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The Cuban Revolution and Its Extension: Counter Resolution of Socialist Workers Party, Australia.

Presented by Doug Lorimer, Peter Camejo, and Jim Percy

1. The central arena of the world revolution

Since 1979, the Caribbean-Central American region has been the focal point of the conflict between imperialism and the workers of the world. The powerful example of the Cuban socialist revolution is calling forth a historic challenge to capitalism and imperialism. In Grenada and Nicaragua workers and farmers' governments led by proletarian revolutionists are guiding their societies along the road to the creation of new workers states, a process that in both cases has become irreversible except through outside military intervention.

Precisely for that reason, imperialism has put intervention on the agenda. Imperialism cannot afford to allow the peaceful consolidation of new workers states in the region. Nor can it afford new revolutionary victories in El Salvador and Guatemala. Economically, politically, and militarily, the Caribbean and Central and South America are the base and stronghold of US imperialism. In 1962 it demonstrated that it would risk nuclear war to maintain this stronghold. The stakes for imperialism are higher today than they were then.

The leaderships of the Central American-Caribbean revolution have demonstrated that they cannot be bought off with promises of "aid" or "detente." They have not been intimidated by threats. Imperialism has no alternative but to attempt to destroy them.

The US intervention has already begun: assassination attempts against the leaders of the Cuban Communist Party and Grenadian New Jewel Movement, CIA destabilisation and the organisation of Honduran-based counter-revolutionaries against Nicaragua, the supply of "advisers" and vast quantities of weapons to the dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala. But this is only the beginning.

US imperialism has not intervened more openly and massively so far only because of the opposition it would encounter from these revolutions and because of the tremendous price it would pay both domestically and worldwide. But Washington will use its own troops massively when it calculates that that price is outweighed by the cost of further revolutionary advances in the region.

Helping to defend these revolutions and stave off imperialist assault must be the highest priority of the Fourth International. Concretely, this means doing everything in our power to raise the price that US imperialism would pay for intervention, primarily by building international understanding of and solidarity with the revolutions of Central America and the Caribbean.

The Fourth International, its sections, and its sympathising organisations must be active participants in solidarity organisations in each country, helping to create such organisations where they do not yet exist. Fourth Internationalists should affiliate to and actively build the activities of solidarity efforts initiated by the Caribbean-Central American revolutionaries themselves, such as the World Front in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador. Our aim is to build broad united front actions involving working class, civil liberties, and all other organisations capable of agreeing on specific anti-imperialist actions.

The press and other propaganda activity of the Fourth International should reflect the high priority we place on this central arena of the world revolution. We should explain to the workers, particularly of the imperialist countries, why these revolutions are so important. We must help the workers to identify with these revolutions, to regard the workers and peasants of this region as their comrades, and to understand that they themselves need the sort of revolutionary proletarian leadership which stands at the head of the Caribbean and Central American revolutions.

2. The significance of the Cuban Revolution

The triumph in Cuba of the guerrilla forces of the July 26 Movement on January 1, 1959, and the passing

over of the revolution from democratic to socialist tasks, culminating in the creation of a workers state in late 1960, represented a major breakthrough in the worldwide struggle for socialism.

As the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, the Cuban Revolution marked the beginning of the end of the imperialist "pax Americana" established following World War II. Anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles in the postwar period led to the creation of workers states in China, North Vietnam, and North Korea. But while the imperialist powers were forced to grant formal political independence to most of their colonies, throughout the rest of Asia and Africa imperialism was able to keep the newly independent states within the framework of the capitalist world market, economically dependent and incapable of overcoming underdevelopment. Similarly, in the countries of South and Central America and the Caribbean—most of which had long been formally independent—US, and to a lesser extent European, capital maintained its seemingly unchallengeable domination, symbolised by the relative ease with which it overthrew the reformist Arbenz government of Guatemala in 1954.

This seeming invincibility of the imperialist system was dealt a powerful blow by the rapid development of the Cuban Revolution and the defeat of the US-organised invasion at Playa Giron in April 1961. Suddenly, even in its own "back yard," US imperialism was no longer all-powerful. Socialist revolution was shown to be a practical, realistic path by which to overcome imperialist oppression, not merely in countries bordering the Soviet Union or other workers states, where assistance against imperialist military aggression was more readily available, but anywhere that the exploited toilers waged a determined struggle with the guidance of a revolutionary leadership. Far more than any other of the postwar social transformations to that time, the Cuban Revolution demonstrated that socialist revolution was necessary and possible on a *world* scale. The heartland of capital's empire was as vulnerable to revolution as its periphery.

Multiplying the Cuban Revolution's impact on the international relationship of class forces was the fact that this was the first socialist revolution since the Russian Revolution directed by a leadership totally outside the Stalinist current. This independence of Stalinism was emphasised and reinforced by the conservative and sectarian hostility displayed by the Stalinist Popular Socialist Party for the guerrilla struggle against Batista almost until the moment of its victory. Similarly, in the period from January 1, 1959, to the consolidation of the Cuban workers state, the PSP emerged as the chief ideological proponent (aside from the bourgeoisie itself) of confining the revolution to purely national-democratic tasks, of preventing it growing over uninterruptedly into a socialist revolution.

The Castro leadership's independence of Stalinism ensured a healthy beginning for the Cuban workers state.

Unlike the situation in Eastern Europe and China, the socialist transformation in Cuba was carried out with the full and active participation of the workers and peasants, without bureaucratic restrictions curtailing their mobilisation. Thus, from the beginning the Cuban toilers have been able to recognise both the gains and the difficulties encountered by the revolution as *their* gains and difficulties, rather than as the achievements or failures of a leadership separate from themselves.

Internationally, the Cuban Revolution contributed to undermining Stalinism's grip on the labor movement by destroying the bureaucratic misleaderships' claim to hold the sole key to socialist revolution. In the Cuban experience, Stalinism was clearly shown to be a conservative obstacle to revolution rather than the key. The Cuban leadership has attempted to win over forces to a revolutionary perspective even within the reformist Communist parties in South America—and at times quite successfully. Many, if not most, of the leadership of the pro-Fidelista groups in Latin America have their origins in the Communist parties. On occasion, the Cubans have polemicised against specific Communist parties in Latin America, such as the Venezuelan CP, in defence of those carrying out a revolutionary orientation.

But the Castro team's contribution to resolving the crisis of revolutionary leadership goes beyond the necessary but negative task of undermining Stalinism's ability to divert the revolutionary strivings of the exploited into class-collaborationist channels. Even though initially they proceeded largely by trial and error, the Cuban revolutionaries provided many positive lessons for revolutionaries in other countries. Among the most important of these are the Cubans' stress on international solidarity, the necessity of relying on the mass organisation and activity of the working people, the centrality of a firm worker-peasant alliance, how to use diplomacy for revolutionary purposes, and the need to defend socialist revolution by extending it internationally. These are key aspects of the Marxist-Leninist program that had been all but obliterated by decades of Stalinist misleadership of the workers states.

3. Progress against underdevelopment

In a little more than two decades, and under conditions of imperialist economic blockade and military threat, the Cuban Revolution has made huge strides in overcoming the legacy of underdevelopment and improving the standard of living of the workers and peasants. While the complete and rational development of the Cuban economy is impossible so long as it is not integrated into a worldwide socialist economy, Cuba provides an outstanding example of what can be achieved through the establishment of a nationalised, planned economy.

Chronic unemployment, once the scourge of the Cuban proletariat as of all the neocolonial economies, has been eliminated.

Despite planning errors in the first decade of the revolution, based primarily on insufficient appreciation of the objective limitations on rapid economic development, there has been sustained growth of the economy. The government has correctly recognised the importance

of protection against the fluctuations in world market prices for agricultural products, and has to a large extent secured this protection through long-term trade agreements with the European workers states.

While sugar production remains dominant in the economic plan, there has been considerable diversification of both agriculture and industry within the bounds imposed by the country's size and its stage of technological development. There has been notable progress in mechanisation of sugar and other agricultural production, a process that both lightens the effort required of the working class and frees labor to develop other areas of the economy. Cuba has avoided the overemphasis on heavy industry achieved at the cost of limitations on mass consumption that is characteristic of the Stalinised workers states.

There has been a notable improvement in the average income over the revolution's two decades. Unlike the situation in capitalist countries, this average reflects a real economic phenomenon, rather than an abstraction concealing extremes of wealth and poverty.

The dirt-floored *bohio* characteristic of prerevolutionary Cuba has all but disappeared, even in the more remote rural areas. Rents have been reduced to a small fraction of wages.

Free medical care is available to all, of a quality and accessibility unmatched by any other underdeveloped country and even rivaling that of some highly developed capitalist countries. The infant mortality rate, the most characteristic indicator of the level of health care, is lower in Cuba today than it is in the capital city of the United States. France has 135 doctors per 100,000 population. Cuba has 159 doctors per 100,000.

Education is free at all levels from preschool through university, including materials, books, and transportation.

Food shortages created by the imperialist economic blockade have been largely overcome, and those items still in short supply are shared equitably through rationing. Meat and poultry are still rationed, but fish, eggs, and dairy products, strictly rationed during the first decade of the revolution, are freely available at reasonable prices, as are fruits and vegetables in season. The quality and quantity of clothing available to the average Cuban have also greatly improved.

Cuban workers enjoy benefits such as social security, paid maternity leave, and subsidised holidays superior to those of workers in many imperialist countries.

4. Social gains

The revolution's impressive economic gains have been matched by equally important social conquests. Among those to benefit most from these conquests have been women and Blacks.

Prior to the revolution, Cuban women suffered the extreme oppression faced by women in colonial and semi-colonial countries. In 1959, only 9.8 per cent of

Cuban women had jobs, and 70 per cent of those were employed as domestic servants. Many were forced into prostitution. Contraception and abortion were illegal. Women were discouraged from taking an active part in society, and in many families women had to have a chaperone when they left the house. Overall, the effects of imperialist domination—malnutrition, illiteracy, poor housing and medical care—were doubly felt by women.

Despite these obstacles, women were drawn into revolutionary activity in the 1950s, playing a number of different roles. Some women became guerrilla fighters, and a women's unit was formed which distinguished itself by its courageous actions.

The creation of militias after the revolution was the first means of involving women on a mass scale in defence of the revolution. Although initially there was questioning of women's role in the militias, every able-bodied person was needed to defend the country, and women were able to win acceptance of their right to participate in the militias.

The formation of the CDRs in 1960 also drew many more women into revolutionary activity. Another step was the formation of the Federation of Cuban Women in August 1960, which provided a means for women to discuss and organise to solve the problems they faced as women.

Women played an important role in, and especially benefitted from, the mass literacy campaign carried out in 1961. Over half the volunteer teachers were women, many of them young women who had to leave their homes and travel into remote parts of Cuba—a radical departure from the chaperone system of only a few years earlier. Fifty-five per cent of those who learned to read and write were women. As well, women were encouraged to participate in the vast number of new educational programs being opened up.

Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders showed the way in raising consciousness about the role of women in the revolution. The growing confidence of women played a key part in helping to change old attitudes. The Cuban leadership recognised the need to incorporate women into the workforce both as a means of expanding production and to challenge the economic dependence and domestic isolation of women. In 1968, the FMC initiated a campaign to draw 100,000 new women into the workforce each year. During this campaign many of the old job stereotypes were broken down, with women becoming doctors, technicians, and cane cutters.

While the campaign was successful in this regard, it also highlighted the many problems that Cuban women faced in their struggle for equality. While many new women came into the workforce, domestic pressures, lack of services such as childcare centres, and continuing sexist attitudes all combined to make the net increase of women in the workforce average a little under 40,000 a year between 1969 and 1974.

Similar problems were also revealed in a study called for by Fidel Castro after the first People's Power election

in 1974, when only a small percentage of women were elected.

The problems encountered in deepening the integration of women into public activity stemmed directly from the lack of material resources in the Cuban economy. This was particularly acute in the late 1960s and early 1970s. There were insufficient material resources to build the necessary childcare centres and other such services which would relieve women of their domestic chores. As well, rationing of goods and the provision of social services such as free medical care meant that there was not a strong economic incentive for women to join the workforce.

All these problems were analysed by the FMC and the Cuban Communist Party, and in 1975 a new stage was opened in advancing the struggle for women's equality. A number of measures were projected such as expanding childcare centres, laundries, and cafeterias; reviving a Women's Front in the trade unions to try to solve the problems of women workers; and a drive to improve the educational level of women. In 1974, an advanced maternity-leave law was passed.

Particularly important was the opening up of an ideological campaign to educate people on women's rights. A central aspect of this campaign was the mass discussion of the new Family Code, which contained articles stipulating that women should be equal in marriage, that men should share in housework and raising children, and that both members of a couple have an equal right to work and study.

The conscious attention paid to trying to remove obstacles to women's full participation in society has resulted in further gains for Cuban women. Many problems still remain. While the new measures undertaken over recent years have lifted the percentage of women in the workforce from 25 per cent to 32 per cent, this still means a large number of women remain in the home. The struggle for women's equality in Cuba, however, has to be viewed as an ongoing process, a process that has to contend with Cuba's economic limitations.

The overall direction of the Cuban leadership in pushing forward this process is in accord with the traditional Marxist position of ending the economic chains that maintain the family system and the oppression of women in capitalist societies.

Freely available abortion and contraception, easily obtainable divorce, the right to work, and the provision of social services all help to free Cuban women from economic dependence on the family. In particular, childcare centres which provide free meals and medical services, and the new boarding-school system in which Cuban children participate in work-study programs have helped to lighten the burden on women. These facilities also have benefits for children, who have the opportunity to develop their own confidence and independence.

Big steps forward have also been made in eliminating racism in Cuban society. One of the first acts of the

revolution was to ban racial discrimination, which had prevented Blacks in prerevolutionary Cuba from going into certain areas such as beaches, hotels, and clubs, and from taking certain jobs. Legal penalties were introduced for anyone who refused to employ or provide services to Blacks.

The revolutionary leadership adopted a policy of undermining the ideology of racism through patient education, exposing the class interests served by racial oppression. Typical was the following in an adult education manual prepared by the Ministry of Education:

"In all times and places racism (and national hatred) have been the means to oppress people. To justify colonial oppression in Asia and Africa, the colonials invoked the 'inferiority' of the people. The anti-national groups in our country, the great interests (foreign companies, large landholders, parasitic magnates) found racial discrimination and the persistence of prejudice beneficial and convenient, because they contributed to divisions among the people and permitted them to have at their disposal a reserve labor force for the most arduous work and creating fears that maintain distrust and weaken the Revolution. . . .

"Racial prejudice and discrimination in Cuba date from the slave period during which it reached its greatest height. It was necessary to proceed as if the slave was not a human being, or was an inferior being, and it likewise suited the slaveholder to make the slave believe this in order to dominate him more easily.

"When slavery ended, there remained in society the same discriminatory venom that used to justify it, since the criteria of inferiority accumulated against those who were exploited as slaves continued to be used once they were free to oppress them and their descendants as Negroes.

"The nature of the relationship of subordination that our country maintained until recently with the United States, where racial segregation has so much virulence, also contributed to the persistence in Cuba of discriminatory attitudes. This had a lot to do with the fact that when the War of Independence was over the foreign occupiers deprived humble Cubans, especially the Negroes, of the opportunity to participate in the development and enjoyment of the wealth of the country. . . .

"Whites and Negroes participated together in the revolutionary war against Batista and his foreign protectors.

"The Cuban nation, then—its culture, its real independence—is inconceivable if the Negro is left out of the historic past and revolutionary present. The union and brotherhood of whites and Negroes is indispensable for the triumph of the Revolution. . . ." (quoted in *How Cuba Uprooted Race Discrimination*, by Harry Ring, Pioneer Publishers, pp. 12-14)

While racial prejudice still exists among backward elements of the older generation, it is no more than a

disappearing legacy of the past. And Cuba's internationalist and anti-imperialist foreign policy has made it a leading fighter against racism internationally.

In recent years, the government has also repealed the laws inherited from prerevolutionary Cuba that made homosexuality a crime. Also abandoned are the propaganda campaigns against homosexuality that were carried out in the early years of the revolution. While anti-homosexual prejudices remain strong in Cuba and there has been no official effort to counter them, sexual preferences are regarded as a person's private affair.

Cuba is also outstanding in Latin America for the development of the arts since the beginning of the revolution. The unfortunate Padilla affair of 1971, which might have heralded moves towards imposing the sterile cultural conformity of the Stalinised workers states, has not been repeated. On the contrary, there is wide freedom of expression within the revolution, and Cuban arts, particularly film, literature, and music, are widely known for both their seriousness and diversity. The Cuban government and mass organisations act on the belief that cultural pursuits and sports should not be the exclusive preserve of a small elite, but part of the normal recreational activity of workers and farmers. "Amateur" movements in various artistic fields are a product of this concern.

The truly remarkable gains of the Cuban Revolution—achieved despite imperialist sabotage and economic blockade—make it obvious why Cuba continues to be a revolutionary inspiration for the exploited and oppressed of Latin America and of much of the rest of the underdeveloped world. Indeed, with the long-term stagnation of the international capitalist economy and the accompanying attacks on workers' living standards, Cuba will more and more provide even the working classes in the imperialist countries with a favorable example of what can be achieved through a government that represents the interests of workers and working farmers.

Cuba's example is made all the more powerful by the revolution's long record of selfless internationalism. Instead of hoarding their hard-won gains to themselves, the Cuban people have sought to share them with other peoples victimised by imperialist exploitation. The thousands of Cuban internationalist doctors, teachers, technicians, and agricultural specialists working in other countries are living proof of the great progress that has been and is still being made by the revolution—progress in both material well-being and in creating a society whose highest principle is human solidarity.

5. The creation of the Cuban workers state

The program of the July 26 Movement from the time of its founding until after the victory over Batista was a revolutionary-democratic one. It centred on such demands as constitutional rule by the majority, equality before the law, and punishment of those who had

usurped the government. Its social and economic proposals were radical but did not go beyond the framework of bourgeois property relations. These included profit-sharing by workers, confiscation of illegally amassed wealth, and nationalisation of the electricity and telephone trusts. The centrepiece of the social program was a thoroughgoing agrarian reform, to enforce the provision of the 1940 constitution that forbade the holding of more than 1000 acres in a single property.

The Castro grouping subordinated everything they did, including military action, to publicising their revolutionary-democratic aims. As a result, even setbacks could be turned to advantage. The July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada army barracks that launched the revolutionary struggle was a military defeat for the rebels. But it was converted into a political victory by the propagandising of the rebels' aims and Castro's famous court speech "History Will Absolve Me." The wave of popular support for the rebels forced Batista to release Castro from prison. In launching the next stage of the struggle, Castro again put politics ahead of military considerations, publicly announcing in advance that the *Granma* would be landing in Cuba.

As the Rebel Army they formed in the Sierra Maestra mountains began to consolidate its military position, the Castro team began to implement their radical agrarian program in the territory they controlled. This won them increasing support among the peasantry.

While the main base of support for the Rebel Army was among the peasantry, the July 26 Movement leaders also sought to build support among the urban working class and the agricultural workers on the big plantations (latifundia). The student movement was also an important base of support. Many of the July 26 Movement leaders had themselves become politically active originally as students, and the student-based Revolutionary Directorate was an urban ally of the rural guerrillas. Activity in the cities involved raising funds and supplies for the Rebel Army, gathering intelligence, spreading propaganda, strikes, and acts of sabotage.

A general strike called for April 9, 1958, failed as a result of a number of objective and subjective factors. Among the latter was the conservatism of the Stalinist Popular Socialist Party and the bourgeois-liberal wing of the July 26 Movement. As the struggle deepened the differences between the latter and the revolutionary wing around Castro became clearer.

Through 1958 popular opposition to the corrupt and brutal Batista dictatorship continued to grow. Finally, unable to stem the military advances of the Rebel Army and the wave of popular support for it, the ranks of Batista's army began to revolt and discipline broke down in the officer corp. Support for the July 26 Movement in the cities now became overwhelming, with a general strike preparing the way for the Rebel Army's entry to Havana in January 1959.

The victory over Batista resulted in a coalition regime in which bourgeois forces were predominant. Two bourgeois liberals, Manuel Urrutia and Miro Cardona, became respectively president and prime minister, while Fidel Castro took no post in the government. Fidel later commented:

"The revolution was not sectarian; if the revolution

had been sectarian, it would never have put into the ranks of the government such gentlemen as Rufo Lopez Fresquet, Miro Cardona or Mr. Justo Carrillo and some others of that kind. We knew how those gentlemen thought; we knew they were men of plenty conservative mentality. But the fact is that the government itself of the republic, in the first days of the triumph, was not in the hands of the revolutionaries; the government itself of the republic was not in the hands of the men who had spent many years struggling and sacrificing; it was not in the hands of the men who had been in prisons and had fought in the mountains; it was not in the hands of the men who lit that revolutionary spark and knew how, even in the moments of greatest uncertainty and skepticism, to carry aloft the banner of the revolution, and with that the faith of the people, to bring them to the triumph." (*Bohemia*, April 2, 1961, quoted in *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution*, Education for Socialists, pp. 23-24)

The Castro team, learning from the 1954 CIA-organised coup against the reformist Arbenz government in Guatemala, refused to allow the reconstitution of a bourgeois military force. They immediately moved to disband the remnants of Batista's army and police.

Thus a situation analogous to the dual power created by the February 1917 revolution in Russia appeared in Cuba during the early months of 1959. While armed power lay with the worker-peasant Rebel Army headed by Castro, the bourgeois liberals held the power of the governmental apparatus in their hands. As Fidel later commented:

"I recall in those early days the responsibility for making revolutionary laws was left in their hands. . . . Throughout the whole period, we waited to see what would happen. . . . The first weeks went by and they had not passed a single revolutionary law. We had to put up with this because some of the gentlemen had a certain following among the people. . . ." (*Fidel Castro Speaks on Marxism-Leninism*, p. 27)

The contradiction between the government's inaction and the revolutionary-democratic goals which the Castro team continued to argue for had to be resolved. On February 16, Castro became prime minister, with a mandate to implement his democratic program.

On May 17, the agrarian reform law was adopted. Holdings larger than 1000 acres were seized and distributed among landless peasants and agricultural workers. All the cane land belonging to large sugar mills was taken, as was land owned by non-Cubans. The former landowners were compensated with long-term government bonds. The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) was created to oversee the reform; it became another and important element of the counter-power to the bourgeois elements of the provisional government.

Other measures carried out included the elimination of governmental corruption, reduction of housing rents by 30 to 50 per cent, reduction of taxes on most wage-

earners by two-thirds and the prosecution of wealthy tax-evaders, the closing of the gambling dens and brothels of Havana, confiscation of the homes of wealthy emigres, the imposition of currency and import controls, and the opening of the books of US-owned utilities, followed by a reduction in their charges.

However, the bourgeois liberals continued to use their governmental positions to resist the most radical measures, particularly the agrarian reform. Matters came to a head in July 1959, when President Urrutia's opposition to the agrarian reform law led to Castro's resignation.

The revolutionary wing of the July 26 Movement, supported by the trade unions, organised a series of mass demonstrations that forced Urrutia to resign. He was replaced by Osvaldo Dorticos, a firm supporter of Castro, and Castro resumed his post as prime minister. While bourgeois elements remained in the government for some time after this, they were unable to resist the implementation of the Castro grouping's revolutionary measures. Basing himself on the support of the worker-peasant masses, Castro was able to remove them one by one from the regime.

