

Winter 1965

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

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# Two Views on the Dialectics of Nature

To William F. Warde

I have just read your article, "Is Nature Dialectical?" in the Summer 1964 issue of the *International Socialist Review*, and I was quite impressed by it.

Although I must plead guilty to a rather superficial knowledge of Marxism, I am very interested in Hegel's work. During my study of Hegel, I have come to the conclusion that the question of the philosophy of nature is a crucial one. In my opinion, Hegel's philosophy falls apart into a dualism of mind and matter instead of being the synthesis he desired just because of the failure of his philosophy of nature.

This failure is not, I submit, a failure of the dialectical method, but the result of the lack of sufficient scientific knowledge at Hegel's time plus Hegel's insistence on bending the inadequate knowledge he did have into his philosophic system. It is the latter fault that makes his philosophy of nature appear downright silly to-day; but it is only to-day that we are beginning to attain the scientific knowledge that makes a dialectical view of the facts the only reasonable one.

This part of Hegel's philosophy has been largely neglected, but I consider it vital to a serious consideration of his thought today. Therefore, your article on the dialectics of nature was a very welcome piece of writing to me. On the whole, I agree with your position — the laws of dialectics apply to nature as well as man.

The scientific knowledge available now can only be understood thoroughly by the use of dialectics. This appears most obviously in the realm of evolution and biology in general, but the inter-relationship of all aspects of our world means that it is applicable to the other sciences as well.

## Existentialist Position

The existentialist position would create a complete alienation between man and the world, and would destroy the objectivity of our knowledge and thus our ability to act. Sartre's position, as described in your article — that man can never attain to the "reality" of things, that our knowledge and the laws of our (dialectical) logic apply only to man and human society, etc. — sounds like that of a resuscitated Kant.

It can only lead to a divided world-view, a denial of the possibility of true knowledge and, ultimately, to excesses of subjectivity rather than creative activity. The existentialists may begin their philosophic inquiry from the standpoint of the individual, but that does not mean that they can stop there without losing sight of the essential thing — that man is in and of the world.

The points made by Vigier and Garuady were, I felt, an excellent rebut-

tal to Sartre and Hyppolite. There is one point in your article, however, with which I would take some exception. That is when you argue against the anti-dialecticians by pointing out the advances made in science, especially by Oparin, through the use of dialectical method. Dialectical logic may help the scientist reach some useful hypotheses for later investigation, but this is not the essential point here.

It seems to me that the method or means by which scientific discoveries are made is secondary in this argument. What is really vital is the fact that only a dialectical view of nature can provide an adequate framework in which these new discoveries can be seen in their total relationship. That is, how one gets to the discovery is not so important as the realization that this new "fact" can only be thoroughly explained and related to the rest of our knowledge through a dialectical viewpoint.

## Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

There is one other point that seems appropriate to this discussion: I read recently that Roger Garaudy was to write an introduction to a Russian translation of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*. Now Teilhard certainly is not a dialectical materialist in any sense of the word. However, beneath the theological portion of his thought, one finds a view of evolution that is certainly dialectic — in a Hegelian, if not a Marxist, sense. And Teilhard's work seems to have been a little too "materialistic" for the Roman Catholic Church.

Teilhard's work in itself deserves study, but simply in connection with the question of the dialectics of nature, it seems to me that it may be a sign that we are approaching a higher synthesis of thought. The static conceptions of "idealism" and "materialism" may give way to a newer, more adequate realization of their inter-dependence throughout the whole sphere of nature. That can only be achieved if we recognize the objective character of dialectics — that it applies to nature as well as to history. The perpetuation of alienation between "mind" and "matter," man and the world, nature and history, can serve no good purpose, but only leads to fragmentation and confusion in philosophy and action.

Dialectics by its nature has to be an "open" system which not only allows for the addition of new knowledge but also admits man's freedom and ability to shape history. The recognition of nature as dialectical is the only way to a whole world-view that includes man in the world while recognizing his unique position and frees him to control his own future. Your article is an excellent statement of the issues and their importance,

and I hope it will precipitate in this country a greater appreciation of the problem and wide discussion of it.

Yvonne Groseil  
November 15, 1964

## Reply

Here are some comments on the main questions of theoretical interest raised by this friendly letter.

1. Would knowledge of the method of the materialist dialectic, which is based on the most general laws of being and becoming, assist the physical scientist in his investigations of nature?

Up to now almost all scientists have carried on their work without conscious understanding of the dialectical laws of universal development just as most people speak very well without knowing the history or grammar of their language, breathe without awareness of the physiological processes of respiration, and acquire the necessities of life without comprehending the principles of political economy.

Western philosophers and scientists almost unanimously believe that the dialectical view of nature is false, irrelevant and even positively harmful in the theory and practice of science. This prejudice, rooted in our predominantly empirical and positivist intellectual traditions, has been reinforced by the arbitrary and ignorant interference of the Stalinist bureaucrats with scientific theory along with their narrowly schematic, distorted and dogmatic interpretation of Marxist method.

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**FROM LENIN TO CASTRO:*****Importance of the Individual in History-Making***

By William F. Warde

## I

IN THE third chapter of *The Prophet Outcast*, the final volume of his biography of Trotsky, where he treats of "The Revolutionary as Historian," Isaac Deutscher discusses the role of personality in the determination of social events in a highly instructive context. The problem is raised in connection with Trotsky's appraisal of Lenin's place in the Russian Revolution.

Deutscher holds that Trotsky shuttled between two discordant positions. In the *History of the Russian Revolution*, a letter to Preobrazhensky in 1928, and in his *French Diary* Trotsky maintained that Lenin was absolutely indispensable to the victory of October. It would not have been achieved without him. Elsewhere, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, says Deutscher, Trotsky reverted to the orthodox view of historical materialism which subordinates the quality of the leadership to the more objective factors in the making of history. Is this a wavering on Trotsky's part?

Marxism does teach that no individual, however talented, strong-willed or strategically situated, can alter the main course of historical development, which is shaped by supra-individual circumstances and forces. Therefore, reasons Deutscher, the revolution would have triumphed in 1917 with other leaders even if Lenin had been removed from the arena by some accident. Trotsky himself, or a team of other Bolshevik chiefs, might have filled his place.

Deutscher divines that Trotsky's lapse into a subjectivism bordering on "the cult of the individual" in regard to Lenin was motivated by a psychological need to exaggerate the role of individual leadership as a counterweight to Stalin's autocracy in his mortal political combat with him. He seeks to correct Trotsky by reference to the ideas expressed in Plekhanov's classical essay on *The Role of the Individual in History*. This was a polemic against the Narodnik school of subjective sociology which exalted the hero as an autonomous creator of history at the expense of the masses and other objective determinants of the class struggle. Arguing against the thesis that the collective demand for leadership could be supplied by only one remarkable individual, Plekhanov pointed out that the person hoisted into supreme authority bars the way of others who might have shouldered and carried through

the same tasks, though in a different style. The eclipse of alternate candidates creates the optical illusion of the sole irreplaceable personality. If the objective prerequisites are ripe and the historical demand forceful enough, a range of men can fulfill the indicated functions of command. The Chinese and Yugoslav examples, writes Deutscher, demonstrate how rising revolutions can utilize men of smaller stature than a Lenin or Trotsky to take power. The class struggle can press into service whatever human material is available to fulfill its objectives.

This theme has an importance surpassing Trotsky's judgment on Lenin's significance for the Russian Revolution or Deutscher's criticism of Trotsky's alleged inconsistencies on the matter. The reciprocal action of the objective and subjective factors in the historical process is one of the key problems of social science. It is no less a key to revolutionary practice in our own time.

Historical materialism unequivocally gives primacy, as Deutscher emphasizes, to such objective factors as the level of the productive forces and the state of class relations in the making of history. But there is more to the matter than this.

**A Relative Relation**

In the first place, the social phenomena divided into opposing categories are only relatively objective or subjective. Their status changes according to the relevant connections. If the world environment is objective to the nation which is part of it, the nation in turn is objective to the classes which constitute its social structure. The ruling class is objective to the working class. The party is subjective to the class whose interests it represents and aims it promotes while groups, tendencies, factions and their combinations are subjective to the movement or party which contains them. Finally, the individual has a subjective status relative to all these other factors, although he has an objective existence in relation to other individuals.

In the second place, the multiple factors in any historical process do not, and indeed cannot have, an equal and simultaneous growth. Not only do some mature before others but certain of them may fail to achieve a full and adequate reality at the decisive moment, or indeed at any point. The coming together of *all* the

various factors essential for the occurrence of a particular result in a great historical process is an exceptional or "accidental" event which is necessary only in the long run.

The leadership, collective and individual, embodies the conscious element in history. The influence of an individual in determining a course of events can range from negligibility to totality. The extent of his effectiveness in action depends upon the stage of development of historical conditions, the correlation of social forces, and the person's precise connection with these at a given conjuncture.

There are long stretches of time when the strongest-willed revolutionist cannot in the least avail against the march of events and practically counts for nothing in redirecting them. On the other hand, there are "tides in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, lead on to fortune."

Ordinarily, individual action takes place somewhere between these two extremes. What men do — or do not do — in their personal capacity affects to some limited degree the velocity and specific features of the main line of development.

The case in point is: where and when can an individual exert the maximum weight and become the decisive force in the outcome of a struggle? This can happen only when his intervention is inserted at the culminating point of a prolonged evolution when all

the other factors of a more objective sort have come into being. These set the stage for his decisive role and provide the means for carrying through the purposes and program of the movement he represents.

The great man, who helps start a novel line of development in any field, comes as the last link in the assemblage of conditions and the concatenation of events. We are all familiar with the straw that breaks the camel's back or the drop that overflows the cup. The individual who makes all the difference serves as the precipitant that transforms quantity into quality in the process whereby the new supersedes the old.

However, he must intervene at the critical turning point of development for his action to have so decisive an influence. Such fortunate timing, which does not always depend upon his own awareness, permits him to become the final cause in the cumulative sequence of conditions which are necessary determinants of the outcome.

### Variation in Historical Spans

The discrepancy noted by Deutscher between Trotsky's observations that Lenin was indispensable for the October victory and that the objective laws of history are far more powerful than the special traits of the protagonists involved is to be explained by the difference between the short and the long run of history. The calculus of probabilities applies to human history as well as to natural events. Given enough chances in the long run, the forces representing the objective necessities of social progress will break through all obstacles and prove stronger than the defenses of the old order. But that is not necessarily true at any given stage or in any instance along the way. Here the quality of the leadership can decide which of the genuine alternatives growing out of the prevailing conditions will be realized.

The conscious factor has a qualitatively different import over an entire historical epoch than it has in a specific phase or situation within it. When antagonistic social forces vie for supremacy on a world-historical scale, such favorable and unfavorable circumstances as the character of the leadership tend to offset and cancel one another. The underlying historical necessities assert themselves in and through the aggregate struggles and override the more superficial and chance features which can decide the upshot of any particular encounter. Moreover, an ascending class in the long run benefits more than its opponent from the accidents of development since the receding class has less and less reserve strength to withstand and overcome small variations in the relation of forces. The total assets of the one increase as those of the other diminish.

Time is an all-important element in the conflict of contending social forces. The indeterminate phase when events can be diverted in either direction does not last long. The crisis in social relations must be resolved quickly one way or the other. At that point the activity or passivity of dominant personalities, groups, parties and masses can tip the scales on one side or the other. The individual can enter as the ultimate factor in the total process of historical determination only when all the other forces in play are temporarily equalized. Then his added weight can serve to tip the balance.

Almost everyone can recall occasions where his own intervention or that of others proved decisive in resolving an uncertain situation. What happens in the

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

Published quarterly by the International Socialist Review Publishing Association, 116 University Pl., New York 3, N. Y. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

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Vol. 26 — No. 1 — Whole No. 170

Editor, Tom Kerry; Business Manager, Karolyn Kerry; Assistant Editor, Dick Roberts.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 1 year (four issues) \$1.50; 2 years (eight issues) \$3. Add 50 cents per year for Canada, Latin America and overseas; single copy 50 cents, bundles 35 cents a copy for five copies or more, domestic or foreign.

small incidents of life applies to big events. Just as the single vote of the chairman can decide when the forces on an issue are evenly divided, so the outstanding qualities of great figures are manifested when history arrives at a deadlock. Their decision or decisiveness breaks the tie and propels events along a definitely different line. This holds for counterrevolutionary as well as revolutionary tendencies. Hitler was important because he took Germany into fascism and war. But he did not direct German or world history into a qualitatively new channel. He simply helped write a further horrible chapter in the death agony of capitalism.

Lenin's imperishable contribution was the push he gave to opening an entirely new path for Russian and world history, redirecting it from the dead-end of capitalism onto the new beginning of socialism.

### The Problem of Possibilities

This brings us back to the specific problem Deutscher discusses. He does not question the fact that in the actual unrolling of the 1917 Revolution Lenin functioned as the final cause in the October victory. The difference between Deutscher and Trotsky concerns the uncertain realm of historical possibilities. Could another revolutionist such as Trotsky, or a combination of them, have assumed Lenin's place?

Trotsky somewhat categorically said no. Deutscher objects that if others on hand could not have performed the same job of leadership, then the position of historical materialism on the lawful determination of events must be abandoned. Either the objective or the subjective factors decide; it is necessary to choose between them.

In my opinion, Deutscher here takes a too constricted and one-sided stand on historical determinism whereas Trotsky employed a more flexible and multisided interpretation based upon the interrelation of mutually opposing categories. He tested his conception, first in practice, then in theory, in the successive stages of the Russian Revolution where the importance of the conscious factors stood out with remarkable clarity.

### In the Light of Experience

The type of leadership was very different in the two revolutions of 1917. The February Revolution was not planned or directed from above. Trotsky points out in the chapter of his *History*, "Who Led the February Revolution?" that it was led "by conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin." As educator and organizer of these key workers, Lenin was to that extent necessary to the February overturn, even though he was not on the spot in person.

Between February and October he became more and more decisive because of his resolute and far-sighted stands at a series of crucial moments, starting with the reorienting of the Bolshevik cadres in April and culminating in his insistence on insurrection in October. According to Trotsky, Lenin's role could not have been duplicated. This was not simply because of his personal gifts but even more because of his exceptional standing in the Bolshevik party which was largely his creation.

The question of leadership in the Russian Revolution had a dual aspect. While the Bolsheviks led the workers and peasants to victory, Lenin led the Bolshevik

party. His paramount role came from the fact that he led the leaders of the revolution.

Trotsky knew better than anyone else how Lenin could sway the higher echelons as well as the ranks of his party. His authority was a considerable help from April to October in getting his correct proposals adopted over the resistance of other Bolshevik chiefs. This accumulated capital of prestige was not at the disposal of others, including Trotsky, who had a different organizational history and relations. That was the objective basis for his opinion that the October Revolution would most likely not have taken place unless "Lenin was present and in command."

To be sure, it is not possible, as Deutscher remarks and Trotsky himself recognized, to be utterly categorical on this point. But Trotsky's conclusion, which is to be found in all his writings after October and before the rise of Stalin, was not based upon a regrettable lapse into excessive subjectivity. It came from applying the Marxist dialectic to the facts as he witnessed and assayed them. If he was wrong, it was not because of any deviation in principle or abandonment of method induced by unconscious political-psychological motives, which Deutscher considers to be the case, but the result of misjudging the facts.

## II

SIDNEY HOOK has entered this controversy from the opposite end. In a review of *The Prophet Outcast* in the May 11, 1964, *New Leader* he seizes upon Deutscher's criticism of Trotsky's subjectivism for his own purposes. Instead of condemning, he compliments Trotsky for discarding the dogmas of dialectical materialism and attributing "the most important social event in human history" to the purely personal and contingent circumstance of Lenin's presence in Russia. In his eyes the October Revolution was the accidental consequence of the work of an individual. Hook repeats the view expressed in his book on *The Hero in History*, cited by Deutscher, that the October Revolution "was not so much a product of the whole past of Russian history as a product of one of the most event-making figures of all time."

Whereas Deutscher in the name of Marxist orthodoxy inclines to make the objective factors virtually self-sufficient and thus underrates the crucial importance of Lenin's leadership, Hook practically nullifies the other and prior determinants by making the October victory wholly dependent upon a single individual. His approach falls below the standards of the most enlightened liberal historians who at least placed objective factors on a par with the ideas and intervention of great men.

### Trotsky's View

Hook has to falsify Trotsky's standpoint in order to convert him into a pragmatist as superficial as Hook himself. Trotsky's *History* is explicitly devoted to demonstrating the necessity of the Russian Revolution and its specific outcome as the result of the whole previous evolution of world capitalism, the backwardness of Russia complemented by its concentrated industrial enterprises and advanced working class, the stresses of the First World War upon a decayed Czarist autocracy, the weakness of the bourgeoisie, the failure of the petty-bourgeois parties and the bold vision of the Bolsheviks headed by Lenin.

Trotsky delineates the operation of this determinism in living reality by narrating and analyzing the inter-connection of the salient events from the February beginning to the October climax. The successive stages of the revolution did not unfold haphazardly; they issued with inexorable lawfulness one from the other in a causally conditioned sequence. The aim of his theoretical exposition was to find in the verified facts of the actual process the effects of the objective necessities formulated in the laws of the class struggle applied to a backward great power under twentieth century conditions. He had already anticipated and articulated these in his celebrated theory of the Permanent Revolution.

Trotsky viewed the Bolshevik party as one of the components of this historical necessity and Lenin as the most conscious exponent and skilled practitioner of the political science of Marxism based on these laws. It was not purely fortuitous that Lenin was able to play the role that he did. He was no chance comer. "Lenin was not an accidental element in the historic development, but a product of the whole past of Russian development." For years he had prepared himself and his party for the task of steering the expected revolution to victory.

There was no foreordination in the full compass of the preconditions for October extending from the history of Russia in the world to the political foresight and insight of Lenin. Their joint necessity was proved in practice. Nor was the actual course of events realized without the concurrence of many accidental circumstances favorable or unfavorable to both sides.

It was, for example, a lucky chance that the German General Staff for its own reasons permitted Lenin to travel from his Swiss exile back to Russia through Germany in time to redirect the Bolshevik party. It was an historical accident that Lenin remained alive and active throughout the crucial months; it could have been otherwise and indeed Lenin thought his murder quite probable. In that case, if we credit Trotsky, the socialist outcome implicit in the situation could not have been achieved in 1917.

This means that the history of the twentieth century, which is now unthinkable apart from the Russian Revolution in all its consequences, would have been quite different. Not in the broadest lines of its development but certainly in the particular course and features of the irrepressible contest between the socialist revolution and its capitalist antagonists.

There is nothing un-Marxist, as Deutscher seems to think, in acknowledging this. To link "the fortunes of mankind in this century" with Lenin's activity in 1917 is not subjectivist thinking; it is a matter of fact. Conversely, Lenin's absence could well have substracted that margin of determinism from the total conditions required for victory which would have made the subsequent sequence of developments in the world revolution quite different.

