

April 11, 1977

Dear Jack,

I am in the process of trying to finish up some things. So enclosed is an article on Cuba and related questions. The idea is perhaps it should be just circulated at this point to leading comrades interested in work on this question for consideration on a leadership level when, as we discussed on the PC, we have a chance to go into these questions in a serious way.

I have given a copy to Fred F. but enclosed are extras for whomever you think is most concerned with these questions.

Also attached is a clipping which should be of interest even to those who approach these questions from a different theoretical outlook.

Tim

PC + NFO +
Sus, Benj +
Joe, G.N., F.D.

THE POSTWAR SOCIAL OVERTURNS AND MARXIST THEORY

A discussion has been going on in the world Trotskyist movement for over 30 years on the social overturns in the postwar period. Judging from the resolution in Vietnam submitted to the next world congress by leading members of the IMT, this discussion is not yet completed.

Of course considerable progress has been made. It is difficult for us today to fully comprehend the very genuine confusion and disorientation which affected our movement over this question between 1948 and 1956 when the Hungarian Revolution settled many theoretical matters rather decisively through the actions of the masses. The differences which persist in our movement on Stalinism have narrowed considerable in scope since those days.

Extremely important progress has been made by the SWP and the LTF. A theoretical assessment has been made of China which has led to completely correct Trotskyist politics in relations to recent events. The SWP was not caught by surprise by the recent turn of China towards the American imperialist camp nor disoriented by the death of Mao and the purge of the gang of four.

The party's position on Vietnam has also been crystal clear. The party has carried out outstanding and consistent work in opposition to American imperialism in the course of the Vietnam War without making the slightest concession to Stalinism.

The Cuban question remains. We are sure the party will shortly fill this void in our theory in a principled Trotskyist manner.

We are still, I believe, a bit distant from what we really need--a completely consistent overall theory of the postwar social overturns which is fully integrated with Trotsky's own theoretical assessment of Stalinism. Such a theory would be a development of Trotsky's position, consistent completely with it, and expressing the same methodology.

The international movement began correctly in the East European discussion. The comrades sought to apply Trotsky's brilliant contribution on the possibility of the Russian workers state to be extended into new territories under exceptional circumstances. Then this attempt was abandoned as many followed Pablo in his impressionistic reaction to Tito's break with the Kremlin in 1948--the source of current IMT theories on China and Vietnam.

Cuba added an additional theoretical confusion because the comrades abandoned any attempt to understand Cuba within Trotsky's framework of understanding Stalinist expansions. They turned instead to a section of our theoretical capital never designed to explain such developments-- the workers and farmers government slogan. Then this new theory was applied retrospectively in China and Vietnam. It fitted, in our opinion, that reality even less perfectly.

The facts do not justify this abandonment of the correct theoretical beginnings of Trotsky in 1940 and our international movement in 1948. They require a return to this beginning and a new development from this base. This article will only sketch such an approach giving perhaps a little more detail on Cuba since that question is still to be politically resolved in the party.

THEORETICAL CONQUESTS OF BUFFER STATE DISCUSSION

A re-study of this discussion would be very useful at the moment because of the monstrous confusion presently being introduced into the international discussion by the IMT Vietnam resolution. Their attempt to characterize South Vietnam as a workers state at the moment of the fall of Thieu because of the presence of "bodies of armed men" representing another class is completely absurd on the basis of the facts of East Europe alone.

Part of the area, Finland, Eastern Austria, was occupied by the Red Army only to end up as strong capitalist states. Coalition governments with serious bourgeois parties and social democratic parties abounded everywhere until 1947. Rumania even remained a monarchy for a period despite the presence of bodies of armed men.

It is important to note the essential features of the buffer state process because these features would characterize in general all the social overturns which came later.

(1) Each country passed through a revolutionary stage to one or another degree of intensity. This occurred at the moment of liberation by the Red Army and/or by an indigenous partisan force. Capitalism was weak and discredited. The working class was on the ascendency with factory occupations and various forms of localized working class committees, peasant committees, etc. All the conditions, outside of a revolutionary party, were generally present for immediate socialist revolution.

(2) In every case it was at this point that the Stalinists

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insisted upon the bourgeois character of the regime and revolution. They bolstered existing bourgeois state apparatuses or constructed new ones on a bourgeois model. They resurrected bourgeois parties and formed coalitions with them. They demobilized the masses and protected what remained of capitalist industry. Thus they consciously defused the first, revolutionary stage in these countries.

