

Fourth International

A JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL MARXISM PUBLISHED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Algeria & Vietnam



Statements of the International Committee

Documents:

The Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party

'Trotskyism Betrayed' (1962)

'Opportunism and Empiricism' (1963)

The 'Open Letter' of 1953

and other discussion documents

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A Journal of International Marxism

Published by the International Committee
of the Fourth International

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REVOLUTIONARY GREETINGS TO THE WORLD TROTSKYIST MOVEMENT

THIS Seventh Annual Conference of the Socialist Labour League sends its revolutionary greetings to all the forces of the international working class who are in struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the defeat of the treacherous reformist and Stalinist leaderships of the working class.

Our Conference declares its solidarity with the struggles of the workers in the United States, Western Europe and Japan against their capitalist exploiters, with the workers and peasants of the colonial and oppressed nations, particularly in Vietnam, against imperialism and its agents, and with the workers of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe against the parasitic bureaucracy which collaborates with imperialism.

Only the reconstruction of the Fourth International, with Trotskyist-Leninist parties in every country, can ensure the unity of these struggles and their victory.

We therefore send fraternal greetings to all sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International, and will give every support to its conference for the rebuilding of the Fourth International, planned for early 1966.

Our greetings go particularly to those who have fought revisionism under especially difficult circumstances in the USA, the American Committee for the Fourth International. They will receive every possible support from the Socialist Labour League.

The Conference called by the International Committee will mark a qualitative stage in the development of the Fourth International. Revisionism in the Trotskyist movement has run its course from theoretical distortions to open class betrayal in the recent period. The entry of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party of Ceylon into the capitalist coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1964 was the most crushing proof of this degeneration. It followed hard on the heels of the unprincipled 'reunification' between the Pabloite 'International Secretariat' and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. This reunification was completed without political discussion, deliberately to avoid the political questions confronting the international movement.

The struggle against revisionism carried out by the International Committee has hastened the process of degeneration of the Pabloite forces. Ever since 1951, these revisionists have in effect subordinated the working class and the building of the revolutionary party to the Stalinist bureaucracy, the reformist leaders and the bourgeois nationalists in the colonial countries. The forces of the International Committee have correctly fought for the political independence of the working class through the building of the revolu-

tionary party and the application of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Pablo himself now separates publicly from the 'reunified' Secretariat in Paris, and openly advocates the complete liquidation of Trotskyism into the Stalinist bureaucracy and the bourgeois-nationalist movements.

This open break from Marxism by Pablo, supported by a number of old Trotskyists such as Santen in Holland and Vereecken in Belgium, together with half the French section, the majority of the Australian section and certain groups in Algeria and other colonial countries, should be the warning light for those Trotskyists remaining in the sections of the United Secretariat who want to fight revisionism and defend the Transitional Programme. They should support the Socialist Labour League and the International Committee of the Fourth International in fighting for a discussion of all principled questions and the serious preparation of a future conference of all those who accept the Transitional Programme. This was proposed by the International Committee in September 1963 and rejected by the United Secretariat.

The evolution of Pablo, and the events in Ceylon, Belgium and the USA, have proved the correctness of our proposals. Germain, Frank and Hansen have proved themselves utterly incapable of defending the programme of the Fourth International. Their theory and their 'politics' are in essence the same as those of Pablo. In America, the Socialist Workers Party's prostration before petty-bourgeois nationalism in the Negro movement is only one reflection of their acceptance of the liquidationist revisionism of Pabloism.

In Western Europe, the sections of the 'Unified Secretariat' have become mere appendages of the 'Left' Social Democracy. Belgium provides the proof. 'Entry' was used to opportunistically abandon the construction of the revolutionary party, only to end in the adventure of proclaiming a new centrist party in alliance with the worst nationalist and petty-bourgeois elements, whose split from the new party itself is only a matter of time. The next United Secretariat Congress will expel Pablo and his supporters, expel over 500 members of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, as well as having to give an accounting of all these events.

The present stage is therefore a crucial one. It is the last opportunity to engage in a serious discussion and reconstruction of the International before the forces around the United Secretariat are completely liquidated by Frank, Germain and Hansen, who are rapidly following Pablo to the complete abandonment of revolutionary Marxism. All those who struggle against these revisionists

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will receive the support of the Socialist Labour League.

The successful fight of the International Committee against revisionism and the work of its sections in constructing a leadership of the working class provide the basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. Such a reconstruction is the fear of Stalinists and Social Democrats everywhere, just as it is feared by the capitalist class. The responsibility for the split in the International rests squarely upon the Pabloite revisionists.

1963 showed that in the USA the Socialist Workers Party had succumbed to the same revisions. When the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sent condolences to the widow of Kennedy, and called upon the United States government to defend the Negroes with Federal troops, the consequences of revisionism were shown no less starkly than they were in

Ceylon.

The 'reunification' of the revisionists in 1963 without discussion of past differences was a part of the whole method of liquidationism. The proposals for international discussion put forward by the International Committee conference in September 1963 were rejected by the Pabloite United Secretariat. Since then, the disintegration of the Pabloite forces, a reflection of the crisis of the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies faced with the intensification of the international class struggle, has confirmed the political necessity of a thorough discussion in the world movement to prepare a real rebuilding of the Fourth International and a defeat of revisionism.

We call upon all Trotskyists throughout the world to support our efforts to reorganise the Fourth International on the programmatic basis of its 1938 Founding Conference.

June 1965

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ON U.S. ACTIONS IN VIETNAM

THE International Committee of the Fourth International condemns the large-scale bombing attacks in North Vietnam by the U.S. imperialists in early February, 1965.

These actions are counter-revolutionary reprisals against the rapidly approaching complete victory of the revolution in South Vietnam.

The International Committee is in complete solidarity with the workers and peasants in Vietnam and the Viet Cong (liberation army) in their revolution against the corrupt capitalist regime in Saigon and its imperialist supporters. The interests of the working people in South-east Asia cannot be realised until the last vestige of imperialist intervention is removed.

The International Committee calls for the unrelenting support of the workers of all countries for the liberation army and for the actions of the Vietnamese workers, whose aim is to expel the American forces from South Vietnam and all imperialist forces from South-east Asia.

In this struggle for national

liberation, the workers will find the road to their own power in these countries. Their struggles are part of the world socialist revolution.

The successful conclusion of the civil war in South Vietnam will complete the revolutionary victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. That victory demolished French imperialist rule over Indo-China, but the victory was cynically betrayed by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Geneva Agreement of July 1954 which partitioned Vietnam. The pretext for this 'compromise' was that only this type of settlement could avoid nuclear war in the atomic age.

Subsequently the Geneva provisions for 'free elections' and national unification have been ignored by the South Vietnamese dictatorship which has received the support of U.S. imperialism: the American forces in Vietnam are now 24,000 troops, together with a large naval and air striking force.

Meanwhile, the British Conservative and Labour governments alike have built up imperialist forces in Malaysia.

Even this, however, has failed to prevent the present situation, where Saigon governments fall every few days and the Viet Cong

controls 80 per cent of South Vietnam.

The counter-revolutionary reprisals of the Pentagon aim to intimidate the peoples of South-east Asia and particularly the workers and peasants of Vietnam and of the Chinese Peoples' Republic.

Threatening 'escalation' into a world nuclear conflict, Johnson and the U.S. ruling class hope to ensure the collaboration of Moscow and even Peking for a sell-out in Vietnam, to save whatever can be saved for imperialism.

The workers of the world and the people of Vietnam can have no confidence in any wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

There must be no settlement through secret diplomacy.

The revolution in Vietnam will be victorious through the struggles of the Vietnamese workers and peasants backed by the solidarity actions of workers all over the world.

Those 'socialists' who demand recall of the Geneva Conference or 'new diplomatic initiatives', particularly the Communist parties of Western Europe and the left wing of the British Labour Party, are advocating a new sell-out like Geneva in 1954.

The present situation and its

dangers, the large-scale blood-letting over the last 11 years, are the results precisely of the subservience of these opportunists to imperialism and to the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1954.

Now, as then, there is no way out except through the international working-class struggle. In every country and particularly in Britain and the USA, the workers must demand:

HANDS OFF THE VIETNAM REVOLUTION!
WITHDRAW ALL U.S. AND BRITISH TROOPS, WARSHIPS
AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT FROM SOUTH-EAST ASIA
IMMEDIATELY!
STOP THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM!
END THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT
FOR U.S. IMPERIALISM!
NO SECRET DIPLOMACY!
ALL SUPPORT TO THE REVOLUTION IN SOUTH
VIETNAM!

21/2/1965

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ON ALGERIA

AHMED BEN BELLA, President of Algeria, was removed from power in the middle of the night of June 19-20. His arrest, and the reorganisation of the government, were the work of his Defence Minister and leader of the Army, Colonel Boumedienne.

Characteristically, Ben Bella was deposed without any prior open political preparation either by the masses or even by organised trends within the National Liberation Front (FLN) party, which has the monopoly of political life in Algeria. It was a matter of a highly organised plot by Boumedienne and top military leaders to impose a change on the masses of Algeria.

In this fundamental sense, therefore, there is no change whatsoever in the character of the state in Algeria. The country remains capitalist. As well as the considerable properties retained by Algerian bourgeois, 80 per cent of the country's economy remains in French hands. Boumedienne's first public statement was to guarantee these holdings and to promise adherence to all existing agreements. The fundamental land reforms to begin the liberation of the Algerian poor masses have not yet begun. The powerful state and military bureaucracy will be consolidated rather than 'democratised' by the recent events.

Not even a single word of appeal to the masses came from Boumedienne. When students and workers demonstrated against Ben Bella's arrest on June 21, they were dispersed by troops and police. This persistence of capitalist property relations in Algeria, with the economy still rigidly controlled by the relation to the world market, particularly through agreements with France, is the source of dire poverty and economic chaos in Algeria, where over one million are registered unemployed.

Boumedienne and other bourgeois-nationalist leaders are likely to denounce the 'corruption' and 'economic experimenting' of Ben Bella, hoping to divert the attention of the masses from their real

problems. The only solution is a break from imperialism. For this to happen, there would have to be built an independent revolutionary Marxist party to lead the workers to power. No section of the national bourgeoisie can accomplish this task.

In Algeria, as in all the 'newly independent' bourgeois states, the crisis of world imperialism is exposing the real class nature of the regimes. These have hitherto claimed to be 'revolutionary' or 'socialist', but are now faced with the impossibility of an independent or national path of capitalist development. In Algeria, the problem of the national bourgeoisie, a very weak class depending on French capitalism and needing a strong state apparatus to organise the economy and discipline the working class, is facing all the major questions in the immediate future, and the quarrel between Ben Bella and Boumedienne reflects the struggle between differing bourgeois groups on how to handle the situation.

The national-liberation movements have to solve in the first place the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, national liberation and unification, land reform (liberation of the peasants from the landlords) and the establishment of bourgeois forms of political sovereignty in the state in some kind of bourgeois-democratic regime. In the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeoisie, neither in Algeria nor in Cuba, nor in India, nor anywhere else, can achieve these tasks. The bourgeoisie is too weak; it is tied closely both to the foreign exploiters and to the landlords, it fears the peasantry, and especially the working class, too much to accomplish land reform or the establishment of political democracy.

Instead, as in Algeria, they have compromised with French imperialism, halting the land reform at an elementary stage, imposing a one-party state and abolishing independent workers' and students' unions.

It is in this context that one ruler replaces

another under circumstances like the present. The next few weeks will bring all these problems to a head. The foreign policy of the government and the consolidation of Ben Bella's personal reputation and power were at stake in the Afro-Asian conference in Algiers in June, which never took place.

Negotiations for changes in the oil and gas agreements with the French imperialists are due to begin this week. No doubt there are differences within the FLN about how to drive a bargain which will strengthen the Algerian bourgeoisie and its state against the masses. Ben Bella himself was due to enter France on a state visit. Last, but by no means least, Ben Bella had been forced by peasants' and workers' struggles to promise that the basic land reform would begin this summer immediately after the harvest.

None of these problems can be permanently settled by the national bourgeoisie and their state. They will proceed to bureaucratic and dictatorial solutions, and the removal of Ben Bella is intended to smooth the way for new repressions of the workers and peasants. This does not mean, of course, that the new regime will not make demagogic promises in the next few weeks.

In late 1964 and early 1965 the workers in the towns conducted a number of strikes for higher wages and for workers' management of the factories. The government of Ben Bella, having in the previous year intervened to abolish the independence of the trade unions, was forced to make certain gestures to this mass protest while in fact tightening the grip of the government party in the unions. The new regime will be especially concerned to repress the workers' movement, fearing above all the possibility of an alliance of these town workers with the poor peasantry, who grow more bitter and impatient against the delay in the land reform.

In such a situation, with the bourgeoisie divided, finding it necessary to depose a figurehead whom they had needed to mislead the masses with talk of national unity, the opportunities for the working class are evident. A revolutionary workers' party would gain an enormous following for a programme of workers' control, leading to workers' state power, expropriation of the landlords, confiscation of the vineyards and the formation of peasant soviets, and the expropriation of foreign holdings.

The Fourth International and the international workers' movement must pay particular attention to the absence of such a party and the urgency of beginning its construction immediately. The neglect of this task, flowing from the revisionist capitulation to the national bourgeoisie contained

in Pabloism and the policies of the 'United Secretariat', has played a vital role in creating the present situation, where the immediate questions of the fate of the Algerian masses is settled by military coup and counter-coup.

These Algerian workers and peasants have not said their last word; it is their strength and pressure which bring to a head the crisis of the bourgeois state, unable to adjust its relation to world imperialism without changing the delicate balance of class forces within Algerian politics. A revolutionary party can and will be built in Algeria, but only if the lessons of the struggle against revisionism are learned.

The International Committee condemned the Evian Agreement with de Gaulle as a sell-out. We insisted against the revisionists that Algeria remained a bourgeois state. The revisionists apologised for Evian; they insisted that Ben Bella represented a powerful trend towards the left, and even towards a workers' state in Algeria. All criticism of the Algerian state, all insistence on starting from its class basis, was condemned as 'sectarian' and the revisionists staked everything on pushing 'left' bourgeois elements further to the left.

When Boudiaf and other socialist leaders were imprisoned, the sections of the International Committee protested. Once again these repressions were supported by the revisionists. Their role has been to disarm the working class, leaving the national bourgeoisie free to dominate the state and repress the working class whenever that became necessary. All this was done in the name of 'Trotskyism' and the 'Permanent Revolution'. The results are now there for all to see, just as they were in Ceylon. 'The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself' was a principle abandoned by Pabloism through their rejection of the need to build independent revolutionary parties.

In a whole number of colonial and semi-colonial countries, the national bourgeois governments are undergoing political changes in their form of rule and political domination over the masses, in response to the squeeze which is put on them by the currently developing economic crisis. Where the state takes a bonapartist form on behalf of a weak bourgeoisie, as in Algeria, or Cuba, then the type of 'revolt' occurring on June 19-20 in Algiers is on the agenda. The role of the Fourth International is not to take sides and campaign for mass support for one or another wing of the bourgeoisie, but to build independent parties of the working class which can utilise such crises for the overthrow of the capitalist state.

21/6/1965

INTRODUCTION

Since January 1961, a process of theoretical clarification has been going on in the Fourth International, the organisation of revolutionaries in each country who fight to build Marxist parties in continuity with the struggles of Lenin and Trotsky and their comrades. In that year, the Socialist Labour League of Britain addressed to the leadership of the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA a letter (Document No. 1 in this issue) drawing attention to the dangers of revisionism in that Party. Specifically, it was a matter of insisting upon a detailed and long discussion of our political and theoretical standpoints: the SLL considered that the earlier split in the International with the followers of Michel Pablo (1952-53) was along fundamental lines, and that this was clearly revealed in the revisionist politics and theories of the Pablo group; the SWP leaders, on the other hand, looked for possibilities of 'reunification' on the grounds that the differences were narrowing. To our insistence on discussion before consideration of unification, we were met first with silence and then with manoeuvres, with a token discussion carried on. Eventually the SWP leaders collaborated with the Pabloites in supporting a unification without discussion in 1963. In their support for the formation of this 'Unified Secretariat', they were especially insistent upon the evaluation of the Cuban regime of Fidel Castro as a workers' state, since this was supposed to define more sharply than anything else the prospects of 'unity'. All theoretical discussion, all analysis of the full meaning of the 1953 split, of the reasons for the split, were cast aside on the grounds that the concrete issue of Cuba was the most important one, revealing the 'great opportunities' before Trotskyists and overshadowing all discussion of differences.

Since the 'reunification' one disaster has followed another for the 'unifiers'. Pablo himself, with his faction, has been suspended from the leadership of the 'Unified Secretariat'. In a number of countries new splits have taken place. A whole group of leading spokesmen of this tendency have written publicly in agreement with left social-democratic reformists in the European press. And above all has come the disaster of the entry of the 'Trotskyist' ministers into the coalition government in Ceylon. It was this latter affair which exposed the completeness of the degeneration of the spurious International in Paris. The record of their responsibility has been fully documented (see *Ceylon, The Great Betrayal*, published by *The Newsletter*, 1964). Their protestations that they in fact supported the left wing in the LSSP (Ceylon Trotskyist Party) were exposed as lies by the publication in *The Newsletter* of extracts from their internal discussions, in which they warn of the 'divisive' dangers of opposition to the rightward course of the LSSP leadership. Now their chosen emissary to the LSSP (Revolutionary section), Osmund Jayaratne, has announced his disagreement with opposition to the Coalition.

This unprecedented betrayal of the working class by spokesmen of

Trotskyism brought to a head all the dangers of which the International Committee was aware when it insisted upon a discussion of fundamental principles before consideration of 'unification'. The insistence upon characterisation of Cuba as a workers' state was a smokescreen behind which discussion was avoided and the Ceylonese capitulation prepared. The latest issue of the magazine of the SWP, *International Socialist Review*, contains a vitriolic attack on the politics of the International Committee, taking the form of an attack on Gerry Healy, Secretary of the Socialist Labour League ('The Test of the Cuban Revolution', by Joseph Hansen, *ISR*, Winter 1964). Avoiding all discussion of Ceylon, in which all the practical and class implications of the theoretical differences are starkly revealed, Hansen scurries back to the issue of the Cuban revolution, hoping there to find some more favourable ground. His excursion into politics (as compared with his usual light-hearted comments from afar) is highly unfortunate, but it gives us the opportunity to return to the question of the 'Cuba' discussion of the past three years in the light of what has happened in the interim. Hansen gives the impression that the SLL has avoided a real discussion on the implications of the Cuban revolution. We therefore reproduce here some of the documents of our contribution to the discussion in the International Committee. From these detailed documents it will become very clear that, far from avoiding a discussion on the theoretical implications of Cuba, we insisted precisely upon the deep methodological revisions of Marxism by the SWP in their approach, and the dangers which these implied for the future of the Fourth International. After all it was the International Secretariat, and not us, who addressed a communication to the LSSP, on the subject of their proposed United Left Front with the MEP and the Stalinists, in the course of which they held out the prospect: 'Ceylon can provide another Cuba or Algeria and prove to be of even greater inspiration to revolutionary minded workers throughout the world.'

The documents reproduced here are the following:

1. The letter of the National Committee of the SLL to the leaders of the SWP, in which the first attempt was made to open a discussion on our differences (January 2, 1961).
2. Extracts, particularly concerning Cuba, from the document 'Trotskyism Betrayed', addressed to the SWP leadership by the National Committee of the SLL (July 21, 1962).
3. 'Opportunism and Empiricism'. A reply to Joseph Hansen's 'Cuba, the Acid Test', in which he elaborated on the arguments in his recent *ISR* article. 'Opportunism and Empiricism' was adopted by the NC of the SLL on March 23, 1963. Appended to this document are:
 - (a) the letter of F. Rodriguez on the Cuban state, dated February 1963, and
 - (b) the revealing letter of James P. Cannon on the missiles crisis in Cuba (dated October 1962).

4. Letter addressed by the SLL to the NC of the SWP after the SLL Conference in June 1963. Besides important references to the situation in Cuba, this letter draws attention to the traitorous course of the LSSP leadership.

5. 'From Revisionism to Opportunism', Resolution of the Conference of the SLL, March 1, 1964.

These documents provide an invaluable record of our insistence upon principled discussion and they completely expose the attempt of Hansen to distort our position. The fact is that, whereas he and his supporters refused a discussion in their haste to 'reunification', they are now forced by the objective realities to publicly discuss with the International Committee; the fact that they must now do this under conditions much less favourable for themselves only provides another lesson in the impossibility of defying the laws of objective reality exposed by scientific analysis. That the avoidance of discussion until now has brought the calamity of Ceylon in the meantime indicates only the important truth that this is no abstract discussion, but the central core of the active struggle to build the revolutionary International of the working class.

