



# discussion bulletin

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### PLENUM DISCUSSION OF WORLD MOVEMENT

#### Part 2

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### Editor's Note

This is the second of a series of bulletins containing the resolutions, reports, discussion and summaries dealing with the world movement at the June 1962 plenum of the National Committee.

The plenum voted as follows on the majority report by Joseph Hansen and the minority report by Tim Wohlforth contained in this bulletin:

	<u>For Majority Report</u>	<u>For Minority Report</u>
Regular NC members	17	1
Alternate NC members	13	1
Consultative*	11	2

(\* Includes members of Control Commission, heads of N.O. departments, party branch organizers, members of editorial board of magazine and members of youth executive committee invited to the plenum on a consultative basis.)

International and its variegated problems than has been available to us for some years. This information, already placed before you, should help guide us toward a better decision than would otherwise be possible.

In addition, the Cuban Revolution happens to have become one of the key issues in the new differences that have broken out in the world Trotskyist movement. While it has served to divide, this revolution has at the same time exercised a decisive influence in hastening the process of unifying the ranks of the Trotskyists and has strengthened the basis in principle for that unification. Here we are fortunate in possessing about as good a knowledge of the Cuban Revolution, through direct contact and through study of original documents, as any group of Trotskyists in the world except those in Cuba itself, and we have the additional experience of three years of one of the most important and intensive campaigns in the history of our party -- the revolutionary-socialist defense of the Cuban Revolution in the very heart of the imperialist power that is seeking to crush it. Many of the comrades present today are able to speak with the accuracy and authority of first-hand acquaintance with the subject. What they have to say should help us greatly in reaching the wisest decision within our power.

The majority resolution stresses the political basis for a unified Trotskyist movement. It reflects the actual coalescence of views and at the same time constitutes a proposed platform for the consideration of currents either already close to Trotskyism or moving in that direction. It thus leaves aside many important questions for later discussion and final resolution. Everyone here, I believe, is familiar with the reasons for putting aside the differences of 1953 and the organizational issues that were then in sharp dispute. As Leninists we deliberately subordinate organizational and tactical matters for the sake of political agreement. Similarly in the basic field of Marxist methodology we do not demand agreement in advance before we will collaborate politically with another tendency. This again is in the Leninist tradition.

However, it would be a considerable mistake to believe that deeper questions of methodology are not involved. The truth is that they are at the heart of both the rapprochement with the comrades who adhere to the International Secretariat and the division that has appeared between us and the comrades of the Socialist Labour League.

Let me begin with where we agree with the International Secretariat on this fundamental level. To do that it is necessary to review a little party history.

At the close of World War II the Soviet armies had swept up to Berlin, occupying Eastern Europe. A crucial alternative was posed. Would the capitalist structure of these countries so affect the Soviet Union as to change its class character? Or would the surviving elements of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union assert themselves and lead to a change in the class structure of the occupied territories?

We were not the first to formulate this alternative. Credit for that goes to Trotsky. He advanced it during the 1939-40 dispute with the petty-bourgeois opposition headed by Shachtman, Burnham and Abern. Trotsky did not attempt to predict how it would turn out. It was an alternative posed in life that could only be decided by events themselves. For a time the outcome remained unclear as Stalin dickered with Anglo-American imperialism for a long-term deal.

I do not need to remind you how the alternative was finally settled. To our great satisfaction, the October Revolution proved to be still alive -- and also more powerful than the tendency toward degeneration.

But as the capitalist structures went down in Eastern Europe under impact of measures that were bureaucratic in nature, intense discussion broke out in our party. How were we to estimate these overturns? Did they signify the establishment of workers states?

Some of the comrades came to the conclusion rather early that the facts required us to consider these countries as workers states, although of a different type from the one established in 1917 under Lenin and Trotsky. Other comrades were doubtful of the validity of this analysis. They saw very clearly that it raised a series of questions for which there were no ready answers in the books and which required the gravest consideration before our movement became committed to a definitive position.

In expressing these doubts and indicating the character of the problems, these comrades were, of course, proceeding in the most reasonable way. They demanded sureness of analysis.

Among the problems they pointed to were these:

- (1) Are the overturns really permanent?
- (2) Won't the workers state label inspire confidence that Stalinism can play a revolutionary role?
- (3) Won't it lead to the false view that Stalinism is the wave of the future?
- (4) Won't it lead revolutionists to relegate the role of revolutionary socialism to Stalinism?
- (5) Won't it cause Trotskyists to abandon faith in the necessity for building a revolutionary-socialist party based on the working class?
- (6) Doesn't it put in question the very existence of Trotskyism as an independent and viable force?
- (7) Won't it at least foster tendencies toward revisionism and liquidationism?

In brief, all the questions which the comrades of the Socialist Labour League and their representatives in the U.S., the Wohlforth-Philips grouping, have raised in relation to the Cuban Revolution were all raised in the SWP as early as 1947 when Moscow's reaction to the Marshall Plan began to become plain. All the questions raised by our minority with such an air of new discovery and alertness to long-range problems were all satisfactorily answered a dozen years ago in one of the most rounded and objective discussions in the history of our movement.

The gist of the conclusion was this: Yes, the political dangers that have been indicated are real and confront us with new difficulties. But the appearance of these workers states, along with the Soviet victory, spells the beginning of the end for Stalinism. In any case the facts are indisputable. As realists, we have no choice but to recognize them, whether we like these facts or not. On the side of theory, too, no choice is open. A theory that cannot account for facts is not a theory but a dogma.

In that discussion, fortunately, we were able to rely on Trotsky almost directly. In a certain sense Trotsky even participated in the discussion, since its true beginning was in 1939-40. The Soviet invasion of Poland and the attack on Finland had brought Shachtman to his feet with a point of order, which was that it is impossible for a workers

state to extend its frontiers or to expand by bureaucratic means. If it does so, then the breach in the norms of proletarian democracy proves that it cannot be a workers state. In answering Shachtman, and the theoretician who stood behind him, James Burnham, Trotsky provided for us the main concepts needed to handle theoretically in all its concreteness what had only been rather abstractly adumbrated in Poland and Finland. The essence of the procedure was to extend to the new formations the concepts used in the analysis of the degenerated workers state. So that is what we did in the case of Eastern Europe.

This not only saved the integrity of our theory by bringing within it the new phenomena; on close examination the facts offered fresh confirmation of the validity of the concepts themselves and thus the validity of Trotsky's analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union; although the theory, viewed as a whole, had become a little more complex due to the new inclusion. If this confirmation of the theory with which we started had not occurred, then Trotsky's entire theoretical contribution dating back to 1924 ~~on~~ would have had to be discarded. Trotsky's analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union and its degeneration, and our analysis of the class character of the East European countries and their deformation thus became an interlocking, interdependent whole. Without the one, the other could not be logically maintained as a truthful reflection of the newly changed reality.

Let me recapitulate the main concepts: a workers state is basically defined by the expropriation of the holdings of the capitalist class in the key sectors of industry, transportation and finance; the establishment of a government monopoly of foreign trade; and the introduction of a planned economy. Deviation from the norm of a healthy workers state relates fundamentally to the political sphere; i.e., the relative amount of proletarian democracy. The origin of the new workers states in the world today can be traced ultimately to the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

This basic theoretical position received a rather substantial test in the case of Yugoslavia. Here, in contrast to some of the other countries, comrades found it easier to accept the view that Yugoslavia was a workers state. The reason for this was the significant role of revolution, rather than bureaucratic measures under Soviet Army auspices, in establishing the new state.

On the other hand, the connection with the Soviet Union was not so direct, precisely because of the absence of Soviet government control, and this offered a theoretical difficulty. All the doubts and hesitations offered in relation to the analysis of the class character of the Eastern European countries held much more sharply in the case of Yugoslavia. What about the role of guerrilla warfare, for instance; of the predominance of the peasantry; and of a leadership, which was of Stalinist, that is, petty-bourgeois origin? What about the absence of a revolutionary-socialist party?

It could be argued, and it was argued, that these questions did not matter too much because circumstances were exceptional in Yugoslavia; and, in any case, a revolution is itself the final authority. It determines its own forms which may deviate considerably from norms; and one institution can at times perform, if imperfectly, the logical function of another. In any case the results speak for themselves and are unassailable whatever problems they may set for theory.

Theory, however, has its own rights. It permits no vacuums or it ceases to be theory; and some comrades, among them some who had been the first to take a stand on Eastern Europe, remained hesitant about Yugoslavia.

The discussion, which began, if I remember correctly, in the SWP, extended swiftly into the international Trotskyist movement and eventually, with some delays here and there, the view became virtually unanimous -- with the exception of those in our ranks who held the state capitalist position -- that the facts in the case of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia had compelled us to extend the theoretical heritage we had received from Trotsky and that this difficult job had been accomplished not without success.

This view, let me repeat, was virtually unanimous with the exception of the state capitalists. It included the SWP, the International Secretariat, a body composed principally of European comrades, among them Pablo, who had emerged from the war years with excellent records as revolutionary socialists, and it of course included our British cothinkers. This common basic appreciation of the extension of socialist-type property forms in other lands following the Soviet victory in World War II constituted a very solid foundation for the working out of derivative political, organizational, and tactical questions.

