

# SWP

# discussion bulletin

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## PRESTON-HEALY PREPARE THEIR SPLIT!

By Tom Kerry

As part of the flood of billingsgate pouring out of London in a desperate attempt to scuttle the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement, we received a circular letter from G. Preston, General Secretary of the IC, demanding a correction of the statement made in my article ("Unprincipled Combinationism -- Past and Present." DB Vol. 24, No. 15) that: "The Slaughter-Healy faction has 'captured' the IC through the simple device of weighting the vote of the British and French over that of the other sections."

First to clear up a point that may have occasioned some confusion. We no longer receive "letters" from the General Secretary, they come in the form of mimeographed circulars obviously prepared for factional dissemination throughout the world. Sometimes when you address General Secretary Preston of the IC you receive a reply from National Secretary Healy of the SLL. Sometimes it's the other way around. It's all very confusing. To simplify the problem we'll just refer to Preston-Healy and let it go at that!

I may be a bit thick but I can't understand what precisely the "correction" is that Preston-Healy demand. As the record of the voting -- cited from the official minutes -- shows, the British and the French cast two votes each and the others just one. That's what I said in my article. In fact every decision made at the meeting was on the basis of a weighted vote. I can therefore only reiterate what I said before. In "capturing" the IC through the device of the weighted vote Slaughter-Healy have only succeeded in capturing themselves.

\* \* \*

In the demonology of Preston-Healy the SWP now occupies first place. The demon Pablo has been reduced in rank. And when it comes to exorcising demons Preston-Healy yield priority to no man.

In a recent broadside addressed, of course, "to all International Committee Organizations," General Secretary Preston heralds "the complete capitulation of the SWP to Pabloite policies." Where previously the SLL Newsletter would unmercifully flay "Pabloism" in its pages, much to the edification of its readers, it is now the SWP that is getting "the treatment." I am sure the British working class awaits with bated breath each succeeding issue of the Newsletter for the latest communique on Preston-Healy's war against the SWP.

And what issue does the Newsletter single out for public denunciation of the SWP? Our line on the Negro struggle in the South! The Newsletter recently devoted a series of "analytical" articles to the Birmingham events. From even

a cursory reading of these articles the British workers -- those who bother to read the Newsletter -- could only draw the conclusion that the main enemies were the "Negro clerics," the "Black Muslims" and...the SWP!

The May 18 issue informs us that: "The only realistic approach so far has come from boxer Floyd Patterson, who has joined the struggle in Alabama. He said he was not prepared to just stand around while a police dog took a bite out of him." What colossal stupidity! This is only one example of the factional lunacy which is making a laughing stock of Preston-Healy in the radical movement.

Doesn't Preston-Healy know that before his brief junket to Alabama, in the company of ex-baseball star, Jackie Robinson, Patterson publicly announced his commitment to "cleric" Martin Luther King's policy of "non-violence?" But what are "facts" to the Preston-Healy dialecticians? Patterson and Robinson showed personal courage in going to Alabama to lend their support to the embattled Negro freedom fighters. Even more important than their actual presence was the tremendous amount of publicity focussed on the struggle precisely because both were nationally known figures; both former champions in their respective fields.

Robinson prefaced his trip to Alabama with a sharp attack on the Kennedy administration which received national coverage. Would that the "dialecticians" of the SLL had done as much!

Isn't it a scandal! Because of the position occupied in the world today by American imperialism, the Kennedy administration is extremely sensitive to manifestations of protest abroad against the racist violence of the southern ruling class. You would think that a "Trotskyist" organization in Great Britain, Washington's closest "cold-war" ally, would seek by every means to mobilize whatever forces it could to demonstrate its solidarity with the Negro fighters of Birmingham. The American press reported manifestations of protest throughout the world. Demonstrations of protest were broadcast over the national TV networks. But, you see, the SLL was too busy flaying the "Negro clerics," the "Black Muslims" and the SWP.

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But all of this is really beside the point. Healy's sudden concern about the Negro struggle -- in the U.S. -- which provided the pretext for a public attack on the SWP, is merely his none too subtle way of preparing the split which has been inherent in his whole course of action. There is one thing that Healy has learned -- when preparing for a split always attack the other side as splitters. And Healy has been bellowing about little else in the past few months.

What Healy has not learned is the lesson we have sought

to teach that it's dangerous to maneuver with the question of unity. We have had a rich experience on this question. Unfortunately, Healy is determined to learn the hard way. From the very beginning he has been frantically maneuvering with the question of unifying the forces of world Trotskyism.

Healy began his policy of maneuver when the question of unification was placed on the agenda in 1957 with the proposal for the setting up of a parity committee to engage in a discussion with the IS. We proceeded then on the assumption that there was complete agreement on the approach to the problem. I must now confess that we were taken in. For in a bulletin of the SLL containing a "Report of a meeting of the NEC of the Socialist Labour League, Feb. 3 and 4, 1962," there is recorded the following dialogue:

"H...n stated that in 1957 the SWP had the impression that we thought eye to eye about the international, Pabloism, etc. He said the present differences were a mystery to him.

"Healy explained some of the history of the leadership of the SLL, their experience in the RCP and the struggle with Pabloism. In 1957 when the SWP claimed differences were growing less, we were undergoing an important theoretical development. The British section at that time was winning members from the Communist Party. We did not want a conflict with the SWP." (My emphasis)

In plain words, what Healy is saying is that he pretended all along to be proceeding in agreement with the SWP while actually engaging in a course of action designed to block unification. This disclosure opened our eyes to the real state of affairs. For a long time we could not understand the disparity between Healy's words and deeds. We attributed it to the fact that the British were dragging their feet on the question. It now becomes plain that Healy was maneuvering with us all the time.

It was at this same Feb. 1962 meeting of the SLL that Cliff Slaughter blurted out the truth. "There was no possibility," he insisted, "of any agreement with the Pabloites through discussion, but we should try and win people from the Pabloites." Here you have the classical formula of a unity maneuver! Pretend to be discussing unity as a cloak for a raiding operation. The Slaughter-Healy demand for more "discussion" is a fake. The SLL leadership views the unity discussion as a screen for carrying on a splitting operation. And because the opponents of the Healy unity maneuver in the IC refuse to be taken in by this transparent hoax they are stigmatized as splitters.

