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It is written: "In the Beginning was the Word."
Here I am balked: who, now, can help afford?
The Word? -- impossible so high to rate it;
And otherwise must I translate it,
If by the Spirit I am truly taught.
Then thus: "In the Beginning was the Thought."
This first line let me weigh completely,
Lest my impatient pen proceed too fleetly.
Is it the Thought which works, creates, indeed?
"In the Beginning was the Power," I read.
Yet, as I write, a warning is suggested,
That I the sense may not have fairly tested.
The Spirit aids me: now I see the light!
"In the Beginning was the Act," I write.

-- Goethe.

As the main stream of the world Trotskyist movement heads toward healing a split that has lasted an unconscionable eight years, some ultraleft currents in various areas are pressing in an opposite direction, seeking to perpetuate the old rift, to deepen it if possible, and even to precipitate fresh ruptures. The Latin-American Bureau of J. Posadas, ordering an end to discussion before it was even initiated, bolted from the International Secretariat last April under guise of "reorganizing" the Fourth International, and raised the banner of a program that goes so far in its deviation to the left as to include a but thinly disguised appeal to Moscow to start a preventive nuclear war. On the side of the International Committee, the top leaders of the Socialist Labour League, under guidance of Gerry Healy, have chosen to interpret the efforts of the Socialist Workers Party to help unify world Trotskyism as a "betrayal" of the basic principles of Marxism which they intend to fight tooth and nail; and, to emphasize their dedication to this course, they have hardened a posture on Cuba the only virtue of which is to lay bare an astonishing lack of the most elementary requisite of revolutionary leadership -- ability to recognize a revolution when you see one.

How are we to explain this curious turn? Obviously it was precipitated by the unification process. A series of practical problems surged to the fore. How can you unite with the opposing tendency even if they do consider themselves to be Trotskyists? The question is asked by groups on both sides. After years of bitter factional war how can you collaborate and live in the same organization? Didn't the public positions of the other side damage the cause as a whole? How can you

work with leaders whose records provide grounds for deep suspicion? How can you find areas of agreement? A far easier, more "Leninist", and therefore more "principled" tactic is to simply continue firing at them, no matter if differences have to be magnified. Prestige, pride, bullheadedness, personal eccentricities, all these came into play at the prospect of unification. In the case of the Latin-American Bureau, for instance, a factor may have been fear that pretensions as to size and influence, which were actually declining, would be exposed by unification, or that habits of paternalistic centralism would have to give way to democratic controls. Nevertheless, however weighty they may be -- and in a small movement they can loom large -- such factors do not explain the political differentiation.

The same fundamental cause that brought fresh impulsion to unity sentiments in the past couple of years is also responsible for the flare up of resistance. At bottom lie the mighty forces of the colonial revolution and the interrelated process of de-Stalinization. These are having an effect on the radical movement roughly comparable to that of the Russian Revolution some forty years ago. Cutting across all formations, they are shaking them and regrouping them, dividing them to right and to left. If the repercussions among radicals began with the victory of the Chinese Revolution and speeded up with the famous Twentieth Congress and the Hungarian workers uprising, it came to a crescendo with the Cuban Revolution. When the massive nationalizations took place, and the Castro government expropriated both American and Cuban capitalists, every tendency had to take a stand. The imperialists left little room for equivocation.

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

The fact that differences, even sharp differences, exist among the ultralefts who were turned up by the latest and most decisive test does not invalidate this conclusion. Posadas, for example, after initial opposition, came around to the view that Cuba is a workers state, thus making a rather better showing than Healy on this crucial issue. Yet he is, if anything, even more truculently opposed to any moves toward unification of the Trotskyist movement. Advocating a line that bristles with inconsistencies and extravagances, Posadas is nevertheless compelled to adapt himself to one of the main realities of politics in Latin America today. Throughout that vast region,

it is political death among radical workers to voice a position on Cuba like the one on which Healy insists. Posadas, for all his flights of fantasy, was able to recognize this reality after discovering it the hard way. Healy, unable to agree to so grim a conclusion from anything he has seen in insular British circles, is more nonchalant about the prospect of such a fate overtaking the Latin-American Trotskyists.

As is typical among ultralefts, elaborate justifications "in principle" are offered for their sectarian course, along with dire prophecies about the consequences of the "betrayals" being committed by those following in the real tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. Like similar rationalizations of ultralefts before them, these offer little resistance to critical appraisal. I propose to demonstrate this by examining the main thread of argumentation about Cuba as presented in SLL material, above all the document, "Trotskyism Betrayed." I will then take up briefly the related considerations offered by the leaders of the French section of the IC in "Draft Report on the Cuban Revolution," a document that discloses substantial differences with the SLL leaders on Cuba while maintaining a united front with them on the question of unification.

Should Marxists Go By the Facts?

The world Trotskyist movement has waited now two long and crowded years for the SLL to recognize the facts about the Cuban Revolution. The SLL leaders have refused to listen to the American and Canadian Trotskyists who have followed events in Cuba with close attention from the very beginning. They have refused to listen to the Latin-American Trotskyists who have first-hand acquaintance with the development and results of the Revolution in both its home base and the rest of the continent. They scorn the conclusions reached by other Trotskyists throughout the world. Why this obstinate refusal to admit palpable events? Strangest of all, the leaders of the SLL have come to recognize that they are refusing to acknowledge the facts; they have converted this into a virtue and even elevated it into a philosophy. The reasoning is very simple: To recognize facts is characteristic of empiricism; Marxism is opposed to empiricism; therefore, as Marxists, we refuse to recognize facts. Here is how this reasoning -- included as part of the package in a review of Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks -- is presented by Cliff Slaughter in the original academic language which has proved so entrancing to the editors of Labour Review in recent years and which, we are sure, will prove just as entrancing to readers of this article:

"Lenin's Notebooks on Hegel might appear obscure and a not very pressing preoccupation, when big things are happening all over the world. However, it is exactly on the theoretical front that the sharpest and most uncompromising struggle must be waged. A mistaken conception here can mean a whole

mistaken method, the relations between the facts becomes totally misunderstood, and disastrously wrong conclusions will be drawn. For example, some 'Marxists' assume that Marxist method has the same starting-point as empiricism: that is to say, it starts with 'the facts'. It is difficult to understand why Lenin and others should have spent so much time on Hegel and the dialectical method if this were true. Of course, every science is based on facts. However, the definition and establishment of 'the facts' is crucial to any science. Part of the creation of a science is precisely its delimitation and definition as a field of study with its own laws: the 'facts' are shown in experience to be objectively and lawfully interconnected in such a way that a science of these facts is a meaningful and useful basis for practice. Our 'empiricist' Marxists in the field of society and politics are far from this state of affairs. Their procedure is to say: we had a programme, based on the facts as they were in 1848, or 1921, or 1938; now the facts are obviously different, so we need a different programme. For example, the spurious 'Fourth International' of Pablo's group decided some years ago that the Stalinist bureaucracy and its counterparts in various countries were forced to act differently because of changed objective circumstances ('facts'). New 'revolutionary currents' were abroad in the world, more recently particularly in the colonial revolution. The consequence of this 'mass pressure' would be to force the bureaucrats to act contrary to their wishes and to lead the workers to power. The great scope of the colonial revolution, the 'liberalization' of the Soviet regime, and the exposure of Stalin by Khrushchev, were taken as the 'facts' in this case. Then again, the revolution in Algeria, Guinea, and particularly Cuba are said to be yet a new kind of fact: socialist revolutions, even without the formation of revolutionary working-class parties." (Labour Review, Summer, 1962, p. 77.)

Study of this shining passage is worth the effort, for it reveals the theoretical method used by the SLL leaders in approaching the Cuban Revolution and much else in today's world. We note the qualifying sentence, "Of course, every science is based on facts." The author is to be congratulated on admitting this; it is a favorable indication of at least a certain awareness that a material world does exist. We can even pin a medal on him for the sage observation that the various sciences cover different fields, that in these fields facts have various orders of importance and that it is the job of science to reveal their significance and the significance of the relations between them so that we can put them to use. But let us examine more closely the two sentences that stick up like bandaged thumbs:

"For example, some 'Marxists' assume that Marxist method has the same starting-point as empiricism: that is to say, it starts with 'the facts'. It is difficult to understand why Lenin and others should have spent so much time on Hegel and the dialectical method if this were true."

So "Lenin and others" spent so much time on Hegel and the dialectical method in order to avoid starting with the facts? Or to be able to bend them with philosophical sanction to fit preconceived notions? Or to avoid sharing any grounds whatsoever with empiricism, especially in the precise area where it is strongest? But Hegel did not teach that. He was more dialectical in his appreciation of empiricism than Slaughter and others. Hegel recognized that empiricism is much more than mere observing, hearing, feeling, etc. and that its aim is to discover scientific laws. "Without the working out of the empirical sciences on their own account," he observed, "Philosophy could not have reached further than with the ancients." As was his method with all views which he considered to have philosophical merit, he sought to include what was valid in empiricism in his own system. It is worth noting, for instance, that "Being," the opening category of his logic, corresponds on this abstract level to an empirical beginning.

Hegel criticized empiricism on two counts: (1) In place of the a priori absolutes of the metaphysicians, which it rejects, empiricism substitutes its own set of absolutes. Thus it is arbitrary, one-sided and undialectical. (2) Its basic tendency is to oppose the idealism of which Hegel was an ardent exponent: "Generally speaking, Empiricism finds the truth in the outward world; and even if it allow a supersensible world, it holds knowledge of that world to be impossible, and would restrict us to the province of sense-perception. This doctrine when systematically carried out produces what has been latterly termed Materialism. Materialism of this stamp looks upon matter, qua matter, as the genuine objective world." (The Logic of Hegel, translated from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, p. 80.)

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

Slaughter's error is to establish an absolute gulf between empiricism and Marxism, leaving out what they have in common. In brief, he is guilty of rigid, mechanical thinking on this point. However, we plead that the culprit be let off with a light sentence in view of the novel circumstances. How often are we privileged to see a British metaphysician demonstrate that the heavy machinery of academic learning can be so finely controlled as to prove a mere trifle like facts don't count? And with Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks fed as information to the machine! It's better than cracking a walnut with a pile driver.

An additional error is involved. Slaughter finds it "difficult to understand why Lenin and others should have spent so much time on Hegel and the dialectical method" if it were true "that Marxist method has the same starting-point as empiricism: that is to say, it starts with 'the facts.'" Our utilitarian must easily understand then that the practical benefit which "Lenin and others" got out of Hegel and the dialectical method was the view that a scientific system of thought like Marxism -- unlike empiricism -- takes precedence over facts. True, in its origin, the Marxist system of thought was admittedly built on a foundation of facts, but once in existence it became -- thanks to Hegel -- relatively free from the need for further contact with facts. Thus the time spent on Hegel and the dialectical method was more than compensated for by the saving made possible in disregarding current facts. The primary task of a Marxist theoretician today, consequently, is not to apply the dialectical method to analysis of reality -- this is subordinate since the job has been done and we know from the system of thought what the reality is like and what it is going to be like. The primary task is to study the books and become adept at expounding the texts so that the system is promulgated in all its purity. Facts are of practical value in this task as illustrations and confirmation of the correctness of the system but are of not much import on the theoretical level.

But this is dogmatism, not Marxism. Marx and Engels did not simply take over idealist dialectics and assign it a chore such as it performed for idealism; namely, helping to dig up material to prove the validity of a philosophical system. From that point of view dialectics is devoid of methodological interest.

In the Marxist world outlook, dialectics does not serve an auxiliary role. It is central. To understand what this means and to appreciate its relevancy to the issue at hand -- our attitude toward facts -- we must go back to the origin of materialist dialectics, which is to be found in Marx's solution to the chief contradiction of Hegel's dialectics. This contradiction, as Slaughter will certainly agree, was its failure to provide for self-criticism, for dialectical self-adjustment. The impasse was inevitable, since the Hegelian system excluded anything more fundamental than thought itself and there was thus nothing for thought to be adjusted against. The material world was viewed as a mere inert and passive "other" created by the activity of thought. Research thus centered on the nature of thought, the "nuclear energy" of the Hegelian system. Marx brought dialectics out of this blind alley by empirically taking matter as the fundamental source of motion. He thereby turned things around drastically and opened the way in principle for adjustment of his own theoretical system; that is, by checking it against the primary source of all movement, the material world. In place of thought spinning on itself as in the Hegelian system, Marx found the way to a genuine "feed back." Through

this revolution the dialectical method became self-consistent. It, too, is open to change. A major characteristic of materialist dialectics, consequently is supreme sensitivity to facts. Any work that fails in this respect will not stand up as an example of materialist dialectics. It is an apology or an academic exercise such as abounds in the Stalinist school of pseudo-dialectics.

