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WHY MAJORITY LEADERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND

RED CHINESE DEMOCRACY

by Hilde Macleod

At Havana University on March 13, Fidel Castro delivered a speech in which he said that the battles against Batista and his henchmen were only the beginning of a revolution; the battles today against imperialism were more difficult; but there was a still more difficult battle, the battle against the past and its reactionary ideology.

"Ideology has an important place in revolution," Castro said, "because when classes are struggling against each other, their ideologies are struggling against each other too. The reactionaries are trying to attract the greatest number of people to their own ideology, making use of the influence of old ideas on the people."

No doubt it was this struggle against bourgeois ideology which led the Cubans to adopt the Chinese method of combatting it -- the method of holding weekly "criticism and self-criticism" meetings in offices, factories and various special group organizations.

It is probably inevitable that some bourgeois ideology will creep into the revolutionary party in capitalist countries. The need to recognize it and to fight against it was glaringly revealed in a recent discussion on the Sino-Soviet dispute in the Los Angeles branch, when two comrades brought forth an illustration which to them was seemingly clinching proof of Stalinist degeneration of the Communist Party regime in China.

Their illustration was the book, Prisoners of Liberation, in which the authors, Adele and Allyn Rickett, tell of their experiences in a Red Chinese political prison for spying during the Korean War. (In war time captured spies are usually shot.) In the eyes of our comrades the inhuman treatment (worse than Stalin's crimes, one remarked) they endured was the Chinese method of "criticism and self-criticism" -- Moa Tse-tung called it thought remoulding -- which is used for the purpose of educating people in socialist ideology. Of course, in the case of political prisoners and other wrong doers, the compulsory sessions are much more severe than in the voluntary system used for the free population.

When this process of re-education for correct proletarian thinking began, these two young people were typical egocentric, arrogant, bourgeois-minded supporters of capitalism. When, after several years of this thought re-moulding, they had been brought to realize the seriousness of their crime against the Chinese people, and that their imprisonment was

just, they were released and given permission to return home to the U.S. A correct reading of the Ricketts' story reveals that they came out of that Chinese prison finer human beings, with much higher ethical standards, than when they entered. They came out firm adherents of the Chinese revolution.

One would have thought that when reading the book our comrades would have taken thoughtful note of the following admission of Allyn Rickett: "As I continued my analysis, I realized how my egotism had slowly developed to where I was incapable of seeing anything which was not to my advantage and where I was oblivious to the plights of others. I remembered how Dell and I had looked with revulsion at the poverty around us when we first arrived in China....In discussions with my cell mates I also began to remember the attitude I had previously displayed toward my own crime.

"I had been asked, 'Well, how can you maintain that there is nothing wrong and criminal in what you have done?'

"Preoccupied as I was only with a desire for release, my mind sought refuge in the excuse that I had only been trying to serve my country, with no desire to harm anyone. The dishonesty of this rationalization was now clear to me. Not wanting to harm others was no excuse at all, since a person totally blinded by his own self-interest is incapable of thinking of others to begin with

"Having one's innermost self brought out and discussed under the glaring light of self-criticism was a shattering experience, but the resulting recognition of myself made me determined to overcome the weakness in my character which had been the cause of those former mistakes. Thus began the struggle with myself which was to last throughout the rest of my stay in prison and, indeed, goes on even today."

This evidence of a change in this man from a self-centered coldly calculating, egotistical individual into something more warmly human, more sensitive to richer, superior values in life, seemingly made no impression on our comrades. Just as the reactionary bourgeois authorities rejected such values, so did our comrades.

The practicing psychiatrist who examined the Ricketts and read their story in answer to the question: Is it really possible ... to deprive a person of his normal mental processes and stuff his mind full of alien ideas and principles which he will accept as his own and put into practice from then on? wrote the following:

"The most convincing answer to this question is to read the Ricketts' own carefully documented account of their long experience in prison. It is perfectly true that the Chinese government set out to re-educate them, but this re-education

was not accomplished with pills, drugs, or any hocus-pocus whatsoever.

"The Ricketts and the other prisoners in the jail were re-educated in the only way that such re-education can be accomplished, namely, as the result of a long, slow, and tedious examination of themselves and their past social milieu, together with an attempt to live and practice a new type of life. In other words, they were re-educated the hard way, by a perfectly understandable process.

