turn to the centrists of the ILP. In 1945-1947 we fought for entry into the Labour Party. This has remained our orientation for sixteen years.

We have as much experience of entry as any other section of the international movement. Our organization has seen its weekly newspapers banned on two occasions by the right-wing National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, when our organization has been proscribed. In 1954 we were forced to close down our weekly paper in order to preserve our positions inside the party. Those who say that the English organization is sectarian have either forgotten or are ignorant of the facts.

We have been able to maintain our main orientation towards the Labour Party and the trade unions and at the same time ideologically prepare our movement for a struggle against Stalinism, the right wing of the Labour Party and the middle-of-the-road centrists. Without such an ideological preparation, it would have been impossible to have consolidated a Trotskyist movement in Britain for such a long period. To say that we are frightened of unifications with opponent tendencies is equally nonsense. In 1943-44 when we were still a faction of seven people, we fought for and assisted in achieving the unification of the English Trotskyist movement in the Revolutionary Communist Party. In 1947 by agreement with the international movement and with the right-wing majority of the RCP, we entered the Labour Party

as a separate faction. In 1949 when the Haston majority which had fought us so hard and bitterly for years decided also to enter the Labour Party, we reunified the English movement, even though we were still in a minority.

For us the essential thing about such unifications is that our organization should be politically clear on what is involved. In unifications with centrist groupings it is essential that we should be clear on the nature of these organizations and in what way they were developing. If we entered into organizational measures of unification without such clarity our whole efforts could not but end in disaster.

The Haston group of the old RCP began to move away from Trotskyism several years before they actually left the movement. Our faction understood this and it was able to clarify itself as a result of their political revisions. On occasion they veered to a sectarian position, especially in relation to the Labour Party, but towards the end of their sojourn in the Trotskyist movement they rapidly swung to the Right and most of their leaders have remained there ever since as individuals.

### *On Unity with Pablo and the Parity Proposals*

When the question of unity with Pablo is posed, we are by no means taken aback. What we are primarily interested in is the political development of the forces around our own International Committee. We are not frightened of or opposed to unity with Pablo if an occasion should arise when it would genuinely help the development of the movement. But in order to do this successfully, it is necessary for us to be politically clear on what Pabloism is. Here is the reason why we start with his revisionist method.

We consider that one of our main tasks is to educate the cadres of the Fourth International against Pablo's political policies. We did not break from him in 1953 as a result of a misunderstanding. During the period of the 1940s, our movement was in any case only a minority of the English organization. In fact we only became the recognized leadership of this movement four years before the split took place in 1953. Practical international activity was a new field for us, but theoretical understanding of internationalism was not. We had grown up defending the spirit of internationalism and we continue now in the same way.

Pablo primarily came unstuck in Britain in 1953 because he proved

to everyone concerned that he wanted to destroy the Marxist cadre that was built in years of struggle. His reason for this was that he was unable to develop his revisionist policies in any other way. We do not attach anything sinister to Pablo. He had broken from the Trotskyist method a long time before. If this was not discovered until 1953 it was because of the political weakness of the international movement. Apart from a few documents his political credentials before 1945 were largely unknown. He had no experience in actual party building, nor for that matter had Germain. At the second world congress in 1948 it took only 20 minutes for a comrade to give a report on the activities of the international from 1938 to 1946. Small wonder the movement split apart from such inadequate preparation.

The reason why Pablo was able to assume leadership was because of the lack of political preparation in the years during and after the war. This vacuum has existed ever since the death of Trotsky in 1940. Anyone, like Peng, who wants us to rush into a unification today simply wants to continue the disintegration and splits of the past. A unified re-organized international movement in the years to come can only be established on the basis of absolute clarity so far as Pabloite revisionism is concerned.

There is nothing basically wrong in the experience of the fundamental nature of the discussion now taking place in the ranks of the International Committee. It has, in fact, been overdue for 20 years in the international movement. Such a discussion contrasts sharply to the type of vague discussion that has gone on in Pablo's circles prior to his congresses. We must try to probe the depth of the differences in order to arrive, if possible, at a political consolidation of the forces around the International Committee. If this can be achieved then one can anticipate a situation where the parity proposals of comrade Cannon could be a useful medium for re-organizing the international movement. We are not opposed to these proposals, provided they are reinforced by the consolidation of our own tendency. If, however, the proposals were to be advanced under conditions where our own forces were confused, as is the case at the present time, then they could lead to nothing but further splits. Here is why we have stressed with the SWP the dangers of the proposals becoming a manoeuvre that might tend to gloss over the need for a serious clarification of our own forces. Fortunately, comrade Cannon has also arrived at the conclusion that at the moment, at least, there is no basis for advancing the parity proposals.



## *Our Main Task is Clarification*

What is required today is not so much unity. Only after an international discussion in which clarification of the sections affiliated to the In can be consolidated can the question as to whether possible be answered.

The Socialist Labour League believes that the further away from Marxism today than they have in the past. It may, however, be possible for tendency to enter into a form of unification combination of our political firmness and a favour can be utilized to isolate and defeat them.

## *What Happened in 1954*

The contribution of comrade Peng in real opened after the split with Pablo in 1953. In the was an exchange of letters between comrade (the LSSP, Ceylon. This gave grounds for would go to the Pabliste Fourth Congress and political line. On the eve of the Congress they of the English section and others that they intended they would under no circumstances compromise with Pablo. We warned them that Pablo include their political line in his document position. They said they would not agree to the fight for an international conference of all the later in the year.

They went to Pablo's conference and they They agreed, in fact, to allow their political rated in his document. This suited Pablo do We met them when they arrived back from and they asked us if it would not be possible committee to prepare a new conference. We had, in fact, made a serious mistake, but however, to leave the door open for further discussion. After much discussion we agreed that provide a representative from Ceylon to sit on this part prepared to go ahead. That was the origin of the accepted by the International Committee on

So far as we were concerned, far from the parity committee being a device based upon our conception that Pablo was coming closer to us politically, it represented on the contrary a tactical weapon designed to assist the Ceylonese release themselves from the serious mistakes that they had made at his conference. Our immediate aim at the time was to try and broaden the international Trotskyist tendency. In other words we conceived of the parity committee as a weapon of struggle against Pablo on the political field.

However, as the months went by the Ceylonese failed to participate on the parity committee. Gradually it was clear to everyone that the Pabloites intended to use this committee as a manoeuvring ground against the International Committee.

To suggest as Peng does that we arbitrarily broke from the parity committee without consulting the forces of the International Committee is just not true. The people who first protested were the SWP comrades in their letter of November, 1954. The French were opposed to the parity committee all along and when a decision was taken to abandon this committee it was done by an overwhelming majority of the International Committee. Only comrade Peng was opposed. Subsequently, comrade Peng wrote to the SWP and received a reply from them endorsing the abandonment of the parity committee.

That is the real story as anyone can read from the correspondence which is appended to this document. [This correspondence is published in volume 2 of this series — Ed.]

Comrade Peng continues his factional spleen against the International Committee in a most undignified way. He proceeds as a man who wishes to score points rather than someone trying to understand the political nature of our problems. To suggest that nothing was accomplished by the International Committee is an example of blind factionalism. At most of the meetings we listened to long reports of the activities of the various sections. From our own experience we were able to develop the work in England as a result of this form of international collaboration. Of course comrade Peng is not very impressed by our activity. But there it is. Anyone who wants to come to England from the international movement is welcome to assist us to improve this work or to advise us in any way if he or she considers that we are making sectarian or opportunist mistakes. We are willing to learn from anybody who treats our work with the seriousness it deserves.

### *Why Our Section Developed*

The English section developed in the 1950s precisely because of its understanding and struggle against Pabloite revisionism. That is the measure of help that we have received from the sections of the International Committee. There were, however, serious shortcomings in the work of the International Committee, but not along the lines that comrade Peng indicates. The reason for our 'paralysis', as he described it, lay in the fact that right from its inception the committee was not based upon a thoroughly understood world perspective. Many of the old habits from Pabloite thinking still prevailed as they do today in the mind of such comrades as Peng.

In 1955 the SWP submitted three documents as part of the series on world problems, but unfortunately the series was never completed. The documents were, however, duplicated and distributed to all the sections of the committee.

In the opinion of the English section, the great weakness of the International Committee lay in the lack of political clarification. We failed to move forward in our offensive against Pabloism because some of the affiliated sections of the Committee were not clear on the question. This is now perfectly plain for all to see.

Here is the reason why the parity proposals in 1957 were looked upon by the British comrades with some misgiving. So far as a tactical approach was concerned, we supported them, but we were worried about the fact that the International Committee remained politically confused. To say, as comrade Peng does, that we rejected these proposals because of 'sectarianism' is just another piece of falsification.

### *The 1957 Parity Committee Proposals*

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

The parity proposals of comrade Cannon arrived in England towards the end of April 1957. They had already been transmitted to the LSSP in Ceylon. We protested about this since we felt that it would have been far better to have them first of all discussed inside the International Committee before they were sent to Ceylon. Later, in November 1958, during the Toronto meeting when we had a chance

to talk the matter over face to face, comrade Cannon did agree that this would have been a more correct procedure.

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

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

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

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

This is how matters stood until the Toronto meeting, in November 1958. The parity proposals were rejected by Pablo. Of course comrade Peng and some comrades in the SWP may say that because the English organization raised political criticisms they gave Pablo an opportunity to reject the proposals. Our reply to that is that if our own forces are unclear on Pabloism, the parity proposals could have brought nothing but further splits.

When comrade Peng sneeringly refers to our failure to reply to Germain, he really shows that he has no understanding of the problems facing the International Committee. Our political work was paralysed by the fact that we had disagreements in our own ranks which took several years to develop to the stage where they are today.

The Socialist Labour League has tried on all occasions to work in the closest collaboration with the SWP, and if this has now broken down it is because there are serious political differences between us. All of us hope that we shall be able to renew the collaboration on a sounder footing in the future, but the matter remains at the moment.

*We have carried out all the Decisions of the International Committee*

Contrary to what comrade Peng has to say, the Socialist Labour League has carried out all the decisions of the International Committee on the question of the parity committee proposals. The documents submitted by the SWP, together with a resolution from the Socialist Labour League and a further document by comrade Peng were submitted to the delegates at the Leeds conference of the International Committee in 1958. Here again, it was impossible to arrive at political agreement because the SWP still opposed such a position believing it to be premature. To suggest that we were not ready for political discussion is contrary to the facts. The hesitations were on the part of other people.

In November 1958, a representative from the English section visited Toronto where discussions were held with various leading comrades. A decision was taken to re-propose the parity proposals and that the SWP would draft an international resolution to assist in political clarification of the movement. No such document was forthcoming and it was not until April 1961 that one was produced.

We proposed the parity proposals to the International Committee upon our return from Toronto. The comrades were in agreement with the setting up of a parity committee for the purpose of conducting a political discussion. We reported this back to the comrades in the SWP, but they did not even reply to us. Later we learned that they were hostile to this proposal. They wanted the proposals advanced without any qualifications that prior political discussion should take place before unification.

All along the main differences between ourselves and the SWP have always centred on our conception of unity. We wanted discussion alongside the application of the parity proposals, the SWP wanted to present the parity proposals first. We shall never agree to such a proposition.

The English section continued its quest for unity. In June 1958, we

nvited two delegates from the Pabloite Italian organization to visit us in Britain. After three days discussion we endeavoured to get agreement on the following document:

This meeting of representatives of the Italian and British sections of the Fourth International agrees:

- 1) That the chief task for Marxists today is to bring into fraternal association all those throughout the world who claim to stand under the banner of revolutionary marxism and who support the conclusions of the Transitional programme of the Fourth International.
- 2) We reaffirm the main ideas of that programme; that the objective circumstances on a world scale are ripe for socialism; that between the working class and socialism stands the counter-revolutionary stalinist bureaucracy, no less than social democracy.
- 3) We reaffirm that the crisis of humanity is the crisis of working class leadership. The urgent need, therefore, is to build independent working class parties in every country — including Eastern Europe and the USSR — with the job of winning the working class and oppressed peoples in revolutionary struggle against imperialism and for the political revolution in the countries dominated by the stalinist bureaucracy. Intervention in social democratic or stalinist parties is with this purpose and subordinated to this aim.
- 4) We repudiate conceptions of self-reform of the stalinist bureaucracy and affirm that the political revolution can only be successful under the leadership of parties of the Fourth International.

But it was not possible. They would not join with us in accepting such general proposals.

From then on it became very clear that contrary to what may be the opinion in the SWP or anywhere else, the international discussion had to begin. We accordingly wrote the editorial in the *Labour Review* of August, 1959. Relations between ourselves and the SWP became very strained at that time. We decided to press for a further meeting and this was held in Toronto in February 1960. At that meeting we obtained agreement along the lines that it was impossible to push the parity proposals immediately, whilst it was decided to make every effort to continue the political clarification. Then comrade Hansen wrote to Kolpe and the Pabloites once again began making their periodic overtures in the winter of 1960. We decided to write our letter of January 2 to the SWP.

## *Difficulties of the International Committee*

The eight-year history of the International Committee is a history of political crisis mainly due to the fact that the real struggle against Pabloite revisionism was never consolidated. Because of the problems facing our own section we were unable to embark upon this for several years. Now, thanks to the growth and political development of the English movement, it is possible for us to begin immediately the serious international discussion.

Comrade Peng sneers about the slovenly work of the International Committee. We think he is going to find that things will be changed from now on. The work of our section is not carried out in a slovenly way because we have political agreement in the leadership. From now on we are going to work in the International Committee for such agreement with our co-thinkers, but we shall not hesitate to break sharply with all those who wish to remain in confusion over Pabloism.

Comrade Peng is impressed by Pablo's 'office'. The real political forces of the Fourth International will in time acquire all these amenities. In Britain we have no shortage of offices or equipment to wage the class struggle. We shall work might and main for the day when our international movement will have everything that it requires to conduct its work.

Comrade Peng speaks lightly about documents having been shelved. It is perfectly true that because of the political differences which constantly lurked in the background a thoroughgoing discussion did not take place in the International Committee. Nevertheless, serious attempts were made to begin this discussion. The most important of these was the Leeds conference in 1958, where delegates from South America, Canada, Germany, France, Switzerland and Britain met to discuss the problems. But nothing came of this meeting because the SWP were not prepared to continue the political struggle against Pablo. Each time we pressed for clarification, and each time we were blocked by what was apparently a wall of silence on the important political issues.

When comrade Peng refers to the Algerian question, he simply repeats old Pabloite slanders and stories. Let us briefly recapitulate the stand of the British section in relation to the Algerian National struggle.

We conditionally supported both wings of this movement in so far as they fought the French, but we reserved our right to criticize them

from a Marxist point of view if we considered this necessary. To speak about our visit to Messali Hadj in 1955 and to equate the situation at that time with Messali Hadj's support for De Gaulle in 1958 is one more demonstration of Peng's method. He is so anxious to score points that he is unable to see a living movement as it is. It might be said that in his overtures to De Gaulle, Messali Hadj found himself in the company of the right wing of the FLN.

The trouble with Peng is that in his eagerness to score his point he adopts Pabloite arguments without verifying them. He talks about Messali's soldiers going over to the French. By this he means the now famous Bellounis case. Had he checked his facts he would have found that this matter was cleared up long ago. Joan Gillespie, the American author, herself an ardent FLN supporter, explained the position of Bellounis in her book *Algeria, Rebellion and Revolution*. This is what he says; and her explanation is now accepted by everybody except perhaps the Pabloites.

In every conflict, there occur incidents which have no military significance, but create strong psychological effects upon world public opinion. Such an incident was the 'Melouza massacre' in Algeria in late May 1957. In one night in a small village in Central Algeria, 303 men, the total male population of the village, were said to have been killed by the FLN in cold blood because of their allegiance to the rival MNA. Shocked by this event, French President Côté called upon the 'universal conscience of mankind' to condemn the brutality. The facts in the case have not yet been fully revealed. No outside observer was able to count the dead, and the incident apparently did not occur in Melouza itself, but in a small village nearby. The FLN accused the French of instigating the massacre, and the MNA Secretary-General later implied that the French were indeed implicated. The FLN called on the United Nations Secretary-General to urge France to permit an investigation. The French Government did not accept, and after much discussion in the Press, the Melouza massacre received little subsequent attention.

Whether or not the conflict between the FLN and the MNS was behind the 'Melouza massacre', the situation in Central Algeria in mid-1957 illustrates the confusion and mixed loyalties of a colonial war. This area was the fief of 'General' Bellounis, a former member of the Central Committee of the MTLN, who had established his own *maquis* and paid a vague allegiance to Messali and the MNA. Finding himself unable to resist FLN military pressure, Bellounis accepted an arrangement with the French Army under which he received arms in return for resistance to the FLN. This tactic, which had been used earlier by the French in Vietnam,



particularly angered the FLN. And it may have been that this conflict provided the basis for the creation of a brutal FLN-MNA clash. The FLN was never fully able to liquidate the Bellounis *maquis*, and its existence remained a sore point until early 1958. Bellounis did not make a political agreement with the French, and refused to rally to the cause in May 1958 when the French Army called for closer co-operation between Muslim and Frenchmen in Algeria. Bellounis became a casualty of the colon-Army coup of 13 May. The French later claimed to have executed him.

Of course we greeted Messali in his struggle in 1955 as a national leader. We published his declaration of policy in English. But we never gave him whole-hearted support as if he were a Marxist leader. On the contrary, in 1957 when his organization began to move to the Right, we refused to print their English paper because they placed too much emphasis on the United Nations instead of the Algerian trade unionists in France. So far as we are concerned this marked the end of our relations with him long before they made overtures to De Gaulle.

In considering Messali's turn to De Gaulle, it is important to note the development which took place in his French trade union organization in the period 1956-1957. The terrorists from the FLN organized a series of murders of his leading trade union militants. This merely tipped the balance of power in the MNA so that more petty-bourgeois elements took control. We condemned these criminal acts of terror which greatly weakened the Algerian National Movement and strengthened French imperialism. On the other hand, the Pabloites condoned these murders. In this respect we were equally opposed to the methods of terror of the MNA, but they were by no means on the scale, at that time, of the FLN.

So far as Peng's 'correction' of his mistake in relation to the Open Letter of the SWP in November 1953 is concerned, we would simply ask that comrades read what he had to say in Appendix 4. [See volume 2 of this series — Ed.]

We have followed comrade Peng's document point by point. It is not our intention to let matters rest there. We shall shortly republish the Sinclair document and examine some of its conclusions in the light of the political evolution of Pabloism on a world scale. Comrade Peng need have no fear of us evading the arguments of Germain. There will be no more evasion and we shall treat the method of comrade Peng just the same as we shall treat the method of Pablo and Germain. As we said in the beginning, they belong essentially to the same impressionistic school of thought.

**DOCUMENT 12a****Political Report to the International Committee meeting of July 28-29, 1961, by C. Slaughter**

Since the publication of the Socialist Labour League's resolution on International Perspectives, the Convention of the SWP in June 1961 has adopted the International Resolution prepared by the SWP National Committee. The political line of this SWP Resolution, in the opinion of the SLL National Committee, shows a decided trend away from the fundamentals of Trotskyism, and makes urgently necessary a political discussion between the sections of the International Committee. Certainly there can be no question of 'unity' approaches to sections of the International Secretariat until the issues at stake in this discussion have been clarified.

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The fundamental weakness of the SWP resolution is its substitution of 'objectivism', i.e., a false objectivity, for the Marxist method. This approach leads to similar conclusions to those of the Pabloites. From his analysis of imperialism as the final stage of capitalism, Lenin concluded that the conscious revolutionary role of the working class and its party was all-important. The protagonists of 'objectivism' conclude, however, that the strength of the 'objective factors' is so great that, *regardless* of the attainment of Marxist leadership of the proletariat in its struggle, the working-class revolution will be achieved, the power of the capitalists overthrown. It is difficult to attach any other meaning than this to the SWP resolution's formulations about the 'impatience' of the masses who cannot delay the

revolution until the construction of a Marxist leadership. This means that the *existing* leaderships of the anti-imperialist forces will be forced 'by the logic of the revolution itself' to undertake the revolutionary leadership of the proletarian struggle for power. The SWP has not fully developed this theory, but in its attitude to Cuba it accepts exactly these conclusions. In the early 1950s the basis of the Pabloite notion that the Communist Parties and the Soviet bureaucracy would 'project a revolutionary orientation' followed from precisely this approach. A Marxist analysis must insist on this deviation in the SWP Resolution being thought through to the end. If the petty-bourgeois leadership in Cuba has been forced by the objective logic of events to lead the proletariat to power (the SWP says Cuba is a 'workers' state', which can only mean the dictatorship of the proletariat) then we must demand an analysis of the present world situation which shows how this type of event has become possible, so that the Leninist theory of the relation between class, party and power, must be discarded.

Similarly with the formulation in the SWP resolution about the construction of the revolutionary party *in the course of the revolution itself*. Again the implications of the formula must be thought through to the end. For us, such formulae only have meaning under the aspect of the general historical perspective of class relations. The SWP must show in what way 'objective factors' in the world situation make it *unnecessary* in some cases to prepare and construct a revolutionary leadership. The construction of such parties through periods of the blackest reaction, as well as in preparatory and pre-revolutionary periods, is the great historical work of Lenin and his followers. Even if Lenin and Trotsky were not wrong in *their* time to *prepare* such parties, does the SWP consider that in *our* time definite objective forces have ensured that there will be time enough for the construction of revolutionary parties *in the course of the revolution itself*? If so, they must describe to us exactly the qualitative change from the epoch of imperialism in which Lenin and Trotsky worked to our own era. If not, they must presumably return to the Leninist position on this question.

Unfortunately, the mistakes of the SWP on this question seem to be deep-going. Avoiding all along the line the concrete tasks of constructing revolutionary leaderships as the only *guarantee* of working-class success in the struggle for power, (and for Cuba specifically *renouncing* this necessity until *after* the revolution!) the SWP resolution is not averse to abstract statements about the construction of a world

revolutionary party. There can be no concessions on this point. The test of any Marxist's devotion to the construction of the International as the only leadership of the proletarian revolution will be his insistent work for the construction of the revolutionary party *in each country*. In the only concrete example taken by the SWP, that of Cuba, we see the concept of the Bolshevik Party specifically renounced.

Once the basic Marxist theory of leadership and consciousness is revised in this way, the door is open to a completely wrong method of evaluating the non-Marxist political tendencies. Leaders are described according to some general scale of 'progressive' or 'leftward-moving' (under the pressure of irreversible and mighty 'objective' forces, of course) instead of in their specific class role between imperialism and the world proletarian revolution. In this way the Trotskyist movement will be led into characterizing its *enemies* at definite stages in the struggle as more or less progressive tendencies, accepted by the 'impatient masses' because of the strength of the objective forces. Leading SWP spokesmen refer to Stalinism as 'the fracturing monolith' or the 'melting iceberg'. Great stress is laid upon the 'left turn' of Khrushchev. Here a series of impressions is substituted for social and political analysis, and the effect of the whole is to give an impression of leftward-moving general 'objective' processes at the expense of the necessity of independent political work in the proletariat.

The SLL National Committee regards this tendency towards objectivism as particularly dangerous at this time. Although faced with great mass struggles in the backward countries since 1945, and challenged by the great economic growth of the USSR and China, imperialism has in fact continued to maintain a relative stability. The role of the bourgeois nationalists, the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Social-Democracy in the old European powers, and the new bureaucracy centred on the UN, have enabled the imperialist economic machine to keep going despite the necessity for large political concessions. It is a basic necessity for all Marxists to have a clear class opposition to all these forces for the stabilization of imperialism, and to the reflection of these forces in the opportunists of the Labour and national-liberation movements. Capitulations to opportunism at this phase of imperialist development are the main danger to the revolutionary party. Only a consistent struggle against the opportunists, and against all those who fail to draw the political conclusions from their reactionary class role, can preserve the revolutionary party

from degeneration. Failure to develop theoretically, and to understand the contribution of all these trends to the needs of imperialism, can be the beginning of precisely such concessions and such dangers. The opinion of the SLL National Committee is that the SWP is in danger of following such a course. A 'soft' attitude to the basic characterization of non-Marxist political tendencies is the natural accompaniment of the failure to state correctly the role of the construction of revolutionary parties. We are asking, then, for an evaluation of the non-Marxist political leaders *not* on some abstract scale of 'progressiveness', of their response to 'objective forces' making for socialism, but *rather* on the basis of their actual class role in relation to those forces which help to give relative stability to imperialism in its present deep crisis. We long ago broke with the Pabloites because they capitulated to the bureaucracy. This means a capitulation to the forces preserving imperialism, and led directly to liquidationism. It was necessary to *break* with such methods if the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat was to be built.

The Pabloites found a formula — that the bureaucracy would be 'forced by mass pressure to project a revolutionary orientation' — which sounded like Marxism, and therefore misled many genuine would-be revolutionists. The use of Marxist-sounding formulae to cover up opportunist betrayals is nothing new in the history of the proletarian movement. We must ask the SWP to recognize the dangers in *their* formulae about non-proletarian forces actually leading the proletariat to power. Is not this a period when precisely the stress on the *spontaneous* (mass pressure) aspect of working-class struggle leaves the proletariat open to the domination and betrayal of alien class forces, so that its struggle can be *contained* within imperialism? Finished opportunist trends in the history of the Labour movement derive from the dominance of alien class ideas in the movement. Marxists must fight constantly on the theoretical front against any failure to understand the new forces of support for imperialism. From such a failure, combined with the ritualized repetition of Marxist phrases and terminology, can grow an objective covering-up for the new opportunists. Instead of stressing the need for constructing independent revolutionary leaderships in the backward countries and inside the Soviet Union, China and the Eastern European countries, as the *only* guarantee of proletarian victory, the SWP looks for ways of measuring how far to the Left the Stalinists and the nationalist petit-bourgeoisie can be driven by 'objective forces'. Is not this method in

danger of becoming a series of formulae to justify those who parade as revolutionaries before the masses but in fact have the function of preventing them from achieving the socialist revolution. The issue is posed sharply: does the SWP think the nationalist petit-bourgeoisie and/or the Stalinist bureaucracy, are *forced to play a revolutionary role*, by the pressure of objective forces moving in a socialist direction? If so, they are in duty bound to provide all the evidence for this and to *draw all the political conclusions from it*.

We would stress that even though such deviations derive not always from capitulation to alien class tendencies and often from lack of theoretical sharpness and development, and that the latter is, in our opinion, the case in the SWP, on the other hand if the differences are not thrashed out and mistakes corrected sharply and urgently, then there is great danger of a fundamental split.

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Another indication of this revisionist trend is the return to speculation about 'unity' with the Pabloites in the letter of comrade Peng and in statements of some SWP spokesmen. The Pabloite revisions marked a capitulation to the whole theory of socialism in one country (via capitulation to the Soviet bureaucracy), and a betrayal of the idea of international proletarian revolution, particularly of the stress on the leading role of the proletariat in the advanced countries. The return to 'unity' proposals is directly associated with the tendency in the SWP to find a road to the existing petit-bourgeois leadership (in this case in Cuba) rather than to focus primary attention on the construction of Marxist parties. Comrade Cannon even preserves the *slogan* of revolutionary socialist parties but *in Cuba* acknowledges the leadership of *Castro* for such a party. We are not told what the Trotskyists in this party will do. Will they have their own discipline? Or will they accept *Castro's* discipline? What will be their relation to the Stalinists who, according to Hansen, will be in such a party?

It is only if the theoretical revisions of the SWP resolution are taken to their logical conclusion that 'unity' with the Pabloites becomes a feasible prospect. For our part, we do not agree that, as Hansen and Peng put it, 'the political differences have narrowed', let alone agree with Peng that the original split could have been avoided. The recent writings of Germain (Mandel) on the Belgian strike (*Les Temps Modernes* July 1961) show the results of the Pabloite capitulation to the

bureaucracy. In a long 'essay in socio-economic explanation' of the strike, Germain neglects almost completely the role of conscious political leadership. When he does finally acknowledge that the centrist trade union leaders became at certain stages the principal obstacle to further advance, he hastily adds: 'But this is only (!) one side of the coin', and proceeds to whitewash their betrayal by pointing out that had they not done the work they did in the decade before . . . there would have been no great strike for them to betray!! Are we to unify with such abject apologists for the social-traitors?

There is danger of falling into this type of trap if the mistakes of the SWP resolution are not corrected. Here we will mention only the distortion in this document of the theory of Permanent Revolution. As outlined by Trotsky, this theory emphasizes *specifically* the leading role of the proletariat. The *last* conclusion he would expect to be drawn from it was that *without* independent proletarian struggle and organization the *socialist* revolution could be carried through. In 1917 the theory was confirmed by Trotsky's joining the Bolshevik Party, prepared over 15 years by Lenin. This is how Marxist theories in our epoch are *confirmed*, not by the unconscious adaptation of the petit-bourgeoisie to 'mass pressure'. Which is it to be? An understanding of the role of Castro in terms of the theory of Permanent Revolution, a theory derived from the whole panorama of imperialist development? Or the *rejection* of the theory of Permanent Revolution by generalization from the temporary and one-sided judgment of Castro's July 26 Movement? This is only another aspect of the departure from dialectical method which is involved in objectivism. It is because of the revolutionary role of the politically independent international proletariat that the development of imperialism in all its aspects can be grasped as a whole in the theories of Lenin and Trotsky. Once this is forsaken and the role of the masses reduced to that of a generator of 'pressure from below' with all conscious direction left to the other classes and their representatives, then the old formal method of examining reality piece by piece on a series of 'examples' is restored, and the revolutionaries are reduced to the same petty empiricism as the nationalist petit-bourgeois leadership itself. Castro and Che Guevara have expressed this better than anyone else. The SWP resolution adds a Marxist blessing: 'They followed the dialectical logic of the revolution rather than the formal logic of their own programme'.

