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# SWP

# discussion bulletin

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## DRAFT THESES ON THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

### 1.

The Cuban revolution began under the leadership of the July 26 Movement, a radical petty-bourgeois political tendency centered around the leadership of Fidel Castro. The initial program of the July 26 Movement was largely bourgeois-democratic, but promised thoroughgoing agrarian reform and industrialization.

It was distinguished by its clear recognition that the Batista dictatorship could be unseated only by revolutionary means, by its insistence on this as a principle in its relations with other groupings, and by its resolution in carrying the struggle against Batista through to the end no matter what the consequences.

### 2.

In the Sierra Maestra phase of the revolution, the Castro leadership succeeded in mobilizing the guajiros and the agricultural workers, the decisive sector of the Cuban working class, to overthrow the Batista dictatorship. The outlook of the young revolutionary leaders became modified by these social forces. The city workers, under a trade-union leadership imposed on them by the Batista dictatorship, were unable to bring their power to bear in the early stages, but with the victory they rallied in their overwhelming majority behind the revolutionary leadership.

### 3.

The July 26 Movement came to power in January 1959 in a popular political revolution that at first appeared to be limited to democratic aims.

### 4.

The revolutionary leaders enacted such immediate reforms as an increase in wages and reduction of rents, electric rates, and food costs. They set up a coalition government, granting such important posts as the presidency to the bourgeois-democratic elements.

### 5.

The American monopolists and their agents were hostile to the July 26 Movement from the beginning, although they also sought to use flattery on its leaders. With the institution of sweeping agrarian reform measures, the Castro leadership met with a belligerent response from American big business and the bipartisan Democrats and Republicans. Wall Street counted on the bourgeois-democratic elements in the coalition government as points of support for its counter-revolutionary objectives. Increasing strains appeared between the two sides in this government as Washington stepped up the pressure.

### 6.

The conflict between American imperialism and the Castro forces precipitated a political crisis in Havana. This was resolved by a decided turn to the left, signaled, among other things, by the

expulsion from the government of such figures as Urrutia and Pazos; and the coalition came to an end in the fall of 1959.

7.

The fact that Cuba now had a Workers and Farmers government was indicated by its firm resistance to imperialism and its Cuban agents, the resoluteness with which it went ahead with the agrarian reform, disarming of reaction, arming of the people and "interventions" of capitalist holdings. The lack of respect which this government displayed toward capitalist property relations was coupled with bold projects to meet the needs of the masses in employment, housing, education, recreation and culture.

8.

The interacting process between American imperialism and the Cuban revolution swiftly deepened after the end of the coalition government. The measures undertaken by the Castro regime in the interests of the Cuban people met with ever more unbridled attacks from Wall Street, its political agents, propagandists and counter-revolutionary agents. The blows of these counter-revolutionary forces, in turn, compelled the Castro government to resort to increasingly radical measures.

9.

These included the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, the nationalization of the latifundia, and, in August-October, 1960, the virtual expropriation of the American and Cuban capitalist holdings; that is, the key sectors of Cuban industry.

These steps necessitated economic planning. This started in the fall of 1959, developed concomitantly with the nationalization of industry and is now firmly established.

All these measures were taken with the examples of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China available for study. Thus, in the final analysis, the overturn in property relations in Cuba is an echo of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia.

10.

When the capitalist holdings in the key sectors of Cuban economy were taken over by the government, Cuba entered the transitional phase of a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule.

11.

The Castro government had already smashed part of the old state structure in coming to power, liquidating the old army and police force in order to assure Batista's defeat. But the failure of the Castro leadership to proclaim socialist aims showed that the subjective factor in the revolution remained unclear and along with it the possible course of the revolution.

In the two years since then the state structure has undergone a cleansing out of hold-overs whose basic loyalty was to the former capitalist power. Upon nationalization of the key sectors of industry, the new state structure became so committed to a planned economy that only civil war can now restore capitalist property relations. A civil war could not succeed without a counter-revolutionary invasion far bloodier than that engineered by Washington in Guatemala in 1954.

12.

The Cuban government has not yet instituted democratic proletarian forms of power such as workers, soldiers, and peasants councils. However, as it has moved in a socialist direction it has likewise proved itself to be democratic in tendency. It did not hesitate to arm the people and set up a popular militia. It has guaranteed freedom of expression to all groupings that support the revolution. In this respect it stands in welcome contrast to the other noncapitalist states, which have been tainted with Stalinism.

13.

If the Cuban revolution were permitted to develop freely, its democratic tendency would undoubtedly lead to the early creation of proletarian democratic forms adapted to Cuba's own needs. One of the strongest reasons for vigorously supporting the revolution, therefore, is to give the maximum possibility for this tendency to operate.

At the same time, revolutionary socialists advocate forms of this general character for Cuba because they would greatly strengthen the political defense of the revolution, help safeguard against possible retrogression, and, by setting a new world example, speed revolutionary developments inside the imperialist countries and in the colonial areas they still dominate.

The appearance of democratic forms of proletarian rule in Cuba would also have enormous repercussions in the Soviet bloc, aiding the revolutionary-socialist tendency in those countries which seeks the revival of Leninist democracy.

14.

In search of allies in its defense of the revolution, the Cuban government turned to the Soviet bloc. It met with a favorable response from both Moscow and Peking. The material aid which it received may well prove decisive in its defense against the American-supported counter-revolution.

The overturn in property relations makes it feasible in principle for Cuba to tie its economy in with that of the Soviet bloc, including Yugoslavia, thus strengthening the planned economies in Europe and Asia, as well as gaining life-saving support from them.

This does not conflict with the fact that it is in the interests of the Cuban as well as the American people to resume the trade with the United States which was cut off by Eisenhower.

15.

The Cuban revolution constitutes the opening of the socialist revolution in Latin America. The Castro government has won tremendous support throughout the entire area below the Rio Grande and in turn has inspired millions of oppressed people with the desire to emulate the Cuban revolutionary success. The Cuban question has become the key question dividing all tendencies in Latin America.

16.

The Stalinists were bypassed by the July 26 Movement. This is a fact of world-wide significance, for it shatters the delusion that revolutionary victories can be won only through the Communist parties. In turn, the success of the July 26 Movement adds to the ferment visible in many Communist parties in the past few years, giving fresh weight to the tendencies seeking to break through the crust of Stalinist bureaucratism.

17.

The Cuban Communist party is not exempt from this ferment. The American capitalist propagandists have built a fantastic bogeyman about a "take over" in Cuba by the Communist party. They leave completely out of account the effect of the revolution and its development on the thinking of the Cuban Communist party, above all its ranks.

The fact is that the Cuban Communist party supports the revolution. If a rift were to occur between Cuba and the Soviet Union, it can be taken for certain that the loyalties of a decisive section of the Communist party, if not the party as a whole, would remain with the Cuban revolution. The experience in Yugoslavia speaks eloquently for such an outcome.

With free access to the views of all radical currents, as is the case in Havana today, the Cuban Communist party can be expected to undergo considerable transformation, no matter what the ups and downs of the diplomatic relations may be.

18.

The Cuban revolution has had a stimulating effect on the radical movement in many countries. It can play a powerful role in reviving hope and confidence in the socialist goal, in demonstrating that Stalinism is not inevitable, and thus helping to pave the way for construction of mass revolutionary-socialist parties. In the United States it has already opened up new opportunities for revolutionary socialists, as is evident in many areas, particularly the campus, Spanish-speaking minority groups and the Negro people.

19.

Whatever one may think of the Castro government and the new property relations in Cuba, it is our duty to defend this small country from the attack of the giant American corporations, their

government and their counter-revolutionary agents. The Cubans have a right to decide their own form of government and property relations free from pressure.

It is especially in the interest of the American trade-union movement to defend Cuba, for the monopolists now seeking a counter-revolutionary overturn there are the same ones that have long sought to cripple and smash the union movement in the United States.

The general slogans that should be advanced are "Hands Off Cuba!" "End the Blockade!" "Help the Cuban People!"

20.

Despite the colossal power of American imperialism and its counter-revolutionary ruthlessness, plus the grave dangers and sacrifices these signify for the Cuban people, the perspectives for the defense of the revolution are most promising. It occurs in the general context of colonial uprisings beyond the capacity of the imperialist powers to contain and it derives strength from this vast upheaval. The Cuban revolution occurs, in addition, in the context of the rising world power of the Soviet countries, whose interests coincide with the defense of Cuba. Finally, the workers and peasants of the small island appear as the vanguard of the Latin American revolution and therefore enjoy mass support on a continental scale.

Born under the influence of these forces, the Cuban revolution quickly established connections with them. It began influencing them in turn. A highly dynamic revolution, it can, by following the natural lines of its defense through revolutionary policies on the international scene, add qualitatively new force to the colonial revolution, to the defense of the Soviet countries against imperialist attack, and to the struggle for world-wide socialism.

December 23, 1960.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND MARXIST THEORY

The Cuban Revolution, as it has developed in the last 19 months, poses some uncomfortable theoretical problems for Marxists. Of course these are problems that should fill us with delight, for they stem from the fact that the Cuban Revolution has gone farther, faster and deeper than any of us had anticipated; has, in fact, become a profound social revolution. Nevertheless, the paradoxes and problems remain and can even pose certain dangers for us.

What is so shocking about Cuba is this: that a revolutionary movement stemming from the urban middle classes and winning the support of the peasantry, which gained power when the U.S. finally decided to dump its former puppet, Batista, proceeded once in power to follow an authentically revolutionary course. It broke up the old army and police forces and armed the workers and poor peasants, expropriated the major economic holdings of U.S. capital, broke with the representative political leaders of the Cuban liberal bourgeoisie. And all this without the existence (not to speak of the intervention) of a revolutionary socialist party and without any autonomous action on the part of the working class!

The inconsistency of all this with certain of our expectations deriving from the Theory of Permanent Revolution is only too obvious. If we rightly believe that every revolution in our time must go beyond "bourgeois-democratic" bounds in order to achieve real success, and can find full vindication for this aspect of the theory in the Cuban Revolution, we also have believed that this process can take place only under the leadership of the working class and with the guidance of a Marxist party!

Some comrades have sought to conjure away this difficulty by slapping a ready-made label onto the Cuban Revolution. Cuba, we are told, has become a "workers' state" or, alternatively, is ruled by a "workers' and farmers' government." Alas, to substitute a system of ready-made categories for Marxist analysis, far from solving any theoretical problems, merely generalizes them, gives them an urgency and importance far beyond their present status. Cuba is to be called a "workers' state?" Then isn't it necessary to answer the general problem of the conditions under which we can expect proletarian revolutions to be victorious under middle class leadership and without even the participation of the working class or a working class party? The Castro regime is a "workers' and farmers' government?" And what, then, is the nature of the Cuban state? If anything, the social composition of the state apparatus, of the armed forces and militia, is more proletarian than that of the government - and thus we are back with our previous problem. Even dodging that undodgable question, we are still confronted with a very queer animal - a "workers' and farmers' government" in which there are no workers or farmers and no representatives of independent workers' or farmers' parties!

