

Fall 1964

**INTERNATIONAL  
SOCIALIST  
REVIEW**

*Labor Leaders and  
the 'White Backlash'*

By Tom Kerry

Peoples Frontism in Ceylon

From Wavering to Capitulation

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# Correspondence

## Editor:

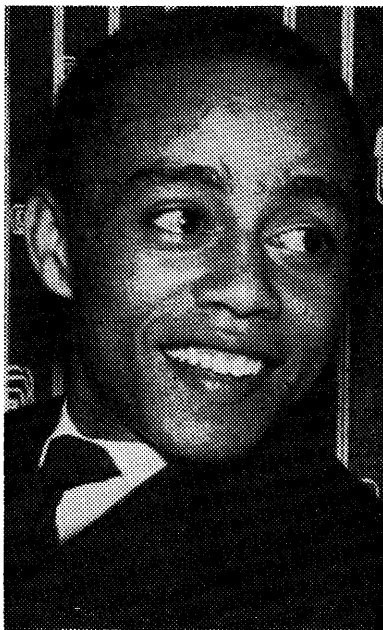
April 15th, 1964, Dr. Neville Alexander and ten other nonwhite South Africans, including four women, were convicted in the Cape Supreme Court of "sabotage" and belonging to the militant "National Liberation Front" and sentenced to prison on Robben Island — South Africa's version of an Auschwitz or Belsen Nazi concentration camp.

Ten-year sentences were given to Dr. Alexander, a doctor of philosophy and high-school teacher, one of the most brilliant graduates who ever went through Cape Town University in the Federal Republic of Germany; Don Davis, a minister; Marcus Solomons, a school teacher; Elizabeth van der Heyden, a school teacher; and Fikele Bam, an African senior law student at Cape Town University. Seven-year sentences were given to Lionel Davids, a clerk, and Gordon Hendricks, a student. Five-year sentences were given to Ian van der Heyden, a high-school teacher, Dulcie September, a teacher, Dorothy Alexander, a sister of Dr. Alexander and high-school teacher, and Doris van der Heyden, a librarian. These sentences are part of the fascist regime's strategy to silence all the intellectuals in the nonwhite camp.

To make this trial possible on a fair basis, the friends and comrades of Dr. Alexander in West Germany at all Universities have made the case public and collected DM40,000 [\$10,000] to assist and support him and his comrades. A special committee has been established at the University of Tübingen to organize this campaign.

Immediately after these savage sentences were given, his German colleagues again came to his aid, but to raise another sum of DM30,000 seemed to be beyond their possible power. Therefore they have appealed to students, friends and comrades in other countries to help Dr. Alexander and the co-accused to get a revision of their case, due to many "irregularities," "breach of common law . . . and privilege" in the past Cape Town trial.

Further, the organization of the movement has not gone beyond planning. No "sabotage act" has been committed. In the Rivonia trial in Pretoria, for instance, Lionel Bern-



Dr. Alexander

stein (who has fled to Bechaunaland since) was set free having done more than any of these convicted, because he had only been busy constructing the "Mayibuye"-plan. Thus the chances of the sentences being put down or even repealed are very great.

Up to now, only DM4,000 could be collected here in West Germany. The total costs of revising the case, taking place in November-December 1964, will amount to DM45,000. Japanese comrades and professors who knew Dr. Alexander have collected about DM1,000; and Defense and Aid, London, has sent 750 pounds to South Africa.

However, the bulk of the sum needed has still to be collected. In South Africa itself the families are starving due to the fact that the "bread-winners" are either in jail or under 90-day detention arrests. We ask for all possible support from your readers and other interested organizations. All contributions can be sent to me.

Fraternal and sincere greetings from us here in Germany in our struggle for peace, justice and humanity,

**Franz J. T. Lee**  
74 Tübingen/Neckar,  
Schwabstrasse 22,  
Federal Republic of Germany  
August 13, 1964

## A Correction

### Editor:

In the article I wrote on Brazil, published in the last number of the *International Socialist Review* (Summer 1964), it is printed in the last paragraph that the investments of the USA reach \$1,500,000. Evidently, there was a typographical error, since the investments of US capitalists in Brazil reach \$1,500,000,000, that is, 1.5 billion dollars.

The total investment of the United States in Latin America in 1963 reached almost 10 billion dollars. The most important countries for investments in millions of dollars are:

<b>Venezuela:</b>	<b>3,000</b>
<b>Brazil:</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Mexico:</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Argentina:</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>Chile:</b>	<b>850</b>
<b>Panama:</b>	<b>650</b>

After Canada (the country that represents the largest colony of American imperialism), it is the Latin American continent which absorbs most American foreign investment.

Socialist greetings,

**Manuel Sarmiento**  
Mexico  
August 24, 1964

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Editorial**Goldwater and the American "Left"**

The 1964 election campaign has given rise to some strange phenomena not the least of which are the antics of the American "left" under which term are subsumed those tendencies who, to one degree or another, consider themselves socialist. In some instances the Goldwater bogey has been seized upon to refurbish shopworn concepts to justify the gross violation of principle involved in "socialists" supporting capitalist candidates. In others, especially among the ultra-left sects, verbal radicalism reaches its apogee in the policy of abstentionism.

Each of these tendencies reinforce the other. The unabashed opportunists of the American Communist Party, for example, have resurrected the discredited theory of the "lesser evil," to proclaim: Goldwater must be defeated at all costs! With slight variations the fellow travellers and "progressives" who revolve in the CP orbit echo this refrain.

The Social Democrats and their camp followers see in the Goldwater candidacy a confirmation of their policy of "realignment." That is, the reshuffling of the coalition forces which will align all of the "liberals" in one party and the "conservatives" in another to form a "genuine" two-party system. In practical political terms the policy of "realignment" is summed up in the slogan: Drive the Dixiecrats out of the Democratic Party.

The only rub is that the political bosses who dominate and control the Democratic Party machine want no part of any such "realignment." Already chafing under the "liberal" label they are wriggling into the more respectable posture provided by the designation "moderates." They need the Dixiecrats in the coalition as a necessary counterweight to the Negro and labor contingents. With no counterweight from the *right* to balance the pressure from the *left* the politicians of the *golden mean* would be seriously handicapped in playing the role of mediator between the conflicting forces that now comprise the Democratic Party coalition; a role in which the threat of punitive action from the *right* is always used to extract compliance from the *left* for the damaging compromises that serve to limit, curb, weaken and undermine the civil rights and labor struggle.

Nor are the Dixiecrats at all eager to accommodate the practitioners of realignment. They have too much at stake to lightly abandon the Democratic Party monopoly of political power in the South. As Democrats, enjoying a privileged position in Congress by virtue of the seniority system, they exercise a disproportionate power in the determination of national policy; first, as chiefs of the most important Senate and House committees; second, as a powerful bloc occupying the position of balance of power in the legislature. The periodic "revolts" of the Dixiecrats against the national leadership of the Democratic Party have always been strictly circumscribed and limited to a very narrow framework.

The Dixiecrat "walkout" in 1948 in protest against the civil rights plank of the Democratic Party platform in which they ran a candidate against Truman, was carefully fabricated to preserve Democratic Party control of

the deep South. No less is the care exercised today by the unreconstructed Dixiecrat insurgents to preserve their political power structure. They know that after the "shooting is over" they will be welcomed back into the fold as errant prodigals temporarily gone astray.

The policy of realignment is no less a hoax than the lesser evil theory. In fact, none of its proponents today even so much as hint that it would be desirable for the "loyal" Dixiecrats to take a walk. For, you see: Goldwater must be defeated at all costs! And to defeat Goldwater the Dixiecrats become an indispensable part of the coalition.

To lend credence to their "lesser evil" line, the CP leaders loudly blazon that Goldwater Republicanism and Fascism are twins. The term "fascism" is used as a scare word to frighten the doubters into line. The ultra-lefts, with virtually no exceptions, join in equating "Goldwaterism" with fascism, thus contributing their bit to bolstering the CP "lesser evil" line.

The political decline of the so-called American "left," spearheaded by the degeneration of the Communist Party and the Social Democrats, both of whom long ago abandoned the Marxist class criteria in their approach to politics, has made it even more significant that the Socialist Workers Party, with its limited forces and resources, is today holding aloft the unsullied banner of revolutionary socialism by running its own candidates in the 1964 presidential election campaign: Clifton DeBerry for president and Edward Shaw for vice-president.

The only real alternative for those who have a shred of socialist integrity left is to support the SWP candidates against the candidates of the capitalist class. That the proponents of "lesser evil" and "realignment" politics refuse to do so is not surprising.

What may give rise to a lifted eyebrow is the news that a small group of ultra-leftist intransigents in far off Great Britain, who still call themselves "Trotkyists," have also come out against supporting the candidates of the SWP. Writing in the weekly *Newsletter*, organ of the British Socialist Labour League, the editor takes the SWP to task for not properly conducting the fight against "Goldwaterism." Under the circumstances, declares ye editor, "a vote for the SWP candidates is meaningless." This will undoubtedly reduce the SWP vote (in Britain) to virtually nil — at least in that section of London known as Clapham Commons in which the SLL resides.

Oh, well! The SWP should feel flattered that the *Newsletter* would condescend to take note of its role in the American election campaign. For there is an election campaign now going in Great Britain in which the *Newsletter* constantly warns its readers that the greatest calamity that could befall the British workers would be for the Labour Party to take power. This, sadly, is a manifestation of political *dementia praecox* (defined by Webster as a form of insanity developing usually in adolescence, characterized by incoherence of thought and action) or as aptly defined by Lenin: the infantile disorder of ultra-leftism.

# Labor Leaders and the 'White Backlash'

By Tom Kerry

The so-called "white backlash" was a prime subject of discussion at the recent AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Chicago following the Republican Party convention which nominated Barry Goldwater as its presidential candidate. Goldwater's bid for the racist vote in northern industrial areas, as well as in the Dixiecrat South, stirred the top labor brass into consideration of ways and means of combatting the "backlash" among white union members. Their major concern was to ensure the election of their "friend" Lyndon Baines Johnson, Democratic nominee. The interests of the workers, white or black, was a secondary consideration.

The "backlash" among white workers, as the union tops saw it, was all the result of a misunderstanding. It seems they had been deceived into voting for the unspeakable racist governor of Alabama, George Wallace, in his Democratic Party presidential primary campaign, by being deliberately misled into believing that the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would result in replacing white workers with Negroes.

The union heads hastened to reassure the white workers that it just wasn't so: That the Civil Rights Act would involve no fundamental alteration in the pattern of hiring, firing and upgrading under which the black worker is the last hired and first fired; under which labor with a black skin will still do the hardest, dirtiest and lowest paying work — if and when they can get it. That there would be no preferential consideration given black workers to compensate for centuries of discriminatory employment practices. That the two-to-one unemployment ratio would continue to prevail — with twice as many Negroes unemployed as against whites. Outside of a few paltry crumbs the Civil Rights Act would involve no real change in the employment pattern. This, in essence,

is the sum total of the campaign envisioned by the labor bureaucrats to appease the "white backlash."\*

## Rally for the Democrats

In furtherance of their campaign the union heads have called a civil rights conference immediately following the Democratic Party convention — in which some 250 union functionaries will sit as delegates — to discuss the "implementation" of the Civil Rights Act. In reality the conference will serve as a sounding-board and rally for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket. The union leaders hope, reports the *New York Times* of August 4, "that the meeting will also serve as a forum in which white backlash sentiment can be counteracted. For example," the article adds, "the federation will show that the Civil Rights Act does not require white workers to be laid off to make room for Negroes — an erroneous interpretation of the law that has gained currency among white workers."

A "showing" by the AFL-CIO heads that the Civil Rights Act "does not require white workers to be laid off to make room for Negroes," might mollify some whites — but what about the black workers? This approach is an evasion of the fundamental responsibility of the union leadership. If the problem is viewed simply as a matter of determining how the existing number of jobs shall be shared among the component sectors of the working population, no amount of "education" can mitigate the conflict. Despite three years of

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\* In a sense, it parallels the line taken by the Dixiecrat supporters of Texas cousin Johnson, who seek to reassure their more benighted compatriots that the Civil Rights measure is no Reconstruction Act and that the occupant of the White House is no foraging Carpet-bagger; that it is more shadow than substance, and all it seeks to do is paper over the more ugly manifestations of the Jim Crow system while leaving the white supremacist structure intact.

economic boom there are not enough jobs to go around. With the acceleration of automation the total number of jobs will diminish. Increased competition between workers for an ever diminishing number of jobs can only exacerbate the clash, not only between white and black worker, but between employed and unemployed, young and old, male and female, etc., etc. Along this road the labor movement is doomed!

## Real Program for Labor

The Transition Program of the Fourth International, drafted by Leon Trotsky and adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938, taking cognizance of this tendency, warned against its dangers and offered a solution. It reads:

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural,' the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a *sliding scale of hours*. Trade union and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old working week. Wages, under a strictly guaranteed *minimum*, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to

accept any other program for the present catastrophic period . . ." (Emphasis in original.)

If in 1938 "the time was ripe" to advance the demand for a *sliding scale of wages and hours* it is rotten ripe today. The sliding scale of wages was popularized in this country as the "escalator clause" providing an automatic increase in wages in line with the rising cost of living. The popular version of the *sliding scale of hours* is the demand of 30 for 40, i.e., a thirty-hour week at forty hours pay.

It is in the tradition of the American union movement to seek a reduction of the work week as a means of combatting unemployment. The militant struggle for the eight-hour day in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century comprises one of the glorious chapters in American labor history. During the labor upsurge of the 1930's a number of unions fought for and won the 30-hour week. A number of unions today have succeeded in reducing hours below the standard 40-hour work week, mostly in the skilled trades. But these exceptions constitute only a very small minority of the working class.

#### Bureaucratic Subservience

What now cripples the struggle for the shorter work week is the slavish subservience of the union bureaucrats to the capitalist politicians of the Democratic Party. Shortly after the election of "their" candidate, John F. Kennedy, the AFL-CIO tops sponsored a bill in Congress calling for the reduction of the work week to 35 hours. No one took them seriously. Kennedy had come out against the proposal for a reduction in hours with no reduction in pay even before he was elected.

When Johnson took office after the assassination of Kennedy he seized upon the occasion of his State of the Union Message, Jan. 8, to repudiate publicly the demand for the 35-hour week. "I believe the enactment of a 35-hour week," he declared, "would invite inflation, would impair our ability to compete and merely share instead of creating employment." Instead he proposed the establishment of a committee — a typical Johnson device for sweeping such problems under the rug — to "determine on an industry-by-industry basis as to where a higher penalty rate for overtime would increase job openings *without*

*unduly increasing costs*, and authorizing the establishment of such higher rates." (Emphasis added.)

The 35-hour bill got short shrift in Congress — it was not even considered. This did not deter AFL-CIO president George Meany from going through the motions of submitting the proposal to recent Republican and Democratic convention platform drafting committees for consideration by the delegates. Both platforms studiously ignored the proposal. It did not even occur to the 250 union functionaries sitting as Democratic Party delegates to question the omission. However, they



George Meany

were thrown a bone in the form of a platform plank providing that: "Overtime payment requirements must be increased to assure maximum employment *consistent with business efficiency.*" (Emphasis added.)

Even this meaningless gesture had previously provoked the *New York Times* into voicing editorial alarm. "This proposal," a July 27 editorial declares, "is no more realistic than organized labor's demand for reducing the work week, which the Administration has rightly rejected. Increasing overtime pay from one and a half to double time would greatly increase costs, leading to a shrinkage in profit margins and cutbacks in production." Then comes the clincher: "It would accelerate the introduction of automation . . ."

#### Effect of Shorter Work Week

The view that the demand for a shorter work week with no reduction in take-home pay would be self-defeating because it would accelerate automation and increase unemployment is not confined to such obvious spokesmen for Big Business as the *New York Times*. It has been echoed by a variety of pundits ranging from economic commentators specializing in analytical studies of the social effects of automation to the Social Democrats and liberals. In the past period the advance of technology through the acceleration of automation and cybernation has resulted in a significant rise in labor productivity. The main beneficiaries have been the capitalist owning class whose "profit margins" have soared to stratospheric heights.

But the *legal work week* has remained relatively stable under the Wages and Hours Act adopted in 1938. Wage increases in the past few years, during a period when automated processes have been introduced on a wide scale and at a rapid pace, have been lower than in any post-war period. Unemployment has remained frozen at an (official) average of five percent throughout the boom period. Fewer and fewer workers are turning out ever greater quantities of commodities. Yet, even the hint that workers are entitled to share in the increased productivity of labor through a reduction in the work week, calls forth a stern rebuke and ominous warning: desist or you will be automated out of your job!

The implication is that if workers would exercise restraint they can somehow escape the massive replacement of men by machines which the advent of automation has brought in its wake. But that is precisely what has been happening under the present legal work week of forty hours. These admonitions and warnings calling upon the workers to refrain from pressing their demand for shorter hours and better pay are really nothing new. Since the dawn of the capitalist mode of production and exchange, employers have always raised the specter of dire catastrophe if hours of labor were reduced and wages raised. Yet, something new has been advanced.

#### Cybernation Utopia

To the clamor of the profit hogs and their pen prostitutes has been added the siren song of the prophets of the future cybernated social

order. As against the demand for a shorter work week they advance the vision of a cybernated economic system in which only a relatively small handful of workers will be required to operate an automated machinery capable of producing a superabundance of all requisite commodities. Under this order, they argue, the wages system would become obsolete. Work would of necessity, have to be separated from income, for there would otherwise not be enough purchasers for the ever increasing product of the cybernated machine. To avoid total collapse, they contend, it will be necessary to provide a guaranteed income for all without regard to who actually performs the little work involved.

Most of these experts do a useful service in criticising and exposing the utter insanity of the present "free enterprise system." Their analysis of the possibilities of abundance for all under a rational system of distribution of the product of modern technology serves to buttress the socialist critique of the capitalist system — that under capitalism, goods and services are produced, not to meet the needs of the people, but for profit. There can be no argument against the proposition that given time and an uninterrupted development of the tendencies inherent in the "cybernation revolution," the amount of labor required to produce an economy of abundance could be reduced to a minimal quantity.

But the development does not take place in a vacuum. Nor can the question of time be dismissed as an unimportant factor. In addition to economics there is politics. And *in politics time is of the essence*. Even if it is presumed that the development takes place under ideal conditions, abstracting from the contradictions inherent in the private ownership of

the means of production and distribution, a considerable span of time would be required to reach the stage envisioned. Meanwhile, millions of workers are unemployed and the number must continue to grow granted the fact that automation is displacing more and more workers.

