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INTERNATIONALISM AND THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Excerpts from the report given to the 23rd National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party August 29, 1969.

By Barry Sheppard

Two weeks ago I was in Okinawa, to attend an antiwar conference organized by the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs. Also attending the conference were two representatives of the American SDS. Since I have been out of the country for a number of months, this was my first direct encounter with the new stage of the degeneration of the SDS leadership -- it was quite an experience. I won't go into their childish, ultraleft and Stalinist political positions -- they advocated the use of violence against political opponents within the working class movement, announced to the conference that they were going to burn Chicago down unless the ruling class frees Huey Newton and supports the National Liberation Front by October 11, etc. I'm also not going to discuss their insensitivity towards the Japanese or their boorishness. At one point I thought we were dealing with a couple of looney birds, when, at a reception given by the social democratic Japanese government on Okinawa for the delegates at the A and H Bomb conference, this SDSer pulls a knife on a Japanese worker who was hired by the conference to run the translating equipment, yelling that the Japanese was a fascist, "like Tojo," and that he should be "put six feet under." That was some display of internationalism. Well, I'm sure that you comrades are more familiar with this aspect of the Rudd leadership of SDS than I am.

I am recalling the unpleasant memory of these two creatures because of another equally stupid opinion of theirs. When I first met them, I approached them in a friendly and unprejudiced manner. They asked me what I was doing. I explained that I was on a tour of some of the countries in Asia and Oceania, visiting Trotskyist organizations and people involved in the antiwar movements in those countries. I also told them that I have been visiting in Europe for the same purpose. They managed to communicate -- by their giggles and snotty remarks -- that they thought the idea of an American who considered himself to be a revolutionary working to help further an international organization was the utmost folly. It was "leaving the scene of the action," you know, separating yourself from the "real" struggle. I should be back home, where people are "beginning to pick up the gun," to use one of their favorite phrases. Through these statements they displayed a deep ignorance of the reality of the revolutionary process going on in the world and of Marxist theory which reflects and explains that reality, and thus provides

a guide to revolutionary action.

The Socialist Workers Party has never conceived of itself as merely or solely a national grouping. It has always considered itself an active part of an essentially international movement. This essential internationalism flows directly from the international character of capitalism and the necessarily international character of the struggle to overthrow capitalism and replace it with world socialism.

Capitalism has become a worldwide system. "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe," Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto. "It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere." What was true in Marx's time has become far more so in the imperialist stage of modern capitalism. The politics and economics of capitalism, its market, its crises, its militarism and wars -- all have an international character. Never has this been so plain as today. The imperialists themselves understand this fact. They have an interest in what is happening in every part of the world, and they are at all times scheming, planning and carrying out actions of various kinds designed to further their interests throughout the world.

It is the very international character of capitalism that gives the struggle against it an international character. The working people of all countries, together with the oppressed nationalities and other sectors of the toiling masses of the world, face a common enemy: the world bourgeoisie headed by the imperialists. Not only do they face a common enemy and have the common bond of struggling to eliminate capitalism and exploitation throughout the world, but the struggle for socialism in every country and in each sector of the world revolution is intimately connected with and influences the struggle in every other country and sector. A victory for the workers in any country is an advance for workers everywhere and a setback for capitalism everywhere; and the converse is also true. The Russian Revolution of 1917 marked a giant step forward not only for the Russian workers and peasants, but for the workers of the world, and its international repercussions are still with us. It was the most important event of our time. Likewise, the triumph -- temporarily, on a historical scale -- of the Stalinist counterrevolution in Russia

has had a terrible negative effect on the struggle for socialism everywhere.

Socialism itself cannot triumph in a single country. Every victory of the working class anywhere is in danger as long as capitalism exists on an international scale. The Russian, Chinese and Cuban workers states all remain under heavy imperialist pressure and all remain in danger as long as the power of world capitalism has not been broken. The defense of these revolutionary conquests implies a struggle to eliminate capitalism as a world system, which above all means to overthrow capitalism right here, in the most powerful imperialist center itself.

Many of you here in this room today, many of the new members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance, came to revolutionary socialist conclusions in part through your opposition to the war in Vietnam. For a number of years now Vietnam has been the key focal point of the international class struggle. The imperialists intervened in Vietnam to try to stop a colonial people from slipping out from under the control of imperialism, and to see what they could get away with in attacking the workers state in North Vietnam. They conceived of their operations in Vietnam as part of their worldwide plan to contain, and roll back if possible, the world revolution. They didn't count on two factors -- the resistance of the Vietnamese and the sympathy and support the Vietnamese would win throughout the world. The struggle put up by the Vietnamese has sparked a worldwide movement against the Vietnam war that has become massive inside the U.S. itself, and is one of the factors in the rise of a new revolutionary generation internationally.

The Vietnam war is an illustration both of the international character of capitalism, and of the possibility of organizing on an international scale the struggle against capitalism. To unite and properly organize this international struggle for socialism, to imbue it with the best fighting spirit and to provide it with a correct revolutionary-Marxist policy, an international organization is an absolute necessity. The revolutionary party that seeks to overthrow capitalism on an international scale must also be international. And no national grouping can develop completely without a world party based on an international program.

From the beginning, Marxists have held this international outlook and have attempted to build such a world party. The famous slogan of the Communist Manifesto, "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" reflects this essential aspect

of Marxism. The first attempt was the First International, founded in 1864, with the direct participation of Marx and Engels. The First International raised the banner and program of scientific socialism and set an imperishable example in the task of uniting the working class on a worldwide scale in the struggle for a socialist society. But its founders were unable to prevent its disintegration due to the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871 and to centrifugal tendencies set up by anarchist groups within its ranks. The Marxist program was again given flesh and blood on an international scale when the Second International was established in 1889. The Second International succeeded in giving a socialist political education to great masses of workers, and in establishing powerful parties in a number of countries. For reasons we do not have to go into here, the Second International degenerated in spite of its organizational successes. This degeneration was expressed in a revision of the revolutionary program of Marxism, and in the betrayal of everything we have been talking about, socialist internationalism, when World War I broke out. In 1914, the Second International came apart at the seams, as different national sections betrayed the interests of their own and the world's working class by supporting their "own" bourgeois governments in the war. Against the collapse of the Second International as a revolutionary instrument of the proletariat, and under the lead of the Russian Bolsheviks who had preserved the internationalist program of Marxism, and had for good measure also provided the workers of the world with the example of the first successful workers revolution, the Third International was founded in 1919. It kept alive the principles of proletarian internationalism, and provided us with some of our richest lessons and development of Marxist theory and practice. But it, too, degenerated with the rise of Stalinism. Under the nationalist theory of "socialism in one country" the Communist International was transformed from a fighting instrument of the world revolution into a tool for carrying out the class-collaborationist policy of the Kremlin. The International Left Opposition took up the struggle against this policy, in defense of the program of world revolution. Until 1933, the Left Opposition held that it was possible to try to reform the Communist International, and worked as a faction of it in spite of the fact that the Opposition had been expelled. But when the powerful German Communist Party capitulated in face of Hitler's drive for power and permitted the German proletariat to be decimated without the slightest effort at an organized and united struggle, and without any comprehension or correction being offered by the Stalinized International, the Left

Opposition realized that the Third International could not be reformed. In 1933, the International Left Opposition called for the construction of the Fourth International. In 1938, the founding conference of the Fourth International was held.

We have already discussed the iron necessity of building a world party of the socialist revolution. The failure of the Second and Third Internationals has made the construction of the Fourth absolutely necessary. While those failures indicate the difficulty of the task of constructing a world party capable of leading the struggle for socialism through to the end, the Fourth International stands upon the accomplishments of the first three Internationals, and represents the continuation of the authentic Marxist trend.

The founding of the Fourth International did not mean that we had established the finished mass world party of the socialist revolution, any more than the founding of the Socialist Workers Party meant we had succeeded in creating the finished mass Bolshevik party in this country. Both the founding of the Fourth International and of the SWP were beginnings, were big steps forward in the process of building a mass Bolshevik party here and on a world scale. In 1938, the Trotskyist groupings which met to place their collaboration on a qualitatively higher level through the founding of the Fourth International were relatively small propaganda groups, just as the sections of the Fourth International are today. They recognized that the job of building the International and the job of building national parties had to go hand in hand. They could no more wait to found the International until mass parties had been built on a national basis than we could just build branches in the various cities of the U.S. and postpone the building of a national center of the SWP. Building the branches and building the national SWP go hand in hand. And building national sections and building the International go hand in hand, too. Truly complete internationalist parties in the different countries of the world cannot be built without an internationalist consciousness and program and without being part of a world party that is attempting to put organizational flesh and blood on that program.

However, at the same time, we must also be aware that the process of building the International isn't exactly the same as the process of building a national section of the International. Capitalism is an international system, but one of its most striking features is that while it is international, it is also based on the nation-state. Far from

overcoming national differences, it has exacerbated them. The contradiction between the growing internationalization of economy and the continued existence of the nation-state is one of the most explosive contradictions of capitalism. Capitalism can be characterized as an international system of national oppression and national conflict. The continued existence of the nation-state, which will not be transcended until the victory of socialism on a world scale, is a paramount historical fact and sets the scene for the work of constructing the world party of the socialist revolution. It means that the revolution develops in each country according to the peculiar conditions of development of the class struggle in that particular country. I have already discussed the interactions of the developments in the class struggle of each country -- how the struggle anywhere in the world affects the struggle everywhere. But we also must understand the uneven character of the struggle in each country. Just look at the great differences between the struggle in South Vietnam, North Vietnam and in the United States. All three processes are deeply interrelated and yet are deeply different, uneven. Each nation in the world has its own level and tempo of development within the context of the worldwide system of capitalism and the struggle against it. Revolutions themselves, while part of the world revolution, take place on a national basis as a result of the development of the class struggle which has its own logic within each nation. We know from both theory and practice that for revolution to be successful and to develop in any country a revolutionary party must be constructed with deep roots in the class struggle in that country and with a capable and viable national leadership. Such a leadership must be developed out of the struggle in each country itself. The International cannot substitute for such a leadership if none exists, and consequently one of the chief concerns of the International is to help such leadership develop on a national level, through collaboration and solidarity between the national leaderships on an international level.