In summary then, the imperialists are being enabled to achieve a temporary stabilization not only through the Labour aristocracy but

also through the existence of new and powerful forces, namely the petit-bourgeois occupants of bureaucratic and state positions in the new national states, the international agencies of the United Nations. The opportunists who man the state apparatus and international parties of the Soviet bureaucracy, together with the remnants of Social-Democracy in the trade unions and parliaments of a few advanced countries, depend upon and reflect the pressure of these new forces. The petit-bourgeois intelligentsia of the advanced countries, from its conservative and conformist Right to its fake liberal and Left wing, provides the ideological weapons for this reactionary role of the new opportunists. To mistake the manoeuvres and vacillations and bargainings of these bureaucracies and their ideological counterparts for signs of a general Left trend representing 'irreversible forces' is once again to miss the main point of Marxism, the need for consciousness of the proletariat's objective role in order to change history, and the evaluation of all political trends from that viewpoint.

It is reactionary twaddle to claim the actions of petit-bourgeois leaders as 'confirmations' of the theory of Permanent Revolution. This amounts to one of two things (or possibly both): (a) It absolves people who call themselves Trotskyists from 'confirming' precisely in practice, on the arena of working class struggle, the theory of Permanent Revolution; and (b) it covers up a capitulation to the new opportunists and their role with fine talk about confirming the theories of Trotsky. We believe that the Pabloites represent this capitulation and that their practical liquidationism is the consequence. The results of Pablo's activities have proved to be disastrous. The policies which gave rise to these activities flowed from a fundamental revision of Marxist method, a retreat from the central importance of conscious revolutionary action of the working class. They led to the abandonment of the construction of revolutionary parties; it is impossible to maintain relations with what is frankly a liquidationist trend of ten years consistent activity.

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The other question that now arises for us is the attitude of certain comrades who at first went along with us in the characterization of Pablo's method and programme but now begin to incline towards not only unity with the Pabloites but also a political drift towards some of Pablo's fundamental weaknesses. This refers particularly to the



majority of the leadership of the SWP, including comrade Cannon. The letter of comrade Peng in Paris is in the same category.

Peng's reasons for unity turn on the SLL's 'organizational methods', 'the regime', etc. This is of the same genre as the persistent looking for friends and even recruits in the nationalist leaderships. Both derive from lack of confidence that the revolutionary cadre can itself establish a relationship with the working class, a party which can lead the workers to power. Instead of deeper and deeper analysis of the class positions, deeper and deeper penetration of the working class itself, constant building and testing of the revolutionary cadre in every country, the plea is for a united front of doctrine and platform to impress the petty bourgeois and centrist elements who are constantly being pushed forward in the struggle. This is all that can be meant by comrade Peng's insistence on the importance of unity in order to 'take advantage of the great opportunities'.

Look at this statement carefully. Peng considers that both the Pabloites and the sections of the International Committee have failed to grow and to build anything in recent years — 'our movement, because of the continuing existence of the split, has not only been unable to leap forward by utilizing the favourable objective conditions; on the contrary, it has been stagnant in many countries, even moving backward'. The trick in this analysis is the unproved statement that the failure of the movement to grow is attributable to the split. It is strange if an organizational measure can historically reverse a whole political trend. There is in fact no evidence for such a claim whatsoever. Correct policies and methods of work in the class will find a response under favourable conditions, and organizational details will not stand in the way independently for long. The fact is that comrade Peng has now decided that the split with Pablo was a mistake and need never have happened. We cannot agree with one word of this, and consider it a disastrous retreat from 1953.

Comrade Peng quotes favourably the letter of February 6 from the SWP, in which they say that 'Great new opportunities for Trotskyism, signalized by such events as the Cuban Revolution, the freedom struggles in the Mideast and Africa, the upsurge in Japan, the Belgian general strike, etc. are now opening before us. If our movement were united we could take much better advantage of them and achieve a much faster rate of growth in many areas and on a much more solid foundation than is possible with a movement split into factions warring over issues which they are unable to make clear to the

socialist-minded working-class vanguard'. We believe that this too fits in with the tendency of the SWP leaders to see themselves not so much as builders of independent revolutionary parties in the working class as 'ideas men' who hope to be 'discovered' by the existing petit-bourgeois leaderships thrown up by the mass struggle. This emphasizes again the danger of Marxist theory becoming a set of fixed formulae to justify the existing situation rather than a guide to action. The stress given to the need to recruit from Castro's leadership rather than to the building of the revolutionary party in Cuba is a logical extension of this position. The cry for 'unity' is an attempt to become disembarassed of the awkward questions that might crop up in the course of negotiations. In this approach the basis of Marxism is forgotten. When non-proletarian tendencies, because of the unresolved crisis of working-class leadership, achieve the leadership of mass movements, their consciousness is *bourgeois* consciousness. This was the whole meaning of Lenin's struggle against Economism. The ideas of these non-Marxist leaderships must be defeated in struggle, for they are the ideas of bourgeois society, part of bourgeois ideology. The adoption by such people of Marxist phrases and formulae might be very useful to them, but it means nothing to us. There is a long history of such people.

There are serious political consequences of these theoretical differences. If the 'new reality' of the SWP resolution includes the recognition of petit-bourgeois leaderships as *revolutionary* in the fight of the proletariat against imperialism, then recognize the practical conclusions for Marxist revolutionaries. It is surely implied that the petit-bourgeoisie is a viable class with a great historical destiny, and that the role of the conscious proletarian vanguard at this stage is quite different from what we had thought. Once again we say, the revisions must be thought through to the end, just as Trotsky demanded of those who rushed to characterize the Soviet bureaucracy *a class*, a *necessary* historical organ in the development of society, rather than as an 'accidental' excrescence on the process of world revolution, that they elaborate their programme for that unique epoch of history .

### Conclusions

With such a serious division of opinion in the International Committee, 'unity' discussions with the International Secretariat are out of the question. The Socialist Labour League National Committee with

the backing of its National Conference, has determined the theoretical struggle against their idiosyncrasies with the SWP and with comrade Peng. V. I.C. The only grounds for unity discussions revolutionary alternative to those in the IS rank our position. Our opinion is that the incorrect the SWP make such an effective approach in It is not a question at this stage of approaches a thorough political discussion in our own rank the basis of material exchanged already, and International Perspectives document to be published in *Labour Review*, the discussion be immediately for an international conference in the Summer by the committee of the main line of this report discussion with the SWP.

**DOCUMENT 12b****Reply to discussion.**

Many comrades have taken up questions in such a way that they seem not to start from the most important and general considerations. If in fact you agree with our condemnation of tendencies towards the acceptance of 'spontaneity', precisely when the stress on conscious intervention is primarily important against the adaptations of imperialism, then all the conclusions of a determined struggle against the degeneration of Trotskyism must be drawn. This may be the last chance for a long time to draw out all the lessons of the necessary split with Pablo in 1953, which held up to our eyes the full meaning of how far the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky could be distorted. We have a chance to learn these lessons and rebuild the Fourth International. But if the dangers in the SWP position are not seen in this perspective, and decisive action taken to remove them, then there is every danger that the American section and possibly others will be wrecked. If the 'new' theory of the socialist revolution in Cuba is accepted there will be no more Trotskyism in South America, in Africa, and possibly none elsewhere, for the tendency is towards the Pabloite retreat from independent working-class politics, towards capitulation to the bureaucracy and the petit-bourgeois nationalists. This tendency, and the neglect of the primary need to recruit, cherish and develop the revolutionary cadre of the Fourth International, will lead to suicide if it is victorious.

In the discussion comrade Bloch quoted from the International Secretariat resolution to its Sixth Congress. This quotation suggested that the economic, social and political structure of modern Africa produced groupings and institutions whose laws of development were different from those of class society as we know it. Comrade Jacques

concentrated his fire on the inadmissability of quoting out of context, at the same time stating his 'general' agreement with our methodological criticisms of the SWP resolution. But this is a strange procedure. Comrade Jacques knows perfectly well that the Pabloite method is perfectly consistent with the quotation made by comrade Bloch and he knows that the same method is by no means averse to numerous formally correct statements of the Marxist position 'in general'. So why, when it is really a question of taking a position on the dangers to Trotskyism represented by the SWP position, does he drift into these secondary and formal questions? This indicates a tendency to run away from the practical urgency of the conclusions to be drawn from his stated 'agreement' on the main point of *method*. Comrade Jacques accepts, he says, that Pabloism is a definite centrist tendency. He must draw the *political conclusion* of a necessary *break* with Pabloism, and a determined theoretical *fight* against those who refuse to make the break. The practical activity of the Pabloites helps the opportunists in all spheres. And so we condemn anyone in our ranks who wants to make unity proposals to these people because they are *called* Trotskyists. There have been many quotations from Marx in the discussion. One of his injunctions was to judge people by their political actions and not by their professions of faith.

It is true that the present situation presents us with great opportunities, *but* it is *absolutely wrong* to try to 'grasp these opportunities' by solidarizing ourselves precisely with those who have departed from revolutionary theory and practice. The forces to whom we often have to make a road are *breaking* from the very apparatuses and leaders to which Pabloism bows and scrapes and in fact capitulates. In our own ranks the SWP sees the 'grasping of opportunities' quite superficially. It talks about the importance of deep objective currents which favour the proletariat, but all its *politics* are directed to the surface leaderships which have the allegiance of the masses as a result of the unresolved working-class crisis of leadership. This is *not* 'grasping the opportunities', but it is the real meaning behind the false method and theory of the SWP resolution. *Because* such great opportunities are opening up, are revealing *crises* and *fissures* in Social Democracy, in Stalinism and in mass movements everywhere, *therefore* we must be absolutely clear, decisively clear on the meaning of capitulation to theories of spontaneity in our own ranks, and to the theories of 'mass pressure', 'socialism in one country', etc. which flow from it. The role of such ideas is to *disarm* us in face of these opportunities. And so the talk

about the importance of unity in order to grasp opportunities is really *the opposite* of what it claims to be. We ask that comrades make their criticism of the SLL International Resolution from this practical point of view, as we do, from the point of view of strengthening the fight against these capitulations.

If this attitude is taken, then we believe that some comrades will agree they have been wrong to state the differences in such terms as 'The SWP resolution is too "objective", the SLL too "subjective" in emphasis'. It is not at all a question of emphasis here, of a bit of good on both sides, but of a whole difference of *line*. Comrades are wrong to suppose that we criticize the SWP resolution for being too objective, for looking at objective facts. It is *objectivism*, a mistaken method, to which we object. As has been said, Marx established the truly objective method in social science — to start from the production relations, and the dominance of particular classes in that structure of relations and in the superstructure built upon it. We have explained in our letter on the SWP resolution the reason why only the *working class* can adopt this method and its revolutionary consequences. But is the SWP resolution based on such an objective approach, despite its constant harping on 'favourable objective factors'? On the contrary, it nowhere gives us an analysis of the development of modern capitalism, of the relations between imperialism, the new politically independent states, and the workers' states. For this objective analysis it substitutes a compound of optimistic *impressions* about 'favourable objective forces'. History appears to be moving in our direction.

The turn to 'objectivist' theory and method is not accidental. It arises at specific stages in the history of the working-class movement. It constitutes a retreat before the enormity of new tasks, before the new theoretical work required, before the necessity of a definite *break* with opportunist trends and their class basis. Marx had to conquer the ideas of mechanical materialism before the transition could be made from petit-bourgeois domination of the proletariat in the democratic movement to the independent socialist politics of the proletariat. The Mensheviks and the leading German Social-Democrats, when confronted with the problems of the epoch of imperialism, found refuge in theories of mechanical stages for each country, so long as these did not indicate proletarian revolution. Lenin had to reassert the Marxist theory of 'practical consciousness', the idea of the working class as the 'subject' of the historical process in the epoch of imperialism's decline

as a world system. From this flowed his revolutionary defeatism and his insistence on the 'Party of a new type'. Later Stalinism, adapting theory to the Soviet bureaucracy's relation with imperialism, gave us another version of 'objectivism' in the theories of 'socialism in one country', and the 'two stages' of the colonial revolution, a trend continued in the recent declaration of the 81 Communist Parties.

We face a similar turning-point today. The situation in the colonial countries could be a fatal one for imperialism if the international working class could grasp the historical initiative. Instead, there arises a tendency to look for formulae to *agree* with those who represent the given backward consciousness of the masses. In March and April 1917, the leading Bolsheviks who said 'support the Provisional Government' at the same time went into raptures about the 'confirmation' of the theory of 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry'. This failure to grasp the initiative confirmed Trotsky's earlier brilliant prophecy that the weakness in Bolshevik theory would only give rise to danger on the eve of the revolution itself. Lenin broke the deadlock: he insisted on the role of the masses and on an independent Bolshevik programme. I am discussing here not any direct analogy between 1917 in Russia and any contemporary revolution (though no doubt some could be found!) but the *method* and *theoretical approach* of Lenin as compared with the 'objectivists'. We see in Lenin's *rejection* of 'support for the government' and his slogan 'to the masses' what is meant by programmes and theories being *confirmed*. We try to confirm the theory of Permanent Revolution and of the crisis of leadership by fighting for them as *programmes*. The SWP resolution separates these as two separate abstract forecasts.

Comrades have pointed to gaps and weaknesses in the SLL resolution. But what is present in every section of the resolution, despite its weaknesses, is the *objective* effect on the situation of imperialism of the actions of the traitorous working-class leaderships and the other forces helping in the continued existence, relative expansion and temporary stabilization of imperialism as a world system. This is precisely what is lacking in the SWP resolution, which is too replete with 'inevitable processes'. One is tempted to ask: 'What does the betrayal of leadership matter anyhow? What does a liquidationist tendency in our movement matter? We have entered a period where petit-bourgeois leaders are *forced* to become revolutionaries! Revolutionary parties will in any case arise *in the course of the revolution* itself! It will all come right in the end'.

No one in the discussion has really tried to defend these concepts in the SWP resolution. It has been said that we are setting up a court to try the SWP in its absence. This is not the question. The SWP Convention has accepted a resolution. If the IC sees real dangers in such a resolution, it is its duty to analyse and thoroughly criticize it, and to initiate a world-wide discussion of the deep differences that are revealed. Comrade Peng complains of the references by comrade Healy to the failure of the SWP to check the theoretical degeneration of the Fourth International up to 1950, before which it sent support to Pablo in Paris. Comrade Peng says that comrade Healy should criticize his own failure in this respect too, and that the financial support reflected true internationalism on the SWP's part. Comrade Healy rightly replied that he was not in fact a member of the leadership of the British section at that time. But in any case this argument, together with comrade Peng's reference to earlier occasions when he opposed Pablo and comrade Healy did not, is beside the point. We are trying to initiate a discussion on the reasons for the present position in the International, in terms of its development since Trotsky's death. The answers will not be found by a reckoning of scores. The SWP was right to give support to the International although it could not be a member for legal reasons, but its failure to develop theory, as the leading party in the International, is vitally important.

Comrade Peng takes us to task for comparing the present discussion with that between the Bolsheviks and the centrists in 1914-1917. We think the question was very well posed by comrade Peng himself in his article *Pabloism Reviewed*, when he wrote 'If Bernstein's revisionism has been proved completely bankrupt in the light of the First World War, if Stalin's revisionism was exposed by its betrayal of the 1933 German Revolution, then Pablo's revisionism revealed its real face in the light of the East German insurrection of June 1953 and the French General Strike of August 1953'. We think that is correct today.

We cannot accept the method used by the German comrades in leaning towards unity. They have said that among their youth contacts in West Berlin the publications of the Pabloites circulate and we have nothing to offer. They blame the split for the fact that many youth who are attracted by Trotskyism eventually leave politics or go into the Social-Democracy. This seems false logic to us. In Britain we have consistently opposed the Pabloites in the Social-Democratic Youth Sections, and yet we have a strong and promising youth movement. These examples prove very little. The important question



is of consistent work among the youth, and it seems to us that at least a minimum amount of duplicated material could be published. Unity with the German Pabloite section will surely solve nothing. The French comrades tell us that Pablo's organization in Germany is largely devoted to errand-boy work for the FLN. Can such an organization solve the great problems of this vital sector of the European working class? The German comrades say large numbers of German workers and youth reject the Social-Democratic bureaucracy. Will they be satisfied with the alternative offered by an international tendency which capitulates to elements in that bureaucracy? We ask the German comrades to begin from the *general* political questions between us, the SWP and the Pabloites, and not from their *particular* organizational difficulties. We will assist from the British section in every way we can: we propose to send one comrade to Germany for a short visit, and to invite any young comrades in Germany to cadre schools in England.

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Comrade Peng says the SWP resolution starts from objective considerations. But to what conclusion does this 'objective investigation of 'new reality' lead us? *In the abstract*, to the need to build the revolutionary party. This we know already. *In practice*, all that is new in the resolution in this respect is the theory of spontaneous revolutions and the creation of revolutionary parties 'in the course of revolution itself'! Were Lenin and Trotsky wrong to fight for the construction of parties in periods that were 'objectively' non-revolutionary? Even if *every* Trotskyist has been crushed, as so many were, between the millstones of Nazism and Stalinism, would that have meant Trotsky's struggle to build the Fourth International had been a gross miscalculation? Would he have been guilty of misjudging the objective trend and exposing the cadre to unnecessary risks? No one here would dare to say so, but that is the logical conclusion from the *objectivist* mistakes of the SWP. The question that follows from the SWP resolution today is: Why not liquidate the Trotskyist parties? We must stop this trend before it is too late.

**DOCUMENT 13**

**Extract from the Minutes of the NEC of the Socialist Labour League, February 3, 1962.**

*(J. H-n also present)*

*International Report*

G. HEALY gave report. He pointed out that we had had long relations with the SWP covering the emergence of Pabloism in 1953. He stressed the need for discussion between us at the present time. He spoke of the great contribution that had been made by the SWP in relation to the split with Schachtman. He spoke of the role of Pablo. Pablo's methods served political ends. He had put a question mark over the party. This was revisionism as a result of adaptation to trends within the Soviet bureaucracy. It was not a tactical question but an assault on the teaching of Trotskyism. While the Pabloites continue to speak about Marxism they have, in fact, set their course away from the construction of Marxist parties. You could not judge Pabloism on one article or action but only by examining their whole course and how it has worked out in practice since the split of 1953.

The way to fight the danger of splits was by clarifying the political issues. When you avoided clarification then the movement begins to disintegrate. There is the danger of an insular approach to problems and internationalism growing inside the SWP. This can cause the disintegration of the SWP cadres. Some people say: if you have discussion you will have differences. But if you do not have discussion you will have confusion. We should establish the maximum working relations wherever we could between the SWP and the SLL. HEALY asked H N whether the SWP intended to work out preparations for an international congress as soon as possible in order to seek a principled unification with the Pabloites. We should draw up a series of points for agreement as the basis of such a congress — adherence to

the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International; for the construction of revolutionary parties in all countries; for the development of an international leadership — bearing in mind the bitter experiences with the Pabloites in this field in the past. These points could be presented to the Pabloites and then discussed at an international congress.

The Pabloites dream of the SWP joining the International Secretariat. That may well happen if political policies come together. If we can clarify the position by discussion we can help to reorganize the international movement and prepare the way for wider unification and assist the ranks of the Pabloites through discussion. A major discussion on the entry question is needed. Opportunism has to be discussed. There is no other way to build the International. The founding of the Fourth International was the result of similar discussions. We need a sharp break from all those who just keep saying 'we want unity' but who at the same time do not want discussion at any price. Just as we need to break from any sectarian elements who may negatively use 'discussion' as a weapon to prevent the reorganization of the Fourth International.

H N stated that he was on a fact-finding tour. Two things puzzled him. One was Healy's statement that the SWP was becoming insular in its approach. He also asked why HEALY thought the cadres were disintegrating.

HEALY replied that he made that remark because the SWP had failed to discuss with the SLL on any of the matters raised in our documents since January 1961. Cadres faced disintegration because of the SWP's failure to discuss with the SLL theoretically which deprived the American cadres of important political work.

H N thought this was an extreme position to take. To take such an attitude on the basis of the last thirteen months did not hold. He pointed out that the SWP had a long record of many years' work in the international movement.

HEALY stated in reality there had been no real political agreement for several years. The international resolutions of the two organizations were now diametrically opposed.

H N stated that in 1957 the SWP had the impression that we thought eye-to-eye about international Pabloism, etc. He said the present differences were a mystery to him.

HEALY explained some of the history of the leadership of the SLL, their experience in the RCP and the struggle with Pabloism. In 1957

when the SWP claimed differences were growing less, we were undergoing an important theoretical development. The British section at that time was winning members from the Communist Party. We did not want a conflict with the SWP. Today we say the differences with Pablo are greater. The SWP say they are growing less. This is all the more reason for a discussion between us.

H N stated that he appreciated HEALY'S frankness and said he had heard rumours of differences. When they (the SWP) wrote the Open Letter of 1953 their intention was to begin a really serious fight on the whole problem of Pabloism. They could not do that because of difficulties beyond their control. It was not that the SWP did not want to meet the British. The differences over Pablo were not nearly so serious as the differences over Cuba. If we get it down in black and white in whatever form you like we will discover that our appreciation of Pablo is pretty much the same. The SWP had considered Pabloism essentially on the organizational field and it was the same with the Schachtman question. This was an element in that fight which in the last analysis was linked to political positions, but the political positions did not exist at that time and it took several years for the position of Schachtman to come out, i.e., on the USSR, the character of the state, the dialectic, etc. H N said that instead of these differences on a political level — which we separate from the organizational questions for analytical purposes — we had a seen a shift back to orthodox positions, for example on the Hungarian Revolution which was a test of where the Pabloites stood on the USSR. The SWP therefore had come to the conclusion that the political differences were narrowing.

A COMRADE FROM JAPAN intervened and asked H N whether his way of thinking was different from the Pabloite school. He pointed out that H N opposed Pablo on organizational questions and stated that one could not separate the method from the politics.

H N said he agreed but said that for analytical purposes the political position is separate from the organizational questions.

H N said that following the Cuban revolution they had got a whole series of weekly papers and followed *Revolucion* closely. Their people had visited Cuba. They were in touch with Cubans in the USA. They had made an analysis of Cuba. They thought it was a workers' state. This was an extension of the analysis of China. You can say our analysis of China was right in 1955 and the analysis of Cuba is wrong today. It is linked with the discussions on whether Eastern European countries are workers' states. We do not think you have followed the

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Cuban events. Not a single group in the whole of Latin America supported the SLL position. The question of Cuba was much more important than all the differences over Pabloism between 'your party and our party'. If you were afraid of the Pabloites then you would have a problem, but if you had your principles you could not fear to lose anything to the Pabloites. It should be handled on a tactical level.

HUNTER pointed out that SLL differences with the Pabloites were not based on tactical questions. Young members of the League understood our differences with the Pabloites because they were constantly coming into contact with them in the youth movement. The SWP mainly viewed Pabloism from the organizational field, but we knew that organizational disputes arose from political differences and our differences with Pabloites were on fundamental questions. In looking at any question we had to start from the whole world situation and the past experiences and lessons of the working class. Pabloism challenged the whole past of the Trotskyist movement. He took up the question of Hungary where the Pabloites had hailed the Declaration of October 5, 1956 as a tremendous contribution by the Soviet leadership.

HUNTER explained the perspective of the Pabloites in relation to the British Labour Party which involved 'organizing the Left to take dominant positions in the Labour Party' and this led to following silently behind Left centrists who had no intention of defeating the Right wing.

H N: You are obviously convinced that Pabloism is more important than Cuba. We view the revolution as the most profound stage in the American revolution.

HEALY: What is involved with the Pabloites is the whole past and future of the fight for Marxism.

H N: We start empirically with the Cuban revolution. I will write that down and sign it if you like.

SLAUGHTER pointed out that a Pabloite publication had gone even further and declared Guinea a workers' state.

M. BANDA spoke of what internationalism meant and pointed out that it meant political collaboration. The SWP had regarded the dispute with the Pabloites as a factional struggle between themselves and the Pabloites. We did not consider ourselves as a faction within the Fourth International. We had conducted a public quarrel with the Pabloites which had been put forward in Labour Review. The SLL had said 'down with revisionism in the movement' and compared the

Pabloites with Kautsky. We were not afraid, it was a question of a struggle for the Fourth International. If the SWP starts from organizational concepts it is putting the cart before the horse. He pointed out the politics of Pablo. Before the Eighth Plenum, slump was the order of the day; before the Ninth it was an impending war. Then came centuries of degenerated workers' states. The methods come after, not before the politics. M. BANDA referred to *In Defence of Marxism*. These were the reasons why the British section had agreed 100 per cent with the Open Letter. The SWP was correct in conducting this battle — but it had only been a battle, not a war, and the war had continued in Europe. He referred to Pablo's methods in France and said we were not going back to those methods. He mentioned how Pablo accused the British section of being imperialist agents while he was in this country, and pointed out the actions taken by the SLL to defend Pablo when he was in jail recently.

M. BANDA ran through the policies adopted by the Pabloites. They had written off the American working class as apathetic and thought that nothing was possible in the US until there was a war. They had said nothing was possible in Europe. They had made the colonies the centre of the revolution, and today they were suggesting that Russia was becoming such a centre. Pabloism was a far greater danger than the Schachtman tendency. He made several criticisms of the line of *The Militant* — particularly in relation to its first comments on the Soviet H-bomb tests and the first article on Korea by H N.

COMRADE FROM JAPAN asked: Is your opinion the official position of your party? Is your view popular in the party?

H N: We speak as individuals. The position I have put on Cuba is now our official position.

SLAUGHTER referred to H N's remarks that they had heard rumours and said this made him very angry as many comrades had spent many hours over writing these documents explaining the SLL views to the SWP. The SLL was asked to prepare a draft for the IC. How do you build a revolutionary party? This was the difference between the SLL and the Pabloites. Slaughter took up the attitude of the Pabloites to the Soviet Union and H N's article in the ISR. He referred to our experiences in England with Pabloite supporters in the Labour youth movement.

G. HEALY then said he had two questions he would like an answer to. First: Did the SWP intend to collaborate with the SLL within the International Committee. Second: Did the SWP intend to assist the

IC to prepare an International Congress where the political differences can be clarified? Marxism was a general science and that within science empirical data is used but it was the Marxist method which dominated.

H N stated that he did not accept Healy's remarks regarding empiricism. 'We start empirically'. As far as Latin America was concerned, he was not trying to frighten the SLL but was simply telling them that their policy in Latin America was suicidal for the Fourth International. 'I see that from our point of view collaboration is on very shaky grounds. All these things are very new to me'.

HEALY pointed out that during the past many letters, documents and resolutions had been sent to the SWP requesting discussion. Unfortunately none had been forthcoming.

H N said he would report to his committee that he had been asked two questions. 1. Did the SWP intend to work in the IC and with the SLL in clarifying questions. 2. Did the SWP intend to work with the SLL for an international congress? And that subsequent to this it became clear to me that your feeling is, that differences have become so serious that these questions have to be raised. I will ask our committee to give you a formal reply.

SLAUGHTER: May I ask if there has been a political discussion on our communications?

H N: You may ask. There is the mail.

SLAUGHTER: I'm asking you here.

H N stated that the Committee had received all communications, and they had not known what the SLL was getting at.

Discussion adjourned until Sunday morning

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*International Discussion continued:*

HEALY stated that the SLL wanted to obtain political agreement with the SWP but in order to attain this it was necessary to discuss the political method of Pabloism.

H N stated that he had told Germain and Frank that while the differences had narrowed on political questions they were still wide on organizational questions. They argued that their organization was democratic centralist, etc. 'I said it was not democratic centralism'.

HUNTER: What are the organizational differences with the Pabloites?

H N: We need the same international as the Fourth International. Our difference with Pablo in 1953 was that he was acting in a bureaucratic way — a type of bureaucratic centralism. An individual like Pablo, who represented nothing, could intervene in any section. We have not changed our views on that issue.

SLAUGHTER said that the SLL did not accept the idea that the IC and the IS had grown closer together. Since 1956 we had been able to do more theoretical work and we think that the conceptions of Pabloism prevent the revolutionary movement developing. We think the differences are on method and politics. The political statements of the SWP are closer to the Pabloites. Pabloism was a danger to our movement. Did we still accept that Stalinism is a counter-revolutionary force in the Labour movement? That it was therefore necessary to develop independent working-class parties and oppose the Stalinists? The Cuban Communist Party was a Stalinist party, so was the American CP. We intervene in the British Communist Party to win members by opposing the Stalinist leadership. The questions that arise in the British Communist Party are: is a political revolution necessary in the USSR? Can we reform the Communist Party? Are other independent parties needed? These basic questions must be answered. Could we answer them by accommodating ourselves to Pablo's revisionism?

The method of Pabloism was impressionism. It is impossible to build the Marxist movement without opposing all trends that adapt themselves to pressures. We are opposed to all petty-bourgeois opportunists. We are also opposed to Stalinism. At the present time many of the Stalinist leaders are going over to the Right. We could have had a general strike in Britain this January — but there is a crisis of leadership. The question was not 'How do we get closer to the Pabloites' but how to get closer to the working class in this particular phase of imperialism. In this country the approach to working-class youth was all important. We had seen Pabloism in action here.

Pabloism was a degeneration of Trotskyism. The Pabloites are *not* a faction of the Fourth International. Two years ago the colonial revolution was supposed to be the centre of the world revolution. Now they say the most decisive force is that 'elite' that controls the state. (*Fourth International*, Winter 1961). Khrushchev also says state capitalism in the colonial countries can be a progressive force. Those petty-bourgeois forces which the SWP characterizes as 'Left wing



forces' we say are petty-bourgeois forces which imperialism depends on in its present development. *The Militant* had reproduced an article from Tribune by Fletcher without requesting information about this man from the SLL. In this country the Pabloites teamed up with the state capitalists. There was no possibility of any agreement with the Pabloites through discussion, but we should try and win people from the Pabloites. There was a danger that the theoretical mistakes made by Pablo were now being made by the SWP.