However, the problem of jobs is crucial to the struggle for Negro equality *now!* One-fifth of the nation does exist below the poverty level *now*. The mounting number of youth entering the labor force each year are not and cannot be content with the vision of a cybernated utopia sometime in the distant future — they demand jobs *now!* These are the facts of social life that impinge upon the consciousness of the workers now employed. For among them, even the relatively privileged enjoying the protection of seniority rights, are haunted by the feeling of insecurity; of the constant fear of being automated out of their jobs. This is the real source of the "backlash" that pits one section of the workers against another and for which the American labor bureaucrats bear a direct responsibility.

#### Against Shorter Work Week:

While it is readily apparent why the employers oppose the shorter work week it is difficult to understand the opposition of the liberal cybernation experts, among whom Robert Theobald ranks as one of the more advanced thinkers on the subject. Writing one of his major contributions in a special issue of *The Nation*, (May 11, 1963) Theobald observes that: "Since World War II, the unions have ritualistically demanded a shorter workweek, but there has been little real drive behind the demand." He then goes on to add:

"In 1962, however, the AFL-CIO decided that one of their primary goals must be the achievement of a thirty-five hour week with no decrease in take-home pay. They argued that this reduction in hours was necessary to spread the available work.

"Unfortunately," he argues in rebuttal, "such a change in hours would set up secondary effects which could largely prevent the increase in employment it was designed to achieve. There appears to be some evidence that the employer may be able to reschedule work to accomplish the same amount of production, in spite of a reduction in total work hours, without additions to the labor

force; and that even if he cannot conveniently reschedule, he will often prefer to pay for overtime than hire more workers. In addition, some of those whose hours are reduced may 'moonlight,' that is to say, take a second job. The most important negative effect, however, would result from the fact that each employee who worked shorter hours for the same total pay would receive an effective increase in the amount paid per hour. *Higher payments to labor, whatever the method by which they are achieved, tilt the balance further in favor of investment in machinery — thus leading to more emphasis on cybernation and the more rapid elimination of the labor force.*" (Emphasis added)

This is an amazing conclusion for a man who insists that it is neither possible nor desirable to place any obstacles in the path of the "cybernation revolution," which, as he points out in his article "is only beginning." He is not only against shorter hours but any "higher payments to labor" which would "tilt the balance" by accelerating automation unemployment. The same argument could just as validly be advanced against the present forty-hour week — including the wholly reactionary "moonlight" argument against increased leisure for workers so reminiscent of the attitude of the parasitic exploiting class.

It is not the question of "leisure" which concerns us here, important as it is, but of advancing such demands as would serve to unify the working class against the disintegrating effects of capitalist exploitation. Although he should know better, Theobald proceeds on the assumption that the demand for a 35-hour week is a static demand, incapable of meeting the problem of a dynamic technological process — cybernation. The number 35 is no more final and fixed than the number 40 now generally in effect, nor the number 48 that preceded it, or the number 56 that had earlier been fixed as the standard work week.

#### Program for Labor Unity

The slogan of the *sliding scale of hours* as quoted above from the Transition Program of the Fourth International, is a *dynamic* demand. It means that for every increase in the productivity of labor which results in the displacement of workers by automated machine production there is a corresponding reduction of hours.

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It is estimated that today with a 30-hour week long term unemployment would be eliminated. If this leads to an acceleration of automation, so be it. So long as the workers could find employment at reduced hours automation would not be viewed as a curse but welcomed as a boon. By incorporating the concept of the *sliding scale of hours* in the union contract — just as today a number of unions have incorporated in their contracts the *sliding scale of wages* (escalator clause) to protect the workers standard of living against the constantly rising cost of living — hours of work would be adjusted to the increased productivity of labor with no reduction in pay.

To those who advance the argument that the reduction of hours will be self-defeating because it would increase unemployment by accelerating automation we answer: the advance of technology will continue at an accelerated pace whether or not hours of work are reduced. Experience has already confirmed this fact. Without the protection of the *sliding scale of hours*, however, unemployment will mount, poverty will become more widespread, competition for a dwindling number of jobs will become more frenzied and fratricidal, the divisions among the working class will deepen, disunity and disintegration of the only progressive class in society will hasten the descent into barbarism.

That is the ineluctable end-product of the present policy of the labor bureaucrats whose whole course was summed up in one succinct phrase by John L. Lewis: Better pay for fewer workers. Ironically, the United Mine Workers union is among the first to experience a menacing "backlash" of unemployed miners against the union, many of them being former union members automated out of their jobs.

#### Role of Labor Fakers

Theobald is eminently correct in contemptuously dismissing the legislative demand for a 35-hour week of the AFL-CIO brass as a meaningless "ritualistic" exercise in futility. The labor statesmen knew in advance that the Kennedy-Johnson administrations were opposed and said so publicly. The labor fakery made no serious attempt to mobilize the unions for effective struggle around the demand. With rare exceptions the demand has been dropped from union contract negotiations. Subordination to the Democratic Party has rendered

the labor statesmen impotent to lead the kind of economic-political struggle required to break the resistance of the employers and their political agents in Washington to the demands for a shorter work week.

When an economic demand becomes generalized and is directed at the government it becomes a political demand. The demand for a shorter work week is fundamental to interests of the working class. Such a demand can be won only by struggle — on both the economic and political arena. On the economic field by the mobilization of the organized power of the unions against the individual employers. On the political arena by the class organization of their own independent labor party. But the current crop of labor statesmen, concerned solely with the preservation of their privileged bureaucratic positions and the pelf and power that come with it, are physically, morally and intellectually incapable of leading such a struggle.

In the struggle for survival the question of leadership is decisive. The so-called "white backlash" is but one of the manifestations of

reactionary capitalism in its period of decay. The Negro struggle for Freedom Now is shaking up the whole social structure. While it brings to the surface everything that is vile and reactionary in capitalist society it is planting the seed of a renescent militancy in labor's ranks fertilized by the threat of automated unemployment. Rising consciousness will give organizational expression to the mood of discontent even now manifested in embryonic form in a number of unions in which dissatisfaction with the policies of the labor brass is mounting. A genuine left wing movement in the unions will place at the top of its list of demands the unifying slogan: *a sliding scale of hours* to provide jobs for all. Reinforced with the call for an independent labor party and committed to fraternal collaboration with the Negro Freedom Now movement the so-called "white backlash" among workers will become transformed into a united black and white lash to scourge racism, poverty, unemployment and insecurity out of existence along with the social system that breeds these infamies.

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# ***From Wavering to Capitulation***

By Ernest Germain

**T**HE DECISION of the majority at the June 6-7 special conference of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* to join the liberal bourgeois government of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in Ceylon was a heavy defeat for the Fourth International. The fact that the world-wide Trotskyist organization decided unanimously to sever relations with the majority of one of its most important sections, because of this betrayal of the basic interests of the Ceylonese workers and poor peasants and of the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism, shows that the international Trotskyist movement as a whole remains faithful to the cause to which it is dedicated — the cause of world revolution.

The fact that a considerable minority of the LSSP, its Revolutionary Section, led by Comrades Edmund Samarakkody, a member of parliament, Bala Tampoe, one of Ceylon's principal trade-union leaders, and Meryl Fernando, another member of parliament—a minority that includes 14 members of the Central Committee of the LSSP and one quarter of the membership—likewise refused to condone the betrayal and remained faithful to the banner of the Fourth International, indicates that the defeat suffered by Trotskyism in Ceylon is only a temporary one. With the help of the world Trotskyist movement, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) will

prove its capacity to regain a leading position for Trotskyism among the workers and poor peasants of Ceylon.

Nevertheless, the defeat is a fact; and it would be unworthy of a revolutionist to deny it or to try to soften it by taking a lenient attitude. It is necessary instead to explain the origin of this setback affecting a whole sector of the revolutionary movement in Ceylon and to draw the appropriate lessons.

## **Particular Character of the LSSP**

It was never a secret to any member of the world Trotskyist movement, informed about the special problems of the Fourth International, that the section in Ceylon, the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party*, was an organization to which the term "Trotskyist" had to be applied with a series of specific reservations. The *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* was, in fact, the first working-class party to be organized in Ceylon and was for some time the only such party in the country. It was founded and led by a group of brilliant young intellectuals who had studied at British universities, had been attracted by communism, repelled by the Moscow frame-up trials and the ultra-opportunist policies of Stalinism in the late thirties, and who had therefore evolved in the general direction of Trotskyism. However, the question of affiliating to the world Trotskyist movement only arose after the outbreak of World War II and after breaking with the pro-Stalinist wing of the old LSSP led by Pieter Keuneman, who favored collaborating with British imperialism during the war and who later founded the Communist Party of Ceylon.

As a result of this first political differentiation, the small group of

Trotskyist intellectuals suddenly found themselves at the head of the largest working-class organization in the country. They correctly applied the theory of the permanent revolution under the conditions prevailing in Ceylon and audaciously took the lead in struggling for national independence against British imperialism. They rapidly acquired great influence among the masses, becoming leaders of the popular opposition first against the imperialist regime and then the regime of the "national" bourgeoisie, a position they held for twenty-five years.

However, the party they led could not really be called "Bolshevik." Nor was it a mass party comparable to the mass parties of the working class in Europe or other parts of Asia. Characteristically, while the LSSP could poll several hundred thousand votes, its active membership never went above a thousand. It was a party that combined left-socialist trade-union cadres, revolutionary workers who had gained class consciousness but not a specifically revolutionary-Marxist education, and a few hundred genuine revolutionary-Marxist cadres. The overwhelming majority of the latter category are today members of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section). The majority of the two other categories followed N. M. Perera and his friends on the road of coalition with a bourgeois government.

Many political and organizational traits testified to the hybrid character of the LSSP. The party never had a theoretical organ in the Sinhalese or Tamil languages; it never translated the bulk of Trotsky's writings or even the bulk of the resolutions and decisions of the congresses and other leading bodies of the Fourth International into these languages. But most of the rank and file and

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virtually the entire proletariat understand no other languages, although English is common currency among the upper strata of the population, particularly the intellectuals. Participation in the political life of the world Trotskyist movement, above all its internal political life, remained limited therefore to a minority of revolutionary leaders.

On the programmatic level, the party was born Trotskyist, and developed in sharp struggle with the Stalinist, later Khrushchevist, Communist Party of Ceylon. The struggle became embodied in two rival organizations of the Ceylon working class—the LSSP and the CP. No Social Democratic party existed in Ceylon. The party program, of course, correctly characterized the shortcomings and betrayals of the international Social Democracy and reformism in general; but it is important to note that unlike the differentiation from Stalinism, the differentiation from reformism existed only on the ideological and literary level, accessible only to a minority of party members. The differentiation was not experienced by the party membership in a flesh-and-blood way through actual struggle with a rival organization. In fact, while being formally a Trotskyist party, the LSSP functioned in several areas comparably to a left Social Democratic party in a relatively “prosperous” semicolonial country; i.e., it was the main electoral vehicle of the poor masses, it provided the main leadership of the trade unions.

Party membership was essentially formal, hinging only on the payment of dues. Party conferences were membership conferences, in which oratorical feats of the party leaders rather than sober discussion of principles and experiences carried the day. The Fourth International stubbornly sought to bring the LSSP around to the basic principle of democratic centralism, beginning with party conferences based on delegates democratically elected by the branches. After years of resistance, the principle was finally accepted—only to be transformed into a mockery at the crucial June 6-7, 1964, conference where the demand to enter a bourgeois government was put over. This conference was called as a “delegated conference,” in which delegates were elected on the basis of . . . one delegate per member!

Recruiting to the party was con-

ducted haphazardly, unsystematically, and, worst of all, was not concentrated among working-class and poor peasant youth. Some of the party's trade-union leaders complained bitterly about the neglect in organizing study classes that could draw hundreds of young militant workers into the ranks. Such neglect permitted the opportunist right wing of the party to inflate the membership at the decisive moment with new recruits lacking socialist education and class consciousness, many of them of petty-bourgeois origin.

### The Party Leadership

The party leadership itself was not homogeneous. It was composed in reality of two wings, one led by N. M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena which displayed petty-bourgeois nationalist inclinations and was opportunist from the start, the other, genuinely Trotskyist, led by a group of comrades around Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Bernard Soysa, Edmund Samarakkody, Doric de Souza and Bala Tampoe. Relations between these two wings were uneasy from the beginning. A split occurred in the forties in which a *majority* of the membership, under the leadership of Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera, broke away from the Fourth International for a time, and the genuine Trotskyists formed the Bolshevik-Leninist party headed by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene.

The opportunist character of the majority grouping was displayed when its members of parliament refused to vote against the status of “independence” in 1947 that left key positions to British imperialism. The split was healed in June 1950 but only partially. N. M. Perera and the majority of those who had split unified with the Bolshevik-Leninist party. For some time Philip Gunawardena kept the so-called “old” LSSP going, receiving reinforcements from a new split in the LSSP in 1953. Finally, in 1956, he entered the first Bandaranaike government, dissolving the “old” LSSP into the MEP (*Mahajana Eksath Peramuna*—People's United Front).

These ruptures, despite partial recoveries, left deep scars in the ranks of the leadership of the LSSP. Sensitivity resulting from the old wounds was all the keener in view of the fact that although the main forces had been brought together, the pos-

sibility of a fresh cleavage remained. While the group around Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene became undisputed political leaders of the party, N. M. Perera became an even more popular figure among the trade unions and masses.

The problem of overcoming the old divisions and of blocking anything that could precipitate a new split with N. M. Perera became an obsession among the key political leaders. The policy was correct in itself since the unification had taken place on a principled basis and since the party's activities as a whole were proceeding in accordance with the general program of Trotskyism. The fatal flaw was that these key political leaders did not occupy themselves with full time party work—they remained part-time leaders. (For many years it was a standing grievance among party activists that Colvin R. de Silva, the party's most able theoretician and one of the most powerful orators in all Asia, who could have rapidly built a mass following much larger than N. M. Perera's, continued his career as Ceylon's leading lawyer instead of turning full attention to party building.) The flaw led eventually to political wavering in face of Perera's systematic opportunist inclinations.

The dialectical interrelationship between the two tendencies went even deeper. N. M. Perera, himself, and the trade-union cadres generally under his leadership, were in the beginning filled with respect and admiration for the political brilliance and revolutionary daring of the Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene group. The structuring of the LSSP leadership on this healthy basis—Perera's opportunist inclinations notwithstanding—showed itself best during the August 1953 *hartal* (general strike). The LSSP leadership appeared as a really revolutionary team at the head of insurgent masses, fighting in the streets simultaneously for immediate material gains for the impoverished masses and for the socialist overthrow of the capitalist regime.

But when some of the leaders of the genuinely Trotskyist wing of the LSSP did not change their daily lives to accord with their revolutionary convictions; when they failed to devote themselves whole-heartedly to party building; when they began wavering on basic political questions; the N. M. Perera group, after

some years of watching this, lost confidence in the old party leadership. They decided to "go into politics" on their own, and to develop their own line, with the disastrous results registered at the June 6-7 conference.

The defeat suffered by Trotskyism in Ceylon is therefore essentially the story of how and why the Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene group lost leadership of the party

### **The Myth of Ceylonese "Exceptionalism"**

**T**HIS TRAGIC collapse of a group of genuine revolutionists, who displayed great heroism in the past, great daring and genuine revolutionary devotion,<sup>1</sup> was not, however, the "inevitable" result of adverse circumstances. The development of the basic contradiction in the nature of the LSSP was inevitable since it corresponded to the hybrid origin of the organization. But it was not inevitable that Perera's tendency should become as strong as it did, finally gaining a majority. The contradiction could have been overcome with a quite different outcome had the leadership carried out its clear duties. We have already noted the basic organizational weaknesses evident among some of the best representatives of the group (Leslie Goonewardene being an exception, however, in this respect) which centered around limiting themselves to *literary* and *ideological* leadership, leaving the actual chores of day-to-day party building to "activists" who tended to gather around N. M. Perera, the most popular mass figure of the party. But this fatal weakness on the organizational level was complemented by the appearance of parallel errors on the ideological plane.

Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene were brilliant Marxist thinkers who have written some of the best revolutionary pamphlets in Southeast Asia. They undoubtedly assimilated the whole body of basic Trotskyist concepts. But in the political arena in Ceylon, while trying creatively to apply the method of revolutionary Marxism to the specific conditions of their country and its

through their own weaknesses and inner contradictions, an outcome that was strikingly pointed up when the resolution presented by Leslie Goonewardene, General Secretary of the party for more than ten years, received only ten percent of the vote at the June 6-7 conference, and when the tendency led by these comrades wound up with only a handful of followers.

mass movements, they committed a progressive series of mistakes that can be summarized in the formula of "Ceylonese exceptionalism." They never set out to develop this theory in a systematic, organic way. Instead they fell into it pragmatically during the fifties, at first imperceptibly, without being aware of what was happening, until they fell victim to the logic of these false ideas and were drawn irresistibly towards conclusions which they would have condemned with biting scorn only a few years earlier.

The first indication of this theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" was at the Fourth World Congress in 1954, when, during the discussions of the theses on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism," the LSSP delegation suddenly came up with an amendment to change the demand for *freedom for all working-class parties*, under the proletarian dictatorship after the conquest of power, to freedom for *all parties*. In arguing for this astonishing amendment, they contended that due to the exceptional conditions in Ceylon, the masses there would not understand any other position. They added that in their opinion, "the masses cannot be wrong." They seemed to have temporarily forgotten one of the ABC's of Marxism — that the masses can often be wrong. (The masses were wrong when they cheered the departure of the armies for the front in Europe fifty years ago; they were equally wrong when they acclaimed the SLFP-LSSP coalition government in Ceylon a few weeks ago.) To reason like the Ceylonese comrades at the Fourth World Congress was to fall into *tail-endism*, a dangerous tendency, and

one which these comrades were to display to an increasing extent as time went on.

Needless to say, the amendment offered by the Ceylonese delegation found no support among the delegates at the Fourth World Congress, and they dropped the matter, since they were not eager to defend this position at the Congress.