This "method" which can only have disastrous consequences for the SLL and all those associated with them is now being applied to the SWP. Healy now informs us that a leader of the Phillips-Wohlforth faction had made the pilgrammage

to Mecca last autumn and "we (Preston-Healy) assisted him in drafting the memorandum (Call for the Reorganization of the Minority Tendency) which was presented to you on November 13, 1962."

"When this comrade returned to the U.S.," Healy tells us, "the memorandum caused a split within their tendency." That much we already know. The question that still remains unanswered is the one we have put repeatedly to both minority groups and now put to Healy: What was the issue or issues around which the split occurred? We are left with the inference that the Robertson-Mage faction refused to commit themselves even to a weasel worded statement that they would conduct themselves as loyal party members.

Healy knows, if his disciples in the SWP don't, that while we are very patient with critics and oppositionists, we do not tolerate acts of disloyalty against the party. Not that Healy has any scruples against such disloyalty but as a "master" maneuverer he knows the value of operating from behind a verbal screen in which the deed is at variance with the word. Listen to the master lecturing his disciples:

"We have continuously tried," he affirms, "to explain to all of the comrades in the Wohlforth and Robertson groups that they must abide by the terms of this memorandum. If other tendencies support us in other sections, we shall adopt the same attitude." What has been the form and content of Healy's "continuous" efforts "to explain" the facts of life to his disciples? Thanks to Healy we now know of one personal pilgrimage to London. Have there been others? Letters, documents, correspondence? Is this the "method" which the General Secretary commends as the model for constructing a "new" international leadership? And, so that there will be no mistake about it, Healy arrogantly announces his intention to apply his "method" to "other sections." Forewarned is forearmed!

But, Healy warns, if the SWP even hints at calling to order those who are playing fast and loose with our organization principles and practices, we will have HIM to deal with. For, he threatens, "We shall in no circumstances stand idly by and allow any kind of organizational measures to be taken against comrades Wohlforth, Phillips or any other tendencies including Shane Mage or Robertson whose desire is to seriously participate in the international discussion." To make plain what he really means, Healy declares: "Your national conference cannot terminate this discussion, because it will continue to be organized from the Parity Committee."

There you have it -- all wrapped up neat and tidy. Our convention, Healy informs us, cannot terminate the discussion. And, if the SWP, meeting in convention, is foolhardy enough to flout the edict of the "General Secretary" and tries to enforce its decision on "any tendency" that "desires" to



continue the discussion we can be assured that Preston-Healy "shall in no circumstances be standing idly by." Me-thinks our "General Secretary" is afflicted with an acute case of megalomania! He's really hot!

Now who is to decide whether or not any SWP member stands in violation of party discipline? You think that the SWP will have that right? Not on your life!

\* \* \*

All of the above was culled from a general circular sent by Healy, as is his wont, "to all IC organizations," on May 22. A week later we received a supplement, dated May 29, this time in the form of a personal communique from Healy. For the edification of our membership I quote the letter in its entirety:

"It has been brought to our notice (by whom?) that the following paragraph of our letter to you of May 22 which reads:

"'We are not sympathetic to minorities who do not carry out seriously the work of the national sections, even if they support us politically. When Comrade Phillips came here last autumn, we assisted him in drafting the memorandum which was presented to you on November 13, 1962,' could be construed to suggest that the Robertson-Image 'Revolutionary tendency' has not carried out their work as good members of your party.

"Although they do not adhere to the memorandum of November 1 'Reorganization of the Minority Tendency' we have every reason to believe that they have carried out their work as good members of your party. (My emphasis)

"We affirm that should any action be taken against them for furthering the international discussion, we shall give them our fullest support."

(Signed): G. Healy  
National Secretary

There you have it! I don't know why we bother about holding a convention at all. Think of all the time, energy and money that could be saved by calling off our convention and allotting the funds to Healy for paper, postage and printing, to keep us informed from day to day as to what we can and cannot do. It would have the additional advantage of keeping "all IC organizations" posted so that they do not go astray but hew strictly to the line laid down by General Secretary-National Secretary Preston-Healy.

\* \* \*

A word of friendly advice to the Healyites in the SWP: You will be making the worst mistake of your lives if you

count on the "protection" of Preston-Healy to challenge or defy the decisions of our national convention.

Healy, who is busy promoting a split in the world Trotskyist movement would like nothing better than to provoke a split in the SWP. We have, without flinching, faced more formidable splits and splitters before. I have every confidence that the membership of the SWP, meeting in national convention, will, after full and free discussion, make its decisions which will be binding on all members of the party, Preston-Healy to the contrary notwithstanding.

June 1963

END

AN ANSWER TO M.T.WEISS' "COMMENTS"

By Hedda Garza

"Comments on the Political Resolution" by Myra Tanner Weiss (Vol. 24, No. 22) should have been more accurately labelled "Disagreements with and Revisions of the Political Line of the Majority and Various Assorted Scattergun Shots at the Leadership of the New York Local," for that indeed is what it is.

Comrade Myra's attacks on the activities of the New York Branch during the past year and, more important, the unfounded basis for these attacks can only make comrades wonder, "Myra, which side are you on?"

The document levels charges from the broadest to the most picayune: The party leadership fails to make a correct economic analysis of current events; denigrates regroupment; behaves like a bunch of sectarians; is still living in the thirties; and two party leaders even told a comrade to shave off his beard, not "critical support" but a flaming sign of bureaucracy!

Perhaps the most rankling section of the document is the long list of "proofs" that the party is "sectarian." No facts are given in any of the charges, which is the height of irresponsibility because comrades throughout the country cannot possibly have any idea of what comrade Myra is talking about and can only come away with vague impressions that something foul is happening in New York. It can only be assumed that the facts are deliberately omitted and that for some reason comrade Myra is attempting to discredit the majority leadership just prior to a convention where we have several minorities to contend with and important party work to undertake. Again, it makes one wonder, comrade Myra, which side are you on?

I will only briefly discuss Myra's political disagreements. Comrades throughout the country are familiar with the party line on these questions and will reach their own conclusions. Comrade Myra makes the same type of accusation made by the minority tendencies. She claims that the present political resolution of the majority does not sufficiently analyze the achievements of regroupment. The minority claims that we do not sufficiently discuss our position on China. But there was a full document on China in 1955, and there was a full discussion on the achievements of regroupment in the Political Resolution of 1959, which covered all of the points made by Myra: the shattering of the Stalinist monolith, building of a periphery, opening of discussion, hegemony of the SWP in the radical movement, etc. Since when is it necessary for us to repeat each and every evaluation made by the party? Our positions stand until they are contradicted, replaced, or withdrawn!