The mass mobilisations in July 1959 produced a shift in the class relationship of forces that enabled the Castro grouping to resolve the dual power situation in favor of the workers and peasants. The government that emerged out of the July 1959 crisis, while still including personnel from the bourgeois coalition government set up in January 1959, was nevertheless of a qualitatively different character from the latter. Governmental power was now in the hands of those who represented the interests of the exploited classes rather than the exploiting classes. The way was now open for the Cuban masses to use this lever to defend their existing gains and to go on to conquer new ones, including the eventual elimination of capitalist exploitation.

The Castro government formed in July 1959 was a *workers and farmers' government*. Such a government is described in the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, written by Leon Trotsky in 1938, as a "government independent of the bourgeoisie," and a "short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat."

The idea of such a government was first conceived by the Bolsheviks and elaborated on at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922. The "Theses on Tactics" adopted at that congress describe the workers and farmers' government as a government that is "born out of the struggle of the masses, is supported by workers' bodies that are capable of fighting, bodies created by the most oppressed sections of the working masses."

According to the "Theses," the elementary measures which distinguish such a government "consist in arming the proletariat, disarming the counterrevolutionary bourgeois organisations, installing supervision over

production, insuring that the main burden of taxation falls on the rich, and smashing the resistance of the bourgeois counterrevolution." They point out that such governments "fall short of representing the dictatorship of the proletariat, but are still an important starting-point for winning this dictatorship."

The Castro government as it emerged out of the July 1959 crisis fulfilled these criteria. It was formed out of the struggle of the worker-peasant masses and based itself on their mobilisations and on the armed power of the worker-peasant Rebel Army. Its independence from the bourgeoisie was indicated by its refusal to subordinate the implementation of its revolutionary-democratic program to the interests and property rights of the bourgeoisie, either Cuban or foreign.

Regardless of the number of bourgeois-democratic tasks not yet completely solved, or the number of socialist tasks on which a beginning had been made in the period of dual power, the creation of the workers and peasants' government was a qualitative leap on the road to socialist revolution. From that point on, the long-term safeguarding of capitalist property would have required the destruction of the workers and peasants' government (by domestic counter-revolution or foreign imperialism).

The workers and peasants' government was also a *necessary* stage in the process of creating the Cuban workers state. The number of uncompleted bourgeois-democratic tasks and the specific weight of the peasantry in Cuban society dictated that the destruction of the old order could be accomplished only through a government based upon both exploited classes and dedicated to solving the historic tasks specific to each of these classes. The expropriation of the big bourgeoisie could not be carried out instantaneously. Until that expropriation was accomplished, capitalist property relations still predominated, and therefore the full dictatorship of the proletariat had not come into existence. The Cuban workers and farmers' government was thus the transitional form of state of a society passing from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The high percentage of US ownership of agricultural land, the virtually unanimous opposition of Cuba's capitalists even to reforms within the framework of bourgeois property relations, the early flight abroad of the Cuban bourgeoisie, and the increasingly overt attempts to destroy the revolution by whatever means required, made it necessary for the revolutionary government to lead the working masses to a relatively rapid expropriation of capitalist property. In the period August-October 1960, the overwhelming majority of capitalist enterprises were nationalised and a proletarian dictatorship consolidated in Cuba.

6. The political evolution of the Castro leadership

The chief historical peculiarity of the Cuban socialist revolution was its leadership. In Cuba a successful proletarian revolution was led by a current that was radical petty bourgeois in both composition and program.

Stalinism is also a petty-bourgeois current, and Stalinists of course had been at the head of previous social transformations in Eastern Europe and Asia. But these revolutions resulted from the combination of a number of specific historical events lacking in the case of Cuba: occupation by the Soviet army and/or the destruction of the capitalist state apparatus in war; the allegiance of these parties to the requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy in a period when imperialism was driving towards war with the Soviet Union; the fact that these Stalinist parties had mass support based largely on their claim to stand for Marxism and socialist revolution, which made them to some degree susceptible to mass pressure for revolutionary change.

Moreover, while these Stalinist parties were forced by exceptional circumstances to go further than they themselves wished along the road to a break with capitalism, they consistently sought to impose bureaucratic limitations upon the revolutionary action of the masses, particularly the urban workers. These bureaucratic limitations and controls upon the course of the social revolution produced workers states that were dominated by hardened bureaucratic castes from their very inception.

In contrast to the Stalinists, who were *pushed along* by the revolutionary pressure of the masses, the Castro grouping *led* the revolutionary process in Cuba. It relied on, and consciously promoted, the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and peasants.

The Castro team, while it began with a non-Marxist program, was able to lead the Cuban workers and peasants in implementing the Marxist program of socialist revolution because this program, as Marx and Engels themselves explained in the *Communist Manifesto*, is not "based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer." Rather, it is based on "actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes." Marx, Engels, and—using their scientific method—their successors uncovered the fundamental laws of motion of capitalist society and its transformation, through the revolutionary action of the proletariat and its allies, into socialist society. On the basis of these objective laws of motion they formulated a program expressing "the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

The decisive role of the alliance of the working class and the poor peasantry, under the leadership of the

former, in completing the national-democratic revolution and the uninterrupted growing over of this revolution into a socialist revolution are not merely desirable goals, but objective laws of the class struggle.

Thus the Cuban revolutionaries discovered in practice what had been earlier formulated theoretically by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Because they were serious about carrying the democratic revolution through to completion, they could not stop there: Completing the democratic revolution was impossible without beginning the socialist revolution. History decreed—chiefly because of the corruption and distortion of Marxism-Leninism by Stalinism—that the Cuban revolutionaries would become Marxists in deed before they would become Marxists in their theoretical understanding. As they led the Cuban proletariat along its historic line of march to the creation of a workers state, the Castro team came to a proletarian-socialist consciousness.

In an article that appeared in the armed forces magazine *Verde Olivo* on October 8, 1960, Che Guevara outlined a similar explanation of the course of the Cuban leadership:

"This is a unique revolution which some people maintain contradicts one of the most orthodox premises of the revolutionary movement, expressed by Lenin: 'Without a revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement.' It would be suitable to say that revolutionary theory, as the expression of a social truth, surpasses any declaration of it; that is to say, even if the theory is not known, the revolution can succeed if historical reality is interpreted correctly and if the forces are utilized correctly. . . .

"There are truths so evident, so much a part of people's knowledge, that it is now useless to discuss them. One ought to be a 'Marxist' with the same naturalness with which one is 'Newtonian' in physics, or 'Pasteurian' in biology. . . .

"The Cuban Revolution takes up Marx at the point where he himself left science to shoulder his revolutionary rifle. And it takes him up at that point, not in a revisionist spirit, of struggling against that which follows Marx, of reviving 'pure' Marx, but simply because up to that point Marx, the scientist, placed himself outside of the history he studied and predicted. From then on Marx, the revolutionary, could fight within history.

"We, practical revolutionaries, initiating our own struggle, simply fulfill the laws foreseen by Marx, the scientist. We are simply adjusting ourselves to the predictions of the scientific Marx as we travel this road of rebellion, struggling against the old structure of power, supporting ourselves in the people for the destruction of this structure, and having the happiness of this people as the basis of our struggle. That is to say, and it is well to emphasize this once again: The laws of Marxism are present in the events of the Cuban Revolution,

independently of what its leaders profess or fully know of those laws from a theoretical point of view. . . .

"[On January 1, 1959] ends the insurrection. But the men who arrive in Havana after two years of arduous struggle in the mountains and plains of Oriente, in the plains of Camaguey, and in the mountains, plains, and cities of Las Villas, are not the same men, ideologically, who landed on the beaches of Las Coloradas, or who took part in the first phase of the struggle. Their distrust of the *campesino* has been converted into affection and respect for his virtues; their total ignorance of life in the country has been converted into a knowledge of the needs of our *guajiros*; their flirtations with statistics and with theory have been fixed by the cement which is practice.

"With the banner of Agrarian Reform, the execution of which begins in the Sierra Maestra, these men confront imperialism. They know that the Agrarian Reform is the basis upon which the new Cuba must build itself. They know also that the Agrarian Reform will give land to all the dispossessed, but that it will dispossess its unjust possessors; and they know that the greatest of the unjust possessors are also influential men in the State Department or in the government of the United States of America. But they have learned to conquer difficulties with bravery, with audacity and, above all, with the support of the peoples; and they have now seen the future of liberation that awaits us on the other side of our sufferings." (*Che Guevara Speaks*, Merit Publishers, pp. 18-23.)

Fidel presented a similar explanation of the political evolution of the July 26 Movement leadership in an interview in 1963:

"It was a gradual process, a dynamic process in which the pressure of events forced me to accept Marxism as the answer to what I was seeking. . . .

"So, as events developed, I gradually moved into a Marxist-Leninist position. I cannot tell you just when; the process was so gradual and so natural." (*Fidel Castro*, by Herbert Matthews, p. 186)

In the two decades since, the Cuban revolutionaries have learned a great deal more about Marxism, both from theoretical studies and from the experience of leading the Cuban workers state. This can be seen through an examination of a number of key areas of their policy.

7. The alliance of workers and peasants

The agrarian reform that has been carried out in the course of the Cuban Revolution is the most successful of any revolution in history, including the Bolshevik Revolution. (The Bolsheviks of course had to contend with a far larger peasantry and a situation in which they found it necessary to begin by implementing the program

of the Social Revolutionaries rather than their own program. And of course, Cuba had not suffered the enormous destruction of industry and transport with which the Bolsheviks had to deal.) The result has been the forging of an unbreakable worker-peasant alliance and a great increase in agricultural productivity.

The agrarian reform was carried out in two distinct stages. The first was the reform of May 1959, which placed a ceiling of 440 hectares on landholdings. The expropriated land was made available free to some 700,000 landless peasants and agricultural workers, with priority going to tenants, sharecroppers, or squatters who had been living on the land. Each family was guaranteed a minimum of 25 hectares, with the right to purchase an additional 40 hectares. This land could be passed on to a single heir, but could not be sold or otherwise alienated, except to the state.

Laborers on the sugar plantations had a long tradition of collective struggles and therefore, for the most part, little interest in owning or working individual plots. The National Institute of Agrarian Reform, which was headed by Fidel Castro, began organising this agricultural proletariat into co-operatives on a completely voluntary basis. These co-operatives were quickly and smoothly transformed into state farms. In this way, 40 per cent of Cuban agriculture was collectivised.

At the same time, small farmers were guaranteed the title to their lands. The revolution saw to it that they received other important benefits as well, including the literacy campaign, health care, new housing, and schools.

The first reform left a significant layer of agricultural capitalists and rich peasants, estimated by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez (*Cuba en el transito al socialismo*) to number about 10,000, and holding an average of about 170 hectares each. This layer collaborated with the counter-revolutionary bands established by the CIA in remote areas of the island in 1961 and 1962, and also engaged in economic sabotage. The second agrarian reform, in October 1963, eliminated this layer.

All landholdings greater than 67 hectares were expropriated. (As in the first reform, compensation was paid in long-term government bonds. This time, however, the compensation was not for the full value of the land.) Fidel Castro summarised the reasons for the second reform, and its limits, in a speech to the Third Congress of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) in May 1967:

"Naturally, it was absolutely necessary to carry out a second reform. Why was it so vital? Because a large part of those landowners who still had between 250 and 500 hectares were virtually sabotaging production. It was necessary to carry out the other agrarian reform.

"What did they do then? They began to say, 'Our turn is coming next.' Then the Revolution stated—and this Revolution has been characterized by doing what it says; it has been characterized by its seriousness, for keeping its word—the Revolution said, 'there will be no more

agrarian reforms.' The process of agrarian laws and reforms lasted up to that moment, in fact."

Castro explained the reason for this pledge:

"The bourgeoisie in general and the landowners used many arguments. They said to the peasant farmer, 'This is socialism, and that means they're going to socialize your land.' We came along and said to the peasant farmers, 'This is socialism and that means we're not going to socialize your land.' Because socialism is a realistic and scientific conception of society, and because the poor and exploited peasant is definitely an ally of the working class. And since the poor and exploited peasantry is an ally of the working class, that peasantry must be treated as revolutionary, it must be treated as a comrade, as a friend, it must receive all the political consideration to which it is entitled."

Following the Fifth Congress of the National Association of Small Farmers in 1977, the government stepped up efforts to persuade small farmers to amalgamate into state farms or co-operatives. There is no coercion; the aim is to convince the small farmers, by argument and example, that the change will improve their working and living conditions. In the December 3, 1979, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Jose Perez described a conversation that Juan Jose Leon, the vice-president of ANAP, had with members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade:

"Leon told us that the government would like to advance toward collectivization of the small farms as quickly as possible, but not at the cost of breaking its pledge to small farmers. He said their policy was based on the program of the *Communist Manifesto*:

"The goal of the revolution is to eliminate the difference between the countryside and the city. The basic tool we are using right now is promotion of cooperatives, convincing the small farmer.

"We can't take any other measures except convincing the peasants. If we are incapable of convincing the Cuban farmer that collective production is better than individual production, that means we have failed politically. Forced measures would mean the political failure of our revolution."

In a speech to the Sixth Congress of ANAP on May 17, 1982, Fidel Castro re-emphasised both the gains to be made from formation of co-operatives and state farms and the government's pledge that no coercion would be involved:

". . . Even though over 70 percent—nearly 80 percent of the land (including that made available under the Agrarian Reform Laws or acquired in other ways and rented land) had already been included in state enterprises in one way or another, we had reached a point where the economy and the population required that agricultural production on the remaining 20 to 25 per cent of the land be developed technically. Small-scale private ownership had given all or nearly all it could.

Sugarcane was being harvested by machine in many places, crop-dusting techniques were being used to spread herbicides and pesticides and irrigation systems were being developed; all this was practically impossible with so many tiny plots. . . .

“ . . . Following the 2nd Agrarian Reform Law, it was announced that this was the last land reform—that is, everybody could relax—and this promise was kept. It was also promised that no farmers would be compelled to join a farm or a cooperative, and this, too was and will be strictly kept, as Pepe [Ramirez, president of ANAP] pointed out here at the end of his speech. This principle has been scrupulously respected. . . .

“I wasn’t an ardent believer in cooperatives. . . .

“Whenever I speak of higher forms of production, I’ve always thought and still think that state enterprises are the highest. I’ve always liked the idea of having agriculture develop like industry and of having agricultural workers be like industrial workers. An industrial worker doesn’t own the industry or production, except as part of the people, for the people are the owners of industry and production.

“I’ve always liked that form the best, but it wasn’t the most realistic one. The most realistic form—since the most realistic thing is always the most revolutionary one—for the farmers’ land, that 20 to 25 percent of the land that the farmers retained, was to use both methods: state enterprises and cooperatives. . . .

“We made little headway in 1977. As I recall, according to Pepe’s report, there were 44 cooperatives, with 6052 hectares of land. It was slow going at first. It seemed it would take a lot of work for the idea of the cooperatives to catch on, but we said there should be no pressure or haste, that we should let the farmers gradually convince themselves of the advantages offered by the cooperatives. That was how this movement began.

“I used to think—and I still do—that this movement will last eight or ten years more, until a higher form of production is introduced on most of the land now individually owned. . . .

“I think our countryside will have a great future and I am sure that the day will come when, what with the state enterprises and the cooperatives, our agriculture will be highly developed—not just for Latin America, where we’re already far ahead of the other countries, but also one of the most highly developed agricultures in the world (APPLAUSE) and one of the most thorough agrarian revolutions ever effected, (APPLAUSE) without resorting to violence, without using coercion and with the strictest respect for our workers’ and farmers’ feelings and wishes.” (*Granma Weekly Review*, May 30, 1982.)

According to statistics presented to the congress, the co-operative movement had already succeeded in forming 1140 co-operatives, covering 35 per cent of the land owned by small farmers.

On the worker-peasant alliance—one of the most

central issues for a socialist revolution in an agricultural country—the Cuban revolutionary leadership has for more than two decades carried out a progressive and flexible agrarian policy unmatched in history. The lessons of this experience have enriched the Marxist understanding of relations between the proletariat and the peasantry under a workers and peasants’ government and under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

8. The development of proletarian democracy

From its beginning to the present day, the Cuban Revolution has been characterised by an extremely high level of active participation by the masses of workers and farmers. From the two Declarations of Havana to the five-million-strong March of the Fighting People in 1980, the masses have mobilised again and again to defend and advance their revolution.

The great popularity of the leadership team around Fidel Castro is a product not only of the tremendous social and economic gains brought by the revolution, but also of the Castroists’ acute sensitivity to the needs and concerns of the working people, their ability to express the most pressing problems of the masses and suggest ways in which they can be overcome. The leadership has repeatedly stressed that the progress of the revolution must be the work of the workers and farmers themselves, not of government administrators or party officials.

Perhaps just because of the success of the leadership in meeting the needs and wishes of the Cuban people, the process of institutionalising forms of mass democratic activity has proceeded relatively slowly and with some unevenness.

Such institutions have never been totally lacking, of course. The National Revolutionary Militias of the early years of the revolution were intended not only for defence against imperialist attack, but also to provide a guarantee against a military coup. The Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, in addition to guarding against sabotage and other forms of counter-revolutionary activity, became to some degree organs of popular control at the local level; in addition they largely replaced the police, to that extent doing away with the possibility of law being enforced in a manner contrary to the will of the masses. The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), founded in 1960, has been a vehicle for expressing the special interests of women; while it has no formal power to initiate or veto legislation, the FMC’s views are clearly taken into account by the government in formulating policy.

But the need for more institutionalised democratic forms has, through experience, impressed itself upon the Cuban leaders. Fidel’s 1962 denunciation of the bureaucratic clique organised by Anibal Escalante emphasised the need to rely upon the masses as a counter to bureaucracy. But it did not trace the problem of

bureaucracy to its material roots, instead treating the development of the Escalante grouping as the product of sectarian attitudes among some former leaders of the Stalinist Popular Socialist Party. Nor did the speech recommend any particular organisational measures or forms of institutionalised democracy to counter the threat.

However, shortly thereafter, Fidel first proposed the Cubans' unique method of selecting party members, which was fully implemented after the dissolution of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution and the formation of the Cuban Communist Party in 1965. Before being accepted or rejected by their local party nucleus, prospective members must be nominated by their co-workers in mass assemblies that discuss their qualifications. The leadership has also deliberately restricted the number of administrators and functionaries allowed to join, while encouraging the maintenance and strengthening of the party's working-class composition.

It is clear, however, that the Cuban revolutionaries still felt a need to look into this question more deeply, including by studying the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the subject. Some of their conclusions were set out in a series of four editorials published in *Granma* in 1967. This series analysed bureaucratism as an ongoing danger, traceable to the specific administrative role of the bureaucracy:

"As long as the State exists as an institution and as long as organization, administration and policy are not fully of a communist nature, *the danger will continue to exist that a special bureaucratic stratum of citizens will form in the bureaucratic apparatus which directs and administers the State.* This apparatus has [a] given relationship to the means of production, different from that of the rest of the population, which can convert bureaucratic posts into comfortable, stagnant or privileged positions.

"And this is the most profound and serious problem to be considered in the campaign against bureaucracy."

The series proposed an ideological campaign against bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois attitudes, and a big reduction in the size of the state apparatus. Within a few months, tens of thousands of government functionaries were transferred to productive work, the staff in some ministries being slashed by up to 70 per cent.

While undoubtedly useful and progressive, these measures still fell short of institutionalising mass control over administrators and their policies. Moreover, certain economic and social policies followed by the leadership at this time had unfortunate side-effects on the struggle against bureaucratism and for socialist democracy. Egalitarian forms of distribution beyond the level appropriate to the Cuban economy led to moral incentives being counterposed to material incentives, particularly since such distribution resulted in workers accumulating cash wages for which there were not

sufficient stocks of consumer goods available. This situation tended to create divisions within the working class between more and less politically conscious layers, with the former having to carry most of the burden of voluntary work and of making up for the difficulties caused by absenteeism and the lack of material incentives to work. Had this situation continued to develop, the less-conscious layers of the working class could well have become a base of support for bureaucratic elements in the government or party apparatus. This danger was symbolised by the second Escalante case, at the beginning of 1968. The seriousness with which the Cuban Communist Party leadership regarded Escalante's "microfaction" was not due solely to Moscow's support for Escalante, but also to the danger that the "microfaction" could gain significant support from layers of the population becoming demoralised by economic problems and the strains imposed by imperialist blockade and military threats.

The problems arising in the course of the unsuccessful attempt to harvest 10 million tons of sugar in 1970 brought the situation to a head. Not only did the campaign lead to serious disruptions in the economy, but it also resulted in a decline of the activities of the mass organisations, as party cadres turned their attentions to the harvest.

In his July 26 speech that year, Fidel placed the blame for these problems squarely on the leadership: "We are going to begin, in the first place, by pointing out the responsibility which all of us, and I in particular, have for these problems. . . ."

Later in this speech, Fidel emphasised that it was workers on the job who often understood better than their leaders what was needed in a particular situation:

"And workers with torn shoes and clothes were asking for lathes, machine tools and measuring instruments—more concerned about this than with their other problems. Even in spite of the bad food supply, they were more concerned with the factory and production than with food. And this is really impressive! This is really a lesson for us! This is a living confirmation of the reality of the proletariat and what it is capable of. The industrial proletariat is the truly revolutionary class, the most potentially revolutionary class. (*Applause*).

"What a practical lesson in Marxism-Leninism! We began as revolutionaries, not in a factory, which would have been a great help for all of us. We began as revolutionaries through the study of theory, the intellectual road, the road of thought. And it would have helped all of us if we had come from the factories and known more about them, because it is there that the really revolutionary spirit of which Marx and Lenin spoke is to be found."

Later that year, a series of meetings with workers in different branches of production were held to discuss grievances, economic problems, and their solutions.

"Administration on a large scale is a science," Fidel

said at one of these meetings. "And we certainly do not have this kind of scientists. Therefore, the terrific amount of confusion, mistakes and snafus that exist in this field are almost understandable. In addition, there are problems of an ideological, political nature. Public administration is still deeply imbued with a petty-bourgeois spirit. . . . There is no doubt that this antiworker spirit, this scorn for the workers, exists among a number of administrators. . . ."

He also denounced bureaucrats who used their positions to obtain special privileges for themselves: "Now that we've abolished capitalism, who are the only exploiters that are left? Who are the ones who can exploit us today? Those who try to take privileges. Privileges can be a factor in exploiting the working people. We must always fight with everything we've got against any manifestation of privilege-taking."

One measure that was instituted to fight bureaucratic privilege was the establishment of workers' control over distribution of scarce commodities, through assemblies that vote on who will receive goods that are in short supply.

The Cuban leaders also set about consciously stepping up the activities of the mass organisations, particularly the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, which include the big majority of the Cuban population.

In 1974, the Cuban revolutionaries began the most important step towards the institutionalisation of democratic control with the People's Power experiment in Matanzas province. The Organs of People's Power have now been in place on a national level for six years. They represent the most advanced form of workers' democracy since the degeneration of the Russian Revolution.

Nominations to the municipal assembly of People's Power are made by mass meetings and elections conducted by secret ballot, with at least two candidates for each seat. Electors have the right to recall their delegate, and are known to make use of it. Delegates normally maintain their regular jobs; when they do work full time for one of the People's Power assemblies, they receive the wage applying to the job they have temporarily left. These two measures, right of recall and pay no higher than that of a skilled worker, have been regarded by Marxists since the time of the Paris Commune as important obstacles to bureaucratic degeneration or usurpation.

The People's Power system also corresponds to the soviet system in that delegates to provincial assemblies and the national assembly are chosen by the municipal assemblies, rather than by direct election, thus assuring a greater measure of control over delegates.