The great fortune of the Russian people and all mankind is that in 1917 *both accident and necessity coincided* to carry the struggle of workers and peasants to its proper conclusion. This has not always happened in the decades since.

#### "The Historical Crisis of Mankind"

Deutscher weakens his case considerably by focusing attention on Russia. The role of Lenin and his party stand out more clearly and sharply in the light of the

defeats suffered by the working class elsewhere in Europe and Asia during the 1920's and 1930's, in the last analysis because of the lack of a collective and individual leadership of Bolshevik-Leninist caliber. The October victory coupled with the post-October defeats convinced the once dubious Trotsky of the decisive role of leadership in an objectively revolutionary situation. These experiences led him to the generalization which was the keystone of the founding program of the Fourth International, adopted in 1938, that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership." That is why he dedicated the last years of his life to the task of attempting to assemble such a leadership under the banner of the Fourth International.

Deutscher's disagreement with Trotsky over Lenin's part in the Russian Revolution is directly connected with his difference with Trotsky over the latter's role in the post-Lenin period. Deutscher regards Trotsky's assertion that the foundation of the Fourth International was "the most important work of my life — more important than 1917, more important than the period of the civil war, or any other . . ." as an aberration. The energy devoted to the Trotskyist groups was largely wasted, he believes, since the objective conditions were not suitable for constructing a new International. In his opinion, Trotsky would have been better advised to remain an interpreter of events instead of vainly trying to change their course by means of a rival world revolutionary organization.

J. B. Stuart has undertaken to answer Deutscher's criticism of Trotsky's unrealism in connection with the Fourth International in the April 17-24 issues of *World Outlook* and there is no point in repeating his arguments. Here we are primarily interested in the real rationale behind Trotsky's positions.

Deutscher contends that Trotsky misjudged Lenin's importance in the winning of the Russian Revolution and his own role in the period of world reaction after Lenin's death for psychological reasons which ran counter to Marxist objectivity. Trotsky actually derived his position in both cases, it seems to us, from his conception of the needs of the revolutionary process in our time. He thought that all major objective ingredients for the overthrow of capitalism had in general ripened. What was missing for new Octobers was the presence of leadership of the type supplied by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917. Such cadres had to be created to prevent the incompetent and treacherous bureaucracies heading the different sectors of the workers' move-

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ment from ruining more revolutionary opportunities. Thus world political, rather than individual psychological, necessities accounted for his conclusions.

### III

IT IS TRUE, as Deutscher points out, that revolutionary power was conquered in Yugoslavia and China with leaderships trained in the Stalinist school which do not match the standards of Lenin's Bolshevism. The 1963 Reunification Congress of the Fourth International took cognizance of this development in its resolution, *The Dynamics of World Revolution Today*: "The weakness of the enemy in the backward countries has opened the possibility of coming to power even with a blunted instrument."

However, the document hastens to add: "The strength of the enemy in the imperialist countries demands a tool of much greater perfection." For the taking of power in the capitalist stronghold as well as the administration of power in the degenerated or deformed workers states, the building of new mass revolutionary parties and their unification in a new international organization remains the central strategical task of the present period no less than in Lenin's and Trotsky's day.

#### The Cuban Revolution

This dialectical unity of the objective and subjective factors in the making of a revolution has been both exemplified and theorized by Fidel Castro and his close associates. If ever an historic event could be considered the work of one man, that was — and is — the Cuban Revolution. Castro is truly its "lider maximo" [main leader].

Castro has explained, notably in his December 21, 1961, speech on Marxism-Leninism, how the founders of the July 26 Movement did not wait for *all* the objective conditions required for revolutionary success to emerge spontaneously. They deliberately set about to create the still missing revolutionary conditions by fighting. Their guerrilla warfare did bring about the moral, psychological, political changes needed to overthrow Batista's tyranny. The general lesson of their experience for the further struggles against Latin-American dictatorships has been formulated as follows by Che Guevara in his handbook on guerrilla warfare: "It is not always necessary to wait until all the conditions are ripe for the revolution; the insurrectional center can create them."

The transformation of the balance of forces in favor of the progressive side by the initiative of a small band of conscious revolutionary fighters dramatically demonstrates how decisive the subjective factor can be in making history. Yet Castro would be the first to caution against an adventurism which ignores objective conditions, to disavow any cult of the individual, and to acknowledge that his intentions would have miscarried and his combatants would have been rendered powerless without the response they received, first from the peasants in the mountains and then from the masses in the rural and urban areas. The sensitivity of the Cuban leaders to the interplay of the subjective and objective factors in the development of the revolution and its regime at all stages has brought them to a deeper understanding of the ideas of Marx and of the need for a party like Lenin's.

#### Assassination of Kennedy

Recent events ninety miles from Cuba have highlighted the twofold aspects of the individual's weight

in history-making. Kennedy's assassination last November did not seriously interrupt any operations of the U.S. government or shift its course at home or abroad. After assuming executive authority, Johnson has pursued essentially the same policies as his predecessor, albeit with a Texas brand rather than a Harvard accent. Thus the abrupt removal of an extremely popular and powerful personality has proved to be inconsequential compared to the automatism of capitalist rulership. Pro-capitalist individuals come and go; the system remains.

At the same time the holder of supreme office in the United States controls more massive military power than any other person in the world or in human history. On June 4 Johnson boasted that the national strength "is stronger than the combined might of all the nations in the history of the world."

The president can release enough bombs to destroy all mankind. Who can question the overwhelming importance of the individual when one man's decision can terminate human history on this planet? Kennedy was eyeball to eyeball with this possibility during the 1962 Caribbean crisis.

To be sure, the man in the White House does not act as an isolated individual. He is the chief executive of the United States, commander-in-chief of its armed forces, and more significantly, agent of the profiteers who run the economy and government. His personal role by and large accords with the objective necessities of monopolist domination; and, in the last analysis, the fundamental interests of the ruling class determine his political conduct.

But his representative functions do not nullify the fact that he alone is delegated to make the final decision and can give the command to press the H-button.

Personal decision is the crowning expression of social determinism, the last link in its causal chain. The social determinism operative in the world today is divided into two irreconcilable trends, stemming from opposing class sources. One is directed by the capitalist war-makers whose spokesmen in the United States have stated that they will not refrain from using atomic weapons if necessary. The other is constituted by the masses of the United States and the rest of the world who dread this prospect and have everything to lose if it should occur.

Which of these contending determinisms will prevail? The fate of mankind hangs in the balance of this decision. To dispossess and disarm the atomaniacs headquartered in Washington, a revolutionary movement of tremendous dimensions and determination will have to be built. No single individual will stop them. But victory in the life-and-death struggle for world peace against nuclear annihilation will require the initiative and devotion of *individuals* who, though they may not possess the outstanding leadership capacities of a Lenin, Trotsky, or Castro, can act in their spirit.

June 5, 1964

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# ***The Test of the Cuban Revolution***

**Healy's Position on Peng Shu-tse, Pierre Frank,  
James P. Cannon and the Cuban Revolution**

**By Joseph Hansen**

**F**OR several years Gerry Healy has been waging a persistent campaign against the Socialist Workers party and, since the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International, against the majority of the world Trotskyist movement. In recent months, the general secretary of the Socialist Labour League has stepped up his attacks, devoting considerable space in his press to this subject which seems to have become an obsession with him.

To be the target of an attack is nothing new for the SWP or the Fourth International. It has constituted part of the normal education of the cadres of Trotskyism since the beginning. In the same way, the attacks are normally answered, if politically warranted, or if something can be learned from it. Healy's campaign, offering a rather stodgy brand of ultraleftism, happens to be of little intrinsic interest.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the position he has been pressing of late on the Cuban Revolution could do injury in the colonial world, particularly Latin America, if the impression should gain ground that it corresponds in any way to the views of the Fourth International or the Socialist Workers party. It has thus become necessary, for prophylactic reasons, to deal with the challenge.

## **The Split and the Reunification**

First of all, we will indicate the background. A split occurred in the world Trotskyist movement in 1953-54 over organizational and political issues. Two international factions emerged, one centered around the International Secretariat, the other around the International Committee. The latter had the support of the Socialist Workers party and the

1. The dismal ideological level, however, is offset by the pastel inks used to stimulate reader interest in the *Newsletter*, weekly journal of the Socialist Labour League. After sampling the greens, blues and yellows, I find the lipstick pinks most intriguing.

British Trotskyist grouping headed by Gerry Healy. By 1957 it became evident that the political differences between the IS and the IC were narrowing. James P. Cannon, the founder of the American Trotskyist movement and one of Trotsky's closest collaborators in the Fourth International took the initiative to try to bring the two sides together. The effort fell through. Within both the IC and the IS, opinion nevertheless grew that unification had become possible on the basis of the common positions held by both sides. Healy opposed this view although he was rather reticent about advancing it, confining himself by and large to quietly encouraging in the SLL a belief that the differences were widening. At the same time he sought to give the impression that he would go along with efforts to reunify the movement, if that was what the majority wanted. Under Healy's influence, however, delays and a remarkable dragging of feet featured these efforts until 1962 when the IC made an abrupt turn in the direction of reunification by proposing that a "Parity Committee" be set up between the IC and the IS. This was accepted by the IS and such a committee was actually formed. A major hurdle to reunification had been overcome.

The Parity Committee functioned usefully, doing much to prepare the next step; i.e., healing the ten-year-old breach and reuniting the bulk of the world Trotskyist movement on the basis of a principled program. At the crucial point, however, Healy refused to proceed. He sought to postpone final action for at least another year, if not indefinitely, alleging the need for more "discussion." The majority of the IC refused to be held back by any more delaying or procrastinating maneuvers. The upshot was to send observers to the Seventh World Congress organized by the IS.

The minority of the IC, headed by Healy, were invited to send a full delegation of their own. They turned down the invitation, refusing to send even a single observer. The majority of the IC then participated in a Reunification Congress.<sup>2</sup> Posts in the top bodies of the Fourth International were provided for all sections of both the IS and IC. These actions were then left open to ratification. The International Secretariat ratified as a whole at once. The various sections of the International Committee ratified one by one, beginning with the Chinese.

As the Fourth International reunited, Healy proclaimed the "continuation" of the International Committee. Outside of the Socialist Labour League, the only support came from scattered individuals and the *La Verité* grouping in France.

In justification of his position, the head of the SLL has worked out an elaborate rationalization. According to this, the entire world Trotskyist movement — saving himself and his supporters — has degenerated. The prime evidence of the decay is the healing of the ten-year split. As Healy sees it, the Socialist Workers party "betrayed," going over to "Pabloism."<sup>3</sup>

The explanation offered by Healy

2. For the programmatic documents on which the reunification was based see *Fourth International*, No. 17; *Quatrième Internationale*, No. 19; or *Cuarta Internacional*, No. 2.

3. Michel Pablo, while greeting the reunification, held views on a number of points conflicting with the position of the reunified movement, his main stated difference concerning evaluation of the Sino-Soviet conflict (against critical support of the Chinese side). He registered his differences at the time of the Reunification Congress where his tendency represented a small minority. After the reunification, he developed further differences, the most serious being on the application of democratic centralism. He argues that the norm for this period should be the "coexistence" of groupings. Acting in line with this position, he has gone so far as to issue his own public faction organ and is at present suspended from leadership in the Fourth International. Like Healy on this point, he finds the rules of democratic centralism fine in theory but not something to be observed in practice . . . so long as he remains in a minority.



for the "degeneration" is even given a "sociological" basis. The Socialist Workers party has "succumbed" to a bad environment; namely, the years of prosperity and witch-hunting in the United States. The leadership of the SWP, the rationalization continues, was unable to effectively counteract the unfavorable atmosphere because of incapacity to develop theory. Thus the SWP became prey to the allegedly centrist views of the International Secretariat. Hence its position in favor of reunification of the Fourth International

The gaps, holes and inconsistencies in this view are rather striking. For instance, Healy holds that it was not just the SWP leadership that failed to develop theory; the Fourth International as a whole failed. How is this to be accounted for in areas like Europe, Asia and Latin America where sociological conditions are quite different from those in the U.S.? Most pertinent of all, what about Healy himself?

#### Healy's Record

In the theoretical life of the world Trotskyist movement, his record is not outstanding. In the struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition led by Shachtman and Burnham in 1939-40, he played no role whatsoever. During the analysis of the character of the East European countries in 1948-50, he abstained. During the discussion of the character of China and the Chinese Revolution in 1950-54, he remained silent. These were the great landmarks in the development of theory in the Fourth International after it was founded, as universally recognized by all sections and all tendencies, whatever their evaluations of other issues or differences. We do not hold it against Healy that he failed to make a contribution in this field. He contributed in other ways, primarily as an organizer and agitator, where his talents lie. These fields are important, at certain stages even decisive, in the development of a revolutionary movement. So long as Healy remained part of a rounded-out team, he did very effective work. But if failure to develop theory paves the way for degeneration in practice, as Healy holds, where is the evidence for this in his own case? Perhaps it is his current excursion into the field of theory?

Healy's claim that our movement, following Trotsky's death, failed to develop theory, carries grave implications concerning the direction of his course. No leader of the Trot-

skyist movement contends that the Fourth International has registered major organizational successes outside of proving itself capable of surviving despite the most powerful foes, ranging from Stalin, right through Roosevelt and Churchill, to Hitler. The Fourth International has grown and has spread Trotskyist ideas in many areas; it has yet to lead a revolution. Outside of Healy, however, no Trotskyist leader denies that the movement has been able to keep abreast of world events politically and to record significant achievements in theory. In fact, in arguing against pessimists and skeptics who seek to make much of the organizational weakness of the movement, the Fourth International has been able to point to its strength in the theoretical field and to its record in analyzing world events and trends. By revising his opinion about this, Healy lays the ground for concluding that the Trotskyist movement failed in both fields. What then remains?

By his recent exertions in the field of theory, Healy is evidently trying to make up for much lost time. At the last moment, he will succeed where all the others have failed. By his feat he will salvage whatever is salvageable in the wreck ("reorganizing" the Fourth International, as he puts it diplomatically). A laudable ambition, but one that carries an unhappy implication. What worth is there in the program of Trotskyism, if, in a quarter of a century it could not produce anything at all in the way of a movement in either theory or practice except one lone leader, even one as remarkable as Healy? But this last minute effort at rescuing the movement founded by Trotsky likewise appears doomed. Instead of going ahead and making some solid contributions — these would win acclaim from all sides — Healy wastes time complaining about the "unwillingness" of leaders of the Socialist Workers party to engage with him in a dispute. What does he expect, if, as he claims, they are bankrupt? And why does he act as if his hands were tied by their alleged refusal? Can't he develop theory, after all, unless the SWP leaders pitch in? The blind alley has no exit.

It is true, of course, that leaders of the SWP have displayed reluctance to engage in a "discussion" match with Healy. Perhaps the memory of old ties fed an illusory hope that the spectacle might somehow be avoided. But, it seems, there is no choice.

OUR first problem is Healy's tendency to view ideological differences in personal terms. A good example is provided by the attack levelled in the October 10 *Newsletter* against Peng Shu-tse. Comrade Peng wrote an Open Letter to Healy (published in the fall 1964 *International Socialist Review*) the purpose of which was to call public attention to a series of misstatements made in the June 20 and June 27 issues of the *Newsletter* concerning the position of the United Secretariat in Ceylon. The *Newsletter* claimed that the United Secretariat supported a capitulatory center wing in the Lanka Sama Samaja party. The truth is that it supported the left wing against the right wing headed by Dr. N. M. Perera. In addition to straightening out the record on these points, Comrade Peng called attention to errors of an ideological nature made by Healy, ranging from his attitude toward Messali Hadj and Aneurin Bevan to the character of the Cuban state. Peng accused Healy of seeking factional advantage in the Ceylonese situation.

The response of the *Newsletter* was to call Peng Shu-tse "a kind of political house dog." This was expanded: "He barks at opponents when he is told to and wags his tail in a disgruntled sort of way when asked to be quiet." Further: "It is so long since Peng Shu-tse has been an active member of an organized revolutionary party that he has completely lost touch with reality. Trotsky used to describe such people as 'irremovable senators.'" All this is put in bold face.

The tone thus set, the rest of the "reply" consists of accusing Peng of acting "as a kind of double agent" in the International Committee, of writing articles "vaguely critical of Pabloism, whilst still managing behind the scenes, to retain his toehold in the Pabloite camp." (The truth is that Comrade Peng was among the first to note the narrowing of political differences between the two camps, while the International Secretariat mistakenly considered him to hold quite divergent views on some key points.) The rest of the reply is a heavy-handed attempt to meet Comrade Peng's challenge, made in passing, to show in what way in the past they favored the left wing in the LSSP. This is evidently intended for consumption among the ranks of the Socialist Labour League; since the

Ceylonese Trotskyists rebuffed Healy's pretensions.

The five-column article was followed by a second installment. In this, Peng's reference to Healy's attitude toward Bevan and Messali Hadj is selected as the target for a broadside.

First of all, Messali Hadj is put to the side for the time being. That's a touchy subject; Bevan is the one to concentrate on! The tactic followed in relation to the late left-wing leader in the British Labour party is presented in the best possible light, the phase of support, according to the author, being kept within reasonable bounds. The strongest proof offered for this is the following: "During the years of Bevanism we enjoyed the close co-operation of the SWP leaders, who knew very well what was our attitude towards Bevan and supported us fully on this."

The *Newsletter* is soliciting the right people for a testimonial, and we are pleased to be called in as expert witnesses. Peng, as a member first of the International Secretariat and then the International Committee until it finally participated in the Reunification Congress, had an excellent opportunity during the years in this leading position to become very well acquainted with Healy and he reached certain conclusions that deserve to be taken into account. The author of the *Newsletter* article, who was evidently working under strong pressure to put up the best possible defense of Healy's record, offers as an exhibit, in opposition to Peng's observations, the line followed by the movement as a whole in the case of Bevan. In those days, Healy, to his credit, was responsive to the opinions of others, including Comrade Peng. Under the stabilizing influence of the international movement, the British organization was able to steer a reasonably steady course between the rocks of ultra-leftism and opportunism.

### Explanation Lacking

But to get back to the issue. Comrade Peng had his own impression as to whether or not Healy at certain moments placed undue hopes in Bevan and Messali Hadj but he did not demand that his judgment be taken as definitive. What Comrade Peng said was the following: "As to whether or not your attitude toward Bevan was right or wrong, you never offered any explanations either to the working class or to the members of your own group!" In other words,

Peng said in his Open Letter to Healy, even if you were right, you should have given an explanation for your turns. Peng is correct in this; arbitrary turns do not educate the membership or sympathizing circles. But Peng's point is not answered; it is avoided.