H N said he had heard of the differences, but thought they were more over Cuba than Pablo. He had heard that in the opinion of the SLL the SWP had degenerated.

HUNTER: Trotsky taught us to draw out the politics; that is what we have done. He wanted the SWP to reply to the SLL documents.

HEALY said he did not want any misunderstanding over the word degenerate. It was necessary to educate the cadre. The international discussion would educate the British section. A similar discussion would assist the American section. If such discussion did not take place then there was a real danger that the cadres of the SLL as well as those of the SWP would politically degenerate.

H N said he had no immediate feelings to put to the SLL, but thought progress would be made.

HEALY asked H N if he thought it would be a good idea to extend the discussion to the Pabloites.

H N replied that he had just come in from Brazil and needed to think about it.

H N was asked whether the Pabloites had mentioned the SLL to him in Paris. He said he had not discussed it at all with them.

**DOCUMENT 14****Minutes of the Political Committee of the  
Socialist Workers Party, February 21, 1962.**

**Present:** Dobbs, Hansen, Murry, Tim [Wohlforth], Wood, Chester, Kerry, Lavan, Carl.

**Chairman:** Tim

**Agenda:** 1. Plenum: 2. Information Report

**1. PLENUM**

**Motion by Dobbs:** (1) To schedule a four-day plenum at the camp on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 14, 15, 16 and 17th.

(2) To project as the plenum agenda:

1. World Movement
2. Political Report
3. Youth Report
4. Negro Struggle
5. Organizational Report

**DOBBS:** We will need a four-day plenum because we have quite a bit of ground to cover and it appears from the experience at the last convention that it will be feasible for the comrades to attend on that basis. In addition, it is helpful if we can proceed without working day and night in formal sessions.

Concerning matters to be dealt with, it is self-evident that the question of the world movement will have to receive thorough consideration at the plenum. Between now and the plenum the NC members will be receiving from Hansen a report similar to that made at the enlarged political committee meeting. On that basis it should be possible for us to initiate discussion of the subject in the PC and with the NC in preparation for the plenum.

In the political report we need to bring up-to-date our analysis of the developing objective situation along lines similar to those projected at the last convention and make more concrete our evaluation of rising possibilities for increased party activity in the mass movement while continuing our general propaganda work. The anti-war movement has gained further momentum since the convention. The civil rights struggle is deepening. There are significant indications of growing potential for Left-wing development in the unions. Also, we have had quite a bit of new evidence since the convention of continuing ferment in the CP that holds forth the prospect of reaching some new forces in that quarter.

We should, along these lines, evaluate our general perspectives for political activity in the period ahead, thinking in terms of both the development of new potential around dissident CP'ers and reaching out for newly radicalized forces in the various spheres of the mass movement. As a corollary to that process we must deepen our analysis of rightist trends in the country and also look to the possibilities of mobilizing broad forces on the left to combat the rightists and to defend victims of the witch-hunt.

The youth report will deal with similar political questions as they relate particularly to the youth. Discussion of both the party and youth perspectives along this line should help to facilitate youth-party co-operation.

The negro struggle should be on the agenda as a special point in view of the new developments that have taken place in the civil rights movements and the new problems that have arisen. Under the political report it would seem practical simply to deal with the negro struggle as one general category of the various forms of party activity and take up under this special point on the agenda the various tactical problems and any differences about evaluation of developments in this sphere.

The final point on organization should cover three main categories:

1. Launch from the plenum a general campaign for expansion of press circulation and sale of literature in keeping with the conceptions that have motivated us in projecting an 8-page paper next summer.
2. Discuss ways and means of tooling up as best we can organizationally in the next period to carry forward our work in a most effective manner.

3. Deal with the question of the NC in the sense of the report Cannon made to the last convention at the time of the election of the NC. The problem we face is that some older NC members are not able to be as active as they have been and at the same time the Nominating Commission found it extremely difficult to make room for younger comrades on the committee. The comrades were advised at the convention that the NC would go to work on this question and try to have a solution to recommend so that the next convention won't be confronted with the same problem. Informal conversations among leading comrades since then have tended generally toward the concept of establishing an 'advisory member' status for NC comrades who are not able to be active. The concept being that such comrades would continue to receive committee material and would be entitled to participate in committee proceedings with voice but without vote. The feeling is that an approach along this line would help clear the way to bring younger comrades onto the NC, looking toward the necessary transitions in leadership, and at the same time make it possible for the party to have the benefit of the knowledge and experience of the older comrades who are not able to be as active as they once were.

### *Discussion*

TIM said that concerning the world movement he thinks the central problem we face at this time which was brought to the attention of this committee by Hansen's report in a much more profound way than previously, is the development of the very deep-going political differences between the party and the SLL. Since over the past number of years our whole international functioning has been so related to close collaboration with the British this is a very serious situation and it requires that in the period between now and the plenum we devote considerable attention to it. This necessitates that we explore or explain fully all the political questions that have been raised between ourselves and the SLL. In order to facilitate that he would suggest the following:

- 1) We should publish in an International Information Bulletin all the discussion material that has so far been issued by the IC that has not yet been received by the party. This is necessary so that the party comrades can judge the political background to the present serious

deep-going differences that have come up. Any other material related to the international question which we have should also be released. All this material should be released in the form of international information bulletins as we have traditionally done. This should be done right away.

2) The PC should take a step immediately to help relieve some of the tension between us and the SLL and that should be to inform the NC of the SLL immediately that we wish to continue political collaboration with the IC as in the past and are, therefore, preparing to participate in the political discussion that is now going on in the IC in preparation for the forthcoming world congress. This does not commit ourselves to attending the world congress but we should make clear we intend to have a political discussion with the British and other members of the IC through discussion with our PC, NC and plenum. It would be good to make this right away so there would not be continuing worry or fear as to whether or not we intend to continue political collaboration with these comrades.

Also he wants to inform the PC that he is preparing, with other party comrades, a statement of position on these questions which, as soon as it is completed, will be submitted to the PC and the party.

Points he wants action on are:

- 1) Release of the IC discussion material to the party.
- 2) Statement to the SLL that we intend to participate in discussion and continue political collaboration.

KERRY noted Tim's remark he is collaborating with other party comrades and asked: Are these other comrades members of the NC? Do you intend to take this discussion to the ranks?

TIM said he intends to take this discussion to the PC from the ranks. Comrades deeply concerned about taking their opinion to the committee for opinion. He is not requesting any discussion in the branches. It is simply a matter of bringing a political position to this committee for its consideration.

DOBBS: You propose to take the discussion from the ranks to the committee?

TIM: From rank-and-file comrades who are concerned with this question.

**DOBBS:** That means you are taking this discussion into the ranks in preparing submission of material to the committee, before there has been a discussion in the committee, and before there has been a decision in the committee about taking the question up in the party.

**TIM** said what is involved is that this question was discussed in part and in brief in the pre-convention period. In the course of that discussion some comrades in the party came to a particular point of view which was submitted in the form of a series of amendments to the international resolution. These comrades are now considering the next step in the development of the political discussion in the form of a statement to the committee for its consideration.

**MURRY** asked Hansen if our documents on Cuba were submitted by the SLL to the rank and file.

**HANSEN** said he didn't know.

**MURRY** said what's important for the world movement, what is prerequisite to understanding new world problems is the Cuban revolution. SLL have yet to express their full opinion on that and decide its nature. No basis for them to demand that we take off the agenda what we consider pivotal. Whole impression given is that SLL remains engrossed in question of Pabloism and can't confront the living question of Cuba. Entire movement should consider not only the resolutions and theses of our party on the Cuban question but the activity we will engage in. We should have a flourishing discussion, not a rehash of Pabloism.

**HANSEN** said he assumes that the comrades are thinking out loud about what to do in relation to the SLL. It may be that some comrades have already made up their mind. He hasn't made up his mind yet and is still thinking. Even going into a discussion at first seems attractive. Still, what kind of a discussion do you envisage and what's the objective? Obviously same questions that were asked of him in London are those Tim wants a stand for or against. In London they wanted an idea of the NC response. Hansen said he told them that the questions were loaded questions, that they were putting in question the entire relationship between them and us and this was a new fact our NC had to take into consideration. What was involved now was to take the views they have evidently reached, present these, plus arguments and discussions before the NC and that the NC would very likely give them a formal reply. He told them our NC would next meet sometime between April and June and they seemed satisfied as they

expect us to follow our usual procedure and make up our minds in advance as to how we assess this relationship. It is a very serious question. Involves question of the whole coming period of the whole world movement. Hansen said he won't propose any solution during tour because he doesn't have any at this point. We will reach this only by thinking out loud and making our minds up at the plenum. Then the British comrades can be answered as they have asked. They are not pushing us for an immediate answer:

CHESTER asked if Hansen knew whether SLL had held an internal discussion on Cuba?

HANSEN said he didn't know.

KERRY thought it would be decidedly premature to ask this committee to adopt such proposals as Tim makes. He wants to see Tim's document before he votes on these proposals. We will discuss with SLL and anybody else. We will not accept what sounds like an ultimatum that we must discuss on the basis of their premises, etc., and in their framework. That is a patent absurdity. Concerning the world movement today, you don't have an international. It is a most peculiar historical situation. The 2nd International is defunct having gone over to the cold war. The 3rd International was dissolved, it has no formal existence. The 4th International exists in the form of an IC which is out to conduct an international campaign against centrism in which they include us and you say we are going to discuss whether we are centrists with the SLL. Today we are not in a period of the decline of the world working class. We are in a period where the objective conditions call for international regroupment. This is not the period that saw the degeneration of internationals. This is the period of the rise of the revolutionary wave. You would say that you could expect that all kinds of tendencies would develop on an international scale that would be trying to establish some kind of international organization. Burns says the big danger is centrism and we are told we must discuss the charge we are centrists. This is not the way we envisage our international discussion.

The point of departure should be the crisis of Stalinism, development of Trotskyist tendencies in various sections of the world and above all of the revolution, as it appears and exists today in Cuba, as well as in other sections of the world. What do the British mean by saying Cuba is a particular question and they are not interested in the particular. But that particular is our point of departure, and if you don't proceed from this pattern then you are living in a vacuum.

discussion must proceed from the objective situation. What is necessary is a political clarification of the revolutionary developments that have taken place. It is easier stated than solved. The central problem is: How to initiate such a discussion and the proper basis for such a discussion through the kind of documents that have at least some relation to reality and look toward the establishment of a world revolutionary organization. We are not in a rush to pass motions, especially from a comrade who is going to submit a document to the PC and NC but the document is going to be signed by rank-and-file comrades. Why? Is that our method? One can only understand that you propose to carry the discussion to the ranks before the NC initiates such a discussion. That means taking discussion out of the committee before the committee has made a decision.

TIM said several things getting confused. He is not proposing what should be the nature of the discussion with the British but simply that we inform them formally, what Hansen suggested to them informally, that we intend to take up this matter and inform them of our opinion.

The second question is that we should continue our traditional policy of publishing for the information of the comrades, international discussion material, and therefore that we should release to the party in the form of international information bulletins the material so far released to the NC, even including Peng's document.

As for submitting a statement, he doesn't see what's so out of the ordinary about it because the proposal is that comrades who have made their position clear are going to submit their opinion to this committee. They're not going to discuss it in the branches. The questions involved here are in these comrades' opinion of extreme importance and these comrades feel very concerned and obviously the proper thing to do is to present their position to the PC for it to decide how to handle the question. That is completely proper procedure.

KERRY said comrades can submit anything any time they want. What is involved is that Tim, as a member of the PC, and others in the ranks are going to submit a joint document to the PC without awaiting the plenum at which this question will be number one on the agenda. When the PC initiates a discussion in the committee that discussion remains the property of the committee until the committee decides to initiate a discussion in the ranks.

DOBBS said that the last convention adopted a resolution and report on international situation, world movement, Cuba, with the understanding that there were two sides to our action and it was made clear



at the time. The positions adopted at our convention were considered subject to re-consideration in the light of further discussion in the world movement. Concerning the party meantime, the decisions of the convention are governing. The party goes ahead with its work leaving it to the NC to determine the question of further discussion. The NC has made no determination to reopen such discussion in the party ranks, and there is certainly no need to be impetuous about it with a plenum scheduled soon. Extremely complex problems are involved. Tim speaks of comrades associated with his proposed statement being seriously concerned. Doesn't he think everyone is seriously concerned. It is the responsibility of the leadership to think carefully and seriously before it projects any course of procedure. All the more important that the discussion of this question remain confined, as it has been since the convention, within the NC, until the next plenum and that plenum itself decides what the further course will be on the question.

Concerning supplying information, all the documents transmitted to us by the SLL or IC either have been or are in the process of being duplicated and distributed to the NC. Not only were the British told that informally but also formally.

MURRY said Tim's approach gives a very bad impression. He speaks of relieving tensions with the British and having responsible discussion, and then, as if he assumes that is going to be rejected, he already announces an oppositional document. It is very important what happens right here in this committee. It is worth consideration and reconsideration before rushing into discussion on Tim's basis. Hansen just reported discussion with British. What is the need of firing back quick letters saying we assure them we are going to discuss with them.

#### *Motions by Tim:*

(1) That we inform the NC of the SLL that we are now preparing to discuss with them the various issues facing the international movement; and

(2) That we release in the form of International Information Bulletins the international discussion material published by the IC and any other related international discussion material.

session of the problem of the  
 NC until the plenum decides  
 on the subject.

*Passed Unanimously*

made in my motion the point  
 will hear from us for the simple  
 formed of that in writing and

I withdraw my first motion.

on distribution of material to

his motion to confine discus-

tion as applying to distribution  
 for it.

as follows and a new vote was

discussion and circulation of  
 world movement remain con-  
 decides on further procedure

Wood, Chester, Kerry, Lavan,

*Motion Carried*

material therefore not voted on.

**Vote on motions by Dobbs concerning plenum:**

- 1. To schedule a four-day plenum at the camp Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, June 14, 15, 16 and 17.**

*Passed Unanimously*

- 2. To project as the Plenum agenda;**
  - 1. World Movement**
  - 2. Political Report**
  - 3. Youth Report**
  - 4. Negro Struggle**
  - 5. Organizational Report**

*Passed Unanimously*

## **2. Information Report**

**Letter from Argentine co-thinkers commending Hansen visit and proposing continued fraternal co-operation.**

**Report on a union situation.**

**Report of proposals for discussion meeting with Coggins group.**

**Adjourned.**

**DOCUMENT 15**

**Letter from the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League to the Political Committee of the SWP, March 12, 1962.**

Dear Comrades,

The minutes of your Committee No. 4, February 21, 1962, arrived on the eve of our National Committee meeting on March 10 and 11.

Copies of these minutes were studied by the members of the Committee, although certain difficulties arose from the fact that a report of comrade Hansen's contribution to your committee on his visit to Europe was not to hand. We should be able to comment in greater detail on the discussion by your PC members reported in the minutes had we been able to study what comrade Hansen said. Our National Committee has asked me to ask if it is possible for us to have a copy of comrade Hansen's report.

Reading through these minutes, we are left with the impression that there are misunderstandings which can be cleared away in order to prepare the ground for a fruitful discussion. Perhaps it would be as well if we briefly went through the relations between our respective organizations since January 1961.

On the 2nd of that month, we addressed a letter to the plenum of your National Committee which was about to meet in New York. In that letter we raised the question of Pabloism, explaining our political estimation of this revisionist tendency. On February 6, you replied as follows:

Enclosed you will find our reply to the letter from your National Committee.

You will note under point 7 that a further reply will be sent concerning some questions raised in your January 2 letter. We will try to get this to you reasonably soon.

Instead of a meeting at the North we are considering the possibility of arranging for someone to visit you later in the spring. Perhaps a somewhat broader informal consultation among IC supporters might also be contemplated as the written discussion begins to unfold.

What are your thoughts in this regard?

The letter which we received was sent out to all our membership as well as to affiliated bodies of the International Committee of the Fourth International in IC Internal Bulletin No. 3. (Item 2.)

We replied to you as follows:

We discussed your note of February 6 which indicated that you are considering sending a comrade to Europe.

This would be most helpful provided who ever comes would concentrate on political discussions with the supporters of the International Committee. It seems to us that the political problems of the International Committee are most important and a lot of time must be devoted to them during this year.

We accordingly looked forward to a visit from one of your committee and to a reply to the matters raised in paragraph 7 of your letter, which said:

We agree with you that a thorough discussion of these and other international questions is overdue and should now be undertaken. We await with keen interest your draft resolution along with the documents promised by the Japanese comrades and those that may be forthcoming from other countries. As a contribution to the discussion, we intend to offer documents stating our own views on the major questions. Among these will be a more detailed reply to many questions raised in your January 2 letter.

We received no further reply from you on this matter

On February 24, we sent a further letter to you commenting on the contents of your letter of February 6. Naturally, our reply was limited to this letter because we were still waiting for the reply which you promised.

During the early weeks of February 1961, we sent you a copy of our international resolution in the hope that some discussion would take place between us. We received no reply.

On May 4 we wrote again.

Arising from your information that you will be presenting a general resolution on problems of the world movement we shall be sending you a

letter raising certain important political questions in connection with this early next week.

We hope that you can take this letter into consideration when you are drafting this document. You should have it by the 12th or 13th May.

On May 8 we addressed to the National Committee of your party a letter outlining our political ideas which we asked you to consider when you were drafting your international resolution. We received no reply to this letter.

Later during the summer, we received a copy of a letter from comrade James P. Cannon which he sent to New York on May 10. In this letter he talked about 'an outbreak of neo-Oehlerite frenzy in Great Britain.' In a further letter to comrade Dobbs on May 12, he said:

From reading the Newsletter in the recent period, I get the definite impression that the SLL is off on an *Oehlerite* binge. This can lead to an impatient demand from the ranks for the Trotskyist cadre in Great Britain to cut loose from the Labour Party and its left wing, and to form an independent Trotskyist party and be done with it. I cannot imagine a better way to put the Trotskyist cadres in Great Britain in a corner.

We patiently awaited a political explanation of these statements and some comments on our international opinions, but none came.

We were heartened, however, when we received a copy of a letter also sent from comrade James P. Cannon to the Political Committee in New York dated May 22, which said:

I also agree with the remarks of Dobbs to the effect that our international resolution now being drafted, giving a positive statement of our own views at the present time, is the best way to begin our contribution to the international discussion.

I think it should be frankly presented as such — our contribution to the international discussion — and, consequently, as Farrell indicates in his remarks, that it will be subject to possible modifications later on in the light of that discussion. That is simply another way of saying that we are willing to learn as well as to teach; that we do not *begin* a discussion with ultimatums.

We agreed with comrade Cannon on this occasion and hastened to draft a more detailed statement on your international resolution which was forwarded to New York in time for your Convention. (IC Bulletin No. 4.)

We received no reply to these documents and this made us anxious since we felt that the terms of comrade Cannon's letter of May 22 were not being implemented and that at least we were entitled to a discussion on the points that we had raised.

The International Committee met on July 28 and 29, 1961 and we sent a report of the political discussion to New York immediately it was available. (IC Bulletin No. 6). We felt that it was important that the comrades of the SWP should be aware of the comments of the British delegation at that meeting so that they could take these into account when replying to our opinions on their international resolution.

There the matter stood from July 1961 until November 24. We then wrote the following letter to your Political Committee.

We would like you to tell us when it will be possible to publish our criticism of your document on International Perspectives in the Internal Bulletins of the SWP. We would also like to have as soon as it is possible, a reply to these criticisms for discussion in our own organization and the International Committee.

Any further delay in this matter can only succeed in adding to the confusion already existing and in the long run it will lead to a further deterioration in the relations between our organizations.

We are extremely anxious to avoid this. As far as we are concerned we are prepared to discuss objectively all the outstanding matters with a view, if possible, to arriving at basic agreement with you. However, this cannot take place until the discussion commences.

Hoping for an early reply.

We received no reply until almost two months later, when a note was received from comrade Dobbs which said:

In reply to your recent enquiry on the subject, International Bulletin No. 6 of the International Committee has been duplicated and distributed to the members of our National Committee who now have it under consideration.

There was some ambiguity about this reply since our letter of November 24 asked, in particular, whether it would be possible for you to publish our criticism of your resolution on international perspectives so that we could reciprocate by publishing your reply to our criticisms for consideration by the International Committee.

Your minutes inform us that this matter will be discussed at your plenum on June 14, 15, 16, 17, 1962, almost eighteen months after the discussion was opened by us.

At your political committee comrade Kerry spoke about the difficulty of conducting a discussion under conditions where the SLL calls the SWP centrist. We do not know where this information comes from since we do not hold any such opinion. Nor do we hold the opinion that the SWP considers us to be Oehlerite sectarians merely because comrade Cannon mentions this in one of his letters to New York. Our opinions are written down and should be, or have been available to the members of your National Committee.

We have spoken of the Pabloites as a centrist organization and we have said that we see dangers of this in some of the political positions of the SWP — surely this is a matter open for discussion? We stand to be corrected, but in order to do this, you must first of all discuss with us.

According to your minutes some talk took place about ultimatums. Please may we say that we have no such conception of discussion between ourselves and the SWP.

We have waited almost eighteen months and the record of correspondence between us speaks for itself. What does international collaboration mean if it does not imply discussion between sections? What is the purpose of drafting an international resolution as you have done and talking about the need for discussion upon it if you have not presented to your membership our contribution to that discussion? During the session of your committee, comrades such as Hansen and Murry spoke about how the discussion should be organized. Comrade Hansen said he wasn't sure and comrade Murry said that we needed to begin with Cuba and not with 'a rehash of Pabloism'. Either the comrades have not read our documents or they have forgotten all about them. May we suggest that the discussion takes place on our respective international resolutions and the comments we have already made, particularly in relation to your own?

The main contributions to your discussion on Cuba by comrade Hansen and others have been submitted not only to our own membership, but to the membership of the International Committee in IC Bulletins 1 and 2. You should have copies in your office, if not we will make them available to you.

We fail to see how comrade Murry can speak about a 'rehash' of Pabloism as if it was something of no consequence. A split took place



in 1953 which shattered the entire international movement. We are aware that comrade Murry is one of those who was loudest in declaring that the differences between ourselves and the Pabloites have grown less and less. He and others are entitled to their opinion. But if the Socialist Labour League thinks to the contrary — and writes its opinions down — we believe that we are also entitled to an answer and not just a declaration that all we want to do is to 'rehash' the Pabloite discussion.

In a discussion so important and fundamental as this, tendencies will present their opinions on matters about which they feel strongest. This might lead to some confusion in the beginning, but experience has shown that before very long the political lines of demarcation will become clear. Surely this is one more good reason why the discussion should start as soon as possible?

At one point, comrade Hansen said 'he assumes that the comrades are thinking out loud about what to do in relation to the SLL.' May we suggest that the only thing you can do with the SLL is to discuss with it in a way that will assist in the clarification of our differences?

In conclusion we would like to emphasize something we have stressed on a number of occasions. We feel proud of the work which our comrades of the SWP have carried out under the most difficult circumstances. As internationalists, we feel that the close association between our two sections can continue under conditions where the present discussion may well draw us even closer together.

We look forward to your political contribution to the discussion.

Yours fraternally,

*G. Healy*

National Committee of  
the Socialist Labour League.

(Unanimously endorsed at its meeting March 10 and 11, 1962.)

**DOCUMENT 16****Letter from Hugembert-Valdes (Chile) to  
G. Healy, January 31, 1962.**

Dear Comrade Gerry,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you officially of the XII National Congress of the POR which took place on 26, 27 and 28 January which symbolically appointed as its Honorary President comrade Natalia Sedova. Important resolutions were taken which we will send when the resolutions which were approved and the amendments are printed.

Particularly we are concerned that the IC of the Fourth International should publish in its Internal Bulletin our International Resolution and the resolution on the construction of the Party in Latin America so that it may be discussed in the world movement, the discussion which began in the IC.

I may state in advance some of the conclusions of the XII National Congress.

- a) to ratify the affiliation of the POR of Chile to the IC of the Fourth International.
- b) to support the proposal of some sections that the IC should organize a World Conference of the Trotskyist Movement.
- c) to characterize as untimely any move towards unity with the Pabloites before the World Conference of the Trotskyist movement takes place.
- d) The World Congress of the Trotskyist Organizations should be summoned to allow sufficient time for the study of documents, which should be circulated at least six months before the conference takes place.
- e) If any agreement in thinking is reached in this conference and especially if a common position with regard to Pabloism is reached, a document should be approved on which concrete proposals are made to the Pabloite IS.

We believe that these measures are necessary today more than ever, not only because of the world crisis of Stalinism and for other objec-

tive reasons, in the development of the world revolution, but also because at this time *Pabloism is undergoing a tremendous internal crisis*. We annex a letter from the IS of the Pabloites, to the Latin-American sections as proof of this statement. In it you will see that a split in Pabloism has taken place or is about to take place, this will be a split between the Latin American Bureau (BLA) (Posadas) and the IS. At first sight it seems that Posadas is splitting to the right. For ourselves, as Latin Americans, it is important to establish that some members of the Pabloite Latin American sections (very much reduced by the divisions which Latin American Pabloism has had in the last two years) do not wish to accompany Posadas in this adventure. For example in the IS letter it is stated that Lucero (we believe that this is Ortiz from Uruguay or a Bolivian) and Gregorio are opposed to Posadas. Our last Congress believed that it was necessary to exploit the crisis of Pabloism and the first means we have found is to spread the letter I mention. And the most important thing is to hold the World Congress of Trotskyism to decide on a strategy and tactics towards Pabloism.

The possible loss of some Latin-American sections has made the IS turn towards the numerous groups which broke with Posadas' BLA some years ago and which previously were not recognized by the IS. In the same way, the IS turns towards some sections of the Trotskyist organizations of the IC in Latin America. The letter which our POR has received from the Pabloite IS and which I transmit to you, says:

Rome, January 9, 1962.

To: Frente Obrero (our newspaper)  
Dear Comrades,

We have received both your journal and your letter of 13 November (which, nevertheless was late in arriving). (This letter, I must explain, was only a circular which the editors of the paper sent out to various countries to confirm the circulation).

We are interested in reading Frente Obrero and we ask you to keep on sending it. We would like to know in more detail your position on the situation in Chile and the tactics of the revolutionary movement, and more especially we would like to receive the book (a pamphlet) by comrade Vitale about whom we have heard, but which we do not know.

P. the IS (Livio)

We must make it clear that this is the first letter we have had from the IS since our break with Pabloism in 1954.

f) With reference to Palabra Obrero, the ex-POR of Argentina, the Congress of the POR confirmed its characterization that it is a tendency which has abandoned the principles of Trotskyism and has capitulated to the national bourgeois movement, Peronism, even going so far as to liquidate the Trotskyist organization. Not to recognize the alleged present leadership of the SLATO which was imposed in an unannounced meeting in order to change the leadership in Argentina in April 1961. To attempt to re-establish a Latin-American Trotskyist organization.

g) With reference to Latin America, the congress reaffirmed its support for the Cuban Workers State, and for its worker-peasant government they authorized critical support, maintaining the characterization that the workers state is deformed because it is not led and administered by organs of workers power; and because there are no workers councils. It was made clear that because it was characterized as 'deformed' it did not necessarily have to be the same as China, Yugoslavia, etc. A vote was approved repudiating the Punta del Este conference as a manoeuvre of Yankee imperialism against the Cuban Revolution and the Latin-American people.

h) National Politics. The Congress decided (i) to ratify the line of working jointly with the Movement of Revolutionary Forces led by Clotario Blest as a means of reconstructing the Party while always maintaining our POR, its leadership and its basic organization and its Trotskyist publications. There is no question of entrism but a United Revolutionary Front between different Marxist groups, independent revolutionary syndicalists and anarchists. (ii) to give major attention to penetration into the peasantry (there was a peasant comrade in the Congress, the leader of a Peasant committee).

i) Comrade Humberto Valenzuela was re-elected as General Secretary. Comrade Valdes was elected member of the CC with the highest majority.

With Fourth Internationalist greetings.

*Hugembert-Valdes*

P.S. We are receiving the Newsletter and the Labour Review in the number asked for. We have also received up to No. 6 of the Internal Bulletin. We hope that you received your letter of 18 December, 1961, in which we stated that we were in complete agreement with a comrade of the IC visiting Latin America and giving us some help — in addition to the other information we sent in that letter.



# Chapter Five

## The SWP programme for unprincipled reunification

**In this political resolution of the SWP leadership in 1962 (Document 17) the path towards a 'reunification' eliminating discussion of the fundamental questions is clear to all those who can push their way through the carefully prepared barriers of appeals to 'objective processes' absolving the conscious revolutionary movement of all responsibility! The SLL conference of the same year (Document 18) reaffirmed the principled position on reunification: that there must first be clarification of the problems facing the movement since 1940.**

## DOCUMENT 17

### Draft resolution of the SWP Political Committee May 1, 1962

#### *Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps*

New developments in world politics — the fracturing of Stalinist monolithism and the growing differentiations among the Communist states and parties; the rise of the colonial revolution from which independent revolutionary tendencies like Castroism have emerged; the premonitory stirrings among the workers in several imperialist strongholds — are opening up important avenues for the organizational growth of the Fourth International and the expansion of its ideas and influence. These opportunities may be missed if the fragmented forces of the world Trotskyist movement cannot combine to make the most of them.