Building the International is a process -- a process that has its ups and downs, that includes fusions and splits. There will be all kinds of developments in the process of building the International in the future. Trotsky thought it would be quite possible for him and his followers to be in a minority in the Fourth International at some point in its development, for example. What has been the general outline of this process so far? Without going into a long discussion, I want to outline what has happened in the process of building the Fourth International since 1938, so that we can have some perspective on the present

stage of that process.

World War II placed many physical obstacles in the way of international collaboration, as different national sections found themselves on different sides of the front, and travel and all forms of communication became more difficult. A reactionary law passed in the U.S. made it impossible for the SWP to continue as a section of the International, and we had to offer our fraternal political collaboration to the International as best we could. The war and also acts of repression by the fascists and the Stalinists physically destroyed many of the pioneer Trotskyist cadres around the world. We had lost Trotsky himself in the beginning of the war. The war itself did not result in victory for the revolution in Western Europe, which we had looked forward to. The Stalinists and Social Democrats managed to maintain their grip on the workers movements in Western Europe, and to scuttle the possibilities of revolutionary victories in France and Italy, which, of course, would have changed the course of world history. Those revolutionary advances that were made -- in Yugoslavia, China, and Eastern Europe, were made under the leadership -- or misleadership -- of the Stalinists, which temporarily strengthened Stalinism throughout the world. (Later, these same advances, in spite of their Stalinist leaderships, would spell the beginning of the breakup of the Stalinist monolith, but for the time being, Stalinism was strengthened throughout the world.) Then came the rebuilding of Europe and Japan and the resurgence of the capitalist economy in a prolonged period of capitalist expansion. And the cold war and anti-Communism, especially in this country. In this period the scattered forces of Trotskyism around the world renewed contact. The SWP played an important role in this process, as we played in the initial process of building the movement internationally in the 1930s, and as we have always played and continue to play. New younger leaders came to the fore in Europe, who had been in the anti-Nazi underground. We immediately set out to extend fraternal political collaboration to these new leaders who were working to rebuild the International.

At this time we were still a small group swimming against the stream, and the current was getting pretty swift against us. It was in this context that there was a breakdown in international collaboration in 1953. Joe Hansen has already touched upon this rupture in his report. During the period of the split we extended fraternal political support to the International Committee, which operated as a faction of the Fourth International. You can read about the issues involved in the internal discussion bulletins of the time. We sought, however, to avoid falling into a posture of dead-

end factionalism that would have barred outright any possibility of healing the rupture. During this period, McCarthyism and the witchhunt made it very difficult for us to have direct contact with the international movement. It was very hard for our leaders to get passports, for example. But after some time we began to perceive that new events were bringing the two sides closer.

Both the International Committee and the International Secretariat had substantially the same position on the Hungarian and Polish events of 1956. New forces were beginning to operate in the world. Stalinism entered a period of crisis from which it has never emerged and never will emerge. The Stalinist monolith began to shatter. The Cuban Revolution and the possibilities opening in Algeria brought the two sides even closer. But even before the Cuban Revolution we began to see that the political differences were narrowing, and we began to explore reunification. There was resistance on both sides -- especially from Healy on the International Committee side and Pablo on the IS side -- but the reunification was carried through on a principled basis. We recognized that the political differences had narrowed to the point where a continued split would be criminal. While the reunification brought together the majority of Trotskyist forces on a world scale, there were also some defections. So the process of reunification went hand in hand with the breakaway of people who had developed fresh differences with Trotskyism.

In the period since the reunification, there has been the rise of a new generation of revolutionary youth on an international scale. This has been reflected in recruitment of youth in many sections. One of the factors in the rise of a new generation of revolutionary youth has been the international movement against the war in Vietnam. The forces of the Fourth International have played an important role in this movement, often a leading and decisive role. This has helped all sections of the International. France has been one of the countries where Trotskyists have succeeded in gathering many young people around them, and the role played by these youth in the French May 1968 events gave an impetus to the movement everywhere -- for example, we were able to use the French events to explain to many young people our basic program, the possibility of workers revolution in the advanced countries, and the necessity of building a revolutionary leadership.

Recent years have seen a new rise in the world revolution in all three sectors, in the colonial sector, where the resistance put up by the Vietnamese has blunted the imperialist offensive in the

colonial world, in the struggle for socialist democracy in the workers states which reached a new stage in the Czech events, and in the advanced capitalist countries as evidenced in the French May. This is the background of the discussion and political differences which now exist in the International. Joe has already described the Chinese discussion, prompted by the "cultural revolution," itself a new development in the crisis of Stalinism. As you know, differences have emerged on other questions, especially around the document on Latin America passed by the World Congress this spring. Underlying this discussion are the questions of how best to reach young people attracted to the revolutionary example set by the Cubans, how best to take advantage of the situation opened up in Latin America by the Cuban Revolution, and how we should relate to the Cuban revolutionaries themselves. You have had a chance to read the article by Joe Hansen criticizing the Latin American resolution, and his report to the New York branch on the World Congress discussion, so I'm not going to repeat those arguments here. Suffice it to say that we feel that the majority position of projecting rural guerrilla warfare as the fundamental strategy of our movement in Latin America for a prolonged period is an adaptation to the weak side of Castroism. We do not feel there are any short cuts around the difficult task of building Bolshevik parties and mobilizing the masses around a series of transitional demands. Guerrilla warfare can be a useful tactic in certain situations. We object to raising this tactic to a general strategy, and in the process calling into question the need to build Bolshevik parties based on the transitional program. We also object to the method of laying down a general tactic for a whole continent for a prolonged period of time. Tactics have to be worked out by the leaderships of the national sections, and must be considered separately according to the conditions in each country.

There were also differences around the youth resolution which was presented to the congress by the United Secretariat. On this resolution, the United Secretariat was unanimous in its support of the resolution. But the younger French comrades objected to the resolution. They have not yet written down their ideas, and so I am not sure just what they will say, but at the congress they apparently objected to the concept of a transitional program for the student movement. We gave fraternal political support to the United Secretariat document, which was based on the international experience of the student movement and upon ideas first put forward by Ernest Mandel and others in the International, as well as upon our own experience and our own thinking here in the U.S.

Because it was agreed that there had not been adequate time for a full discussion on China or Latin America or the youth before the congress, the delegates to the congress unanimously decided to continue the discussion. The discussion on China was to continue in written form in the International -- that is, between the leaderships of the national sections and fraternal groups -- immediately, and that discussion is now open. It was agreed to delay the Latin American discussion for some months, and then reopen it. And on the youth, it was agreed to publish the United Secretariat resolution as the opening document in a discussion.

I know from my experiences on my recent tour in Asia, and from what I saw in Europe, that the International as a whole has just begun to discuss these questions. Many people have not yet made up their minds. Organizing an international discussion is not a simple thing. For example, it takes two to three months for the sea mail bundle of discussion bulletins to reach India. Bulletins also have to be translated into French and English. In countries where many members do not speak English or French, bulletins must be translated before the members can read them. Let me give you one concrete example. The Ceylonese comrades received their discussion documents the day their delegation left to attend the World Congress, and consequently there was no possibility for the Ceylonese section to consider them before the Congress. So the discussion is just beginning.

The work of building the International includes processes of political discussion like the one we are now engaged in. We have to keep in mind the particular problems connected with building an international. We can't look at the International as merely a kind of big SWP. The International can't build a party in a particular country in just the same way we would aid the building of a branch. The International can do many things to aid the development of Trotskyist parties in different countries, to help them develop leaders, but it can't substitute itself for national leaderships. Those leaderships have to come out of the situations they are working in, in collaboration with the leaderships of other sections through the International. Another thing we should keep in mind is the unevenness of development from country to country. This is true in regard to our movement, just as it is true in regard to the general history of each country. The Trotskyist movement is different in different countries -- has a different history, with national peculiarities. Each section is at a different level of development.

We in the SWP have some precious

assets. We have a continuity of leadership that spans the class struggle in this country from 1905 when the Industrial Workers of the World was founded all the way up to the antiwar struggles of 1969. That's a lot of class struggle history and experience embodied in our cadres, and the distilled lessons of that experience are now being passed on to the younger leaders of the party. These lessons can also be of value to our co-thinkers abroad.

The International is at essentially the same level it was in 1938, that of propaganda groups, although organized on a wider scale and with better opportunities open for us all over the world. Especially important is the fact that youth are coming towards the International. This is happening in a new rise of the world revolution and in the context of a crisis of world Stalinism -- which gives us unprecedented opportunities. That's one reason why the discussion in the International is so important -- how do we take advantage of these opportunities and win the best of the new generation to authentic Marxism? More and more young people are looking to us for answers.

How do we approach this discussion? What we want is political clarity. We think that the points we are raising are important and we want to have a thorough discussion of them. We want to have an objective political discussion with the entire international movement participating. We do not want a factional situation to develop. Our objective is to have a

calm political discussion. Events themselves in this ever more swiftly moving world should help sort out the differences and put the contrasting positions to the test of reality.