Likewise avoided are Peng's main points, particularly his stated reason for the Open Letter — the falsifications in the *Newsletter* concerning the position of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in the Ceylonese situation, and Healy's hope to split the ranks of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section). What the experts on the *Newsletter* did was to comb through Peng's Open Letter and single out what they considered to be the easiest line of attack. This, they decided, was the reference to Bevan. They then played this up big in the *Newsletter* so that their deliberate failure to answer Peng's charges about the falsifications in the *Newsletter* and Healy's factional ax grinding in Ceylon might be lost sight of in a gushing discharge of printer's ink. The method, made famous by the squid, speaks volumes about the way issues are "clarified" in the Socialist Labour League.

A third article in this series appeared in the October 31 issue. By this time the author apparently felt that his audience was sufficiently softened up and the main issues clouded enough to bring in Messali Hadj, former leader of the Algerian nationalist struggle, once praised by Healy as "a living symbol of this struggle." The delicate matter was deftly wrapped up and disposed of by reference to the bloody factional fighting that broke out at one stage in the Algerian nationalist movement. Leaders were killed who had "exercised a very powerful restraining left-wing [!] influence on Messali Hadj." Thus is Peng's reference taken care of and along with it the extravagant literature picturing Messali Hadj — before his betrayal — as the "living symbol" of the Algerian Revolution.

What of the charges levelled by Peng Shu-tse about falsifications in the *Newsletter* concerning the position of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in Ceylon and Healy's hope to split the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section)? Not a word in reply after three issues of the *Newsletter* devoted to Comrade Peng's short Open Letter. Not a single word! The crowning touch is a charge that Peng "runs

away" from an "international discussion." That blast of hot air came from the jet engines as the author took off for parts unknown. To make it really good he challenged the "leadership of the Socialist Workers Party" and all "the organisations affiliated to the Pabloite centre" to stop running away like Peng Shu-tse and start "discussing."

If the author is really serious about asking for a "serious international discussion" as a "principled" matter, "not a tactical one," he could not begin better than by publishing a front-page box in simple plain black ink with a suitable heavy black border rectifying the falsifications published by Healy. We know of no better way by which the *Newsletter* might seek to begin to overcome the painful impression created by its revolting personal abuse of Comrade Peng Shu-tse and its scandalous evasion up to now of the questions he raised.

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### PIONEER PUBLISHERS

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To savor the full impact of the type of reply to which the *Newsletter* resorted, it is necessary to know something about Peng Shu-tse. He was one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist party. In 1920 at the age of 23, a young school teacher from the same province as Mao Tse-tung, he constituted part of the group that first responded in China to the October 1917 revolution. As one of the most promising youth he was selected to go to Moscow in 1921 for special training. He attended the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, staying in Moscow until after the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in 1924. He thus learned his theory in the Soviet Union in the time of Lenin and Trotsky when a premium was placed on integrity and loyalty to principles and independence of mind.

Back in Shanghai, he became a member of the staff of *The Guide Weekly*, the official organ of the Communist party. He was named editor of *New Youth*, the famous quarterly launched by Chen Tu-hsiu in 1915 which became the theoretical organ of the Communist party. In January 1925 he was elected to the Central Committee and made a member of the five-man Standing Committee (the Political Bureau) where he served as head of the Propaganda Board and thus as editor of both the *New Youth* and *The Guide Weekly*. This was his position when the Second Chinese Revolution broke out.

In May 1927 he was transferred to Peking due to differences troubling the leadership over the line to be followed as the revolution reached its height. He was among those leaders most uneasy over the advice and instructions coming from Moscow (under Stalin's influence) which led to the defeat of the revolution. In the spring of 1929, two documents written by Leon Trotsky were brought to China by three students. They gave Peng his first real insight into what had happened. He showed the documents to Chen Tu-hsiu, who was China's most famous Communist figure at the time. The two decided to oppose Stalinism. One of their first acts was to send a letter to the Central Committee asking for correction of the line of ultraleft adventurism. They asked for the publication of Trotsky's documents within the party and the opening of an internal discussion. For this the Central Committee expelled them on direct orders from Moscow; and on November 10, 1929, they formally constituted the

Chinese sector of the international Trotskyist Left Opposition. During the years of ferocious repression under Chiang Kai-shek, they worked in the underground, organizing the workers in the cities.

In 1932 Peng and Chen were arrested. Chiang Kai-shek did not dare to murder them as he did so many others — they were too well known. For five years the two were held behind bars in the dungeons of the bloody dictator, finally being released in 1937 along with other political prisoners in face of the military advance of Japanese imperialism.

The older Chen Tu-hsiu had begun to show the effect of the years of terror and repression. A rift developed between the two leaders. Peng returned to Shanghai where he resumed his tasks in the underground among the workers.

With the unforeseen turn taken by the Chinese Revolution — an advance by the peasants and the development of the Revolution from the countryside to the city, the wing of the movement headed by Mao Tse-tung came to the fore. Their attitude toward the Trotskyists was determined by their training in the school of Stalinism. They imprisoned or killed the Trotskyists no matter what their record or how willing they showed themselves to be in carrying out the tasks of the Revolution. Peng Shu-tse had to leave his native country and direct participation in the revolution for which he and his wife, Pi-lan, a well-known woman leader and Communist writer, had sacrificed so much.

Peng is a heroic figure, one of the iron Communists whose selfless devotion in the difficult years made possible the success of the Chinese Revolution. He sees clearly and deeply as was demonstrated by the fact that he was among the few in this world who correctly estimated the true import of the "Great Leap Forward" — not afterward but when it was launched. The world Trotskyist movement can feel proud that such a figure stands in its ranks, still an active participant in today's titanic international class struggle.

This is the pioneer Trotskyist whom the *Newsletter* slanderously labels a "house dog" and, at the end of the article in the October 17 issue, a "political degenerate."

And what is the record of the author who uses such language?

The author does not happen to be Gerry Healy to whom Peng addressed his Open Letter. The author is some

one named "Frank Williams." Who he is, I don't know. Perhaps Healy will provide us with his record in a coming issue of the *Newsletter*. Otherwise, we will never be able to tell where he acquired the abominable arrogance so reminiscent of white imperialist overlords and "old China hands." And we will not know why Healy thought it desirable to have such a person speak for him instead of answering the Open Letter himself.

#### How to Deepen Theory With a Dossier

The "Frank Williams" contribution is no isolated instance. Healy appears to breed similar poison-pen practitioners in the top leadership of the Socialist Labour League. Thus the July 25 *Newsletter* published a long article on the front page about Pierre Frank, a member of the United Secretariat, "who recently visited Ceylon."

The article presents material from a dispute in the French Trotskyist organization in 1934-35 — thirty years ago! — in which Trotsky said some sharp things about his young disciple. As further "exposure," the *Newsletter* reveals that Pierre Frank came to England in 1939 "to organise a struggle against Trotsky and the International Secretariat" and that some months after the outbreak of World War II he was "interned for a short period in the Isle of Man as an alien."

This "alien" was later "released" by the "police" and he "worked in Britain for the duration of the war."

The purpose of this information, taken out of the dossiers Healy keeps, was to quote from a telegram sent by Trotsky in 1935, reading: "Frank letter reveals centrist demoralisation stop consider rupture preferable to concessions." From a letter written by Trotsky shortly thereafter, the *Newsletter* publishes the accusation that "Molinier and Frank . . . are capitulating to the social-patriotic wave."

Whether or not Trotsky exaggerated, the *Newsletter* article itself indicates that whatever the differences of that time might have been, they were resolved at least eighteen years ago. But this is dismissed by the *Newsletter* and we are given the conclusion: "Right from the early '30s Frank was always 'a demoralised centrist'. He was regarded by Trotsky as a demoralised centrist and he continues so to this day." The placard is then hung on his neck: "political imposter."

The occasion for this attack was a trip by Healy to Ceylon last June at the same time as Pierre Frank. Healy demanded admission to a conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja party which was then being held. The presidium, composed of representatives of the left, center, and right wings, unanimously turned Healy down — without consulting Pierre Frank. Pierre Frank, of course, was seated as the official representative of the Fourth International and backed the left wing against the right-wing capitulators and the centrists who trailed after them. When Healy wrote up the story, he charged in the June 20 *Newsletter* that Pierre Frank had “joined hands with the coalition renegades and urged that Healy’s application be rejected.” Healy also said that the United Secretariat had backed the center grouping. Pierre Frank answered these falsifications in an article carried by the July 17 *World Outlook*. In the same reply he referred to Healy’s ultraleftism on the British political scene.

Instead of retracting the falsifications (the same one that aroused Peng Shu-tse), or trying to answer Pierre Frank on a political level, the *Newsletter* theoreticians dug through the files for thirty years until they found what Trotsky said in 1935. Or perhaps they had discovered it earlier and were reserving it for just such an emergency. In any case, what Trotsky said thirty years ago exactly fitted Healy’s — and not Pierre Frank’s — trip to Ceylon in 1964. Thus the crushing rejoinder to Pierre Frank: You are a “political imposter.”

### **Pierre Frank’s Record**

What are the facts? Pierre Frank’s radical record begins as a teen-ager in Paris expelled from school because of his radical political views. A few years later, in 1923 or 1924 he joined the Communist party. In 1929 he was one of a group of Communists who sent a representative to see Trotsky when the Bolshevik leader was exiled to Prinkipo. Under Trotsky’s guidance, he helped found the Left Opposition in France. By 1931 he was elected to the International Secretariat and in 1932 became one of Trotsky’s secretaries in Prinkipo. He was with Trotsky for about a year, going with him on his famous Copenhagen trip. A month or so before Trotsky moved to exile in France, Pierre Frank returned to help make the preparatoin.

Shortly after that he became involved, together with Raymond Molinier, another French Trotskyist leader, in one of the numerous internal struggles that have been a standing problem throughout the history of the French section and which ended many times in splits. This was the period which Healy selected to dig for quotations.

But during this period of separation on factional lines, Trotsky never changed his fundamental appreciation of his French disciple. In the December 30, 1936, entry in his diary, written aboard the Norwegian tanker *Ruth* on the way to Mexico, Trotsky includes him among “my French political friends” who took a letter to the Soviet ambassador in Paris. In *The Case of Leon Trotsky* (the verbatim record of Trotsky’s testimony before the John Dewey Commission in 1937), he again mentions Pierre Frank as a “French friend.” At the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938, which was held under Trotsky’s guidance, a motion was passed approving immediate acceptance of the French comrades without any delay, the only exception being Molinier and even here the door was left open under certain conditions. If the French group accepted the resolution, it was declared, no disciplinary measures would be taken against any comrade on the basis of the past dispute.

There is more to come, as we shall see, but let us turn for the moment to another item in Healy’s “exposure.” Why did Pierre Frank visit England in 1939? Was it “to organize a struggle against Trotsky” as a kind of anticipation of what he allegedly did to Healy during a visit to Ceylon twenty-five years later? Here, again, are the facts:

In France, under the Daladier regime, as the curtain rose on World War II, Pierre Frank was sentenced to ten years in prison for “defeatist” activities against the French imperialist army. Molinier also received a heavy sentence. Had the two not succeeded in escaping, they would most surely have been murdered under the Nazi occupation as occurred with other Trotskyist leaders in Europe during the war.

As a political refugee in England, Pierre Frank was accorded all the “courtesies” to be expected from British democracy in such circumstances. He was arrested in October 1940, charged with not registering as an “alien,” and sentenced to six months at hard labor. After being

grilled on his “Trotskyist views,” he was ordered deported. But since France was under German occupation, the British authorities decided to send him to one of their own concentration camps. There he was kept under lock and key until the end of 1943. Upon being released, he resumed his Trotskyist political activities where he had left off. Among others with whom he worked in England was Gerry Healy, who by this time had joined the Fourth International. Only after the war was Pierre Frank able to return to France.

### **Frank’s Correspondence with Trotsky**

Let us go back now to his relations with Trotsky and the Fourth International: Molinier succeeded in joining Pierre Frank in London in the spring of 1940. In May of that year, Stalinist assassins machine-gunned Trotsky’s bedroom in Coyoacan, Mexico. Trotsky, his wife Natalia and their grandson managed to escape death, although one of the guards was kidnapped and murdered by the Stalinists. Upon reading the headlines, Frank and Molinier at once wrote a letter to Trotsky, expressing their solidarity. They indicated that they had drawn certain lessons in the light of the tragic events of the day and they asked about the possibility of a reconciliation.

Trotsky answered them in a letter dated July 1, 1940. He proceeded cautiously, as he was evidently not sure about the actual state of things in the French organization or possibly he was not certain where everyone stood in relation to the struggle with the petty-bourgeois opposition headed by Burnham and Shachtman which had just come to a head in the Fourth International. Trotsky stated that it was not clear to him from the letter he had received from them whether it was proposed that a reconciliation be made on the basis of loyally accepting international discipline. If discipline was accepted, said Trotsky, using the guarded allusions required by the times, “a sincere reconciliation would present no difficulty and I would be happy to open direct conversations with your father [the International] on the question; but only under these conditions. I hope you will believe that in acting in this way, I am guided exclusively by your interests and those of our family [movement] as a whole, with my best wishes, your uncle Leon.”

Frank and Molinier responded with a letter dated August 5, 1940, assur-

ing Trotsky that they considered unity "imperative"; and they went the whole way, pledging to Trotsky that "we accept the rights and the duties as defined in your letter of July 1, without any reservations and without any equivocation." As to the practical side of ending the split in the French movement, they left this up to the International and they added that they had no doubt what the effect of Trotsky's advice would be there.

They never received an answer. On August 19 a Stalinist assassin drove a pick-ax into the brain of their teacher, comrade and friend.

A little later Molinier made his way to Latin America. Pierre Frank, as we have seen, was invited to enjoy the hospitality of Churchill's government for "a short period in the Isle of Man as an alien." (The letter to Trotsky was forwarded, however, to the International Secretariat and they sent Pierre Frank a favorable response which was delivered to him in jail.)

We have still not finished with the facts. In 1944 a European Conference of sections of the Fourth International was held in defiance of the Nazi occupation. This gathering approved the unification of the two French groups, including Frank and Molinier, both of whom were still in exile. In 1946 at the first World Conference after the war, Pierre Frank was there as a representative of the French section. He was elected to the International Secretariat, an action that Healy approved, so far as we have been able to ascertain.

### SLL Political Committee

A little more patience and we come to the end of this lesson on how to deepen theory by rummaging around in a dossier. The "exposure" of Pierre Frank printed on the front page of the *Newsletter* is not signed by Healy. It appears over an anonymous signature, "A Statement by the Political Committee of the SLL." Who are the members of this body? What are their credentials? How long have they been in the movement? Did they, too, enjoy vacations on the Isle of Man as Churchill's guests during the war and thus get to know Pierre Frank?

The information is not divulged. A surreptitious conclave of unknown composition meets, constitutes itself into a kangaroo court, peers at various items laid on the table by an unnamed prosecuting attorney, and arrives at its ineluctable verdict: "political imposter." This is then pub-

lished as the decision of the most authoritative body in the Socialist Labour League. The victim has been taught a stern lesson in what a mortal sin it is to complain about falsifications in current issues of their newspaper.

One wonders what kind of atmosphere reigns in the Socialist Labour League under such a Political Committee.

If it is necessary to go back thirty years to understand the full meaning of the current dispute, why was this particular incident chosen? Wouldn't it have been much more useful and to the point to compare Healy's charge that the SWP has degenerated politically with the similar charges made by the ultraleftist Hugo Oehler thirty years ago? An instructive comparative study might be made of Oehler's articles about the "centrism" and "betrayals" of James P. Cannon to the centrists in 1934-35 and similar articles sponsored by Healy about the founder of the American Trotskyist movement thirty years later. Young comrades could learn something from that.

A single example like this one provided publicly by Healy's Political Committee is enough to induce a cold chill at what it reveals about the educational methods in the Socialist Labour League.

### An Award for James P. Cannon

Still another example indicates that we are dealing with methods that have become accepted practice among leaders of the Socialist Labour League. The summer issue of *Labour Review*<sup>4</sup> carries an editorial entitled "Ceylon and the Fourth International." This pristine gem contains the following paragraph:

"James P. Cannon, one of the closest collaborators of Trotsky, is just as guilty for what happened in Ceylon as Pablo. He adamantly refused to discuss with the Socialist Labour League and the organizations of the [International?] Committee of the Fourth International the major political differences which have now been revealed through the agency of Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition government. Cannon has betrayed every-

4. Healy has changed the name of his theoretical magazine to *Fourth International*, apparently for the sake of adding to the confusion created by the ultraleftist J. Posadas who split from the Fourth International in 1962. Posadas issues publications that have duplicated those of the Fourth International down to the typography, but filled of course with his own material, mostly transcripts of his speeches. Posadas calls his grouping of isolated individuals in various countries the "Fourth International" and uses the name "International Secretariat" the way Healy uses "International Committee."

thing that Trotsky fought for. His shameful silence is the silence of an opportunist coward who in the final years of his life rallies to the assistance of a clique of renegades who have destroyed a large portion of Trotsky's Fourth International."

Along with such delectable morsels the charge is again levelled that the reunified Fourth International is guilty of "revisionism"; that it "encouraged the capitulation in Ceylon." The epithet "open agents of imperialism" is used for the first time, so far as I am aware, in Healyite polemics against the Trotskyist movement. It is emphasized to show that it is deliberate. "All those leaders associated with this betrayal are, we repeat, the tools of imperialism."<sup>5</sup> As the paragraph cited above indicates, Cannon, the founder of the American Trotskyist movement, before that a founder of the American Communist party, one of the key figures directly linking world Trotskyism with Leninism, who saw the objective need to end the split in the Fourth International seven years ago, not least of all because of what could happen in Ceylon, is charged with guilt for what did happen in Ceylon. The proof that is offered by Healy's *Labour Review* is guilt by association and — by silence. (Read the charge again: "just as guilty" because he "rallies to the assistance of . . ." by maintaining "shameful silence . . .")

One can imagine the sense of outrage felt by Cannon. An "opportunist coward"! The target of innumerable opponents since 1910, thrown into the ring with some of the toughest brass-knuckle artists in the trade, only to end up pinked by a cork from a pop gun. Let Comrade Cannon learn that in the Socialist Labour League, under Healy's regime, you are equally guilty whether you boldly speak your mind like Peng Shu-tse, whether you take a trip to Ceylon like Pierre Frank, or whether, choosing the course of "cowardly opportunism," you just continue reading your newspaper.

