

706 Broadway, 8th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10003

May 1, 1974

Jack Barnes

Dear Jack,

The enclosed two letters are for the steering committee of the faction.

Whereas in the case of the letter of December 20 suggesting a stronger internal structure for the faction, no reply in writing was asked for and none was received, in this case the two of us would appreciate a reply of some kind.

Comradely,

Davis K.A.
Bill Gotthelb

New York, N.Y. 10003
May 1, 1974

International Steering Committee
Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

Dear comrades,

The enclosed letter to the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction explains itself. We propose that it be published as an internal discussion document of the faction and that it be made available to all faction members. We are considering also circulating it among other members of the faction in order to obtain additional signatures.

You will note that while the letter specifies several programmatic questions that the faction, in our view, must answer in its political platform, it does not specify the answers to these questions. The letter limits itself to the organizational question, the urgent necessity for the faction to transform itself organizationally so that it operates as a faction rather than as a tendency.

We would like to inform you in advance of the answers we propose to these programmatic questions, so that you can consider them for possible adoption by the faction when it begins to function as a democratic-centralist organization. We think that there is general agreement on most of these questions, but we also believe that discussion of them in the ranks is an unavoidable and absolute necessity because of the urgency that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, in this exceptional situation of crisis in the world movement, take correct positions on each of these burning questions.

We will propose that the faction adopt the following political positions:

(1) For a political revolution in China, a deformed workers state, against the bureaucratic regime headed by the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party. For unconditional defense of the social gains of the Chinese revolution. Adoption of the general line of the draft resolution submitted by seven members of the United Secretariat, "Two Assessments of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Balance Sheet."

(2) For a political revolution in North Vietnam, no confidence in the Vietnamese Communist Party, a Stalinist party; for a Vietnamese section of the Fourth International. No characterization of such agreements as the Vietnam and Laos "peace" agreements, signed in the context of the detente and under conditions of continued imperialist presence, as "victories"; continued defense of the socialist revolution in Indochina and the right of the peoples there to self-determination, as our main task. Support for the general line of the articles on Indochina by Horowitz, Feldman and Johnson.

(3) Rejection of any support for such bourgeois class-collaborationist formations as the Unidad Popular of Chile, a popular front, on grounds of principle. An electoral front open to capitalist parties is a capitalist coalition and can never be supported in elections.

These three points must be added to the platform of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction as soon as possible, in the present crisis situation. It is especially clear that they are central and burning issues in the international discussion because the first two have been the subjects of public polemics in the ISR by Tom Kerry, Fred Feldman and George Johnson (in addition to Education For Socialists Bulletins by Tom Kerry and Peng Shu-tse), and the third was the subject of a public polemic against Tariq Ali by Doug Jenness at an educational conference in New York. These issues, especially Vietnam and popular frontism, were central in the internal discussions prior to the SWP convention in December, at least in the New York Local. The faction can no longer avoid placing the principled questions of Stalinism and popular frontism at the center of the international debate, whatever the consequences.

In our opinion, however, the consequences could only be beneficial from the point of view of the immediate interests of the faction, as well as those of the world movement. On each of these questions, the present majority is divided, despite sometimes having even taken a formal position. If the faction makes its position clear, it can only make more apparent the unprincipled nature of the majority bloc and bring about disputes inside it. This, in turn, would make it extremely difficult for the splitters to force a wider split.

An added benefit, from the principled point of view, would be to make clear that the majority faction is not only ultraleft, but opportunist as well.

The argument that broadening the focus of the LTF's platform would increase the possibility of a wider split is thus entirely in error. Centering on these questions would make it more difficult, rather than less, for the extreme revisionist and liquidationist wing of the present majority to force acceptance of its positions on other wings. But if we pretend that these are secondary issues, the majority can quietly unite -- inevitably on the basis of the program of the dominant extreme wing.

It might be argued that the faction cannot add these points to its platform at this time, because it must be prepared to assume the public duties of a world organization. But in that case, it would be all the more urgent to take correct positions on these burning questions and all others. Otherwise, how could we wage a public struggle against sectarian and opportunist groupings, including perhaps a split-

tist wing of the present majority that succeeded in widening the split? How could we even claim to be a principled international grouping?

Even without the danger of a widened split and without the danger of sections supporting popular fronts or refusing to call for political revolutions in China and North Vietnam, it would be necessary for the world movement to take a clear position on these three issues. How could one possibly argue for a political revolution effectively if one called the party at the head of the Chinese or North Vietnamese state "centrist," i.e., reformable? Only if they are Stalinist parties does political revolution make any sense at all. If they are centrist parties, then the logical conclusion is to have some confidence in these parties to lead the political revolution. Some majority comrades seem to have this very position. This would be no less harmful than calling for self-reform of the deformed state. The question of Stalinism is not at all separable from the question of political revolution, when we consider it objectively.

The same is true for the question of popular frontism. Some comrades of the majority would agree with us that it would be wrong to vote for the Union of the Left or the Unidad Popular, saying at the same time that these are not popular fronts but rather reformist united fronts. But such a position puts a living Trotskyist party (as opposed to a salon intellectual whose main occupation is reconciling what is irreconcilable) in an impossible position. If the Unidad Popular is of the working class, why not vote for it? This is the question that thinking workers will ask us. A position failing to call a popular front by its name is just as bad as a position of voting for it, when the position is put into practice. Such a position begins by sowing confusion and ends by being a transmission belt to support for popular fronts.

Thus, it is necessary that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction include these three points in its platform, especially since they have been discussed already, including in public.

There are, in addition, several further points on which an international faction has no choice but to take a clear and correct position. If it does not do so, it cannot possibly function as a faction. We will propose the following points for adoption by the faction as soon as possible, following a democratic discussion in which the ranks of the faction will participate:

(4) Rejection of programmatic united fronts with ultraleft, Maoist and centrist groups unless the program is specified. When we support reformist parties in elections, we do it as a class vote but on the basis of our program. When we support other tendencies to the left of reformist parties, we do it critically, on the basis of our own program, also, but we may in addition conclude temporary blocs on the

basis of a specific written program which is made public.

The Ligue Communiste of France, on the other hand, before its dissolution, made the mistake not only of supporting the Union of the Left popular front, but also of supporting Lutte Ouvriere on the sole basis that it was a "far left" group that rejected the peaceful road. Likewise, the IMG of Britain supported the Labour Party without calling it a class alternative, and made the same error as the French comrades had made in relation to a "far left" party in their support for Healy's group. Bob Purdie of the IMG said in Red Weekly of March 18 that the IMG supported the Labour Party because its victory "would be seen as a victory and would increase confidence and combativity." (emphasis added) Thus, the IMG employed the formally correct tactic of critical support to the Labour Party, but did so on the same opportunist basis on which the Ligue Communiste had supported the Union of the Left. It isn't any surprise, therefore, that the IMG simultaneously supported the Healyite WRP not on the basis of a principled agreement or on the basis of criticism of Healy's non-revolutionary program, but rather on the basis that the Healyite party was "revolutionary"!

Now, in the French elections, Rouge is calling for a united far-left election campaign, but proposes no program for it and does not indicate that one will be necessary. These errors of principle deserve the sharpest possible condemnation by the LTF. They not only liquidate the program of Trotskyism into the petty-bourgeois program of centrism, but, like the orientation to the "new mass vanguard," also tend to liquidate the cadres of the Fourth International into a petty-bourgeois milieu of sectarianism, separated from the real-life experience of the working class.

(5) The adoption of a program for political revolution in Cuba. Not only the forms, but also the content of workers democracy are lacking in Cuba. Ranks have been introduced into the army, fostering a privileged officer caste; piecemeal has been introduced as a "socialist" measure; Castro has publicly indicated that bureaucratic privilege in salaries will be instituted on the lower levels, while it is already known that privilege exists on higher levels. The Castroist leadership has adopted the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country," proclaiming loudly that Cuba is a socialist society. Despite the catastrophe in Chile, following numerous other defeats and disasters, Castro continues the Stalinist foreign policy of support to the Peruvian military government and other capitalist regimes and support to the extension of the detente to all countries of the world. In this way, he serves directly the interests of imperialism in general and U.S. imperialism in particular, as the U.S. press has noted with satisfaction.