Does this feature of materialist dialectics have any practical consequences or is it simply a curiosity among splitters of hairs? We are at the very heart of Marxist politics! An evolving material world, moving in a time sequence, inevitably forces rectifications in the thought that hopes to reflect it in close approximation. This holds with even greater force if that thought aims at active intervention, for it must seek genuine and not illusory points of support in a reality that is in dynamic movement. The primary task of a Marxist theoretician is to analyze reality with the best tools available -- those of dialectics -- so as to provide the most accurate guide possible for revolutionary action in the world as it actually exists at a given stage. This requires us to start with the facts.

The point is crucial. The type of thinking exemplified by Slaughter's contribution, which has brought the National Committee of the SLL to the sad position of refusing to acknowledge the facts in Cuba, has inspired a flood of arguments like those found in the previously cited paragraph from Labour Review:

(1) Years ago some people of a "spurious 'Fourth International'" decided that there were new facts about the Stalinist bureaucracy which required Trotskyism to make adjustments. They were wrong. Today the same "spurious" sources assert that new currents in the colonial revolution can force bureaucrats to act contrary to their wishes and lead the workers to power. Wrong again. We leave aside the crude simplification and consequent distortion of opponents' views and also the merits of the real points involved in order simply to call attention to the logic: Bad people were wrong before; therefore, they are wrong again.

(2) These same "spurious" characters or perhaps some "empiricist" Marxists" whom Slaughter does not name, also say -- in obvious error -- that "the revolutions in Algeria, Guinea, and particularly Cuba are...yet a new kind of fact: socialist revolutions, even without the formation of revolutionary working-class parties." Again we leave aside the distortion of opponents' positions in order to call attention to the hidden syllogism: What is not provided for in the program of Marxism cannot occur; this possibility is not provided for in the program of Marxism; therefore, it has not occurred.

In place of the problem of finding points of support for our program in the world in which we live, the SLL method is simply to assert the necessity for our program despite the reality.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with asserting the need for revolutionary socialism, including the need for party building, but this is only "A." Agreeing on that, we wish to proceed to "B"; how is this to be accomplished in a given situation? The SLL leaders display little interest in "B." For them "A" seems sufficient. Here is a typical example of their thinking that indicates this:

"In practice, however, both the Pabloites and the SWP find themselves prostrate before the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in Cuba and Algeria, which they have chosen to regard as the touchstone of revolutionary politics. Our view of this question is not opposed to that of the SWP simply in terms of who can best explain a series of events. It is a question rather of the actual policy and program of Trotskyist leadership in these backward countries."

But no revolutionary socialists "choose" what shall be regarded as the touchstone of revolutionary politics. This is done by much bigger forces; namely, classes in conflict. Cuba and Algeria happen to be the two areas in the world where this conflict has reached revolutionary proportions at the moment. This was not determined by any decision of ours. It was determined by revolutionary mass actions. Nor did we choose the current leaderships of the colonial revolution. They are the result of objective conditions of vast sweep. What we did choose was to study the facts and in these facts seek openings for effective application of our program. If we may express the opinion, it is an overstatement to say that anyone finds himself "prostrate before the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders in Cuba and Algeria" because he refuses to follow the SLL National Committee in thinking that a Trotskyist can clear himself of any further responsibility by putting the label "betrayal" on everything these leaders do. It is an error of the first order to believe that petty-bourgeois nationalism = petty-bourgeois nationalism, has no internal differentiations or contradictions and cannot possibly be affected by the mass forces that have thrust it forward. To avoid the political prostration that follows the method practiced by the SLL, revolutionary socialists seek to go beyond simply repeating the words about the need for a party. By joining in the action of the revolution, they seek to help build a revolutionary-socialist party in the very process of the revolution itself in-

stead of arguing with the revolution that it would have been better to delay things until the party had first been constructed.

Slaughter states, we recall, that "Part of the creation of a science is precisely its delimitation and definition as a field of study with its own laws: the 'facts' are shown in experience to be objectively and lawfully interconnected in such a way that a science of these facts is a meaningful and useful basis for practice." We welcomed that statement. Now we must protest what followed, if Slaughter was by some remote chance thinking of us when he said, "Our 'empiricist' Marxists in the field of society and politics are far from this state of affairs. Their procedure is to say: we had a program, based on the facts as they were in 1848, or 1921, or 1938; now the facts are obviously different, so we need a different program."

In the case of Cuba, proceeding by the Marxist method, we sought to establish the facts and then determine how they are objectively and lawfully interconnected with our previous analysis of China, Yugoslavia and the buffer countries. Our conclusion was not to say, "We need a different program." Quite the contrary. We stated that the case of Cuba confirmed our previous analysis and thus confirmed the correctness of Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union and of his theory of permanent revolution. From this we derived a meaningful and useful basis for finding our place in the Cuban Revolution.

In contrast to this, the SLL leaders approach Cuba as if the problem boiled down to illustrating the correctness of Lenin's norms for a healthy workers state. The correctness of these norms is not at issue. We believe in them, advocate them, and seek to advance them as always. The SLL leaders, however, stop at the mere assertion of these norms and try to force them to do work for which they are insufficient. This leads them into a series of glaring errors and even into disastrous policies, as we shall see.

To anticipate what we shall attempt to prove in detail, the SLL leaders, following the method indicated in Slaughter's article, do not show how the facts in Cuba are objectively and lawfully interconnected with the preceding Trotskyist positions. Instead they commit a very common but also very basic mistake: they dissolve the concrete into the abstract. They do this in two steps. First they refuse to link the facts in Cuba with the criteria used in analyzing China,

Yugoslavia and the buffer countries. They then quite illogically stop at Lenin's norms. The result of going this far, however, is to leave them with only Lenin's norms to determine the character of a workers state. The criteria for determining a workers state have been dissolved into the norms which, since Trotsky's time, have been recognized as valid only for determining a healthy workers state. By dissolving Trotsky into Lenin in this way, the SLL leaders are left without the tools of theory necessary to assess anything except what would have been considered a workers state in 1917. What will not fit the norms is given a capitalist label, since no grays exist in the SLL's world of solid blacks and solid whites. Thus, incapable of correctly analyzing the Cuban Revolution, they end up by refusing to accept as non-capitalist anything that deviates from Lenin's norms. The correct label for that position is ultraleft sectarianism. This method compels them, as an odd final consequence, to contend that "Lenin and others" brought from Hegel the view that facts are not primary. They provide their own ultimate absurdity and seek, appropriately enough, to find sanction for it in the philosophy of idealism.

With such reasoning the National Committee of the SLL determines its policy in a revolution that is shaking the Western Hemisphere. Thus in much of what they write about Cuba one gets the impression of a thought process little above that of medieval times when the experts determined what the world was like through fasting, meditation, prayer and pious reference to the holy scriptures.

Who Has Lost Touch With Reality?

An instructive example of what this type of thinking can lead to is provided by the document to which the National Committee of the SLL appended its joint signature, "Trotskyism Betrayed."

"Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba?" asks the NC. "We reply categorically NO! The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship. But what is even more significant is the absence of what the SWP euphemistically terms 'the institutions of proletarian democracy' or what we prefer to call soviets or organs of workers' power."

To substantiate this stern decision handed down by the SLL court, we are referred, in accordance with the method of thought we have discussed above, to the writings of Lenin; and the appropriate texts are cited as if the leader of the Bolsheviki had the Cuban situation before him.

So what exists in Cuba? We are given it, straight from the bench, without any if's and's or but's:

"In our opinion, the Castro regime is and remains a bonapartist regime resting on capitalist state foundations."

As for Castro, he is taken care of with similar crispness: "The regime, however, is a variety of capitalist state power. The Castro regime did not create a qualitatively new and different type of state from the Batista regime."

According to these experts in what the law books say, who cannot find any mention of Cuba in Lenin's State and Revolution, not even dual power exists in the island: "The 'militia' / the quotation marks on 'militia' put those half million armed Cubans in their place! / is subordinate to Castro's state -- not to soviets, not even to a constituent assembly. In this sense they do not constitute workers power or even dual power."

And all those happenings in Cuba, about which the papers have been making such a fuss, are explained as easily as digging up an appropriate citation from Lenin: "Despite or rather because of / that "rather because of" is good! / all the economic and social changes that have taken place in the last two-three years, Cuba has witnessed, not a social revolution which has transferred state power irrevocably from the hands of one class to another, but a political revolution which has transferred power from the hands of one class to another section of that same class. . . . Where the working class is unable to lead the peasant masses and smash capitalist state power, the bourgeoisie steps in and solves the problem of the 'democratic revolution' in its own fashion and to its own satisfaction. Hence we have Kemal Ataturk, Chiang Kai-shek, Nasser, Nehru, Cardenas, Peron, Ben Bella -- and Castro (to mention a few)."

There you have it -- in all its baldness -- the judgment of the National Committee of the SLL on the Cuban Revolution and its achievements.

But a puzzle remains. How come that the Republican Party, which is fairly aware of Wall Street's thinking, doesn't recognize that Castro is just another "Batista?" Why the dragging of feet among the Democrats, who know Wall Street's thinking just as well as the Republicans but who take a longer view of the interests of capitalism? Above all, how explain the anomalous reaction of the Cuban capitalists who poured out of the island like rats from a burning cane field and holed up in Florida, the way Chiang and a section

of the Chinese capitalists holed up in Formosa? How was it possible for the entire capitalist class of the United States to unite, without a single fissure, against Cuba and risk bringing the world to nuclear war in the effort to topple the Castro government? How come they refuse to recognize that their properties could not be in safer hands than those of a Cuban "Chiang Kai-shek"? How are we to assess this strange new phenomenon of Wall Street losing touch with reality in the one area where it never misses -- its property interests?

Another mystery. How come that the Soviet people, the Chinese people, the Koreans, Viet-nameese, Yugoslavs, Albanians and people of the East European countries, all consider that Cuba has become non-capitalist and now has an economic system like theirs? How explain that they, too, have lost touch with reality on such a decisive question?

For that matter, what about the Cubans? Here a whole population is apparently suffering from a manic-depressive psychosis. The capitalists and their agents think they have been overthrown and it's a disaster. The rest of the population agree and think it's wonderful. They have raised the banners of socialism and tens if not hundreds of thousands are assiduously studying Marx, Engels and Lenin. Isn't that going rather far in failing to recognize that "capitalist state power" still exists in Cuba?

We have still not come to the end. There are ten countries, including the United States, in which Trotskyists sympathize with or belong to the IC. In all these countries, only the SLL holds this curious position on Cuba. Not a single other group agrees with them -- not even those in France. Have the other nine, then, lost all touch with political realities? How is this to be explained? Have all of them "degenerated" and "betrayed" Trotskyism except Healy and his staff?

Let us also add that the Posadas group in Latin America would not touch the SLL position on Cuba with a ten-foot pole. Nor for that matter, not a single solitary Trotskyist in all of Latin America, whether with the IC or the IS, so far as I know. Can't any of the Latin-American Trotskyists recognize a "Batista" when they see one? How can they be so far out of touch with the real world?

Since I mentioned the IS, the ultimate horror of "Trotskyism Betrayed," let me concede that here the National

Committee of the SLL can draw some comfort. In their next solemn session they might have Slaughter or Healy read as encouraging news the following declaration by a prominent member of the IS:

"Fidel Castro is at present the latest 'hero' discovered by the Communist Parties of Latin America, to whose regime they attribute the revolutionary gains of the Cuban masses. Fidel Castro, however, is only the Bonapartist representative of the bourgeoisie, who is undergoing the pressure of the masses and is forced to make them important concessions, against which his bourgeois teammates are already rising up, as has just been clearly shown by the opposition set going inside his own government against the -- timid enough -- agrarian reform."

The author of that statement, which the SLL position so obviously echoes, amplifies and expounds is Michel Pablo. It can be found on page xiii of his pamphlet The Arab Revolution. Unfortunately, the authors of "Trotskyism Betrayed" cannot expect to build too much on this, since it was Pablo's position in June 1959 before Castro broke up the coalition government with the representatives of Cuban bourgeois democracy. Pablo long ago dropped that position, if position it was and not just a premature assessment. Pablo, whatever else you may think of him, has enough wisdom and ability not to insist on a position which is that untenable in face of the facts.