In addition we reprint here the following background documents to the discussion.

6. 'A Letter to Trotskyists throughout the World' (1953), the famous 'Open Letter' from the SWP, making public the split with Pablo revisionism.

7. 'Pablo "Answers" the Open Letter' (1954). A reply to Pablo published in the organ of the SWP, *The Militant*.

DOCUMENT No. 1

To The National Committee of the
Socialist Workers' Party.

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 criticising 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 resumming 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 organise 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 fascism or monarchist forces, and new outbreaks of war fostered 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 emphasising 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 capacity 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 characterised 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 organised 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, organised 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 organisation, 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 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 organisation 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 organisationally’; 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 recognised leadership is Stalinist will tend to regroup itself around the C.P. 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 committee, 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 organisation. 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 radicalising 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 organisational 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 organise 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’ organisation, whom we can influence and from whom we can recruit.

It is, however, the work amongst the youth which has been most decisive. . . . 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 realisation of what a wrecking task the Gaitskellites are engaged upon. The youth movement is therefore today a potentially great force in the radicalisation 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 the youth paper. When our comrades go into action in Young Socialists 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 organisation 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 of 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 characterisation 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 No. 2

Extracts from 'Trotskyism Betrayed'—communication of the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League to the Socialist Workers' Party, 21/7/62

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 construction of 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 organise 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 recognise 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 and their reliance on impressions of the strength and 'progressiveness' of the nationalist movements, a consequence of the theoretical stagnation of the SWP, have 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 organisational 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 radicalised 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 organisation, above all on Soviet power, which the Communist International insisted upon for its affiliated bodies. Lenin's contributions 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 realising them, that is, the strength, the solidity, the firmness of their own organisation.'

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

The reason for this distortion is to be found not in the ignorance of those who wrote this document nor in the unavailability of the relevant documents but in the present political line of the SWP. This line is one which wants 'unity' of all Trotskyist forces, but without clarification of differences or a thorough examination of the roots of revisionism, and which abandons revolutionary criticism of 'left' trends in the movement. This leads to a denial of the historical

foundations of the communist movement. In their anxiety to present a unified and peaceful Trotskyist movement to 'leftward-moving currents', primarily from the 'Stalinist monolith', they are led to the distortion of the very political foundation upon which the reconstruction of the international communist movement depends. When the SWP tries to justify its present line by saying that Trotsky made approaches to 'left-centrist elements' it is once again selecting those 'facts' which suit its case and neglecting other vital aspects of the process. The document itself acknowledges that Trotsky initiated this discussion after the basic cadres of international Trotskyism had been consolidated. In fact this consolidation, like the great theoretical transformations forced through by Lenin between 1900 and 1917, was a process of political clarification which had to be carried through, before any question of numbers, or of organisational 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 characterisation 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 pre-

pared 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, of course, not 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 Bourguiba. 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 characterise 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 recognised, says the SWP document, that the 'main thing' is a victory for the independence struggle and a setback 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 program and proposals in contending for leadership.' (Our emphasis) What this opposition amounts to is not an independent course towards working-class power, but a loyal opposition within the nationalist camp.

Lenin's words on some of these questions, as set down in 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 underdeveloped 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 stabilisation—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. . . .

20. . . . 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 collaborate 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 organisation, 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 recognising 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 Shachtman 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, organised 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 organised 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 but was a workers' state which must be defined 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 characterisation 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 of applying definitional 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 at a unique stage in the development of the world revolution. They apply these 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 organisations 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 those two aims. Neither the July 26th movement nor the Stalinists will take up either of these slogans.

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

Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba? We reply categorically NO! The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship. But what is even more significant is the absence of what the SWP euphemistically terms 'the institutions of proletarian democracy' or what we prefer to call soviets or organs of workers' power. This is the paradox which lies behind all the so-called 'democratic and socialist tendencies of the Cuban revolution'. To substitute a workers' militia for soviets does not help. Workers' militias without soviets are no better, no worse than soviets without workers' militias.

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

'Only he is a Marxist who extends the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is where the profound differences lie 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—symbolised 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 centralised in his own hands and not by hostility to bureaucracy or any other such things.

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 nationalisations 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 estab-

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

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

Here is what Trotsky says on this subject:

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

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

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

That is why the Socialist Labour League fights for the construction of a Marxist party based on the working class and armed with the finest and latest weapons from the arsenal of Marxism. The first task of such a party would be to establish the political and theoretical independence of the working class

from the capitalist class, its state and its ideological servitors. This implies complete organisational and political independence from that bureaucratic fusion of Stalinism and Castroism which is the Unified Revolutionary Party (IRO). 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 remains to be done in Cuba.

25. One final word on the section of the SWP document concerned with Cuba. The SWP political committee circulates among its members and presumably throughout the world movement the following criticism of the SLL: 'On the other hand, the fallacious theoretical approach of the SLL to the Cuban Revolution has impeded practical activities. The SLL lost the initiative in Cuban defense efforts to centrist forces in England. The rejection of an Embassy invitation to celebrate the Cuban Revolution on January 1, 1962 needlessly widened the gulf between the British Trotskyists and the Cuban Revolutionists. Recently the SLL has started promoting a "Food for Cuba" campaign. This kind of solidarity action is sure to be appreciated by the hard-pressed Cubans. We hope this improvement in their practical work will be followed by reconsideration of their theoretical views on the Cuban Revolution.' We cannot understand this pronouncement. No evidence is given for it, and we would like to know which 'centrist elements' have gained the initiative in Cuban 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 organised 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'.

DOCUMENT No. 3**OPPORTUNISM AND EMPIRICISM**

'Only by learning to assimilate the results of the development of philosophy during the past two and a half thousand years will it be able to rid itself on the one hand of any isolated natural philosophy standing apart from it, outside and above it, and on the other hand also of its own limited method of thought, which was its inheritance from English empiricism.'

It is clear from this passage that Engels considers empiricism to be a *barrier* to the dialectical conception of the world. Hansen's talk about 'consistent empiricism' is sheer nonsense. The point about empiricism, a reliance on 'the facts as they are perceived', is that it cannot be consistent.

Empiricism, and its transatlantic younger brother, pragmatism, refuse to admit the possibility of answering the question: 'What is the nature of the objectively existing external world?' They thus leave the way open to subjective idealism which explains the world in terms of mind alone. Empiricism, ignoring the history of philosophy, rejects the dialectical theory of knowledge as 'metaphysics'. Only the dialectical materialist view can explain the world, because it includes a materialist explanation of the development of our concepts as well as of the material world which they reflect. Empiricism must be *rejected*, not made 'consistent'. There are many sides to this methodological error of Hansen's.

Trotsky warned the SWP leadership in his last writings that they must encourage a determined struggle on the theoretical front against the 'American' philosophy of pragmatism, a more recent development of empiricism; unless this was done, then there would be no real Marxist development in the U.S. Today Hansen and Cannon are 'confirming' Trotsky's warning in a negative fashion. In the discussion concerning the future of the Fourth International, Hansen leads the tendency which calls for 'unification' with a revisionist tendency on the basis of purely practical political agreement on immediate tasks. From this point of view he rejects an examination of the history of the split and of the differences between the tendencies. This is only part of his substitution of impressionism for scientific analysis (see *Trotskyism Betrayed* and C.S.'s reply to J.H.'s *Report to the Plenum*, International Bulletin No. 11). What is the methodological basis of Hansen's approach here? The dominant question for him is always 'what will work best?'—asked always from the narrow perspective of immediate political appearances. This is the starting point of pragmatism, the 'American' development of empiricism by Pierce, James and Dewey. It leads Hansen to advocate unity with the Pablo group because that will 'work' better as an attraction for people pushed in a 'leftward' direction, even if the causes of

the split are never clarified. Such an approach, as we have explained in earlier documents, destroys the theoretical basis of the movement. The incorrect concepts and methods of our political work can only be overcome through conscious theoretical and practical struggle, not by sweeping them under the carpet.

Pragmatism and the Cuban Crisis

Cannon's letter to Dobbs,* summing up the Cuban crisis, could similarly serve as a model of the pragmatist method. After a lifetime of struggle for revolutionary Marxism, particularly against Stalinism, he denies that whole career in two pages with the kind of politics which Hansen's pathetic essay in 'theory' is meant to justify: 'What else could he have done under the given circumstances?' asks Cannon. What were these 'given circumstances'?

'1. The U.S. naval blockade was set for a clash with Soviet ships which would escalate into nuclear war. Kennedy gave clear notice that the U.S. would not stop at the use of the most forceful measures. '2. The Pentagon was ready to bomb and invade Cuba and crush its revolution. Newspaper accounts report that this was one of the alternative moves considered even for (from?) the start, and it was to be put into effect if Moscow did not yield on the missile bases.'

Cannon replaces class analysis of social forces and political tendencies with pragmatic prescriptions. The so-called 'given circumstances' (equivalent of Hansen's 'the facts') are the *product* of a policy of class-collaboration by Khrushchev and the Stalinist bureaucracy in relation to U.S. imperialism. We must evaluate Khrushchev's conduct as *part of the process which produced these circumstances*. Only in that way can Marxists work out their political programme in relation to other class tendencies.

Empiricism versus Revolutionary Politics

Indeed Cannon's letter on Cuba illustrates the *class* role of empiricism and pragmatism, those tendencies in philosophy which accept 'the given fact', etc. Inevitably this acceptance becomes what Trotsky once called a 'worshipping of the accomplished fact'. In effect this means accepting the forms of consciousness proper to those who are adapted to the existing structure, such as the bureaucracy in the USSR and in the labour movement. They develop their ideas as ways of rationalising and justifying their own position between capitalism and the working class. Cannon's justification of Khrushchev, like the recent contribu-

* Published at the end of this document.

tions of Murry Weiss in justification of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the constant avoidance of the questions of political revolution and construction of revolutionary parties in the workers' states by SWP spokesmen and the Pabloites, are an abandonment of principled revolutionary politics, flowing from the abandonment of dialectical materialism in favour of empiricism. Dialectical analysis insists on seeing facts in the context of a whole series of interrelated processes, not as finished, independent entities about which 'practical' decisions have to be made. In the sphere of politics, that means to see each situation in terms of the development of the international class struggle, to evaluate the policies of the various political forces towards this situation in terms of their relation to these class forces and to their whole previous course. This is why it is nonsense to pose the Cuban problem as Cannon poses it—'What else could he have done under the given circumstances?' Taken to its logical conclusion, this type of argument can be used to justify anything. It is not even surprising, once the extent of this theoretical departure from Marxism is grasped, that Cannon utters an absurdity like '... people unaffected by imperialist propaganda have, I believe, breathed relief over the settlement and thanked Khrushchev for his sanity. Bertrand Russell and Nehru expressed themselves along this line.' Who would have thought that at the same time, Nehru was head of a government engaged in armed conflict, with imperialist support, against the Republic of China? In the course of that conflict mass arrests of Indian Communists were carried out. At the same time, Soviet fighter planes were being supplied to the Indian government by Khrushchev! No doubt Nehru praised Khrushchev (as well as Kennedy and Macmillan) for this piece of practical 'wisdom'. Perhaps Cannon will say 'What else could he have done under the given circumstances?' Cannon's method leads to this end not by a trick of logical development, but because the forces for whom he becomes the apologist are tied *in reality* to imperialism and its present needs. Trotskyism is no more an exception to the laws of history than any other phase in the development of Marxism and the labour movement. Once theoretical development stops, then the movement is subject to the dominant ideologies of the time, however gradual and subtle the process of adaptation—and however venerable the 'cadre'.

Hansen's Method

Hansen's document 'Cuba—The Acid Test' is therefore an important contribution to the international discussion. It states explicitly the *empiricist* and *anti-dialectical* basis in *method* for the opportunist tendencies in the SWP's politics as well as for their unprincipled and un-historical approach to the problem of unity and development of the world Trotskyist movement. From the beginning of the discussion, the SLL, described by Hansen as 'the ultra-left sectarians', have insisted that basic differences of

method underlay the different political lines and attitudes to organisation. Hansen now confirms this. His insistence on 'the facts', as being the same for empiricism as for Marxism is effectively answered by Lukacs:

'These facts are indeed not only involved in constant change, but also they are—precisely in the structure of their objectivity—the products of a historically determined epoch: that of capitalism. Consequently this "science" which recognises as fundamental to their value for science the immediately given form of phenomena, and takes as a correct point of departure for scientific conceptualisation their form of objectivity, this science finds itself planted simply and definitely in the ground of capitalist society, accepting uncritically its essence, its "objective" structure, its laws, as an unalterable foundation of "science". In order to progress from these "facts" to facts in the real sense of the word, one must penetrate to their historical conditioning as such and abandon the point of view which starts from them as immediately given: they must undergo historical-dialectical analysis ...'

(*History and Class Consciousness*)

In support of his capitulation to empiricism, Hansen quotes the verdict of Hegel.

'Generally speaking, Empiricism finds the truth in the outward world; and even if it allows a supersensible world, it holds knowledge of that world to be impossible, and would restrict us to the province of sense-perception. This doctrine when systematically carried out produces what has been latterly termed Materialism. Materialism of this stamp looks upon matter, *qua* matter, as the genuine objective world.' (*The Logic of Hegel*, translated from the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences, p. 80).

Hegel's opposition to empiricism is *correct* in one sense. If 'empiricism systematically carried out' led to dialectical materialism, then why would Hegel, the Absolute Idealist, figure so decisively in the development of Marxism? The 'materialism' to which empiricism leads, according to Hegel, is of course mechanical materialism, which remains unable to explain the role of consciousness and the material unity of the world, including human action and thought. This 'defect of all hitherto existing materialism', as Marx called it, meant that it could *not* be consistently carried out, and it left the door open to dualism and subjective idealism. Hegel overcame the dichotomy of subject and object, introducing a unified conception of a dialectically interconnected whole, by making spirit the content of all reality. Marx had only to 'stand him on his head' to arrive at dialectical materialism. This is *in fact* how dialectical materialism developed, through *contradiction*, and not through Hansen's businesslike logical formula of 'empiricism systematically carried out'. The relation between empiricism and dialectical materialism has a history, which shows a struggle of dialectical materialism *against* the empiricists and their development in positivism and pragmatism. It is

contrary to the method of Marxism to examine empiricism for its 'strong points' and its 'weak points'. As a trend in philosophy it has formed the soundest basis for pseudo-scientific attacks on materialism ever since Marx, and in politics it has always formed the philosophical basis for opportunism.

Hansen avoids this type of discussion by quoting Hegel and then introducing his own paraphrase of Hegel. Hegel said that empiricism systematically carried out issued in 'materialism', by which he naturally meant the materialism of his own day. We must surely appreciate historically what Hegel meant when he said that empiricism 'systematically carried out' led to materialism, which 'looks upon matter, *qua* matter, as the genuine objective world'. The vulgar materialism of that time had a *metaphysical* view of the world, seeing the given facts of experience as fixed, dead, finished products interacting according to mechanical principles, with mind reflecting this reality in a dead, mechanical fashion. Hansen must surely agree that it was *this* kind of materialism which Hegel attacks here. He could hardly have had in his head the theory of *dialectical* materialism as the product of 'empiricism systematically carried out'. The dialectical materialist method of thought was born only *after* Hegel, through the struggle against Hegel's dialectical idealism. And yet Hansen, with a very clumsy sleight of hand, uses his quotation from Hegel to identify 'empiricism systematically carried out' with dialectical materialism:

'I would submit that "Lenin and others" did not bring from Hegel his opposition to empiricism on idealistic or religious grounds. On the other hand Marxism does share Hegel's position that vulgar empiricism is arbitrary, one-sided and undialectical. But empiricism "systematically carried out"? This is the view that the "genuine objective world", the material world, takes primacy over thought and that a dialectical relationship exists between them. What is this if not dialectical materialism?'

'Facts' are Abstractions

The vital phrase 'a dialectical relationship exists between them' (matter and thought) is introduced from the outside by Hansen. It leaps over the whole development to dialectical materialism through the Hegelian school and 'standing Hegel on his head, or rather, on his feet!' All Hansen's respect for 'the facts' does not seem to have helped him to proceed from the simple 'fact' that ideas have a history as part of the social-historical process, and that the vulgar materialism of the bourgeoisie cannot be systematically developed into dialectical materialism by a mere stroke of the pen. It took some years of very hard struggle, of determined theoretical and practical grappling with the objective development of bourgeois society in the first half of the 19th century, to achieve that result.

When we attack empiricism we attack that method of approach which says all statements, to be meaningful, must refer to observable or measurable data in

their immediately given form. This method insists that any 'abstract' concepts, reflecting the general and historical implications of these 'facts', are meaningless. It neglects entirely that our general concepts reflect the laws of development and interconnection of the process which these 'facts' help to constitute. Indeed the so-called hard facts of concrete experience are themselves *abstractions* from this process. They are the result of the first approximation of our brains to the essential interrelations, laws of motion, contradictions of the eternally changing and complex world of matter . . . of which they form part. Only higher abstractions, in advanced *theory*, can guide us to the meaning of these facts. What Lenin called 'the concrete analysis of concrete conditions' is the opposite of a descent into empiricism. In order to be concrete, the analysis must see the given facts in their historical interconnection and must begin with the discoveries of theory in the study of society, the necessity to make a *class* evaluation of every event, every phenomenon. The empiricist, who pretends to restrict himself to the bedrock of 'facts' alone, in fact imposes on the 'facts' an unstated series of connections whose foundations are unstated. With Hansen and the Pabloites, their new reality is actually a list of *abstractions* like 'the colonial revolution', 'the process of de-Stalinisation', 'irreversible trends', 'leftward-moving forces', 'mass pressure', etc. Like all statements about social phenomena, these are meaningless unless they are demonstrated to have specific *class* content, for class struggle and exploitation are the *content* of all social phenomena. This discovery of Marx is the theoretical cornerstone which Hansen has lost, with all his talk about 'the facts'.

Empiricism: a Bourgeois Method

All this argument that 'the facts' are the objective reality and that we must 'start from there' is a preparation to justify policies of adaptation to non-working-class leaderships.

Empiricism, since it 'starts with the facts', can never get beyond them and must accept the world as it is. This *bourgeois* method of thought views the world from the standpoint of 'the isolated individual in civil society.'

Instead of taking the objective situation as a problem to be solved in the light of the historical experience of the working class, generalised in the theory and practice of Marxism, it must take 'the facts' as they come. They are produced by circumstances beyond our control.

Marxism arms the working class vanguard in its fight for the independent action of the Labour movement; empiricism adapts it to the existing set-up, to capitalism and its agencies in the working-class organisations.

'In the beginning was the deed,' quotes Hansen. But for Marxists, action is not blind adaptation to 'facts', but theoretically guided work to break the working class from petty-bourgeois leaderships. To 'join in the action' led by such trends, merely seeking

'to help to build a revolutionary-socialist party in the very process of the revolution itself' is a renunciation of Marxism and an abdication of responsibility in favour of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Hansen says:

'If we may express the opinion, it is an over-statement to say that anyone finds himself "prostrate before the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in Cuba and Algeria" because he refuses to follow the SLL National Committee in thinking that a Trotskyist can clear himself of any further responsibility by putting the label "betrayed" on everything these leaders do. It is an error of the first order to believe that petty-bourgeois nationalism — petty-bourgeois nationalism, has no internal differentiations or contradictions and cannot possibly be affected by the mass forces that have thrust it forward.'

In the first place, no one has said that there cannot be differentiation within the petty-bourgeois national movement or that they remain unaffected by mass pressure. Who has denied that? What is at stake is the method by which this 'fact' is analysed and what consequence it has for the construction of independent revolutionary parties to lead the struggle of the working class. Hansen and the Pabloites, on the other hand, use this 'fact' of 'left' swings of some petty-bourgeois nationalists to justify capitulation to those forces. Is this point separate from the differences over method and philosophy? Certainly not: Marxist analysis of the whole modern epoch has established that the political leaderships representing non-working-class social strata can go only to a certain point in the struggle against imperialism. The objective limits to their revolution lead them eventually to turn against the working class, with its independent demands which correspond to the international socialist revolution. Only a course of the construction of independent working-class parties aiming at workers' power, based on the programme of Permanent Revolution, can prevent each national revolution from turning into a new stabilisation for world imperialism. The struggle to create such parties has been shown to involve a necessary fight against opportunists and counter-revolutionary trends within the movement, in particular against Stalinism which subordinates the working class to the nationalists, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, on the grounds of the theory of 'two stages', which conforms best to the Stalinist bureaucracy's line of an international understanding with imperialism. It is in line with these 'facts', facts established through the struggles and theoretical work of Lenin, Trotsky and others, that we evaluate the posturings and the actions of present-day political tendencies, and *not* by regarding the latter as facts 'in themselves' or as 'given circumstances' à la Hansen and J. P. Cannon.