Perhaps the situation about prospects for the International can be illustrated by a conversation I had with one of the top leaders of the Australian CP. The Australian CP has been one of the sharpest critics of Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia. At the recent conference of CP's in Moscow, they continued their opposition to the Czechoslovak invasion, and Brezhnev and company felt forced to print their denunciation of the invasion in Pravda, which was the first time that Soviet citizens got to know that CP's around the world had criticized the invasion. Well, we talked for a long time. He paid us a tribute, and this is a tribute from a man who knows. He asked me, quite seriously, whether there was such a thing as an international Trotskyist movement. I explained that there was, and some of the things it was doing around the world. Then he said, "I wanted to know, because from that meeting in Moscow, we think there is no such thing any more as a Communist movement. It's in complete shambles and disintegration." And he put his finger right on the essential point. The future belongs not to some grey bureaucrat in the Kremlin, or to the followers of the man who walks on water in Peking, but to the internationalists, who have continued the program and movement started by Marx and Engels, and who nowadays go by the name of Trotskyists.

Nov 3
1969

THE ORIGIN OF THE DIFFERENCES ON CHINA

By Joseph Hansen

The following is the text of the report made by Joseph Hansen at the Twenty-third Convention of the Socialist Workers Party.7

* * *

At the recent world congress, Comrade Germain stressed the fact that although various differences had arisen as the international Trotskyist movement sought to formulate its stand on the "cultural revolution," the area of agreement remained broad and substantial.

On this, I believe that Comrade Germain is correct. There is agreement on such key questions as the following:

1. That a workers state exists in China.
2. That it is a deformed workers state.
3. That there is no proletarian democracy in China and no possibility of achieving it under the present regime.
4. That a political revolution is required in China to establish proletarian democracy.

In addition to these very basic points, Comrade Germain is correct in citing agreement among most Trotskyists on two more points:

1. That the "cultural revolution" was essentially an intrabureaucratic struggle.
2. That the mobilization of the masses during the "cultural revolution" weakened the bureaucracy in China.

The common position reached by all sectors of the International on these basic questions is a very real and valuable achievement. It means that the International is assured in advance that in assessing current events in which these issues are involved, its political stand will reflect a virtually unanimous view.

This makes it possible to have a very free discussion on the differences that have arisen.

The Differences

The disagreements that appeared at the world congress and during the discussion period leading up to it can be listed as follows:

First, differences over interpretation of some of the aspects of the "cultural revolution."

These include the role of the youth, primarily the Red Guard movement; the extent of the mass mobilizations and the degree to which they were kept under control or escaped control; the extent of the damage done to culture, education, and possibly other institutions, such as defense, science, the atomic industry; and, finally the role of the military, or its role since the end of the "cultural revolution."

These questions should give rise to no serious problems, since they will be settled by new events and additional information.

In a somewhat different category is the difference over the emphasis to be placed on the cult of Mao. Everyone at the congress, of course, opposed the cult. The question was what weight should be placed on it in an official resolution of the Fourth International.

Associated with this was the question of what tone to adopt in polemics with Maoists. Here it was a matter of judgment, or practical experience, as to the best way to approach revolutionary-minded youth who have been influenced by Maoism.

In relation to this, it was noted that the problem extends into the International. In a few places losses have been suffered to the Maoists.

At the congress, a related question also came up. How important is the danger faced by the International from the widespread ultraleft mood among the youth? In our opinion this is a rather serious question, one not easily solved. Others held a different view.

Comrade Peng's Position

Besides these differences, the position taken by Comrade Peng played a role at the congress. He voted for the minority draft of the resolution on the "cultural revolution," but he proposed that critical support should be given to Liu Shao-chi.

In my opinion, this particular difference was of a tactical order. Comrade Peng held that the Liu Shao-chi group favored de-Stalinization whereas Mao was dead set against it, and therefore the interests of the Fourth International would best be served if Liu Shao-chi won out.

At the congress, Comrade Peng held that the possible opening for the Fourth International in intervening in the

"cultural revolution" had been missed. The Liu Shao-chi group had been crushed. Thus the issue was no longer current. Comrade Peng maintained that it is nonetheless of historical interest, and of importance in drawing lessons for the future.

As the discussion progressed, differences of another order began to emerge. These were perhaps more important, in the final analysis, than the points of immediate dispute since they concerned the theory of the Chinese Revolution. The following questions came up:

1. The specific nature of the Chinese Communist Party and the correct label to place on it. Is it a "Stalinized" party? If we call it a "Stalinized" party, what does this do to our basic position on the counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism?

2. The specific nature of the bureaucracy and the correct label to place on it. Is it a "Stalinist" bureaucracy or just a bureaucracy in general?

3. The specific nature of the foreign policy of this bureaucracy. Is it "bureaucratic centrist" or "Stalinist"? Is its basic objective "peaceful coexistence" or the fostering of socialist revolutions abroad?

Origin of the Differences

A clear understanding of the origin of these differences in theoretical appreciation of the Chinese Revolution is very important. It can help set the correct tone for the discussion and keep it at a proper level.

The differences were not injected artificially. They arose through the efforts of the international Trotskyist movement to come to grips with a major domestic development that had worldwide impact -- the "cultural revolution."

To have differences over such a development is quite natural and nothing to get excited about in a movement that maintains proletarian democracy.

Some of the divergences can be traced back ultimately, in my opinion, to the first attempts of the leaders of the Fourth International to assess the Chinese Revolution theoretically. During the years in which the movement was split, some of the assessments remained frozen; others underwent modification without the benefit of a fruitful exchange of opinion because of the factional struggle.

The discussion has already aroused lively interest internationally. In the SWP, several comrades, perhaps a little prematurely, at once offered contribu-

tions, taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the pre-convention discussion period.

One of these early contributions may have created a rather negative reaction because of its tone. This is the contribution made by Comrade Mike Tormey entitled "China -- a Fundamental Difference." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol.27, No. 8.)

I will take it up at this point because of the advantages it may offer in further indicating the frame of the discussion and some of the things that ought to be avoided.

Comrade Tormey's Position

Comrade Tormey maintains that the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement in 1963 took place "with two divergent positions on China" without the divergences being "clarified." "The SWP," he writes, "has not fought for its line inside the world movement, and we have compromised our theoretical position on China. The leadership has not carried out its responsibility to the rank and file of either the party or the International, especially to the Chinese section."

Comrade Tormey maintains that "the only reason a discussion is on the agenda today is that the United Secretariat majority wouldn't let us smuggle in our line and rewrote the SWP's document."

Besides "smuggle," Comrade Tormey also uses words like "appeasing" and "obfuscating" in relation to the course followed by the leadership of the SWP. He even finds means of employing words like "dishonest" and "betray."

I hope that any comrades who may feel tempted to answer Comrade Tormey in the same tone will not do so. In a discussion of this nature, it is a mistake to permit oneself to become provoked into arguing on such a level. It is better to try to see what point Comrade Tormey is trying to make.

If I understand his underlying thesis it is that the 1963 reunification was a mistake, that it took place on an unprincipled basis, and that the leadership of the SWP in the intervening six years has conducted itself in an unprincipled way because it did not initiate a faction fight over such questions as the theoretical appreciation of the Chinese Revolution and the precise way it was affected by Stalinism.

Perhaps I am overstating Comrade Tormey's thesis. If this is the case, I hope he will not object to my attempting to answer it just the same. My purpose

is to try to help prevent the discussion from becoming diverted into the channels implied by his arguments.

A Principled Reunification

First of all, the reunification in 1963 did occur on a principled basis. A document was drawn up, codifying the principles on which the reunification took place. No one in the world Trotskyist movement challenged this document at the time and no one has challenged it since.

It is especially to be noted that the Healyites, who were the loudest in shouting that the reunification was "unprincipled" and a "betrayal," never published this document, never made it available to their rank and file, never submitted it to criticism.

The reason for this was that the leadership of the Socialist Labour League could not find any good reason for not accepting the reunification on the basis of this document. Had they published the document at the time, explaining that it had been accepted by the majority of the International Committee, they would have exposed the completely unprincipled nature of their own course -- which was first to initiate concrete steps pointing toward reunification, and then to split when they found themselves in a minority in the International Committee on such questions as the nature of the Cuban Revolution.

It is quite true that the movement did not unite in 1963 on a monolithic basis. We are opposed to monolithism. As a political party, the Fourth International reunified in accordance with political principles. It would have been wrong to demand agreement on all questions of theory or of historical interpretation, although agreement did exist on the big questions of this nature traditionally associated with our movement.

The main area of disagreement was well known to both sides -- it concerned the responsibility for the split some ten years before. Whatever the final determination on that might be, it was the revolutionary duty of both sides to seek to heal the split so as to open up the possibility for united action in taking advantage of a series of exceptional opportunities that had appeared, such as utilizing the favorable repercussions of the Cuban Revolution and participating actively in the Algerian Revolution; and, on the other hand, joining forces against both opportunist and sectarian tendencies that had appeared in some sectors of the Trotskyist movement, notably Ceylon and Latin America (Posadas).

Reunification would also make pos-

sible an eventual historic estimate of the split in the most objective way possible and with the least likelihood of injuring the continued unity and growth of the world Trotskyist movement. That could be done only at a later date, in the light of fresh experience and with the old factional lineups liquidated.

This way of proceeding was not only the most rational and objective. It was in the Trotskyist tradition. In the SWP we learned this directly from Comrade Cannon. He learned it from bitter experience -- and from the Russians.

An Instructive Precedent

A similar question, it might be mentioned, came up when Trotsky first reached the position in 1933 that a Fourth International had to be built.

Jean van Heijenoort, one of Trotsky's secretaries, tells the story: "A few voices raised the question: haven't we waited too long? Shouldn't we have recognized the need of a new International much sooner? To this Trotsky answered: 'This is a question we may well leave to the historians.' He was undoubtedly profoundly convinced that the change in policy would have been incorrect several years sooner, but he refused to discuss this question because it was no longer of practical and immediate interest."

This bit of history can be found on page 63 of the new Merit publication, Leon Trotsky -- The Man and His Work.

Thus we can see that a willingness to leave to the historians questions that are no longer urgent in immediate political practice is not without precedent in the history of the Fourth International.

Naturally, this does not mean that such questions have been buried forever. They can come up in connection with new issues. In that case they can acquire a certain currency; but in a quite different, and, it is to be hoped, more favorable context.