A second manifestation of the theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" appeared during the preparations for the 1956 general elections, a manifestation that was to reappear in each subsequent election. This was the view that under the "exceptional circumstances" prevailing in Ceylon, a revolutionary party could win power through the ballot. It was, of course, entirely permissible *in principle* for a revolutionary party with mass influence to participate in the elections under the slogan: "For an LSSP socialist government." (It is quite another question whether the slogan was *tactically* correct; *i.e.*, whether its correspondence to the long-range objective need also fit in with the subjective reflection of the situation in the minds of the masses. Looking back, one can question whether the Ceylonese masses have ever viewed a LSSP government as a realistic alternative to the bourgeois government. The problem of a transitional form, a Workers and Peasants Government, arises here.) It was wrong to suggest to the masses that power could actually be conquered, capitalism actually overthrown, solely by electoral means. It was just as bad, if not worse, for the LSSP leadership to become victim of its own propaganda and to begin thinking in terms of the "parliamentary road to socialism."

### **Participation in Parliament**

Here again it was argued that the masses in Ceylon don't conceive of any other way to win power under the circumstances. The argument, however, not only left out the possibility of educating the masses; it was not entirely correct factually. The Ceylonese masses displayed great willingness to conduct extra-parliamentary struggles during the 1953 *hartal*. They displayed similar willingness again after the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike and the subsequent Emergency in 1960. And during the rise of working-class struggles from 1962 on, their attention again became focused essen-

<sup>1</sup> During the war, imprisoned for their revolutionary opposition to imperialism, some of the LSSP leaders escaped, fled to India and built a Trotskyist organization there, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India [BLPI]. One of them, Anthony Pillai, became a widely known trade-union leader as national chairman of the trade-union federation Hind Mazdoor Sabha. It must be said, however, that acting more and more as a left reformist, Anthony Pillai's development foreshadowed the opportunist degeneration of part of the central leadership of the LSSP.

tially on the *extra-parliamentary* scene. In truth, the relationship between the parliamentary illusions of the masses and the parliamentary illusions and outlook of the LSSP leadership, which had started as a case of tail-endism, now saw the revolutionary party dragging the masses back to the scene of parliament at a time when experience was centering their attention more and more on direct action!<sup>2</sup>

A third manifestation of "Ceylonese exceptionalism," inherent in a certain sense in the previous one of "the parliamentary road to socialism," occurred during the 1960 crisis precipitated by the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike. The view was advanced that not only could power be won through the ballot box and parliamentary means, but the revolution itself could be completely "peaceful," without any need whatsoever for defensive military preparations in the struggle for power. This theory was founded on the premise that the bourgeois army and constabulary in Ceylon were so weak that they would be unable to intervene actively in the class struggle. It was further pointed out that the "left parties" enjoyed considerable sympathy among the armed forces, the LSSP among the lower echelons, and the MEP of Philip Gunawardena among the noncommissioned officers.

However, life itself brutally refuted this theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism"; in fact, an army conspiracy proved to be behind the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike in 1960! Preparations for an army coup were discovered and blocked only at the last moment in 1962. Again in the spring of 1964 rumors about a projected army coup became

widespread in Ceylon (even playing a role in paving the way inside the LSSP for a coalition with the SLFP!) Despite this refutation of their assumptions, the LSSP leadership never drew any lessons from what had happened and never corrected the tendency toward tail-endism or the hope that Ceylon would prove to be an "exception."

It may seem strange, at first sight, that experienced leaders and brilliant Marxists like Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, who had torn to shreds the reformist illusions of the Stalinists about "people's fronts," about a "new democracy" (in France and Italy 1944-47), about the parliamentary road to socialism, who had no less effectively criticized the miserable performance of the postwar Labour government in pretending to introduce socialism "piecemeal" in Great Britain without touching the bourgeois state machine and the bourgeois army, solely basing itself on a majority in parliament — it may seem strange that such comrades, very well versed in Lenin's *State and Revolution*, who had given lec-

### **The "National Bourgeoisie," the Peasantry, and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution**

**G**RAVE as they were, these three instances of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" were relatively "mild" in their consequences compared to the fourth one. This concerned the problem of the relationship between the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class, and the reciprocal relationship of the three classes in Ceylonese politics in general and Ceylonese *revolutionary* politics in particular.

It is well known that the peasantry plays a key role in all mass revolutions in backward, colonial or semi-

tures on this very subject, year after year, in their own party, could suddenly accept these tedious old illusions of "classical" reformism which had been so many times dispelled by historical experience. This is why it is correct to label their deviation from Marxism a case of "Ceylonese exceptionalism."

The position they adopted was not at all a rejection of the Leninist theory of the state, of the necessity to destroy the old bourgeois state machine, to base the workers state on proletarian democracy as opposed to bourgeois democracy, not upon "parliament" but on self-governing committees of the toiling masses. No, they continued to swear by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. They made the sharpest possible critical analysis of people's frontism and the policies of the postwar Labour government. They continued to swear by *State and Revolution* and the "permanent revolution" . . . adding only that "exceptional" circumstances in their own country happened to make Ceylon an "exception" to the general rule.

colonial countries. Since it constitutes the bulk of the population, no popular revolution is possible in these countries without an uprising of the peasantry. So long as the peasantry is not in motion, the working-class minority cannot make a bid for power without the gravest risk of being isolated and crushed.

This is a basic tenet of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, and the Stalinists (as well as Khrushchevists and Maoists) either speak out of ignorance or deliberately lie, of course, when they declare that Trotsky was "guilty of underestimating the role of the peasantry" in revolutions in backward countries. Suffice it to quote the following passage of his key book *The Permanent Revolution*:

**"Not only the agrarian, but also the national question assigns to the peasantry — the overwhelming majority of the population in backward countries — an exceptional place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed." (pp. 152-53)**

While the theory of the permanent

<sup>2</sup> As late as August 23, 1963, the LSSP Political Bureau published the following estimate of the situation and the temper of the mass movement in Ceylon:

"In the period facing us, there are two broad possibilities of development. In the first place, there is the question of the direct struggle of the masses leading to the capture of power. The mass struggles of today are still economic in aim. But we are living in a period of sharp changes, which included an attempted coup by reactionary forces. Although the repetition of such an attempt from the same quarters is unlikely, it is not excluded that attempts of such a nature may be made from other quarters . . .

"The other possibility is the question of the ULF [United Left Front] coming to power in a parliamentary election. This is a possibility that depends on the state of the mass movement at the time of such an election . . . If indeed such an effort is successful and a ULF government is formed, the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses will be enormously facilitated. The LSSP which does not believe that the socialist transformation of society can be accomplished except by the masses themselves, will in such a situation, both by its actions from within the ULF government and outside, set about the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses."

Instead of which, ten months later, the LSSP joined a bourgeois coalition government with the express goal of limiting and preventing "industrial strife!" It is hard to find a quicker and more cynical shift than the one between the August 23, 1963, resolution and the coalition policy of the present LSSP leadership!

revolution recognizes the key role of the peasantry in any popular revolution in a backward country, it also calls attention to the fact that historical experience has shown that the peasantry is *unable to build independent political parties of its own*. It can act either under the leadership of the liberal national bourgeoisie or under the leadership of the proletariat. And since the liberal national bourgeoisie is unable to play a revolutionary role in the epoch of imperialism, it therefore follows that a proletarian party must succeed in winning the political allegiance of the peasantry and carry the revolution through to victory by establishing a workers' state; i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the peasantry will remain under the political leadership of the national bourgeoisie, in which case there will be no victory (or no revolution at all under certain circumstances). "No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries," writes Trotsky,

**"the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution."<sup>3</sup> (p. 153.)**

Let it be noted in passing that after the experience of the October Revolution, Lenin fully accepted this basic postulate of the theory of the permanent revolution, stating again and again that the peasantry either fought under the leadership of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie—a third road, involving an "independent" peasant party, he explicitly ex-

cluded.<sup>4</sup> All historical experience has completely confirmed the correctness of this theory.

### Need for Agrarian Program

Now it is nearly incredible, but nonetheless true, that comrades who had been fighting for nearly thirty years in defense of the correctness of this theory of the permanent revolution on a world scale and especially in their own country; who had paraphrased the above-mentioned quotations in hundreds of lectures, speeches, articles and pamphlets as well as several books,<sup>5</sup> failed to recognize the very things they had been talking and writing about when they ran up against them face to face in their own country! For the basic, fatal departure from revolutionary Marxism into which the LSSP leadership fell after 1960 hinged precisely upon a *correct analysis of the class nature of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and government*, which were based mainly on the Ceylonese peasantry.

The LSSP, it is worth observing, has always analyzed the situation in the Ceylonese countryside in too sketchy a way, paying insufficient attention to the specific problems of the village poor; the slogans and agrarian program of the LSSP thus proving insufficient to meet the needs of these poor villagers. Outside the plantations—which are run by the rural proletariat and for which the LSSP correctly raised the slogan of *nationalization*<sup>6</sup>—it is true that the majority of the agricultural producers of Ceylon are small independent peasants whose standard of living is higher than that of the abjectly poor, average village dwellers of say India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam or China prior to the victory of the revolution.

But it is also true that there is heavy unemployment and underemployment in the Ceylon village, that

the latest census disclosed that one-fourth of the village families own no land whatsoever, another one-fourth, less than half an acre; that since independence, the average indebtedness of village families has more than tripled and that more than sixty percent of the village families are saddled with debt. Such conditions have long made urgently necessary a detailed analysis of the agrarian problem in Ceylon and the drafting of a *comprehensive program of transitional demands for the peasantry* which the party could actively advance not only during election campaigns but also in normal day-to-day work. We are sure that the LSSP(RS) will make up for the long-standing deficiencies and failures of the past in this field.

The LSSP leadership took an essentially pragmatic, electoralist approach to the peasantry. As a result, they were badly surprised by the triumph of the SLFP in 1956, and even more by the relative stabilization of the SLFP in 1960. What had happened, however, was a quite common "electoral" evolution in a relatively stable semicolonial country. The traditional party of the bourgeoisie and rural rich, the UNP (United National Party), had become utterly discredited in the eyes of the toiling masses through its bungling of the rice-subsidy issue (which led to the *hartal* of 1953), its general corruptness and conservatism, its ties with British imperialism, etc., etc.

The masses wanted a radical change. But the LSSP, although pre-eminent among the working class, had not organized a systematic drive to win the peasant masses to its own program for a revolution in the countryside. In short, it lacked the necessary program for a thoroughgoing agrarian reform. Consequently, the "national" bourgeoisie could carry out a traditional maneuver. It divided its own forces into "conservative" and "liberal" wings, and the latter entered the elections on an opposition platform of essentially *political* reforms (progressive substitution of the poorer, Sinhalese-speaking petty bourgeoisie in key posts in local and national government administration), thereby winning overwhelming support among the rural petty bourgeoisie and peasantry.

No trained Marxist, however, could doubt that the SLFP was essentially a *bourgeois* party; i.e., the party of the "liberal" wing of the "national"

<sup>3</sup> It is worth underlining here that Trotsky explicitly states that the first tasks of the permanent revolution to be solved are, naturally, those of the democratic revolution. Otherwise, a revolution in a backward country wouldn't be a permanent, that is, a continuously advancing revolution, but an instantaneous one. This is a reminder to all those sectarians who criticize actual revolutions for not beginning with what they can only end; i.e., the complete destruction of the bourgeois state and bourgeois property. This and the preceding quotation are from the 1962 edition of *The Permanent Revolution* printed by Plough Press Ltd.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Lenin's speech at the third Pan-Russian Trade Union Congress on April 7, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> See, among other things in K. Tilak's excellent book: *Rise & Fall of the Comintern, the chapter on the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the chapter on the Spanish Revolution, etc.*

<sup>6</sup> It should be added that prior to the Cuban Revolution, the LSSP was the only party with mass influence in a semicolonial or colonial country consistently to fight for nationalization instead of distribution of plantation land among landless peasants.

bourgeoisie. It was bourgeois not only in origin (the founder, W.R.D. Bandaranaike, had been one of the main leaders of the UNP for many years) and program, but especially in actual political practice: bourgeois property and bourgeois "law and order" were upheld under the SLFP government exactly as under the UNP government. Which of the two regimes was most corrupt is hardly worth arguing.

And if this appeared self-evident to any Marxist, it should have been a thousand times more evident to any *revolutionary* Marxist; i.e., to any Trotskyist, who, having thoroughly assimilated the theory of the permanent revolution, knew that of course an "independent" party of the peasantry has never appeared anywhere; that no exceptions are known, not even in Ceylon; and that even a party whose membership is composed ninety-nine percent of peasants will act objectively in society under the leadership of the remaining one percent of the upper strata middle-class and bourgeois members as a party of the liberal national bourgeoisie unless by some magic it has been transformed into a working-class party. To our knowledge, even N. M. Perera would hesitate to call the SLFP a proletarian party...

### From Wavering to Capitulation

**D**OESN'T the danger exist that a revolutionary party can become "isolated" if it remains hostile to a liberal-bourgeois "new deal" which is at the same time violently opposed by conservative reaction? Isn't there even the danger of a military coup? Of course the "danger" exists. The Bolsheviks, not unexpectedly, found themselves "isolated" during the first days after April 1917 when, under Lenin's pressure, they came out vigorously in opposition to the "Provisional Government." This was also the reason why Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front government in France in June 1936, not to speak of the Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front government in Spain, which was under open military fire from the fascists, was, at least in the beginning, neither easy nor "popular." Nevertheless opposition of this kind is the very essence of Leninism, of Bolshevism, of revolutionary Marxism.

Of course, this does not imply that a revolutionary working-class party will use *the same methods and same*

*language* against a liberal-bourgeois government supported by the majority of the people, and a conservative, reactionary or fascist regime, hated and despised by the people. It does not even imply the impossibility of offering such a regime a *united front* against the aggression of reaction or imperialism (such as the Bolsheviks offered Kerensky against Kornilov, and as it would be correct in Ceylon to offer the SLFP against a military coup or against "reprisals" undertaken by U. S. imperialism in defense of the oil trusts).

But the conditions for such a *united front* are well known: strict independence in the party's policies and organization; firmness in marching *separately* while striking together; stubborn efforts to warn and educate the masses on the absolute ineffectiveness and inadequacy of the policy of the liberal-bourgeois SLFP to stop reaction; continuous propaganda against imperialism, against capitalism and in favor of genuinely socialist solutions.

Above all, under no conditions to share the least responsibility for the bankrupt liberal-bourgeois regime (whose very bankruptcy is the *greatest feeder of reaction!*); under no condition *any* coalition with the "left wing" of the bourgeoisie; under no condition *any* relinquishment of constant propaganda — and, whenever possible and necessary, agitation — in favor of a Workers and Peasants Government, which, under the concrete conditions of Ceylon, could only be a government of the working-class parties with a socialist program.

The dynamics of such an initially "unpopular" stand are well known. Relatively soon, the honeymoon atmosphere of general rejoicing at the supposed "victory of the left" is dissipated, inasmuch as experience soon shows the masses that little has changed in the economic and social situation they face. They begin to realize that something much more radical is required. The initial "popularity" of the government changes into something quite different. And if the revolutionary opposition has handled itself correctly, has followed a correct policy, its own popularity

then grows day by day, since it offers an *alternative governmental solution*, with an alternative program, to the bankrupt "liberal" regime.

The Ceylon experience is no exception to this. Prior to the 1960 general elections, the LSSP leadership constantly stressed the growing unpopularity of the SLFP government, which had been so popular in 1956. In the same way, the LSSP leadership stressed very strongly in 1962-63 that the SLFP government had become utterly bankrupt. The July 7, 1963, document drafted by the LSSP majority for submission to the CP and MEP for formation of the United Left Front, begins with the following sentence: "The first task of the Front is to mobilise the masses in their own organisations and behind the Front in a campaign of struggle centering around the following demands *against the bankrupt SLFP and capitalist reaction.*" (Emphasis added.)

### Formal Coalition

It is hardly believable that less than one year after having drafted that sentence — a year which showed steady *decline* in the popularity and voting strength of the SLFP — the same comrades of the majority of the LSSP, backed, by and large, by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, reached the conclusion that having won growing successes for several months by extra-parliamentary means against a bankrupt bourgeois government, it now became necessary . . . to join the bankrupt party in parliament and the government!!!<sup>7</sup>

The traditional firm Trotskyist positions of the "old guard" inside the LSSP leadership were for the first time put in question immediately after the elections of 1956. Looking at the peasantry essentially from an electoral angle, part of the LSSP leadership became unduly impressed with the landslide victory given the SLFP as an alternative to the UNP. A group of former Trotskyists under Philip Gunawardena capitulated completely to the liberal bourgeoisie and joined the coalition government. (They stood for some reforms in favor of the small peasantry — the

<sup>7</sup> As late as March 21, 1964, Colvin R. de Silva was reported as saying at a giant rally of the United Left Front on Galle Face Green in Colombo "that one thing was clear from the events of the recent past . . . that the Government was bankrupt financially, politically and in all other respects." Yet only some weeks later he supported the position that all working-class parties should . . . join the bankrupt government. He did that instead of calling upon the toiling masses to replace the bankrupt government with a genuine socialist government of the ULF based upon a genuinely socialist program.

paddy land act — but at the same time became the spearhead of petty-bourgeois reactionary chauvinism directed against the Tamil minority. This split the Ceylonese proletariat — the bulk of the plantation workers, the main sector of the proletariat, being of Tamil, or Indian, origin.) The LSSP itself showed signs of wavering, advancing the proposal of “responsive co-operation” with the liberal-bourgeois Bandaranaike government. However, when the race riots started, when the chauvinism of the enraged petty-bourgeois elements supporting W. R. D. Bandaranaike threatened the unity of the proletariat and the country, and when the right wing of the SLFP mounted sufficient pressure to have Philip Gunawardena thrown out of the government, the LSSP sharply radicalized its stand and courageously fought the SLFP Emergency. This was the positive side of its “tail-endism.” Each time the workers went into action, the LSSP leadership took a new turn towards the left.

The traditional Trotskyist position against collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie was again questioned in 1960. After the unexpected electoral victory of Mrs. Bandaranaike, the LSSP decided to vote for the Throne Speech and the Budget; i.e., to give parliamentary support to a capitalist government. A proposal made by N. M. Perera to enter into a coalition with the SLFP was rejected by only a narrow majority. A big step had been taken from wavering towards betrayal. However, once again the Ceylonese working class saved the LSSP leadership temporarily from ignominy. After a short glow of hope about the possibilities of Mrs. Bandaranaike’s government, the workers started on the road of growing economic struggles. This led eventually, for the first time in the history of the Ceylonese labor movement, to the establishment of a Joint Committee of Trade Unions — under LSSP leadership — which the plantation workers also joined and which represented nearly one million organized workers. In the course of this experience, the LSSP leadership was pushed towards the road of essentially extra-parliamentary struggle, implying a struggle for *power*,<sup>8</sup> and towards the United Left Front of working-class parties conceived as offering an *alternative government*. (The LSSP Political Bureau resolution of August 23, 1963, declares that

“the mobilisation of the masses for struggle is necessary if a government of the United Left Front is to become a reality.”) This represented a sharp turn to the left compared with the attitude of 1960-61.