It is to be noted especially that in the subsequent differences which led to a split and the formation of two

main factions, no substantial disagreement appeared as to the validity of this basic analysis of the character of the newly born states. On the contrary, after the split both sides continued to adhere to the same fundamental view on how to analyze the character of the state and, still more significantly, developed it independently in relation to what was a rough test indeed -- the Chinese Revolution.

In comparison with China, the most populous nation on earth, Yugoslavia was only a test-tube case. What was seen on minor scale in Yugoslavia was played out in China with forces involving tens and hundreds of millions of people. Some comrades jumped hastily to apply what they considered to be an extension of our position on Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. Marcy, for instance, under an essentially political criterion, equated Stalinism in power to a workers state. Like a few who succumbed to Titoism; he succumbed to Maoism. This was an erroneous position, due in part to a faulty understanding of the analysis of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, and in part to a mechanical application of the theses contained in Lenin's State and Revolution. Others hesitated long. I list myself among those who hesitated longest. I felt that it would be a mistake to consider China "exceptional." If you said it for a country of the weight of China, then you had to say that a similar pattern was possible for a series of other countries. It was best, therefore, to be completely clear about what you were saying, especially concerning the exact stages and interrelations of the process, for once a decision was made it would have far-reaching consequences.

I do not know the details on how the discussion held by the International Secretariat on the question of China finally ended; but independently they came to similar conclusions as the SWP, and at about the same time or a little before. As for our British cothinkers, they hailed the SWP decision with astounding alacrity and if they discussed the ramifications of the position I never saw any of their documents.

From our point of view, the fact that the International Secretariat, despite their dispute with us, had reached a position on China virtually identical with ours spoke in their favor. We had believed that the sharp differences in 1953 over organizational questions and over the concepts behind those questions indicated the rise of deeper differences that might proceed to the foundations of Trotskyism; and we thought we saw the beginning of the process in relation to such political issues of 1953 as the French general strike



and the East German uprising. We considered that the further course of Mestre, Clarke, Lawrence, and the rest, was substantial proof of what we had maintained. However, the International Secretariat, as we saw it, backed away from these positions or attempted to clarify what they considered to be misunderstandings on our part as to where they really stood. We noted that.

Finally, the political positions taken in relation to the Hungarian Revolution convinced us that our fears had not been borne out; the political differences had narrowed so much that unification was feasible. In brief, agreement existed on the fundamental level of the appreciation of the character of the state; similar agreement existed in the main on the important but derivative level of current political issues; only the organizational problem remained.

We knew from long experience how unprofitable and even disastrous a blind factional posture can be in such a situation. We decided to try to act as objectively as we possibly could. The IS had declared that it favored unification. Taking the declaration in good faith, we responded in 1957 by suggesting formation of a parity commission. The IC indicated that it found the proposal acceptable; but, as you are well aware, this attempt to bridge the split proved unrealistic due to mutual suspicion and fear of loss of factional advantage in a unified movement.

Now we come to the question of Cuba. For me this was the decisive test of the validity of the position on China. A little more than eight years after dictator Chiang Kai-shek was toppled, dictator Batista went down. And just about eight years after the establishment of the Chinese workers state, the Cuban workers state was set up. The events were in striking parallel -- the role of guerrilla warfare, of the peasantry, of a march on the cities, sympathetic response of the workers, destruction of the bourgeois army, the establishment of a petty-bourgeois government limited to aims within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, then agrarian reform, arming of the people, radicalization of the government, sweeping expropriations of capitalist property, establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, of a planned economy, changes in state structure to bring it into line with these developments, armed defense against a counterrevolutionary assault mounted by American imperialism -- all this under a leadership of acknowledged petty-bourgeois origin. It is as if Marxist theory had said, you doubt the validity of the analysis of the Chinese Revolution? All right, here's something closer to home: take a look at Cuba!

Turning to the peculiarities distinguishing the two revolutions, however, there was one noteworthy difference. The leaders of the Cuban Revolution were not trained in the school of Stalinism. In fact, in guiding the revolution to power, they by-passed the Communist party. This difference holds immense portent for the future as a sign of the decline of Stalinism; but it also stands within the continuity of previous analysis for it is easy to demonstrate the appearance of a trend in the series of workers states: the leaders tend to stand in increasing independence in relation to the Russian bureaucratic caste (whatever their relations to their own national bureaucracies). In the case of the Cubans this is so obvious that it has struck nearly all serious observers of the Cuban Revolution.

The non-Stalinist origin of this leadership can be said to mark a certain qualitative change. By their example of by-passing the Cuban Communist party, the Castro leadership broke the myth that deep-going revolutions can be led only by cadres trained in the school of Stalinism. From now on, would-be revolutionists will seek other variants, and many Communist parties, especially in Latin America, have been visibly affected, if not thrown into a crisis by the development. This great new fact, coupled with the process of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union, in turn has opened up the brightest perspectives for the swift spread of Trotskyism and the growth of revolutionary-socialist parties throughout the world.

It also visibly brightened the prospects for unifying the world Trotskyist movement. Two independent analyses of the Cuban Revolution were made simultaneously; one by the SWP and the other by the IS. In all essentials, they came to the same conclusions. The Latin-American comrades of both sides reached the same view from their vantage point. It will not be easy for historians to determine who was really first. That question, of course, is of little importance or interest. What is interesting and instructive is the speed with which these independent analyses were made. This testifies to the fact that the lessons learned in analyzing the class character of the state in China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe have become well absorbed by the world Trotskyist movement. The lessons, at least in their main outline, are now a living part of our Marxist methodology. Cuba was relatively easy for us to handle and by far the most pleasant. From the viewpoint of theory it was not unexpected. There was no big theoretical gap to fill. Cuba was only a particular case in a series of particular cases. Note well -- a particular case in a given series.

This triumph of Marxist theory obviously demonstrated how similar were the approaches of the two sides in the world Trotskyist movement. It gave fresh impulsion to unity sentiments, since whatever the convictions might be as to who was right in the past and whatever the views might be about organizational concepts and practices, both sides were dutybound, on the foundation of their basic outlook, to at least attempt a fair test of the possibilities of unification. All that is really required on both sides is good will and a flexible transitional phase.

But it was here that the Cuban Revolution itself gave rise to a fresh division, or the deepening of an old division about which we have only recently begun to receive some clarification. Leading comrades of the Socialist Labour League reached a position on Cuba that differs fundamentally from the one worked out by the SWP, the IS, and the Latin-American comrades of both sides. This position is briefly described in the majority resolution and so I will not repeat it here. What I wish to consider is how they arrived at this view. They do not describe their method and so I must rely on logical deduction. If this leads to some errors of interpretation, I am sure that the comrades of the SLL will not display unwillingness in collaborating to set me right.

First of all, I think they are strongly inclined to close their eyes to the facts. That is the only explanation I can come to on reading such an assertion as this: "On all decisive and fundamental questions which impinge upon the power and wealth of the national bourgeoisie as a whole, however, the regime comes down on the side of capitalism." How the British comrades could bring themselves to say something like that if they had read even a single issue of any one of the periodicals of the counterrevolutionary Cuban national bourgeoisie is incomprehensible unless it is taken as a current illustration of the rather sad reflection of a British divine at the turn of the seventeenth century: "None so blind as those that will not see."

This defect is visible in almost everything they write about the Cuban Revolution. For instance, in a major article prominently displayed in the most recent issue of Labour Review which purports to provide the background to the Cuban Revolution, they couldn't even get such an elemental fact straight as the size of the population in Cuba. The same tendency led them into such a political blunder as to imply that the attack on Voz Proletaria in Cuba was taken on the initiative of Castro, whom the Newsletter (July 15, 1961) says

"personifies the dictatorship of Cuban capital." It happened to be Stalinists of the Anibal Escalante type who were to blame for the attack on Voz Proletaria, but the Newsletter ended its article declaring: "We urge in particular members of the British Communist Party to press their Executive to protest in the sharpest possible manner against Castro's attempts to follow the example of the Supreme Court and the Justice Department of the United States."

There's a political line which Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips, as advocates of the SLL position, might tell us how best to explain to the new generation of revolutionists cropping up all over Latin America under inspiration of the Cuban Revolution and its exemplary struggle against American imperialism.

This blindness to facts, which lands our British co-thinkers into such strange distortions of reality, is carried over into the field of theory and there becomes converted into disdain for those who display a more friendly attitude toward facts. A ready label is slapped on them: "Empiricists!"

However, in contrast to this effort to keep the facts from the door, a somewhat different approach is also evident among our British comrades. This course is to admit the facts and attempt to bring them into some kind of conceptual framework. But the concepts used are not the same as those used by the world Trotskyist movement for the past fourteen years.

One variation is to call the Cuban Revolution nothing but a "particular" case. Particular in what context? Our natural assumption would be that it is "particular" in the context of China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But this is not the case. Our British cothinkers refuse to consider Cuba to be a workers state of any kind. We are left utterly in the dark about what they mean by "particular" unless they are using it in the sense of vulgar empiricism which considers it normal procedure to quarantine dangerously contagious facts in isolation wards.