The only way to workers democracy in Cuba and a revolutionary foreign policy is political revolution, the first

step being the construction of a revolutionary party whose aim would be to replace the Stalinist Cuban Communist Party at the head of the socialist revolution in order to prevent its further betrayal. The Fourth International, while continuing the unconditional defense of the Cuban revolution, must also begin the long-overdue task of preparing the programmatic and organizational basis for a Cuban section.

Thus, in addition to repudiating the Castroist line adopted at the 1969 World Congress, the Fourth International must revise and update its positions taken at the 1965 congress and the 1963 Reunification congress. The 1965 congress, for example, stated that the Latin American "vanguard," implicitly including the Castroists, overcame its errors in guerrilla struggle, and "little by little a more mature conception of armed struggle displaced this putschist tendency, a conception fusing guerrilla struggle, armed mass struggle and the organization of the masses in pursuit of economic demands." (ISR, Spring 1966, p. 42.) The same 1965 congress decided that Castroism, despite the inclusion of the Cuban CP into the world current led by Moscow, was "an autonomous and fundamentally revolutionary current of the Communist movement owing ideological allegiance to neither Peking nor Moscow. They have proved this in all the fields that are decisive in characterizing a revolutionary tendency..." (ibid., p. 84.) The 1963 "16 points," on which Reunification was based, stated, more prudently, that the "exact form" of the Cuban state "is yet to be settled," and made no direct characterization of Castroism, while the document passed at the 1963 congress merely speculated hopefully about "the infusion of Trotskyist concepts in this new Castroist current." ("Dynamics of World Revolution Today," p. 17.) But in 1966 Castro made a vicious public attack on Trotskyism.

To say the least, none of these documents is adequate today as a guide for a world Trotskyist organization on the question of Cuba and Castroism. They must be corrected and brought up to date. We must carry out to its logical conclusion the task outlined by Peng Shu-tse in "Return to the Road of Trotskyism" (1969), which pointed out that the guerrilla warfare strategy "is not an alternative strategy to the peaceful-road-to-socialism strategy advocated by the Stalinists, but ... will only help the opportunism of the Stalinists as well as American imperialism," and called on the world movement to "thoroughly criticize all the Cuban leadership's weaknesses."

The publication in the internal bulletin of a document calling for political revolution in Cuba by Comrade Upandranath Roy of India, who is rumored to be a member of the LTF, and the decision of the present majority to propose a debate or discussion on Cuba for the coming year, make it essential for the LTF to take the correct position on this important question.

(6) Instead of an orientation toward a "new mass van-

guard" composed of petty-bourgeois and student layers as well as Maoist, centrist and sectarian currents, the world movement must orient toward the workers, especially through their mass trade union organizations and their political parties. Special attention must be paid to the social-democratic and Stalinist parties, as we can expect differentiations and crises inside them, reflecting the growing instability of the world economy. The "new mass vanguard" orientation is in reality a fundamental deviation from the Trotskyist proletarian orientation and from Point 5 of "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," the basis of the 1963 Reunification, which stated in part, "The Trotskyist movement recognizes that the main task is not simply to wage literary war on reformism and Stalinism, but to actually win these socialist-and Communist-minded workers [of the mass reformist parties] to the program and organization of revolutionary Marxism."

A correct proletarian orientation would include an orientation toward the youth, as outlined in the 1969 resolution, "The Worldwide Radicalization of Youth and the Tasks of the Fourth International," and a tactical orientation toward tendencies moving in the direction of Trotskyism. It would have as a guide the second section of "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," in which Comrade Peng wrote: "Our orientation toward the working class must, above all, be concretely based on our work in the trade unions... Only with such a concrete plan of orientation toward the working class can we envisage the construction of a mass revolutionary party capable of taking power."

(7) For participation in the nationalist movements in the colonial world and movements of the oppressed nationalities in all countries, driven forward by the progressive nationalist sentiments of the masses. While participating in these movements to advance them, the vanguard party must always maintain its organizational and ideological independence as the representative of the working class. The party must at the same time support the progressive democratic demands of all non-proletarian sectors of the popular masses, which imperialism in its death agony is increasingly unable to grant.

(8) For participation in the women's liberation movement and recognition of the important role of mass feminist sentiment among women in bringing them toward revolutionary conclusions. The world party cannot face the crises of the future without addressing the problems of more than one-half of humanity struggling for its basic human and democratic rights.

(9) For sections of the Fourth International in each country of the Middle East, whose program will include the early abolition of artificial national frontiers imposed by imperialism. For unconditional support to the Arab side

in any war to regain land seized by Israel. Unconditional support to the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their homeland and basic human dignity. Support to the slogan, "For a democratic, secular Palestine," while pointing out that this can only come about through a socialist revolution and a socialist Middle East. No confidence in the program of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships such as Fateh. Opposition to military tactics such as terrorism when used as a substitute for mass action by the Palestinian and Arab peoples. Electoral support to Rakah, the Israeli CP, only as a workers party, not as an "anti-Zionist" party. Against the slogan of Jewish self-determination in the Arab East in any form.

Comradely,

Bill Gottlieb

Bill Gottlieb

David Keil

David Keil

(Lower Manhattan branch, New York Local)

cc: Peng Shu-tse
Dennis Richter

To the Steering Committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist
Faction

Dear comrades,

The world Trotskyist movement has now been plunged into the worst crisis in its history. The organizational crisis was recognized in 1973 after it was learned that the "IEC Majority Tendency" was in reality a secret faction, and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was proclaimed. Meanwhile, the Argentine split was extended to many other countries. By the time of the world congress, a full 114 of the 270 mandates (42%) were from countries where open splits have occurred along factional lines. The publication of revisionist positions and the carrying out of terrorist actions have necessitated public polemics against comrades of the Fourth International. Thus, it is clear that a de facto split, unprepared and hence not principled, already exists in the world movement, and has existed for some time with a tendency only to widen.

It is well known that a wing of the present majority has been working toward further widening and even completing this split. This wing has apparently won control in the majority tendency and has effectively excluded the LTF from participation in the Bureau of the United Secretariat, the day-to-day working body of the world center. Members of the Internationalist Tendency in New York are organizing deliberate open violations of discipline as provocations, claiming brazenly to have the authority of the world movement, in an obviously coordinated attempt to force their own expulsion and, they hope, a complete split.

The basic source of this organizational crisis is the flight from Marxism by the central leadership of the Fourth International, the leaders of the present majority tendency. This was most clearly expressed by the adoption, at the Ninth World Congress in 1969, of a resolution on Latin America which outlined a program and conception of "armed struggle" which came not from the arsenal of Marxism but from that of Castroism and, in the last analysis, of petty-bourgeois anarchism. At that time, there was every reason to hope that the leadership of the International might learn from its error. But in spite of the disaster in Bolivia and the fiasco of the official section in Argentina, it learned nothing. On the contrary, it deepened and extended the error geographically. This bankrupt strategy has now been extended to Europe, as is vividly illustrated by the majority's attitude toward the assassination of Franco's right-hand man, Carrero Blanco.

But the deviations are by no means limited to those of an "ultraleft" nature. The majority leaders have tail-ended world Stalinism in declaring the betrayal of Vietnam, organized by Moscow and Peking on behalf of Washington, to be a

"victory." One of them, Pierre Rousset, has written a book that, judging from his contribution to the ISR, is an apology for Vietnamese Stalinism. Chinese Stalinism has been prettified as "centrism," and critical support has been extended to Mao's bureaucratic purge known as the "Cultural Revolution." In the March, 1973 parliamentary elections in France, the Ligue Communiste (now dissolved) extended critical support to the bourgeois popular front formation, the Union of the Left, leading the French section to urge a vote for some members of the "Left Radical" party, a bourgeois party. Related to this has been the discovery that the government of the late Salvador Allende was not really a popular front, at least not during certain periods, such as when the military was in Allende's government! Ernest Mandel has "discovered" that the semi-colonial countries can achieve their full national independence within the framework of the world imperialist system. Pierre Frank states that there is no such thing as political principles.