Comrade Myra labels almost every aspect of party intervention and work "regroupment." We don't use the same terminology, and so we are accused of forsaking everything from the defense of Cuba to the political revolution in the deformed workers' states (the latter giving a juicy assist to the minority).

We are told "the majority resolution fails to make even the attempt to analyze the economic problems of the United States." Then Myra treats us to her new theoretical position: It seems that the majority still holds that old-fashioned idea about working-class leadership of the revolution. Lo and behold we are outdated, "History is working out somewhat differently, as usual. The Negroes, the women and the youth are not waiting..." Later she adds, "The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, the women, and others are demanding equality now. We are in an upsurge already -- but it is not quite like the anticipated one." (My emphasis.)

In other words, the old fuddy-duddy majority is cautioning us that things are moving, but slowly. They notice the Negro movement, but they fail to see the Puerto Ricans, the youth and the women on the march. They miss the whole picture.

Myra throws in the women, youth and Puerto Ricans with the Negroes, like extra ingredients in a vegetable soup. No one using his eyes can find moving masses of Puerto Ricans and women in this country. There are, of course, many separate women's grievances, but it seems most likely that the women of this country will continue to move with their class. When the working class moves, it will be working men and women. The Negro struggle is far from an all male movement, and middle class and upper class women are strong defenders of their property rights and their parasitical rights, along with the men of their class. The Womens' Strike for Peace movement can hardly be called a "demand for equality" or "an upsurge", and radical Puerto Ricans in this city constitute a far smaller group than ours. The Negro movement, yes! And the party has a clear perspective on that work, embodied in the Resolution on the Negro Struggle.

Comrade Myra's approach reminds me of the story about the Nazi accosting the Jew on the street. "Jew," he says, "Who started the war?"

The Jew replies, "The Jews and the bicycle riders."

The Nazi, annoyed, asks, "Why the bicycle riders?"

The Jew replies with a shrug, "Why the Jews?"

Here we are presented with the phantom of masses of Puerto Ricans and women, joining with the Negro people to prove that Myra and C. Wright Mills are right; the revolutionary role of the working class is a thing of the past.

All right, you may say, so Myra's politics have gone off base. That can happen to anyone, but that's no cause for

accusations of irresponsibility. Let us examine some of the items under Myra's heading, "The Struggle Against Sectarianism."

Accusation: "We decided, but failed, to effect a union with socialist elements in the nationalist movement in building a defense for the Monroe victims of racist terror."

That is the entire accusation! Not "we tried and failed" but "we decided and failed." Not one word about the long attempts made by our comrades. Not one word about the obstacles, the facts, the dangers to the Monroe defendants themselves. I believe that a comrade involved in that situation is writing about the details, but the very nature and brevity of the accusation is designed to be nothing but a smear.

Accusation: "We negotiated with a New Jersey group of dissident Stalinists for common action, etc. Nothing came of this. It is possible that nothing could come. But I know how hard comrade Weiss had to work to bring about the ISP and I don't think an equal effort was made for this bloc."

Not a word about the size and nature of this group. Did it deserve similar effort to the ISP? Was it amenable to common action, etc.? A charge again -- without facts and backing.

Accusation: "At least in New York we abandoned our efforts to build a united defense of the Cuban Revolution through Fair Play."

"We abandoned," says Myra! Not, "We backed out of a struggle for leadership because as long as FP was a corporative organization we could only do damage to defense of the Cuban revolution by engaging in a head-on battle for posts. Not a word about the months of struggle to try to reconcile the differences in FP. Not facts, comrade Myra, innuendoes and slander again! Two lines to make an accusation regarding two years of work in Fair Play!

We are next told about efforts of the peace movement to put up their own candidates. "We gave no support despite the fact that we had no candidates of our own in the field. We just plain abstained."

That issue was thoroughly discussed. One peace candidate in particular was Harry Purvis, a member of the National Association of Manufacturers and a staunch Republican. His line was no different from that of many Republicans, Dems, and Reform Dems who bitterly scream for banned bombs and clean milk while they blithely support anti-Cuban activity and wars in Vietnam. For the party to give even critical support to such candidates, simply because some well-intentioned peaceniks are deluded into such "independent political action" would be a travesty of the most basic party principles.

More of Myra's "concrete manifestations of our sectarian mistakes:" We worked for a demonstration in Times Square during the Cuban crisis. It fell through, but we never stopped trying and until the very last moment it appeared that the demonstration would take place. Again, Myra never complained about these plans to the executive committee or the organizer. She never told us then that we were showing lack of realism, or "cued us in" on the "relationship of forces in the peace movement." If she knew it then, she abstained from telling us. With each page of the document, a new accusation is unveiled.

Accusation: "We refused to support the biggest demonstration that was held on Sunday."

The facts are that we were unwanted and uninvited by the right wing peace movement that ran the Sunday peace demonstration during the Cuban crisis. They wanted no pro-Cuban sentiments at that affair, and Comrades who went down, went as individuals and distributed thousands of campaign leaflets. To my knowledge, Myra made no protest or any move to change our policy at that time.

Accusation: (Progressive Labor's Cuba Trip)

Comrade Myra makes it appear that it is sectarian caprice that causes the party to exercise caution. Progressive Labor has demonstrated before that they enter these travel-ban tests without realistic preparation. There is a clear danger that if a number of comrades were to participate in the trip, they would be left stranded on their return without a defense.

Accusation: "The party was asked to give its assistance to an anti-fascist demonstration in Yorkville. We didn't even send an observer to what turned out to be the most militant demonstration New York has seen in many years."

The assistance was asked for in an anonymous phone call. Furthermore, the facts surrounding the demonstration were unclear. A Jewish Veterans organization and local merchants took to the streets with the line that the city authorities should ban the meeting. Would Myra want us to join in a United Front that demands a government ban on the right to speak in the streets? By the following week the police had refused permits to the group for further planned meetings, so a careful policy of party intervention could not be worked out.

Accusation: "Highschool youth who were interested in fighting a Board of Education ban on SWP speakers (where Birchites were permitted) got no help from us. This opening -- we do not get them frequently -- was missed."