Class Analysis is Needed

Hansen and the SWP leadership approach the whole international situation in this non-Marxist, empiricist

manner. Hansen complains about the SLL ignoring facts, refusing to analyse 'new reality', since they don't seem to fit the prescriptions of Lenin and Trotsky. On the contrary, comrades in the SLL have made a small beginning in analysing the real class basis of the surface 'facts' of the present situation. Hansen is satisfied to *list* the 'mighty forces of the colonial revolution and the interrelated process of de-Stalinisation'. We have published several articles (see *Labour Review* 1961 and 1962, articles by Baker, Kemp, Jeffries, and the resolution 'World Prospect for Socialism') beginning a *class* analysis of the relation of these two processes (struggles in the colonial countries and crisis in Stalinism) to the international revolution of the working class against imperialism. We have yet to find any such attempt in the publications of the SWP or the Pabloites. What we do find is a search for the most positive or progressive trends within the Stalinist and nationalist movements. This means taking *surface* 'facts', like the pronouncements of the Chinese or Russian Stalinist leaders, and ascribing to them positive or negative values. Germain, for example, arrived at the conclusion that apart from the idea of the revolutionary International, there existed 'bits' of the Trotskyist programme in a 'broken' way in the various Communist parties of the world, from Yugoslavia with its factory committees, through Italy, Russia and China, to Albania with its insistence on the rights of small parties! No doubt this is a good example of empiricism systematically carried out. It would be interesting to ask minorities within, say, the Albanian Communist Party what the 'pragmatic' consequences of this 'systematic empiricism' have been for them! (See also the 'critical support' for various wings of Stalinism in the IS Resolution on the 22nd Congress.)

Was Evian a Victory?

But to return to Hansen's reply. It is of the greatest interest that Algeria is almost completely dropped from the argument. This is because the SLL's accusation about 'prostration' before nationalist leaders is best exemplified there.

In earlier documents Hansen made great play of the SLL's condemnation of the Evian agreement between the Algerian government and French imperialism. We said that this was a 'sell-out'. Hansen said that here was an ultra-left mistake, showing failure to recognise that at least Evian included national independence and should be welcomed as a victory. We proceeded from an analysis of the class tendency which has asserted itself through the FLN leadership in arriving at a compromise with French imperialism, preventing the Algerian people from going on to win their own revolutionary demands. Those who concentrated on the 'victory' and speculated about Ben Bella deceiving the masses, and turned the energies of Socialists towards alliances with the bourgeoisie rather than the construction of an independent revolutionary party. We characterised this as a well-known form

of opportunism, and we say now that by this kind of approach the Pabloites and the SWP are sharing in the preparation of defeats for the working class of Algeria instead of carrying out the responsibilities of revolutionary Marxists in constructing working-class parties. Pablo himself works as a functionary of the Algerian government in some technical capacity. By itself, this fact could mean anything or nothing. The important question is his political line and that of his organisation. There is not the slightest doubt that Pablo's position in the administration will not be endangered by this political line (which does not at all mean to say that he may not be removed). Hansen's articles in *The Militant* and the campaign of the Pabloites on 'aid to the Algerian Revolution' are confined to an appeal to aid the poverty-stricken victims of the legacy of French imperialism. Instead of a campaign in the labour movement, we have a humanitarian appeal. Pablo and his friends even press for the organisation of volunteer technicians and administrators to go to Algeria, take their place as servants of the Ben Bella government, and thus counteract the possibly reactionary influence of French and American aid and personnel. In this way the 'objective' conditions will be created for a move to the left rather than to the right on the part of Ben Bella. In the course of all this, the Algerian Communist Party was banned, a new French aid programme was announced, and the direct control of Ben Bella's clique established over the Algerian trade unions. Meanwhile Ben Bella makes great play of tidying up the 'bootblack' racket and takes a 'firm stand' in telling the French to explode their bombs farther South in the Sahara. Are not these 'Trotskyists' conniving at the suppression of any democratic rights for the working class while the nationalist leaders carry out 'left' measures 'on behalf' of the masses? If this is not prostration before the national bourgeoisie, what in the world constitutes such prostration? Hansen claims that 'everybody knows' we need revolutionary parties, the only difference is on how to construct them. But in practice the Pabloites are not for the construction of such parties, they avoid the necessity of such construction. If objective developments in the 'new' reality will inevitably push petty-bourgeois nationalists towards revolutionary Marxism, perhaps the role of Trotskyists is only to encourage these background 'objective forces'.

Pierre Frank, prominent leader of the Pablo group, recently visited Algeria and reported his findings in *The Internationalist*, supplement to *Quatrième Internationale*, No. 17, 13.2.63). There is hardly need to comment on the meaning of the following passages:

'If the government is composed of variegated social and political elements, one must say nevertheless that the central nucleus, the decisive nucleus found at present in the Political Bureau of the FLN (National Liberation Front) is based on the poorest masses of the cities and above all the countryside. This is its main strength. But it cannot automatically head toward extensive nationalization of the

economic structure without running the risk of catastrophic consequences. For some years, it will have to permit a development of bourgeois forces, to compromise in certain spheres with foreign capital and to create bastions in the countryside and the towns in order to pass later to the construction of a socialist society. This will not be done without crises or without international and domestic developments that will run counter to this difficult orientation.

'To conclude: Everything is in movement. It is an experiment, a struggle that must be supported throughout the world, but which demands constant determination of bearings so that the development of the various forces operating on the terrain can be gauged. In this way we can contribute to this new revolutionary experience with its altogether specific traits, its difficulties and its potentialities, and help it move toward the socialist outcome.'

At the level of methodology, this illustrates the extreme consequences of a 'contemplative' rather than a 'revolutionary-practical' attitude. To the former, *empiricist* recognition of the 'given circumstances', 'the facts' is a natural starting point (and finishing post). At the political level, it illustrates the capitulation to existing forces, existing forms of consciousness in the political movement, amounting in the end to support for the servants of imperialism, which flows from the abandonment of the dialectical method.

Who has Corrected Whose Errors?

Hansen says that we are harking back to the original differences of 1953 instead of demonstrating that the Pabloite revisions of that year have resulted in an opportunist course by the Pabloite 'International'. Because Hansen *accepts* the present position of the Pabloites on Algeria does not alter the fact that this course is an opportunist one. In any case, Hansen must still answer our question (See reply of C.S. to Hansen's Report to the Plenum. *International Bulletin* No. 11) in connection with this matter of 'correcting errors'. He advocates unification on the grounds that the Pabloites have corrected their course of 1953. But the Pabloite Executive Committee insists that unification is possible for the opposite reason—the SWP has overcome its failure at that time to 'understand' the programme of Pablo (Declaration on Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement, June 23/24, 1962).

In the advanced countries too, we have drawn attention to the current policies of the Pabloites. Hansen pretends that our criticisms have amounted only to seizing on isolated statements of Pabloite sections; 'Not even leaflets put out by this group of comrades (the Pablo group) in this or that local situation escape the sleuths. A phrase torn from a leaflet distributed at the Renault plant in Paris in defence of Cuba against U.S. imperialism serves for elevation to front-page attention in *The Newsletter* in London, so hard-pressed are the leaders of the SLL to find evidence of the revisionism of the IS.' (Cuba—The Acid Test, p. 30).

In the first place, our reply to Hansen's last Plenum report on unification (International Bulletin No. 11) goes through Pabloite material on the main political questions of today, and it is nonsense to say the SLL has made no general criticism. If Hansen wrote 'Cuba—The Acid Test' before reading this reply, perhaps he will now defend the Pabloites against what we wrote in it. Secondly, what is wrong with examining the leaflets put out by Pabloite sections? It is precisely the way policies work out in the work of sections which illustrates most clearly our differences of method. Surely the section in Paris is a fair example of a Pabloite section—the nerve centre of the Pablo International is there. And is the Renault factory just 'this or that local situation'? It is a vital concentration of French workers. In 1953 was it not a leaflet put out in the Renault factory which came under the scrutiny and attack of the SWP when it made the public break from Pablo? Thirdly, if Hansen claims that the passage criticised by *The Newsletter* was torn from its context, why does he not produce the context and demonstrate our methods of distortion? He cannot do this; the phrase concerned put international working-class solidarity action on the same level as 'aid' given by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Hansen prefers to quote *not a single word either from the leaflet or from The Newsletter's criticism!*

(We omit here a short reference to the Italian section of the IS, as it was based on a faulty translation of an article in their journal.)

Cuba and Spain

The major part of Hansen's attack on the 'ultra-left sectarians' is concerned with the attitude of the SLL towards Cuba. Hansen begins his document by trying to make an amalgam of the SLL and its IC supporters on the one hand, and the Posadas group which recently broke from the IS on the other. Hansen knows these are absolutely separate and distinct tendencies. He makes literally no evaluation whatsoever of their political content or the evolution of their present position. They are both opposed to 'unification', therefore, he implies, they must be responding to the same social forces and must be essentially similar. Here again we have an excellent illustration of the pragmatist method. The objective relations between these tendencies, their history, and their response to the major political problems, are ignored. It is *useful*, it 'works', to identify them with each other as saboteurs of unification—they are 'ultra-left currents'. Hansen reports that the Posadas group includes in its programme the prospect of a nuclear war against capitalism. This is thrown together with the SLL's opposition to characterizing Cuba as a workers' state. Posadas, says Hansen, must agree that Cuba is a workers' state, because it would be 'political death' to think otherwise in Latin America. The differences are thus to be explained geographically. Politically the Posadas group and the SLL are the same—ultra-left sectarians, driven to this by their

fear of unification. How is this cussedness to be explained? Hansen is unclear: the heading of the Trotskyist 'mainstream' (the SWP leadership and the Pabloite IS) towards unification comes from the 'mighty forces of the colonial revolution and the inter-related process of de-Stalinisation'.

'The Trotskyist movement has not escaped the general shake-up either. The Chinese victory, de-Stalinization, the Hungarian uprising were reflected in both capitulatory and ultra-left moods as well as strengthening of the main stream of Trotskyism. What we have really been witnessing in our movement is the outcome of a number of tests—how well the various Trotskyist groupings and shadings have responded to the series of revolutionary events culminating in the greatest occurrence in the Western Hemisphere since the American Civil War. The move for unification and the symmetrical resistance to it are no more than logical consequences to be drawn from reading the results, especially those supplied by the acid test of the mighty Cuban action.'

Where is the explanation? Two opposite viewpoints are here 'explained' by the same thing. They were just different 'logical' results of approaching the same events. Could anything illustrate more clearly the barren consequences of refusing to deal with the *history* of the controversies and splits, and to probe to their basis in theory and method? Hansen found it more 'practical' to produce, by sleight of hand, an identification of his opponent, the SLL, with the views of the Posadas group.

The note by the French comrades, appended to this reply, raises similar points about the demagogic results of these methods of controversy. As they point out, their own document on Cuba comes under fire from Hansen but has not been issued to the members of Hansen's party. They also correctly indicate the unprincipled character of the argument which runs: nobody who counts in Latin America agrees with the SLL characterisation of Cuba; therefore it is suspect and shows how stupid and sectarian they are. As the French comrades remark, the 'opinions' of the Soviet and Spanish people were often quoted in a similar way against Trotsky's characterisation of the state and the ruling cliques in both countries. In addition, they take up Hansen's laboured jokes about their reference in an earlier document to a 'phantom' bourgeois state in Cuba. What Hansen must do is *explain* why such a concept is a matter for joking, and in what way he thinks it departs from the *kind* of analysis made by Trotsky of the class forces in Spain in 1936-37. Either Hansen has forgotten, or he chooses not to remind his readers, of the concept advanced by Trotsky at that time of an 'alliance' with the shadow of the bourgeoisie'. Perhaps he knows some good jokes about that too.

It would be pointless to take up every step in Hansen's documents in a similar way. His whole method is to argue from incidents and impressions, combined with the vaguest generalisations like 'the

might of the colonial revolution' and the 'interrelated process of de-Stalinisation'.

Our Record on Cuba

On the question of Cuba itself, Hansen raises no new arguments in the discussion and no new facts on the regime there. We see no need to reply in detail to Hansen's caricature of the record of *The Newsletter* in defending Cuba before and during the blockade of October-November 1962. Hansen concerns himself entirely with the pages of *The Newsletter*: we take every responsibility for everything written in our journal, but we would also point out that Hansen was in Europe during the crisis. He, and *The Militant* correspondent in London, made not the slightest effort to acquaint themselves with the campaigning activity of the SLL during the crisis. Hansen correctly says that there were many demonstrations against the blockade—and he contrasts this with the 'insular' *Newsletter*! This is nothing but a slander. SLL members were right in the forefront of every one of those demonstrations. They instigated and led a great many of them. The first mass meetings and demonstrations in Britain were led and addressed by our members. No one except the SLL organised a single factory-gate meeting against the blockade. Our comrades also fought tooth and nail to turn the protests especially into the Labour movement and to the factories. They had to fight resolutely against the right wing and the Stalinists in order to do so. They led these demonstrations against imperialism, and in defence of the Cuban Revolution, at the same time educating the workers and students in the role of the Soviet bureaucracy. They explained the causes of Khrushchev's contradictory policies, instead of joining Russell and the pacifists in praising his 'brilliant' diplomacy. In order to do this they had to fight the Stalinists, a fight which won the support of many Communist Party members for Marxism. That could not have been done without training the SLL in the spirit of revolutionary Communist methods of work and a struggle against revisionism. How well would our comrades have performed had they been armed with the heritage of Pabloism—the new situation restricts more and more the capacity of counter-revolutionary measures by the bureaucracy—or with Cannon's apologia: 'What else could he have done under the given circumstances?'; and calling up of Nehru and Russell, 'unaffected by imperialist propaganda', in his support? We are proud of our record in the Cuban events of last autumn, and we are ashamed of the identification of 'Trotskyism' with the capitulation to the Soviet bureaucracy of Cannon and the Pabloites. Hansen's long list of quotations from *The Newsletter* is really only a mask for that capitulation.

Abstract Norms

Hansen's case is basically the same as Pablo's in 1953. 'Objective' forces pressing towards Socialism make it impossible for the Soviet bureaucracy to

betray, and press even petty-bourgeois groupings to adopt a revolutionary path. We have seen above how in Algeria this means calling on Marxists to simply help along the 'objective' forces that will favour a course to the left by Ben Bella and his nationalist government. For all the talk of firmness against imperialism which is supposed to be involved in calling Cuba a 'workers' state', the actual 'defence' of the Cuban Revolution by the SWP and the Pabloites was unable to even separate itself from the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy of Khrushchev! This is one of the things we mean when we say that Hansen is not analysing Cuba from the point of view of the development of the international class struggle, but by the application of abstract norms to isolated cases.

Hansen approaches the question of definition of the Cuban state by trying to relate it to the history of such discussions in the Trotskyist movement. The analysis of that discussion is certainly a vital part of the Marxist answer to the problems posed by Cuba today, but it will have to be along a different line to that taken by Hansen. He takes the SLL National Committee to task for ridiculing the imposition of abstract norms from Trotsky's definition of the USSR to the economy and political system of Cuba today. He says that we thus 'sever the connection' between the present and the past discussion.

Hansen even says we have cut out Trotsky's definition of the USSR 'by declaring it has no relevance to the Cuban discussion'. Is that the same thing as saying that the question of the Cuban state cannot be resolved abstractly by 'criteria' from this earlier discussion? It is always easier to demolish your opponent if you write his case afresh in your own terms. The real point of a historical analysis of the development of our concepts is to establish the way in which they scientifically develop by reflecting the objective world. Just as Trotsky's definitions of the USSR were hammered out on the basis of changing conditions in the USSR and in the world, of struggles against revisionist trends, and of the struggle to build a new International, so the historical threads of the discussion today must be seen as part of the struggle to build a revolutionary International able to lead the working class to power. The whole political line of the different tendencies in the Trotskyist movement must be the content of an analysis of their discussion on these questions. What looks like 'historical' analysis turns out in Hansen's hands to be the most rigid and unhistorical treatment.

Petty-Bourgeois Leaderships and the Working Class

For example, he criticises *Trotskyism Betrayed* for failing to characterise the Soviet bureaucracy as a petty-bourgeois bureaucracy. Hansen's insistence on this point has a specific purpose: 'What was new in this situation—and this is the heart of Trotsky's position on the question—was that a reactionary petty-bourgeois formation of this kind could, after a political counter-revolution, wield power in a workers' state and even defend the foundations of that state

while being primarily concerned about their own special interests.' It follows therefore that under certain circumstances petty-bourgeois formations will be forced to lead the revolutions of workers and peasants and abolish the capitalist state. Says Hansen: the SLL leaders accepted this for Eastern Europe and China, why not for Cuba? (They should even be more willing, he suggests, since 'the Cuban leadership is in every respect superior to the Chinese'.) We now see what Hansen means by 'continuity' in the discussion. Trotsky saw that a petty-bourgeois bureaucracy could lead and even 'defend' a workers' state. After the Second World War this petty-bourgeois formation could even take the leadership in the extension of the revolution and the establishment of new, 'deformed workers' states'. So why should the SLL strain at the notion that petty-bourgeois leadership can lead the establishment of workers' states in countries like Cuba? There you have the whole of Hansen's playing with 'the history of the controversy'. He picks out from the history one aspect, the characterisation as petty-bourgeois of certain social groups. This aspect is selected because it is the one essential to the justification of his present political course. Now it is, of course, absolutely essential that the characterisation 'petty-bourgeois' be very precise. This class is continually being differentiated into the main classes of society, bourgeois and proletarian. Its various political representatives reflect this intermediate, dependent and shifting position. They are capable of no independent, consistent political line of action. Only if a petty-bourgeois intellectual joins the proletariat, in Marx's terms, can he achieve that independence and consistency of theory and action. The bureaucracy in the labour movement was often characterised by Lenin and Trotsky as petty-bourgeois in terms of its way of life, its approximation to the standards and acceptance of the ideology of the middle classes, its going over, in the special conditions of rich imperialist countries, to the way of life and social functions of the middle classes. They formed part of the 'new middle caste' of society in the imperialist countries. In the USSR the bureaucratic ruling group consisted of the elements listed by Hansen—'a reflection of the peasantry, the remnants of the old classes, the elements who switched allegiance from Czar to the new regime—all these and the political-military administrative levels of the new government who, under pressure from the Capitalist West, drifted from the outlook of revolutionary socialism or came to prominence without ever having understood it'.

The term petty-bourgeois is not at all sufficient to characterise this bureaucracy for the purpose of the present (or any other) discussion. A *decisive* sector of the Soviet bureaucracy was Stalin's faction in control of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state. The historical relation between this party, this state, and the Soviet working class gave a specific character to the bureaucracy. It was not at all simply a question of relation between old, middle classes and a new governing elite. The existence of nationalized property

relations established by a Soviet revolution, with the Bolshevik Party in power, gave us a historically-produced petty-bourgeois stratum at the head of the first workers' state, a group which represented, as Trotsky so painstakingly insisted, not the general laws of development of classes in the transition from capitalism to socialism, but the particular and unique refraction of these laws in the conditions of a backward and isolated workers' state. In extending this 'capacity' of the petty-bourgeois, as *petty-bourgeois*, to defend and even extend workers' states, Hansen and Co. do precisely what Trotsky fought *against* in the discussion. Our French comrades are right to insist that the evaluation of the history of this discussion in the Trotskyist movement is more than a day's work, and the pre-condition of any useful results will have to be a much more serious and scientific handling of Marxist concepts than is displayed by Hansen with his easy identification of a 'petty-bourgeois formation' like the unique bureaucracy of the first workers' state with the petty-bourgeois leadership of the July 26th movement in Cuba.

Hansen on Permanent Revolution

In the coming months the French and British sections of the IC will publish contributions on the history of the discussion of 'workers' states'. Meanwhile we confine ourselves to differences in method to which Hansen draws attention, particularly in relation to Cuba. Nothing that Hansen says in 'Cuba—The Acid Test' answers the main argument in our section on Cuba in *Trotskyism Betrayed*. But before taking up particular points from Hansen's document it might be useful to state the general position from which we think Marxists must begin. One reason for doing this is that Hansen accuses us of treating Cuba only as an 'exception', and of seeing no continuity between past and present discussions on the character of the state. Castro set out as the leader of a petty-bourgeois nationalist party. His party has led a revolution and been able to hold power in Cuba. How has this been possible? What is its significance?