The truth is that among the differences that led to the split in 1953-54, the question of theoretical appreciation of the Chinese Revolution did not play a prominent role at all. It is therefore not difficult to abstract the question of China from the differences that led to the split. It is true that differing theoretical appreciations of the Chinese Revolution existed in those days and that these may have had an indirect relation to the issues involved in the split. But anyone holding that view, if he is to be objective in assigning historical responsibility, should very carefully

note what role was played in this by the slowness of the SWP in coming to the position that a workers state had been established in China.

In the SWP we could afford to take our time. As in the case of our analysis of the meaning of the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe following World War II, we wanted to be sure that we had thought through all the possible consequences that might follow from our theoretical conclusions. The delay did not affect any immediate, practical political positions of the party. However, this slowness may have had an adverse effect in the International.

If this was the case, we who were associated with the International Committee would have objected ten years later in 1963, at the time of the reunification, to any demand that we "repent," to use Comrade Tormey's phrase. But then none of the comrades of the International Secretariat displayed the least inclination to demand that we repent, and vow that in the future we would think things through at a faster pace.

At the moment they were faced with a deep division within their own ranks. In 1963, comrades Pierre Frank, Ernest Germain, and Livio Maitan stood on one side, Pablo on the other. Among the questions in dispute was their theoretical appreciation of the Chinese Revolution.

Pablo's Turn on China

This internal difference among the comrades with whom we were uniting was of considerable interest. Obviously it was a reflection inside the world Trotskyist movement of the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Pablo had made a decided switch in his position on the Chinese Revolution. He now viewed Maoism as one of the chief obstacles standing in the way of de-Stalinization. This judgment was not without an element of truth, in my opinion.

In trying to explain the nature of Maoism, Pablo had come to view it as a Chinese version of Stalinism. This likewise appeared to me to be not without a certain validity.

But Pablo had gone further than that. To explain Mao's Stalinism, Pablo had decided that a stage of Stalinist retrogression is inevitable in any revolution in a backward country. Perhaps even worse, he had reached the conclusion that Tito's regime in Yugoslavia had developed a correct way of combating this tendency toward degeneration -- workers self-management. Thus, as against what had happened in China under Mao, Pablo offered

what had happened in Yugoslavia under Tito.

As an immediate practical political conclusion in the Sino-Soviet conflict, Pablo favored opposing Mao and giving critical support to Khrushchev, the de-Stalinizer, who was then the head of the Soviet government. Pablo maintained that to do otherwise would mean giving objective assistance to the worst Stalinist forces in both China and the Soviet Union, the forces utterly opposed to de-Stalinization.

Comrades Pierre Frank, Ernest Germain, and Livio Maitan were up in arms over both the deep-going theoretical conclusions and the political position Pablo had reached. They won a solid majority against him in the congress which they held on the eve of the Reunification Congress.

At the Reunification Congress there was no attempt to plaster over these differences with Pablo. They remained on the agenda for further discussion in the normal course of political life in the reunified International. The same held true for the theoretical appreciations of the Chinese Revolution maintained by the majority of the International Committee insofar as these differed from those held by the International Secretariat.

In relation to China only two political issues had to be decided on -- which side to favor in the Sino-Soviet conflict and whether to call for a political revolution in China. The first point was easily handled, since both the International Committee and the International Secretariat already favored giving critical support to Peking. In the united organization, only a small minority supported Pablo's contrary view.

On the second point, each side made a concession. Pending further discussion, the comrades of the International Secretariat agreed to a formulation that included the substance of the position of the International Committee, while the International Committee agreed not to insist on the designation "political revolution."

We thought that this was a good temporary solution inasmuch as it removed the possibility of ambiguity in the political position of the International on this question while permitting the comrades who held reservations to consider it further and to await the test of fresh events. The principled nature of this solution was shown by the complete agreement on the specific points drawn up as a political platform in the struggle for proletarian democracy in China.

The reunification of the Fourth In-

ternational made it possible for us to look forward to future discussions on this and other subjects within a reasonable time that would lead to still greater homogeneity of views.

Fresh Splits

The prospect of a strengthened International did not meet with universal approval. On the side of the International Committee, a minority headed by Gerry Healy refused to join in the reunification, deciding instead to split from the world Trotskyist movement.

On the side of the International Secretariat, a minority headed by Juan Posadas had already split for much the same reasons as those motivating Healy.

Before long, Pablo followed their example.

All three of these groups, of course, were strong advocates of democratic centralism. They also practiced democratic centralism quite vigorously -- so long as they remained in the majority. As a minority, however, they found many reasons for not practicing what they preached.

Some changes inside the SWP since 1963 should likewise be noted. A few who agreed with Healy -- Wohlforth and Robertson among them -- found it impossible to abide by the rules of democratic centralism. A few others, who took an uncritical view of Maoism, lost interest in further internal discussion and left the party.

Thus, since 1963, the situation within the International and the organizations in fraternal sympathy with it has altered in various ways. One of the most important has been the addition of sizable new forces through the recruitment of youth.

So far as the composition of the movement is concerned, the discussion today takes place in quite different -- and, in my opinion, much more favorable -- circumstances than existed in 1963.

In addition, some major events have provided fresh material. These include the deepening crisis and decomposition of world Stalinism, particularly the further sharpening of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the catastrophe in Indonesia, and the big convulsion in China called the "cultural revolution." These developments greatly facilitate a fruitful discussion.

I hope that this is sufficient to answer the question that appeared to be implied in Comrade Tormey's contribution concerning the procedure followed at the Reunification Congress in 1963.

I should like to turn now to a couple of points which he makes that are more directly related to the differences that have arisen over the "cultural revolution."

Question of Liu's Program

Comrade Tormey maintains, if I understand him correctly, that the refusal of the SWP to support Liu Shao-chi amounts to "appeasing" the majority of the United Secretariat in questions of principle relating to the Chinese Revolution.

In the effort to substantiate his case, he ascribes to Liu Shao-chi a program that is very far to the left. The method followed by Comrade Tormey in this is hardly a model of objectivity. In the fall 1966 issue of the International Socialist Review, in an article on the "cultural revolution," Comrade George Novack wrote that from the accusations lodged against the dissident intellectuals and from other sources, it was possible "to discern the vague contours of their criticism and the trend of their thinking." Comrade Novack drew the conclusion that if the points he listed were taken together, "these positions would constitute a serious oppositional program to the policies of the Peking leadership."

Comrade Tormey assumes that this was the program of the Liu Shao-chi faction. As Comrade Tormey puts it, "Comrade Novack has obviously outlined part of the program of the Liu Shao-chi faction."

This may be obvious to Comrade Tormey, but George Novack did not draw that conclusion. He stated that the list represented the "vague contours" and "trend" of thinking of the opposition as a whole. He did not say that this was the program of Liu Shao-chi.

It is not accurate to say that we were "neutralist" in the factional struggle. With our call for a political revolution, for the establishment of proletarian democracy, we stood in opposition to Mao.

But it is accurate to say that we did not offer critical support to Liu Shao-chi, although we defended his right to be heard. There was good reason, in our opinion, for not supporting Liu Shao-chi. So far as we were able to judge from the available information, Liu Shao-chi did not represent the most radical trend. He did not even organize a faction on a declared program in opposition to Mao.

To the Left of Liu Shao-chi

In contrast to the readiness with which he ascribes a serious oppositional program to Liu Shao-chi, Comrade Tormey dismisses out of hand any possibility of a tendency in China moving toward Trotskyism. "This position of Comrade Hansen's," he says, "is totally off the wall."

I have the impression that Comrade Tormey did not take time to think this through. If no tendency exists to the left of Liu Shao-chi, and if Liu Shao-chi nevertheless advanced a quite revolutionary program, then we are compelled to conclude that Liu Shao-chi took this progressive step on his own volition. That means that Liu Shao-chi is consciously a revolutionary Marxist or very close to it. Since he originated in the bureaucracy, and was in fact considered for many years to be Mao's chosen heir, and still represents a wing of the bureaucracy, then we have to say -- if Comrade Tormey is right -- that at least part of the bureaucracy carried out self-reform under the leadership of Liu Shao-chi.

Suppose that similar reasoning were applied to developments in the Soviet Union -- that no tendency stands to the left of Khrushchev. Would not the logical conclusion be that Khrushchev represents a tendency in the Soviet bureaucracy moving toward self-reform?

Comrade Tormey, I am sure, will agree that Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization consisted not of self-reform of the bureaucracy but of granting concessions to the masses under the pressure of a rising mood of opposition that could easily foster Trotskyism. In the case of the Soviet Union, I am sure that Comrade Tormey would agree that we were fully justified in assuming that groupings could form under these conditions that would gravitate toward Trotskyist positions; that perhaps they had already formed, at least in an embryonic way, and that genuine Trotskyists might already be found in their ranks.

Why weren't we justified in taking a similar attitude toward the situation in China during the "cultural revolution"?

Comrade Tormey, however, insists that we support Liu Shao-chi unless we can tell him specifically whereabouts in China a more revolutionary tendency exists and what its program is.

All we can say in response to that demand for empirical proof is that Mao's totalitarian method of rule and the wall of secrecy he maintains around China preclude any easy access to such information. We must confine ourselves pretty much to indirect indications that tendencies to the left of Liu Shao-chi do exist.

However, I can call attention to three specific items of unusual interest in this connection.

In Mao's Prisons

The first is a couple of paragraphs in the article by George Novack in the fall 1966 International Socialist Review which Comrade Tormey evidently overlooked. The paragraphs are from a report by a veteran Japanese Trotskyist leader. He explains that one of the reasons for the militancy of some of the adult leaders accused by the Mao regime of being counterrevolutionists is the resistance of many young men and women for a number of years.

"We should not forget the existence of many victims of the 'Great Leap Forward' and other affairs," writes this Japanese Trotskyist leader. "Each one of these has involved thousands of young men."