The problems involved in reconstituting the organized revolutionary leadership of the world working class are now preoccupying Trotskyists on all continents. An international discussion has been started to ascertain what political bases and organizational steps can best provide a solution.

The Socialist Workers Party made its first contribution to this new discussion in a resolution, 'The World Struggle for Socialism', adopted at its June 1961 convention. The Socialist Labour League of England also adopted a resolution, 'The World Prospects of Socialism', at its 1961 annual conference. This differs in important respects from the positions taken by the SWP. Since then a group of comrades led by Tim Wohlforth and A. Phillips have submitted a platform inside the SWP 'In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective', based on the position put forward by the SLL.

There are, of course, many things in the lengthy SLL document with which we fully agree. Taking these for granted, the following

contribution to the discussion will deal with the major points of disagreement or misunderstanding that have arisen between us and the SLL.

These involve four questions:

- (1) The colonial revolution, in particular Cuba and Algeria.
- (2) Relations between the revolutionary movement in the underdeveloped and the advanced countries in the world struggle for socialism.
- (3) Ways and means of building mass parties of revolutionary Marxism.
- (4) Reunification of the Trotskyist forces.

### *Section 1: Two Views of the Cuban Revolution*

Of all our disagreements with the SLL on current political policy, the most important concerns Cuba because this is a problem of a living and developing *socialist* revolution. We have reached divergent appraisals of the Cuban State and the nature of the Castro leadership. This is no small matter, since Cuba is the touchstone today of revolutionary politics for all socialist militants, above all in the Western hemisphere.

Here is why:

1. A workers state has been established in Cuba, a consequence of the first victorious socialist revolution in the Americas.
2. Cuba stands in the vanguard of Latin-American progress. To 200,000,000 people Cuba provides an inspiring example of how to win freedom from imperialism, eradicate capitalist-landlord exploitation, and tackle the major economic-social problems of a backward country. As the revolution moves ahead, it continues to blaze new trails in many fields.
3. The overturn in Cuba constitutes the first act in the development of the socialist revolution of the Americas which includes both the United States and Canada.



4. By extending the socialist revolution into the New World, Cuba has raised the entire colonial revolutionary process to a new plateau of achievement.

5. The triumph of the Cuban workers and peasants has dealt a stunning blow to US imperialism at its very doorstep. It has exposed the hypocrisy and brutality of the Yankee colossus, its weakness in its own heartland, and confirmed the growing strength of the anti-imperialist camp.

6. The course of the Revolution since 1959 has given fresh confirmation to the correctness of the theory of the permanent revolution, first vindicated in Russia of 1917, subsequently in Yugoslavia and China, and now in Cuba.

7. This is the first socialist revolution since the Second World War whose leadership had never been tied to Moscow. This bypassing of Stalinism by a brilliant and daring group of young Cuban revolutionists has noteworthy implications.

a) It shows the colonial peoples striving for emancipation a political alternative to the Stalinized Communist parties.

b) From the first its regime has been far more honest, democratic and identified with the peoples' interests than the states deformed by Stalinism, and its foreign policy has been more consistently revolutionary.

c) Confronting the Communist Parties, particularly in Latin America with the difficult problem of coping with the revolutionary course of action exemplified and advocated by Castro, it both intensifies the crisis of Stalinism and advances a positive solution to that crisis.

d) It provides an immediate rallying center for all revolutionary currents in the Americas.

Despite their differences with one another or with the Castro regime, the Trotskyists everywhere have defended the Cuban revolution against imperialist intervention and its agents and have

worked hard to mobilize support in its behalf. But the actual and potential developments of this revolution impose tasks upon the Marxists which go much beyond the elementary duty of expressing solidarity with an oppressed small nation fighting for its independence.

The profoundly democratic and socialist tendencies of the Cuban revolution have propelled it to a point higher than that attained socially in any sector of the colonial revolution except in China, North Korea and North Vietnam, and politically far beyond these. Beginning as a struggle for democracy and land reform, embracing even some bourgeois elements in the opposition coalition, the revolution passed over from its bourgeois democratic origins to an anti-imperialist, proletarian-peasant stage in which the power and property of native and foreign capitalism were expropriated, agrarian relations thoroughly transformed, the workers and peasants armed, and the economy planned, foreign trade made into a state monopoly and a government set up functioning in the interests of the impoverished masses.

These fundamental changes converted Cuba into a workers state, a workers state that has displayed profoundly democratic and socialist tendencies although the institutions of proletarian democracy have yet to be worked out and stabilized under the revolutionary Workers and Peasants Government. This was certified by the fact that the central leadership and forces of the regime have clashed with and publicly denounced the bureaucratism which such leaders of the Stalinist Peoples Socialist Party as Escalante attempted to impose. All this was noted and recognized by the SWP as the events occurred.

Despite any errors or inadequacies, the record shows the July 26 forces headed by Fidel Castro to be a revolutionary tendency that has increasingly taken Marxist positions on domestic and foreign policies, while clarifying its own thinking in the process.

Under these circumstances, we believe the Trotskyists of Cuba should seek to enter and take their place in the soon-to-be-formed unified revolutionary party where they can work loyally, patiently and confidently for the implementation of the fully revolutionary-socialist program which they represent.

In addition to mobilizing support for the Cuban cause, as they are doing, the Trotskyists throughout Latin America should try to bring together all those forces, regardless of their specific origins, which are

ready to take the Cuban experience as the point of departure for the revolutionary struggles in their own countries.

From the first hour the SWP as well as its Canadian co-thinkers took the initiative to rally support for Cuba, opposing the aggressions of Big Business and its government and counter-revolutionary agents. From the first we told the truth about the aims and achievements of the Revolution. These efforts to inform the American and Canadian people and to expose the lies of the capitalist press have been motivated not only by considerations of solidarity with the struggles of the Latin-American masses but also to protect the interests of the workers of the United States against the criminal plots of the monopolists and militarists.

The Socialist Labour League, on the other hand, has followed a basically different course toward the revolutionary events in Cuba. The gist of their position is expressed in the following excerpts from their 1961 Resolution on the International Situation, reprinted in the Winter 1961-62 *Labour Review*.

1. The Agrarian Reform 'in its content and motivation remains a capitalist reform and does not transcend capitalist property relations in the countryside.' (p.117)

2. 'The Castro regime is Bonapartist in structure and petty-bourgeois in composition . . . . On all decisive and fundamental questions which impinge upon the power and wealth of the national bourgeoisie as a whole, however, the regime comes down on the side of capitalism.' (p.118)

3. 'By attempting to form a "single party of the revolution," by attacking the Left Wing of the July 26 Movement and by its refusal to convene a Constituent Assembly on the basis of secret and universal suffrage, the Castro regime reveals more and more its class limitations in carrying the democratic revolution to the end. The attacks against the POR are further evidence of this trend.' (p. 118)

Thus, according to the SLL, Cuban society today has a capitalist economic foundation and a bourgeois state headed by a petty-bourgeois Bonapartist government which has not even been able to fulfil the democratic demands of the people. This appraisal conflicts with the facts on all essential points.

### What are the reasons for these fundamental errors?

1. The SLL comrades have failed to observe the qualitative transition of the Cuban Revolution from its initial national-democratic phase over to its proletarian-socialist stage. The decisive change came between August-October 1960 when the nationalizations in the major areas of Cuban industry changed the basic social-economic structure of the country.

2. This blindness is due to an incorrect conception of the interplay between the objective and subjective factors in shaping the course of the revolutionary process. The SLL comrades tend to invert this relationship by giving primacy to the subjective factor.

Here is the key passage on this point in the SLL Resolution which indicates how its treatment of the Cuban events came to be misguided: 'To see the colonial revolution as automatically extending, under its own momentum, is to encourage the serious revisions of Marxism already discussed. It is nonsense to speak of the theory of the permanent revolution being 'confirmed' without the leadership of a Marxist party and without the perspective of a spread to the advanced countries. (p. 117)

If this means what it says, then capitalism can under no circumstances be overthrown in a colonial country unless and until a full-fledged Marxist leadership stands at the head of the revolution and its regime. While they have not expressed it with that much clarity, this is the basic concept which the SLL comrades have applied in their attempted analysis of the Cuban reality.

Facts, however, are stubborn things. It is a fact that capitalism was eliminated in 1960 and no longer constitutes the basis of Cuban social and economic life — and this overturn was directed by a leadership which did not explicitly call itself Marxist until a year and a half after the overthrow of capitalism and does not avow Trotskyism to this day.

As the precedents of the Soviet Union under Stalinism and then of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China demonstrate, Cuba could not logically be defined as anything but a workers state even if its political structure were not democratic and its leadership were non-Marxist. But the SLL comrades do not want to admit even this much. They correctly view the deformed states in Eastern Europe dominated by the Kremlin as non-capitalist but they refuse to grant that status to the

uncorrupted workers regime in Cuba. They set aside the traditional Marxist standards for determining the character of a workers state and advance instead purely political criteria. They so exaggerate the importance of the subjective factor that they lose sight of the fundamental changes in the basic property relations.

There is no warrant either in the method of Marxism or the traditions of Trotskyism for this procedure. The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International says that in our epoch 'The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership'. The SLL reiterates this correct declaration. But their Resolution overlooks the fact that it is the conclusion from a prior consideration of 'The Objective Prerequisites for Socialist Revolution'.

The Transitional Programme gives first place to the objective conditions within which the proletariat and its leadership operate: 'The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second, by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: The laws of History are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus.

From this it might appear that the programmatic charter of the Fourth International also lapses into the sin of 'objectivism'. In reality, it sticks to the materialist method of Marxism. For the leadership factor cannot be converted into the sovereign ruler of history. As Trotsky emphasized in *Stalinism and Bolshevism*: '... The party is not the only factor of development and on a larger historical scale is not the decisive one.' (p. 16) The class struggle remains the fundamental driving force. To view the progress of the class struggle as dependent first and most of all upon the presence or absence of an adequate Marxist leadership is to stand social reality on its head and not on its feet.

If the revolutionary forces do not have a suitable leadership prepared in advance of their drive toward supreme power, they are compelled to create or recreate one in the process of the revolution. Even Lenin's Bolshevik party had to be reoriented by his April Theses and reformed between February and October 1917.

In case after case in the 1920's and 1930's and in many cases thereafter, the vanguard was not able to do this in time. Major revolutionary opportunities miscarried. This resulted in catastrophes — fascism, Stalinist degeneration of the USSR, the Second World War and the threat of a third world war. The conclusion is unmistakable.

ble: It is imperative to work at all times and everywhere for the formation of a revolutionary Marxist party. That is the reason for the existence of the Fourth International.

However, all this does not gainsay that in Cuba events have taken a more complex and favourable course than they did in the places where the revolutionary opportunities miscarried. After making the armed struggle against Batista a principle of their movement, the Castro leadership, of petty-bourgeois intellectual origin and formation, strove to keep step with the line of march and requirements of the revolution by identifying themselves more and more closely with the interests of the peasants and workers. Transcending their initial objectives, which were limited largely to winning political democracy and agrarian reform, they re-equipped themselves and their movement with broader and deeper revolutionary ideas and perspectives. These at a certain point explicitly merged with Marxism. Their ideological evolution is far from ended.

It would be wrong, as the 'New Lefts' and others do, to simplify this case, deny the need for a Marxist party, and convert that into an abstract rule applicable to the political development of the revolution in general. Here, too, the Cubans are proving to be better revolutionists than such theoreticians, for they are proceeding to organize a Marxist-Leninist party. This step forward now becomes part of the example of the Cuban revolution which will have immediate and enduring influence on the thinking of revolutionists throughout Latin America and elsewhere. This new step can also help speed the progress of the revolutionary socialist movement in such imperialist centers as the United States. The 'New Lefts' will shortly find themselves singularly isolated in their hasty generalization from the first phase of the Cuban experience.

On the other hand, it is wrong for the SLL to deny the proletarian character of the Cuban state because its leadership was a little late in recognizing kinship with scientific socialism. These are other ways of arriving at Marxist conclusions and putting them into practice than by being recruited one by one through propaganda and education to an established Trotskyist group. The militants of the July 26 Movement have demonstrated that lessons learned in revolutionary action can lead to the same results on an even larger scale and in a shorter time. In the Second Declaration of Havana Fidel Castro sets forth many of the essential ideas of the permanent revolution in the light of the experiences of the Cuban people. The conscious recognition of the validity

of scientific socialism by the Cuban leaders is a tremendous victory for revolutionary Marxism which will influence the entire further direction and development of the Latin-American countries.

The Cuban experience demonstrates once again that the ultimate determinant in the outbreak, course and outcome of a revolutionary struggle is the relationship of class forces on a national and world scale, and not the subjective political factors alone. In this period of the ascendance of the world revolution Cuba has provided positive proof of a lesson illustrated in a negative way during the previous period of world reaction.

Explaining the political defeat of Bolshevism in the Soviet Union in answer to those who tried to pin it on the original sins of Lenin's party, Trotsky pointed out that 'Bolshevism considered itself as one of the factors of history, the 'Conscious' factor — a very important but not the decisive one. We never sinned in historical subjectivism. We saw the decisive factor — on the existing basis of productive forces — in the class struggle, not only on a national but an international scale.' (*Stalinism and Bolshevism*, p.14)

The favourable course of the Cuban Revolution was determined by far more powerful and fundamental forces than the original character and aims of the Castro leadership. Among these were the urgency of land reform, the fusion of the sugar workers with the peasants in the countryside, the total rottenness of the Batista regime, and above all, the rapacity and arrogance of US imperialism. It was promoted by the existence, aid and example of the workers states.

This is not to detract in the least from the tremendous role played by Fidel Castro and his associates in carrying the revolution through to its logical conclusion. The daring evinced in launching armed struggle was carried to historical heights after they took power by breaking with the bourgeoisie and going forward against US imperialism toward socialism.

This in turn demonstrates how important leadership is when momentous decisions have to be taken. Somewhat unexpectedly, the comrades who insist so strongly at this date on the vital necessity of correct leadership have here a most convincing example to illustrate their thesis. And it could hardly be otherwise in a revolution that developed as swiftly and profoundly as this one. Such is the dialectical way of viewing the interaction between the objective and subjective conditions in the revolutionary process.

The turn of events in Cuba has perplexed tendencies inclined to

isolate the question of mass leadership from the totality of conditions and to make that single factor predominant. Communist Party theoreticians, for example, have maintained that Cuba could not be a workers state because neither the revolution nor the regime issuing from it were headed by the CP. They termed it a national democratic revolution which took state-capitalist measures. The Cuban CP finally gave up this view, quietly ducking the task of offering an adequate theoretical explanation, and the others will likely follow, as recent declarations from Moscow indicate.

The SLL has followed a symmetrical type of reasoning — except that it insists no workers state can be established unless a revolutionary Marxist, that is, Trotskyist, party has directed the revolution and heads the regime. However, it applies this rule only to Cuba and not to those countries whose governments are directed by the Communist Parties, as in Eastern Europe and China.

The SLL underestimates the significance of the Cuban Revolution for the development of the Socialist movement and the strengthening of Trotskyism in the Americas. As we have emphasised, the Cuban Revolution, following in the sequence of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, cannot be regarded as a purely particular and peripheral case without departing from the dialectical method. All the problems and solutions of revolutionary politics in the colonial world today are focussed most sharply in Cuba.

The future of Latin-America Trotskyism depends upon its ability to absorb the lessons of the Cuban Revolution and to apply them in regrouping the authentic revolutionary forces. On this key question the Latin-American Trotskyists have made a good accounting. Through their own independent analyses, they came to conclusions about the Cuban revolution identical in all major respects to those of the SWP and our Canadian co-thinkers. The common results provided a valuable mutual check on the correctness of the positions that were reached as well as a new basis for comradesly collaboration in advancing the Trotskyist movement.

In the United States, from whence the major menace to the life of the Cuban Revolution comes, Cuba is as important for the revolutionary vanguard as the Algerian question has been for France. The SLL Resolution displays no recognition of the fact that an incorrect policy could seriously harm our prospects and shove the SWP for a long time to the sidelines as an impotent sect. Our generally correct attitude has enabled the SWP to play a prominent role in the Cuba defense



movement and to attract new elements, especially among the youth, to the cause of revolutionary socialism.

Our theoretical and political contributions were the most solid in the American radical movement, became the ideological axis for the counter-offensive against the propaganda of the State Department and its agents, and drew the favorable attention of a whole new layer attracted by the Cuban Revolution, including such significant figures as C. Wright Mills. This work and the accompanying participation in demonstrations, etc., in conjunction with activity in other fields, decisively advanced the SWP from its previous isolation to its present prominence in the American radical movement.

On the other hand, the fallacious theoretical approach of the SLL to the Cuban Revolution has impeded practical activities. The SLL lost the initiative in Cuban defence efforts to centrist forces in England. Their rejection of an Embassy invitation to celebrate the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1962 needlessly widened the gulf between the British Trotskyists and the Cuban Revolutionists. Recently the SLL has started promoting a 'Food for Cuba' campaign. This kind of solidarity action is sure to be appreciated by the hard-pressed Cubans. We hope this improvement in their practical work will be followed by reconsideration of their theoretical views on the Cuban Revolution.

### *Section 2: Algeria - Victory or Tragedy?*

The lack of objective judgment evinced by the SLL toward the Cuban Revolution can likewise be seen in its treatment of the present turning point in the Algerian Revolution.

For more than seven years the Algerian rebels had to strain every resource to win national liberation from French rule. Now they have signed a cease-fire which, for all its shortcomings, substantially realizes this wholly progressive aim. How has the SLL appraised de Gaulle's de facto recognition of Algeria's right to independence?

The March 10, 1962 *Newsletter* article on this subject, under the headline of 'Algeria's Tragedy', stated: 'This settlement is the most cynical deal which a nationalist leadership has ever made with a colonial power.' The article went on to depict the agreement as a sellout giving French capitalism what it essentially sought.

The SWP made a different estimate. The March 26 *Militant* story, captioned 'Algerian Pact Blow to French Imperialism', said: 'The heroic, seven-and-a-half-year fight of the Algerian people has finally

forced French imperialism to concede independence to the North African colonies . . . The FLN negotiators made some real concessions to their opponents on economic and military matters and also incorporated into the pact some face-saving words for the French — undoubtedly needed by de Gaulle in his struggle with the ultra-right Secret Army and the fascists who opposed any settlement whatever. But the key issue, Algeria's political independence, appears to be unequivocally established.'

The contrast is clear. Whereas the SLL maximizes the concessions and minimizes the most important feature of the agreement, the gaining of independence, the Militant rightly does the opposite. Blame for the concessions ought to be imposed not primarily upon the Algerian leaders, but upon the SP and CP leaderships in France who restrained the French workers from supporting the Algerians, strengthened the hand of the imperialists, and left the rebel fighters in the lurch. Instead of bringing this fact forward in a situation where it is most pertinent, *The Newsletter* concentrates its condemnation upon the FLN leadership.

The FLN had to wage a bloody seven-year war without help from the French workers. That is the real source of the weakness which forced their compromise. Admitting that the clauses do contain dangers for the further development of their revolution, can the agreement as such be stigmatized as a 'shameful sellout', a defeat for the revolution and a victory for French imperialism, as the SLL contends?

This judgment is utterly false. The agreement wrested from de Gaulle against OAS resistance is a major victory for the Algerian people, for the Arab and colonial revolution. It is a jolting setback to French and world imperialism. Of course, it is far from a complete and final victory. But it lifts the struggle for national independence and social liberation in that country to a higher stage and places the revolution upon firmer and more favourable grounds for the solution of its next tasks.

These were briefly indicated in the conclusion to an editorial on 'The Algerian Revolution' in the April 2 *Militant*, which pointed out that two roads are now open for its further evolution. These are the road of Tunisia under Bourguiba; retaining capitalism in a backward country — or the Cuban road. 'The first step in Algeria is the consolidation of independence, the second must be the socialist transformation of Algerian society.' The Marxists there will strive to fight

together with the worker-plebians against the bourgeois elements in the nationalist camp in order to direct the revolution along the second course.

Between them Cuba and Algeria encompass most of the basic problems confronting the Marxists in the present stage of the colonial revolution. The disorientation displayed by the SLL in regard to these two revolutions flows from their wrong method of approach to the fundamental processes at work. The root cause of the errors in both cases is the same: a loss of Marxist objectivity, disregard and depreciation of all other factors in the situation but the character of the official leadership. The subjective method of analysis results in oversimplified and sectarian conclusions.

There is no argument between us that the success of the colonial revolution requires leadership from a Marxist party and that the creation of such parties must be the primary and ceaseless aim of all Trotskyists. However, the recognition and declaration of this truth only formulates the problem; it far from provides the solution in practice. The real problem is this: how can these objectives be implemented and realized in cases where the masses have already plunged into anti-imperialist action, and even into armed struggle for independence, under other types of leadership? Today this includes almost all the undeveloped countries except Ceylon.

The Marxist have their own socialist programme and aims which correspond to the basic needs of the workers and peasants which bring them into opposition to the bourgeois elements, and which distinguish them from the petty-bourgeois radicals in the national independence movements. They should participate in the forefront of the revolution at each stage — including its nationalist stage in colonial and semi-colonial lands — taking into account the concrete conditions of the struggle, in order to draw and direct the movement forward from its national-democratic beginning to its proletarian-socialist culmination. Throughout the process they have to make alliances with the most combative elements among the leaders and the ranks while bringing forward their own programme and proposals in contending for leadership.

No single formula can suffice to settle the many practical and tactical problems encountered along the way. But one thing is sure. Any ultimatic approach to the living movement of the masses as it advances from one stage to the next, which refuses to recognize the real relations involved, would cut off the Trotskyists from influencing

the struggle, directing it along the proper paths, and coming to its head. It would obstruct and render impossible the construction of the kind of party the revolutionary forces need.

Unfortunately, this is what the false positions of the SLL tend to do in the cases of Cuba and Algeria in particular and the colonial revolution as a whole!

### *Section 3: The Relations Between the Underdeveloped and Advanced Countries in the Strategy of the World Revolution*

The SWP Convention Resolution of June 1961 states: 'The strategic necessity of the world revolution at its present juncture is to combine into one mighty movement these three titanic historical processes; the anti-capitalist struggles of the workers in the highly industrialized imperialist centres; the anti-imperialist movements of the colonial peoples; and the anti-bureaucratic movements of the workers, peasants and intellectuals in the Soviet countries.' (*International Socialist Review*, Summer, 1961, p. 90)

The SLL Resolution sets the matter in a narrower context: 'It is upon this revolutionary crisis, with its dialectical relationship between the struggle of the workers in the advanced countries and of those oppressed by imperialism in the colonies and former colonies, that Marxists base their revolutionary strategy.' (*Labour Review*, Winter 1961, p. 86)

It is in fact that the main arena and most dynamic sector of the world revolution is today located in the underdeveloped countries where imperialism and capitalism are breaking at their weakest links. The explosiveness and advances of the insurgent colonial movements from Asia through the Middle East and Africa to Latin America stand out in sharp contrast with the prolonged passivity of the labor movement in the advanced industrial countries where imperialism retains its strongholds.

This situation has induced some commentators like Paul Sweezy, editor of *Monthly Review*, to award the colonial revolutions a permanently paramount role in the struggle for world socialism, thereby cancelling out as unrealistic for an indefinite time any prospects for the conquest of power by the workers in the advanced countries. They would make eternal a state of affairs based upon a correlation of class forces which obtains for a specific but limited period in the total process of the unfolding world revolution.

These proponents of the enduring primacy of the colonial revolution do not understand the dynamics of the permanent revolution on the world arena. They fail to grasp the meaning of the irregular rate with which the different constituent sectors of the anti-capitalist battalions enter into action or the central place occupied by the workers in the metropolitan centres in the overall struggle for socialism.

The peoples of the underdeveloped areas and the workers in the industrialized countries are predestined allies in the fight against capitalism. The intolerable conditions imposed by imperialism upon the colonial masses have driven them into revolt before the workers in the metropolitan centres were prepared to settle accounts with their own capitalists.

The struggles of the colonial peoples for national sovereignty economic emancipation and social progress form one of the mightiest factors in clearing the way for a new world order. By shaking the power, property and privileges of the imperialists, every forward step, every victory of the colonial masses thrusts international capitalism off balance and weakens its positions. Where, as in China, North Korea, North Viet Nam and now Cuba, these movements have wrenched loose from capitalism, they have directly and tremendously strengthened the world socialist cause.

The struggles of the colonial peoples not only deal blows to the imperialist rulers; their consequences can help prod the workers in the metropolitan countries into action on their own account, as the Algerian war has affected France and the Angolan uprising is upsetting Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal.

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

But it is necessary to make a sober appraisal of the comparative strengths of the rival class camps from a world-historical standpoint. These achievements have not dislodged the monopolists and militarists from their central strongholds or disarmed them. Entrenched imperialism retains all its capacities for destruction and

has enough nuclear weapons to overkill humanity at least fifty times. Unless and until the hold of imperialism is broken on its own ground — above all, in the heartland of the United States — the prospects for socialism remain uncertain and all its accomplishments to date are in peril.

The crux of the problem of the world politics today does not lie in the changing relations between the Big Two super-states of the US and the USSR, as so many think, but in the relations between the workers and capitalist rulers in the highly industrialized countries. This conclusion applies with equal force to the period we have passed through since the end of the Second World War, to the current deadlock in world politics, and to the period ahead.

The fundamental features of world politics for the past fifteen years have been shaped by two major facts. One is that the advances of the revolution have been restricted to the less developed parts of the globe. The other is that the workers in the more advanced countries have been unable to challenge or were held back from ending capitalist rule. The second of these factors has been more decisive in determining the channels of current world history than the first.

These circumstances have enabled the imperialist governments to carry on their cold war and witch-hunting policies without much internal opposition. They have helped strengthen the Stalinist bureaucrats by deterring the workers in the Soviet bloc from moving more vigorously to restore or to establish democratic proletarian regimes for fear of imperialist intervention. In addition, lack of support by the labour movement in the imperialist states has created great difficulties for the liberation struggles of the colonial peoples.

This point is crucially important because our emphasis upon the passivity and activity, the setbacks and successes, of the workers in the imperialist strongholds marks us off from all other tendencies in the radical movement and, above all, from those who adhere to the Stalinist view or a modification of it.

The followers of Khrushchev, for example, see socialism already achieved in the Soviet Union and bound to spread to the rest of the world through the economic, diplomatic and military ascendancy of the Soviet states. In line with this tenet, they assign in practice a subordinate role to the independent class struggles of the workers in the West. The movement for socialism is going to be decided, they think, by the extension of the power of the Soviet bloc.

The Soviet advances are undeniably an immense component part of

the drive toward socialism. They undermine world capitalism, reinforce the countries where capitalism has been abolished, popularize some of the ideas of socialism and its basic economic superiority over capitalism, and prepare invaluable positions for the future society.

But however impressive their proportions, however fast they accumulate, and however far-reaching their influence, these achievements, limited to the less developed sections of world society, cannot decide the destinies of either capitalism or socialism. Above all, they cannot substitute for the promotion of the struggle for workers power in the citadels of capitalism.

Why is this struggle central in changing the present world situation?

First, because the material requirements for the superior social system: technique, science, industry and its skilled workers are most highly concentrated in the advanced countries. So long as these remain in capitalist hands, humanity cannot arrive at socialism.

Second, the headquarters, the power-sources of the class enemy are located there. The victory of the workers in the West is no longer simply the necessary requisite for opening the gates to a higher stage of social development, as it was in the days of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. With the advent of nuclear weapons it has become urgent for the very survival of humanity. For, so long as the monopolists hold down the workers in the West, the road to the socialist future remains mined with nuclear explosives and the whole human race is threatened with extermination.

The central role of the industrial workers of the imperialist countries in the struggle for socialism is underscored in the following two paragraphs from the SWP Resolution of June 1961:

The confinement of revolutionary advances to the less developed parts of the world, together with the pronounced political lag in the West, has set its stamp upon our entire period. This negative feature, the most important element in the current reality, involves the citadels of imperialist power as well as the proletarian forces that must be mobilized to take them. The key to the world situation is here. Not until the workers in the industrially advanced countries dominate the political arena with all their mighty social weight will the struggle for socialism be won.

The chief problem is how to loosen the deadlock, break the stalemate, by overcoming the passivity of the workers in this decisive sector of the international class struggle. Until this is done, there can be no decisive

change, no qualitative transformation in the world-wide relation of forces, no great new period of historical advancement opened up, no scoring of an irreversible victory for socialism, no guarantee that atomic war will not convert our planet into a radioactive desert (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1961, p. 92).

This most recent statement adopted by the national convention should serve to dispose of any allegations that the SWP has changed its fundamental position, that it now unduly inflates the role of the colonial revolution and underestimates the proletarian struggle in the advanced countries and has thereby lost or is in danger of losing the perspective of world revolution. It should be clear enough to convince anyone not predisposed to believe the contrary.

#### *Section 4: How Can Mass Parties of Revolutionary Socialism Be Created?*

Here is the very first point which the document of the Wohlforth-Phillips group counterposes to the positions of the SWP leadership. 'We look to the working class and *only* the working class as the revolutionary force in modern society.' (*In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective*, p. 15)

The notion that all other social forces form one reactionary mass counterposed to the working class is not Marxist. Scientific socialism teaches that the working class is the central, most consistent and reliable revolutionary power in modern society which leads in struggle and in the building of socialism all other potentially revolutionary forces such as the peasants, lower middle classes and the intellectuals. The declaration of the Wohlforth-Phillips group quoted above is especially dangerous and misleading in reference to the colonial revolutions in Asia, the Near East, Africa and Latin America where the armed struggle of the insurgent peasantry has played and will play a colossal role.

This same one-sided proposition provides the *sociological* premise for the sectarian *political* conclusions of this tendency and the criticisms they direct against us.