It seems, consequently, that the NC of the SLL has succeeded in finding an abandoned niche where they are doomed to complete isolation. It is theoretically possible that Healy and his closest collaborators are the only ones among all these who have not lost touch with the Cuban reality. But the force of the facts makes this most unlikely.

A New Type of Capitalism?

There still remain some vexatious theoretical problems of lesser order, all of which are opened up by the position of the National Committee of the SLL on Cuba, but of which not a single one is discussed in the document they submitted despite all the boasting and arm-waving about how the SLL leaders intend to bring theoretical clarity to the very much muddled world Trotskyist movement.

First on the Agrarian Reform. "A basic criterion for a workers state in the economic sphere in an underdeveloped country," they inform us, "is the nationalization of the land

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

Such a tangle of errors is included in this paragraph that one can scarcely decide which loop to pick up first. But let us be patient, for this is all the National Committee of the SLL has to say about Cuba's Agrarian Reform. To begin with, let us pull out the misleading reference to Egypt since we are dealing with Cuba. Second, it is not true that so long as petty-commodity production continues, the economy of a country will remain capitalist. Petty-commodity production and capitalism are not synonymous. That is why a workers state, on replacing a capitalist state, can safely call on the peasants to take the land. It is also the fundamental reason why Engels, and all genuine Marxists after him, have stood firmly on the principle that the peasants must not be forced into collectivization. That is also why nationalization of the land, while a very important and indicative measure, is not a basic criterion for a workers state and was not considered as such in designating Yugoslavia, the Eastern European countries and China as workers states, a position for which the National Committee of the SLL voted. Third, the addition of the criterion "thorough political measures by the ruling power to prevent the growth of kulaks" sounds queer as a basic criterion for a workers state in the economic sphere. In any case this new "criterion," in this unexpected association was never even suggested in the discussion on Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and China. Is the National Committee of the SLL perhaps thinking of revising the Trotskyist position on the character of these states by demanding that this new "basic criterion" be added?

Not much is left of the SLL position on Cuba's Agrarian Reform; but, in compensation, the tangle is just about unwound. Only a snarl or two is left. Instead of giving "land back to the peasants," the main course of the Agrarian Reform in Cuba is just the opposite. It is true that the Cuban government has proved quite sensitive to the will of the campesinos in this respect, contrasting wholly favorably to the course followed in all the countries where Stalinist methods were applied either directly by Moscow or under its influence. Thus the deeds to many farms have been handed

out, especially in the Sierra Maestra. Some co-operatives, too hastily formed, may have been dissolved, but the general line of development is clearly in the direction of a bigger and bigger state role. Thus, the most important co-operatives have now been converted into state farms. Good, bad or indifferent that happens to be the case.

On the alienability of land in Cuba, which is beside the point in this discussion, the National Committee of the SLL simply displays an ignorance in perfect harmony with the pattern of thinking which permits them to close their eyes to more important facts that stare them in the face. It so happens that the Agrarian Reform law specifies that the "vital minimum" of land, to which a campesino gets a deed, "shall be inalienable." Exempt from taxes, this land cannot be attached and is not subject to contract, lease, share-crop or usufruct. It can be transferred only by sale to the state, or through inheritance by a single heir on the death of the owner, or, in the event there is no heir, by sale at public auction to bidders who must be campesinos or or agricultural workers. There is only one way in which the owner can even mortgage his land in Cuba and that is by mortgaging it to the state or to its specified institutions. Now that they have learned these facts will our British comrades still maintain that nothing essentially new has occurred in Cuba?

We come to the theoretical problem which is our reward for having opened up this tangle of errors. However you assess the Agrarian Reform in Cuba as a criterion in determining the character of the state, it was the swiftest and most thoroughgoing by far in the history of Latin America. How was such a radical reform possible under a regime that is not qualitatively different, as the SLL leaders allege, from the "Batista regime?" Is this provided for in the classics of Marxism? How are we to explain it? Finally, are we for or are we against this Agrarian Reform? The National Committee of the SLL maintains a painful silence on this that is truly scandalous in leaders who consider themselves to be Trotskyists. But if, after a collective democratic discussion they decide to vote, yes, must they not also add that we should begin reconsidering our attitude toward "capitalist" regimes capable of such far-reaching measures?

We come to a related question. Castro's insistence on a thoroughgoing, radical agrarian reform blew up the coalition government in July 1959. The representatives of

bourgeois democracy hastily stuffed stocks, bonds, dollars and pesos into handbags and followed the representatives of the oligarchy and the imperialist interests into exile in Miami. Thus a new government came into being that proved capable of acting in a qualitatively different way from the previous one.

Let us note what this government did so that the National Committee of the SLL will understand better what we mean by "the facts." It carried through, as we have noted, the swiftest and most radical agrarian reform in the history of Latin America. It did this against the combined resistance of the Cuban landlords, Cuban capitalists, and American imperialists. This resistance was not simply verbal. The counter-revolutionaries fought with rifle and bomb and whatever the CIA and Pentagon could give them.

Against this powerful landlord-capitalist-imperialist resistance the new government armed the people of Cuba. Not with just speeches but with mass distribution of guns and the organization of a powerful militia. Against the mounting military measures taken by American imperialism, the new government turned to the Soviet bloc for comparably effective defensive military hardware. While this was going on, the new government initiated sweeping economic measures such as the establishment of controls on foreign trade and controls over capitalist management. Still more important, it continued the process begun in conflict with Batista's army and police of smashing the old state structure. Finally, some two years ago, in defiance of the wrath of the mightiest capitalist country on earth it expropriated capitalist holdings "down to the nails in their boots." This same new government proceeded with astounding speed to expand state controls into state planning and when the imperialists brought an axe down, cutting all major economic ties between the United States and Cuba, this new government, responding in heroic way to the emergency, tied its economy in with the planned economies of the Soviet bloc. Can such a government be described as differing only quantitatively from a "Batista" regime? Accurately described, that is.

All right, have it your way. Let us grant that the difference is only quantitative and -- for the sake of the confusion on which the National Committee of the SLL insists -- let us stubbornly refuse to grant this quantitatively different government even a quantitatively different label. Our theoretical problems are only worsened -- and in a

qualitative way. We must then admit that reality has so changed that it has now become possible for a Batista-type regime to carry out such revolutionary actions in a series of countries. What has happened to capitalism to give it the possibility of taking such self-destructive measures? Has it suddenly become rejuvenated? Has the death agony of capitalism really turned out to be a fountain of youth?

As in the case of Cuba's Agrarian Reform, we are also faced with a political issue that cannot be evaded -- unless, of course, you counsel that we abandon politics. Are we for or are we against all these measures? If we approve them, are we then not compelled to admit that such governments are capable of a progressive role? Does it not follow, if they are "a variety of capitalist state power" as the SLL leaders assert, that capitalism has not yet exhausted all its progressive possibilities? If this is so, a still more thorny problem arises. Does any barrier exist to prevent a capitalist government in an industrially advanced country from playing a similar progressive role? If a barrier does exist is it qualitative or simply quantitative? What, inside this new capitalist reality, determines the character of the boundary? On all these questions, which are raised in principle by the document flung so vehemently on the table, the National Committee of the SLL maintains the most discreet silence.

Let us consider for a moment the character of the Cuban economy today. "The nationalizations carried out by Castro do nothing to alter the capitalist character of the state," the National Committee of the SLL claims. Good; for the sake of argument let's see what happens if we agree not to change the label, whatever else has changed. We note that these nationalizations were not undertaken by either the capitalist or imperialist supporters of Batista. Nor were they undertaken by the representatives of bourgeois democracy. The bulk of the Cuban capitalists, such as they were, most of the landlords, and the corrupt assemblage of politicians who served as their agents are now to be found in Florida or any other land of the palm save Cuba. Thus we must add to the fact of "mere" nationalization, the fact of expropriation of the Cuban and American capitalists and landlords. The National Committee of the SLL may stoutly deny this. None of the former property holders will. In addition, I think that, roughly speaking, 999.9 out of 1,000 observers who have taken the trouble to visit Cuba or study the events will put these two items down as incontrovertible facts.

To this must be added the fact that a planned economy has been installed that extends so far as to completely embrace the principal agricultural sphere -- sugar. True, the planning may not be efficient. It may be hampered by lack of competent personnel, poor balancing, some bureaucratism, breakdowns and other faults. These are due not only to lack of experience but to the direct sabotage of counter-revolutionaries and to the enormous pressure of American imperialism which seeks to throttle in the cradle this effort at planning. Nevertheless, in principle, the planned economy is operative in Cuba, has already achieved remarkable successes, and has clearly displaced private capitalism in all the key sectors of the economy. This is a fact, too. (1)

(1) (Perhaps this is the place to file an objection to a declaration in the statement of the SLL, where the nature of the state in Cuba is considered, that nothing essential was changed by the Castro government: "What it did do was to clear out the old judges, administrators, bureaucrats, diplomats and policemen and replace them with people who supported Castro. The old institutions were filled with new personnel." This is dead wrong. The old institutions, including its personnel were committed to the preservation of private capitalist property interests. The new institutions, in contrast to the old, are committed to the preservation and administration of nationalized property.

Putting these three main facts together -- expropriation of the bourgeoisie, nationalization of industry, and the institution of a planned economy -- and adding to this combination the "capitalist" label on which the National Committee of the SLL insists, what do we end up with? It's inescapable: state capitalism. But, again, what is gained by such a label save indescribable theoretical confusion and the admission that capitalism still has great and progressive inherent possibilities despite all that has been said about its death agony? Moreover, we are not saved thereby from taking a political stand. Is this so-called state capitalism in Cuba better or worse than the private capitalism which it overturned? Yes or no? If it is superior, in what respect is its superiority apparent?

Finally, exactly what does the National Committee of the SLL propose on the economic level, which if enacted would entitle us to cross out the "capitalist" label? Our haughty theoreticians disdain to answer in their document. We would appreciate, if it's not asking too much, a plain and simple reply to that question.

China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe

Two whole years after the event, as we noted above, the National Committee of the SLL still refuses to recognize Cuba as a workers state. In their efforts to establish theoretical grounds for the dogmatic view that nothing has changed in Cuba and that it's all a malicious "revisionist" invention about the Batista regime being overthrown, they inevitably tear gaping holes in basic theory.

Not openly and boldly, but in a covert way, they strike at the entire continuity of our theory since the time of Trotsky insofar as it relates to assessing the character of a workers state. They begin with Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union, attempting to cut that theoretical foundation away from the problem before us. "But it is ridiculous to think," they argue, "that the question of the Cuban state can be resolved abstractly by 'criteria' from this earlier discussion (with Shachtman and Burnham) even at the end of which Trotsky was still saying that the last word had still to be said by history." What do they mean by that cryptic last remark? That Trotsky doubted or was not sure of the character of the Soviet Union? Or that the National Committee of the SLL has now become shaky about it? What do they mean by the epithet "ridiculous?" Ridiculous by whose standards and on what grounds? The criteria used by Trotsky, abstract though they may be, happen to be the concrete theoretical grounds for every succeeding step in Trotskyist analysis concerning the problem of the character of the Soviet Union and the workers states that have appeared since then. To sever this connection prepares the way for revising everything accomplished in theory in this field since then -- and also prepares the way for revising Trotsky's theory of the degenerated workers state. The National Committee of the SLL is taking here a most revealing step.

The mechanical thinking that feels an inner compulsion to cut the link with Trotsky's analysis, reveals itself in still another way. On page 12 of their document "Trotskyism Betrayed" they seek to summarize Trotsky's position: "The bureaucracy which usurped the government power in the social economy of Russia was a parasitic group and not a necessary fundamental class." That sounds correct on first reading, but something is missing. What kind of parasitic group? What was its class coloration? We search the page in vain for an answer. Yet this is one of the most distinctive features in Trotsky's analysis. The parasitic layer is petty bourgeois, a reflection of the peasantry, the

remnants of the cold classes, the elements who switched allegiance from Czar to the new regime -- all these and the political-military administrative levels of the new government who, under pressure from the capitalist West, drifted from the outlook of revolutionary socialism or came to prominence without ever having genuinely understood or accepted it. What was new in this situation -- and this is the heart of Trotsky's position on the question -- was that a reactionary petty-bourgeois formation of this kind could, after a political counter-revolution, wield power in a workers state and even defend the foundations of that state while being primarily concerned about their own special interests.