"These principles used were applied in the framework of a humanitarian, socialist morality which guided their approach to the individual prisoners. It is my opinion that this morality was the decisive force in their (the CCP) ability to tame, persuade, and re-educate hundreds of thousands of anti-social elements. Without this morality the jails could not have been emptied in a few years.

"One sees the specific application of this morality in many different ways: the respect for the dignity of the individual prisoners; the concept of punishment as education and not as revenge or mere physical deterrent; the criticisms of the acts of an individual without condemnation of his innermost personal self..." (Preface, Prisoners of Liberation)

When the Ricketts arrived in Hong Kong on their way home they were subjected to a furious grilling by the Hong Kong Captain of Police and bourgeois news hounds who pressured them to tell horror tales about the Red Chinese regime. When they refused to do so and insisted that it was a good regime, the Captain of Police and the news wolves declared them "hopelessly brainwashed."

"Brainwashed" was the verdict of our comrades also.

That a Trotskyist could take the side of a capitalist cop and bourgeois news wolves against young people who had become adherents of the Chinese revolution, IS SHOCKING!

This tells volumes about the thinking of our comrades in question -- and none of them flattering. First, it reveals the hostility felt toward Red China -- an hostility which parallels that of the reactionary bourgeoisie. It reveals a Stalinophobic prejudice, deep-seated and fanatical, which warps the thinking of genuine revolutionists. But particularly deplorable, it reveals a complete lack of understanding of the purpose of this thought re-moulding of what the Chinese and the Cubans are striving for -- the inculcation of socialist ideology and the elimination of the alienation of man from man.

Some of the most sensitive of bourgeois writers on China show keener insight than do our comrades. The noted British author, Basil Davidson, called this thought re-moulding "a moral revolution"; Tibor Mende, the well-known French professor, characterized it as "generalized correct thinking"; Felix Greene names it "The psychological revolution." Davidson tells of "an actress of great gifts .. who had been trained under M. Saint Denis at the Old Vic," who said to him concerning "criticism and self-criticism": "How can I explain to you what happens to us?...You can't help getting new things into you here...We do things together now, in groups. Not so much for ourselves as for everybody, everybody who needs us. So that we are doing our best work for the sake of other people. But in the old society you fought for yourself -- you were forced to fight for yourself..." Davidson concluded: "The notion of selfless service is a very real one in China today and it is the Communists who have made it so."

Concerning the results of this thought re-moulding, Tibor Mende stated: "From the highest leaders down to local cadres, from officials, professors or students, I heard expressed this apparently sincere and occasionally fanatical faith in their role as builders of an unprecedented ideal society." Felix Greene declared, "This is no 'me first' economy, it is a 'we' economy that is growing here.....The Chinese appear to be finding their basic psychological security not in the search for material possessions, but in the quality of their relationship with each other."

Han Suyin, author of A Many Splendored Thing, tells of a young Pakistani friend, a "deeply anti-communist young man" who was struck by the effects of thought re-moulding and said to her: "I can't explain what has happened to me. I came here to pass judgment, to find fault. I wanted to write a sensational story about China. But I can't do it now. What is being done is too big to be belittled...and there's nothing fake about all this. We've got to tell it to the world."

Only a regime of genuine proletarian democracy could accomplish results which call forth such reports.

But apparently our comrades saw nothing but totalitarian torture in it!

In his internal bulletin article, Why White Radicals are Incapable of Understanding Black Nationalism, Comrade Vernon presents a somewhat similar idea in his description of white culture in the United States. He writes:

"Nationalistic-oriented people....realistically remain unmoved by the idea of being integrated, absorbed and assimilated into the great insipid white morass of these wonderful United States of America.

"The white U.S. has no music worthy of the name, no indigenous culture, no soul, no life, no poetry, no national purpose,no genuine fraternal links with other people struggling to build a better world...(only)the most universal narrow mindedness, rugged individualistic selfishness, coldness to fellow human beings through all classes of the white American population...(only) the poverty and emptiness of American emotional and cultural life.

"The Cuban revolution (means) complete shattering of any lingering fear that all the world is like the U.S. in its emotional deadness and coldness."

Might not the influence of these aspects of U.S. culture -- particularly its emotional deadness and coldness -- be one reason why majority leaders do not understand Red Chinese democracy?