The chief charge in the indictment of the SWP, most sharply enunciated by the adherents of the SLL viewpoint in the Wohlforth-Phillips group, is that we are abandoning the concept of 'the creation of revolutionary mass parties, that is, Trotskyist parties, that is, Trotskyist parties, as *essential* to the victory of socialism in every country in the world.' (*Ibid.*, p. 15)



This accusation appears all the more baseless in view of the Resolution adopted at the 1961 Convention which begins and ends with an affirmation and even accentuation of the decisive importance of revolutionary Marxist leadership in the struggle for socialism. A refutation beyond that scarcely seems necessary. But with these critics it is perhaps advisable to call attention to the 34 year history of the SWP and the career of its central cadres. The record is impeccable. Our party owes its origin and existence to the conscious recognition of the need to build a revolutionary-socialist party and the failure of other political organizations and tendencies to fulfill it. Some of our veterans have devoted half a century or more to the job of creating the required leadership, not only in this country but in the movements of the Second, Third and Fourth Internationals.

If such objective proofs from a long and honorable record fail to satisfy our newly-arrived critics then the real source of the differences must be sought elsewhere. And, in fact, the disagreements do not center on recognizing the necessity for Trotskyist parties but rather on the ways and means by which they can be strengthened and expanded under the given conditions of the class struggle and the present size and situation of our own forces.

It is one thing to acknowledge that a revolutionary party is needed and quite another to assemble and weld together the forces to form it. Mere citation of abstract formulas, repetition of correct but commonplace phrases, quotations from Lenin, Trotsky — and even Cannon (from what the critics regard as his better days) — will not suffice.

The problem is far from new. Our cadres, nationally and internationally, have been grappling with it for decades and are still far from its ultimate solution. Moreover, at each big turn in applying practical steps towards its solution, we have encountered resistance from scholastic sectarians and infantile leftists in our own ranks acquainted with important formulas but not so well equipped to apply them correctly and judiciously in the complex course of the class struggle.

During our first five years as Trotskyists (1928-1933) we had to build our original forces by recruiting cadres one by one mostly from the CP. When the triumph of Hitlerism and the rise of industrial unionism shook up the Social Democracy and the radical movement after 1933, larger opportunities opened up for us. In 1934 the American Trotskyists proposed and made a fusion with the American Workers Party and then in 1936 entered the Socialist Party.

Both of these tactical turns toward fusion with newly radicalized

elements encountered fierce, unrelenting opposition from the sectarian Oehlerites who accused us — that long ago! — of giving up the principle of the independent revolutionary party. They, too, were not averse to leveling charges like liquidationism, accommodationism, betrayal of the banner and similar crimes. Finally, to submit it all to the test of events, they went their own way. The results are known. The Oehlerites vanished while US Trotskyism increased its numbers and influence without surrendering a single one of its principles.

The Oehlerite diagnosis had as little substance then as its belated echo among the Wohlforth group has today. This was confirmed when, after a hard period of isolation enforced by the cold-war atmosphere, a serious threat of liquidationism did arise in our party with the appearance of the Cochran tendency in 1953. We quickly understood what they meant by their demand to 'junk the old Trotskyism'. We fought these genuine liquidators of an independent revolutionary party to a finish — their finish, not ours!

More recent is the precedent of the Marcyites. They, who are so lenient toward the policies of the Russian, Chinese and Albanian bureaucracies, could not tolerate our activities in the regroupment ferment provoked by Khrushchev's revelations in 1956. They viewed our participation in the United Socialist ticket and the 1958 New York elections as inexcusable softness toward revisionist elements, the first step on the road to liquidation of the party. They did not wait for any further steps. Like the Oehlerites before them they split and founded their own little cult.

Echoes of the Marcyite criticisms of the SWP leadership can now be heard in the SLL Resolution warning against 'a search for a shorter way, for alliances which may impose accommodations to alien trends, for regroupments without solid theoretical bases, for programmatic adaptations to suit what are assumed to be American peculiarities . . .' (p. 110)

The regroupment experience from 1956 to 1959 tested our capacity to respond energetically and skilfully to shake-ups in radical circles and to the appearance of new currents moving in a revolutionary direction. The experience demonstrated that our cadres had not petrified into doctrinaires, despite prolonged isolation. The SWP alone of all the political groups on the left gained influence, numbers and prestige during this period which witnessed the disintegration of the CP and the dissolution of the Shachtmanites and Cochranites. Then in 1960 a strengthened SWP entered the Presidential campaign

under its own banner and full program to conduct a memorable defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Both sides of these past internal struggles are pertinent to the current disputes in our movement. Hysterical cries about the dangers of 'revisionism, accommodationism, centrism, and empiricism' (the keynotes resounding throughout the Wohlforth-Phillips document) will not divert us from the main tasks. The crucial problem now, as before, is not to reiterate the need for Trotskyist parties, which we have known for a long time and which we didn't learn from them, but rather how we can broaden our existing cadres into a strong and dominant revolutionary power.

The cadres, once organized, never cease recruiting new members on an individual basis. But a mass party cannot be created by this means alone. Other methods are needed to convert a propaganda group into a party of mass action and influence. Experience has shown conclusively that the way to bring together wider forces is through collaboration, fusions and unifications with leftward-moving currents freshly radicalized by the class struggle.

Limiting our review to the twentieth century, the history of Lenin's Bolshevik Party involved more than splits. It also involved unifications and attempted unifications with other tendencies in the Russian Social Democracy, including the Mensheviks. Five years after 1912 when the Bolsheviks first constituted themselves as an independent party and in the midst of the 1917 revolution, they merged with Trotsky and his Inter-District group — a fateful decision which helped pave the way for the victory in October. Even after the conquest of power, the Bolsheviks held the door of the party open for any signs of a revolutionary turn by the left Mensheviks or the Communist-Anarchists.

The Communist parties of Germany, England and the US were all formed after the First World War, not by molecular accretions to the single original nucleus, but by fusions of a number of groups, none of which had originally been Bolshevik.

The same methods were employed by Trotsky in building the Fourth International during his lifetime. After the basic cadres of international Trotskyism had been consolidated, he initiated a series of discussions and negotiations with left-centrist elements in independent parties and others still connected with the Second and Third Internationals, in order to augment the forces of the movement.

Having learned from Lenin and Trotsky the indicated ways to

change a small propaganda group into a mass party, we ought to be busy trying to put them into practice. The problem is by no means limited to the reunification of these parties and groups which today formally acknowledge the program of Trotskyism. If our movement should fail to foresee and consciously aim at collaboration and eventual unification with new people who are actually engaged in carrying through a socialist revolution, as in Cuba, or striving toward it as in Algeria, or just awakening to its necessity as in the US, and other countries, it would shrivel into a futile sect instead of becoming the growing revolutionary force that Trotsky envisaged and which we have sought to realize.

The necessity of creating a new revolutionary leadership of the working class was set forth in the Transitional Programme of 1938 and repeated in the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International in 1940. There it was explained that this would be a prolonged process in which the tiny minority of existing cadres would have to engage in many kinds of flexible tactical operations. New forces would have to be gained and the revolutionary mass party forged 'in the flame of events'.

To grow and really become mass leaders, the Trotskyists must take the initiative in reaching out toward all leftward-moving currents and individuals breaking loose from previous allegiances and becoming responsive to revolutionary action and ideas. The anti-Stalinist, anti-Khrushchev and pro-Leninist tendencies emerging in the Communist parties, the socialist revolutionists of superb quality in Cuba and other countries of the colonial revolution, the militant workers and youth who are repelled by reformism, pacifism, centrism and Stalinism in the industrialized lands, must be met with a sensitive and receptive attitude in order to win them to the programme and outlook of the permanent revolution. To address dire warnings in our direction about the dreadful dangers of sliding into 'pragmatic methods and theoretical accomodation', (*Labour Review*, p.110) or losing our revolutionary perspective whenever we turn in the direction of new forces of this kind, does not help but only hinders success in building the world party of socialist revolution.

It would be ridiculous of us to refuse to grant others the right to come to revolutionary Marxism in their own way, which may not be ours. This applies above all to such figures as the heads of the Cuban July 26 Movement who have not simply talked about a socialist revolution but have made and are leading one.

... THE NEW WORLD WIDE TO FASCISM

We are duty-bound to seek and find common ground with all such revolutionary tendencies in order to acquaint them with the heritage of Trotskyism — and also to learn something from them. If the leaders of the Wohlforth group cannot see this from the history of Marxism and Leninism, they ought at least to be able to see it from their own political evolution. Not so long ago they were radical middle-class student-intellectuals in the left wing of the Shachtmanite group. Although they were far from being orthodox Trotskyists we did not hesitate for a moment to conclude an alliance with them in the struggle against their own right wing. We listened very carefully to their estimate of their own experiences and to their criticisms of us. We tried to learn from them. We accepted proposals they suggested. And even before they formally joined our party we proposed that they take over dominant direction of the youth movement.

If we had adopted toward them the same rigid, self-righteous attitude that they prescribe as the ideal norm, they would hardly be in a position today to lecture and scold us on the imaginary dangers of 'a drift from a revolutionary world perspective.' Nevertheless, we do not regret our flexible and open-minded approach to them nor will we refuse it to those who will come later. Let us hope that these others will learn more quickly and thoroughly that sectarianism, feeding upon unjustified organizational exclusiveness and scholasticism, can be as harmful to the healthy growth of a living movement as opportunism.

### *Section 5: Proposals for Reunifying World Trotskyism*

The disunity of the international Trotskyist forces has lasted since 1953. We believe the time has come to end it.

In our opinion, three main reasons were responsible for the rupture nine years ago. One was an apparent tendency shown by the International Secretariat, under Pablo's direction, to conciliate with Stalinism and look upon the Soviet bureaucracy as capable of self-reformation into a political agency of the working class and to impose this view without prior discussion or authorization upon other sections of the movement. This tendency was most explicitly expressed by Clarke in our own party, by the IS failure to condemn the role of Soviet military intervention in the East German uprising, and by its attitude in the French General Strike of 1953.

Second was its apparent conception that a small literary circle could

constitute a full-scale authoritative international leadership superseding and substituting itself for self-governing parties in the various countries. This view and method of operating tended to prevent leaders and cadres in various sections from standing on their own feet.

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

Internationalism does not begin and end, as some think, with setting up a central authority, armed with disciplinary powers, to issue directives which the national organizations must unquestionably obey. In our opinion internationalism is essentially a process of comradely discussion and collaboration in which the constituent sections of the world movement exchange views and jointly work out, if possible, common positions on the most vital problems of world politics. Discipline in action follows from that, but cannot substitute for it.

Strong revolutionary parties and responsible leaderships can be created in each country only if they are truly representative of its ranks. The leaders must be raised up out of the party work and struggles, be trusted by the members and democratically chosen by them. The members are the only ones who can install and remove them. As Trotsky once said: 'leadership is a natural growth out of a living party organism. It cannot be arbitrarily removed by outside forces without leaving a gaping wound that does not heal.'

Later, considerable differences developed on the application and aims of the entrism tactic in relation to reformist and Stalinist parties.

Because of Pablo's dominating role in the International Secretariat, we labelled these tendencies 'Pabloism' and, as orthodox Trotskyists, opposed them as vigorously as we could, supporting the faction organized under the guidance of the International Committee. We sought, however, to avoid falling into a posture of dead-end factionalism that would have barred *a priori* any possibilities of healing the rupture.

Since 1953 significant changes have taken place.

The first sign of a turnabout came in 1954 when the IS backed away from the pro-Stalinist tendencies it had inspired and protected in France, Great Britain and the US. This was certified by the break with Clarke, Lawrence and Mestre, three figures who pressed the IS line to

its logical conclusion, the first abandoning Trotskyism, and the latter two joining the CP with their followers.

This narrowing of the political differences between the two factions of the world Trotskyist movement made it possible to seek reunification with the proper conditions and organizational safeguards. This was the origin and motivation of the SWP parity proposal of 1957. Unfortunately, this proposal was rejected by the IS. Furthermore, while the English and French representatives on the International Committee supported the SWP unity proposal in words, they sabotaged it in practice.

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

Nevertheless the SWP continued to stand firm on the position that the diminishing of divergences on the key political issues of the day made unification desirable, although we did not think it would be easily or speedily brought about because of the obstacles on both sides. We rejected the view which the SLL began to develop that the political differences between the two tendencies had widened and become so profound that co-existence in a single movement was unwarranted or impossible. If the necessary organizational guarantees were properly handled we believe co-existence in a common organization could prove workable.

Today the unfolding crisis of world Stalinism, the progressive development of the Cuban Revolution, and the renewed interest in Trotskyism make unification all the more urgent, and we intend to fight for it against any opposition from any source.

A cohesive world movement would be a powerful pole of attraction for Communist dissidents and other militants who are looking for the Leninist road. At the same time the political positions of the majority of the IS, a number of IC affiliated groups, and some Trotskyist organizations affiliated with neither side on most of the vital issues of the day, from the de-Stalinization process and the Sino-Soviet conflict to the Cuban Revolution, are so close that they are indistinguishable to any unprejudiced reader of their respective publications. If the organization blocks can be surmounted, as we believe they can, there is no reason why unity cannot be achieved.

How can the existing deadlock be broken and what steps should be taken to promote the preconditions for reunification?

A good beginning has been made in the recent IC proposals for a Unity Commission of the two groups to organize an international discussion and conduct joint work for the rehabilitation of Trotsky, aid to Cuba, etc. This should be supplemented by exchange of articles in the press, coordination of work in different fields, and the renewal of collaboration between divided sections.

The international discussion should be carried on, not in order to produce new splits and splinters, but to facilitate the prospects of reunification. All differences of opinion on the most important questions should be presented and made known to everyone. The course and outcome of the discussion should demonstrate precisely what the areas of agreement and disagreement are among the different tendencies within the world movement. The object should be not to freeze old lines of demarcation and to manufacture new divisions but to clear the way for all viewpoints to express themselves.

At the appropriate time a call should be issued for a World Reunification Congress. This could be held within a year or sooner, if possible. No group should be shut out of the preparation or participation in the Congress but ample room should be afforded for the expression of all tendencies. Every effort should be made to invite the participation of all Trotskyist groups formally outside the existing international organizations and to secure participation or observation by new interested revolutionary currents.

The aim should be to consolidate a homogeneous and integrated international leadership with adequate and democratic representation for every political minority at the Congress. There should be no ultimatism or exclusiveness in constituting the Congress; no effort to impose monolithism of thought in the world movement following the Congress; and no disciplinary measures against the national sections between the Unification Congress and its successor.

The Congress should reaffirm the necessity for a world movement governed by the organizational principles formulated in the Transitional Programme adopted by the Founding Congress of the Fourth International. 'Without inner democracy — no revolutionary education. Without discipline — no revolutionary action. The inner structure of the Fourth International is based on the principle of democratic centralism; full freedom in discussion, complete unity in action.'

The tactical procedures in building the party in every country must be considered separately according to the conditions in each case.

The Congress should make it explicit, however, that entrust work



must be accompanied by independent external expression of the full Trotskyist programme and positions and that members must be recruited and educated around the full Trotskyist programme. Also, that the ultimate aim of all entrism activities is the formation of mass parties on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

These points can be included in documents to be prepared and adopted by the Congress on ways and means of constructing revolutionary mass parties.

Some of the differences of the past must be left for later discussion or historical adjudication. But these differences, which do not vitally affect current policy, should not be permitted to divert the forces in the IC and the IS, who really want unity, and are determined, as we are, to bring it about.

Unification, in the Lenin-Trotsky tradition, does not exclude, but rather presupposes further discussion, including the discussion of past differences. But all such discussions, in our opinion, can be conducted most fruitfully now in a united international movement.

**DOCUMENT 18****Resolution of the Fourth Annual Conference of the SLL on relations with the Pabloites, May 10, 1962.**

This conference of the Socialist Labour League supports the call of the International Committee of the Fourth International for a conference early in 1963 of all affiliated sections. The discussion before and during this Conference is the essential precondition for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Without political clarification of the problems facing the international working class and the Marxist movement, and without a thoroughgoing analysis of the experience of the International since 1940, there can be no rebuilding of the Fourth International. Any attempt to unify and organize the forces at present claiming to be Trotskyist without such a discussion would be a backward step. It could lead only to a setting aside of the most important questions and consequently the failure of the revolutionary movement to face up to its political responsibilities.

The first task in the process of political clarification is to expose the revisionism which produced the 1953 split, and which has since then led the International Secretariat further along the path of opportunism and liquidationism.

Since the death of Trotsky, the great weakness of the Fourth International has been its failure to develop theory. Where this happens, the Marxist movement is in danger of adaption to the ideas of other classes. Marxist phrases and formulae are used to justify such adaption, but they are the opposite of Marxism.

Pabloism, with its theories of 'war-revolution', 'centuries of degenerated workers' states', capitulation to the Stalinist bureaucracy, subordination to the bourgeois-nationalist leaders in the colonial countries is precisely such a tendency. Our movement can only take a

big step forward when the lessons of the split and the source of Pablo's revisionism, are fully grasped by the movement.

The next stage in the international discussion must therefore be a definitive clarification of the political reasons for the split of 1953, a settling of accounts with the revisionist currents which have developed in the past within the Marxist movement.

In order to facilitate this discussion, the Socialist Labour League will take part in the sub-committee of the International Committee and International Secretariat proposed in the IC's letter of February 1962. We believe that if this committee can make the necessary technical arrangements for exchange of written discussion documents, then the various sections throughout the world can be drawn into the necessary process of political clarification. In this discussion our aim will be to make the necessary analysis and exposure of revisionism, and to clarify the forces who will rebuild the Fourth International.

At the same time, the Socialist Labour League will co-operate in proposals for limited joint practical campaigns on such questions as 'Aid for Cuba' and the reopening of the Trotsky case and the publication of Trotsky's works in Russian, as proposed in the letter of the IC.

# Chapter Six

## Trotskyism Betrayed

The reply to the SWP's pro-Pabloite resolution by the National Committee of the SLL (Document 19) insisted that Pabloite adaptation was now even more dangerous than in 1953, because of the decisive nature of the struggles developing in the advanced countries. While the SWP, with Hansen as their chief spokesman, retreated further into impressionism and resorted to slandering the British section as 'sectarians', the leadership of the International Committee traced the SWP's turn to Pabloism to the refusal to deepen the discussion of the issues at stake in 1953. (Document 21.) In the fight against centrism the International Committee was thus able to draw on the lessons of the split and take forward the struggle for dialectical materialism.

## DOCUMENT 19

### *Trotskyism Betrayed: The SWP accepts the political method of Pabloite revisionism by the National Committee of the SLL, July 21, 1962.*

1. The document 'Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps' adopted by the Political Committee of the SWP on June 16 and 17, 1962, marks a new stage in the international discussion. For the first time the SWP has acknowledged explicitly the questions of principle which at the moment divide the SWP and the SLL.
2. A discussion on these questions must not be confined to the leading bodies of the SLL and the SWP, nor only to the leading committees of the IS and the IC. It must be extended throughout the ranks of every section of the world movement.
3. The SWP draft claims to 'take for granted' that there are many things on which the SLL and the SWP have full agreement. The document goes on to deal with 'points of disagreement and misunderstanding'. One of these points of disagreement and misunderstanding is said to be the question of 'ways and means' of building mass parties of revolutionary Marxism. *We must point out, however, that this discussion is not at all a question of listing points of agreement and disagreement: we are convinced that a whole difference of theoretical and political method is involved.* This is acknowledged even by the SWP Political Committee document when it says that the SLL comrades give 'primacy to the subjective factor'. The international discussion now beginning cannot be simply a matter of clearing up misunderstandings and partial differences. Our opinion is that the method in the SWP document is a fundamental revision of Marxism and is different in no way from the

revisions of Pablo which led to the split of 1953. It is difficult to see how the SWP leadership can claim to have agreement with the SLL 'on many points' if in fact their document is correct in saying that we have an 'incorrect conception of the interplay between the objective and subjective factors in shaping the course of the revolutionary process'.

4. The basic differences in method as we shall show are centred upon the basic questions of Leninism, how to proceed to the construction of an international revolutionary party.

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

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

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

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

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

than that of 1953. Apologies for the non-Marxist leaderships, assertions that petty bourgeois leadership can become Marxist 'naturally' through the strength of the 'objective forces' — these threaten to disarm the working class by disorientating the Marxist leadership. If capitulation to the centrists takes place now, preventing the working class from breaking with the Social Democratic, Stalinist and trade union bureaucracy, then the revisionists will have the responsibility for enormous working-class defeats.

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



leaderships, and even, as in Algeria, about the necessity for agreement with the imperialists (see below) all these have a counter-revolutionary role in disarming the working class.

8. In the whole theoretical trend of the SWP exemplified by the famous theory of the 'confirmation' of the concept of Permanent Revolution, there is an acceptance of non-Marxist, petty-bourgeois tutelage over the masses, but in the guise of recognition of the 'strength' of the masses in pushing the politicians to the left. Theory has been degraded from a guide to action to a dead commentary on the accomplished fact. Behind this there is a long theoretical stagnation, reflected in the failure of the SWP to go beyond a superficial criticism of the last round of revisionism, Pabloism and in the absence of any theoretical contribution by the SWP since Trotsky's death. It is in the construction of the revolutionary party in the USA itself that the necessity of defeating the SWP leadership's revisionism is most urgent.

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

9. The Political Committee draft distorts the position of the Transitional Programme in an attempt to brand the SLL international resolution as 'subjective'. 'The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International says that in our epoch "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership". The SLL reiterates this correct declaration. But their Resolution overlooks the fact that it is the conclusion from a prior consideration of "The Objective Prerequisites for Socialist Revolution"'. The SLL document in fact begins in the same way as the Transitional Programme, with a section on 'The Necessity for Socialist Revolution' and continues, 'it is upon this revolutionary crisis, with its dialectical relationship between the struggle of the workers in the advanced countries and of those oppressed by imperialism in the colonies and former colonies, that Marxists base their revolutionary strategy'. (*Labour Review*, Winter 1961, p.86) Strangely enough, the SWP document chooses to quote this latter sentence in order to attack the SLL on another point (relations between underdeveloped and advanced countries) in the

strategy of world revolution, but to ignore it in the consideration of the basic question of programme and method. Trotsky's emphasis on the ripeness of the objective situation for socialism served always to highlight the responsibility of leadership and to criticize the betrayals of the reformists and the Stalinists. To argue from the objective conditions in order to *excuse* the non-revolutionary leadership is a complete distortion of the Transitional Programme.

10. This point is worth discussing in more detail, since it underlies all the political differences. Like Pablo before them, the SWP spokesmen quote as justification of their attitude a phrase torn from its context in the Transitional Programme, 'the orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus'. The whole document emphasizes the last sentence of this quotation to justify the view that historical forces and revolutionary tendencies will suddenly and automatically produce a leadership; in other words, that the bureaucratic apparatus will be defeated by 'the laws of history' whatever happens. But when Trotsky wrote this paragraph it was an expression of confidence in the possibility of creating a Marxist leadership on the basis of the objective conditions to overthrow the bureaucratic apparatus both in the USSR and in the international workers' movements. The last thing in his head was any idea that 'the laws of history' would get along without the conscious leadership of the class. The 'treacherous policies of the old workers' organizations' must be fought and defeated by the revolutionary party based on Marxist theory. Talk of the 'laws of history' accomplishing this as a process separate from the development of the party is an abandonment of the Marxist position on the relations between 'objective' and 'subjective'. Under the guise of correcting the SLL by quotations from the Transitional Programme, the SWP document in fact abandons the thesis of the crisis of leadership. It does not carry out any historical analysis of the real results in politics of the failure to resolve this crisis of leadership; had this been done it would have been impossible to disagree with the conclusion reached by the SLL international resolution, that the present relationship of forces in the advanced countries is to a great extent precisely the product of the crisis of leadership. To argue that this 'relationship of forces' some-

how produces international revolutionary trends is sheer distortion of the Transitional Programme. This distortion inevitably extends into revision of the whole history of Bolshevism; a revision which is necessitated by the SWP's current political attitude towards non-Marxist leaderships as the following quotation shows: 'If the revolutionary forces do not have a suitable leadership prepared in advance of their drive toward supreme power, they are compelled to create or re-create one *in the process of the revolution*. Even Lenin's Bolshevik Party had to be re-oriented by the April Theses and reformed between February and October 1917'. Lenin's life work in clarifying the basic theoretical issues and in constructing an independent revolutionary party through periods of reaction as well as revolution is mutilated and dragged into the argument only in order to make even the 're-arming of the party' in 1917 an 'example' of the theories discovered by the SWP. Somehow even the Bolshevik party must be made to have been 'created or re-created' in the process of the revolution. Such a distortion of history, and particularly the history of our own movement, is a sure indication of political degeneration.

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

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

and relations with the tendencies axiomatically can only follow the clarification of these primary questions.

12. For all its claims to objectivity, the SWP in none of its documents for the last two years has made any objective economic and political analysis of the development of imperialism or of the Soviet Union. It is substituting for this a series of impressionistic estimates of these processes — 'The Stalinist monolith is fracturing', the masses 'cannot wait' for the revolutionary party to be formed. Crass optimism takes the place of revolutionary confidence based on an analysis of capitalist contradictions and the power of the working class. Whereas the SLL international resolution begins a serious analysis of new trends in the economy of imperialism and judges the various political trends in relation to this objective development, the SWP simply searches for examples to confirm the thesis that 'history is on our side'. Once it is accepted that the existing petty-bourgeois trends, either nationalist or Stalinist, will be forced by mass pressure to complete the proletarian revolution, to 'confirm the permanent revolution', then the way is wide open for the abandonment of the independent politics of the working class. This flows so irrevocably from the theoretical apologies for the petty-bourgeois leadership, that the longing of the SWP for unity with the Pabloites comes as no surprise.

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

The SWP's judgment of 1953 applies to its own position today just as precisely as it did to the Pabloites then. The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International based itself on the crisis of humanity brought about by the overripeness of capitalism for revolution. Was it wrong to raise the banner of the Fourth International in the 'unfavourable relationship of forces' of the 1930s? Were the defeats

from 1933 to the present day due to an unfavourable relationship of forces? On the contrary, in a 'favourable' objective situation, the workers were *betrayed* by Social Democracy and Stalinism. The crisis of humanity resolves itself into the crisis of leadership — this thesis has in fact been abandoned by the SWP leadership, and it is sheer hypocrisy for the SWP document to quote the Transitional Programme in its support.

13. In our communications with the SWP we provoked a strong reaction by daring to suggest that talk about 'confirming the permanent revolution' without the revolutionary parties was nonsense. In practice, however, both the Pabloites and the SWP find themselves prostrate before the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in Cuba and Algeria, which they have chosen to regard as the touchstone of revolutionary politics. Our view of this question is not opposed to that of the SWP simply in terms of who can best explain a series of events. It is a question rather of the actual policy and programme of Trotskyist leadership in these backward countries. The theory of permanent revolution is, like all Marxist theory, a guide to action; analysis becomes the pointer to the need to organize an independent and determined working class and its allies in the peasantry for their own soviet power. 'Confirming the permanent revolution' is not an accolade to be conferred by Marxists on approved nationalist leaders, but a task for which Marxists themselves have the responsibility. We find it difficult to comment on the SWP's complaint that we failed to recognize that any other line on Cuba would have made things more difficult for them in the American radical movement. We are less impressed by the fact that the SWP 'drew the favourable attention of a whole new layer attracted by the Cuban Revolution including such significant figures as C. Wright Mills', than by the fact that their theoretical position is a revisionist one, and if adhered to will lead to the liquidation of the SWP as a Trotskyist party. The very fact that the SWP document resorts to such criteria should be a warning signal.

14. The failure of the SWP spokesmen to provide an objective analysis of the role of the nationalist leaderships; their reliance on impressions of the strength and 'progressiveness' of the nationalist movements, a consequence of the theoretical stagnation of the SWP, has also led to a falsification of the historical truth about the relations between consciousness and the development of the revolutionary

movement. Lenin's implacable opposition to all opportunism and compromise on principles, his insistence on analysing the economic roots of all political difference, his lifelong insistence on the primary importance of political clarification before organizational steps — all this is ignored, in order to justify the SWP's present orientation. Their document says 'experience has shown conclusively that the way to bring together wider forces is through collaboration, fusions and unifications with leftward-moving currents freshly radicalized by the class struggle.

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

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

It was not flexibility that served (nor should it serve today) as the basic trait of Bolshevism but rather *granite hardness*. It was precisely of this quality, for which its enemies and opponents reproached it, that Bolshevism was

always justly proud. Not blissful 'optimism' but intransigence, vigilance, revolutionary distrust, and the struggle for every hand's breadth of independence — these are the essential traits of Bolshevism. This is what the communist parties of both the West and the East must begin with. They must first gain the right to carry out great manoeuvres by preparing the political and material possibility for realizing them, that is, the strength, the solidity, the firmness of their own organization'.