Surely neither the Fourth Congress of the CI nor the Transitional Program envisaged such a phenomenon.

We make no contribution to Marxist theory or to an understanding of the Cuban Revolution if we start from the idea that before we can support a revolution we must baptize it "proletarian" or if we are looking for non-working class shortcuts to socialist revolution. Above all must we abjure the tendency to think in abstract categories, to seek before all else for a tidy ideological pigeonhole into which to cram an unruly reality. A scientific theory is perpetually on trial before the facts and every failure to correctly predict and explain the facts points to the possibility of an inadequacy in the theory. Concretely, if in certain specific countries at the present specific historical conjuncture our theoretical expectations as to the need for working class leadership in order to achieve the main goals of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are contradicted by reality we must recognize that, although this does not require a general theoretical revision, it most certainly does require a reexamination and modernization of these specific aspects of the theory.

In this brief paper I do not intend to carry out such a reexamination, nor have I any intention of here setting forth a developed theoretical analysis of the Cuban Revolution; rather, I will try to lay out a theoretical framework within which such an analysis can eventually be developed.

Our starting point must be the immediate historic task confronting the Cuban Revolution: overcoming the backwardness and impoverishment of the masses imposed by centuries of colonialism and most particularly by the past 50 years of sugar monoculture inspired by and benefitting only the U.S. capitalists. To do this required one absolute precondition - a radical land reform. But since the great sugar estates and sugar mills were largely U.S. owned no step could be taken without an immediate clash with U.S. imperialism, and no thoroughgoing reform could be carried out without an end to U.S. economic domination of the island.

Now these aims - modernization, land reform, national independence - most assuredly are not socialist tasks. They merely lay the foundation upon which the Cuba of the future will be built. But will that Cuba be capitalist or socialist? Posing this question indicates one essential aspect of the Cuba problem - that the answer will not be found in Cuba. An independent, isolated, socialist Cuba standing against the enormous power of the U.S. is an obvious absurdity. But no less absurd is the idea of an independent development of Cuban capitalism. It is therefore false to argue that Cuba must be either a "capitalist state" or a "workers' state"; either a "capitalist government" or a "workers' and farmers' government." We are dealing with an extremely dynamic and contradictory process whose fate is bound up with that of the entire Latin-American revolution.



The U.S. State Department, for so long so brutally blind in its Latin-American policy, has awakened abruptly to this fact. The sharp switch in 1959 from a pro-Castro to a violently anti-Castro line was scarcely motivated by considerations restricted to Cuba; the essential was that by expropriating U.S. property and above all by reorienting its trade from the U.S. to the Soviet bloc, Cuba had taken a decisive lead in the Latin-American revolution and was leading it in an exceedingly dangerous direction.

The aim of U.S. policy has finally become perfectly clear: to prop up, at whatever cost, the more-or-less "democratic" bourgeois regimes while gradually liquidating the old-style dictatorships; and at the same time to intensify to the breaking point the economic pressures on Cuba. After a certain time the Castro regime, out of pure economic necessity, would be forced to come to terms with the State Department. The alternative of complete economic dependence on the Soviet bloc is, in fact, no alternative; as the New York Times put it in a recent editorial. "Castro is in danger of becoming a Soviet pawn and he should remember that the fate of pawns is usually to be sacrificed." Who can doubt that Cuba would be on the bargaining table at any future Summit?

This is not an unreasonable strategy; far from it. It can be upset by only one thing - a dramatic spread of revolutionary unrest which would break through the solidarity of the Latin-American bourgeoisie with U.S. imperialism and open a real perspective for Cuba. Although "Castro-type" revolutions remain a possibility in the most backward countries, such as Guatamala and Paraguay, the decisive countries of Latin America are those which have already experienced the initial growth of capitalism and in which there exists an already sizable industrial working class; Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Mexico. In these countries a "classless" revolution is impossible - the task of leadership is already on the shoulders of the proletariat.

Thus we see the two possibilities open to the Cuban revolution - to return to subordinate status in a U.S. dominated capitalist Western Hemisphere, or to be taken up and carried forward by a Latin American socialist revolution.

In this context is there anything concrete to be said about the nature of the Cuban government and state? It is clearly too early to answer in terms of finished categories, for the nature of the Cuban Revolution itself is not yet decided by history. Given the enormous prestige of Fidel Castro and the influence within the government of the Cuban Stalinists a deal between Castro and Kennedy/Nixon, with the tacit blessing of Khrushchev, would require no political counter-revolution within Cuba. Similarly, if successful proletarian revolutions were to break out in the main countries of Latin America no additional revolution would be required to bring Cuba into a socialist federation of the Americas.

Our emphasis must therefore be on the transitional and

open character of the Cuban Revolution. The Cuban state is a developing state, scarcely more than a year old: its class character will be determined by the development of the revolution. The Cuban government is a democratic middle-class regime basing itself on, and under continual pressure from, the workers and peasants. Is this self-evident description any less useful than the abstract, arbitrary and false label "workers' and farmers' government?"

It is precisely because the Castro government is so clearly not a workers' government that it is so important not to hastily label the state a "workers' state." If a workers party were in power it would little matter how quickly nationalization of industry proceeds. | In the present fluid situation the middle class leadership of the Revolution presents the greatest internal danger to the advance of the revolution. | This makes it mandatory that we advocate the creation of a genuine revolutionary working class party in Cuba today. ||

If we say that the final decision as to the Cuban Revolution will be made on a Latin-American scale, this is not to counsel passivity upon Cuban Marxists. The Cuban Revolution has still a lot of room for progress toward the establishment of an authentic workers' democracy, with its own institutional forms of workers' and peasants' power and with a functioning system of workers' control of production on all levels. Tendencies toward authoritarianism, paternalism, bureaucratization and thus eventual bourgeoisification are obviously present and strong; the status of the Stalinists in the government and unions, the suggestion of the need to restrict the right to strike, are ominous signs. As American Marxists, our obligation, as the most outspoken and militant defenders of the Cuban Revolution against our own ruling class, is at all times to discuss it clearly and critically, and without any fetishism.

Shane Mage  
Tim Wohlforth  
James Robertson

August 17, 1960

CUBAN QUESTION: REPORT FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE

By Joseph Hansen

In your folders you have a document, "Draft Theses on the Cuban Revolution." The line of this has been adopted by the Political Committee. There is a disagreement in the committee; and a minority has a separate viewpoint which will be presented here. The majority is simply asking the plenum to vote on this one document -- not for every sentence in it or every phrase or how it's phrased but for its line. That's all we want today.

We need this in order to give our party press and our spokesmen throughout the party a guide for some very important developments which have occurred in the Cuban revolution. There are in addition a number of complexities about this revolution and a number of implications on which I'm sure there is considerable disagreement and maybe many nuances. And on these differences I am sure that we will have to have an extensive discussion, a discussion which will probably go on for some time in our party, to go into the ramifications of all that is implied by the Cuban revolution.

Now I hope that we can have this discussion in this coming period -- after we've decided the main points today -- I hope that we can have this discussion in the most objective kind of way, in a cool way, in a way that is in the tradition of our party when we handle questions of this kind -- without heat, without epithets and without any of that pulling together and defending each other's positions because of special relationships in other parts of party work. We want to have an objective, free discussion and I think that one of the advantages of that will be that it will enable us to cooperate in clearing up these differences that we have among us or that can develop among us.

I think that's the freest kind of discussion because it enables us to take an opposing viewpoint and study it and size it up from the viewpoint of seeing where it reflects a weakness in our own position. If I have a position and someone is opposed to it I'm very interested in his position because I'm sure he's a capable, reasonable person and that he's seeing certain weaknesses in my position to which I should pay the utmost attention to preserve the party's interests.

Now our approach on this whole question of the Cuban revolution is from the party-building viewpoint. I think this was manifested yesterday in the discussions that we heard from any number of comrades after Comrade Farrell had finished his report. Each of the branches and each of the areas has reported how the Cuban revolution affected their branch work. And this is perfectly normal and perfectly in order. This is the way we approach all these big events.

Now it may have seemed in a certain way that we were approaching the question narrowly. We were seeing what factional interests the SWP had in the Cuban revolution and how we could capitalize on it as a party. But I think if you look a little farther

than just this surface aspect of things that what's involved is a broad sense of the party's historic role and how the Cuban revolution can help us, the class-conscious vanguard on an international scale, in building the party that is needed in taking us past capitalism and into the socialist world of the future.

Now this broad party-building viewpoint was manifested yesterday by the delegates who took the floor in the way which has been characteristic of all our discussions on all the big questions in the past decades. This is the approach that we took when we came to the big events in Germany in 1931 to 1933. The main question was the role of the party and how the role of the party was affected by events there. The same thing was true when we approached Spain -- the Spanish revolution and our discussions revolving about that. And it was true in the forties when the war broke out and we were faced with the problem of defending the Soviet Union. There again it was the role of the party that came first in our thinking. It was true in our discussion on Eastern Europe, on the character of the state there, on Yugoslavia and again in China.

In every one of these discussions the question that was dominant was the role of the party. Now this is in the heritage of the Left Opposition, the heritage that goes back to the very first days, when Trotsky first organized against the Stalinist counterrevolution. And I must say that this is a great tradition of our party, one that we are fully conscious of and one with which we approach all these questions.

I say this as preliminary remarks in turning to the Cuban revolution to indicate that when we approached this question it was with our tradition fully in mind and with the attitude of utmost seriousness towards the questions involved in theory and in politics in relation to the Cuban revolution. It was with full consciousness of the responsibilities that rest on us in approaching these questions.

The reason for this is that the Cuban revolution is a great revolution. It's a revolution that can prove decisive for the development of our party and our co-thinkers in Latin America for years to come. We already see how the Cuban revolution has become a pole of attraction in the radical movement in the United States, separating the various tendencies, cutting through them, beginning a new combination of forces in the United States. This is much more so in Latin America itself. The Cuban revolution has now become a key issue in all political discussions in South America, forcing every party from the extreme right wing of the bourgeoisie over the whole spectrum into the working class, forcing them to take a position on Cuba. The Cuban revolution is having the same effect in Latin America as a key issue as the Russian Revolution had in its day when it first came out. The Cuban question now is comparable in Latin America to the Russian question some decades ago.