We come now to the question of why this point is important -- of decisive importance, in truth -- in solving the central problem posed by the spread of Soviet-type economies in the postwar period. However, let us first listen to the National Committee of the SLL:

"The states established in Eastern Europe in 1945 were extensions of the Russian revolution by the military and bureaucratic methods of the Stalinist leadership. They were possible under the circumstances of special difficulty for imperialism and the chaos in Europe consequent on the defeat of German capitalism. In fact the betrayals of international Social-Democracy and Stalinism restricted the advance of the revolution to Eastern Europe (and later China). This perpetuates the essential conditions of the survival of the bureaucracy in the workers states. There was by no means the same dynamic in the foundations of the deformed 'workers states' as there had been in Russia in October 1917. Our movement's characterization of all these states was not simply a question of applying 'criteria' like nationalization to the finished product."

These six sentences constitute all that seems to have registered with the National Committee of the SLL of that rich collective effort of our world movement to solve the complicated problems posed by "the facts" in those areas. Yugoslavia, a special case which gave rise to considerable discussion in the world Trotskyist movement, is not even mentioned. We will not cavil, however, in view of the fact that China was brushed off with three words (inside parentheses).

What is remarkable about this capsule treatment of an important chapter in the preservation and development of the theory of our movement is that although it concerns the decisive links of theory between Trotsky's analysis of the

Soviet Union and the world Trotskyist movement's analysis of Cuba today, it does not contain a milligram of theory not even by way of historical mention! Such references as "chaos," "betrayals," "circumstances of special difficulty," "by no means the same dynamic," etc., indicate the general setting to which theory must relate but not the points of the theory itself. The six sentences constitute in fact a shamefaced way of completely disregarding the theory of the character of these states. Thus, if we combine the previous operation of cutting away Trotsky's position on the Soviet Union by declaring it has no relevance to the Cuban discussion, we stand where? The answer of the SLL is to leap across all the intervening links to Lenin's abstract formulations of the State and Revolution period. None of the arguments used against the pertinence of our referring to China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe apply to the pertinence of the SLL referring to Lenin! Why? Well, these are texts written by Lenin himself you see and you don't want to be against Leninism do you? Now do you? This methodology is, of course, the correct means for accomplishing one end -- the conversion of Lenin into a harmless ikon.

Leaving nothing undone to make sure that the confusion is twice confounded, the National Committee of the SLL states on page 13 of their document, "Our essential differences with the SWP on this question is, therefore, not over the 'criteria' of workers states. We do not accept such a framework for the discussion; if, in fact, we had defined a workers state by the existence or non-existence of Trotskyist parties then this would be a lapse into 'subjectivism,' but we have not done this." A few lines further down on the very same page, however, we have done this. We read: "Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba? We reply categorically NO! The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship." The latter sentence, then, excludes Cuba from being a workers state -- and also China, Yugoslavia and the East European countries. It even excludes the Soviet Union since you cannot "maintain such a dictatorship" in the "absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants."

Listen again to the National Committee of the SLL on why Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union is not relevant to Cuba: "At every stage of his eleven-years-long work towards a 'definition' of the USSR, Trotsky insisted on a rounded, critical perspective and not simply on the 'normative' method of applying definition criteria." Are we in

a kindergarten for retarded children? It was precisely because Yugoslavia, the East European countries and China did not follow the norm that we could not use the "normative method." That was the big difficulty, if we may remind the National Committee of the SLL, and why we sought an adjective like "deformed" to indicate that these workers states were not according to norm.

"The SWP method is the opposite," our analysts continue, "taking certain 'criteria' from the discussion of one particular manifestation of the revolutionary struggle in one part of the world as a unique stage in the development of the world revolution. They apply this criteria to another part of the world a generation later, to a particular sector at a particular stage of the struggle. Thus nationalization and the existence of workers militias are sufficient to make Cuba a 'workers state' and to make the Cuban revolution a socialist revolution."

We protest! And not just over the misrepresentation of our position in the last sentence. It is the SLL method that is normative. They refuse to consider either the individual or the particular. They go back two generations to the most general norms of the workers state as defined by Lenin in the light of the writings of Marx and Engels. They then apply these norms to the individual case of Cuba. Since Cuba does not fit, their conclusion is that Cuba is not a workers state. It is this method of thought which we claim is now represented in the positions that the SLL is pressing for adoption by the entire world Trotskyist movement. It is undialectical and completely mechanical. It measures facts by norms, and if they do not measure up, too bad for the facts.

What are the particular threads of theory to which Cuba must be related, if we are to proceed dialectically? In the case of the Eastern European countries, we held that the petty-bourgeois layer which had usurped power in the Soviet Union could, under certain conditions, export both their own rule and the property forms on which they were a parasitic excrescence. To do this they had to overthrow capitalist property relations as well as capitalist regimes. (At a certain stage they also liquidated native revolutionists who might have led independent currents.) The physical presence of Soviet armies in the occupied countries made it not too difficult to grasp the theory that reflected this process. In Yugoslavia, as has been pointed out before, it was more difficult. Partisans played the predominant role and in place of Soviet generals and Soviet secret

political police, the Yugoslav revolutionists came to power. They were, however, of the Stalinist school with a strong nationalist coloration. Can a workers state be established by petty-bourgeois figures such as these? Without the intervention of a revolutionary-socialist party? The National Committee of the SLL voted yes. The theoretical position they approved was that a petty-bourgeois Stalinist leadership can take power and establish a workers state, not because it is a Stalinist species of petty-bourgeois leadership but because it is at the head of a revolution, involving both peasants and workers, a revolution that is of even greater relative strength because it occurs in the time of the death agony of capitalism and after the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II.

The next link was China. This particular case displayed even more novel features: years in which the Mao leadership existed as a dual power in which guerrilla warfare played a prominent role, eventually paving the way for full strength regular armies, the march on the cities, and so on. With all its differences, the key problem again was like the one in Yugoslavia, save that the direct role of the Soviet Union was even more remote. Could a revolution be led by a petty-bourgeois formation -- without prior organization of a revolutionary-socialist party -- to the successful formation of a workers state in a country as vast and populous as China? There was long hesitation about this but "the facts", which the National Committee of the SLL so lightly wave aside today in the case of Cuba, spoke so powerfully that the world Trotskyist movement had to accept the reality. The National Committee of the SLL, be it noted, did not contribute much to that discussion but they made up for the slimness of their writings by the elacrity with which they voted to call China a workers state. Perhaps it is only now that they are beginning to consider the implications of what they voted for? The strange part is that this difficulty in taking a Cuba Libre chaser after downing China in a single gulp arises over the fact that the Cuban leadership is in every respect superior to the Chinese, unless you consider Mao's Stalinism to be a virtue. Perhaps, with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, the SLL leaders have learned to put up a hand with firm resolution, "Thanks, but we don't drink!"

The position that Cuba is a workers state rests on the extension of the theory, as it was developed in the previous particular cases, to this new case. A contrary position must demonstrate either that the previous positions were fallacious or that nothing has really happened in Cuba. A half-way position, with which the National Committee of the SLL may be toying, is to hold that each individual case calls

for its own special criteria -- one set for Cuba, another set for China, etc. This would signify the complete breakdown of any scientific approach, not to speak of dialectics, and the enthronement of the most vulgar empiricism. The National Committee of the SLL has chosen the alternative of denying the facts. It has, however, gone far, as we have shown, in preparing the ground for shifting to the other main alternative; namely, that everything must be revised back to 1940, if not back to Lenin.

On the other hand, the theory with which we were able to provide a rational explanation for the appearance of such unforeseen formations as workers states deviating widely from the norms laid down by Lenin has proved its worth -- and quite dramatically in the case of Cuba. I refer not only to its help in defending and extending the Cuban Revolution but in understanding why the Cuban issue is of such extraordinary explosiveness in world politics.

The position of the National Committee of the SLL utterly obscures this role, in fact denies it, for Cuba is seen as only one particular "unique" case, unconnected with anything save the colonial revolution in general and, perhaps the American elections in particular; hence incapable of playing any great or even unusual role. They overlook what is absolutely basic -- the fact of a socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere. In place of the revolutionary action which flared in the powder house of imperialism, the SLL leaders substitute the most barren academic schema: "A Marxist evaluation of any movement insists upon an analysis of its economic basis in the modern world. This must begin from the international needs of imperialism." How do these most generalized economic abstractions apply to the blaze in the Caribbean? "We have tried to understand and discuss the Cuban question," the National Committee of the SLL answers, "in terms of our own analysis of the economic position of Cuba and the evaluation of the present struggle in Cuba and the rest of America." This approach, worthy of a dogmatic instructor in an economics department, has led them to constantly underestimate Cuba politically; and the many painful surprises have taught them nothing.

Once you see Cuba for what it is, a workers state and the opening stage of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, as is made possible by linking it to the revolutions in Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and China (The Cuban leaders are well aware of the latter tie), then it is quite clear why it plays such a spectacular role. The extension of the October 1917 Revolution into the Western Hemisphere

is a revolutionary action far more decisive in the scales than the weight of Cuba's economy in North and South America. This revolution has something qualitative about it as a culmination of the overturns that began in Eastern Europe. With its signal that the stage is now opening for non-Stalinist revolutionary leaderships, it even appears as a major turning point in the whole postwar period. Wall Street, quite understandably from the viewpoint of its class interests, is not excited over the weight of Cuba as a particular country but as a bright flame burning amidst crates of high explosives. It can absorb the economic losses in Cuba. It cannot absorb the political consequences of long continued existence of the revolution that caused these losses. Cuba in its eyes, to change the simile, has the peculiar shape of a fulcrum offering a point of support for a lever from the land of the October 1917 Revolution. Wall Street knows very well that not much weight is required on that lever to lift the entire Western Hemisphere and with it the world.

Thus U.S. imperialism views Cuba as of first-rate importance. This being the view of the most powerful capitalist class, the heart and center and main support of all the other capitalist sectors, its moves in relation to Cuba inevitably reverberate in every country. For all the weaknesses inherent in its size and economic and military position, Cuba thus occupies the center of the stage and becomes a general problem for all of humanity.

This is not all. By bringing forward a leadership of non-Stalinist origin, the Cuban Revolution has visibly hastened the eventual closing of the whole chapter of Stalinism. By impelling this leadership toward revolutionary-socialist views, the Cuban Revolution has increased in a marked way the actuality of Lenin's general norms. This would seem so graphically evident that the blind could see it in the measures taken by the Castro regime against Stalinist bureaucratism and in the debates resounding in the Soviet bloc over the meaning of "peaceful co-existence" and how best to fight imperialism. "Unique" Cuba, following the particular pattern of the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and China, has become a general concern for capitalism and the Soviet bloc, and given fresh inspiration to the partisans of Lenin's norms. Dialectics has provided us with a beautiful example of the interrelationship between the individual, the particular and the general.

In maintaining and developing in this way the theoretical positions staked out by Trotsky, we have not engaged in "revisionism," as Healy and his closest collaborators charge. We have conceded nothing in our program, which continues to be based on the fundamental positions laid down by Lenin.

We have, on the contrary, found it easier to find our way in the complex course of the revolutions that followed World War II. Our analysis enabled us to work out more skillful ways of finding points in these revolutions from which to bring the norms of Lenin to bear. We prefer to believe that this was Lenin's way both in spirit and in method.

The Proof of the Pudding

As the National Committee of the SLL can undoubtedly prove a thousand times over by quotations from "Lenin and others," theory and practice are intimately interrelated. A bad theory is bound to be reflected in practice; and vice versa. Thus from the highly erroneous theory of the Cuban Revolution which the SWP holds, as the SLL leaders see it, certain disastrous consequences must inevitably follow. Prominent among these is a pro-Castro attitude and a vast overrating of the importance of the Cuban Revolution. These sickening symptoms, in the opinion of the National Committee of the SLL, show the cancerous "degeneration" which the SWP has suffered. The alleged decline of the American Trotskyist movement is in turn to be explained as a product of the unhealthy environment of economic prosperity and political witch-hunting in which the SWP has had to operate throughout the postwar period.

It really is a curious dialectic, isn't it? The SWP displays its tendency to capitulate to American imperialism by standing in the forefront against all the witch-hunting of the American imperialist pack howling and clamoring for Castro's blood and the downfall of the Cuban government! On the other hand the National Committee of the SLL shows how much better it resists the imperialist pressure of Wall Street's junior partners in the City by sneering at the importance of the Cuban Revolution and calling Castro just another "Chiang Kai-shek." This proves that the freer and easier environment provided by British capitalism is more conducive to Leninist intransigence since the temptation to stray into sin is higher and the opportunities for it more numerous than in the USA, and these challenging objective conditions offer on the subjective side greater scope, under wise Leninist guidance, to stiffen and improve the character and consciousness of the cadres... or words to that effect.