If eliminating bourgeois ideology is, as Castro says, more difficult than the struggle against imperialism, what a tremendous task it will be in the United States -- this brawniest, bawdiest bastion of bourgeoisdom on earth! In this citadel of reaction where the working class is so completely the victims of bourgeois ideology; where making the fast buck and devil take the hindmost is the pervading idea and ideal of the mass of the people; where the "me first" ideology reigns supreme; where even in the revolutionary party the designation "comrade" is mostly a mockery, the fight against bourgeois reactionary ideology will be most difficult, most protracted and most fiercely fought.

It is necessary, it seems, to begin that fight in our own party as this episode of comrades taking the side of a capitalist cop against two newly become adherents of the Chinese revolution, surely demonstrates. Their use of the term, "brain washing" -- a term coined by the imperialists to denigrate defectors during the Korean War -- is a peddling of imperialist propaganda, used in the same hostile fashion as do the imperialists. Our comrades hostility to the Chinese method of "criticism and self-criticism" as used to rehabilitate criminals and to educate opponents of the regime in socialist ideology is also a reflection of the bourgeois ideology that has crept into party thinking. More astute, some U.S. scientists recognize its value as stated in the June 1961 issue of Science:

"The Russians use confession to convict and condemn, the Chinese to rehabilitate and reform."

CHINA, CUBA and William F. Warde

William F. Warde, in the April 29 issue of The Militant quotes with evident approval, K. S. Karol of the British New Statesman as follows:

"He (Fidel Castro) does not accept Peking's crude analysis about the decline of imperialism, and he finds it difficult to follow the Stalinist scholasticism of Mao's language and in any case he will not accept the ideological and intellectual dogmatism which lies behind it.

"When he claims that 'Cuba is the only free country in the world' he is making fun of the Chinese as well as Russians and Americans."

Well, well, let's see. Let's have a look at some concrete evidence. The "Schools of Revolutionary Teaching" mentioned in the following dispatches are the special schools set up to educate and train cadres for the new Integrated Revolutionary party -- Castro's Creation.

Havana, May 23, (1962)"...Many writers and artists have begun to study Marxist theories on literature and art. Mao Tse-tung's Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature are warmly welcomed by the Cuban revolutionary writers and artists. After the first congress of Cuban revolutionary artists and writers last year, the Cuban National Printing House put out 25,000 copies of this book. Now the Cuban artists and writers are studying this document while the arguments expounded in it are topics of discussion in the Cuban literature and art organizations and in the schools. A leading member of the cultural council of Havana province, Lopez, told Hsinhua that 'this document is of great importance for us. It has advanced fundamental principles which also suit the situation in Cuba!'"

Havana, June 27 (Hsinhua) "The National Press of Cuba has published in Spanish fifty thousand copies of Mao Tse-tung's article, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People' ...The National Direction of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations published fifty thousand copies of Chairman Mao's article, Combat LiberalismThe National Committee of the Schools of Revolutionary teaching has also edited a pamphlet containing three works by Chairman Mao, The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, On New Democracy, and Reform Our Study.

Havana, February 15 (1963) (Hsinhua) "The Spanish edition of the Fourth Volume of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung was available to the public today. Many people were queuing up at the Cuban bookstores to buy it. The first consignment was sold out in a few hours. Disappointed customers were asking when the next lot would be available.

"Part of the first stock went to the teachers at Revolutionary Education Schools throughout Cuba who had ordered in advance."

Thus the reading of Castro's mind by the intellectual snobs of the New Statesman -- and their approving admirers-- is refuted by some facts of life.

Since the P.C. draft resolution declares that "...the Fidelista Cubans can usefully serve as a standard of measurement" and The Militant contends that Mao stands at the opposite pole from Castro and that "the leaders in Peking have been unable to provide a comprehensively correct program and model of action for the world working class," let's hear from one of the Cuban leaders who has been one of Fidel Castro's closest collaborators since before Moncada.

On October 2, 1962, Armando Hart, Minister of Education in Cuba, made a speech on the significance of the victory of the Chinese revolution. Among other laudatory things he declared that the Chinese leaders were skillful in applying creatively the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions and class struggle of Chinese society...Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party had pointed out long ago that the people's movement should rely on armed struggle, on bringing the workers and peasants into this struggle and on the rural areas encircling the cities. "This is a great contribution to the worldwide revolutionary struggle," Hart said.