However, under the surface of these declarations, the party leadership had undergone the fundamental change noted above. The Perera group had cut itself loose from “political control” by the Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene tendency and had started to “play politics” on its own. Such politics could only be of

an extremely opportunist, reformist type. In the spring of 1964, recklessly overthrowing the very United Left Front for which he had fought so strongly nine months before, N. M. Perera abruptly opened secret negotiations with the SLFP concerning the setting up of a coalition government. The road from wavering to capitulation was completed when the majority of the LSSP, which in 1960 had still drawn back from spelling out the meaning of the fascination of the SLFP, this time followed Perera to the bitter end . . .

### The Attempt to Find Some “Precedents”

FOR THOSE who had struggled a lifetime against Stalinist people’s frontism it was not so easy to discard overnight what had been their guiding concepts and to replace them with what they had formerly rejected as stupefying poison. The nagging voice of conscience had to be stilled. Rationalizations were needed for what was indeed only a new, pitiful edition, of an old and familiar course — common, ordinary capitulation. (Comrade Karalasingham has drawn an excellent parallel between Lenin’s indictment of governmental class collaboration in Russia and the latest example of Ceylonese Menshevism. See his article, “Analysis of the SLFP-LSSP Coalition,” in *World Outlook*, Vol. 2, No. 26, June 26, 1964.) The rationalizations involve two concepts: (1) “Precedents” of “coalitions” that have led to “victorious socialist revolutions” in Eastern Europe, Cuba and Algeria; (2) the “accepted program” of the SLFP-LSSP government.

Did “coalition” governments appear in most of the Eastern European countries after World War II? Yes, they did. Did these “coalition” governments lead to the overthrow of capitalism? Yes, they did. But what was the real nature of these “coalitions?” The *actual power of the state*

(“the state is, in the last analysis, a body of armed men”) no longer rested in the hands of the local capitalist class or foreign imperialism. It was *in the hands of the Soviet army* and its local CP agents (in the case of Czechoslovakia, the working class, partially armed and under tight control of the Communist Party, was brought in, too). In Yugoslavia, real state power was already in the hands of the Yugoslav CP and the Communist army which had just brought a long civil war to victorious conclusion, completing a genuine, albeit a bureaucratically distorted, social revolution.

In other words, the cases in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1948 were *just the opposite* of the “classical” coalitions between representatives of working-class parties with the bourgeoisie. In the “classical” cases, the representatives of working-class parties in coalition cabinets are the *prisoners of capitalism*, because capitalism controls the economy and the state. In the East European “coalition” cabinets, the representatives of what remained of the bourgeoisie were the *prisoners of the Soviet bureaucracy*, because it was this bureaucracy, its army and its local agents, who controlled the economy and state power. The proof of the pudding being in the eating,

<sup>8</sup> See the resolution of the LSSP Conference of July 20-22, 1962, which states:

“The struggles to come will not be waged only against this or that measure of the SLFP government, but against the whole policy of the SLFP government, especially in the field of wages and taxation. It will be a struggle which, even if it appears in the beginning as having the aim of forcing the SLFP government to give up various measures, will in its development rapidly reach the point where the need to replace the SLFP government itself by a government which corresponds to the demands of the masses will be felt. In other words, the struggle will tend from the beginning to pose the problem of power.

“In preparing the masses for direct struggle, the Party cannot advance slogans which envisage a solution of the government problem mainly through the parliamentary process and on the parliamentary level. Any slogan of that kind would dampen the initiative of the masses and tend to divert the masses themselves from the perspective of direct action.” (Quatrième Internationale, No. 17, December, 1962, p. 63. Emphasis added.) [In the absence of the original text, this has been retranslated from the French.]



the real nature of these governments is generally shown by what occurs to the unhappy prisoners in the coalition. When they have played out their usefulness to the genuinely dominant social force, any illusions they may have about being in "power" are ended by a simple kick in the pants. They often find that the bars of their gilded cage in the coalition have suddenly changed to bars in a very real prison. That was the fate of the Scheidemanns and Herman Müllers in Germany, the Léon Blums in France, Thorez and some of his co-ministers in the Fourth French Republic. It was the fate of the bourgeois ministers after 1948 in Eastern Europe.

Were coalition governments formed at the beginning of the Cuban and Algerian revolutions? Yes, coalition governments were formed. Did they prevent the overthrow of capitalism? In the case of Cuba, certainly not. In the case of Algeria, the social outcome has not yet been decided, but in any case the temporary coalition between Ben Bella and Ferhat Abbas did not prevent the *revolution* from advancing along the road to overthrowing the bourgeois state.

### Beyond Coalitions

Why didn't the coalition block the victory of the revolution in Cuba? Because it was *broken* at the decisive moment. When the Cuban *revolution* reached the point where it was imperative to nationalize the big estates and to break the stranglehold of foreign imperialist and *native* capital on agriculture, *all* the representatives of the "national" bourgeoisie left the government or were given a kick in the seat of the pants. They went over to the camp of the counter-revolution, thereby again confirming another of the basic postulates of the theory of the permanent revolution; i.e., that the fundamental tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in backward countries, in the epoch of imperialism cannot be carried out under the leadership of the "national" bourgeoisie, or even be tolerated by them, but requires a *proletarian* revolution and the establishment of a workers state as a necessary precondition. And, as Trotsky pointed out many times, a radical agrarian reform is precisely *the* fundamental task of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

In other words, a coalition government is not an absolute obstacle to

the overthrow of capitalism either when it is a *sham* coalition (when the bourgeois ministers are captives because they have already lost all real power in the economy and state to their class enemy) or when it is a passing phase that is *transcended by the development of the revolution*.

Isn't it clear that under these conditions, references to such "precedents" to excuse the coalition in Ceylon lack the slightest justification? Ceylon is not occupied by the Soviet army. The Ceylonese bourgeoisie have not been deprived of power by "military-bureaucratic" means. Mrs. Bandaranaike is no languishing "captive" of Messrs. Perera, Moonesinghe and Cholmondeley Goonewardene. Economic and state power remain fully intact in the hands of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie, not to mention the strong grip of British imperialism. There is not the remotest analogy with the cases of Eastern Europe in 1945-48.

As for the other analogy, no one as yet, unfortunately, is able to point to revolutionary events in Ceylon in any way comparable to those of Cuba or even Algeria. No spontaneous occupation of factories and estates by workers and poor peasants has occurred. We are not faced with a panic-stricken attempt of the liberal bourgeoisie to hang on, if even to the coat-tails of a revolutionary government, in the wake of a powerful mass uprising. We are not faced with a team of LSSP leaders resolved to push forward a seething revolution at all costs until it reaches a complete break with imperialism and expropriates the propertied classes even if a government coalition must be swept into the dust pan. On the contrary, the reality is that a liberal bourgeois government has just tricked the leading party of the working class into a coalition in order to *prevent* an upsurge of the mass movement, in order to *stifle* mass action, in order to *stop* the threat of potential revolution. And far from showing willingness to break up any coalition that stands in the way, the majority of the LSSP leadership revealed shameful eagerness to join such a coalition under conditions set by the bourgeois masters. All references to the Cuban and Algerian revolutions are therefore as much out of place as the references to Eastern Europe. What we have is a classical case of class collaboration in a coalition government in order

to "fool, divide and weaken the workers," as Lenin so aptly put it.

Again the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The real nature of the passing "coalitions" in Eastern Europe and in Cuba was revealed by their very transitory character and by the socio-economic results which afterwards became evident: expropriation of the bourgeoisie; a break with imperialism; destruction of the bourgeois state and the bourgeois army and police; slow emergence of a state apparatus of qualitatively different character. If it should turn out, to everyone's surprise, that a comparable process occurs in the immediate future in Ceylon, we shall of course humbly admit that we were wrong and that this coalition, after all, was only a passing phase in the rise of the Ceylonese revolution. But we observe that no one in the LSSP leadership, absolutely no one, has dared to hurl this challenge against those who accuse them of betrayal.

On the contrary, in a guilty way they promise only a few miserable reforms (workers *advisory* committees in state industry, such as Winston Churchill introduced in British plants nearly twenty-five years ago!) which do not threaten capitalist property and the bourgeois state in the least way. When the genuine revolution breaks out in Ceylon, it will most certainly *not* be in consequence of any inspiration from this government, but the result of a mass uprising *against* this government or the reactionary regime for which it is paving the way.

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## Who Is Responsible for the Revisionism?

**W**HEREAS the LSSP leadership in their rationalizations use the "analogy" to Eastern Europe, to Cuba and Algeria to excuse capitulating to the liberal bourgeoisie, some sectarian critics of the Fourth International use the same arguments — a most telling parallel! — to condemn the stand taken by the world Trotskyist movement in relation to Eastern Europe, Cuba and Algeria. The saddest case is that of Healy, who, taking as his main foundation a deliberate lie,<sup>9</sup> sees in the betrayal of the LSSP leadership the "logical" outcome of our alleged "revisionism" on an international scale. If you hold that a "petty-bourgeois nationalist" like Fidel Castro can make a revolution and set up a workers state, Healy argues, then you are logically driven into taking the position that it can also be done through a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike. The method of arguing by analogy, whether used by opportunists in Ceylon or ultra-lefts in Britain, degrades Marxist dialectics to scholasticism and pure sophistry.

Healy's position, however, lacks even logical self-consistency. Having delivered his "crushing attack" against the "revisionists," he at once becomes subject to a still more crushing attack from Messrs. Schachtman, Tony Cliff and Co., who quite justifiably demand more thoroughness from him and equally justifiably accuse him of being the biggest "revisionist" of all; for doesn't Healy admit that in Eastern Europe workers states appeared not only *without revolutionary parties but also without revolutions!* Isn't Healy logically responsible, therefore, for Perera's betrayal? Once you admit, as Healy does, that capitalism can be overthrown without a revolutionary party, without a revolution, and after a coalition with the native bourgeoisie, as he teaches was the case in

Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania and East Germany, how then can you consistently draw the line on the possibility of capitalism being overthrown in Ceylon without a revolution, simply through a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike?

A whole queue of sophists thirsting for revenge now forms. Messrs. Schachtman, Tony Cliff and Co., themselves come under crushing attack from Bordiga and other ultra-leftists: "You are not 'in principle' opposed to the United Front, are you? Then, Healy, Schachtman, Cliff and *tutti quanti*, you are responsible not only for Perera's betrayal, but also for the betrayals of the French and Spanish people's fronts and all the opportunism of the Communist parties for the last thirty years." All these betrayals, they contend, were the logical consequence of the basic revisionism that occurred at the Third Congress of the Communist International, where it was decided that so-called 'united fronts' with opportunist working-class parties was a permissible tactic. We happen to know, they argue, that Lenin himself said in the First and Second Congresses of the Communist International, that these opportunist parties of the working class are in reality bourgeois parties objectively, in fact the best and main props of the bourgeois state and bourgeois private property under conditions of working-class upsurge. Therefore, any 'united front' with such parties is shameful revisionism and betrayal. Once you condone such betrayals, they triumphantly conclude, the logical consequence is the ultimate betrayal of you yourself joining in a coalition government with these or other bourgeois parties.

To make a long story short, Bordiga himself is not without sin. His "revisionism" comes under crushing attack from the anarchists. They point

out that the ultimate source of all the crimes and betrayals committed by all the opportunists in the labor movement is the original sin of "accepting the idea of the state." Once you agree to the argument that the workers must conquer state power, you find that the next step is acceptance of the view that a majority must be won. To win a majority you must take into consideration the views of opportunist elements among the masses. Once you start kowtowing in this way, it is an easy step first to negotiate with and then to ally yourself with political parties that represent these conservative elements. You thereby become hopelessly revisionist. When you accepted the idea of conquering state power you were already on the road to a coalition with the bourgeoisie. It was really the idea of conquering state power that was responsible for Perera's capitulation. Thus to simon-pure anarchists, Perera, Cannon, Healy, Schachtman, Cliff and Bordiga are just one reactionary revisionist mass . . .

### Basis of Social Revolution

Is it so difficult to unravel this sophistry? A social revolution signifies the replacement of one mode of production by another, of the economic, social and political power of one class by that of another. In the mainstream of history this can be done only if the revolutionary class is led by a revolutionary party. Un-

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<sup>9</sup> In The Newsletter of July 4, 1964, Healy, General Secretary of the Socialist Labour League (Great Britain) states that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International supported the "center" position of Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva, demanding a coalition between the United Left Front and the bourgeois SLFP. The truth is that the position of the "center" group was consistently opposed by the United Secretariat which counterposed the slogan of a government of working-class parties to any thought of coalition with a bourgeois party. Again, Healy states in The Newsletter of July 11, 1964, that the United Secretariat "advocated support for the centrist wing of Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin de Silva . . . right up until the vote was taken at the LSSP conference of June 7." This is an outright falsification. From the moment it learned of Perera's secret negotiations, the United Secretariat urged that the firmest stand be taken on the Trotskyist positions; i.e., opposition to any coalition with the bourgeois SLFP. This included any ULF coalition with the SLFP along the lines advocated by Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva. The documents, which have been scheduled for publication, will show how gross Healy's attempt is to saddle the United Secretariat of the Fourth International with the position taken by the "center" grouping.

der wholly abnormal circumstances, however — especially if it has been previously weakened to the extreme by war and uprisings — a ruling class can also be dislodged without such a party. This is not a new phenomenon; it is as old as the Paris Commune; and it was acknowledged and faithfully noted by Leon Trotsky in the very *Transitional Program* which Healy brandishes the way a Protestant cleric brandishes Holy Scripture, carefully avoiding citing the passages that don't suit his sectarian politics.<sup>10</sup>

What should revolutionary Marxists do? Deny the truth? Defend the fantastic idea that the Cuban bourgeoisie is today politically in power (when its state apparatus has been completely destroyed, when its army has been totally crushed, when the Cuban state, equalling "men in arms" is the armed proletariat and poor peasantry)? Maintain that the mode of production in Cuba is still capitalist (when not only industry, transport, banking and wholesale trade are one hundred percent nationalized but even agriculture is seventy percent socialized; i.e., when the socialization of the means of production is in fact *more advanced than it was in Soviet Russia ten years after the October Revolution*)? Should such realities be denied out of fear of succumbing to temptation, the real "moving spirit" of sectarianism, as Trotsky correctly declared? Consider the completely hallucinatory character of Healy's position: He argues that *without a revolution* workers states were created in Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, nay, even in East Germany where the working class was completely crushed and exercised no form of "power" for even a single moment. He cites the nationalization of the means of production as the acid test, proving that workers states were established. But he argues that in Cuba where nationalization of the means of production occurred *in the process of and as a consequence of a genuine revolution*, the deepest and most popular seen since 1917, deeper and more popular than the Spanish Revolution, bringing into united action up to seventy percent of the population, establishing committees with two million members in a population of seven million, with workers wielding actual power for years now in many areas, forms and plants, that all this *does not* mean a workers state but only a variety of . . . bourgeois power!

We do not care to share any such hallucinations. In our opinion, Marxism begins with a scrupulous critical analysis of reality and its own relation to it, and never sacrifices truth for the sake of any formula which would thereby be converted into a scholastic dogma. From the Marxist point of view there is no escaping the admission that under certain exceptional circumstances capitalism *can* be overthrown without prior formation of a revolutionary Marxist party — even without prior formation of soviets. While admitting something that has been confirmed by life itself, it is necessary to determine the exact reasons which made it possible, thereby reinforcing the theoretical conclusion that it can happen only under *exceptional* circumstances, is not a general rule, and most certainly does not apply to imperialist countries where the bourgeoisie is still very powerful, economically as well as socially.<sup>11</sup> Such an analysis, far from being "revisionist," strengthens and enriches revolutionary theory, for in order to transform reality, Marxists must start by understanding and accepting it. Merely repeating formulas in parrot-like fashion dooms a grouping to the fate of a politically bankrupt sect that can *never* win leadership of the masses and *never* make a revolution.

Does this mean, then, that because history has provided examples of a

capitalist class being overthrown without the previous existence of a revolutionary Marxist party that some kind of *opportunist* policy; i.e., a coalition with liberal bourgeois parties, can lead to a revolution? Certainly not. Experience is enormously rich in demonstrating that such a policy, far from speeding a revolution, only betrays the hopes of the working class and helps a tottering capitalist class to remain in power. To argue that "revisionism" in the case of Cuba — meaning admitting the facts — "logically leads" to Perera's policies reveals complete incapacity to see the difference between a case where the bourgeoisie has *lost* power and a case where its power has been *saved*. What the Popu'ar Front accomplished for the French bourgeoisie, or what Perera is trying to accomplish for the Ceylonese bourgeoisie today, is completely clear to all the political forces directly involved in these operations. On the other hand, no amount of sophistry from Healy will convince the Cuban bourgeoisie, in emigration in Miami or huddling together in the miserable *gusano* circles of La Habana, that they are really still in power today under Fidel Castro the way the *Comité des Forges* still remained in power under the Popular Front government of Léon Blum in 1936 and 1937.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality, and the 'workers' and farmers' government' in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Transitional Program*, p. 37, Pioneer Publishers, 1946.)

<sup>11</sup> This is done in detail in the document "The Dynamics of World Revolution," adopted at the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International. (Reprinted in the *International Socialist Review*, Fall 1963.)