*(The Third International After Lenin by L. Trotsky)*

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

15. It is not surprising that the basic methodological differences should find expression in a sharp clash on matters of urgent political importance. The SWP's attitude towards the Algerian struggle, and particularly the condemnation of the SLL's characterization of the

FLN leadership and its agreements with French imperialism, will serve as the best example. On this question it has to be said that the SWP now finds itself at the end of a long historical line, beginning with the Mensheviks and continuing through the Chinese revolution to the post-war struggles of the Arab, African and South-East Asian peoples. It is no accident that the publications of the SWP have not contained a fundamental analysis of the Algerian revolution for some years. No article on Algeria has appeared in *International Socialist Review*. Little has appeared since 1958 in *The Militant* on the national movement in Algeria. From our side, over a number of years an attempt has been made to analyse the nature of the Algerian war and revolution and to specify the character of its leadership. In this process, mistakes have been made, but certainly we did not suddenly discover that the Evian agreement was a sell-out. We did not argue that the FLN had conducted the struggle against the French correctly up to a certain point and then blame it for making peace with French imperialism. The Algerian war did not end as it began; the men and movements involved were not the same at the beginning as at the end. We attempted to trace out the development of the elemental struggle of the Algerian peasantry and urban plebeians led, as it was, by a narrowly-based, petty-bourgeois leadership subject to all kinds of international pressures. We foresaw, while the peace negotiations were going on last year, what the likely, indeed, inevitable outcome would be. We were prepared for the result and did not, therefore, have to exhaust our resources of vocabulary to turn the Evian agreement into a major defeat for French imperialism or to find excuses for the nationalists. We should, therefore, say that our criticism is not one merely of the Evian agreement, but extends to the conduct of the struggle by the FLN over the whole course of the war. It is not, of course, true that we overlooked the responsibility of the leaderships of the workers' movement in France for the Algerian tragedy; that has constantly figured in the treatment of the French crisis in our press. The Evian agreement was not the result only of these, or only of the FLN. A different policy, that is a really revolutionary policy on the part of the French working class movement, could only have been waged under different leadership, but such a change in leadership in France would have profoundly affected the Algerian movement. It would have swept the Ben Kheddas and Ben Bellas away like chaff in the wind. They have only survived because of the defeats of the French workers. The behaviour of the GPRA leaves little doubt that



the talk of agrarian reform and even social revolution is no more than a blind. The Algerian petty bourgeoisie seeks to fill the place vacated by French colonialism, while continuing to be a loyal guarantor of the fundamental interests of French capital in North Africa. We see the Evian agreements as the expression of this willingness, in which the FLN leaders remain true to their nature. We cannot forget that the 'centralist' leadership have never really desired more than this and that they have not stopped at assassination to strike down those proletarian elements in the nationalist movement who long ago pointed out where they were leading. The role of the revolutionaries is not to bow down before a leadership which has nothing to commend it except the ability to control, for the moment, the elemental forces of the Algerian revolution. We do not take seriously its professions of revolution. All nationalist petty-bourgeois groups today pose as socialists and Marxists. The FLN is actually a coalition of tendencies, but though some of them have potentialities, we see no proletarian tendency. What we do see is a willingness for compromise, a fear of the masses, a desire to co-exist with imperialism, which may well make 'independent' Algeria no more socialist than Nasser and Bourghiba. Does the SWP wish to extend the accolade to these leaders as well? Considering the deep crisis of French imperialism in Algeria it had retreated in relatively good order, leaving its interests to custodians it has at length decided to trust. Some rightists think, of course, that Algeria will 'go Communist' and attack de Gaulle for making the agreement with the nationalists. We think those who see in an 'independent' Algeria under the FLN the last hope of keeping that country within the circuit of the capitalist world market to be more in line with the existing facts.

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

16. It is necessary to clearly characterize the way in which this latest SWP document provides 'theoretical' cover for the betrayal of the Algerian revolution. The SLL, it appears, is wrong to call the Evian agreement a sell-out. We should have recognized, says the SWP document, that the 'main thing' is a victory for the independence struggle and a set-back for French imperialism. This type of formulation is of course not new: it is the classical Stalinist criticism of the Trotskyist programme in backward countries. We note that in Section II, the SWP document quotes with approval the following sentence from the pages of *The Militant* — 'The first step in Algeria is the consolidation of independence, the second must be the socialist transformation of Algerian society'. Is this different in any way from the Stalinist 'two stage' theory of the revolution in backward countries? Would it be possible to find a clearer example in practice of the abandonment of the Permanent Revolution, an abandonment which is not made any better by the fact that the theory is said to be 'confirmed'? The sentence which follows the above quotation, 'The Marxists there will strive to fight together with the worker-plebeians against the bourgeois elements in the nationalist camp in order to direct the revolution along the second course', amounts to nothing more than a habitual repetition of phrases which the SWP leadership do not as yet omit from their political statements. That this talk of 'the fight against the bourgeois elements' is nothing more than revolutionary phraseology is clear from the document itself. A Marxist, it says, 'should participate in the forefront of the revolution at each stage — including its nationalist stage in colonial and semi-colonial lands'. Such formulations can only disarm the most advanced workers. We are asked to 'make alliances with the most combative elements among the leaders and the ranks while bringing forward their own programme and proposals in contending for leadership'. (Our emphasis). What this opposition amounts to is not an independent course towards working-class power, but a loyal opposition within the nationalist camp.

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

A resolute struggle must be waged against the attempt to clothe the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries which are not genuinely communist in communist colours. The Communist International has the duty of supporting the revolutionary movement in the

colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties — which will be truly communist and not only in name — in all the backward countries and educating them to a consciousness of their special task, namely, that of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic trend in their own nation.

and

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

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

themselves. Meanwhile their jails remain full of communists and militant workers. The SWP by this position, falls along with the Pabloites into conniving at similar results in Algeria.

### *Role of the Workers in Advanced Countries*

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

It is in Section III, 'The relations between the underdeveloped and the advanced countries in the strategy of the world revolution', that the SWP's departure from the Marxist method stands most clearly revealed. In the first draft of the 1961 international resolution of the SWP, the decisive role of the revolution in the advanced countries was omitted. The final version 'corrected' this omission in the manner of the Pabloites referred to above. However, the first draft was a more correct expression of the actual policy of the SWP on all points of programme. The objective relationship between the advanced countries and the struggle in the backward countries is not analysed at all. The SWP resolution of June 1961 runs as follows: 'The strategic necessity of the world revolution at its present juncture is to combine into one mighty movement these three titanic historical processes; the anti-capitalist struggles of the workers in the highly industrialized imperialist centres; the anti-imperialist movements of the colonial peoples; and the anti-bureaucratic movements of the workers, peasants and intellectuals in the Soviet countries'. The latest political committee document only confuses still further this estimation, which amounts in fact to no more than a survey of the struggles in different parts of the world. It now appears that 'the main area and most dynamic sector of the world revolution is today located in the

under-developed countries where imperialism and capitalism are breaking at their weakest links. The mood of this sector stands out in sharp contrast with the prolonged passivity of the labour movement in the advanced industrial countries where imperialism retains its strongholds'. This statement is followed by a sharp 'attack' on those who assume the contrast to be permanent — 'They fail to grasp the meaning of the irregular rate with which the different constituent sectors of the anti-capitalist battalions enter into action or the central place occupied by the workers in the metropolitan centres in the overall struggle for socialism'. In the absence of any objective analysis of the state of the class struggle in the advanced countries since the Second World War, the formal stress on the decisive role of this sector in the SWP document can only appear as a Utopian faith in the revival of the struggle in those countries. Along with this we find formulations which excuse the betrayals of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats in these countries, e.g. 'The intolerable conditions imposed by imperialism upon the colonial masses have driven them into revolt before the workers in the metropolitan centres were prepared to settle accounts with their own capitalists'. What should have been said here is that the outright betrayals of the Stalinists and Social-Democrats, their consequences in the rise of Fascism and the carnage of the Second World War, the collaboration of the reformists and the Stalinists in the restoration of European capitalism after 1945, made it possible for capitalism to remain in existence despite the organization and will to struggle of the workers in the advanced countries. Only a prepared struggle against these tendencies and the construction of an independent revolutionary party can guarantee the prospect of victory in the mass struggles now beginning in the advanced countries. Once the problem is posed in this way there results an entirely different political orientation from that of the SWP. The present 'relationship of forces' is a product of past betrayals and not of the strength of imperialism in the advanced countries. The road forward will be found through the qualitative analysis of what produced the present 'relationship of forces' and of the forces which can change it. The SWP document talks about 'irregular rates' for the different sectors, ending with a conception of the 'central place occupied by the workers in the metropolitan centres in the overall struggle for Socialism' (our emphasis).

19. We are asked, once again, to start from the main thing, as with

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

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

The confinement of revolutionary advances to the less developed parts of the world, together with the pronounced political lag in the West, has set its stamp upon our entire period. *This negative feature, the most important element in the current reality*, involves the citadels of imperialist power as well as the proletarian forces that must be mobilized to take them'.

(our emphasis).

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

It is true that this section of the SWP political committee document is followed by a section 'How can mass parties of Revolutionary

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

### *Cuba*

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

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

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

21. The determination of the SWP and the Pabloites to consider Cuba a workers' state, or, to quote the SWP document, 'an uncorrupted workers' regime', is another example of the departure from Marxist method. The SWP document tries to present the differences over Cuba in a false way, accusing the SLL of not recognizing the

workers' state in Cuba only because the revolution there was not led by a Trotskyist party. The SWP, not misled by such 'subjectivism', bases itself on other 'criteria'. The discussion in the 1930s on the class character of the USSR, and particularly the struggle against Burnham and Schachtman for the defence of the USSR as a workers' state, are an essential background to the question of Cuba. But it is ridiculous to think that the question of the Cuban state can be resolved abstractly by 'criteria' from this earlier discussion, even at the end of which Trotsky was still saying that the last word had still to be said by history. Trotsky and the Fourth International adjudged Russia a workers' state because in the October Revolution the armed workers, organized in Soviets, took the State power, which they then used to expropriate the capitalists and to defeat the counter-revolution. The peasant revolt was able to expropriate the landlords because the successful proletarian revolution guaranteed their initial conquests. (Incidentally, does anyone in the SWP leadership think that the proletariat would have been able to retain the state power without the leadership prepared in the Bolshevik party? Who organized the Red Army and the great dynamic relationship of people to government which was preserved through the Civil War? Does the SWP think that a Marxist leadership to carry out these tasks would have been thrown up 'in the process of the revolution itself'?)

22. For reasons which have been well analysed in our movement, these victories of the proletariat degenerated. Trotsky fought a long battle against those essentially petty-bourgeois trends in the movement who used this degeneration to absolve them from the defence of the workers' state. In defending the USSR as a workers' state, Trotsky himself considered that the social and economic conquests of October were still intact. The bureaucracy which usurped the government power in the social economy of Russia was a parasitic group and not a necessary fundamental class. Its power was unstable, based on a temporary relation between the proletarian revolution in backward countries and the continuing existence of imperialism in the advanced countries. Trotsky's basic definition still holds: the conquests of October are still intact. The power of the bureaucracy remains unstable and parasitic. It is clearer now than it was then that the Stalinist regime was not a new type of society destined in a makeshift way, taking into account the special historical problems of the isolation of the revolution in a backward country. The states



established in Eastern Europe in 1945 were extensions of the Russian revolution by the military and bureaucratic methods of the Stalinist leadership. They were possible under the circumstances of special difficulty for imperialism and the chaos in Europe consequent on the defeat of German capitalism. In fact the betrayals of international Social-Democracy and Stalinism restricted the advance of the revolution to Eastern Europe (and later China). This perpetuates the essential conditions of the survival of the bureaucracy in the workers' states. There was by no means the same dynamic in the foundations of the deformed 'workers' states' as there had been in Russia in October 1917. Our movement's characterization of all these states was not simply a question of applying 'criteria' like nationalization to the finished product.

23. These historical considerations are not irrelevant to the dispute over Cuba. Trotsky insisted that his discussion and definition of the USSR were to be taken historically, and in *relation* to the world struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. At every stage of his eleven-years-long work towards a 'definition' of the USSR, Trotsky insisted on a rounded, critical perspective and not simply on the 'normative' method applying definition criteria. The SWP method is the opposite, taking certain 'criteria' from the discussion of one particular manifestation of the revolutionary struggle in one part of the world as a unique stage in the development of the world revolution. They apply this criteria to another part of the world a generation later, to a particular sector at a particular stage of the struggle. Thus nationalization and the existence of workers' militias are sufficient to make Cuba a 'workers' state' and to make the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution. This 'normative' method is the theoretical cover for the practice of prostrating themselves before the present unstable and transitory stage of the struggle — the victory of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalists — instead of starting from the perspective and tasks of the working class. The objective basis for such a perspective would have to be an analysis of the present relation of classes and parties in Cuba and Latin America, in relation to the struggle against American imperialism. Our essential differences with the SWP on this question are, therefore, not over the 'criteria' of workers' states. We do not accept such a framework for the discussion; if, in fact, we had defined a workers' state by the existence or non-existence of Trotskyist parties then this *would* be a

lapse into 'subjectivism', but we have not done this. We have tried to understand and discuss the Cuban question in terms of our own analysis of the economic position of Cuba and the evaluation of the present struggle in Cuba and the rest of America. We are in no circumstances prepared to join in the adulation of the 'superb' leadership of the Cuban revolution. We are in no circumstances prepared to liquidate the Trotskyist leadership in organizations like the IRO of Castro and the Stalinists in Cuba. The only possibility of holding on to the gains so far made in the struggle against imperialism is through the building of workers' councils and the extension of the revolution into Latin America. Only a Marxist leadership can orientate the Cuban masses for these two aims. Neither the July 26th movement nor the Stalinists will take up either of these slogans.

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

Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba? We reply categorically *no!* The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship. But what is even more significant is the absence of what the SWP euphemistically terms 'the institutions of proletarian democracy' or what we prefer to call soviets or organs of workers' *power*. This is the paradox which lies behind all the so-called 'democratic and socialist tendencies of the Cuban revolution'. To substitute a workers' militia for soviets does not help. Workers' militias without soviets are no better, no worse than soviets without workers' militias.

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

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

and on the question of Soviets:

the . . . revolution is one continuous and desperate struggle, and the proletariat is the vanguard class of all the oppressed, the focus and centre of all the aspirations of all the oppressed for their emancipation! Naturally,

therefore, the soviets as the organs of struggle of the oppressed masses reflected and expressed the moods and changes of opinions of these masses ever so much more quickly, fully and faithfully than any other institutions (that incidentally, is one of the reasons why soviet democracy is the highest type of democracy)' (Lenin in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*).

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

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

Castro continues to *lean* upon the working class and peasantry in the struggle against the latifundists and their agents in and around Cuba. He is helped in this task by the *economic* concessions made to the workers and peasants. But it is the peasantry who have benefited most from the Castro regime. It is to this group and the urban petty-bourgeoisie that Castro turns and will turn for aid whenever there is a threat from the Left. Castro balances between contradictory and antagonistic class forces. This is what explains the smallness of the ruling clique, the absence of democratic discussion, the instability of the regime marked by recurrent splits and purges and the mystique of the Castro cult.

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

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

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

A basic criterion for a workers' state in the economic sphere in an underdeveloped country is the *nationalization of the land* and thorough political measures by the ruling power to prevent the growth of the kulaks. Neither in Egypt nor in Cuba has this been done. On the contrary, in Cuba Castro has recently promised (under the impact of the food crisis) to give the land back to peasants. So long as land remains alienable, so long will petty-commodity production continue and so long will Cuba remain a capitalist nation.

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

Here is what Trotsky says on this subject:

No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only *under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party*.

*This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution.* (Our emphasis) (*The Permanent Revolution* by L. Trotsky).

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

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

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

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

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

25. One final word on the section of the SWP document concerned with Cuba. The SWP political committee circulates among its members and presumably throughout the world movement the following criticism of the SLL:

On the other hand, the fallacious theoretical approach of the SLL to the Cuban Revolution has impeded practical activities. The SLL lost the initiative in Cuban defence efforts to centrist forces in England. The rejection of an Embassy invitation to celebrate the Cuban Revolution on

January 1, 1962 needlessly widened the gulf between the British Trotskyists and the Cuban Revolutionists. Recently the SLL has started promoting a 'Food for Cuba' campaign. This kind of solidarity action is sure to be appreciated by the hard-pressed Cubans. We hope this improvement in their practical work will be followed by reconsideration of their theoretical views on the Cuban Revolution.

We cannot understand this pronouncement. No evidence is given for it, and we would like to know which 'centrist elements' have gained the initiative in Cuban defence efforts. There have in fact been no such initiatives or efforts in Britain by anyone else except the SLL. Furthermore, in our efforts we have found the Cuban Embassy and their supporters in the Communist Party to be a major stumbling-block to any organized aid for the Cuban people. We hope that this section of the SWP statement will be withdrawn.

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

### *The Fourth International*

26. Our emphasis on leadership, both in the underdeveloped and in the advanced countries, is perfectly justified by an examination of the facts. When the SWP speaks of the 'prolonged passivity' of the workers in the advanced countries, what is it doing but finding another form of words to express *the crisis of leadership*? What is the reason for the failure of the workers in the advanced countries to come to the assistance of the colonial workers and peasants who have revolted 'before the workers in the metropolitan countries were prepared to settle accounts with their own capitalists' but *the crisis of leadership*? Does the SWP want to blame the working class? Is it looking for a *substitute* for the working class in action as a force under

revolutionary leadership? Yes, it tries to make the colonial movement, the 'objective forces' and ultimately even the Communist Parties the substitutes for this. The talk about the success of the Soviet bloc, etc. reads very much like an adaptation of the Khrushchev line of competitive co-existence. In this respect some of the declarations of the SWP during its election campaign in 1960, as well as articles in its press on the USSR leave more than a suspicion that in the course of co-operating with fellow travellers since 1956 some of their war paint has rubbed off on to the SWP. Why is it that the Soviet successes are seen only in positive terms? Nothing is said about the conditions for the political revolution in the USSR. The counter-revolutionary policy of the Soviet bureaucracy remains a shackle on the world working class movement, holding back not only the workers in countries like France and Italy, but also in the underdeveloped countries like India and Indonesia. Support for the national bourgeoisie, like support for anti-monopoly coalitions, flows from a desire for a deal with world imperialism. We suggest that the SWP political committee re-read the documents produced during the course of the struggle against Pabloism in 1953-4. When it speaks of the 'narrowing of the *political* differences' with the Pabloites, we take it that this is done with full cognizance of the documents and articles which they have produced in recent years. Some of the crass mistakes of these effusions have been dealt with in our press and documents. To pick a way through all the erroneous nonsense, pretentious verbiage and arrant absurdities which masquerade as Trotskyism in the Pabloite publications is a task which we have great reluctance in assigning our comrades to. If the SWP finds the political differences have narrowed to the point where they are prepared to conceive of organizational fusion in the near future, we can only conclude that the change has come from the SWP and not from the Pabloites and that there has been a failure to get to grips with the theoretical problems of the Marxist movement.

27. We do not agree that the SWP or anyone else has 'an impeccable record'. What a claim to make! Only people who do not do anything politically necessary make no mistakes. We note with some amusement the petulance with which our serious and fraternal criticism has been received. Does it not occur to our American comrades that we are only referring to well-known dangers in the environment in which they are working and that it would be more than surprising if they were entirely blameless of the kind of flaw which we suggest has been

present in some of their recent work? In any case, the best way to meet this criticism is for the SWP to draw up its own balance sheet of recent experiences, beginning with that of 'regroupment' since 1956. We should also appreciate an examination of industrial and trade union work and the extent of the work carried on to draw closer to the most depressed strata of the North American working class, including the Negro people, the Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. We should be much more impressed by successes recorded here than by a parade of names of newly won friends from the ranks of fellow travellers, new lefts and other assorted radicals.

28. Having allowed their principles to become blunted as a result of some of their manoeuvres within the context of American radicalism, the SWP has now decided that the Pabloites have in some way 'corrected' their earlier revisionism by similar adaptations to the harsh world of events. This estimate ignores the need for consideration of the basic differences in *method* and not simply questions of programme and organization which divided the SWP and British Trotskyists from the Pabloites in 1953. Marxist politics start from a theoretical analysis of the whole, and any 'corrections' must flow from the conscious criticism of previous positions. The empirical adaptation to events characteristic of the Pabloites is the opposite of Marxist method. The SWP's conclusion, namely that the differences between us and the Pabloites have narrowed to a point where the breach can be healed organizationally, is only possible because the SWP has ended up with exactly the same method as the Pabloites themselves.

29. Moreover, because it can argue in this way, we must draw the conclusion that the SWP has not really understood Pabloism. Indeed we would extend this criticism to the whole political treatment of Pabloism since the split. It treats it as an accidental, theoretical deviation using wrong organizational methods. It is not able to give an account of the social and historical roots of this deviation in Marxist terms, if only because, in doing so, it would expose its own weaknesses. Pabloism has not changed, or if it has, it has only become more crass in its theory and more bureaucratic in its organization. It is, in any case, now in a state of profound crisis. The Latin American Bureau is now in open revolt. In Europe a number of groups have broken away in the past year or find themselves critical of such practical aspects of Pabloism as 'deep entry' in the Communist Parties



or the conduct of Belgian Pabloite leaders during the General Strike. At this time, therefore, it seems particularly inappropriate for the SWP to assert that the differences have become narrower. If Pabloism has social roots and the SWP finds itself more and more in sympathy with it, the time has come to turn the searchlight of criticism into the SWP itself. The SWP has set a false course and is drawn irresistibly into the morass of Pabloite thinking. We propose to continue to combat Pabloism, as we have done consistently in the past, as a dangerous revision of Marxism. We now call upon the comrades of the SWP to take a good look at themselves and at the course they are following and to draw back before it is too late.

30. A warning signal was given in the Fall 1960 issue of the *International Socialist Review* in an article by Murry Weiss on 'Trotskyism Today'. Among its other faults this article managed to ignore completely the basic differences which split the Trotskyist movement in 1953. In other words, Weiss was already taking the course now belatedly pursued by the SWP — that of covering up and minimizing the differences with the Pabloites in order to appear more attractive to dissident Stalinist elements or to Castro or to anyone else who may be interested. Such an attitude to its own history is inexcusable. If a Marxist party which has a public and international split on basic political issues later sees this to be only a temporary misunderstanding, then this very fact would require us to make a thorough analysis of the process by which we came to make such a serious misjudgment. For a serious struggle against revisionism, Weiss and the SWP leadership substitute a pragmatist method of covering up differences to make alliances, which may temporarily 'work'.

31. Once again this crisis necessitates looking into our own history. Whereas in 1953 the SWP's Open Letter insisted that the Pabloites had broken with the very fundamentals of Marxism; they now say:

In our opinion, three main reasons were responsible for the rupture nine years ago. One was an apparent tendency shown by the International Secretariat, under Pablo's direction, to conciliate with Stalinism and look upon the Soviet bureaucracy as capable of self-reformation into a political agency of the working class and to impose this view without prior discussion or authorization upon other sections of the movement. This tendency was most explicitly expressed by Clarke in our own party, by the IS failure

to condemn the role of Soviet military intervention in the East German uprising, and by its attitude in the French General Strike of 1953.

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

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

Instead of a basic departure from all Marxist principles, we now find the Pabloite position characterized as 'as apparent tendency' to conciliate with Stalinism, etc. Nine years later, the SWP lays most of the stress on organizational differences, forgetting the fundamental lessons of its own history in the 1930s. Organizational differences flow from basically different political positions. Once the political differences of 1953 have been 'cut down to size', they are easily shown by the SWP document to have disappeared in the course of the years.

Since 1953 significant changes have taken place.

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

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

32. The facts are that Pablo and the IS defended Lawrence in his struggle with the majority in Britain even though at that time his course towards the Stalinists was clear and recognized by the majority. In fact when two of Lawrence's own members complained to Pablo about his course towards the Stalinists, Pablo, far from taking

up the complaint, denounced these members to Lawrence. Clarke in America, Lawrence in Britain, Mestre in France all completed their development to Stalinism, and thus made their break with Trotskyism. It was only later that the IS denounced them. In any case the Pabloites and the SWP must surely examine the whole method and the nature of the revisionism which nurtured this capitulation to Stalinism. No matter how the SWP now estimates the events of 1954, they found it necessary along with other sections of the IC to circulate Peng's document against Pabloite revisionism in 1955. The criticism of Pabloism contained in this document is just as severe as those of the Open Letter of 1953. As for the position taken up by the IS on the Hungarian and Polish struggles in 1956, here again history is being doctored. There was no basic difference in the IS statement concerning Hungary and Poland in 1956 from their statements on the East German rising in 1953. Commenting on the Soviet declaration of October 30th, 1956 they say, 'This statement attempted to establish relations between the people's democracies and the USSR on a new basis . . . The immediate repercussions of the Hungarian revolution can stimulate a momentarily predominant "glacis". But the pressure of the masses cannot fail to grow in these countries. The process of transformation of relations among workers' states to relations of equality and fraternal collaboration is irreversible'. In other words, while repeating phrases about the need for the working class to overthrow the bureaucracy, Pablo's own attitude towards this bureaucracy in fact disarmed the workers. The British section, therefore, did not agree in any way that the political differences were narrowed. Our experience of the British Labour Movement confirmed us in that opinion. The Pabloites not only failed to support us in the fight against the right-wing Social Democrats, they made unprincipled alliances with elements defecting from our own ranks, such as Fryer and Cadogan, who soon abandoned all claims to revolutionary socialism. We have stated elsewhere our views on the Pabloites' liquidationism in the Algerian struggle. If the SWP is right in saying that 'the political positions of the majority of the IS, a number of IC affiliated groups, and some Trotskyist organizations affiliated with neither side on most of the vital issues of the day, from the de-Stalinization process and the Sino-Soviet conflict to the Cuban Revolution, are so close that they are indistinguishable to any unprejudiced reader of their respective publications', we can only hope we are not included.

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

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

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

The parity proposals of comrade Cannon arrived in England towards the end of April 1957. They had already been transmitted to the LSSP in Ceylon. We protested about this since we felt that it would have been far better to have them first of all discussed inside the International Committee before they were sent to Ceylon. Later, in November 1958, during the Toronto meeting when we had a chance to talk the matter over face to face, comrade Cannon did agree that this would have been a more correct procedure.

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

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

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

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

This is how matters stood until the Toronto meeting, in November 1958. The parity proposals were rejected by Pablo. Of course comrade Peng and some comrades in the SWP say that because the English organization raised political criticism they gave Pablo an opportunity to reject the proposals. Our reply to that is that if our own forces are unclear on Pabloism, the parity proposals could have brought nothing but further splits.

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

**DOCUMENT 20****Report to the SWP Plenum on the majority resolution, by Joseph Hansen.  
(June 1962)**

You have before you for your consideration two resolutions. One, expressing the views of the Political Committee majority, is 'Problems of the Fourth International — and the Next Steps'. The other, representing the minority view, is 'In Defence of a Revolutionary Perspective'. It bears the signatures of two members of the National Committee, Tim Wohlforth and Albert Philips.

As the reporter for the majority, it is not my intention to simply outline what is in the document we have drawn up. I know that all of you will have studied it carefully and thoughtfully; and all of you, I am sure, are prepared to take the floor to declare where you stand. What I propose to do, therefore, is to present some additional comments and observations which I offer by way of starting the discussion.

All of you will agree, I am sure, that the action of the plenum today is of unusual importance. We are dealing with a crisis in perspective affecting the entire world movement founded by Leon Trotsky. On the one hand the objective possibilities for its rapid advancement are the best since its origin; in addition, the chances have improved for bringing to an early close the deep-going split which has lasted for almost a decade. On the other hand, resistance to unification has stiffened among certain sectors and new differences have come to the fore, among them differences of quite serious nature. In this situation the opinion of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party can have considerable influence in helping to resolve the crisis. Our co-thinkers the world over are well aware of the fraternal concern which the American Trotskyists have felt for the welfare of the international movement since 1928 when we joined the Left Opposition and then in

intimate collaboration with Comrade Trotsky participated with other key groups in founding the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International.

We are unusually fortunate today in having at our disposal a better picture of the actual strength of the Fourth International and its variegated problems than has been available to us for some years. This information, already placed before you, should help guide us toward a better decision than would otherwise be possible.

In addition, the Cuban Revolution happens to have become one of the key issues in the new differences that have broken out in the world Trotskyist movement. While it has served to divide, this revolution has at the same time exercised a decisive influence in hastening the process of unifying the ranks of the Trotskyists and has strengthened the basis in principle for that unification. Here we are fortunate in possessing about as good a knowledge of the Cuban Revolution, through direct contact and through study of original documents, as any group of Trotskyists in the world except those in Cuba itself, and we have the additional experience of three years of one of the most important and intensive campaigns in the history of our party — the revolutionary-socialist defence of the Cuban Revolution in the very heart of the imperialist power that is seeking to crush it. Many of the comrades present today are able to speak with the accuracy and authority of first-hand acquaintance with the subject. What they have to say should help us greatly in reaching the wisest decision within our power.

The majority resolution stresses the political basis for a unified Trotskyist movement. It reflects the actual coalescence of views and at the same time constitutes a proposed platform for the consideration of currents either already close to Trotskyism or moving in that direction. It thus leaves aside many important questions for later discussion and final resolution. Everyone here, I believe, is familiar with the reasons for putting aside the differences of 1953 and the organizational issues that were then in sharp dispute. As Leninists we deliberately subordinate organizational and tactical matters for the sake of political agreement. Similarly in the basic field of Marxist methodology we do not demand agreement in advance before we will collaborate politically with another tendency. This again is in the Leninist tradition.

However, it would be a considerable mistake to believe that deeper questions of methodology are not involved. The truth is that they are

at the heart of both the rapprochement with the comrades who adhere to the International Secretariat and the division that has appeared between us and the comrades of the Socialist Labour League.

Let me begin with where we agree with the International Secretariat on this fundamental level. To do that it is necessary to review a little party history.

At the close of World War II the Soviet armies had swept up to Berlin, occupying Eastern Europe. A crucial alternative was posed. Would the capitalist structure of these countries so affect the Soviet Union as to change its class character? Or would the surviving elements of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union assert themselves and lead to a change in the class structure of the occupied territories?

We were not the first to formulate this alternative. Credit for that goes to Trotsky. He advanced it during the 1939-40 dispute with the petty-bourgeois opposition headed by Schachtman, Burnham and Abern. Trotsky did not attempt to predict how it would turn out. It was an alternative posed in life that could only be decided by events themselves. For a time the outcome remained unclear as Stalin dickered with Anglo-American imperialism for a long-term deal.

