

April 11, 1977

Dear Jack,

Enclosed is a first draft of the introduction Nancy and I have been working on to a collection of materials on the splits with Healy.

Since Nancy has not had time to seriously work on it as we had originally planned, it needs some editing and more careful footnoting and perhaps a bit of more detailed ~~documentation~~ documentation here or there.

Also originally we planned to deal with the 1961-1974 period *as well* which would require a certain amount of research on her part. It is possible, however, to leave it as it is if comrades feel it is effective enough this way.

In any event I think this contains a good deal of important information which is simply not available. I suppose you remember Joe made an accusation a number of years back about "the good name of Trotskyism" in Britain. This is an attempt to give the documentation to that suspicion about Healy's internal regime which developed over many years.

Anyway let me know what you think before we proceed any further. I am sending a copy to John Ross who expressed interest in the project and has done some work on Healy's history. Also to Mark Jenkins as these people are involved in a study of the whole history of British Trotskyism. I was also thinking of Connie Harris who went through the Behan business and may be able to shed a bit more light on it. I gave a copy to Fred F. and may have an extra one to circulate to whomever you feel should see it--like George, who knows personally the 1950 period, or GB or Joe or whoever.

Anyway at least we feel relief on getting it this far.

tim

By Nancy Fields and Tim Wohlforth

Over 1,000 people gathered in London on January 14, 1977 to express solidarity with Joseph Hansen and George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party. These two comrades and many others had been victims of an immense slander campaign conducted by Gerry Healy of the Workers Revolutionary Party and his supporting groups internationally in what is called the "International Committee."

Healy had reached a new stage in his degeneration. Long noted for the extremity of his polemics, he had dropped polemics entirely in favor of accusations that his opponents had some kind of connection with the police agencies of the capitalists or the Kremlin. Hansen and Novack were accused of being "accomplices of the GPU." Healy had developed the theory that all his opposition, internal and external, was the work of the police. He had gone over to the kind of slanders used by Stalin against Trotsky and other critics. (1)

Tim Wohlforth began his speech at the London meeting stating: "In my opinion, the only kind of inquiry that we need, really need, is an inquiry into how it can be that an organization which began and started out in the struggle against Stalinism, in the struggle for Trotskyism, had ended up going over to the method of Stalinism. Healy, like Stalin, has now started on a path of slander and fabrication for which there is no end." (2)

This Education for Socialists Bulletin is a contribution to such an inquiry. The main body of the Bulletin contains the central writings of the comrades around the world who have broken with Healy just prior to the launching of his slander

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campaign. It was Healy's inability to confront politically this crisis in his own movement that required him to go over to the methods of Stalinist slander that now dominate his activities.

This was no minor crisis. Tim Wohlforth, founder of his supporting organization in the United States, and Nancy Fields, Political Committee member, were forced out of the leadership in September, 1974 and soon left the organization. Robin Blick, foreign editor of the Newsletter and Workers Press, Mark Jenkins, at one time editor of the Newsletter, and Betty Hamilton, a founding member of the International Committee and long time political associate of Healy, together formed the Bulletin Group in 1974 in order to clarify Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party from the outside. The entire Western Region of the WRP, some 200 members under the leadership of Alan Thornett, were expelled in late 1974. In 1975 Healy expelled the founder of his Greek Section together with one-half of its 200 members. Splits took place in Portugal and Peru while important individuals broke in Australia and Ireland.

These comrades do not now necessarily agree with the SWP, nor even with each other. We feel, however, that their story must be told just as they saw it at the time and their political criticisms of Healy and his methods made known to the widest working class public.

Certain themes emerge from this material. All the oppositions, in one fashion or another, felt that Healy had broken with the method of the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International. He had become a complete

sectarian, substituting ultimatic demands directed at the working class for a serious, patient struggle to construct a revolutionary leadership in the class around transitional demands which can mobilize masses in action.

All these comrades came up against the bureaucratic and authoritarian regime within Healy's movement which denies the possibility of minorities to exist within a party. By making it impossible for the ranks of the party to correct the party this regime both created the conditions for the political degeneration of the party as well as defended by authoritarian means the degenerate politics from internal criticism and correction.

The basic assessment, therefore, of Healy's own comrades in England and in a number of other countries, is that Healy has broken politically with the program of Trotskyism and organizationally with Leninist party norms,

The purpose of this introduction is to make a contribution beyond that made by comrades in the heat of the factional battles in 1974 and 1975. These comrades have explained well enough what happened and what was the real character of Healy's political line in this period. The question which needs more clarification is: What led Healy to his present point of degeneration?

We believe that an objective study of the whole history of Healy's group is necessary to answer this question. Such a study shows, in our opinion, that the roots of Healy degeneration go way back in his history. It will also show that degeneration in regime preceded political degeneration and created the conditions for political degeneration. Finally, in our opinion,

the turning point in Healy's evolution was 1963, when he refused to participate in the process of reunification of the Fourth International.

This decision in 1963 was (1) a break with international collaboration which had been critical to the healthy side of Healy's development since 1943 and (2) led to a sectarian ending of 17 years of work within the British Labour Party. This is why we will concentrate in this introduction on the factors in Healy's evolution which led up to this fundamental break. The documentary material included in this Bulletin on the splits of the 1974-75 period explains quite sufficiently the results of Healy's independent course in the ten years since his break from the Fourth International.

We feel a study of the degeneration of Healy's movement is important for at least four reasons. (1) It is essential for the comrades who have left Healy's movement so that they can complete their break from those aspects of Healy's outlook and functioning which contributed to his degeneration and thus be in a position to make a positive contribution to the building of the Fourth International. (2) For the same reason, it is of great importance for the comrades who mistakenly remain within Healy's organizations in different parts of the world. (3) Since Healy's organization has been the main Trotskyist current in postwar Great Britain, with every present current in England at one time or another emerging from out of that organization, such a study is a prerequisite to the further development of Trotskyism in Great Britain. (4) Certainly features of Healy's evolution have a commonality with the developments of other currents of Trotskyism in the postwar era and thus a study of Healy can be help-

ful to the education of the entire world Trotskyist movement.

THE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE PERIOD

British Trotskyism did not begin with Gerry Healy. Prior to Healy's joining the movement in 1937, the Trotskyists had already passed through important pioneer work within the British Labour Party and its centrist split-off the Independent Labour Party. These groups, however, were weak, most of the time divided into several small groupings, and not well developed theoretically or deeply involved in international work and questions.

Prior to joining the Trotskyist movement Healy had been a member of the Young Communist League. Little is known of this period in his life.

In the summer of 1937 Healy joined the Militant group which worked within the British Labour Party. Soon after he joined the Militant group fused with several other small groups to form the Revolutionary Socialist League, the official section of the Fourth International. (3)

Shortly after joining the Trotskyist movement, Healy joined a faction within the RSL headed by Ralph and Millie Lee. The Lees were disturbed because the leadership of the RSL tended to give some credence to slanders of the Stalinists against them which followed them from South Africa where the couple had begun their Trotskyist activity. Instead of fighting out this issue within the RSL, the Lee group split prior to the Founding Conference of the Fourth International taking Healy with them.

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The Lees formed the Workers International League. From its origins it disagreed with the RSL on the critical question of working within the BLP.

James P. Cannon, of the SWP, went to England as part of the preparation for the Founding Conference to urge the Lee group to attend the Conference and to orient towards a reunification of the British Trotskyist forces. The WIL turned Cannon ~~ground~~^{down} demanding that existing differences with the RSL over British perspectives be resolved prior to attendance at the world conference or reunification. Thus it placed questions of national significance above the interests of the international movement.

The Founding Conference had a special commission on Britain which (1) condemned the WIL for not participating in the conference; (2) corrected the RSL over the slander question; (3) recognized the RSL as the official section in England; and (4) urged the WIL to reconsider its course and fuse with the RSL.(4)

The WIL functioned as a group outside the FI from 1938 until 1944. It was a very active group and carried on important trade union work and grew considerably during the period. By 1944 it was larger than the official section.

It is very important to assess this WIL experience. In two striking ways Healy's more recent evolution appears to express a certain reversion to the political positions of the WIL. First, of course, is the insular position the Lee group took on the question of the Fourth International. It was concerned only with the British question and was quite willing to go it alone independently of the opinion and the needs of the Fourth International. Secondly, the WIL rejected work in the British Labour Party

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in favor of open party work around the trade unions.

The policies of the WIL were an expression of certain inherent weaknesses within the British working class itself. They were an adaptation to, instead of conscious struggle against, British conditions. These conditions persist in Britain. Thus there is a social base for the reassertion of the political outlook of the WIL in Healy's organization today.

The British labor movement developed on the basis of Britain's world imperialist dominance. This labor movement was nonetheless very militant and very powerful. Today it is the most powerful labor movement in the world. However, from its origins, it expressed a tendency to concern itself with the narrow interests of British workers, a tendency permissible only because of the relatively privileged position of these workers because of British imperialist dominance.

This is not the only tendency in the British working class. In Marx's day the leaders of the British union movement collaborated with him in the first period of the construction of the First International. This expressed a counter-tendency, a revolutionary desire to struggle together with workers on the Continent and in America. This was expressed most concretely in the magnificent actions of the British industrial workers in defense of the North in the American Civil War. Yet in the end the British labor leaders capitulated to British insularity and withdrew from the First International.

The Labour Party developed after the formation of unions

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and as a political expression of these unions. This has posed an additional problem for the conscious development of the British working class. British workers have a tendency to utilize the BLP as a political instrument at election times and then, when difficulties arise because of the reformist policies of the BLP leadership, to fall back upon their older union form of struggle.