5. In the October 31 *Newsletter* Frank Williams writes: "The Pabloites have no answer to our criticisms, so they proceed to denounce us as agents of Wall Street imperialism." The author, of course, may argue that by "Pabloites" he means a perfectly definite category in his own head — where the alleged denunciations also exist. In the context of the article the reference could, unfortunately, be taken to mean the United Secretariat of the Fourth International or leaders of the Socialist Workers party. None of these, to my knowledge, have ever labelled the Healyites "agents of imperialism," since all of them are perfectly aware that the correct label is "ultraleftists" and all of them know the importance to Marxism of accuracy in terminology. Perhaps Williams is suffering from a bad conscience . . . if something more deliberate is not involved.

And who are the doughty warriors now enlisted in Healy's army of detractors of James P. Cannon? Healy's magazine has two editors, Tom Kemp and Cliff Slaughter. They bear responsibility for the editorial. Both of them were British Stalinist intellectuals until 1956. In that year, they acquired their wisdom from Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. They were among a sizeable group in England who found their way to the Trotskyist movement. This was to their credit. It is also to their credit that they stayed when others who came at that time proved less firm—or, if we are now to believe their tales, had weaker stomachs. But to this day they are apparently convinced that at least part of their training in the Stalinist movement was invaluable. They cling, for instance, to the scientific terminology that every Stalinist theoretician must master. "Political house dog," "political degenerate," "political imposter," "open agents of imperialism," "clique of renegades," "opportunist coward" are some of the more restrained examples of the edifying art of Stalinist polemic. Perhaps Kemp and Slaughter still cherish this dubious acquisition because they met with no rebuff while perfecting this art in the SLL. On the level of "theory" they find a common meeting ground with their new leader.

As a matter of curiosity we wonder what kept Tom Kemp and Cliff Slaughter in the Stalinist movement until Khrushchev roused them from their dogmatic slumbers? We rule out, of course, the possibility that they might have been motivated by opportunism or cowardice. This leaves either ignorance or stupidity. Neither of these are dishonorable but why, then, their intellectual pretensions? We should like to hear their answer so that we can judge in the

present "discussion" whether we are dealing with basic flaws in character or simply bad habits. We trust we are not accused of unfairly raking up the unsavory school in which they received their political training. As they are well aware, we long sought to avoid having to beard them in public on their theoretical level. If we do so now, it is in large part because of their own insistent demands and the evidence that they still employ the methods they learned there.<sup>6</sup>

### Healy and the Cuban Revolution

Having waded in hip boots through all this muck we reach the solid ground of Healy's vaunted theory. Will it prove worth the effort? The gist of the matter can be put very briefly.

The big advances in the field of theory made by the world Trotskyist movement are primarily reflections of the extension of the October Revolution. Four main facts have had to be accounted for. First, successful revolutions have not yet occurred in the advanced imperialist countries. Secondly, revolutions have smashed through to power only in areas where capitalism was weakest. Thirdly, up to now the revolutions in these areas have succeeded without the working class taking the open direct lead from the beginning. Fourthly, this has occurred without the prior formation of revolutionary-socialist Leninist-type parties. The latter two facts raised a number of difficulties in theory which were solved only after deep consideration and long discussion.

The first extension of the October Revolution occurred in Eastern Europe (including Yugoslavia) after the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, the advance of its armed forces beyond the Soviet border, and the Kremlin's subsequent decision to carry out an overturn in property

relations. (In Yugoslavia a genuine revolution was the main driving force albeit under an opportunist leadership.) These developments were reflected in the theory of "deformed" workers states — new workers states bearing the imprint of both the property forms that came out of the October 1917 Revolution and its subsequent Stalinist degeneration.

The next big advance in theory reflected the victory of the Chinese Revolution. In this the role of the Soviet Union was not quite so direct. In addition, quite new things appeared — the positive role of guerrilla warfare (already anticipated in Yugoslavia), the capacity of a peasantry to create an organized armed force, the advance of a revolution from the countryside to the cities. The main theoretical conclusions reached in Eastern Europe applied in China but with differences because of the new features.

The theoretical conclusions in relation to China were generally accepted in the movement only after repeated re-testing of basic positions. The inferences were considerable due to China's size, her population, the potential of the country as a world power and the influence its example would have. If some differences still remain over China and new ones have appeared, they do not concern the basic appraisal of China as a workers state. In any case, up to this point, Healy, as we have indicated earlier, offered neither contributions of his own nor objections to the theoretical conclusions of others.

The next great landmark was the Cuban Revolution. From the viewpoint of theory its major importance was the confirmation it provided to the main conclusions in the previous analyses. The confirmation was most brilliant. The line of theory now stands unbroken from its beginning in 1939-40. Most heartening of all from

6. As a recent example of how the Healyite school operates, we offer the November 7, 1964, issue of the Newsletter. The following item, on a background of tomato red, appears on page 3 as an insertion in a six-column article concerning the scandalous deal between the heads of the Ceylonese and Indian governments to deport 675,000 Indian residents now in Ceylon: "On July 1 last year, the Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International wrote from the Pabloite centre in Paris to Leslie Goonewardene, Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, saying: 'We recognize there is nothing wrong in the principle of negotiations between India and Ceylon on the subject' [the citizenship rights of Tamil workers]. The present agreement is a result of the revisionist policies of the Unified Secretariat who have once again betrayed workers in Ceylon. Once again members of the Unified Secretariat stand exposed and condemned [sic] as traitors to the working class."

This is exactly the way the box was printed, with the exception of the "sic" which we added. Note the charge that the shameful agreement negotiated by the Ceylonese prime minister "is a

result of the revisionist policies of the Unified Secretariat who have once again betrayed . . ." In the Healyite brain, the "Pabloite centre" wields almost demonic powers as can be seen in the state relations of some countries.

The following is the actual text of the pertinent part of the July 1 letter written to the then official secretary of the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International:

"The Unified Secretariat concretely proposes that an additional clause be inserted in point 14 (a) to make it clear that the party stands for equal opportunity for the Tamil language in relations between citizens and the Central Administration.

"Concerning point 14 (b) we think that in order to avoid any ambiguity it must be made clear that the option of deciding the citizenship rights of persons of Indian origin should not be left ultimately to the goodwill of the government of India, but to the people directly concerned, although we recognize of course that there is nothing wrong in the principle of negotiations between India and Ceylon on the subject.

"Apart from these formulations, the main question in our opinion is the necessity to associate with the united front the plantation workers who represent the bulk of the agricultural workers in Ceylon. As these workers are not organized in any working class political party, the association can be ensured only through a collaboration with their trade unions, the DWC and CWC."

By cutting eighteen words out of a sentence in one of the above paragraphs and providing their own "explanation" of the meaning of the phrase thus separated from its context, our "theoreticians" are able to "prove" that the "Pabloite centre" stood for the exact opposite of what it actually stood for. The monstrousness of what they did — its deliberateness — can be judged by simply reading the original sentence.

What compels the leadership of the SLL to resort to such falsifications? Do they really think they can get away with "discussion" of this character simply because their victims are likely to throw up their hands at the appalling work required to reply? Whatever their reasoning may be, these methods clearly have nothing whatsoever in common with Trotskyism.

a political point of view was the appearance in Cuba of a leadership whose origin was completely outside the Communist movement but which evolved in the course of the revolution itself toward Marxist positions. Thus dawned the bright perspective for which the Trotskyist movement had struggled since its inception against the conservatism of both the Stalinist and Social-Democratic bureaucracies. Theory now proclaims that the Cuban Revolution, the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, is the harbinger of a great new wave of revolutions that will end with world capitalism going down in its main centers.

### Healy Demurs

It was at this point that Healy raised a finger: "I object."

Healy's objection insofar as he has been able to reduce it to rational statement is as follows: According to Marxist theory it is impossible to have a successful revolution without *prior* organization of a Trotskyist party; whoever says otherwise is a revisionist.

To the request to look at the Cuban Revolution, Healy again objects: "That's being empirical."

When asked about China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe, and ultimately the character of the state in the USSR as analyzed by Trotsky, our deepener of theory, whose press is so loquacious when it comes to "discussing" the character of James P. Cannon, Peng Shu-tse and Pierre Frank, finds that the best principle is to keep a firm grip on his tongue.

The meaning of the demand that he study the continuity of the theory is apparently not grasped by him although his French supporters appeared for a time to have caught a glimmering; they promised to go back to the origin of the concepts that found confirmation in Cuba. Not much has come of this promise, however.

As for the chief theoretician of the SLL, he has simply sought other points of difference such as estimates of the relative weight of the revolution in colonial and imperialist countries and whether or not it is a fact that for a time the main arena of revolutionary activity has been the colonial world (Healy denies it). In these endeavors it can scarcely be said that he has come up with any stunning successes.

The Cuban Revolution thus offers Healy no theoretical problem and is indeed of little theoretical interest to

him. Since no Trotskyist party was organized in Cuba *prior* to the Revolution, obviously no successful revolution could occur there. It is just as obvious to Healy, for the same reason, that there was no overturn in property relations in Cuba. The Cuban state remains "capitalist" and Castro is just another "Chiang Kai-shek." (This is really Healy's position!) Anyone who expostulates, pointing to the destruction of the capitalist and big landholding classes, to the extensive nationalizations, the beginnings of genuine planned economy and the many social and economic gains of the workers and peasants such as the agrarian reform is denounced by Healy as an "empiricist." An even gamier label may be awarded as we have seen. Healy fails completely to see why the Cuban Revolution is of primary theoretical importance for the whole Trotskyist position on the question of the nature of the workers state, including Trotsky's position on the USSR.

He fails to see why the Cuban Revolution is much more dramatic evidence of the true balance of world forces than were the overturns in Eastern Europe or even the Chinese Revolution, the theoretical appreciation of which Healy did not question.

But without the direct inspiration and guidance of a Trotskyist party in Cuba, how *could* a revolution win there? The answer is that given the development of class forces to the point of explosion inside Cuba, the revolutionary-minded leadership at hand proved capable of drawing inspiration from the example of the Chinese Revolution (ultimately the October Revolution) and of learning key lessons from revolutionary experience in Latin America (Guatemala and Bolivia as well as Cuba's own revolutionary past). They built a tightly disciplined grouping of armed partisans who, in the course of struggle, became conscious revolutionists. With this they were already well on the way to Marxism. Beginning as rebels, they became revolutionists and eventually socialists. An empirical path, but still a path! In addition, the mere existence of the Soviet Union and China as world powers affected the perspective in Cuba because of the aid, either indirect or direct, that could be obtained. The Cuban Revolution echoed the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, as the Cuban leaders themselves admitted when they stood back and began sizing up what they had accomplished. Looked at from another

angle, the Cuban Revolution revealed that world capitalism is much weaker than its appearance indicates. It is far gone in its death agony. Even tiny Cuba could "get away" with it!

In contrast to Healy, who sees only another dreary "betrayal," the Fourth International drew fresh inspiration from the Cuban Revolution. Healy came to the conclusion that it was necessary to perpetuate and deepen the split in the world Trotskyist movement. The majority of both the International Secretariat and the International Committee and the Socialist Workers party took it as fresh evidence for the need to close ranks, to subordinate secondary differences, and to unite on the basis of a principled program, the better to take advantage of the new opportunities.

That is where the differences stand today on the theoretical level. They will remain right there until Healy grasps the import of the challenge to examine the grounding of the Trotskyist position on Cuba, in our prior positions on China, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union.

**T**HEORY is tested in practice. And while a broad theory may not appear to have immediate consequences this can prove to be a most deceptive appearance. In the case of Healy his theory led to the separation of the Socialist Labour League from the Cuban Revolution and, indeed, the whole Latin-American revolution.

This is due to the fact that Healy's theory blocks the SLL from finding practical ways of offering concrete support to the Cuban Revolution. It is true that you will occasionally find a phrase in the Healyite press *declaring* "support" for the Cuban Revolution. However, it is not clear just what Cuban Revolution is meant, the one that conquered in 1959 and led to establishment of a workers state in 1960, or a future revolution that finally meets Healyite specifications. If they are talking about the present Revolution, their "support" amounts to little more than a stock sentence added once in a while to an article condemning the Cuban government — if the editor doesn't forget.

On the basis of his new thinking, it is true, Healy can claim that the best possible "support" is the criticism he occasionally provides. Revolutionary criticism is a good thing if it is correct and makes a genuine contribution to better understanding of the revolutionary process and defense

of its interests. We are all for that. But this is not the nature of what Healy has chosen to offer.

A recent example was the full-page attack in the July 18 *Newsletter* entitled "Bankrupt middle-class programme leads Castro into US Hands." This article was based on extensive quotations from an interview conducted by Richard Eder and published in the July 6 *New York Times*.

In order to better evaluate the *Newsletter's* contribution to "clarification" on the subject of the Cuban Revolution, the timing should be noted. During June and July U.S. imperialism was driving its hemispheric campaign toward a paroxysm of hatred for the courageous goliath that dared to defy the nuclear giant and defend the little country's sovereignty and socialist achievements. The pressure was on in the Organization of American States to condemn the Cuban leaders on charges of seeking to extend the revolution across the Caribbean to Venezuela. The motion that was finally passed July 26 actually reads, "the Republic of Venezuela has been the target of a series of actions sponsored and directed by the Government of Cuba, openly intended to subvert Venezuelan institutions and to overthrow the democratic government of Venezuela through terrorism, sabotage, assault, and guerrilla warfare."

The motion called on every country belonging to the OAS to "suspend all trade" except a few items for "humanitarian reasons"; to "suspend all sea transportation" to Cuba except what might be necessary to transport the "humanitarian" items; and warned the Cuban government that if it persisted in its revolutionary course it could signify "individual or collective self-defense, which could go so far as resort to armed force . . ."

The lynch campaign covered the front pages of the entire capitalist press from Point Barrow to Patagonia. Day and night the hate-Cuba propaganda pounded the American public over radio and TV. This was the time chosen by Healy to add his bit: "Moves by Fidel Castro to offer an 'Alliance for Progress' to the United States reveals the absolute bankruptcy of his petty-bourgeois ideology . . . deal . . . lays bare the complete betrayal of the Cuban people by the Soviet bureaucracy . . . blind-alley into which the Cuban leaders have empirically led the Cuban people . . . slow disintegration of a once-popular rebellion . . . ideas

of the revisionists in Europe and America have been proved demonstrably false by events in Cuba."

And on what factual basis does this well-timed "exposure" of Castro rest? An interview by *New York Times* correspondent Richard Eder. The accuracy of this interview was questioned on all sides at the time by supporters of the Cuban Revolution. In Paris, *World Outlook* wrote for instance that the "offer" which Eder claimed Castro made to "withhold material support from Latin-American revolutionary movements if the United States and its hemispheric allies would cease their material support of subversive activity against Cuba" is "quite contrary to the line Castro and his government have followed." *World Outlook* pointed out that the official Spanish version of the interview said nothing about any such offer. Inquiries made in Havana by other supporters of the Cuban Revolution soon established that either Eder had not understood Castro, had garbled what he said, or it had been garbled or falsified in the office of the *New York Times*.<sup>7</sup>

#### How to Mix Up Cuban Sugar And British Coal

Yet on the basis of this garbled interview or deliberate falsification, printed during a ferocious imperialist lynch campaign against Cuba, Healy's *Newsletter* dared to shriek "betrayal" and devote an entire page to "exposing" the "absolute bankruptcy" of Castro's "petty-bourgeois ideology"! A little closer look at this masterpiece of Healyite "theory" will prove enlightening.

7. Castro said, diplomatically, that he had been "misunderstood." By way of rectification, the *New York Times* under a July 27 dateline from Santiago de Cuba quoted from a speech made by Castro the previous day in which he made a specific denial. Here are some key sentences which we have translated from the text of the speech:

"But in one of the questions, he asked me: 'And the question of aid from Cuba to the revolutionary movement, in Latin America, is that negotiable?' Well, I thought that the question referred to this aid that they say we are giving to revolutionary movements in Latin America; and I didn't say yes or no. In other words, I didn't say whether we have been helping them or not helping them. I limited myself to answering his question. And I told him: 'Look, aid to the revolutionary movements can't be negotiated, it can't be negotiated' — I told him [Applause]. 'If you ask me another question, that is, if you ask me if our country is capable of living up to international norms, I would then say, yes; but we are not going to negotiate solidarity. This would not be worthy of revolutionists; and if we happen to give some aid or ask for some aid, it's not in order to negotiate on the basis of such aid, no.'"

The July 31 issue of *World Outlook*, published the pertinent extracts from the Spanish text of the interview, quoted the rectification published by the *New York Times* and specifically called attention to the blunder of the *Newsletter* in utilizing the Eder interview as the basis for its one-page spread in the July 18 issue. To this day the *Newsletter* has not seen fit to print a rectification.

"Castro proposed to halt all material aid to Latin American revolutionaries," says the *Newsletter*, excitedly repeating the falsification in Eder's interview.

"This was part of a whole series of proposals whose end result would be the re-integration of Cuba into the capitalist world market." The "end result" is not Castro talking. It is the *Newsletter's* own little contribution; or, if you wish, the author's contribution. The author is "Ed Stilwell." We never heard of him but let us suppose that he is a new writer, who, by way of encouragement in starting out in the four-page *Newsletter*, was told to go ahead and take all of page two.

Slanted reporting of the garbled or falsified interview continues. "This pattern should be clear enough," says Stilwell. "Castro is proposing first of all to turn his back on the struggling masses of Latin America if the United States will guarantee the security of his regime." That's not Castroism in Cuba or anywhere else in Latin America; it's just pure Healyism in distant London.

We finally reach a paragraph that touches Healy's theoretical position:

"These steps, without a single denationalization, will mean the complete integration of the Cuban economy into the world capitalist economy and furthermore its integration as a subordinate, colonial, dependent section of this world economy."

Such an economy, we are told, "will have even less weight" than the nationalized coal industry in Great Britain's economy. And just as the nationalized coal industry "supplies cheaply an important raw material for Britain's giant capitalist establishments, so a nationalized economy in Cuba will supply an important raw material, sugar, for the American capitalists of the North." This platter of coal dust, served up with a sugar frosting, goes for theoretical reasoning in the Socialist Labour League. Let us extend the analogy. All of British industry, banking and transport, might be nationalized; key sectors of the land, too; the British bourgeoisie graciously given exit visas to go to Boston the way the Cuban bourgeoisie went to Miami; a planned economy might be begun; a whole series of gains for the masses instituted, such as cutting rents in half; the economic orientation of the country shifted into the Soviet bloc; the government that came to power in a great popular revolution leading to the destruction



of the old army, police, and state apparatus could call itself Marxist-Leninist and begin intensive mass education, using the works of Marx and Lenin as texts; and still at 186 Clapham High it would be said this is only "bourgeois nationalism," the proof being that if trade relations were resumed with the capitalist USA then all the nationalizations in Britain would have no more significance than municipal ownership of the subway system in New York.

As can be seen, the dish of British coal and Cuban sugar tends to end up as an intestinal obstruction. Reasoning by analogy has its dangers. Yet with such methods the leaders of the Socialist Labour League determine their policies in relation to the Cuban Revolution. Read further:

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the Cuban Revolution, though the most radical colonial revolution of the last decade, has not brought about a definitive break with world capitalism and in no sense has a workers' state been established."