"We know of one prison alone in the suburbs of Peking where hundreds of youthful political prisoners have been doing heavy labor for many years, resolutely refusing release on the condition of recanting. They are not Trotskyists, at least they do not call themselves such. (Many Trotskyists who were arrested in 1949 and later also remain in prison.) Many Chinese youth and students know of their existence and resistance."

The second item is a very brief report carried by Agence France Presse January 22, 1967, that Kang Sheng, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, had been attacked in wall posters for protecting "a Trotskyite student, Tan Li-fu, arrested in December."

We reported this item in the February 3, 1967 issue of World Outlook and commented at the time on its possible meaning.

The Sheng Wu Lien Tendency

The third item is from the most recent issue (June-July) of International Socialism, published by the state capitalist tendency in Britain. Tony Cliff, the leader of this tendency, has this to say:

"In IS 29 (Summer 1967) I wrote an article on the Cultural Revolution in China; 'While there is without doubt a "Bukharinist" wing in the Chinese Communist Party, and a Stalinist (Maoist) wing...there is not a Trotskyist or Left-Oppositionist wing.' I added, however, as the final sentence of the article 'The crises from above may also spur on a new, revolutionary working-class movement below.'

"Much sooner than anyone expected,

echoes of just such a movement reached our ears."

Tony Cliff cites a speech made by K'ang Sheng, the minister of public security. (I don't know if this is the same Kang Sheng who was accused the previous year of protecting a "Trotskyite" student.) On January 24, 1968, K'ang Sheng attacked a grouping called "Sheng Wu Lien" -- which is the shortened form of "Hunan Provincial Proletarian Revolutionary Great Alliance Committee." This committee was composed of more than twenty organizations. According to K'ang Sheng, it was organized on a declared program that claimed that the "cultural revolution" had remained merely reformist up to this point.

"It may be seen from an article by Yang Hsi-kuang," said the minister of public security, "that they have probably collected some counter-revolutionary works of Trotsky..."

Tony Cliff writes further: "At last one of the documents of the Sheng-wu-lien, entitled 'Whither China?' came into our hands." In his opinion, it resembles the manifesto issued by Kurón and Modzelewski in Poland, and Tony Cliff concludes from this that "it is clear that the struggle against Bureaucratic State Capitalism as well as monopoly capitalism is really a world-wide struggle." For the benefit of readers of International Socialism, he published four pages of extracts from the document "Whither China?"

We were able to obtain a copy of the complete text of this document as well as the speech by K'ang Sheng, the minister of public security, plus several other items on this subject, including a short speech by Chiang Ch'ing, the wife of Chairman Mao, and a copy of the program of Sheng Wu Lien.

From this material, I would judge that Tony Cliff is overly optimistic in concluding that this is a state capitalist tendency. It could just as well represent a tendency that is seeking to take some of Chairman Mao's proclamations to their logical conclusion, such as demanding that the state machine be smashed and a Paris Commune type of state be established. Some of the formulations, however, read as if they had been written by someone familiar with at least some of Trotsky's writings or the writings of his Chinese followers.

I am of the opinion that more material of this kind will eventually turn up. But this ought to be sufficient to indicate that there is substance to the view that tendencies to the left of Liu Shao-chi did appear during the "cultural revolution."

A Tactical Question

Before leaving this point, it ought to be noted that the Sheng Wu Lien grouping did not offer critical support to Liu Shao-chi. Instead it offered critical support to Mao Tse-tung.

This should serve as further confirmation of the dangers involved in trying to determine from afar what is the best tactical course to follow in a situation so complex as the one in China and with so many unknowns. Such decisions should be left to the comrades directly involved in the field of action.

Perhaps Comrade Tormey can be persuaded to adopt this view. He says that if a new tendency moving toward Trotskyism actually exists in China, then "Naturally, it would be automatic to support such a tendency..."

What if this tendency thought it was tactically advisable to offer critical support to Liu Shao-chi? In my opinion, the best course for the world Trotskyist movement would be to back them up in their judgment. And what if this tendency thought it was tactically advisable to offer critical support to Mao? Would not the same considerations impel us to back them in that even if we held reservations as to the correctness of their judgment?

The question is one of tactics, not principles, during a certain stage of the struggle for a political revolution in China to establish proletarian democracy.

I would like to turn now to a different aspect of the question -- our theoretical appreciation of the Chinese Revolution.

This was not on the agenda at the world congress, but the debate touched on it and there can be no doubt that the logic of the discussion is to move in that direction.

Real Origin of the Difficulties

In his contribution "Thoughts on the History of the Chinese Revolution and the Present Discussion of Maoism," (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 27, No. 8), Comrade Jan Garrett lists three traps which he warns that we can fall into if we just "muddle along," as he thinks we have, on the question of the Chinese Revolution.

He calls these the "objectivist" theory, the "accident" theory, and "eclectic dualism."

The labels are attractive. However, I think they are rather arbitrary.

I have the impression that Comrade Garrett reached his conclusions on this

point by mistaking the origin of the difficulties. He appears to assume that the source is to be found in theoretical incompetence or ignorance. I deduce this from his assertion that many SWP members have been just muddling along on the question of the Chinese Revolution. He misses the mark because he does not refer to the real origin of the difficulties.

At the time of the victory of the Chinese Revolution over Chiang Kai-shek and his imperialist backers, our movement was confronted with the necessity to explain the contradiction between certain long-held theoretical postulates and the actual course of events. The postulates were as follows:

1. The peasantry as a class cannot lead a revolutionary struggle through to a successful conclusion.
2. This can be achieved only by the proletariat.
3. The proletariat cannot do it except by organizing a revolutionary Marxist party.
4. Stalinism does not represent revolutionary Marxism; in essence it is counterrevolutionary.
5. Stalinism represents a temporary retrogression in the first workers state; the advance of the revolution will doom it and it will not reappear.

Despite these postulates, which appeared to have been thoroughly established by both weighty theoretical considerations and a mountain of empirical evidence, in the Chinese Revolution the proletariat did not play a leading role as a class. Instead, this role was assumed by the peasantry.

Moreover, no revolutionary Marxist party was formed on a mass scale. Instead, a Stalinist party stood at the head of the revolutionary forces and came to power in a struggle that ultimately toppled capitalism.

Finally, Stalinism was quite consciously cultivated by the new regime. Today this school of thought has culminated in a cult of the personality that if anything has outdone its model in the Soviet Union.

The problem that faced our movement was to explain these contradictions and to determine what lessons should be drawn and what they portended for the future.

So far as the political positions of the world Trotskyist movement were concerned, no problem existed. Without exception our positions were correct, ranging from full support to China, despite Chiang Kai-shek, in the struggle against Japanese imperialism to full support for the revolution against Chinese capitalism and the vestiges of feudalism despite the

Stalinist nature of the leadership that was thrown to the forefront.

It is very important to remember this, for it constitutes the most positive kind of proof that our movement is a dynamic political formation and not a church dedicated to maintaining the purity of a set of dogmas. One can feel proud in reading the political platforms presented in the documents of that time. They were very good, standing up remarkably well under the test of events.

Problem of the Proletarian Content

As to the attempts to find solutions to the contradictions between the reality and our theoretical postulates, some of these were clearly in error from the beginning. Others have not held up, or only created fresh difficulties.

In the main, the attempted solutions centered around locating the proletarian content which it was felt must lie at the heart of the Chinese Revolution despite its strange forms and the role of Stalinism.

For instance, in the case of the peasantry, there was speculation that perhaps its true nature had been misjudged. Unlike the peasants of Western Europe and elsewhere, perhaps the Chinese peasants had achieved a proletarian or even socialist consciousness either because of the peculiarities of China's historic background or because of the impact of imperialism on the country.

A current example of this line of thought is to be found in Comrade Moreno's contribution in Fifty Years of World Revolution.

Much greater attention was paid to the nature of the Chinese Communist Party. This was only natural since our movement from its very inception has considered the question of the party to be primordial in the process of bringing a revolution to victory. Thus it appeared that the key to the success in China must be sought in the nature of the Chinese Communist Party.

One line of speculation was that Trotsky had made a mistake in concluding that the Chinese Communist Party under Mao had become a peasant party.

Another was that if Trotsky had been right in his conclusion at the time, then it must have changed back into a proletarian organization.

Comrade Morris Stein argued, for instance, if I recall correctly, that there was a steady flow of workers from the cities who went into the countryside and joined the Chinese Communist Party.

Their influence, he thought, was sufficient to give a proletarian character to the party.

Another line of speculation concerned the personal qualities and influence of Mao Tse-tung. Some comrades felt that despite everything, when Mao Tse-tung was faced by the supreme test, he had adhered in practice, if not in program, propaganda, or diplomacy, to revolutionary Marxism.

Still another variant was that the very Stalinism of the Chinese Communist Party gave it a proletarian character. The line of thought here was that Stalinism is connected with the workers state in the Soviet Union and that this association therefore makes it proletarian.

At bottom, this view represents an identification of Stalinism with the workers state. It is quite a change from Trotsky's position that Stalinism stands in contradiction to the workers state, that it is a cancerous growth. As against the proletarian tendency represented by Leninism and the Left Opposition, Trotsky considered Stalinism to be petty-bourgeois in nature.

Another line of thought, flowing in the same general channel of trying to find something proletarian about the Chinese Communist Party, was the view that this party changed from a peasant party to a "centrist" party, then a "left centrist" party, then an "opportunist workers party," and finally a "workers party."

In the current discussion, the view that Mao's policies should be designated as "bureaucratic centrism" may fall within this frame. At the world congress Comrade Pierre Frank argued for the latter point. Through an error in translation I was under the impression that someone else had introduced the amendment to this effect in the resolution on the "cultural revolution." But Pierre has written me since then that he was the one who suggested it.