And also I must say that in the United States besides becoming a question differentiating the different tendencies in the

radical movement, it has also become a key issue in foreign policy. And there's no party now that takes a stand on foreign policy in the United States that can avoid the question of Cuba. So we emphasize that this is a very, very important question for us.

Now how did we begin our approach to the Cuban revolution? We did not begin it from a theoretical level. We began it from a political level. The first thing we did was to determine what our attitude would be toward the Cuban revolution as a whole. What our policy would be toward it. This was reflected immediately in our press, in the Militant.

Now we had no difficulty whatsoever reaching a political position on Cuba. Because no matter what the specific characteristics of the revolution might be, as a whole it obviously was a part of the whole colonial revolution that had been sweeping the Far East, the Middle East into Africa and in Latin America. Therefore, we supported it as an automatic reflex. We supported it. And we supported it with all the more energy because it involved American imperialism, our own enemy right here at home. That's the approach on a political level.

Now similarly, as this revolution developed, in each of its crucial stages, we had no difficulty in finding what our attitude would be, determining our policy toward each of these turns and in expressing it in the Militant. For example, in January of 1959, when the people of Cuba moved in and took power in all the cities of the country and in Havana and they held the tribunals, citizens' tribunals where they put these criminals, these butchers of the Batista regime on trial, we had no difficulty in stating where we stood on those tribunals. On the opposite side, congressmen of the Democrats and Republicans and all the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie also had no difficulty in stating where they stood and we were on opposite sides of class lines. We had no difficulty there.

We had no difficulty taking a stand on the agrarian reform which began very early but which became codified in the law of May 17, 1959. We were all for that agrarian reform, the bigger the better and it turned out to be a pretty big one.

We had no difficulty in determining our attitude toward the bourgeois ministers who were in the Cuban government. Fresquet, Pazos, Urrutia and the others. We were glad to see them dismissed and kicked out. We had no difficulty whatsoever in taking a political position on these ministers and what should be done about them. I might say in passing that everyone of these are now part of the counterrevolution; they are in one or another of the groupings that are located in Florida.

Well, we had no difficulty in determining our political attitude toward the July 26 Movement taking full responsibility in Cuba as the government. That was easy to determine. We said, "Yes, we're all for that, because this is something quite different from the bourgeois ministers, from those who seemed to be a facade for the revolution for a time." And we were all for them

replacing the ministers in the various posts.

We had no difficulty at all regarding the nationalizations in Cuba. We were a bit doubtful in the beginning whether they would go that far, we would wait and see what would occur. But when they occurred we did not have the slightest difficulty in stating exactly where we stood. "We're for those nationalizations, every bit of them, and the bigger the better." And they were plenty big.

We had no difficulty on such key questions as the monopoly of foreign trade when it was done first in the form of controls by the government over foreign trade. It became established, and we were for that because it was part and parcel of our whole traditional program as to what a country should do of that character as it moves forward -- to establish a monopoly of foreign trade.

And we had no difficulty taking a position on the planned economy that began in Cuba in an early stage in very tentative forms and which is now rolling ahead. We had no difficulty saying, "Yes, we're for a planned economy. We have been for a long time. We think planned economies are a good thing."

And we had no difficulty taking a position on the relations with the Soviet bloc. We said, "That's very good. Cuba has found a possibility here for saving its revolution from being crushed by American imperialism and we're all for that." We were for the aid that they got. And from the Soviet side, we were glad that they would give aid to the Cuban revolution. We had no difficulty taking a position on that.

And we had no difficulty taking a position on the extension of the Cuban revolution into South America. Even in the tentative forms with which it was begun by the Castro forces, the July 26 Movement as they went to the various countries in South America, in Mexico and all the Latin American countries and appealed to them for aid and for help, and suggested to these countries that they should imitate the Cuban revolution and have a revolution like theirs. "That's wonderful, that's a good way to defend the Cuban revolution." All we could say is that we want more like that and stronger and better organized.

On all these questions, which were key political questions, we had to take a stand. As the key situations developed we had no problem at all in reaching political positions.

Now on the theoretical side, the story is a little bit different. Besides the political side, the revolution has its theoretical side and these are rather closely interconnected. Because it is very difficult to take a political position that is consistent without relating it to theory, to your most general positions. And even if you don't express your theoretical positions, don't develop and discuss them publicly, still you have to have them in mind as you study the politics and decide what your political positions will be. They're very closely interconnected.

Now we have let that side, so far as our press is concerned, remain rather in abeyance and I will explain to you some reasons why in a moment.

At this point, still looking at things from a political viewpoint, it has become politically necessary to make a theoretical assessment. We can't just remain on the level of political events as they occur, we now have to turn to the theory of the Cuban revolution because there is a political need for it. Let me explain that.

First of all, there is a tremendous imperialist campaign being waged against Cuba by American imperialism. And among the aspects of this campaign, one of its components is to picture Cuba as having gone "communist," as having gone "socialist," as having gone "Stalinist." This is in all the bourgeois papers; the most responsible of them as well as the most yellow has this estimate. Now that faces us with the problem, what do we say? Do we agree or disagree with them and if so, why? You're faced with a political problem here. You have to answer it.

The same is true in relation to the radical movement. Other tendencies are characterizing the revolution, beginning with the July 26 Movement. The July 26 Movement characterized their movement in the beginning as "humanist." But it doesn't take much reading now of the Cuban press to see that they are shifting and giving this humanism a socialist content and talking more and more about Marxism and about socialism and planned economies and of the example of the Soviet Union and of China.

And if the July 26 Movement is shifting this way, we are faced with a political duty to say if we agree or disagree. Are they wrong or are they right, and why? And it's not only the July 26 Movement in Cuba -- which forces us in any case, even if no one else said anything about it. There are figures like Sartre, very important intellectual figures, that have a position. Is he right or is he wrong? And C. Wright Mills. I'm sure all of you have read Listen, Yankee. At least all those in this room have read Listen, Yankee. All right, is he wrong, or is he right? A big important figure in the academic world in the United States has made an estimate of the Cuban revolution. We are now faced with a political need to answer where we stand on this. Huberman and Sweezy have taken a stand on it. Do we agree or disagree? The Communist party has a stand on the character of the revolution. Where do we stand -- do we agree or do we disagree with them?

In other words, we feel a political pressure now to reach a definite decision as to the main characteristics of this revolution. It finally boils down to this question: Should we intervene in the dispute that's going on between all these currents, all these figures, or should we abstain from this dispute and wait still longer before we take a position? If we do, we suffer political damage. Political necessity forces us to turn to the theoretical side of the revolution.

There's another consideration that is even more important in my opinion. And that's this. Enormous changes have taken place in

the relationships of the classes in Cuba and in the relations between Cuba and the United States. First of all, inside Cuba it is obvious that there has been a complete turnover in class relationships. Between the United States and Cuba -- this should be obvious to anyone who can read the headlines in the daily press -- relations have completely altered from what they were even a short time ago. The relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union have completely altered. And the relationships between Cuba and Latin America have completely altered.

Now our policies, our political policies, are determined by these changes. We have to take positions on them, relate them to our own goals, to where we're heading, say where we stand in relation to them and determine our policies in relation to these changes. To do that, we must size up these changes, see what they are, see what has occurred, name them, label them so that we can see where we are at. We have to do that in order to either maintain our policies or to alter them if it is necessary.

Now we could let this go and just take political positions on current stuff, for or against this and give some reason or another. Let the theory go for a while. But it is highly dangerous to let such a gap occur between your theory and your politics. We know that from theory -- that theory itself at a certain point demands that we take cognizance of its needs too. And the reason for that is that theory links us with the past. It links us with all our past experience in revolutions, all our past experience with parties and points the way in the long range sense to the future, so at a certain point we can't let it drift, we have to take a position insofar as the theoretical side is concerned.

Now I am bringing these questions up because I want to stress one point. And that is that our interest in this theoretical discussion is not primarily terminological. We're not interested in this label or that label or simply in slapping a label on the Cuban revolution. We feel profound needs for assessing that revolution and its stages and its class relationships. We don't feel the need primarily just to put a label on it. It's very important to understand that -- what our interests are in approaching this. The real question that's involved here is to trace the actual stages of that revolution, to trace the actual shifts in the class relationships, the actual shifts in the political power in Cuba. That is very important.

On the other hand, I don't think we should be afraid of labels -- especially if they are correct labels. Labels you know are sometimes a very advantageous thing. I've noticed that many times at the bar. Put a bottle of Old Pap up and a bottle of White Horse and you usually reach for the White Horse -- although it might be mislabeled.

Labels can be very useful. Above all they are useful in indicating analogies. For example, we call Cuba a workers state; we are immediately presented with the analogy of Yugoslavia and China. The mere label itself forces you to compare the two and see how they connect. And this means also that a label



tends to indicate continuity of processes. By labeling the state -- whether the label is correct or incorrect -- it turns us, it forces us in the direction of previous manifestations of the same phenomena.

For example, has the October Revolution in one way or another been extended or reflected in Cuba? Do we have a Soviet type economy here or not? These are all indicated as soon as you come to the question of labels.

Finally, on the continuity of theory. How does this relate to similar theories on similar questions? It immediately points to the discussions we had on Eastern Europe, on Yugoslavia, on China. And it points even farther back, as soon as you enter the field of theory, because there's direct continuity to the very beginning of our movement in Trotsky's Left Opposition and even before that in the Bolshevik period that laid the very foundations of theory in our movement on the basis of what Marx and Engels had achieved.

Now in this case I think that the label should not give us cause for vexation. I think in this case the label should be rather a cause for rejoicing because what we are naming here, if we are correct, is the first workers state in the Western hemisphere. And it's a pretty good-looking one. Everybody that's been down there will agree with that. Cuba is the most auspicious opening for the socialist revolution in Latin America. I think anybody that's been there, really experienced it and felt it and seen these people and talked with them will come back with that, completely re-inspired if they've been dragging a little bit because of the slowness of things in the United States. An auspicious occasion. So we shouldn't be so much afraid of labels.

If the Cuban revolution is such a favorable event, such an important thing, why did we wait until now to take up the question of naming it? I indicated that I would explain the reasons.

First of all, as you've probably gathered from the report that Farrell made yesterday, we did not have a full opportunity to discuss this question from the theoretical side. We were so busy defending that revolution and so busy organizing an election campaign that our personnel here became extremely limited. Key comrades were outside of the city. Others became sick at a crucial time. And consequently it was very difficult for us to discuss this question with thoroughness, with the amount of thought that's needed to approach this.