Thus what can be called a syndicalist tradition exists side by side with a social democratic political tradition. The first, no matter how militant, can become a cover for the second because it offers an alternative to political struggle by workers against the BLP leadership. Only through such political struggle can British workers develop revolutionary consciousness and a mass revolutionary party be built.

The Labour Party entry tactic, if properly understood, is rooted in this basic problem of the British working class. It is not a matter of where it is easier to recruit or of conjunctural questions. It is rather the question of how best to take the militancy of the working class in the trade unions into the BLP and direct it politically against the reformist leadership of the BLP so that a layer of militant workers can be won to the revolutionary party.

Because entrism flows from a perspective which conflicts with the "natural" tendency of the worker, it was always been posed to British revolutionaries from the "outside," from the intervention of the international movement. So it was with Lenin in the period of the Third International. The history of

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British Trotskyism under Trotsky and after his death has been essentially centered around the entry question.

This general problem of British working class politics has been complicated further by the specific role of British Stalinism. The early British Communist party was deeply infected by a petty bourgeois radicalism which is a symmetrical strand within the British middle class to syndicalism within the working class. The British middle class radicals tended either to import into the working class a disguised liberalism which sought to dominate the working class and utilize it as a pressure point for reforms (fabianism) or its twin, a radical sectarianism which abstained from real struggle and denounced reformism from the outside. This latter trend reinforced the reformist hold on the working class and fitted in rather well with syndicalist tendencies within the working class. This trend would also find expression time and time again in British Trotskyism.

However, in the period leading up to the British General Strike of 1926, the Communists made important inroads into militant layers of workers organized into a shop stewards movement. These workers were seeking to break out of the reformist stranglehold of the Labour Party, and had decisively turned towards internationalism under the impact of the world economic crisis. However, Stalin's collaboration with the trade union tops during the 1926 strike was a blow against the development of this cadre.

Nevertheless, it gave the British Communist Party an important base in the trade unions which it maintains to this day. It has acted now for decades in the labour movement to throttle its militancy, but when necessary to ride along with it, but all the time seeking to prevent this union militancy from

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coming into direct conflict with the BLP leadership. Thus Stalinism acts consciously at every point to bolster the backwardness of the British working class and ~~also~~ objectively strengthens the grip of reformism on the working class.

Viewed from this perspective, the WIL clearly marked a quite common expression of capitulation to British insularism and syndicalism with a good dose of radical sectarianism from the middle class thrown in for good measure.

Gerry Healy, schooled for five years in WIL politics, emerged as an independent tendency within the WIL in 1943. Then, with the support of James P. Cannon and the SWP, he began a struggle to bring about a fusion with the official section, the RSL, with the aim in time of bringing the fused organization around to a perspective of work within the Labour Party.

A unification with the RSL finally took place in 1944 leading to the creation of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). The Ex-WIL forces were dominant in the fused organization. These included Jock Haston, who would lead the RCP until he left the Trotskyist movement in 1950, Ted Grant, who today heads the Militant Group within the BLP, and Gerry Healy. John Lawrence, who would later lead an important split from Healy's group in 1953, was one of the few leading figures of the ~~period~~ to come from the RSL.(5)

Healy fought from 1944 to 1947 as a small tendency, no more than 30 to 40 people, within the RCP for an entry policy.(6)

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He received support for this position internationally from the SWP, and after the war, from the European center of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International.

This created quite a difficult situation because the majority leadership of the RCP under Jock Haston opposed entry and was quite critical of the IS on a number of political issues. The International leadership did not act precipitously in this situation. It sought a solution which would allow the entrust faction to try out its tactics while still holding on to the large majority of comrades who might learn the error of their ways in time.

In 1947 the International proposed to in effect split the two factions into two groups, each recognized by the IS as sections. Between 1947 and 1949 there were two recognized independent groups in England affiliated with the Fourth International.

THE 1950 CRISIS OF BRITISH TROTSKYISM

The year 1947 marks the emergence of Healy as head of an independent section of the Fourth International. Healy's strength in the next period would be rooted in his break from traditional British insularism and his turn into the British Labour Party.

These were not easy years for British Trotskyism and neither the RCP nor the Healy group prospered. The Labour Party had come to power in 1945 on the basis of what was a worldwide upsurge of the working class. Unlike its predecessors, the

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Labour Government did in fact carry out the essential elements of its platform. It nationalized the coal and steel industries and instituted socialized medicine and a series of other welfare measures.

Of course this in no way changed Britain from being a capitalist state. In fact the coal nationalization was quite helpful to British capital because it was no longer profitable and a cheap source of coal was needed by other sections of British industry.

It did, however, foster illusions in the British working class for a period. It seemed to many workers at least some slow progress was being made towards socialism. At the same time world capitalism was recovering internationally. Britain would share in this boom but to a lesser extent than other major capitalist nations because it had lost its former world dominant position and its industrial complex was falling into decay when compared to other capitalist nations. Nonetheless the real wages of British workers began to rise and unemployment began to fall.

This did not mean that industrial struggle ceased nor that political struggle within the Labour Party ceased. It was, however, not on a high level. Struggle would begin to pick up within the BLP and within the unions by 1950 and reach an intensive level under the 13 year Tory Government of 1951-1964.

While Healy's group made only very slow progress between 1947 and 1949, the RCP, with its false perspective, was the hardest hit. Demoralization developed within the organization leading to large losses in membership, a decay in finance, and a serious political disorientation in the central leadership around

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Haston. The Haston group had been a politically confused group, cliquish in its leadership circles, carrying over in its own way many of the characteristics of the WIL period. This does not mean that Healy's group was free from the effects of the WIL period or that its perspectives were that clear. Its strength lay mainly in its correct decision to work within the BLP and its close international relations.

On some issues Haston was a bit closer to the mark than Healy. Haston had insisted upon the fact that a capitalist stabilization was taking place in England and internationally. While in time he would draw extremely pessimistic conclusions from this prediction, it must still be admitted that he was more correct than either Healy or the International on economic perspectives.

Healy had entered the BLP on the basis of a prediction of immediate economic slump and a pre-revolutionary situation. This position was consistent with the outlook in the International generally at that time. He persisted in this outlook right into 1949 when his group declared:

"We are entering a pre-revolutionary stage in the history of British capitalism when the problems of power will be posed ever more sharply before the workers and the revolutionary vanguard." (7)

This statement, even the phraseology, will sound quite familiar to those who passed through Healy's organizations in the 1960s!

The International Secretariat backed him up on this question. On February 5th, 1949 the IS sent a letter to the

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RCP stating: "For example, we cannot subscribe to the idea that the Labour Government has achieved 'stable economic and political relations.'" (8) While the British economy had its special problems, the next period would produce a growth in capitalist production, healthy profits, substantial trade surpluses, virtually no unemployment, and with the aid of important industrial struggles, a significant rise in workers' real wages. Politically the situation was sufficiently stable for the direct rule of the capitalists through the Tories for 13 long years.

The Healy group in this period had no name. It came to be known as the "Club." This remained its informal name until the Socialist Labour League was launched in 1959 after the longest sustained deep entry in the history of the world Trotskyist movement.

In 1949 the RCP leadership decided to fuse with the Club and enter the British Labour Party. The Haston leadership negotiated a fusion which gave a majority in the leadership bodies to Healy's people. Thus ended the period of two sections in England. Healy emerged with the only official charter.

The leadership group in the RCP, around Jock Haston, had decided upon an entry from a liquidationist point of view. They were walled out of the Trotskyist movement. This position was not known to the membership of the RCP. It was known to Ted Grant and Jimmie Dean who were in the leadership at the time. They opposed both Haston's liquidationism as well as the entry proposal. However, they decided not to fight Haston on this question and thus to aid

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Haston in hiding from the membership his real perspectives. This was an expression of the clique arrangements which had characterized the leading circles of the RCP.

The leadership of the Fourth International, however, sensed the liquidationist direction of the RCP leadership from its written material and sought to warn the membership about it: "We have shown that pessimism in respect of the working class and liquidationism permeate this document. This pessimism and liquidationism extend themselves inevitably to pessimism and liquidationism in respect to the vanguard to the Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International and its sections." (9)

Immediately upon consumation of fusion Haston and his closest friends deserted the organization for positions in the right wing of the BLP and trade unions. A few others also dropped away. But those that remained made up clearly the majority of the fused organization. Healy would soon tackle this problem.

Healy was working extremely closely in this period with Michel Pablo and the rest of the leadership of the I.S. He was to note this himself in 1953: "For the past few years I have been extremely close to him [Michel Pablo] and have grown to like him considerably." (10)

In 1949 Pablo had developed the essential revisions of Trotskyism which in a later period were called "Pabloism." He had done this primarily through an impressionistic reaction to Tito's break with the Kremlin in late 1948. He had concluded from this the following: (a) that Stalinist parties can be transformed into centrist parties; (b) that these centrist parties can create

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workers states which will have deformations but which do not require political revolutions; (c) that these kinds of distorted revolutions and deformed states will be the central characteristic of the revolutionary process perhaps for centuries; (d) and flowing from this he began to urge Trotskyists to enter the Stalinist parties in order to assist them along this revolutionary course.

Healy was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of this outlook of Pablo's within the international movement. In 1949 Healy's entrust paper, Socialist Outlook, began to uncritically champion Tito. He participated in an international campaign to send youths to Yugoslavia to participate in work brigades. Michael Banda, present general secretary of the WRP, was one of these youth brigaders.

This created great uneasiness in the ranks of the organization, particularly among the section of the group which had been in the RCP. This section had no inclination to agree with a political position simply because Healy proposed it. In fact they had a critical attitude towards the international leadership as well. This uneasiness over an adaptation to Stalinism--via Tito--was increased by what appeared to many to be an internal regime also similar to Stalinism.