He added: "Both the Chinese revolution and the Cuban revolution had borne out the statement of the Second Declaration of Havana that revolution is possible despite difficult conditions." He concluded his speech by proclaiming:

"Advance together with this vanguard -- the Chinese Communist Party!"

"The best service Marxists can render in the Great Debate is to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth", (emphasis added) so Comrade Warde tells us in one of his Militant articles. The P.C. draft resolution repeats this idea, adding: "...and present a rounded picture ... in order to carry out our political function and win over solid supporters to our cause." I endorse these sentiments, but not the example Warde sets us in his execution.

First he accuses the CCF of "lack of clarity and candor" in the Sino-Soviet debate because of "the Stalinist ideology which nurtured them." To begin with, in order to present a "rounded picture" Warde should give us a definition of precisely what constitutes the "Stalinist ideology"; next he should give concrete evidence of "lack of clarity and candor" and from what features of his alleged "Stalinist ideology" it comes; how and where such lack is derived from the alleged "Stalinist ideology." Otherwise his claims are valueless.

Warde says further: "Most important of all, is the status of the internal regime of the Chinese workers' state and its ruling party. The obdurate resistance of the Chinese CP

leadership to de-Stalinization and its proponents is connected with the strict maintainance of its own bureaucratic hold."

Here it is incumbent upon Warde to describe explicitly, with concrete evidence, the features of Stalinism he accuses the CCP of upholding and its concomitant bureaucratic hold. The whole truth and nothing but the truth demands it. If he cannot demonstrate with concrete authentic facts, the presence of Stalinism in the CCP regime -- I contend there is none -- then there is certainly no need for any de-Stalinism campaign within China.

On this question of de-Stalinization to which Warde returns again and again, Donald Zagoria, in his book, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, gives some of that concrete evidence which Warde's articles so sadly lack. Zagoria's conclusion:

"Peking's desire to limit the attack on Stalin, however, should not be taken to mean that the Chinese were or are Stalinists. There was much in the April article that must have made the Soviet dictator turn over in his grave...To identify the Chinese leaders, at that time or now, as inflexible Stalinists is to miss the point. The Chinese correctly anticipated in Khrushchev's attack on Stalin the opening of a Pandora's box that could cause great confusion in the entire Communist world, including China. Their effort to limit the attack on Stalin was a symptom, not of Peking's admiration for Stalinism, but of its fear that grave consequences would ensue from Khrushchev's attack.... The motive behind this analysis was evidently to be sure that the Communist baby would not be thrown out with the Stalinist bath water."

Warde further castigates the CCP for "...contradictions between the Stalinist ideology and methods they cling to and the program needed to fulfill the revolutionary tasks of our time." and "It must be noted that on a number of crucial questions the Chinese CP has far from cast off its bureaucratic character and Stalinist heritage either in its principles and its practices," and Warde reminds us that "Marxism is a guide to action and the real worth of any general proposition set forth in its name is validated, not by pretentions but by the practice of its proponents."

Here again Warde is declaiming from the stratosphere. What are those crucial questions in which he sees evidence of CCP "bureaucratic character and Stalinist heritage?" Why this talk of pretentions and practice? To be sure, there is a deep contradiction between "Stalinist heritage" and the fulfillment of revolutionary tasks. But where does Warde find this contradiction in the practice of the CCP? The development of a revolutionary program, the planning and execution of the revolution -- these were the "principles and practice" of the Chinese Communist Party. This was the "real worth" of Marxism they "validated"! But this true

touchstone of Marxism -- the making of a mighty revolution by the CCP, Warde avoids mentioning!

It is dangerous to trifle with a revolution!

Is Warde clairvoyant, able to read the minds of Mao and his colleagues? "Pressed by the imperialist blockade and by the sullen mood of the hungry masses at home," Warde writes, "Mao and his colleagues hesitate to relax the strict control of their regime over the party and the people. They feel that criticism of their policies would be even more vigorous than in 1957."