(3) A change of policy took place as a result of a change in the international situation. Stalin responded to the heating up of the cold war by seeking to consolidate the East European region as a strategic defensive buffer against the imperialist rearment of Western Europe. East Europe could only be made safe through purging it of its capitalist elements and transforming it into the same social system which existed in the USSR. This vindicated our assessment of the class nature of the USSR. This took place between 1947 and 1949.

(4) The process of structural assimilation included the following steps in each country:

(a) The destruction of the political and social power of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois parties, never allowed to be strong, were physically eliminated and the remnants of capitalist property nationalized. A five year plan was instituted and the economy of the country tied more closely to that of the USSR through bilateral trade agreements.

(b) The consolidation of the monolithic party. The social democratic parties were forcibly fused with the Communist parties to produce a single party completely dominated by the Stalinists.

(c) The interpenetration of the monolithic party with the state apparatus. Suspected pro-capitalist elements (as well as potentially pro-working class ones) were purged from the state apparatuses and large numbers of CP cadres put in their place. Note the old state apparatus was not destroyed; it was purged and fused with the Stalinist party.

(5) This process took place with a limited amount of controlled mass participation but basically from on top in a military-bureaucratic manner. Note this process took place essentially through the indigenous stalinist forces; not directly through action of the Red Army. It took place in essentially the same manner where the Red Army was not even present--Yugoslavia, Albania--as where it was present.

In seeking to understand these events our movement, largely through the work of Ernest Mandel (Germain), rested on Trotsky's pioneer work in assessing what happened when Soviet troops entered Poland and Finland in the early stage of the war. This same pattern was followed in the incorporation into the USSR of the small Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Trotsky saw no contradiction between the counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism and its ability to extend its social system into other areas. He noted it did this in a reactionary way, as a defensive mechanism, while at the same time seeking collaboration with imperialism elsewhere and contributing to the defeat of the working class. He also was well aware that to the extent that the Soviet bureaucracy expanded its rule, it deepened its own contradictions and came closer to its own destruction as a ruling caste--to political revolution. This latter point would be fully born out in the future development of the buffer states.

Trotsky used the analogy with the counterrevolutionary period of the French revolution, the Thermidor of Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte also extended the bourgeois revolution against feudal elements in Europe through military means. This extension also had many reactionary aspects as Bonaparte was very fearful of the radical democratic plebian wing of the revolution wherever

his armies penetrated.

TWO THEORETICAL PROBLEMS

There were two important theoretical problems which bothered the comrades who developed this thesis in the late 1940s. They were never fully resolved and the resolution of them goes a long way towards understanding the somewhat more unique social overturns which occurred outside East Europe as well as Yugoslavia.

(1) The question of the relative weight of the USSR and domestic Stalinist forces in the process. Mandel tended to look at this question formally and strictly in the light of Trotsky's writings in 1940. He expected that the East European area would either remain capitalist ^{or} ~~and~~ become an actual physical part of the USSR as did the Baltic states. Neither alternative happened except for sections of Eastern Poland and ^{as Europe as} other states which actually bordered on the USSR. It is quite possible that at one point Stalin himself actually considered this alternative but the national element was so powerful (Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc; testify to this) in the area that such a process was precluded.

From the very beginning it was necessary to build up a domestic Stalinist movement with its own apparatus, police, some roots among a section of the workers, and many opportunist recruits from the social democrats and outright bourgeois parties. Only such a movement could carry through the social transformation under the conditions prevalent. This indigenous movement was nonetheless Stalinist and linked ideologically and in many other concrete ways to the ^a bureaucracy in the USSR. It was theoretically essentially an extension of that bureaucracy.

Furthermore, in most of East Europe the red army was in the background and was quite capable of coming into the foreground. The Soviet secret police was everywhere as Tito later revealed. The

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countries existed in any event under the protective umbrella of Soviet hegemony of the region, which the imperialists were forced to recognize, and which was backed up by a powerful military machine including atomic weapons.

But it must also be realized that Stalinism is in essence "socialist" in one country. There lay the contradiction. The protection of "socialism" in the USSR required Stalin to set up "socialism" in various East European countries. Yet as these Stalinist forces began to consolidate their power in the structural transformation process, they began to reflect the specific national interests of their own developing bureaucracy which did not always coincide with the national interests of the USSR bureaucracy. Thus the seeds for the disintegration of the USSR-dominated bloc were already being planted through the very process of the creation and consolidation of this bloc.

Yet we must note that the period of closest collaboration and relations of each of these states with the USSR was precisely the period of their structural assimilation process.