In the Russian Revolution, the petty-bourgeois (the 'democracy') could not resolutely seize the power on its own account, let alone 'retain' power, because of the strength of the proletariat and its ally the peasantry at that period. Given resolute revolutionary leadership, the working class proved able to overthrow the 'democracy' and achieve power. This power, in the view of Lenin and Trotsky, was an international breakthrough. It was seen essentially, in this backward country, as a power to be defended 'until the workers of Western Europe come to our aid'.

In this summary are contained the basic ideas of the 'permanent revolution'. Those countries who arrive at the stage of bourgeois-democratic revolution *late* cannot achieve this revolution under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. The latter, and its spokesmen in the petty-bourgeois parties, are too incapable of an independent development. Their relation to international capital and their fear of the proletariat make

their task an impossible one, and they will run to the support of reaction. The proletariat is the only class which can carry through the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. But in the course of its revolutionary actions and the creation of its own organs of struggle, there arise independent class demands. From the first stage of the revolution there is a rapid transition to *workers' power*. The condition for the maintenance and development of this power and its social base is the international socialist revolution.

Petty-Bourgeoisie in the Anti-Imperialist Struggle

The nations drawn into the struggle against imperialism now cover the entire world. The class composition of these nations varies enormously. In many of them, there is no industrial proletariat even to compare with the Russian proletariat of 1905, or the Chinese of 1919. In many of them, the development of industry has been forcibly restricted in the special interest of the ruling imperialist powers, so that the population consists almost entirely of a poverty-stricken peasantry. This peasantry is not at all identical with the 'peasantry' of Marxist writings in the 19th century. In many cases the majority of cultivators are landless sharecroppers and occasional wage-labourers. The special requirements of extractive and primary processing industries often create a special type of worker—migrant workers, spending half their time employed in mines or on plantations for low wages, the other half unemployed or back in small-scale cash-crop production or subsistence agriculture. The actual relationship of exploitation between international capital, banks, native moneylenders and merchants, landlords, etc., on the one hand, and the direct producers, peasants and workers, on the other, presents new and original forms. These forms are often hideous combinations of the ruthless drive for profit of advanced finance-capital and the backward social relations of feudal sheikhdoms and chiefdoms. At the political level, the peoples of these countries suffer the same deadly combination. All the horrors of modern war are visited upon them, either in direct conflict between the imperialist powers or through the equally effective 'pacifying' activities of the United Nations. In each case, we must see a particular combination of the forces and the laws analysed by Trotsky and Lenin in their work on imperialism and the Permanent Revolution.

Cuba is one of those countries where capitalist development has been almost entirely a function of foreign investment and control. The dependence of the economies of Latin American countries upon a single crop or resource (for Cuba, sugar) has often been described. The national bourgeoisie could never be an independent social force in Cuba. It could function only as a political or commercial executive for U.S. investments. Under these conditions the petty-bourgeois democratic ideologists could not long play their classical role in the bourgeois revolution, that of providing a political leadership tying the

workers and peasants first to the bourgeois struggle against absolutism or for independence, and then tying these lower classes to the new regime. In the Russian Revolution the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks attempted to do this. The leadership of the Bolsheviks over a proletariat concentrated in a few advanced centres, particularly Petrograd, in the vanguard of a peasant war, won Soviet power. The alternative would have been a repressive regime founded on the capitulation of the petty-bourgeois parties to the counter-revolution. Even in Germany and Italy, more advanced countries with much larger working classes, the failure of the proletarian revolution was replaced within a short time, not by bourgeois democracy, but by the naked oppression of Fascist regimes. Mankind had entered an epoch where the alternatives were Socialism or Barbarism, in the shape of Fascist reaction.

Capitulation to Soviet Bureaucracy

In the world today, we have a more advanced stage of the same situation. Not only barbarism but complete annihilation presents itself as the alternative to Socialism. This fact on a world scale, together with the preservation of the workers' state under bureaucratic domination in the USSR and the setting up of similar regimes in other backward countries (Eastern Europe and China), have led some 'Marxists' to view the present situation as qualitatively different. The Stalinists have concluded that the threat of war and the power of their own military forces make practicable a strategy of peaceful competition with the leading imperialist powers, and peaceful and Parliamentary roads to Socialism within the individual nations. This is quite clearly not a *theory* but an ideological apology for the actual capitulation of the Soviet bureaucracy, determined above all to preserve its privileges by balancing between the working classes and imperialism. The current Sino-Soviet dispute raises these questions for discussion throughout the Communist Parties. Never was there greater need for theoretical clarity and decisiveness by the Trotskyist movement, for only the scientific development of the theory of Permanent Revolution can provide any answer to the problems raised. In our opinion the revisions of Trotskyism by Pablo, leading to the split in 1953, and now manifested in opportunist policies for the advanced countries, the workers' states, and the colonial countries, were a political capitulation to the forces which stand between the working class and the overthrow of imperialism. The power of the Soviet bureaucracy, and the slowness of the European and U.S. labour movements to resolve the crisis of leadership in the 1930s and 1940s, had an impact on the ideas of Pablo and his group which was not interpreted scientifically, in a class way, but impressionistically. This abandonment of the dialectical method, of the class criterion in the analysis of society and politics, resulted in the conclusion that forces other than the proletariat organised behind revolutionary Marxist parties would lead the next historical

stage of struggle against capitalism. We have seen how Hansen explains this for China and Eastern Europe. We remember Pablo's insistence that the Stalinist parties in countries like France could lead the working class to power. We have seen since then the 'rehabilitation of the revolutionary peasantry' by Pablo and the current belief that petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders can lead the establishment and maintenance of workers' states. In Cuba, even an 'uncorrupted workers' regime' has been established, according to these 'Marxists'. All this is possible because there is a 'new reality'; as Hansen says: 'To this we must add that the world setting today is completely different (?) from what it was in 1936-39. In place of (?) the entrenchment of European fascism, the Soviet Union has consolidated a position as one of the two primary world powers. The Soviet economic structure has been extended deep into Europe. China has become a workers' state. The colonial revolution has brought hundreds of millions to their feet. De-Stalinisation has altered the capacity of the bureaucracy to impose its will in flagrant fashion as in the thirties . . .'

The similarity here to the analysis of the 'new situation' presented by the Stalinists is remarkable. They, too, discuss at the level of 'the strength of the Socialist camp', 'the colonial revolution', 'the defeat of fascism' and 'the growth of the Soviet economy'. They, too, try to protect themselves from the formation of new revolutionary parties by claiming that it is *their* defensive reaction of 'de-Stalinisation' which assures the future of the Communist movement. Those who refer to Lenin are 'dogmatists'! Capitulation to the bureaucracy in political questions will eventually involve a descent into their methods of thinking, in narrow empiricism and pragmatism, combined with demagogic generalisations. This is the type of thinking which underlies the present revisionist barrier to the building of the Fourth International.

The SLL's Position on Cuba

Let us briefly now summarise the 'refutations' made by Hansen of our position on Cuba as stated in the document *Trotskyism Betrayed* and see how they stand up.

1. We criticised the 'normative' method of applying separate 'criteria' abstractly and unhistorically without specific historical and class analysis. We demanded instead a class analysis of the political forces and of the government and state in Cuba. Hansen replies by accusing us of ignoring the historical continuity in the discussion on the class character of the USSR, China and Eastern Europe and Cuba. We have seen above the way in which he establishes this 'continuity'—by finding in it justification for acceptance of petty-bourgeois formations as leaders of the working class. We have tried, in anticipation of future analysis, to lay down the general Marxist framework for a discussion. We have suggested that the analysis carried out over the last two years in *Labour Review* form the basis for a class evaluation of the

nationalist and Stalinist forces in Cuba and other countries.

2. We stated categorically that the new unified party (IRO) of Castro and the Stalinists could not be a substitute for the construction of a revolutionary Marxist party in Cuba. Hansen does not take up this question at all. He presumably defends the position stated earlier by Cannon, that the Trotskyists should take a loyal place within the IRO. Hansen replies to the French comrades that in their writings, 'The meaning of the attacks on the Cuban Trotskyists (by government officials and spokesmen) is exaggerated and placed at the wrong door besides not being properly balanced against the ideological influence which Trotskyism exercises in a significant sector among the Cuban revolutionary vanguard.'

He still must explain the clear statement of Guevara that no factions shall exist in the IRO, whose 'democratic centralism' will thus be of the Stalinist type. He must explain who *is* responsible for the attacks on Trotskyists. And he must not ask us to take seriously his gentle hint that the SWP or someone else has secret influential friends by Castro's side. When did that become a Marxist argument, and what has it got to do with the question whether a Marxist party can be built? No doubt we will also be told that in Algeria there is 'ideological influence' by Trotskyists like Pablo in 'a significant sector among the revolutionary vanguard', but we find it difficult to get excited about that. Hansen had the opportunity in this part of the argument to expand on his earlier theme: 'We all know the ABC—we need revolutionary parties—but the question is how to go ahead and build them.' But he has *nothing* to say except that it is 'exaggerated' to defend the Cuban Trotskyists from attack by the State apparatus and that it should be remembered we have some friends in there.

3. We stated our opinion that the dictatorship of the proletariat had not been established in Cuba, and that therefore the label workers' state was wrong. Hansen does not take the question head-on—or perhaps this is one of those old 'norms' of Lenin which are too old fashioned to apply. To our argument that the state machine remained a bourgeois structure *despite* the absence of the bourgeoisie, Hansen replies only with attempted ridicule, despite the fact that, as the French comrades have pointed out, this involves him in the necessity of revising Trotsky's conclusions about Republican Spain in the 30s (*Spain—The Last Warning* 1936). The SLL, says Hansen, should revise their opinion because: the *imperialists* disagree about it being a bourgeois state; the 'people' of the USSR and the other workers' states disagree(!); the Cuban people disagree; other Marxists disagree; and finally, the present SLL position was once stated by Pablo himself, before he learned better. All these arguments amount to precisely nothing (see the letter from F. Rodriguez, in this bulletin).

Hansen does not take up at all the question of Soviets or workers' councils as the form of State power, and the meaning of a 'militia' without such

workers' self-government. He does not say how this 'militia', controlled in fact through the army by the centralised state apparatus, differs from 'the people in arms'. Is it not a fact that the arms supply is regulated through the army and *not* through the militias? Through the State apparatus and *not* through workers' councils or committees? Why does not Hansen take up our argument that the old state machine was not smashed but was staffed with personnel from Castro's own movement, later supplemented by the Stalinist bureaucrats? Is it a 'norm' from Marx and Lenin which must now be dropped? We insist that so long as the petty-bourgeois leadership of Castro keeps hold of this state machine, bureaucratically independent of any organs of workers' power, in control of *force* in Cuban society, then it will function as the main hope for the re-entry of the bourgeoisie into Cuba, nationalization notwithstanding.

4. Essentially connected with the last point was our characterisation of Castro's government as a Bonapartist regime resting on bourgeois state foundations (*Trotskyism Betrayed*, p. 14). Certainly Castro has leant heavily on the proletariat and the poor peasantry up to now, but he also is careful to preserve a relationship with the rich peasants, and the exigencies of the economy may force him to rely on them more and more. Hansen should think out how far he is prepared to go with Castro in such an eventuality. Already Pablo, with whom Hansen wants to unite, has been working out a theoretical line to justify Ben Bella's insistence that in Algeria the peasants are more important than the workers. If Hansen is to answer the case for saying Castro is a left Bonaparte, balancing between imperialism and the working class, then he must give an alternative explanation for the absence of proletarian democracy in Cuba. If Cuba is an 'uncorrupted workers' regime' how do we explain the absence of workers' councils? What explanation is there other than the preservation of the independence of the State power by Castro and his movement, *against* the working class as well as against imperialism? Stalin's regime was also characterised by Trotsky as a Bonapartist one. Does that mean that Cuba, like the USSR, is therefore a workers' state? No: we say that Stalin's was a bureaucratic regime resting on the proletarian state foundations conquered by the Soviet workers in 1917; Castro's is a Bonapartist regime still resting on bourgeois state foundations. If the Cuban revolution can be successfully defended from foreign invasion, then the next stage will be a short period of dual power, with the workers and peasants led in their Soviets by a new revolutionary party behind the programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

5. Hansen makes no reply to our statement: 'The attack on Escalante was motivated by a desire to keep power centralised in his own hands and not by hostility to bureaucracy or any other such thing.' (*Trotskyism Betrayed*, p. 14). Hansen still writes as if it does not need proving that Escalante was removed from office as a step against Stalinist bureaucratism.

But we must repeat that he leaves several points unanswered. What is the significance of the fact that the majority leadership of the Cuban Stalinists also condemned Escalante, and that *Pravda* welcomed his removal as a blow against 'sectarianism'? Does it mean that they are now taking their place in Castro's crusade against Stalinism? But would not this imply that the Stalinist movement is reforming itself along the right lines? Or does it mean that the Cuban CP and *Pravda* decided to humour Castro for the time being, acknowledging his strong position in Cuba itself? In that case the nature of the relation between the July 26th movement and the Stalinists should be exposed by the SWP, and its implications for the nature of the new 'united revolutionary party' recognised.

The main basis for interpreting Escalante's removal appears to be the speech of Castro 'Against Sectarianism and Bureaucracy'. In this speech Castro gave many examples of favouritism and bureaucratic discrimination in the State administration. Escalante and his group, according to Castro, used their power to staff the state apparatus at all levels with their own (Communist Party) nominees. All this seems to be very fine, but if the speech is read carefully, and compared with earlier speeches and writings, it becomes clear that there is more there than meets the eye.

In condemning Escalante's appointments, Castro repeatedly remarks that the men appointed were not proved revolutionists but Party intellectuals, some of whom were under their beds while the revolutionaries were risking their lives against Batista's regime. The clear implication of this part of the speech was to assert the leadership of the July 26th group over that of the Communist Party, and to *threaten* the Communist Party with calling up the sympathies of the people behind the 'real revolutionaries'. It was probably against this very real danger to their own bureaucratic positions that the Stalinists decided to join in the attack on Escalante and cut their losses. It is very interesting to compare this speech with Castro's equally well-known one, also published by the SWP, in which he claimed to have always been at least close to communism. In this latter speech, made at a stage when he was more dependent on the Communist Party for the staffing of the State bureaucracy, Castro almost apologised for whatever hostility he had shown to Stalinism in his earlier career. He explained that only his 'lack of understanding' prevented him from being a Communist; he thus glossed over the betrayals of Cuban Stalinism in the past. He called upon the militants of the July 26th Movement to learn Marxism from the old hands of the Communist Party. What else can we call these rapid changes in emphasis except the adaptation of a Bonaparte to the changing necessities of preserving his domination? Could anyone suggest that they bear any relation to a serious or revolutionary evaluation of Stalinism as a political trend?

In this matter, do Castro's speeches to the populace

bear any relation to the process of 'educating the masses' at which he is supposed to be so adept? An article from Hansen on this question would be interesting. In 'Cuba—The Acid Test' he makes only the briefest references to the question: 'the alleged take-over of Castro's forces by the Cuban Communist Party has been sufficiently exploded by events' (p. 28).

Hansen chooses here to ignore the point that even if he was right about the significance of Castro's actions 'against bureaucratism' this would largely confirm what had been said about the dangers to the Cuban revolution of Castro's dependence on the Stalinists in staffing the State apparatus. He makes no analysis of the actual relations between the July 26th Movement and the Communist Party, and simply refers once again to 'the measures taken by the Castro regime against Stalinist bureaucratism' (*Cuba—The Acid Test*, p. 16) as if nobody could question their 'revolutionary' or progressive character. But a reading of Castro's own speech makes the matter quite clear. In condemning the bureaucratic appointment to State positions of Communist Party members by Escalante, Castro is defending *not* workers' rule, proletarian dictatorship, but the independence of *the State machine*. He insists in so many words that *the state* must have the right to place all personnel. These officials will be loyal to *the State* and not to any outside organisation. The assertion of the worth of the July 26th fighters against those who were 'under their beds' is a justification of this independent power of the centralised state apparatus itself, under the direct control of Castro's government. Guevara's speeches against workers' control in industry, and the attacks on the Cuban Trotskyists, are in the same line.

6. Hansen repeats all the arguments about nationalization carried out by the Castro government, without introducing anything new to the discussion. We had indicated that nationalization today could mean many different things, and was often carried out on a large scale by bourgeois governments, particularly in backward countries. The longer capitalism continues in the absence of proletarian victory in the advanced countries, the more capitalist economy will have to adopt measures which conform to the character of modern industry, division of labour and communication, yet still restricting the economy within the contradictions of capitalism. Hansen makes a terrible hash of the argument at that point. He says: if nationalizations like those in Cuba can be carried out by a bourgeois state, doesn't this lead you to the conclusion that capitalism can still have a progressive role? This is only the argument of the revisionists ('Capitalism can make itself work') stood on its head. Hansen is taking at their face value the claims made by the governments and capitalist spokesmen for such changes. The fact is that the economy of Cuba, or Israel, or Egypt, or any other country, will be *hampered* by such a framework from becoming part of the rationally planned international economy of Socialism. Does the use of atomic fission prove that science and industry can still

advance under capitalism, and that Marxism is wrong? Or doesn't it demonstrate that every technological advance, so long as imperialism is not abolished, turns into its opposite, i.e., that all development involves greater economic and political contradictions?

Hansen does not take up the relevance of his criteria of 'nationalization' for say, Egypt or Burma, where a military-nationalist government recently nationalized the banks and many foreign holdings. Perhaps these will have to be called workers' states, since if somebody else (bourgeois or petty-bourgeois governments) nationalized these enterprises, that might imply further progressive roles for the capitalist class and the capitalist system. We raised the question of the SWP's evaluation of these states in our earlier document, but Hansen gives no reply. On the question of nationalization of the land, one small point will show the incompleteness of Hansen's presentation. Hansen says that the alienability of land (whether it can be bought and sold) is 'beside the point in this discussion' but takes the opportunity to attack the SLL for its 'ignorance of the facts on this question'. He goes on: 'It so happens that the Agrarian Reform Law specifies that the "vital minimum" of land, to which a campesino gets a deed, "shall be inalienable". Exempt from taxes, this land cannot be attached and is not subject to contract, lease, sharecrop or usufruct. It can be transferred only by sale to the state, or through inheritance by a single heir on the death of the owner, or, in the event there is no heir, by sale at a public auction to bidders who must be campesinos or agricultural workers.' Now a very interesting omission from this passage (a passage whose only meaning is that the Castro government has tried to create a stable, small and middle peasant class in Cuba) is that besides the vital 'minimum' there is also the possibility of much larger holdings, *up to a maximum of 1,000 acres*. Between the minimum and the maximum, the land *can* be sold on the market. Hansen's correction of our 'ignorance' here may perhaps serve as a model of how to start with 'the facts'.

7. Finally, we raised the question of a new revolutionary party in Cuba. Hansen ignores this completely. He prefers the 'facts'.

Hansen's Silence

In this reply to *Cuba—The Acid Test* we have restricted ourselves to the methodological principles raised by Hansen, and to a number of illustrations of the differences between us on these principles, particularly on Cuba. Other questions which we took up in *Trotskyism Betrayed* are ignored by Hansen, and we await his reply. For example, we took several pages to answer the accusation of 'subjectivism' in our evaluation of the world situation. Taking up Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* and the International Resolution of the SLL (*World Prospect for Socialism*) we showed that our evaluation of the relation between leadership and the objective contradictions of capital-

ism was the same as Trotsky's. Hansen makes no attempt to return to the attack on this point; perhaps he thinks it enough to say that 'the world setting today is completely different from what it was in 1936-39' (p. 28). We also made a detailed reply defending our characterisation of the Algerian leadership and the Evian sell-out. Once again, nothing from Hansen in reply (see above). What kind of discussion is Hansen going in for? We try to take up all the points raised, to carry them to the end, and Hansen simply drops them. Such discussion soon becomes profitless. Similar treatment is given to the question of the Leninist approach to party-building. We tried to establish, from the documentary evidence, the falseness of Hansen's claim that Lenin and Trotsky had built the Party primarily through flexibility and unifications. We pointed out the essential theoretical firmness and the ability to insist on splits characteristic of Lenin, and Trotsky's recognition of this essence. Hansen replies not a word.