What is Warde's authority for "the sullen mood of hungry masses"? Is not this endorsing filth from the capitalist press? Since victory in 1949, the CCP has steadily and consistently, struggled to build a socialist society. Is it becoming of a revolutionary party to attempt to belittle it, to denigrate it? And without offering any concrete evidence? The whole truth and nothing but the truth demands a searching study of the concrete developments, the actual march of events of the third Chinese revolution in order to judge it correctly. But what majority leaders do is persist in that great omission for which Lenin reproached the Hungarian Communist, Bela Kun:

"He gives up the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions." (Collected Works, Russian ed. Vol. XXXI, p.143)

The truth, the whole truth also demands an objective examination of the CCP program and whether or not history has verified its correctness. Our Trotskyist press has severely castigated Mao Tse-tung for his programmatic document, On New Democracy, damning it particularly for advocating the development of the revolution in two stages. But the Chinese masses followed the Chinese Communist Party and by-passed the Chinese Trotskyists, did they not? It was in On New Democracy that Mao wrote: "Any party or individual engaged in the Chinese revolution that fails to understand this historical feature (the revolution in two stages, H.M.) will not be able to direct the revolution and lead it to victory, and will be forsaken by the people and become something pitifully whining in the corner."

*Much of this concrete truth is given in the second section of my discussion bulletin, Red China - Catalyst of World Revolution, the manuscript of which has been in the National Office for over eight months and which the N.O. seems reluctant to issue.

(Because of the large volume of discussion articles submitted for publication in the bulletin, the National Office has been unable to handle this extensive compilation of reference quotations -- Editor.)

Is it not the verdict of history that since 1949 a small band of Chinese Trotskyists has "become something pitifully whining in a corner" in Hong Kong?

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth demands not only that we should study the history of the third Chinese revolution as it unfolded in life, but also review concretely our own history in regard to it. This has some harsh aspects. For instance:

In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army it led were in the process of fighting the last fierce battles of the civil war. They were not only fighting Chiang Kai-shek, with U.S. and British imperialism backing him, but also they were fighting Stalin, since Stalin was supporting Chiang with whom he (Stalin) had an alliance.

At this crucial time which side were we on?

The Militant of June 13, at the time of the fall of Shanghai to the Red Army, tells the story:

"A military bureaucratic shift of political power has taken place in China and not a social revolution....The new rulers of China are preserving fundamentally the same, rotten, social and economic foundation as Chiang Kai-shek's regime did....The reconstruction of society on socialist foundations is possible only under the democratic control and leadership of the working people. Standing as an obstacle in the way of such a reconstruction are the bayonets of Stalinist power in China, which are employed not only to prop up the bankrupt capitalist system but also to regiment the masses. That's why Stalinism must be mercilessly destroyed."

What kind of support to the Chinese revolution was this? And what of its "truth"? How would the Chinese workers and peasants, now enthusiastically building their new socialist society, regard this attack on their revolution?

CONCERNING the POT and the KETTLE

1. The KETTLE (CCP): The Militant, February 11, attacks the Chinese position on Yugoslavia (erroneously) as "reverting to the methods of Stalin's original attempt to smash the Tito regime"... because it demands that Yugoslavia be expelled from the Soviet bloc. The reason? Revisionism.

The POT (SWP): In 1953 the National Committee of the SWP in its "Open Letter" attempted to read out of the Fourth International, the Pabloites. The reason? Revisionism.

2. The KETTLE: The Militant, March 25, 1963 condemns the CCP thus: "What they demand and defend in the international sphere, they refuse to permit within their own party and country..."

The POT: In its issue of November 9, 1959, The Militant castigated the CCP for its defense of its revolution against the attacks of India in the border dispute. When Comrade Arne Swabeck wrote a letter to the editor protesting this kind of "support" for the Chinese revolution, it was refused publication.

3. The KETTLE: The Militant, March 25, 1963 accused (again erroneously) the Chinese CP leaders of being "in the awkward position of calling for inter-party democracy abroad while denying it at home."

The POT: In 1959, the SWP National Secretary and the editor of the ISR agreed that Comrades Arne Swabeck and John Liang should write for the magazine an article on the tenth anniversary of the Chinese revolution, which incorporated their views on the subject. In spite of this commitment, when the article was delivered, it was refused publication.

4. The KETTLE: The Militant, March 18, 1963 wrote of the Sino-Soviet dispute: "It would be most beneficial if the discussion could be conducted, freely, openly and democratically without disrupting the unity of the workers states..."