Another line of approach attempts to be more realistic. It tries to analyze the Cuban reality in the light of the concept "workers state." A product of this reasoning was rather proudly offered to the public in two installments in the March 11 and March 13, 1961, issues of The Newsletter under the somewhat ambiguous title "Cuba Si, Humbug No." Most of our comrades felt acute embarrassment that such an article

could appear in a Trotskyist newspaper and I heard some angry and even bitter comments about it. Certain comrades went so far as to believe that a typographical error was involved and that the title was really intended to read "Humbug Si, Cuba No."

True enough, from the political point of view it was damaging to the cause of Trotskyism, but on the level of methodology it was quite instructive because of what it revealed about the concepts with which the theoreticians of the Socialist Labour League are attempting to operate.

Read that article again -- both installments -- carefully. The author, Brian Pearce, begins by telling us that defense of the Cuban Revolution is "the duty of socialists everywhere." We find no difficulty in agreeing with that, although we, in order to avoid ultraleft exclusivism, would try to widen the field to include others besides socialists. "At the same time," Comrade Pearce continues, "we need to be on guard against various illusions to which the Cuban experience has given rise in some quarters, amounting to the view that a workers state can be established without a regime of workers councils and without a revolutionary Marxist party."

Naturally, as strong defenders of the Cuban Revolution, we are interested in how Comrade Pearce proposes to help plug any holes in our defense lines. First he cites the Bolivian Revolution of 1952, then the Mexican Revolution of 1910. We are given a passing reference to Sun Yat-sen and Kemal Atatürk. The scene shifts then to Bulgaria from "1920 to 1923." From there we go to "Central Asia and Eastern Siberia in the early 1920's." Then a passing reference to an analogy made by J. R. Campbell between "the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia" and "the class character of the Spanish Republic in 1937-1938." We don't stay in Spain. The author puts us back in Siberia for the inside story about Lenin's maneuver in connection with the Far Eastern Republic. That's the end of part one.

Part two opens in sunny Mexico in the days of Cárdenas. We are told about the nationalization of the oil industries and Trotsky's views on workers management of these industries. We are referred to another article by Trotsky, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay."

For a moment we seem to have finally made it to Havana. Comrade Pearce declares: "In a discussion about the problems of the Cuban revolution there have been references made to the

Comintern slogan of 'a workers government' (later 'a workers' and peasants' government'), in 1922-1924." However, this is but a prelude to a general discussion of transitional slogans which ends up with the admonition that "renewed study" is needed of the errors made by "the Brandler leadership of the German Communist Party" when they entered "a coalition government with Social-Democrats in Saxony" in 1923.

British workers must be a patient lot to have read that article and not written to the editor to ask what connection the title had with the contents and what was the meaning of it all. But then I doubt that the real audience which the editor had in mind was the British workers.

Comrade Pearce was really saying, "Look, you Americans and Canadians, stop feeling elated about an alleged opening of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba must be understood in the light of Bolivia in 1952, Mexico of 1910, early Kuomintang China, Turkey and Bulgaria of the twenties, the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia, the Spanish Republic, the Mexico of Cárdenas' time, and Saxony in 1923."

"And what connects these together?" we ask our teachers.

"They all took radical measures, some sounding very revolutionary, but none was a workers state."

"And what about the specific measures taken by the Cuban revolutionists?" we inquire.

Silence.

"And what about our analyses of China, Yugoslavia, and Eastern Europe?"

Silence. But complete silence.

We take another look at Comrade Pearce's opening remarks. "We need to be on guard. .. against the view that a workers state can be established without a regime of workers councils and without a revolutionary Marxist party."

Comrade Pearce's contribution suddenly becomes highly illuminating. With only one exception -- Bolivia -- all his references are to the period preceding World War II, before the victory of the Soviet Union over the armies of German imperialism and before the expansion of the degenerated workers state into Eastern Europe. Some of his examples are even

taken from the pre-World War I period. We have been transported into a world where the dimension of time is missing; one, moreover, from which the most significant experiences in relation to the problem at hand have been arbitrarily left out. The sense of history is absent, all connection between actual sequences of events rubbed away. We are offered not a logical progression but a collection of oddities: a few old coins and cancelled stamps, some shrunken heads, and a couple of pages torn from the works of Trotsky.

Most extraordinary of all is the complete lack of appreciation of the profound impact which the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, its rise to a world position next to that of the United States, and then the victory of the Chinese Revolution have had on the thinking of people outside of Britain, especially those in the colonial areas. How is it possible for a comrade who knows a great deal about the history of the first workers state to have overlooked the most palpable fact of all -- its emergence as a pre-eminent model to millions upon millions of minds in the colonial world? This subjective factor has objective consequences! It can be seen in the case of Cuba in the form of a series of institutions. Or does Comrade Pearce hold that the subjective factor can play no decisive role in history unless it first finds institutional form in a model revolutionary-socialist party prior to a revolution?

The strangest fact of all in relation to Comrade Pearce's article about humbug is that the theory, of which it is an expression, now guides the politics of the Socialist Labour League. This is what stands behind the ultimatistic line which our British comrades have adopted in relation to the colonial revolution as a whole, their position in connection with Cuba being only one glaring case, as the majority resolution points out.

Read that article again. Comrade Pearce not only junks the whole analysis on which the world Trotskyist movement, including our British cothinkers, has based itself since the discussion on Eastern Europe, he puts in question Trotsky's position on Poland and Finland in 1939-1940 and ultimately Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state. We have suddenly been given an insight into the thinking of our British comrades; we have a possible explanation for their enigmatic refusal to extend to Cuba the fundamental concepts utilized in analyzing China, Yugoslavia, and Eastern Europe. They are contemplating, we must conclude, a revision of Trotskyist theory so far-reaching that it implies discarding Trotsky's position on the Soviet Union.

Does this conclusion, which we have reached by logical deduction, sound absurd? Then listen to this: some of the French adherents of the International Committee have already put down the following in black and white: 'We will undoubtedly have to revise the analysis of the new working-class states of Eastern Europe as carried out in 1948, and the reopening of this discussion will disclose how it was at that period that viewpoints alien to Trotskyism were introduced into our working method, viewpoints which took the form of 'Pablosim' as an organized tendency, but which today remain present in a number of parties professedly in agreement with the International Committee.

Clearly these comrades are to be commended for the logical consistency with which they approach the problem of unifying the Fourth International. If bitter dead-end factionalism bars you from friendly collaboration with French Trotskyists who adhere to the International Secretariat, then you must find major differences over the central agreement that is pulling the Trotskyist movement together -- the meaning of the Cuban Revolution. To do that, you must junk the criteria used in analyzing that revolution. This can be accomplished only by unraveling all the theoretical positions on China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. The comrades themselves specify the minimum date to which this revision must be taken -- 1948.

They will find, however, that they cannot stop there. They will have to go back to a still earlier date -- 1939-40, the date of the discussion on Poland and Finland. Having done this, they will still find themselves unable to stop. They will have to go back even further -- back to 1924, the year of the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor. And it will be hard to stop there because Trotsky based his analysis of the degenerated workers state on the concepts inherited from the previous body of Marxist theory.

I think we are in position now to get a clearer appreciation of a rather distinctive feature of the leadership of the group which has been organized in the SWP to defend the position of the SLL and which has submitted the minority resolution for consideration at this plenum. This distinctive feature is the bloc with Comrade Albert Philips.

As everyone here knows; perhaps only too well, Comrade Philips has held the state capitalist position for many years. We think that Comrade Philips is a valuable party leader and we have argued with him in hope of eventually winning him to



our basic position in analyzing the character of the state, as he has argued with us in hope of winning us to his. I think many comrades have learned something in these years of patient discussion, especially about the democratic character of the SWP. Lately I have heard a rumor that Comrade Philips has given up the state capitalist position. I do not know if it is true but I report it so that Comrade Philip can correct me if I am wrong.

In any case I think that Comrade Philips will find himself in something of a dilemma, if he hasn't already discovered it. If he has dumped state capitalism, then I think he owes the plenum an explanation. We would like to know what arguments finally won him over. Since these arguments would undoubtedly prove very useful in convincing other state capitalists, our party would stand to gain. I imagine that our British cothinkers would be interested in this information, too, inasmuch as there are quite a few "state caps," as they call them, knocking about the woods and moors of Britain who might be won over by the right arguments. It should also prove educational to know what was the date of conversion and why it was that date and no other.

On the other hand, if you have not really given up your state capitalist position, I think the plenum is entitled to know the basis for your bloc with Comrade Wohlforth. If you have differences on fundamental questions, it is your duty as a principled Marxist to make them clear and to state why you have formed a bloc to advance the platform submitted in resolution form by the minority.

Of course, there is still another possibility; namely, that Comrade Wohlforth has secretly adopted the state capitalist position.

Without a full clarification, I am afraid that some of the comrades will be tempted to reason like this: a state capitalist would have some pretty good reasons for trying to make friends with defenders of the SLL position, even if he had to dummy up a little or adopt diplomatic evasion because of the well-known lack of tact which our British cothinkers customarily display in dealing with "state caps."