The Korean War brought these matters to a head. The position taken by Socialist Outlook on the war, while completely correct in its opposition to United States intervention under U.N. cover, was also totally uncritical of the North Korean regime.⁽¹⁰⁾ Further, the Korean War tended to encourage the comrades critical of Healy's and Pablo's adaptation to Tito, because Tito lent his prestige to the imperialist camp in the war.

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This led to the development of two opposition groups, both primarily composed of former RCPers. How these groups were formed and what happened to them is of considerable importance for understanding modern British Trotskyism. Ted Grant headed one group and Tony Cliff the other.

Tony Cliff is a Palestinian who came to Britain in 1946 joining the RCP. By 1947 he had already developed the rudiments of his state capitalist position which was published as an internal document within the RCP. It received little interest and almost no support. By the time of fusion Cliff had no more than 5 or 6 supporters.

In 1950 Cliff began to pick up strength within the Club. His thesis that the degenerated workers states theory of Trotsky's led inevitably to capitulation to Stalinism and to Stalinist organizational methods seemed a more and more reasonable idea as Healy passed through his Titoist phase.

The Ted Grant group was somewhat different. Grant did not accept Cliff's view of state capitalism. However, he opposed Healy's adaptation to Tito holding a position quite close to that the SWP and Healy would take after 1953 on Stalinism in general:

"Idealizing and whitewashing the Tito leadership because of their break with Moscow, the British leadership has suppressed all fundamental criticism of this tendency, and regards Yugoslavia in this light of a 'normal' proletarian dictatorship: i.e. a healthy workers state with this or that minor blemish of no real importance. Taking as a platform the fact that, since the break with

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Moscow the Tito leadership has been compelled to borrow many of the arguments from the arsenal of Marxism in their criticism of the Moscow oligarchy, they do not see the conflict as a reflection of the national struggle against oppression and the exploitation of the Moscow bureaucrats and as one which was reflected throughout Eastern Europe, and even within the boundaries of the Soviet Union itself--the Ukraine, the Crimea Tartars, Volga German Republic, etc. The only important difference being the possibility of a successful resistance owing to the independent character of the state apparatus in Yugoslavia.

"Despite zigzags to the left, partly demagogic partly sincere, the fundamental basis of the regime in Yugoslavia remains as before...socialism in one country (and tiny Yugoslavia at that), manoeuvring between world imperialism and the Russian bloc (only thanks to which Yugoslavia can maintain itself.) The regime remains totalitarian--workers democracy does not exist." (11)

This political struggle came to a head at the July 1950 conference of the Club. The Club was organized in a highly conspiratorial, underground manner. No doubt some of this was necessary to protect members against expulsions within the BLP. But it also was useful to Healy in creating an internal atmosphere not very conducive to objective political discussion.

For instance, documents were given to comrades by the branch secretary and could be held on to for only one week at which point they had to be returned. Contact between branches was not permitted nor were area aggregate meetings allowed.

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In preparation for the conference Healy carried through a number of branch reorganizations. In each case the result was to give greater voting strength to Healy's supporters. Several key oppositional comrades were expelled prior to the conference. These included Tony Cliff.

One day before the conference delegates were suddenly informed it would not be held at the announced hall. They were to call a special number upon arriving in London. They were given a new location and upon arriving had to knock on the door, have their name checked against a list, and then were admitted.

To give the affair its appropriate touch of hysteria, Healy opened the proceedings with the announcement that he expected a police raid at any moment. Healy's ability at stage managing the proper atmosphere for his intrigues was learned a long, long time ago.

To add the proper tone to the debate, Healy told Grant, who proved luckier than Cliff and had made it to the convention, to "go back to the dung heap of history where you belong." Then to add to the process of clarification, Healy announced that the main document of the Cliff group on state capitalism could not be presented to the conference since its author had been expelled. This was despite the fact that several of Cliff's supporters were present and willing to speak to the resolution.

After the conference the expulsions began in earnest. Jimmie Dean and Ted Grant were expelled, though we do not know on what grounds. Percy Downy, a Cliff supporter, was expelled for expressing his political position publically and all those who opposed the Downy expulsion were suspended from membership.

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The end result of this process was the loss of around 100 people, about one half of the membership and almost all the former RCP comrades. The only prominent RCP'er to remain with Healy was Bill Hunter.

Let us now look at how Healy would assess this period in his Problems of the Fourth International, one of his rare excursions into his own history. As we proceed with our history of Healy we will see there is barely a statement in that pamphlet that is not at least one-sided and distorted. No wonder it is not footnoted. Here is what Healy says about Grant:

"The SWP members were especially helpful to us during the period between 1943 and 1949 in the struggle against ^{the} Haston clique. This group, which comprised a majority of the English Trotskyist organization, was led essentially by Haston, his wife Mildred Haston and Ted Grant. The Hastons deserted in 1950 and moved towards agreement with the right wing of the Labour Party.

"Grant, however, did not take this road. Although he had been the political attorney for Haston, he could not bring himself to agree with the latter's liquidation into the Labour Party. At the same time, he could not bring himself to publicly denounce Haston's desertion from the Trotskyist movement.

"When it was proposed on the Political Bureau early in March 1950 that Haston should be expelled for his renegacy, Grant abstained. The man is an incorrigible opportunist.

"It was for this reason that Grant was expelled from the Trotskyist movement at the Third World Congress of the Fourth International on August 1951. Ernest G^Ermain proposed the resolution for his expulsion and it was carried unanimously, on the grounds

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that Grant was a renegade. Even Pablo, who at that time was (1) already scheming to expel a majority of the French section, supported the expulsion." (12)

The first part of this statement is essentially correct and verified by independent sources. Grant (12) was part of the Haston leadership, he did oppose Haston's course, and as we have shown clearer than Healy's confusing statement he hid his differences with Haston from the RCP membership at the time of fusion with the Club. We have no independent information on the question of an expulsion motion in May 1950 except that Haston was no longer a member of the Club at that time so it could only have been a matter of expelling someone post-humously so to speak. (13)

The remainder of the statement is quite strange. The Fourth International is not generally involved in expulsions of individuals. Clearly Grant was already expelled by Healy by the time of the Third World Congress. The action Healy refers to could only be the Third Congress' decision to support Healy in the matter and turn down Grant's appeal.

Even more interesting ~~is~~ ^{is} Healy's failure to mention the content of Grant's dispute with Healy at the time. This would be clearly embarrassing by the time Healy would recount this incident. Why ~~was~~ was Grant expelled--for his political views, for his "opportunist" ^{conduct}?

The mention of Pablo is even stranger. Why the phrase "even Pablo"? Why should Pablo object to expelling an individual whose views were highly critical of Pablo and quite similar in many respects with those of the French majority which, Healy states, Pablo was already at work trying to expell?

Here is what Healy writes on the Cliff group:

"Delegates from Cliff's group proposed to our annual conference in August 1950 that we denounce the North Koreans as being just as responsible for the war in Korea as the United States Imperialists. This position was overwhelmingly rejected by the delegates with one notable exception--Grant.

"He attended the conference as a delegate and when the vote was taken against Cliff, he abstained .

"After the conference, the Cliff group then proceeded to open disruption of the majority conference decisions. On the Birmingham and St. Pancras Trades Councils they proposed resolutions denouncing the North Koreans as being as equally responsible for the war as the American imperialists.

"Naturally we expelled them immediately." (14)

First note that Healy refers to "delegates from Cliff's group" and not to Cliff putting forward a position at the 1950 conference. He seeks to hide the fact that Cliff was not present because he had been expelled prior to the conference. He also neglects to mention that these delegates were denied the right to present Cliff's resolution on the question to the conference. He mentions people being expelled for putting forward publically their state capitalist position ~~and being expelled~~ but he fails to mention those purged from the organization simply for refusing to vote for the expulsions.

What conclusions can we draw from this experience?

(1) Healy did not in 1950 represent a political current distinctive for its Trotskyist orthodoxy. To the extent that he

was distinctive at all within the International politically it was for his abject loyalty to and support for the positions of Michel Pablo. At this point in his development clearly Healy represented an activist tendency receiving its political ideas, more or less uncritically, from an international source.

(2) Healy acted in this period in a manner which organizationally obstructed political discussion. This makes it impossible after the events to really know whether or not the Cliff Group and the Grant group could have remained within the section, despite differences, or whether class pressures were in fact pushing them to break with the movement. In this respect we should note that in the same period there existed within the SWP a state capitalist group, led by J.R. Johnson (C.L.R. James) which took a similar position to Cliff on the Korean War. It was not expelled but left the party of its own accord. A small section of this group, led by Art Fox (Albert Philips) remained within the SWP until 1965. Also, a leading party comrade, who belonged to no faction or tendency, John G. Wright, held a critical attitude towards Pablo's views on Yugoslavia. He was not only not expelled but died a few years later as a loyal productive contributor to the leadership of the SWP.

(3) Healy emerged from this crisis with approximately what he went into it with. He proved incapable of assimilating into his organization any sizable number of comrades from the RCP. This would prove to be a pattern with Healy.

THE BEVANITE PERIOD

It is necessary to briefly treat^v Healy's entry work in this period. In December of 1948 Healy gathered together some left elements in the BLP and formed a publishing society to put out a monthly publication called Socialist Outlook. This was what is called an "entrism" paper. That is, it was considered a Labour Party paper much like the Tribune and it featured prominently a number of articles which expressed left reformist politics as well as some of a Trotskyist political line. However, Healy completely controlled the apparatus of the paper from the beginning and the Club members were the backbone of its circulation. (15)

Healy also published an open Trotskyist theoretical journal called Labour Review. This, however, came out very infrequently. Socialist Outlook took the main energies of the group.