The POT: When some youth asked Comrade Arne Swabeck to teach for them a class on Imperialism and the Colonial revolution, the Los Angeles branch organizer and members of the executive committee, whipped up a witch hunt of sorts against Arne to get the class canceled, and even rammed through the branch an insulting motion restricting the subjects upon which Arne could speak. The reason? Arne did not have the "right line" on the Chinese question and so -- shades of Socrates! -- he might corrupt the youth! *

DEMOCRACY? -- or BUREAUCRACY?

*Attempts to settle political questions by organizational means usually backfire. It did this time too.

* * *

Joseph C. Harch, writing in the Christian Science Monitor of May 29, states: "Figuratively speaking diplomats the world around are gearing their planning and their thinking to an event which opens on the fifth of July. Wherever they gather the talk revolves around the single question of what will come out of the meeting which opens in Moscow on that day." He means, of course, the meeting of the CPSU and the CCP.

The P.C. draft resolution (p. 25) declares: The

Sino-Soviet dispute...concerns nothing less than the fundamental problems of our epoch."

Thus spokesmen for the imperialists and the SWP agree on the world shaking importance of the questions involved.

It was not always so -- so far as the SWP is concerned.

"The strength of Marxism," wrote Trotsky in The Third International After Lenin, "lies in its ability to foretell."

But the majority leaders of the SWP foresaw nothing of the world shaking struggle concerning "the Chinese question" taking place today. More than three years ago the Swabeck-Liang minority started a struggle to institute a revision of the SWP position on the Chinese revolution led by Mao Tse-tung. More than three years ago a warning of what was coming, came with the publication by the Chinese of Long Live Leninism. But for the last three years no member of the SWP Political Committee has written a line in response to the arguments put forth in Swabeck-Liang documents.

Seemingly, in the party the majority leaders -- and their adherents -- considered the Chinese question an unimportant nuisance. In the Los Angeles branch, at least, any raising of the Chinese question was met with hostility and regarded as a disruption of practical work. Now history has caught them unawares and the majority leaders are forced to admit that the Chinese question involves nothing less than "the life and death issues of our epoch."

That this is a crucial juncture in revolutionary history cannot now be denied. In the Great Debate all radical parties are on trial; all party leaders are being tested. This issue is a crucible in which the revolutionary gold will be separated from the dross. What party leaders do and say today on this all-important question will determine in large measure the future of a party and its leaders. History is an inexorable judge.

We have it from a reliable source that at a certain university on the West coast there is kept a complete file of all Trotskyist publications, from 1928 on, internal bulletins included. One day an historian will be pouring over this pile of data, searching for all the pertinent facts for use in the writing of an history of American Trotskyism. When he arrives at the present period what will he have to say concerning the present leaders of the SWP and their handling of the Chinese question? In contemplation of this future record which of the present leaders of the SWP can confidently say of his role in The Great Debate, "History Will Absolve Me."

June 5, 1963

Questions That Disturbed Me At The 1962 Plenum

by Bill Winnick

Note: This article was written immediately after the 1962 plenum, while the discussions, and especially the mood, were fresh. I resubmit it because I believe the membership must become aware of the internal situation, and the crisis of our leadership. Since then I have learned about the personal evolution of some of our leaders, like Murray and Myra Weiss, and would, because of personal affection, and political respect, moderate the sharpness of tone.

Despite essential soundness in theory, a revolutionary party can fall flat on its face if it fails to function correctly. It is my sincere hope that these comments may help to revive and reorient the party.

June, 1963

* * *

1. Who is right on Belgium and Algeria?

Kerry stated that "Kemp went to Belgium to do a hatchet job on Germain." The S.L.L. position was "infantile left-ist" the "situation didn't call for workers power." Whether the situation did or did not call for workers power, the problem is the subjective one: did anyone call for it? Should our Trotskyist colleagues have raised the issue? Why did Trotsky raise the question of power in the British general strike of 1926? What is the basic Trotskyist position on general strikes, if not a posing of power question? Kerry's position is opportunist, an accommodation to the centrists (and, of course, represents the tendency of the 1961 majority international resolution).

On Algeria, the majority position correctly states that the Evian agreement is a victory over French imperialism, but fails to expose the sell-out provisions agreed to by the F.L.N. The S.L.L. position calls it only a sell-out, and thereby presents an ultra-left position which is a rejection of our established combined attitude toward colonial revolutions.