Despite "or rather because of" this sour, billious attitude toward the goings on in Cuba -- whatever they may be -- the National Committee of the SLL is convinced that it is putting up a model defense of the Cuban Revolution. Following

a paragraph reaffirming the need for the "construction of a Marxist party based on the working class and armed with the finest and latest what are the latest? weapons from the arsenal of Marxism," the Committee declares:

"In conclusion we state that such a policy does not inhibit the struggle for the defence of Cuba against imperialist attack, nor does it prevent episodic alliances with the Castroite forces in the struggle against the latifundists. On the contrary, it would immensely facilitate the tasks of defending Cuba and defeating landlordism.

"The defense of Cuba and Castro against imperialism is a tactic. Our strategy remains the overthrow of capitalism and the setting up of a real workers' state with real worker's power. This task still remains to be done in Cuba."

Should we begin with the end and work back through this tangle? "A real workers' state." Then some kind of workers state now exists in Cuba and the task is to make it "real." But that means capitalism has been overthrown. Our authors scramble to the alert. "That's not what we mean!!" All right, let's skip it and take a look at how your reduction of the defense of the Cuban Revolution from a principles to a "tactic" has worked out.

Before their policy had crystallized into a hardened sectarian dogma of refusing to recognize the victories of the Cuban Revolution, the British comrades organized a demonstration in behalf of Cuba that brought immediate response in Havana. The papers there gave it top banner-line coverage and reproduced big photos of the demonstrators with their placards. This action undertaken by the SLL proved to be only a flash in the pan. In place of sustained action, a literary campaign was substituted. Perhaps the SLL was too weak and uninfluential to do more. But the literary campaign has to be read to be believed. Utilizing as object lessons what it took to be the crimes and betrayals of the Castro government, it sought to provide, apparently, a healthy offset to the supposed deviations of the SWP. The theme of this educational material was "Cuba Si, Humbug No." This was the headline over what was passed off as a fundamental contribution, setting the tone and line of the press for the ensuing period. This key article took us everywhere in the world, to Siberia and Bolivia, through time and space, everywhere but Cuba. As I noted elsewhere, some of the American defenders of the Cuban Revolution thought that a typographical error was involved and that the title was really intended to read, "Humbug Si, Cuba No."

As late as a year or so ago, the SLL might possibly have recovered from the heavy penalties that were being paid for its ultimaticist abstentionist course. But they took a step that could scarcely be better conceived to block recovery of lost ground. They turned down an invitation from the Cuban embassy to attend a reception. This rejection was couched in the form of an ultimatum and put in such an insulting way as to signify that the occasion was being utilized to slam all doors and to hell with any Cubans, Trotskyist-minded or otherwise, who might be extending a hand in their direction. The excuse for this ultimatum was a report that appeared in some South American newspapers of an attack on the Cuban Trotskyists (members of the Posadas group) which Guevara made at Punta del Este in the summer of 1961. The SLL did not inquire at the Cuban embassy as to the accuracy of the newspaper account. It did not then inquire -- if the account had turned out to be accurate -- whether Guevara would still stand on these remarks. (2)

(2) On one occasion, Guevara attacked the newspaper of the Cuban Trotskyists over TV. News of this attack was quickly disseminated, since there are many forces, including Stalinist-minded, who are interested in driving a wedge between the Cuban Revolution and Trotskyism. Only months later did we learn accidentally that on TV, the very next night after this episode, Guevara apologized to the "Trotskyist comrades" for the misrepresentation of their views and said that he had been mistaken in his interpretation of what they had said. Even at Punta del Este, Guevara met with leading representatives of the Posadas group, and they gave banner lines to this interview, paying no attention to the alleged attack on them, as if this were inconsequential or had been garbled by the reporter who included it in his dispatch. Experiences of this kind taught us quite early in the Cuban Revolution how cautiously any reports in this area must be handled. Such considerations, of course, are meaningless to Healy. They don't show up in the crystal ball he reads in London.

It did not even leave open the possibility that there might be differences among the Cubans over the question of Trotskyism and that the opening of a door in Britain might be due to pressure in our direction. The National Committee of the SLL acted as if by reflex -- not to explore, but to slam the door. That's what openings are for, ain't they?

Later, in response to suggestions from the SWP, the leaders of the SLL organized a campaign for aid to Cuba. This was very tardy, but it still might have opened some possibilities if it had been accompanied by a positive turn in the

SLL press. This was not to be so. The campaign itself was conceived and executed in such unilateral, isolated fashion that not even the Cubans were consulted, despite the talk about "episodic alliances with the Castroite forces." Thus the SLL campaigned for "food" for Cuba, without co-ordinating the campaign with the international one launched in consultation with the Cubans for "medicines." The result was that the SLL got its reply to the diplomatic note that had been sent the Cuban embassy: disavowal of the isolated, unilateral SLL campaign for "food." The Cubans did not go for the "tactic" of the SLL. The SLL leaders felt, in consequence, that they had no choice but to abandon their campaign. In this they were wise to recognize the reality: they had proved incapable in Britain of either leading or inspiring so much as a modest concrete campaign to aid the Cuban Revolution. Thus a departure from the principle of defending Cuba and Castro against imperialism -- the principle of unconditional defense -- had be paid for to the damage of the SLL as well as the Cuban Revolution.

The SLL defense efforts were, consequently, reduced to their press. But here any campaigning was not only cut down in size, it was made to carefully reflect their theoretical concept of the Cuban Revolution. To read The Newsletter on Cuba is like exploring an empty vinegar barrel. Not much there and not very enticing.

How the centering of attention on the texts of Marxism, coupled with refusal to admit and to weigh facts, can separate a leadership from some of the main realities of world politics can be seen in vivid fashion by following the pages of The Newsletter. We need not go far back in the file; some fresh examples are available for study.

As American imperialism began its preparations for the naval blockade, The Newsletter handled the news in perfunctory fashion. The issue of September 8 reports the new aggression plans and correctly calls for "assistance of the Cuban people in every way possible." However, the temptation to spoil this with a jibe is irresistible: "The true friends of the Cuban Revolution are not the 'radical tourists' flying back and forth across the Caribbean, but the working class movement throughout the world." Among the "radical tourists" happen to be revolutionists from the working class movement all over the world, especially Latin America, for Havana has become a kind of revolutionary crossroads of the world. The SLL leaders, of course, can be excused for not knowing this since it is within the realm of "facts" about Cuba; moreover, they are not inclined to be "radical tourists," especially in a hot

place like Cuba.

In the September 15 issue Cuba gets a few inches on page three. It seems that the "U.S. State Department has been pressing other governments, including the British /that's alert reporting/, to stop ships from taking goods to and from Cuba, in an effort to tighten the stranglehold of their economic blockade of the island." This brief item gets the very correct but very perfunctory headline: "Labour must counter U.S. Cuban plans." Labor must, of course, but The Newsletter is not much excited about it. Even the heavy pressure from the U.S. State Department on the Macmillan government fails to kick off a sharp reaction in the phlegmatic editor. Has this counterrevolutionary pressure, then, no meaning for British politics? Is the Labour Party to draw no lessons from the despicable role played by the Macmillan government in the Cuban crisis? Are the Labour Party ranks supposed to regard complacently how the bureaucrats knuckled under?

The September 22 issue gave Cuba a real break: a signed front-page story -- but modestly at the bottom. "Any resemblance between a real war danger and the present crisis in Cuban-American relations must be seen as pure coincidence." The analyst presents his reading of the situation: "The U.S. government, and Kennedy in particular, are still smarting from the Bay of Pigs fiasco last year. Moreover this is election year in the U.S., and Kennedy knows only too well that the only way to stay in the White House is by staying out of Cuba -- and concentrating on Berlin."

The author correctly notes that "the State Department has a long-term plan whose sinister implications are becoming clearer every day. It hopes to starve Cuba into submission by intensifying the blockade and threatening sanctions against West European nations who continue to trade with and aid the Cuban nation." These excellent sentences are, however, completely spoiled by the ultraleft prescription which is proffered to the Castro government: "Any attempt to establish normal relations with the U.S. government would undermine the Cuban liberation movement irretrievably in the eyes of the Latin-American masses." The headline for this illuminating article is "Cuba: hot air and wine."

The commentator who wrote this, Michael Banda, is not to blame. He is only faithfully and very logically applying the line developed by the National Committee of the SLL, giving a practical demonstration of how thoroughly steeped he is in its method of thinking.

The September 29 issue of The Newsletter apparently did not consider the continuation of Kennedy's new aggressive moves to be newsworthy despite the mounting world tension. The editors have their own way of gauging the importance of "the facts"; and, as we have seen, this does not necessarily coincide with the views of the rest of the world or even anyone else.

The October 6 issue continues to rate the Cuban Revolution and its defense as unnewsworthy. Perhaps it was just as well.

In the October 13 issue, Cuba managed to fight its way onto page two. Someone, obviously bored with the assignment, notes that "The past few weeks have seen a stepping up of the U.S. efforts to tighten the economic stranglehold on Cuba." It appears that the State Department is going to place a naval blockade on Cuba. The British government may get involved in this, but it's not too clear from the article just how. The abstract formulas about the vital need for "assistance from the International Labour movement" are repeated. Finally we come to the section where we must bare our flesh to the needle. The plunger is pushed to the bottom. We are inoculated against the danger of placing the slightest confidence -- not in the British, but in the Cuban government.

"The aid, both military and economic, which the Cubans have received from the USSR, has enabled them to defy the attacks of U.S. big business. But increased dependence on these supplies carried with it the danger of political pressure from Khrushchev for more 'responsible' policies to be followed.

"The UN speech of Cuba's President Dorticos is a warning of the possibility of such moves. Dr. Dorticos declared his government had no intention of spreading revolution to the South American mainland, or of taking action against the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo."

In the following issue, Oct. 20, Cuba did pretty well in The Newsletter. A column on the front page noted that the pressure was being stepped up, a Cuban patrol boat having been sunk "by a large exile ship." The main danger was correctly seen to be "the strength of American imperialism" not the "small groups of counter-revolutionary exiles." Another danger was well handled by the author, Eric Neilson; that is, the readiness of the Soviet bureaucracy to compromise with the American imperialists. With almost prophetic insight the author wrote probably the two best paragraphs in many an issue of the paper:

"This compromise could mean that Khrushchev is considering cutting off the supply of arms to Cuba, arms vital to the defence of that country against U.S. imperialism.

"Any such compromise must be firmly opposed by all those who claim to support the Cuban revolution against the reactionary forces which now threaten it."

When Kennedy had completed the mobilization of troops for invasion of Cuba, had stationed the fleet in the Caribbean, put bombers in the air carrying nuclear weapons and readied rockets and submarines for the attack, he issued his ultimatum to the Soviet government. The world teetered at the edge of nuclear destruction. For once the National Committee of the SLL decided that "the facts" outweighed their texts. Reality broke into the columns of The Newsletter. The top headline in the October 27 issue was awarded to Cuba. "SAY NO TO YANKEE WAR." A map even was printed on the front page showing that there is an island named Cuba and that it lies off the tip of Florida and between the Bahamas and Jamaica, which are of special interest to British readers.

Even more, a big section of page two was used to reprint extracts from the speech by President Dorticos about which readers of The Newsletter had been warned in the October 13 issue. Now The Newsletter, veering completely around, praised what Dr. Dorticos had said: "This very clearly exposes the preparations for war which have now entered a stage of open and undisguised aggression not only against Cuba but against the Soviet Union."

In the main article Gerry Healy became so enthusiastic over the Cuban Revolution that he ventured to say these welcome words:

"The Cuban revolution is a continuation of the great colonial revolution. Its defence cannot be organized within the framework of 'co-existence with world imperialism.'

"To defend the Soviet Union is to fight for the extension of the revolution which gave rise to it in the first place.

"The Cuban revolution is just such a revolution. That is why U.S. imperialism wants to destroy it, and in doing so has now decided to attack the Soviet Union itself."

Splendidly stated! The existence of a workers' state in Cuba, extending the October Revolution into Latin America, is an unbearable challenge to U.S. imperialism. That is why Wall Street is willing to risk nuclear war to crush it.