<sup>12</sup> The "petty-bourgeois nationalist" label that Healy pins on the government of Fidel Castro involves a fundamental revision of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution: (1) The petty bourgeoisie is suddenly granted the capacity to build an independent movement; otherwise Healy would have to call Fidel Castro's movement either a bourgeois movement or a petty-bourgeois working-class movement (of the left socialist or semi-Stalinist variety). (2) This imagined "independent petty-bourgeois movement" (or, still worse, a bourgeois party!) is suddenly granted the capacity to solve the basic demand of the bourgeois-democratic revolution: a radical agrarian reform — seventy percent of all the arable land is socialized today in Cuba and there are no more unemployed or landless peasants. Thus, reasoning from Healy's assumption, the social and economic problem that provides the main motive power driving the revolution forward in "permanent" fashion no longer exists in Cuba; Castro solved it. (Rather than revising the theory of the permanent revolution reality compels us to deny Healy's contention that a capitalist state still exists in Cuba.) (3) If Healy is right, then it is clear that the leadership of the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer a necessary precondition for solving the agrarian question and bringing the agrarian revolution to successful conclusion. If Healy is right we would be obligated to admit that Trotsky turned out to be dead wrong on a key postulate of the theory of the permanent revolution. Healy can't have it both ways!

ONLY a sector of the leading cadre of the LSSP became really integrated into the Fourth International. The international movement had no way of influencing the rank-and-file members of the party except through this cadre. But it must be said, in all fairness, that this cadre was much more politically advanced and much closer to the general program and current political line of the Fourth International than the average member of the LSSP. From the start, therefore; i.e., from the reconstitution of an International Center at the close of World War II and from the first formal relations with the Ceylonese section, the international leadership had no choice, even if some other recourse seemed more advisable, but to try to bring the LSSP progressively closer to the norms of a real Leninist-type organization through comradesly collaboration with the LSSP leadership. What was involved essentially was patient education.

The problem was not a matter of correct or incorrect tactics. The same line was consistently followed from 1945 to 1964 — nearly ten years of this period being in close consultation with Healy and with his complete approval. The line involved a basic organizational principle — how to facilitate the selection of national and international leaders in the Fourth International. We do not believe that hard-handed intervention from an international center can substitute for the patient selection, in a democratic way, of a mature revolutionary leadership in each country.

The International can and must help to clarify political issues; but it is duty bound to refrain from setting up artificially, from the outside, any tendencies or factions, or from engaging in organizational reprisals against national leaderships in which it has misgivings or holds reservations because of their political tendencies. To act otherwise does not lead to political clarification; on the contrary, it inevitably leads to organizational grievances becoming substituted for political discussion, and thus, in the long run, hinders and delays the process of creating an independent-minded revolutionary leadership. This responsible attitude — really a *norm* — is all the more necessary where language obstacles and distance make it impossible to conduct a direct dialogue with the majority of the membership and where the leading cadre displays loy-

## LSSP (R.S.) and the Fourth International

(The following statement by Edmund Samarakkody, a member of the Ceylonese parliament and one of the leaders of the Revolutionary section of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party*, was issued June 7.)

The decision of the reformist majority of the LSSP to enter into a coalition with the capitalist SLFP (*Sri Lanka Freedom Party*) government and thereby to become an instrument of the capitalist class in Ceylon, constitutes a complete violation of the basic principles of Trotskyism on which the revolutionary program of the party is based.

This degeneration is the logical outcome of the parliamentary reformist line which the majority of the leadership of the party has followed for several years and the substitution of parliamentary and reformist struggle in place of class struggle and revolutionary perspectives, and the systematic recruitment of nonrevolutionary elements into the party on that basis.

The revolutionaries of the LSSP have, in this situation, decided to organize themselves on the basis of the party program. They therefore withdrew from the conference and will hereafter function as a separate organization under the name of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section)*.

In order to carry forward the revolutionary struggle for power, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) calls upon all the adherents and supporters of the LSSP in the country to rally round the revolutionary banner which it refuses to surrender to the SLFP Government and the capitalist class.

(Signed) **Edmund Samarakkody, Secretary, Provisional Committee of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section)**

**Note:** The Provisional Committee of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) addressed a communication to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International requesting recognition of the LSSP (RS) as the "Ceylon Unit" of the Fourth International.

A letter from the United Secretariat under date of July 10, 1964 — which crossed the Provisional Committee communication in the mail — addressed to the Emergency Conference of the LSSP (RS), scheduled for July 18-19, stated that the US had voted: "To recognize this Emergency Conference as officially constituting the continuing body of the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon and to empower it to speak for and conduct any matters pertaining to the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon."

The Emergency Conference voted to accept the "recognition granted, and will hereafter function as the Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International." The vote on this motion by the delegates was 54 "for," 9 "against," and 8 "neutral."

alty to the international organization, attending congresses, distributing communications as they are received, and taking the opinions and arguments of the International into careful consideration, adjusting or changing deviations in political line in response to suggestions or criticisms from the International.

It should be added that this attitude was not only correct in principle; it corresponded in the current situation to the feelings of the leaders of the left tendency that fortunately arose spontaneously in the LSSP and which sought the closest consultation and contact with the International. Several times in the past year, when pressure from other sources rose for "vigorous" intervention, the comrades of the left tendency warned against any "factional" moves in the internal struggle in the LSSP on their behalf. In this situation any violation of the principle involved would have had immediate

practical consequences that could only damage their work. These comrades thereby demonstrated how well they understand the principle of democratic centralism as bequeathed to our movement by Leon Trotsky. They fought against the opportunist trend, organizing a tendency the better to defend the traditional Trotskyist positions; yet they helped the United Secretariat, which shared their basic views, to maintain normal, comradesly relations with the elected leadership of the party.

The influence which the International Center sought to wield among the leaders of the LSSP falls into two periods sharply divided by the 1960 experience.

Before 1960, the international leadership was concerned about erroneous attitudes on various questions, but it limited its communications to the Political Bureau and Central Committee, occasionally to party conferences. It was critical over the lack of

integration of the LSSP leadership into the International, its failure to make financial contributions in proportion to organizational strength, its failure to maintain close relations with the Indian section (which was abruptly "abandoned" by the Ceylonese comrades in the late forties), its lack of a Leninist-type organizational structure, its lack of systematic recruitment especially among the plantation workers, the lack of party educational work, etc., etc. On some points, such criticisms led to favorable results. Membership conferences were formally given up. The work among the Tamil population became more energetic, a Tamil newspaper was published, a Tamil-speaking plantation workers union was organized with promising results. The Youth Leagues became a mass organization, including tens of thousands of members, sympathetic to the LSSP. An attempt, later abandoned, was made to have the party study the agrarian problem. Several attempts (which failed) were made to have the main party leaders give up activities that blocked them from full-time participation in party work.

On many occasions the International had reason to be proud of the LSSP and its leadership, as for example in the 1953 *hartal*, in the race riots of 1958 and in the 1961 strike wave. In instances like the race riots it upheld the banner of internationalism in the most stubborn way, holding tough against the petty-bourgeois chauvinistic pressure mounting on all sides until it reached *pogrom* level, yet never giving up its fight for equality of status between Sinhalese and Tamil, always defending the political rights of the oppressed minority, even at the cost of "popularity." It is sad to have to say that such a fine record was marred in 1963 when the party leadership began to give up what it had maintained under the severest hardship, for opportunistic reasons conceding on the language question to the CP and MEP leaderships during the 1963 United Left Front negotiations.

The decision of the LSSP after the 1960 elections to support Mrs. Bandaranaike's government meant the abrupt end of this stage of relations between the leaderships of the LSSP and the Fourth International. It was clear that the problem was no longer occasional tail-endism or a threat of opportunism which could be corrected by fraternal discussion and com-

radely collaboration. More vigorous measures were required to bring the LSSP, or at least part of it, back to revolutionary Marxism.

That is why the LSSP decision to support the Bandaranaike government in 1960 met with a sharp public censure from the International leadership. And when the majority of the LSSP did not correct this grave mistake after a public warning from the Fourth International, the Sixth World Congress, meeting at the end of 1960, again publicly criticized and attacked the Ceylonese section for its opportunistic behavior, a measure without precedent in the history of the International in relation to an organization that had not split away. At the same time *The Militant*, the American weekly expressing the viewpoint of the Socialist Workers Party, completely independently of the Sixth World Congress, also found it necessary to publicly condemn the opportunistic support which the LSSP leadership was offering to a bourgeois government.<sup>13</sup>

This pressure from the world

<sup>13</sup> In September 1960 the International Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a public statement, published in issue No. 11 of the magazine *Fourth International*, saying among other things: "The IS has not failed to express to the LSSP its disagreement in regard to both its recent electoral policy and its policy towards the SLFP after the March and July elections. The IS particularly believes that the no-contest agreement, extended up to a mutual-support agreement, involves the danger of creating illusions about the nature of the SLFP among the great masses, and that an attitude of support to a government such as that of Mrs. Bandaranaike should only be critical and hence limited to the progressive measures actually proposed and adopted.

"In the specific case of the Speech from the Throne, the IS thinks that the very moderate character of the government programme and its attitude against nationalisation of the plantations — a fundamental question for a country like Ceylon — is such as to involve a negative vote by the LSSP MPs.

"A discussion on the Ceylonese situation and the policy to adopt has been opened in view of the next conference of the LSSP and of the World Congress of the International." (pp. 53-54)

At the Sixth World Congress itself, the following resolution was adopted and printed in issue No. 12 of the magazine *Fourth International*:

"The Sixth World Congress, having discussed the situation in Ceylon, states that it disapproves the political line adopted by the LSSP following the election defeat of March 1960.

"The Congress condemns more especially the vote of parliamentary support expressed on the occasion of the Speech from the Throne, and the adoption of the budget by the party's MPs.

"The Fourth International does not exclude support for the adoption of progressive measures, even by a national bourgeois or petty-bourgeois government in a colonial or semi-colonial country. But the social nature, composition and general programme of the Bandaranaike government does not justify the support which was accorded to it.

"The World Congress appeals to the LSSP for a radical change in its political course in the direction indicated by the document of the leadership of the International.

"The Congress is confident that the next National Conference of the LSSP, in whose political preparation the whole International must participate, will know how to adopt all the political and organisational decisions necessary to overcome the crisis which was revealed following the results of the March 1960 election campaign." (p. 50)

This resolution shows what a shameful lie was printed by Healy's Newsletter in the July 4 1964, issue: "The Pabloite International Secretariat endorsed [!], with reservation, the main line of the LSSP in the 1960 elections . . . Thus it supplied them with further cover for their capitulation to the SLFP."

Readers and friends of *The Newsletter* should ponder why the group that edits this paper feels compelled to use systematic lies and distortions of the truth as political ammunition whereas Trotsky said that the revolution, the biggest truth of our times, doesn't need lies . . .

expressed in a drive towards a United Left Front of working-class parties.

This was undoubtedly a step forward compared with support to the SLFP government. It had the merit of presenting a *working-class alternative to a bourgeois government*. This the World Congress correctly saluted as a fundamentally correct orientation. At the same time, the Congress drew attention, both publicly and through a special letter to the LSSP, to four key issues involved in the turn which the Congress thought had not been properly met by the LSSP leadership: (1) Insufficiently critical analysis of the 1960 mistake;<sup>14</sup> (2) lack of clarity about the extra-parliamentary nature and potentialities of the United Left Front in contrast to its parliamentary features; (3) lack of any kind of public criticism by the LSSP of the opportunist policies of the CP and MEP, contrary to the Leninist concept of the united front; (4) failure to involve the Tamil plantation workers and their organizations in the United Left Front. (This point blew up into a real scandal through failure to invite them to the platform in the May 1, 1963, demonstration, and the Congress strongly criticized the LSSP leadership over this.)

The LSSP leadership, now faced with an officially constituted Left Tendency in the party, again partially responded to the pressure of the International. It took some steps on the question of interesting the Tamil workers in the draft program for the United Left Front, only to partially back down under pressure from the CP and MEP. The ULF started to call big mass demonstrations, which were attended by tens of thousands of workers and peasants, clearly testifying to the popular response to formation of the ULF and the objective possibility of launching an all-out campaign in favor of bringing to power a ULF government on a socialist program. Strike struggles of the working class grew sharper and sharper. The program of twenty-one points was adopted by all the trade unions. A mammoth demonstration of 40,000 people supported it on March 21, 1964.

It was at this point that N. M. Perera, in complete opposition to the party's program and its conference decisions, treacherously embarked on secret negotiations with Mrs. Bandaranaike for the purpose of entering a coalition government. Mrs. Bandaranaike herself very clearly and

frankly expressed why she wanted such a government:

**"However much progressive work we do, we cannot expect any result unless we get the co-operation of the working class. This could be understood if the working of the Port and of other nationalised undertakings are considered. We cannot go backwards. We must go forward. Disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows must be eliminated, and the development of the country must proceed.**

**"Some people have various ideas on these subjects. Some feel that these troubles can be eliminated by the establishment of a dictatorship. Others say that workers should be made to work at the point of gun and bayonet . . . My conclusion is that none of these solutions will help to get us where we want to go . . . Therefore, gentlemen, I decided to initiate talks with the leaders of the working class, par-**

ticularly Mr. Philip Gunawardena and Dr. N. M. Perera . . ." (May 10, 1964, speech. **Emphasis added.**)

As soon as the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was informed about this step, it sent a letter to the LSSP Central Committee, warning it not to undertake a step which would be utter betrayal and counterposing to the idea of coalition with a bourgeois party the correct perspective of a united front government of all working-class parties based on a socialist program.<sup>15</sup> The Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, held in May 1964, unanimously endorsed this stand. At the same time it was decided to send a representative of the Fourth International to attend the LSSP special conference and fight against the coalition proposal, making it clear to everybody, inside and outside the party in Ceylon, that the Fourth International would have nothing to

<sup>14</sup> See Quatrième Internationale, No. 19, July 1963, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> This letter, dated April 23, 1964, called attention to the "inability of the ruling SLFP to continue much longer in office, expressed in its rapidly dwindling parliamentary majority, its sudden prorogation of parliament and its 'behind the scenes' maneuvers to negotiate a fresh lease of life through an alliance with the parties of the left."

The letter continued:

"As far as the SLFP is concerned, two factors appear to motivate its present course of action: (1) lack of confidence in its ability to continue in office for the rest of its constitutional term; (2) a deep-seated fear of an upsurge in the working-class movement and the real possibility of the emergence of a government of the left. Clearly, it is this latter possibility which drives it today to seek a modus vivendi with the left and attempt a re-alignment of forces through a coalition with the United Left Front.

"Its calculations are fairly obvious. It hopes to gain strength by an infusion from the left. It hopes to disorient the masses by taking on left coloration. It hopes to weaken the threat from the left by splitting the left organizations (since acceptance of a coalition would obviously not be unanimous and would most likely open the most bitter factional struggles). It hopes to associate prominent left figures with its rule and thereby utterly discredit them for the following phase when this one comes to its inevitable end and social forces have reached unendurable tension and polarization.

"Its primary immediate aim is to stem the tide of rising mass unrest, contain the parties of the left within its own control and commit them to 'progressive' formulae within the framework of the capitalist structure. It is clear that the 'concessions' proposed by the Prime Minister and reported to the Central Committee meeting remain mere sops insofar as they leave intact the structure of capitalism and in no way touch the essential productive bases of the economy.

"It is necessary to declare at this stage, quite categorically, that we oppose our party entering any coalition government wherein decisive control is held by a party that has proved time and again its reluctance to move against the capitalist order, and furthermore has demonstrated in action its essentially antiworking-class character. We do not believe that the character of the SLFP is determined by the declarations of one or another of its individual leaders. Its character has been revealed by its whole history during its years in power. In this sense we see no reason for changing our characterization of it as a party essentially functioning within the framework of capitalism and utilized by certain layers of the bourgeoisie as a possible bulwark against the growing forces of the working class. Any form of coalition with such a party, as long as it remains the dominant majority within such a coalition, can only lead to the immobilization of the left in advance and its becoming itself a target for the growing resentment of the masses."

<sup>16</sup> Comrade Pierre Frank's stay in Ceylon during and after the LSSP conference greatly helped the cause of the Fourth International. Besides his speech at the conference, he conferred with many leaders and members of the LSSP. The press was quite interested in what he had to say as it was known that he represented the main stream of the world Trotskyist movement and that his opinions carried weight. His statements were extensively reported in the Ceylon press and he was thus able to make clear to the whole general public that the Fourth International rejected Perera's coalition politics and had nothing to do with his moves and negotiations



do with the betrayal if Perera should succeed in carrying it out.<sup>16</sup>

Thanks to the collaboration between the International and the courageous action of the Left Tendency of the LSSP, the banner of Trotskyism remains unstained in Ceylon — the Fourth International is not identified with the disastrous opportunist course of Messrs. Perera, Moonesinghe and Cholmondeley Goonewardene. The bulk of the Trotskyist-educated cadre has been saved for the Ceylonese revolution. When the inevitable clash between the Ceylonese working class and the capitalist government occurs, many working-class members of the LSSP who mistakenly followed N. M. Perera will turn to the LSSP(RS). Fresh layers of militant workers will come to the organization that knew how to stand firm against the opportunist wing. Given a correct orientation, a resolute break with all the opportunist and sectarian habits of the old LSSP, and an energetic turn towards mass work and mass education among the workers and poor peasants, the LSSP(RS) can and will build an alternative revolutionary leadership for the Ceylonese toiling masses.

What lessons should be drawn from this experience? Opportunism remains a constant danger for any revolutionary organization once it gains mass influence, especially if it faces conditions in which the revolution is deferred. There is no other final guarantee against this danger than the thorough education of the cadre through study and action in revolutionary Marxism. The party members must root themselves in the working class and absorb the program of the Fourth International until it becomes second nature, lodged in their very bones, without any illusions about "exceptionalism" of any kind.

The opportunist deviations of the Perera group are so spectacular and so criminal that they are easily perceived. But this should not cause us to overlook an opposite kind of error that can prove just as harmful from the viewpoint of building revolutionary mass parties and preparing for revolutionary action on a big scale. This is the error of sectarianism and ultra-leftism which often appears as an offset to opportunism. This error is much less spectacular and those who fall into it are seldom faced with problems of conscience, consequently it can often prove to be more in-

sidious in causing a revolutionary cadre to miss a big possible breakthrough towards mass influence.

Opportunism generally represents a caving in to the direct pressure of a hostile class environment. In underdeveloped countries, tail-endism in relation to the masses paves the way for opportunist adaptation to bourgeois parties momentarily wielding wide mass influence. The social nature of such opportunism is very clear: adaptation to the petty bourgeoisie, which in turn is following the leadership of the liberal national bourgeoisie.

The roots of such opportunism are "national," not "international." The petty bourgeoisie — to speak of the liberal bourgeoisie in this connection is ridiculous — cannot directly influence the Fourth International with its particular kind of pressure. Its pressure is exerted on national sections that happen to be living in a given environment where this is possible. To battle that pressure, the Fourth International has the resource of sections that are free from the pressure, or more capable of resisting it, plus a team of leaders who tend, out of long experience, testing and selection, to reflect the interests of the movement as a whole. But to bring these resources to bear in an effective way in a given situation precisely when they can do the most

good requires a certain material weight.