First of all, the resistance to agreeing that Cuba is a workers state, in face of the overwhelming evidence, brightens things for the state capitalist position. If Cuba isn't a workers state what label fits it but the label of state capitalism?

Secondly, the mere failure of the SLL to bring forward in the case of Cuba the criteria used in relation to China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe, puts a big question mark on the accepted Trotskyist analysis of those states. This is a gratifying development from the state capitalist position, for if they are not workers states what are they except instances of state capitalism?

Thirdly, there is an inexorable logic to this, as any state capitalist who has been up and down the trail well knows. There is no distinguishable qualitative difference in character between the Soviet Union today and China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe. If they are not workers states neither is the Soviet Union; and if they are to be characterized as state capitalist, so must the Soviet Union.

State capitalism, naturally, does not exhaust the field of alternatives. A completely novel label may be placed on the Soviet Union -- like "bureaucratic collectivism" or "managerial society" or some such variant. For that to happen to the SLL would be a fate worse than death. It is the obvious duty of a state capitalist to respond to the critical situation, to rush to the rescue, fill the breach and thus save the SLL from such a disastrous end.

In a turn in the market, where customers have begun to appear on the strange street of shops dealing in exotic labels for workers states, it's time for the shopkeepers to snap to attention if not to carry out a little entryism sui generis.

Now I don't want to be unfair to Comrade Philips. This might not be the thinking of all the comrades here as to the reasons for his making a bloc with Comrade Wohlforth; but it would surely occur to some. At least the dark suspicion crossed my mind. I am sure that as a principled Marxist, Comrade Philips will want to clear this up at the plenum today.

Let me turn now to the other half of this ambiguous bloc -- Comrade Wohlforth. I have become convinced that he does not really have a serious concern for theory. I base this conclusion on the postulate that as a theoretician he would feel the keenest concern over how his analysis of the Cuban Revolution has stood up under the test of such events as (1) the Cuban government's recognition that their revolution is socialist in character; (2) the recognition by the entire

top leadership of the revolution that the views of Marx and Lenin are correct and that they now count themselves as Marxist-Leninists; (3) the concern displayed by the Castro regime over bureaucratic practices such as those carried on by an unreconstructed Stalinist hack like Anibal Escalante; (4) the initiation of steps towards organization of a Marxist-Leninist party; and (5) the continuous appeal to the people of Latin America to take the path blazed by the Cuban Revolution.

If theory were Comrade Wohlforth's primary interest and concern, he would either now remain silent because he felt that the test of events, while damaging to his position, was still inconclusive; or, if he felt that enough results were now in, he would have attempted a justification or self-criticism in the light of what has happened in the past year.

Instead, he changed the subject and kept talking. In place of "The Cuban Revolution and the Lessons of 1962," he wants us to get embroiled over the topic of "Pablosim and the Lessons of 1953" as if this chapter in the history of Trotskyism had become the most burning question facing our movement today.

What does this reflect if not a shift in concern? A shift away from basic theory to the field of political organization? Comrade Wohlforth became interested in putting together a group to support the position of the SLL. And he carried this out with a quietness befitting the modesty of the task. But the exigencies of current SLL policies require subordination of discussion on the Cuban Revolution and its meaning. SLL policies at the moment require strong stress on the dangers of "Pablosim" and the possibility that "Pabloism" and "Cannonism" are really synonymous. Comrade Wohlforth found this shift in subject congenial and he carried it out with admirable dexterity.

The irony of it is that in the SWP, "Pabloism" is so obviously unreal as a current menace that Comrade Wohlforth found himself in agreement with the general line of Comrade Dobbs' political report as outlined in the Political Committee. True, the resolution presented by the minority seeks to find a contradiction between the revolutionary perspective which the SWP holds in the United States and the alleged "Pabloite" perspective it holds in the world arena. "This contradiction between a domestic and an international perspective will in time be resolved," the resolution astutely predicts. Meanwhile, by way of concrete material

concerning the impending disaster over which alarm must be shouted, all the minority can give us is some vigorous finger-waving about some vague signs of the party "drifting from campaign to campaign not fully in command of its own political course;" of a vague tendency by "some in the party" "to counterpose hollow 'party building' to this essential task of building the party by developing its roots in the class;" of a vague possibility that an "accommodationist spirit can penetrate our work."

Still more ironic is the fact that the SWP has just gone through a test on its internationalism that is about as stringent as will be found in any book on how to tell a revolutionary-socialist position from an opportunist one. I mean our sustained campaign in the most powerful imperialist country on earth in defense of the Cuban Revolution. That was only our duty, of course. But we met it.

As for participation in the problems of the world Trotskyist movement we have done that to the utmost of our ability in the face of the most reactionary laws and the worst siege of witch-hunting in the history of the United States. I know that it is difficult for Trotskyists in some countries abroad to visualize the problems; but at least those in our own party know what we are up against. In venturing to make this an issue, the Wohlforth-Philips tendency contributes to the possibility of the most irresponsible kind of actions by those who are ignorant of what is involved.

Finally, while considering the irony of the demand that we should shift the subject from the Cuban Revolution and its meaning to "Pabloism" and how it will get us in trouble if we don't watch out, let me repeat that some of the French comrades who share Comrade Wohlforth's desire to straighten out the politics of the SWP, especially as it relates to unification of the world Trotskyist movement, are moving logically to the next stage -- they are considering revising the basic theory of the world Trotskyist movement as far back as 1948.

It may be that Comrade Wohlforth will join us in opposing this revisionism, which is a real, genuine revisionism. I hope that proves to be the case. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that it would not be without its advantages to the minority to follow the course suggested by their French co-thinkers of revising our basic positions back at least as far as 1948. They could then drop this adolescent nonsense of trying to impress us with melodramatic declamations on the perils that "Pabloism" holds for the SWP -- if not today then

eventually. They could move on to the level where they must finally go anyway, if they are to convince the cadres of the SWP; that is, demonstrate that our basic concepts are wrong -- the basic concepts we have developed, used and tested over a period of fourteen years -- and then prove that these wrong concepts are identical with "Pablosim." That is what a theoretician of any capacity would be attempting right now if he held the minority position about a political ambush which the SWP may run into if it continues down the road we have been following since Cannon went further than the American theses of 1946.

Before concluding with the position of Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips, I should like to make a few observations on their combination with the leaders of the Socialist Labour League. The two sectors may not see eye-to-eye on certain issues. They may even have differences of a fundamental character. Consequently, under sharp criticism, one sector may indignantly protest that they do not advocate and certainly do not stand on certain propositions or positions held by the other. It is their duty, then, to distinguish and make clear to all exactly where they do stand, what their differences are, and why the over-all objectives of the combination are more important than the points on which they stand in opposition to each other. Meanwhile we can only proceed on the basis of the package deal.

My own opinion of this package deal can be summarized as follows: the platform submitted by Comrade Wohlforth and Comrade Philips picks as a decisive test of party-building the empiric criterion of assembling a body of avowed revolutionary-socialists. The example is cited of the success of the Socialist Labour League. If this criterion was chosen in order to gain popularity in the SWP they did not do badly. It is certain to win unanimous approval if not a rising ovation. But this empiric criterion is not the sole criterion and sometimes it is not the decisive one at a given moment. There is also the criterion of leadership capacity as demonstrated under varied conditions, difficulties and opportunities. And there is the criterion of program, the policies proposed to construct a mass party of revolutionary-socialists in the world situation confronting us. Here the choice of planks is far from happy.

For example:

(1) We are asked to maintain that Cuban society today has a capitalist economic foundation and a bourgeois state with a government which "comes down on the side of capitalism" on "all the decisive and fundamental questions which impinge

upon the power and wealth of the national bourgeoisie as a whole."

(2) We are asked to support a policy which rejects overtures made in our direction by the Cuban revolutionists.

(3) We are asked to condemn as betrayals and sell-outs the partial victories won under petty-bourgeois or nationalistic leaders in the colonial world.

(4) We are asked to support an analysis of the character of the state in Cuba which puts in question our analyses of the character of the state in China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and ultimately the Soviet Union itself.

(5) We are asked to follow a course of putting on the shelf the wide areas of agreement that exist in the world Trotskyist movement and which constitute a thoroughly principled basis for healing the long-standing split and unifying the movement; and are asked instead to bring forward, for a thorough raking over, the differences of almost a decade ago, some of which have been superseded, others of which can well await historical judgment; and thus convert a most promising opportunity for unification into an unprincipled, irresponsible factional brawl that could have no other possible outcome but to heighten personal animosities, deepen suspicions, widen the split, set new feuds going, and make it still more difficult for Trotskyists of various tendencies to pool their resources and to act in common in taking advantage of the great opportunities now facing us.

(6) Only one gain is offered in return for adopting this course of self-destruction. We will finally have achieved clarification on Pabloism and adequately met its threat. This, of course, from the viewpoint of a group put together on the basis of anti-Pabloism is well worth the sacrifice. With a true understanding of the mysterious nature of Pabloism, you get a master key that unlocks the doors to all other mysteries in this complex world of today and everything turns out to be quite simple; to build a party you only have to read one half of Lenin -- how he fought the opportunists -- and in case of temptation repeat the words of the master, "Get thee behind me, Pablo."