Finally, we took up once again the relation between the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and in the backward nations. We especially insisted on the political implications of the SWP's statement that 'the pronounced lag in the West, this negative feature (was) the most important element in the current reality.' All the talk of the revisionists about 'favourable objective forces' amounts *in fact* to the opposite of what it appears. Times are good, and getting better, but *for what?* For the construction of revolutionary parties around the programme of the Fourth International? No! For the emergence of Marxists from the petty-bourgeois political groupings, a development which Trotskyists should direct all their efforts to supporting! This is the most that can be gathered from Hansen and the Pabloites. Their 'deep entry' and their silence on the principled questions of new revolutionary parties, Soviet democracy, and the political revolution, are designed to find ways of 'getting in on the act'. Someone else is going to do the job, and at the moment the Stalinist bureaucracy and the nationalist leaders are getting on with it. As for the advanced countries: 'In fact experience would seem to indicate that the difficulty of coming to power in the imperialist countries has increased if anything since the time of the Bolsheviks.' This is used to back up Hansen's agreement that the construction of revolutionary parties is an 'absolute necessity in the advanced capitalist countries'. In the advanced

countries it's difficult: you need Marxist parties. But in any case the 'epicentre' of the revolution is elsewhere, and there it can be done by someone else. In effect the 'parties' of Hansen and the Pabloites in the advanced countries become cheer-leaders for the petty-bourgeois nationalists in Algeria, Cuba, etc. Hansen chooses to ignore the line of those Pabloites in Europe who 'keep their heads down' in the Social Democracy, hoping to be discovered as the core of some future centrist parties, rather than constructing independent parties in opposition to the reactionary leaderships.

Hansen's document, *Cuba—The Acid Test*, is a serious warning to Marxists. It parades as a serious contribution to an international discussion, yet ignores a whole series of vital questions raised immediately before, questions concerning the whole record and orientation of Bolshevism.

In place of this, Hansen insists on 'the facts', and in particular, the fact of the Cuban Revolution. Into this part of the discussion he introduces nothing new except a demagogic distortion of the SLL's position and a crude attempt to gain something from the different evaluations of the Cuban state by the French and British sections of the IC.

All this indicates that Hansen is running away from the fundamental political questions. His insistence on 'The Acid Test' of Cuba is a plea for 'commonsense' to override theory. It is this which underlies the wholly different concepts of building the International now dividing the SWP and the SLL. Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary party.

The great benefit to be derived from *Cuba—The Acid Test* is that it makes explicit the foundations of this abandonment of revolutionary theory, of dialectical materialism. Hansen has now placed out in the open his defence of empiricism as a method, a method which has a natural expression in the politics of opportunism. It is to these politics that Hansen's method now leads. It is for this reason that he and Cannon drive for unification with Pabloism, whose opportunist and liquidationist revisions of 1953 have not been in any way corrected. All that has happened is that the theoretical stagnation of the American Trotskyists has led them inescapably to the same end.

Adopted unanimously by
The National Committee of
The Socialist Labour League
on 23rd March, 1963.

ADDENDUM

It is characteristic of the Castro regime that not a single leading body of the ORI is elected. While Castro inveighs against sectarianism and dogmatism in the party, he is at the same time responsible for the installation of an autocratic and self-perpetuating bureaucracy.

For example, the 'reorganising process' in the ORI

is carried out by the National Board—which is appointed. Who reorganises the National Board? Presumably Castro. There is no freedom for dissident tendencies and no provision for minority representation.

All policy decisions are made behind closed doors by a small clique of Castro and his supporters. There

is no democratic debate and little discussion. For instance, during the last missile crisis, it transpired that 'some people' in the ORI favoured UN inspection. Who these people were and what chance they had to express themselves we do not know. We had to wait until Castro spoke to get what facts we could.

Again recently the workers of Havana were treated to a piece of organisational skulduggery without precedent in the revolution. This was the decision to dissolve the acting Provincial Committee (37) of Havana, its executive board and Secretariat. It was replaced with a small Provisional Executive Board (11) with 'limited functions considered indispensable at this stage'.

The ostensible—and official—reason for this arbitrary action was the failure of this important leading organ to carry out the 'reorganising work' but the real reason was probably a political one—the elimination of the remnants of Escalante's forces in the ORI.

The Provincial Committee—one of the most important in Cuba—has no right of appeal to any Congress of the ORI for the simple reason that there has been no democratically convened Congress, and there is little prospect of seeing one in the future.

At the same time, too, all the party organisations in

the Province of Havana have been placed under the direction of eleven Regional Commissions which are not subject to election and renewal.

The bureaucratic centralisation going on in the ORI is the antithesis of working-class democracy and is the surest symptom of Bonapartism in the revolution.

We do not wish to make a fetish of democracy—nor do we wish to minimise the importance of the bullet vis-a-vis the ballot in a revolution. But dictatorship if it is to remain popular and viable must be tempered by the widest democracy. Comrade Cannon in his own inimitable style expressed this thought succinctly when he wrote:

'When the founders of scientific socialism said the workers must emancipate themselves, they meant that nobody would do it for them, and nobody could. The same holds true for their organisations, the instruments of struggle for emancipation. If they are really to serve their purpose, these organisations must belong to the workers and be democratically operated and controlled by them. Nobody can do it for them. So thought the great democrats, Marx and Engels.' (*Notebook of an Agitator*, p. 239, Pioneer Publishers 1958).

We cannot say more.

APPENDIX TO 'OPPORTUNISM AND EMPIRICISM'

A Reply to Joseph Hansen

From: F. Rodriguez, Paris
To: The Leadership of the SWP

Paris, February 14, 1963

Dear Comrades,

I have received, as have a certain number of other Frenchmen, Joe Hansen's text 'Cuba, An Acid Test', which constitutes an answer to the positions maintained on Cuba by the SLL and the French.

I am glad that an international discussion should begin in this way, on a question of such importance. We shall discuss it again between ourselves, in order to answer some of Hansen's objections in detail. However, I should like, straight away, in the name of my comrades, to make a few points which seem to preface any dialogue, as they deal with the conditions themselves of a discussion of an international scale, that is to say with workers' democracy itself.

1. The international bulletin of the SWP published Joe Hansen's text in reply to our text and to our theses. The comrades of the SWP who will read it will thus know the answer to texts which *they have not seen*. For our part, we have acted differently, and have published for our comrades, the texts of the SWP before ours.

2. This lapse in the understanding of what workers' democracy should be, is even more deplorable as comrade Hansen has a very peculiar conception of the way in which an honest militant should put forward the ideas of his comrades, when he does not share them. I had a moment of anxiety, while reading his text, and wondered if our comparison with Spain had been so badly presented that Hansen could have criticised it as he did, in good faith. But this is not so: we mentioned Spain to show an example of a bourgeois state—the republican state—broken by a revolution, and resuscitated by the alliance between the bourgeois and Stalinists. If Joe Hansen wants to discuss this point with us, he will have to revise the analyses which our movement made at that time, and he will have to tell us that Trotsky was wrong to speak of the 'alliance with the *shadow* of the bourgeoisie', 'with political *spectres*' (*Works*, Vol. 3, p. 536). It is without pleasure that we read Hansen's jokes about 'spectres', for before writing our text, we re-read Trotsky's lines in the History of the Russian Revolution on the 'semi-spectral dualism of power' (Vol. 1 of the Reider edition, p. 306). It seems to us that Comrade Hansen, if he has any consideration for the members of the SWP, should explain to them either that he is not very familiar with Trotsky's thought, and that the comrades he mocks are more so than he is, or that he invites us all to condemn without remission, those of Trotsky's writings which we have just mentioned.

3. We have not got the same conception as Joe Hansen has of what constitutes 'consideration' towards comrades: Hansen laughs at the 'spectres' which Trotsky taught us existed and that it was just as well

to recognise, and refrains from saying, as he laughs at us, that we are following Trotsky in speaking of half- or quarter-spectres. On the other hand he reproaches us with not having told our comrades things that we do not know. If, in fact, we said that we would return to certain questions at a later date, it was because our work is not yet complete. We prefer work to gossip, and we think that we have shown more consideration for the comrades than if, like Hansen, we had spoken either of a text that they have not been able to read, or of things we did not know or of which we were not certain. The leaders of the SWP will soon receive our text on the USSR after Stalin, and we hope that, this time, the comrades of the SWP will have it too: we believe, in fact, that it will arm them better to understand and consequently to practise what constitutes the defence of the USSR, which the analyses of *The Militant* and the contributions of Murry Weiss in defence of the bureaucracy cannot do.

4. We congratulate comrade Hansen on seeing that we have differences with the comrades of the SLL on the question of Cuba. Our agreement with them on fundamental questions is, in fact, so profound that in reading superficially as he seems to do, he could have overlooked their existence. However, we are sorry that the arguments that Joe Hansen puts up to the comrades of the SLL are so feeble that they can hardly help to make them revise the points of their analysis that we consider debatable. In fact, how can Hansen be taken seriously when he invokes against the SLL the opinion of the 'peoples' of the USSR, Poland, Hungary, etc. . . . as it is expressed in the columns of the press which is edited by the bureaucrats, or in the meetings where they alone speak? The same opinion of the 'peoples', as he says, called Trotsky a spy and a murderer, and called the Trotskyists 'Hitlerites' . . . And did not the Spanish 'people' in the social-democracy and Stalinist meetings and writings also condemn the 'Trotskyists', accusing them of calumniating, even of assassinating their 'revolution'? At that time, no serious militant in the Trotskyist movement thought of criticising Trotsky for his analysis, and of suggesting that in order to explain the contradiction between the opinion of the 'people' and his own, resort must be made to a psychosis of mania, etc. . . . as comrade Hansen does today. If Hansen really wants to criticise our comrades of the SLL, who have turned to Lenin for the definition of a workers' state—see the number of lines that Trotsky devotes to 'the definition of the USSR in *The Revolution Betrayed*—he must first of all explain why the construction of a 'pure' workers' state was possible in a backward country at that time, and why it no longer is in Cuba today, and why he is reduced, as he has been for the

last two years, to awaiting a speech by Castro, announced but not in evidence, on the new institutions, in order to know what workers' democracy is today. We fear that Hansen may have forgotten that a revolutionary Marxist *must change the world*, and not analyse the way in which it changes by itself under the influence of those unconscious and objective forces which he calls 'the facts'.

5. Finally, if our text had been published for all the comrades of the SWP, we presume to think that there would have been at least one to understand that it was a typing error that substituted 'cultural assimilation'—which is meaningless—for 'structural assimilation', which was a frequent expression of Trotsky's pen during the polemic of 1939-40, as in our ranks just after the war. Hansen would thus have been spared

the ridicule of devoting so many lines to a copying mistake.

However, despite bad procedures and futile lawyer's manoeuvres, Joe Hansen's text puts up some serious objections to our theses. We are getting down to work to answer them, and we shall try and publish all the texts again, his and ours, hoping that you will do as much. It is only in this way, in our opinion, that the leadership of the SWP will prove that it intends a discussion which can make the world movement progress, and that it is not one of those who, with the words of unity on their tongue, in reality are preparing a split in the obscurity of a discussion in which the texts of each are not known to all.

Yours fraternally,

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ

THE AGE OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

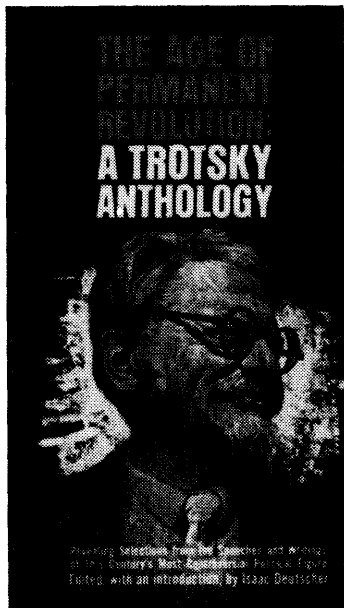
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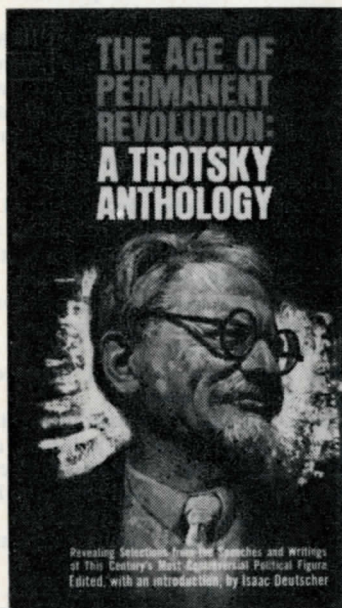
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A LETTER FROM JAMES P. CANNON TO FARRELL DOBBS

Los Angeles, California
October 31, 1962

Dear Farrell:

Now that the crest of the Cuban crisis seems to have passed, everyone is assessing its outcome. This is the trend of our thinking in informal discussions here.

We must keep our eyes on the main issues and not get side-tracked by subsidiary considerations. What was the situation?

1. The U.S. naval blockade was set for a clash with Soviet ships which could escalate into nuclear war. Kennedy gave clear notice that the U.S. would not stop at the use of the most forceful measures.

2. The Pentagon was ready to bomb and invade Cuba and crush its revolution. Newspaper accounts report that this was one of the alternative moves considered even from the start, and it was to be put into effect if Moscow did not yield on the missile bases.

In the face of these direct and immediate threats to world peace and the Cuban revolution, Khrushchev drew back, agreed to pull out the missiles, and dismantle the bases under UN supervision. He received in return a suspension of the blockade and public assurances that Cuba would not be invaded.

What else could he have done under the given circumstances? It would have been foolhardy to risk setting off a thermonuclear war and daring the U.S. to come and wipe out the Cuban bases in view of Washington's evident determination to go to the limit if necessary.

In our opinion Khrushchev sensibly backed away from such a showdown, thus saving the world from war and the Cuban revolution from attack by overwhelming forces for a *time*. But this *time* is of decisive importance!

The retreat was unavoidable and the concessions, as we know about them, did not give up anything essential. Those who judge otherwise should tell us what alternative course the Kremlin should have followed on the military and diplomatic fronts at that excruciating point of decision. Should Khrushchev have defied the embargo or refused outright to withdraw the missile bases?

The crisis over Cuba is of immense importance. But we should not forget it is only one sector in a world-wide conflict between imperialism and the workers states which has witnessed in the past, and will see again, advances and retreats by one side or the other. As revolutionary realists, we have not criticised or condemned heads of workers' states or union leaders for retreating and making concessions when the

balance of forces was unfavourable. Lenin traded space for time at Brest-Litovsk. As we know from our Minneapolis experiences, even the most militant leadership which is up against the gun may have to give ground before the insuperable power of the employer in order to save the existence of the union and fight another day.

The grim fact was that both the Soviet Union and Cuba not only had guns, but even more fearsome weapons, poised over their heads and ready to be used.

For this reason we do not believe that Khrushchev's course was incorrect on the level of military affairs and state relations. To condemn it and cry 'betrayal' would only help the Stalinists get off the hook where they are really vulnerable. That is their policy of supporting Kennedy, Stevenson and other 'peace-loving' Democratic capitalist politicians. This attitude, flowing from the Kremlin's doctrine of peaceful co-existence, has again been exposed as criminal.

Although we should carefully watch their development, we should be cautious and not jump to conclusions about the relations between Castro and Khrushchev. The latter's unilateral decisions and divergent aims may have created friction between them but it would be unwise to substitute speculations for solid facts. Khrushchev's declarations have not indicated any abandonment of Cuba, and it would be difficult for him to do so with the eyes of China, the colonial peoples and the Soviet militants upon him. On the other hand, Castro deeply needs Soviet aid.

The principal point—and you make it in the editorial—is that the world, the socialist movement and the Cuban revolution have gained time. The bombs are still there. But they were not dropped anywhere. And we are heartily in favour of that!

Despite gleeful claims by the American press that Kennedy's strong stand has given a stern lesson and severe setback to 'Soviet aggression', people unaffected by imperialist propaganda have, I believe, breathed relief over the settlement and thank Khrushchev for his sanity. Bertrand Russell and Nehru expressed themselves along that line.

We must remember that nuclear war would mean the greatest defeat for humanity and socialism. We must avert that terrible eventuality, not, to be sure, by stopping the class struggle against imperialism, but by utilising every means that will give the workers time enough to wake up and organise themselves for that purpose.

JIM CANNON

DOCUMENT No. 4

12th June, 1963

The National Committee of the
Socialist Workers' Party

Dear Comrades,

It was with deep regret that the delegates and visitors to the Fifth National Conference of the Socialist Labour League took note of the failure of your committee to send fraternal greetings to our conference. This is the first time since the founding unification conference of the English Trotskyist movement in March 1944 that you have taken such action, even though you had major political disagreements for a number of years with the old leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

In the past we have always regarded your greetings as a recognition of the revolutionary ties which existed between our organisations. It is well known that several members of the leadership of the Socialist Labour League, including myself, grew up and developed with knowledge gained from the books and writings of the leaders of your party. We feel, therefore, that your decision not to send greetings is in line with your political hostility towards us. It is a continuation of the shabby accusations contained in recent letters from you. (See IC Bulletin No. 16).

We can only conclude that you wish to sever relations between the SLL and the majority leadership of the SWP. By the time you read this letter you will have joined forces with the Pabloites and the existing split will have become more serious.

This rather sad state of affairs is not of our making. Early in 1961 we started a discussion with you in order to see if it was possible within the framework of the International Committee to learn and to teach one another in a way that would strengthen the international Trotskyist movement.

We were unable to convince you on such an approach, because, as you know from copies of letters which we have and you have, comrade Cannon advised against a discussion. It is the same Cannon who is now busy in the background whooping up the petty organisational scandals which he requires to make the split complete. He knows as well as we do that the letter to your Political Committee over the Cuba crisis reveals that despite his long and heroic defence of Trotskyism, he has at last capitulated to the Pabloite disease. Indeed, your Political Committee could not support this letter. But instead of seriously discussing your differences before the membership you have deliberately kept them in the background in your conference preparations.

You have deliberately avoided a serious discussion, yet you are engaging in a constant offensive against us behind the scenes, within your leadership. You are getting ready to expel the Wohlforth minority, although it has loyally carried out every decision of your party. Such is the political degeneration of the SWP.

You have now come to the conclusion that the 'sectarian SLL' is not worth the writing of a letter of

greetings to its conference. You have found new allies. You publish an attack on the SLL from comrade Peng which you say is an act of 'fraternal courtesy to the Chinese section of the International Committee', but who has heard of the Chinese section since the split with Pablo in 1953?

Peng refused the IC the corresponding address of this section. During the ten years of the functioning of the committee he never once gave a report of the life and work of that section. Until this recent bulletin from him you yourself have not produced a single report from the Chinese comrades. In other words, this section is resurrected only at times when it suits the leadership of the SWP in factional alliance with Peng.

We who know this man are fully aware that he has no understanding whatsoever of the daily life and political work of our sections. We have never heard him make a single contribution on the national problems of any section over the past ten years. To hide behind the 'authority' of such a man in struggle against the SLL can only be described as an act of political bankruptcy on your part.

We note that one of the criticisms which he laid against the SLL was that it did not really wage a struggle against Pabloism in Britain. Here we would like to publish for all to see a section of the correspondence between yourselves and us on this matter. (See appendix)

Peng talks about our 'internal regime' and 'Healy's organisational methods'. 'The list of expulsions in the past few years makes depressing reading,' he says. 'In one instance expulsions occurred on the eve of a national convention.' You know very well that these are misrepresentations and lies from beginning to end.

You publicly defended the steps we were forced to take in relation to Peter Fryer. You are aware that Pablo came to England especially to organise these refugees from the class struggle and that he spent considerable sums of money trying to encourage them to go into public opposition to us. He published their most slanderous documents against us. He joined hands with the most reactionary forces, including the right wing of the Labour Party, to 'expose' the SLL. You know all this and, in fact, you opposed it, but you now publish Peng's lies without the slightest comment.

We expelled Brian Behan before the second congress of the SLL because he outrageously in public attacked the organisation and its leadership. Behan is now one of the anarchist propagandists

He is a regular contributor to the extreme Tory magazine *The Spectator*. He writes in the house organ of the Astor family *20th Century* alongside such well-known fascists as Andrew Fountaine and such representatives of the 'democratic' press as Cecil King of the *Daily Mirror* empire.

We are proud to have expelled such a renegade from our movement. But even if we had made a mistake, what did you or Peng do at the time to correct us? You remained silent. Peng never raised this matter once at any meeting of the International Committee. You were hoping, in fact, to manoeuvre the 'British' as you describe them into a position of accepting your capitulation to Pablo and when this became impossible you have, of course, resorted to the old methods of slander.

Of course, comrade Peng will serve you loyally within the international Pabloite organisation. We discovered in 1955 that he was serving the Pabloites loyally, when at one meeting of the committee we caught himself and his daughter L. taking documents from the committee to be handed over to the Pabloites. We reported this to comrade Dobbs when he visited us in 1958 but we, of course, have never taken any action against Peng. If the truth were known, despite his occasional contributions to your internal bulletins, Peng has been in close association with the Pabloites for a considerable period.