(2) The theoretical problem of the state. Lenin held that socialist revolution required the destruction of the existing state apparatus of the capitalist class and its replacement by a new state apparatus thrown up by the working class in course of struggle--the commune or council kind of state. In East Europe--and this pattern was followed without exception in all other postwar social transformations--the capitalist state had been either preserved or rebuilt during the capitalist stage of these states from 1944-5 to 1947. It was not destroyed in the 1947-49 period but rather purged and fused with. Is this not a variety of social control?

We think not. The resultant state formation in East Europe was and is of a contradictory character. It is based on socialist property forms, but in every other respect is hostile to the working class and similar to a capitalist state. This is why a political revolution is necessary to overthrow it. We are not talking of the creation of a genuine workers state which would require the destruction of the capitalist state completely and totally, but the extension of the degenerated workers state in a new and different manner which reproduced from the beginning a fundamental contradiction between the state apparatus and the working class property forms--a contradiction only resolvable through the formation of workers councils as part of a revolution to overthrow the bureaucratic caste and its state apparatus.

In any event these theoretical matters tended to encourage Mandel to hold off in characterizing the buffer states as workers states well after these states had obviously changed their class character. This caused considerable confusion in the movement thus setting the stage for Pablo to enter and "resolve" the problems in a completely non-Trotskyist and liquidationist manner.

YUGOSLAVIA: ORIGINS OF NON-TROTSKYIST CONCEPTIONS

It was in the Yugoslav discussion in 1949 that the key elements of Pablo's revisions of the traditional Trotskyist conception of Stalinism were introduced to the movement. In 1948 Tito broke openly with Stalin and for a period veered sharply to the left to gain support for an independent course. Pablo reacted impressionistically to this temporary phenomenon (brought quickly to a close when Tito supported imperialism in the Korean War in 1950) and developed a series of new non-Trotskyist theories. These can be summarized as follows:

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(1) While the YCP was originally Stalinist, it had broken with Stalinism to make a revolution and create a workers state.

(2) It is now a centrist party and the Yugoslav state, while partially distorted, is capable of positive evolution towards democratization and we no longer need to create an independent Trotskyist party there fighting for political revolution.

(3) The YCP was able to so change because of mass pressure under conditions of a new reality which gives the upper hand internationally to the working class.

(4) If this can happen in Yugoslavia (and appears ^{ed AT The Time} also to be happening in China) it can happen elsewhere -- perhaps everywhere -- to Stalinist parties under these new conditions. But of course distortions may still remain here and there and for a long time to come -- thus the theory of centuries of deformed workers states.

In time three additional points were developed out of this general approach:

(5) The war-revolution thesis. In reaction to the Korean War, Pablo projected a generalized world war in the next immediate period. It would be a war between two class camps. The Stalinists would head the working class camp and, as we learned from Yugoslavia (and China we would add), since mass pressure can change the Stalinists into adequate instruments of social change workers states of a distorted variety can develop all over the world out of this military conflict. This theory tended to recede from Pablo's repertoire with the receding of the war threat.

(6) Based both on the impressionist theory of war-revolution and the new ideas about the changeability of the Stalinists under mass pressure all Trotskyists were to try to enter the Stalinist parties ^{To} aid in the transformation process -- entrism sui generis.

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This theory was to survive well into the 1960s even after its rationale in the war-revolution thesis was quietly dropped.

(7) The death of Stalin brought about minor concessions to the masses by the new bureaucratic rulers. This was seen, following the same basic idea of Stalinists changing under mass pressure, as a process of self-reform of the Stalinist bureaucracy which could possibly produce a proletarian wing of the bureaucracy which would lead the political revolution.

All these various theories actually hinge on one central point: Can a Stalinist party change its basic character under mass pressure? If it can then all the other theories have a plausibility to them depending on changing objective circumstances. The IMT comrades still answer yes to this question in the case of China and Vietnam. They, of course, do not carry out the logic of this position to the extremes that Pablo did in his day. And yet as long as this question mark remains over our basic conception of Stalinism as event^s develop^{ment}/comrades will extend this theory once again endangering our movement to the ravages that Pablo's theory wrought upon it.

Does the real evolution of Yugoslavia justify such a major and dangerous revision of Trotskyism? We think not. In all essentials Yugoslavia followed closely--in many instances led--the pattern of the rest of the buffer.

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Tito ^{was} a hardened Stalinist who earned his credentials before the war ^{by} urging purported Trotskyists from the party. His Partisans sought, under Stalin's directives, to coalesce ^{with} the bourgeois Chetnik movement. But the Chetniks preferred the Nazis to the Partisans and thus Tito was forced to fight on his own. Even the imperialists realized this and gave their support to the Partisans in the end.