At the June, 1949 Blackpool Conference of the Labour Party, the Club initiated, with a whole group of prominent leftists within the party, a group known as Socialist Fellowship. This effort involved such people as Ellis Smith, head of the Pattern-makers Union, and MPs like Fenner Brockway, Tom Braddock and Ron Chamberlain. The group's platform tended to express a left reformist approach while the organization from the beginning was under Club control.

The Fellowship grew as did the circulation of the Outlook because a left development was just beginning in the BLP and there was a political void. Aneurin Bevan had yet to come out clearly as a left alternative to the right wing leadership. The Tribune in that period had close financial ties with the Transport & General Workers Union headed by arch right winger Arthur Deakin. This

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tended to dampen its leftism a bit.

The Korean War then intervened. Its first effect was to bring about a break within the Fellowship with Ellis and Broxoway supporting the U.N. intervention and the others opposing it. However the Korean War had the effect of deepening the divisions within the leadership of the BLP. The right wing became more and more complicit with U.S. imperialism and the arms budget went up at the expense of social services. Aneurin Bevan became dissident seeking some kind of neutralist alternative to alignment with the U.S. and fighting for socialist policies within Britain.

Then another event of considerable importance occurred-- the revival of the Tories. Already in municipal elections in 1949, Tory strength was gaining at the expense of the Labour Party. A general election in February 1950 returned the Labour Party to power with only a slim 6 seat majority. Then in another election in October 1951 the Tories won a majority of the seats in Parliament though still polling only a minority of the votes. The Tories were able to sustain governmental power for the next 13 years.

This Tory victory was in no sense a decisive defeat of the British working class. The Labour vote in the period was 14 million, the largest any party had received in British history. The trade unions remained strong and the Tories were unable to seriously dismantle any of the major gains of the preceding Labour Government in the course of their 13 years' rule.

Struggle persisted within the trade unions as the rank and file fought their leaderships To ensure the workers' share

of the general prosperity of the period. At the same time Bevanism developed into a powerful movement within the BLP with broad support within the working class. This expressed not only the concern of workers to maintain and improve their living standards but deep opposition to world imperialism's policies--a genuine anti-war sentiment within the working class itself. Thus England of the 1950s was a lot better place for the development of the revolutionary movement than was the McCarthyite United States/.

In 1951 Aneurin Bevan and his supporters broke from the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet sparking a powerful left movement within the party. This brought about an influx of members into the party reflecting a desire within the working class to fight the right wing leadership both of the unions and of the party.

The Club responded strongly to this movement. While maintaining their separate identity around Socialist Outlook (The Socialist Fellowship had been banned), they became strong, but critical supporters, of Bevan. This movement allowed them to change their paper into a fortnightly and then a weekly. This led to recruitment to the Club both within the party and from industrial work. At one point they became main campaigners within the Constituency parties for pro-Bevan delegates to the party's convention.

This kind of work persisted until the Socialist Outlook was banned in 1954. From 1954 until 1957, when the Newsletter was launched as an open journal geared to the dissidents within the Cp, the Club had no regular organ entrust

or open. It sold Tribune. Healy's group had no formal name until the Socialist Labour League was formed in 1959.

There are several points to be raised about Healy's entry experience which have a bearing upon the main theme of our inquiry.

(1) The work was conducted on the basis of close international collaboration. In 1950 George Novack was in England and collaborated on a day-to-day basis with the group in its work. ~~He~~ even wrote several articles published under Healy's name. Relations were also close with the International Secretariat and Michel Pablo. Pablo was becoming an advocate of his own form of entrism and thus had only praise for Healy's work in that period. Thus the successes of the ~~period~~ were not simply due to Healy's ability but also to the work of the International.

(2) The work required extreme ~~flex~~ flexibility. It would be very difficult, indeed, to see in Healy's conduct in this period any trace of ultimatism, sectarianism, or ultraleftism. These tendencies, which developed so strongly particularly after 1963, were by no means due to some inherent quality or original sin, on the ~~part~~ of Healy. This period represented a definite shift away from the methods and outlook of the WIL on the basis of international collab~~o~~ration.

(3) While tactically flexible, Healy was always organizationally extremely solid and hard. He would maneuver with all sorts of people but he maintained organizational control wherever possible, built a tight entry party, always had an Organizing center for his operation--usually a print shop. The 1950 expulsions suggest that Healy maintained organizational tightness in a very personal way, rather than in a solid political way. Firmness in politics

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was not that evident in this period. Firmness in organization was. This had a positive side to it--a party building approach which would distinguish Healy's work from other entry experiments on the Continent. But there is at least some evidence it had a negative side to it--a tendency to substitute personal dominance for political struggle in maintaining the cohesiveness of the section.

(4) Healy's entry work always proceeded side by side with important industrial work. Healy himself correctly points out this characteristic in a later period, (16) In fact British Trotskyism in the early postwar period appears as a whole to have been largely a working class movement. Even the Cliff and Grant opposit ~~ion~~ ion groups were largely working class in composition. Cliff's supporters, who were expelled, were expelled for raising their positions within trades councils.

(5) Labour Party work and trade union work require much attention to maneuvering. This is necessary tactical work but it is not the best environment for the development of principled revolutionaries. We will see that Healy's approach to principled political issues in the next period would show signs of an emphasis on ~~man~~^m maneuver at the expense of political clarification. Could his 17 long years within the BLP have left its political mark on Healy in this respect? We think so.

THE 1953 SPLIT

The mythmakers at Clapham High Street have devoted considerable efforts to distort Healy's actual role in the 1953 split in the Fourth International which created the International Committee. They seek to create a picture of Healy's actions in that period more in keeping with his present pretensions to be the world's foremost battler against Pabloite revisionism than with the facts.

The truth is a bit different. Healy had developed exceptionally close relations with Pablo in the postwar period. We have already noted Healy's enthusiastic endorsement of Pablo's views on Yugoslavia in 1949. At the time some in the SWP took a more cautious approach and some even an openly critical one. We have also recounted the strong endorsement the Third Congress gave Healy in relation to Grant. It took the same approach to Cliff.

Between 1950 and 1953 the relations between Healy and Pablo appear to have been extremely warm, personally close, and politically uncritical on the part of Healy. While Germain (Mandel) originally opposed Pablo's bureaucratic actions against the French majority, Healy enthusiastically endorsed them. There was probably few people in the International Movement of the time less prepared personally for a break with Pablo than Healy.

Healy, also, had close political associations with the SWP. There was no basis at that time to see in this any contradiction. Healy had collaborated closely with Cannon in his struggle with Haston over a number of years. George Novack had spent time in England working intimately with Healy in 1951. Sam Gordon,

a former SWP leader, worked closely with the group throughout the period.

There was an important political element in this relationship. Healy's group, as we have noted, was very tightly organized and was deeply committed to "party building". At the same time it was a proletarian organization and developed much of its work on the basis of a study of the SWP and its history. It was quite possible in the period for Healy to model himself after the SWP's party building working class traditions and see no conflict between this and Pablo's theories and methods. Many in the SWP at the time did not see such a conflict. It is also now clear that Healy's methods of "party building" even at this point in his development diverged from those of the SWP in the personal character of the group and Healy's way of handling political oppositions. But, at the time, it was difficult to discern this from the United States.

What is clear from the published material of the time is that Healy supported Cannon over the issue of Cochranism. (17) He recognized this tendency as a liquidationist one and had no sympathy with it. He did not begin at all with the international issues posed by Pablo's political development. In this respect his response was basically similar to that of the SWP leadership at the time.

Today he seeks to give a different impression. His intellectual attorney, Cliff Slaughter, writes:

"From the beginning of the fight against Pablo, different tendencies can be discerned among the forces which soon formed the International Committee. The letters by G. Healy show how

the British leadership entered the fight in an endeavour to carry forward the building of sections of the International and to educate its cadre in struggle against liquidationism.

"The attitude of the SWP leaders was markedly different. By the summer of 1953, they were faced with a Pabloite faction in their own camp. Cannon, having endorsed Pablo's positions throughout the period following the Third Congress, now swung around and prepared for an organizational break. The SWP leaders, imbued with pragmatism, were incapable of taking the fight beyond a re-statement of orthodoxy. It was the British section in particular, basing itself on the fight for revolutionary leadership in the working class, that was able to bring out the importance of the differences with Pablo and take the split as the starting point for new theoretical development." (18)

This is pure mythology!

Healy began with support to the SWP leadership's struggle against Cochranism and not with Pablo and Pablo's theoretical views. To the extent that differences arose on minor points between Healy and the SWP as the struggle escalated in every case it was a question of Healy holding back from a political struggle with and break from Pablo.

On February 19, 1953 Gerry Healy wrote a letter to various leaders of the SWP. "First," Healy states, "the war is getting very near." (19) This phrase did not express any sharp break with Pablo's war-revolution thesis. Then he informs the SWP leadership: "Some very serious work in the mass movements is being done now, and in France in particular." (20) This was

a reference to the official section in France, led by Pierre Frank, which was implementing Pablo's "entrism sui generis."

"My first feeling, therefore," Healy proceeds, "is one of extreme worry--are we threatened with another international split? If so we must avoid it at all costs. Our movement must not go into the war, smashed up and divided." (21) If the 1953 split, just six months away, was the most fundamental break of all time, then surely Healy was not yet ready for it.

Nor was he particularly critical of Pablo's leadership of the FI. "I am fully aware that our secretariat has some defects, but it is the best--the very best we have ever had." (22) Healy no doubt drew this conclusion from its propensity to support him in Britain up to this point in time.