The Russian soviets arose originally as organs of struggle, and were therefore production-based. As the revolution was consolidated, the soviets were reorganised in July 1918 on a territorial basis. The People's Power assemblies, arising long after the victory of the

revolution, are also based on residential areas rather than productive units. It appears that, at least initially, this structure sometimes led People's Power assemblies to address problems from the standpoint of what was desirable for the workers and farmers as consumers rather than from the standpoint of what was possible on the basis of Cuba's productive forces. Marta Harnecker quotes a member of a municipal executive committee describing the early period of People's Power:

" . . . The debate just ebbed and flowed. Many topics shouldn't have been discussed at such length. But, in the long run, we gained a lot, especially in political savvy. Many resolutions, for example, had to be stricken later as unfeasible. Because we inherited exactly the same resources that Local Power had (CDRs), the same Department of Education had, the same Department of Interior Commerce had, etc. And, besides, we were forewarned: 'You've not going to get shiploads of cement; you're not going to get anything in any special way. You must learn to make do with the resources at hand.' Despite all this, many a resolution was passed which was clearly contrary to existing possibilities.

"If we now went down to Sancti Spiritus, full of optimism, and began to operate in that town as a regular government, we'd set about creating work commissions at once, and we'd pay a lot attention to what these commissions should handle. We'd advise delegates that all the problems they wished to present before the assembly should first be cleared with the executive committee, and checked further perhaps by a special commission capable of advising us whether or not the bureau affected by the proposal would be able to meet its demands, whether or not the resources existed to entertain such a beautiful proposal. Only then would we take the proposal before the assembly for final approval. If we had a technical advisory board that could tell us, for example: 'Look, this resolution is not feasible at the present time, but try again in six months' time,' we might be able to give the delegate a more complete reply, and the delegate, in turn, could inform his constituents at the accountability session that that particular motion could not be enacted at the time for this or that reason. . . . Dreaming up solutions is easy, if realities are not taken into account." (*Cuba: Dictatorship or Democracy?*, p.126)

Fidel Castro also addressed this question in the National Assembly of People's Power in June 1978: "Everyone must be able to distinguish between problems rooted in objective conditions and those issuing from subjective conditions. Only in this way will each delegate and voter be able to tackle in earnest the problems caused by subjective conditions, problems like hygiene in a restaurant, poor service to the public in a store, or unmotivated committees, assemblies, delegates, or bureaucrats. For all these problems can be overcome by improved attitudes and a commitment to serious effort, and they should never be confused with objective problems that can only be solved by the process of development." (*ibid*, p. 216)

By law, all organisations, including the Communist Party, are forbidden to present or campaign for candidates or slates. However, the small size of electoral districts (up to about 3000 people) means that voters are likely to be familiar with the political views of candidates. Use of the right of recall also provides a method of selecting delegates on the basis of political program.

The development of People's Power has been paralleled by a greater measure of control over production by the workers concerned. The economic plan, as it applies to each factory, is discussed and voted upon by the workers of that factory. They have the right to reject the proposals for their factory, and the plan does not apply until they have ratified it. Assemblies of workers also control production norms, and elected representatives are part of the management of enterprises. These measures of workers' control have been developed primarily following 1970 and the subsequent reorganisation of unions along industrial lines.

Another measure of the Cuban Revolution's continued democratic progress and control of bureaucratic abuse is the lack of a big spread in wage scales. Nominally, the ratio of the lowest to the highest wages is about 1 to 8; in practice the figure is closer to 1 to 3. A good part of this discrepancy is based not on higher salaries for administrators but on the "historic wage," which since 1973 is being gradually eliminated. Because of bonuses for exceeding production norms, workers can and do earn higher wages than administrators (who are not eligible for these bonuses). Unlike the Stalinised workers states, there are also no special shops catering to bureaucrats at subsidised prices. Differences in living standards are also reduced by the fact that many essentials are provided free or at subsidised prices to all Cubans. This includes health care, education, childcare, rent, and meals at work.

The process of "institutionalisation" is not yet completed. The Cuban masses, led by the Communist Party, are aware that they are engaged in a process of experimentation to find the most suitable forms for ensuring democratic control. What has already been accomplished, the unmistakable enthusiasm of the Cuban workers and peasants, and the deliberate leadership provided by the party to this process give every reason to expect further successes.

9. A proletarian internationalist outlook

The Cuban revolutionaries have always been characterised by a high degree of internationalist consciousness. The small size of the Cuban economy and the proximity of the imperialist giant make it clear that there is no possibility of "socialism in a single country" in Cuba; the fate of the Cuban revolution is tied to its extension, particularly in Latin America.

This question led to extremely sharp conflicts with Stalinist policies in Latin America and the effort by the

Cubans to create an international organising centre for anti-imperialist struggles in the form of the Organisation of Latin American Solidarity.

During the early 1960s the Cuban leaders evidently hoped for a rapid extension of the revolution through a rather mechanical repetition of the Cuban pattern in one or more countries of Central and South America. An insufficient appreciation of the real lessons of the Cuban revolution by those who attempted to imitate it, sabotage by the Stalinist parties of the region, the Cubans' inability to provide significant material aid, and the lessons that had been learned by imperialism led to repeated setbacks instead of the hoped-for breakthrough. In an effort to repeat the Cuban experience despite these obstacles, Che Guevara launched the guerrilla *foco* in Bolivia. Guevara's capture and assassination by government troops in October 1967 was the definitive proof that the guerrilla method was an inadequate tool for extending the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban Communists' support for revolutionary currents in Latin America failed to build sizeable organisations as against reformist currents, including the Stalinists, because of the limitations of the guerrilla strategy during the 1960s and early 1970s. The Cubans' failure to orient towards the masses with a Leninist conception of a vanguard party weakened them against reformists who consciously built themselves a base in mass organisations. The central question was whether class struggle or class collaboration represented the road forward for the exploited masses, but the reformists were able to pose the alternatives as "mass work" or isolated guerrilla bands.

The escalation of US aggression against Vietnam and the mass struggle of the Vietnamese against the invader made it clear, however, that armed revolutionary struggle and the involvement of the masses are not counterposed alternatives but complementary aspects of a single revolutionary strategy. The Cubans' militant solidarity with the Vietnamese was thus based not only on recognition of what the Vietnamese resistance contributed to the defence of the Cuban revolution but also on the belief that the Vietnamese were setting an example that could be and would have to be followed by all the countries exploited by imperialism—a belief summed up in Che's call to "Create two, three, many Vietnams."

The Cuban revolutionaries' internationalism still remained one-sided, however, in its exclusive focus on the countries of the underdeveloped world. They showed little or no understanding of the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in the imperialist centres, even after May-June 1968 in France.

A change in this attitude has become evident, following the impact of the mass movement against the Vietnam War in the imperialist countries and with the development of working-class struggles in response to the downturn in the international capitalist economy. One important sign of this change is the approach to Cubans living in the United States (of whom there were 700,000 prior to the opening of Mariel). Beginning in the mid-1970s, there were visits by individual Cubans in the US who were friendly to the revolution. The revolutionary government then went on to propose visits

by young Cubans who had been taken abroad by their parents while they were children. The first delegation of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, consisting of 55 people, visited Cuba at the end of 1977 and beginning of 1978. The second, of 200 people, toured in 1979.

The visits of the Antonio Maceo Brigade were part of a larger process, called the Dialogue, in which the Cuban government has sought to reach out to the Cuban community in the United States. Like other national minorities in the US, the Cubans suffer discrimination, lower wages, higher unemployment, etc. Seeing the gains of the revolution with their own eyes can have a profound effect on broad layers of this community—a point understood by the US government, which has now used the Trading with the Enemy Act to ban such visits.

It remains true, however, that in the short and medium term the example of the Cuban Revolution has the most profound impact in the underdeveloped countries, particularly in Latin America, and the Cuban revolutionaries correctly focus most of their attention on this area. The year 1979, with the victory of revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, brought the long-awaited extension of the Cuban revolution. These victories of course strengthen the Cuban revolutionaries against any tendency towards conservatism and compromise with imperialism within the state or party apparatus. The Cubans' unstinting aid to and solidarity with these revolutions demonstrates that there has been no weakening of the revolutionary internationalism symbolised by Che's sacrifice.

10. A revolutionary foreign policy

The Cuban leadership's efforts to extend the revolution in Latin America are part of a consistent foreign policy that has sought to exploit any opening for developing struggles against imperialism. In contrast to the Stalinist rulers of the Soviet Union and China, who regard weaknesses in imperialism's armor as opportunities to collaborate with the imperialists for their own national bureaucratic benefit, the Cubans utilise such weaknesses to deal a blow at the enemy. Whereas "peaceful coexistence" to the Stalinists means deals with imperialism to hold back the class struggle internationally, in Cuban foreign policy it means mobilising whatever forces can be mobilised against imperialist intervention in other countries.

In his 1968 speech on the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, Fidel outlined the Cubans' approach to the struggle for peace:

"The real promoters of war, the real adventurers, are the imperialists. Now, then, these dangers are real; they are a reality. And this reality cannot be changed by simply preaching, in one's own house, an excessive desire for peace. In any case, the preaching should be done in the enemy's camp and not in one's own camp, because this would only contribute to stifling militancy, to

weakening the people's readiness to face the risks, sacrifices, not only the possible ultimate sacrifice of one's life, but also material sacrifices.

"And when the peoples know that the realities of the world, the independence of the country, and internationalist duties demand investment and sacrifices in the strengthening of the defense of the country, the masses are much better prepared to work with enthusiasm to achieve this, to make sacrifices, understanding this need, being conscious of the dangers that arise when the people have been stirred up and softened by a constant, foolish and inexplicable campaign in favor of peace. It is a very strange way of defending peace. That is why we who at the beginning did so many foolish things out of ignorance or naivete, for a long time now have not painted any signs around here saying, 'Long Live Peace,' 'Long Live This,' 'Long Live That.'

"Because at the beginning, out of mimicry, by imitation, we repeated things as they arrived here, until we reached a point, well, what is the meaning of 'Long Live Peace'? Let's put up that sign in New York: 'Long Live Peace' in New York, 'Long Live Peace' in Washington."

This has been a constant theme of the Cuban revolutionaries. In his speech to the Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries in 1979, Fidel expressed it:

"Peace is possible, but world peace can only be assured to the extent that all countries are consciously determined to fight for it—peace not just for a part of the world, but for all peoples. Peace, also, for Vietnam, the Palestinians, the patriots of Zimbabwe and Namibia, the oppressed majorities in South Africa, Angola, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Ethiopia, Syria, Lebanon, and the Saharan people. Peace with justice. Peace with independence. Peace with freedom. Peace for the powerful countries and the small countries. Peace for all continents and all peoples."

The contrast between Stalinist class collaboration and the Cubans' class-struggle approach was glaringly evident during the US aggression against Vietnam. The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese was, for Moscow and Peking alike, the small change of negotiations for detente with Washington. The Cubans refused to buy into detente at the cost of lessening their solidarity with Vietnam, publicly calling on the Soviet Union and China to make Vietnam an inviolable part of socialist territory and announcing their willingness to send Cuban troops to help in the defence of Vietnam.

The Cuban leaders were quick to appreciate the historic importance of US imperialism's defeat in the Vietnam War, and equally quick to use the changed international relationship of class forces to the advantage of anti-imperialist struggle. Responding to the request of the Angolan government, Cuba sent thousands of internationalist volunteer fighters to help turn back the South African invasion of Angola. This bold move was the product of both revolutionary audacity and sober calculation of the political restraints on the military pow-

er of US imperialism. Despite its obvious rage at the Cuban action, the US government proved unable to intervene militarily against it. The Cubans inflicted a heavy military—and equally importantly, a political—defeat on imperialism. The victory over the South African invader gave a new impetus to the struggle against the racist regime throughout southern Africa and in South Africa itself.

Two years later, some 17,000 Cuban volunteers were sent to Ethiopia to help in defeating the imperialist-backed invasion by Somalia. Once again, the Cuban leaders had correctly calculated the international relationship of class forces and the stakes in the struggle. And once again, the Cuban troops were instrumental in defeating the imperialist scheme. Cuban aid was decisive in stopping an attack aimed at crushing the Ethiopian revolution and thus pushed further the evolution of the relationship of forces against imperialism.

While less spectacular, the Cubans' internationalist aid in non-military forms is equally anti-imperialist in its content. In all its forms, Cuba's internationalist assistance is based on an understanding of the close and inseparable link between the struggle for socialist revolution and the fight against imperialist domination of the underdeveloped countries.

On the basis of this understanding, the Cuban government has been particularly effective in its role in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It has succeeded in turning against imperialism in a number of situations the objective contradictions that exist between imperialism on the one hand and the semi-colonies on the other, including those semi-colonies with pro-imperialist governments. Its leadership role in the Non-Aligned Movement has been instrumental in giving that body a far more effective anti-imperialist direction. Thus when the contradiction between imperialism and the semi-colonies led to war over the Malvinas Islands, the Castroists were quick to mobilise support for Argentina, to attempt to draw the Argentine government away from its close dependence on US imperialism, and to draw the lessons of what the war showed about the Organisation of American States and the inter-American treaties.

It has been a matter of absolute necessity for the Cuban government to pursue its diplomatic aims with the utmost skill. It has been forced—as the Soviet government was in Lenin's time—to seek to exploit not only the contradictions between imperialism and the semi-colonies but also the contradictions within the imperialist camp, particularly in order, wherever possible, to break through or weaken the US economic blockade of Cuba. In seeking to maintain or develop its trade relations with semi-colonies like Mexico and imperialist countries such as Britain and Spain, the Cuban government has necessarily observed the requirements of diplomatic protocol but has firmly resisted pressures to change its fundamental policies or its support for anti-imperialist struggles in exchange for

economic or diplomatic concessions. The Cubans' success in diplomacy is all the more to their credit in that, unlike the Bolsheviks, they are not part of a mass revolutionary international, a fact which makes it more difficult to maintain the distinction between state-to-state relations and the attitude of Cuban Communists towards particular governments.

In its relations with governments that have issued from revolutionary upsurges—like the Angolan MPLA and the Ethiopian Dergue—the Cuban leadership seeks to provide aid and encouragement for further advances as well as support against the threats of imperialism and its agents. This necessary support and encouragement, however, is sometimes expressed in a manner that implies political confidence in these governments. In particular the Cuban leaders regularly and repeatedly refer to the Angolan and Ethiopian governments as “revolutionary,” despite the fact that they defend capitalist property relations and resist leading the workers and peasants in *consistent* struggle to transform the conditions created by imperialist exploitation. While it is undeniable that the MPLA and the Dergue stand at the heads of governments created by mass struggles against imperialism and against precapitalist social structures, they have demonstrated neither the ability nor the willingness to lead the struggle forward to the next stage of establishing the power of the workers and poor peasants—in marked contrast to the actions of the July 26 Movement. They rely on the masses in order to defend themselves against imperialism or its agents, but not in order to transform their societies. By characterising as “revolutionary” governments that are unwilling to go beyond the tasks of the national-democratic revolution, the Cubans blur over the distinction between national-democratic and socialist revolution and the importance of a conscious leadership to guide the transition from one stage to the next.

At the same time, the Cuban leaders clearly specify that there is a difference between governments leading socialist revolutions and those that are only involved to some degree in conflicts with imperialism. In his July 26, 1980, speech, for example, Fidel said:

“It is inevitable that we say something about Nicaragua. It is of interest to us, all of us. Not only we Cubans, but all Latin Americans.

“I'm sure you all realize what it means, the impression, the happiness, the enthusiasm, the optimism, the emotion involved in arriving at the second Latin American country to free itself of imperialism. (APPLAUSE) In this hemisphere, there are now not two but three of us because Grenada has to be included, too. (APPLAUSE)

“Naturally, Nicaragua, Cuba and Grenada are not the only progressive countries. There are other progressive governments, friendly with Cuba. We could mention, for example, the Government of Mexico, (APPLAUSE) and we will soon have the great honor of welcoming the

president of the sister Republic of Mexico. (APPLAUSE) There are governments like that of our dear friend Manley, in Jamaica; (APPLAUSE) There are governments like that of Panama. (APPLAUSE) But three of us have shaken the yoke of imperialism in the last 20 years in a radical way, once and for all (APPLAUSE) and it is a historical imperative that one day we'll all be free. (APPLAUSE) We'll either be free or we will cease to exist (APPLAUSE) because one day the battle cries of 'Patria libre o morir' and 'Patria o muerte' will be the battle cries of all the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. (APPLAUSE)" (*Granma Weekly Review*, August 3, 1980)

11. Cuba and the Soviet Union

The Cuban leaders have recognised and frequently stated the truth that the Cuban Revolution could not have survived had it not been for the existence of the Soviet Union. Economic assistance from the USSR and the Soviet role in helping to deter direct military aggression by imperialism have both been indispensable to the existence of revolutionary Cuba. The fact that the Soviet Union has been able to provide this crucial aid despite the rule of a hardened bureaucratic caste is indisputable evidence that the fundamental gains of the October Revolution have so far survived the Stalinist counter-revolution.

There could never be any question that the Kremlin rulers would exact the maximum political price possible for every bit of aid supplied to Cuba. Moreover, even aside from the explicit or implicit demands made by the Soviet bureaucrats, it was inevitable that Soviet aid would create pressures within Cuban society to follow the Soviet lead in foreign policy and to adapt Cuban domestic policies and social structures to Soviet "models."

The Cuban revolutionaries have not had the luxury of being able to "shop around" for this assistance. The aid was indispensable to the survival of the Cuban revolution, and it was not available from any other source. The only question was how much the Cubans would pay, and they were not in a strong bargaining position.

Nevertheless, the world revolution has gained far more from Soviet-Cuban relations over the last two decades than have its enemies. First and most important is the fact that the Cuban Revolution has survived imperialist encirclement and blockade and has now spread into the English-speaking Caribbean and to the mainland of Latin America. These achievements would have justified a far greater price than the one that the Cuban Communists have actually paid for Soviet assistance.

The Soviet Stalinists and their international followers have undoubtedly strengthened their authority with the world working class to the extent that Soviet aid enables them to identify themselves with the Cuban Revolution

and its gains. In the final analysis, this political benefit for the Stalinists stems from the fact that they rule a country whose revolution they have not yet succeeded in totally strangling: The Kremlin rulers benefit similarly every time their base as parasites on a planned economy forces them to carry out a progressive action.

Aside from this, however, the Soviet bureaucrats have received remarkably little in exchange for their material assistance. They have not succeeded in dictating the Cuban revolutionaries' program in either foreign or domestic policy.

As long ago as the 1962 missile crisis, the Cuban leaders demonstrated that they would act independently and would publicly disagree with the Kremlin when they felt that was necessary. When Kennedy and Khrushchev reached their agreement, Castro announced to the world that he had not agreed to withdrawal of the missiles but could not prevent it. But the Cubans could prevent the UN "inspection" of Cuba, which Khrushchev had agreed to, and Castro and the Cuban masses made it clear they would prevent it if anyone were foolish enough to try to enforce it.

Well known also is Che Guevara's public criticism of the Soviet rulers for exploiting the underdeveloped countries by trading with them at prices set by the capitalist world market.

The Cuban Communists' effort to encourage the building of large class-struggle organisations in Latin America was not successful, largely because of the error already noted, but was clear evidence of the intention to follow a revolutionary line despite Stalinist displeasure. Again, during the Vietnam war, Castro repeatedly and publicly criticised both Moscow and Peking for failing to unite in defence of Vietnam against US aggression.

Where there are Cuban troops abroad, as in Angola and Ethiopia, their use provides an unmistakable contrast with that of Soviet troops, although this difference is not stated openly. Cuban troops—and other internationalist volunteers—are noted for their scrupulous regard for the sensibilities and rights of the nation they are aiding. Also unlike the Soviet government, the Cubans do not demand material or political concessions for their assistance—it is real aid rather than a trade-off.

The Cuban government has also maintained its independent stance in regard to the Eritrean struggle for independence. The Cuban position on this question is a mistaken one, in that it fails to acknowledge the Eritrean people's full right to self-determination and fails to recognise that the granting of this right would strengthen the Ethiopian revolution rather than weakening it. But whereas Moscow openly provides political and material support for the Dergue's war against Eritrea, the Cuban government has stated that its troops are not involved in the campaign and has called for a peaceful settlement to

be negotiated on a basis acceptable to both sides. The Cubans' attitude on the question of Eritrea was expressed by Castro in a 1975 speech hailing the Ethiopian revolution:

"Unfortunately, a fratricidal struggle between the new government which broke the old structure and a national liberation movement is being waged within that very state. This situation in which two causes of progressive trends are confronting each other is complex. Therefore, what is the duty of the Non-Aligned? Is it perhaps to cross our arms or support one side to the detriment of the other? Urge on the war? Decidedly not. The least that should be done is to make a serious effort and seek a peaceful and just solution that would be acceptable to the parties in the conflict which is separating and confronting the Ethiopian revolutionary process and the Liberation Movement in Eritrea." (quoted in *The Ethiopian Revolution*, by Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, p. 252)

Even the Cuban support for the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was presented from a quite different standpoint than that of the Kremlin. Castro in his speech did not accept the fiction that the invasion occurred by "invitation" and was therefore not a violation of the right of self-determination:

"What are the factors that created the necessity for a step which unquestionably entailed a violation of legal principles and international norms that, having often served as shield for the peoples against injustice, are highly esteemed by the world?

"Because what cannot be denied here is that the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state was violated. To say that it was not would be a fiction, an untruth. And the violation was, in fact, of a flagrant nature."

Castro was also unsparing in his criticism of the Czechoslovak CP (not just the Dubcek leadership):

"Gentlemen, is it conceivable that a situation could occur, under any circumstances, after twenty years of communism in our country, of communist revolution, of socialist revolution, in which a group of honest revolutionaries, in this country, horrified by the prospect of an advance—or rather a retrogression—to counterrevolutionary positions and toward imperialism, could find themselves obliged to request the aid of friendly armies to prevent such a retrogression occurring? What would have happened to the revolutionary consciousness of this people? To the dignity of this people? To the revolutionary morale of this people? If such a situation could arise some day, what would be left of all these things which, for us, constitute in essence the revolution? . . .

"All of us know that the leadership which Czechoslovakia had, generally, for twenty years was a leadership plagued with many vices: dogmatism, bureaucracy, and, in short, many things which cannot be presented as examples of truly revolutionary leadership.

"When we speak here, when we present our thesis about the 'liberaloid' nature of this [Dubcek] group, so warmly greeted by imperialism, it does not mean in any way that we are expressing our solidarity with the former leadership. We must bear in mind that that leadership,

with which we had relations from the very beginning, even sold this country, at a high price, many weapons which were spoils of war seized from the Nazis, weapons for which we have been paying, and are still paying for today, which belonged to Hitler's troops that occupied Czechoslovakia. . . .

"On many occasions they sold us very outdated factories. We have seen the results of many of the economic concepts on which they base their business transactions, on which they base their eagerness to sell any old junk, and it must be stated that these practices led to their selling old, outdated junk to a country which is making a revolution and has to develop."

Furthermore, Fidel asked, if the invasion was necessary to block an imperialist-backed counter-revolution, why didn't the Warsaw Pact countries openly denounce imperialism's role:

"We have been informed exhaustively concerning all the preceding events, all the facts, all the deviations, all about this or that liberal group; we have been informed of their activities. The activities of the imperialists and the intrigues of the imperialists are well known, and we are disturbed to see that neither the Communist Party nor the government of the Soviet Union, nor the governments of the other countries that sent their troops to Czechoslovakia, have made any direct accusation against Yankee imperialism for its responsibility in the events in Czechoslovakia."