The present majority has adopted an orientation toward a "new mass vanguard," which is pronounced capable of being transformed into an "adequate instrument." In reality, the turn toward this so-called vanguard is a turn away from the workers, just as the class struggle in Europe is sharpening, as can be seen by the recent events in Britain and the more recent upheaval in Portugal. The talk of an "adequate instrument" implies a repudiation of the Leninist combat party, which is only natural once one has abandoned a proletarian Marxist orientation. Everywhere the majority is turning away from mass struggle, whether of the workers or of their allies. Instead, its orientation is to the world of "far left" sects made up of petty-bourgeois intellectuals divorced from the real life of the working class of their countries. This is best illustrated by the practice in France and Britain of giving electoral support, on no clear programmatic basis, to any group that is "left" of the Stalinists, no matter what their program is or how slight their significance in the political life of the nation and its proletariat.

Thus it is clear that, in addition to having the most dangerous possible organizational stance, the present majority faction is based on a full political program which, in its every aspect, is irreconcilable with the program of Marxism.

Under conditions of increasing liquidation of the program and organization of Trotskyism by the present majority and the ever-widening split in the world movement, it is urgent that immediate steps be taken to prevent the split from being widened further and to wage the sharpest possible political and organizational struggle against the liquidators of Trotskyism. It has become absolutely necessary that the Marxist wing of the international movement, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, weld itself into a genuine, democratic-centralist faction with a program to return the world movement to a proletarian orientation with a Marxist program.

By its very nature, a faction differs from a tendency, both by its organizational forms and by the tasks it sets itself. A tendency is simply a loose grouping of militants around a few points. Members of a tendency don't call into question the proletarian nature of the politics of those they oppose and do not challenge their ability to lead a Trotskyist organization. Comrades form a faction, on the other hand, only when they have no confidence whatsoever in the other comrades and wish to reject their entire political program. A faction is "a party within a party," and a faction declaration is a declaration of war. Faction fights are always, in the final analysis, reflections of the class struggle. For these reasons, a faction, in contrast to a tendency, demands a democratic-centralist organization of its own. It is in this way that a fuller program can be worked out and an effective struggle can be waged. Factions need not be politically monolithic. On the contrary, tendencies can exist within factions.

The decision to transform the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency into a faction was a sad necessity; the action of August, 1973, corresponded to the objective requirements of the situation. Unfortunately, however, the LTF has not become a truly democratic-centralist faction with a full program and an appropriate stance. The faction lacks an internal discussion bulletin, leading to democratic decision-making meetings, or an elected leadership. It has taken no position on a number of important issues and continues to base itself on the single issue of guerrilla warfare and "minority violence." In the SWP, for example, the vote for delegates to the December, 1973, convention was based solely on approval of the "Balance Sheet" resolution and rejection of the central IEC Majority resolutions.

It might be objected that adopting a full program would make a total split in the world movement more likely and perhaps shatter the unity of the LTF. Such objections, however, would be mistaken. As Jack Barnes explained at the August, 1973, convention in Ohio, a democratic-centralist faction can at certain times be the only hope for maintaining organizational unity with the opponent faction. Today is one of those times. In the present situation, the faction can become a stronger pole of attraction for the intermediate (Kompas and "Against-The-Stream") tendencies if it offers a full alternative program to the liquidationist majority program. Thus it can force the majority to hold back from a split. A correct program, defended in a disciplined and aggressive way, can even attract sectors of the present majority bloc or at least bring about disputes inside this bloc which could hinder the impulse to split.

A good historical analogy is the decision of Lenin to form the Bolshevik faction. Over time, Lenin was able to weld all Russian Marxist revolutionaries into a single, tightly organized combat party. This was in spite of the fact that

the Russian revolutionary Marxists were far from agreement on everything. The Bolsheviks always had a very active internal life. This policy of Lenin's bore its ultimate fruit when Trotsky and his followers joined the Bolsheviks. Lenin was able to bring into a solid combat party not only those who had originally supported him, but also those revolutionaries who had incorrectly opposed him and supported the Mensheviks. It was this policy which ultimately made the victory of the October Revolution possible. If we follow similar policies today, we can be confident of similar results.

What has been the recent experience of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction? At the World Congress, the majority flagrantly violated the pre-congress agreement to limit the agenda, as well as the agree-upon preconditions for a democratic world congress, by unilaterally placing on the agenda a document which had not been discussed or voted on in most sections. Unity was only preserved at the cost of placing the largest party of the Fourth International, the PST, a party deeply integrated into the class struggle and based on Trotskyist principles, on an equal footing with two guerrillaist sects, as a sympathizing group; and at the cost of according an ultraleft group of conscious splitters from the Canadian section the status of sympathizing group -- among other major concessions. Worse, the unity agreement included a hypocritical point in which each tendency or faction was to make a statement at the close of the congress "proclaiming their firm support to maintaining the unity of the Fourth International." Principled politicians were thus forced to proclaim confidence in and adherence to a unity based on a de facto split in almost half the world movement, a unity based on shameful conditions and a non-Trotskyist line, and under the leadership of conscious splitters; while unprincipled politicians were enabled to claim that they will preserve unity, to claim credit as supporters of unity while already, at the very time, discussing how or when to slander and organizationally split from ("isolate and politically defeat," in Massey-Barzman's delicate language) the minority. Members of the international majority in New York are already using this agreement to claim that the LTF has agreed that the congress was democratic and fully authoritative.

Such an agreement, which in reality formalizes a partial split, all in the name of "unity," can only be supported on the condition that the faction take the offensive, politically, and strengthen itself organizationally, in a continuing struggle for the allegiance of the cadres of the world movement. Following the congress, however, the LTF meeting, as reported by Joseph Hansen, did not decide to take the offensive by elaborating a full program and by moving toward democratic-centralist internal functioning, but rather decided to "relax factional tensions" and "let the majority test its line." Of course, there could be no objection to such decisions in themselves; but it is impossible to take

such an attitude without simultaneously specifying openly that factional tensions cannot possibly be decreased unless the majority leadership reverses its evident intention of increasing them, and that the majority has already, in our opinion, been shown to be incapable of understanding that its line, which has been tested for five years, is bankrupt. By themselves, "relax factional tensions" and "let the majority test its line" are attitudes characteristic of a tendency, not a faction, especially not a faction whose task is to prevent an immediate split forced by conscious splitters and to elaborate a program to counter the liquidation of Trotskyism in every sphere.

For all the reasons given above, we propose that the following specific measures be taken to ensure the democratic-centralist character of the faction and to counteract the danger of an unprepared, unprincipled split in the world Trotskyist movement:

- (1) An internal LTF discussion bulletin, open to contributions from all LTF members on the questions being discussed in the world movement.
- (2) Faction coordinators and other officers of the LTF to be elected by the members and to have authority, when necessary, over the functioning of LTF members, with regular faction meetings.
- (3) Full reports to all LTF members on all LTF Steering Committee meetings, with oral discussion to follow. The Steering Committee should also report to the membership on all United Secretariat meetings and other developments.
- (4) A full meeting of the world faction, to be held within a year from now, with decisions binding on all members. The agenda should not be limited in advance, and should include provision for discussion and decision on the following questions:
 - (a) The nature of the Chinese workers' state and the character of the Chinese CP.
 - (b) The nature of the North Vietnamese workers' state and the character of the Vietnamese Communist Party; also, the character of the Indochina "peace" agreements.
 - (c) The nature of popular frontism: the class character of such formations as the Unidad Popular of Chile, the Union of the Left in France, the Frente Amplio in Uruguay, and the PRG in South Vietnam.
 - (d) The precise implications of the proletarian orientation: the correct orientation of the Trotskyist movement toward the trade unions, the mass reformist parties and the youth and students; the class nature of the majority's

"new mass vanguard."

(e) How Trotskyists function in relation to centrist and ultraleft tendencies, especially in election campaigns; on what basis may support be given to groups such as Lutte Ouvriere and the Workers Revolutionary Party of Healy.

(f) The nature of the Cuban workers' state and the Cuban Communist Party: whether a political revolution is required, as Comrade Roy of India advocates. (This question must especially be discussed in the LTF in view of the majority's decision to propose the Cuban question for upcoming discussion in the world movement.)