Myra was the speaker. She did not inform the organizer of the assignment until the ban went into effect. A comrade had arranged for Myra to speak and when the ban occurred the organizer was informed that there were not enough students willing to back up the fight at that time.

Myra complains bitterly of "intolerance and rudeness" and objects to a comrade's remark that if "one is going to have differences, one has to have a tough skin..." I fail to see this as an aspect of our "sectarian tendency." When comrades attack the basic beliefs of the party, they must have a tough skin to take the strong answers they are bound to receive. A comrade who is "badly needed" is a comrade who would be very difficult to "drive out." He or she would also be a comrade who would think over disagreements clearly and carefully before presentation. A comrade who deserves respect handles facts with respect. Throwing out half-truths as accusations does not command respect and, yes, it will require a tough skin on you, Myra, to handle the anger of comrades who resent this type of unfounded accusation.

Another Hit and Run Tactic: On page 12 of Myra's document is the statement, "As a member of the New York Branch, I asked the organizer why we refused to assist some workers trying to organize a union."

Now that sounds terrible! Workers come to us and ask for help and we refuse them. Are those the facts? Well, on this one I know the facts first-hand because I was partially involved in the incident. An ex-comrade, Julie, who first left with the Ohlerites and then returned, and then left with the Marcyites, then broke with them -- called Comrade Dick for an appointment. He has always been an ultra-left dabbler, coming to the party with one hot scheme after another. Comrades have spent time and energy assisting him in those schemes, only to find they were overblown half-fantasies.

Despite this, Dick has never refused him a hearing and a hand. This time Julie met us in a restaurant; (he would not come to the headquarters). He is now a cab driver. His new "left wing" had put out a paper and he wanted comrades to become cab drivers and edit the paper. He decided on the spot that I would be a good candidate. I can drive a car and I'm an editor. Anyway, if I couldn't or wouldn't be a cabbie, maybe I could help with the paper? He told us that the first issue was going to press. Dick asked if he had plans for distribution. "No problem," Julie said. "They have bunches of guys willing and able to distribute." We agreed that he would mail us the first issue to look over, and then we would discuss the question of helping with future issues.

Inadvertently, we discovered that Comrade Fred H. had been approached by another dissident cab driver and also asked for help on a paper. We were not even sure it was the same paper and agreed to investigate further and consult with the organizer. We had received no copy of Julie's promised paper.

The next we heard, Julie came to the headquarters, grabbed a youth who did not know him and told him to distribute a stack of papers, and then left in a hurry. The young comrade

consulted with a member of the executive committee on duty at headquarters, who advised him to wait and get more information. A few days later (the organizer tried to reach Julie but failed) Julie came to headquarters in the middle of a branch meeting, saw a stack of his papers upstairs and took them back. Myra went out to investigate and heard his complaint that we "would not help a trade unionist." Within seconds she was back at the meeting and, instead of waiting to find out the facts, as any rank and filer would do, she hastened to take the floor and ask the organizer belligerently why he would not help a unionist who was organizing a union.

This -- in a branch being plagued that very evening with minorities whose chief accusation is that we have turned our backs on the working class! Which side are you on, comrade Myra?

I submit that Myra's cry for democracy is a smokescreen for her own poor understanding of democratic centralism. "Democracy" also involves consulting with branch leaders on disagreements. Myra abuses "democratic rights" by hurling unfounded and unfactual charges at the branch leadership.

It shocks me that a party leader should act in such a fashion. A woman in the party has a double task, in one sense. She must overcome the earned and unearned prejudices of bourgeois society both in and out of the party. Capitalist society has crippled both men and women, but perhaps the greatest deformation has occurred in women. A woman must prove her seriousness, independence and intelligence in a far more sweeping way than a man must. Myra, who was made a party leader despite these obstacles and is a champion of women's rights, now proceeds to give credence to every argument that women are "irresponsible, flighty, over-emotional, unserious, childlike, hysterical etc. etc." Displaying a lack of discipline, judgment, and even plain honesty Myra has done the Party, Party Women and herself a great disservice -- that I hope she can rectify.

July 1, 1963

END

SPOTLIGHT ON A "SECTARIAN" MISTAKE

The Actual Record and Perspectives in Monroe Defense Work

by Julia Brown

In her "comments" on the Political Resolution, comrade Myra Tanner Weiss casually flings one of her indiscriminate brickbats at the "sectarian mistakes" of the comrades responsible for initiating, organizing and carrying forward the two-year-old campaign to provide an adequate defense for the victims of the Monroe, N.C., "kidnap" frameup.

"We decided," says comrade Weiss, "but failed, to effect a union with socialist elements in the nationalist movement in building a defense for the Monroe victims of racist terror." The inference is that we "failed" because of our "sectarian mistakes".

The truth is that we have striven from the beginning, first to avoid the setting up of rival committees. Then to press forward on all occasions our policy of unification of both committees. Contrary to the slanderous charge that our "failure" was due to "sectarian mistakes," the record will show that in every instance the initiative to achieve a unified defense, without exception, came from the comrades active in the defense effort.

As a rank and file member assigned by the party to carry the main responsibility for what is admittedly an extremely complicated and difficult task, I shall try, to the best of my ability, to set forth the true facts as I saw them, in this brief article.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Freedom Now draft resolution cites the inspirational role played by Robert F. Williams and the Monroe, N.C., movement in the Negro struggle. It is a tribute to the correctness of our position that it has been primarily through our efforts that Williams' ideas and practice of self-defense were brought to the attention of the most radical tendencies in the liberation movement.

It is no accident that those interested in learning the history of the Monroe movement seek out the Militant as the most comprehensive informational source. "Respectable" sections of the civil-rights organizations red-baited Williams as a Trotskyist. Some radical tendencies attacked his ideas as a product of Trotskyist "adventurism" and/or "sectarianism". Those who came to his support were and still are labelled Trotskyist.

We have earned this identification through our extensive coverage in the Militant and through our work in the "Kissing" case and "Kidnap" cases. Tours which we helped to arrange in the "Kissing" case and for Cuban defense made Williams known to many thousands whom the Militant did not reach.

The "Kidnap" Defense

Too soon for a conclusive evaluation -- the "Kidnap" case has yet to see its first court room -- our two-year experience in Monroe defense work



has been a rich and instructive one.