(7) I think this platform should be rejected as a manifestation of factional rigidity within the world Trotsky-

ist movement and of ultraleftism, especially in relation to the colonial revolution.

Briefly now on the demand which our British cothinkers have been pressing for some time for a confrontation of positions. They have accused us of lack of tact, if not worse, in failing to respond with greater promptness to their challenge. Perhaps this is a justified criticism. But our delay arose in part from confidence in the good judgment of our British comrades. We were incapable of imagining that the development of the Cuban Revolution, as it deepened in the direction of socialism, could fail to impress comrades with whom we have had such long, friendly and mutually advantageous association.

We persisted in thinking that as revolutionists they would surely pass the most elementary, but also the most decisive test that can face a revolutionist; namely, the capacity to recognize a revolution when one comes along. We persisted in thinking that as Leninists they would surely agree that facts are stubborn things; and that the facts, collected, weighed and analyzed as carefully as possible, week in and week out by the staff of The Militant and the International Socialist Review would finally convince them and be reflected in their attitude toward the Cuban Revolution. It is clear that we made an error. Their distaste for "empiricism" proved to be unexpectedly strong.

We now have no choice but to proceed to discuss the reasons for this reluctance to accept reality. That involves, of course, the question of methodology and it is on that level, I believe, the main axis of the discussion will very likely unfold.

What will be the probable effects of such a discussion on the prospects of unification? Here I do not feel pessimistic. Our British cothinkers have a point, I think, in stressing the lack of clarification that exists among some of the partisans of the International Committee and in all likelihood among some of the adherents of the International Secretariat. If this lack of clarification serves to block unification, it should manifestly be cleared up. The condition for success, of course, is that we must keep an open mind as to just who may prove to be most in need of clarity.

There are no valid reasons for not inviting the comrades who adhere to the International Secretariat to participate in this discussion while efforts are made at the

same time to open up areas of common work and the establishment of comradely relations. In connection with this, the International Committee has taken an important step by asking the International Secretariat to join in setting up a parity commission for this purpose. In voting for the majority resolution you will be expressing approval of this action.

However, since the minority comrades will also no doubt want to express their approval of the initiative taken by the International Committee, while still voting for their own resolution, I think it would be well to formulate a separate motion on this point.

In closing permit me to summarize the intent of the majority resolution and the general line you are asked to discuss and act on today:

(1) A vigorous effort to persuade both of the main tendencies in the world Trotskyist movement, plus some who have been standing aside, to heal the split and unite the Fourth International.

(2) Full participation of the SWP in the discussion and as active a role as possible in helping the rapprochement which the IC recently initiated with its proposal to the IS for a parity commission.

(3) Stubborn opposition to any group or faction that seeks to perpetuate the split or to artificially slow down or sabotage the process of unification.

(4) Comradely collaboration with any group or tendency, no matter what its previous alignment, if the general line set forth in the majority resolution meets with its approval.

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Report to Plenum on Minority Resolution

by Tim Wohlforth

Over the past two years we've been through several debates and in most cases they have been with Joe. I have noticed something today while I was watching him speak; I feel Joe really enjoys debates. I sympathize with that but I also think that in the course of his thorough personal enjoyment of the polemic he sometimes get a little bit carried away. It is to be expected that debaters always seek to bring out the weakest points in the position of the opposition.

However, the effective debater must also answer the strongest points in the opposition or he has not really answered the arguments. Joe not only has directed himself to what in my opinion quite frankly is a weak theoretical position of the Socialist Labour League on Cuba but he hasn't been content with that. He has taken as the SLL's theoretical analysis of Cuba two episodic articles written over a year ago rather than relying on the actual resolution passed by the SLL, not to mention the fact that he has ignored the position taken by the French comrades and the position taken by the minority. That of course is poetic license, I guess, but it is not convincing.

One of the difficulties with debates I find over the years, over the last two years of innumerable debates, is that I'm afraid sometimes people have short memories. I would like it very much if this group of comrades here would prove this wrong. I want the comrades here to print indelibly in their minds this prediction of Joe Hansen's -- that the comrades of the International Committee, specifically the French comrades and the British comrades, intend to revise the basic conception of Trotskyist theory on the Russian question. Remember that, comrades. In two years hence, remember it thoroughly and perhaps you will say that Joe got carried away.

Remember it, comrades. You know the British comrades. They have some weaknesses. But is this their weakness? Is this the trouble with the British comrades? Are we faced with a revisionist challenge? Are they soft towards "state caps" as they call them -- that they're likely to beat up on the streets? That's the trouble with the British comrades?

I think that Joe has plenty to argue about and there's plenty of difference between the party majority and the British comrades, the French comrades and other comrades internationally without bringing up such questions. We must stick to the facts, as we are constantly told.

Now Joe said that in his opinion the discussion was evolving in the direction of the deeper questions of method. To me that is very true. In fact I might say that 18 months ago at a January 1961 plenum discussion on Cuba I said in my opening remarks, in hearing Joe's presentation on Cuba, the following: "I might start out by saying that in addition to having differences with Joe on substantive theoretical questions on the Cuban revolution I'm afraid to say that I also have a difference on the question of methodology and this may be a most fundamental difference." In my opinion, the 18-month discussion both in this country and internationally verified this. That the most fundamental difference in the party today and in the international movement is precisely the question of method, the question of the preservation and the development of the Marxist method.

That is exactly what is at issue. This method in reality in the long run can only be understood, only be properly evaluated, precisely by its application and use concretely in development, in relation to world events. We can discuss any question, comrades -- this is the first sign of a deep methodological difference -- we can discuss any question internationally and we will have a difference. Any basic question, Algeria, Cuba, various European questions and so on. And the reason is we are proceeding to approach these questions from two different methods.

Now in my opinion essentially what has happened is that the majority comrades, those formulating the political and theoretical outlook of the party, have begun to adopt the method of empiricism in application to international developments, in their whole theoretical outlook. Essentially, empiricism is not simply a matter of understanding facts or collecting facts, it's a matter of never going beyond that stage really. Essentially the empiricist starts with an empirical description of an isolated aspect of reality, a particular moment or period of time. The analyst, the person looking at this reality, is divorced from it. He looks at it as if from a cloud, observing something passing below. He looks at that reality, he gets an impression of reality, the way it looks and then he takes that impression, he imposes that impression on other realities throughout the world.

That is the method of empiricism. In reality, empiricism is the least concrete, the least factual, has the least understanding of reality of any methodological approach for the very simple reason that it imposes upon reality the schema which it derives from one particular aspect of reality. And never is able to see things in process, in motion. Essentially, the method of Marxism, the dialectical method of Marxism, views reality always as an interconnected whole, never in isolation. It relates any particular event to the past experience of mankind which is summed up, which is contained in the method itself and in the Marxist theory. It interrelates this event with the whole body of Marxist theory and it relates any contemporary development with developments throughout the whole world and realizes that you can only understand an event if you see it in motion. You understand not only what it is -- what it appears to be today -- but what it has been and what it will become. If you do not see that event constantly in motion, in process, you cannot understand it.

And finally it always approaches reality from the point of view of being a part of it in which the observer is a participant in that reality. It seeks to understand only in order to intervene, to be a directive, purposive part of that reality.

Now empiricism or what we might sometimes call an eclectic variation of empiricism (people that adhere in one aspect of reality to a dialectic method and in others to an empirical outlook) have had at various times strong influence in the Trotskyist movement. Joe in his talk referred to the Shachtman struggle. In my opinion this discussion must inevitably go back to the Shachtman struggle because essentially the Shachtman struggle was a struggle against an empiricist trend in the movement. A group of comrades had reacted to an impression of Soviet reality. They did not view the Soviet Union with an understanding of its origin, of its process. They just looked at the event. Here was the Soviet Union walking into Finland. Therefore, the Soviet Union was carrying on an imperialist act. It looked as if there were a new ruling class running it. They reacted impressionistically to that event, abandoned the dialectical method of Marxism. They had no understanding of the Soviet Union's evolution from its October revolution.

And this was the point that Trotsky raised. It was his main reason for turning the discussion in 1939 and 1940 to the question of method, to an attack on the empiricist, pragmatic and eclectic method of Burnham and of Shachtman and of Abern.

Now the second time that an alien methodological outlook entered the -- became strong in the Trotskyist movement -- was in the period which Joe correctly notes the French comrades have suggested we look back at. That's the period from 1948 to 1950. At that time the whole world movement was thrown into a crisis, a crisis which culminated in the 1953 split. The 1953 split had its origins in the discussion that was held around East Europe and Yugoslavia. That is where the French comrades had their origins and that is where Pablo's whole conciliationist outlook towards Stalinism had its origin and that is precisely the basis for the political origins of the fundamental division in our world movement. At that time, Pablo reacted to a similar type of events with the same identical method as Shachtman. He just came to the opposite political conclusion. He was just as faraway from Trotskyism as Shachtman but in the opposite direction. He saw Stalinism as expanding. Therefore what does the empiricist conclude from that? He abandons our whole previous method and understanding of Stalinism for he did not see Stalinism as it had been, as it was becoming, but just as it was at that moment. How did the empiricist do that?