You would never know from the pages of The Newsletter, since such "facts" are of little concern to them, but the British working people acquitted themselves well in this emergency. Hundreds of spontaneous and hastily organized demonstrations flared up throughout Britain. These became a significant factor in causing Kennedy to hesitate in reaching for the red telephone.

This impressive response of the British working people to the crisis over Cuba was a convincing demonstration that they are not nearly so insular in their outlook as the National Committee of the SLL. Our "Leninists" were so far behind events that they could not even be said to be "tail-ending." To be a tail-ender you at least have to run after someone who does something or try to catch up with actions that are occurring. The National Committee of the SLL was dreaming about a different world than this one.

To close this gruesome chapter, we place in evidence the November 3 issue of The Newsletter. The Cuban crisis still rates a prominent place but the leaders of the SLL have obviously relaxed. The opening sentence of the front-page article by Gerry Healy reads: "The defence of the Cuban revolution against U.S. imperialism is now the acid test for the world Trotskyist movement."

In a newspaper addressed to the British workers, it may be taken as eccentric to open the main article with a sentence of such narrow focus. Actually the audience which Healy specifies is too broad. It would have been sufficient to cite the National Committee of the SLL. That's the public Healy has in mind anyway, isn't it? This strange article does not go after British imperialism for the treacherous role it played in the crisis. Instead it attempts to illustrate the thesis that "Cuba is another grim warning of the predominantly reactionary nature of the Soviet bureaucracy and its politics." Much of the article is a plodding repetition of the basic Trotskyist explanation of the nature of this bureaucracy and its opposition to revolution. When he gets to his point, however, on how the Cuban situation illustrates his abstractions, the author runs into trouble. "In the case of Cuba, Khrushchev has provided Castro and his people with food supplies although in inadequate quantities." On this, Healy's view of the situation is a little awry. Some

of the shortages faced by the Cubans, such as pork and lard, could probably not be made up in the Soviet Union. In general the poor people in Cuba are eating better than in Batista's time, the children certainly, and hunger is not the main problem as of now. Where the Soviet role has been decisive is in supplying oil, tools, vehicles, machinery and military goods. The Cuban cause is very popular throughout the Soviet bloc and it is a considerable error to think that quite substantial aid has not been given.

However, Healy rests his case not on this but something rather unexpected:

"The establishment of rocket bases in Cuba could not possibly defend the Cuban revolution. This can only be done in the immediate future by the struggle to win over the solidarity of the American working class and to extend the revolution in Latin America.

"Of course the Cuban government had every right to accept these rocket bases and sign such agreements as it wished with the Soviet Union.

"But it was most inadvisable that it should have exercised this right by permitting Khrushchev to place under the control of Russian technicians rocket bases which were plain for all to see on the small island. (*)

"Having a right and exercising it are two different things. One does not necessarily follow from the other."

Like the hero in the novel by Victor Hugo, Healy deserves to be decorated for that sentence about winning the solidarity of the American working class and extending the revolution into Latin America. And then summarily shot for his advice to the Cubans: "Having a right and exercising it are two different things. One does not necessarily follow from the other." If he objects to such a harsh penalty, the military court can well reply: "Having a right to advise the Cubans and exercising it are two different things. One does not necessarily follow from the other." We can hear Healy's immortal reply as he refuses a blindfold: "What kind of right is it if you can't exercise it?"

(*) How microscopic does Healy think the island is? The U.S. resorted to U-2 spy planes and the violation of Cuban air space to discover them.

The irony of his advice is that only a few weeks before, the ultra-left spurs were being dug into Dorticos for declaring that his government had no intention of exporting revolution or of taking action against the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo. A couple of weeks before that The Newsletter shook its finger warningly against the Cubans considering "any attempt to establish normal relations with the U.S. government." And only two issues before Healy's article, in the number that went to press on the eve of Kennedy's ultimatum, The Newsletter warned that Khrushchev might cut off Cuba's supply of arms, "arms vital to the defense of that country against U.S. imperialism." The Newsletter alerted its readers to the evident dangers in that quarter: "Any such compromise must be firmly opposed by all those. . . ." etc., etc. Apparently Gerry Healy didn't get around to reading the column on Cuba that week. Or perhaps by "arms vital to the defense of that country against U.S. imperialism," with its stockpiles of nuclear "deterrents," The Newsletter had something only quantitative in mind like 40,000 tons of bows and arrows and flint tomahawks. Thus the Kremlin betrayed by sending defensive equipment of too superior a quality.

Perhaps Healy is right, but the fact that the White House chose the rocket bases as the excuse for pushing to the brink of nuclear war was partly accidental. Before that they obviously weighed seizing on Soviet aid in building a fishing port as a cause for going to war. As I write this, the stationing in Cuba of planes capable of carrying bombs is the pretext for maintaining the blockade. If this today, then tomorrow in a new crisis something else. In every case it will be an instance in which the Cuban government exercises its sovereign rights. The real reason, of course, is that Cuba is a workers state, a fact which Healy cannot bring himself to admit. U.S. imperialism, more realistically, has recognized its existence and consciously and calculatingly made it a major policy to end this standing affront, challenge and threat to the capitalist system. If a plausible pretext is lacking one will be manufactured. The facts are absolutely conclusive on that.

Healy's position is a concession to the pacifist view: don't provoke the warmongers! As if they are not always provoked by their intended victims, if for no other reason than by their weakness.

The major lesson to be drawn from this is that in an acid test what looked like 24-carat ultraleftism can reveal some surprising opportunist streaks.

Position of the French Section of the IC

The leading comrades of the French Section of the International Committee share with the National Committee of the SLL the view that Cuba is not a workers state. They differ on two fundamental points, however. Unlike the British comrades, they believe that dual power exists in Cuba; and they hold that the Castro regime constitutes a "Workers and Peasants Government." Moreover, in contrast to the SLL's top leaders, they recognize the logic which has compelled the majority of the world Trotskyist movement to consider Cuba to be a workers state. Their criticism is not against the justifiability of extending to Cuba the same basic approach that was used in the case of China, Yugoslavia, and the East European countries. What they maintain is that since Cuba is not a workers state -- according to their estimate -- something must have been wrong in the preceding position. We must, therefore, dump all the work done up to now in estimating the character of the state in China, Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe and start over again. What they propose as a substitute, they have only intimated; perhaps they will soon offer us something more substantial.

In a certain sense they have thus proceeded in a more sophisticated and methodical way than the National Committee of the SLL. They are prepared to acknowledge most of the facts which the British comrades consider to be an unbearable or indecent sight. They are willing to admit the consistency of the workers state position. Thus they rectify the most repelling crudities of the SLL position. With the same sharp eye for avoiding what is grossly absurd, they take what they consider to be valid in the views of their allies -- that Cuba is not a workers state -- and insist that it be carried to its obviously necessary conclusion; namely, revision of the hard-won theory of the world Trotskyist movement back to 1948 and earlier. They state this quite frankly:

"And we rejoice that the discussion on Cuba inevitably entails returning to this former discussion and the elaboration of a new analysis of the nature of the buffer states, of Yugoslavia and China, questions on which we are 'revisionists' insofar as -- the discussion on Cuba demonstrates it -- these comrades today, in basing themselves on the characterizations adopted in 1948, at times place in question the very principles that served as the foundation structure of our international movement."

We, for our part, acknowledge that this methodology is inherently superior to that of the National Committee of the SLL, since it recognizes in principle the preeminence of reality; and we will add that the British comrades might profitably study the coherence and lucidity with which their French allies argue their case in "Draft Report on the Cuban Revolution." It is regrettable that the authors of the Trotskyism Betrayed document chose to brush this contribution rudely aside, not even referring to it, still less discussing its views in their opus. However, the French comrades may, with good reason, have felt grateful for this lack of consideration.

As I see it, the position developed in the "Draft Report" rests on four main errors: (1) Substitution of "Workers and Peasants Government" for "Workers State"; (2) refusal to recognize a qualitative change in the character of the state in Cuba; (3) misunderstanding of the main criteria used in characterizing the buffer states; (4) abuse of an analogy with the Spanish Revolution of 1936-39. I will consider these in their order.

The authors of the "Draft Report" agree that the break up of the coalition government in Cuba in July 1959 marked a change of decisive character in the regime; it was qualitative. This position, in my opinion, is unassailable. The turn proved to be an essential link in the chain of Cuban events. The new regime that replaced the coalition undertook a series of measures, directed against the interests of the landlords, native capitalists and imperialists that clearly advanced the class interests of the Cuban campesinos and workers. These measures took effect in all fields, economic, social and political. Their outstanding characteristic was disarmament of the bourgeoisie and armament of the masses. Deep inroads were thus made in the old state structure. The correct label for such a government is "Workers and Peasants," a petty-bourgeois formation foreseen long ago by Marxists. Our Transitional Program noted the possibility of such governments appearing in our epoch, as well as the possibility of their going "much farther" than they originally intended. When the Cuban "Workers and Peasants Government," in reply to the aggression of U.S. imperialism, expropriated landlord and capitalist properties on a major scale, in September-October 1960, then instituted a planned economy and completed the destruction of the old state apparatus, it obviously went beyond anything foreseen in any of the theoretical or programmatic writings of Marxism in the period before World War II, including the writings of Trotsky. Whatever label may be put on the resulting state,

we are up against a hard fact which Marxism must account for on pain of confessing incapacity to deal with reality. If our opponents will concede for the moment that what we have before us is a workers state of some kind or other then what is new in life and what must therefore be reflected in theory is that a "Workers and Peasants Government"; that is, a petty-bourgeois government, can go so far as to establish a workers state, (4)

(4) The conditions under which this has occurred, together with the limitations of the resulting workers states, that is, their "deformation," have been discussed concretely in the cases of the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and China. The conditions which made possible a similar development in Cuba have been discussed but it is still too early to draw final conclusions on the limitations. As for what the particular pattern of these overturns of capitalism signifies for the general necessity in our epoch of constructing a revolutionary-socialist international, this question was raised at the time of the discussion over the buffer countries -- most sharply, if I remember correctly, by leading comrades in the SWP. The general conclusions drawn at that time remain completely valid. First of all, it is far easier for the proletariat to come to power in a backward country than in an imperialist center. This was well understood by the Bolsheviks, but it is still truer today. The relative decline of world capitalism in relation to the rise of the Soviet Union, plus the enormous revolutionary ferment on a global scale has made the grip of capitalism much weaker in the backward areas than it was even a few decades ago. Experience has demonstrated that forces which are socialist-minded but not Bolshevik can come to power and undertake a series of measures that in certain circumstances go so far as to transcend private capitalism, providing the base for a workers state. Such a state, however, testifies to its specific origin by deviating from the Leninist norms. These new possibilities, however, have not eliminated the need for revolutionary-socialist parties. What they really demonstrate is the richness of revolutionary openings and therefore the bright perspective facing revolutionary socialism in these areas. Could anything be more instructive than the turn of the Castro leadership towards Marxism-Leninism in the very course of revolution and its acknowledgement of the need for a revolutionary-socialist party?

Likewise valid is the conclusion drawn in the 1948 discussion of the absolute necessity for construction of revolutionary-socialist parties in the advanced capitalist countries. In fact experience would seem to indicate that the difficulty of coming to power in the imperialist centers has increased if anything since the time of the Bolsheviks. This is due not solely to the perfidious role of the Stalinist, social-democratic and trade-union bureaucracies, but also to the lessons learned by the bourgeoisie in the defeats they have suffered. Consequently, to win in the imperialist centers, construction of a revolutionary-socialist party has become even more imperative. None of this, of course, is of much concern to the ultraleft sectarians whose politics consists of little more than parrot-like repetition of a stock of revolutionary phrases. To repeat these phrases in Cuba with a semblance of plausibility, they are forced to deny reality. In a country like Britain they make up for this by repeating them thrice.

This is the precise point which the authors of "Draft Report" balk at. And recognizing very clearly that this conclusion cannot be avoided in view of the fact that it involves the same principle operative in China, Yugoslavia and even Eastern Europe, they very logically extend their negative position backward to include those cases.

By doing so, however, they at once involve themselves in a self-contradictory stand. They insist, properly so, on "underlining the importance of the rupture of the coalition between Castro and the bourgeois figures installed in the government after the flight of Batista." This qualitative political change marked the appearance of a new kind of government. On the other hand they underline the importance of not recognizing any qualitative change in the economy or the state resting on that economy at any point up to now in Cuba.