While I am on the point, I should like to say that I fail to see what is gained by this nomenclature. If we ask what is the class nature of "centrism," whatever its variety, we are compelled to say that it is petty-bourgeois. That is also the class nature of Stalinism. It is petty-bourgeois.

Thus the introduction of the general term "centrism" does not help in answering whether a Stalinist party can become a revolutionary party. It merely suggests a succession of stages in which the class essence of the gradation or series of steps remains obscure.

Marcy, Swabeck, Posadas, and Healy

It was quite clear from the beginning that all these tentative answers to the central problem carried implications that could prove quite dangerous politically; and we were soon to experience repercussions in our ranks. I will mention some of them.

Sam Marcy and his group rapidly came to the conclusion that Stalinism in power equals a workers state. Since a Stalinist party had gained power in China, this signified that a workers state had been established.

From this position, Marcy evolved into a Maoist of such fervor that he was capable of swallowing even the new constitution, announced at the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, designating Lin Piao as Mao's heir.

The consistency with which the Marcyites identify Stalinism with a workers state was shown in the most striking way during the Hungarian uprising when they offered critical support to Khrushchev in using Soviet tanks and troops to crush the proletarian rebellion.

The Marcyites adopted the same position in relation to the current invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia. They even went so far as to help the Kremlin in its efforts to find a propagandistic cover for crushing the upsurge that was pointing in the direction of a political revolution in Czechoslovakia.

Later in the SWP, we had the sad case of Arne Swabeck, one of the founders of the American Trotskyist movement, who proceeded from the theoretical position that only a revolutionary Marxist party can lead a successful revolution. Inasmuch as the Chinese Revolution was successful, he concluded that the Chinese Communist Party must have been a revolutionary Marxist party, and he ended up as a Maoist.

Juan Posadas followed a similar line of thinking. but with an odd twist. Because of Mao's supposed receptivity to genuine Marxism, Posadas came to believe that Mao derived his finest thought from reading the speeches and writings of J. Posadas. Just how this was accomplished was never made quite clear. Perhaps Posadas believed that Mao had set up a Latin-American Bureau in Peking that occupied itself with translating Juanposadas Thought into Chinese ideograms so that Chairman Mao could imbibe at this fountain.

The identification of Stalinism with a workers state took a different and

perhaps still more remarkable twist in the thinking of Gerry Healy. He maintains that there are two, and only two, roads to a workers state -- either under the leadership of a Trotskyist party or under the leadership of a Stalinist party.

Thus in the case of Cuba, Gerry Healy refuses to recognize the existence of a workers state because the revolution was headed by neither a Trotskyist party nor a Stalinist party.

Wohlforth Lays It on the Line

If you wish proof of this aberration, it has conveniently been made available in the most recent issue of the Bulletin (August 26). On pages S-5 and S-6, Tim Wohlforth, who seems to have displaced Cliff Slaughter as Healy's chief apologist, explains this remarkable theory.

In Eastern Europe, he says, "The very process of expropriation of capital in these countries was accompanied by a process of the creation of this workers' bureaucracy through the taking over of the government by a workers' party, the Communist Party, and the purging of the government of all forces unreliable to the tasks this party had to carry out -- some positive social tasks as well as reactionary tasks."

Wohlforth continues: "The Castro government is in no sense a workers' bureaucracy. In fact Castro has carried out a series of purges against even Stalinist elements within his government -- as illustrated by the two Escalante affairs -- and maintains complete control in the hands of the petty-bourgeois nationalist forces who came to power with him."

Then Wohlforth gets down to the nitty gritty: "In Cuba, and only in Cuba, the nationalizations were not accompanied by the emergence of a government controlled by the Stalinists."

We hardly need any further enlightenment from this Healyite theoretician. His position is that if the process that actually occurred in Cuba had been led by a Stalinist, say Blas Roca or Anibal Escalante, then the Healyites would have at once agreed that a workers state had been established. If Blas Roca or Anibal Escalante had purged Fidel Castro and Che Guevara this would have been proof positive.

But since the Stalinists in Cuba were outflanked and bypassed from the left by fresh revolutionary forces, the Healyites find it incompatible with their dogma to admit that a workers state has been established there.

It is this reactionary theory that has led the Healyites, out of concern for

consistency, to commit such abominations as to call Castro another "Batista," to offer critical support to Cuban Stalinism when Castro became alarmed at the growth of bureaucratism, and to speculate, as they did openly in their press after Che Guevara left Havana in 1965 for another "assignment," that Castro had murdered his comrade-in-arms.

Now for the icing on the cake. The Healyites make a great show in their press of alertness to the danger of succumbing to Stalinism. However, they have not set a very good example in practice. Besides succumbing to the temptations of Stalinism in Cuba, they succumbed in China.

During the "cultural revolution," the Newsletter suddenly blossomed with rave articles about Mao's Red Guards. It was quite a sight to see the great red banner of Maoism lifted high in the Newsletter. This lasted but a short time. Praise for Mao's Red Guards vanished as abruptly as it had appeared. For the past two years, the Newsletter has hardly mentioned the "cultural revolution."

What happened? No explanation was ever offered. I suppose that the headquarters gang managed to get the ailing author of the articles back into a straitjacket and that was that. It never occurred to them that he was only acting in strict consistency with Gerryhealy Thought.

Four Main Results of War

The world Trotskyist movement never landed in such blind alleys as the ones in which Marcy, Swabeck, Posadas, and Healy are now to be found. At the same time, I think it is just to say that we have not yet achieved a fully satisfactory unified theory.

Perhaps we are now in position to accomplish this. With good fortune, this may be one of the outcomes of the current discussion.

The method we should follow is that of historical materialism -- not the "objectivist" theory, the "accident" theory, or "eclectic dualism." Studies pursued in accordance with the method of historical materialism are the most likely to bring solid results. So let us look at the process that brought into the world the second generation of workers states.

World War II had four main consequences: (1) the victory of the Soviet Union; (2) the weakening of world capitalism as a whole; (3) the resulting temporary strengthening of Stalinism; (4) an upsurge of revolutionary struggles in both the imperialist centers and the colonial areas.

These four results shaped the course of history for some time, above all the advance of the world revolution.

Eastern Europe

In the case of the East European countries that were occupied by the Soviet armies as they moved toward Berlin, the overturn of capitalism in those areas was explainable as a direct consequence of the victory of the Soviet Union over German imperialism.

The armed struggle was carried on by the Soviet armies and the resistance movement operating in conjunction with them. The capitalist governments collapsed as the Soviet troops advanced. They were replaced by governments in which Moscow, standing behind local Stalinist parties, exercised power.

For a time the Kremlin retained the capitalist structures in Eastern Europe, evidently as bargaining pieces in trying to reach some kind of world settlement with Western imperialism.

When this bid was turned down and Washington opened up the Cold War, Stalin responded by destroying the capitalist structures in the countries occupied by the Soviet armies.

Imperialism was too weak to block the overturns. Naturally, there was a great hue and cry. But no capitalist country in Europe had the armed forces required to push back the Soviet armies. Even the U.S. armed forces were disintegrating.

The economic forms that replaced the capitalist structure in Eastern Europe were patterned on the economic forms in the Soviet Union. The structure of the state was likewise based on the Soviet model.

The proletarian element in these newly set up workers states clearly derived from the economic forms that were "structurally assimilated," to use the descriptive phrase applied by the comrades in Europe at the time.

The source of the reactionary Stalinist element, that is, the totalitarian political forms, was the Kremlin bureaucracy, the parasitic ruling caste which was keenly alert to the need to set up a replica of its own formation in these satellite states. Possible sources of political dissidence were handled with frame-up trials and purges.

We, of course, favored the overturns in Eastern Europe although we were absolutely opposed to the means used. To us, the overturns constituted fresh proof that the October Revolution was still

alive. Stalin had not succeeded in destroying the foundations of the workers state. Despite himself he had had to export Soviet property forms, if only as a defensive measure against imperialism.

At the same time we were fully aware that the basic policy of the Soviet bureaucracy was "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and that in accordance with this policy Stalin had once again, during these very same years, betrayed the big revolutionary upsurges in Italy, France, and elsewhere.

Yugoslavia

Let us now consider Yugoslavia. Here again, the Soviet victory was the decisive element. This victory served to inspire the Yugoslav people who had already become armed during their struggle against the German occupation.

The Yugoslav Communist Party had played an auxiliary role in the Soviet military defense by organizing the resistance in Yugoslavia against the German occupation and by pinning down German forces through guerrilla warfare. The armed struggle in Yugoslavia was thus linked to the victories of the Soviet armies.

But the Soviet armies did not play a direct role in Yugoslavia as they did in countries like Bulgaria.

British and American imperialism sought to counter the government set up by Tito by bolstering the forces favoring the monarchy. However, they were too weak to succeed in this, even with the connivance of Stalin. The armed forces under Tito smashed the counterrevolution and became the sole real governing power in Yugoslavia.

This government, in turn, took the steps ending capitalism in Yugoslavia. The economic forms that replaced capitalism were modeled on those in the Soviet Union.

In the political arena, Tito, in true Stalinist style, crushed all dissidence or what might appear to be a potential source of dissidence from the left.

Although the independent role played by the Yugoslav Communist Party under Tito was much greater than that of the Communist parties in countries like Rumania and Czechoslovakia under the Soviet occupation, the basic pattern of the process that ended in the establishment of a deformed workers state in Yugoslavia was the same.

Let us turn now to China. The main condition for the peculiar form which

the revolutionary process took there was the same as in the East European countries and Yugoslavia -- the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II.

The two other conditions following from this one were likewise the same -- the weakening of world capitalism and the temporary strengthening of Stalinism.

As for the revolutionary upsurge touched off by the course of the war and its outcome, this occurred on the colossal scale of the most populous country on earth.

As in Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, the Soviet armies played a certain role by their proximity in the final stage of the war against the Japanese imperialist aggression, but to a lesser degree than in the European theater.