Healy came out clear as a bell on the question of the Third Congress: "I realize that there may be some comrades in your majority who oppose the 3rd Congress resolution on Stalinism. That is a complication. Negativism on this point could very well feed people in the Cochran camp who may be dithering about on the Stalinist issue. We must have clarity all around, no matter whose toes may be trodden on. For instance: S (Sam Gordon) here took it upon himself to bring to G's notice that he opposes the 3rd Congress on Stalinism. O.K., but it is not our line and we should certainly defend the line of the International if called upon to do so." (23)

If, according to Slaughter, the origins of the SWP's "pragmatism" lies in the SWP's refusal to connect up Cochranism with the line of the Third Congress, then what judgement must we make of Healy?

The truth is that only a few people saw this connection at the time. There is evidence that within the SWP there had been some disquiet over the positions Pablo had been developing and for some period of time. There is no evidence of any such disquiet on the part of Gerry Healy himself or anyone else in his section after the expulsion of Cliff and Grant. This does not quite fit Slaughter's picture of these events.

There was one man in England who saw this connection and it wasn't G. Healy. It was Sam Gordon and Healy saw Gordon as a "complication" whose "toes may be trodden on." Actually Gordon was to play an important role in bringing Healy along, step by step, into the struggle with Pabloism.

Healy began his first gingerly entrance into the struggle in May, 1953. He was already clearly identified as a sympathizer of the SWP majority in its fight against Cochran but in every other respect a loyal supporter of Pablo. At an I.E.C. meeting that month Healy made some minor criticisms of a draft resolution on recent developments in Russia. This brought about a rather extreme reaction from Pablo.

Gordon describes the situation:

"Burns (Healy) is very much worried about the whole situation and feels his own responsibility rather strongly. Organizationally he has always gotten along well with Jerome(Pablo), like^d him a good deal; now he feels that J. does not know what he is letting himself in for, that he is up in the clouds, suffering terribly from isolation. He wants to save Jerome, he says, from 'cutting his own throat.' He therefore intends to pursue a very cautious course." (24)

Healy shortly wrote his own letter to the SWP outlining his concern for PAblo and his hope to save him. (25)

Gordon goes on to comment on the situation created by Healy's position:

"It goes without saying that I sympathized with him in the position he is in, although I expressed the opinion that I would be very firm and frank politically first of all and fit in the organizational problem within this framework. He replied that he had his own method of handling such a situation, and we left it at that." (26)

Healy's method soon proved to be to try to avoid as long as possible being firm and frank politically. Clearly, this was partly due to his own political confusion on the issues involved in the struggle with Pablo. It also revealed a "method" of approaching politics that suggested he learned a bit too much about maneuvering during his entry work in the Labour Party.

Even Healy's weak criticisms in May led Pablo to line up John Lawrence to fight Healy internally. Healy persisted in seeking to try to compromise with Lawrence right into August. When the new documents were presented in preparation for the Fourth Congress, which carried forward the same line as the Third Congress documents, Healy refused to vote against these documents or to amend them, voting instead to send them out for discussion.

This conduct towards Lawrence stood in sharp contrast to the impatient factional response he had to opposition groups in 1950. Lawrence had been a key figure in Healy's Labour Party work and Healy saw him as a close collaborator, a part of his coterie around himself. And Pablo stood behind Lawrence and Healy

resisted as long as possible a break with Pablo.

Healy was forced into struggle only when Pablo uped the voltage and sought to place Healy under international discipline to defend Pablo's line within the British group. When Healy refused to accept this bureaucratic proposal, Pablo threw his weight openly behind a drive by Lawrence to take the organization away from Healy. This, of course, is where friendship ends with Healy.

These events occurred in August, 1953. Lawrence's strength within the leading committees of the organization and on the editorial board of Socialist Outlook was no minor matter. Healy had only a slim majority on the Executive Committee and carried the National Committee by 11 to 6. The editorial board had to be reorganized to reflect Healy's NC majority. Healy almost lost his print shop. This illustrates the extent to which those in the top leadership of the British group could be won to Pablo's views. Healy never released figures on how many members of the Club were expelled or dropped away in that period. We would not be surprised if the losses were at least as substantial as those incurred by the SWP.

Certainly this development suggests that there had been political weaknesses in the central group around Healy for some time. Organizational firmness had not been accompanied by the political training of the cadres. Of course, a big responsibility for this situation lay with the political revisionism emanating from the European center since 1949. Yet it suggests a cadre not yet developed to independently think through political matters. This problem was not, of course, exclusive with Healy's group, but it certainly brings into question Slaughter's attempt to give this formation any special political acumen prior to 1953.

GERRY HEALY AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

Gerry Healy has gone to considerable lengths to distort and obscure his real role as part of the International Committee between 1954 and 1961. The purpose of these distortions is to present a picture of Healy as a consistent opponent of reunification and perhaps even a major theoretician of anti-Pabloism. (26)

The real story is quite different.

The International Committee was formed in the immediate aftermath of the Open Letter issued by the SWP in November, 1953. It was composed of Healy's Club, the French PCI (Majority) led by Bleibtreau and Pierre Lambert, and a small Swiss section. It was soon joined by Peng, who represented the Chinese section in exile and was resident in Paris, and the Canadian section led by Ross Dowson, which had suffered a split of Cochranite supporters led by his brother Murray. A little later an important group in Argentina led by Moreno joined as well as a significant group in Chile led by Luis Vitale. Neither group had much contact with the IC during this period. The SWP, barred from membership by the Voorhis Act, played a very active role in its political development.

Gerard Bloch, of the PCI, was the first International Secretary of the IC. After a year or so he was replaced by Gerry Healy. Healy held the post until the reunification in 1963.

The International Committee ^{did not} have any organized structure, apparatus, and only a limited political life as an international formation. It never had a single full time

functionary, an office, a publication, discussion bulletin, It produced very few resolutions and never held an international conference. IC meetings were held--usually attended by the British, French and Peng--and a considerable amount of correspondence circulated. The meetings and the correspondence were primarily concerned with the question of relations with the International Secretariat headed by Michel Pablo. Important documents were written by sections and submitted for discussion within the IC but there is little evidence any serious international discussion was ever held.

There were serious objective difficulties which partly explains this situation. Particularly McCarthyism made international travel and participation on the part of the SWP very limited. Yet there were clearly other factors at work. Above all, we think, there was a political confusion on exactly what the IC was. The very fact that the main discussion point within the IC from 1954 until reunification was always the question of relations with the IS suggests that that split had an unfinished character to it and this contributed to a hesitancy over giving the IC too much of an international structure.

We also believe certain autarchic tendencies set in the various sections of the IC. A sentiment developed to simply proceed with one's own work in one's own country and leave international matters largely to a later date. There is no evidence that Healy in any way resisted this tendency.

And he was, after all, the man in charge of the IC during most of this period. There is some evidence that Peng wished

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for more of a life within the IC and met resistance on this from Healy.

The first dispute to break out in the newly formed IC centered over a parity commission which had been established with the IS for the purpose of furthering international discussion. This occurred in 1954 following a request for such a committee by the LSSP. In that period the LSSP held positions close to the IC on the question of Stalinism but had refused to break with the IS.

Healy had negotiated this commission and held in that period a very high opinion of the LSSP. Healy saw the committee basically as an effective maneuver aimed at winning the LSSP over to the IC. He did not see it as a method to achieve unification with the IS.

The SWP at first supported this initiative but then thought better of it. It was their position that the IC had first to clarify itself and through that process break the healthier elements from the IS rather than engage in any maneuver now which would be interpreted by some as a road to quick reunification. Healy, after the exchange of a couple of letters, came over to the position of the SWP on the matter.

Peng took a different position. He strongly favored the parity commission because he strongly favored reunification. He viewed the split from the IS of its extreme wing--Lawrence, Mestre, Clarke--as a sign that there was now a basis for fusion with the IS. He also maintained a sharp political criticism of Pablo's views on Stalinism and of his organizational methods.

The French were adamantly opposed to the parity committee idea from the beginning. Because of their bitter experiences with Pablo, this would be their orientation throughout the period. When the matter finally came to a vote at an IC meeting, Healy moved the SWP proposal and only Peng voted against.

Healy later saw his minor tactical difference with the SWP as the seeds of his later political break: "From that moment it was clear that an even more serious conflict was brewing between the International Committee and the SWP." (27) This appears a little absurd. The position of the SWP at the time--clarify the IC first, consider unification later--would be the position of Healy in the 1961-63 period. If the SWP had insisted upon Healy's position then a slight case might have been made. But the opposite was the case.

We can only conclude that what Healy objected to was listening to the opinion of another party, a force outside Englad, and perhaps being convinced by it. In this sense we can see some seeds of future developments in this small incident--a deep resentment Healy may have been developing to having to collaborate with anyone outside himself.

As far as the content of Healy's proposal, it had all the earmarks of maneuverism. A proposal for a parity committee is a step towards unification. It should be based politically on a common agreement that there is a political basis in principle for the end result of the committee--reunification. Healy favored the proposal but opposed the end result. Healy would persist in this maneuveristic method again when the parity committee proposal came up in 1957 and would himself propose a parity committee in 1962 at a time when he was working might and main against unification

Perhaps Healy's much touted "method" is the method of unprincipled maneuvering learned in long years of in-fighting in the Labour Party.

The next effort in the IC was the production of discussion material aimed at fulfilling the task of arming the IC politically prior to any renewed efforts on the IS front. Peng wrote an assessment of Pablobism. The SWP produced a general resolution on the world situation, one on the colonial world, and one on China. Healy produced a short resolution on "Suez and its Aftermath."