It requires considerable dexterity to justify this self-contradictory stand. To the natural question that at once arises, "What kind of state exists, then, in Cuba?" they offer an ingenious answer. If it is not a workers state, then it must be a capitalist state. Since this is scarcely demonstrable, the authors of "Draft Report" maintain that what we have before us is a "broken-down, decomposed, phantom bourgeois state, controlled by the group of men around Castro" ("un etat bougeois, delabre, decompose, fantomatique, controle par le groupe d'hommes qui entourent Castro").

What import this novelty has for Marxist theory is not discussed in "Draft Report." Perhaps the authors will return later to the profound meaning which phantom bourgeois states hold for our epoch. Meanwhile we are inclined to jog along with what the Castro government has succeeded in accomplishing, having at its control such a phantom in Cuba.

There might be dialecticians who would contend that if you break down and decompose something until nothing but the ghost remains, it is no longer the same, having really undergone a qualitative change. The authors of the "Draft Report," to forestall such a criticism, argue that alongside Castro can be found the "elements of workers power," still appealing to the same leadership but "in reality always increasing their pressure toward more radical measures." As in Spain in 1936-37, the "Draft Report" contends, dual power exists in Cuba.

Even if this were so, we would still be left with the phantom bourgeois state, this formless plasma of the spirit world. If, as materialists, we eliminate this wraith from consideration we are left with only a "Workers and Peasants Government" to which the "Draft Report" thus assigns the functions of a state. And this despite their recognition that it is a "serious error in method to confound the nature of the state and the nature of the government."

We come now to the second error, which, of course, flows from the first one. If Cuba is now a workers state, when did the qualitative change occur? In the SWP, the majority view is that the date was fixed by the massive nationalizations. This was the point of qualitative change. But the authors of the "Draft Report," holding that no qualitative change has occurred, are compelled to dispose of all possible dates. Those involving power are rejected on various grounds without specifying the real one which is that a revolutionary-socialist could not in advance grant political confidence to the Castro leadership in view of the limitations of its declared program. Fundamental economic criteria are likewise rejected, two grounds being advanced for this: (1) they are not sufficient in themselves; (2) even if they are sufficient in themselves this is true only if they are operative over a long period of time. These arguments really beg the question. Implied in them is the premise that the most drastic overturn of an economy has no qualitative meaning in itself, only a quantitative one.

The admission that a long period of time would ultimately bring qualitative considerations to bear alters nothing in the hidden premise, since it is not specified what economic measures, accumulating bit by bit would lead to the qualitative change nor what would constitute, on the economic level, the point of decisive change. Thus the protagonists of this view are left without a program specifying what they demand in Cuba in the economic sphere that would mark the clear emergence of a workers state. All their demands are of a political character involving the nature of the power, the lack of institutions of proletarian democracy such as workers councils, etc. Consequently they end up like the National Committee of the SLL and the minority in the SWP with a mere political definition of the workers state. To justify this in Marxist theory they are forced to fall back to the generalized norms stated by Lenin before further concretization was made possible by study of the reality in a degenerated workers state.

This completely unhistorical approach calls for its payment in the history of our movement. It forces our French comrades to demand complete revision of our position on the series of deformed workers states. They argue that the destruction of the capitalist economy, the nationalization of the key sectors of industry and the introduction of planned economy were not sufficient to prove that the bourgeois state had been smashed and that it had been displaced by a workers state. They contend that two more essential criteria must be added.

"We think," they say, "that it is precisely here that one of the weaknesses of our analysis of 1948 becomes evident, and we will return to this later. However, undeniably, in the case of the European buffer countries, the criterion of 'nationalization' is inseparable from the criterion 'cultural assimilation' with a 'degenerated workers state': it is because the bonapartist state of the buffer countries is the instrument of the bureaucracy of a degenerated workers state that the Trotskyists were able to consider it as a deformed workers state, and the criterion 'nationalization and planning' is not, by itself, sufficient."

Precisely what is meant by "cultural assimilation" is not indicated. Do they mean "structural" assimilation? But that is just a condensed way of saying expropriation of the capitalists, nationalization and planning. Perhaps by "cultural" assimilation they mean liquidation of independent political trends, a process brought to its culmination in the purge trials of 1949 and again in the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956? Or is it something as vague as a phantom bourgeois state?

On the other point, the authors of the "Draft Report" are, quite logically from their point of view, adding a political criterion to those we used in 1948; and, just as logically, making it the decisive criterion; "it is because the bonapartist state of the buffer countries is the instrument of the bureaucracy . . . ," they say. Not so. We rejected the criterion of power in 1948 since it would have signified that we considered the buffer countries to be workers states because of Stalinism and not in spite of it. Otherwise we would have ended in a position inconsistent with our position on the Soviet Union itself. We specified that labeling the buffer countries as workers states did not thereby imply political confidence in the bureaucracy. We opposed its bureaucratic measures. We conceded absolutely nothing to Stalinism.

Had the criteria now advocated by the authors of the "Draft Report" been adopted, what slippery footing we would have found! For example, so long as the Tito leadership remained a docile instrument, we would have had to call Yugoslavia a workers state. When it fought for political independence and broke diplomatic relations, thus no longer serving as the "instrument" of the Soviet bureaucracy, we would have had to switch and say: "Sorry, but a bourgeois phantom state is again haunting Yugoslavia." And when Yugoslavia was able to resume relations, we would have had to report: "Thank God, that ghost has been laid again."

As for China -- that would have been a spiritualist's paradise. When is a phantom not a phantom? Can you have half phantoms and quarter phantoms and so on ad infinitum?

The big advantage in such juggling of criteria, of course, is that you can avoid calling Cuba a workers state. I would agree that in some instances, at least, the authors of the "Draft Report" hit the nail on the head with their observation: "The disagreements go beyond words. It is in fact in setting up a conception of the Cuban Revolution as a whole that each one chooses a definition which, at bottom, epitomizes his politics." Of course, to maintain their novel position, the French comrades have to prove that no Soviet "cultural assimilation" has occurred in Cuba and that the Castro regime is not an "instrument of the bureaucracy of a degenerated workers state." Unfortunately, here our authors, seeking to establish a close analogy with the Spanish Revolution, depart from their admirable consistency and try to prove that the Castro government has gone a long way in succumbing to Stalinism; that is, in taking the road to a workers state, according to the criteria they now advance.

The fourth major error in the "Draft Report" is a concession to the Healy-Slaughter school of thought which can scarcely win our praise. For some obscure reason the French comrades insist on looking at Cuba primarily through the dark glasses of the defeated Spanish Revolution. An analogy has its uses but it inevitably breaks down if carried too far. Since the limitations of the analogy are not stated by the authors we are forced to determine them ourselves.

First of all, how can the countries themselves and the major situations confronting them be compared with much meaning? A key question in Spain was the colonies. The failure of the republican government to grant freedom to the Moroccans was more decisive in strengthening Franco than the military aid he received from fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Cuba, on the other hand, belongs to the colonial world and has just won freedom from an imperialist power. The situation is not one of a civil war involving a fascist threat but of an attempt by imperialism to crush a workers state and restore colonial rule.

The analogy between the counterrevolutionary forces is thus not very close. In Spain, Franco was fighting for power. In Cuba, the native Franco, Batista, has been overthrown and the native counterrevolutionaries, as the Cubans have scornfully said many times, could be handled by the children if it were not for the U.S.

Cuba has a revolutionary-minded leadership which the Spanish workers and peasants lacked. This leadership came to power in revolutionary struggle, proving itself in action. It demonstrated that it had drawn correct lessons from the experiences in Guatemala and Bolivia and that it was capable of learning from the experience of the Chinese Revolution. Finally, this leadership has proved its awareness of the duality of the Soviet bureaucracy as a source of material aid and as a source of political danger. When such a leadership proclaims that it has become "Marxist-Leninist," its words must be taken with the utmost seriousness even though it may not yet measure up to our norms.

To this we must add that the world setting today is completely different from what it was in 1936-39. In place of the entrenchment of European fascism, the Soviet Union has consolidated a position as one of the two primary world powers. The Soviet economic structure has been extended deep into Europe. China has become a workers state. The colonial revolution has brought hundreds of millions to their feet. De-Stalinization has altered the capacity of the bureaucracy to impose its will in flagrant

fashion as in the thirties. The analogy breaks down here especially in leaving out of account such experiences as the rebellion of the Yugoslav CP, the uprising in East Germany, the attempted political revolution in Hungary and the current differences between the Russian and Chinese CP's. Where does the parallel to the break up of Stalinism exist in the Spanish situation? The revolutionary stream today is not running in the direction of Stalinism. In all of Latin America to one degree or another the Communist parties are in deep crisis over the Cuban Revolution -- above all in Cuba. All these differences in conditions point unquestionably to the validity of the conclusion that the outcome of the revolution in Cuba is far more promising politically than it was in Spain.

An analogy cannot substitute for analysis of reality itself. It is a gross error in methodology to conclude that because the Spanish Republic was not a workers state, therefore Cuba is not. To determine the general characteristics of the Cuban or any other revolution we must begin by considering it individually; that is, ascertain the facts; for, as we learn from Hegel, the individual is a combination and manifestation of the general. On doing this, we see at once that the analogy between the Spanish and Cuban revolutions is destroyed by the different outcomes of the two, which in turn confirms that different means were operative in the two revolutions. The Spanish Revolution was defeated for internal reasons, primarily the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism. The Cuban Revolution was victorious, sealing its victory in the establishment of a workers state. A revolutionist must be able to tell the difference between victory and defeat! The immediate future of this workers state does not hinge on the outcome of a civil war in the face of native fascism but on successful resistance to the diplomatic, economic and military aggression of a foreign imperialist power. Is that not so? For additional light on how best to meet this threat facing Cuba, the Spanish Revolution offers little. We must turn to other analogies such as the comparison with the Russian workers state when it was battling imperialist intervention.

As for the subsidiary points in "Draft Report," these can be safely left aside. There is much quibbling about "nationalizations" in general, for instance, which is beside the point in considering the specific nationalizations in Cuba. Undue credit is given Miro Cardona for actions taken while he was in government and their real import is missed. Other errors of this kind could be cited. A major one, the alleged take-over of Castro's forces by the Cuban Communist Party has been sufficiently exploded by events. The meaning of the attacks on the Cuban

Trotskyists is exaggerated and placed at the wrong door besides not being properly balanced against the ideological influence which Trotskyism exercises in a significant sector among the Cuban revolutionary vanguard.

The accusation that the appreciation of Cuba as a workers state has led the SWP to adopt "centrist, opportunist and liquidationist positions" is a premature announcement of our death. It also displays a rather disturbing lack of appreciation of the political logic flowing from the conclusion that a workers state has been established under a non-Stalinist leadership. This has opened up fresh and most encouraging perspectives for party building in both Latin America and the United States, although it has also brought some new and difficult tactical problems. The first experiences in this respect have already been favorably recorded both by the SWP and the Latin-American Trotskyists. If our French comrades are doubtful about the favorable reports on what has been gained in the main bastion of world imperialism, perhaps they will listen with more open minds to what our comrades in Latin America have to say about their experiences. These are much more pertinent to the discussion on the Cuban Revolution than the highly questionable analogy with Spain. The Latin-American Trotskyist view may also provide a good antidote for the ill-considered policy that would have us undo everything since 1940.

Cuba and Reunification

I have tried to demonstrate that the National Committee of the SLL proceeds in the Cuban Revolution from assumptions hardened into dogmas; that is, they brush aside or disregard facts that cannot be fitted into their preconceived framework and throw out of focus those that do seem to exemplify their preconceptions. Elevated into a principle, this subjective approach turns everything upside down -- the Notion is made supreme over the mundane world of material events. We are not surprised that the same method is applied to the problem of reunifying the world Trotskyist movement. Nor are we surprised that the SLL leaders even take pride in their methodological consistency: "The SWP criticism of the SLL starts from the Cuban revolution," they observe. "In doing so, it reveals its whole mistaken method. We must begin from the need to establish Leninist parties in every country, and in the first place to defeat revisionism."

Let us pause a moment right there. We are given a blueprint in which the subjective side is listed first; moreover,

not program in general but the "defeat" of a challenge to the program; still further, a specific variety of challenge -- "revisionism," by which they mean revisionism in the opportunist direction, not the utraleft. (The SLL leaders seem to work from a revised copy of the general blueprint which conveniently leaves out the need to defeat ultraleftism.) Next in order comes general application of the general blueprint for establishment of "Leninist parties" in "every country." (Granting them the benefit of the doubt, we assume that they mean concretely by this the construction of the world party of the socialist revolution, the Fourth International). Only after descending this ladder do we come to the need to establish the concrete development of the revolution, which in reality must constitute the foundation for everything else in Cuba.