(g) The national question: the nature of nationalism of the oppressed.

(h) The women's liberation movement: the nature of feminism.

(i) The Middle East: whether a single section should be built for the whole Arab East, as the majority says, or sections in each existing state; the character of the slogan "For a Democratic, Secular Palestine."

(j) Tasks of the Fourth International in Ireland.

(k) Balance sheet and tasks in Chile.

When the faction democratically adopts positions on these major questions and others, they should be formally added to the list of positions around which the faction is organized.

Comradely,

Bill Gottlieb

Bill Gottlieb, Lower Manhattan Branch

David Keil

David Keil, Lower Manhattan Branch

David Keil
95 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238

April 5, 1974

Dear Comrade Peng,

Enclosed is a letter which I'm mailing tomorrow to Ninure Saunders, whose name now is Ninure Oyabisi. It is she, you'll recall, with whom I wrote the document on trade union work and a proletarian orientation, last summer.

I'm sending you this letter to show you the information I have discovered on the degeneration of the Cuban revolution and to ask for your opinion. (My discussion of Cuba begins on page 4.)

I am planning to come to Paris in June. By that time, I hope to have enough information on Cuba for a definite decision on the nature of the Cuban workers' state and the nature of the Cuban CP. I would like very much to discuss this with you. I also want to help you in any way that I can.

Very comradely,

David

95 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238

April 1, 1974

Dear Minure,

Thanks for your letter. I'm sorry I haven't written before now. I've been doing a good deal of studying on Cuba, but I haven't reached a definite conclusion. The best place to present the results will, I think, be the internal bulletin. But I have done some research which I would like to tell you about later in this letter.

I went to see Joseph Hansen early this month to discuss the questions I had about Cuba. He took the time to tell me a number of facts I didn't know and to clarify some points I had doubts on. But I'm still studying Cuba closely, both past and present.

There was a city-wide LTF meeting on March 12, where Hansen presented a report on the world congress and the LTF meeting that followed. I hope there is some kind of tour being organized so comrades across the country can hear this report.

He said that the Sept. 1973 10-point agreement between the IEC majority and the LTF was broken when the IEC majority insisted on putting the document on "Armed Struggle in Latin America" (IIDB, X, 20) on the agenda as a resolution. This, he said, was the single most important document of the congress, though in most countries it had not been discussed or voted on. The congress decisions, he said, signified a deepening of the ultraleft errors of the IEC majority, and the last congress.

The IEC majority received 53% of the vote on Europe and 51% on Latin America; the lowest LTF vote was 43%. A third tendency, the "Mosryazonbke" (sp.?), a bloc including the Compass tendency of Germany and Denmark, the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of Italy, Krasno's Centre-le-Courant tendency of France, and Comrade Kailas Chandra of India, received a number of votes and, according to Joe, is moving toward the LTF's positions.

A 9-point agreement stated the organizational dangers inherent in the deep differences by recognizing 2 or 3 groups in each of a number of countries: 3 sympathizing sections in Argentina (PST, Fraccion Roja, Fraccion Bolsheviki); 2 sympathizing groups in Australia; in Canada, the LSA-ISO as a section and the RRG as a sympathizing group; 2 sympathizing groups in Mexico and Spain.

The IEC majority splittists' hopes (i.e., the hopes of that section of the majority that wants a split) for excluding the Chinese section from the IEC never reached the

floor of the congress (though they had in 1969 -- see the '69 world congress minutes, Intl. Inf. Bull., No. 9 in 1969, p. 13.)

The PSI was included on the IEC, thus it had to be recognized as Trotskyist.

A group of Vietnamese Trotskyists in exile accidentally came to the attention of LTF members. It appears, from what Joe said, that the ex-Ligue Communiste leadership has had bad relations with them and they tend to have the same positions as the LTF. (The bad relations must result from the French comrades' policy which favors liquidation of Trotskyism in Vietnam, in my opinion, just as they have nothing to do with the Chinese Trotskyists because they favor the liquidation of Chinese Trotskyism, as an adaptation to Stalinism in these countries. These are the strongest arguments for the characterization of the IEC majority as liquidationist, in my view -- good arguments for the fiercest possible internal faction fight against it.)

The LTF meeting following the congress decided to attempt to relax factional tensions, give the majority a further chance to test its line, but, recognizing that unity is precarious, and in view of the armed struggle resolution, not to dissolve.

In the discussion, after Hanson's report, Dianne Feeley asked why the IEC majority's line had been characterized as ultraleft, not opportunist, in view of the Ligue Communiste's election policy. In reply, Joe said that ultraleftism is itself a kind of opportunism, and that the French comrades had reversed the policy of the Ligue of supporting the Union of the Left.

In my opinion, Dianne's question was a good one. The Mar. 18 IR reports that the IMG called for a vote for Deely's Workers Revolutionary Party as a "revolutionary" organization, and for the Labour Party "because of the effect the outcome of the election will have on the mass struggle. A victory for the Tories would be seen by the mass of the working class as a defeat, and would lead to a decrease in the confidence and combativity of the working class. A victory for the Labour party, on the other hand, would be seen as a victory and would increase confidence and combativity." (Bob Lurdie, quoted from Red Weekly, in IR, 3-18, pp. 314-15.) These are the very same opportunist arguments which the Ligue used in calling for a vote for Lutte Ouvriere and the class-collaborationist Union of the Left, respectively. The correct policy would be a LP or WRP vote as a class vote for parties of the working class.

The IMG's election policy was not ultraleft at all this time -- but opportunist.

In the same discussion period, I asked if Cuba had been discussed and if the LTF was planning to have an internal discussion on Cuba, in view of the "deformed workers state" characterization by Comrade Roy and in view of recent indications of the Stalinists' role in Cuba. I also asked if there would be a faction internal bulletin.

In reply, Joe pointed out that Cuba had been discussed by the LTF in its world political resolution, but not by the IEC majority. He said it had not come up directly at the congress. His own view is that there has been no qualitative change, though there are some signs of erosion in Cuba. He said there are no plans for a discussion bulletin at present.

I would like to call your attention to the LTF correspondence which you can look at if you ask the Chicago LTF coordinator.

If you have any questions about this faction meeting in New York or the discussion afterward, I'd be glad to answer them to the best of my memory -- or maybe you can get a tape and hear the whole meeting.

* * *

Ordinarily, I understand that it would be best to confine new discussion on Cuba to the internal bulletin, unless one knows one is in general agreement with one's correspondent on the specific question being studied.

But we are in a special situation now, with a hot faction fight going on in the international movement and the LTF lacking any firm internal structure, especially lacking an internal bulletin. In addition, I am quite sure that, after the Brezhnev visit to Cuba, the Cuban question will come into the debate in one way or another, and the LTF does not have a clear enough position, in my opinion. The passage in the LTF world resolution pointing to the growth of a privileged officer caste is not adequate, because it only raises the question of a deformed state without answering it.

I wrote a letter to the LTF Steering Committee in December, suggesting that the faction become more structured and have an internal bulletin. But I haven't gotten any written answer yet. Some other comrades agree that it might be good for the faction to function in a more organized way.

Since an internal faction discussion bulletin is urgently needed, in my opinion, and since there isn't any indication that we'll have one, I don't feel that it's mistaken to correspond on Cuba or even other questions, and discuss them freely among themselves, as an exception to the general practice.

Nevertheless, I will not give you in this letter my personal opinions as to the character of the Cuban CP or the

Cuban workers' state. I will limit myself to subordinate questions, i.e., questions of fact. From these facts, and from your own study, I hope that you can begin to draw your own conclusions, which I would be glad to discuss with you privately, given that there is not other way to discuss it.

The first results of my study on Cuba are as follows:

I

Today, the Cuban leadership does not call for proletarian revolutions in Latin America. Instead, it gives political support to "progressive" capitalist regimes such as Velasco in Peru and the Unidad Popular in Chile. This has been true for several years. Such a policy can only be called reformist, a policy of betraying the Latin American workers, in its objective results.