Continue reading: "Castro now admits this if one looks a little deeper than the radical rhetoric which he uses in common with other bourgeois nationalists like Ben Bella and Nkrumah."

The publishers of the *Newsletter*

have indeed sucked a great deal of journalistic pap from Eder's thumb. Note the twists and turns and loaded language: "Castro admits" . . . "admits"? "if" one pays no attention to what he says. And Castro, Ben Bella and Nkrumah constitute one reactionary crew of demagogues, all three being just "bourgeois nationalists." Yes, "bourgeois" was the word chosen by the theoreticians of the *London Newsletter*.

Let's proceed a bit more deeply into the statements offered as theoretical analysis of the Cuban Revolution: "These steps . . . will mean." The tense is in the future. *If* a number of steps are carried out, sometime in the future, this will then mean that the Cuban Economy *will* be integrated . . . completely . . . and "will supply" the U.S. with cheap sugar; therefore the Cuban Revolution has not "brought" about a definitive break with "world" capitalism and "in no sense" has a workers state "been established." The tense has suddenly shifted to the past. A prediction establishes a past condition, operating retroactively before it is confirmed. Healy, we are compelled to admit, has developed Marxist theory to new and quite unforeseen heights.

Trade relations with the capitalist

world market are presented as decisive in determining the character of a workers state. All the criteria used up to now by Trotsky and the world Trotskyist movement have been dumped. The criteria of a popular revolution (or Soviet control), of the destruction of bourgeois rule and bourgeois property relations, the nationalization of property and the establishment of a state monopoly of foreign trade and then a planned economy have all been discarded by the *Newsletter's* "Marxist" contributor. Everything now hinges on Cuba's relation to the world market. But why confine this to Cuba? What about Yugoslavia? What about the Paris Commune? And in the case of the Soviet Union . . . was it the *reduction* of ties with the world market that made it a workers state? (As the first workers state it could not shift to relations with a Soviet bloc.)

The most ridiculous part of the analysis is that if only this single revisionist criterion were applied, Cuba would have to be called a workers state *today*. It's principal economic relations are with the Soviet bloc. Therefore if the Healyite formula is correct, Cuba became a workers state when the U.S. established its economic blockade and forced Cuba to carry on the bulk of

## VICTIMS OF APARTHEID TERROR APPEAL FOR AID

The trial of the noted South African scholar, Dr. Neville Alexander, originally scheduled for December of this year, has been postponed to March 1965. The trial is being held-up because South African prison authorities refuse to allow defense attorneys to obtain signatures from Dr. Alexander and his seven co-defendants, who are imprisoned in Robben Island — South Africa's version of a Nazi concentration camp.

The fact that prison authorities won't allow his lawyers to see Dr. Alexander and his comrades is further evidence of the maltreatment of prisoners in this camp. Heinous crimes and atrocities are committed against the native African prisoners, including the notorious Tausa "dance" in which the prisoners are made to strip naked before the racist prison guards allegedly to deter-



Dr. Alexander

mine whether they are concealing weapons.

Prisoners are allowed to get only one letter and one visit per half year.

Dr. Alexander's case is one of the most important in the growing world-wide struggle against *apartheid*. Defense committees for Dr. Alexander and his co-defendants have been formed in many countries, including West-Germany, where Dr. Alexander studied, Japan and England.

Funds are urgently needed to support this case. Of the \$12,000 which will be necessary to carry through an appeal, about \$5,000 have been collected, mainly in West Germany. Your contributions may be sent directly to Franz J. T. Lee (Secretary) Dr. Alexander Defense Comm., University of Tübingen, 74 Tübingen, Froschgasse C 2, West Germany, or to the *International Socialist Review*, 116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y.

its trade with the Soviet bloc. By the same logic it will remain a workers state until such time as those trade relations actually come to an end.

At this point we could say that if this Healyite theoretician really believed his own theory, it would be possible to make a political bloc with him in defense of the Cuban workers state. We know that Eder's interview was either garbled or falsified and in any case the alleged "offer" by Castro was rejected by the State Department the very day after the interview was printed. Thus, if the criterion is valid, Cuba will remain a workers state for some time unless it is crushed by the U.S. or undergoes such prolonged isolation that it eventually completely degenerates, a possibility that appears little likely in the world of today. So why not join in common efforts to keep the Cuban workers state safely trading with the Soviet bloc? The trouble is that our author is too unstable and too illogical. He doesn't stick with the revisionist criterion he has advanced, he won't hold to its logic. He is motivated by other considerations. To confirm Healy's line, the Cuban government must "betray" — yesterday, today, tomorrow, continuously, all the time.

And so Stilwell, this scintillating new addition to the *Newsletter's* staff, continues on the theme of Castro having "turned to the capitalist camp." (How can a *bourgeois* nationalist turn to the capitalist camp? Was he then in some other camp?) "Castro's policy was thus a sort of peaceful co-existence with a vengeance." Even "partial support for limited revolutions was not to last for long." The proof advanced by the author for this remarkable assertion is none other than *Venezuela*, the very country that was being used by Washington to spearhead the campaign against Cuba while Stilwell was working on his contribution for the *Newsletter*. In this way we are offered the sharpest possible contradiction between Healy's estimate of Castro and that of the imperialists.

We cite as evidence of the imperialist estimate, two paragraphs from the editorial which appeared in the *New York Times* of July 27, the day after the OAS passed its counterrevolutionary resolution.

"The real issue in the much-feared subversion of Latin America by Marxist-Leninist Cuba is not a physical one," say the editors. "Premier Castro is not in a position to arm

any Latin-American opposition effectively even if he wanted to, and his Communism has been a disillusionment, not an appeal, in the hemisphere.

"The 26th of July celebrations underline Dr. Castro's effectiveness as a subversive agent. It is the fact that he and his regime survive after more than five and a half years of turmoil, economic collapse, the exodus of a great number of middle-class and professional elements, and after everything that the United States could do to him short of a military invasion, which gives him his greatest impact on Latin America. So long as he remains a towering figure on the hemispheric scene — hated, feared and despised by many; loved and admired by some — he will be a grave danger to Latin America and, because of his connections with Russia, to the United States."

Healy's toying with Trotskyist theory presents him, as one of the rewards, with an impenetrable mystery. His revisionist conclusions block any rational understanding of the course of American imperialism in relation to Cuba and the rest of Latin America. Thus, to refer again to the "clarifying" article on Cuba in the July 18 *Newsletter*, we read:

"There is, of course, some question as to the attitude of the United States towards these developments. On the surface, the US stance seems to completely preclude any kind of coming to terms with Cuba — even though this would obviously lie in the best interests of US imperialism."

Contrary to the *Newsletter* there was no question about the U.S. attitude. It was restated by the State Department the day after the Eder interview. Two issues are "not negotiable," a State Department spokesman told the press. One is "Castro's promotion of subversion elsewhere in the hemisphere" and the other is his "ties of dependency with the Soviet Union . . ."

Our *Newsletter* pundit, however, knows better. To him it's obvious where the "best interests of US imperialism" lie. He speculates that similar "intelligence" is "not totally excluded" among the U.S. rulers and that after the election Johnson might "be in a position to carry out some international wheeling and dealing that would make Kennedy look like a conservative." The implication is that Johnson might just pick up that "offer" reported in Eder's garbled or falsified report.

We would remind the publishers

of the *Newsletter* that the liberal Kennedy sponsored the armed invasion of Cuba that ended in defeat at Playa Girón. As for the potentially still more liberal Johnson (as the *Newsletter* sees him), he discarded even the shreds of Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress," sponsored a counterrevolution in Brazil last April, and did not hesitate during his campaign to order the bombing in the Gulf of Tonkin. In the term of office now before him, Cuba will remain one of his main targets — as it was for Eisenhower and Kennedy. The truth is, as a rudimentary class analysis should show anyone, it is "obviously" in the best interests of American imperialism to crush the Cuban Revolution, thus counteracting the example it has set and teaching the rebellious Latin American colonial slaves a fearful lesson. Under present circumstances, the Cubans have every reason for their alertness, their nervousness, and their repeated warnings about Washington's intentions. If American imperialism does not move in a sudden violent way to crush Cuba it is because the Wall Street brain-trust calculates that the overall relationship of class forces on a world scale is not propitious for the operation. If, under certain circumstances, they should be compelled to "recognize" the Cuban Revolution as Henry Ford finally had to recognize the Auto Workers union, it would be due to a new change in the relationship of class forces, further weakening the American position.

With the counterrevolutionary victory for American imperialism in Brazil last April, the immediate perspectives for Cuba darkened. The chances for another military thrust under Pentagon auspices rose. But that does not mean another attack is inevitable. The combined strength of the Soviet Union, the East European countries, the swiftly rising power of China, the newly freed colonial countries like Algeria, and solidarity with the Cuban Revolution — which remains a mighty force in Latin America, and even inside the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Europe — can compel American imperialism to procrastinate, to postpone the military showdown it would like to undertake just as it has procrastinated and postponed its timetable for World War III. If this can be accomplished it will be a tremendous victory for the Cuban Revolution and for the socialist revolution on a world scale. It is a realizable goal.

Healy sees otherwise. His stand on the Cuban Revolution has taken him farther and farther away from the world Trotskyist movement.

"The recent events in Cuba," the *Newsletter* claims in its assessment of the garbled or falsified Eder interview, "have confirmed irrefutably that no petty-bourgeois leadership and party can establish a workers' state. The working class in Cuba have neither power — nor the semblance of it — the militia, the agrarian reform and the nationalizations notwithstanding."

In other words, we are told, there is no workers state in Cuba today and no hope of establishing one so long as the Castro government remains in power. Healy has ruled out consideration of the Castro regime as even a Workers and Peasants Government, the possibility of which was forecast and discussed by the Communist International in Lenin's time and referred to again by Trotsky in the *Transitional Program*. Incapacity to distinguish shadings, incapacity to appreciate their importance, readiness to brush them aside, are quite characteristic of ultraleftism.

What conclusions do the SLL revisionists of Trotskyist theory draw from this?

"Cuba can and will be defined as a workers' state only when a revolutionary party based on the programme of the Fourth International has successfully overthrown the capitalist state — at present represented by the bonapartist dictatorship of Castro — and replaced it by the dictatorship of the working class."

Note that. Stilwell can and will define Cuba as a workers state "only when a revolutionary party..." And what happened to the criterion brought down with such authority earlier in the same article, according to which a country's relations with the world market are absolutely decisive in determining the class character of the state? Tossed in the wastebasket. That, we might say, is where it belongs. The framework of Healyite theory is not sturdy enough for any other use.

If Healy succeeds in overthrowing the Castro government, what economic and social program will he put into effect? Does he propose to undertake an agrarian reform, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, extensive nationalizations, the institution of planned economy — in brief, the measures already carried out under Castro? Will he mobilize the youth to end the illiteracy already

ended under Castro? Will he smash Batista's army, police and state by leading a true armed insurrection from Pico Turquino? If the economic and social overturn accomplished under Castro was only the "radical rhetoric" of a "bourgeois nationalist," a "Chiang Kai-shek," what kind of "radical rhetoric" does Healy propose? It would be well for him to inform the Cuban proletariat — peasants, too — more specifically about how he proposes to accomplish what has already been accomplished before he sets out from the London docks in a British *Granma*.

### Recent Binge

Is Healy, then, incapable of anything but the most barren ultraleftist course? Not at all. In the case of Bevan, he was, with the help of the international movement, able to avoid shipwreck. The leaders of the Socialist Workers party can testify to this, and they are expert witnesses, as we know from the *Newsletter* itself. It is just that now, having cut off his international ties, Healy gives way to moods he has probably long resented curbing. He is on an ultraleft binge.

The evidence could not be clearer. The *Newsletter* reveals in its pseudo reply to Comrade Peng that Healy was capable of offering critical support to Bevan — when Bevan was moving to the left. But did Bevan ever move as far to the left as Castro? Take a look at the record. In contrast to the genuine revolutionist Castro, what was Bevan? A "fake left," as the *Newsletter* might say. Now if Healy could at one time offer critical support to the fake left Bevan — and it was correct to do so at a certain stage — yet today refuses to offer critical support to a truly revolutionary figure like Castro, it is possible to draw only one logical conclusion: Healy has changed. His politics are no longer the same. He is now on an ultraleft binge. Today Healy will not offer critical support to a government that has carried out a genuine socialist revolution — even when it is suffering an economic blockade, diplomatic assault, and the standing threat of military aggression organized by the world's mightiest imperialist power. He calls for the beleaguered government to be overthrown as "capitalist."

The true situation is this: Neither the Socialist Workers party nor the majority of the world Trotskyist movement have given up the fundamental political course they have followed since the Fourth International

was founded. The main sectors of the movement independently reached the same basic conclusions on a new major world event, the Cuban Revolution. For whatever reasons, Healy proved incapable of keeping up. He suffered the most unhappy fate that can befall a revolutionist. He was unable to recognize a revolution when he saw one. The events in Cuba, in the whole colonial world, were beyond him.

His comrades and friends, even at the cost of some abuse, allowed him a couple of years to discover that his position was untenable and that wisdom called for a retreat. He chose the opposite course. The result was that he ended up in a minority in the International Committee. When the majority decided that it was time to go ahead, that it was a necessity to proceed with the unification of the world Trotskyist movement, Healy broke ranks. Instead of joining in the Reunification Congress and abiding by the rules of democratic centralism, which would have permitted him to present his point of view inside the movement, he decided to take his case to the public.

In the process he deepened his errors. He began floundering. On the eve of the British elections, readers of the *Newsletter* must have been hard put to determine who was the main enemy, the Tories, Pablo, James P. Cannon, Harold Wilson or Peng Shu-tse. (From the ultraleft viewpoint, of course, there wasn't much difference, the whole world outside of the Healyites being one reactionary mass.) Much worse than the ridiculous figure Healy made of himself with his display of unbridled factionalism was such an error as finding himself issuing a private declaration of war on the beleaguered Castro government at the very moment the Johnson administration was ramming through its warmongering OAS resolution.

During the period leading up to the Reunification Congress, the Chilean Section of the International Committee warned Healy that his position on the Cuban Revolution would signify political hara kiri for anyone who clung to it. They pleaded with him to reconsider. Healy paid no attention. The inevitable has now occurred. So far as the Latin-American revolution is concerned, Healy committed hara kiri publicly in the pages of the July 18 *Newsletter*.

Even in Great Britain, if I am not misinformed, such a mishap is considered bad for one's political health.

## Letter from Britain

# Labour Party In Power

By Roger Protz

The Labour Party has come to power in Britain with a cliff-hanging majority of 5 over the Tories and Liberals. The tide that seemed to be running so strongly for Labour receded at the last moment; the middle class dithered, pondered, worried, then either stayed at home or voted for the Liberals. But there was no mass swing to Labour. They govern almost by default.

But they do govern, however small the majority, and it is an historic occasion for the British labour movement, which has emerged from the political twilight after 13 years of Tory rule. It is an astonishing result. The Tories, the entrenched, ruthlessly-efficient party of the ruling class, are out of office at a time of relative economic and political stability and British politics are in the melting pot.

Why did the Tories lose? The economic stability is indeed very relative; underlying the apparent affluence are all the cross-currents of crisis and, although only the myopic sectarians of the left would see in the present balance of payments crisis the rapid downfall of British capitalism, it seems clear that the post-war boom will end with a bang, not a whimper.

British industry has failed to modernize. The monopolists and big employers have been content, in recent decades, to rest on their laurels and dream of their once dominant position in world trade. Cut-throat competitors, meanwhile, have been forging ahead on the continent and in Japan, and, thanks to heavy handouts from the United States, even the vanquished of World War II have overtaken the somnolent British lion.

Britain flounders at the bottom of every economic league. Now there is a frenzied spate of activity. Modernisation and planning are the key words on everyone's lips (well, almost everyone: we have a few latent Goldwaters of our own). Schemes and blueprints for the 'new Britain' are on countless drawing boards. Tory ministers and their allies in big business looked optimistically to the future but, in their hearts, knew that their plans could only succeed with a frontal assault on the mighty British labour movement.

All these pressures have been at play inside the Tory Party for the past few years and even those calm, unruffled ranks were knocked sideways by a sudden series of events which mirrored the economic crisis: the Profumo affair, which revealed a half-hidden world of rich pimps and influential prostitutes and produced the startling anachronism of a capitalist politician who had most pronounced egalitarian traits so far as his sexual prowess was concerned; followed by the rough removal of premier Harold Macmillan and the obscene picture of bourgeois gentlemen fighting like alley cats for his discarded mantle. Even feudal Lords joined in, discarding crowns, coronets and ermine in all directions in order to get a piece of the game. Lord Hailsham became a Hogg, but was pushed aside in the melee, and the cadaverous Lord Home, now the more plebeian Sir Alec Douglas-Home, was chosen as leader.

### Middle Class Panic

Although Labour came to power, the party's vote was fractionally down, compared to the 1959 result. Labour's stock 12 million supporters, predominantly working class, were again solidly behind Harold Wilson, but the party made no inroad at all to the middle-class vote. The Liberals trebled their vote, to over 3 million, but, because of the vagaries of the electoral system, have only 9 members in the new parliament. But the size of this Liberal vote holds a great menace for the left; here lie many of the seeds of middle-class discontent which, in the next decade,

might easily overspill the Liberal Party, with its laissez-faire programme, and form the nucleus of an extreme, authoritarian party — unless Labour can make a dynamic effort to win the allegiance of the middle class.

But at the moment, all eyes are on Labour. Harold Wilson has declared that however small and tenuous his majority, he will govern for as long as possible and will press ahead with the reforms outlined in his election manifesto: nationalisation of the great steel industry, riddled by price rings, which even the Tories admitted was not being run in 'the national interest'; repeal of the Rent Act, a hated piece of Tory legislation, which allowed landlords free reign to push up rents and mercilessly evict tenants, often with the help of thugs and alsatian dogs; push the old-age pension — Britain's old people are probably the most disgracefully treated of any western country — and general reforms of the social services. This is a very limited and timid programme, but, if it is pushed through, could bring some relief to many sections of the community.

Wilson knows that he will have a tough time getting some measures, especially the nationalisation of steel, through the House of Commons; both Tories and Liberals will unite to oppose him. A united party is therefore vitally necessary. In order to try to tame his left wing — and it will not need much taming, for Labour's left-centrist lions have a traditional habit of tucking their tails between their legs and scurrying towards the right at a time of crisis — Wilson has taken a number of their spokesmen into his cabinet. Barbara Castle leads a new ministry for overseas development, Frank Cousins, boss of the giant, bureaucratic Transport Workers union, also has a new job, Minister for Technology, and Anthony Greenwood, once an impassioned nuclear disarmament, goes to the colonial office, where his first move was to refuse to dismantle the Tory gerrymandering in British Guiana, designed to unseat Cheddi Jagan at the next, enforced, election there.