In the course of our activity we have had to deal with individuals and groups from a wide political spectrum in student, radical and civil-rights movements. This activity has enabled us to maintain and solidify already established ties and to enlarge our circle of friends among militant elements in those movements. Through it we established ourselves as a factor in the civil-rights arena and it has been an important source of recruitment. We have also had to cope with serious problems, committed some errors and missed some opportunities.

Since much important work is yet to come a review is in order. We must try to dispel whatever confusion exists about our role in the Monroe defense and about the nature of the work itself.

Immediately upon learning of the August 27, 1961 rioting in Monroe, the attempt was initiated to organize a defense movement. We approached L.J., a militant young Negro active in Fair Play and a leader of On Guard. He agreed to take the initiative, with our help, in organizing such a committee. Conrad Lynn, Robert Williams' attorney, was contacted and he was prepared to act as counsel.

On September 1, at a meeting which included L.J., Calvin Hicks (leader of On Guard), a Freedom Rider, and several of us, there was general concurrence on the nature and activity of a defense committee, the list of sponsors to be invited, and the need for speedy formation. Names of prospective sponsors were divided up among us to contact. September 6 was set as the date for the meeting of sponsors and formal announcement of the new committee. It was agreed to meet briefly the night before to compare notes and to draw up an agenda. It seemed the committee was all but launched.

At the "brief" meeting to draw up the agenda (attended, unexpectedly, by eight or nine members of On Guard) it quickly became apparent that there was to be no sponsors' meeting the following night, that, indeed, the entire project had lost its urgency for the On Guard group, and, that, in any case, their concept of a "defense" committee had radically altered.

Their new proposal was not to set up a defense committee but to wait for someone important like A. Philip Randolph to take the lead. They felt any action taken now would jeopardize such support. They further stated that when a committee was formed, it would have to be an all black one. Only Negroes would be admitted to sponsor-membership or could act as officers. Whites would be permitted to help but only in raising money, running socials, etc., but could not be members. This went specifically for the white Freedom Riders who had been in Monroe. Moreover, Negroes belonging to a "political group" would not be allowed as sponsors or on the executive committee (an obvious reference to the SWP).

Nothing could dissuade them. We argued that it would be unfair to the defendants to alienate any possible support when such powerful forces were arrayed against Williams and the Monroe community, especially in view of the open hostility and opposition of the leading civil-rights groups. We pointed out that the Freedom Riders, much in the news then, could help rally public sympathy and should therefore be represented and involved on the

executive committee, that one of the defendants was a white Freedom Rider. We reminded them that there had never been any question but that militant Negroes such as they should maintain control of the policy-making body, and retain a majority of the committee.

Neither could they be convinced of the need for immediate formation of a defense committee despite the imminent danger that Robert Williams would be arrested, and the necessity to provide legal help for the defendants already in jail and the need to counteract the viciously slanted newspaper accounts.

The sole concession wrung from them was their agreement to a press conference for the Monroe Freedom Riders that week before they were all dispersed. Even this minor victory for the Monroe defense resulted only after much wrangling, On Guard's threats to expel L.J. (who felt one of us should be on the four-man arrangements committee for the press conference), and denunciation of the Freedom Riders. (Although we were excluded from that committee, we paid the costs of the press conference.)

The next day Conrad Lynn informed us that Dr. Perry had phoned from Monroe demanding to know why nothing had yet been done. Because the situation in Monroe was rapidly deteriorating for lack of any help, Perry was flying up to New York the following day. At the insistence of Dr. Perry and Conrad Lynn, who correctly pointed out that the On Guard group would, if they were serious, join later after their grandiose hopes concerning A. Philip Randolph proved unfounded, we proceeded with the formation of a pro tem committee.

On September 7, at a youth rally scheduled some weeks earlier for Julian Mayfield, Conrad Lynn announced the defense committee had been formed with Perry as chairman, Dickerson as treasurer and Berta Green as secretary.

In the midst of the time and energy-consuming preparations to get the committee in operation, we intensified our efforts to involve the On Guard people. At one such unity attempt, the On Guard group retreated on the question of white sponsors but displayed even less understanding of the role of a defense committee. They declared that Williams had made a "monumental error" when he invited the Freedom Riders to Monroe and that Williams and Monroe were secondary to On Guard's principles and that the publicity of the defense committee would have to reflect such views.

Several weeks later formation of the Monroe Defense Committee was announced, after Lynn, Perry, the Monroe Negro community, had vigorously opposed the On Guard concept of a defense committee.

What followed was an endless series of "unity" meetings, agonizing sessions which increasingly demonstrated the hopelessness of achieving unification. Negotiations at the final meeting with them on Dec. 16, 1961 -- a meeting arranged at our initiative as had been all the others -- were illustrative of their utterly sectarian and irresponsible attitude.

Present were a prominent Negro freedom fighter and a well-known and highly respected pacifist leader (whom we had prevailed upon to act as mediators), L.J., Hicks and Quinn representing the MDC, Dr. Perry and Berta

Green speaking for CAMD. After detailing a host of grievances, all products of factional imaginations, the MDC people were compelled, by our attitude, to discuss the real issues. The CAMD representatives declined to argue the absurd charges but simply apologized for the many sins they were accused of. Berta Green offered to resign as secretary -- an offer made numerous times before that (and one which is still begging).

In addition to their objection to whites in the defense leadership, they asserted their opposition to the CAMD concept of confining committee efforts to mobilization of broad support for the defense of the Monroe victims. Rather the committee must advocate self-defense and, indeed, must itself act as a liberation movement. As a case in point, L.J. said that if he (as an MDC spokesman) were asked if he were for violent revolution, he would be able to make an emphatic affirmative reply. Hicks confirmed this and added that he hoped the MDC would back L.J. up.

They belittled the idea of support from liberals like Anne Braden, were not at all interested in seeking support among people who disagreed with them and generally envisaged MDC as a political action group.

The mediators became progressively less patient and more partisan. They lectured the MDC reps on the necessity for a defense committee to avoid alienation of potential support. They cited the bad repute the CP had brought upon itself as the result of similar policies and remarked that they would not want to be defendants with the kind of defense committee just described to them.

A proposal to publish a joint ad as a step toward united action was half-heartedly agreed to by the MDC. Perry, who had been angered by the MDC attitude and felt that they wanted to "use" Monroe for their own political aims, was very cold toward the ad.

Later, after the refusal of the MDC to go ahead with the ad, both mediators began to actively support the committee, one joining the CAMD national executive.