He saw this expansionism as dominating the whole next epoch of humanity -- the whole next period of humanity would be unrolling "centuries of deformed workers states." Our movement would have no political role until after this stage had gone by. This is the origin of the "centuries of deformed workers states." Their thesis was no episodic thing. This was a deep empiricism. The whole history of Pabloism has been this empiricistic impressionism -- reacting to events. This is shown in the fact that it constantly changes its program and its outlook as new events occur, not understanding and absorbing the new events into one theory and one theoretical structure -- but reacting, just reacting. Reacting impressionistically to events, being buffeted around.

He also reacted to the Yugoslav development which, quite correctly, Comrade Hansen has also brought up. But what happened -- what was the analysis of Yugoslavia? Don't just bring it up, saying, "Well it ended up with the position Yugoslavia was a workers state." Sure we did. But a lot happened before we ended with that position. What was Pablo's position at that time which was adopted by this party at that time? Pablo's position toward Yugoslavia? His position was that Yugoslavia was evolving toward a direction of becoming a healthy workers state, that Tito was not a Stalinist, but a left centrist, that he was from above instituting

forms of democratic proletarian rule. Exact quotes. That was the position taken by Pablo and taken at that time by the majority of the party, resisted by some comrades like John Wright and others. Not just the state capitalist comrades but also the comrades of considerable standing and authority in the movement as well as our French comrades in Europe.

Pablo empirically came to this conclusion from seeing the fact that Tito broke from Stalin, the fact that he sought an independent base -- he did among his own masses for a period of time. He also sought a base with imperialism. We also know he even supported the West in the Korean war. Jockeying between forces this bureaucracy temporarily did take a left turn. Reacting to that, Pablo saw Stalinism and Stalinist parties in the leadership of countries -- Stalinist bureaucracies capable of being converted into revolutionary workers parties. That's what he saw. That's what the empiricist saw observing the happening of one particular development and seeing it as a whole trend. But that wasn't what happened, was it? That didn't happen.

But what's happening today? Tito's planning his trip to the Crimea for a little bit more than his health. Perhaps for his political and economic health. Tito did not break fundamentally from Stalinism, we know that. Tito today, the Yugoslav Communist party represents the Stalinist bureaucracy in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia is a workers state, yes, it is a deformed workers state. Right? These are all true, this is all what happened.

And this you could only understand at that time if you viewed Yugoslavia from the point of view of its whole development, looked at it that way instead of at just a moment and projecting from that. Furthermore because of his whole outlook toward Yugoslavia, Pablo had no active attitude toward Yugoslavia. Or let's say that he had -- he felt that you could win Tito over by compliments. Everyone knows this, he turned the Fourth International into a propaganda machine for the Tito regime. Sure he did. You all remember it. You go back to some of the stuff that came out then. I don't think you'd feel too comfortable with it unless you changed the name to Fidel, maybe. You would not feel comfortable as far as it relates to Yugoslavia.

He turned the Fourth International into a propaganda machine for Tito along the lines that if only Trotskyists can get close to him and the way we get close to him is just find nice things to say about him in the press. Just get close, close to him, invite him to attend meetings of the

Fourth International and so on. This way he will be won over to Trotskyism.

But that's nothing. That means nothing. You do not win people over that way. He had no conception of the independent intervention in Yugoslavia of the working class, of the Trotskyist party or just of the working class in general. The workers were to be given power from above by Tito. They were not to struggle for it. They were to have it handed to them. And who was Pablo? Pablo was the observer, he was up on this cloud, he was looking at this panorama of events sweeping along in Yugoslavia and objective forces were transforming Tito.

And where was our movement? It was supposedly up on that cloud with him. It was this kind of thinking -- this kind of thinking that led to the political outlook that brought about the split in the movement in 1953. It was for these reasons that Pablo said, "Enter the Stalinist parties, and enter them with a conciliatory attitude toward the leadership because the leadership of these parties are going to be transformed the way the leadership of the Yugoslav party was transformed." By the pressure of the masses especially under conditions of an impending world war which the impressionist also saw. He saw the cold war was stiffening, of course it was stiffening. So, the cold war is stiffening, then the third world war is on the agenda. Empiricism, impressionism.

And in looking back at that material, Pablo enters the international discussion as if an alien outside method and approach were there. Now I'm going to be frank about it. The other comrades had a lot of weaknesses. They were slow to grasp the changes taking place. I'm speaking specifically of the comrades who made the finest contributions in that period. They should not be slighted over. Comrades should go back and read over that material. Comrades will see that Comrade Germain played a fine role during and after the Second World Congress. Comrades have to say that John G. Wright in this country made wonderful contributions. Other comrades in the party here did. Comrade Stein in his presentation on Eastern Europe and so on. This is fine material. They were using a correct method. They had an incorrect theory. They were slow to take into account the new changes in East Europe. They tended to view the structural assimilation of East Europe into the Soviet orbit in a too mechanical way, insisting that Stalinism could only expand in this area through the actual incorporation of these regions. That was

Germain's weakness. He was weak theoretically. But he was correct in his method. He was correct in his method and he was functioning with the method of Trotsky. Pablo abandoned all that. Walked into the movement in 1948 for the first time in our history with a new criterion for workers states. All you need is nationalized property. All you need is a monopoly on foreign trade. This is all you need and you got a workers state.

What did our party say? Our party said, "Bull." In 1948 and 1949 and 1950. That's what Morris Stein said and what the Political Committee said and not Joe, but Joe's held a lot of positions. But this is what we said. This was rejected by our movement. It was rejected because it was wrong. We said, you can only determine a workers state by bringing up the question of origins, not just empirically seeing what it is at the moment. That was the trouble we had with Shachtman. He just wanted to look at it as it was at the moment, and to him the appearance he saw was bureaucratic collectivism. We said he's wrong, you can't understand Russia without understanding the Russian Revolution and its degeneration and therefore the traditions of the Russian Revolution that are in the property forms that remain. So we say to these people, you can't just look at a country, see how much nationalized property -- look at Egypt. They've got a planned economy, expropriated all major capitalists because the capitalists were so reactionary they wouldn't even invest in capital development. What are you going to do with Egypt? You can't judge it that way.

I could go into Eastern Europe and show you in even more detail how this method falls apart. Of the countries that were first structurally assimilated into the Soviet orbit, first became essentially workers states, the least amount of nationalized property exists. And some of those that took the longest to become deformed workers states were far more nationalized. Like Poland or Czechoslovakia as contrasted to Rumania and Bulgaria.

But this was a new method, a new approach, empirical approach. Somehow, to identify workers states, you should just look at the state, see how much nationalized property there is, you've got your criteria here, your criteria there. I don't have to polemicize against it. Read Comrade Wright, read Comrade Stein.

They weren't wrong. They made mistakes. They weren't basically wrong in their methodological approach. They

made errors. And Pablo took advantage of their errors to introduce an alien method and to me that's the same situation here. I think the comrades in Britain are wrong. I'll say it, I'll be very happy to say it. They're not all wrong. They're right in saying that in agriculture essentially capitalist relations remain except in a few state farms, the bulk of agriculture remains in private hands. They're right in saying the planned economy isn't really yet fully planned. They're wrong in saying Castro is a representative of capital. He's not. Cuba is well on its way to becoming precisely what Yugoslavia, China and Eastern Europe are. Yes. That is my opinion. But the comrades today are reacting to an impression of a Cuban reality. The same way that Pablo reacted to Yugoslavia. In my opinion they are going to be proven wrong. Or, if you prefer, he was proven half right. He was right that it was a workers state, wrong when he thought it wasn't going to be a deformed workers state.

I think, very well, comrades, you may be proven half right again. It may very well be a workers state. If you want to call it a workers state, all right. It's a matter of the designation of the point of qualitative change. But you're going to be very, very wrong if you try to maintain, as Pablo did then, that Cuba is going to evolve into a healthy workers state with real proletarian rule, without the proletariat independently participating in that process. You also look at Cuba from a distance, from afar. You see this objective tide transforming things. What is your policy? To support what the Cuban leadership says? I'm informed here that our great weakness was that we didn't see that there was Communist danger in Cuba. Of course there was. We said it at the last convention -- that there was a division between Castro and the Stalinists and that we should support Castro. At that time comrades said that there was no Stalinist threat in Cuba. The Militant raised the question of a Stalinist danger in Cuba only after Castro did -- so maybe Castro's a better Marxist. But is that the real thing? No. That's not the real thing. The real thing is that we have a policy of just going along and describing reality in Cuba and not intervening in it. We do not feel that our intervention, the independent intervention of the working class itself in Cuba, will determine these events, will have a determining impact on these events. We do not look to that force in Cuba today. We look to the government, we look to the state apparatus, we even go so far as to minimize the correct steps that Castro himself has made. Joe does it here. To him the struggle against Escalante is the struggle against an unreconstructed Stalinist.