There were other differences, some of them of an unexpected nature.

China's Historic Pattern

I should like to suggest that the first of these was the strong resemblance of the opening phases of the third Chinese revolution to the revolutions of former times in Chinese history.

The earlier revolutions followed a cyclical pattern. When the exploiting classes in China reached the point of exerting intolerable oppression on the masses, the entire economic system tended to break down. The remarkable canal system upon which so much of Chinese agriculture depended fell into disrepair. It became increasingly difficult to feed the population. Famines began to occur. The central authority became increasingly hated. Finally, the peasantry, goaded to desperation, began to link up, and, more importantly, to organize for battle.

A phase of armed struggle opened, with its guerrillas, focal centers, and peasant armies. Eventually these armies conquered, and a new government, headed by the leaders of the insurgent armies, came into power.

The new government at once went to work to repair the ravages of the civil war, to reduce the exploitation of the peasants, to divide up the land at the expense of the former landlords. The canal system was rehabilitated and extended, once again assuring a dependable supply of food for the population.

The army hierarchy that constituted the new government naturally soon displayed concern for its own comfort, ease, and even modest luxuries. The hierarchy developed into a privileged bureaucracy. The land became concentrated once again in fewer and fewer hands and the new

dynasty came to represent the new landlords. The oppression of the peasantry became worse and worse and the system began to break down once again.

The most interesting part of this ancient pattern is the way the peasants succeeded in uniting and building armies imbued with a central political purpose and capable of smashing the old regime and putting a new and better one in power.

A comparison of this phase of the old pattern with the first stages of the third Chinese revolution would, in my opinion, prove highly instructive.

For one thing, it should help counteract the compulsion felt by our movement for so long to find some kind of proletarian quality in the Chinese peasants to account for their remarkable capacity to create a peasant army imbued with revolutionary political aims.

In any case it would make a very good research project for some young Trotskyist theoretician. So much for that point. We come now to more important items.

New World Context

Upon achieving their victory in 1949, the peasant armies of the third Chinese revolution were, of course, confronted by a quite different world from the one their forefathers faced.

First of all, the class nature of the enemy was not the same. In addition they found themselves up against the invading armies of Japanese imperialism, and a little later a fresh threat of invasion from Chiang Kai-shek's American backers, who launched the Korean War and carried their aggression up to the Yalu River.

On top of this, the Chinese peasants established their government in the age of nuclear power, television, jet engines, intercontinental missiles, space rocketry. It was a world dominated by two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union -- the one tied in with Chiang Kai-shek and standing behind the armies of President Truman and General MacArthur, the other associated with the common struggle against Japan, economic planning, and the immense achievements since 1917 that had lifted Russia out of abysmal backwardness.

Thus the consequence of the victory could not be a mere repetition of China's ancient cycle of revolution and counter-revolution, hinging on the status of agriculture and the private property relations associated with it.

The victory won by the Chinese peasant armies was bound to be shaped by the international context in which it occurred.

Role of Armed Struggle

The capacity displayed by the Chinese peasants to mobilize themselves in the absence of leadership from the Chinese proletariat gave the armed struggle in China extraordinary force and staying power. Here, too, a special study might provide our movement with very valuable new material.

In checking back in the documents written when China first came up for intensive discussion in our movement, I was struck by the absence of consideration of the role played by the sustained armed struggle.

For instance, in the May 1952 resolution of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, which was published in the July-August 1952 issue of Fourth International, there is a list of the ways in which the Soviet bureaucracy sought to block the Chinese Revolution from developing into a proletarian revolution. Among the ways, we are told, was the following: "By the pressure exerted upon the Chinese CP to maintain the tactic of guerrilla warfare, and not to attack the big cities."

This could be taken to mean that Stalin favored rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period, but was against urban guerrilla war or, more likely, was against the deployment of the peasant armies to take the big cities when that stage of the guerrilla struggle was reached. At one time, of course, he inspired an opposite course -- of attacking cities prematurely.

The resolution contains nothing more than this about the import of the armed struggle in the Chinese Revolution.

It is obvious, I think, that if the 1952 resolution had been written in the light of the Cuban experience, or even in the light of the Algerian experience, that a quite different approach would have been taken on this question.

The truth of it is that quite large forces were involved in the armed struggle even in the early stages. In his successive campaigns to liquidate the so-called soviets set up by Mao in Kiangsi in the early thirties, Chiang Kai-shek utilized armies numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Three of these massive campaigns were defeated by the revolutionary peasant armies, and in 1931 Mao proclaimed a "Chinese Soviet Republic" in this region.

It took two more huge campaigns to dislodge this government and compel Mao to begin the Long March in 1934.

A new base was established in Shensi. For a time the armed struggle against the Chiang Kai-shek government was given up in favor of an alliance with the Chinese bourgeoisie and its political representatives. However, the armed struggle continued for a number of years against the Japanese imperialist forces; and in this struggle the revolutionary peasant armies gained in experience and above all in size until they numbered in the millions. We can well appreciate the pressure they exerted to carry the struggle through to the end.

These armies were highly organized -- as was required to defeat the enemy -- and thus gave rise to a structure of command with vast ramifications. It would be a great contribution to our knowledge if we could know the absolute size of this network, its relations with other mass organizations, and what changes may have occurred in its outlook after the victory.

Workers and Peasants Government

The role of the peasant guerrillas and the peasant armies is intimately linked to the role played by the successive governments that were set up in the bases controlled by them.

According to Mao, the government of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Kiangsi had 9,000,000 persons under its rule. In relation to China as a whole that was only a modest number. Just the same it was greater than the population of Cuba today.

In 1937, Mao reduced the "Chinese Soviet Republic" to a "regional authority" covering Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia. The number of subjects was probably a couple of million at most -- say a population something like that in Albania today. Nevertheless from this base, Mao's regional government expanded on a big scale during the war against the Japanese imperialist invaders. Similar regional governments were set up until a hundred million persons or so came under the rule of "Red" or "People's" China.

Thus when the workers and peasants government was established in Peking in 1949, long years of experience in wielding government power had already been accumulated by the apparatus under Mao's command.

How to handle a huge military structure, undertake public works, collect taxes, apply oppressive measures, grant concessions, judge which political currents should be ruthlessly stamped out

(such as the Trotskyists) and which should be brought into a "coalition" (such as the "democratic-minded" capitalists and their political parties); how to conduct a foreign policy in keeping with the interests of the apparatus -- in short, the whole business of running governmental affairs was already old stuff for the Maoist team.

Thus the workers and peasants government headed by Mao that was established in 1949 had a long background of experience that was invaluable in the task of getting things going and rehabilitating the country after the destruction, dislocations, and havoc China had suffered under Chiang Kai-shek and the imperialist armies of Japan.

In the early years not much attention was paid to the sector of China governed by Mao. Thus it is difficult to form an accurate picture of the way Mao ruled in the period before moving to Peking in 1949 and establishing his fourth capital there. (Juichin, Pao An, Yen-an, Peking.)

What kind of justice prevailed under Mao during these decisive years? Was it balanced and fair? Was democracy practiced? Did even a semblance of democracy exist? Or did Mao follow the practices he admired so much in Stalin?

I think that we can make a fairly good guess.

When the peasant armies finally took the cities, they not only put Chiang Kai-shek and his forces to flight, they suppressed every move of the proletariat to engage as an independent force in the revolutionary upsurge. In following this policy, Mao was not initiating something new, he was continuing what he had practiced for years. Stalinism was congenital in the new regime.

Stalinism, a Temporary Phenomenon

Perhaps this is the place to consider Trotsky's thesis that Stalinism was a temporary phenomenon, doomed to disappear with the advance of the revolution. This is absolutely correct on a historic scale. Trotsky based it on the consideration that with the success of the proletarian revolution in one or more advanced capitalist countries, the standard of living could be raised so rapidly as to destroy Stalinism economically, since Stalinism arose as a product of a backward economy in a country subjected to extreme isolation and pressure by world capitalism.

But Trotsky did not speculate on what might occur if the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries was delayed for several more de-

cedes while the revolution conquered in areas still more backward than Czarist Russia.

We have seen what happens in this case. It is a matter of history. Stalinism is temporarily strengthened and its death agony is prolonged.

Trotsky's thesis nevertheless caused many comrades to scan Maoism with the hope that it might prove to be anti-Stalinist and thus provide early confirmation of Trotsky's prognosis on the historic fate of Stalinism.

Mao's policy in Indonesia and his course in the "cultural revolution" have shown how misplaced these hopes were.

Birth of Chinese Workers State

Let us continue with our analysis.

The workers and peasants government that began wielding power in Peking in 1949 was decisive in another respect in shaping the ultimate outcome of the Chinese Revolution.

It was this government that finally destroyed the capitalist state and established a workers state in China. This took place despite Mao's "New Democracy" program of maintaining capitalism for a prolonged period. The tasks faced by the new regime, particularly when they were compounded by the aggression of American imperialism in Korea, were of such order that they could be met only through economic forms that are socialist in principle.

The establishment of a workers state in China offered the most striking testimony as to the validity of the basic premise in Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution; namely, the tendency of revolutions in the backward countries to transcend the bourgeois-democratic phase and turn into socialist revolutions. Our movement has correctly placed a great deal of stress on this; it is not necessary for me to repeat it here.

What I should like to call special attention to is the link in the revolutionary process through which this qualitative leap was made possible -- the workers and peasants government.

From the theoretical point of view this is the item of greatest interest, for it was this government that set up the economic forms modeled on those existing in the Soviet Union, repeating what had happened in Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia.

The possibility of workers and peasants governments coming to power had been visualized by the Communist Interna-

tional at the Fourth Congress in 1922. But the Bolsheviks held that such governments, set up by petty-bourgeois parties could not be characterized as proletarian dictatorships, that is, workers states.