Buffeted by internal dispute, public accusations and counter-accusations by their own members of "racism in reverse" and midst charges of misappropriation of funds, On Guard and the national MDC disintegrated several months later. (They left behind a host of unpaid bills, and angry civil-rights supporters who to this day, because of the confusion of the committees names, blame us for their sins.)

This simplified the picture considerably. What remained seemed the result of a clear-cut division of labor: The Cleveland MDC assumed responsibility for the defense in the Mallory extradition fight, the CAMD represented the other defendants.

With the acceleration of the process of extradition of Mrs. Mallory in Ohio, the CAMD has been able to develop a modus vivendi with the Cleveland MDC. Until recently all offers for joint activity of any kind were turned aside by the Cleveland MDC. Our assistance is now accepted (albeit grudgingly) and some degree of cooperation has been possible. Although recent attempts to merge the two committees were rudely rejected by the Cleveland

MDC, we think the proposition will be taken more seriously if and when all the defendants face trial together in North Carolina. (It should be explained that the last rejection was made despite the fact that CAMD had urged the leader of the Cleveland MDC to assume the role of secretary of a unified committee.)

Perhaps this brief history of the Monroe defense will enable Comrade Myra Tanner Weiss to be a little more specific and to enlighten us as to where we committed our "sectarian" mistake (together with an exposition of the logic she used to arrive at the conclusion of "sectarian" from the premise of "failure").

We failed: but under the conditions described above, we could have been successful only by sacrificing the defendants -- by subordinating their interests for the dubious advantage of winning the approval of a tiny and ephemeral group of ultra-left sectarians. As it was, our never-say-die attempts to achieve unity were only tolerated, with increasingly greater reluctance, by Lynn, Perry and Dickerson. Our pro-unity attitude began to seem to them the product of an extraneous political maneuver, especially since the MDC was in evident decline from its very origin.

And who were these "socialist elements in the nationalist movement" of whom Myra writes?

The On Guard group consisted of about 15 people. On the credit side of the ledger was:

- 1) They were inspired by the African and Cuban revolutions. Several of them had done some work in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.
- 2) In the two issues of their paper they wrote some things which we could agree with.
- 3) They participated in the Lumumba demonstration at the UN.

On the debit side of the ledger:

- 1) They were obsessed with adventurist schemes and the search for some gimmick which would catapult them into prominence and leadership. The obverse side of this coin was their abrupt turn to opportunism when they mistakenly thought they had a chance to make a deal with A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, or some other big name.
- 2) They were bohemians without any ties to the Negro masses and no perspective of winning their confidence by participating in day-to-day struggle.
- 3) A number of them had been miseducated by the Stalinists. Several were still active in C.P. circles. This led to an attempted machiavellianism in their organizational maneuvers and to bitter anti-Trotskyism on the part of some.
- 4) They saw the Monroe defense more as a "get-rich-quick" opportunity than as an obligation to help Robert F. Williams and the victims of Monroe racism.

In the period of rivalry between the two defense committees the On Guard people were buttressed by a motley conglomeration of opportunists and political opponents of the SWP.

The Marcyites poisoned them and provided them with much of their "theoretical" ammunition; Bayard Rustin (a leading member of SP-SDF) overcame his pacifist principles by means of his aversion to Trotskyism (and dragged an unwitting Muste along with him); the Stalinists jumped on the bandwagon when they thought they saw the opportunity to strike a blow at us.

It was small wonder that our own Negro comrades in Ohio and New York were repelled and infuriated by them; that the Negro community of Monroe and the defendants wanted no truck with them. It was no surprise to us when this coterie was torn asunder by internal dissension and disintegrated in a cloud of scandal.

We may have "failed" but it was not because of sectarianism or lack of trying. In the only place where they had a group, New York, a number of comrades had been assigned to work with them and did Jimmy Higgins chores for them. By coincidence, the very night of the riot in Monroe an On Guard money-raising social was taking place in the home of one of our New York comrades.

We approached them to take the leadership of the defense movement. In the period of the two committees we bent over backwards to bring about unification, and failing that, cooperation. When they went to pieces with mutual recriminations of "Uncle Tom", "Black Chauvinist", and "Embezzlers" we managed to maintain friendly personal relations with both sides. Now that the dust has settled somewhat we find that many of them are still friendly. One of them recently chaired a fund-raising affair for the defense committee.

Future cooperation with them as individuals or with any group they might set up is by no means excluded.

A word about the second alleged instance of sectarianism listed by comrade Myra. I speak only of the experience with the New Jersey Coggins group in Monroe defense work. In it they proved themselves steeped in Stalinist maneuverism. Although they were supposed to arrange for two of the defendants to speak at meetings for the defense, they used them at functions in a Democratic Party election campaign which they were engaged in. They tried to use the defendants at their May Day meeting in New York in rivalry with a defense committee rally at which both were scheduled to speak. We tried to reason with them. But they countered our arguments about how defense work should be conducted with cynical justifications of "using" defense movements primarily to build their organization rather than to save the defendants. They advised us not to be "petty bourgeoisie," but to do the same thing.

So far our relations with "Progressive Labor" in defense work are a repetition of the above.

### Achievements

To the committee's credit must be listed the fact that the three young

defendants are not in prison serving sentences. Without the legal defense we have afforded they probably would have been railroaded in a quick trial.

Moreover, the three defendants are out on \$15,000 cash bail arranged by the committee.

CAMD has furnished legal defense and bail in two other cases in Monroe.

It has sent several shipments of many thousands of pounds of food and clothing to Monroe. One shipment was transported by a trade union.

It has succeeded in involving, to one degree or another, the national office of the NAACP, the national director of CORE, Malcolm X of the Black Muslims, SCEF, the executive secretary of SNCC, the ACLU, in the defense.

It should be remembered that the initial reaction of the NAACP was to forbid its branches to cooperate in any way whatsoever. CORE originally issued only a slightly less hostile memorandum to its chapters on the case.

In addition to the involvement of these national organizations and figures, the cooperation of many local civil rights and Muslim groups as well as individuals has been obtained. In fact, it was this which constituted a strong pressure on the national organizations to relent. Monroe defense was used by many of these local elements as an issue in battling conservative national and local leaderships.

The committee issued voluminous publicity on the case. It succeeded in getting stories printed in the Negro press, some union papers and foreign newspapers.