But I think that even if we had had greater opportunity to discuss the Cuban revolution, to probe into the theoretical sides of it, I doubt very much that we would have labeled Cuba a workers state before now. In my opinion the reason for this was the absence of a manifest socialist consciousness on the part of the leadership of that revolution. We simply could not give them a blank political check when they came to power and say, "Well, obviously because of the mentality you have, your program, your consciousness, you're going to make Cuba into a workers state."

Therefore we're ready to call it a workers state now." It remained to be seen in the struggle itself what the final course would be in Cuba. And therefore we had to be very, very cautious about it.

This test of the Cuban revolution, the test in struggle, was passed between the period of August to October in 1960, three months ago when industries were nationalized throughout the entire island. Castro said at one point they were going to nationalize them down to the nails in their shoes. This turned out to be correct. He meant all the nails. Cuba is one of the most thoroughly nationalized countries in the world. They took about two and one half billion dollars worth of property down there. Most of it American. All that's left, according to the United States Embassy in Cuba, before they had to leave too, was about 100 million dollars of U.S. property. That was all that was left. That was their estimate. I don't know if they're figuring it on the tax levels or what. This consists mostly of properties like Western Union, Radio Corporation of America, communications outfits, small businesses, completely minor stuff. If you view this from the viewpoint of expropriation, it's hard to expropriate one end of a telegraph line. You've got to have both ends to really make it operate. Whatever the reasons there's not much left down there.

Now this attitude on our part, of waiting until we saw what happened, of waiting until the nationalizations actually occurred, if they were going to occur, is a conservative approach. That's a fact. It's a conservative approach on our part. And this conservatism was due to our concern for theory, our realization of the importance of theory. It's a result of the long experience we have had in our party with improvisations and the dangers they lead to, with the dangers that come from failing to think things through. We want in questions like this to be absolutely sure.

Now the conclusions that we have reached are not speculations, they're not projections, are not based on any political confidence in what the regime down there is going to do. Our characterizations simply reflect the facts, just the facts. The fact that the capitalists have been expropriated in Cuba. The fact that a planned economy has been started there. The fact that a qualitatively different kind of state exists there. No matter what you call these things, they are the facts that everyone has to start with. That's the situation.

Now we may be clear enough to put some labels on them.

I don't want to repeat what's in the Theses you have before you. I don't want to rehash them because I expect everybody will have read them and have studied them. But what I would like to place before you are some considerations, some of which I am sure you will agree with, others which you may or may not agree with and some considerations that I present as personal opinions. So first of all, let me indicate where I think you will all agree on the question of Cuba before I come to the speculative side, if it is speculative. It is very important in beginning a discussion to understand what we agree on. It makes the discussion a lot easier. This is true whatever the nuances may be in all the

various positions that are taken.

The first fact I think we can all agree on is this: That the revolution began under a petty-bourgeois leadership. A petty-bourgeois leadership whose program was largely bourgeois democratic. That's one of the things I think everyone will agree with, one reason being that the leadership itself recognizes that. The Castro leadership says that. They recognize that. Now there are two special things about this leadership. One is that it was extremely radical. It believed in armed revolution. It really believed in it and organized it --armed overthrow of the government. They practiced it, they advocated it. And let me add that it's completely legal in Cuba. I don't say it's legal here, but in Cuba it's legal to advocate the armed overthrow of the government.

This leadership had one more characteristic that I think everyone will agree with. Its first appeals were directed to the population at large -- workers, peasants, everybody -- in the expectation that there would be a spontaneous uprising in response to their appeals through some dramatic actions that would dramatize the appeals. Then after they found that this did not work, then they set about organizing an armed force, an armed force consisting largely of the peasantry and of agricultural workers. I think those are facts that are so clear that no one would deny them. Certainly in our movement everyone will agree with them. I think we also have agreement among all of us that this is an extremely profound revolution, one that has gone to far-reaching economic and social measures. Everybody will agree on that, even though they won't agree on what to call them. I think everyone will agree that the revolution began with the support of the peasantry and of the agricultural workers, that it had the sympathy or quickly won the sympathy of the urban workers and finally their active support. That's the present stage of the revolution down there now and I think everybody else who has been there and studied there will agree on that point.

Finally, I think everybody will agree that the Cuban revolution has displayed strong democratic and socialist tendencies, moving in that direction. It's much more democratic than anything we've seen in a long time.

That's where we have agreement so far as the main facts are concerned.

I think we will also have agreement on what our main tasks are in respect to the Cuban revolution and that's of key importance for our party. Also for the discussion we want to have, an agreement on that score is of key importance.

The first main task is to defend this revolution against imperialism. That's our main preoccupation as a party in relationship to the Cuban revolution. To defend it against imperialism.

I think we have agreement that we should defend all institutions that have been created in Cuba, like the planned economy, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, that we defend these

revolutionary institutions against the counterrevolution. That's a big area of agreement.

I think we all agree that we should do our utmost to rally the American labor movement to the Cuban revolution and rally the students and intellectuals, whomever we can get together to defend that revolution. I think we all agree on that. And I think we agree on certain tasks inside Cuba no matter how we name these various things that occurred there. First, that we follow a policy aimed at expanding and developing the proletarian democracy. That's our Number One. Second, that we follow a policy aimed at building a revolutionary socialist party. In other words, that we follow a policy of deepening, extending the socialist consciousness which has already begun in Cuba. And that we follow a policy aimed at extending the Cuban revolution throughout Latin America, this first area of expansion. We all agree on that no matter what we call these different things. And thus we have a very wide area of agreement.

I want to stress that again and again -- the wide area of agreement that we have. I do that because in a discussion, there's a natural tendency to emphasize differences, emphasize even nuances that appear much larger than they really are. The fact is that our areas of agreement are so wide, so solid that we can afford to take things fairly easy on the other side.

Now we come to the theoretical questions that there may be some differences on. One of these key questions is what the Cuban revolution implies in theory to the role of the party.

I said that on the practical side, at least for the SWP, there's been a new opportunity. This is visible to everyone of us. This is one of the consequences of a revolutionary victory. There it stands in great contrast to the defeats that were suffered in the revolutions of the thirties. In Spain and Germany and so forth. We are now experiencing as a party, a revolutionary victory with immediate impact on the United States. That's a tremendous thing for us.

But we're still left with the question how are we to explain this victory in Cuba in the absence of a party like the Socialist Workers party. Let me explain that. There's no Socialist Workers party in Cuba. But how can they have a revolution down there in Cuba without the SWP? Isn't there great danger involved in this? Doesn't this imply that no party is needed? Can you have a revolution without a party?

Now I will admit that there is a danger here. A danger that some comrades can reach such a conclusion. This was the case in our previous discussions on similar questions. It was the case in Eastern Europe. One of our fears was that this could lead to a revision among some comrades on the importance of the party. The same thing was true in our discussion of China. It was a foremost consideration in our discussion. Before that we had a manifestation in a different form in earlier years where certain

comrades reached the conclusion that since in theory a party is absolutely essential to have a revolutionary victory, therefore since all the Trotskyist parties are very small, this signifies that the perspectives for the revolution are very dim.

To answer this question regarding the role of the party in Cuba and how it was possible to have a revolution there, a successful one, without a party like the SWP there, I think we have to go beyond Cuba to find the answers. I tried to indicate this in an article which is in the current issue of the magazine. It's briefly this: That you have to find the answer not inside Cuba but in the international situation in which Cuba is locked and which affects Cuba from all sides. Cuba is not an isolated country. It is affected by the international situation. And the main factor impinging on Cuba is first of all the decay of imperialism which has reached such a state as to impel people after people in country after country towards revolutionary uprisings. The second factor is the strength of the Soviet bloc which stands as a great enormous example in their minds, a revolutionary example. They realize at least vaguely how the Soviet Union was started, they can see the revolutionary import of its institutions, therefore it stands as a constant revolutionary source of ideology which tends toward a revolutionary direction.

And finally I think the other main factor in world politics which explains this is the default of the Communist party in assuming revolutionary leadership for many decades. It has finally reached the point where people pressing towards revolution which can no longer be delayed, revolutions which grow imperative, which are needed right now, put forward any leaderships which happen to be at hand.

And so we have these revolutions with varied successes. One after another of these situations. I think what these situations indicate is not only the ripeness for revolutions but also the ripeness for the formation of a revolutionary party. It shows that side, too. That's quite evident if you stop long enough and think how rotten-ripe this world is for the birth of a revolutionary party.

Let me state once again what our concept of a party is because I'm afraid that sometimes we tend to look at the SWP as it is -- that's what we mean by a party, a revolutionary party. On that question, I think we have to say, "Yes, the SWP is what we mean by a revolutionary party but also it's not what we mean by a revolutionary party." A yes and no answer. In program and in aim, yes. It's revolutionary-socialist to the core. Personnel? Well, looking around here I can see a lot of people whose personalities need improvement. Mine's all right, of course. And I see a certain lack of forces here. We don't have a great mass party. You see there's a lot of room for improvement in this party both on the personalities that make it up, that's qualitatively, and also in the quantity of forces that we have at our disposal. So our tendency, therefore, is to take a very narrow conception of the party because it's what we see before us, the SWP. But even if we achieved a great mass base in the United States -- which I'm sure would be a considerable step forward --

even if we achieved that, we would still have a tendency, I think, towards a certain narrowness in our concept of the party.

Now when we talk about a party, we mean an international party. One that is commensurate to tremendous international goals. We mean a party that is capable of taking the world working class and leading it forward to overthrow capitalism which is an international system. From then on, leading the world out of capitalism to the socialist world of the future. That's what we mean by a revolutionary-socialist party. A tremendous thing. One that is of the greatest historic importance. It's probably the greatest task that has faced humanity, the building of such a party.

Now let me say right now that such a party has never been built yet. Marx didn't build one. Lenin didn't build one. They started the core of it. Their aim was absolutely clear -- where they were headed. But they never conceived this party as simply a narrow, national party. They conceived it as an international one, one that is capable of the greatest task that has faced humanity, taking us from capitalism to socialism.

When we say that capitalism is rotten-ripe for revolution, we also say that the conditions on an international scale are rotten-ripe for the construction of such a party. Such a tremendous international party that has all the knowledge and capacity, both political and theoretical, for accomplishing these great tasks. How are we going to build such a party? Will it be built in advance of the revolution? It would be very good if it could be -- at least that's what the Cubans themselves say now -- it would be good to have such a party in advance. The fact is that such a party has got to be built in the very process of revolution as revolutions occur with varying degrees of success. That's the fact that faces us. In some countries I think we will be able to build national sections of the party before the revolution occurs and in some countries like ours I think that is an absolute condition for success. In other countries the revolution forges forward faster than the party. That's an evident fact of politics now. So, when we mean a revolutionary party, a revolutionary-socialist party, we don't just mean a revolutionary-socialist party in little Cuba or in little Guatemala or in little Costa Rica, or in little Nicaragua. Those will be important sections of it. We are thinking of an international party on a major scale in which these are component parts.