All this material reflected the same general line. It took a hard, uncompromising line on Stalinism, recognized the capitalist boom and the problem it posed for the movement, and noted the progressive character of the colonial revolution without adapting to the bourgeois nationalists. Healy's resolution even went out of its way to note the new stirrings among the Black masses in the United States and to assert the critical role Blacks would play in the American revolution.

There is every indication that these resolutions represented the thinking of the IC as a whole and Healy in no way distinguished himself theoretically at this point of the development of the IC.

No sooner had these resolutions been completed than the crisis of Stalinism came to a head in the 20th Party Congress, the Polish events and the Hungarian Revolution. The SWP responded to these events immediately and strongly. In fact the basic resolution of the SWP together with the speeches of James P. Cannon represent an important theoretical acquisition to the Trotskyist understanding of Stalinism which deserves to be revived and

studied afresh by the world movement today. It was without a doubt the most positive result of the principled struggle in 1953.

The theory of "self-reform" of the Stalinist bureaucracy, so popular within the Fourth International in 1953, was tested and proven completely false by the concrete events in Poland and Hungary. Just as the Paris Commune showed Marx and Engels in life just how a workers revolution would take place and what kind of state it would produce, so the Polish and Hungarian workers showed world Trotskyism the same as regards the political revolution.

In both countries workers organized their own independent councils to fight the bureaucracy. In Poland the liberal section of the bureaucracy, headed by Gomulka, consciously acted to defuse this workers council development and restabilize bureaucratic rule without open Soviet troops intervention. In Hungary, the situation was too volatile for Nagy to carry out the same tactic. Nonetheless, in the course of the struggle against Soviet troops, Nagy made unwarranted concessions to the capitalists by calling for United Nations intervention, while the brunt of the resistance came from the independent councils of workers.

Clearly the bureaucracy may make concessions to the masses but it makes these concessions only to prevent a political revolution, to maintain bureaucratic rule in difficult times. It is this bureaucracy, not the independently organized workers, which is the source of the restorationist threat. Individual Communist Party members can and did go wholeheartedly over to the side of the workers. But no section of the bureaucracy can be expected to do so.

These ideas, developed by the SWP, were reprinted and utilized by Healy as his basic line in his successful intervention in the crisis of the British Stalinist party. Healy, himself, added nothing of his own. He was dependent upon the SWP for ideas and theory just as in an earlier period he had been dependent on Pablo.

Beginning in 1957 new efforts were made towards reunification. This time the initiative came from the SWP. The SWP noted the break of the extreme Pabloites from the IS in 1954. They felt, however, that more time and the test of events was needed to discern exactly where the IS was headed politically. The 20th Party Congress, Poland and Hungary had been that test of events. In the eyes of the SWP, the response to those events by the IS had been similar to that of the IC and thus the political positions of the two international factions were growing closer together. This gave a political basis to moves towards reunification.

Healy did not openly oppose this reunification move though he tended to give greater stress to existing political differences than did the SWP. However, he acted in a manner designed to discourage reunification.

He published an article in his internal bulletin by Bill Hunter (W. Sinclair) entitled "Under A Stolen Flag." The article sought to make a case that the political differences with the IS not only had not lessened but actually had grown deeper.

Then he took a very factional attitude towards the Grant group which had recently affiliated with the IS. He insisted, as the price for fusion, that the group openly repudiate the political positions of the IS. Obviously if fusion could take place between an IC and IS section in a particular country only

on the basis of repudiating the international positions of the IS, this meant that on an international scale unification was completely out of the question.

Here we have another example of Healy's "method." If, as Sinclair had asserted, the political positions which lay behind the split in 1953 were now wider apart, then the only conclusion one can come to is that any proposal for reunification is out of the question. Healy then should have simply openly opposed reunification. Instead he accepted the SWP proposals and maneuvered with them.

What was the actual situation at the time politically? We feel an objective study of the material published on all sides, including Sinclair's article, backs up the thesis that the IS had clearly retreated from the extreme positions on Stalinism taken in 1953. However, the IS still insisted that it had been politically correct in 1953 and made no self-criticism. And important elements of Pablo's pro-Stalinist thinking can be found throughout the documents of the IS of the period alongside quite orthodox Trotskyist positions. These contradictory positions no doubt reflected contradictory trends within the IS formation.

Then we must consider the IC side. The IC had not been able to develop as a serious international formation capable of carrying on the tasks now posed to Trotskyism as a world movement in the period of Stalinist crisis and decline. Theoretical clarification had proceeded at a very slow pace at best. It would be a big mistake to think that the IC forces were either homogenous or completely clear on principled questions at the time.

An interesting example of the confusion which existed in

the IC is the question of Algeria. The IS had given its full, and largely uncritical support to the FLN headed by Ben Bella. This no doubt expressed a tendency to adapt to petty bourgeois nationalism. The Lambert group had responded by giving its full, and largely uncritical, support to the MNA headed by Messali Hadj. Healy enthusiastically supported Lambert's initiative and published one of Messali's speeches as a pamphlet. He held the opinion at the time that Messali could evolve into a strong supporter of Trotskyism. Shane Mage (Philip Magri) brought the SWP into the matter by presenting the Messalist line in a series of articles in the Militant.

It is now clear that both sides were wrong in principle on this question. It is incorrect for Trotskyists to intervene in fraternal disputes between sections of the petty bourgeois nationalist movement in colonial countries and to foster illusions in these tendencies. This was the principled position the LTF took on Angola.

All this would suggest that the future clarification and development of the Fourth International actually required reunification if a principled minimum restatement of Trotskyism could be agreed to as a political basis for reunification and a solution found to the organization question so that a discussion could proceed within the reunified body which was not marred by expulsion threats and actions. This was the position taken by James P. Cannon at the time.

Of course this would neither mean that the old disputes of the 1953 period had been completely settled nor that new disputes would not arise. It only meant that such a reunification was the

next ~~Necessary~~ step in the long, patient process of constructing and clarifying the world Trotskyist forces.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that Healy's main concern in 1957 was the Grant group. He appeared to fear above all else any effort to fuse that group with his own, even though it was a fraction of the size of his group. Certainly, once inside the Club, Grant would be no automatic hand-raiser for Healy. Thus, Healy no doubt feared, he would be a pole of attraction to dissident elements within his organization who objected to his personal methods of party rule. As we will see, such dissident elements would develop in the Healy group by 1958.

This could mean that Healy's concern was more with organizational matter^s than with the question of Trotskyist political orthodoxy as it was called at the time. Perhaps this explains why the Sinclair piece was published but then, when Germain wrote a long answer to it, Germain~~s~~ was not answered. In fact Healy made no serious effort after 1957 to pursue a discussion within the IC on the political and theoretical questions of Pabloism.

Unification, in any event, was not achieved in that period not only because of Healy's tactics--and the obvious opposition of Lambert--but also because of the refusal of the IS to make the necessary organizational concessions. Once it became clear that Pablo was also maneuvering to bloc reunification, Healy became an advocate of reunification on the basis of Cannon's organizational proposals. He maintained this position up to 1961. He was more than happy to advocate unification as long as he was convinced it would not happen.

THE PETER FRYER EPISODE

Healy's intervention into the crisis of Stalinism was the most successful of any section of the Trotskyist movement in that period. Basing himself on the political and theoretical capital produced by the SWP, Healy conducted himself with the political astuteness and organizational flexibility which had characterized his successful intervention in the BLP during the Bevan period.

The first important figure to join Healy was Peter Fryer, a journalist for the Daily Worker, organ of the CP, who was an eye-witness to the Hungarian Revolution. His book, The Hungarian Tragedy, was without a doubt the single most effective weapon in breaking up the Stalinist monolith in England.

Healy travelled the length and breadth of England visiting personally every dissident who wrote a letter in the Stalinist press always bringing with him a copy of Trotsky's Revolution Betrayed to be left if necessary on the doorstep.

At one point, right at the height of the ferment, the Labour Party Young Socialists held a summer camp under tent. It was no ordinary social democratic affair for in that period every Trotskyist tendency worked within the BLP and many of the dissidents from the CP either were now in the BLP or around it for the purpose of discussions. Gerry Healy, Ted Grant and Tony Cliff were each present at the camp fighting for adherents. A whole layer of intellectuals and workers broke with the Communist Party in that period and many joined the Club because of its clear Trotskyist politics, its aggressive organization, and its base in the BLP and

trade unions.

In addition to Fryer, Cliff Slaughter, Tom Kemp, Brian Pearce, Alastair McIntrye, Brian Behan, John Daniels, Robin Blick, and Mark Jenkins joined the Club.

Peter Fryer, with Healy's backing, set up a weekly paper, the Newsletter devoted to material on the Stalinist crisis. Labour Review was launched as an axis for theoretical discussion among intellectuals. In its early period, it was perhaps the best Trotskyist theoretical journal of the postwar period.

Healy's approach in the period was distinguished by its freshness, its openness. Trotskyists as well as non-Trotskyists wrote in the press. All issues were openly debated. Workers struggles were reported in the press as they really were and many militant workers, who were not Trotskyists, participated in the industrial conferences Healy organized. This openness had as much appeal as the ideas of Trotskyism because it stood in sharp contrast to the sterile bureaucratism of the CP.

Labour Party work also prospered. This was particularly true among the youth. Healy began to develop the youth cadre which would permit him to dominate the official BLP youth organization, the Young Socialists, when it was established in 1960. By 1959 Healy had a total of at least 400 members, the largest group of Trotskyists ever assembled in England. There was nothing on the continent to compare with it in size and calibre of its cadres.