And Castro went on to point out that it wasn't sufficient to oppose a "rightist" line *only* in Czechoslovakia:

"Our party did not hesitate to help the Venezuelan guerrillas when a rightist and treacherous leadership, betraying the revolutionary line, abandoned the guerrillas and entered into shameless collusion with the regime. At that time we presented our analysis as to which side was right—that scheming, politicking group that betrayed the combatants, that betrayed those who had given their lives, or those who kept the flag of rebellion flying. . . .

"I ask myself, in the light of the facts and in the light of the bitter reality that persuaded the nations of the Warsaw Pact to send their forces to crush the counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia, and—according to their statement—to back a minority in the face of a majority with rightist positions, if they will also cease to support these rightist, reformist, sold-out, submissive leaderships in Latin America that are enemies of the armed revolutionary struggle, that oppose the people's liberation struggle."

The speech also included a sharp attack on the Kremlin's concept of "peaceful coexistence":

"We do not and cannot believe in the possibility of an improvement in relations between the socialist camp and the U.S. imperialist government as long as that country performs the role of international gendarme, aggressor against the peoples and enemy and systematic opponent of revolutions everywhere in the world. Much less can we believe in any such improvement in the midst of an aggression as criminal and cowardly as that being waged against Vietnam.

"Our position on this is very clear: one is consistent with world realities and is truly internationalist and genuinely and decidedly supports the revolutionary movement throughout the world, in which case relations with the imperialist government of the United States cannot be improved, or relations with the imperialist U.S. government will improve, but only at the cost of withholding consistent support from the worldwide revolutionary movement."

The bourgeois media normally portray the Cuban CP's backing for the invasion—and their similar statements on the "right" of the Warsaw Pact to intervene in Poland if necessary—as an expression of "totalitarianism" supposedly inherent in socialist revolutions. By identifying the Cubans with the reactionary policies of the Soviet Stalinists, the imperialist propagandists hope to undermine working-class solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. It is therefore important for the press of the Fourth International to take the lead in explaining the real significance of the Cubans' position.

The Cuban revolutionaries' sometimes quite scathing comments on the foreign and domestic policies of ruling Stalinist parties, and their own revolutionary policies on both the domestic and international level, make it clear that their position on the workers states of Eastern Europe is not an expression of the attitudes or interests of an emerging bureaucratic layer. However, the Cubans' public statements do not present the ruling Stalinist parties as expressing the interests of a social layer distinct from and hostile to the workers and farmers. Hence these parties are treated as guarantees, however inadequate, against imperialist-backed counter-revolution, rather than in their real role as an indirect aid to imperialism. Consequently a struggle such as that led by Solidarnosc, even when it is provoked by disastrous "mistakes" of the government, is seen primarily as weakening the workers states and creating openings for imperialism. This erroneous analysis is sometimes supported by reference to the attempts of imperialism to use Stalinist repression in the workers states for its own ends.

A further important factor, of course, is the Cuban Revolution's dependence on Soviet military and economic assistance. Only the Cuban revolutionaries themselves are in a position to decide how far it is possible to go in criticising the Stalinist regimes without endangering the survival of the Cuban Revolution. The press of the Fourth International should therefore aim to present our own position on the need for political revolution, and to *explain* the Cubans' position, including what we regard as incorrect in it, in a manner that takes account of both this particular problem confronting the Cubans and the qualitative difference between the Cuban CP and Stalinist parties.

Moreover, the Cubans' own experiences in developing and institutionalising democratic control and their own struggles against bureaucratic abuses, contrasted with the Polish regime's inability to win legitimacy in the eyes of the working masses, are in and of themselves powerful weapons helping to undermine Stalinism's hold on sections of the labor movement. Speeches by Fidel since the birth of Solidarnosc have frequently emphasised the theme of the necessity for close ties between the workers and farmers and the ruling party. In a September 1980 speech on the 20th anniversary of the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, he noted:

"... we should not gauge the merits and importance of the organization solely on the basis of its services. The implications are more important, more far-reaching. The CDRs represent an experiment that other sister nations have begun to put into effect. They also represent an extraordinary political experience, what a revolution really needs to protect itself and to be strong, something that no Marxist-Leninist Party can ever ignore, and that is, the closest ties possible with the masses! (*Applause*)

"The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, along with our glorious trade unions, the Federation of Cuban Women, the National Association of Small Farmers, the student organizations and the Pioneer Organization represent a powerful mechanism and an insuperable instrument to link our Party to the masses. (*Applause*) And I dare say that they are unique in the world. (*Applause*) It isn't that many other revolutions and many other Parties are not linked to the masses, since all really revolutionary parties have always been characterized by such links. What I mean is that in our country we have the most complete mechanism to link the Party with the masses, and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are one of the pillars of that mechanism. (*Applause*) Facts show and experience shows that no Marxist-Leninist Party can ever neglect its links with the masses. (*Applause*)"

In his report to the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, Castro said in regard to Poland that "The success that reaction has had there is eloquent testimony to the fact that a revolutionary Party in power cannot deviate from Marxist-Leninist principles, neglect ideological work and divorce itself from the masses." This was in the same speech in which he said "There is not the slightest question about the socialist camp's right to save that country's integrity and ensure that it survives and resists at all costs imperialism's onslaught."

Following the imposition of martial law in Poland, in his speech to the 10th World Trade Union Congress in February 1982, Fidel denounced the imperialist hypocrisy over the action, which he called "the unfortunate events in Poland." These were, he said, "an unquestionable result of serious mistakes made during the process of building socialism in the fraternal country as well as of the action of the imperialist enemy."

Thus the Cubans' position on the bureaucratized workers states is a mistaken view of how to defend the historic gains of proletarian revolution, which derives from an inadequate analysis of Stalinism. Unlike the policies of the Stalinist ruling castes, the Cuban position is not one of support for a counter-revolutionary social layer, but a mistaken method of defending the workers states against the consequences of that layer's misrule.

Cuba's dependence on Soviet aid has had its greatest influence within Cuba in the area of restrictions on democratic rights. Even here, however, such restrictions have never been extensive, and the trend has been to enlarge democratic freedoms rather than to restrict them.

The Cuban Communist Party is the only party in Cuba today, and its guiding role is recognised in the Constitution. It should be noted, however, that the CP's special position arose from the specific course of events rather than by government decree. All the bourgeois parties openly went over to the counter-revolution at an early stage, leaving only the July 26 Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the PSP as parties supporting the revolution. The Castroists at the head of the government did not use state power to force members

of the Revolutionary Directorate or the PSP into a united organisation. On the contrary, they conducted a fusion of the three organisations, in the process undermining severely the influence of the Stalinist leadership of the PSP. Within this united party, many of the cadres and even leaders of the PSP were won over to the revolutionary perspectives of the Castro team.

As a general norm of democracy in a workers state, Marxists favor the right of political parties to exist and function within the context of support of the revolution. But such a norm is not at all the same thing as urging the creation of additional parties where they do not exist. The role of a Leninist party is to unite the working class in conscious struggle for its historic interests, to lead the proletariat and working farmers in the creation of a workers state and the battle for world socialist revolution. Where, as in Cuba, the ruling party has shown itself equal to these tasks, revolutionary Marxists oppose the creation of any other parties, which could create unnecessary divisions within the working class or between the working class and its allies. Naturally, the unity of the working people led by the revolutionary party is most real and effective when it is entirely voluntary and not based on the legal proscription of other parties.

In the concrete situation of the Cuban Revolution today, the program of government of an alternative party would almost certainly be politically retrogressive. As has been outlined, the Cuban government follows a revolutionary internationalist foreign policy; the alternative could only be adventurism or, more likely, acceptance of detente with imperialism on the basis of abandonment of Cuba's principled support for anti-imperialist struggles. The Communist Party of Cuba is leading the process of institutionalising democratic control; while it might be possible to argue for different specific forms or measures in this institutionalisation, an alternative *program* could only call for a reversal of this process. In terms of the economy, there has been indisputable progress in both development and in ensuring equitable distribution; the errors that have been made have been corrected by the party itself. Even in regard to the consistent errors of the Cuban CP, such as its characterisation of certain bourgeois nationalist regimes as "revolutionary" or its inadequate analysis of the Stalinised workers states, there is no reason to believe that these errors could be corrected more easily from outside the party than from within it. And a public debate on the character of the Soviet government—which would necessarily follow from the existence of another party advocating that the Cuban government change its position on Poland—would jeopardise Soviet assistance and thus the very survival of the Cuban Revolution.

The most likely political character of an additional party in Cuba today is indicated by the nearest approach seen to such a phenomenon after the fusion of the three groups that formed the Communist Party. This was the faction organised around Anibal Escalante. This faction received the backing of the Kremlin to the extent that the Cuban government insisted on the recall of an official of the Soviet embassy.

Escalante and his "microfaction" were sentenced in 1968 to long prison terms, even though their factional activities were not a crime under Cuban law. There have been no other known instances of criminal sanctions being taken against party members because of factional activity, but the Communist Party at this time opposes the formation of factions or organised tendencies within its ranks, in this respect differing from Leninist organisational norms.

The Cuban leaders' position is not, however, directed towards guaranteeing the position of a privileged elite or preventing criticism of the policies of the leadership. Unlike the Stalin faction in the Soviet CP, which turned a temporary ban on factions into a permanent one in order to consolidate the power of conservative bureaucrats, the Castro leadership has consistently followed a revolutionary, antibureaucratic course, and it encourages democratic discussion within the party. The Castro leadership believes that organised groupings would weaken the party in the face of the imperialist enemy. Furthermore, tendencies or factions could become *de facto* parties, creating artificial divisions in the working class or jeopardising relations with the Soviet Union in the manner indicated above. And a pro-Stalinist faction, relying on direct and indirect Soviet support, could achieve an influence far out of proportion to its real strength inside Cuba.

The goal of the Fourth International is the development of full workers' democracy in Cuba, including such things as the right to form factions, tendencies, and even other working-class parties within the context of support for the revolution. The obstacle to this goal is not the Cuban CP, but the imperialist threat to the revolution and the revolution's dependence on aid from the Stalinised workers states. Thus the best way to expand workers' democracy in Cuba is through the extension of the world revolution—a goal consciously promoted by the Cuban Communists. In this situation, it would be mistaken and counter-productive for revolutionaries outside Cuba to try to second guess the Cubans' decisions on the tempo at which particular measures of workers democracy can be introduced.

12. The Nicaraguan revolution

The revolutionaries who formed the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua in 1962 were not merely inspired by the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba. They also studied and learned from the experiences and political evolution of the Castro leadership.

Thus, unlike the July 26 Movement, the FSLN based itself on a program which, while it had a revolutionary-democratic axis, also included measures transitional to the establishment of a workers state. The Historic Program of the FSLN published in 1969 called for the destruction of "the military and bureaucratic apparatus of the [Somoza] dictatorship" and the establishment of a

“revolutionary government based on the worker-peasant alliance.” This government would create a “patriotic, revolutionary, and people’s army” and “arm the students, workers, and peasants, who—organised in people’s militias—will defend the rights won against the inevitable attack by the reactionary forces of the country and Yankee imperialism.”

The program projected that the revolutionary government would “expropriate and eliminate capitalist and feudal estates . . . turn over the land to the peasants . . .” and “encourage the peasants to organise themselves in cooperatives. . . .” Among the other economic reforms to be effected by the revolutionary government, the 1969 program included:

“A. It will expropriate the landed estates, factories, companies, buildings, means of transportation, and other wealth usurped by the Somoza family. . . .

“B. It will expropriate the landed estates, factories, companies, means of transportation, and other wealth usurped by the politicians and military officers, and all other accomplices, who have taken advantage of the present regime’s administrative corruption.

“C. It will nationalise the wealth of all the foreign companies. . . .

“D. It will establish workers’ control over the administrative management of the factories and other wealth that are expropriated and nationalised. . . .

“F. It will nationalise the banking system. . . .

“M. It will establish state control over foreign trade. . . .

“O. It will plan the national economy, putting an end to the anarchy characteristic of the capitalist system of production. An important part of this planning will focus on the industrialisation and electrification of the country.” (*Sandinistas Speak*, pp. 14-15)

Under the impact of the defeats its guerrilla units suffered in the 1960s and the dramatic growth of the urban proletarian and semi-proletarian population in the 1960s and 1970s, a discussion developed in the FSLN over the relation of armed struggle to mass mobilisations, the respective roles of the urban and rural toilers, the relation between military and political struggle, and the purpose and acceptable limits of agreements with the opposition bourgeoisie. These debates over how to overthrow Somoza and end imperialist domination of Nicaragua led in 1975 to the formation of three tendencies and eventually to three public factions. The ripening conditions for the overthrow of Somoza contributed to a deepening of the FSLN’s understanding of Marxist strategy and to the overcoming of the differences. This was reflected in the elaboration of a new program in 1977. Titled the “FSLN Military and Political Platform for the Abolition of the Dictatorship,” it stated that the aim of the Sandinista Front was “to initiate a struggle to overthrow the Somoza gang. We then plan to form a revolutionary democratic government, to allow us, proceeding from a proletarian ideology and Sandino’s historic behests, to make socialism triumphant and create that society of free people of which Augusto Sandino dreamed.” The new program pointed out that “both historic goals will be secured, given a Marxist-Leninist approach and a firmly

knit vanguard to direct the revolutionary process.” This revolutionary process would take the form of a civil war: “. . . We speak of a civil war insofar as it is hatched by the local reactionary forces resisting the revolutionary process. This will be a revolutionary war, insofar as, relying on a worker-peasant alliance and led by a Marxist-Leninist vanguard, it. . . creates the conditions for carrying forward . . . the process through the democratic phase towards socialism.”

The leading role of the working class in such a worker-peasant alliance was particularly stressed:

“The urban industrial workers and rural agricultural workers comprise the basic class capable of effecting profound revolutionary changes in the capitalist system of exploitation. The strength, development and organisation of this class are the guarantee that the socialist society desired will be attained. . . . Although the working class is the *basic force* of the revolutionary process of both today and tomorrow, it will not achieve its revolutionary aims without the broad backing of other segments of the people, especially *the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie* (students and intellectuals). . . . The motive force of the revolution is represented by the alliance of the three classes of the proletariat, peasantry, and petty bourgeoisie,” (*The Agony of a Dictatorship*, pp. 46-48)

As the anti-Somoza struggle deepened, many of the disputed questions began to be resolved in life. This was encouraged by the growing unity within the FSLN after the reunification of the three factions in December 1978. Particularly important in this process were the 1978-79 urban mobilisations and the spread of popular committees and militias. These developments enabled the FSLN to overcome the weaknesses of its guerrillaist strategy and link its military campaign to a powerful mass insurrectionary movement, which in turn enabled the FSLN to topple the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979.

With the benefit of its political ties to the Cuban leadership, the more favorable international relationship of class forces in which the Nicaraguan revolution occurs (a product of Vietnam’s victory over US imperialism), and the different structure of its capitalist economy, the Sandinistas have been able to avoid or minimise some of the problems and difficulties that confronted the July 26 Movement.

Imperialism did not have the great amount of direct investment in Nicaragua that it did in Cuba, and it therefore exercised its control over the country in a less direct fashion. This meant that Nicaraguan capitalists, while they were still a neo-colonial bourgeoisie dependent on imperialism, had somewhat greater room for manoeuvre in the conduct of day-to-day affairs, including greater room for intrabourgeois conflicts.

This fact and Somoza's use of state power to enrich himself at the expense of competing capitalists combined to create a fairly broad layer of capitalist opposition to the dictatorship, which even engaged in sporadic armed struggle on a few occasions. This bourgeois opposition was not revolutionary or even consistent in its opposition to Somoza, but it had sufficient reality—symbolised by Somoza's assassination of the publisher Chamorro—to attract a certain following among the workers and peasants.

In an effort to use these capitalist forces in the final struggle against Somoza, the FSLN projected a Council of State in which bourgeois forces would have had a majority. But the actual course of events in the final weeks of the civil war significantly altered the relationship of class forces. It was not the bourgeoisie but the workers and peasants who drove Somoza from power, in the process defeating the frantic efforts of US imperialism and Nicaraguan capital to keep intact at least some elements of the National Guard.

The FSLN took three of the five positions in the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN) established on July 19, 1979. Convocation of the bourgeois-dominated Council of State was postponed to May 1980. In the meantime it was restructured to give the organisations of the workers and peasants an overwhelming majority. The FSLN moved immediately to disband the remnants of the National Guard and replaced them with a new army and police recruited from the ranks of the working masses and placed under the control of the nine commanders making up the FSLN's National Directorate.

From the very first, the GRN, as its actions revealed, was a workers and farmers' government, an instrument for carrying out the revolutionary program of the FSLN.

Confiscation of Somoza's holdings at one blow gave the workers and peasants' government ownership of more than 40 per cent of the economy (measured against Gross Domestic Product): 19.1 per cent of agriculture, 25.0 per cent of manufacturing industry, 70.0 per cent of construction, 99.0 per cent of mining, and 54.7 per cent of services. (In 1978 the only state holdings were 39.9 per cent in construction and 30.8 per cent of services, for a total of 15.3 per cent of GDP.)

This state sector was already larger than the Nicaraguan workers and peasants would have been able to manage directly. Together with nationalisation of foreign trade, it provides a basis for the working class to begin learning to administer the economy. The FSLN correctly refrained from proceeding to early nationalisation of the property of the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie. The capitalists' expertise was needed and will be needed for some time to come. To the extent that the capitalists can be induced to continue production—under a government that regulates their prices and profits, controls foreign trade, and sides with the workers when disputes arise—it is a gain for the revolution. In this

sense, the FSLN leaders are quite sincere when they speak of the revolution's long-term commitment to a "mixed economy."

The Sandinistas' decision not to proceed with over-hasty nationalisations was also correct on political grounds. As already mentioned, many of the bourgeoisie could claim "revolutionary" credentials as a result of their opposition to Somoza. Premature attacks on their property would have seemed to many workers and peasants a betrayal of the "national unity" created in the struggle against Somoza. The FSLN has wisely put the onus of breaking this national unity on the capitalists who seek to decapitalise their enterprises or sabotage production.

Minister for the Interior Tomas Borge outlined this orientation to the bourgeoisie in a May 1981 interview:

"We reached the conclusion that they are necessary so that production will not have a sharp drop. Now it is up to the businessmen to see that the mixed economy—which is basic to political pluralism—does not disappear. We realize that we have to work to maintain a mixed economy, and we have a sincere interest in maintaining it. But if the entrepreneurs decapitalize the companies, if they conspire against the Revolution, they will bring an end to mixed economy and pluralism. Thus the economy depends on the businessmen. Our interest and good will are evident. It now depends on the degree of development of bourgeois culture and whether the entrepreneurs can go beyond the line of political savagery. Many bourgeois sectors still dream of the past and do not accept the fact that now we have power. That obstructs the national dialogue going on between the government and the opposition."

In this way, the revolutionary government has also undercut the basis for an imperialist propaganda campaign against the revolution. There are no "revolutionary" capitalists fleeing to Miami because their property has been "unjustly" seized; at most there are a few criminals convicted of decapitalising their enterprises, or known supporters of one of the most brutal dictatorships in history. Because of the relatively small size of direct imperialist investment in Nicaragua, Washington has not been able to engineer a confrontation over US-owned property. Thus the FSLN has gained valuable time in which to strengthen the organisation and class consciousness of the workers and peasants for the inevitable showdown with imperialism.

The Sandinista government has also proceeded with the necessary mixture of determination and caution in the countryside. The Rural Workers' Association (ATC), set up by the FSLN in March 1978, began establishing production co-operatives on Somozaist estates even before the revolutionary victory.

Within a year of the revolution, the government had expropriated some one million hectares of farmland—most of it from Somoza and his allies but also from owners who were restricting production or refusing to

rent at reasonable rates. The government has tried to avoid the splitting up of large estates, whose products represent an important part of Nicaragua's export earnings. Confiscated estates have been converted directly into state farms. Production of foodstuffs, much of which traditionally took place on small plots, is being encouraged by giving landless laborers access to land for the first time, as well as by forcing reductions in rent. The government is actively encouraging small producers to amalgamate into co-operatives, rather than remaining isolated on the plots made available to them by the revolution. As in Cuba, there is no coercion of small farmers who do not wish to join co-operatives.

The government has also set up a state purchasing agency to buy foodstuffs from small producers, eliminating the extortionate profits of middlemen. Another agency provides small farmers with pesticides, machinery, and fertiliser at low prices, while the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform provides technical assistance.

The ATC has been an important force in defending and advancing the interests of the rural proletariat on both private and state farms. It has campaigned against bureaucratic practices in government and on some occasions mobilised thousands of peasants to demand state intervention of idle lands.

Some small farmers were initially organised in the ATC, but a separate organisation, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), was set up in April 1981. This helped to break small and medium farmers away from control by the big agricultural capitalists, with whom they had previously been organised in the Union of Agricultural Producers of Nicaragua.

On the basis of such measures, the FSLN has already succeeded in establishing a firm worker-peasant alliance. Working farmers have been shown in practice that their interests are best served by alliance with the working class.

The development of mass organisations—unions, the women's organisation, youth organisation, Sandinista Defence Committees, in addition to those already mentioned—has proceeded at even a faster rate than in the Cuban Revolution. In particular, with the growing threat of imperialist-backed invasion, the militias have been vastly expanded. Military power in Nicaragua is firmly in the hands of the working people.

A large percentage of these armed working people are female. Women were an important part—about 30 per cent—of the FSLN guerrilla forces, in commanding positions as well as in the ranks. A major role in the political struggle against the dictatorship was played by AMPRONAC, a broad-based women's movement organised by the FSLN. Women's prominent role in the struggle has earned the Nicaraguan revolution the description of "the most female revolution in history." Since the victory of July 19, 1979, AMPRONAC—renamed AMNLAE—has been among the strongest of

the mass organisations.

During 1980, a nationwide literacy campaign succeeded in reducing the illiteracy rate from 50 per cent to 13 per cent. Special campaigns were conducted in the languages of the minorities in the Atlantic coast region. As in Cuba, the literacy campaign was only the beginning of an ongoing effort to raise the educational level of the workers and peasants so that they can administer the economy and society. Today there are more than twice as many students of all ages as there were in 1979.

The revolutionary government has also set about increasing the quantity and quality of health care. Spending on health now accounts for 11 per cent of the national budget.

Despite decapitalisation, there has been impressive economic growth. In 1981, Nicaragua had a growth rate of 8.7 per cent—the highest in Latin America. Between 1979 and 1981, the unemployment rate was reduced from 40 per cent to 13 per cent.

The success of the Sandinistas to date in preventing significant layers of the bourgeoisie from openly joining the counter-revolution has meant that capitalist parties continue to exist. There are as well several small ultraleftist and Stalinist sects with bases in particular unions. In the first months of the revolution the government responded to provocations from the latter by jailing some of their leaders and closing their papers. However, the FSLN soon realised that this was not the most effective way of dealing with such groups, and the repressive measures were ended. Subsequently there has been some improvement in relations between the FSLN and these groups.

While the revolutionary government clearly has the right to ban the bourgeois parties if it judges them to threaten the revolution, and the ultraleft and Stalinist organisations if they step outside revolutionary legality, the present multiplicity of parties has been a clear benefit to the Nicaraguan revolution and to the cause of socialism internationally. It has helped to undermine further the baneful effect of Stalinism, which allows the capitalists to claim that socialist revolution leads inevitably to totalitarian dictatorship.