Thus we come to the conclusion that there is great unevenness in the growth and development of this party. Great unevenness. Some countries can forge forward faster than others. In some cases the action can transcend the political consciousness of it. Given this great unevenness in the development of an international party, we have to ask ourselves this question: Does this signify that it is impossible for the masses to overthrow a capitalist power in certain countries until the international party appears in full force and completeness? That's the question that faces us. We probably wouldn't even have asked this question if we hadn't already gotten certain answers. The answers are that in certain countries it is possible. Yugoslavia, China and Cuba. That's the fact sheet. We have to look at it and say that's what

it is. I would say that in the light of those three empiric facts, we would have to conclude that it is possible in certain situations in certain countries under certain conditions -- it is possible for the masses to go as far forward as establishing a workers state.

Having said that, we immediately come to the question of limitations. These are tremendous. Let's just take the case of Cuba. First of all, there were great and costly errors committed in the Cuban revolution. Great and costly ones. The revolution established a coalition government with bourgeois democrats. That didn't help the revolution any. It led to a very ragged differentiation between the revolutionary forces and those that were counterrevolutionary -- a process that's still proceeding in Cuba. That's the reason for all these "defections" that take place in Cuba; it's the flight of the counterrevolutionaries.

There was a great error made in the relations between the Cuban revolution and the American workers. One of the first things they did down there was to immediately break off all connections with the trade-union movement in the United States. And George Meany said, "Thank you." He couldn't have asked for anything better than such an error on the part of the Cuban revolutionaries. Cut off their relations with the American trade unions.

They've made considerable errors in the extension of their revolution in Latin America. They realized the general importance and need of it but so far as actually carrying it out in a coordinated, organized way, it has been very, very slipshod with any number of errors. We can see that in a practical way in our experience with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The thing never seemed to get off the ground. It operates in a way that is completely alien to all our concepts, not only our concepts, but alien to the needs of the Cuban revolution. That's one of the problems that has arisen because of the lack of a revolutionary party in Cuba.

Take it from the economic side. Look at the delays that occurred down there in the process of the revolution in expropriating the properties, they had to wait until they were pushed into it by American imperialism, slapped around, then there was a response, a defensive reflex to these blows struck by American imperialism. They were stumbling, fumbling, losing all kinds of valuable time which the bourgeoisie in the United States utilized in order to prepare the ground psychologically for their counterrevolution. Two years of time -- a year and a half at least -- was wasted almost, while the bourgeoisie in the United States, step by step, got prepared psychologically for the counterrevolution.

Finally, we come to this big error in the Cuban revolution, its big limitation; and that is the lack of the development of democratic forms of rule. To any Trotskyist, any revolutionary socialist, it jumps out before your eyes, the weakness of the revolution on that side. And that weakness derives primarily from the weakness of the leadership, of its consciousness. All these things tell us the limitations of this workers state that

has appeared in Cuba. And this side is just as important as the other side. That is, the recognition of what is positive about that revolution.

So, a success like the one in Cuba demonstrates not that a party has become superfluous -- instead, what it demonstrates is just the opposite. It brings forward with new imperativeness the need for an international party of the kind I've tried to indicate in just a few sentences. That is, the need it has demonstrated is the need for Marxist political consciousness that takes the organized form of a party.

If you view that revolution as uncompleted, it's very easy to see then that this is the big need of the moment. An uncompleted revolution in transition -- and what it needs for completion is a revolutionary-socialist party. But if you view that revolution as completed, as being finished, then you can say, "Well, what do you need a party for? You can have a completed revolution without a party." So it depends how you view that revolution what conclusion you will come to about the party.

Well, we come to this question: What kind of consciousness has appeared in Cuba? What occurred down there? What are the perspectives for the development of revolutionary consciousness, revolutionary-socialist consciousness in Cuba? The fact is that the consciousness is beginning to appear in Cuba. Dick Garza called my attention to the magazine Verde Olivo, the official publication of the armed forces. There's an article in there by Che Guevara, and there are others in the Cuban press if you follow it closely enough, in which he takes up the question of Marx and Marx's contributions. A very interesting article. He says Marx foresaw the laws of the Cuban revolution. He says these laws exist objectively. Marx didn't just bring them out of his head. Marx was reflecting a reality. Marx saw these laws long ago; we were hazy about these laws but we discovered them in practice.

That indicates how the consciousness of this revolution is developing in the mind of one of its leaders. There are many interesting things in that article. For instance, he says, "They ask me if I'm a Marxist. That's like asking a physicist if he is a Newtonian, or a biologist if he is a follower of Pasteur. This has all become part of the body of human knowledge. You can't operate in world politics without knowing something about Marx. In a vague way," he says, "everybody has this consciousness."

He is talking, of course, about the intellectuals that you find in other countries, in Latin America, he wasn't talking about the United States and the workers here and the intellectuals in the United States. It's a reflection of a political culture that you find much more advanced in other countries than you find in the United States. I indicate this article, I hope Dick may be able to give you something that is in it. (Warde: "It's in Studies on the Left.") I only read the Cuban press.

This process that occurred in Cuba, this action of the



revolution, was bound at a certain point to have a reflection in consciousness. They did actually follow the laws of the revolution in practice. But that had an effect on their minds. What's impressive and important is that some of the leaders at this point are aware of this interconnection. They state this publicly. Now as soon as I mention this, let me qualify it. When they state this publicly, they also include references to Stalin. This is a very important consideration. It may be that this is due to diplomacy towards their relations with the Soviet Union. It may be a political price they are paying for the political aid. It also may be a stage in their development. They may have to go through this development in their own mind of really probing Stalinism. Their first assumption may be that it is revolutionary.

We hope that it won't mean a retrogression. But under the oppression of American imperialism and the demands of the Soviet bureaucracy the Cuban revolutionary leadership can retrogress in their thinking. We hope that they won't. We struggle very, very hard, as much as we possibly can, to prevent it. That's one of the key questions with us -- to fight for the soul of the Cuban revolution.

We have on our side this fact that we do know that the central leadership in the Cuban revolution is aware of Stalinism in general and do not like it. We do know that. Mills' report is a very accurate one on the thinking of the leadership in the Cuban revolution; that is, the anti-Stalinism. But they are under tremendous pressures, with American imperialism on one side and the Soviet bureaucracy on the other and they make some very unwarranted concessions.

But beside the leadership there are also the masses in Cuba, the workers and the peasants. They are learning Marxism in the class struggle. They are learning it in the class struggle with the United States and Eisenhower has given them some very eloquent lessons in it and I think Kennedy will follow up his predecessor in giving them even more advanced lessons in the class struggle. Besides this, there is the alliance with the Soviet bloc that is having a big impact on the thinking of the masses there. The example of what's been done in the Soviet Union, its culture, its achievements, science, planned economy, all of that is now making a big impact on Cuban thinking.

Finally, there's the publicity in the press that's now appearing about Marxism, even though it is tainted with Stalinism; it is having an impact on the thinking of the masses in Cuba. It, too, is a reflection of the thinking, of the shift toward revolutionary consciousness.

Thus, I would say that the conditions are becoming very favorable now in Cuba for the development of revolutionary socialism; that is, formation of a contingent or section of this big international party we are thinking about.

I am coming to my conclusion now. This is the opening stage, in my opinion, of the socialist revolution in Latin America. The opening stage of it. One small island off the coast of that

tremendous land mass. And there are certain lessons we can already draw, I think, about the revolution: What this revolution shows us about what's going to happen in Latin America.

First of all, that in Latin America, the democratic tasks that face all those countries speedily pass into socialist ones. In Cuba, the gap was about a year and a half, plus or minus. About a year and a half. The terrific speed of that revolution shows what the speed will be in the other countries of Latin America.

Another lesson I think is this: that some very crippling myths have been dispersed through the Cuban revolution. The first myth is this: These countries, with their monocultures, one-crop or one-product countries, their poverty which follows as a consequence of that kind of economy, so distorts and twists and cripples them that it dooms them if they should try to break out of the imperialist grip. This has been a crippling myth in Latin American politics for decades. You couldn't make a revolution in Bolivia because it's only got tin, and if isolated by American imperialism, what can it do but collapse? So therefore, why make a revolution? That kind of thinking has been in our own movement and in circles around our movement. That myth has been ended by the experience of the Cuban revolution.

The second myth that has been ended is that imperialism is so powerful that it would be absolutely futile in these countries to try to overthrow the state. Absolutely futile to overthrow the rule of the imperialists. Cuba, by existing as long as it has, only 90 miles from Miami, has demonstrated the fallacy of that view. And that can have tremendous consequences in Latin America.

Now there are some other items that have been disproved. One is that the revolution can be accomplished only by Communist parties. That was an illusion in many, many parts of this world, that you have to wait for the Communist party. And if they happen to be off beam now you have to wait until they are on beam. And let me just ask in passing: What does this do to the theory of entrism sui generis? Where would the Cuban Trotskyists have been in Cuba? They would have been in the CP, wouldn't they? What they needed was 12 guys to go up on the Sierra Maestre. If you go by that experience that's literally what happened. It shows the importance of an independent organization as contrasted to the policy of burying yourself in some organization that's not so revolutionary.

Look what it's done to the theory of peaceful coexistence. Cuba can solve this peacefully with the United States? Every time you pick up a newspaper the headlines show you what a completely wrong, fraudulent policy that is.

And look what it's done to popular frontism, the policy followed by the CP and other organizations. Knocked it into a cocked hat. Popular frontism won't win revolutions. To win a revolution you've got to be very serious and organize from the bottom with the masses and move towards power.

There are many questions, I think, that are raised of the utmost importance, theoretically and politically and the comrades who have these special viewpoints are to be thanked for bringing them forward.

Let me indicate a few areas now where any comrade can make a contribution who wants to in the field of theory. First of all, the character of the slogans that were used by the July 26 Movement. How many of them, what their character was, and how the masses responded to them. There's a lesson in that for a revolutionary-socialist party, too. At a certain stage of the revolution, slogans become very simplified and condensed and very well worth studying from that one viewpoint alone in looking forward to the struggles of the future.

Another question: the importance of the struggle for democratic rights. We sometimes think of democratic rights as something you struggle for because, well, your democratic rights are involved, because you need room for the party to move in, to breathe in and to stay out of jail, so forth and so on. But in this struggle in Cuba, the struggle for democratic rights against oppression turned out to be a key issue of the socialist revolution. That's a very revealing fact that's worth very serious study.