Isn't it a struggle against Stalinism? Isn't it a struggle against a section of a political movement in Cuba the Stalinist party, and shouldn't we be saying that about Cuba and warning the Cubans of the necessity not only to struggle against Escalante but against Stalinism in all its manifestations? Hoy has just been made the organ of the new united party. Is Blas Roca, who takes his orders direct from Khrushchev (is there any question of that), is Blas Roca now no longer a Stalinist? Is there no longer a danger in Cuba of Stalinism? Hoy is the official organ of the new united party. Pravda has supported this action. Has Khrushchev been won over to Trotskyism? Or perhaps a Stalinist threat remains in Cuba though it has been partially countered -- an action we should support. I'll go back to that a little later.

Now the comrades on the basis of reacting to Cuban events have come up with a bold assertion. They say now it is possible to create workers states with the proviso only in the colonial areas (though it is not specified why only in the colonial areas) without a Marxist party. And furthermore they even suggest, in my opinion this is more than a suggestion, that the workers state can be created without the workers by attributing to the peasantry, the armed peasantry, a greater role.

Now this is the empirical conclusion they arrived at from Cuban developments. That Cuba has been able to resolve the problem of the need for a ~~Marxist~~ party for the creation of a healthy workers state. The Marxist party is to be added two years later from above, organized from above. This concept to me is the essential, the fundamental essence of the -- upon this the whole structure of the majority rests. And to me this concept is fundamentally wrong. The only evidence that can be cited to uphold this position is the fact that in the postwar world we have seen an expansion of Stalinism, of countries whose essential identity is the same as that of the Soviet Union.

This has occurred in two ways. First, in an area where the Soviet Union directly had proletarian political hegemony in Eastern Europe, these areas were structurally transformed into essentially the same type of society as exists in the Soviet Union, workers states, but deformed workers states. This also occurred in Yugoslavia and China and now to some extent in Cuba we see a similar process under conditions where the direct role of the Soviet Union is nowhere near as great. It varies from country to country. But always under conditions, at least in Yugoslavia and

China, where the Stalinist party was in the dominant position in the country, where the country carried through its transformation in direct collaboration, under the control of and with the support of the Soviet Union, where the end result was the incorporation of this region into the Soviet orbit. To me the extent that Cuba becomes a workers state in any other way than through the genuine Marxist revolutionary party, the working class itself coming to power, it will be along this road. To me it is no accident that Cuba has been evolving in this direction, that Stalinist ideology has grown in Cuba; that Fidel's speech for instance on Marxism-Leninism which Joe has challenged me to comment on, had no concept in it at all of workers democracy. Not one word. Not one word in it of proletarian forms of rule. You can read it. I've read every word of it. Find me a word on proletarian forms of rule. It has the Stalinist concept in it of one-party rule, period. Substituting itself for the class. And that one party is to be chosen from above through a selective process of the leading top committee then choosing and selecting all the lower committees. Not even holding a conference.

So to me this is the essential problem we face, the essential theoretical problem. That on the basis of a certain interpretation of Cuban developments the comrades have come up with a theoretical conclusion which if it is true -- and it may be true -- we'll investigate it -- means the end of Trotskyism. If consciousness, if the Marxist party is no longer an essential ingredient to the establishment of a workers state in at least a large section of the world -- in the first place, I think it is dubious that you're going to be able to prevent the extension of this concept to other parts of the world -- if this is so then it puts a big question mark over the need of consciousness itself, need of Marxism itself, need of Marxist theory and need of the Marxist party.

And I do not think that these events justify that because in Yugoslavia and in China, while these countries were transformed into workers states, the problem of the need for Marxist leadership still remains, does it not? That is why we pose the question of political revolution in Yugoslavia and China. And is Cuba not to follow that pattern? To the extent that it too becomes a workers state incorporated into the Soviet orbit without genuine rule by the working class through its party and through its institutions, will not that also happen to Cuba? Should we immediately, as impressionists, reject that as a possibility, come up with a whole new theory that now anything goes, that we create the

parties now two years after the revolution? That you do not need a Marxist leadership? In one third, what is it, maybe more than one third, of the world that is under colonial rule?

That to me is the essential question that is posed for us.

Now all these other questions are related to this fundamental question. This whole argument of subjectivism versus objectivism and all that is largely -- is posed in the wrong way. The problem is not whether or not you're to emphasize objective factors or emphasize subjective factors. The problem is whether or not you're to have an outlook which interrelates the two, consciously interrelates the two. Whether you're going to look on the world from on high as an observer who does not intervene in events. Just comments on them, sees the automatic process going on, or whether you're going to intervene as an active participant in history. That's what it means.

This question about the critical nature of the subjective element. I'll state it clearly and baldly and if one of the comrades wants to take me up on it, then challenge me on it. I say that when the objective conditions are ripe for revolution the subjective factor becomes the most important objective condition for the victory of revolution. Very simple concept. That is, when you're in a revolutionary period, when you're in a revolutionary period, the struggle is decided by the relative consciousness, organization, experience of the contending classes, the capitalists and the working class.

That's the most fundamental concept of Marxism, that is the way we've always analyzed historical events. That isn't denying the objective element -- it is not saying which is primary or not -- but recognizing that the subjective factor is one of the most important objective conditions for the victory of the revolution, and that is what we've always said. You need a party, you need a leadership. The class itself must be conscious of its task and if it is not, if it is not conscious of its task, capitalism isn't going to collapse automatically. Trotsky said many times, one of his most profound ideas repeated over and over again, especially in the disputes in the early days of the Third International, there is no impossible situation for capitalism. That if the class isn't ready, the class isn't conscious, capitalism will figure a way out of the situation. Out of

any situation. As long as the class itself, the working class, isn't conscious, organized. This is where the whole weight of capitalism is against -- the organization of the working class, against its consciousness and especially against the Marxist vanguard. Our most important idea, we cannot slur over that. We cannot look upon the subjective factor as an automatic process. It will just come along so why worry about it. Old capitalism is falling apart and it will throw up the necessary leadership. No, it's a conscious process and we must approach it in an active way. The essential question of subjectivism and objectivism is whether or not we're going to be just commentators. Sit here in the U.S. and see the colonial revolution taking care of itself. And all we have to do is pick which guy to support. We might make some mistakes there, in fact the comrades already have made some mistakes that we'll get to under Algeria. But maybe you'll even pick a couple of guys that come out on top.

Essentially that's the problem of world relationship of forces, that is the same thing. What has happened is this. You cannot read the International Resolution or the majority statement before this National Committee without coming to the conclusion that on the question of world relationship of forces the document is completely and utterly eclectic. You people know why. Originally the International Resolution placed very little weight in the concept to the role of the advanced countries and was permeated with this concept that the relationship of forces in the world were now totally on the side of revolution and of socialism, that the process was therefore just merely unfolding under the weight of the revolutionary tide. And, after criticisms, the opposite concepts were put into the document. So you can find both concepts there. I can read you all the points you want from your own documents saying the objective, the world relationship of forces are now in favor of socialism. Furthermore, I'll show how this concept is applied. So the least you should try to do is to amend your document to make it consistent, make up your mind which view you hold.

The problem is that when it gets down to concrete analysis, at least in the colonial sphere, the analysis flows from a concept that we are in a new period of world reality. That the forces of socialism are so strong today that it is possible to do without the Marxist party or, as it says right here: "The Cuban experience demonstrates once again that the ultimate determinant in the outcome of a revolutionary struggle is the relationship of forces on a national and world scale. And not the subjective political factors alone. In this period of the ascendance of the world revolution,

Cuba has provided positive proof of a lesson illustrated in a negative way during the previous period of world reaction. This means that the period has so changed, the period of ascendant world revolutionary forces is so changed that today we don't need the Marxist party, that these pressures will just push everything aside.

This is essentially Pablo's concept of the new world reality which he posed in 1948 and 1949. If Comrade Hansen is going to give historical credit he ought to give it to that period. He ought to say, he ought to accuse the SLL of being revisionist because they're breaking from Pablo's concept of the new world reality in 1949. And he also should get up here and admit that the party made a revisionist mistake in 1953 in attacking Pablo for this correct Trotskyist concept that was one of the central bases of the split.

Now what is the world relationship of forces? This is an extremely important thing for this reason. In my opinion we are entering very much into a new period in history. For the first time in the postwar period (certainly in the post-48 period), in my opinion, we have seen a very significant pickup in the class struggle in the advanced countries. This is a very important fact. The reasons we all pretty well know and that is that capitalism in Europe and in the United States and Japan is entering into a real period of crisis. This crisis is expressed in the necessity of the capitalists to maintain their profits by putting the pressure on the working class and of extracting the profits from the workers which has led to the Belgian general strike, the series of strikes and mass actions of France, to the "Pay Pause" struggles in England. In this country it is having its effect with the beginning of strike action -- the first time in several years that there's been case after case in local unions of the rank and file voting down the international leadership and local leadership and going out on strike.