We know, as materialists, that politics are decided in the last resort not by ideas but by social forces. Even the strongest ideas do not triumph if there is not enough material strength behind those ideas. The most powerful counterweight to opportunist deviations in national sections of the world Trotskyist movement is a strong International, with strong cohesive forces, with enough material resources to make possible effective and benign political aid in fields and areas where it is most required,<sup>17</sup> with enough weight and prestige to make any centrifugal tendency stop short and think twice before taking any decisive step in the way of breaching the political line determined by the world Trotskyist movement at its congresses.

The split in the world Trotskyist movement in 1953 undoubtedly weakened the deterrents to the growth of opportunism in the LSSP. The 1963 reunification came too late to be able to reverse the trend. Let all those who sought to block that unification, who managed to hinder it and defer it for some years, or who refused to participate in it when it finally came about, ponder the lesson of Ceylon. They bear much of the responsibility for the loss of part of a revolutionary cadre in that country.

<sup>17</sup> On five occasions the Fourth International sent leading members of the Center to Ceylon in order to participate in discussions involving the leaders and rank and file of the Ceylonese section. Three of these trips were made after the 1960 crisis. It is evident, however, that this was not enough. A stronger International would have been able to send some of its leaders for a prolonged stay in Ceylon to help in the necessary fundamental educational work.

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116 University Place

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# The Man on the Flying Trapeze

By Peng Shu-tse

Dear Comrade Healy,

In June 1963 the majority of the sections of the International Committee met with the sections of the International Secretariat in a Reunification Congress. In this Congress, the world Trotskyist movement reached agreement on basic principles, ending the split that had existed since 1953-54, and established the United Secretariat as the leadership of the Fourth International.

Since that time, the Socialist Labour League, which you head, and the *La Verité* group (France) led by Lambert, utilizing the name of the International Committee, have repeatedly denounced the reunification, attacking and slandering the united Fourth International and its new leadership, the United Secretariat, without restraint. You have especially singled out the Socialist Workers Party for your diatribes because of the support it has given the united movement.

It has been my intention for some time to express my views on this in order to help clarify the situation. Due to other work, this had to be postponed. On reading the June 20 and June 27 issues of the *Newsletter*, in which you carry reports about the special conference on the LSSP [*Lanka Sama Samaja Party*] the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International, I felt it necessary to put everything else aside. These issues of the *Newsletter*, particularly an editorial and the reports you sent from Colombo are so malicious, contain so many falsifications and slanderous arguments attacking the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, that it is necessary to speak in behalf of the truth.

First of all, let me point out that when you use the name "International Committee," you hope by this

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*Peng Shu-tse was one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party. Breaking with Stalinism after the 1927 debacle, he helped to found a Chinese Trotskyist movement. Since 1951 he has been living in Europe. Interviewed by Ross Dawson in 1963, Peng gave an interesting account of his life which was published in the Summer 1963 ISR under the title "Chinese Revolutionists in Exile."*

fraud to create a false impression. Since the Reunification Congress last year, the overwhelming majority of the sections and supporters of the International Committee have either openly ratified the Congress or in other ways indicated their backing. In Japan, for instance, one of the last areas to take action, a major effort is now underway to achieve reunification on a national scale under the banner of the Fourth International. Of all the sections originally adhering to the International Committee, a minority of only two decided to break with the majority view and remain outside the united world Trotskyist movement — your SLL and Lambert's group. With the Reunification Congress the International Committee came to an end. For two groups to represent themselves as the former International Committee is a patent fraud!

Last September, you and Lambert held a conference upon which you chose to place the label "International Committee." You announced that a delegate from a "Hungarian section" attended this so-called conference. But this "Hungarian section" did not exist at the last meeting of the International Committee in March 1963. Between March and September what happened? Did you find a Hungarian émigré in England whom you decided to call a "section" in order to decorate your "IC conference?" You are reduced to such paltry methods to maintain the pretense of the continued existence of the International Committee and the construction of new "sections!"

## Impressionism and Subjectivism

You advance certain political conceptions to justify calling your group "the only" Trotskyists and to describe others, including whole sectors of the reunited Fourth International, especially its leadership the United Secretariat, as "Pabloite revisionists" who are allegedly "betraying Trotskyism." On this ground you repeat your call for "reorganization" of the Fourth International in order to build "revolutionary proletarian parties in every country." Let me call your attention to an article I wrote—"Where Is Healy Taking the Socialist Labour League?"—in which I took up your method of impressionism and subjectivism.

In this article, I considered your revision of theory, your opportunism, your sectarianism and your bureaucratic practices, including a series of absurd mistakes of yours on the most important issue, especially problems concerning the Cuban Revolution. Since you chose to ignore or forget this article, I am obliged once again to call your attention to some of your major errors:

## Catalogue of Errors

(1) From the beginning of the Algerian struggle for liberation, you wholeheartedly supported the nationalistic MNA (Algerian National Movement), headed by Messali Hadj against the FLN (National Liberation Front). You even praised Messali Hadj as "a living symbol of this struggle." The MNA, you said, "wages an intransigent fight against imperialism under the leadership of the working masses." And how did things turn out? Just the opposite of what you wrote! Messali, with his MNA, capitulated to French imperialism. With regard to the shameful capitulation of Messali Hadj and his party, you never said anything that might have drawn attention to your position. When, after seven and half years of the most difficult struggle, the FLN was obliged to sign the Evian agreement with the French government, granting temporary economic concessions to the French and letting them retain certain military interests in return for political independence, you called it a "sell out."

(2) In your own country, England, for a long time you praised Bevan, placing almost all your hopes in him. In adaptation to Bevan's politics and sowing illusions about his role, you went beyond even your efforts with regard to Messali Hadj. In spite of your praise and adaptation to his politics, Bevan followed the logic of his own opportunist course and went over to Hugh Gaitskell. When your attitude of adaptation toward Bevan proved bankrupt, you immediately jumped from right opportunism to ultraleft sectarianism. 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!

(3) When the Castro regime expropriated and nationalized American imperialist and Cuban capitalist holdings beginning in the fall of 1959, a workers state was established in Cuba. This was the appraisal of virtually the entire world Trotskyist movement. But you have categorically rejected this Marxist appraisal. In your opinion no "dictatorship of the proletariat" exists in Cuba. In determining the nature of a workers state you substitute a purely political criterion for the economic one. At this point, you depart from Marxism, taking the road to revisionism already blazed by Bruno R., Burnham, Shachtman and the state capitalists!

(4) After denying the character of the workers state in Cuba you further declare: "The [Castro] regime is a variety of capitalist state power. The Castro regime did not create a qualitatively new and different type of state power from the Batista regime." That is to say, the Castro regime is not qualitatively different from the Batista regime. Such an absurd appraisal of the nature of the Castro regime, as I pointed out in my article, reveals absolute blindness to the facts and the worst impressionism in theory. (See "Where Is Healy Taking the SLL?" *International Information Bulletin* pp. 6-7.)

The most outrageous is the following statement: "Here we have Kemal Ataturk, Chiang Kai-shek, Cardenas, Peron, Ben Bella, and Castro..." You put the counterrevolutionary Chiang Kai-shek and revolutionary Castro on the same level, treating both as enemies. This is to go beyond sectarianism and slip into the camp of reaction!

(5) Using the same method, the political criterion, change of "the state power from the hands of one class to another," you insist that the Cuban Revolution is not "a social" but "a political revolution." In this way you seek to deny that the Cuban Revolution has developed uninterruptedly from the stage of democratic revolution to socialist revolution. Here you again abandon or forget the ABC's of Marxism concerning the meaning of a social revolution; i. e., a change of property relations or the transfer of property from the hands of one class to another. From this point of view the Cuban Revolution obviously entered the stage of socialist revolution; bourgeois private property ownership has been definitively transformed into workers state ownership. It is an irrefutable fact. But with your revisionist, anti-Marxist

method, you refuse to recognize this fact!

These grave theoretical and political mistakes committed by you, as indicated above, demonstrate that you have departed from the method of Marxism and the politics of Trotskyism. In face of this, you have no right to call yourselves Trotskyists and to attack the Fourth International and its leadership, the United Secretariat. If you were really convinced of the correctness of your method and your political position, and also had the courage, you would publish my article, "Where Is Healy Taking the SLL?" and open a public discussion about this, permitting the members of the SLL to participate. As yet, you have preferred to say nothing about the criticism I levelled against your mistakes.

### Ceylonese Crisis

Let us turn to the crisis of the LSSP, which you seek to turn to factional advantage. At the special conference of the LSSP on June 6-7, an open split took place. The right wing of the party headed by N. M. Perera accepted posts in a bourgeois coalition government. The left wing, led by Edmund Samarakkody, walked out. The centrist tendency represented by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, went waveringly toward the right. This important and tragic event in our movement deserves special attention and the most serious examination so that the necessary lessons can be drawn in order to help the left wing rebuild the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon. But your aims are different. You seek to utilize this event as a good opportunity for attacking and slandering the whole unified Trotskyist movement, particularly the United Secretariat. Baiting your hook with distortions, falsifications and even lies, you try fishing in these troubled waters.

Quite typically, writing from Colombo in the June 20 *Newsletter*, you say: "Their desertion (N. M. Perera, Colvin R. de Silva, and Leslie Goonewardene) is a continuation of the policies of the so-called Unified Secretariat." With these words, you place the whole responsibility for the capitulation of the right wing and the wavering of the centrist tendency on the United Secretariat. You say nothing about the following fact in relation to a meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, reported in *World Outlook* June 5: "A report

was made on the coalition overtures advanced by the government party, the SLFP (*Sri Lanka Freedom Party*) to the LSSP, Ceylonese section of the Fourth International. The members of the International Executive Committee expressed unanimous opposition to any coalition in which the LSSP would serve in the role of captive to the bourgeoisie... The IEC called on the LSSP to counterpose to these proposals a vigorous campaign for a United Left Front government on the basis of a socialist program that would signify a break with imperialism and capitalism in Ceylon." It is very clear that the policy adopted by the IEC plenum was strongly against the tendency toward capitulation represented by the right wing of N.M. Perera and the centrist tendency represented by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene. This single reference from *World Outlook* exposes your condemnation of the policy of the United Secretariat as a complete falsification, a lie!

You also say: "A government of the ULF would have been no different from the present coalition." This demonstrates that you cannot even distinguish "a United Left Front government on the basis of a socialist program that would signify a break with imperialism and capitalism in Ceylon" from "the present coalition" controlled by the capitalist party, the SLFP!

You further assert: "This tendency (the left tendency led by Edmund Samarakkody) which received no support from the Pabloite Secretariat prior to or during the conference..." This assertion proves that if you are acquainted with the facts, you prefer to report something different. The fact is that the tendency led by Edmund Samarakkody was in close touch with the United Secretariat. The two Ceylonese delegates at the Reunification Congress last year were both leaders of the left wing in the LSSP. One of them has directly participated in the United Secretariat for the past year. At the Reunification Congress the problem of the rightist tendency in the Ceylonese party and how to conduct an effective principled struggle against it was discussed at some length. The various groupings present at the Congress were unanimously behind the left wing. At the IEC plenum held last May this position was reaffirmed. After the plenum the United Secretariat passed a resolution again stating its support of the left wing. All this took place "prior to

the conference." As to "during the conference," as you happen to know, Pierre Frank represented the United Secretariat in Ceylon. He stated the opinion of the world Trotskyist movement in favor of the left wing as against both the right wing and the centrist grouping.

### **The LSSP (Revolutionary Section)**

Finally, you make the boast: "The only tendency to fully support its [the left tendency] struggle has been the International Committee of the Fourth International." The purpose of this bait is perfectly obvious. But let me ask, just where and when have you ever "fully" supported the left wing "prior to and during the conference?" Please give us an itemized list of your declarations "prior" to the conference. Or do you prefer to maintain silence about this? "During the conference," of course, you might have sought to make up for your previous neglect. However, the Presidium — on which the left wing was represented — voted unanimously not to admit you even as an observer, in view of your dubious credentials, and you were reported to have spent your time on the street outside the hall.

Thus, it was not until after the conference, when the left tendency had issued a statement publicly denouncing the capitulation of Perera's group and had declared that they were organizing themselves as the "revolutionary section" of the LSSP, that you courageously and sagely stood up to cry that "we," the "International Committee of the Fourth International," were the "only" tendency to fully support you! And you add, for the benefit of the readers of the *Newsletter*, that "members of the revolutionary wing have the most fraternal feelings for the work of the Socialist Labour League." A beautiful pudding!

### **Not Born Yesterday!**

This empty talk will not delude many in the left wing, now the LSSP (Revolutionary Section). They were not born yesterday. They have learned certain lessons from the struggles in their own country — within their own party as well as within the International. They are familiar with your attitude toward Messali Hadj and Bevan in the past and your present position on the Cuban state, Castro's regime and the development of the Cuban Revolution in general. They are familiar with

your absolute opposition to the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement and to your previous hostile attitude toward the left wing of the LSSP (marked by your absolute rejection last year of the offer to unite with them and the similar tendencies that make up the majority of the Fourth International). In light of this, it is rather illusory on your part to think that you can win the adherence of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) to your policies. If I may venture a prediction, when your illusion is punctured by the facts, you will turn rabidly against these comrades.

If you really wished to collaborate with the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) you would first of all change your position on some important questions, especially your position on the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. This in turn would open the possibility for the Socialist Labour League to genuinely help the Trotskyists in Ceylon to forge ahead.

In my opinion the lessons of the crisis suffered by the LSSP can be drawn along the following broad lines:

(1) Objectively: the functioning of a bourgeois parliament, after British imperialism granted political independence, created illusions in parliamentarism and the possibility of democratic reforms among petty-bourgeois political circles.

(2) Subjectively: most of the top leaders of the LSSP came from the middle class, some even from bourgeois families. They were revolutionists in the beginning and played a big role in building the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon against the domination of British imperialism. After political independence was won and a bourgeois democratic system developed, certain leaders of petty-bourgeois or bourgeois background won seats in parliament and stayed there for many years. They gradually became imbued with parliamentary illusions. This was pre-eminently reflected by the Perera tendency.

(3) If the Fourth International had not split, or had reunification been realized earlier, the reformist and parliamentary tendency among the leaders could possibly have been corrected under the united influence of the International. At least the strength of this tendency could have been considerably reduced. Unfortunately the split in the International was prolonged for almost ten years (from the end of 1953 to June 1963).

You are perfectly aware that you bear a big responsibility for prolonging this split. The reformist tendency was thus able to develop more freely. It finally exploded at the special conference of the LSSP.

From this analysis, the most important lesson to be drawn from the crisis of the LSSP is clear. All organizations or groups that consider themselves to be Trotskyist are duty bound to join or to support the united Fourth International. Only in this way can the influence of the world Trotskyist movement be mobilized effectively and in time to correct dangerous errors in certain sections when they occur. In addition, it is much easier to construct a capable leadership team in the International based on the collaboration of all the sections.

Unfortunately, up to now you have not understood this. On the contrary, in the case of the Ceylonese party, where this lesson is glaringly clear, you have chosen to launch a new factional struggle against the Fourth International, using means that have nothing in common with our movement, including distortions, falsifications, slanders and outright lies. By this you harm the whole movement, especially in Britain. This is a road that leads to disaster.

Dear Comrade Healy, it is high time that you stop and reconsider. In particular it is time for you to re-examine your attitude toward the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. Correct your errors and begin helping the Fourth International instead of trying to injure its cause.

You have boasted many times that the Socialist Labour League contains young comrades who are just becoming acquainted with Trotskyism. If these young comrades become integrated and receive a Marxist education, enabling them to become seasoned cadres, this will prove to be a fresh source of strength to our world movement. But if they are simply indoctrinated into a narrow factional view, this will only injure our world movement; and, may I point out, the primary injury will be to the British Trotskyist movement. I fear that the latter alternative represents what is actually happening in the Socialist Labour League under your leadership.

**S. T. Peng**  
**Paris**  
**July 9, 1964**

## Letter from Japan

# Peking Curbs Japan Labor

By Eiichi Yamanishi

TOKYO — Two events have had big consequences here. The first was the betrayal by the Communist party of Japan [CPJ] of the general strike of April 17 that was planned by Sohyo [General Council of Japanese Trade Unions] and backed by the Japanese Socialist party [JSP]. The main action was to have been a half-day general strike of the National Railway workers — and it would have been, as everyone agreed, the biggest strike since the end of the war. In fact, it would have been one of the major struggles among the advanced countries since 1945.

Just one week before the deadline as the preparations were mounting, the CPJ announced that it was opposed to the strike; and it started a furious campaign to stop the action, declaring that the proposed strike would drive a wedge between the labor movement and the broad layers of the population. Instead of a struggle of the workers alone, they advocated a people's movement against a treaty between Japan and Korea and for national independence. They ordered union members under their influence to immediately withdraw from strike preparations and do their best to disrupt it.

This gave a welcome excuse to the leaders of Sohyo to submit the issues finally to the Arbitration Committee and thus avoid an historic struggle.

The CPJ's sudden switch just before the big showdown undoubtedly reflects a line determined in Peking which is now vying with Moscow for the favor of the Japanese capitalists, seeking to interest them in the Chinese Market. Peking must have told the leaders of the Communist party of Japan not to irritate the Japanese rulers and capitalists at this moment when so much seems to be at stake. They showed that they will not hesitate to inflict deadly blows to the labor struggles in other countries if it appears to favor their own national interests. The workers of the world should note this.

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The leaders of the SP and Sohyo are jubilant over having found a most unexpected excuse for denouncing and expelling Communist activists and members of unions and thus being able to firm up their control. In fighting this anti-communist campaign, it is necessary to patiently explain to Communist activists the international history of Stalinist betrayals of the world labor movement. This has to be done with facts — not abstract theory, but concrete facts.

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The CPJ is now facing a grave crisis due to the Sino-Soviet dispute. Yoshio Shiga, one of the five CP members of parliament, in violation of a party decision, voted for the treaty for partial cessation of nuclear tests. With Nosaka and the late Tokuda, Shiga was part of the former triumvirate that headed the party. He is one of the oldest and most influential leaders of the CP and now heads the pro-Khrushchev minority faction.