Another area: the immense importance of an agrarian program to socialists. Our tendency here in New York is to leave the agrarian problem to those out in Minnesota. In the Twin Cities, they say, "What are you talking about? I was born in the Bronx. Or in Scandinavia and I've become an American." Here I think we can go back and get a new Appreciation of why it was that Lenin paid so much attention to the agrarian program, and why we, too, even in the United States, should be turning in that direction.

Another area is the true nature of this humanism in the Cuban revolution, its real content.

What was the true nature of the rebel army? Was it just an armed force, or did it have an ideology, a certain political character? Was it something more than an army? Was it partly a party? An armed party. A very interesting phenomenon and the same goes for the militia today in Cuba. Is it just a militia that marches with arms, or does it have a political character, does it play a political role, and have a political consciousness? Is there politics in that militia, is it simply a militia or something more? Those are areas we need to know more about.

Finally, let me give one for the students who go to Cuba. What's the structure of the political life in that country? I mean its real political life. Where's its political life occurring? In the unions? In the militia? In the army? In the cooperatives? In the government organizations? In the political formations like the CP? Exactly how does the political life of that country occur? We know they've got a lot of democracy there. We know there's a lot of discussion. But what are the forms exactly in which that is occurring down there? This is very

important information for us in determining our political line in the sense of influencing the discussion of revolutionary socialism down there. As a matter of fact, that question alone can be decisive in the way in which we move along our policy of constructing the revolutionary socialist party.

January 14, 1961

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CUBAN QUESTION: MINORITY REPORT

By Tim Wohlforth

I agree with Joe that what we want -- I know we felt this on the Political Committee -- is that the discussion in the party on the Cuban question be an objective educational full discussion. I feel the only thing hot about me at the moment is my fevered brow. I'll try to keep it that way. I don't intend to accuse Joe of raising my temperature because it's about the way it was when I began. The fundamental cause of that is a virus.

Because I believe with Joe, the fundamental question before this party is how the work of the party goes. There has been and continues to be a complete solidity of view on the defense of the Cuban revolution. It is precisely for this reason that we are able to take this question -- it could be a very serious question -- and put it within this educational framework for consideration by the party.

I might start out by saying that in addition to having differences with Joe on the substantive, theoretical questions of the Cuban revolution, I'm afraid to say that I also have a difference on the question of methodology. And this may be the most fundamental difference. I really don't believe that our task, the task of Marxists, is to find out in the tradition of Sergeant Friday of "Dragnet" what the facts are, just the facts, and then find a label for them. The main reason why I feel rather strongly about that is because of my previous political association of several years ago. This was the fundamental methodology of the Shachtmanites. That was their idea toward the Soviet Union and on their basis and with their methodology, they were absolutely correct. They said, "All we want to do is discuss the facts. Soviet Union, slave labor, etc. If the bureaucracy acts as if it were a class, then it is a class. Trotsky said it did in Revolution Betrayed. But Trotsky said it isn't a matter of, in an empirical fashion, labeling what you see. Rather, you must understand any social phenomenon as flow, you have to discuss from whence it came and where it is going. And before you arrive at a label for something you don't just simply assess what percentage of industry is nationalized and then match up the following slogans.

But rather you try to understand the unfolding of a revolution, unfolding of a social phenomenon, where it has come from, where it is going and relate that to the world body of socialist, or Marxist thought. Incorporate into the body of Marxist thought this new social phenomenon. Or, if necessary, revise that body of thought and revise it consciously, on the basis of information that social reality brings to you.

But it isn't a simple matter of getting an impression of reality and giving a label to it. It is a much more profound thing than that.

Now as Joe mentioned, I think that there is complete agreement on several questions as to the nature of the Cuban revolution. At least every source I have read, including the leaders of the revolution, agree. I'll just go over these very briefly because I think that now they've become so well-known in our movement because of our following of Cuban events that they would be a repetition of the obvious. And I'll discuss them within the framework of the nature of the leadership of the Cuban revolution, which is one of the big problems which faces us and which we must decide upon.

In the first place, the leaders of the Cuban revolution came out of the student movement, and began political activity within the framework of the bourgeois Orthodoxo party. Castro broke from that party on the basis of finding that he didn't have much success in running for elections and then, with a band of students, attempted a terrorist act in the tradition of the Social Revolutionaries and stormed Moncado. He literally wiped out his entire movement and saved the day by his own personal brilliance, his own personal qualities at the trial that he was allowed to have. He could have easily been shot in the actual storming of Moncado or immediately thereafter -- as were most of his followers-- by the Batista henchmen.

Being an empiricist, but a profound one, he came to the conclusion that this was not necessarily the best way to carry through the Cuban revolution as it was rather costly on one's forces. When he finally got out of jail, he decided to gather together his middle-class students into a guerrilla army, training them as guerrillas, and rather than storming the center of power in Cuba, entering Cuba through the back door, through the mountains, guerrilla activity. At this time, he did not have any conception of a program in any real sense -- he had some sort of a social program -- he did not have a thoroughly worked out one.

Guevara put it this way in this article which Joe referred to, which is in Studies on the Left. The only reason I read it is that I only read the English and American press. "The men who arrived in Havana after two years of arduous struggle are not the same men, ideologically, that landed on the beaches of Las Coloradas or who took part in the first phase of the struggle. Distrust for the campesino had been converted into affection and respect for his virtues. Their total ignorance of the life in the country has been converted into a knowledge of the guajiros."

So, in effect, the Castro movement started out a middle-class movement which first gave up parliamentary methods of struggle and attempted terrorism and then decided to try moving into the countryside. Once moving into the countryside and finding themselves isolated with twelve men in the mountains, formed an alliance with the social class which gave them their ability to later conquer Cuba -- the peasantry.

For instance, Mills characterizes the rebel army this way and this characterization is identical with the characterization of Sweezy, of Guevara and Castro themselves, of Joe in his pamphlet; everyone agrees on this. "The rebel army was formed of peasants and led by young intellectuals." Essentially the social force that was formed by Castro and which came to power in Cuba.

Now as far as I can find out, from all the information that I can get, this particular leadership, the leadership of the Castro movement, the leadership of the rebel army, the rebel army officers -- its essential nature has remained consistent over the last couple of years. It has gone through a political evolution to some extent, it has changed its political outlook because they themselves admit they have changed their political outlook. But its essential character as a petty-bourgeois leadership is consistent to this day. Theodore Draper characterizes them this way and I could quote from Mills or from Sweezy or from anyone who has been down there and and, in fact, they themselves would admit it. "Every member of Castro's government came from middle-class or upper-class homes and became, or intended to become, a professional or intellectual." And then he also makes this observation, which I think is an interesting one;

"Whereas the Bolshevik intellectuals and professionals were closely linked politically and psychologically to the Russian working class, the revolutionary intellectuals and professionals behind Castro identify themselves emotionally with the guajiros." And Mills in another place points out that the government today is based on -- as of August this year -- (although Sweezy who was down there in October would generally say the same thing) -- represents above all the people in the countryside.

So we see what the leadership of the Cuban revolution was in its beginning. The nature of the leadership has not changed -- that is, the essential 26th of July leaders are still in power. A section of them hasn't been thrown out, another section has been thrown in, representatives of the working class have come into power. Basically, the Cuban leadership came to power basing itself on a petty-bourgeois class, the peasantry, and being itself a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie. It was a rural peasant class led by an urban class.

In addition to this, it has had from the very beginning to this moment, an ideology, a petty-bourgeois ideology. It originally claimed to be a simple humanist ideology. Its fundamental motivation is one of nationalism, one of what we sum up as the democratic demands. Its social program was one of land reform, a democratic demand. It prides itself, it eulogizes, it raises to the height of almost a cult, the conception of empirical method and lack of theory. And I would say that the Guevara article which Joe refers to is the clearest expression I have ever seen of that. It sort of says, "Don't bother to read Marx; theory isn't really necessary because Marx is right and therefore, since he correctly analyzed the objective flowing of history, one just has to go along and flow. Then one becomes a Marxist."

In other words, you go along; if there is a fortress, and you make a mistake, you all get shot and make a conclusion. Or you go into the mountains, you find you're isolated, you find that the middle classes want to shoot you and the peasantry like you, you form an alliance with the peasantry and Marx is vindicated. This is the way you go along at every point.

This is the opposite in methodology of Marxism. This is empiricism. This is a middle-class ideology. It is precisely for this reason that people like Mills identify so closely with the leadership of the Cuban revolution because they are the ideological representatives of the Castro ideology in this country. We, as Marxists, have a duty to conduct an ideological attack upon this extremely dangerous theory. That is, that theory as we understand it, isn't necessary. That theory comes empirically out of one's experience and you don't really need theory; you just have to go out and do what needs to be done. Everything will take care of itself.

And therefore in a certain sense the ideological challenge of the Cuban revolution is an attempt to refute the fundamental theories on which our movement is built. And this is the meaning, for instance, of Guevara's conception of himself as a natural Marxist. In the sense that in just acting empirically as they do they somehow are expressing objective laws and everything is all right. Of course, everyone is sort of a natural Marxist from that point of view. You could say that Hitler was a natural Marxist because Trotsky figured out just exactly what he was going to do, predicted from a Marxist analysis how he was going to evolve, and Hitler evolved that way, you see. It's not theory.

Now what is the program of the Cuban revolution as it has actually been carried out? There are two essential motive forces of the Cuban revolution.

And they both relate to, are subdivisions of, one general category of theoretical conceptions. That is, the bourgeois-democratic demands, or the democratic demands, if you prefer to call them that. These are nationalism and all that is connected with that, and agrarian reform.

All actions of the Cuban government have flowed from the conscientious application of these two things, these two perfectly legitimate things that we support. Slogans that we support but which are not essentially working-class slogans, but democratic slogans which the working class also support in alliance with other social classes. From this everything else has flowed. The difference between Castro and other petty-bourgeois reformers in colonial areas is that he was serious about it. And even in this respect he is not unique. This was the difference between Mao in China and Stalin.

Now in order for Cuba to become an independent nation, it was necessary to destroy the Batista army, its bureaucracy and any industry it controlled, in effect, and used to subsidize Batista. Which just happened to be a rather large section of the locally-owned industry. Now even this, in my opinion, these actions, would not have caused any really severe conflict between Cuba and the U.S. or impelled Cuba along its present leftward trend. What has been, in my opinion, as far as I can figure out, and is consciously understood also by the Cubans and all observers of Cuba -- the thing which set off and really moved ahead the Cuban revolution -- is what it did for the peasantry. The agrarian reform.