The Partisans [^] liberated Yugoslavia with little Red Army support (the Red Army entered Belgrade but later withdrew) . In this sense the situation was similar to Albania which the Red Army never even entered.

These events did give Tito (as well as Hoxha) a certain distinctiveness among the buffer states and a close similarity with China. The partisan movement ^{gave} Tito's party a certain semi-governmental base prior to final victory and thus a potential for independence at an earlier stage than the rest of the buffer.

Tito's course after liberation followed the pattern of East Europe--in fact led that pattern. A revolutionary situation existed ^{which} was deep or deeper than anywhere in East Europe at the time of liberation. Various councils and peasant committees existed. The bourgeoisie was among the weakest ⁱⁿ the buffer. All the conditions were present for a socialist revolution.

But no such revolution took place at that time. Instead ^a Subeich and friends, bourgeois politicians, were imported from London to form a coalition government. This stage lasted shorter in Yugoslavia than anywhere else reflecting the unstable conditions for capitalism there. However it lasted long enough to demobilize the masses and reconstruct the state on a capitalist model.

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The process of structural assimilation began in Yugoslavia sooner than in the rest of the buffer and was completed sooner giving Tito a base for his break in 1948 with Stalin. In the period of transformation from on top (there was little mass participation in this process) Tito had close relations with Stalin and in fact was held up to the rest of East Europe as the model to follow. There was in that period two wings of the bureaucracy in East Europe--the Golmulkaists and the Titoists. Golmulka favored a more gradual transformation process while Tito was seen as the super-Stalinist.

Tito's break from Stalin in 1948 only proves what we have stated--the very process of extension of the degenerated workers state produces almost from the beginning conflicts between the newly arising national bureaucratic castes and the "mother" caste. This again proves the temporary, transitional character of Stalinism--its real crisis and weakness underneath the appearance of its strength and growth.

The future evolution of Tito no longer made Tito the popular example to support the "Stalinists plus mass-pressure equals-revolutionists" theory. This is perhaps why the IMT is rather quiet about Yugoslavia.

The future evolution of the buffer as a whole illustrates that Tito was unique only in the timing and degree of his ability to carry through a course independent of the Kremlin for virtually all these states now seek in one fashion or another such a course.

Then there is the problem of little Albania. If Tito was transformed into a centrist by mass pressure the same conditions were also at work on Hoxha. The only difference is that conditions were such that Tito expressed his independence by mouthing anti-Stalinist phrases while Hoxha sought his independence from Yugoslavia through being a super-Stalinist-- first blocking with Stalin against Tito and then shifting to the Kremlin China against as Tito shifted back closer to the Kremlin. Certainly Hoxha, the world's super-Stalinist, makes a strange figure of a man breaking from Stalinism. And so most have just not wanted to discuss Albania. It is, after all, a small country, and perhaps no one will miss it.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHINA

The next big theoretical challenge to come along for the movement was China. Chinese events appeared in a surface way to justify the reasoning Paulo had developed around Yugoslavia. Of course China did follow very closely the Yugoslav pattern. And Vietnam followed very closely both patterns. This is why once Yugoslavia is properly understood neither China nor Vietnam offer any serious theoretical problems.

Many comrades associated with the LTF have quite thoroughly documented the evolution of Mao. He was a Stalinist and he died a Stalinist. Those who now carry on his bureaucracy are likewise Stalinists. As was the case with Tito and Hoxha, he carried on the liberation struggle in the war largely on his own and was unable to develop a real relationship with Chiang--and for similar reasons.

After the war Stalin hoped to establish on his eastern border a ~~firmly~~ but capitalist state just as he pursued the same policy in East Europe. He hoped to achieve this through a coalition government with Chiang Kai Chek. Mao agreed with this policy and did his best to implement it. Chiang did not agree with it undoubtedly feeling the bourgeois forces in China were too weak to survive such a deal. So Chiang went on the offensive against Mao.

Mao was forced to fight back in self-defense. There is still a question as to whether at this point Mao had sharp differences ^{with Stalin}. If they did it was not a decisive matter because differences of this sort arise from perspectives based on Mao's part on his own situation in China and those based on Stalin's situation in Moscow. Mao, even more than Tito, had a base for his party, a semi-state structure which went back many decades and thus certain in ^{the} ~~steps~~ of the embryonic bureaucracy of the army, party and partial governmental apparatus distinct and contrary to those of the Kremlin.