The coup in Chile, I found, did not teach the Castro leadership the necessary lessons. As you remember, we discussed Chile as an important test for the Cubans. I was not able to find any evidence that they came through this test with anything except miserable failure. Granma of Oct. 14 contains an unsigned article titled "Fifth Anniversary of the Peruvian Revolutionary Process," which points out the conclusions that Castro drew from the Chile coup, in his Plaza de la Revolucion speech Sept. 28: "The Chilean example teaches us the lesson that it is impossible to make the revolution with the people alone: arms are also necessary! And that arms alone aren't enough to make a revolution: people are also necessary!" This is worthy of Mao's "Little Red Book," no more. Lacking any conclusions regarding the class-collaborationist nature of the UP government in Chile, a bourgeois government, this statement draws "lessons" from Chile hardly different from those of the Chilean CP, which launched a loud "armed struggle" propaganda campaign after the coup and even admitted that "the putsch caught us by surprise." (See IP, Nov. 26, p. 1368.)

Most disturbingly, the article reaffirms the Cuban CP's support for the Peruvian military government: "In these five years, the Government of General Velasco has advanced along the outlined path [of independence], adopting laws and measures to transform the socio-economic structures of the country, developing a policy of defense of national riches, struggling to have the most downtrodden sectors of the Peruvian population live a life of human dignity and applying an independent and sovereign foreign policy." (p. 10)

How could one give such trustful praise to the military caste in Peru so soon after watching what the same caste did in Chile? Castro claimed that Peru is different from Chile, in his Sept. 28 speech: "Contrary to the Chilean Army, the Peruvian Army made it possible for men from the most downtrodden sectors of the population to enter military schools, and the class composition of the Peruvian Army is different

from that of the Chilean Army. This factor facilitated the work of some leading commanders and officers who, headed by General Velasco Alvarado, led the Armed Forces of Peru to unity with the people and to progressive positions, in opposition to the oligarchy."

The Cubans even stated, after the coup, that Allende's policy toward the armed forces had been correct. Raul Roa, the Foreign Minister, said in his U.N. speech, Oct. 10, "No other government did more to promote the institutional development of the Armed Forces and even called on them, as did President Allende, to incorporate themselves in the tasks of national development and share in the responsibilities of government." The only problem, according to Roa, was that a reactionary section of the armed forces betrayed Allende's trust! (Granma, Oct. 21, p. 8.)

To the Cubans clearly did not learn from Chile, any more than they learned from the Bolivian coup in 1971 or the Brazilian coup in 1964. Granma, Dec. 9, includes a sympathetic article on the "Anti-Imperialist Front for Socialism" of Argentina, a new popular-front formation. Granma, Dec. 30, includes a speech by Castro which mentions twelve capitalist governments, present at a review of the Cuban military forces, as "nationalist governments, governments having a true sense of dignity, governments fully aware of their sovereignty and their independence."

The Cubans thus clearly believe that national liberation will come to the colonial countries through bourgeois regimes, in direct contrast to their own experience in Cuba with a revolution over which they presided. Thus, when Granma talks about "the counter-revolutionary Trotsky," (Nov. 11, 1973, p. 2), it reflects not only a misunderstanding of who are the real friends of the Cuban revolution, but also, it must be said, a political line diametrically opposed to that of Trotskyism. How can this be doubted? The only question to be discussed is, is this a Stalinist line and party, or is it of some other character?

The opportunist foreign policy of the Cubans was noted by some of our Latin American co-thinkers. Hugo Blenco, for instance, said in an interview with II published in the pamphlet Hugo Blenco on Chile and Peru, "Unfortunately, Ridel's trip to Peru also marked a capitulation by the Cuban government to the Peruvian dictatorship." (p. 3)

The policy of those who direct the Cuban Students Federation has been discernible and counter-revolutionary in regard to Peru, if a report published in II is accurate. The June 18, 1973, issue prints an

interview with a Peruvian student who reports that the Latin American Student Congress (CLAB), which included the Cuban Students Federation on its permanent working committee, excluded the Peruvian Student Federation, (PEP), a founding member of the CLAB, from its congress because it could not meet the conditions of participation, which included support to the Chilean Unidad Popular, support to Velasco Alvarado, "recognition of the fact that the USSR is the vanguard of the international Communist movement and the socialist camp" (a condition, obviously insisted upon by the Cubans, to which a smart pre-capitalist tendency could agree, but not a principled socialist tendency). The PEP representative stated, "It is a congress that has abandoned the policy of internationalism for one of peaceful coexistence."

Anibal Lorenzo of the PST of Argentina summed up the Cuban policy toward Peru when he said that Castro "takes a Stalinist attitude" toward the Velasco regime. Speaking at the August 1973 gathering at Oberlin, Lorenzo also reported that during Cuban President Dorticos' 1973 visit to Argentina, he would not meet with the PST or even with the comrade, Coral, who had seen Dorticos, Castro and Guevara several years ago.

As the LTF has pointed out in its political resolution, "Castro has offered political support to bourgeois regimes in Latin America that have maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba...The mistakes made by the Cuban leaders helped open the way for the Stalinists to take a comeback in Latin America." (IIDB, XI, #2, p. 15)

To conclude this discussion of the Cubans' Latin American policy and its relation to the perspective of proletarian revolution, I think that it is necessary to point out that even the Second Declaration of Havana (1962), while not giving support to capitalist governments, did not call for proletarian revolutions either. It is necessary to bring this up because a very authoritative pamphlet, Germain's Marxism versus Ultraleftism: Key Issues in Healy's Challenge to the Fourth International, claims that the Castroist line in the Second Declaration was for permanent revolution or socialist revolution. Authority has been added to this pamphlet by its inclusion in the recent collection of articles against Healy published as an Education for Socialists bulletin. (Peng's much more thoroughgoing polemic against Healy, "Where is Healy Taking the Socialist Labour League? A Dangerous Sectarian Tendency," on the other hand, a document which is much more clear than Germain on the questions of the timing of the transformation of the Cuban state, the lack of democracy in the creation of the workers and farmers government, the need for a Marxist party, and the tasks in Cuba, despite Germain's pamphlet coming out four years later than Peng's document -- has never been published except in the SWP international information bulletin in 1963.)

In Germain's generally successful polemic against Healy over Cuba, in which he showed (as long had done in 1963) how Healy revised Marxism in calling Cuba capitalist, Germain unfortunately also tried to prove that Castro had a proletarian revolutionary strategy for Latin America. He wrote that Castro "proclaims the necessity of the proletariat to conquer power." But Castro, in the passage of the Second Declaration quoted by Germain, and elsewhere, calls not for proletarian dictatorship but only for proletarians and "revolutionary intellectuals" to lead "the struggle against imperialism and feudalism." (Germain, p. 42.) The difference is qualitative. As Fred Feldman and George Johnson showed in the July-August 1973 ISR, "leadership of the working class" as a concept can be easily integrated into a Stalinist perspective of revolution by stages, i.e., bourgeois revolution. (ISR, p. 64) Thus, Germain was seriously in error in his characterization of the Castroist Latin American line in the 1967 pamphlet. This error must be corrected. In the course of doing this, it will be necessary to discuss whether the line was Stalinist or simply non-Trotskyist of some other variety.

II

The reformist element in Cuban foreign policy is not limited to Latin America. The Granma editorial of July 8, 1973, gives full support to the Washington agreements signed by Brezhnev and Nixon. Titled "Victory for the Positions of Socialism," the editorial states, "In signing the agreements, Leonid I Brezhnev was putting into practice, as a representative of his government, and in the name of his Party and people, the policy proposed by Lenin fifty-five years ago." The editorial serves further to give left cover to the agreements by simultaneously condemning Nixon for his crimes in various countries.

The speech which Castro made at the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the seizure of power was a pleasant surprise for Washington, according to the U.S. press. The New York Times, Jan. 22, says a Western diplomat "pointed out that the anniversary speeches had, in fact, turned out to be quite mild," as Brezhnev would have desired, and Newsweek of February 11 notes that "while Castro heaped a load of predictable praise on the Soviet Union and scorn on China, he also managed to omit entirely his favorite expletive: vanguil imperialism." (pp. 6 and 45, respectively.) I would like to point these quotes out to you especially because the IS account (Feb. 18, p. 178), while indicating part of the evolution of Castro closer to the Stalin line, does not give any indication of an evolution toward accommodation with the U.S. itself. Yet that is exactly what these quotes, and other clippings I have found, imply.