It was the agrarian reform which hit the interests of American imperialism, which threatened American imperialism all over Central and South America and which forced American imperialism to respond with tremendous pressure upon the Cuban government. It was in reaction to the response of American imperialism which forced Cuba to nationalize then all American holdings. Now once it had nationalized all American holdings in Cuba, which are most of the capitalist holdings in Cuba, had nationalized the strictly Batista holdings, the small section of capitalist industry that was left was in bankruptcy. For the very simple reason that any intelligent capitalist in that particular climate is dragging every penny he can out of the firm and is preparing to fly to Miami, you see. This problem faced the Russian Revolution too at a certain point, so regardless of wanting to, it was necessary to intervene here and there and nationalize here and there smaller industries in Cuba, such as the tobacco industry, etc., including sections owned by the domestic capitalists.

Now it is extremely important to know the reasons why the nationalizations took place. Because it gives one a better understanding of the nature of the leadership of the revolution. And therefore puts us in a better position to realize what that leadership will do in another period. For instance, if a leadership nationalizes industry because it is the representative of the interests of the working class, it's carrying through the needs of the working class consciously. Then it is not of too much concern what industries they nationalize, because you know that they would come to it. Nobody raised a big stink because Lenin and Trotsky took a few months to do it and even so, they felt they had to do it much faster than they wanted to. Everyone said, "Who cares? We know who's running the country. The working people are running the country. A question of a holdout of capitalism here and there is not too important as long as the workers have the power."

But if the working class doesn't have the power, then there are an awful lot of other things that can happen, a lot of dangerous things that can happen.



As we said in our document, the greatest internal danger, internal within the framework of the revolution itself (looking on counterrevolutionary activity in Cuba as in effect an extension of external influence from the U.S.) -- the greatest internal danger of that revolution is the nature of its leadership.

Now Sweezy in his very interesting latest article wrote, I guess in December or January -- December -- says this: "As of May 1960, nationalization in the field of industry was confined to recovery of the ill-gotten gains of the Batistianos and no plan had been made to extend the area of nationalization except under the necessarily slow process of establishing new industries under state auspices. It is possible to argue that this is as far as a peasant-based revolution could be expected to go; that in the absence of outside shocks, Cuba would have tended to develop into a mixture of agrarian collectivism and state-directed capitalism. If this had happened, it is more than likely that a degenerative process would sooner or later have set in, leading to the ultimate ascendancy of the private sector and reduction of the state to the role of servant of business interests."

This is extremely interesting as it reflects on the nature of the leadership we are dealing with.

However, one cannot just simply go around nationalizing industry in reaction to American imperialism without releasing certain social energies and social forces within one's own country which add a new factor to the Cuban revolution. And this to me is the most important and hopeful aspect of the revolution. The nationalization of industry in Cuba raised the consciousness of the working class. This is extremely important because it helps to explain the contradictory nature of Cuba. Not that a conscious working class went out and nationalized Cuba. It was a government that nationalized industry in response to American imperialism and the act of nationalization then raised the consciousness of the working class, raised its cohesiveness, increased its social power in Cuba and therefore made the working class in Cuba a tremendously potential social force and present social force in the social relations of Cuba.

But the working class in Cuba and its representatives, legitimate representatives, are not now incorporated into the government of Cuba. The government remains the same government that led the rebel armies and the social base remains the peasantry. This is the reality and we don't need to distort history to make it look a little better.

Now let's take a look at the Draft Theses which is before you. First, I am going to deal as I go along in the resolution with several point, all of which fit into a pattern in the resolution, which I am in opposition to, though these points are not necessarily the essential points of difference and I think we will see how these lead into the essential points of difference.

First comes the point on the nature of the guajiro. Joe, in his thesis, says that the guajiro is the decisive sector of the Cuban working class. Now the guajiro as far as I can find out, is a Cuban expression for a rather widespread phenomenon in Latin America -- in fact, in most colonial areas. And that is a semi-peasant, semi-proletarian who is unemployed a good deal of the time and whose main source of income is as an agricultural worker. He is the bulk of the rural population in a country like Cuba and he works on a part-time basis when he can find employment, harvesting the sugar and other of the crops of that nature. In fact, you will notice in the Declaration of Havana, a very fine document, a list of names, none of which I can pronounce, of similar types

of agricultural workers in other countries, including Puerto Rico and so on, the local name given to them by their own country. Lenin dealt with this social class -- not social class, social grouping -- in dealing with the question of the peasantry in Russia and recognized that the agricultural laborer is with the small peasant, closely linked by family ties by living with him in many cases, the most radical section of the peasantry, and therefore that section of the peasantry upon which the urban working class rests for its allies on the countryside. This was the basic approach of Lenin to the agricultural worker.

Now completely alien to Lenin's conception of the agricultural worker is the concept that the agricultural worker is the decisive section of the working class -- politically decisive section. No. Because Lenin and Trotsky were very stubborn people on one idea. They looked to the urban social classes as the decisive classes in history and they feel that the struggle for the countryside is the struggle between different urban social classes for hegemony over the rural social classes. And they therefore look to the industrial working class to the extent that it exists as the decisive section of the working class. There is no doubt that in 1917 in Russia the agricultural worker was far more preponderant than the industrial worker and that preponderance is even greater in any of the colonial countries that we have analyzed.

This is quite important because of an attempt by Joe to sort of turn the agricultural worker into the decisive section of the working class and therefore be able to give the impression that the actual social base for Castro was the working class. In fact, I understand that Guevara in his guerrilla pamphlet mentions the point in recruiting the guajiro to the rebel army was his plan for land reform. The guajiro was not interested so much in nationalizing this, that and the other industry in Cuba; he's interested in land reform which he should be. And this is the most radical section of the working class?

However, we still feel that the most decisive role in revolution and history, conscious revolution, is the urban social classes and we're not ready to throw that out of our theory without serious thought.

Next comes the question of the workers and farmers government slogan. In a certain sense this isn't too relevant now. The position of calling Cuba a workers and farmers government was, in my opinion, a little more of a problem before Cuba was recognized as a workers state. It's now subsidiary to the concept that it is a workers state but it's still important because I feel a lot of confusion was raised in the way this question was handled.

Now what did Lenin and Trotsky mean by the workers and farmers government? They meant a government of working-class parties, that were not Bolshevik parties but they were working-class parties in a coalition government with peasant parties of a Left Social-Revolutionary nature. They didn't mean a government of some amorphous party of workers and peasants. The only way in which one could turn the present government in Cuba into a workers and farmers government would be to turn the 26th of July Movement into a workers and peasants party. If there was one thing that Trotsky fought against for the whole six years of the struggle inside the party from 1922 to 1928 it was the absurd thought of workers and peasants parties. There was a big struggle with Stalin over the question of workers and peasants parties. It's a phoney. They're phoney. A workers and peasants party is by definition a petty-bourgeois party and leads to the taking of the working class and subordinating it to the program of the peasantry. We want an alliance with the peasantry expressed through the government.

They have their party, we have our party and we don't mix the two parties. And Trotsky was especially sensitive on this. We all recall that the Kuomintang was a workers and peasants party and that the left Kuomintang was a workers and peasants party.

So the only way we can have a workers and farmers government (I don't know why farmers are brought in here. They're called peasants in Cuba, I understand. "Farmers" has a far more bourgeois ring to it, probably because our farmers are so well off) -- the only way in which the present Cuban government, the government of the Castro movement and leadership, could be a workers and farmers government would be if the Castro party is a workers and farmers party.

And if Lenin and Trotsky were right, especially Trotsky, since Trotsky was the main person who struggled on this question, then by definition, if it is a workers and farmers party, by definition it is a petty-bourgeois party, and this is an incorrect designation. A mistake, and that party should be split. The workers should be separated from the peasants, so the workers have their own proletarian banner in alliance with the peasantry, not that they submerge themselves and compromise their program with the peasantry. We've got to understand that, because we don't want that conception here of a workers and farmers government.

Now our slogan on the workers and farmers government should be this-- the slogan was originally a concept to push ahead social forces by urging the proletariat to seize power even through intermediary radical workers parties. Our slogan in Cuba today should be: "Form a Workers and Peasants Government." Form one! Don't rely simply on the 26th of July Movement. Form your own government! Of yourselves! This is the essence of our program and approach, the essence of Leninism and Trotskyism under all conditions. Power to the working class! Through themselves! Through their own parties! Not through anybody else! Not through anybody else!

There are a couple of other small points. Joe speaks about economic planning being firmly established in Cuba. I agree with Sweezy on this. "Chaos may be too strong a word to characterize the situation in this field, but at any rate, it is not too far off the mark." Let's not eulogize things; let's not give it a pretty picture. If they had firmly established economic planning at this point they would have done a far more miraculous job than the Russian Revolution did. It took many years to develop economic planning. It is not easy to develop economic planning. They are barely able to get enough statistics to find out what's going on in their economy. The very rudiments of a planned economy. Yes, they are moving in the direction of a planned economy, but that doesn't mean that they have a planned economy in Cuba today.

Economic planning is not a nice thing where you set up an economic planning board and therefore you have it. It's something that takes a lot of time to achieve in a backward country.

Then there's the question of Stalinism. Now it's quite right that it was extremely positive, number one, for the Soviet countries to offer to support the Cuban revolution and to establish normal trade relations, and, number two, for the Cuban government to accept this and not fear it. It meant a pulling away of Cuba from the capitalist orbit. But everything in this world is not simple and to urge Cuba to tie its economy in with the Soviet bloc when one understands the role of counterrevolutionary Stalinism in the world, is a dangerous thing to urge. One realizes what Stalin did with the little bit of

economic aid he gave to the Spanish Republic. To put Cuba in a position where it is in the economic control of the Soviet Union at a time when the Soviet Union is attempting to make a deal with the U.S. in order to precisely sell out Cuba, is at least something we should warn against, raise as a possible danger. That's all.

And then I don't want to discuss this business of the Cuban C.P., but I don't see any factual basis for raising the possibility of the reformability of the Cuban C.P. I think it's thrown in here as a gratuitous sop to a rather disgraced party in Cuba and I don't think it does us any good by throwing it in.

And now we come to the two essential questions of difference. The key phrase in the whole document: "Cuba has entered the transitional stage of a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule." I really don't know what to say about that phrase. I think that our movement should normally just reject it out of hand. What is this workers state? It's not a deformed workers state, the comrades are not raising it as a deformed workers state. It is a workers state; however, it sort of lacks workers power -- that is, democratic proletarian rule. That's all!

Now Lenin and Trotsky had a very -- maybe it was simplistic -- a very simple conception of a workers state. The organization of the working class through its own organs, which it called soviets (I don't care what you call them) for state power and then the carrying through of the nationalization of the means of production, as the economic base of the political rule of the working class.