### Ray Gunter

Wilson has also stocked his cabinet with a number of staunch right-wingers, of whom the most dangerous, as far as the left is concerned, is the little Welsh demagogue Ray Gunter, who goes to the Ministry of Labour. Gunter, a leading hatchet man against the Marxist left in recent years, is a pronounced campaigner for trade union reform and will attempt to speed up the Tory plans to embroil the union bureaucrats more closely into the state machine through various planning bodies.

Everything points to the first major upsurge against the social democrats coming from the rank and file of the trade unions. While Labour Party activists will prefer to bide their time and 'give Wilson a chance,' industrial workers, ignoring the frantic advice of their union leaders, will press ahead with their struggles for better wages, hours and conditions, hoping at first that Wilson will be kindly disposed towards them but soon finding out what his real intentions are. And once the union militants move into action, it will not be long before the Labour Party left-wing, which has strong links with the unions, joins the march.

A fruitful and vital period lies ahead for the British Marxist movement. With patience and perseverance, pushing aside all sectarian tendencies, it can build a strong base in the coming months. Already Wilson is attempting to solve the balance of payments crisis in a purely capitalist way — heavy taxes on imports and free handouts to monopolies and even the most backward British industrialists, a step which will undoubtedly draw retaliatory measures from Europe and only make worse the present situation.

Frenzied screaming from the ultra lefts about 'traitors' and 'scabs' will not help unseat Labour's right-wing; on the contrary, it will turn many possible supporters of Marxism away in distaste and help to further entrench Wilson and company. If instead the Marxists can calmly counterpose to Wilson's solutions, thoroughgoing socialist proposals, we can win a great army of support and look with enthusiasm to the future.

# Question of Alliances in Negro Freedom Struggle

By George Breitman

As much as any tendency in this country, the Socialist Workers Party has attempted to understand and explain how much the Negro people, although a minority, can accomplish through struggle on their own, alone and unaided if necessary. (See the SWP's 1963 convention resolution, *Freedom Now: The New Stage in the Struggle for Negro Emancipation*, and *How a Minority Can Change Society*.) At the same time we have always believed and stated that in order to win genuine and complete equality the Negroes will need powerful and reliable allies, at home as well as abroad.

But not all alliances are good.

Recognition of this fact is the chief virtue of an article about the problem of Negro-white alliances, "The Negro Revolt: The Push Beyond Liberalism," by Sam Bottone in *New Politics*, Summer, 1964. Bottone is a member of the Socialist Party's national committee and evidently a member of one of its left wings since he opposed support of Johnson. His views on the Negro struggle are unorthodox in his party; another SP leader, Paul Feldman, attacking Bottone's position on Johnson in the Oct. 15 *New America*, needles him this way: "Does Bottone support the Freedom Now Party? . . . His articles on the civil rights movement hover on the brink, but he has not publicly, to my knowledge, taken the plunge."

"The question of Negro-white alliances," writes Bottone, "is of vital importance and in the long run, the success of the civil rights movement will hinge on the alliances it develops." With this we concur, provided that the phrase "in the long run" is not overlooked. He continues:

**"Three distinct strategies on this question have begun to emerge: 1) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance is the movement's most immediate need and must be achieved at almost any cost, even the sacrifice of the movement's militancy and, if necessary, the weapons [demonstrations, direct action, etc.] which brought it into being; 2) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance is a fraud; the Negro must achieve his freedom by his own efforts, reject-**

**ing entangling alliances; 3) the Negro-labor-liberal alliance must be forged on the civil rights movement's own terms, not by sinking to the level of current liberalism but by pushing the labor movement beyond liberalism."**

Bottone is opposed to Strategies No. 1 and 2, and favors No. 3. We think we know what he means by No. 3, but his formulation is rather confusing. He says he wants a Negro-labor-liberal alliance, but he doesn't want it at "the level of current liberalism." Jokes could be made at his expense: Does he want an alliance at the level of past liberalism or future liberalism? Is he silly enough to think that liberalism is capable of becoming its radical opposite, or that if it did, it should still be called liberalism? We doubt that, judging by the generally critical appraisal of liberalism elsewhere in his article.

Then why does he include the liberals in the kind of alliance he favors? What he actually wants, if we read him correctly, is a Negro-labor alliance supported by other sections of the population, with the labor component of that alliance pushed "beyond liberalism," which is labor's present ideology. In short, an alliance of the Negro movement with a *radicalized* labor movement, that is, a labor movement considerably different from the one that now exists. We shall return to this point after considering his remarks about Strategy No. 2.

## Rustin Tendency

On Strategy 1, Bottone is at his best. Here he is writing about the predominant position of his own party, although he refers to it as the "Bayard Rustin tendency." (It is also essentially the position of the Communist Party, the labor bureaucracy and various middle-class radical groupings.)

Rustin, as Bottone notes, is one of the most influential figures in the civil rights movement. He "has considerable influence with Martin Luther King, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, and sections of CORE and SNCC" (and also the Reuther section of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, sections of

the pacifist movement, etc.) Rustin has "long been identified with militant and radical views," but he now expresses "a distinct political tendency in the civil rights movement whose appeal is militant and radical in rhetoric, but quite the contrary when put into action . . . His views illustrate how seemingly radical conceptions can have a conservative influence and lead away from building and strengthening a militant movement."

Bottone documents his indictment, showing that on a wide range of incidents and issues Rustin has become a foremost opponent of militant actions that might embarrass or antagonize white liberals and labor leaders. This is hardly a new position in the Negro movement. But Rustin presents it in the following modern, sophisticated, pseudo-radical dress:

The civil rights movement has now gone as far as it can on its own; its economic and social objectives can be won only if fundamental changes are made in society; such changes can be made only through a realignment of the political structure into consistently liberal and conservative parties; and only a Negro-labor-liberal alliance can bring about such a realignment. But you can't get allies by doing things they don't like. So you must stop doing such things, and limit yourselves only to things they approve of.

Don't call this Uncle Tomism, call it Bayard Rustinism. Whatever it's called, this policy would, in Bottone's words, disarm the civil rights movement "ideologically in the face of the enemy, who would transform it into a pale appendage of liberalism and the Democratic Party." Not only would, but has, with few exceptions.

Much less satisfactory is Bottone's treatment of Strategy No. 2 ("the Negro-labor-liberal alliance is a fraud; the Negro must achieve his freedom by his own efforts, avoiding entangling alliances"). This position he attributes to "various separatist and black nationalist tendencies in the Negro movement" and to "left political tendencies" "operating on their fringes."

In the first place, the way he pre-

sents this position is neither clear nor adequate. If somebody wants to avoid entangling (impeding, obstructive) alliances, does that mean he is opposed to *all* alliances, to non-entangling alliances?

### Unrelated Groups

Some Negro tendencies are undoubtedly opposed to all Negro-white alliances now and forever; others are opposed to harmful alliances, like Strategy No. 1, but are open, by implication at least, to other kinds, to useful and helpful alliances, if not now then later. Lumping together different and unrelated groups under Strategy 2 — Black Muslims, Freedom Now Party, *Liberator*, Socialist Workers Party, *Monthly Review*, Progressive Labor Movement, Revolutionary Action Movement or RAM, — merely because they have some similarities, may make it easier for Bottone to dismiss them all, but it prevents clarification of the alliance question.

We don't have room here to discuss all the groups Bottone takes up under Strategy 2. Some of them are really irrelevant; the Muslims do not engage in politics at all, and RAM, in its own ultra-leftist way, similarly has no time for such mundane activity as the Freedom Now Party's efforts to organize the Negro people in political opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties.

But let us discuss the FNP, which is relevant to the question of political alliances. Bottone locates it "somewhere to the left" of the Muslims as one of the "separatist and black nationalist" groups expressing a new "ideological militancy which rejects integrationist goals as conservative."

It would have helped if Bottone had defined some of these terms, instead of assuming that everyone accepts the same definitions. For example, what does "separatist" mean to him? That the FNP wants to separate the Negro people into a nation of their own? No unit of the FNP anywhere has taken that position. Does it mean that the FNP seeks to organize the Negroes *independently*, in their own party? This of course is its primary aim, but independent is a better and more precise word to describe it than separatist. **(Bottone seems to feel Negro political "separatism" is bad; does he also think Negro political independence is bad?)**

And what does he mean by "reject integrationist goals"? That FNP members are opposed to desegregation of everything everywhere? Or

that they do not aim at assimilation into the present society? Desegregation and assimilation are not the same thing, although both words unfortunately are widely used as synonyms for "integration." If I, or Bottone, fight to end racist segregation and discrimination and at the same time express the belief that Negroes will never get equality in a capitalist society, does that make us rejectors of integrationist goals? Bottone is a long way from clarifying things about the FNP that are closely connected with the question of alliances.

### FNP Program

This becomes even clearer when he declares, "The program of the Freedom Now Party is 'radical': it rejects the existing parties and calls for the nationalization of basic industries." Bottone is plainly ignorant of the fact that the FNP groups scattered throughout the country have never had a national convention and have never adopted a program. The FNP's only state convention so far was in Michigan, and all it adopted was a brief, general, state platform, with no reference whatever to nationalization of industry.

The FNP is therefore in an incipient stage, its program still in the process of being worked out and far from being adopted. It doesn't even call itself radical as yet, although by rejecting the existing parties and proposing a political alternative for the Negro people it surely occupies an objectively radical position in the American political spectrum. **(We leave it to Bottone to explain why he insists on using quotation marks around "radical" when he talks of the FNP, as he does when he describes the SWP as "left.")**

Continuing his remarks about the FNP, Bottone says:

**"Its focus is on building an organized Negro political power which can pressure the white power structure into granting the Negro economic and cultural freedom. But the FNP rejects any relationship to other social forces in American society, and therefore ends up with the idea that the Negro community, if organized around something like the FNP, has sufficient power to win its demands from a hostile and inherently racist white society. The very nature of this approach pushes the FNP toward separatist solutions."**

It is premature, we repeat, to speak of the FNP "ending up" with an idea when it is virtually starting to form-

ulate its program and strategy. Some members may "reject any relationship to other social forces in American society"; others don't; and still others are trying to decide what relationships to other forces are possible, now or in the future, before deciding whether or not to reject them. **(Does Bottone really think that Negroes breaking with the capitalist parties, breaking to the left of them, would really reject any relationship to a mass revolutionary working class movement fighting for a program that included the eradication of racism?)**

Similarly, some FNP members may be sure that an independently organized Negro community does have the power, by itself, to win its demands from this society; others may not be sure but want to test the validity of this proposition by organizing and fighting and letting the answer be given through the outcome of struggle. (Not at all a bad way to find an answer.) At any rate, nobody knows at this point what the FNP, when constituted on a national basis and with an adopted program, will decide about such questions.

### All-Negro Party

Bottone isn't only weak on the facts about the FNP, he is deficient in his grasp of the whole concept. This becomes manifest when he says: "An all-Negro party makes sense only if the movement rejects integrationist goals and seeks economic, political and cultural separation from white society." But saying so doesn't make it so. Let us check the correctness of Bottone's statement about the "only" thing that would make sense of an all-Negro party by imagining we are listening to a discussion between an agitator for a Negro party and another Negro he is trying to convince.

**A:** We want genuine equality in this country.

**B:** You mean integration?

**A:** We don't mean what they call integration in the North today. We mean full freedom, where we have the same rights and opportunities as anybody else. But call it what you like. To get it, mighty big changes have to be made. Right?

**B:** Right.

**A:** But we've learned from long and sad experience that the Democrats and Republicans are our enemies, political agents of our oppressors. So we need a new party really dedicated to our freedom. We have also learned from experience that we can't trust white or white-dominated

groups. Very few whites seem to want a new party anyway. So we've got to organize ourselves and all other Negroes into a party of our own. That way we can have a party controlled by ourselves and won't have to worry about it selling us out to the white power structure.

**B:** Our people have been brainwashed so bad it will be hard convincing them to build such a party.

**A:** Everything worth doing is hard, but we think it can be done. Why don't you pitch in and help us?

**B:** But what are you going to do after you get a lot of Negroes in your party? What can 10 percent of the population do by ourselves?

**A:** Ten percent can do a lot. In areas where we are a majority, and they are many because of segregated housing, a mass Negro party could elect its own city, county, state and congressional representatives. They wouldn't owe their election to the Democrats or Republicans but to the black community, so we would control them. For the first time we would have real representatives in office, who could speak and act for us without divided allegiances and without having to get permission from the major parties, the liberals or the labor leaders.

**B:** But we'd still be a minority.

**A:** Sure, but in a much different and much better position than now. By solidly organizing a decisive part of the Negro community into our own party, we will have some real, undiluted political power for the first time. Meanwhile, the other side will be weaker.

**B:** What do you mean?

**A:** When Negroes walk out of the Democratic Party, it will be weaker. Without the Negro vote it won't be the majority party, it won't be able to win elections, it will begin to come apart. The unions' ties to the Democrats will be strained and, if it can't win elections, broken. The whole political structure will be scrambled up merely by our getting together in our own party.

**B:** But won't we still be a minority?

**A:** Yes, but I keep telling you, we'll be in a better position than ever before because we will have some real political power, which we'll be able to use for bargaining and negotiating purposes.

**B:** Bargaining and negotiating with whom?

**A:** With any "other social forces" that are willing to work together with us on our "own terms," formally

or informally, temporarily or permanently.

\* \* \*

Doesn't this concept of an all-Negro party, which is held and has been expressed by at least some FNP members, make as much "sense" as Bottone's dictum that such a party *must* reject integrationist goals and seek separation? We are not saying that this concept will or should shape the strategy ultimately decided on by the FNP forces; we are saying only that it is perfectly compatible with the organization of an all-black party.

Bottone is a prisoner of rigid, formalistic, undialectical categories. ("Integration" through "separation" seems impossible where thinking is frozen this way.) This becomes painfully clear when Bottone discusses the organizational structure of the political alliance needed to destroy racism in this country. He says:

**"The civil rights movement must express itself through a political party which fights uncompromisingly for its goals, a party free of ties to status quo forces. This is not and cannot be the Democratic Party. Nor can it be, as some have proposed, an all-Negro party. It must be a party which all working people can support and in which they can participate actively and democratically; a party which translates the demands of the civil rights movement in a broad economic and social program which will shape and guide the future of the entire nation."**

On the whole, very good. We have only one but. Why must there be a political party, one political party and only one, to accomplish what he wants? Who has ordained, on earth or in heaven, that this job can be done only by one party? Why can't there be two or more than two parties, an *alliance of parties* as well as of social forces — and why can't one of these be a party built by the Negro people, having their confidence, and maintained by them as a safeguard against sellout until such time as they no longer need fear one?

### Unions Default

If the union movement had done its job 25 years or even 10 years ago, if it had created an independent labor party fully committed among other things to the struggle for Negro equality, then it is possible, even likely, that the Negro people would have flocked to its banner as they did to the CIO in its early days, and the question of a black party might never

have come up historically. But the unions defaulted, they clung to the Democratic Party, they did everything they could to keep the Negroes in the same trap. And they are still doing this today.

That is why the FNP arose and strives to become a national party. It may turn out that the FNP, through its example of independence and through the effects it will have on the Democratic-labor coalition if it is successful in tearing the Negroes away from that coalition, will be a major factor stimulating the unions into long-overdue entry onto the road of independent labor political action. This surely is not a logical impossibility.

Bottone's Strategy 3, if we interpreted it correctly as well as charitably, calls for a Negro alliance with a radicalized labor movement, attracting the support of other forces willing to accept the leadership of that kind of alliance. But there is no such labor movement yet, unfortunately. The labor movement today is not pushed "beyond liberalism," but stuck deep in the quagmire of liberalism. So what does Bottone advise militant Negroes to do in *this* situation?

Does he advise them to *WAIT*, to wait politically until the labor movement begins to move? That of course is what the liberals in and out of the labor movement advise and insist. Or does he advise the Negroes to go ahead and organize themselves politically?

That is just what the FNP is trying to do, at a time when strong and acceptable allies are not in sight. If he can unfreeze his thinking a little, Bottone surely should be able to see that the organization of a *mass* FNP, disrupting the present coalition around the Democratic Party, is precisely one of the factors that will push the labor movement beyond liberalism and toward the kind of alliance he wants.

One of the most encouraging developments of recent years has been the way some Negroes have freed themselves from fetishes about "separation," "integration," "two-party system," etc. The result has been the unleashing of political creativity and initiative, which this country so badly needs. It is time for white radicals to overcome their fear of being ridiculed as white "black nationalists" and get rid of some fetishes of their own. The result here too would be refreshing and productive all along the line.

# ***Upheaval in Bolivia: An Eyewitness Report***

By Livio Maitan

LA PAZ, Nov. 20 — The commentaries in the world press on the events of recent weeks in Bolivia have played up a number of contradictory themes, talking about a victory of the *gorillas* [reactionary officer caste], of “Nasserite” tendencies in the army, of conflicts between the miners, the students and the peasant militia, of defeats suffered by the miners, etc. As for the Bolivian press, it speaks of a *revolución restauradora* [restorative revolution] and there has been a flowering of publications, resolutions, communiqués, declarations of positions. Bolivia is undoubtedly enjoying a period of “democratic liberties” which has few precedents in the history of the country and one quickly becomes aware of the relief everybody feels at being able to go home without finding the police there, without feeling that they are being followed, or that they must think twice before voicing their opinions in public.

However, it would be a serious mistake to go by surface appearances and pass things off by drawing an analogy with other situations in Latin-American countries in the past (despite the actual existence of certain analogies). In reality the process under way is specific and new for Bolivia itself.

It is necessary first of all to cite the essential facts (all the more so since the major press services gave very partial and tendentious reports).

## **Opposition to the MNR**

The erosion of the MNR [*Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*], headed by Victor Paz Estenssoro, had been going on for some years. Last year it reached an extreme degree with the December events, the split with Juan Lechín, and the foundation of the PRIN [*Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista*]. (The MNR had already suffered a

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split to the right under the leadership of Walter Guevara Arze.) The elections of last May 31 were completely fraudulent and Paz was elected for the third time in face of open opposition from the miners and the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the indifference of the peasants.

His days were numbered. Paz had no popular support whatsoever, having become in reality the symbol of open acquiescence to American imperialist domination of the country. Even the peasants, to whom the MNR regime had — partially — given the land could not forget the very limited character of the agrarian reform and the inescapable fact that their standard of living had undergone no actual improvement.

In the final analysis, Paz based himself exclusively on the support of the American embassy and a repressive apparatus whose unbelievable extent, organization, and cruel and barbarous character were disclosed by the recent events. Given the country's constantly worsening economic conditions and the impossibility for the regime to grant any concessions, even if only to certain sectors of the population, a profound ground swell became inevitable.