There is every indication that particularly in the last year of Mao's march to power Stalin enthusiastically supported him. He would have preferred a neutralist capitalist government on his Eastern flank. But he did not want a U.S. Puppet government which would place a string of U.S. bases along his immense eastern border. Thus Mao's victory was the lesser evil.

Mao came to power in 1949 and acted precisely as did the Stalinists in East Europe. He formed a coalition government with rump bourgeois forces. He guaranteed private property and capitalism. He maintained the large hunk of the old bourgeois apparatus which remained and rebuilt the rest on that model.

was carried through structural assimilation only after the Korean War and especially after American troops approach^{ed} the Yalu river forces^{ing} Chinese troops to interven^e heavily. The process was identical and the resulting state insitutions^T and economy were also identical. Is it so wild, so strange, to assert^s that the Chinese social overturn was essential^{ly} the result of the extension of the^{Soviet} property forms into Russia's Eastern Buffer through an agency of the bureaucracy, the CCP, and with the support of the bureaucracy? Is China quantitatively or qualitatively different from the process of Yugoslavia and the buffer? If the latter than why was the process so identical and the results so identical?

When the SWP resolution in 1955 speaks of the entire system in the USSR with its bureaucratic waste being "reproduced on Chinese soil" how else can this be explained except through the theoretical position I have sketched out here?

Vietnam needs no special discussion here because it follows so closely the Chinese pattern. Everyone's theory of Vietnam is dependent on their theory of China. Theoretically China, we maintain is not distinct from Yugoslavia. And a proper understanding of Yugoslavia brings down all theories which attempt to explain these developments as distinct and separate from the East European developments.

16-16-16

The workers and farmers government theory, is not, in our opinion very helpful when applied to China. This is for the following reasons:

(1) It gives to a class--the petty bourgeoisie--which is distinct from the working class, the role in the creation of workers states. The petty bourgeoisie is a class of small proprietors (peasants, independent artisans, small self-employed businessmen) which therefore bases itself upon capitalist property relations. It has sharp differences in periods with large capital but its distinct role in history is, no matter how radical it becomes, to limit this radicalism by its defense of private property relations. We do not believe postwar events require us to change this basic Marxist assessment of this class. At least China offers us no such basis for change as it is totally understandable within the framework of our traditional theory of Stalinism. We will deal with Cuba shortly.

(2) In order to apply this theory to China, comrades have had to change our basic assessment of the nature of Stalinist parties by asserting that the CCP is a petty bourgeois party. This is a half-truth and therefore completely wrong. Stalinist parties represent petty bourgeois forces within the working class. They may be largely petty bourgeois in composition in one country and largely working class in composition in another. In China, for instance, they were almost totally petty bourgeois for a long historic period, and yet after 1949 were able to bring into the party an important layer of workers.

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(3) There remains the question of whether the workers and farmers government label is a correct one to apply to these countries during the process of social transformation. We believe this tends to distort the facts. In the first period, in all these countries we had not workers and farmers governments but bourgeois coalition governments based on a capitalist state. During the next stage whatever petty bourgeois parties existed (and they did exist especially in East Europe) were destroyed along with any independent workers parties (the social democrats in East Europe). It would be best to refer to the governmental form in this transitional period as bureaucratic, as the bureaucratic caste in the process of creation.

CUBA --A UNIQUE CASE

Cuba was, without a doubt, the most unique of all the social overturns of the postwar world. For this reason it has created a considerable amount of theoretical confusion.

We are ^{ALL} of course, aware of the facts. Fidel Castro led a petty bourgeois nationalist formation to power through an extended guerilla war. His main base in the course of this war was among the small peasants in the mountainous country. As he approached Havana his victory was accompanied by a massive mobilization of the working class, agricultural laborers, and the middle class.

He established a bourgeois coalition government with Urruti. Up to this point his evolution was not particularly unique and has been repeated many times since.

18-18-18

The United States then reacted with extreme hostility to Castro's attempts to actually implement his bourgeois democratic program--particularly when American sugar interests were threatened.

Castro at this point had three courses open to him:

(1) He could continue with the coalition government of Urruti and come to some terms with U.S. imperialism by sacrificing his program. This course would have maintained capitalist relations on the island in a typical neo-colonialist fashion.

(2) He could turn decisively to the working class and mobilize this class through its own democratic organs as did Lenin and Trotsky carrying through a social transformation on the model of October, 1917. Then we could utilize this base for the extension of the revolution into Latin America and elsewhere on the same model as the best way to defend Cuba.