The Bolsheviks were firmly convinced that petty-bourgeois parties, even though they went so far as to establish a workers and peasants government, could never move forward to establish a workers state. Only a revolutionary Communist party, rooted in the working class on a mass scale so as to be able to lead it into action, could do that.

The experience in China showed that in at least one case history had decreed otherwise.

This came on top of the experience in Yugoslavia and in Eastern Europe where it can be argued that the implications were not so clear cut because of the role played by the Soviet armies, the catastrophe suffered by German imperialism, and the revolutionary crisis suffered by the other capitalist powers in Europe.

It was precisely because of the adjustment that would be required in the hypothesis advanced by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International that our party moved so cautiously and sought to explore every possible alternative before it agreed to recognize that a workers state had been established in China. We take a very serious attitude toward theory.

The thoroughness with which we sought to examine the consequences of the Chinese experience served as good preparation for what happened in Cuba some ten years after the Chinese victory. We were able to follow the pattern of events in Cuba with ease.

The most gratifying aspect of this from the standpoint of theory was that the pattern of the Cuban Revolution decisively confirmed the principal conclusions we had reached with regard to China.

Cuba and Algeria

The key item in Cuba was the workers and peasants government established in 1959 by a petty-bourgeois political force, the July 26 Movement.

As in the case of China, this new Cuban government, which had been brought to power through a hard-fought armed struggle and a revolution of the most deep-going and popular character, could not meet the giant tasks it faced, particularly in face of the violent reaction of U.S. imperialism, without toppling the capitalist structure and establishing economic forms that were socialist in principle.

Once again, these were modeled by and large on those in the Soviet Union. Even more than in the case of China, the very possibility of a workers state in Cuba of any durability hinged on the existence of the Soviet Union. The appearance of a viable workers state in Cuba was thus a consequence, in the final analysis, of the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II.

The pattern was similarly visible in the Algerian Revolution. In this instance, however, no workers state was established. Instead the workers and peasants government was brought down by a military coup d'état in June 1965 after some three years in power.

This was proof that the establishment of a workers and peasants government does not automatically guarantee the subsequent establishment of a workers state.

In the case of Cuba, a significant new development was to be observed. The leadership that came to power, while it was petty-bourgeois, was not trained in the school of Stalinism. It stood to the left of the Cuban Communist Party.

The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. The team headed by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara constituted the first contingent of a new generation of revolutionists that cannot be brainwashed by either Moscow or Peking.

Trend Toward Classic Norm

On the broad scale of the post World War II period, this constitutes a watershed.

The deformation of the revolutionary process in Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia, in China, in North Korea and North Vietnam was a resultant of the revolutionary upsurge following World War II coupled with the temporary strengthening of Stalinism.

The expansion of Stalinism, however, intensified its internal contradictions and this led to a series of crises that finally culminated in the Sino-Soviet conflict and the spread of "polycentrism." Stalinism has thus been greatly weakened. Even in its Maoist form, Stalinism now faces an increasingly dim future.

On the other hand, the establishment of a series of workers states as the consequence of successful revolutions has greatly strengthened the world revolution and its perspectives.

This means a growing tendency internationally toward a revolutionary pattern that comes much closer to the classic norm in which the proletariat

moves into the foreground. Evidence of this is to be seen in the shifting of the axis of revolutionary struggles in the backward countries from the countryside to the cities. The events in France in May-June 1968 showed what explosive potential now exists in the imperialist centers of the West. The ghetto uprisings in the United States and the upsurge among the student youth internationally have offered further corroboration of the trend.

We can conclude from this that the next revolutionary victory, wherever it comes, will in all likelihood go even further than the Cuban Revolution in departing from the deformation imposed by the pernicious heritage of Stalinism. The Leninist norm, calling for construction of a fully conscious revolutionary-socialist combat party, will acquire full force and validity as revolutionary situations develop in the strongholds of world capitalism.

Consequences

What are the main consequences of viewing the Chinese Revolution along the lines I have indicated so far as the current discussion is concerned?

First of all, I would say that it is much easier to see the role played by the peasantry and its petty-bourgeois leadership. We can call them what they are, petty-bourgeois, without seeking to conjure away this fact or to ameliorate it by speculating that after all these forces must have been proletarian in some shape or fashion, otherwise the peasantry and the Stalinized Communist Party could not have played the role they did.

Secondly, we can see much more easily how a proletarian element did finally come into play in the Chinese Revolution through the governmental power that established economic forms modeled on those of the Soviet Union.

Thirdly, we can more easily see the continuous thread of Stalinism in China from the very beginning up to the current stage marked by the crisis and fierce factional struggle of the "cultural revolution." It is not necessary to look for periods in which Stalinism presumably vanished -- only to reappear. We eliminate this awkward hypothesis which would require us to explain how Stalinism in China could have died in the flames of a peasant upheaval only to arise again from the ashes of the "great proletarian cultural revolution."

Fourthly, we can much more easily grasp the origins of the bureaucracy in China, how it was shaped by Stalinism as it came into being, and what a substan-

tial element this bureaucracy actually is in the Chinese social and political scene.

Fifthly, we are in better position to understand the interrelationship between Mao's domestic and foreign policies, and particularly in the case of his foreign policy to see how its basic design is to safeguard and advance the position of the bureaucratic ruling caste and why this gives his foreign policy its nationalistic "peaceful coexistence" characteristics and its capacity to alternate between rank opportunism and adventurist ultraleftism. It becomes easier to see the true origin of Mao's foreign policy and to avoid the error of mistaking the resultant of the clash between Peking's policy and the contending policies of other countries with what Mao seeks to achieve.

Sixthly, by considering the pattern of the Chinese Revolution in conjunction with the patterns in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Algeria, we can much more readily appreciate the limitations of the lessons to be drawn. It is easier to avoid unwarranted and incorrect extrapolations that could prove very misleading and dangerous.

In mentioning these consequences, I should like to stress that they are derivative. They follow from viewing the Chinese Revolution in the way I have suggested.

What is most important, of course, is to weigh the validity of this analysis of the pattern of the Chinese Revolution and its connection with the patterns in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, Cuba, and Algeria.

In any case, as the discussion develops internationally on this subject, the most fruitful contributions may well be those that seek to fill in the extensive gaps that still exist in our knowledge of some of the phases of the Chinese Revolution that are of the greatest interest from the standpoint of theory.

State Capitalism

Postscript:

Because of time limitations it was not possible for me to do more at the convention than barely refer during my summary to a point that should be considered logically in conjunction with the question of the degenerated or deformed workers states and their relationship to Stalinism. This is the peculiar state structures of countries like Egypt and Burma.

As is well known, in these countries the government has taken over the bulk of the means of production with the

exception of agriculture.

The nationalizations are so extensive, in fact, that quantitatively the situation appears comparable to what exists in the workers states. As a result it is tempting to equate them with workers states; and this has been done -- incorrectly so -- by various currents.

One procedure of those who make this error is to call them workers states. Another is to call them state capitalist; but -- still equating them with workers states -- to call countries like the Soviet Union and China "state capitalist."

The essential difference between states like Egypt and genuine workers states is to be found in their different origin. In every instance, the workers states, whether deformed or otherwise, have emerged as products of revolutions. Through armed struggle, through upheavals involving the masses on an immense scale, the people have overthrown their capitalist oppressors, displacing them from power in the most thoroughgoing way.

In countries like Egypt, upheavals on this scale have not occurred. The usual pattern is that a sector of the officer caste takes over, generally through a coup d'état, occasionally ratified through partial mobilization of the masses, who, of course, are in favor of ousting the old regime.

The new government is fearful of the masses. One of the first things it does is to block the masses from mobilizing, at least in a massive revolutionary way. The new government aims at giving capitalism a new lease on life after a period in incubation under auspices of the state apparatus.

The officialdom is thoroughly aware of the ultimate perspective, and conducts itself accordingly. How the state machinery is used to spawn millions was graphically demonstrated in Mexico.

It is obvious that the qualitative nature of nationalizations is determined by whether they originate in a thoroughgoing revolutionary struggle or in measures undertaken by a sector of the officer caste or their political representatives, who may even have in mind forestalling a popular revolution by setting up a simulacrum of a workers state. This phenomenon can be quite correctly placed under the general heading of state capitalism.

What is demonstrated by the extensive nationalizations in countries like Egypt -- and the less extensive ones in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America -- is the enormous pressure being exerted on

a world scale to bring capitalism to a close and to move into the epoch of socialism. Private capitalism has become so antiquated, so outdated, that capitalist governments everywhere are compelled to intervene more and more extensively in the very management of industry if they hope to prolong the death agony of the system a bit longer.

The growth of state capitalism also testifies to the depth of the crisis in revolutionary leadership observable on an international scale. Prime responsibility for this lies with Stalinism.

The overhead cost of the many betrayals of the most promising revolutionary openings, from Germany in the early thirties to Indonesia three decades later, can be measured, among other ways, by the growth of statism, the direct intervention of the capitalist state in the economic system.

The importance of the occurrence of a revolution, as one of the criteria in determining that a workers state has come into existence is very clear in the case of Cuba.

Because they do not recognize this criterion, the Healyites refuse to acknowledge that a workers state exists in Cuba. They lump Cuba with Egypt, Burma, Syria, and so on.

They are inconsistent in not placing China and Yugoslavia in the same category. They seek to avoid this inconsistency by making the existence of Stalinism the decisive criterion. This shows that in the final analysis they are incapable of distinguishing between revolution and counterrevolution.

The qualitative difference that a revolution makes in nationalizations is evident in the difference in durability of the takeovers in countries where a revolution has occurred and countries where it has not occurred.

This is because of the fact that the old ruling class is smashed in the one instance and only temporarily displaced in the other while the state structure is used to rejuvenate the system. The marked difference in popular consciousness is likewise of prime importance.

Cuba and Burma offer striking examples of these differences.

A comparative study along these lines would undoubtedly prove highly instructive.