The revolutionaries of the FSLN have clearly learned from the example of the Cuban Revolution. At the same time, they deal with a different objective situation and have a different background and experiences than the Cuban communists. On some questions, they arrive at different conclusions than do the Cuban revolutionaries. And just as the FSLN has clearly learned from Cuba, so Castro has publicly and with undoubted sincerity expressed the desire and intention of the Cubans to learn from the Nicaraguan revolution. Discussion between the two parties may well lead one or both to modify particular positions. It is noteworthy, for example, that in May 1981 Tomas Borge indicated that the FSLN evaluated the situation in Poland differently than did the Cuban Communist Party, although this difference was

not evident in the FSLN's response to the Polish government's crackdown the following December. Whatever the precise view of the FSLN or the CCP at the moment, the indication is that the views of both are open to modification through discussion and the influence of events.

13. The revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala

The revolutionary victory in Nicaragua has given a major impetus to the revolutionary forces in El Salvador and Guatemala. One important lesson that revolutionary forces in both countries have drawn from the 1978 reunification of the FSLN is the need for unity in the struggle against the US-backed dictatorship.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front has been formed in the heat of civil war. It brings together former guerrillaists, a major grouping that split from the Salvadoran Communist Party over the latter's opposition to armed struggle, the CP itself, a Social Democratic grouping, and a minority tendency of the Christian Democracy, in addition to trade unions and professional and student organisations.

Unlike the situation that existed in Nicaragua, there are not major divisions within the Salvadoran bourgeoisie, and no significant sector of that class is in opposition to the dictatorship. The FDR calls for a "revolutionary-democratic government" based on the workers and peasants, and the dismantling of the old state machine. The governmental program of the FDR envisions major and rapid structural changes to the Salvadoran economy, without, however, mistakenly excluding co-operation with smaller capitalists if that proves possible:

"The revolutionary democratic government will:

"1. Nationalize the entire banking and financial system. This measure will not affect the deposits and other interests of the public.

"2. Nationalize foreign trade.

"3. Nationalize the system of electricity distribution, along with the enterprises for its production that are in private hands.

"4. Nationalize the refining of petroleum.

"5. Carry out the expropriation, in accord with the national interest, of the monopolistic enterprises in industry, trade, and services.

"6. Carry out a deepgoing agrarian reform, which will put the land that is now in the hands of the big landlords at the disposal of the broad masses who work it. This will be done according to an effective plan to benefit the great majority of poor and middle peasants and agricultural wage workers and to promote the development of agriculture and cattle raising.

"The agrarian reform will not affect small and medium landholders, who will receive stimuli and support for continual improvements in production of their plots.

"7. Carry out an urban reform to benefit the great majority, without affecting small and medium owners of

real estate.

"8. Thoroughly transform the tax system, so that tax payments no longer fall upon the workers. Indirect taxes on widely consumed goods will be reduced. This will be possible not only through reform of the tax system, but also because the state will receive substantial income from the activity of the nationalized sector of the economy.

"9. Establish effective mechanisms for credit, economic aid, and technical assistance for small and medium-sized private businesses in all branches of the country's economy.

"10. Establish a system for effective planning of the national economy, which will make it possible to encourage balanced development." (*Intercontinental Press*, April 7, 1980, p. 359)

The revolutionary-democratic government envisaged by the FDR/FMLN program conforms in its essential elements to a workers and peasants' government.

Despite massive supplies of modern weapons, the training of its forces in the United States, and the assistance of US military "advisers," the dictatorship has been unable to make significant headway militarily and in fact appears more and more on the defensive. Even the intervention of several thousand Honduran troops in mid-1982 was unable to achieve anything that the regime could point to as a victory.

The increasing military strength of the FDR/FMLN and the growing weakness of the dictatorship are to a large extent based on corresponding political advances and defeats. The failure of the January 1981 offensive to overthrow the regime has clearly not stopped the FDR/FMLN from continuing to broaden its support. The electoral charade of March 1982 succeeded only in destroying the fig leaf of a "middle course," supposedly represented by the Duarte regime, between the real alternatives of brutal repression and a revolutionary victory.

The FDR/FMLN has made skilful use of international diplomatic initiatives to undermine the dictatorship. By stating its willingness to negotiate an end to the civil war, it clearly places the responsibility for continuing violence on the regime, wins broader international support, and raises doubts in the minds of government troops as to the future of the regime for which they are risking their lives.

In Guatemala, the four main organisations engaged in armed struggle against the military dictatorship united in February 1982 to form the Guatemala National Revolutionary Union (URNG). The URNG was able to demonstrate considerable support only a month later, when 60 per cent of voters responded to its call to boycott the dictatorship's rigged elections (even though failure to vote is illegal), and another 30,000 voters cast blank ballots.

The URNG is based primarily among the country's oppressed Indians (the majority of the population) and is particularly strong in the north-west. Since the unification, there has clearly been an intensification and broadening of the armed struggle.

The founding document of the URNG indicates that its goal is a workers and peasants' government that would implement policies broadly similar to those being carried through by the FSLN in Nicaragua:

"The principal cause of our people's poverty is the economic and political domination of the big, wealthy, and repressive foreigners and Guatemalans who rule our country. The revolution will put an end to that domination and will guarantee that the product of the labor of all will benefit those who produce the wealth through their creative efforts.

"The property of the big, wealthy, repressive ones will pass into the hands of the revolutionary government, which will ensure that this wealth is utilized to solve the needs of the working people. The revolution will assure the implementation of a true agrarian reform, distributing land to those who work it in an individual, cooperative, or collective way.

"The revolution will guarantee the existence of small and medium agrarian holdings, and will distribute to those who work it the land now held by the top military chiefs and by the corrupt, avaricious, and repressive officials and businessmen. The revolution will guarantee small and medium commercial property, and will encourage the creation and development of the national industry that Guatemala needs in order to progress.

"The revolution will guarantee effective control over prices so as to benefit the great majority, and will guarantee by law adequate wages for all rural and urban workers. Power in the hands of the people will be the basis for solving the big problems of health care, housing, and illiteracy that the immense majority of the Guatemalan people suffer." (*Intercontinental Press*, March 8, 1982)

14. Revolution in Grenada

Despite Grenada's small size, its revolution is of tremendous importance. The problems of underdevelopment and imperialist exploitation it faces are similar throughout the Eastern Caribbean, and the revolution has a strong attractive power throughout this region. The Grenadian revolution, led by the New Jewel Movement, has brought to power the first workers and farmers' government in an English-speaking country, and there are large numbers of Grenadians living in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. The Grenadian revolution can have a profound influence in these imperialist countries, particularly in the Black working class.

The New Jewel Movement itself developed out of the Black Power movement in the Caribbean in the late

1960s and early 1970s. This movement was never solely nationalist, however. The example of the Cuban revolution showed that socialist revolution represented the road of liberation from national and racial oppression. Moreover, as the countries of the Caribbean gained formal independence, local Black politicians generally replaced the white colonialists as the immediate agents of oppression and defenders of exploitation.

The NJM was formed in 1973 through a fusion of two organisations, both of which were initiated by radical intellectuals, many of whom had studied or worked abroad and thus come into contact with all the ideas of the radicalisation of the 1960s. It quickly developed broad mass support, being able to organise actions of up to 10,000 people within a few months of its founding.

Out of these actions and the repressive response of the Gairy dictatorship came a months-long general strike in 1974. Leadership of the strike was not in the hands of the NJM, however, but in the hands of bourgeois forces, which led most of the unions on the island. These bourgeois forces called off the strike when it was within sight of victory.

Following this experience, the NJM consciously set about expanding its influence among the masses of exploited and oppressed, including the country's tiny working class. Over the next few years, it was instrumental in founding the Bank and General Workers' Union and won a leadership role in a number of other unions.

In 1976 the NJM formed an electoral bloc, the People's Alliance, with two bourgeois parties. Despite extensive fraud, the alliance was credited with 48 per cent of the vote and won six of the 15 seats in Parliament, three of these going to the NJM. With Maurice Bishop as leader of the parliamentary opposition, the NJM used Parliament as a forum to the limited extent possible. But from the experience it drew the related conclusions that the way forward did not go through Parliament and that the bourgeois parties were not reliable allies.

As the Gairy dictatorship's already limited support was eroded following 1976, repression in both legal and illegal forms was steadily intensified. In these conditions, the NJM was able to develop an effective underground network that ensured distribution of its press and organised support in both urban and rural areas. It also began preparing for insurrection by developing an armed organisation of the party.

The events of March 13, 1979, were a true insurrection of the workers and farmers. Once the NJM had seized the main army barracks and Bishop had broadcast the NJM's revolutionary call, the workers and peasants mobilised in their thousands to disarm the police and guard against any attempt to counterattack by Gairy's supporters.

The workers and farmers' government issuing from this insurrection faced a horrendous objective situation: unemployment up to as much as 50 per cent, an economy dependent on a few agricultural exports and tourism, a large degree of subsistence farming, and virtually no

industry or even processing of agricultural goods, imports being the main source even of many staple food items. And of course, from the first day of the revolution, it confronted the active hostility of US imperialism, with economic sabotage, the organisation of counter-revolutionary attacks and assassination attempts, and the threat of invasion.

The People's Revolutionary Government and the NJM have confronted these difficulties by organising and relying upon the strength of the workers and small farmers. They are transforming the union movement, important sectors of which were still led by conservative forces, through patient political persuasion and example. They have built and led new mass organisations—of women, of youth, and even of children. They are carrying out an ongoing campaign to wipe out functional illiteracy and raise the educational level of the producing classes. They have organised a popular militia with broad participation of the workers and farmers. A network of parish councils, workers' parish councils, and zonal councils is being developed. These councils are important democratic forums through which the producers can express their views and demand an accounting from government officials.

The PRG has carried out a land reform suited to the particular conditions of Grenada—acquiring idle land by forced long-term lease and aiding the establishment on it of co-operatives of previously unemployed young people. Aid from Cuba has made possible the development of fishing co-operatives. Food-processing industries have been established to create jobs, reduce the effect on the economy of world market price fluctuations on raw agricultural goods, reduce imports, and increase export income. An international airport to boost the tourist trade, long dreamed of but never begun by the colonial or Gairy governments, is becoming a reality.

Since March 1979, wages in Grenada have increased faster than the rate of inflation. A government corporation has kept down the price of key imports. Grenadians now have free health care—which has been greatly expanded—and free education. Milk for young children and lunches for schoolchildren are provided free or at subsidised prices.

Grenada follows the same sort of anti-imperialist foreign policy that is followed by the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions. In such forums as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, and CARICOM, it has sought to forge a united front, particularly among the small island nations of countries suffering the effects of imperialist exploitation.

The NJM consciously seeks to educate Grenadian workers and farmers in a spirit of revolutionary internationalism and solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean and in Africa. Grenadian volunteer teachers participated in Nicaragua's literacy campaign in English-speaking regions of the Atlantic coast.

15. Learning from the Bolsheviks

The course followed by the NJM since March 1979 demonstrates that it has learned not only from the experience of the early years of the Cuban revolution, but also from the lessons drawn by the Bolsheviks from the experience of the first years of the Russian Revolution. The FSLN's course has also demonstrated that it too has learned from the attempts by the early Soviet government to utilise the capital and expertise of Russian and foreign capitalists to reactivate the devastated Russian economy and prepare for a systematic transition from workers' control of the capitalist economy to workers' management of a nationalised economy. The international relationship of class forces today makes the successful application by the FSLN and the NJM of this course far more likely than was the case with the Bolsheviks.

The fact that the Russian revolution stood alone in 1918 gave encouragement to the Russian and world bourgeoisies to launch a counter-revolutionary war that forced the Soviet government to cut short its experiment with what Lenin called "state capitalism," and to carry through the wholesale expropriation of the bourgeoisie in July–August 1918. While this was politically necessary because of the outbreak of the civil war and the foreign intervention, it was economically premature. It forced the Bolsheviks to allow a partial restoration of capitalism with the New Economic Policy in 1921.

Given a more favorable relationship of class forces internationally during the first few years of the revolution, the Bolsheviks would have proceeded more slowly to the consolidation of a nationalised economy. As Trotsky pointed out in his report on the NEP to the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International in 1922:

"It is perfectly obvious that from the economic standpoint the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is justified to the extent that the workers state is able to organise the exploitation of enterprises upon new beginnings. The wholesale, overall nationalisation which we carried through in 1917-18 was completely out of harmony with the conditions I have just now outlined. The organisational potentialities of the workers state lagged far behind total nationalisation. But the whole point is that under the pressure of the Civil War we had to carry this nationalisation through. . . .

" . . . had we been able to enter the arena of socialist revolution after the victory of the revolution in Europe, our bourgeoisie would have quaked in its boots and it would have been very simple to deal with it. They would not have dared to so much as stir a little finger upon the seizure of power by the Russian proletariat. In that case, we could have tranquilly taken hold of the large-scale enterprises, leaving the middle-sized ones and small ones to exist for a while on the private capitalist basis; later we would have reorganized the middle-sized enterprises.

rigidly taking into account our organizational and productive potentialities and requirements." (*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Volume 2, p. 226)

The victory of Soviet Russia in the civil war, however, created conditions in which other Soviet governments could follow a more gradual course toward the establishment of a planned economy based on socialist property forms. When Soviet republics were established in the Caucasian countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia in 1921, Lenin urged them to "effect a slower, more cautious and more systematic transition" in their economies through "an extensive policy of concessions and trade" with the capitalist West. As distinct from the tactics of the Russians, Lenin urged the Caucasian communists to "practice more moderation and caution, show more readiness to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and particularly the peasantry." (*Collected Works*, Volume 32, pp. 316-18)

This is the revolutionary and realistic approach being taken by the NJM and the FSLN.

16. The Marxist-Leninist strategy for revolution in backward countries.

The Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutions have added further confirmation of the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution in the underdeveloped countries, a theory first tested in the Russian Revolution. This theory explains that:

(1) The national-democratic revolution in the backward countries cannot be led by the national bourgeoisie, but must be led by the working class, in alliance with the broad masses of the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois strata;

(2) On the basis of such a worker-peasant alliance, the military and political power of the bourgeoisie and large landowners must be overthrown and replaced by a workers and peasants' government resting on the armed power of the worker-peasant masses;

(3) Such a workers and peasants' government first solves the national, democratic, agrarian, and anti-imperialist tasks, improving the workers' conditions and expanding their control over the economy at the expense of the capitalists;

(4) As the organisation and class consciousness of the workers and their alliance with the poor peasants deepens, the revolution develops as a *permanent* process, growing over uninterruptedly to the specifically socialist tasks of expropriation of the bourgeoisie and establishment of a workers state (dictatorship of the proletariat) based on a nationalised, planned economy.

The workers and peasants' government is the essential link between the democratic and socialist stages of this uninterrupted revolutionary process; it is the bridge by which the working class moves from the first to the

second.

This is the line of march which the Cuban revolutionaries implemented in practice in 1959-60. They subsequently codified the lessons of their experience in their key programmatic statements, beginning with the Second Declaration of Havana in 1962. In the Programmatic Platform adopted by the first congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1975, the Castro leadership gave its most rounded theoretical formulation of the permanent dynamic of the Cuban revolution:

"The Cuban Revolution—while presenting a whole series of specific features deriving from concrete national peculiarities and conditions and the international situation in which it is unfolding—has taken place in accordance with the fundamental laws of the historical process discovered by Marxism-Leninism, and has confirmed the main Leninist thesis on the revolution and the possibility of its uninterrupted course until turning into a socialist revolution.

"There is no insurmountable barrier between the democratic-popular and anti-imperialist stage and the socialist stage. In the era of imperialism, both are part of a single process, in which national-liberation and democratic measures—which at times have already a socialist tinge—pave the way for genuinely socialist ones. The decisive and defining element of this process is who leads it, which class wields political power. . . .

"A specific characteristic of the transition from the democratic, popular, agrarian and anti-imperialist stage to the socialist stage in Cuba lies in the fact that it took place in a brief period of time and under the same revolutionary leadership. The problem of political power had already been solved in essence from the very start for both stages of the Revolution.

"In the first stage it took the form of a democratic revolutionary dictatorship of the popular masses: of workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and other strata of the population, with interests opposed to imperialism and bourgeois-latifundist oligarchic domination.

"Now, in the second stage, that of socialist construction, it has taken the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the working peasants and all other strata of our society, with interests opposed to those of the capitalist regime. . . .

"As a first step an anti-imperialist, agrarian, democratic and popular revolution was necessary to resolve the contradiction between the demands of the development of the productive forces and of the existing production relations.

"The national bourgeoisie was incapable of leading such a revolution because of its economic weakness, its subordination to Yankee imperialist interests and its fear of the action of the popular masses. This made it oppose even the measures of a national-liberation character of the first stage.

"The interwoven economic interests of the Yankee

monopolies, the bourgeois latifundist oligarchy and the rest of the national bourgeoisie would make any measure affecting any of these sections bring about immediate opposition and resistance of the bourgeoisie as a bloc. In conditions of economic and ideological domination by imperialism, measures that do not even go beyond the bourgeois democratic framework are generally rejected by the bourgeoisie of dependent countries. In these countries, the bourgeoisie fears that the development of the revolutionary process will inevitably lead to socialism.

"This situation in which the objectives of national liberation and of a democratic nature had to be implemented by the working class at the head of the State power, conditioned the close interrelationship between the measures and tasks of the first and the second stages of our Revolution and the uninterrupted character of the transformation leading to the transition from one stage to the other in the context of a single revolutionary process."

It is along this Marxist-Leninist strategic line that the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutionaries are *consciously* moving today. And it is this same Marxist-Leninist line that the Salvadoran and Guatemalan revolutionaries are *consciously* fighting to put into practice.

17. Castroism and the Fourth International

As the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, the Cuban Revolution inevitably became a symbol for the aspirations of workers and peasants throughout the region. The goal of "socialism," which could be paid lip service by reformist misleaders and bourgeois demagogues, could now be defined more precisely as "the kind of society being constructed in Cuba." It is in this sense that Marxists speak of the extension of the Cuban Revolution: The working masses moving forward in Central America and the Caribbean are continuing on their own national territories the international proletarian struggle that was first explained scientifically by Marx and Engels and which achieved such an inspiring victory in Cuba.

In the same way the practical and theoretical achievements of Fidel Castro and the team he developed have made them symbols of the type of leadership required for the victory of the workers and peasants in each country. The leaders of the revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean have in common that they are showing their peoples the way to victory over imperialism and capitalism. They are Marxist vanguards strongly influenced by the lessons of the Cuban Revolution in societies with a common history of imperialist exploitation and oppression. They thereby constitute a current quite distinct from both Stalinist and Social Democratic reformism and from centrism, as well as from revolutionaries in the imperialist countries.

Of course, referring to the Cuban Communist Party, NJM, FSLN, FMLN, FDR, URNG, and similar organisations in other countries as a distinct current does not at all imply even organisational links, let alone identical outlooks on strategy, tactics, or major events of the international class struggle. The successes of the revolutionaries of Grenada, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala demonstrate that they have understood the necessity of building parties firmly rooted in each country's particular conditions and traditions of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggle. This need for revolutionaries to base themselves on the specific realities of the class struggle in their own countries, to map out their own roads and learn from their own experiences—rather than mechanically repeating the Cuban "pattern"—is itself an important lesson of the Cuban Revolution, one often stressed by Fidel and other Cuban leaders. Thus Jesus Montane, a candidate member of the Cuban CP's Political Bureau, provided a good description of this current when he said that revolutions can be led to victory only by "those who learn from others and think for themselves."

Abstractly, it would be accurate to describe this current simply as "Marxist," but the term does not adequately distinguish these revolutionaries from the Stalinists, Social Democrats, and sectarians who falsely claim that title. Both enemies and supporters of socialism have recognised the distinct character of these new Marxist vanguards by describing them, in reference to the first of them to achieve victory, as "Fidelista" or "Castroist." The term should be understood in the sense just outlined: The FSLN, for example, is "Castroist" in the same way that Fidel and the Cuban CP are "Sandinistas." Both terms refer to Marxist vanguards that have emerged in the specific conditions of the underdeveloped countries of the Western Hemisphere. A correct political orientation to this current is of the utmost importance for the Fourth International.

In the early 1960s, it was common in the Fourth International to describe the Castro team as "revolutionists of action." This characterisation was accurate in the sense that Trotsky first used the phrase—to stress that the point is now to change the world, the great theoreticians of Marxism having already completed the fundamental work of analysing it. The characterisation was also accurate in the sense in which it was more often used—namely, to mean that the team led a socialist revolution by learning from experience rather than from Marxist classics, that their course of development was from revolutionary action to Marxist theory instead of from Marxist theory to revolutionary action.

But this characterisation, "revolutionists of action," could be appropriate only as a description of the origins, not the subsequent development, of the Castro team. The great significance of the Cubans was that these "revolutionists of action" had, on the basis of their own experiences in the class struggle, arrived at Marxism as the best *guide* to action. The Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963 thus noted:

"... Cuba became the first example in our epoch of a revolution in which the leadership through its own experiences in the very course of struggle came over to the concepts of Marxism-Leninism.

"Subsequent experience has proved that this is a profound conversion. . . ."

The Castro team had already proved that they could act like Marxists. Once they had themselves become intellectually convinced that Marxism-Leninism is the most highly developed science of society and revolution, there was no longer any valid ground for regarding them as anything other than Marxist-Leninists. Unfortunately, however, the use of the phrase "revolutionists of action" to describe the Cubans survived within the Fourth International. This could mean only one of two things: (1) The Castro team were "revolutionists of action" as *opposed* to Marxist revolutionaries, their stated adherence to Marxism being based on an understanding that in fact did not reach the level of Marxism; or (2) The course by which the Cubans arrived at their Marxist beliefs is inherently inferior to other paths, and these leaders therefore had to be regarded as less capable than other Marxists of reaching correct revolutionary positions when confronted with new events in the class struggle. Either of those views would be patronising and sectarian.

It could not, of course, be excluded *a priori* that the Cuban Revolution would degenerate as a result of imperialist encirclement, the influence of Soviet Stalinism, and the bureaucratic pressures inherent in any workers state in conditions of underdevelopment.

As events have proved, however, the Cuban Marxists were able to overcome those dangers, in the process deepening their own understanding of Marxism. They have gone on to greatly broaden the democratic control that the Cuban workers and farmers exercise over their society, to undermine the ability of layers of the

apparatus to accumulate bureaucratic privilege, and to inspire new revolutionary victories in the region.

The "Castroist" current has as its class basis the workers and small farmers. It represents and fights for their interests in opposition to both capitalism/imperialism and bureaucratic abuses. It does so by mobilising the masses themselves to fight in their own interests. Its policies and political positions are developed through analysis of the world with the scientific tool of Marxism. It is the most influential current of Marxist revolutionaries in the world today, an important component of the forces that will resolve the international crisis of proletarian leadership.

The Fourth International was founded in a period of profound defeats for the world proletariat, defeats caused largely by the inadequacies and betrayals of working-class leadership. The historic task of the Fourth International was to prepare the overcoming of the crisis of proletarian leadership by preserving the programmatic continuity of Marxism-Leninism following the irreversible degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party and the Communist International.

Isolation from the mass movement and the domination of the workers' movement by reformist currents inevitably created strong sectarian pressures within the Fourth International. Precisely because the Fourth International is a programmatic nucleus, even seemingly minor programmatic differences could and did generate sharp factional struggles and even splits. Decades of swimming against the stream, of isolation from the main forces of the working-class movement, created pressure to treat necessity as a virtue and to regard isolation as proof of programmatic orthodoxy.