(3) He could turn to the Soviet Union for support and carry through a social transformation from on top, modelled after the East European pattern, fusing with the local Stalinists, and going over to Stalinism in the process.

Clearly he choose the third course. He would not bend to imperialism and the masses mobilized behind him exerted great pressure against such a course. He no doubt could not even conceive the second course because his movement was not trained in Marxism, had no roots in the working class, or real acquaintance with Trotskyism.

19-19-19

All the evidence backs up this conclusion. It is not accidental that the social transformation in Cuba was accompanied by: (1) close economic relations with the Soviet bloc and sizable actual subsidy; (2) Castro's conversion to Stalinist ideology and the fusion of his movement with the Cuban Communist Party (like the East European fusions but in reverse); (3) no change in the direction of democratic control over the real state power in the country.

We ask: What would have happened if Castro did not have this ~~third~~ road open to him? Suppose the USSR and the other Stalinist states either did not exist or refused to give him aid? Clearly he would have collapsed before the U.S. or gone over to or collapsed before the working class. He was able to steer a course partially independent of both fundamental classes in the world only because of his special relationship with world Stalinism.

Cuba was, of course, highly exceptional and its evolution distinct in many ways from that of the other Stalinist states. Cuba was and is not a buffer of the Soviet Bloc nations. It was always expendable. It was supported by Khrushchev as a point of counterpressure well within the U.S. sphere of influence to lessen pressure upon the USSR. This is one reason why other Cubas did not happen--the ~~third~~ course was not open to them.

Cuba was the only place where the leading group which led the transformation was not Stalinist in origins but became converted to Stalinism. Its rule was therefore different and the development of a ruling caste more extended in character.

The possibility of a relatively peaceful development of a democratic workers state was therefore not theoretically excluded in the early stages of the regime. However, it must be recognized that the 26th of July movement did not have a working class base before coming to power nor a tradition of democratic centralism within its own organization. After coming to power Castro never developed democracy beyond a bonapartist ^{1,} plebiscitary form. The masses were mobilized from ~~on~~ top, consulted from above, but never allowed to directly participate in decision making with the right to ~~separate~~ parties.

Even such a development in the early period would have required attempts at the independent mobilization of masses under our own leadership and could not be expected to be handed down from above by Castro.

There is also considerable evidence of Castro's partial independence from the Kremlin. Interestingly, this took the form of attempts to develop policies, which were not based on Marxism, but reflected a return to thinking which Castro had as a petty bourgeois nationalist. Thus his strategy for Latin America, to the extent that it differed with the Soviet Union, did so in the direction of guerilla warfare not in the direction of the independent mobilization of the working class.

Internally, on two occasions, Castro moved against a section of the local Stalinists within his own party. Both moves centered on Escalante. Most interesting is the second move against what was known as the "microfaction." Significantly, Castro acted towards this supposed group in a manner similar to the recent purges in China. The microfaction was never allowed

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to present its own views on matters. This illustrated that in the struggle against bureaucracy, bureaucracy was already well developed

There are two other interesting aspects of this affair. First, it was not a move against ~~the~~^{The} whole of the Stalinist group which had fused with Castro but only a small section of it. The rest of the Stalinists played it safe and supported Castro against Escalante. Secondly, the issue around which it was fought, material incentives, was to be only a temporary difference between Castro and the general policy of Stalinism. Material incentives have been reinstated in Cuba and today are a central part of the present five year plan.

Another difference which arose was over Castro's attempt to develop Cuba independently by raising sugar production to ten million tons. This proved to be a complete disaster, distorting further the already highly distorted one crop economy of Cuba, and the failure of this plan led to Castro's ever closer relations with the Kremlin.

Looking at this process as a whole, it appears that Castro's assimilation into the Stalinist camp has not been smooth at every point. To the extent that he has resisted this process, it has been through a turn back to petty bourgeois conceptions from which he arose and not a turn towards revolutionary Marxism. Each such turn has led to disaster. Thus he has now settled in to this role as administrator of a deformed workers state.

Let us now look at where Castro has ended up. The final act of institutionalization of the deformed workers state, with its developed bureaucratic caste occurred a year ago December when a congress of the Cuban Communist Party was finally held

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and the governmental institutions rounded off.

Today Castro is President of the State Council, Prime Minister, Secretary General of the Cuban Communist Party, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. This is a bit more formal power than any other leader of a deformed workers state can claim.

The politburo of the CCP has three old line Stalinists out of 13 members. Some 91 per cent of the successful candidates elected in 1976 to the National Assembly are members of the CCP.