And therefore to Lenin and Trotsky, the conception of a workers state, without workers power (and by workers power, they did not mean some sort of Kautskyist conception that the workers have nice organizations here and organizations there that are sort of influencing things that are going on here on top). Such a conception was alien to them.

Now we needed revision -- not a revision, an addition, to Lenin. Trotsky made it. He added the conception, under certain conditions, of the degeneration of the revolution. Then we expanded that with the Chinese revolution, the extension of the revolution, under certain conditions. A bureaucracy grows up and this bureaucracy rules and through the form of a workers state, a deformed workers state and without proletarian rule. Now without relating it to any previous theory, Joe brings in an animal in between which is neither one nor the other.

And then comes the final point of difference, which I consider the most essential point, although it is not mentioned in this document (Joe's) although he partially mentions it in his speech. The revolutionary party. Perhaps the one reason why this document should be rejected out of hand, is that in eight pages (your copy is probably four, as mine is a triple-spaced copy) there is not a single mention of us, the Trotskyist movement in Cuba. The role of revolutionary Marxism in Cuba, the independent, revolutionary Marxist party. Even aside from all that, the role of the independent working class in Cuba is not mentioned in here. Is not mentioned here! And this is the most fundamental difference that we have.

Everything in this document, everything in our press for the last four or five months, has gone along a consistent line, one of offering helpful hints

and advice to the Castro leadership. Now the concept behind this is a very simple concept which we have come across before. It is the concept of the revolutionizing of the petty-bourgeois leadership by mass pressure. This concept we've come across before and we call it Pabloism, because this was Pablo's concept of what would happen to the Communist party under the impetus of revolution and war. With the impetus of revolution and war, everything would be brought to such tremendous revolutionary pressure that the workers wouldn't need to form their own Trotskyist party, Leninist party, Marxist party, but they would transform the leadership, the already existing petty-bourgeois leadership; in this case, the Stalinist parties, or maybe the social-democratic parties.

To me, that is the essential question. Everything that Joe said is from the concept of transforming the 26th of July Movement into a Trotskyist movement. And this to me is alien to the whole conception and approach that we have had of building a revolutionary party. Maybe he's right. But if he is right, we've been wrong for 30 years. I don't think he's right.

Now how can we explain and understand the Cuban revolution? What would be the essentials of a Marxist theory of Cuba? First is this: The Cuban Revolution is essentially a democratic revolution, that is, a national and agrarian revolution. The dynamic of the revolution comes from the organization of the poor rural social classes by the urban petty bourgeoisie, an extremely radical section of the urban petty bourgeoisie which is given power and organization through the form of the military, formed into a guerrilla force, very similar to developments in China, Viet Nam and so on. Its program is essentially a bourgeois-democratic one.

The distance it has been forced to progress towards socialist ends and to go beyond the limitations of its bourgeois-democratic program is a vindication in part of the theory of the permanent revolution. That is, in order to achieve the bourgeois-democratic goals it is necessary to go beyond capitalism. But of course the other aspect of the permanent revolution, which Trotsky considered to be the most crucial one and the one in which he said he always had agreement with Lenin, was that we would only be able to do this through the revolutionary party. Our problem is to what extent we would have to revise this essential of Trotskyist theory, that the revolutionary party is necessary to the carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution beyond capitalist limitations.

Now my opinion is that a certain degree of revision is in order and that revision has already taken place, at least empirically, in our movement over a number of years. That is, we have recognized that a petty-bourgeois empirical movement which is essentially what the Stalinist movements were, are able to go beyond democratic forms if they can organize the peasantry in a cohesive form, usually in a military way. On the basis of the most radical sections of the peasantry, they could push forward and go beyond capitalism, but they are unable to achieve healthy working-class rule and that therefore an inevitable degeneration occurs. What is left of Trotskyism then is several rather essential concepts.

Number one, the development of a healthy workers state is impossible without the intervention of the working class's conscious Marxist arm.

Second place, that the coming to power of a petty-bourgeois formation leads inevitably to a degeneration of the revolution and therefore the negation of that revolution as a spur to world revolution, at least partially. Such revolutions are incapable of expanding and carrying forward the world revolution and

Trotskyism is therefore necessary. Not just a nice idea, but necessary, essential.

What's the nature of the government and state in Cuba? The nature of the government is pretty simple. It is a petty-bourgeois government, petty-bourgeois leadership, petty-bourgeois in ideology, petty-bourgeois in primary social base, petty-bourgeois in social composition.

The nature of the Cuban state: We'll look at it this way. I consider the nature of the Cuban state to be in transition in the sense that it will be decided by history in a very, very short period. That it can go in two directions, in my opinion, in two opposite directions. In either case, without a political revolution. I think that the working class can come to power in Cuba, in my opinion, without a revolutionary overthrow of the present regime.

On the other hand, I think a degeneration can set in, a Thermidor can begin in Cuba, a Thermidor, in my opinion, whose first sign will be a certain bureaucratization of the present regime along the lines of the Stalinist countries.

Then we may see a certain pulling back of Cuba from its conception of revolutionizing Latin America by arming the agricultural workers and a development of a peaceful coexistence line and a working out of relations with both the East and the West along the Yugoslav pattern. That this can occur, by the way, without a single, solitary industry being denationalized. A Thermidorean reaction can occur in Cuba, in my opinion, without a political revolution and therefore, by definition, if it can go one way or the other without a revolution, it is in transition. It has not yet stabilized itself as a deformed workers state. It has not yet stabilized itself as a healthy working-class government.

Now as I said, I don't want to argue about this in a certain sense, because the Cuban leaders agree with me on this. For instance, Guevara said, and this was quoted for some reason at the head of Sweezy's latest article: "What lies ahead depends greatly on the United States. With the exception of our agrarian reform which the people of Cuba desired and initiated themselves, all of our radical measures have been a direct response to direct aggression from powerful monopolists of which your country is the chief exponent. U.S. pressure on Cuba has made necessary the radicalization of the revolution. To know how much further Cuba will go, it will be easier to ask the U.S. government how far it plans to go."

Is that a Marxist leadership? All right, I'm going to ask the question. Suppose by some weird fluke (it's not out of the question) the people in the State Department intend to get smart instead of dumb and realize they are not going to be able to crush the Cuban revolution with arms without spreading the revolution in Latin America. Suppose they get smart. I mean, they've gotten smart before. Scruples didn't keep them from making a deal with Yugoslavia, working it out, slowly pulling Yugoslavia into the capitalist orbit. The British have been smart enough to advocate such a policy for China for years. Maybe they'll get smart and stabilize relations a little bit. What have they got to lose? The Cuban government has made it very clear for a number of months right up to very recent times what they would like to be is neutralists. But they cannot be neutralists because American pressure is forcing them into the Soviet camp. This is important to know.

Is there not room for retrogression? If the U.S. is the sole force pushing it forward? I'm not going to put it that simply. I don't think that just American action right now would necessarily mean a deal with Cuba. Things are not that simple. It's not all up to Castro. Castro has unleashed certain social forces by his radical action. And these social forces may have a different attitude toward pulling back than Castro does. The main social force is the working class which was not a very conscious force at the beginning of the revolution, has gained in consciousness, its consciousness increased considerably by nationalization.

Now how will the working class react to that? Such a development? I do not know, but it is clear our policy, our aim, should be to link ourselves to the working class of Cuba and not with the government. It has been our policy and is our policy to this day that we rely on the working class and that we favor independent working-class policy and politics.

In the second place, we do not simply think that an independent revolutionary party would be pleasant in Cuba. We consider it essential, for without an independent revolutionary party in Cuba, the degeneration of the revolution is inevitable. That is the essence of Trotskyism, the essence of Trotskyism. Summed up in two concepts as far as this question is concerned: Number one, we do not believe in the revolutionizing of the petty-bourgeois leadership of mass movements, but the supplanting of them by the working class from below. We reject that Pabloite concept.

And number two, we consider that the intervention of the independent working class, under the Marxist banner, is essential for the establishment of soviets, soviet power, workers' power, workers' councils, workers' organizations. I don't care about terminology, but the essence in Cuba. And that unless this is established in Cuba, degeneration is inevitable. Inevitable! Not just put as something that might happen. We're not looking at this as empiricists. We're looking at it as Marxists. Certain things inevitably flow in Marxism.

We have to put the whole thing in perspective. This, I think, was the main validity of Gerry's letter to this committee. That sometimes we lose perspective, we don't understand what's our major goal. Our major goal, in my opinion, is precisely the building of the small revolutionary party in the advanced capitalist countries. That's the task. Nothing fundamentally is going to be solved without that. We support the colonial revolution not as a substitute for building the party here and in England, and in Japan, and in Continental Europe, but precisely because we felt the colonial revolution will encourage that process. We are not too hopeful, I am not too hopeful, for a healthy development in Cuba precisely because of the small size of the revolutionary forces in the major metropolitan countries.

This is not simply a reflection of our egotism but a reflection of the fact that the working class in these countries are generally on a very low political level, have no international consciousness. In a certain sense, you can say that we are egotistical. The essence of Marxism is egotism. Namely, that only the working class can carry through the socialist revolution and the working class can only do it through its conscious representatives in the Marxist movement. And nobody else can! That's the essence of Marxism way back for 100 years and we don't throw that out lightly. We admit to our egotism.

So that is our problem.

Now I know one of the problems we have here. Perhaps one of the reasons why I reacted strongly on this question of Cuba is because I didn't want to get burned twice. I got swept away with the Pabloite conception of the on-rushing flow of objective social forces in China. I think I made a mistake. I forgot a little thing about us; that is, the building of the revolutionary cadre and all I saw was the sweep of history. Well, maybe the sweep of history is sweeping us away here in Cuba. And I didn't want to make that mistake either on Cuba. I realize that I was wrong, but I felt the same comrades who were right then are now using that same methodology toward Cuba, forgetting about us, about consciousness, about the party. They are seeing only the objective unfolding of things. Joe here talks about consciousness in an abstract way. That he's reading in Revolucion they're talking about Marx, a little bit of socialism in people's thought, or maybe the 26th of July Movement, think that maybe, possibly, they're objectively Marxists. When we talk about consciousness, we mean it in the form of a party, of organization, of working-class identity.

Let us not forget about that, comrades. That is the danger. And let us worry a little less about flattering Fidel and a little more about building the international movement. And that is all I want to say about that.

Fundamentally, we have to realize that there is no substitute for the building of the revolutionary party nor can we identify the building of the revolutionary party by characterizing petty-bourgeois parties as revolutionary parties; or potentially revolutionary parties. That is the greatest danger. There's the greatest error in that. And that is what we have to watch out for.

To sum it up, we have to come to the conclusion that we're Trotskyists, not Fidelistas.

January 14, 1961