Gerry Healy was not a man strongly rooted in theory. There is no evidence of such abilities prior to 1957. He was essentially an activist and party builder. By 1957 he had assembled all the necessary forces for a strong party. He had won over a group of tal-

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ented intellectuals from the CP. His worker base was augmented also by new recruits from the CP. His youth base was developing into the strongest youth force on the British left. The future of British Trotskyism would be greatly determined by the way Healy developed the forces objective circumstance^s had handed to him.

Could he overcome his years of training as a personal leader of a small group and develop a serious collective leadership? Could he learn how to build a cohesive party which still contained within it divergent elements with different ideas? Could Healy change, learn from the new forces he had recruited as well as teach them, develop confidence in the comrades around him rather than fearing each one as a potential factional oppo^Nent?

Peter Fryer would prove to be Healy's acid test. Fryer was no minor figure in the movement. When the Socialist Labour League was organized within the BLP in February 1959, the Newsletter became the organ of the SLL. Fryer continued as editor of the paper though it was largely turned towards the developing militant struggle in the trade unions. He wrote a book for the SLL, Battle For Socialism, one of the best popular expositions of Trotskyist politics in Britain. His polemic against E. P. Thompson, "Lenin as Philosopher", revealed that he had serious theoretical capabilities. He was consider^d a main leader of the SLL.

At about 8 PM on Monday, August 31, 1959, Peter Fryer disappeared from the party center leaving behind a letter explaining his reasons for resigning from the organization. (28)

The events which swiftly followed Peter Fryer's walk out of the party took on a James Bond character. Healy ran around England visiting Fryer's mother, his companion, and any personal friends he could find. He even suggested that Fryer's companion was an agent of the GPU who was seeking to ferret him out of the country. There was talk of watching the parts to prevent this from happening. (29)

The affair reached such ridiculous proportions that Fryer was forced to request his solicitor to threaten legal action unless Healy called off the harassment. At one point a central committee member forcibly entered two comrades' home only to be forcibly removed with the Central Committee member getting the worst of it. (30)

In the meantime the Newsletter ran a notice that Fryer had resigned as editor because of ill health. This, Fryer noted in an open letter to SLL members, "was true as far as it went. But it did not say what had made me ill." (31)

/Fryer left the SLL not over any political differences but because of opposition to its internal regime.

"We who came into the Trotskyist movement from the Communist Party, hard on the heels of the experience of Hungary and our struggle with the Stalinist bureaucracy in Britain, were assured that in the Trotskyist movement we would find a genuine communist movement, where democracy flourished, where dissenters were encouraged to express their dissent, and where relationships between comrades were in all respects better more brotherly and more human than in the party we had come from. Instead we have found at the top of

the Trotskyist movement, despite the sacrifices and hard work of the rank and file, a repetition of Communist Party methods of work, methods of leadership, and methods of dealing with persons who are not prepared to kowtow to the superior wisdom of the 'strong man.'

"The outstanding feature of the present regime in the Socialist Labour League," Fryer goes on, "is that it is the rule of a clique -- the general secretary's personal clique -- which will not allow the members to practice the democratic rights accorded to them on paper, and which pursues sectarian aims with scant regard to the real possibilities of the real world." (32)

Fryer then presents a graphic description of how Healy operated in everyday practice. It is a description strikingly similar to what comrades would report a decade and a half later in their recent breaks with Healy.

"The ordinary members of the Socialist Labour League, who have joined because they want to build a revolutionary leadership as an alternative to Stalinist and social-democratic betrayals, should know how this clique operates, and how the general secretary maintains his control of it. His domination is secured by a series of unprincipled blocs with various leading members against various other leading members who happen to disagree with him on any given point at any given time. There is scarcely a single leading member of the League whom the general secretary has not attacked in private conversation with me at some time or other, in terms such as these: 'I have enough on P. to get him sent down for seven years.' 'I don't know what game P. is playing. He could be a police agent.' 'C. is a bad little man who would put a

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knife into anyone.' 'There will have to be a showdown with B. He's trying to take over. I come back to find he is appointing his own full-timers.' 'B. is a primitive Irish peasant.' 'I don't trust P. He is not a Marxist. He doesn't accept dialectical materialism.' 'S. won't stay in the movement long.' 'G. is a lunatic.' 'A. is quite mad. He beats his wife.' 'S. is completely useless. He has built nothing and never will build anything.' 'F. is a stupid kid.' 'H. is only out for personal prestige.' There is no principle whatever in the general secretary's attitude to his comrades." (33)

This passage is particularly vivid in the light of recent developments. It becomes a little easier to understand how Healy could develop his slanderous theories that leaders of the SWP with whom he collaborated with for so many years, are accomplices of the GPU!

Fryer continues:

"Over two years' close work with the general secretary have convinced me beyond any doubt that he will permit no real criticisms and no real differences of opinion within the organization. All the fine talk we heard two and a half years ago about the rights of minorities turns out to be so much eyewash when anyone ^(who) ventures to open his mouth is told he is succumbing to 'class pressures' -- what a travesty of Marxism! -- when critics are summoned to the executive and browbeaten into withdrawing their criticisms, when critics are threatened, intimidated and expelled, when lies are told about them, when the details of their personal lives are utilized for blackmail and character assassina-

tion." (34)

This is a rather strong indictment. Yet it comes from a single individual. Is he perhaps exaggerating things a bit? Is he only reflecting his own difficulties in being in a disciplined party? Are we dealing with perhaps some personal weaknesses of Healy or are we dealing with the question of a whole regime which is antithetical with the Leninist norms of party organization?

It was not just a matter of Fryer. Fryer was part of a break of a whole layer of comrades who had come into the movement out of the Stalinist party and who were sensitive to what appeared to them to be a continuation of Stalinist internal methods within the Trotskyist organization.

Next came the purge of the majority of the members of the Nottingham Branch. It began rather modestly when John Daniels, an important intellectual who had played a key role in the production of Labour Review, raised questions about the economic perspectives of the SLL. He did not believe that 1958 indicated a major break from the postwar capitalist boom as the organization had predicted. He felt that boom was continuing and that the important labor struggles of the period were offensive struggles of workers under boom conditions. A witchhunt began against Comrade Daniels. (35)

Another key comrade of the branch was Ken Coates who in a later period would play a role in the group around The Week publication that was the predecessor to the IMG. Coates had requested and been granted a three month's leave of absence to carry

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on some important theoretical work. Coates was then threatened with expulsion for inactivity! To top it all off the rumor was spread around that the branch was a center of "drug taking", a pure fabrication. (36)

This group began to develop serious differences with Healy. They became sympathetic to some of the views of Pablo and strong advocates of unification with the IS. These differences were never discussed within the SLL. Instead the Nottingham Branch was purged.

Then the fire turned upon Peter Cadogan, a member of the Cambridge Branch, who developed differences similar to those of the Nottingham group. He took the initiative in organizing the Stamford Faction, named after the town it was formed in, composed of the Nottingham group, Fryer, and himself. He was immediately expelled. (36a)

So ended the first phase of Healy's struggle against the bulk of the very Stalinist dissidents he had recruited to Trotskyism two years earlier. Phase two would not be long in coming.

THE PURGE OF BRIAN BEHAN

Brian Behan was an Irish worker who had been prominent in the Communist Party. He was the brother of Brendan Behan, the famous Irish poet and writer. Behan had been on the Central Committee of the Communist Party during the Hungarian events and had been a key figure in the important working class opposition to Stalinism.

Behan, while a member of the Club, had led one of the major building worker strikes of the period -- the Shell-Mex site strike on the South Bank in London. Shell-Mex employed some 2,000 workers. The management, upset over work stoppages, chose to lay off the entire work force. This precipitated a rank and file strike during which thousands of building workers from every site in the London ^{area} marched to the South Bank to show their solidarity.

He was also a key figure in organizing a series of rank and file trade union conferences, called by the Newsletter, which received wide support. It was an important development for British Trotskyism within the labor movement.

Behan had been quite critical of Fryer and was the one who put down a motion to expell him. However, he soon developed serious political differences with the leadership. He was, we feel, wrong on these questions. But his confusion was understandable.

In February, 1959 Healy had transformed the Club into an open organization within the Labour Party -- The Socialist Labour League. He was reacting to some expulsions of Club members in the Birmingham area and a press witchhunt against him in the South London papers.

This step was taken without serious discussion in the ranks, without a resolution, and without a conference to decide the matter. Therefore there was considerable confusion within the ranks of exactly what this step meant and how it related to the entry perspective the Club had carried out since 1947. Both the work among Stalinist dissidents as well as ~~and~~ the rank and file conferences signified a greater degree of work outside the normal channels of the Labour Party than had been the rule in the earlier period.

Behan represented a pole in the discussion. He felt that the open group should be an independent party while BLP work should continue on a fraction basis. This was the position of the old RCP. He argued for this perspective on the ground that England was headed for a depression which would mean large union struggles requiring such an independent party.

He was wrong on both accounts. Behan reflected the strong strain of syndicalism within the British labour movement which was perpetuated within the trade union section of the British Communist Party. A serious discussion of Behan's position could only have strengthened the SLL politically and might even have, in time, reoriented Behan.

Such a discussion did not take place. Some four discussion bulletins^s were produced -- an event which would never again occur in Healy's movement -- but they were dominated from the beginning by organizational charges. In this fashion Healy succeeded in obscuring the political issues in the debate.

For instance Behan's wife, Celia Behan, introduced the following motion into the Southwark branch:

"1. This branch, disturbed at the concentration of responsibility on the shoulders of comrade Healy who is: General Secretary, Secretary of the International Committee, Editor of the Newsletter, and in practice Treasurer and Manager of the print shop, resolved that steps be taken to end this unhealthy position immediately. We suggest the immediate appointment by the National Committee of a trainee Editor.