Cuba has been admitted to the Comecon with full membership and its 1976-80 Five Year Plan is coordinated and synchronized with that of the Soviet Union. There are 6,000 Russian advisors stationed in Cuba to aid in this economic coordination. There is no doubt that presently Cuba has closer ties economically with the USSR than any of the East European states. Cuba's financial indebtedness to the USSR is fantastic and new credits are being extended especially since Cuba has been very helpful to USSR's influence in Africa. Also important are the close cooperation in fishing efforts with floating docks used in common, a whole Cuba port built for the Soviet fishing fleet, etc.

There is no doubt that Cuba's recent intervention in Angola was carried out in behalf of the USSR. Even Andrew Young refers to the presence of Cuban troops there as a "stabilizing" factor. After all, Cuban troops were deployed in Cabinda to protect American oil facilities from insurgent attacks.

Now we have Cuba aggressively entering the Detente game seeking to better its relations with the United States.

To sum up: Cuba became structurally transformed into a workers state in late 1960. This was only possible because of the support the USSR extended to Castro and the support in return Castro extended to the USSR. This process was distinctive from all other postwar social transformations in the non-Stalinist character of the force which initiated the process, the vulnerability of the resultant state apparatus before the masses, and the extended length of time it has taken to consolidate a bureaucratic caste. Thus the possibility of a transformation into a democratic workers state without a violent overthrow of the existing leadership was present in the early stages. This possibility is today completely ruled out as the consolidation of the bureaucratic caste, long in progress, has now been completed and formalized.

We do not feel that the theory of workers and farmers governments is particularly helpful in answering the theoretical problems posed by Cuba either. In the first place it makes an unnecessary generalization--it attributes to the petty bourgeoisie in general in underdeveloped countries a capability to create workers states which is not proven by the 17 year history since the Cuban transformation. The Cuban revolutionary process was dependent upon the USSR. But the USSR is a counterrevolutionary world force. It is this which limits future Cuba^λ--does not rule them out completely but definitely and specifically limits them. The workers and farmers government theory is flawed because theoretically it contains no such limit.

The party, however, in practice, has acted as if its theory did have such a limit. The comrades obviously concluded from Algeria that other Cubas would be most unlikely but they failed to explain this theoretically. Certainly Angola--the product of a civil war, led by quite radical sounding petty bourgeois nationalists, with Cuban troops present--was not viewed by the comrades as a potential Cuba. And yet, theoretically, from the theory developed around Cuba, that would have to be held as a strong possible development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the theory I put forward has several merits: (1) It explains why it is all social transformations of the postwar era have created deformed workers states essentially identical in all critical respects. How can we explain an identical end product with differing and contradictory theories of the process of creation of this end product?

(2) It is consistent with, and is in fact a development of Trotsky's own theoretical work in developing his basic theories in the light of the 1940 events. It is thus completely Trotskyist. It holds to the outlook that Stalinism is completely counterrevolutionary, thermodynamic in character, basically a degeneration back towards capitalism, but a degenerative process that has not been completed. It thus sees Stalinism as temporary, unstable and crisis ridden. It is however capable of expansion in a reactionary way under exceptional

conditions. That expansion, however, rather than strengthening it in the long run contributes to its disintegration. While expanding, it does not abandon but clings to and deepens its anti-working class policies of collaboration with imperialism under any circumstances where such collaboration is possible.

(3) It preserves in all respects everywhere the Trotskyist perspective of political revolution, of a violent character, against the bureaucracy of all these states, including Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, under the leadership of a Trotskyist party. It preserves the central need to construct these parties in every country of the world and to fight on the basis of a Leninist strategy for leadership of the working class.

(4) It places clear and easily defined limits on the process of social transformation not under a Trotskyist leadership. It makes clear such transformations can happen--may even happen again in the future--but that indigenous forces alone are insufficient for such a development. Thus one must assess the whole international situation in which they occur--the policies of the imperialists as well as those of the Soviet countries and their connections. A process of social change which is dependent in any way on a counterrevolutionary force has by this fact alone a great limitation put upon it.

(5) It happens to be correct. That is, it is verified by the experiences in the world of the last 17 years. It fits the facts, The theory deserves, at this point in the theoretical development of the Fourth International, some serious consideration.

Dr Castro: a remarkable talent for survival in Soviet-dominated Cuba

Last December, under the new Cuban constitution, Dr Castro became *de jure* as well as *de facto* Head of State. Now, at the age of 50, as President of the State Council, Prime Minister, Secretary General of the Cuban Communist Party and C-in-C of the armed forces, he holds the top four jobs in the country.