2. Have we dropped our line of "political revolution" for degenerated workers states?

Have we adopted Deutscher's line of gradual self-reform of the bureaucracy? Hansen says we still have the line, but we don't have to enunciate it everyday (this reminds me of Trotsky's reference to the French Social-Democratic mayors who endorsed Socialism - on every legal holiday!). Joe's tactics may be validly applicable in talking to dissident Stalinists, but why conceal or repudiate our position in our basic programatic document? Why should we embrace Deutscher's centrist position? Are we about to win Deutscher over to Trotskyism in this "clever" manner, or is Deutscher about to win us over to Deutscherism?

3. Is there a position on the Negro Struggle?

The conflict in the discussion between Breitman and Kirk exposes the absence of a line in the party, and leaves the ranks floundering. Shall we embrace nationalism, as Breitman proposes, as a progressive manifestation? G.B. says the S.W.P. should support Williams' demand for an "independent black left." If so, let's just give up our attempt to create a Negro cadre, or to recruit into the S.W.P. Shall we expose the falseness and demagogy of the Muslims, or shall we quietly admire their misleadership of the Negro workers? No one can answer Malcolm X but us - and we seem to be reluctant to take him on. I heard echoes of this in our avoidance of work in Harlem. Is this reluctance and avoidance additional evidence of opportunist adaption to "new progressive forces coming our way"? Lennie's comments were alarming: Boston "distributed thousands of leaflets, but not a single Negro came - we can't seem to reach the Negro." This was an astounding confession which should have penetrated the ears of an alert leadership. Does our National leadership have a plan, a method for branches to reach Negroes? Are there any branches that have reached the Negro? If so, how did they do it?

4. Why is the S.L.L. taking a leading part in these discussions? (Asked by Tim at the plenum).

I suppose that basically, our English comrades have been "burned" by the political and organizational tactics of the Pabloites, and this has created a great emotional conflict. But another probable answer is that the S.L.L. feels cocky about its way of building a party. Apparently the S.L.L. has an orientation rooted in the

working class. Such an orientation is just what Phillips proposed to the plenum, but this was branded as a dangerous illusion by Murray Weiss: "the students are in motion." Sharon said: "the students will get us to the working class." Such attitudes reveal an abdication of the role of the party i.e. - the adults. While the 200 or so active youth are building a "bridge to the workers" (?) what shall the party-worker do? On this, the plenum provided no directives, no leadership.

5. Have we adopted an opportunist attitude toward other tendencies?

Alvin's statement was curious, and illuminating: "there's no need for sharp polemics against centrist tendencies, as Lenin did in 1903, and Trotsky after 1928". The new task is "to identify(!) ourselves with new tendencies moving in our direction." Alvin presented an opportunist expansion of the 1946 "American theses." He contemplates (more properly: fantasies!) the appearance of a third way (other than a Labor Party development, or the S.W.P.) to the American revolution, through "an unexpected revolutionary formation which can arise here - one of them may be before us now." This mechanical application of the Cuban events, this wild leap into fantasy, was given support by Hansen, with references to such petty-bourgeois (but revolutionary!?) formations as the E.P.I.C. movement, Technocracy, the Townsend plan, and "Ham and Eggs." We're groping for every unborn possibility, but reject Phillips orientation as "unrealistic."

6. Was Dobb's political report adequate?

The report was unanimously endorsed, but some comrades felt uncomfortable about it, without knowing why: Murray Weiss put his finger on the source of this uneasiness, when he characterized the report as a good essay in sociology, a good description of recent events, but almost totally lacking in direction. Does Farrell have contact with the party activists in the various fields he describes? I doubt it. E.g. on the pacifist movement, he advocates a slogan which Himmel says harmed our work in Detroit. The P.C. must begin to get reports from comrades active in these fields, and more important - should get the comrades into these fields. How to build the American party? Dobbs stated: "The former method of individual radicalization is now being replaced by the emergence of left-wing tendencies or groups." e.g. the Negro-Labor Vanguard group. This cheerful perspective (and many similar statements at the plenum) seems to imply a repudiation of the

method of one-by-one recruitment, i.e. of activity by each (and every!) comrade in his neighborhoods, shops, and organizations. While Farrell negotiates with Coggins, what do I do? - sit on my hands? Murray Weiss says: "our best hope is the student youth." But I'm not a student, and I'm somewhat over 25 - so what do I do? Farrell's solution to the problem of our approach to the working class seemed to be that the various leftward moving tendencies, such as Coggins, Pacifism, Cuban defense, will get us to the workers and unions, but he failed to describe this process, especially the nature of an individuals participation in it. Farrell says "try to create a left-wing in the union movement" - but does the P.C. get trade union reports from comrades? Do branches maintain fractions? Is there a trade union Bulletin?; a trade union director? Farrell gave approval to all of these suggestions by Phillips, but Weiss called this "dangerous wish-fulfillment."