Beginning with September, in fact, this surge took on concrete expression, marking, it can be said, the beginning of a new rise in the mass movement in Bolivia. It is significant that the urban petty-bourgeoisie were the first to mobilize.

The first struggle of some scope was the teachers strike which lasted almost a month. (The teachers demanded an increase in their miserable salary which amounts to approximately \$40 [U.S.] a month.) The government took drastic measures, proclaiming a “stage of siege.” (The strike was accompanied by frequent demonstrations in the streets of La Paz and serious conflicts with the police.) A part of the national leadership of the unions, directed by the MNR, then decided to capitulate, signing a contract that was a sellout. Nevertheless, the strike continued in some cities.

Almost immediately after, the students in the secondary schools opened

a struggle in protest against an increase in the price of notebooks. Again the streets of the country's main city became the scene of demonstrations and struggles against the repressive forces.

At the same time, the government — which had already taken notorious measures against leaders of the political opposition, compelling them to go into exile or underground — took another grave step by establishing censorship of the press.

This provoked another wave of protest, including protests from conservative newspapers who decided to temporarily suspend publication. At the University of La Paz, demonstrations began that were to spread to all the principal towns of the country and culminate in the setting up of barricades on the La Paz campus by students and vanguard workers; and in the brutal occupation of the university by forces made up of the police, the special militia of the MNR (including women), and contingents of the army.

Clearly something more was at the bottom of all these demonstrations than the incidental reasons cited above. In truth, the whole movement had a very clear oppositional political significance of increasingly violent nature against the Paz regime, which now came under attack not only from the left but also from the center-right and the right.

## **Intervention of the Miners**

The student demonstrations at Oruro inevitably brought in the miners. Casualties in these demonstrations included dead and wounded and the repression was brutal even during the funerals that were held for the victims.

The army decided to move against “San José,” the mine center in the outskirts of Oruro where the miners have a radio station. Thanks to a relation of forces in its favor, the army came out on top. But meanwhile the decisive miners' centers of Siglo Veinte, Cataví and Huanuni were drawn into the struggle. The miners' forces from these centers met a contingent of the army close to the small village of Sora-Sora. The en-



counter ended in the complete rout of the army and the capture of arms and even some prisoners [see interview below]. The miners then decided to draw back to their bases before the army could open a counteroffensive.

### The Military Junta

The significant and symptomatic occurrence at Sora-Sora, together with the progressive deterioration of the situation in La Paz, were without doubt the decisive factors that determined the attitude of the military, above all Alfredo Ovando Candia, the chief of staff, and René Barrientos Ortuno, chief of the air force and vice president of the republic. According to sources here in La Paz who are in position to know, a meeting had already been held a few days before in which representatives of the army and a representative of the American embassy met with Paz Estenssoro himself. They came to the conclusion that Paz had to go and that Guevara Arze would be the candidate to succeed him. However, events did not permit such a well-calculated operation and it was under pressure of the situation which was precipitated that Barrientos turned to open rebellion at Cochabamba. A little later, despite the fact that Barrientos' rebellion was limited to this city, the army decided to bring down Paz (probably with his agreement) and to name a military junta.

At La Paz, crowds poured into the streets and then marched toward the government palace with Juan Lechín, who came out of the underground. Shots were fired at the crowd in fear that Lechín would be installed in the palace as the new president. Upon the arrival of Barrientos from Cochabamba, it was announced that two presidents had been named, Ovando and Barrientos. But the crowd displayed its hostility to Ovando, considering him to be a military chief of the MNR, and after two hours Barrientos announced the resignation of his colleague.

Thus began the rule of the junta headed by Barrientos. To a large extent they depended for the time being on the old personnel of the MNR and Barrientos named as ambassadors to Washington and Paris figures of the days of the *rosca* [the tin barons].

However, the situation remained fluid and the junta resorted to a policy of balancing between the contending forces. Barrientos began touring the country, making inter-

minable speeches. He listened to everybody, offering guarantees in all directions (promising above all to hold an "honest" election in the relatively near future), including overtures in the direction of the miners. He offered verbal assurances that he was inclined to examine the possibility of re-establishing workers' control with the right of veto — which Paz had cancelled — and one of his ministers went so far as to come out flatly for restoring workers' control.

In reality the junta has not followed a settled line up to now. The situation, as we said, remains fluid. The new government has no important base — at least at this stage — outside of the army, which also is not altogether sure (it must not be forgotten that with the exception of a contingent the Bolivian army is not composed of mercenaries and that the soldiers are in the great majority the sons of peasants and workers). Barrientos and those with him are compelled to operate in a context characterized by the fact that all the anti-MNR currents developed a convergent action, symbolized by the establishment of the Revolutionary Committee of the People which includes all political formations from the extreme right to Lechín's PRIN (only the Trotskyist POR [*Partido Obrero Revolucionario*] and the Communist party being excluded).

### "Democratic" Period

At present, all the classes and all the social layers — all sectors — are utilizing the "democracy" to state their respective demands, to press their claims; and it goes without saying that the ghosts of the old regime, the *rosca*, don't want the same things as the miners or the radicalized petty-bourgeoisie and the political currents that are taking shape and announcing themselves. Even old reactionary parties, the *rosqueros*, are reappearing such as the Liberal party and the PURS [*Partido Unido Republicano Socialista*]. Some parties are speaking up which claim to be new, calling themselves "movements" which did not exist in the past. Barrientos can only tack according to the wind and insist above all on his guarantee of a "democratic" election.

It is clear that various maneuvers are being prepared and projected of which it is difficult to foresee whether they will actually be carried out or not. However, their present meaning can be deciphered.

One of these maneuvers is the business of rightist or center-right parties

talking about mobilizing under the Christian Democratic banner (particularly the Social Christian party and the Falange [*Falange Socialista Boliviana*]). They are trying to present the Christian Democracy as a new, revolutionary experiment, in the Chilean style, calmly forgetting the specific Bolivian context.

For his part, the former president Siles Suazo — who was exiled by Paz Estenssoro last September — is seeking to reorganize the MNR by cleaning out Paz and his group. He is advocating the reunification of the forces that left the MNR because of the policies of the former leadership, particularly the PRA [*Partido Revolucionario Auténtico*] of Guevara Arze and the PRIN of Jaun Lechín.

As for the military, their political inexperience is glaring. In addition it is probable that there are two different tendencies. If the reactionaries are, without the least doubt, predominant, certain "Nasserite" aspirations unquestionably also exist. Barrientos, in the final analysis, may seek to play the bonapartist role and, along this road, stake out his political future. At bottom, his speeches and his tours imply that he has a perspective of this kind.

In general, everybody is trying to gain time and, in the final analysis, the junta is maintaining itself because none of the major currents are actually struggling against it, not even those holding the biggest reservations concerning it. The PRIN has a very equivocal position of waiting in relation to the junta and of collaborating to a certain degree with even rightist currents in the Revolutionary Committee of the People. Up to now Lechín has far from repulsed the advances made by Siles about a new edition of the MNR. The Communist party is divided at present into two branches. The right wing, led by Kolle, flatly pro-Soviet, is waiting for the junta to provide "democratic" elections. In the left wing, certain leaders, including Escobar of the Siglo Veinte mine, have invited Barrientos to visit the mine centers.

### Basic Social Forces

Behind all these groups and parties, behind all these operations, what are the real social forces involved and what are their present postures?

The miners came out of the recent battles with the conviction that they made an essential contribution to the downfall of the MNR. They are more resolute, more politically conscious,

better armed than ever. They have withdrawn to their strongholds where the central government power does not exist and where the only authority — even if it is sometimes challenged — is that of the unions. Siglo Veinte and Cataví justifiably consider themselves to be “free territory.” The left organizations — PRIN, the CP and the POR — are by far the most dominant. Guevara now has a small base, particularly at Huanuni; the Falange and the Social Christians are very weak. In some of the less politically sophisticated sectors there is some expectancy that the junta might actually organize elections and some are asking if Barrientos won't take the road followed by Colonel German Bush and Major Gualberto Villaroel.

Deep unrest is apparent among the urban petty-bourgeoisie and they are struggling with great energy. There is no doubt, however, that a considerable sector — the majority of students — are following the Falange. This clearly implies a very grave danger in view of the character of leadership of this party and its completely reactionary components. But among the petty-bourgeoisie the support to the Falange is, by and large, of a “Peronist” nature. The students particularly seek democratic liberties and emancipation from the imperialist tutelage.

The bourgeoisie as such is extremely limited, not representing an appreciable social and political force. It is nourishing hopes in the junta and would support any possible shift offering a guarantee of success. The “landholders” — a good part of them dispossessed of their land — are more dynamic and aggressive. They support the Falange above all and they hope that the hour of their rescue has sounded. They can wield influence in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors, particularly in certain towns.

The big unknown is the peasants. Much has been made of their allegedly siding with Paz Estenssoro in the October struggle. In reality, this occurred only in exceptional instances. At Sucre where it assumed some proportions, the evident explanation is that in this rampart of the reaction, the students are under the influence of the Falange. Elsewhere it was not the peasant militias that were involved in the battles but the mercenary militia and the MNR shock forces. The truth is that the peasants stood largely aside (minority forces helped the miners) and

they are now waiting expectantly. It is true that they are aware that the landlords raised their heads and they are distrustful of the new regime. In any case they cannot be considered to be partisans of the junta. They may follow either a new MNR or become allied with the left, if it is able to develop a clear, concrete and audacious policy.

This, in sum, is the alignment of forces. It can be added that everybody is trying to exploit to the maximum the present “democratic” pause in order to organize or reorganize their respective forces. What exists at present in Bolivia is a pause, an interval, a highly transitional phase, even if it cannot be said whether it will last for weeks or months.

### Symptoms of Conflict

The first signs of the coming conflicts are already apparent. Barrientos has raised the question, evidently a major one for him, of turning over all arms to the army. When he visited the mine districts, the union representatives replied by presenting the demands of the workers and explicitly stating that the arms will not be given up. Miners at the Siglo Veinte mine told me that they would sooner give up their wives and children than their arms.

In the countryside, reactionary Falangist elements have begun to vigorously demand that the land should be returned to its former owners (in the Potosí region) and they have even gone into action in the Sud Yungas region. The heads of the department of agrarian reform have found it necessary to issue a press release declaring that the titles granted under the reform still remain in effect.

It is clear that the present situation cannot extend for a long period. Instead there will soon be new developments, new dramatic battles.

In general, the relationship of forces is quite favorable to the revolutionary sector. But an element of considerable weakness persists. If one probes the causes which made it possible, despite the rise in the mass movement, for the preventive coup d'état to succeed (it has unquestionably dammed and interrupted the process for the time being), and for the army to remain intact as a whole, to which should be added the passivity of the peasants, it is necessary without the slightest doubt to single out the absence of a centralizing leadership capable of setting a clear unifying aim.

If, for example, the struggle at the university of La Paz is considered, it is to be noted that it had no precise aim whatever except to voice vehement protest against the regime of the MNR. Even the combat at Sora-Sora, which was of such importance, had no other aim but to express solidarity with the demonstrators at Oruro.

This lack of leadership persists. Lechin is proving to be more centrist than ever. The CP has no line, and even the program advanced by the COB [*Central Obrera Boliviana*] which reveals Trotskyist influence, has remained theoretical up to now. The POR, despite its important ties and its degree of influence in the decisive sectors, has not yet had the opportunity of proceeding as the actual direct leadership on a national scale.

It is probable that a relative prolonging of the present situation would favor the attempt to set up a new MNR — whatever its name; that is, the rightist course of Lechin, the PRIN and the COB itself. Conservative or reactionary pressure — for example the success of the junta's campaign for arms to be given up or a generalized attack by the landlords against the peasants — could precipitate sharp outbursts by pushing into struggle not only the miners but the broad masses who are at present hesitant.

Bolivia can again become the central revolutionary hotbed of Latin America in the coming months. It is objectively possible that a new breach will be opened in the system of imperialist capitalism in this continent which keeps on boiling despite the gains of reaction, particularly in Brazil. More than ever the outcome will depend, in the final analysis, on the role which a revolutionary leadership of the Bolivian masses can play.

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# Vivid Account of the Battle of Sora-Sora

[During a trip to the mine centers of Cataví and Siglo Veinte, a special correspondent from *World Outlook* interviewed V. E., a member of the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario*, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, and other miners who were with him at the battle of Sora-Sora. On the table of the small room where the interview took place, a machine gun, captured from the government troops at Sora-Sora, lay rather symbolically in full sight. The following is a translation of the interview.]

**Question: When did the miners begin to mobilize?**

**Answer:** They began mobilizing as soon as the news reached Siglo Veinte-Cataví about the demonstrations in Oruro and the repressions by the police and the army. We heard that people had been killed and wounded and that fights had broken out even during the funerals for the victims. Actually the news we heard was that there were a lot of dead and wounded which explains why the miners reacted so quickly and so violently.

**Q: What was their reaction concretely?**

**A:** The evening of the twenty-eighth [of October] they began to mobilize. During the night, 150 to 200 miners left Siglo Veinte in three trucks in the direction of Huanuni-Oruro armed with dynamite and old guns. A truck left at the same time from Cataví. During the same night they reached Huanuni where there was a concentration of forces. A discussion developed between the cadres of the CP [Communist party] — who are in the majority at Siglo Veinte — and the Trotskyist militants (aherents of the *Partido Revolucionario Obrero*, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, and of the newspaper *Masas*, the tendency led by Guillermo Lora).

**Q: What was the discussion about?**

**A:** The partisans of the CP didn't want to proceed into combat. Their fundamental argument was: the Trotskyists are armed the best so let them go first. So a truckload of Trotskyists moved to the head of the convoy. Two other trucks followed. At Sora-Sora they separated to go by different routes.

**Q: Where was the army?**

**A:** The army was on the other side of Sora-Sora and actually the first truck made contact with them right after leaving the village. Someone shouted at the first truck to stop. But at the same time the soldiers started shooting at the truck. It was still dark. The miners jumped out immediately and tried to hide along the side of the road. But seven — all of them Trotskyists — were wounded.

**Q: And the other trucks?**

**A:** One went as far as Machacamarca. But later the militants of the CP returned to Huanuni.

Meanwhile the men in the first truck got a truckdriver to take the wounded. In the morning everybody returned to Huanuni and started accusing the militants of the CP for not helping the first truck when it was attacked by the army.

**Q: What happened then at Cataví and Siglo Veinte?**

**A:** The radio station at Huanuni, controlled by the miners, broadcast the news about the first encounter. The situation was confused. They talked about sixty dead. This was when other trucks left Cataví and Siglo Veinte. I was in one of these trucks. We reached Huanuni around eleven o'clock while other people were arriving. After a quick lunch, we left the town and got to Sora-Sora around noon.

**Q: And then?**

**A:** We decided to advance on foot across the *pampa* [open flats], armed with dynamite and guns. We moved toward Machacamarca.

After feeding those who hadn't eaten at Huanuni, a meeting was held in which almost 200 miners participated. We had reached a crossroad.

**Q: How did the meeting turn out?**

**A:** Ordoñez, who is the leader of the CP at Siglo Veinte and at the same time the main trade-union leader, proposed we shouldn't go any further and about a hundred men, more or less, answered by getting into their trucks. The others, the Trotskyists and the miners who liked their attitude decided to go ahead. Later the partisans of the CP followed in turn.

Meanwhile a lot of other miners showed up. [The total number of miners involved was around 3,000. Some contingents of peasants joined them, according to reports. They went across the

*pampa*, occupying the surrounding hills.] The CP people switched back and forth a little, going back and then moving ahead again.

**Q: And the army?**

**A:** The encounter took place quite rapidly. The miners started attacking with dynamite, moving against a hill where a military contingent was entrenched and they defeated them. One soldier dropped, killed. The other soldiers began to run in a disorganized way, dropping their arms. They didn't want to fight. Some of them fired, but in the air, without hurting the miners. The miners captured some prisoners and a lot of arms.

**Q: Did the miners try to advance towards Oruro?**

**A:** No. There the army had really moved in a much bigger force, and brought up artillery. At the same time, it began to blow very hard and there were such clouds of dust that you couldn't see anything. The miners decided by a majority vote to return to their bases despite an opposing opinion held by some.

On its side, the army decided to stay in its positions and not to come to Huanuni, not to speak of Siglo Veinte and Cataví.

**Q: Did the miners return to Cataví-Siglo Veinte?**

**A:** Yes, they returned and the population was waiting for them, worried because there had been talk of a massacre.

Later a meeting was held to draw up a balance sheet. Ordoñez, the secretary of the union and a member of the CP, wasn't able to speak. They shouted at him: "Nurse. Servant girl." [He drove an ambulance during the struggle.] The report was made by a Trotskyist.

Well, those are the main facts. The miners now feel stronger and more confident than ever.

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## IN REVIEW

# The Leap from Open Shop To Industrial Unionism

By Tom Kerry

LABOR'S GIANT STEP: TWENTY YEARS OF THE CIO by Art Preis. Pioneer Publishers, 1964. 538 pp. \$7.50.

By Tom Kerry

There have been in recent years a spate of books published decrying and bemoaning the decline in prestige and influence of the American trade union movement. The liberal "friends" of labor are especially distraught over the absence of that crusading spirit which characterized the explosive birth and development of the CIO in the middle 1930's. They tend to "identify" with the movement of social reform which developed parallel with the rise of the CIO, little dreaming that it was precisely the liberal reform program, policy and practice embraced by the labor leaders which sapped the energy and devitalized the fighting spirit of the ranks.

Other critics go further. They proclaim the labor movement a putrefying corpse and write off the American working class as the historical agency of social transformation. Such sentiments are nothing new. With greater justification the Cassandra's of the "roaring 20's" wept over labor's lost cause and predicted in sepulchral tone that the American workers would never, but never, succeed in unionizing the mass production industries in this country.

The great merit in Art Preis's book is that he takes as his point of departure the profound wisdom of the sage who opined: "Ours not to weep but to understand!" To understand means to comprehend and relate the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is only thus that correct lessons can be derived from the history of labor's struggles. In the telling some sacred cows are gored, some hoary myths are laid. How can it be otherwise?

The twenty year period covered by *Labor's Giant Step* encompasses some of the most bitterly fought class battles in the history of the American labor movement. When the class struggle reaches such peaks of intensity it lays bare the anatomy of class society and discloses the true relationships between capital and labor and, more to the point, between labor and government, which

functions as the executive arm of the employing class. It is no surprise therefore, that Preis applies his scalpel to the most pernicious myth of all—the legend of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the friend and champion of labor and the scourge of the moneylenders who ruled the Temple of Mammon in Wall Street — and Washington.