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In the Literary Association of New Japan, an organization of progressive writers and critics, a revolt has broken

Eiichi Yamanishi is well known in Japan for his excellent translations of the works of Leon Trotsky. He has just completed translating the biography of Trotsky by Isaac Deutscher. The first two volumes of the trilogy have appeared; the third is at the printers.

out. Discontent has been brewing for some years against Stalinist interference in the Association's literary activities. On March 27-29 it held its eleventh national conference in Tokyo with more than three hundred participants. The CP tried to dominate the conference, summoning supporters from all over the country. But it ended in complete rout for the party. The latest issue of the Association's magazine is filled with articles, reports and letters expressing disgust and resentment over the tactics of the small Stalinist minority at the conference.

Mitsuharu Inoue, a young vigorous novelist, said at the conference, "There is a tendency among us, especially among revolutionary writers of Japan, to avoid criticizing Stalin . . . but without this, no new theory of art can be produced."

But no one, including Inoue, referred to Trotsky. Still, this belated revolt is symptomatic.

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## Fascist Threat

The other recent event of importance here is the decision of Sokagakkai to put up thirty candidates for the next parliamentary election. This is a fanatic, ultrachauvinistic sect that has no parliamentary illusions. Sokagakkai has grown with phenomenal speed, especially after the great uproar against revising the Japanese-U.S. Security Treaty. Its rise is one of the consequences of national frustration at losing that great struggle.

Sokagakkai boasts that more than three million families adhere to it. The youth sector, embracing hundreds of thousands of members, many of them students of big universities, are receiving vigorous military training, regimentally organized. This is by far the biggest fascist organization in the world today. It must be closely watched.

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Despite the striking growth of postwar industry, the base of Japanese capitalism is quite shallow. Two or three years' growth of investments always ends in overproduction. Many small businesses are going bankrupt while still showing profit on the books. The breathlessly rapid growth of giant industry, coupled with the way middle classes are ruined by this expansion — this is the hotbed of Sokagakkai, the mushrooming fascist movement.

This presents the Japanese vanguard with two important tasks. The first is a correct attitude towards the two workers states, China and the Soviet Union. Negotiations with these two countries should not be left unchallenged to the capitalists. The Japanese labor movement should speak up. The Japanese workers have full right to present a plan to link Japanese industry with the planned economies of the two workers states, not on a narrow capitalist base but on a wider base transcending these limits such as Trotsky so clearly presented more than thirty years ago.

If Trotsky were alive today, he would surely propose an incisive, imagination-catching economic plan of gigantic scale embracing all the workers states. He would scarcely limit himself to merely weighing the arguments of the leaders of Peking and Moscow.

The second task is to explain clearly and vividly the whole history of the German tragedy in the early 1930's. I saw every phase of the development of that tragedy under the illumination of Trotsky's analysis.

At the same time it is necessary to explain that if even under the Hitler terror Germany could mobilize such strength as to conquer a whole continent, though only for a time, what might not have been done if that energy had been mobilized by a socialist Germany, a socialist Germany united with Soviet Russia!

But today we have even more reason to appeal to the peoples of both worlds to visualize the far greater potentialities in combination with a huge federation of workers' countries — thirteen on the Asia-European continent alone! There can be no reason, no convincing reason, for either Peking or Moscow not to press in that direction.

# Race and Radicalism

By Robert Vernon

In recent years there has been a flood of subsidized studies on "communism" in American life. Another contribution to this plethora is *Race and Radicalism — The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict*,\* by Prof. Wilson Record, author of a similar work entitled *The Negro and the Communist Party* which appeared in 1951. This particular job was subsidized by the Fund for the Republic as part of a series called *Studies in Infiltration*. It will become a gospel text for liberal "students" of "communism" in the period ahead. Reading it will make the white "anti-communist" liberal feel good, even complacent, but will not help him to understand much about either Negroes or radicalism.

Like most professional anti-communist "research," this contribution will soothe the anxieties and shore up the smugness of pseudo-liberals and reactionaries who lap up its contents. But these readers will remain utterly impotent in the face of the new and dynamic movements of radicalism now stirring throughout the land. The generation of anti-communists raised and fed on this pap will be poorly equipped to stem the next surge of radicalism. Readers of these subsidized anti-communist treatises will be equipped only to deal with conventional, old-fashioned Stalinist-Khrushchevite movements, and will not be too well equipped even for that. But then that is their problem.

The professorial author states:

**"This study is part of a much larger, collective inquiry into the impact of communism on American life and institutions, sponsored by the Fund for the Republic. If the studies now in process are as enlightening as those already published, the project will enhance scholarly comprehension of a complex phenomenon in a seminal way."**

Such comprehension would require an understanding of what radicalism is and an understanding of the complexities of the struggle of black people in white America. Prof. Record, like most white liberals, demonstrates himself inadequate for either task.\*\*

The questions posed are nevertheless interesting and of importance. What is the Communist Party and what relation does it have to radicalism? How

\**Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict*, by Wilson Record. Cornell University Press, 1964. 237 pp. \$5.95.

does the NAACP relate to the black struggle?

## CP Zigzags in the Negro Struggle

In order to develop a meaningful context, we must first briefly review the history of American leftism in relation to the Negro movement. The Communist Party was the first white radical organization in American history to enter into any significant interaction with Negroes. The CP started off on a good footing as a revolutionary organization in the wake of the Russian Revolution in 1917, but by the end of the Twenties had ceased to be a revolutionary party and had become instead an opportunist pseudo-radical organization whose radical phrases and behavior depended on the state of international relations between the US government and the Soviet Union more than on any other factor.

Isolated in a backward economy and surrounded by a sea of hostile capitalist enemies, the Soviet power succumbed to an internal bureaucracy concerned about its domestic problems and its own "goulash," to use Khrushchev's revealing expression, i.e. its own privileges and standard of living higher than that of the Soviet masses. This petty-bourgeoisified privileged bureaucracy, exemplified in Stalin and later in Khrushchev, cynically regards the "communist" parties beholden to it as so much small change in its dealings with capitalist "friend" and enemy nations. If the capitalist country in question is temporarily "friendly" toward the Soviet Union in its foreign policy, the politics and behavior of the "communist" party in that country will reflect that warm state of affairs, as seen in the Browderite phases of the CP in 1935-1939 and 1941-1945. When the particular capitalist country is more openly hostile toward the Soviet Union, the "communist" party in that country will display more militancy and more "leftist" demagoguery, as seen in the behavior of the CP in 1939-1941 and during the initial cold war period, 1947-49.

\*\*When more liberal sources prove inadequate, Prof. Record frequently cites from William Nolan's *Communism versus the Negro*. But this anti-communist treatise is a HUAC-level, facetious, ignorant and sloppy work which reeks from every page of smug American chauvinism and patronizing contempt for Negroes, with the attitude that "our Negroes" are "too intelligent and too loyal to fall for that Commie stuff." Citing this as an authority does no credit to Prof. Record's scholarship.

These zigzags of party "line," completely indifferent to the needs and interests of the mass movements and working class of each country, wreaked enormous havoc in the workers movements in all countries since the late Twenties and are still doing so, wherever Stalinized "communist" parties have influence. Black people in the U.S. have gone through their own experience with this phenomenon.

In early 1941, during the Stalin-Hitler pact Negroes organized a March on Washington to demand some of that equality and a crack at the jobs opening up because of booming war industries. The CP was anything but enthusiastic about this movement because it was not geared to opposition to the war *per se*. The instant the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union began in June 1941, the CP reversed its position on this and many other things. Now the CP flatly opposed and sabotaged the March on Washington movement because it was *interfering* with the "war effort." Throughout the war the CP not only held back from, but actively discouraged or sabotaged efforts by Negroes to take advantage of the situation and press for more rights and more opportunities. This caused severe conflict with the Negroes in and around the CP, leading to an unhealing rupture between the CP and that sector of integrationist Negroes which the CP had been able to influence up to that time.

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The NAACP is a liberal, not a radical, organization. While controlled and financed by white liberals, it has a large Negro following in the south and a middle-class Negro and white following in the Northern cities. Its integrationist goals fit the needs of the Southern struggle, although in recent years newer and more militant organizations have been elbowing it aside. In the North, the NAACP has little contact with the working-class black people in the ghettos, and frequently evokes hostility from black ghetto militants. The Association is openly hostile to black nationalism and to any attempts by black people to break free from (and not into) the American Way of Life.

The concept of NAACP "membership" is confusing. Anyone can become a "member" of the NAACP by donating two dollars to the Association for that purpose, so that the yearly "membership" figures of the NAACP run to six figures. But this is actually a matter



of fund raising. The dedicated active membership is relatively small.

The NAACP is an organization which has rendered enormous and invaluable services to the cause of Negro equality, it its areas of competence. But it is pointless to attribute to the NAACP a role which it is incapable of fulfilling — that of an organization adequately representing all aspects of the black struggle.

\* \* \*

Prof. Record, bringing the liberal viewpoint to bear, addresses himself to an imposing and exacting task: an analysis of the interaction between anti-capitalist radicalism and Negro protest in the United States. His main thesis is that radicalism, represented in Record's eyes by the CP, is alien to the American scene altogether and in particular alien to American Negroes, whose protest is "nothing more than a radical Americanism." In the other corner, the Negroes are completely and unambiguously represented by the NAACP. It remains to fill in the blow-by-blow details of the slugging match between the CPUSA and the NAACP, with the latter winning by a knockout.

Prof. Record does have a standard technical sociological training which makes him competent in the usual academic sense. But his background and abilities are completely inadequate for handling phenomena which are not limited to the scope of the American Way of Life and to white American "culture," and this holds for both radicalism and black people.

Record not only equates the CP with radicalism, but displays an unscholarly ineptness in his complete inability to distinguish those aspects of the CP's activities which might be inherent in radicalism (even black radicalism) by the simple fact of its being radicalism, as against those which are due to the Stalinist and pseudo-radical character of the CP alone. Record is not enough of a scholar even to pose, much less to grapple with and answer, such questions as: how would any other mass

radical movement differ from the CP in its relations and approach to Negroes and to a NAACP-type movement? How would a black radical movement differ from the CP and from other white radical movements in its approach, methods, and relations? But then that's not what Prof. Record is being subsidized for. His mentors are not hip to those questions either.

### Omits Black Nationalism

Record's absence of any understanding of spontaneous black radicalism is so complete that he fails to mention Robert F. Williams, until 1961, the rebellious president of the Monroe, N.C. NAACP chapter, even in a footnote, despite the fact that his study of the NAACP and radicalism takes us up to date in 1963. His denial of the existence of black radicalism, his inability to grasp the significance of the Garvey movement, of the Black Muslims, of the current generation of Afro-American rebels in the North, reflects severely, but still indirectly, on his competence to deal adequately even with a liberal organization like the NAACP. But there is no excuse for failing to deal with the problem posed by a radical NAACP fighter like Rob Williams in a book written explicitly about the NAACP and radicalism — Except that this would explode the ludicrous fiction that radicalism and the CP are identical.

Today, new radical forces are sweeping the Negro communities North and South. The militant integrationists North and South have developed completely outside of any control or guidance by any white radicals, and are seeking to break free from influence by white liberals and Negro liberals. As it becomes increasingly clearer to integration fighters that their goals cannot be attained within the framework of the existing society, the gulf between them and their liberal "friends" becomes progressively wider and wider.

The black nationalist tide in the Northern ghettos represents not only a new stage in the black struggle, but a vital component and a new stage in radicalism as a whole. Black nationalism is not new, and has always reflected the fact that the American Way of Life is hostile to and inadequate for black people. It has always been an expression of the black ghetto, the most compact, the most combative, and the most explosive working-class concentration to be found anywhere in these United States.

What is new is the sweep and quality of the present-day black nationalist upsurge. Although numerically weaker than the organized movement of Garvey's days, black nationalism today is on a much higher political level and vibrates in tune with the urbanized black working class packed into the ghettos, whose problems can be tackled successfully only by taking on much

bigger goals than integration into Bwana's Way of Life. In its ideological onslaught against the status quo, black nationalism is not only far more radical than the pseudo-radical CP could ever be, but is more revolutionary than any white radical tendency cast in the image of the conservatized and privileged white trade unionists.

It is against this background that we examine the scholarly efforts of a liberal to "analyze" radicalism and Negro revolt.

### The Liberal Viewpoint

The picture seen through Record's liberal eyes blocks out this unpleasant nightmare of black radicalism and substitutes an idyllic landscape:

**“. . . if successful, [the Negro revolution] will strengthen the bourgeois order and the American middle-class ideology, enabling one-tenth of the citizenry previously excluded to live in tract houses, wear grey flannel suits, shop in the supermarkets, and achieve 'togetherness.'"**

Don't laugh — there's more:

**"The performance of democratic capitalism . . . has been, despite its many faults and limitations, so impressive as to cut the heart from radical reform movements. American society . . . offers to its members such . . . material wealth, mobility, opportunity, and personal freedom that few Americans are inclined to shop elsewhere . . . The mainstream of racial dissidence as the United States pursues the seventh decade of the twentieth century is unquestionably integrationist. The freshet of radicalism has virtually dried up: separatism is a brackish slough . . . The American black man severed his African roots in the dim past . . . the American Negro is an American. In his thirst for cultural assimilation he follows the traditional pattern of American ethnic minorities . . ."**

Before he got completely carried away, Prof. Record did manage to add:

**“. . . of course, the interracial millennium is not likely to begin next year or next decade."**

One wonders how (and why) a black worker holding his last unemployment check (after his job has been eliminated by advancing automation) will make the payments on that split-level house with picture window and that grey flannel suit. And granting a minority of successful Negroes able to break into Charlie's middle-class world, where will the white liberals move to, to get away from that horde of grey-flannel-suited attaché-case-toting Negroes invading their all-white suburbias?

A constant theme of liberal "experts" on communism is that the U.S. Communist Party made progress only when it concealed its "real" radical aims in its right-wing zigzag periods, because then it was swimming in the mainstream of American life, and that it

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## **Documents on the Negro Struggle**

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failed to make a good pitch to the masses when it became too outspoken or too radical. But the fact is that the CP gained its mass following in the Thirties as the product of a radicalization of large sectors of both black and white workers beginning to recover from the trauma of the Great Depression. The degree to which these workers associated the CP with the Russian Revolution and with the Soviet Union was an advantage for the CP at that time. Friction between the CP and its mass following came about not because the CP was too radical but because it was too unpredictably at odds with the radical needs and aspirations of its following and membership.

The liberal attitude betrays a total lack of understanding of radicalism in general. The task of a radical organization seeking a mass following is not to follow the mass at its lowest political level or to conform to whatever popular opinion is, but to win the support and loyalty of that large minority of radicalized rebels who will form the backbone of a radical movement. A radical organization is to be judged a failure when it alienates that kernel of rebels who are in conflict with capitalist society. The CP, through its dishonesty, its unreliability, its class hostility to the needs and aspirations of the black working-class ghetto population, sealed its doom when it alienated the vanguard of black radicalism. How middle-class people in the NAACP felt about the CP was of secondary importance.

It is no advantage for radicals to conform to the "mainstream" of American life. The mainstream of American life happens to be directed against black people, and it is nothing new or alien for black radicals to swim against it. They have no choice.

### Radicalism or Reformism?

From his liberal perch, the learned professor conjures up a grotesque death duel between the liberal NAACP and the pseudo-radical CP in which the survival and prospering of the NAACP is somehow evidence of a defeat of radicalism. Nonsense. In any radical upsurge, there is always plenty of room for reform organizations like the NAACP which do a commendable job of winning short-term reforms. These organizations draw in all those partially but not completely radicalized elements who abound in any period when radicalism is rampant, and who, as aptly described by Fidel Castro, "*quieren la revolucion, pero no tanta*" [ . . . are for the revolution, but not so much revolution — from speech to Metalworkers Union, Havana, July 1960]. These organizations are not deadly enemies of the radicals, or vice versa, unless the radicals concerned are hopeless and blinded sectarians unable to cement their ties with the masses.

In Record's fanciful view, the CP is

continually pictured as "lambasting" the NAACP, as the "archenemy" of the NAACP, all of which is moreover completely out of character with the prolonged right-wing opportunist behavior of the CP since 1941. This distortion is necessitated by the central purpose of the book: to picture the NAACP and the CP as prime antagonists representative of Negroes and radicalism respectively, whereas in fact neither today occupies the leading place either among radicals or Negroes.

A common fallacy of the white liberals is that the CP failed in its approach to Negroes because Negroes are so American and so loyal (to Bwana) and so nonviolent, the little darlings. But it is precisely the rejection of America and of Bwana's Way of Life which attracted masses of black people to the Garvey and Black Muslim movements. It is precisely this feeling which sweeps the Northern ghettos today. Black militants are 100,000 times more radical than the CP. They reject the CP because of its alien, middle-class, pseudo-radical, and therefore to them *white*, politics.

The Communist Party orientation toward the Negro struggle is strictly toward the integrationist wing of that struggle. The CP displays an undisguised hostility toward the black nationalist wing generated by the black workers of the Northern ghettos who do not feel themselves a part of American society and draw appropriate conclusions. This hostility is in part the class hostility of petty bourgeois white radicals (privileged white workers, middle-class radicals, radicals taking their lead and inspiration from privileged "socialist" bureaucracies abroad) toward a movement they are incapable of understanding, and is in part the reflex of a bureaucratic pseudo-radical movement against a rival which it cannot control or manipulate.

In their common class hostility toward this aspect of the black ghetto, Prof. Record and the CP are not quite poles apart. Record slanders the Black Muslims as in "alliance" with "George Rockwell and the American Nazis" — a slander also circulated by the CP — and links Marcus Garvey with "the Ku Klux Klan, the Anglo-Saxon Clubs, lynching" in the same breath. For Prof. Record, no other black radicals exist. The words "black ghetto" do not even appear once in all of his 237 pages.

Prof. Record's incompetence is also evidenced in his equation of the CP "theory" of an independent black nation in the southern "black belt" to "Negro nationalism." This "theory" was neither generated by nor accepted by any segment of black people, and is completely alien to black nationalism, which is a product of the black ghettos of Northern cities and not of isolated Southern farm communities.