It was quite natural therefore that the major sectarian splits from the Fourth International—those led by the Healy, Lambert, and Moreno groupings—were to result directly from the advances in overcoming the crisis of proletarian leadership represented by the victories of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions. By setting up this or that point of "Trotskyist" orthodoxy as an obstacle to recognising and acting towards the "Castroists" as fellow Marxist revolutionaries, the sectarians converted the programmatic acquisitions of Marxism into their opposite: from instruments to aid in building the mass Leninist international necessary for the victory of socialism into obstacles to its construction.

The strength of the Fourth International's programmatic continuity is seen in the fact that a common appreciation of the Cuban Revolution was a fundamental basis for the reunification of the International in 1963, and that a majority of Trotskyists at the time recognised the Cuban leaders as Marxists who could be an important part of the solution of the crisis of proletarian leadership. It is necessary to recognise, however, that for a period of years beginning in the early 1970s the Fourth International as a whole fell into a *relatively* sectarian

attitude towards the "Castroist" current. The International as a whole stopped paying close attention to developments within Cuba and within "Castroist" organisations elsewhere in Latin America. Events such as the organisation of the system of People's Power were evaluated incorrectly, as evidence of increasing bureaucratisation. It was some months after the Grenadian revolution before the International even became aware that a revolution was going forward in that country.

The quite varied responses within the International to the victory in Nicaragua demonstrated how far this sectarian drift had gone, of which the Morenista response was a grotesque extreme. It is only necessary to compare the worries and lack of enthusiasm of too many sections with the response that would have come from the entire International had the victory occurred in 1962, or if Che's effort in Bolivia had succeeded instead of meeting defeat in 1967.

The Marxists of the "Castroist" current have proved in three different countries and are proving today in a fourth and a fifth that they are consciously leading the workers and poor peasants to the creation of workers states. If it is to remain true to its historic task, the Fourth International must seek the closest possible political collaboration with these Marxists in the struggle to build the mass Leninist international and its sections in every country. To allow programmatic disagreements—even serious ones, such as on the political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers states—to stand in the way of this collaboration would be to convert the Fourth International into a sectarian obstacle to the overcoming of the crisis of proletarian leadership. In countries where "Castroist" parties are leading revolutions or revolutionary struggles, the only proper place for Marxist revolutionaries is in their ranks, as loyal builders of those parties.

Through this political collaboration, the Fourth International will bring to the future world party of socialist revolution the political continuity of Marxism-Leninism and the lessons of the struggle of the Left Opposition to defend that continuity in the face of the bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers state. We bring as well thousands of cadres trained in the heritage and application of the Marxist program, and in many countries sizeable nuclei of future mass parties—including in the imperialist countries, where there are few significant "Castroist" groupings.

The Marxists of the "Castroist" current have demonstrated their own willingness to work with anyone who is serious about seeking to defend and extend revolutionary gains. And it is guaranteed that these leaders are not unique—they are only the vanguard of future revolutionary proletarian tendencies and groupings that will emerge from the class struggle itself in the underdeveloped countries, the imperialist countries, and the Stalinised workers states. Our collaboration with the "Castroists" will teach us important lessons and prepare us for the work of linking up and combining forces with such currents in the struggle for socialism.

The unevenness of capitalist development and the unevenness of the world revolution make it inevitable that the mass Leninist international will be built at different tempos in various countries, from forces that have come from different starting points and arrived at Marxism by quite different routes. Construction of the world party of socialist revolution can go forward at any point only by utilising the forces presented by history. The most politically advanced forces available today are the Fourth International and the "Castroist" current.

Why the Pragmatists Slander the Revolutionists

By Adolfo Gilly, Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexico

In December 1978, Jack Barnes, leader of the U.S. SWP, publicly referred to the Cuban Trotskyists by asserting that in 1960 "their specialty was passing out leaflets demanding a march on the Guantánamo naval base, while the Cubans were trying to consolidate the revolution."

In February 1979 I sent an open letter to Comrade Barnes, explaining that this was a Stalinist slander, which he was repeating nearly 20 years later. In my letter I briefly recalled the revolutionary activity of the Cuban Trotskyists in the ranks of the July 26 Movement's guerrilla struggle against Batista in the mountains and the cities (later, after the Revolution triumphed, they would organize the POR(T), the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party).

I provided information about their activity in the years that followed, their participation in all the tasks of building the workers state. I advised Barnes that *he would not find a single proof* of this slander in the publications of the Cuban POR(T) and in the SWP's archives (I have no archives for reasons that are very obvious in Latin America).

I ended up by recalling that "the Cuban Trotskyists were there in the guerrilla struggle, in the underground, and in the prisons, and they conducted themselves far better than others toward whom you seem more lenient."

After a two-year delay *Intercontinental Press* (May 1981) published my letter (and a memoir by Comrade Angel Fanjul), along with a lengthy response by Comrade José G. Pérez, who is editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a national leader of the SWP. In this response, Pérez repeats Barnes's accusation that the activity of the Cuban Trotskyists "included passing out leaflets demanding a march on the Guantánamo naval base" and, based on archival documents, tries to pass judgment on their overall activity.

1. The march on Guantánamo

However, the first proof that Barnes's assertion was false was provided right in the journal that Comrade Pérez edits, *Perspectiva Mundial*. In the Spanish version of Barnes's speech printed in that magazine, *they eliminated, without any clarification in a footnote, the sentence I quoted at the beginning of this document, which prompted my letter to Barnes*. Nonetheless, now Pérez takes up and defends this same accusation.

The second, and even more conclusive, proof is provided by the text of José G. Pérez's response: "How Sectarians Misrepresented Trotskyism in Cuba." After apparently going back over the archives with a fine tooth comb, the prediction in my letter was borne out: the leadership of the SWP, Comrade Barnes, and his spokesman Comrade Pérez, *could not find a single document, a single newspaper, a single leaflet* by the POR(T) that called for or proposed a march on the Guantánamo naval base.

This is due simply to the fact that this call, *which according to Barnes was the "specialty" of the Cuban Trotskyists*, never existed, except as an invention of the Stalinists. This should have been enough to make Barnes withdraw this lie, as I asked in my letter, even while maintaining his other positions. No! Pérez repeats it explicitly in his article, against all his own evidence.

In the archives, Pérez found what I predicted to Barnes: prop-

agandistic calls to expel imperialism from all its bases in Latin America (Guantánamo, Ezeiza, Panamá, Fernando do Noronha, etc.). I hope that no one would now maintain that this meant a call for a march on Ezeiza in Argentina or a landing at Fernando do Noronha in Brazil.

When Pérez says that the correct slogan was to demand "withdrawal" and not to call for "expulsion," he displays ignorance of the revolutionary tactics and propaganda and the style of many calls and manifestos of the Third and Fourth Internationals. It is natural that in the United States revolutionary propaganda demands the *withdrawal* of the troops of one's own country from abroad. It is also natural that the states where these troops are located (in this case Cuba) also demand the *withdrawal* of the occupiers.

But it is just as natural for the revolutionary organizations in their propaganda to call for the strategy of *expulsion* of imperialism and its military bases, whether in Latin America or in Europe, especially in a phase of revolutionary upsurge. Every time a withdrawal has taken place, it is because this type of struggle has forced the withdrawal.

Use of one word or another is a question of tactics, not of principle, and they can be combined according to the circumstances and the places where they are raised. The experience of the revolutionaries of Puerto Rico, among others, offer sufficient illustration in this regard.

Not having found a single document of the Cuban Trotskyists that would justify Barnes's accusation, Pérez tries to save face by citing two types of evidence.

One is a statement that Che Guevara may have made in this regard. If Che said this, he too was lying to justify the indefensible, which he mentions in the same statement: the suppression of the POR(Y)'s organ *Voz Proletaria* and the destruction of the plates of Leon Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution*, acts Guevara attributed to "an error committed by a functionary of second rank."

The facts have shown, however, that the prohibition of all independent working-class press and of the publication of Leon Trotsky's works (and works by many other Marxists) was not an error by a functionary of second rank, but rather an ongoing policy of the Cuban leadership to this day.

Pérez says nothing about this when he takes as good coin a statement containing this obvious falsehood. It is good to be friends of Che Guevara, but we must be better friends of the truth.

The other evidence cited (whose context I cannot verify) are quotes from writings of J. Posadas or from periodicals of other sections of the Fourth International. Apart from the fact that *none of these quotes prove that the Cuban comrades had ever called for a march on Guantánamo*, I explicitly stated in my letter that I was defending the truth about the Cuban comrades in 1960-1963, not the writings of Posadas or other sections. Employing the same logic, I could use against the SWP the ferociously sectarian and anti-Castroist positions of its then ally in the International Committee, the well-known political adventurer Nahuel Moreno, who in Argentina denounced the Cuban revolution as "bourgeois" and attacked [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos's visit to Buenos Aires, while our comrades in the then Argentine

section of the Fourth International went to greet him with welcoming demonstrations and posters.

In my opinion, with this the polemic regarding the Cuban comrades *is closed* and Barnes's *lie is proven*. As his spokesman Pérez persists in defending it, this lie turns into a deliberate and conscious slander.

2. The activity of the Cuban Trotskyists in 1960-63

But Pérez tries to go even further. With a quantity of quotes taken out of context — a method I will examine later — he tries to pass judgment on the entire Trotskyist activity in Cuba after the revolution.

Pérez has an obvious objective. Through a retrospective polemic — it is very easy to find errors or exaggerations 20 years later, without at the same time showing *what the other tendencies in Cuba were writing at that moment* — he tries to develop a theory for a tailending line toward victorious revolutionary leaderships, in which the Trotskyists would be mere supporters of the measures taken by those leaderships, not allies or participants with their own program.

This is the line consistently put into practice by *Perspectiva Mundial*, a magazine that seems more like a publication of *Prensa Latina* than a Marxist organ of the Fourth International.

This discussion cannot be organized around what happened 20 years ago because you end up falling into a game of scholastic quotations. It must be organized around the present tasks in the Latin American revolution and in the workers states. It is more important than ever to open the discussion on this basis, with present-day documents and proposals. But what happened 20 years ago also has its importance.

I cannot check Comrade Pérez's quotations and, given what happened with the march on Guantánamo, I feel obliged to distrust their accuracy and especially their *context*. Let me recall, moreover, that the objective of my letter was to defend the revolutionary conduct of the Cuban comrades against those slandering them, not to say that they never made any mistake (only Comrade Barnes and some of the other elect have that luck). My letter stated:

"It's probably not hard to look through the section's publications and find schematic analyses, political errors, theoretical weak points, or the sort of sectarian formulations you'd expect from a small group facing a great revolution. I don't ask anyone, nor do I try myself, to defend every single thing the comrades said or did. We're not a clique or a sect, we're a revolutionary international."

Having said that, I can however say that even from the quotations selected and pared so carefully by Pérez to demonstrate the "sectarianism" of the Cuban Trotskyists, we can see what proposals they made to advance the revolution and what their line of permanent revolution was in 1960. That was a time when the struggle with the bourgeois wing still was not concluded (although it had already been won in its essential elements), a struggle in which the Stalinists and their allies tried desperately and through control of various apparatuses to contain the revolution in the bourgeois-democratic framework. It was a time when the leadership of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara sought support to advance their own positions, positions that, in the heat of the mobilization of the masses encouraged by that leadership, were increasingly being defined in the direction of the socialist revolution.

These proposals were:

- Struggling for the permanent course of the revolution and for its socialist character, against the PSP (People's Socialist Party) Stalinists and the right wing of the July 26 Movement (M-26). A right wing did in fact exist and *was not Fidel Castro*, as Pérez (once more!) slanderously and without any proof wants to

put in the mouths of the Cuban Trotskyists. In this struggle, the radical turn that was being prepared in the revolution, and that was headed up by Castro and Guevara on the leadership level, was foreseen by the Cuban Trotskyists and by the Fourth International, who struggled for it beforehand in all the arenas where they were present.

- Pointing in advance to the imminence and the importance of this turning point and of the mass mobilization needed to overcome the right's resistance and the conspiracy of imperialism, as is shown in the very documents by Comrade Ortiz that Pérez selected.

- Struggling for a line of nationalizations without compensation at least from early 1960, a line that finally ended up victorious. In the documents that Pérez quotes there is no counterposition to what Fidel Castro and his comrades did in this regard. In other documents, which Pérez prefers not to quote, I recall well that the comrades then pointed out that the nationalizations had in effect been without compensation and carried out tactically. Thank you Comrade Pérez for the lesson you give us in this regard 20 years later.

- Struggling for the formation of a revolutionary Marxist workers party to lead the revolutionary process, as a necessary step beyond the July 26 Movement. The Trotskyists were among the first to raise the point that a guerrilla movement was not enough, and that what was now needed was to move forward to a party to build the workers state. Where is the sectarianism in that?

- Struggling for that party's independence with respect to the state, a position that even emerges from the (truncated . . .) quotes that Pérez mentions. The subsequent evolution, with the party subordinated to the state, has shown that this concern was correct.

- Struggling for pluralism of revolutionary parties in the workers state. This position was then shared by Joseph Hansen and the SWP. It has been abandoned by Barnes and the SWP of today, which defends the existence of a *single party* in Cuba (as I stated in my letter, without getting any response from Comrade Pérez).

- Struggling for the independence of the unions with respect to the workers state, a Marxist position that has also been forgotten in Pérez's article and in the SWP's present policy toward Cuba.

- Struggling for workers democracy and elections on the basis of work places and pluralism of revolutionary tendencies, against the supposed democracy of mass meetings where you vote by raising your hand. This concern also appears in the (truncated . . .) quotes that Comrade Pérez cites.

- Struggling for alliance with the Latin American revolution and with the workers states.

- Struggling for legality of the workers and revolutionary press and for freedom to publish and circulate the writings of the revolutionary Marxists of the past and the present, a point that has apparently escaped the notice of the editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

- Unconditionally defending all the gains of the revolution; obligatory participation by the Trotskyist militants in all its tasks, from the militias to voluntary labor and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs).

- Struggling for the existence of armed militias, organized through the work places and under their control.

It was necessary to defend these and other positions along the same lines, many of which have been abandoned in fact by *Perspectiva Mundial* concerning the Nicaraguan revolution and in other cases, and it was necessary to tactically organize the struggle for them in the midst of the heat of revolutionary mobilization of those days, under the attacks of Stalinism and the right,

and with the inevitable errors of assessment, sectarian formulations, and impatience that go with a young, small organization without great prior mass experience. This is the first thing that a revolutionary organizer would consider in passing judgment on the balance of the activity of the Cuban Trotskyists in that period.

Pérez prefers another path, one better adapted to his present tailending line in Latin America.

(Here for reasons of space two sections have been eliminated: "3. The October 1962 Crisis" and "4. The Death of Che and Other Lies" — Adolfo Gilly.)

5. Twenty Years Later: The Test of Practice

There is nothing more tiresome, for the writer and for the reader, than to pick apart a polemical text with truncated and out-of-context quotes. I do not propose to continue this task.

I will end by mentioning a more decisive test than that of writings, the test of practice. Pérez does not say a word about my request that he determine the fate of the Cuban comrades since 1963. I have personally tried to do this.

Without going into details, I can state that the POR(T) was dissolved by the authorities, applying the Cuban laws that prohibit organizing another party different from the CCP (laws that Barnes and Pérez approve of). In 1963, several comrades were jailed. They were later freed in early 1965, with Che's intervention on their behalf, according to reports, before his trip to Algeria.

In the 1970s some were again arrested, under the (false) accusation of trying to reconstitute the POR(T). They denied the accusation, but they also refused to sign denunciations against the Fourth International or to repudiate their Trotskyist ideas, as they had been asked to do in order to be freed. One of them spent three years in jail, another six (I don't know about the others).

The only charge against them was being Trotskyists. The prison authorities, after a time, treated them with respect as comrades and allowed them to give courses in Marxism to the other prisoners.

Finally, the prison regimen was very mild, but it was still prison. The comrades always declared they were Trotskyists, as in the times of the Sierra Maestra, and they continue to do so. They do not propose to organize any group or party: the law prohibits it and they have no choice but to obey it.

They support the revolutionary government and consider Fidel Castro its most advanced representative. They are members of the militia, the unions, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. They are involved in voluntary labor and in all the tasks of the revolution wherever they might be needed. I do not know their political opinions in detail and therefore I cannot state an opinion on them.

However, I do know of their conduct, not for one day but for 20 years, and their proven loyalty to the Cuban revolution, even when repression kept them for years in the prisons of the workers state.

Barnes and Pérez don't miss a chance to slander them or to polemicize against their supposed writings of 20 years ago. But they don't say a word about this repression, about the revolutionary attitude with which the comrades responded and about their unconditional defense — in practice, in jail and out — of the workers state and the Cuban revolution.

Barnes and Pérez never felt it necessary to defend them, and they don't do it now. In reality, their documents justify the repression, as I said in my letter to Barnes.

The proof of practice — I repeat, not of a single day, but of at least 22 years — is amply favorable to the Cuban comrades (whatever might be their political positions, erroneous or not) with regard to their tenacity and integrity in defense of their Trotskyist ideas.

If the comrades had capitulated or abandoned the revolution, they would have dealt an important blow to the moral authority of Trotskyism among the majority of the leadership of the Cuban revolution, starting with Fidel Castro. Their attitude, in contrast, has certainly inspired much more respect than all the eulogies of the tailenders who are far from having demonstrated in practice the same proofs as the Cuban Trotskyists. And the Cuban leaders, through their own experience, put much more stock in the tests of practice than in desk-top revolutionaries.

"The Cuban Trotskyists were there in the guerrilla struggle, in the underground and in the prisons, and they conducted themselves far better than others toward whom you seem more lenient," I told Barnes in my letter. In this regard I was reminding Comrade Barnes that while he was slandering the Cuban Trotskyists for their supposed attitudes in 1960, *as recently as July 1979*, six months before his speech, he and his party were still supporting and publishing in *IP* on the very eve of the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution, the sectarian and anti-Sandinista writings of a traitor (I say clearly: *traitor*) to the Nicaraguan revolution, Fausto Amador. On Somoza's television, Fausto Amador had slandered Cuba and invited the Sandinista guerrillas to lay down their arms.

We are still waiting for a self-criticism, or at least an explanation from those who backed this traitor to the end and protected him inside the Fourth International against every demand that he give an accounting of his counterrevolutionary activities.

6. The Politics of Barnes-Pérez

I close this piece with the conclusions that I formulated in a *January 1981* letter on Barnes's politics. What follows is a verbatim copy. Comrade Pérez's response has served to corroborate every point of what I wrote then.

* * *

"I do not think that Comrade Barnes's attack on the Cuban Trotskyists has been simply the product of an error of information or an accidental occurrence. Comrade Barnes is a pragmatist, and each of the thoughts that he expresses in his speeches serve an immediate end (sometimes in contradiction with previous or future ends, but this is of no concern to the pragmatists, who see the world case by case and thing by thing).

"His attack on the Cuban comrades fulfills two very obvious aims, at the least. The first was to attack, by slandering those he thought had disappeared from his horizon, the members of the International Secretariat of that time who are still in the leadership of the International. But this objective is connected with the internal polemic, and and moreover is not the most important one.

"His second objective was the one that guided his speech on the Twentieth Anniversary and his whole position toward Cuba: to achieve an agreement and, if his thinking is logical, a fusion with the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba and with its policy toward Latin America. To reach this aim he felt no pangs about spitting on what he thought was the corpse of the Cuban Trotskyists. And, like a good pragmatist who meddles in questions of principle, he was mistaken.

"Attacking the Cuban Trotskyists of 1960, Barnes believed that he was removing an obstacle from the path of his hypothetical agreement and was giving guarantees to Fidel Castro that he does accept the principle of the single party in the workers state, as in reality he does.

"This means that while he thought he was sacrificing the Cuban Trotskyists (a small unimportant group that, moreover, had disappeared, he thought), in reality he was sacrificing a fundamental principle of the Trotskyist program. But pragmatists are not in the habit of worrying about such abstractions.

"I don't know if Comrade Barnes suspects that — aside from this break with a fundamental principle of the Trotskyist program — the logic of his position, his attacks, and his actions nonetheless embrace two important conclusions:

"1. Anyone who is ready to sacrifice a group of Cuban Trotskyists because he considers them a thing of the past who can be slandered with impunity in order to achieve the agreement that he seeks, will not stop there. Although he might not know it, unless it is stopped (and from a pragmatist there is also hope for this, if he understands where he is going), the logic of his action and his agreement leads him to sacrifice Latin American Trotskyism as an independent and necessary current in the revolution in Latin America. If Comrade Barnes is correct, the Trotskyists are no longer necessary in Latin America and can fuse with Castroist Communism or turn into its spokespeople, eliminating one after another of the positions that stand in the way of this function.

"This is the road along which Barnes is pushing his Latin American followers, although neither he nor they are aware of where they are going. For those who can reason, it hardly needs adding that if Trotskyism has no place in Latin America, one must quickly come to the conclusion that the International also has no place in the world.

"But pragmatists are not prone to carrying their reasoning to the end or concerning themselves with its consequences. That is why Trotsky could announce to Stalin, 10 years in advance and before Stalin dreamed of doing it, that Stalin's theoretical positions would lead him to dissolve the Third International.

"In reality, the positions of *Perspectiva Mundial* and its political function already anticipate the idea that organized Trotskyism is unnecessary in Latin America. Comrade Barnes can be sure that Latin American Trotskyism, which has resisted far more severe tests than this, not only will not let itself dissolve but will try to see that the International and the Trotskyists in the United States correct Barnes's positions.

"2. I have no doubts about the necessity of reaching a political alliance with the revolutionary currents represented by Fidel Castro and similar currents in Latin America. But anyone who seeks an alliance on the terms that Comrade Barnes does, loses the respect of the ally itself and lends himself to being used and then discarded according to the equally pragmatic tactical convenience of the other party.

"The Cuban Trotskyists, through their conduct and their attitude, have done infinitely more to win the respect of the Cuban revolutionaries for Trotskyism than all Jack Barnes's apologetic speeches, his falsifications of history, and his twisting of principles. Because the Cubans, Barnes should have no doubt, also know how to recognize this difference; and while they may well utilize this if it suits them, it will never inspire their respect.

"An alliance means coming together and uniting for predetermined objectives. And it requires, more than once, that each side make concessions to the other ally. These common objectives, especially in the intransigent anti-imperialist struggle as well as in unconditional defense of the workers state, exist between the Latin American Trotskyists and the Cuban Communists.

"No one proposes — although this ought to be the subject of another discussion — organizing a Trotskyist party in Cuba today, nor getting into conflict with the Cuban leadership on this point; the paths will probably be more complex.

"On the other hand, one cannot demand as a principle that the International renounce an essential point of its program and accept, wherever it may be, the principle of the single party.

"It is one thing not to establish a party, it is another to renounce your principles; just as in the bourgeois state it is one thing not to carry out an insurrection, and another thing to renounce your principle (as the Eurocommunists do).

"Alliance with the Cuban Communists and with other currents in Latin America is possible and necessary in the near future. But if that is to be achieved, it requires organization, parties, and cadres of Trotskyism, of revolutionary Marxism, and not simply propagandists, publications, or associations of friends of Cuba. Comrade Barnes knows this. But his positions run in an opposite direction to this necessity."

Manifesto of the Second National Conference of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party, Cuban Section of the Fourth International

To the industrial and agricultural workers, to the peasants, the wage-earners, technicians, and revolutionary professionals;

To the students, the women, men, children, and old people;

To all the masses of our workers state:

Compañeros:

The internal, proletarian, forces of our revolution and our workers state, which have defeated the imperialist aggression and the agents of internal counterrevolution, are gaining the maturity to take a leap forward in the permanent development of the Cuban socialist revolution.