### Myth of Roosevelt

Roosevelt's "New Deal" was a rescue operation designed to pump new blood into the sclerotic veins of American capitalism. In order to assure mass acceptance of the real and tangible subsidies doled out to business and agriculture Roosevelt felt constrained to make some concessions to the unemployed and to the organized segment of the American working class. The most highly touted was Section 7-A of the National Labor Relations Act.

Under Section 7-A the workers were ostensibly guaranteed the "right" to organize and bargain collectively through unions of their own choosing. The workers soon learned that this concession was more fictitious than real. To win this "right" labor was compelled to struggle on a massive scale. In practically all of the key union battles of the early period of the "New Deal" the central demand was for "union recognition." Invariably, Roosevelt's intervention aimed at undercutting, compromising and weakening labor's struggle for union recognition — sometimes through government "mediation" and when that failed, by force.

All this is part of the record. Despite Roosevelt's role the labor leaders continued to cling to his coat-tails and along with them the Stalinists, especially after Moscow laid down its People's Front line at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935. Time and time again the more advanced sections of the working class tried to break through the class collaborationist political barrier erected by the conservative labor and Stalinist



leadership. They failed. And therein lies the real tragedy of the historic movement sparked by the CIO.

### Unfinished Task

It remains one of the unfinished tasks of Labor's Giant Step from virtual non-organization to the building of what is numerically the largest and potentially the strongest organized labor movement in the world. In the short span from the rise of the CIO in the early 1930's to the outbreak of World War II the American working class proved unable to overcome its political immaturity. It did develop to a high degree its spirit of union consciousness. Thanks to the restraining influence of its leadership it failed to develop a comparable degree of political consciousness.

The wartime reaction and post-war period of prosperity-reaction served to further retard the political development of the American workers. While gaining many concessions in trade union battles with the employers they still remain captive to the class collaborationist policies of the conservative bureaucrats who head the union movement. But, it would be the most colossal error to prematurely pronounce a requiem over so lively a corpse. As Mark Twain observed when he was informed that his obituary had been published: "The news of my death has been greatly exaggerated."

The lesson Art Preis teaches is that of the enormous potential that is lodged in powerful loins of American labor. Since the rise of the CIO the American working class has suffered no major defeat. While its native militancy has been temporarily damped its explosive quality has not been impaired. Those who absorb the lesson Preis teaches and are able to probe below surface appearances can already discern the embryonic stirring of the molecular process that erupted with such volcanic force to accomplish *Labor's Giant Step* in the few short years of the middle 30's.

This is the book of a man who has lived, breathed and acted the events he describes. It is an indispensable antidote to the poison of pessimism that permeates the literary output of the prophets of despair.

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## Cuba and the CIA

**THE BAY OF PIGS: THE LEADERS' STORY OF BRIGADE 2506** by Haynes Johnson, with Manuel Artime, José Peréz San Román, Erneido Oliva, and Enrique Ruiz-Williams. W. W. Norton, New York, 1964. 368 pp. with index. \$5.95.

Haynes Johnson purports to tell, for the first time, the full history of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the ultimate fate of the Cuban counter-revolutionary prisoners. Most of the information is not new; it is a compilation, in book form, of the events as seen from the *invader's point of view*. As such, it does present some new information (that the first man ashore was an American CIA agent, for example) as well as omitting facts which tend to question the "individual and group heroism, dedication to principle, (and) self-sacrifice . . ." of the members of Brigade 2506 (the name given to the main landing force which trained in Nicaragua). Also, based on interviews with the counter-revolutionaries and authorized by four of the Brigade's officers, it underplays or ignores the spirit, unity and determination of the Cuban militia, army and entire population in defense of their revolution.

However, it does reflect the disillusion of the counter-revolutionaries with the CIA-Pentagon operation. And in this respect, some revealing new insights into CIA operational procedures are brought to light.

Edward Shaw

## RECOMMENDED READING

**REVOLUTION IN SEATTLE** by Harvey O'Connor. Monthly Review Press, 1964. 300 pp. \$5.00.

An excellent account of the 1919 Seattle General Strike written by a participant, who as a youth freshly imbued with the ideas and ideals of socialism — and who still remains a rebel — actively engaged in the great events now set down in the form of a "memoir."

**THE SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE** by Robert L. Freidheim. University of Washington Press, 1964. 224 pp. \$5.50.

A professorial commentary which seeks to bolster the author's thesis that the general strike was an unmitigated catastrophe for the American labor movement. Freidheim strains to maintain a posture of fine impartiality but his prejudice keeps peeping through his academic veneer. Recommended for its basic factual material.

**REBEL VOICES: AN I.W.W. ANTHOLOGY** by Joyce L. Kornbluh. University of Michigan Press, 1964. 419 pp.

(8½ x 11 inches) \$10 through Dec. 21 then \$12.50.

A handsome volume containing a fine collection of Wobbly songs, poems, articles from representative leaders, stories of many historical labor struggles, cartoons and drawings from the I.W.W. press, etc. Culled from the extensive Labadie Collection of Labor Materials in the University of Michigan Library. Every student of the American labor movement will be delighted with this volume.

**THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL** by Rosa Luxemburg, trans. A. F. Schwarzwald. Monthly Review Press, New York, 1964. 485 pp. \$7.50 cloth. \$3.95 paper.

A classic of Marxist economics first published in 1913, Luxemburg's study is a critical examination of Marx's theory of capital accumulation. Reprinted with a new introduction by Joan V. Robinson, British economist, it is required reading by every student of Marxist thought.

**GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY: 1918-1933** by Richard N. Hunt. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1964. 292 pp. \$7.50.

**THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GERMANY: FROM WORKING-CLASS PARTY TO MODERN POLITICAL MOVEMENT.** Yale University Press, New Haven, 1964. 257 pp. \$6.50.

The two volumes taken together constitute a study of the evolution and degeneration of the German Social Democratic Party from the post-World War I Weimar Republic to the present day. The counter-revolutionary role of the Social Democrats led ineluctably to the victory of Hitler in 1933 and then, following World War II, to the jettisoning of any trace of Marxism. Valuable as a study of bureaucratic degeneration of what was once the largest and strongest party in the Second (Socialist) International.

**AMERICAN SOCIALISM: 1900-1960**, edited by H. Wayne Morgan. Prentice-Hall, Englewood, N. J., 1964. 146 pp. \$1.95 paper.

A compilation of brief articles, comments and statements gathered from the Socialist press, books, magazines, etc., including fugitive selections from leading spokesmen beginning with Eugene V. Debs to Norman Thomas.

**THE PULLMAN STRIKE: THE STORY OF A UNIQUE EXPERIMENT AND OF A GREAT LABOR UPHEAVAL** by Almont Lindsey. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964. 385 pp. \$2.95 paper.

Account of an important event in American labor history. Out of the crucible of this great event, in which

the federal government ganged up with the railroad tycoons to smash the strike there emerged the most prominent figure of the American Socialist movement, Eugene V. Debs. The strike and its aftermath had a profound effect on the future development of unionism in the railroad industry.

**COMMUNISM IN EUROPE: CONTINUITY, CHANGE AND THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE**, Vol. I, edited by William E. Griffith. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, 1964. 406 pp. \$12.50.

**THE SINO-SOVIET RIFT** by William E. Griffith. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, 1964. 508 pp. \$2.95 paper.

Both books present detailed accounts of the ideological disputes which have characterized, since their beginnings, the evolution of the Communist parties in Europe. The first work contains separate essays on Yugoslav, Polish and Hungarian communism, and an essay on the Italian Communist Party; to Griffith's work on the Sino-Soviet dispute is appended a helpful and representative collection of recent Soviet and Chinese documents.

**BRENDAN BEHAN'S NEW YORK** by Brendan Behan with drawings by Paul Hogarth. Bernard Geis Associates, distributed by Random House, New York, 1964. 159 pp. \$5.95.

The many drawings by Paul Hogarth are admirable. However, it is not the guide book you would choose to give your old grandmother, coming to visit New York for the first time. The text is too unorthodox.

**THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT** by Karl Kautsky, with an introduction by John H. Kautsky. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1964. \$1.75 paper.

This is Kautsky's pamphlet of August, 1928, against which Lenin polemicized in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, and Trotsky in *Terrorism and Communism*. It remains one of the significant early polemics against the Bolshevik Party.

**THE MOVEMENT: DOCUMENTARY OF A STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY.** Text by Lorraine Hansberry. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1964. 127 pp. \$1.95.

This is a photographic essay, compiled with the aid of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. A large number of Danny Lyons' photos capture the essence of the Southern Struggle, from the viewpoint of a participant — and they comprise a collection otherwise not available to the public. The book can be obtained from SNCC, 6 Raymond St., Atlanta, Ga.

# Two Views on the Dialectics of Nature

(Continued from Page 2)

This correspondent has a more favorable attitude toward the dialectical conception of nature. But she suggests that it may be far less important in facilitating progress in physical science than it is for explaining and correlating its discoveries after they have been made.

Such a one-sided emphasis runs the risk of lapsing into the very Kantian dualism which she correctly criticizes in the case of the Existentialists. What is here involved are the organic connections among the unity of reality, the sum total of our knowledge, and the scientific inquiry which shuttles between them. If the dialectical method can be useful in clarifying the relationships of the knowledge of nature once it has been acquired, why cannot it be equally valuable in helping scientists to arrive at verified results? After all, the dialectical characteristics which are disclosed in the body of known facts must already have existed and been effective in the objective realities from which they have been derived.

If scientists should approach the problems for which they seek solutions in their particular fields with an informed understanding of the fundamental traits of development formulated in the laws of dialectical logic, why can't these serve as a general methodological guide in their concrete inquiries?

## Dialectical Assumptions

In fact, the most creative scientists have assumed the truth of this or that rule of dialectical logic in conducting their work, although they have done so in a piecemeal, haphazard, semi-conscious manner. Without referring to past examples, let's take the many non-Marxist scientists around the world who are cooperating with Oparin in studying the specific steps by which the most elementary processes and mechanisms of life have emerged from inanimate matter. Unlike him, they pay no heed to the fact that the transition of the lifeless into the living exemplifies at least two laws of dialectical logic.

One is the unity of opposites which states that A equals non-A; the other is the transformation of quantity into quality. That is to say, a sufficient aggregate of chemical reactions of a special type gave rise to new properties appropriate to a new and higher state of material existence on this planet, the biochemical level of which mankind is the most complex and advanced embodiment.

Just as Teilhard de Chardin's religious views did not prevent him from participating in the discovery of Peking Man in 1929 and thus adding to our knowledge of human origins, so practicing physicists, chemists and biologists can and do promote their sciences without

any clear notions of the logic underlying their investigations or even with erroneous ideas of the world. But would not the work of individual scientists benefit — as much as science as a whole — if they could rid their minds of these errors and inconsistencies which run counter to a scientific outlook and bring their general ideas about the universe and their logical theory into closer accord with their experimental practice and the requirements of science itself?

That is why Marxists contend that a comprehensive grasp of the logic of dialectical materialism would not only clarify what science has already achieved but enable contemporary scientists to promote and improve their work. Science is still in its infancy and is only now being applied on a grand scale. There are more scientists in the world today than in all previous history. This sudden and sharp jump in the number of scientists and the facilities at their disposal demands a corresponding expansion in their understanding of the logic of evolution which so far has been best provided by the school of dialectical materialists.

2. The works of Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin can throw light on this matter, although not entirely in the way intended by our correspondent. While Chardin is an inconsistent dialectician, he is not at all materialist in his philosophy and procedure. One of the world's most eminent biologists, who was a friend of Chardin's and has read both his published and unpublished manuscripts, George Gaylord Simpson, concurs with this judgment in his new book *This View of Life* (1964). There, in a chapter entitled "Evolutionary Theology: — the New Mysticism," Simpson states that Chardin's ideas are mystical and non-scientific in two major respects. First, he divides all energy into two distinct kinds which cannot be verified: a "tangential" material energy and

a "radial" spiritual energy. Second, he advocates orthogenesis as the principal mechanism of evolution. Unlike natural selection which is based upon random and multi-directional trends of evolution, orthogenesis holds that evolution proceeds in a uni-directional, predetermined and even purposive manner.

Simpson severely censures Chardin for his spiritualistic "double-talk" which really has nothing to do with science. He writes that "Teilhard was primarily a Christian mystic and only secondarily a scientist."

## Roger Garaudy

Roger Garaudy, who is mentioned, likewise deals with Chardin in his 1959 book *Perspectives of Man*. Ironically, this foremost French Communist philosopher is far more conciliatory toward the views of the Jesuit Father than the American biologist, Simpson. Garaudy's book undertakes a critical analysis of the main currents of contemporary French thought: Existentialism, Catholicism and Marxism. He claims that all three are engaged in a common effort to grasp "man in his totality" and he seeks to emphasize their "possible convergences." He concludes that the radical existentialists, the liberal Catholics and Communists can cooperate "not as adversaries but as explorers in a common venture" which proceeds by different paths toward the same goal.

This theoretical position is the reverse of that taken by Garaudy in the days of Stalin-Zhdanov. It is motivated by the desire for a philosophical rapprochement among these incompatible schools of thought to accompany the C.P.'s quest for a political alliance of all "democratic, progressive, peace-loving" forces as prescribed by the policy of "peaceful co-existence."

Those unorthodox features of Chardin's thought which scandalized his superiors in the Jesuit order and the Church and attract liberal Catholics lend themselves to this purpose. It is true, as Garaudy points out, that Chardin recognized certain dialectical characteristics in the process of evolution, such as the universal interconnection and reciprocal action of all things, the transformation of quantity into quality in connection with bio-genesis (though not in the transition from biological to social life), and the transmutations of matter in an ascending series of higher forms.

But the "finalism" and "vitalism" which permeate his thought, based on the supposition that evolution heads in only one direction, toward greater "centrocomplexity," toward the Omega point where humanity will merge with God, is not only irreconcilable with dialectical materialism but, as Simpson insists, with any acceptable scientific approach to universal evolution.

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3. Somewhat in the spirit of Chardin, our correspondent intimates that "the static conceptions of 'idealism' and 'materialism' may give way to a newer, more adequate realization of their interdependence throughout the whole sphere of nature." A Marxist cannot agree with this for numerous reasons.

First, there is nothing "static" about a consistently dialectical and materialist view of nature which is based upon the proposition that everything is in flux because of the opposing forces at work within it and in the universe. Materialist dialectics is dynamic, mobile, evolutionary through and through.

Second, the valid and valuable contributions made to the store of human knowledge by the great idealists of the past like dialectical logic itself have been — or ought to be — incorporated into the structure of dialectical materialism without surrendering or compromising its fundamental positions that reality consists of matter in motion and that social life and intellectuality are the highest manifestations of the development of matter.

Idealism, on the other hand, makes spiritual, supernatural, ideological, or personal forces the essence of reality. Such a fundamentally false philosophy has to be rejected *in toto*.

Nor can these two opposing conceptions of the world and its evolution be amalgamated into some superior synthesis eclectically combining the "best features of both," as Sartre tries to do with his neo-Marxist Existentialism and Father Chardin in his blend of religious mysticism and evolutionism.

Modern thought and science can be most effectively advanced through a firm repudiation of all religious, mystical and idealistic notions and the conscious adoption, application and development of dialectical materialism. Working in equal partnership, Marxist logic and the sciences can enable mankind to penetrate more surely and deeply into the nature of the world we live in.

### Evolutionary Novelty

P.S. After finishing this reply, I chanced to read an article on "The

Emergence of Evolutionary Novelty" by Ernst Mayr, Agassiz Professor of Zoology at Harvard, in *The Evolution of Life* (University of Chicago Press, 1960). It deals with the key problem of explaining the origin of entirely new biological phenomena on the basis of random variations.

Mayr points out that "the exact definition of an 'evolutionary novelty' faces the same insuperable difficulty as the definition of the species. As long as we believe in gradual evolution, we must be prepared to encounter immediate evolutionary stages. Equivalent to the cases in which it is impossible to decide whether a population is not yet a species or already a species, will be cases of doubt as to whether a population is already or not yet an evolutionary novelty. The study of this difficult transition from the quantitative to the qualitative is precisely one of the objects of this paper" (p. 351).

Mayr finds that there are three main kinds of evolutionary novelties: cellular biochemical innovations (the uric acid and fat metabolism of the cleidoic egg of the terrestrial vertebrates); new structures (eyes, wings, stings); and new habits or behavior patterns (the shift from water to land or from the earth to air).

The saltationists and mutationists of various schools argued against the natural selectionists that new structures could only have come into existence suddenly and all ready for advantageous use whereas Darwin held that they would have to be formed by numerous, successive and slight modification of preexisting organs. "The problem of the emergence of evolutionary novelties," writes Mayr, "then consists in having to explain how a sufficient number of small gene mutations can be accumulated until the new structure has become sufficiently large to have selective value" (p. 357). He calls this the "threshold problem."

His paper undertakes to demonstrate the ways in which different organisms have actually effected the changeover from one structure to another in the evolutionary process. Mayr's treatment

is highly pertinent to our own discussion of logical method in science because it indicates how a biologist concerned with the fundamental problem of evolution has been impelled to invoke the dialectical law of the transformation of quantity into quality in order to explain the generation of novelty in living beings.

Indeed, how would it be possible to comprehend how the mere piling up of quantitative variations could give rise to something decisively different from its antecedents unless this law was operative?

It may be objected that Mayr has not used this law to discover anything new but only to clarify how new biological phenomena come into existence. But, as Dalton's atomic theory of the chemical elements, Darwin's theory of evolution and Planck's quantum theory testify, the discovery of the general laws at work, the basic features and essential relations in any field of reality, is the highest expression of scientific activity. A correct and comprehensive conception of the production of novelty in organic evolution is more important for the advancement and reinforcement of biological science than the discovery of some new aspect of functional adaptation to a habitat by a particular group of fauna.

Mayr is one of the most eminent of contemporary American biologists. It can be assumed that he is not a Marxist or an adherent of dialectical materialism. He has resorted to one of the major laws of dialectics empirically without a full awareness of the type of logical thinking he was applying, just as another naturalist of lesser stature might explore a novel type of adaptation of a group of organisms without concerning himself about a general explanation of evolutionary novelty as Mayr has done.

Mayr's acknowledgment of the indispensability of this law of dialectics in solving the problem of the emergence of evolutionary novelties provides involuntary and forceful testimony to its value for the natural scientist.

William F. Warde  
November 18, 1964

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1. Date of filing: Oct. 1, 1964.
2. Title of Publication: International Socialist Review.
3. Frequency of issue: Quarterly.
4. Location of known office of publication: 116 University Place, New York, N. Y. 10003.
5. Location of headquarters or general business offices of the publishers: 116 University Place New York, N. Y. 10003.
6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher, International Socialist Review, Publishing Association. Editor, Tom Kerry, 116 University Place, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10003. Assistant Editor, Dick Roberts, 116 University Place, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10003.
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