While the Cubans cannot be criticized for being willing to negotiate with U.S. imperialism, it is not permissible for them to make programmatic concessions or help cover up the crimes of imperialism.

In a speech Aug. 27, 1971, printed in the pamphlet Solidarity: A Sharpening of the Revolutionary Awareness of Our People, Castro said, "Let's get this straight: Cuba is not in the least interested in having relations with oligarchic, reactionary and pro-imperialist governments!" But the statement by Fernando I. Lopez Yujino, Cuba's ambassador to Mexico, Jan. 8, that the "single and irrevocable" condition for reopening contacts with the U.S. government was the "unconditional and unilateral" ending of the blockade (New York Times, Jan. 9, 1974) shows that Castro's previous "intransigent" position on this particular issue was nothing but bombast. (Though Yujino's statement is not objectionable in itself.) The Cuban government, breaking relations with Israel only in September, 1973 (certainly a "reactionary" and "pro-imperialist" government), stated, "The Revolutionary Government of Cuba has always maintained the norm of not breaking diplomatic relations, in view of the fact that the imperialist Government of the United States, when it broke with Cuba, in order to promote its policy of blockading and isolating our country, constantly tried to bring about and promote, by means of its influence with governments -- especially those in Latin America -- that were vulnerable to imperialist pressure, the breaking of relations with Cuba. Therefore, our country has had the policy of not being the one to break relations, so as not to contribute to the imperialist tactic of isolation." (Granma, Sept. 16, 1973)

Thus, Castro's 1971 public position was purely verbal radicalism and a case of dishonesty in addressing the Cuban people.

His real position, it seems, is being revealed now, as the U.S. and its capitalist allies become more willing to talk--always in exchange forea quid pro quo, of course. Will the Cubans then do as they have done for Peru, Allende's Chile, Mexico and others -- end their criticism altogether? Will the Trotskyist movement be caught unprepared if this happens? Can Castro prevent the detente from including Cuba, now that he has given it his personal endorsement?

III

The Cuban leadership had adapted the theory of "socialism in one country" to Cuba. In fact, Castro's speech, April 19, 1963, projected that a communist society would be built in Cuba before the destruction of U.S. imperialism: "The Yankees are dreaming of a kind of tropical Titoism, but what they are going to have the chance to see is true tropical communism...our country can advance in the not-too-distant future toward forms of communist distribution."

(A New Stage in the Advance of Cuban Socialism, Morit Publishers, no date, pp. 41-42.)

Castro said, on July 26, 1973, "We are in the socialist stage of the Revolution." But he indicated that material incentives would have to be accentuated just at this time and that the Cubans must "correct any idealistic errors." (Granma, August 5, 1973, p. 5.)

This was put into practice by the 13th congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), held in November, 1973. The "theses" published before this congress outline a plan of piecework payment: "If the worker doesn't fulfill his norm, his salary should be reduced accordingly... If the worker overfulfills his norm, his salary should be increased accordingly... For piecework, the relationship between wages and finished product is clear and direct. He who makes 15 units is paid for 15 units. He who makes 10 is paid for 10. And he who makes only 8 cannot be paid for more than 8." (See Granma, Sept. 2, 1973.) Alexandr Shalepin top Soviet trade union official, appropriately congratulated this congress for one of its essential accomplishments, "the perfection of the material incentives to work." (Granma, Nov. 25, 1973, p. 3.)

This was not a minor aspect of the congress, indeed. Castro, in a speech headlined, "That each contribute according to his ability, that each receive according to his work is a principle, an inexorable law in the construction of socialism," noted that "the workers' movement has suggested a series of measures in support of this principle, pointing out that relationship that should exist between wages and work norms; the relationship between wages and the meeting, surpassing or falling short of the work norm..." (*ibid.*, pp. 7-8.)

Piecework, in the name of socialism, is not the only step backward taken at this congress; bureaucratic privilege was formally introduced as a good method for increasing production. Without a decision being formally made ("This is in theory. No decisions have been adopted yet. They are viewed positively, however,"), Castro spoke in concrete terms not only of 44 million pesos to be spent for "linking wages to norms," and 67 million for "increasing wages for technicians" -- dividing the working class of Cuba -- but also of spending 65 million for "increasing wages for personnel in charge of directing production." (*ibid.*, p. 10.) From this last projection, raising wages for lower officials such as brigade leaders and foremen, we can get a general indication of the kind of material privileges that may exist in the higher rungs of the bureaucracy, which were not, of course, touched upon at the congress.

Castro crowned this backward achievement by directly linking piecework to socialism. He stated (p. 7) that the

difference between the distribution principles of payment according to work (interpreted by the CTC as quantitative production) and payment according to need "is precisely what differentiates the socialist phase from the communist phase of the revolutionary process."

IV

It would be mistaken to believe that Castro was merely reflecting the views of Cuban workers when he said that piecework and bureaucratic privilege were called for and that Cuba was a socialist country. The CTC is not a democratically organized trade-union federation. In fact, as Peter Camejo noted in 1969, "The CTC is far more an apparatus for the implementation of governmental policy rather than for workers' protection." ("Cuba Report," CWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 27 (1969), No. 9, p. 7.) This would summarize the situation today, despite the number of votes against the proposed thesis of the CTC congress, reported by Granma (Nov. 4, p. 4) as ranging from 0.01% to 0.30%. Bureaucratic decisionmaking on the official level has even been theoretically justified by some. Maurice Zeitlin, in Revolutionary Politics and the Cuban Working Class (Harper Torchbooks, 1970) quotes Rafael Rodriguez, a long-time Stalinist on the Secretariat of the Cuban CP and President of the National Commission of Technical, Scientific and Economic Cooperation, from a 1969 interview: "while in principle it is certain that we must discover democratic means by which to decide, for instance, the variety and types of consumer goods to be produced...it is a luxury to try to establish such modes of planning at this moment in the revolution." (p. xi.)

The Cuban Communist Party, likewise, is bureaucratized. Despite the fact that it was founded as the sole party of the Cuban Revolution in 1961 (uniting the Stalinist People's Socialist Party with the July 26 Movement and the Student Directory into the ORI (Integrated Revolutionary Organization), which became the PURC (Unified Party of the Socialist Revolution) in 1964 and the Cuban Communist Party finally in 1965), this party has not had a congress yet. The first congress of the CCP is scheduled for 1975. (See Granma, Jan. 13, 1974, p. 3.)

Camejo reported that "although there is no formal proscription, there is no right of tendency in any organization -- including the party...the lack of tendencies, of organized criticism, limits the meaning of all formal democracy which does exist..." ("Cuba Report," p. 6.)

Supplementing the bureaucratic fashion of making decisions in Cuba is a personality cult of Castro. Although not as grotesque as the Stalin, Mao and Kim Il-sung cults, the cult of Castro is a very serious sign. Two instances are Raul Castro's reference to "our Revolution, under the sure leadership of its Party and of Comrade Fidel, its top

leader..." (Granma, Aug. 5, 1973, p. 7) and the title of an article in Granma, July 22, 1973, p. 3: "Cell where Fidel was Imprisoned on Isle of Pines While Serving Time for Attack on the Moncada Being Restored."

V

Along with bureaucratic decision-making and exclusion of the masses from politics (itself a political form of privilege) goes material privilege. I touched on this at some length in connection with "socialism in one country." Camejo reported in 1969 that the Cuban leaders "certainly may have better housing than the masses. But this does not imply real abuse." ("Cuba Report," p. 7.) Real abuse was found by Harry Ring, who wrote, in Cuba and Problems of Workers Democracy (1972) that "In addition [to rationing], some manifestations of bureaucratic privilege-taking have become evident in recent years. And, as Fidel has frankly conceded, there have been repeated instances of bureaucratic mismanagement and malfunctioning -- practices of which the masses are keenly and painfully aware." (p. 12.)