The revolution confronts crucial problems, which are not solely related to the criminal threat of the imperialist invasion: they are production, distribution, planning, development, alliance with the Latin American revolution.

But just as at the time when the historic measures of August–October 1960 transformed Cuba into a workers state, today too the revolution has the internal strengths to overcome these problems and to open a stage of vigorous permanent revolutionary development.

These strengths are, first and foremost, the masses themselves, who are pressing for and developing toward an unlimited involvement in the leadership of the state and the revolution. These are the strengths with which to confront not only the imperialist aggression and the counterrevolution, but also all the crucial tasks that the revolution has ahead of it.

The masses must discuss, develop, decide, and direct: this is the most pressing need of the revolution in this stage. But the masses lack organized bodies, instruments with which to direct and decide in the workers state.

The masses watch over and confront the bureaucracy

On the other hand, a bureaucratic layer is forming and developing, which is interested in monopolizing the apparatus of the workers state, preventing the masses from intervening and making decisions so that it can try to maintain, develop, and consolidate bureaucratic privileges. The masses have a constant attitude of vigilance and rejection toward this layer. But because they do not have the organs and instruments to make decisions, this vigilance is not enough to totally prevent the development of the bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy does not just attack the egalitarian principles that form the basis of the socialist consciousness of the masses, which is the motor force and sustenance of the revolution. The bureaucracy damages the healthy and balanced development of production and distribution, and the economy of the workers state.

There have been many errors in this arena, some of which have been denounced by the revolutionary government itself. These errors have not solely been due to inexperience. Errors of inexperience are the least important, because they do not damage the masses's enthusiasm and revolutionary participation — the workers have shown that they understand these errors, assimilate

them, correct them, and learn from them.

The most serious errors — because they weaken the masses' confidence in the workers state — have rather flowed from the policy of a privileged bureaucracy that is forming, which tends to exclude the masses from leadership in order to assert and develop its privileges.

This bureaucratic layer aims to impose itself over the masses and usurp the leadership of the workers state. It has its own ideologists and its organizing center primarily in Stalinism, in the leadership of the PSP [People's Socialist Party]. Through its ideology, training, and conception, the PSP has consistently opposed, in an open or hidden way, all the stages of the revolution and has tried and tries to subject the revolution to its bureaucratic control.

[Three paragraphs eliminated — Adolfo Gilly.]

The Soviets, The Party, Freedom of Working-class Tendencies

That is why today — in order to organize the military and social defeat of the imperialist invasion, to extend the international support and influence of our revolution — it is of fundamental, decisive, pressing, importance to call upon all the revolution's internal forces, to audaciously open the way for them, to call on them to intervene and make decisions without restrictions: **THE MASSES MUST DIRECT, THE MASSES MUST DECIDE.** This is the crucial stage that confronts our socialist revolution.

But we lack the organs for this. We lack a revolutionary Marxist mass party as leadership of the revolution. This party cannot be bureaucratically created, from above, without a clear program, with the masses solely given the right to designate candidates for membership in assemblies. Such assemblies cannot have enthusiasm or political zeal because they are not called upon to discuss or make decisions about the revolutionary political program. Those decisions remain the monopoly of a small leadership layer or sector. This is a **PATERNALISTIC** conception and, in the final analysis, a bureaucratic conception of the relationship of the leadership with the masses, which reveals a lack of real confidence in the masses.

The revolutionary Marxist mass party must be organized on the basis of the historic, natural organs created by the masses. It must be a workers party, not a confused party of different classes. It must be a party based on the unions. The proletariat must discuss the program of the revolution in the unions. It must decide the program of the revolutionary Marxist party and organize it on the basis of the unions, from below, with the political participation of the masses, which is the guarantee against all the privileges and inequalities, and all forms of bureaucratism.

The unions must be independent with regard to the workers state, which does not mean neutrality. It means they totally support and defend the workers state, but are independent to raise the problems and the interests of the workers. Leaders must be elected democratically, without the imposition of any single candidacies, without bureaucratic reaction against any revolutionary working-class candidacy or tendency.

The right of the masses to decide begins with the right to decide among different working-class tendencies or different working-class positions in the union.

We lack a state apparatus based on councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers delegates (soviets), and on communes in the countryside. Today the masses do not elect their representatives in the state, they cannot make decisions in the state. We must create the organs, the councils (soviets), the communes in the countryside, with elected delegates subject to recall at any time by the masses in their work centers. The revolutionary government and the revolution must be based on this party, on these unions, on this soviet state. These are the instruments to increase

production and fight the nascent privileges and the self-seeking bureaucracy.

But in order for the masses to make decisions, there must be freedom of expression and action for all the revolutionary, proletarian tendencies that are for the **UNCONDITIONAL DEFENSE OF THE WORKERS STATE**, in the first place the Trotskyists, the Cuban section of the Fourth International. Without rights for various workers parties, for various tendencies within the workers state, the masses cannot confront, discuss, and decide. The single party that Stalinism and the bureaucracy are trying to impose is synonymous with imposing it over the masses, violating the consciousness of the masses. It would be a mockery of the masses and an attack on the development of the revolution, and the masses have quite correctly resisted and are resisting the political monopoly that the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] is trying to impose.

[Four paragraphs eliminated — Adolfo Gilly.]

The Bureaucracy Defends Socialism in One Country

The bureaucratic, privileged layers and tendencies are trying to organize the ORI as a party of the bureaucracy to hold down the masses; to maintain control over the CTC [Cuban Workers Confederation] through leaders who were imposed on the masses through single candidacies and who lack authority and support; to control the state apparatus, preventing any intervention and participation by the masses except in a supporting role; to legalize the single party and the single tendency, through arbitrary measures that help only the counterrevolution, such as the repression against members of the Trotskyist POR, which is an unconditional and consistent defender of our workers state and our revolution, like all the sections of the Fourth International in Latin America and in the world.

They are also trying to establish their privileges, to legalize and consolidate them, establishing an enormous inequality in wage scales and fighting the equalitarian tendencies and experiments. They are trying to introduce piecework wages under the heading of "material incentives," in order to create a layer of a privileged aristocracy of labor that would serve as a political base of support for the bureaucracy and also as a social screen to hide the growth of their own privileges. They are trying to establish the omnipotence of a layer of administrators divorced from the control of the masses through the decentralization of industry and competition among the different enterprises of the workers state, as if they were capitalist enterprises. They are trying to increase the concessions to the landholding peasants who exert enormous pressure on the revolution in defense of their selfish private interests.

Behind all this is the ideology of a privileged layer — the bureaucracy — which feels that the revolution has already been made, that now we have to build socialism in a single country, in Cuba, and that for this we must affirm and increase their privileges, their houses, cars, higher pay for functionaries, etc.

But the revolution has not stopped. It is impossible to build socialism just in Cuba. The revolution is permanent: in Cuba we have only begun. To be able to develop, to be able to build the workers state, to defeat our enemies, the revolution must be extended. The revolution is permanent, because from Cuba it is bound up and extends permanently outside our borders, firstly to all of Latin America. This is the perspective of the revolution, this is the perspective of alliance and of construction of the industry and economy of socialism.

[Three paragraphs eliminated — Adolfo Gilly.]

The Intervention of the Masses and the Socialist Consciousness

We must increase and improve production. We must achieve a

harmonious planning that assures the supply of consumer goods both to the city and the countryside. We must continue strengthening the socialist sector in the countryside. We must step up voluntary labor, vigilance in the militias, the functioning of the CDRs, participation in all the tasks of the revolution.

But the basis for increasing production and all the other tasks is not appeals, nor material incentives, nor abstract emulation. IT IS THE LEADING INTERVENTION OF THE MASSES, through the unions, the councils (soviets), the communes, the advisory technical councils elected from below, the revolutionary mass Marxist party that the revolution has a pressing need for, and freedom for all the revolutionary workers tendencies.

Only by functioning, intervening, deciding will the masses feel impelled to increase the minimal technological level in industry and in the countryside, to train themselves as administrators, to learn in the short term to solve the problems of leadership, technology, administration; to devote all their energies to production, as they are ready to devote and do devote them to the militias or to the armed struggle against imperialism.

They feel they are intervening in that arena, they have a rifle, they can decide. In production they feel that they cannot decide, the directors impose decisions on them, they are not consulted, and therefore they pull back. In a deep-going, permanent, effervescent revolution like this one, there is no wage incentive that can substitute for the conscious intervention of the masses, making decisions and leading. They can be wrong, but a hundred times less frequently than the bureaucrats. And they will learn collectively, they will train themselves.

THIS IS THE ONLY REAL, POSSIBLE, APPEAL TO THE SOCIALIST CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MASSES. It is the irreplaceable basis for the development of the revolution.

Arbitrary decisions imposed on the masses, monopoly of the apparatus of the workers state by the bureaucracy, wage and social inequality, this is the death of the revolution. The masses are not prepared to permit it, and they have obstructed and will obstruct the triumph of these tendencies.

WAR ON ALL THE PRIVILEGED! No functionary should receive a salary higher than that of a skilled worker, nor any other special privilege for himself or his family. Only the non-socialist technicians can be paid more, as long as the workers state is obliged to contract with them. But then they can have no political rights nor hold any political or trade-union responsibilities. We must maintain and consolidate equality in distribution. We must control and keep watch over everything, making the CDRs function politically, actively. We must hold public trials, through people's tribunals or through the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution themselves, against any self-seeker,

speculator, bureaucrat, or privileged element.

Administrative punishments are not enough. The masses must judge, decide, and sentence; they must control and participate in distribution.

Compañeros:

THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE TROTSKYIST REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY, CUBAN SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, calls on the workers and the masses to fight for these measures and for this revolutionary Marxist program. It calls on the masses — through their organizations — to demand and force them to respect our revolutionary legality, to free our comrades in prison for defending the revolution and the workers state against the bureaucratic tendencies, to lift the administrative impediments that prevent our organ *Voz Proletaria* (Proletarian Voice) from appearing in printed form. The measures against the Trotskyists are in line with and inseparable from the measures imposed against the masses in the unions, in the state. They are measures the bureaucracy carries out in self-defense, in defense of its methods, its positions, its perspectives.

The new advance of the revolution must put an end to all privileges and all arbitrariness, all threats and pressures against the workers who raise criticisms, all the measures imposed by the bureaucrats. The Trotskyist revolutionaries or the workers who make criticisms of the bureaucracy are not the ones who must be imprisoned, who must be put on trial. It is the counter-revolutionary capitalists and imperialists and the self-serving and privileged bureaucrats! The ones who must be tried and sentenced are those who try to consolidate privileges in a revolution that the masses made, that the masses defend and maintain through their sacrifices and determination!

The revolutionary government must unconditionally base itself on the masses, consistently fight the bureaucratic tendencies, assure full freedom for the workers tendencies, for the Trotskyists, apply this program of permanent development of the revolution, unconditionally opening the doors to control and decision-making by the masses on all levels. The first irreplaceable precondition is the right to different tendencies and revolutionary parties and implacable condemnation of any attempt to use pressure, threats, or repression against the masses and their working-class tendencies.

[Five paragraphs eliminated — Adolfo Gilly.]

Second National Congress of the
Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party
Cuban Section of the Fourth International

Havana, August 26, 1962

Criticism of the International Executive Committee Majority Document on Cuba

By Peter Camejo, member of IEC

The IEC majority document on Cuba, titled "The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current, and the Fourth International," was passed at the May 7-14, 1981 meeting of the IEC. It is available in English in the October 19, 1981 issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Vol. 19, No. 38.

Class analysis

The starting point for any analysis of the Castroist current is to recognize that the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party is a proletarian current. Not simply a current within the workers movement, but a current that can be characterized as representing the interests of the world working class as the central axis of its policies and actions.

The IEC majority document fails to give any class characterization of the Cuban leadership and the Castroist current as a whole.

Petty bourgeois currents

Our analysis of Stalinism and Social Democracy is not based on their having political views which fail to consistently represent the interest of the working class or that they have made mistakes of one sort or another, but the social layer on which their politics depends. We say that the Soviet bureaucracy is a privileged social layer, characterized by Trotsky as petty bourgeois. They enjoy important material benefits and it is the defense of those privileges which determines their overall political outlook and actions. We say that Social Democracy is today based on privileged bureaucracies in trade union hierarchies and often also in bourgeois governmental bureaucracies. The politics of the Stalinists and Social Democrats is class collaborationist in order to best protect, defend and extend both in quantity and in time their privileges.

These currents are not oscillating between support to the proletariat and support to the privileged stratas mentioned above. Even when they lead progressive mass actions against capital (such as strikes or the establishment of workers states in Eastern Europe) they do so as a means to defend their privileges and to try to maintain coexistence with the world capitalist rulers. Thus, we refer to them as clearly rooted sociologically in non-proletarian stratas even though they represent currents (petty bourgeois) within the workers movement.

Centrism

It is possible for political formations to exist that are in transition or temporarily vacillating or oscillating between classes or reflecting pressures from more than one class and temporarily floating between classes. Such formations by their very nature are unstable, tend to either shift in one direction or the other, split and disintegrate.

In the late sixties and early seventies, we saw the growth of some organizations that fit this kind of category. They have almost all disappeared. Some have gone over to Stalinism or Social Democracy, a few have gone over to proletarian politics. While these currents, which we have characterized as centrist,

have disappeared as a whole, the Castroist current is growing, leading five mass-based revolutionary parties, and a few other formations beginning to establish mass bases.

The Cuban Communist Party, its central leadership and the Cuban government which they lead, has been relatively stable over the last 20 years. The IEC document does not attempt to challenge that. The Cubans may actually be one of the most stable governmental powers in the world. Certainly no other workers state has had so few divisions within its leading ranks. To believe that such a leadership is not rooted to a *specific class* over such a long period of time without undergoing major crises and splits, would border on a non-materialist approach to politics. Comrades should remember we are not talking about isolated cadre formations which can live in their own world for decades, independent of living social conflicts. We are talking of a mass party in governmental power and deeply involved in world politics of a mass character.

The Cuban leadership's stability can be traced to the consistency of their politics, their class consistency. The Cuban leadership reflects and promotes the interests of the Cuban and world proletariat. Its leadership and their policies are not based on the defense of privileges.

The charge that the Cuban leadership has important privileges and reflects it in their policies is often heard in left circles. But I have never seen a case made for such a contention worthy of serious consideration. The IEC document presents little real evidence, that is hard concrete factual information of privileges at any level.

The Cuban leadership has, for over 20 years, followed a policy of trying to bring about an egalitarian society within Cuba, and an expansion of the revolution internationally. Saying this does not mean that the Cubans have not made *mistakes*, are not making mistakes, and will not make mistakes in the future, both within and without Cuba. It does not mean that all their policies in the world today are ones that the Fourth International can agree with, or policies which in all cases promote the class struggle. The same can certainly be said about the Fourth International.

There is one important difference between the Castroist and the Fourth International to consider. While the Fourth International supporters have been involved in various important activities that have shown their dedication to the interest of the world socialist revolution, and which have involved at times substantial social forces such as the antiwar effort of the late 60s, the Cubans, unlike the Fourth International, have been tested under the fire of directly leading the masses such as in Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Their record is quite admirable. To say that does not imply that the Fourth International has nothing to contribute. But failure to recognize that the majority of proletarian revolutionaries today are in the Castroist current can only limit any contribution of the Fourth International from effectively helping move forward the formation of a world revolutionary proletarian leadership.

The *mistakes* of the Cubans, such as errors within the Guevarist guerrilla war strategy or in regard to the struggle for

workers democracy in Poland, are within the context of policies aimed at the extension and defense of the world socialist revolution. This is quite similar to the Fourth International, whose policies on specific questions in the class struggle have been, in some cases, in error and in conflict with its overall support to the working class.

Obfuscation

By skirting the question of what *class interests* the Cuban Communist Party defends, the IEC document leads to confusion. It straddles a class characterization in order to place the label of "revolutionary" on what is otherwise described as a centrist current. This obfuscation allows comrades of quite different persuasions to vote for the same resolution. The IEC document hides behind a bookkeepers balance sheet of political positions. The Cubans are good on El Salvador, but bad on Poland. Thus, they are revolutionary but not revolutionary Marxist-Leninist.

This is how the document says it: "The Cuban leadership is therefore revolutionary because it has led the revolutionary process in Cuba and supported the extension of the revolution in other countries, such as today in Central America. But it is not revolutionary Marxist to the extent that, from the point of view of the world revolution as a whole, it oscillates between supporting the extension of the revolution on the one hand, and on the other hand, aligning itself on certain major axes of the international policy of the USSR. This leads it to take positions that go against the fundamental interests of the working class (as the attitude taken towards the big struggles of the Polish workers demonstrate)." (Ibid p. 1030)

This paragraph summarizes the real view of the authors of the IEC document on Cuba. What they describe is a current which "oscillates" — this is the key word to the whole document — between class struggle politics and class collaborationist policies. This is the central characterization of the policies and action of the Cuban leadership which the IEC document makes. Such a current is best characterized as centrist, as a current not clearly rooted in any class, but in motion between classes. Putting aside all the terminological camouflage, this is what the IEC document really says.

Let us repeat what the document says. "On one hand," the Cubans fight to extend the revolution such as in Central America. This is a class struggle orientation based on the interests of the world proletariat, and aids to promote the class struggle as a whole, worldwide. "On the other hand," the Cubans align themselves "on certain major axes of the international policy of the USSR." This can only mean a class collaborationist orientation which supports the interests of the privileged Soviet bureaucracy, a petty bourgeois strata. It means supporting "major axes" of international politics *against* the interest of the proletariat for another class.

The Cubans clearly vacillate between classes. They are not Stalinists nor Social Democrats. But neither are they Proletarian revolutionaries. What are they then? According to the above, they would be best described as centrist. The word "left" could be added, especially considering the references to Central America. The IEC document's characterization of the Cuban leadership by implication is that of left centrists vacillating between the proletariat and a petty bourgeois strata, and the corresponding political lines and action.

The IEC document refrains from putting the label centrist on the Cuban leadership. It simply avoids making any clear characterization. The authors may have hesitated to follow the logic of their position and stand by a centrist characterization because the Cuban leadership fails to reveal a whole series of aspects which would exist if the Cubans were centrist, and if the analysis of the IEC document were correct. Among those characteristics would

be instability and vacillation when under the gun, divisions, splits and sharp rapid shifts in policies.

Poland

There are two ways to look at the Cuban policies towards Poland. One view, which I believe is correct, is that the Cubans begin with the defense of the workers states against the threat of imperialism. They mistake the movement for workers democracy as currents which open the door to imperialist penetration and thus, make the *mistake* of opposing these movements. Much of their statements also involve diplomacy and maneuvers to survive in a world dominated by imperialism and within which the workers states controlled by the Stalinists provide them the necessary aid to survive.

Another view would be that the Cubans oppose movements for workers democracy because they are for the Soviet bureaucracy, and are defending it against the proletariat in Poland. This position in turn would see this support for the Soviet bureaucracy as reflecting pressures from a developing bureaucracy within Cuba itself. This view would see the Cubans' opposition to concrete struggles for workers democracy not as a "mistake", but a product of *their* support "on certain major axes of the international policy of the USSR." That is, their position on Poland is not in conflict with their general policies and world view, but a reflection of it.

The IEC document leans towards the second interpretation. Referring to the "tight links" which exist between Cuba and the "degenerated Soviet workers state", the IEC document states that this "... has led the Castroist leadership to express an unconditional support to the bureaucrats both in the USSR and the other East European countries against any critical movement, mass action or strike." (Ibid p. 1027)

IEC document's contradiction

The IEC document describes what is a rather curious phenomena from a materialist, not to speak of Marxist, viewpoint. According to the IEC document, we have a politically relatively stable current that carries out diametrically opposite policies in different parts of the world. They are proletarian fighters in Central America, and oppressors of the proletariat in Eastern Europe (and, we could add, supporters of petty bourgeois nationalists in Africa). Oddly enough, while the Cubans supposedly carry out a class struggle orientation in one area of the world and a class collaborationist orientation in another, the two contradictory orientations do not reveal themselves within either policy, at least this seems to be the case in Central America, where the Cubans are not only taking a political stance, but engaged in direct action.

Could Cuba's leadership and the Castroist current as a whole really have an oscillating approach to the classes and the class struggle without it revealing itself periodically, if not continuously, in its policies in Central America? (We will look further at this contradiction later on.)

Primary and secondary

One problem with the IEC document's analysis is that it fails to discern what is primary, and thus what is secondary in the Cuban leadership's policies. It fails, for instance, to make a separation between political stances and the more materialist consideration of action.

I hold that the Cuban actions in Central America must be weighed 1,000 times more importantly than their statements about Eastern Europe in determining their class character. Just as we must weigh 1,000 times more importantly the actions of Solidarity in Poland, than we would their utter lack of comments

about the struggle of the workers and peasants against imperialism in Central America to determine what class interests the Polish Solidarity movement and its leadership currents represent.

The failure of the IEC document to clearly discern what is primary and what is secondary adds to its obfuscation of what class interests the Cuban leadership responds to. This weakness in the IEC document gives it an agnostic and eclectic character.

Time phases

The IEC document attempts to present its analysis of the "oscillations" of the Cubans also as having time phases. At times, the Cuban leadership are oscillating towards class collaboration, and at other times towards class struggle policies.

"In the present phase," the IEC document explains, "it (Cuban leadership) has taken up the initiative again by fully committing itself in Central America and by de facto differentiating itself on this terrain, both from the other workers states and from most Latin American communist parties." (Ibid p. 1030)

No one can argue against the existence of phases in any revolutionary process, including the Cuban revolution. The Castroist leadership began on a democratic platform against the Batista dictatorship. In order to carry through their democratic program once they took power, they had to choose between the only two possible historical paths, that offered by imperialism or that of the proletariat.

During the later half of 1960, a workers state was established in Cuba. The evolution of the Cuban leadership has been towards a deeper understanding of the class struggle. A process of proletarianization at all levels was quite evident, even in the early sixties, as the Cubans declared themselves Marxist in more than words. Since the world economic crisis has grown in the last decade, bringing to the fore on a global scale the struggles of the urban proletariat, and after the victory of the Nicaragua revolution, there is no question that the process of proletarianization in Cuba has deepened.

It appears to me that the qualitative turn for the Cuban leadership took place at the time they chose the road of the formation of a workers state, and fought off attempts to consolidate a Stalinist bureaucracy. Since that time, in the early 1960s, I believe it would be perfectly correct to label the Cuban leadership proletarian in character. Their failure to understand and promote Lenin's concept of a mass-based cadre revolutionary party, as opposed to Guevara's guerrilla strategy, is today being overcome as the Cubans draw the lessons of the mass struggles in Nicaragua and El Salvador, as well as in other parts of the world.

The IEC document rejects the evaluation of the Cubans as a proletarian current. The document searches for confirmation of their (centrist) "oscillating" nature in phases. Although it is true the Cubans have had different emphases during the last 20 years as they tried to adjust to a changing world and concrete experiences, the IEC document completely fails to make a creditable case that the "phases" reflect "oscillations" between class struggle and class collaborationist policies as the major axes of Cuban policies, internally or internationally.

But, let us return to the description by the IEC document of what its authors believe is the "present phase." According to the authors, the Cubans have "taken up the initiative again by fully committing itself in Central America and by de facto differentiating itself on this terrain, both from the other workers states and from most Latin American communist parties." (Ibid p. 1030)

This statement, one we can all agree on, lays the groundwork for testing the conflicting lines within the international in the living class struggle. It also provides a basis for united action by the entire Fourth International in solidarity work with the Cubans in support of the revolutionary process in Central America.