This methodology is rigorously applied even in the structure of the SLL manifesto, "Trotskyism Betrayed." The Cuban Revolution which constitutes the acid objective test for every tendency that proclaims itself to be revolutionary is subordinated and relegated to the mere level of one example among many, an example of minor importance in view of Cuba's relative economic weight in the world. On the other hand, the struggle against revisionism, as interpreted by the leaders of the SLL, is given first place in the document both qualitatively and quantitatively. To justify putting the real problems that face the world Trotskyist movement upside down in this way, it is necessary to magnify the danger of "revisionism" in inverse ratio to the reduction of the importance of the Cuban Revolution. In turn this necessitates construction of a kind of demonology inside the world Trotskyist movement symmetrical to the Holy Scripture they make of Leninism. Disregarding or misinterpreting facts -- in perfect parallel to their approach to Cuba -- the SLL leaders picture the relationship between the IS and the IC as if absolutely nothing had changed since 1953. Well, not absolutely. The SLL leaders acknowledge that some change has occurred. As they see it, the differences have -- deepened!

To prove this they would have to demonstrate that the IS, instead of satisfactorily clearing up the political differences that appeared to us to lie behind the organizational dispute of 1953-54, had developed them into a system or at least gone far down that road. It is promised that this will be done in the course of the projected discussion, but as yet little has been forthcoming beyond repetition of the points of difference of almost a decade ago.

A weakness of such glaring proportions in the SLL position requires compensation. Thus our dead-end factionalists picture the IS today as a monolithic group committed to revisionism but also committed to covering up its revisionism with diabolical cleverness. However, since theory and practice are intimately related, as we know from Lenin and others, it is possible to expose these revisionists. Hence every sentence written by anyone adhering to the IS is scrutinized under the microscope for evidence of the hidden revisionist concepts which must lie behind them. Not even leaflets put out by this or that group of comrades in this or that local situation escape the sluths. A phrase torn from a leaflet distributed at the Renault plant in Paris in defense of Cuba against U.S. imperialism serves for elevation to front-page attention in The Newsletter in London, so hard-pressed are the leaders of the SLL to find evidence of the revisionism of the IS.

In this fantasia of ultraleft sectarianism, the course of the SWP takes on sinister meaning. The plain truth is that the SWP noted the facts concerning the declared positions of the IS on the important issues of the day. It noted its stand on the Hungarian uprising, on political revolution in the USSR, on de-Stalinization. It noted especially that the IS had assessed the main stages of the Cuban Revolution in the same way as the SWP, the Canadians and the Latin-American Trotskyists; that is, by utilizing the basic conclusions made in the particular cases of the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and China. Thus the real situation in the world Trotskyist movement was that the political differences had been narrowing for some time and new grounds for common action had appeared. Most important of all, the IS in its majority and the IC in its majority had passed the acid test of the Cuban Revolution. This opened a highly encouraging possibility for healing old wounds and reuniting the world Trotskyist movement on the most solid basis in its history. Whatever differences remained could surely be contained in a common organization under normal rules of democratic centralism. It was impossible to escape the conclusion that objectively the correct course was to press for reunification. The dispute over who was right in 1953-54 should not be permitted to stand in the way of joining forces in common assault on the problems of today. To proceed in a less responsible way would constitute a default in leadership. These simple, elementary considerations, which are ABC to Leninists, are given a different explanation by the leaders of the SLL.

According to their interpretation, the SWP, drifting into the wake of Pabloism, has decided to accept its revisionist views; that is, in the Cuban Revolution, for instance, to acknowledge the facts and assess them in the light of the Trotskyist analysis of the buffer countries, Yugoslavia and China. But this course, with its logical consequences, constitutes "betrayal" in the eyes of the SLL leaders. How is such a miserable end to be explained in the case of the SWP which in its entire long history has never betrayed but always upheld the program of world Trotskyism? The explanation can only be that the SWP has "degenerated"; otherwise the SLL leaders are proved to be in error and how can that be, since they begin with the need to defeat revisionism? Thus the SWP is crossed off; or virtually crossed off. That is why members of the SWP are now privileged to read in the factional documents of the SLL, perhaps with some astonishment, that their party is racked by a deep crisis, having made opportunist concessions to the imperialist environment, above all in its approach to the Cuban Revolution. Not by accident, consequently, the SWP wants to unite with "Pabloism"; and that, as the SLL leaders see it, is the real explanation for the present efforts of reunification.

The logical concomitant to the SLL view that "revisionism" -- as represented chiefly by the IS -- constitutes the main danger facing the world Trotskyist movement, is that unification of the Fourth International is excluded. It is excluded until such time as the SLL view sweeps the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement and wins a majority. This confronts the SLL with a rather sticky contradiction. The elevation of anti-Pabloism into the First Commandment blocks unification. On the other hand, the desirability of winning a majority of Trotskyists to its views forces the SLL to consider how to gain a favorable hearing. Thus, while it bristles at the prospect of unification, it wants discussion. To get such a discussion, the SLL leaders are forced to recognize that the overwhelming sentiment in the world Trotskyist movement is in favor of unification. They must go even further and appear to bend with this sentiment. Hence the initiative they took in the IC to go to the IS and propose formation of a Parity Committee. In doing this the SLL leaders had to admit the eventual possibility of unification; more concretely they had to recognize the need and advisability of engaging in common actions with the IS whatever may be the views on unification, early, delayed or never at all.

In the process of reunifying the world Trotskyist movement, the proposal for a Parity Committee was objectively called for. The SWP did not look into what subjective motives the SLL leaders

might have had in making this proposal but weighed it on its objective merits, attempting in this case as in all others, to utilize the Marxist method of beginning with the reality of the situation. The IS responded in similar fashion to the initiative of the SLL leaders. Thus the Parity Committee was born.

No sooner did this committee meet, however, than the top leaders of the SLL began raising among IC adherents the ugly question of a new split. Naturally they point an accusing finger at the SWP and the IS. It is typical of dead-end factionalists to begin preparations for a split by raising the issue in the form of an accusation. In this case it also reflects the consistency with which the SLL leaders apply their methodology of inverted thinking.

The accusation has two variants: First, that "the Pabloites consider their participation in the Parity Committee as a maneuver to obtain the support of the SWP." That is, they "are using the Parity Committee as a means to get closer to the SWP in order to drag it more rapidly into their orbit." The "Comment" containing this charge was "approved unanimously" by the National Committee of the SLL after the very first meeting of the Parity Committee. Why then did the SLL leaders open the way to such a deadly maneuver? Why did they propose a Parity Committee if it would help the Pabloites in their Machiavellian scheme "to get closer to the SWP"? Or did the well-meaning but bumbling leaders of the SLL fail to see such a possibility when they proposed the Parity Committee? They can scarcely argue that they failed to receive friendly notification. The SWP hailed the initiative as an important step toward reunification. The IS accepted it with the statement that it would participate in accordance with its declared aim of seeking early reunification.

Second, that the SWP has in mind maneuvering to present the discussion to be conducted under Parity Committee auspices "as one which promises early unification, but that this is prevented by the attitude of the SLL and its co-thinkers." Moreover that the SWP leadership is prevented from pressing for early reunification by its members and its past tradition; therefore it regards the Parity Committee proposals as a means of making an official approach to the Pabloites without appearing to break from the IC. However, according to this inside dope, the SWP has been preparing the political ground for such a break. Once again, then, why did the top leaders of the SLL obligingly facilitate such a dastardly move by proposing formation of the Parity Committee?

The fact is that most Trotskyists throughout the world, including the SWP and the IS, hailed the formation of the Parity Committee in good faith as a big step in the direction of reunification. Why the initiators of the Parity Committee should suddenly present it at its very launching as the vehicle of splitting maneuvers cooked up by the SWP and the IS is difficult to conceive, unless we are again being presented with an example of inverted thinking.

What is most ridiculous and unbecoming in this pose is that the SLL top leadership has been developing political positions which in the key case of the Cuban Revolution are completely at variance with the rest of the world Trotskyist movement, including their closest allies in France. It is quite doubtful that they would seriously contend, in the light of the evidence, that their position on Cuba represents that of the majority of the IC. They are thus preparing the political ground for anything but an attempt to bring harmony among the adherents of the IC. On the contrary they have been placing the SWP, and anyone in the IC who thinks that the stand of the SWP on Cuba and unification has merit, under increasingly heavy fire. They have proclaimed that the SLL represents a separate tendency, one even that has declared war on all opponents to its positions. "The Socialist Labour League," they say, "is not prepared to go any part of the way with this revisionism, and will fight it to the end." And, "It is in the construction of the revolutionary party in the USA itself that the necessity of defeating the SWP leadership's revisionism is most urgent." In short, the political split has already been carried out by the SLL. As for relations between the SLL and the IS, it is superfluous to speak of a break, since the SLL leaders openly proclaim their hostility in the face of comradely overtures from the IS and are scarcely diplomatic about indicating that they visualize no reunification so far as they are concerned unless it takes place on the basis of their ultraleft sectarian views. But since this is unrealistic what course remains open but to go it alone and to begin as early as possible to prepare the grounds for it?

It is in the light of such considerations that we must evaluate their language which, while it scarcely displays much originality, carries not a small ballast of epithets, especially in relation to the SWP. We are offered the curious paradox of furious intensification of ultraleft factional war against all who hold the position that Cuba is a workers state, the SWP, in the first place; while, bending to the pressure for unity, Healy, with commendable civility, sits

down with the representatives of the IS in the Parity Committee. By this public show, you see, he makes a kind of record in favor of reunification.

Is someone's duplicity showing? I do not think so. Deviousness is hardly the explanation. Comrade Healy happens to be a superb fighter who has been in many a bout. At the sound of the bell he has learned to start swinging at once with savage jabs and hooks, cunning counter punches and deceptive weaving. Sometimes this occurs when his opponent is not in that corner of the ring; sometimes, even, when Healy himself is not in the ring. One's admiration for such delicately poised reflexes is tinged with a certain pity. Please, won't the National Committee of the SLL consider adopting a very simple course to stymie the enemy's treacherous maneuvers which they unwittingly facilitated? To save the SWP from being dragged away from the SLL into a fate worse than death, let Healy patiently stand by the American comrades. You, too, all of you, stay with them in their mistaken enterprise of trying to unify the world Trotskyist movement. As loyal friends and comrades, who have shared many vicissitudes over the years, go through the experience with them, painful as it may be. Block the splitters by the easy, sound tactic of accepting their offer to unify!

Even from the viewpoint of the narrow factional interests of the SLL this would seem much the wiser course. Certainly you have a much better chance of winning a majority of Trotskyists to your views by persuasion inside a united movement than by attack from the outside. You are doubtful about respect for your democratic rights in a united movement? But this betrays a feeling of extreme weakness in relation to the IS. Does this reflect the reality in regard to numbers or is it lack of political confidence? Or perhaps the internal regime of the SLL cannot be offered as a model example of what you mean by the "democratic" part of democratic centralism? In any case, as the unification process continues, the problem of democratic guarantees for minority tendencies will certainly come up under the proper point in the agenda. From a realistic assessment of all that has been learned by both sides since the experience of a decade or so ago, there can be little question that this demand will be satisfactorily met within the general principle of adherence to democratic centralism. The conditions of 1951 or 1953 no longer exist.

On the other hand the leaders of the SLL may decide that they can best preserve the texts of Lenin in all their purity -- the texts in which Lenin fought revisionism -- by drawing

all the necessary organizational conclusions from their present isolationist political course. There are precedents for this in the British Marxist movement, including British Trotskyism. However, not one of these ultraleft experiments make very happy reading today -- that is, if you judge them by the facts. A repetition at this time of day could scarcely prove any happier.

In the school of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon -- which is also the school of Lenin -- I was taught that important as the books are and for all the time that must be put into mastering them, what is decisive is the revolution itself. A revolutionist who misses the test of revolution is a failure no matter how well he can quote the texts. That is why the Cuban Revolution -- not the ultraleft preoccupations of the National Committee of the SLL -- provides the yardstick by which to measure their pretensions to Leninist leadership.

We suggest that the National Committee of the SLL take another look at the Cuban Revolution. "'In the beginning was the Word' ... The Word? ... 'In the Beginning was the Act.'"

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