Although the committee, as such, takes no position pro or con on self-defense -- since it has and welcomes people of differing views on this into its ranks -- it has publicized this issue widely. It has done so honestly because that is an important constituent element in the case. It explains the white supremacists' hatred for Robert F. Williams as well as the failure of major civil-rights organizations to take on the defense. Thus, committee publicity raises the question of self-defense in Negro communities and in the news media. An example of this is the pamphlet by Truman Nelson, People With Strength, which aroused a debate in the civil-rights press with articles in the SCEF paper, the Southern Patriot, the Peace Maker, Muhammad Speaks; and others. Incidentally, 7,000 copies of the pamphlet have already been sold, with an increasing number of orders from the south.

Local groups of the defense committee have been able, in the course of getting support from union locals, churches and Negro nationalist groups to make valuable friends and contacts.

#### DIFFICULTIES

The case has been deprived from the beginning of its leading figure and most able spokesman -- Robert F. Williams. His exile in Cuba puts him out of the case for all practical purposes.

The inordinately long drawn-out legal delays -- almost two years since



the indictment -- makes it difficult to sustain popular interest. This is true not only of the public but of volunteers in the committee. Dramatic events come up in the civil-rights struggle and peoples' interest and energies are naturally directed to them rather than to the day-to-day work of the Monroe defense. Yet it's vital to keep the committee functioning and the case alive.

Existence of two rival committees caused the expenditure of much time and energy which otherwise could have been used to advance the defense work. It also bewildered many people or gave them an excuse for abstaining.

### Future Work

We are obligated to see the defense work through to a successful conclusion. Even though the case is not -- as it seemed at the very beginning-- a matter of defending an important Negro leader, Robert F. Williams, the most militant and promising figure to emerge in the Negro struggle, it is still an important case. The defendants face 20-year to life sentences so that except for several murder and rape cases now pending, it is one of the most important cases in the south. Moreover, its outcome will determine in large measure whether Williams can safely return to the U.S. In any case, because of our historic connection with the struggle in Monroe and our role in initiating the defense, we have a moral obligation to see it through to the end. Even though other struggles in the Negro movement may overshadow the case, we should not therefore lose sight of this case's importance and our responsibility.

This defense work is understandably not the prime activity in civil-rights now. But it will nonetheless demand more effort than many branches have devoted to it recently. It should not be considered wasted motion or a diversion from our main activity in the civil-rights field. It is an adjunct and an entry into work in the Negro community.

It has already produced many gains -- recruits, contacts, recognition as devoted and able workers in the civil-rights field.

None of these things comes without "leg work". We're going to have to do more, and if, as seems likely, the case soon comes to trial, we will have to do a great deal more.

END

THE REORGANIZED MINORITY: UPON WHAT BASIS DO WE  
REMAIN IN THE SAME TENDENCY

by Steve Fox

I will make no attempt to answer all the questions that Comrade Kerry puts forward, only those which allow me to discuss the more basic questions of the principled bloc.

Firstly, is Comrade Kerry "unaware" that throughout this discussion there has been criticism of the "unprincipledness" of the unity between those with a workers state position and those with a state capitalist position? Comrade Himmel, an N. C. member from Detroit, brought this point to my attention seven months ago. Also, a comrade of the majority from San Francisco (and having, as far as I know, no contact with Comrade Himmel) has made similar criticisms. I believe that perhaps I can draw the conclusion that Comrade Philips' document "What Is An Unprincipled Amalgam" does not come from the shadows of his guilty conscience but from questions that are being discussed in the ranks.

The next important point that Comrade Kerry brings up is the question: why hasn't Comrade Philips written a document on his reevaluation of his state capitalist position?

Before I proceed I would like to remind Comrade Kerry, who is so vociferously demanding a clear statement of position by Comrade Philips, of a minor matter that has never been taken up by the majority.

Comrade Cannon stated in a majority caucus meeting in November of 1953 after the boycott of the 25th Anniversary meeting by the Cochranites that (to paraphrase Cannon) we have no use for Pablo's liquidationist line, that we have no use for Pablo's Stalinist organizational methods, and that "we've got no goddamned use for Pablo, either."

Further, Comrade Cannon said that the party would begin an educational process on the nature of Pabloism. Now, Comrade Philips may have allowed a year to elapse since his plenum statement, but ten years have passed and no analysis of Pabloism has been made. Not only that, but we are calling for the reunification of the world movement without there having been an open and careful political discussion between the IC and IS which would enable the ranks of our party to make an intelligent decision. Who is "playing with the cadre" and with "the entire party membership"?

Quite clearly Comrade Kerry wishes to imply that the reason that Comrade Philips does not issue a document on his position is because in some manner it will threaten the cohesiveness of the "unprincipled" combination. But does Comrade Philips deny the differences he has with others in the reorganized tendency or their ultimate importance? Comrade Kerry indicated that he hasn't denied his differences. In fact, according to Kerry, Philips has gone out of his way to indicate his differences even when it wasn't necessary. What is the conclusion? Comrade Philips (the thief) is just screaming "Stop Thief" at the top of his lungs, hoping to escape detection. Then why doesn't he write a document on his position? Comrade Kerry doesn't answer this. I suppose because it would too sharply indicate the differences in the minority. I will deal with this a little bit later.

I know that it might not sound very logical (because party members don't have to sleep, of course) but is it conceivable that perhaps working full time, being an active trade unionist, and engaging actively in the major questions of dispute in the party, might possibly not allow the time and energy necessary to engage in the research, economic and political, which is necessary for such a reevaluation of position? Comrade Philips considers the most important questions at this moment the defense of the revolutionary perspective for our movement, i. e., the defense of the role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard. I have no question at all that this point is tied up with the nature of the Soviet state and that this question will have to be faced. But the defense of our party's revolutionary perspective must and cannot help but be put first.

Let's take a look at the questions that the "unprincipled" combination of Wohlforth-Philips agree upon and what their aim is in combining.

It seems that there exists an agreement on the role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard. A nice start for an "unprincipled" combination, don't you think?

The other major theoretical question (intimately tied to the first) is the nature of Stalinism and its relationship to the world revolution, upon which both Wohlforth and Philips stated agreement. I would like to delve into this point a little longer, for comrades of the majority in Detroit have indicated that they believe that Wohlforth and Philips could not possibly agree on this point because of the divergence of the sociological evaluation of the Soviet Union and other countries which are considered workers states by Wohlforth.