I do not need to remind you how the alternative was finally settled. To our great satisfaction, the October Revolution proved to be still alive — and also more powerful than the tendency toward degeneration.

But as the capitalist structures went down in Eastern Europe under the impact of measures that were bureaucratic in nature, intense discussion broke out in our party. How were we to estimate these overturns? Did they signify the establishment of workers states?

Some of the comrades came to the conclusion rather early that the facts required us to consider these countries as workers states, although of a different type from the one established in 1917 under Lenin and Trotsky. Other comrades were doubtful of the validity of this analysis. They saw very clearly that it raised a series of questions for which there were no ready answers in the books and which required the gravest consideration before our movement became committed to a definitive position.

In expressing these doubts and indicating the character of the problems, these comrades were, of course, proceeding in the most reasonable way. They demanded sureness of analysis.



Among the problems they pointed to were these:

- (1) Are the overturns really permanent?
- (2) Won't the workers state label inspire confidence that Stalinism can play a revolutionary role?
- (3) Won't it lead to the false view that Stalinism is the wave of the future?
- (4) Won't it lead revolutionists to relegate the role of revolutionary socialism to Stalinism?
- (5) Won't it cause Trotskyists to abandon faith in the necessity for building a revolutionary-socialist party based on the working class?
- (6) Doesn't it put in question the very existence of Trotskyism as an independent and viable force?
- (7) Won't it at least foster tendencies toward revisionism and liquidationism?

In brief, all the questions which the comrades of the Socialist Labour League and their representatives in the US, the Wohlforth-Philips grouping, have raised in relation to the Cuban Revolution were all raised in the SWP as early as 1947 when Moscow's reaction to the Marshall Plan began to become plain. All the questions raised by our minority with such an air of new discovery and alertness to long-range problems were all satisfactorily answered a dozen years ago in one of the most rounded and objective discussions in the history of our movement.

The gist of the conclusion was this: Yes, the political dangers that have been indicated are real and confront us with new difficulties. But the appearance of these workers states, along with the Soviet victory, spells the beginning of the end for Stalinism. In any case the facts are indisputable. As realists, we have no choice but to recognize them, whether we like these facts or not. On the side of theory, too, no choice is open. A theory that cannot account for facts is not a theory but a dogma.

In that discussion, fortunately, we were able to rely on Trotsky almost directly. In a certain sense Trotsky even participated in the discussion, since its true beginning was in 1939-40. The Soviet invasion of Poland and the attack on Finland had brought Schachtman to his feet with a point of order, which was that it is impossible for a workers state to extend its frontiers or to expand by bureaucratic means. If it does so, then the breach in the norms of proletarian democracy proves that it cannot be a workers state. In answering Schachtman, and the theoretician who stood behind him, James Burnham, Trotsky provided for us the main concepts needed to handle theoretically in all its concreteness what had only been rather abstractly adumbrated in Poland and Finland. The essence of the procedure was to extend to the new formations the concepts used in the analysis of the degenerated workers state. So that is what we did in the case of Eastern Europe.

This not only saved the integrity of our theory by bringing within it the new phenomena; on close examination the facts offered fresh confirmation of the validity of the concepts themselves and thus the validity of Trotsky's analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union; although the theory, viewed as a whole, had become a little more complex due to the new inclusion. If this confirmation of the theory with which we started had not occurred, then Trotsky's entire theoretical contribution dating back to 1924 on, would have had to be discarded. Trotsky's analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union and its degeneration, and our analysis of the class character of the East European countries and their deformation thus became an interlocking, interdependent whole. Without the one, the other could not be logically maintained as a truthful reflection of the newly changed reality.

Let me recapitulate the main concepts: a workers state is basically defined by the expropriation of the holdings of the capitalist class in the key sectors of industry, transportation and finance; the establishment of a government monopoly of foreign trade; and the introduction of a planned economy. Deviation from the norm of a healthy workers state relates fundamentally to the political sphere; i.e. the relative amount of proletarian democracy. The origin of the new workers states in the world today can be traced ultimately to the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

This basic theoretical position received a rather substantial test in the case of Yugoslavia. Here, in contrast to some of the other coun-

tries, comrades found it easier to accept the view that Yugoslavia was a workers state. The reason for this was the significant role of revolution, rather than bureaucratic measures under Soviet Army auspices, in establishing the new state.

On the other hand, the connection with the Soviet Union was not so direct, precisely because of the absence of Soviet government control, and this offered a theoretical difficulty.

All the doubts and hesitations offered in relation to the analysis of the class character of the Eastern European countries held much more sharply in the case of Yugoslavia. What about the role of guerrilla warfare, for instance: of the predominance of the peasantry; and of a leadership, which was of Stalinist, that is, petty-bourgeois origin? What about the absence of a revolutionary-socialist party?

It could be argued, and it was argued, that these questions did not matter too much because circumstances were exceptional in Yugoslavia; and, in any case, a revolution is itself the final authority. It determines its own forms which may deviate considerably from norms; and one institution can at times perform, if imperfectly, the logical function of another. In any case the results speak for themselves and are unassailable whatever problems they may set for theory.

Theory, however, has its own rights. It permits no vacuums or it ceases to be theory; and some comrades, among them some who had been the first to take a stand on Eastern Europe, remained hesitant about Yugoslavia.

The discussion, which began, if I remember correctly, in the SWP, extended swiftly into the international Trotskyist movement and eventually, with some delays here and there, the view became virtually unanimous — with the exception of those in our ranks who held the state capitalist position — that the facts in the case of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia had compelled us to extend the theoretical heritage we had received from Trotsky and that this difficult job had been accomplished not without success.

This view, let me repeat, was virtually unanimous with the exception of the state capitalists. It included the SWP, the International Secretariat, a body composed principally of European comrades, among them Pablo, who had emerged from the war years with excellent records as revolutionary socialists, and it of course, included our British co-thinkers. This common basic appreciation of the extension of socialist-type property forms in other lands following the Soviet

victory in World War II constituted a very solid foundation for the working out of derivative political, organizational, and tactical questions.

It is to be noted especially that in the subsequent differences which led to a split and the formation of two main factions, no substantial disagreement appeared as to the validity of this basic analysis of the character of the newly born states. On the contrary, after the split both sides continued to adhere to the same fundamental view on how to analyse the character of the state and, still more significantly, developed it independently in relation to what was a rough test indeed — the Chinese Revolution.

In comparison with China, the most populous nation on earth, Yugoslavia was only a test-tube case. What was seen on minor scale in Yugoslavia was played out in China with forces involving tens and hundreds of millions of people. Some comrades jumped hastily to apply what they considered to be an extension of our position on Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. Marcy, for instance, under an essentially political criterion, equated Stalinism in power to a workers state. Like a few who succumbed to Titoism; he succumbed to Maoism. This was an erroneous position, due in part to a faulty understanding of the analysis of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, and in part to a mechanical application of the theses contained in Lenin's *State and Revolution*. Others hesitated long. I list myself among those who hesitated longest. I felt that it would be a mistake to consider China 'exceptional'. If you said it for a country of the weight of China, then you had to say that a similar pattern was possible for a series of other countries. It was best, therefore, to be completely clear about what you were saying, especially concerning the exact stages and interrelations of the process, for once a decision was made it would have far-reaching consequences.

I do not know the details on how the discussion held by the International Secretariat on the question of China finally ended; but independently they came to similar conclusions as the SWP, and at about the same time or a little before. As for our British co-thinkers, they hailed the SWP decision with astounding alacrity and if they discussed the ramifications of the position I never saw any of their documents.

From our point of view, the fact that the International Secretariat, despite their dispute with us, had reached a position on China virtually identical with ours spoke in their favor. We had believed that the

sharp differences in 1953 over organizational questions and over the concepts behind those questions indicated the rise of deeper differences that might proceed to the foundations of Trotskyism; and we thought we saw the beginning of the process in relation to such political issues of 1953 as the French general strike and the East German uprising. We considered that the further course of Mestre, Clarke, Lawrence, and the rest, was substantial proof of what we had maintained. However, the International Secretariat, as we saw it, backed away from these positions or attempted to clarify what they considered to be misunderstandings on our part as to where they really stood. We noted that.

Finally, the political positions taken in relation to the Hungarian Revolution convinced us that our fears had not been borne out; the political differences had narrowed so much that unification was feasible. In brief, agreement existed on the fundamental level of the appreciation of the character of the state; similar agreement existed in the main on the important but derivative level of current political issues; only the organizational problem remained.

We knew from long experience how unprofitable and even disastrous a blind factional posture can be in such a situation. We decided to try to act as objectively as we possibly could. The IS had declared that it favoured unification. Taking the declaration in good faith, we responded in 1957 by suggesting formation of a parity commission. The IC indicated that it found the proposal acceptable; but, as you are well aware, this attempt to bridge the split proved unrealistic due to mutual suspicion and fear of loss of factional advantage in a unified movement.

Now we come to the question of Cuba. For me this was the decisive test of the validity of the position on China. A little more than eight years after dictator Chiang Kai-shek was toppled, dictator Batista went down. And just about eight years after the establishment of the Chinese workers' state, the Cuban workers' state was set up. The events were in striking parallel — the role of guerrilla warfare, of the peasantry, of a march on the cities, sympathetic response of the workers, destruction of the bourgeois army, the establishment of a petty-bourgeois government limited to aims within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, then agrarian reform, arming of the people, radicalization of the government, sweeping expropriations of capitalist property, establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, of a planned economy, changes in state structure to bring it into line with

these developments, armed defence against a counter-revolutionary assault mounted by American imperialism — all this under a leadership of acknowledged petty-bourgeois origin. It is as if Marxist theory had said, you doubt the validity of the analysis of the Chinese Revolution? All right, here's something closer to home: take a look at Cuba!

Turning to the peculiarities distinguishing the two revolutions, however, there was one noteworthy difference. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution were not trained in the school of Stalinism. In fact, in guiding the revolution to power, they by-passed the Communist party. This difference holds immense portent for the future as a sign of the decline of Stalinism; but it also stands within the continuity of previous analysis for it is easy to demonstrate the appearance of a trend in the series of workers states: the leaders tend to stand in increasing independence in relation to the Russian bureaucratic caste (whatever their relations to their own national bureaucracies). In the case of the Cubans this is so obvious that it has struck nearly all serious observers of the Cuban Revolution.

The non-Stalinist origin of this leadership can be said to mark a certain qualitative change. By their example of by-passing the Cuban Communist party, the Castro leadership broke the myth that deep-going revolutions can be led only by cadres trained in the school of Stalinism. From now on, would-be revolutionists will seek other variants, and many Communist parties, especially in Latin America, have been visibly affected, if not thrown into a crisis by the development. This great new fact, coupled with the process of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union, in turn has opened up the brightest perspectives for the swift spread of Trotskyism and the growth of revolutionary-socialist parties throughout the world.

It also visibly brightened the prospects for unifying the world Trotskyist movement. Two independent analyses of the Cuban Revolution were made simultaneously; one by the SWP and the other by the IS. In all essentials, they came to the same conclusions. The Latin-American comrades of both sides reached the same view from their vantage point. It will not be easy for historians to determine who was really first. That question, of course, is of little importance or interest. What is interesting and instructive is the speed with which these independent analyses were made. This testifies to the fact that the lessons learned in analysing the class character of the state in China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe have become well absorbed by the world Trotskyist movement. The lessons, at least in their main

outline, are now a living part of our Marxist methodology. Cuba was relatively easy for us to handle and by far the most pleasant. From the viewpoint of theory it was not unexpected. There was no big theoretical gap to fill. Cuba was only a particular case in a series of particular cases. Note well — a particular case in a *given* series.

This triumph of Marxist theory obviously demonstrated how similar were the approaches of the two sides in the world Trotskyist movement. It gave fresh impulsion to unity sentiments, since whatever the convictions might be as to who was right in the past and whatever the views might be about organizational concepts and practices, both sides were dutybound, on the foundation of their basic outlook, to at least attempt a fair test of the possibilities of unification. All that is really required on both sides is good will and a flexible transitional phase.

But it was here that the Cuban Revolution itself gave rise to a fresh division, or the deepening of an old division about which we have only recently begun to receive some clarification. Leading comrades of the Socialist Labour League reached a position on Cuba that differs fundamentally from the one worked out by the SWP, the IS, and the Latin-American comrades of both sides. This position is briefly described in the majority resolution and so I will not repeat it here. What I wish to consider is how they arrived at this view. They do not describe their method and so I must rely on logical deduction. If this leads to some errors of interpretation, I am sure that the comrades of the SLL will not display unwillingness in collaborating to set me right.

First of all, I think they are strongly inclined to close their eyes to the facts. This is the only explanation I can come to on reading such an assertion as this: 'On all decisive and fundamental questions which impinge upon the power and wealth of the national bourgeoisie as a whole, however, the regime comes down on the side of capitalism'. How the British comrades could bring themselves to say something like that if they had read even a single issue of any one of the periodicals of the counter-revolutionary Cuban national bourgeoisie is incomprehensible unless it is taken as a current illustration of the rather sad reflection of a British divine at the turn of the seventeenth century: 'None so blind as those that will not see'.

This defect is visible in almost everything they write about the Cuban Revolution. For instance, in a major article prominently displayed in the most recent issue of *Labour Review* which purports to

provide the background to the Cuban Revolution, they couldn't even get such an elemental fact straight as the size of the population in Cuba. The same tendency led them into such a political blunder as to imply that the attack on *Voz Proletaria* in Cuba was taken on the initiative of Castro, whom the *Newsletter* (July 15, 1961) says 'personifies the dictatorship of Cuban capital.' It happened to be Stalinists of the Anibal Escalante type who were to blame for the attack on *Voz Proletaria*, but the *Newsletter* ended its article declaring: 'We urge in particular members of the British Communist Party to press their Executive to protest in the sharpest possible manner against Castro's attempts to follow the example of the Supreme Court and the Justice Department of the United States.'

There's a political line which Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips, as advocates of the SLL position, might tell us how best to explain to the new generation of revolutionists cropping up all over Latin America under inspiration of the Cuban Revolution and its exemplary struggle against American imperialism.

This blindness to facts, which lands our British co-thinkers into such strange distortions of reality, is carried over into the field of theory and there becomes converted into disdain for those who display a more friendly attitude towards facts. A ready label is slapped on them: 'Empiricists!'

However, in contrast to this effort to keep the facts from the door, a somewhat different approach is also evident among our British comrades. This course is to admit the facts and attempt to bring them into some kind of conceptual framework. But the concepts used are not the same as those used by the world Trotskyist movement for the past fourteen years.

One variation is to call the Cuban Revolution nothing but a 'particular' case. Particular in what context? Our natural assumption would be that it is 'particular' in the context of China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But this is not the case. Our British co-thinkers refuse to consider Cuba to be a workers state of any kind. We are left utterly in the dark about what they mean by 'particular' unless they are using it in the sense of vulgar empiricism which considers it normal procedure to quarantine dangerously contagious facts in isolation wards.

Another line of approach attempts to be more realistic. It tries to analyse the Cuban reality in the light of the concept 'workers state'. A product of this reasoning was rather proudly offered to the public in



two instalments in the March 11 and March 18, 1961, issues of the *Newsletter* under the somewhat ambiguous title 'Cuba Si, Humbug No'. Most of our comrades felt acute embarrassment that such an article could appear in a Trotskyist newspaper and I heard some angry and even bitter comments about it. Certain comrades went so far as to believe that a typographical error was involved and that the title was really intended to read 'Humbug Si, Cuba No'.

True enough, from the political point of view it was damaging to the cause of Trotskyism, but on the level of methodology it was quite instructive because of what it revealed about the concepts with which the theoreticians of the Socialist Labour League are attempting to operate.

Read that article again — both instalments — carefully. The author, Brian Pearce, begins by telling us that defence of the Cuban Revolution is 'the duty of socialists everywhere'. We find no difficulty in agreeing with that, although we, in order to avoid ultra-left exclusivism, would try to widen the field to include others besides socialists. 'At the same time', Comrade Pearce continues, 'we need to be on guard against various illusions to which the Cuban experience has given rise in some quarters, amounting to the view that a workers state can be established without a revolutionary Marxist party'.

Naturally, as strong defenders of the Cuban Revolution, we are interested in how Comrade Pearce proposes to help plug any holes in our defence lines. First he cites the Bolivian Revolution of 1952, then the Mexican Revolution of 1910. We are given a passing reference to Sun Yat-sen and Kemal Ataturk. The scene shifts then to Bulgaria from '1920 to 1923'. From there we go to 'Central Asia and Eastern Siberia in the early 1920s'. Then a passing reference to an analogy made by J.R. Campbell between 'the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia' and 'the class character of the Spanish Republic in 1937-1938'. We don't stay in Spain. The author puts us back in Siberia for the inside story about Lenin's manoeuvre in connection with the Far Eastern Republic. That's the end of part one.

Part two opens in sunny Mexico in the days of Cardenas. We are told about the nationalization of the oil industries and Trotsky's views on workers' management of these industries. We are referred to another article by Trotsky, 'Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay'.

For a moment we seem to have finally made it to Havana. Comrade Pearce declares: 'In a discussion about the problems of the Cuban

history is absent, all connection between actual sequences of events rubbed away. We are offered not a logical progression but a collection of oddities: a few old coins and cancelled stamps, some shrunken heads, and a couple of pages torn from the works of Trotsky.

Most extraordinary of all is the complete lack of appreciation of the profound impact which the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, its rise to a world position next to that of the United States, and then the victory of the Chinese Revolution have had on the thinking of people outside of Britain, especially those in the colonial areas. How is it possible for a comrade who knows a great deal about the history of the first workers state to have overlooked the most palpable fact of all — its emergence as a pre-eminent model to millions upon millions of minds in the colonial world? This subjective factor has objective consequences! It can be seen in the case of Cuba in the form of a series of institutions. Or does Comrade Pearce hold that the subjective factor can play no decisive role in history unless it first finds institutional form in a model revolutionary-socialist party prior to a revolution?

The strangest fact of all in relation to Comrade Pearce's article about humbug is that the theory, of which it is an expression, now guides the politics of the Socialist Labour League. This is what stands behind the ultimatistic line which our British comrades have adopted in relation to the colonial revolution as a whole, their position in connection with Cuba being only one glaring case, as the majority resolution points out.

Read that article again. Comrade Pearce not only junks the whole analysis on which the world Trotskyist movement, including our British co-thinkers, has based itself since the discussion on Eastern Europe, he puts in question Trotsky's position on Poland and Finland in 1939-1940 and ultimately Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state. We have suddenly been given an insight into the thinking of our British comrades; we have a possible explanation for their enigmatic refusal to extend to Cuba the fundamental concepts utilized in analysing China, Yugoslavia, and Eastern Europe. They are contemplating, we must conclude, a revision of Trotskyist theory so far-reaching that it implies discarding Trotsky's position on the Soviet Union.

Does this conclusion, which we have reached by logical deduction, sound absurd? Then listen to this: some of the French adherents of the International Committee have already put down the following in

black and white: 'We will undoubtedly have to revise the analysis of the new working-class states of Eastern Europe as carried out in 1948, and the reopening of this discussion will disclose how it was at that period that viewpoints alien to Trotskyism were introduced into our working method, viewpoints which took the form of "Pabloism" as an organized tendency, but which today remain present in a number of parties professedly in agreement with the International Committee'.

Clearly these comrades are to be commended for the logical consistency with which they approach the problem of unifying the Fourth International. If bitter dead-end factionalism bars you from friendly collaboration with French Trotskyists who adhere to the International Secretariat, then you must find major differences over the central agreement that is pulling the Trotskyist movement together — the meaning of the Cuban Revolution. To do that, you must junk the criteria used in analysing that revolution. This can be accomplished only by unravelling all the theoretical positions on China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. The comrades themselves specify the minimum date to which this revision must be taken — 1948.

They will find, however, that they cannot stop there. They will have to go back to a still earlier date — 1939-1940, the date of the discussion on Poland and Finland. Having done this, they will still find themselves unable to stop. They will have to go back even further — back to 1924, the year of the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor. And it will be hard to stop there because Trotsky based his analysis of the degenerated workers state on the concepts inherited from the previous body of Marxist theory.

I think we are in a position now to get a clearer appreciation of a rather distinctive feature of the leadership of the group which has been organized in the SWP to defend the position of the SLL and which has submitted the minority resolution for consideration at this plenum. This distinctive feature is the bloc with Comrade Albert Philips.

As everyone here knows, perhaps only too well, Comrade Philips has held the state capitalist position for many years. We think that Comrade Philips is a valuable party leader and we have argued with him in hope of eventually winning him to our basic position in analysing the character of the state, as he has argued with us in hope of winning us to his. I think many comrades have learned something in these years of patient discussion, especially about the democratic character of the SWP. Lately I have heard a rumour that Comrade

Philips has given up the state capitalist position. I do not know if it is true but I report it so that Comrade Philips can correct me if I am wrong.

In any case I think that Comrade Philips will find himself in something of a dilemma, if he hasn't already discovered it. If he has dumped state capitalism, then I think he owes the plenum an explanation. We would like to know what arguments finally won him over. Since these arguments would undoubtedly prove very useful in convincing other state capitalists, our party would stand to gain. I imagine that our British co-thinkers would be interested in this information, too, inasmuch as there are quite a few 'state caps', as they call them, knocking about the woods and moors of Britain who might be won over by the right arguments. It should also prove educational to know what was the date of conversion and why it was that date and no other.

On the other hand, if you have not really given up your state capitalist position, I think the plenum is entitled to know the basis for your bloc with Comrade Wohlforth. If you have differences on fundamental questions, it is your duty as a principled Marxist to make them clear and to state why you have formed a bloc to advance the platform submitted in resolution form by the minority.

Of course, there is still another possibility; namely, that Comrade Wohlforth has secretly adopted the state capitalist position.

Without a full clarification, I am afraid that some of the comrades will be tempted to reason like this: a state capitalist would have some pretty good reasons for trying to make friends with defenders of the SLL position, even if he had to dummy up a little or adopt diplomatic evasion because of the well-known lack of tact which our British co-thinkers customarily display in dealing with 'state caps'.

First of all, the resistance to agreeing that Cuba is a workers state, in face of the overwhelming evidence, brightens things for the state capitalist position. If Cuba isn't a workers state what label fits it but the label of state capitalism?

Secondly, the mere failure of the SLL to bring forward in the case of Cuba the criteria used in relation to China, Yugolsavia and Eastern Europe, puts a big question mark on the accepted Trotskyist analysis of those states. This is a gratifying development from the state capitalist position, for if they are not workers states what are they except instances of state capitalism?

Thirdly, there is an inexorable logic to this, as any state capitalist

who has been up and down the trail well knows. There is no distinguishable qualitative difference in character between the Soviet Union today and China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. If they are not workers states neither is the Soviet Union — and if they are to be characterized as state capitalist, so must the Soviet Union.

State capitalism, naturally, does not exhaust the field of alternatives. A completely novel label may be placed on the Soviet Union — like 'bureaucratic collectivism' or 'managerial society' or some such variant. For that to happen to the SLL would be a fate worse than death. It is the obvious duty of a state capitalist to respond to the critical situation, to rush to the rescue, fill the breach and thus save the SLL from such a disastrous end.

In a turn in the market, where customers have begun to appear on the strange street of shops dealing in exotic labels for workers states, it's time for the shopkeepers to snap to attention if not carry out a little entryism *sui generis*.

Now I don't want to be unfair to Comrade Philips. This might not be the thinking of all the comrades here as to the reasons for his making a bloc with Comrade Wohlforth; but it would surely occur to some. At least the dark suspicion crossed my mind. I am sure that as a principled Marxist, Comrade Philips will want to clear this up at the plenum today.

Let me turn now to the other half of this ambiguous bloc — Comrade Wohlforth. I have become convinced that he does not really have a serious concern for theory. I base this conclusion on the postulate that as a theoretician he would feel the keenest concern over how his analysis of the Cuban Revolution has stood up under the test of such events as (1) the Cuban government's recognition that their revolution is socialist in character; (2) the recognition by the entire top leadership of the revolution that the views of Marx and Lenin are correct and that they now count themselves as Marxist-Leninists; (3) the concern displayed by the Castro regime over bureaucratic practices such as those carried on by an unreconstructed Stalinist hack like Anibal Escalante; (4) the initiation of steps towards organization of a Marxist-Leninist party; and (5) the continuous appeal to the people of Latin America to take the path blazed by the Cuban Revolution.

If theory were Comrade Wohlforth's primary interest and concern, he would either now remain silent because he felt that the test of events, while damaging to his position, was still inconclusive; or, if he felt that enough results were now in, he would have attempted a

justification or self-criticism in the light of what has happened in the past year.

Instead, he changed the subject and kept talking. In place of 'The Cuban Revolution and the Lessons of 1962', he wants us to get embroiled over the topic of 'Pabloism and the Lessons of 1953' as if this chapter in the history of Trotskyism had become the most burning question facing our movement today.

What does this reflect if not a shift in concern? A shift away from basic theory to the field of political organization? Comrade Wohlforth became interested in putting together a group to support the position of the SLL. And he carried this out with a quietness befitting the modesty of the task. But the exigencies of current SLL policies require subordination of discussion on the Cuban Revolution and its meaning. SLL policies at the moment require strong stress on the dangers of 'Pabloism' and the possibility that 'Pabloism' and 'Canonism' are really synonymous. Comrade Wohlforth found this shift in subject congenial and he carried it out with admirable dexterity.

The irony of it is that in the SWP, 'Pabloism' is so obviously unreal as a current menace that Comrade Wohlforth found himself in agreement with the general line of Comrade Dobbs' political report as outlined in the Political Committee. True, the resolution presented by the minority seeks to find a contradiction between the revolutionary perspective which the SWP holds in the United States and the alleged 'Pabloite' perspective it holds in the world arena. 'This contradiction between a domestic and an international perspective will in time be resolved', the resolution astutely predicts. Meanwhile, by way of concrete material concerning the impending disaster over which alarm must be shouted, all the minority can give us is some vigorous finger-waving about some vague signs of the party 'drifting from campaign to campaign not fully in command of its own political course'; of a vague tendency by 'some in the party to counterpose hollow "party building" to this essential task of building the party by developing its roots in the class'; of a vague possibility that an 'accommodationist spirit can penetrate our work'.

Still more ironic is the fact that the SWP has just gone through a test on its internationalism that is about as stringent as will be found in any book on how to tell a revolutionary-socialist position from an opportunist one. I mean our sustained campaign in the most powerful imperialist country on earth in defence of the Cuban Revolution. That was only our duty, of course. But we met it.

As for participation in the problems of the world Trotskyist movement we have done that to the utmost of our ability in the face of the most reactionary laws and the worst siege of witch-hunting in the history of the United States. I know that it is difficult for Trotskyists in some countries abroad to visualize the problems; but at least those in our own party know what we are up against. In venturing to make this an issue, the Wohlforth-Philips tendency contributes to the possibility of the most irresponsible kind of actions by those who are ignorant of what is involved.

Finally, while considering the irony of the demand that we should shift the subject from the Cuban Revolution and its meaning to 'Pabloism' and how it will get us in trouble if we don't watch out, let me repeat that some of the French comrades who share Comrade Wohlforth's desire to straighten out the politics of the SWP, especially as it relates to unification of the world Trotskyist movement, are moving logically to the next stage — they are considering revising the basic theory of the world Trotskyist movement as far back as 1948.

It may be that Comrade Wohlforth will join us in opposing this revisionism, which is a real, genuine revisionism. I hope that proves to be the case. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that it would not be without its advantages to the minority to follow the course suggested by their French co-thinkers of revising our basic positions back at least as far as 1948. They could then drop this adolescent nonsense of trying to impress us with melodramatic declamations on the perils that 'Pabloism' holds for the SWP — if not today then eventually. They could move on to the level where they must finally go anyway, if they are to convince the cadres of the SWP; that is, demonstrate that our basic concepts are wrong — the basic concepts we have developed, used and tested over a period of fourteen years — and then prove that these wrong concepts are identical with 'Pabloism'. That is what a theoretician of any capacity would be attempting right now if he held the minority position about a political ambush which the SWP may run into if it continues down the road we have been following since Cannon went further than the American theses of 1946.

Before concluding with the position of Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips, I should like to make a few observations on their combination with the leaders of the Socialist Labour League. The two sectors may not see eye-to-eye on certain issues. They may even have differences of a fundamental character. Consequently, under sharp

criticism, one sector may indignantly protest that they do not advocate and certainly do not stand on certain propositions or positions held by the other. It is their duty, then, to distinguish and make clear to all exactly where they do stand, what their differences are, and why the overall objectives of the combination are more important than the points on which they stand in opposition to each other. Meanwhile we can only proceed on the basis of the package deal.

My own opinion of this package deal can be summarized as follows: the platform submitted by Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips picks as a decisive test of party-building the empiric criterion of assembling a body of avowed revolutionary-socialists. The example is cited of the success of the Socialist Labour League. If this criterion was chosen in order to gain popularity in the SWP they did not do badly. It is certain to win unanimous approval if not a rising ovation. But this empiric criterion is not the sole criterion and sometimes it is not the decisive one at a given moment. There is also the criterion of leadership capacity as demonstrated under varied conditions, difficulties and opportunities. And there is the criterion of programme, the policies proposed to construct a mass party of revolutionary-socialists in the world situation confronting us. Here the choice of planks is far from happy.