We are not worried either way because we know that Peng and his ilk will never build a movement anywhere, in any part of the world. They belong to the sectarian and opportunist past of our movement and all they do now is to provide lessons of mistakes which the Trotskyist movement must not repeat.

By parading this man as a leader of the Chinese section in your internal bulletin, you are guilty of a fraud against the membership of the SWP.

Recently we have read in *The Militant* that 100,000 people attended a May Day rally in Colombo. 'The huge turnout,' says *The Militant*, 'was attributed to enthusiasm among the masses at the prospect of a united front between the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Trotskyist), the Communist Party and the MEP (a smaller group led by Philip Gunawardene).'

Here we go again. Just at the moment that you are splitting from the SLL and are reaffirming Peng as the leader of the Chinese section, you turn the attention of your membership towards 'the great LSSP in Ceylon'. Of course, you remain discreetly silent about the proceedings at that meeting. You did not tell your membership that when the three left parties, that is the LSSP, the CP and the MEP, were discussing the preparation of the meeting Philip Gunawardene insisted that only political parties should be represented on the platform. His motive was simple and quite reactionary. He wished to exclude the Indian working class from being represented through their trade unions.

The LSSP to its eternal shame agreed to this farce. It must be remembered that in the past the LSSP was the only party in Ceylon to stand unconditionally for the equality of the Indian Tamil working class. It always sharply opposed Philip Gunawardene of the MEP, whose role at this meeting was utterly reactionary.

You remain silent about what Philip Gunawardene said. With a slip of the tongue he used the word 'race'

instead of 'nation' and then corrected himself. His supporters in the audience shouted 'No, not nation: race!' All this time the LSSP sat silent on the platform. Here is the price for such unity.

It is now freely admitted in the LSSP that the leaders are prepared to make real and large concessions on the question of parity of status for Tamil and Sinhalese. This is the logic of the capitulation which has led them to support the capitalist government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. You should have told your membership that N. M. Perera, Anil Moonesinghe and other leaders of the LSSP are practising Buddhists who worship regularly at the temples. Here is fraud No. 2 which you perpetrate on the membership of the SWP.

Throughout the discussion on Cuba you have done your best to suggest that the SLL is opposed to defence of the Cuban revolution. In Britain and in Europe everyone knows, of course, that this is a lie. It is also well known to you. Our criticisms of the Castro regime have in no way prevented us from defending the revolution and we shall continue to do so with everything in our power in the future.

But you are strangely silent about events in Cuba; events which you have other information on.

'The Trotskyists are harassed. Leading people have been imprisoned sporadically for periods of time with no charges and no trial. An Argentinian comrade was deported. Their paper is semi-legal. They cannot get any publishing house to put it out. They claim a circulation of 1,000 in Havana, which is now their main centre, and say it is passed from hand to hand. They claim 100 members in Havana, of overwhelming proletarian composition, and rapid recruitment, especially since Castro's speech after Kennedy's Orange Bowl talk to Cuban counter-revolutionaries. This speech showed a clear departure from the usual militancy of Castro, and this was noticed by the Cuban people.

'They cannot publish Trotsky's works. Open forums cannot be held under a revival of a Batista ordinance which requires permission from the police which they can never get.'

May we suggest that your silence is needed in order to perpetrate fraud No. 3.

Now you are busy building up the legend of Ben Bella. But everyone knows that the state in Algeria is a capitalist state and that Pablo is an employee of that state. It is also well known that Pablo now supports Khrushchev's policy of peaceful co-existence. Perhaps he has learned from comrade Cannon's defence of Khrushchev over the missile bases in Cuba last October.

You do not really aid the Algerian revolution or revolutionaries. You simply build up a legend in order to give false comfort to the members of the SWP. Such is the method of pragmatism, openly extolled by Hansen.

Cannon's letter to your Political Committee in October 1962 hails Khrushchev's action over Cuba as one that 'will give the workers time enough to wake up'. But surely the role of the SWP as a revolutionary

organisation should be consciously to assist in warning the international working class of the pernicious and treacherous role of the Khrushchev Soviet bureaucracy in this present situation.

The real reason why you do not want a serious discussion over Cannon's letter is that it would reveal the terrible political crisis inside the SWP. In refusing this discussion you perpetrate fraud No. 4.

Of course you have no time for the 'sectarian SLI' Our comrades in the ranks and in the leadership fight day in and day out against reformism and Stalinism in the best traditions of the Trotskyist movement. But they do not yet speak to tens of thousands at public meetings like Ben Bella, Castro and the so-called Ceylon May Day meeting. In your eyes we are merely small, 'ultra-left fry'.

Our comrades took the leadership in the recent campaign against unemployment, organised and spoke to a mass meeting of 1,300, but this is small stuff. When our comrades deal powerful blows against the Social Democrats in the youth movement in the teeth of a violent witch-hunt, your correspondent T. J. Peters (a one-time leading SWP supporter who now writes like a retired liberal) speaks only of the great future before 'British Labour'.

We old-fashioned 'sectarians' believe that the Fourth International of which our organisation has always

been an integral part, offers the only alternative to the corrupt leadership of so-called 'British Labour'. But Peters has no time for us. He, like you, has really seen the light.

It took you some time. (As the saying goes 'Those who come late to Christ come hardest.') It is approximately 12 years since George Clarke joined forces with Pablo and published the message of the infamous Third Congress in *The Militant* and what was at that time the magazine Fourth International. You failed to understand Pablo at that time, and then we had the split of 1953. Cannon hailed this split with the words that we were 'never going back to Pabloism'. Until recently he has been a really stubborn convert to Pabloism. But at last you have made it. You now have allies all over the place, from Fidel Castro, to Philip Gunawardene and Pablo.

We want to say only one thing and in this our congress was unanimous. We are proud of the stand which our organisation has taken against such a disgraceful capitulation to the most reactionary forces as that to which the majority leadership of your party has fully succumbed.

We have, however, the utmost confidence in the rank and file of the SWP whom we are sure will reconvince many of your leaders to break from this fatal course before it is too late.

Yours fraternally,

(Signed) G. HEALY

National Secretary Socialist Labour League

APPENDIX

New York
May 24, 1954

England
Dear Burns,

We salute the British comrades for their smashing victory over the Stalinist-supported Pabloites in the battle for control of the paper.

Your fight has clearly been the bitterest and most complicated of any national struggle in the international campaign to defeat Pabloite revisionism and liquidationism. In that struggle, which you eloquently described as a 'political civil war', the British Trotskyists stood the test of fire and emerged as a finely-tempered combat force hardened and toughened for the great class battles yet to come.

Only a rank and file that is confident, alert, energetic, capable of sustained action and steadily growing in political stature could have provided the forces necessary for the victory. Only a leadership that is politically astute, skilled in strategic and tactical coordination, well grounded in the Trotskyist fundamentals and capable of confidently maintaining combat initiative could have guided the rank and file to such a decisive triumph.

Now that you have smashed the attempt to liquidate

British Trotskyism, the momentum of your defensive struggle will carry over into a new dynamic drive to build up the Trotskyist cadre in the broader left wing of the mass movement. This seems already assured by the further crystallisation and politicalisation of direct periphery elements as reflected in the support you received in the showdown fight for control of the paper. Moreover, the paper will once again be on the beam politically, an effective instrument of which the comrades can be proud, instead of carrying the shameful pro-Stalinist line injected into it by Pabloite intrigue.

Your victory also definitively refutes the false Pabloite claim to a majority in Britain. Coming on the eve of the Pabloite rump congress, this exposure of a Pabloite lie and this profound demonstration of Trotskyist strength brings important new weight to bear against Pablo's whole international intrigue which he has sought to bring to a climax in his 'June Assembly.'

To all the British comrades we say: Well done!
Comradely yours,

SMITH

New York, N.Y.
May 24, 1954

TO ALL LOCALS AND BRANCHES:

Dear Comrades,

We are enclosing a report of the smashing victory won by the British Trotskyists in the fight for control of their paper.

Once again this paper will appear as a hard-hitting 100 per cent Trotskyist organ delivering political hammer blows in the contest for leadership of the British mass movement.

The bitter struggle for control of the paper dissipated all their funds and thus created a problem for them in getting out the immediate issues. Consequently they would appreciate payment in advance for the next bundle orders.

Because of the important political struggles now

unfolding within the British Labour Party, we are sure the comrades will be more anxious than ever to follow events through the columns of the Trotskyist paper which the new editorial board pledges to keep a 'lively, fighting, principled organ worthy of the great tasks it must perform.'

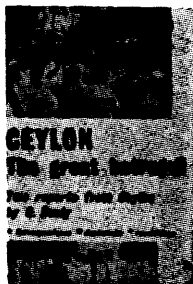
We therefore suggest that comrades who are in a position to do so send us a five or ten dollar special contribution to help make sure we are able to get the paper quickly and regularly.

Comradely yours,

FARRELL DOBBS
National Secretary

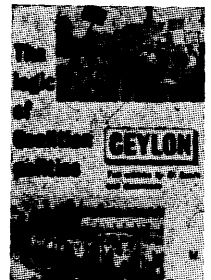
Ceylon

Two pamphlets which contain the reports from Ceylon by the representatives of The Newsletter. G. Healy's reports cover the developments leading up to and including the formation of the Bandaranaike-LSSP coalition government and the subsequent split of the LSSP. M. Banda's reports cover the period up to the downfall of the coalition. Together, these accounts constitute a searching analysis and a devastating expose of revisionist politics as practised by that rump which calls itself the Unified Secretariat.



CEYLON:
The Great
Betrayal By G. HEALY
Also includes documents,
statements, resolutions,
and correspondence.
Price: one shilling

By M. BANDA **CEYLON:**
The logic of
coalition politics
Also contains
documents, statements
and conference decisions.
Price: sixpence



Orders to:

186A CLAPHAM HIGH STREET,
LONDON, S.W.4

New York, N.Y.
May 24, 1954

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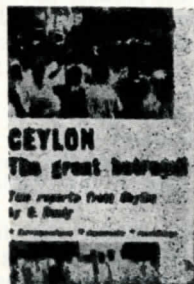
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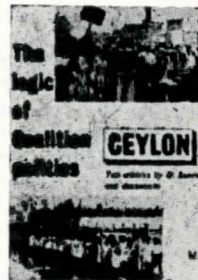
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DOCUMENT No. 5

**RESOLUTION OF SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE CONFERENCE 1964
(February 29, March 1 and 2)
FROM REVISIONISM TO OPPORTUNISM**

A Reply to the International Secretariat Statement of 18/11/63

The statement of the United Secretariat of the (Pabloite-revisionist) Fourth International which rejects the proposals of the International Committee (Fourth International) Conference for a principled unification of the world Trotskyist movement, has once again demonstrated the perfidious and fraudulent nature of Pabloite revisionism.

We must conclude that after a year of desultory talks, evasions and diplomatic manoeuvres the Pabloite IS had no interest in clarifying political principles and the contentious programmatic issues which split the Trotskyist movement for a whole decade.

Instead, it tried to paper over serious differences and consummate a marriage of convenience with the new revisionists inside the IC.

This brings to an end a long period of negotiation with the IS. The history of these negotiations can only be summarised at this stage. It must be stated that throughout this period the IC has never been distracted from its primary aim: the unification of the Fourth International on the basis of principled programmatic agreement.

In 1954, immediately after the split in which a majority of Pablo's supporters liquidated their sections in the Stalinist movement—the IC took the initiative in opening a discussion with the IS so that the confusion surrounding the split would be dispelled and also the possibilities of a principled unification could be explored. However, the SWP (which although not affiliated for legal reasons to the Fourth International has given political support to its decisions) obstructed this attempt.

Then, in 1957, James Cannon—leader of the SWP—without prior discussion with the IC, began discussions with the IS on the grounds that political differences were fast disappearing and that there was little point in exhuming past differences. Every attempt by the IC to criticise the theoretical and political arguments of the IS was frowned upon by the SWP. In this situation it was impossible to achieve clarity on principles—and 'unity' became a series of organisational manoeuvres.

This action was consonant with the theoretical degeneration of the SWP leaders who had begun to abandon many, if not all, of the programmatic positions they held at the time of the split in 1953.

The 'unity' talks finally collapsed because the IS rejected even the watered-down proposals of Cannon. They wanted total and unconditional capitulation to their programme and organisational methods.

After this salutary experience, Cannon was forced to declare that the Pabloites '... conceive of the "International" as the literary and technical apparatus of the International Secretariat, which in practice operates outside all control. This whole conception and practice is incompatible with a living world

movement made up of functioning, self-governing, working-class parties and, in reality, operates to prevent the development of such parties.'

In February 1962 once again as a result of tentative 'unity' moves by the SWP and the IS, the Socialist Labour League placed before the IC the motion:

'The IC to approach the IS with a view to the setting up of a sub-committee consisting of three members from the International Committee and three from the International Secretariat. The purpose of this committee would be to arrange an exchange of internal material on international problems among all the sections affiliated to both the sections.

'... Eventually, the sub-committee would prepare a summary report of the area of agreement and differences between the two bodies.' This resolution was adopted unanimously.

The IS attitude to unity, however, was different from and opposed to that of the IC. In its statement of June 23 the IS states:

'... The IVth 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. ...

'The political basis of the 1953-4 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.'

The IC, since it has never retracted the 'Open Letter' issued by the SWP—and has never accepted the estimate of the international situation in 1950 by the IS which laid the basis for the split, could not but construe this declaration as an ultimatum for unconditional surrender of the political positions successfully defended by the IC and the SWP in 1953.

Any attempt to discuss on the basis of pre-determined agreement must seriously endanger international collaboration and the ultimate unification of the movement. That has been—and still is—the opinion of the IC.

Despite these obstacles, the IC tried in a principled way to conduct the discussion within the Parity Committee set up by the two bodies, the IC and the IS.

But even before the discussion could commence the IC was faced by a split in its ranks which was encouraged—if not inspired—by the IS and the SWP.

Rather than wait for the IC Conference in September 1963 which was to draw up a balance sheet of the discussion and the prospects for unification, the Chinese, New Zealand and Austrian sections conspired to split the IC, hold a hastily convened rump congress of their own in March 1963, and unite with the IS at the 7th World Congress of the Pabloites.

The IS rashly asserts that the splitters represented the majority of the IS. This lie typifies their method:

it is calculated to disarm and confuse those who are not informed of the history and character of the dispute.

The details of this sordid manoeuvre are not as simple as that.

First, neither the New Zealand nor Chinese sections had debated or decided on any of the important documents submitted by both sides in the dispute.

The Austrians never made a *single* written contribution. As for the Chinese, it is seriously doubted whether this section existed—or functioned.

The New Zealand representative acted as a ventriloquist's dummy for the SWP and played no independent role whatsoever.

Secondly, the SWP leaders violated all the norms of democratic discussion when they approved the unification without submitting three out of the four major policy documents for discussion in the ranks.

Lastly, and this is the most reprehensible part of the intrigue—the splitters disregarded the opinions of *all* the Latin American sections of the IC. These sections—the Argentine, Peruvian and Chilean—had insisted that the IC Conference be held in September 1963 in order that they would be able to send a representative delegation and moreover would have time to study the relevant documents.

The statement of the Chilean POR in particular was clear and unequivocal. It rejected 'any separate attempt by any section of the IC to unify with the Pabloite IS. The Chilean POR will not allow itself to be dragged along by any particular section wishing to unite on its own account with the IS, understanding that it is an elementary duty in revolutionary discipline to first discuss as a body in the IC, which in its entirety and by majority must decide the basis for unity with the IS at its World Congress'. We do not conceal the fact that the Latin American sections were in favour of an early unification—but neither do we wish to conceal their principled attitude to unity.

Thus the splitters ignored the *majority* of the IC to secure 'unity'.

The IS now accuses us of being against an 'early fusion of forces'. As we have made plain in the preceding lines, we are opposed—resolutely opposed—to unity which is not preceded by a thorough and ample discussion.

This was also Lenin's attitude when he prepared the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP.

'The *Iskra* at the very outset, in its advance announcement in 1900, declared that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn . . . We were, in fact, guided by the maxim: 'Measure your cloth seven times before you cut it.'" (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, pp. 15/16, Lawrence & Wishart edition, 1941.)

The IS challenges us to define our attitude to the documents of their 7th Congress. Very well.

It is not possible in the space of this statement to comment adequately on the documents of the 7th Congress, but the Revisionists can rest assured that the IC has never remained—and will never remain—

silent on the question of revisionism.

Here we shall touch only briefly on some of the major issues raised at the Congress. (See *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL*, Vol. 1, No. 1 for a full analysis of the main resolution at this Congress.)

On the main resolution, 'The Dynamics (?) of World Revolution Today', under Section IV (The Proletarian Revolution in the Imperialist Countries) we read:

'The most probable variant in the next few years is . . . the following: the colonial revolution will continue involving new countries and deepening its social character as more workers states appear. It will not lead directly to the overthrow of capitalism in the imperialist centres but it will play a powerful role in building a new world revolutionary leadership as is already clear from the emergence of Castroist currents. . . .'

If this quotation means anything at all, it means that the construction of a Marxist leadership in the metropolitan countries is predicated on the emergence of non-Marxist petty-bourgeois leaderships à la Castro in the colonial and semi-colonial world. These leaderships not only abhor Trotskyism, but repress it at every opportunity! The IC explicitly rejects such revisionist fantasies whose acceptance would condemn the FI to decades of stagnation—and perdition.

This quixotic thesis of the IS finds its corollary further on when the authors, referring to Cuba and the prospects for Trotskyism, hopefully suggest:

'As I. F. Stone the acute American radical (s.c) journalist observed after a trip to Cuba, the revolutionists there are "unconscious" Trotskyists. *With the coming of full consciousness among these and related currents Trotskyism will become a powerful current.*'

Without labouring the point, we should like to know the precise meaning of the phrase, 'With the coming of full consciousness'. Are we to assume that 'full consciousness', like Castro's beard, is a natural endowment of every petty-bourgeois radical and peasant revolutionist?

Here we see how a scientific theory of revolution is thrown down and trampled underfoot while coarse elemental 'spontaneity' and bourgeois radicalism is exalted to the point of virtue.

To talk of 'unconscious Marxists' is patent nonsense and a contradiction in terms. Like the cold-blooded mammal it belies reality—and defies all systems of classification.

Marxism, i.e., scientific socialism, is a method of social analysis, a world outlook and the only scientific and valid theory of knowledge. It is human *consciousness* at a very advanced level of development. It represents the conscious expression of an unconscious historical process. It can never be unconscious.

The 'unconscious Marxist' is not a Marxist at all, but an empirical simpleton who identifies social being and social consciousness in a mechanical and absurd way.

Let us not forget Lenin's advice: 'The highest task of humanity is to comprehend the objective logic of the economic evolution (the evolution of social

existence), to comprehend the most general and fundamental features with the purpose of adapting its social consciousness and the consciousness of the advanced classes of all capitalist countries to it in clear exact and critical fashion.' (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 280, Lawrence & Wishart edition.)

On this point the IS quarrels not with us—but with Lenin and Trotsky:

'One of the most outstanding features of Bolshevism has been its severe, exacting, even quarrelsome attitude towards the question of doctrine. The twenty-seven volumes of Lenin's works will remain forever an example of the highest theoretical conscientiousness; without this fundamental quality Bolshevism would never have fulfilled its historic role.' (*Stalinism and Bolshevism*.)

Lenin has remarked elsewhere that socialist consciousness cannot develop without the party and that the party represents the highest form of human consciousness. This has been considered an axiomatic truth for the revolutionary movement.

The revisionist wisecracks in the Unified Secretariat, however, have replaced dialectical materialism and the party with the inane nostrums of Ben Bella and the rhetoric of Castro—who, incidentally, has not read a single work of Trotsky and has never written a single theoretical work in his life.

And what are the prospects, if any, for the FI? Let us listen to the revisionists:

'In the advanced countries, the International can perform crucial services on behalf of revolutions in colonial countries . . . true internationalists . . . Among the advanced workers, intellectuals and youth of the workers states the International can play a special role in helping them to dig through the debris of forty years of falsification . . .' (our emphasis).

Here in a nutshell is presented the perspective for the International. Nowhere in this exposition do the tasks of the movement rise above the level of routine and mundane propaganda. Nowhere is there any mention of the party leading struggles against unemployment and the integration of the unions in the state apparatus—or of winning working class youth to the party and the construction of a mass youth movement around the party. For example, the question of publishing a regular weekly paper is nowhere dealt with—apart from a cursory reference to maintaining 'a Trotskyist publication'. Instead we have such phrases as 'can perform', 'can help' and 'can play'. What has the IS done to build powerful parties in Europe? Precisely nothing!