Much more serious evidence still has come to public attention more recently. First, of course, is the proposal by Castro to create wage differentials for production officials. In addition, Granma, Dec. 16, 1973, announced the establishment of ranks in the army. The New York Times of Dec. 9 reported that the change was designed to "facilitate growing relations between the armies of Cuba and those of other countries that have a different hierarchical order." (p. 15.) It should be pointed out at the outset that this is necessarily a dishonest explanation of the introduction of ranks, since there is no real military need for rank privilege, as Trotsky pointed out in The Revolution Betrayed in discussing the introduction of ranks in the Soviet Army by Stalin in 1935. The real intent cannot be other than to facilitate the growth of a privileged officer caste in Cuba, or to meet demands for such privilege.

VI

All the above facts point, in my opinion, toward the existence of a Stalinized bureaucratic caste in Cuba, and a Stalinist party. Certainly no Stalinist party could wish for a better organ than Granma. (The articles on visits by leaders of Stalinist parties around the world, pictures of Soviet and Eastern European Stalinist bureaucrats, etc., are too numerous to mention. Just pick up any copy of Granma.)

It might be said that Granma does not represent the views of the Cuban leadership. If so, then how can we know these views? If these views are entirely a secret, how can we argue one way or another? How can we argue that Granma does not, for all practical purposes, represent the Castro leadership? I don't think that Granma can be challenged as

the faithful representative of the Cuban leadership, i.e., the Cuban Communist party.

I have, however, found certain indications that the Cubans have deviated in certain ways from the Stalinist line -- not only from the Moscow line, from which many Stalinists have deviated from time to time, but also the Stalinist ideological line. In March, 1966, for instance, Castro told Chilean leaders that "in the conditions of Chile, if a revolution was desired, it would necessarily have to be a socialist revolution...the masses of workers and peasants would not lend support to any bourgeois revolution, because the workers and peasants would not be willing to serve the interests of an exploiting class." (quoted by Germain, Marxism Today (Lafayette), p. 48. Germain cites Soviet Outlook, which in turn reprinted from Granma, Mar. 20, 1966.) In 1968, Castro said, "...nowadays no underdeveloped country can solve the problem of development through capitalism." (New Stage, p. 30.)

Thus, there is a question in my mind as to whether Stalinism is in full control of the CCP and whether there is a privileged bureaucratic caste in full control of the Cuban state.

I am also hesitating to say that the state is bureaucratically deformed or degenerated because I am not able to say when the change occurred, if it did. Since it would be a qualitative change, one would expect some important event to have taken place at the time of the change; or the caste would have to be said to have been already formed when the workers' state was created in August-October 1960. If there was a caste in power for years and years, then the Fourth International, as well as the SWP, took the wrong position for years and years in not calling for a political revolution. Would that mean the Spartacists were right and we wrong? One would have to explain how they could be right about Cuba but wrong about everything else, as they most certainly are wrong about everything else.

So I am not arguing one way or the other in this letter. However, it is clearly necessary to discuss this question in the LFP, in my opinion, and also correct certain mistaken notions. Rouge, Sept. 14, 1973, for example, calls Castro's Algiers speech in defense of Moscow "the twilight of a revolutionary" and "capitulation." In reality, it has been a great long time since Castro has been a genuine revolutionary, in any sense. Presiding over a revolution does not make a person a revolutionary, as we have often pointed out against Kousset and others; nor was the Latin American guerrilla strategy a revolutionary one, because it led to the defeat of possible revolutionary situations.

Rouge might argue that at least it is discussing

the deteriorating situation in Cuba, in contrast to the Militant and IF. That, of course, is to its credit. But it is definitely much better to say nothing about a subject that one is discussing privately than to take the wrong position publicly. It is much more to the credit of the Militant that it has rarely, if ever, taken the wrong position. It's in that framework that one might criticize the shortcomings of its reportage on Cuba.

In addition to rejecting the contention that Castro was a revolutionary up to September 1973, we must reject the idea that guerrilla warfare was in itself a "break with reformism." It may be that the Cubans broke with reformism at some time, but guerrilla warfare is not at all a synonym for such a break. This has already been amply shown in connection with China and Vietnam. Thus, the PRT Red Faction is wrong when it says, "having itself developed empirically, the Cuban leadership proved unable to overcome this weakness and provide an adequate strategy and tactics for the Latin American revolution. The Castroist current broke with reformism along a strategic line of demarcation -- that of armed struggle -- but was not able to develop a strategy and tactics adapted to Latin American conditions." (IIDB, XI, #1, p. 3.) To effectively fight the Red Faction and the ICG majority, we must point out that in Cuba, as elsewhere, armed struggle was not a line of demarcation between reformism and revolution. The only such line of demarcation is political program. Thus, to argue that the Cubans broke from reformism, one would have to show that they developed an alternative political program.

Did guerrilla warfare accompany the development of an alternative political program? That is something we will have to discuss. But at the outset, I think it is necessary to recognize the correctness of Moreno's comparison of Cuban ultraleftism with the Stalinist Third Period of 1928-35: "In the same way that Stalinism failed to differentiate between Fascism and reformist Social Democracy, Guevarism made no distinction between the various regimes existing in Latin America...tried to create artificial bodies for taking power...have always projected arming by itself" -- each time, Moreno points out, deepening the Stalinist error. (IIDB, XI, #4, p. 8.) I think that it is relevant to this discussion to note that Trotsky considered Stalinism to be centrism, i.e., reformable, until 1933, and unreformable after that, requiring a new party and a political revolution to defeat it.

The document by Comrade Roy of India makes it especially necessary that we discuss Stalinism in Cuba. If Roy is a member of the ICF, then it is urgent. In doing so, we will have to decide whether Harry King's 1972 opinion that the Cuban leadership "still includes good revolutionary cadres who have not passed beyond the possibility of responding to a revival of the spirit of the Moncada Barracks and the Sierra Maestra" is correct today -- and whether it was

correct then. We will have to decide whether the differences he notes between Cuba and the USSR in its period of degeneration still apply -- or whether they are the decisive criteria at all: (1) defeats of revolutionary struggles in the '20s and '30s; (2) extermination of millions of people; (3) the bureaucracy becoming a "conscious organizer" of defeats; (4) "totalitarian rule of a privileged bureaucratic caste"; (5) "massive nationwide oppression." (Ring, Cuba and Problems of Workers Democracy, p. 14.)

In discussing these questions, I think it will be quite useful to refer to The Revolution Betrayed, as Harry Ring suggested in his pamphlet. I found the sections on socialism in one country, and wages especially interesting to reread.

In addition to the sources I've cited above, I think the following might be useful to you in reading and rereading:

Peng, "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," especially the last three paragraphs of the section of guerrilla warfare, "Castroism or Trotskyism."

Peng, "Where is Healy Taking the Socialist Labour League? A Dangerous Sectarian Tendency," SWP International Information Bulletin, May 1963, I.

Hansen, The Nature of the Cuban Revolution. SWP, Education for Socialists bulletin, April 1968.

Hansen, Trotskyism and the Cuban Revolution: an Answer to Hoy (Pioneer Publishers, pamphlet), reprinted from the Militant, Oct. 1962.

SWP Discussion bulletins, 1960-63, on Cuba (Wohlforth-Robertson fight.). See also Workers League, Opportunism and Revisionism (pamphlet) and Spartacists, Cuba and Marxist Theory (Marxist Bulletin #8). For the sectarians' positions.

For excellent article on Stalinism, see Education for Socialists Bulletin: Development and Disintegration of Stalinism; Tom Kerry, Anatomy of Stalinism. See also Kerry's article on Mao in ICR, Sept.-Oct. 1969, and of course the recent answers to Rousset in the ICR.

I have hardly begun a serious study of the works of Castro and Guevara, and I'd be very interested in any references you can give me from their writings which point one way or the other in this discussion. He has an interesting discussion of workers' democracy in his Socialism and Man. The Second Declaration of Havana, a Pathfinder pamphlet, is of central importance as a programmatic document of Castroism. ^{For} Castro on the Escalante affair, in which he confronted Stalinists head on organizationally, see Fidel Castro Denounces

David Keil
c/o SWP
706 Eway., 8th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10003

July 12, 1974

Joseph Hansen
National Office

Dear Comrade Joe,

Enclosed is a copy of the initial draft of a document titled "Cuba and the Liquidationist Danger to the Fourth International." In March, when I came to see you, I mentioned that I appreciated the time you took to discuss Cuba with me and said I would continue to study Cuba and, if I decided to write a document, I'd bring you a copy of the first draft. This is the draft. The subject matter goes far beyond Cuba.