What was Farrell's answer to his question - how do we profit from the various developments described? His answer: the 8-page Militant, and the N.Y. election campaign. This answer is completely inadequate! The Vanguard (of the Canadian Trotskyists) is a 4-pager, a tightly written, effective paper - and they use any extra money to finance trailblazers thru the country to spread circulation of the paper.

Even where Farrell attempted to give direction on tactical problems which trouble comrades, he was contradictory and ambiguous. E.g. in his attitude toward the pacifists: Yes, Bill should swim out to the Polaris, but he shouldn't do anything that compromises our stand on pacifism!

7. Did the plenum wrestle seriously with the practical problems facing the party?

The leading comrades were (properly) mainly concerned with the world resolution, and achieving unification of the International. Once this was passed, the leadership hardly participated. E.g. Why was Kerry chosen to give the organization report when he himself admits he was away from the center, and didn't know the details? A similar confession was made by Warde on the economic basis for the political report, for which he stated he was unprepared - that Preis was supposed to give it. In fact, Warde prepared this report one hour before he gave it! Kerry blamed the loss of circulation of the Militant, and the failure to recruit members during the past year, to "the Kennedy boom"! Bea reported that "the Militant is beginning to sell itself!"; that "circulation could

have doubled, if the branches did as well" (as well as whom?) Bea also ~~complained~~ that members don't subscribe to the I.S.R. It would be interesting to know how many of these subscribe to Monthly Review and the Nation! The answer to Kerry's remark, and to Bea's complaints is evident: there is an indifference in the leadership as to what is happening in the branches because it is busy chasing the rainbows of "new groupings, whole new tendencies coming our way." This indifference is evidenced by the report by Kerry of the existence of several "sick branches." How many are there? What's being done to restore their health? What's the nature of the sickness? Do members of the N.C. - the leading experienced comrades - visit these branches periodically to help them solve their problems? The discussion on the organization report was a clear repudiation of Kerry's blind optimism, and revealed many of the ailments of the party's organizational activities. But despite this, Kerry's summary was largely devoted to an attack on the S.L.L.'s role in the printing of "the Permanent Revolution"!

8. What was the plenum mood?

Many leading comrades are approaching (or have passed) pension age; many are sick. These factors can't be ignored. They are reflected in a mood of "we can't do much now; we must wait for a new labor upsurge; the working class is becalmed", and "let the youth do it" (as Murray Weiss said: "the plenum is escalating up to the youth report.") Another reflection is the impatient hysteria in Myra's outburst ("man against beast; man against insect"), which was a discouraging wail of despair and frustration - why this mood in one of our leading and valuable comrades?

Overemphasis on "the cadre" tends to repress independent thinking - many solid members of the N.C. never open their mouths - they take it for granted that the "cadre" can do no wrong, so they accept the years of "stewing in our own juice" uncritically. Awareness of this was heard in the several fearful references that "we'll be sitting here year after year talking to ourselves."

9. Is there a witchhunt against the minority going on?

In my opinion, yes. It was started by Cannon's reference, in a letter, to the minority as being "sly." Then at the plenum, Garza equated the minority's mistake on Cuba to the Zinoviev Kemenev disclosure of the date of the 1917 insurrection! Kirk added to this spirit in designating the S.L.L. position on Belgium as "malicious

and irresponsible gossip." But the crowning touch was Farrells accusation that the minority is "manuevering in violation of ~~the~~ political integrity of the cadre." What does he mean by this? Says Farrell: "We'll be watching Tim and company to see that they conduct themselves properly." Why not scrutinize the ranks of the party generally to see how each is functioning? How much "dead-wood" membership is there? How much adjustment to petty-bourgeois living is there among highly-paid skilled workers in our cadre?

The rights of minorities (in this party) are precious, and the exercise of those rights should not be slandered - or have we learned nothing since the expulsion of Cannon from the C.P.?