The IS conception is the direct antithesis of Lenin's conception of the party as a highly centralised and disciplined combat organisation of dedicated revolutionists armed with a scientific theory of revolution. Such a party seeks to win the vanguard of the working class—and through it the majority of the working class—for the socialist revolution. This can be done only through propaganda, agitation and organisation. Only the collective, organised action of the party can

bring about the leadership of the class.

Marxism is the philosophy of action, the science of revolutionising practice—not the contemplation of texts or the 'digging of debris' as the IS believes.

The IS rejects in practice and in theory the fundamental idea of the Transitional Programme when it states: 'An acute problem in relation to the construction of revolutionary-socialist parties in many countries is lack of time to organise and to gain adequate experience before the revolution breaks out. In previous decades this would signify certain defeat for the revolution. Because of a series of new factors, however, this is no longer necessarily the case. The example of the Soviet Union . . . and the relative weakening of world capitalism, have made it possible for revolutions in some instances to achieve partial successes . . . and even go as far as the establishment of a workers state. Revolutionary Marxists in such countries face extremely difficult questions (!) . . . No choice is open to them in such situations but to participate completely and whole-heartedly in the revolution and to build the party in the very process of the revolution itself.'

Two conclusions emerge from this:

- (a) There is no crisis of proletarian leadership today;
- (b) Revolutions are not organised and prepared for:

they only occur. Therefore, the task of party building is a platonic one—necessary but not indispensable.

If it is possible to have revolutions and even workers' states without the leadership of the party, why should anyone want to build a party in the 'process of the revolution'? Why indeed? Unlike the IS we do not build parties for the sake of glory and prestige, but for the carrying through of the socialist revolution.

If what the IS says is true, then it is time to review the entire theoretical, programmatic and historical basis of the FI. Was Trotsky right to set up the Fourth International, was his struggle really necessary and was his historical prognosis correct?

Does the IS agree with the observation of Trotsky that 'No one has either shown in practice or tried to explain articulately on paper how the proletariat can seize power without the political leadership of a party that knows what it wants'? (*Stalinism and Bolshevism*).

No equivocation, please, Messrs. Liquidators and Revisionists! We demand a straight answer. This does not exhaust by any means our criticism of the IS documents, but it must suffice for the present. We shall comment fully and exhaustively—elsewhere, in our own time.

The *piece de resistance* of the IS statement is the grandiloquent boast about unifying all forces that 'consider themselves to be revolutionary socialists'.

We strongly contest the truth of this assertion for the following reasons.

The reaction of the Unified Secretariat and its transatlantic allies to the Kennedy assassination has proved beyond any doubt the reformist and philistine-liberal nature of this sect.

Just as Stalin's death revealed the degeneration within the IS in 1953, so, too, today the death of Kennedy has crystallised all the rotteness within the IC and IS.

While Farrell Dobbs was sending his condolences to the widow of the leader of world reaction and *The Militant* was approvingly quoting the words of a capitalist judge imploring the 'nation' to 'abjure hatred' (!!), the English organ of the IS (*World Outlook*) was reproducing eulogies to the dead president from renegades such as Earl Browder, who had the indecency to compare Kennedy to Lincoln!

The Newsletter correctly and severely criticised this nauseating statement of Dobbs and the undignified behaviour of the SWP. This attack has provoked Joseph Hansen, a leader of the SWP, to justify it on the grounds of expediency:

'Farrell Dobbs joined with other leaders of the American radical movement to explain why the Marxist movement is completely opposed to assassination. *His declarations were published in the New York Times. The attitude of this powerful newspaper is often of great weight in setting the tone for other newspapers in the United States.*

'Dobbs also issued a short statement to the press expressing personal sympathy for Mrs. Kennedy . . . his statement helped counter the poisonous witch-hunting effort to picture Marxists as unbalanced

individuals.' (*World Outlook*, Vol. 1, No, 18) (our emphasis).

Hansen's 'defence' is as rotten as the statement of Dobbs. If it is as Hansen states, then Dobbs has committed a double crime in the eyes of revolutionary socialists: he has not only disgraced the SWP in front of the Federal state—but he has also prostrated himself in front of the most 'powerful'—and *reactionary*—organ of bourgeois public opinion in America. The leaders of the SWP have sold their revolutionary birthright for the sake of a little bit of respectability.

To call these people 'revolutionary socialists' as the IS statement does, is to insult the honourable name of 'revolutionary socialism'.

We think we have made it palpably clear why the IC did not, and would not participate in the charade of a 'Reunification Congress' and why we condemned the rump conference of an unrepresentative IC minority.

Recent events—such as the Kennedy assassination—have revealed the decisive and irrevocable nature of the split between Pabloite revisionism and revolutionary Leninism.

From now on the struggle must and will be waged on *all* fronts and *in public* so that the vanguard of the international working class will distinguish authentic Marxism from the counterfeit variety.

Down with Revisionism and Opportunism!

Carried unanimously by the Conference of the Socialist Labour League, March 2, 1964.

DOCUMENT No. 6**A LETTER TO TROTSKYISTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD
(The 'Open Letter' of the SWP, November 1953)**

Dear Comrades,

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, the Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sends its revolutionary socialist greetings to orthodox Trotskyists throughout the world.

Although the Socialist Workers Party, because of undemocratic laws passed by the Democrats and the Republicans, is no longer affiliated to the Fourth International—the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky to carry on and fulfil the programme betrayed by the Second International of the Social Democrats and the Third International of the Stalinists—we take interest in the welfare of the world-wide organization created under the guidance of our martyred leader.

As is well known, the pioneer American Trotskyists 25 years ago brought the programme of Trotsky, suppressed by the Kremlin, to the attention of world public opinion. This act proved decisive in breaching the isolation imposed by the Stalinist bureaucracy on Trotsky and in laying the foundation for the Fourth International. With his exile shortly thereafter, Trotsky began an intimate and trusted collaboration with the leadership of the SWP that lasted to the day of his death.

The collaboration included joint efforts to organize revolutionary socialist parties in a number of countries. This culminated, as you know, in the launching of the Fourth International in 1938. The Transitional Programme, which remains the keystone of today's programme of the world Trotskyist movement, was written by Trotsky in collaboration with the leaders of the SWP and at his request was submitted by them for adoption at the Founding Congress.

The intimacy and thoroughness of the collaboration between Trotsky and the leadership of the SWP can be judged from the record of the struggle in defence of orthodox Trotskyist principles in 1939-40 against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition headed by Burnham and Schachtman. That record has had a profound influence in shaping the Fourth International in the past 13 years.

After the murder of Trotsky by an agent of Stalin's secret police, the SWP took the lead in defending and advocating his teachings. We took the lead not from choice, but from necessity—the second world war forced the orthodox Trotskyists underground in many countries, especially in Europe under the Nazis. Together with Trotskyists in Latin America, Canada, England, Ceylon, India, Australia and elsewhere we did what we could to uphold the banner of orthodox Trotskyism through the difficult war years.

With the end of the war, we were gratified at the appearance in Europe of Trotskyists from the underground who undertook the organizational re-constitution of the Fourth International. Since we were barred from belonging to the Fourth International by reactionary laws, we placed all the greater hope in the emergence of a leadership capable of continuing the

great tradition bequeathed to our world movement by Trotsky. We felt that the young, new leadership of the Fourth International in Europe must be given full confidence and support. When self-corrections of serious errors were made on the initiative of the comrades themselves, we felt that our course was proving justified.

However, we must now admit that the very freedom from sharp criticism which we together with others accorded this leadership helped open the way for the consolidation of an uncontrolled, secret, personal faction in the administration of the Fourth International which has abandoned the basic programme of Trotskyism.

This faction, centred around Pablo, is now working consciously and deliberately to disrupt, split, and break up the historically created cadres of Trotskyism in the various countries and to liquidate the Fourth International.

The Programme of Trotskyism

To show precisely what is involved, let us restate the fundamental principles on which the world Trotskyist movement is built:

- 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 fostered 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.

Pablo's Revisionism

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.

This course has already led to serious defections from the ranks of Trotskyism to the camp of Stalinism. The pro-Stalinist split in the Ceylon party is a warning to all Trotskyists everywhere of the tragic consequences of the illusions about Stalinism which Pabloism fosters.

In another document, we are submitting a detailed analysis of Pablo's revisionism. In this letter we will confine ourselves to some recent tests that show in the decisive field of action how far Pablo has gone in conciliation to Stalinism and how grave the danger is to the existence of the Fourth International.

With the death of Stalin, the Kremlin announced a

series of concessions in the USSR, none of them political in character. In place of characterizing these as nothing but part of a manoeuvre aimed at further retrenchment of the usurping bureaucracy and part of the preparation for a leading bureaucrat to assume the mantle of Stalin, the Pabloite faction took the concessions as good coin, painted them up as political concessions, and even projected the possibility of the 'sharing of power' by the Stalinist bureaucracy with the workers. (*Fourth International*, January-February, 1953, p. 13.)

The 'sharing of power' concept, promulgated most bluntly by Clarke, a high priest of the Pablo cult, was indirectly sanctioned as dogma by Pablo himself in an unanswered but obviously leading question: Will the liquidation of the Stalinist regime take the form, Pablo asks, 'of violent inter-bureaucratic struggles between elements who will fight for the status quo, if not for turning back, and the more and more numerous elements drawn by the powerful pressure of the masses?' (*Fourth International*, March-April, 1953, p. 39.)

This line fills the orthodox Trotskyist programme of political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy with a new content; namely, the revisionist position that the 'ideas' and 'programme' of Trotskyism will filter into and permeate the bureaucracy, or a decisive section of it, thus 'overthrowing' Stalinism in an unforeseen way.

In East Germany in June the workers rose against the Stalinist dominated government in one of the greatest demonstrations in the history of Germany. This was the first proletarian mass uprising against Stalinism since it usurped and consolidated power in the Soviet Union. How did Pablo respond to this epochal event?

Instead of clearly voicing the revolutionary political aspirations of the insurgent East German workers, Pablo covered up the counter-revolutionary Stalinist satraps who mobilized Soviet troops to put down the uprising. ('. . . the Soviet leaders and those of the various "People's Democracies" and the Communist Parties could no longer falsify or ignore the profound meaning of these events. They have been obliged to continue along the road of still more ample and genuine concessions to avoid risking alienating themselves forever from support by the masses and from provoking still stronger explosions. From now on they will not be able to stop half-way. They will be obliged to dole out concessions to avoid more serious explosions in the immediate future and if possible to effect a transition "in a cold fashion" from the present situation to a situation more tolerable for the masses.' (*Statement of the I.S. of the Fourth International*, Published in the *Militant*, July 6.)

Instead of demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops—the sole force upholding the Stalinist government—Pablo fostered the illusion that 'more ample and genuine concessions' would be forthcoming from the Kremlin's gauliteers. Could Moscow have asked for better assistance as it proceeded to monstrously falsify

the profound meaning of those events, branding the workers in revolt as 'fascists' and 'agents of American imperialism', and opening a wave of savage repression against them?

The French General Strike

In France, in August the greatest general strike in the history of the country broke out. Put in motion by the workers themselves against the will of their official leadership, it presented one of the most favourable openings in working class history for the development of a real struggle for power. Besides the workers, the farmers of France followed with demonstrations, indicating their strong dissatisfaction with the capitalist government.

The official leadership, both Social Democrats and Stalinists, betrayed this movement, doing their utmost to restrain it and avert the danger to French capitalism. In the history of betrayals it would be difficult to find a more abominable one if it is measured against the opportunity that was present.

How did the Pablo faction respond to this colossal event? They labelled the action of the Social Democrats a betrayal—but for the wrong reasons. The betrayal, they said, consisted of negotiating with the government behind the backs of the Stalinists. This betrayal, however, was a secondary one, deriving from their main crime, the refusal to set out on the road to taking power.

As for the Stalinists, the Pabloites covered up their betrayal. By that action they shared in the Stalinist betrayal. The sharpest criticism they found themselves capable of uttering against the counter-revolutionary course of the Stalinists, was to accuse them of 'lack' of policy.

This was a lie. The Stalinists had no 'lack' of policy. Their policy was to maintain the status quo in the interests of Kremlin foreign policy and thereby to help bolster tottering French capitalism.

But this was not all. Even for the internal party education of the French Trotskyists Pablo refused to characterize the Stalinist role as a betrayal. He noted 'the role of brake played, to one degree or another, by the leadership of the traditional organizations'—a betrayal is a mere 'brake'!—'but also their capacity—especially of the Stalinist leadership—to yield to the pressure of the masses when this pressure becomes powerful as was the case during these strikes.' (*Political Note No. 1.*)

One might expect this to be sufficient conciliation to Stalinism from a leader who has abandoned orthodox Trotskyism but still seeks the cover of the Fourth International. However, Pablo went still further.

The Infamous Leaflet

A leaflet of his followers addressed to the workers at the Renault plant in Paris declared that in the general strike the Stalinist leadership of the CGT (main French trade union federation) 'was correct in not introducing demands other than those wanted by the

workers'. This in face of the fact that the workers *by their actions* were demanding a Workers and Farmers Government.

Arbitrarily separating the Stalinist-headed unions from the Communist Party—evidence of the most mechanical thinking or evidence of deliberate design in covering up the Stalinists?—the Pabloites declared in their leaflet that so far as the significance of the strike and its perspectives were concerned 'this point only concerned the trade union secondarily. The criticism to make on this point does not apply to the CGT which is a trade union organization, which must first and foremost act as such, but to the parties whose role it was to point out the deep political significance of this movement and its consequences'. (Leaflet '*To the Workers' Organizations and to the Workers of Renault*', dated September 3, 1953. Signed by Frank, Mestre and Privas.)

In these statements we see the complete abandonment of everything Trotsky taught us about the role and the responsibilities of the trade unions in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism.

Then the Pabloite leaflet 'criticizes' the French Communist Party for its 'absence of line', for simply placing itself 'on the level of the trade union movement instead of explaining to the workers that this strike was an important stage (I) in the crisis of French society, the prelude (!) to a vast class struggle, where the problem of workers power would be posed in order to save the country from capitalist swindling and open the way to socialism.'

If the Renault workers were to believe the Pabloites, all that the perfidious French Stalinist bureaucrats were guilty of was a trace of syndicalism instead of a deliberate betrayal of the biggest general strike in the history of France.

Pablo's approval of the policy of the CGT leadership seems scarcely credible, yet there is the inescapable fact staring one in the face. In the biggest general strike ever seen in France, Pablo blandly puts as 'correct', a French version of Gompers' bourgeois policy of keeping the unions out of politics. And this in 1953!

If it is incorrect for the CGT leadership to advance political demands in consonance with objective needs, including formation of a Workers and Farmers Government, then why is the Socialist Workers Party demanding of the present-day Gompers of the American trade union movement that they organize a Labour Party? A Labour Party that would aim at putting a Workers and Farmers Government in power in the United States?

Pablo's rubber-stamp OK appears in a still stranger light when we remind ourselves that the CGT leadership happens to be highly political. At the slightest gesture from the Kremlin, it is prepared to call the workers out on no matter what wild political adventure. Recall, for instance, its role in the events initiated by the anti-Ridgway demonstrations last year. These Stalinist trade union figures did not hesitate to call for strikes to protest the arrest of Duclos, a leader

of the Communist Party.

The fact is that the CGT leadership revealed its highly political character once again in the general strikes. With all the skill of years of perfidy and double dealing, it deliberately tried to head off the workers, to stifle their initiative, to prevent the workers' political demands from breaking through. The Stalinist trade union leadership consciously betrayed. And it is this course of betrayal that Pablo calls 'correct'.

But even this does not complete the account. One of the principal aims of the Pabloite leaflet is to denounce French Trotskyists who conducted themselves in the Renault plant during the strike as genuine revolutionists. It specifically names two comrades who have 'been expelled from the Fourth International and its French Section for more than a year'. It states that this 'group has been expelled for reasons of indiscipline; and the orientation which it has followed, especially in the course of the last strike movement, is opposed to that actually defended by the PCI (French Section of the Fourth International)'. The reference to the 'group' is actually to the majority of the French Section of the Fourth International which was arbitrarily and unjustly expelled by Pablo.

Has the world Trotskyist movement ever before heard of such a scandal as officially denouncing Trotskyist militants to Stalinists and providing rationalizations to the workers for an abominable Stalinist betrayal?

It should be noted that the Pabloite denunciation of these comrades before the Stalinists follows the verdict of a workers' tribunal acquitting the Trotskyists in the Renault plant of slanders levelled at them by the Stalinists.

The American Pabloites

The test of these world events is sufficient, in our opinion, to indicate the depth of Pabloite conciliationism towards Stalinism. But we would like to submit for public inspection of the world Trotskyist movement some additional facts.

For over a year and a half, the Socialist Workers Party has been engaged in a struggle against a revisionist tendency headed by Cochran and Clarke. The struggle with this tendency has been one of the most severe in the history of our party. At bottom it is over the same fundamental questions that divided us from the Burnham-Schachtman group and the Morrow-Goldman group at the beginning and end of World War II. It is another attempt to revise and abandon our basic programme. It has involved the perspective of the American revolution, the character and role of the revolutionary party and its methods of organization, and the perspectives for the world Trotskyist movement.

During the post-war period a powerful bureaucracy consolidated itself in the American labour movement. This bureaucracy rests on a large layer of privileged, conservative workers who have been 'softened' by the conditions of war prosperity. This new privileged

layer was recruited in large measure from the ranks of former militant sectors of the working class, from the same generation that founded the CIO.

The relative security and stability of their living conditions have temporarily paralyzed the initiative and fighting spirit of those workers who previously were in the forefront of all militant class actions.

Cochranism is the manifestation of the pressure of this new labour aristocracy, with its petty-bourgeois ideology, upon the proletarian vanguard. The moods and tendencies of the passive, relatively satisfied layer of workers act as a powerful mechanism transmitting alien pressures into our own movement. The slogan of the Cochranites, 'Junk the old Trotskyism', expresses this mood.

The Cochranite tendency sees the powerful revolutionary potential of the American working class as some far-off prospect. They denounce as 'sectarian' the Marxist analysis which reveals the molecular processes creating new fighting regiments in the American proletariat.

Insofar as there are any progressive tendencies within the working class of the United States they see them only in the ranks or periphery of Stalinism and among 'sophisticated' union politicians—the rest of the class they consider so hopelessly dormant that they can be awakened only by the impact of atomic war.

Briefly, their position reveals: Loss of confidence in the perspective of the American revolution; loss of confidence in the role of the revolutionary party in general and the Socialist Workers Party in particular.

Features of Cochranism

As all the sections of the world movement well know from their own hard and difficult experiences, pressures exist far greater than prolonged war prosperity and the sweep of reaction such as has been bearing down upon us in the United States. But the factor that sustains cadres under the most difficult circumstances is the burning conviction of the theoretical correctness of our movement, the knowledge that they are the living means for advancing the historic mission of the working class, the understanding that to one degree or another the fate of humanity depends on what they do, the firm belief that whatever the momentary circumstances may be, the main line of historic development demands the creation of Leninist combat parties that will resolve the crisis of humanity through a victorious socialist revolution.

Cochranism is the substitution of scepticism and theoretical improvisations and journalist speculations for this orthodox Trotskyist world outlook. It is this that has made the struggle in the SWP irreconcilable in the same sense that the struggle with the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in 1939-40 was irreconcilable.

The Cochranites have manifested the following features in the course of the struggle:

- 1) Disrespect for party tradition and the historic mission of the party. Hardly an opportunity is lost by the Cochranites to denigrate, ridicule and preach

contempt for the 25-year tradition of American Trotskyism.

2) A tendency to replace principled Marxist politics with unprincipled combinations against the party 'regime'. Thus the Cochranite faction is composed of a bloc of contradictory elements. One group, centred mainly in New York, favours a kind of 'entry' tactic in the American Stalinist movement.

Another group, composed of conservatized union elements, centred primarily in Detroit, sees little to be gained by turning to the Stalinists. It bases its revisionist outlook on an overestimation of the stability and lasting power of the new labour bureaucracy.

Also attracted to Cochranism are individuals grown tired, who can no longer stand the pressures of the present adverse conditions and who are looking for a plausible rationalization with which to retire into inactivity.

The cement binding this unprincipled bloc is common hostility to orthodox Trotskyism.

3) A tendency to shift the party away from what our main arena must be in America, the politically unawakened workers of the mass production industries. The Cochranites, in effect, dropped the programme of transitional slogans and demands which the SWP has used as a bridge toward these workers and argued that the majority in continuing this course was adapting itself to the backwardness of the workers.