I am also giving copies to Peng, who inspired the study of Cuba on which it is based, and to Bill Gottlieb, an LTF member in Lower Manhattan who believes Cuba is a bureaucratized workers state. (We found that we agree on this after the LTF meeting where you gave the report on the world congress and where I raised the question of Cuba.) He and I signed two letters to the LTF Steering Committee May 1.

After being verified and reworked, the document will probably be submitted to the LTF center for publication as an internal document or to the SWP N.O. for publication in a Discussion Bulletin. I believe that at some point before that, it would be appropriate to show it also to Comrade Upandranath Roy and to anyone else who I know of in the LTF who believes a political revolution is needed in Cuba, in order to get their ideas for improving the draft.

I think that because of the crisis in the world movement, this document deserves your attention, despite its length. Of course, I am also curious to know your opinions of its contents.

Comradely,

David Keil

c/o SWP
706 Bway., 8th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10003

August 6

Mary-Alice Waters
National Office

Dear Mary-Alice,

Here is a letter to the LTF Steering Committee, a copy of a letter to Dick Fidler and a copy of a letter to Upendranath Roy. — see India file.

As I mentioned to Flax the other day, I'd be happy to do some more translating if you have a backlog.

Comradely,

Dave Keir

August 6, 1974
(see LTF mailing
Nov. 13, 1974)

c/o WFP
706 Eway, 8th fl.
New York, N.Y. 10003

August 6, 1974

Dick Fidler
c/o Intercontinental Press

Dear Comrade Dick,

Your article in the July 22 IF, "Cubans Test Electoral 'Pilot Project' in Matanzas," makes some good criticisms of the electoral project from the standpoint of Leninist principles of workers' democracy. But it is unsatisfactory on some key points, in failing to recognize that a Stalinist party is in power and that Cuba is a bureaucratized workers' state, despite the mounting evidence for this, including evidence you yourself present, your article represents a step backward as a whole. We would therefore like to ask you to re-examine the political conclusions which you draw in it.

You mention the fact that the elections hardly lived up to the norms of proletarian democracy but seem to find some reassurance in the fact that the Cuban leaders invoked the "profoundly communist concept -- expressed by Lenin in State and Revolution -- that the functions of administration should be 'within the reach of every literate person.'" But the masters of the Kremlin, also, invoke Lenin's words while trampling on them in practice. In reality, as you yourself document, the "elections" were nothing but a caricature of bourgeois democracy with its territorial representation, its "peoples'", not workers' and peasants', power. By dissolving the several classes and numerous strata of the population into the "people" who "rule," Castro simply follows the time-worn tradition of bourgeois democracy. Stalin himself was a great admirer of this "democracy" when he promulgated "the most democratic constitution in the world" at the very start of the notorious Moscow trials of the mid-thirties. The echoing of Lenin's words in this context by the Cuban leaders is unfortunately not at all reassuring.

We share your concerns about "the party's ^{vulner-}ability to bureaucratic influences in the state administration, subjecting it to the danger of control by counterrevolutionary careerists and opportunists." But this overlooks the danger from the bureaucracy of the party itself, especially of a party that, as you admit, reaches its decisions by "Directives" from the highest echelons of the party leadership" and allows no independent organization whatsoever by its rank and file. It should not be forgotten that Trotsky, from the very beginning of his fight against the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, stressed the role of the party bureaucracy which was headed by the General Secretary, Joseph Stalin.

You claim that the Cuban CP is the only one in the world that acknowledges the need for a greatly increased voice by the masses in the decision-making process. Equally, every CP in the

would pay lip service to this need. Little faith can therefore be placed in such statements when they are unattended by deeds.

We were really mystified by your reference to the "tendency toward bureaucratic deformations." Lenin, in referring to the young soviet Republic, called it a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations, not just tendencies toward bureaucratic deformations. It would be remarkable if Cuba, suffering from enormous pressure from imperialism and lacking both soviets and a mass revolutionary party with a rich internal life, suffered only tendencies toward bureaucratic deformations.

In a similar vein, you refer to the Castro leadership's "drift toward Moscow's 'peaceful coexistence' line." The role played by Fidel Castro in Chile and his refusal to learn from that experience, indeed his affirmation of the same policies in Peru after the Chilean disaster, indicate more than a "drift" toward the Moscow policies of peaceful coexistence. They indicate an embracing of these concepts, as Fidel Castro himself clearly states. Now we are seeing a process in which Cuba is being brought into the detente. The normalization of relations with the U.S. is reportedly held back only by the resistance of some die-hard conservatives in the U.S. Senate who have until yesterday been able to hold decisive anti-impeachment votes over Nixon's head on the Cuba issue. (See New York Times, Aug. 3, p. 3, and Aug. 4, Sec. 4, p. 3.)

Within this context, the failure that you note on the part of the Cuban leaders to develop a theoretical appreciation of Stalinism is all too clear. Stalinists are not known for their theoretical abilities when it comes to analyzing themselves.

The strong point of your article is its recognition that "The procedures adopted in the experimental elections in Matanzas would seem to indicate that the Cubans have chosen to apattern their formal decision-making machinery on the current practices in the soviet Union and other bureaucratically deformed workers states, and not on the Leninist model of soviet democracy." But you do not draw the obvious logical conclusion from this, that the essential character of the Cuban state corresponds to the Stalinist model in the soviet Union and that Cuba is a bureaucratized workers state dominated by a Stalinist party.

Your statement that "the Cuban revolutionary leaders should be the first to be aware of" the danger of bureaucratic influences can only be said to express bewilderment in face of the new developments and inability to explain them despite fully recognizing them. Why are they not aware of the danger when they should be? You state that these "revolutionary" leaders have a history of fighting bureaucratism and you cite the 1962 purge of Escalante. This was a bureaucratic purge which was supported by both the Kremlin bureaucrats, who thus temporarily abandoned their faithful tool, and by the bulk of the old Stalinist apparatus in Cuba itself. We would like to know on what basis you imply that the Cuban party was democratized in 1962. You point to "wide-scale recruitment of 'ex-

emplary workers' elected by their fellow-workers in the plants and offices," but this by itself is more reminiscent of Stalin's "Lenin Levy" than of the real Leninist policy of party democracy.

You state, "It would be a serious error to conclude that what are only trends in Cuba have already become finished characteristics." The reasons you give are the hesitancy of the Castroists, the fact that they "acknowledge openly the need for a greatly increased voice by the masses in the decisionmaking process," and the claim that "They have nowhere closed the door definitively to legitimizing expression and organization of dissenting views within the revolution." But where have they wavered and hesitated? Did they hesitate with Roberto Fadilla in 1971? Did they not definitively close the door on democratic rights for Trotskyists as early as May, 1961, when they destroyed the plates for Trotsky's Permanent Revolution and shut down the paper of the Cuban section of the International Secretariat? These decisions have never been overturned. In this context, for the Castroists to "acknowledge openly the need for a greatly increased voice by the masses" can only be considered the grossest Stalinist hypocrisy and demagoguery. Thus it is your own conclusion that is a serious error, a hardening of a long-standing failure of the Fourth International to recognize the bureaucratic degeneration in Cuba as a finished process at a time when the evidence is becoming overwhelming.

The political line you take follows from this error: "Meanwhile, partisans of the Cuban Revolution should not overlook certain disturbing trends in present developments and should offer their suggestions on how these problems can be overcome, in order to strengthen the Cuban Revolution." Thus you imply that the Cuban leadership is still open to suggestions and advice from Trotskyists. There is no evidence that this is the case, and your article presents evidence that it is not the case. The task of Trotskyists in relation to Cuba is to fight and expose the Castroists leadership as the head of a Stalinist bureaucracy, in order to strengthen the Cuban revolution -- not merely to "offer their suggestions" to it.

Comradely,

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David Kell

cc: Joseph Hansen