For example:

- (1) We are asked to maintain that Cuban society today has a capitalist economic foundation and a bourgeois state with a government which 'comes down on the side of capitalism' on 'all the decisive and fundamental questions which impinge upon the power and wealth of the national bourgeoisie as a whole'.
- (2) We are asked to support a policy which rejects overtures made in our direction by the Cuban revolutionists.
- (3) We are asked to condemn as betrayals and sell-outs the partial victories won under petty-bourgeois or nationalistic leaders in the colonial world.
- (4) We are asked to support an analysis of the character of the state in Cuba which puts in question our analyses of the character of the state in China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and ultimately the Soviet Union itself.



(5) We are asked to follow a course of putting on the shelf the wide areas of agreement that exist in the world Trotskyist movement and which constitute a thoroughly principled basis for healing the long-standing split and unifying the movement; and are asked instead to bring forward, for a thorough raking over, the differences of almost a decade ago, some of which have been superseded, others of which can well await historical judgment; and thus convert a most promising opportunity for unification into an unprincipled, irresponsible factional brawl that could have no other possible outcome but to heighten personal animosities, deepen suspicions, widen the split, set new feuds going, and make it still more difficult for Trotskyists of various tendencies to pool their resources and to act in common in taking advantage of the great opportunities now facing us.

(6) Only one gain is offered in return for adopting this course of self-destruction. We will finally have achieved clarification on Pabloism and adequately met its threat. This, of course, from the viewpoint of a group put together on the basis of anti-Pabloism is well worth the sacrifice. With a true understanding of the mysterious nature of Pabloism, you get a master key that unlocks the doors to all other mysteries in this complex world of today and everything turns out to be quite simple; to build a party you only have to read one half of Lenin — how he fought the opportunists — and in case of temptation repeat the words of the master, 'Get thee behind me, Pablo'.

(7) I think this platform should be rejected as a manifestation of factional rigidity within the world Trotskyist movement and of ultraleftism, especially in relation to the colonial revolution.

Briefly now on the demand which our British co-thinkers have been pressing for some time for a confrontation of position. They have accused us of lack of tact, if not worse, in failing to respond with greater promptness to their challenge. Perhaps this is a justified criticism. But our delay arose in part from confidence in the good judgment of our British comrades. We were incapable of imagining that the development of the Cuban Revolution, as it deepened in the direction of socialism, could fail to impress comrades with whom we have had such long, friendly and mutually advantageous association.

We persisted in thinking that as revolutionists they would surely pass the most elementary, but also the most decisive test that can face

a revolutionist; namely, the capacity to recognize a revolution when one comes along. We persisted in thinking that as Leninists they would surely agree that facts are stubborn things; and that the facts, collected, weighed and analysed as carefully as possible, week in and week out by the staff of *The Militant* and the *International Socialist Review* would finally convince them and be reflected in their attitude toward the Cuban Revolution. It is clear that we made an error. Their distaste for 'empiricism' proved to be unexpectedly strong.

We now have no choice but to proceed to discuss the reasons for this reluctance to accept reality. That involves, of course, the question of methodology and it is on that level, I believe, the main axis of the discussion will very likely unfold.

What will be the probable effects of such a discussion on the prospects of unification? Here I do not feel pessimistic. Our British co-thinkers have a point, I think, in stressing the lack of clarification that exists among some of the partisans of the International Committee and in all likelihood among some of the adherents of the International Secretariat. If this lack of clarification serves to block unification, it should manifestly be cleared up. The condition for success, of course, is that we must keep an open mind as to just who may prove to be most in need of clarity.

There are no valid reasons for not inviting the comrades who adhere to the International Secretariat to participate in this discussion while efforts are made at the same time to open up areas of common work and the establishment of comradely relations. In connection with this, the International Committee has taken an important step by asking the International Secretariat to join in setting up a parity commission for this purpose. In voting for the majority resolution you will be expressing approval of this action.

However, since the minority comrades will also no doubt want to express their approval of the initiative taken by the International Committee, while still voting for their own resolution, I think it would be well to formulate a separate motion on this point.

In closing permit me to summarize the intent of the majority resolution and the general line you are asked to discuss and act on today:

- (1) A vigorous effort to persuade both of the main tendencies in the world Trotskyist movement, plus some who have been standing aside, to heal the split and unite the Fourth International.

- (2) Full participation of the SWP in the discussion and as active a role as possible in helping the rapprochement which the IC recently initiated with its proposal to the IS for a parity commission.
- (3) Stubborn opposition to any group or faction that seeks to perpetuate the split or to artificially slow down or sabotage the process of unification.
- (4) Comradely collaboration with any group or tendency, no matter what its previous alignment, if the general line set forth in the majority resolution meets with its approval.

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## DOCUMENT 21

*A reply to Joseph Hansen , by C. Slaughter*

In our document 'Trotskyism Betrayed' we have replied to the recent statement of the Political Committee of the SWP (Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps). The publication of Joseph Hansen's report to the Plenum in support of this statement, however, helps to clarify the picture still further (SWP Discussion Bulletin July 1962).

In 'Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps' there was only one aim: to provide some 'theoretical' cover for the proposed unification between the SWP and the Pabloites. Certainly the document takes the *form* of criticism of sectarianism and subjectivism in the politics of the SLL, but that is not its essence. The SLL's insistence on the basic programme of Trotskyism represents a big danger for the present SWP leadership, precisely because it is a natural development from the best in the history of the SWP itself. The strength of the SLL today is a stumbling block to all those who still call themselves Trotskyists while in fact going over to centrism. That is why the SWP document attacks the SLL. That is why the Pabloite IEC 'Declaration on Unification' (23rd June 1962) attacks the 'sectarianism' of the SLL and its French comrades on the International Committee. That is why Hansen in his report attacks the minority inside the SWP as 'agents of the SLL'.

We find that Hansen's report, taken in line with the recent material of the SWP leadership, reveals a method of work far removed from Marxism. We have here to deal with a tendency which no longer approaches events and movements, particularly the revolutionary movement itself, from the Marxist viewpoint. Having accepted the

method and outlook of Pablo and his clique Hansen no longer evaluates events from the class standpoint. He does not view the 'relationship of forces' on a world scale or in a particular country from the angle of working out the programme and strategy for the independent policies of the working class. In considering political tendencies he judges them by their appearance or by their claims and not by their objective class significance. In looking at the past, present and future of his own party and of the Fourth International he selects isolated phases and events, selected according to whether they justify his present course; by doing so he obscures the actual development and relation of forces inside the International and inside the SWP. In this way he prevents an objective study of the real lines of political development of the movement. He even states explicitly that this is his method; in striving for unification, he says, we should defer discussion on those questions which earlier divided us. *If* these questions had been fully exposed and it had been shown that they were of a secondary character in relation to objective developments requiring unification of all those with the same class line, *then* this would be a correct view. But to ignore the problems precisely *because* they have a political importance which made a split necessary in 1953 and may still necessitate a split (as we are convinced) — that is theoretical chicanery. It can only be explained by the theoretical decline of a whole group of Marxists in the USA. Hansen's method of presenting the problem proceeds from moods and impressions rather than from an objective analysis. He tries to lay out a picture of big possibilities for the Trotskyist movement because of the favourable objective situation, e.g. 'on the one hand the objective possibilities for (our movement's) rapid advancement are the best since its origin; in addition, the chances have improved for bringing to an early close the deep-going split which has lasted for almost a decade. On the other hand, resistance to unification has stiffened among certain sectors and new differences have come to the fore, among them differences of quite a serious nature'.

Hansen's juxtaposition — 'on the one hand . . . on the other hand' — is not simply a form of words, a mode of expression. In this way he sets the stage for the discussion, and he leads in from the natural inclinations of many members of the movement: they would of course prefer a united movement, which would be able more quickly to grasp its opportunities. Those who oppose unity 'on the other hand' *appear*

to stand in the way of grasping the opportunities. In his next paragraph Hansen goes on to refer to the picture reported by the Pabloite group of the 'strength' of its organization — 'We are unusually fortunate today in having at our disposal a better picture of the actual strength of the Fourth International and its variegated problems than has been available to us for some years. This information, already placed before you, should help guide us toward a better decision than would otherwise be possible'.

Next he calls upon the feeling of solidarity with the Cuban Revolution felt by those present, adding that their decision will be made easier by the fact that they are 'fortunate in possessing about as good a knowledge of the Cuban Revolution, through direct contact and through study of original documents, as any group of Trotskyists in the world except those in Cuba itself'.

All this is camouflage, it adds nothing to a Marxist understanding of the question. It consists entirely of a commentary upon appearances, a playing on moods, leaving the essential question untouched.

Above all, an assumption that 'great opportunities' are an argument for unification is not only incorrect but positively dangerous. In a period of revolutionary developments in the working-class movement, the clearest and most incisive political line is the highest necessity. This line is only arrived at through conflict with incorrect conceptions to arrive at an accurate reflection of the real situation; it necessitates a fight against revisionism, which always reflects the pressure of the ruling class. This means a scientific study of the history of the movement itself. Precisely in order to provide the revolutionary elements in the working class with an international Marxist strategy it is necessary to fight to the end all revisionism, to understand our own present position as the product of such conflicts, consciously resolved.

In 'Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps' the SWP leadership quotes the unification of Trotsky's group with the Bolsheviks in 1917 as an example of tactical flexibility in response to objective circumstances. This is sheer distortion. Trotsky himself (and this in the midst of the SWP cadre in 1940) clearly and explicitly stated that he joined the Bolsheviks in 1917 having by then acknowledged the complete correctness of their method of building a working-class party. Long before this Trotsky had given a classic picture of the essence of Bolshevism which stands in sheer contradiction to Hansen's picture.

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

This fundamental working class orientation of the Bolsheviks brought first Lenin and then the party majority in April 1917 to the standpoint on the proletarian revolution developed earlier by Trotsky. The 'unification' was a victory for the line of Bolshevism in the method of constructing a party, a line which was opposed bitterly and (fortunately unsuccessfully) by Trotsky to unify the Bolsheviks with other trends calling themselves Marxists. In that 'August bloc', Trotsky put aside political disagreement in order to stress agreement on 'concrete questions':

Most of the documents were written by me and through avoiding principled differences had as their aim the creation of a semblance of unanimity upon 'concrete political questions'. Not a word about the past! Lenin subjected the August bloc to merciless criticism and the harshest blows fell to my lot. Lenin proved that inasmuch as I did not agree politically with either the Mensheviks or the Vperyodists my policy was adventurism. This was severe but it was true. (*In Defence of Marxism*, L.D. Trotsky).

Lenin insisted all along on the fundamental lines of programme as historically laid down in the previous splits. Where in Hansen's report or in the document of the political committee of the SWP is there *any* analysis of the actual basis of the 1953 split, *any* consideration of the principled differences which were said then to exist? At one point it seems they are assumed to have disappeared; at another they are simply put aside for future reference. Thus Hansen says 'Everyone here, I believe, is familiar with the reasons for putting aside the differences of 1953 and the organizational issues that were then in sharp dispute. As Leninists we deliberately subordinate organizational and tactical matters for the sake of political agreement. Similarly in the field of Marxist methodology we do not demand agreement

in advance before we will collaborate politically with another tendency. This again is the Leninist tradition'.

When such a sequence of unconnected and nonsensical statements can be made and endorsed in the Political Committee, it is a tragic reflection of the state of Marxism in the SWP. The 'differences of 1953' are not defined or characterized but are slurred over by the phrase 'Everybody here is, I believe, familiar, etc. . . .' The next sentence speaks of 'putting aside the tactical and organizational issues that were then in sharp dispute'. That the issues *were* only tactical and organizational is introduced by sleight of hand. If they were, how can the SWP explain its responsibility for splitting the International for ten years and expelling some 20% of its membership . . . on tactical and organizational issues?! Is the Open Letter by Cannon to be forgotten or to be renounced? What are we to make of Cannon's statement before the Open Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP in November 1953 — 'there is not a single member of this Plenum who contemplates any later relations with the Pablo-Cochran gang'? Are we expected to remain silent when we compare such statements with the approaches of the present SWP leadership to this same Pablo? What is to be said in explaining the responsibility for the 10-year split? Hansen's next sentence is even more bewildering: 'in the basic field of Marxist methodology we do not demand agreement in advance before we will collaborate with another tendency'. Certainly, but please do not waste our time in an international discussion by confusing relations between sections of the revolutionary International, members of a revolutionary party, with 'collaborating political tendencies'. Is this what Hansen means by the Leninist tradition? It is really nothing but a cheap confusion. 'However', Hansen continues, 'it would be a considerable mistake to believe that deeper questions of methodology are not involved'. One might think that here some discussion of the differences with Pablo was in order, but Hansen proceeds to present his case on the deep methodological differences — with the SLL! i.e. with those comrades who were presumably on the same ground as he and Cannon against Pablo in 1953. In the few pages of 'review of a little party history' which follow, Hansen presents a version of the positions taken up within the Fourth International in characterizing post-war developments in Eastern Europe and China. Pabloism and the split of 1953 occupy only a tiny space and once again the affair is reduced to the status of an unfortunate misunderstanding. Hansen says, for instance: 'We had believed that the sharp differences



in 1953 over organizational questions and over the concepts behind these questions indicated the rise of deeper differences that might proceed to the foundations of Trotskyism'. This is not just an understatement; it is a plain lie and it would be wrong not to say so. Cannon and the SWP leadership quite clearly and openly *broke* with the Pablo group, characterizing them as traitors to Marxism. Hansen must either renounce this and explain his responsibility for the consequences or repeat it and say concretely, exactly, why and how he has come to be able to change his mind. The problem cannot be solved in any way other than through an objective historical examination.

All that the 'review of a little party history' amounts to is a very abstract version of the history of the SWP's discussion of Eastern Europe and China. The argument is this: we used the same criteria for Cuba as we used for China and Eastern Europe; these we learnt from Trotsky in the 1940 discussion; he had developed them from the beginning of his campaign against Stalin's theory of 'Socialism in one country' in 1924. Therefore, says Hansen, whoever disagrees on Cuba is overthrowing Trotskyism, of which the SWP leadership is the guardian and representative. Now, if Hansen had been interested in an analysis of party history from a Marxist viewpoint his 'review' would have had an entirely different content and emphasis. The decisive feature of party history in relation to these workers states is only in the most formal sense the question of which arguments proved most correct in defining them. Hansen refers to the arguments of Trotsky in 1940 on Soviet expansion into Poland Finland. But in that discussion Trotsky made exactly the same point that we are making here against Hansen and the Pabloites.

The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution .

It was precisely this same question which split the Fourth International in 1953, and *not* the question of the definition of the workers states, which it had certainly been vital to establish. It was *not* a question of estimating their effect on the 'world relationship of forces', but the qualitative question of the role of the working class

revolutionary vanguard under the new conditions. Those who along with Cannon and the SWP broke with Pablo, insisted that a decisive struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy under the leadership of revolutionary Marxist parties was the paramount need. Those who stayed with Pablo rejected the leading role of the Marxist party: the new objective conditions, including the strength of the workers' states, would force sections of the bureaucracy to lead the masses in a revolutionary direction. The Third World War would then finally pose the questions of revolutionary leadership before those centrist movements. The East German workers' rising and the French general strike of 1953, in which those bureaucracies who were to move left once more betrayed and crushed the working class, brought out the class essence of the Pabloite formula. Unable to begin from the initiative of the working class and from the independent programme of the Fourth International, they in fact covered up for the adaptations of the bureaucracy. Any independent study of 'party history' must show this split as the decisive stage in the International's development since Trotsky's death. A serious 'review' would trace the sources of the split and submit the two political lines to the test of subsequent events. Hansen presents instead a collection of impressions to support his thesis that the differences have narrowed. The final blow to this case is administered by a document which has been issued since the SLL's reply to 'Problems of the Fourth International and the Next Steps'. In that reply we rejected the idea that the Pabloites had reverted to Marxism from their revisionism of 1953; we now have this quite clearly from the Pabloites themselves: in their 'Declaration on Reunification' (23/24 June 1962) they say:

For this very reason, the Fourth International considered the split of 1953, and especially the Open Letter calling for disregard towards the normally elected leadership of the International, as a big mistake, which has done great harm to the world movement. Any differences which existed at that time in the International should have been thoroughly discussed inside the movement, and any organizational grievances brought up before the competent bodies. As long as all Trotskyist organizations do not keep these general rules, irresponsible splits will continue to hamper our progress, even under favourable objective conditions.

The political basis of the 1953-54 split, as we saw it, was a lack of full understanding of the correctness of the International's turn in the estimate of the world situation, made in 1950-51. Many comrades at that time did not understand correctly the tremendous consequences of the victory of

the Chinese revolution, of the rising colonial revolution and of the progress of the productive forces in the workers states, not only with regard to imperialism — whose world positions have ever since worsened — but also with regard to the Soviet bureaucracy, which has been thrown into a very grave permanent crisis, but a crisis of a different nature than the crises born out of the economic weaknesses of the Soviet state in the thirties, or out of the defeats of the international labour movement in that same period. They therefore saw a tendency of 'capitulation towards Stalinism' in the International's correct estimation, that the political revolution in the USSR would be preceded and prepared by numerous divisions within the bureaucracy, concessions by various bureaucratic factions towards the masses, and important reforms within the Soviet Union and the so-called 'peoples' democracies'.

But starting from the XXth Congress of the CPSU, some organizations affiliated with the International Committee or in sympathy with its political views as in the case with the SWP, corrected their evaluation of the world situation and of the evolution within the Soviet Union, and arrived at an estimation of events very close to that of the Fourth International. From that time on, reunification became not only desirable but also possible. Whereas unity negotiations broke down in 1957 on considerations about the organizational functioning of the International. This obstacle now appears to be removed, for instance, the latest convention of the SWP has clearly stated or restated its fraternal opinion that the Fourth International should adhere to the principles of democratic centralism on an international scale.

Hansen's manoeuvre now stands exposed. He sells unification to the SWP membership on the grounds that Pablo and his group have come round to the SWP's point of view. The Pabloites on the other hand take the opposite viewpoint. Hansen claims fundamental agreement on method with the Pabloite group and against the SLL. It should now be clear that both sides prefer *not* to discuss 'the differences of 1953', but rather to maintain a silence on this while deluding their members.

In 1953 the discussion on Pabloism did not go deep enough. Had the full significance of Pablo's revisionism been understood, then the initiative of the SWP in 1953 could have been the beginning of a new advance in the SWP and in the international movement, but because the wrong method of Pabloism was criticized only in one or two (very serious) external manifestations, there did not take place the theoretical advance that was possible on the basis of a theoretical fight and the rejection of Pablo's method. Hansen now says there were 'tendencies'

leadership *sui generis*, like the July 26 Movement or the Algerian leadership or the Angolan revolutionaries, with the masses impatient enough to be disposed to the direct armed action of the revolutionary peasantry.

All that Pablo does here is to describe, albeit with a dash of Marxist terminology, the dominance of the petty-bourgeois leadership in the absence of a revolutionary working-class party; that he calls the description a theoretical conclusion is of no interest to Marxism. It is 'objectivism' gone mad. Nothing could reveal more clearly that in Pablo's hands Marxism has become a cloak for an apology for the petty bourgeois politicians on whom imperialism relies. We now see the full significance of Pablo's early formulations (1961) about the decisive character, in African countries, of the 'elite' which wields state power rather than the working class and its leadership.

The post-war conditions of dominance by the imperialists in Western Europe and the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe as well as the world workers movement, brought a petty-bourgeois capitulation to non-Marxist methods of thought in 1950/1953. Its direct expression was a capitulation to one petty-bourgeois social formulation, the Stalinist bureaucracy. But this revision of part of the programme of Trotskyism and the descent into non-Marxist method have led to a complete revisionism, an entire subordination in programme to petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic groups, and inevitably, as with all such revisions, an abandonment of the basic tenets of Marxism.

Our final example of the petty-bourgeois nature of this 'international' of Pablo which Hansen says has returned to the Trotskyist position, is in the heart of the capitalist west, where Pabloism has its origin and centre.

In the second issue of their newly named paper *L'Internationale* the French section of Pablo's organization have published a feature on the Transitional Programme as applied to France today. In this article we are told that while the Transitional Programme was based on valid principles, the conditions under which it was written have been left behind by the post-war expansion of capitalism, and particularly by full employment and the increased spending power of the workers. Further, a Bonapartist regime in France is able to carry out a very 'flexible' handling of the workers movement. (A footnote adds that 'of course the development of revolutionary action will bring the bourgeoisie to turn to Fascism'). As always, our 'Marxists' hasten to add that despite this important modification the workers still have to

sell their labour power, from which employers extract surplus value, just as in the 19th century. But it is upon the petty bourgeois intellectual's superficial view of this 'modification', and not upon the fundamental struggle of the workers against the employers and for state power that the 'up-to-date' Transitional Programme of the Pabloites is to be based. Thus:

Demands are put forward at a much higher level and deal with the general conditions of the life of the workers, not only in the field of wages, but also in those of hours of work, leisure activities, culture, and housing.

The organized labour movement sets itself an aim other than just the raising of the level of consumption and the solution of social problems. Its aim is to put an end to the alienation of the working class. In the new situation, the Transitional Programme must contain a whole series of demands related to the place of the worker in the nation and in the enterprise (!!).

For everyday political purposes it is sufficient for revolutionary socialists, Marxists, only to hear this kind of talk in order to understand immediately that we are confronted with classical petty bourgeois and reformist positions. However, another problem is involved here, necessitating a more painstaking (if painful) examination. The specific form taken by this reformism is to dress itself in the language of the programme of the Fourth International — transitional demands. In point of fact, these transitional demands were elaborated as quite *opposite* to the usual reform of 'minimum programme' demand. As shown at length in the early Resolutions of the Third International, and later in the programme of the Fourth, transitional demands are those which pose sharply the question of class power. They do this by posing concretely the necessity of certain economic and social solutions together with the necessity of a working class struggle for power to achieve them.

The distortion of the Transitional Programme by the Pabloites flows necessarily from their capitulation to petty bourgeois domination of the existing labour movement. The turn to *reformist* instead of *transitional* demands is the logical consequence of the Pabloite revision of 1953. As we have seen, the essence of Pablo's capitulation to Stalinism was his abandonment of Marxist class criteria in the analysis of society and politics. This Pabloite revisionism, from which revolutionaries in the Trotskyist movement broke in 1953, finds its

full fruition in the last three years with the capitulation to the bourgeois nationalist leadership in the backward countries and to the official labour bureaucracy (Social Democratic as well as Stalinist) in Europe. The capitulation to centrism in the Belgian general strike as well as of the British Pabloites to the Labour Right, exposed the depths of the degeneration. With the publication in France of the 'up-to-date' Transitional Programme, we find inevitably an attempt to give a 'theoretical' rounding-out to the betrayals which have taken place in practice. The liquidationist idea of 'total entry' left no alternative to this. Those very labour bureaucracies whose organizations were 'entered' have more and more openly become tools of the monopoly capitalists who control the state. Trade union leaders and social-democratic politicians are being drawn into the planning and direction of the economy and of 'labour' by capitalist governments. The reformist cover for this disciplining of the workers spreads from Right Wing Labourites with their full commitment to 'responsible' policies of wage restraint and the disciplining of strikers, to the 'New Left' intellectuals who devote their energy to 'democratic safeguards' and 'workers' participation' in capitalist industry. Every day we read of 'charters of workers rights' being drafted, of 'new towns' being designed, of 'culture' being taken up by the trade unions (with the incidental benevolent help of giant business foundations). Among the 'New Left' and other 'revisionist Marxists' there is great concentration on Marxism as a 'humanism', on 'the young Marx' rather than on the mature proletarian revolutionary. However sophisticated and refined all this 'Marxism', it is nothing but a cover for an 'integrated' and disciplined working class. The left intellectual hangers-on of the state and labour bureaucracies, including the Stalinists, may have the illusion that their concentration on 'culture' and 'conquest of alienation' is somehow going to sweeten relations between the workers and the capitalists, especially once that old-fashioned talk about Leninist parties and proletarian revolution has been pushed to the background. They will learn that the 'integration' envisaged and needed by the employers is something *very* different, imposed by force and not by sweet reason, derived from the iron necessities of capitalism's objective development and not from the notions of its intellectual time-servers. Reformism and all apologies for it, however revolutionary the terminology in which it is expressed, only prepares the way for these plans of the capitalists.

A powerful developing international Marxist movement will more

and more take the fight against these petty bourgeois revisions in its stride, as part of the mass struggle against the bureaucracy and against imperialism. A pre-requisite is to clarify our own ideas, and develop our own strategy and tactics by defeating the representatives of this revisionism who have affected the development of Trotskyism itself. Pabloism was and is an international phenomenon. When the French Pabloites make a present of the formulae and the name of the Transitional Programme to the French reformists as a disguise for their betrayals, they fulfil the needs of the ruling class. The betrayals of Social Democracy and Stalinism make it necessary for reformism to be better-dressed if it is to seduce a new generation of militants. Just at a time when the crisis of imperialism and of the traditional leaderships makes it possible for revolutionaries to win powerful new forces, Pabloism has the role of providing a centrist alternative which is exceedingly dangerous for the international working class. We can see this in the debasement of the Transitional Programme in France. At this juncture in French politics it is surely fantastic that the Pabloites ignore the demands of the original Transitional Programme for workers' self-defence against fascism, for workers' movements against militarism, for a programme against banks and monopolies which will swing the French peasantry behind the proletariat and away from De Gaulle. We have, not definite demands for the supervision of mortgage and interest rates on land, fertilizers and machinery, against the bankers, landlords, chemical and engineering trusts, but 'a general principle must be to carry the class struggle into the countryside. Above all, this means putting forward methods of re-organization, the setting-up of producer-co-operatives starting from the amalgamation of family plots and under the control of the working peasants'. The Pabloite programme also fails to emulate the thorough and forthright condemnation of the opportunist labour leaders, both Social Democratic and Stalinist, of the original programme. The 'new' material about conquering alienation is the other side of this 'bringing-up-to-date', serving to characterize it clearly as a petty bourgeois and anti-working class trend. All the nonsense about conquering alienation, *outside the context of the working class struggle for power*, is a reactionary Utopia of the middle-class intellectual. That the 'Trotskyists' of the Pablo group have ended here is a fitting conclusion to the course they began in 1950/1953.

The above outline sketch of the issues involved in a Marxist approach to developments since the split of 1953 will make clear what

**PERERA, Dr. N. M.** — Founder of LSSP. Leader of Ceylon Federation of Labour. Imprisoned during war and escaped to India. Right-wing parliamentarian; Minister of Finance in two coalition governments.

**PHILIPS, Art** — Leading trade unionist in SWP. Supported state capitalist position on Russia.

**POSADAS, Juan** — Leader of Pabloite group in Argentina in 1950s. Expelled with his tendency from Pabloite movement in 1962. Notorious for advocacy of 'preventative nuclear war' by Soviet Union.

**PRESTON** — Pseudonym for secretary of the International Committee (G. Healy) in the period 1953-1963.

**PRIVAS** — Supporter of Pablo tendency in PCI in 1953 period.

**RENARD, Daniel** — Leading member of the French section of the Fourth International (PCI) at the time of the 1953 split.

**ROBERTSON** — Expelled with Wohlforth from SWP. Formed revisionist Spartacist group. Expelled from International Committee at 1966 Conference.

**RODRIGUEZ, P. (Pierre Broué)** — One of leaders of PCI, then of revisionist OCI. Author of works on Spanish and French history.

**SCHACHTMAN, Max** — Founder member of American Trotskyist movement with Cannon and Abern. Led opposition to Trotsky in SWP over Russo-Finnish war and occupation of Poland. An advocate of 'bureaucratic collectivism'. Split with SWP in 1940 to set up Workers' Party, which he dissolved to enter Socialist Party of USA and to join the Congress for Cultural Freedom — a CIA-subsidized organization. Author of *Behind the Moscow Trials*. Died 1972.

**de SILVA, Dr. Colvin R.** — Leader of LSSP, imprisoned and escaped to India to form Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India during war. Leading parliamentarian in LSSP; prominent coalitionist.

**SINCLAIR, W.** — Pseudonym for W. Hunter (British section), author of the document 'Under a Stolen Flag'. Member of SLL and of WRP.

**SLAUGHTER, Cliff** — Member of International Committee of Fourth International and of Central Committee of Socialist Labour League during the period covered by these volumes.

**SMITH** — Pseudonym for Farrell Dobbs.

**SWABECK, Arne** — Founder member of SWP; left to join Maoists in 1960s.

**WEISS, Murry** — Leading member of SWP in 1950s and early 1960s. Supported Cannon against SLL.

**WEISS, Myra Tanner** — Leading member of SWP.

**WOHLFORTH, Tim** — Led opposition tendency in SWP at time of unprincipled 'reunification' of 1962-63. Expelled from SWP for demanding discussion on Ceylon coalition, and formed Workers' League, in sympathy with International Committee.



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In today's conditions of capitalist crisis, only the International Committee of the Fourth International stands on a record of fighting for revolutionary leadership in the working class. To carry forward this struggle now, when every revisionist tendency is striving to turn the working class back into the arms of the bureaucracy, an understanding of its history is essential.

Founded in 1938 in conditions of crushing defeat for the working class, persecuted by the ruling class and the Stalinists, the Fourth International has survived only by the most ruthless struggle against liquidationism in its own ranks. Revisionists like Pablo saw nothing but the strength of the bureaucracy in the relations between the classes after the Second World War, and refused to analyze the contradictions in the inflationary boom, which has now turned into its opposite. The Socialist Workers Party of the United States never carried through Trotsky's struggle against pragmatism within it, and split from the Pabloites in 1953 only to carry out a thoroughly unprincipled 'reunification' with them ten years later.

These four volumes bring together for the first time the major documents of the struggle for Marxism against revisionism from 1951 onwards. Their publication lays the basis for drawing the theoretical lessons of the 20-year split in the International, and strengthening the cadre to build mass revolutionary parties, sections of the International Committee.

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