4) A conviction that all possibility of the American working class coming forward in radical opposition to American imperialism before the Third World War is ruled out.

5) Gross experimental theorizing with 'left' Stalinism that boils down to the extravagant belief that the Stalinists 'can no longer betray', that Stalinism includes a revolutionary side which makes it possible for the Stalinists to lead a revolution in the United States, in the process of which they would absorb Trotskyist 'ideas' so that the revolution would eventually 'right itself'.

6) Adaptation to Stalinism in the face of the new events. They support and defend the conciliation to Stalinism found in Pablo's interpretation of the downfall of Beria and the subsequent sweeping purges in the USSR. They repeat all the Pabloite arguments covering the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism in the great uprising of the East German workers and the French general strike. They even interpret the turn of American Stalinism toward the Democratic Party as a mere 'right oscillation' within a 'left turn'.

7) Contempt for the traditions of Leninism in questions of organization. For a time they attempted to set up 'dual-power' in the party. When they were rebuffed by the overwhelming majority of the party at the May 1953 Plenum, they agreed in writing to abide by the rule of the majority and the political line as decided by the Plenum. Subsequently, they broke their agreement, renewing their factional sabotage of party activities on a more feverish and hysterical basis than ever.

Cochranism, whose main features we have indicated above, was never more than a weak minority in the party. It would never have amounted to more than the most feeble and sickly expression of pessimism had it not been for the aid and encouragement it received from Pablo behind the backs of the party leadership.

Pablo's secret encouragement and support was exposed soon after our May Plenum, and since then Pablo has been openly collaborating with the revisionist faction in our party and inspiring them in their campaign of sabotage of party finances, disruption of party work and preparations for a split.

The Pablo-Cochran faction finally culminated this disloyal course with an organized boycott in New York of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration of the party which was combined with a wind-up rally in the New York municipal election campaign.

This treacherous, strike-breaking action constituted, in effect, an organized demonstration against the 25-year struggle of American Trotskyism, and, at the same time, an act of objective aid to the Stalinists who expelled the initiating nucleus of American Trotskyism in October 1928.

The organized boycott of this meeting was, in effect, a demonstration against the campaign of the Socialist Workers Party in the New York municipal election.

All who participated in this treacherous, anti-party action obviously consummated the split which they had long been preparing and forfeited all right to membership in our party.

Formally recording this fact, the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Plenum of the SWP suspended the National Committee members who organized the boycott and declared that all members of the Pablo-Cochran faction who participated in this treacherous, strike-breaking action or who refuse to disavow it have by that fact placed themselves outside the ranks of the SWP.

Methods of the Comintern

Pablo's duplicity in presenting one face to the leadership of the SWP while secretly collaborating with the revisionist Cochranite tendency is a method that is alien to the tradition of Trotskyism. But there is a tradition to which it does belong—Stalinism. Such devices, used by the Kremlin, were instrumental in corrupting the Communist International. Many of us had personal experience with all this in the 1923-28 period.

The evidence is now decisive that this way of operating is not an isolated aberration on the part of Pablo. A consistent pattern is apparent.

For instance, in one of the leading European sections of the Fourth International, an outstanding party leader received an order from Pablo, directing him to conduct himself as one 'who defends until the Fourth World Congress the majority line and the discipline of the International'. Along with the ultimatum Pablo threatened reprisals if his orders were not obeyed.

The 'majority' to which Pablo refers here is simply the modest label he places on himself and the small minority hypnotized by his revisionist novelties. Pablo's

new line is in violent contradiction to the basic programme of Trotskyism. It is only beginning to be discussed in many parts of the world Trotskyist movement. Not having been backed by a single Trotskyist organization, it does not constitute the approved official line of the Fourth International.

The first reports we have received indicate outrage at his high-handed attempt to foist his revisionist views on the worldwide organization without waiting for either discussion or a vote. We have already enough information to state that the Fourth International is certain to reject Pablo's line by an overwhelming majority.

Pablo's autocratic demand to a leader of a section of the Fourth International to refrain from criticizing Pablo's revisionist political line is bad enough. But Pablo did not stop there. While trying to gag this leader and prevent him from participating in a free discussion in which the rank and file might benefit from his experience, knowledge and insight, Pablo proceeded to intervene organizationally, attempting to crystallize a minority revisionist faction to conduct war on the leadership of the section.

This procedure is out of the foul tradition of the Comintern as it underwent degeneration under the influence of Stalinism. If there were no other issue than this, it would be necessary to fight Pabloism to a finish to save the Fourth International from internal corruption.

Such tactics have an obvious purpose. They are part of the preparation for a coup by the Pabloite minority. Utilizing Pablo's administrative control, they hope to impose his revisionist line on the Fourth International and wherever it is resisted to reply by splits and expulsions.

This Stalinist organizational course began, as is now quite clear, with Pablo's brutal abuse of administrative control in his disruptive campaign against the majority of the French section of the Fourth International more than a year and a half ago.

By fiat of the International Secretariat, the elected majority of the French section was forbidden to exercise its rights to lead the political and propaganda work of the party. Instead, the political bureau and the press were put under the control of a 'parity commission'.

At the time, we deeply disapproved this arbitrary action by which a minority was used to arbitrarily overturn a majority. As soon as we heard about it, we communicated our protest to Pablo. However, we must admit that we made an error in not taking more vigorous action. This error was due to insufficient appreciation on our part of the real issues involved. We thought the differences between Pablo and the French section were tactical and this led us to side with Pablo, despite our misgivings about his organizational procedure, when, after months of disruptive factional struggle, the majority was expelled.

But at bottom the differences were programmatic in character. The fact is that the French comrades of the majority saw what was happening more clearly

than we did. The Eighth Congress of their party declared that 'a grave danger menaces the future and even the existence of the Fourth International . . . Revisionist conceptions, born of cowardice and petty-bourgeois impressionism have appeared within its leadership. The still great weakness of the International, cut off from the life of the sections, has momentarily facilitated the installation of a system of personal rule, basing itself and its anti-democratic methods on revisionism of the Trotskyist programme and abandonment of the Marxist method.' (*La Verite*, September 18, 1952.)

The whole French situation must be re-examined in the light of subsequent developments. The role the majority of the French section played in the recent general strike demonstrated in the most decisive way that they know how to uphold the fundamental principles of orthodox Trotskyism. The French section of the Fourth International was unjustly expelled. The French majority, grouped around the paper *La Verite*, are the real Trotskyists of France and are so openly recognized by the SWP.

Particularly revolting is the slanderous misrepresentation Pablo has fostered of the political position of the Chinese section of the Fourth International. They have been pictured by the Pablo faction as 'sectarians', as 'fugitives from a revolution'.

Contrary to the impression deliberately created by the Pablo faction, the Chinese Trotskyists acted as genuine representatives of the Chinese proletariat. Through no fault of theirs they have been singled out as victims of the Mao regime in the way that Stalin singled out for execution the entire generation of Lenin's Bolsheviks in the USSR, emulating the Noskes and Scheidemanns of Germany who singled out the Luxemburgs and Liebknechts of the 1918 revolution for execution. But Pablo's line of conciliationism toward Stalinism leads him inexorably to touch up the Mao regime *couleur de rose* while putting grey tints on the firm, principled stand of our Chinese comrades.

What to do

To sum up: The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organizationally. The Pablo faction has demonstrated that it will not permit democratic decisions truly reflecting majority opinion to be reached. They demand complete submission to their criminal policy. They are determined to drive all orthodox Trotskyists out of the Fourth International or to muzzle and handcuff them.

Their scheme has been to inject their Stalinist conciliationism piecemeal and likewise in piecemeal fashion, get rid of those who come to see what is happening and raise objections. That is the explanation for the strange ambiguity about many of the Pabloite formulations and diplomatic evasions.

Up to now the Pablo faction has had a certain success with this unprincipled and Machiavellian manoeuvrism. But the qualitative point of change has

been reached. The political issues have broken through the manoeuvres and the fight is now a show-down.

If we may offer advice to the sections of the Fourth International from our enforced position outside the ranks, we think the time has come to act and act decisively. The time has come for the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the Fourth International to

assert their will against Pablo's usurpation of authority.

They should in addition safeguard the administration of the affairs of the Fourth International by removing Pablo and his agents from office and replacing them with cadres who have proved in action that they know how to uphold orthodox Trotskyism and keep the movement on a correct course both politically and organizationally.

With fraternal Trotskyist greetings,
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DOCUMENT No. 7**PABLO 'ANSWERS' THE OPEN LETTER**

By Joseph Hansen

Pablo, who was elected Secretary of the Fourth International and charged with the duty of preserving the integrity of the Trotskyist programme of world socialist revolution, but who utilized his position to attempt to foist a revisionist programme on the organisation founded by Leon Trotsky, held a three-day meeting in Paris at the end of December with the principal European lieutenants of his faction.

He took a series of measures that completely confirm the warning issued by the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the open letter addressed to Trotskyists throughout the world (see *The Militant*, November 16, 1953) about the danger represented by the uncontrolled, personal faction organised in secret by the secretary in whom the Trotskyist movement placed too much trust.

In its open letter, the SWP warned: 'The Pablo faction has demonstrated that it will not permit democratic decisions truly reflecting majority opinion to be reached. They demand complete submission to their criminal policy. They are determined to drive all orthodox Trotskyists out of the Fourth International or to muzzle and handcuff them.'

And that is precisely what the Pabloite leaders did at their meeting. They demanded complete submission to their criminal policy under threat of expulsion from the Fourth International.

The Pabloite faction leaders labelled their meeting the 'Fourteenth Plenum of the International Executive Committee' although no one was present outside of themselves and none of the major sections of the Fourth International had representatives present. Then they proceeded to pass a 'unanimous' motion without precedent in the Fourth International:

'To suspend from membership in the International all the members of the IEC who subscribed to the split appeal which appeared in the *Militant* of November 16, 1953, as well as the appeal of the "Committee of the Fourth International", or who approved it and are trying to rally on this base the sections of the International.

'To suspend from their posts of leadership in the sections all those who signed these appeals, or approved them and are trying to rally on this base the sections of the International.

'To refer the final decision on these cases to the Fourth World Congress.'

What the Open Letter Did

The open letter, which this fiat refers to as a 'split appeal'—although it was nothing of the kind—did three things:

(1) On the political level, it called the attention of Trotskyists everywhere to the fact that in flagrant violation of the programme of the Fourth International the Pablo faction had covered up and apologised for the Stalinist betrayal of the French general strike in

August; had failed to call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany when they were used to crush the June 17 workers' uprising against the Stalinist gauleiters; had painted up the treacherous temporary concessions granted by these besieged rulers; had similarly painted up the concessions deceptively promised by the Malenkov regime to allay mass unrest in the Soviet Union; and had projected the possibility of self-reform of the Stalinist bureaucracy and even the Soviet workers sharing power with it.

(The revisionist 'sharing of power' concept was advanced by Clarke, a Pabloite high priest, in the magazine, *Fourth International*. When Clarke was called to order by M. Stein and the editorial board, Pablo's response was an attack—on M. Stein and the editorial board.)

(2) On the organisational level, the latter called public attention to the secret faction Pablo had organised in the Fourth International as part of his preparation for a 'coup'. It noted that in line with this aim, Pablo had unjustly expelled the majority of the French section of the Fourth International and committed other acts of a similar character in flagrant violation of the organisational methods bequeathed the Fourth International by Leon Trotsky.

The letter charged that Pablo was systematically injecting Stalinist conciliationism into the organisation, utilising 'piecemeal' tactics for the operation, and in similar piecemeal fashion trying to 'get rid those who come to see what is happening and raise objections'.

(3) On what to do about this, the letter urged the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the Fourth International to assert their will against Pablo's usurpation of authority, to remove Pablo and his agents from office and 'to replace them with cadres who have proved in action that they know how to uphold orthodox Trotskyism and keep the movement on a correct course both politically and organisationally'.

These conclusions about Pablo's organisational methods and the danger they represent to the Fourth International were not reached lightly. For a time, some of the facts seemed incredible to us, but they turned out nevertheless to be only too real. Here are three typical ones:

(1) In May 1953, almost two years after the event, a shocking example of how the Pabloites operate came to light. One of their leaders revealed that at the Third World Congress of the Fourth International held in August-September 1951, certain criticisms of some of the formulations in the documents under discussion were sent in by the New Zealand section. But they never reached the delegates for consideration, the reason being that this Pabloite leader, in his own words, 'burned' them.

(2) Some months ago, Burns, one of the outstanding leaders of the British section of the Fourth International, indicated his sympathy with the political

position of the majority of the SWP in its struggle with the revisionist minority headed by Cochran. Burns also indicated that he disagreed with certain revisionist views held by Pablo.

He was ordered by Pablo to keep his mouth shut and not reveal his differences to the British rank and file. When Burns refused to obey this Stalinist-type ukase, Pablo immediately organised a 'with Pablo' faction in England that sought to cut Burns down. To accomplish this aim the faction did not hesitate to publicly violate party discipline in the pattern of the revisionist Cochranite faction secretly fostered and inspired by Pablo in the Socialist Workers Party.

(3) The Pablo faction misrepresented the hounded and persecuted Chinese section of the Fourth International as 'sectarians' and 'fugitives from a revolution'. The truth is that they participated in the revolution against Chiang Kai-shek as revolutionary socialist representatives of the Chinese working class and are stout defenders of the New China in its struggle against world imperialism.

Pablo even went so far as to suppress two of the appeals of the heroic Chinese comrades for help against assassinations carried out against them by Mao's secret police. We do not know whether Pablo burned them as the New Zealand criticisms were burned. But up to this day he has maintained a guilty silence about them. They were made public only after they reached *The Militant* by an indirect route, appearing in the issues of October 19 and November 2.

Pablo did not care to see the appeals published, perhaps because they clearly indicated the genuine position of the Chinese Trotskyists, perhaps because they placed the Mao regime in a sinister light for murdering revolutionary socialists.

These three cases are all that space permits me to cite. They should prove sufficient, however, to give every militant trained in Trotsky's school an idea of the grounds that led the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to raise the alarm and the British, French, Swiss and New Zealand sections to set up an International Committee to struggle for the life of the Fourth International against ruin by Pabloism.

'Irremovable' Secretary

The reaction of the secretly formed Pablo faction to the political and organisational charges levelled by these two bodies and the remedial measures they propose, was, as indicated above, to further abuse its control of the administrative apparatus of the Fourth International by suspending from membership all who subscribed to the critical document, honestly and openly presented by the Socialist Workers Party, or the declaration of the International Committee of the Fourth International that raises the banner of orthodox Trotskyism.

In addition to actual subscribers to these two documents, the Pablo action ordered all leading Trotskyists suspended who have the temerity to

approve these documents or seek to rally support for them.

This means that Pablo has now in effect declared that serious political differences with him or his arbitrary interpretations of programme, or an effort to replace him in office, constitute crimes equivalent to organised sabotage, calling for summary expulsion from the Fourth International.

He has in effect, in the well-known tradition of Stalin, declared himself irremovable, even though he represents only a minority faction. In the same familiar tradition he has declared for monolithism in the Fourth International—the monolithism of a personal cult.

In accordance with this programme of utter perversion of everything that Trotsky stood for, the leaders of the Pablo faction issued Papal bulls from their December meeting, labelling them 'resolutions' of the 'International Executive Committee'. These edicts of the cult head declared the Socialist Workers Party beyond the pale and also excommunicated the overwhelming majority of the British section from the Fourth International. Although the Swiss section was not specifically named as also expelled, the blanket resolution excommunicating all who disagree with Pablo politically applies to them too.

By such desperate organisational methods, borrowed right out of the corrupt school of Stalinism, Pablo hopes to maintain the personal control he usurped of the administrative apparatus.

Typical Pabloite Propaganda

To what lengths the Pabloites are prepared to go to maintain the pretence that their revisionist views and Stalinist methods represent the views and will of the majority of the Fourth International can be judged from their latest propaganda about the British section.

There the Pabloites ended up in the minority as they did first in France and then the United States. Nevertheless, they are circulating the false story that the British section is 'with Pablo'.

This is a lie. Pablo read the rank-and-file-elected leadership out of office, appointed a personal lieutenant to take over like a receiver sent by a trade union czar to handle a rebellious local, and thus converted his minority in England into an 'official' British 'section'. Naturally, the newly born 'section', small and despondent though it be, raised an 'overwhelming' majority of hands for their Pope in Paris. Thus the cult could claim the British 'section' was 'with Pablo', and could also claim they were not lying about it.

In England the rank-and-file majority only laughed at this flimsy ruse, as it served no political end there except to further expose Pablo's affinity for Stalinist methods. Elsewhere it seems to have taken in some people for the time being. The Shachtmanite Labour Action, for instance, which was chosen by the American Pabloites as a sympathetic forum for their first public declaration, printed as good coin the misinformation that 'the size of each group is approximately equal at the moment'.

'Strong' Moves

These edicts of excommunication undoubtedly appear to Pablo as 'strong' moves, the strongest possible answer to the political fire levelled at him in the letter of the Socialist Workers Party and the appeal of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The fact is that such stringent measures are simply the organisational reflection of Pablo's political line which is to liquidate the Fourth International as an independent organisation. To dissolve the Fourth International politically, it is necessary to first break up its cadres by expelling them, or reducing them to silence if not acquiescence. In this way, Pablo seeks to smash those organisations where the orthodox Trotskyists are the strongest and the resistance to his revisionist course the greatest.

Cochran, under the slogan 'junk the old Trotskyism', laid down a similar tactical line for the American con-

tingent of the Pablo cult. The tactics included organised sabotage of party finances and party activities. To 'junk the old Trotskyism', especially the concept of an independent revolutionary socialist party, you first have to break up the existing organisation.

These moves by both Cochran and Pablo thus represent, in the form required by their faction, the substitution of organisational manoeuvres for principled politics, the classic symptom of a petty-bourgeois tendency.

This becomes deadly clear on examination of Pablo's political explanation of the crisis now occurring in the Fourth International, for this explanation is so shallow, so self-contradictory and so evasive that it amounts to no more than pretence—a cover for the organisational manoeuvres which he really counts on to save his political neck and his administrative post.

New readers of *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL* will find it useful to refer to the following articles in back numbers of *Labour Review* and *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL* which have dealt with the Cuban question and associated problems. Together with the documents here brought together, they show how absurd is the suggestion of our avoiding discussion of Cuba. Also, they bring out very clearly the need to establish a correct theoretical framework for the discussion of each question.

1. 'World Prospect for Socialism'—resolution of the Socialist Labour League covering the general perspectives of the international revolutionary movement. The general line of this resolution was adopted by the International Committee of the Fourth International in 1961. *Labour Review*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (Winter 1961).
2. 'Cuba: The First Stage' by F. Rodriguez, translation of an article in *La Vérité* (Autumn 1961). Written in April 1961, it provides essential background material and analysis of the first years of the Cuban Revolution. *Labour Review*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Spring 1962).
3. 'A caricature of Marxism'—editorial in the same issue of *Labour Review*, dealing with current writings of Pablo on Cuba and Algeria.
4. 'Revisionism and the Fourth International' by C. Slaughter. Based on the report on international problems at the Socialist Labour League Conference, June 1963. Especially concerned with the speech by Castro after the dismissal of Escalante. *Labour Review*, Vol. VII, No. 5 (Summer 1963).
5. 'The Future of the Fourth International', report of C. Slaughter to the conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International, September 1963; deals with the theory and method behind the 'reunification' of 1963, and the whole approach of revisionism and Marxism to the building of an international revolutionary movement. *FOURTH INTERNATIONAL*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Spring 1964).

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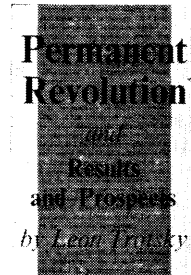


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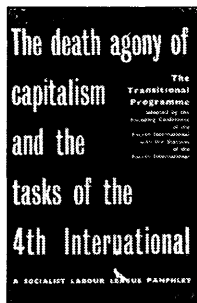
The Draft Programme of the Communist International by Leon Trotsky

This is part of the author's criticism of the draft programme submitted by the Executive Committee of the Third (Communist) International to the 6th Congress of the Comintern which was held in July 1928. The manuscript of that criticism was written by Trotsky during his exile in Alma-Ata (Central Asia). It was sent to the Congress in Moscow together with an appeal for reinstatement into the party from which he had been expelled a few months before by the Stalinist faction in 1927. Stalin and his supporters had invented the theory of 'Socialism in one country', which was made party policy in 1925 and converted into an article of faith to be defended by the world institutions of Stalinism. It is this theory which Trotsky criticises in these pages. 64 pages, 1/-

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