In this sense, the IEC document can be considered a step forward. Unlike the positions held by the majority at the time of the 1979 world congress, the IEC document recognizes a consistent class struggle orientation by the Castroists in Central America, in clear differentiation with the class collaborationist policies of Stalinism and its supporters in the communist parties of South America.

"Full commitment"

The Cuban leadership, on an island of only some 12 million people with an underdeveloped economy, is directly committing itself fully in a direct confrontation with United States imperialism, the greatest economic and military power in the world, in order to attempt to extend the world socialist revolution in an even less economically developed sector. They are doing so without hesitation, or "oscillations," or vacillation. This policy, as everyone has noted, directly challenges the world politics and orientation of the Stalinist bureaucracies. Yet, it is the *central axis* of the Cuban Communist Party's foreign policy.

If the analysis of the IEC majority document is correct and the Cubans are not proletarian revolutionaries, are not rooted in a class, this kind of consistent, "full commitment" of revolutionary class struggle in the face of United States imperialism, and in conflict with the enormous weight of the Soviet bureaucracy, not to speak of the lesser pressures from the national bourgeoisie of South America, cannot and will not last. The "oscillating" nature of the Cubans will undoubtedly reveal itself. Not in the sense of maneuvers and compromises, which are *essential* in any mass struggle, but in class collaborationist policies, and capitulationist alternatives appearing within their orientation.

If this is not the case, if the Cubans and the Castroist current as a whole continue to struggle and maneuver to strengthen the revolution of the workers and peasants in Central America, then the IEC majority document will clearly prove to have been based on faulty premises, and its authors should reconsider their analysis.

We must reject an eclectic analysis which places on an equal plane events, speeches and positions that are incomparable. If we were to apply the approach used in the IEC majority document to its own authors, let us say the majority current of the United Secretariat, we would have to conclude that they too are not revolutionary Marxists, "to the extent" (quoting the phrases of their document) they adopt "positions that go against the fundamental interests of the working class," such as their opposition to the liberation of Cambodia from the reactionary Pol Pot regime by Vietnamese troops.

An objective analysis of the majority current in the United Secretariat would, however, have to place this political mistake in the context of actions where its sections are directly involved in the class struggle, and not give undue importance to their error in Cambodia or previous errors, such as support to an ultra-left strategy in Latin America or misjudgments of the class struggle orientation of the FSLN in Nicaragua.

We cannot take the position that revolutionaries are no longer genuine Marxists because their positions on one question or another is wrong. Such analyses, so typical of sectarians, have wreaked havoc within the Trotskyist movement where every time a difference appears, analyses are made to prove the non-proletarian character of those one is disagreeing with. A method which is still, unfortunately, quite prevalent within our ranks.

On bureaucracy

The IEC resolution, consistent with its "oscillating" (centrist) analysis, holds that a privileged bureaucracy exists in Cuba. According to the IEC document, the privileged bureaucracy controls the middle layers of the governmental and party apparatus,

while the top leaders, appealing directly to the rank and file, are still fighting off this bureaucracy. Such a situation would be one of great instability. Can a materialist believe that such a development could exist for a prolonged period, say 10 years, without social explosions and divisions penetrating the central leadership?

This is how the IEC document describes the differences between the deformed workers states and Cuba regarding the existence of a privileged bureaucracy. The differences "... reside in the fact that there is not a bureaucracy crystallized as a privileged social layer comparable to that which reigns in other workers states." (Ibid p. 1027)

One of the difficulties with the IEC document is that it often says things in the negative, rather than stating straight out what the authors believe. Let us re-state the sentence quoted above in the positive for clarity. In other words, there is "a bureaucracy crystallized as a privileged layer," but it is not "comparable to that which reigns in other workers states."

Middle layer

The IEC document introduces an interesting, but peculiar category which is supposedly a major factor in the problem of bureaucratization. That is "the cadre and leaders at the intermediary level." (Ibid p. 1026) This reference, although somewhat vague, seems to be referring to political cadres, that is essentially Party members. The IEC document claims that it was this "layer" in the USSR which "played a primary role in the process of bureaucratization."

This is not what Trotsky states in *The Revolution Betrayed* or his other works describing the process in Russia. Bureaucratization has its roots in the underdevelopment (correctly mentioned in the IEC document) that is the continued predominance of world imperialism, and in the remnants of the old society (completely forgotten in the IEC document).

In the apparatus of the government and in major economic institutions the tendency towards bureaucratization takes root because by the nature of their work, these social layers are in a position to gain privileges in the context of shortages. This is especially true because these social sectors depend heavily, immediately after the triumph of a socialist revolution, on personnel left over from capitalism who are imbued with all kinds of class prejudices which lend themselves to the support of privileges. Revolutionary cadres and leaders, including *secondary* leaders, enter these areas of work as an antidote to petty bourgeois tendencies. This was true in the Soviet Union, as it is in Cuba. The problem in the USSR was not with the middle layer of "cadres," but that in the ensuing battle between classes, the Party and its cadres succumbed to the alien class pressures reflected through the imperialist encirclement, predominant peasant and petty forms of production, and the social and cultural backwardness of the population as a whole.

Has this occurred in Cuba? Are the present governmental structures and other bureaucratic formations staffed with specialists left over from capitalism? Have these layers won over the revolutionaries sent in to work among them to administrate and manage institutions?

I believe the evidence points in the opposite direction. The Cubans are no longer so dependent on the pre-revolutionary personnel. The new cadre layers have not succumbed to the influence and ways of the old. One of the layers most maligned by left intellectuals outside of Cuba is precisely the "middle layers," the factory leader or manager, captains and other minor officials in Cuba's revolutionary army, etc. These are the people who set the example of working overtime without pay, of seeking social solutions. They are the cadres that explain difficulties in class terms to defend the revolution and seek solutions to problems based on

egalitarianism. They keep up the morale of the workers and ranks of the army, whether it is fighting imperialist troops in Africa, or trying to improve the production of rice in the fields of a cooperative farm.

The demand for revolutionary commitment and self sacrifice is far greater on this "middle layer" than on the broad ranks of the working class within Cuban society.

Undoubtedly, some material privileges do exist. And certainly some in leadership positions have taken advantage of them and undoubtedly there are cases of abuses. No one has shown, however, that privileges have become the rule and not the exception. What evidence exists of privileges is far — very, very far — from justifying a characterization that a crystallized privileged bureaucracy exists comparable or uncomparable to the other workers states.

Such a layer would be carrying out massive resistance in a variety of forms to the Cuban policy of support to the revolution in Central America. How could it be otherwise? The Cuban revolutionary commitment in Central America would run directly counter to all the aspirations of a crystallized bureaucracy. What does the evidence show? It appears that the relationship of forces within Cuba between the pro-proletarian and pro-bureaucracy currents is overwhelmingly on the side of the proletarian current. That is reflected in the mass mobilizations and unqualified support for the revolutionary policies in Central America. This could only be possible if the overwhelming majority of the secondary leaders, the "middle" cadres, support the central leadership and the revolutionary course they have been defending.

Castroist current

When considering the Castroist current as a whole, there is a danger of overgeneralizing. A closer look at the organizations, which we consider part of this current, shows that it is not homogeneous. The differing groups in El Salvador, even the original currents within the FSLN, as well as many other formations, have important differences among them.

The heterogeneous nature of these groups makes it hard to make any sort of precise point of demarcation of where the Castroist current ends and centrist formations or ultra-left groups begin. However, organizations such as the MRP in Costa Rica, PSP in Puerto Rico, and some of the Guatemalan revolutionary formations are clearly part of the Castroist current. Others, such as Vanguardia Revolucionaria in Peru, have some characteristics of the Castroist current, but combine with it the influence of other currents, either reformist or sectarian.

Nevertheless, insofar as organizations are "Castroist," that is follow the general orientation of fighting for a socialist revolution in their own homeland, regardless of the fact that they may make errors, they are proletarian revolutionaries, not centrists. Che Guevara in Bolivia was not a "left centrist," nor is the PSP in Puerto Rico "left centrist."

At the May, 1982 IEC meeting, comrade Jack Barnes attempted to make a differentiation between the Castroists who have already gained power and groups like the PSP in Puerto Rico, the MRP in Costa Rica, etc. Barnes stated he considered these other "Castroist" groups left centrist. Such a dichotomy is wrong. Castroism is not left centrism anywhere.

The SWP majority leadership has been shifting its views on the Castroist current rapidly in recent years. In the opinion of this writer, this has been in general a positive development. The Cuban current is strongly antisectarian. Thus, the changes in the positions of the SWP leadership towards the Cubans has opened up the potential of their being less sectarian. The SWP leadership's attraction to the Castroists, however, stops when it comes to groups like the PSP, because they are repelled by many of the nonsectarian efforts by these groups to reach the masses which

appear to the SWP leadership as right opportunism. At times, the SWP leadership is correct. But, in general there is a dichotomy between the SWP majority leadership's applauding the Cuban leadership's proletarian content and supporting the Cubans politically. For the Cubans support the efforts of the smaller Castroist groups to find their way to the masses, efforts which the majority SWP leadership often consider opportunist errors.

An example of this, indirectly, is the sectarian attitude of the SWP leadership towards the Mexican PRT's successful united front electoral campaign. The SWP gave the most successful revolutionary electoral campaign in Latin America only the most minimal token coverage in its press, even though the campaign was being led by its sister party in Mexico. This is not some organizational oversight or purely factionally motivated. Behind it is the same sectarian politics which originally led the SWP to incorrect positions on Cuba and Nicaragua.

Another example is the sharp difference between the Cubans approach to the nuclear freeze movement and that of the SWP majority leadership. While the Cubans support the movement in a non-sectarian manner, seeing it as a starting point in a process in which the underlying content is progressive and who favor maintaining its broad unity, the SWP majority leadership, as comrade Sheppard explained at the May, 1982 IEC meeting, seeks to split such movements over the issue of Central America. Such a position is correctly considered sectarian by the Cubans.

Further investigation and discussion is needed in terms of our attitude towards groups such as the PSP in Puerto Rico, MRP in Costa Rica, Vanguardia Revolucionaria and others. We also have to take a new look at organizations such as the Liga Socialista in Venezuela and some of the formations moving away from Maoism towards a more pro-Cuban stand, such as in Colombia. Overall, the Fourth International in the last period has been oriented in a sectarian manner towards these groups, as was reflected in the errors committed during the Peruvian elections.

Unfortunately, the positive contributions by the SWP majority leadership on the Cuban question is hampered by their factional and sectarian attitude towards those who do not agree with them on Cuba.

For instance, if a supporter of one of the two minority tendencies in the SWP were to state that: "The Cuban Communist Party is not a Leninist party. It allows no democratic internal life in the Bolshevik sense. There are no organized tendencies and factions around programmatic points that could advance the clarity of discussions and contribute to solving the problems facing the Cuban revolution." — such a comrade would be considered beyond the pale. He or she would be lucky if the SWP majority supporters do not immediately discover that said comrade is really against the turn, against a proletarian orientation, and part of a "right" danger, etc., etc., etc.

Yet, the above quote was written by comrade Larry Siegle, passed by the SWP National Committee and published in 1979. The fact that some comrades agree with the majority's 1979 position does not make them any less revolutionary or proletarian than the majority considered itself in 1979.

There is a great deal to be learned from the Castroist current. They have succeeded in winning the masses and building mass-based revolutionary parties. This does not mean we should agree with their rejection of the right of tendencies in the Cuban Party (or other questions), but it does mean that rather than run off and publicly criticize the Cubans, we should take a very careful look at their views on *all* these questions since they have proven more correct than the Fourth International on rather decisive questions.

A little modesty is called for considering the kind of errors made by the Fourth International in regards to the Nicaraguan revolution.

Nicaraguan test

The victory of the Nicaraguan revolution presented a test for all currents claiming to speak in the name of the program of the Fourth International. What does the record show? Briefly, we can summarize the positions taken by each of the major currents. They were:

A. The majority current of the United Secretariat took an ultra-left stance. Supportive and sympathetic to the revolution, they nevertheless misjudged the actual living class struggle within Nicaragua, making many errors similar to that of the left communist criticisms of Lenin's policies in the early years of the USSR.

At the last world congress in 1979, the debate on Nicaragua appeared to revolve around the question of whether Nicaragua had a workers and farmers government. The real division was over the nature of the FSLN and its political orientation. The majority felt that the FSLN was not consistently revolutionary, and instead was vacillating. They specifically felt that under pressure from the Cuban leadership the FSLN had decided to hold back the class struggle in order to maintain an alliance with the anti-Somocista bourgeoisie.

This erroneous view is a direct product of looking at the unfolding class struggle in Nicaragua through an ultraleft prism. The process through which the FSLN *maneuvered*, in a struggle to consolidate the workers movement and its alliance with the peasantry and urban petty bourgeois layers against imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, was completely along Leninist lines. The Cuban and Nicaraguan leadership in their conduct, including compromises, shifting of tactics, granting concessions, etc., were far more "Marxist" and "Leninist" than the Fourth International.

It is interesting to note that many of these same comrades had little or no criticisms to make of the Castroist current when they were promoting guerrilla actions isolated from the masses. Those actions appeared politically correct to these comrades to such a degree that they set out to imitate them. Search as you might many journals of the Fourth International in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and you will find little or no criticism of the Cuban current.

But, when the Castroist current is maneuvering, making compromises, precisely because they are educating and organizing the masses, that is precisely when their activities have taken on the complexities of truly *mass* work, then these same comrades find themselves less attracted to the Castroist. Now that the Castroist current is directly leading mass revolutionary struggles in a series of countries, these comrades are now concerned that sufficient criticism be made of the Castroists.

The line of the majority current in the Fourth International on Nicaragua can be characterized as having weaknesses of "left dogmatism" as Lenin used the term against the left communists in the early 1920s.

B. The Moreno led current also took an ultraleft political line. They set out to outflank the FSLN from the left. In addition to their ultraleft and sectarian politics, the Moreno current added a criminal element in defrauding the masses in Colombia by taking to the streets, to union meetings and other gatherings of workers to raise monies ostensibly for the FSLN, which they kept for their own ultraleft maneuverings against the FSLN.

C. The SWP led current also made some leftist errors prior to June/July of 1979, in spite of being completely supportive of the struggle to overthrow Somoza. After the mass uprisings in the fall of 1978, *Perspectiva Mundial* wrote that the main block to the success of the Nicaraguan revolution was the FSLN. That was exactly backwards. The only thing which made it possible for the Nicaraguan revolution to succeed was the existence of the

FSLN. Otherwise, the anti-Somocista mass upsurge would have been derailed and the imperialists would have been able to reconsolidate their domination of Nicaragua.

When comrade Fred Murphy wrote the *Perspectiva Mundial* article referred to, and the editors of *Perspectiva Mundial* approved it, they were only reflecting the general opinion existing at that time in the SWP. In San Francisco, we withdrew the comrades we had working in the Nicaraguan solidarity committees. In most cities, we never bothered to join them. SWPers opposed the fight to demand recognition of the provisional government. In public *Militant* forums, we repeated our leftist line, making sectarian attacks on the FSLN. In general, it was criticisms of the FSLN's united front policies against the Somocista regime.

No formal discussion was ever held, that I recall, in the National Committee or the Political Committee endorsing or rejecting the line being presented at forums or in *Perspectiva Mundial*. Insofar as any SWP attitude was expressed towards the policies of the FSLN at that time, they tended to have a sectarian leftist weakness.

When comrade Jack Barnes writes, comparing the SWP reaction to the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolution, "In the case of Nicaragua, because of this experience, (meaning Cuba — PC) we were even more prepared. We moved quickly, and have been able to intervene as the process itself had developed . . ." (IIID No. 3, 1980, p. 37), he is simply inaccurate.

The SWP, along with all formations in the world that consider themselves Trotskyist, took a sectarian posture towards the Nicaraguan revolution. The SWP may have been the first to reverse itself, but it is incorrect to say we were prepared. We were unprepared, caught off guard, and had to reverse some of our political thinking.

After July 1979, a process of correcting the line on Nicaragua began. The SWP leadership took a generally correct line, and began trying to learn from its previous errors. But, for other reason, fell into sectarian errors in its solidarity work. (This is another topic which cannot be taken up here.)

D. The current led by Lambert, who we had hoped might join the Fourth International at the last world congress, simply rejected the FSLN as class collaborationist, and turned its back on the unfolding revolution. Making a public spectacle of their sectarian bankruptcy, they joined with the Moreno current to hold the first meetings ever to protest the lack of "democratic rights" under the new FSLN led government. Through these actions, they played a vanguard role for the bourgeois parties which are now on a world scale campaigning for "democracy" in Nicaragua.

Confronted by the unfolding of a successful socialist revolution, all the currents around the Fourth International, to one degree or other, showed political weaknesses of an ultraleftist nature. These leftist errors seem to be most striking in the complex

process to win the masses.

Other errors of the IEC resolution

There are a series of other errors in the IEC document on Cuba which, in order to keep this contribution short, I will not take up. But, I will mention a few. The document never refers to the impact of the U.S. blockade on Cuba. It implies the type of united front tactics used by the FSLN are wrong, yet this is one of the most important positive lessons where we can learn from the FSLN. The concept that no programmatic or strategic compromise is possible with bourgeois forces can easily be meant in a wrong and sectarian manner, especially considering that the compromises made by the FSLN with the bourgeoisie have been precisely the kinds that are not only correct, but essential for survival of the revolution. The document repeats the false, but popular idea that Che Guevara represented a left current as opposed to Castro.

Conclusions

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution by Joseph Hansen and the early 1963 agreements by all currents in the Fourth International of the Marxist-Leninist development of the "Fidelista Current" are still fully valid.

The views expressed by Mary-Alice Waters in "Proletarian Leadership in Power: What We Can Learn From Lenin, Castro, and the FSLN," and by Jack Barnes in "Marxism and the Class Struggle Today," as well as in "The Political Evolution of the Cuban Leadership" (all three printed IIIB No. 3, 1980) are important steps forward in the discussion on the Cuba.

The report at the May 1982 IEC on Central America, given by comrade Sergio from Mexico and prepared with the collaboration of two other comrades, all who voted for the IEC majority document on Cuba, reflects in my opinion an important step forward in our understanding of the unfolding process in Central America, and indicates a potential lessening of some of the differences on this question.

It is a fact that the Mexican PRT leadership, who voted overwhelmingly in support of the IEC majority resolution on Cuba, have among the best relations with the Fidelistas in Central America, and have carried out probably the most effective and politically important solidarity work. The Colombia PSR, which in its majority has opposed the IEC Cuban resolution, has carried out similar work and also established good fraternal relations with the Fidelistas. This simple fact harbors well for further clarification in this debate, which will come primarily through the developing revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean and can lead to positive results if comrades avoid a factional atmosphere.

Corrections

[The following are corrections for "On the Workers and Peasants Government" by Ernest Mandel (*IIDB*, Vol. XX, No. 2, April 1984) They are submitted by the author.]

p. 29, 2nd column, 7th line from top: "avoid 1927-style disasters" and not "1929-style"

p. 30, 1st column, one but last line of footnote: "There he states that . . ." and not "Since he states that . . ."

p. 30, 2nd column, 4th line above footnote: "by a single event, in Cuba, as in China and Vietnam, it emerged . . ." (Cuba is as China and Vietnam, and not as the October revolution).

p. 31, 1st column: Begin with "In addition, we have to make clear that the FSLN and the state power it represents in this situation of *sui generis* dual power, embody neither a 'bourgeois state' nor a 'two class government' nor a 'popular front', but a dictatorship of the proletariat, a workers state in the process of being constituted, which has not yet definitively . . ."

p. 33, 1st column: Subtitle should read: The real balance-sheet of world revolution 1917-1982

p. 33, 1st column, 12th line from bottom ". . . but because of the social nature of the majority of people involved" instead of "of the social composition".

p. 33, 1st column, 8th line from top: ". . . the main characteristics" instead of "the main themes".

p. 33, 2nd column, last paragraph, starting with the second sentence, should read: "Let us rather remember that the concept of the 'mixed economy' is the traditional formulation of the social-democratic reformists, taken up afterwards by Krushchev, the neo-stalinists and the euro-communists. The parallel with the idea of the 'advanced democracy', put forward to-day by the Western European CPs, is striking.

p. 34, 3rd line from top: ". . . is a purely tactical problem" instead of "as a purely . . ."

p. 34, last paragraph, first lines: "If this is already the case for the most backward, semi-colonial countries, any institutionalization . . ."

p. 35, 1st column, 2nd paragraph, correct from 5th line on: "war communism, which was neither the product of their political project nor an ideal model to follow. For us, this is the ABC: the NEP was a salutary reaction against the excesses of 'war communism'. We could remind comrade Jack Barnes that Trotsky stated that he demanded such an NEP since 1919. Let's hope comrade Barnes is not going to challenge Trotsky's testimony on that subject too."

p. 35, 1st column, 3rd paragraph, 5th line, put a semi-colon after "political power".

p. 35, 1st column, 4th paragraph, 3rd line, inset a hyphen after "several years"

p. 35, 2nd column, 4th paragraph, 5th line, replace "functioned as an army of a bourgeois state", by "whose regime was bourgeois" (or: "whose regime was that of a bourgeois state").

p. 36, 1st column, 1st paragraph, last line, replace "anyway" by "anymore".

p. 36, 1st column, 3rd line from bottom: "their own future,

and the absence of any coercion by the dictatorship of the proletariat against them:"

p. 36, 2nd column, 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence. Correct as follows:

The proletariat and its revolutionary party (or parties) start from the given consciousness of the working population in the countryside in order to work out the pace of collectivisation of agriculture. They do *not* start from that level of consciousness in order to determine the pace of collectivisation of the economy as a whole. The objective needs of the . . ."

p. 37, 1st column, 2nd line, correct: "because of demands or so-called prejudices of the peasantry", instead of "because of the demands of so-called prejudices of the peasantry".

* * *

The following corrections are to the article "Why the Resolution 'Revolution and Counterrevolution in Poland' is a Fundamental Challenge to the Marxist Foundations of the Fourth International," which appeared in *IIDB*, Vol. XX, No. 2.

1. The cover page incorrectly identifies John Steele as a member of the Revolutionary Socialist League. This should be Revolutionary Workers League.

2. Page 9: Paragraph 3. Right-hand column refers to Vol. VIII, No. 6 of the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*. The reference for the IEC resolution should read Vol. XVIII, No. 6 of the *IIDB*.

3. Page 14: Paragraph 4, left-hand column, first sentence should read:

"The society of associated producers that Marx talked about where *state* functions are reduced to the administration of things rather than people, is some distance away."

4. Page 15: Paragraph 4, right-hand column, final sentence should read:

"The resolution takes the correct point that we are *not* on the verge of nuclear war launched by Washington against the workers states to the absurd conclusion that there exists no current imperialist military threat to the workers states."

5. Page 18: Paragraph 2, right-hand column, first sentence should read: "14. The Polish revolution once again confirms that in all. . ."

* * *

An error appears in the "Theses on the International Situation" adopted by the October 1983 United Secretariat meeting (*IIDB*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, December 1983)

The second paragraph of point 40 on page 20 should read:

"Among the immediate tasks, *the solidarity campaigns* with revolutionary movements targeted by repression or counterrevolutionary attacks are a priority on an international level: solidarity with the Central American revolution, solidarity with the independent Polish workers movement, solidarity with the Palestinian resistance and with the South African masses."

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