One way and another 1976 was a good year for him. The victory of his troops in Angola was, as he sees it—and he may be right—a watershed in black/white relations in Southern Africa. At home—for services rendered in Africa, no doubt—the Soviet Union has promised him an expanded aid programme to include the setting up of Cuba's first nuclear power plant.

But is Castro today, in fact, master of his own and his country's destiny? Evidence of ever increasing Soviet intervention in Cuban political and economic life suggests that he is not. There are, indeed, strong indications that Castro's Cuba, a totalitarian state, in which this one man with the aid of a small group of associates, has hitherto controlled every aspect of society, is fast being institutionalized on the Soviet model and under Soviet direction.

The changes began in the early seventies, soon after Castro's personally directed campaign to produce a 10 million ton sugar harvest had all but driven the country's shaky economy into the ground. It was at this point that the Soviet Union finally decided she could no longer stand by and watch her daily hand-out in aid of over a million dollars being frittered away in Utopian whimsy.

In the Soviet view nothing less than a basic reshaping of the island's social and political structure could save what was for it a delicate situation, since, for reasons of strategy and prestige, it could not allow its first transatlantic protégé to destroy itself. With this in view, the Soviet Union was able to persuade a somewhat chastened Castro—whose communism was more maverick than Marxist—to expand and revitalize the party at grass roots level, in order to turn it into a ruling party in the Soviet tradition, "the

highest leading force of society and state" as it was called in the new constitution. At the same time three old guard, Moscow oriented communists were included in the newly created 13 man politburo, whilst at the elections for the new 1976 National Assembly, 91 per cent of the successful candidates were party members or aspirants.

But it is in the restructuring of the national economy that we see most clearly the influence of the Soviet Union in Cuban affairs, amounting, in some cases, to the integration of national programmes. First came the setting up of a Soviet-Cuban Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation followed by Cuba's admittance to full membership of Comecon and the announcement that the Cuban and Soviet Five Year Plans for 1976-80 were to be coordinated. Meanwhile, in order to ensure greater conformity with the Soviet model, some 6,000 Russian advisers have been stationed in Cuba.

For mutual advantage in the fishing industry the Soviet Union has provided floating docks for the joint servicing of Cuban and Soviet vessels in the Atlantic, enabling Cuba's deep sea fleet to fish as far afield as the African coast and the Gulf.

At the same time, about thirty Soviet boats—some top-heavy with sophisticated equipment capable of probing defence systems—operate out of Havana's Soviet-built fishing port. It will be interesting to see how advantageous to both parties' current arrangements will prove to be when the conditions for the new 12 and 200-mile limits are finally worked out. Its geographical situation and status as a developing country could give Cuba access to fishing grounds in Latin American waters denied to the Soviet Union.

Cuba's financial indebtedness to the USSR is astronomical, but yet more credits were made available to cover expected trade deficits for 1973-75; contingent, however, on Castro's agreement to abandon his cherished, Guevara-inspired plan to run the economy without monetary incentives. So cost accounting, wage differentials based on levels of

skill and work norms designed to raise productivity were re-introduced. In December self employment—banned eight years ago—became legal again for certain limited categories. It seems to be "each according to his work" again, not to his needs.

The improvement all round has, in fact, been considerable, though last year's sharp drop in world sugar prices has left her short of cash for her imports and she will be hard put to pay her foreign suppliers; a distressing situation for a country which has a good record in this respect.

But it is all a long way from the land, free from foreign domination, dreamed of by the young Castro and his early followers.

Some disenchantment in the country there certainly is, but to talk of his being discredited and on his way out, is to say the least, premature. For the time being, at any rate, Cuba is unthinkable without Castro. He still enjoys an indispensable stock of goodwill. What is even more important, the recent redistribution of power under the new constitution still leaves the Politburo, the Party Secretariat and the Central Committee with a majority of members, whose allegiance to him is greater than to the Communist Party as such. Among other qualities, Castro has a remarkable talent for survival. Time and again he has managed to tiptoe out of a corner into which he had apparently painted himself.

Whilst Soviet intervention is clearly designed to safeguard the social structure and the economy from Castro's intemperate enthusiasms, it equally clearly aims to ensure more efficient government in the presence, not in the absence of the "Lider Maximo". Both the Soviet Union and Castro ardently wish the Cuban experiment to succeed; each requires the other's help; together they make a highly effective partnership, able—and in my view—likely to make the headlines again, somewhere in the world in 1977.

Sir Herbert Marchant

The author is a former British Ambassador to Cuba.

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