\* \* \*

The continuing vigorous development

of an independent black radicalism, both organizationally and ideologically, is one of the greatest advances in the black struggle, and therefore in the class struggle, in the Sixties. The Freedom Now Party, GOAL and Rev. Cleage in Detroit, RAM in Philadelphia, Malcolm X, *Liberator* magazine, and countless other individuals and organizations are attempting to articulate the needs of the black ghettos of the North and to organize their potential. In general, this trend aims toward a hard-headed, eyes-open, realistic approach to building independent black power, and away from the Negro protest techniques of begging, pleading, working on the guilt feelings and "conscience" of white America, coddling of white liberal "friends," or other ineffective methods.

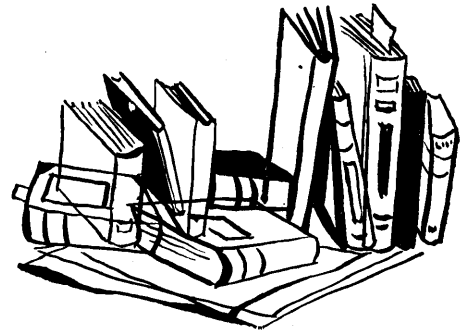
In this arena, nationalism and race pride coincide with the class struggle. The black ghetto is the most solidly concentrated, compact working-class formation in American life; today far more proletarian and revolutionary in potential than the trade-union movement or white radical milieu. All-black or black-led movements spur the struggle forward by eliminating the petty-bourgeois influences of all white liberals (and their middle-class Negro friends) and almost all white radicals. "Marxist" quacks offering a pre-frozen, pre-packaged, white man's political "science" bearing no relevance to the experience of black people in America find no buyers. Shrill insistence on Negro-White Unity with nonexistent white allies (implying the subordination of black militants to the leadership of petty-bourgeois white radicals, privileged white workers, or Negro political zombies tutored by disoriented white radicals) fall on deaf black ears.

These are some of the salient features of the new black radicalism in development. While putting new life and new power into the class struggle, it still has a long way to go toward consolidation: political leadership and organization are sorely lacking, the untapped wildcat energy of the ghetto has to be organized and channeled, the ghetto welded into a solid power and muscle; new roads have to be opened up for the blind struggle in the south; black militants must eventually meet the challenge of taking over the leadership of all American radicalism. A realistic, serious socialist movement can use Marxism to good advantage, but this Marxism will have to be Afro-Americanized and reinforced with the contributions and outlooks of black radicals.

It is in this turbulent cauldron that the future of American radicalism is being forged. Where does the learned Prof. Record's "scholarly comprehension" and, in general, the liberal view of the world, fit in here? Nowhere. The professor looks at the withered rump of a past failure and pronounces radicalism dead.

## Purge and Rehabilitation in the Soviet Union

By Dick Roberts



On June 12, 1937, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, Chief of Staff of the Red Army, and seven other generals, were executed after a secret trial. Before them Zinoviev, Kamenev, Pyatakov, and Radek had fallen victim to Stalin's bloody purge; after, Bukharin and . . . Trotsky. Perhaps as many as 35,000 officers of the army were "liquidated." The estimated total of those imprisoned during the purges reaches the fantastic figure of 8,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the awesome toll of Stalin's purges, it may seem somewhat out of proportion to deal at length with the circumstances of a single frame-up, even that of a Tukhachevsky. The extent to which these trials changed the course of history is incalculable. At the least, they rendered the Soviet Union nearly defenseless before Hitler;<sup>2</sup> and they destroyed her revolutionary cadre. The frightful toll would seem to make the execution of a single individual almost inconsequential.

It is nevertheless instructive to note with what care Leon Trotsky focused his attention on each episode, each assassination, trial or disappearance, and every move of the Stalinist bureaucracy through the entire course of the purges. It was Trotsky's task to pillory in detail the lies and treacheries of international Stalinism, to warn the world working class of the precise nature of the counterrevolution as it took place; and this operation he accomplished with the precision of a master surgeon.

There is not a little irony in the comparison between Trotsky's careful dissection of each case, and Khrushchev's "rehabilitations" which can resolve thousands of cases in a trifling sentence at a Moscow party meeting. In

fact, a reexamination of the anatomy of a purge has particular significance at the present time precisely in the context of the Kremlin "de-Stalinization." It offers a striking measure of Moscow's half-hearted attempt, after more than twenty years, to bring the truth of Stalin's purges to light.

### Rehabilitation

Marshal Tukhachevsky was "rehabilitated" at the 22nd Party Congress, in October, 1961. In two brief paragraphs in his final speech to the congress, Nikita Khrushchev accomplished this act of divine resurrection:

**"We have heard with sorrow of the eminent political and Party men who died without being in any way culpable. Leading officers such as Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevitch, Kork, Yegorov, Eidemann and others fell victim. These were not ordinary officers. As a result, Blucher and other leading military men also became victims."**

**"A curious piece of information has appeared in the foreign press according to which Hitler, while preparing to attack us, circulated by means of his secret service a document, forged throughout, according to which Yakir, Tukhachevsky and the others were agents of the German General Staff. This was sent to the President of Czechoslovakia who, in turn and undoubtedly with good intentions, sent it to Stalin. Yakir, Tukhachevsky and the others were arrested and done away with."**

One must have to be some kind of Kremlinologist to figure out exactly what implications, in this second paragraph, are intended. Note that Khrushchev does not deny the validity of the "curious piece of information." It seems, in fact, that Khrushchev expected his audience to accept without question the probability that Stalin, receiving some sort of counterfeit document from the Gestapo through Benes, simply took it for good coin and executed his top ranking generals.

The "curious piece of information" quite probably refers to a series of articles on the Tukhachevsky frame-up which were printed in the *Giornale d'Italia* in 1960, by Victor Alexandrov,

a Russian-born journalist. Alexandrov's articles were published in France, in 1962, and a translation has appeared this year, published by Prentice-Hall.<sup>3</sup>

In these articles, Alexandrov traces in detail the circumstances leading to Tukhachevsky's execution; but Alexandrov does not leave the frame-up simply in the hands of the Gestapo. It is Alexandrov's thesis that Stalin, not Hitler, originated the frame-up of the army generals.

### Role of the White Guard

Throughout the period, Stalin's secret police worked in close cooperation with the White Army exiles living in Europe. "The active utilization of White Guard officers has become a general method of the G.P.U. abroad . . .," Trotsky wrote in 1937. "The kidnapping of General Mueller was committed in order to replace him with General Skoblin, an old agent of the G.P.U., and in this way to have the free disposition of the whole Union of the White Army." (*Socialist Appeal*, October 30, 1937)

It is Alexandrov's contention that Stalin, through Skoblin, initiated contact with the Gestapo, and that the Gestapo willingly cooperated in the preparation of forged letters of the German General Staff to Tukhachevsky. The letters, again through Skoblin, were passed on to Czechoslovak President Benes, who, as Khrushchev commented, "undoubtedly with good intentions," forwarded them to Stalin.

With such "evidence" in hand, Stalin wiped out his general staff.

Between Alexandrov and Khrushchev, it is impossible to escape either of two conclusions: Either Stalin consciously framed Tukhachevsky with the intermediary of the White Guard and Hitler; or Hitler framed Tukhachevsky with the intermediary of the White Guard and Stalin. Such a "triple alliance" is of the utmost significance, and highly revelatory of the character of Stalin's maneuvers towards coexistence with the Third Reich.

Even the year 1937, two years before the Stalin-Hitler pact, is not too early

<sup>1</sup> This is the considered estimate of Alexander Weissberg, a noted Austrian physicist who was imprisoned in the purges. Other estimates concur with Weissberg. See, *The Accused*, by Alexander Weissberg, trans. Edward Fitzgerald, New York, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> The debilitation of the Red Army (arrests of 60-70 percent of the officers, elimination of 90 percent of the generals and 80 percent of the colonels) on the eve of the war allowed Hitler's troops to run rampant through the country, as far as the Volga, destroying in all nearly 25 percent of the Soviet population — the fruit of just one of Stalin's innumerable "errors."

<sup>3</sup> *The Tukhachevsky Affair*, trans. John Hewish, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964. 201 pp. \$4.95.



Stalin

a date for this inverted cooperation. Commenting on the Kirov assassination, in 1934, Trotsky wrote,

"The vile amalgam constructed around the 'consul' who, apparently, was in the simultaneous employ of three governments, stands today as one of a number of ordinary and normal measures utilized by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the struggle for its caste positions." (*New Militant*, April 5, 1935) (Emphasis Added).

### Krivitsky's Story

Nor was Victor Alexandrov the first to level specific accusations against Stalin. Walter Krivitsky, chief of Soviet Military Intelligence in western Europe, defected from Stalin in 1937 and published a series of articles in this country disclosing Stalin's schemes for preparing an alliance with Hitler.<sup>4</sup> In 1937, Krivitsky contended, "Stalin was confident that the deal with Hitler was as good as consummated. . . . He now knew that he had no immediate attack to fear from Germany. The road was clear for the purge of the Red Army." (Reprinted in *Socialist Appeal*, April 25, 1939) Although Krivitsky had defected before he would have been able to have complete information on the Tukhachevsky case, he predicted to a man, the agents whom Alexandrov later labeled as intermediaries in the frame-up.<sup>5</sup>

Krivitsky was "paid off" for his efforts to expose Stalin. February 10, 1941, six months after the assassination of Trotsky, Krivitsky's dead body was discovered in a Washington hotel — the work, again, of Stalin's gunmen.

How do Khrushchev's revelations stack up against the indictments of Trotsky, Krivitsky, and Alexandrov? We might expect, at least, an answer to the charges, if not an admission. The

<sup>4</sup> The articles were published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. See also *In Stalin's Secret Service* by W. G. Krivitsky, New York, 1939.

<sup>5</sup> In *Stalin's Secret Service*, pp. 238-243.

only clarification Khrushchev offers are the cryptic sentences quoted above.

### Aragon's Apology

But perhaps the affairs of the 22nd Congress took precedence over these matters, and further enlightenment awaited the research of Khrushchev's scholars, the historical experts. With this expectation we turned to the long-awaited new version of the history of the Soviet Union, *A History of the USSR from Lenin to Khrushchev*, by Louis Aragon. Aragon, "intellectual leader of the French Left and internationally famous as a poet, historian, and novelist. . . .<sup>6</sup> winner of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1957, was hand-picked by the Khrushchevites to accomplish this monumental task. Here is Aragon's explanation of the Tukhachevsky case:

**"Later is was to be said that the arrest and the trial were based upon information given to Stalin by Benes, and that it was the Sicherheitsdienst of the Nazi party that had thus deprived the Red Army of its best leaders . . . Although there are no documents that allow one to suppose that there has been a revision of those trials in which the accused publicly confessed, the verdict on the generals has been officially reversed since 1956 [sic]: Tukhachevsky, Ubovich, Eideman, Yakir, Kork, Primakov, et cetera, are no longer traitors. It may be said that it was Himmler who gained in this affair, but it was Yezhov who set it on foot and who brought about the execution of those men who were to be so tragically missed in the face of the German invaders. Stalin had been perfectly right: at headquarters one can strike a blow that accomplishes more than the heroism of several army corps." (p. 323)**

Thus Stalinists write history! Now, according to "expert" Aragon, the accused "publicly confessed!" This is an outright lie — the trials, if there were any, having been kept completely secret. But suppose they had confessed. Their confession, according to Khrushchev's speech, would have been to a conspiracy with Himmler against Stalin, which Stalin would have learned about in 1937. If we accept this, then Stalin, when he signed the nonaggression pact with Hitler in 1939, two years later, would have known that Hitler had framed his best generals.

Incredible to believe is Aragon's assertion that there are "no documents" to clear this up! But that's all right, because Aragon, to whom the Soviet archives were made available, assures

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from the inside cover which continues, "[Aragon] has had the full co-operation of the Soviet authorities in writing this arresting reappraisal of Soviet history." David McKay Company, Inc., New York, 1964. 684 pp. \$12.00.

us that the generals are no longer traitors. In fact, he admits that it was not Himmler, but Yezhov, Stalin's right hand man, who originated the frame-up. (Stalin had paved the way to Yezhov's leadership of the G.P.U. by purging the previous G.P.U. head Yagoda.) Finally Stalin, now the philosopher-king according to faithful disciple Aragon, had been "perfectly right." At headquarters, the elitists (Stalin-Yezhov & Co.) felt a single bureaucrat is worth more than several army corps.

No. There cannot be any illusions about the extent of de-Stalinization. It is not simply that Khrushchev does not want to reveal his own complicity in the purges, which would become apparent in any scrutinization of the records; a thorough examination of the purges would reveal that Stalin had completed a counterrevolution against the Bolsheviks who led the Russian Revolution. The degeneration of a revolutionary Marxist movement to a gang of cloak-and-dagger men, who maneuvered in back alleys to make deals with fascists, was not simply a bureaucratic shift in tactics. It could only be accomplished by destroying physically every last vestige of the great Leninist movement, every man who knew the idea, every man who knew a man who knew the idea . . .

The bureaucratic yes-men who emerged from this "schooling" as the leaders of the Soviet state understand well the role they played. There is not a little "curious information" that their hand-picked historians must "fail" to uncover.

## Reviews in Brief

**SOCIALIST THOUGHT: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY** edited by Albert Fried and Ronald Sanders. Doubleday Anchor Books, Garden City, New York, 1964. 544 pp. with bibl. \$1.95.

To the recent literature on the socialist tradition, *Socialist Thought* is a helpful addition. The editors confine their comments to biographical sketches and let the authors speak for themselves.

The collection seeks the seeds of socialist thought in the hopes of the early eighteenth century democratic revolutionaries; it traces these hopes from Rousseau through the disillusionment in the French Revolution, which the followers of Baboeuf then saw as "only the herald of another revolution, far greater, far more solemn, which will be the last."

The articles representing Marx, Engels, and Trotsky are too short and too few to give an adequate understanding of their contribution to socialist theory, but the book contains a superb and rarely published essay by Engels summarizing Marx's first volume of *Capital*.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LOGIC OF MARXISM by William F. Warde, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1964. 107 pp. \$1.00.

The publication for the first time in book form of William Warde's lectures on the logic of Marxism is a welcome contribution to our Marxist library.

In eight lectures (given in 1942) Warde traces the philosophical background of Marxism in early Nineteenth Century idealism; he compares the formal logic of Aristotle with dialectical logic, clearly explaining the inadequacies of formal logic to deal with the material world; and he shows why it was necessary for Marx to replace Hegel's dialectical idealism with dialectical materialism.

But Warde's treatment of philosophy is far from academic. He illustrates each concept in application to the problems of the everyday world, giving in his final lecture a brilliant description of the dialectical development of working class consciousness.

This brief work is unquestionably one of the finest writings in the American revolutionary socialist tradition. It had been available until this publication only in rare mimeograph copy.

Edward Smith

WHICH WAY AFRICA?—THE SEARCH FOR A NEW SOCIETY, by Basil Davidson. Penguin, Baltimore, 1964. 199 pp. \$1.25.

The newly independent African nations are faced with momentous problems in their quest for the building of a truly free society. Paramount in this regard is the inheritance from the years of colonial oppression. The traditional continental system of peasant communal production was virtually destroyed by the conquering imperialist powers, and replaced, as in Latin America, by the predominance of cash crops, such as cotton and cocoa; the concomitant of this for the Africans was semi-permanent famine and devastation of the agricultural lands. Britain, France, *et al*, lost no opportunity to exacerbate and, even, to create tribal rivalries, in keeping with the colonialist maxim of "divide and rule."

Although most of the peoples of Africa now live in new nations that, after years of struggle, have achieved political autonomy, many of their brothers and sisters in South Africa, Mozambique, Southern Rhodesia and Angola are still the victims of overt and brutal subjugation. Freedom from *apartheid* is high on the agenda. But, after freedom, what? The answer is dictated by African reality; and, articulated by the present battles in the Congo, as well as in the words of the program of the Algerian FLN: "the Algerian Revolution . . . is not and cannot be a simple fight for the conquest of political power.

For us . . . it is a political, economic, and social Revolution." The real solution requires that Africa take the road of Cuba, in line, of course, with her own history, traditions and problems.

Appended to this volume is the Charter of Unity of the African states, adopted at Addis Ababa in 1963. Author Davidson is an informed, sympathetic and honest observer of contemporary Africa. He exposes many of the myths concerning the continent, and sets the record straight before his Western audience. *Which Way Africa?* is a useful introduction to a part of the world that will play an even larger role in the history of the coming decades.

Ralph Levitt

THE AGE OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION: A TROTSKY ANTHOLOGY, edited, with an introduction, by Isaac Deutscher (with the assistance of George Novack). Dell, New York, 1964. 384 pp. 95¢.

THE ESSENTIAL TROTSKY, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1963. 251 pp. \$1.50.

THE BASIC WRITINGS OF TROTSKY, edited by Irving Howe. Random House, New York, 1963. 427 pp. \$5.95.



Leon Trotsky

Three different anthologies of the works of Leon Trotsky have been put out by major publishers since 1963. This is evidence of the very rapid growth of interest in the ideas of Trot-

sky that recent world events — especially the Sino-Soviet dispute — have produced.

The most recent of these, *The Age of Permanent Revolution*, is by far the most valuable and also, fortunately, the least expensive. It is an excellent introduction to Trotskyism and at the same time gives a good picture of Trotsky — the amazingly many-sided man of action and of far ranging intellect.

The book contains only a tiny part of Trotsky's enormous output, but such a careful selection has been made that the reader gets a balanced and rounded picture of Trotsky's views and deeds. Trotsky's brilliant style comes through too, of course.

Isaac Deutscher's introduction is a valuable addition to the book. Succinctly, it sketches the background material which an American audience, largely ignorant of both Marxism and recent world history, will need, to follow the book. Deutscher's defense of the relevance of the theory of permanent revolution to today's world will interest both Marxists and the general reader.

*The Essential Trotsky* contains three essays on the Russian Revolution. The best known of the three, "The Lessons of October," has long been out of print; and is an important work. The first essay, "The History of the Russian Revolution to Brest-Litovsk," was written while Trotsky was negotiating the peace at Brest-Litovsk. It was written to convey the significance of the Russian Revolution to the working class of Europe and other parts of the world. The last essay refutes some of Stalin's falsifications about the Russian Revolution.

The anthology edited by Irving Howe is based on a much narrower range of material than *The Age of Permanent Revolution* — mainly on well-known works in print in English. It reflects the editors views in its stress on Trotsky's criticisms of the Soviet bureaucracy. But it's hard to miss with an anthology of the works of Trotsky! Anyone not familiar with Trotsky's writings will find Howe's anthology an intellectually exciting and enlightening book.

David Herman

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