The traditional point of departure in conclusions between those upholding a degenerated workers state position in relation to the Soviet Union and those upholding a state capitalist position has been on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union, and the economic reasons for the overthrow of the bureaucracy, not on the role of the bureaucracy in relation to the world revolution.

(1) The Stalinist bureaucracy arose originally on the crushing of workers democracy. (2) The Stalinist bureaucracy in its relation to its own working class has antagonistic interests and must be overthrown by the working class. (3) In relation to the world proletarian revolution, it is counter-revolutionary to the core. (4) Where the Soviet Union, for example, has expanded it has done so in a bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary manner, i. e., with the crushing of proletarian upsurges.

These are the points of agreement. The points of disagreement are over why the Stalinist bureaucracy is counter-revolutionary in relation to the world revolution, and not to our tasks in relation to it. This disagreement stems from the differences over the relationship of the bureaucracy to the state, in an economic sense. But within the context of our common agreement we have drawn common conclusions and strategy to the world and American revolutions. We work upon this essential agreement.

Comrade Kerry criticizes Philips' for referring back to Trotsky on the question of the relation of differing sociological evaluations to political programs and conclusions. It is true that Trotsky was beginning the all-out struggle against the petty-bourgeois opposition, and that Trotsky was not discussing blocs specifically. Kerry says that therefore: "This analogy is truly a monstrous lie." Is this so? Trotsky was certainly not making

any excuses for the unprincipled organizational power bloc of Shachtman-Burnham, but is Comrade Philips at all attempting to justify the reorganized minority on an unprincipled basis? Of course not. We are not talking about power blocs but the relationship of sociological evaluations to conclusions, and political program, and Comrade Kerry is trying to confuse the two. What Trotsky was saying was that even with their differences with the party over the Soviet Union, Shachtman-Burnham could remain in the party as long as they maintained a revolutionary perspective, i. e., if they agreed upon the political program and conclusions. What Philips states is quite clear: he is saying that the reorganized minority agrees on conclusions with regard to the most basic issues and it is upon these questions, i. e., the role of the working class and its vanguard, that we place a common front to the party and upon no issues where we disagree. We are not in a bloc for organizational power but for political clarification of the issues upon which we agree.

Comrade Kerry then indulges himself in a little history which might be interesting under other circumstances, but is here a poor propaganda trick, trying to identify the present reorganized minority with the petty-bourgeois opposition, which is simply not analagous due to the qualitatively different aims of the two groupings compared.

The question of the nature of the Cuban state and our ability to remain in a common tendency is directly tied to our common points of agreement. In spite of our different evaluations of the nature of the Cuban state, we are able to remain in the same tendency because we agree on the tasks that are facing our movement, i. e., the defense of Cuba from imperialist attack, and that which is lacking and needed in Cuba, i. e., the independent and leading role of the working class with its vanguard party. We don't pretend agreement on the nature of the Cuban state, nor do we attempt to hide our differences. We remain united on the most basic of questions for the revolutionary movement, that is, on the role of the working class and its vanguard. The reasons for this agreement are various, theoretically; all feel that further development of our ideas will show an inconsistency in one or another section of our tendency's ideas on the class nature of the Soviet Union, and that this other section will change its position on the nature of the Soviet state in order to maintain a revolutionary perspective. But we remain united at this point on that revolutionary perspective.

Comrade Kerry states, however, in relation to the bloc between Philips, the state capitalist, and those of a workers state position against the Cochranites, that there is no logical analogy to today. "There was no question about our making any concession to the Philips position on the class character of the state in our 'bloc' against the Cochranites." However, today, according to Comrade Kerry: "One of the main issues in dispute today is over the class character of the Cuban state." But at that time there was a question of the class nature of a state. If I remember my dates correctly, at that time, 1953, Pablo had decided that China was a workers state, a position that the SWP did not take until 1955. Was this the prime point of consideration in the bloc? No, of course not. Comrade Kerry is perfectly correct in saying that no concession was made to Philips over the class nature of any state. Upon what basis was this political bloc? Upon the defense of the concepts put forward in the "Thesis on the American Revolution," that is, the role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard. Not only that, but the nature of Stalinism and its relation to the world revolution was another point of agreement in the bloc. There was agreement upon the same basic questions and no others, which formed the basis for the bloc then, as form the basis for the bloc within the reorganized tendency. We are putting

forward a common political front on the questions upon which we agree and upon no others. We feel that these questions are so basic that we need to form an organized grouping to put forward our ideas in the best and most organized fashion in order to convince the rest of the party.

It must be understood that the reorganized minority is not attempting to fight for the organization leadership of the party. We are attempting, on the basis of our common confidence in the revolutionary potential of the working class and the role of its vanguard, to reorient the party politically. We feel that this can be done for we feel that in the main the party ranks and the party leadership when clearly faced with the nature of the drift, will return to a revolutionary perspective. Unlike the Shachtman-Burnham opposition, we are not trying to seize control of the party through an unprincipled power bloc, nor are we trying to push, like the Cochran-Clarke faction, the weight of our international co-thinkers down the throat of the party. Rather we are maintaining political collaboration on an international scale on the basis of our common agreement, and nothing more. We have nothing to gain by hiding our ideas, because our ideas are exactly what we are attempting to present to the party, and I mean all of them. Our differences will be presented to the party when they are developed, not in a half-cocked manner before they are developed or in an unprincipled manner after they are developed. We have nothing to gain by operating otherwise.

"Submitted to the acid test of the Cuban revolution the Slaughter-Healy-Lambert-Philips-Wohlforth-Robertson-Mage minority bear a striking resemblance to circus trapeze artists. It makes for an exciting display of virtuosity but no one knows where any one of them will land." Unfortunately, Comrade Kerry did not think it worth his while to answer Comrade Philips on the relation of the various political tendencies in the majority, all of whom agree on the "acid test." Comrade Philips raises points which are quite serious, and I would suggest that some comrade of the majority attempt an explanation, presuming, of course, that a rational explanation is possible. Submitted to the acid test of the role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard, the Swabeck-Weiss-Kerry-Dobbs-Cannon-Germain-Pablo majority bear a striking resemblance to untrained circus trapeze artists. It makes for a dangerous display of confusion for we are not sure where our comrades will land.

July 1963.

END