What we are actually seeing is a very favorable development on the international scene for the rebuilding of the world movement. However what we are seeing is not the creation of a new world relationship of forces in the abstract which will make the party and working class unnecessary in the colonial world but rather the creation of the conditions for the development and building of the party among the working class in the advanced countries as well as elsewhere.

And this is to me an extremely important thing. For instance the document is loaded with concepts like "overcoming

the passivity of the working class" and all that which isn't true. It doesn't fit the reality today. Advanced workers aren't passive. It's the leadership of the advanced workers which is passive. You cannot characterize the British workers as passive, the French workers as passive. Even the German workers, whom you might be able to characterize as passive, are beginning to change. I would not characterize the American working class as passive today. Not at all. You may have been able to maintain that to some extent a couple of years ago but the world is changing. And it is this change that must be dealt with now. This change, by the way, has already affected the international discussion. Why is it that the British comrades have come forward in the international movement as those who are most concerned about the role of the working class, most concerned about the role of the party. Why? Because they built a party. An effective party of young workers. Of fresh, new workers. Why have they been able to build it? They have been able to build it not only because they have a correct political program, a correct outlook, but because the objective conditions have changed in the advanced countries.

Why is it that the American party resists this a bit? Well, for one reason the objective conditions in this country very much tail those in Britain. It is not as clear to the Socialist Workers Party the role that the working class can play in this country. The comrades tend to be looking to other ways, other solutions. Therefore, the whole outlook of the party becomes wrapped up in other countries rather than in the working class of our own country. There is a relationship there that cannot be denied. What is happening is that essentially the sections of the International Committee and not the International Secretariat, which has nothing but little groups in Europe, sections of the International Committee have shown substantial growth over the last few years. This growth is a reflection of a policy that concentrates on the extreme importance of the working class in the advanced countries and the creation of a Trotskyist party in these countries.

The dispute with Pablo has been decisively resolved in concrete reality by the growth of the International Committee sections, in Japan, in England and other countries -- in Latin America; on the basis of a working class outlook and program. The Pabloites have nothing in the working class in Europe. That is not their outlook. That is not where they are looking. They are looking in Europe for the same

type of forces that the party is now looking around Latin America for.

Which gets me to the central task of the question we have with us. It's very, very concretely posed in a single event. Our movement has to make a decision on this event. And that was the Belgian General Strike. We've got to come to the conclusion as to whether the Pabloites were wrong or right there for a very clear reason. Because it relates to whether or not the Pabloite approach toward building a movement in the advanced countries is correct or incorrect -- a test of whether or not the Pabloites are in reality carrying out a Trotskyist outlook and program.

What happened in the Belgian General Strike? Essentially the same thing happened in the Belgian General Strike as happened in the French General Strike which was one of the main political reasons given for the Open Letter and the split in 1953. The Pabloites play the identical role today that they played in 1953 and that they will play in all these advanced countries. Essentially it was this. The Pabloites, who had not inconsiderable forces for our movement with a considerable amount of influence in Belgium, approached the Belgian General Strike by limiting themselves only to partial political demands, never once raising the question of power itself -- a question that was raised by the Belgian workers by their own actions. Did not propose, did not push for a question of workers power, workers and farmers government, the necessity to carry through a social transformation to solve these problems.

Germain openly admitted that they limited their demands to demands acceptable to the present leadership of the strike. They did not demand anything that would not be acceptable to Renard and the other leadership of the Belgian strike. They therefore played the role of critical support to the centrist leadership to the strike, not seeking to create an alternative leadership to that strike.

This is identical to what the French Pabloites did in 1953 in the French General Strike where they limited their demands to what would be acceptable to the CGT and the Communist Party leadership of that strike and where in fact the Pabloites in 1953 played a more open role and a role that could be more defended than Germain. Because everything Germain did he did within the framework of the centrist creation which was his own front group, La Gauche. Never once did he play an independent role in all those developments.

Germain! Today one of the top leaders (with Pablo in relative exile I hope), one of the top leaders of the IS. So the Pabloites played essentially the same identical role. Furthermore they not only did not seek to put forward an alternative leadership in the trade-union movement -- they couldn't. Because their policy is not based on forming a rank-and-file movement in the trade unions, that's not Germain's policy, what does he know about that? It's not the nature of his group, not the nature of any of the Pabloite groups in all of Europe. He was completely up in the centrist circles, with his own offices, he was inflated because he had a big meeting for Jean Paul Sartre recently. This is the way they function. Try to build a movement.

Not the way the Japanese comrades try to build a movement, the way the British comrades try to build a movement. It's not the way I see the Latin-American comrades function, even the Argentines. Sure, they have weaknesses, we've attacked them. The Argentine weaknesses are the weaknesses of a working-class tendency. Deeply involved in the trade-union movement, making an opportunist mistake. At least they're in the class. These other people are floating around. The people you want us to unite with.

Their only real conquest, so to speak since 1953, is the development of a Latin-American section. Which has split from them. So we should unite with these guys. And break our relations with the British who are the only ones who have proved themselves capable of building a movement of the workers in England -- a major achievement of the period.

Is their growth into a substantial section, when no other section was able to do it in this period, is that unrelated to their political outlook? Is it unrelated? Is there no relationship to it at all? Just a mere coincidence that the healthiest section of the International with real roots in workers, anyone will testify to that, anyone -- anyone will testify to that. That that was created by the party which has been the hardest in the struggle against Pabloism. A bunch of sectarians, you call them. You should see their roots in the working class. Sectarian in the trade-union movement? You can't build that way. You can't build a party of that size from such a small base, winning over these Communist Party militants, with a sectarian view. You can't build that way.

So in reality the question of Pabloism is already solved by history. We've had difficulties here on method, at least I can show you something empirically.



So that to me has to be resolved.

Now there's another question you have to face up to. I've answered some questions here. In my summary, any more questions comrades want to ask, especially embarrassing questions, just sit there and think of the most embarrassing questions -- what do they really think of so and so? -- what is their nefarious plot with nefarious Philips -- think of the real dirty questions and I'll answer them. Everyone of them. You count me on it. And if there's anyone I duck I want you to get up and say so.

Now I want to ask some questions and I want some answers. I want them answered. Is that fair? That's fair? Fair, Tom? O.K. Two questions. Two questions, only two questions.

(1) In the majority political statement on the question of deep entrism, the party has an extremely ambiguous statement. It essentially defines the criterion for entry work, precisely the criterion established by Pablo as early as 1951, as far as I know. Pablo favors an independent publication at all times, he's always for the ultimate creation of a mass revolutionary party. The real question of entrism is very clearly stated even recently in one of the letters before the last convention by Jim Cannon, where he says: "They seem to be spelling out their liquidationist policy of deep entry more precisely than ever before so as to assign future leadership indefinitely to different centrist and Stalinist formations."

Well, this is the reality of deep entrism. It's a tactic of entering these Stalinist and social-democratic parties in such a way as to adapt to centrist currents within it. To subordinate yourself to that with the aim of creating a mass left wing, a mass centrist breakoff. What Germain said when he described exactly and clearly what his policy was. He said his whole policy in Belgium was to try to create a mass left wing which would then break from the right wing and then maybe would evolve God knows how many generations later into a mass revolutionary party. Deep entrism. It was that point of view that led the Pabloites to their line in the Belgian General Strike. Essentially adaptation to the existent trade-union leadership and social-democratic leadership led them to a role of functioning within these centrist forms and so on.

Now in England entrism of the Pabloites has led them to a vicious attack on the organization of the SLL which

our party went on record opposed to. Not only opposed to the attack but opposed to it because it was wrong politically and flowed from an adaptationist attitude towards centrist circles in the Labour Party. Is our policy to create an alternative leadership in these parties and in the trade-union movement at all times, or is our policy to enter into these in order to transform the centrists and therefore to adapt to the centrist groups? It was this way that the question was posed, as I said (I would say he was extremely concerned with this question) by Jim Cannon in his letter just before the last convention.

I could also get a very similar quote in the letter that the party wrote to the SLL in February of last year too. I want to know what's your opinion on that. And if you feel as I do that this is incorrect policy perhaps we can get a little greater clarity on that section if the Majority document was clarified so that it was specific. The Pabloites were always great ones for fulfilling the forms of an independent organ. They never say anything which in any way relates to what goes on inside these parties. But they always print the independent organ. They always are for a mass revolutionary party. I mean, who isn't you know, but they don't do anything about it.

I want to know, what is the attitude of the party today or of the comrades here in general, towards the policy of deep entrism as practiced currently by the Pabloites in Europe. This practice being expressed concretely in their actions in the Belgian General Strike and their attack on the formation of the British Socialist Labour League. Policies which in my opinion are essentially ones which assign a revolutionary role to centrist circles which they adapt to rather than playing an independent role of primarily creating an alternative leadership in the unions as well as in the party.

(2) Second question. I am unclear from this document as well as from other things written what the position of the party is today on the question of the political revolution. I'm not raising the question of whether you are for it or against it because I know only Swaback and those who support him are against the political revolution and then just for China. But what I want to know is what you mean by it. What precisely do the words "process of de-Stalinization" mean for the Stalinist countries. Secondly, in the recent ISR, Comrades Weiss and Deck declare that they