"2. This branch resolves that the next Conference should elect a National Treasurer and a finance committee composed of 4

lay members of the National Committee whose function will be to review the financial situation quarterly and report to the National Committee. The finance committee must be party to any major expenditure of League funds.

"3. This branch, disturbed by the present position, whereby the assets of the League are actually owned by 3 or 4 individuals resolves: That the Newsletter, printing press and all other property, publications and assets of the League should be placed under the control of the membership. That the National Committee should put forward suggestions to this end at the coming conference." ⁽⁹³⁷⁾ /

One can well imagine Gerry Healy's reaction to such proposals. This was particularly the case since another suggestion of Behan's was that Healy's car, a Citroen, be traded in for a van with a loudspeaker on ^{top} to carry placards to union demonstrations! Behan voted for his wife's motion. He was then brought up on disciplinary charges for voting for a motion in his own branch which had not first been presented within the National Committee of which Behan was a member. Of course the motion was put forward not by Behan but by his wife, who was not a member of the NC, and had a right to put forward such a motion. We suspect Healy reasoned that NC members were to ^{s1} vote against any and all motions put forward in branches by rank and filers.

Healy maneuvered it so the main members of the Behan group were expelled on the eve of the National Conference held in June 1960.

Comrades of the Behan group were presenting their minority views at a branch aggregate in the London area. Healy suddenly turned up in the middle of the meeting with a group of sup-

porters. He demand from the floor to know whether or not the Behan group planned to split before the Conference. The Behan group simply walked out of the meeting in disgust at this blatant attempt to disrupt the political discussion on the eve of the conference.

Healy proceeded immediately to expell the group for walking out of the meeting. The Behan group answered the charges in a letter which explained that only Healy had raised the question of split, that they never had such an orientation, and that Healy had acted over the past months in a fashion to suppress an objective discussion of their views. They were summarily expelled.

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Alastair McIntyre, one of the most prominent intellectuals in the SLL, supported Behan. He was allowed to present his views at the conference and then dropped out of the SLL. His description of the SLL paralleled that of Fryer:

"...The essential point is that it has now been established that minorities cannot exist in your organization. I say your organization advisidly; for the heart of the matter is that those in whose hands the control of the organization lies, by reason of private ownership of the assets and their personal dominance, are more concerned to have their point of view adopted than they are to have a genuinely free discussion of opposing points of view. This makes the guarentees in the constitution so much waste paper.

"On both Friday and Saturday mornings you 'phoned me'", McIbtrye continues in a letter to Gerry Healy, "and asked me to discuss my views with you. Although I failed to see why private discussion should be substituted for public, my first impulse was

to accept. My second and more intelligent reaction was to be reminded of how like this was to a time-honoured Communist Party technique. I was told by Comrade Gale that I should have taken my point of view not into open discussion but to those comrades with years of revolutionary experience who could have settled my doubts. This was said time and time again by the CP in their last internal crises. You say in your letter to me that references to the CP are irrelevant unless I am saying that the SLL resembles the CP. Comrade Healy, how naive you are. I am saying just that. In a letter to me Comrade Slaughter advises me that if my integrity and the demands of what he calls the 'revolutionary' movement conflict I must remember that only great men solve such problems and that I must subordinate my feelings to the movement. This was, of course, the doctrine of Arnold Kettle in the CP discussions. It has been said to me that the fact that Comrades Behan and Scott were in a minority of two on the NC is relevant. On the EC of the CP Comrade Behan was in a minority of one on seven key votes. In every case he was right. It is no accident that the arguments of Palme Dutt, Kettle and Collitt now appear in the service of Healy, Slaughter and Gale." (39)

The political position taken by the London Executive Committee against Behan is well worth quoting from. It represents a clear statement of the approach of the organization towards work in the Labour Party tested out over 13 years. In four years the authors of this statement would pull completely out of the Labour Party without so much as writing a single document to explain what was so wrong in this statement made in 1960. Their position would be even more extreme than Behan who at least advocated fraction work in the Labour Party.

"The British Communist Party is, however, not merely a purveyor of Stalinist ideology in the Labour movement. Its actions actively prevent the development of a real revolutionary party in Britain. Whilst masquerading as a Communist Party it isolated those workers who join it from the real political struggle against reformism. The main arena for this struggle can only be in the mass organization of the working class, the Labour Party. It is this isolation of militant industrial workers from the Labour Party that strengthens the centrists and reformists inside the Labour Party....

"It is this division of labor between the reformists and centrists on the one hand, and the Stalinists on the other, that creates most of the difficulties that confront the numerically small revolutionary forces.

"Our attitude to the Labour Party is based upon the prospect of participation by the Socialist Labour League in class struggle, combining this with a fight inside the trade unions and from there on to the political plane, which means the Labour Party. We aim at separating the working class from its industrial and political misleaders. At the same time we take into account at each stage the objective difficulties through which the class is passing.

"When we formed the SLL we were keenly aware of the way in which the CP isolated their industrial militants. One reason for the formation of the SLL was to recruit such workers as fast as we could and to arm them with the strategy based on taking the industrial struggle from the trade unions into the Labour

Party (which is the political reflection of the unions) there to seek political solutions. That is why we wage a struggle to build a socialist left wing in the Labour Party with the Marxist SLL as an integral part of it." (40)

Two other prominent members of the SLL, who had been active in the struggle against Behan's group, would shortly drop out of the SLL. One was Brian Pearce, a gifted historian and Russian scholar, one of the most valuable intellectual acquisitions from the CP. The other was Bob Pennington, who had actually put down the motion to expell Behan just as Behan put down the motion to expell Fryer. Pennington is presently a leader of the IMG.

We have now recounted in some detail Healy's organizational methods in a series of internal crises over a full decade prior to the reunification crisis of 1961-63. We are not dealing with a single incident but a whole series of incidents which makes a pattern. It tends to suggest the methods utilized in the 1974-75 period had a long history to them. Let us briefly summarize the questions which an examination of Healy's history raises:

(1) Was it correct to expell the leader of an opposition group, Tony Cliff, prior to the conference which would decide the issue?

The right (2) Was it proper to deny the remaining members of his group to present his document simply on the ground^s that the author of the document had been expelled prior to the conference which was to discuss it?

(3) Was it proper to suspend from membership comrades simply on the ground^s that they refused to vote to endorse the expulsion of other comrades of the Cliff group?

(4) Was the relationship between Healy and leading comrades described in Fryer's statement a proper relationship for a Leninist party? Does not what those who left Healy in the 1974-75 period report suggest that Fryer's description was honest and accurate and that these practices persisted and degenerated further?

(5) Are not the methods of complete personal control of a movement described by Fryer, Behan and McIntyre inconsistent with the norms of democratic centralism?

(6) Was it correct to expell Ken Coats^e, John Daniels, other members of the Nottingham Branch, and Peter Cadogan prior to any discussion in the party of their political views?

(7) Was it necessary to expell Brian Behan and the majority of his supporters, all workers, on the very eve of a conference which would decide the issue politically?

(8) Isn't it interesting, no matter what is said pro or con about each individual incident, that Healy never held a single conference, at which minority positions were put forward, that was not preceeded by at least some expulsions?

(9) Alastair McIntyre declared in 1960 that minorities cannot exist within Healy's organization. No minority existed in Healy's group from that date until the formation of the Thornett group in 1974. Isn't it noteworthy that that group was expelled in its entirety prior to the conference called to decide the issue politically?

For a long time Healy got away with such conduct because it appeared to international comrades that he was generally right on the political issues as against his opponents. His expulsions of Cliff and Grant were endorsed by the Fourth International at its Third Congress. The SWP did not protest his actions against Fryer-Daniels-Coates-Cadogan and the Behan group. We have, by now, had enough experience in the post-war world with the problem of the organizational practices in sections to give such practices a bit more attention.

It is true that politics is fundamental and organization secondary. It does not flow from this, however, that organization is unimportant. History is replet with examples to the contrary. Let us remember that the turn towards opportunism on the part of the Mensheviks was first expressed on the organizational plane. Only later did this opportunism take on a political content. Is it not possible that Healy's turn to sectarianism in politics was first expressed in organizational totalitarianism?

We feel organizational degeneration, because it acts to prevent a party leadership from correcting itself, and the membership from correcting the leadership, can create the conditions for political degeneration. In the case of Healy we feel preservation of this internal regime played a major role in his approach to the critical political problem of reunification of the forces of world Trotskyism. How could Healy favor an international reunification when the last thing in the world he wanted was a national unification which would bring into his midst elements critical of his personal rule of the organization. How can an organization, totalitarian in structure on a national level, coexist for long within an international movement based on the principles of democratic

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centralism?

Healy, like many others, always holds up the model of Lenin's party, Lenin's hardness, Lenin's concern with discipline, as an excuse for his own conduct. But Lenin's party was a different world from Healy's tiny autocracy. When Pravda published Lenin's famous April Theses it also published an editorial note expressing the opposition of the party at that time to Lenin's position. Would this ever have happened in the Newsletter? While Lenin carried the party conference in late April on the main points, on the question of the party's participation in the Zimmerwaldian centrist bloc, he got only his own vote. Could this ever have happened at a conference of the Club or SLL to G. Healy? Such differences in the party persisted even after the Bolshevik Party had won state power.

A party which cannot create the conditions for the flowering of many different and conflicting views, while at the same time sustaining the loyalty of all its members and preventing as much as possible faction formations, will inevitably degenerate. No single leader, or even group of like-thinking leaders, can possibly have all the answers needed for the complex job of building mass revolutionary parties. This is a central lesson of Healy's degeneration we can all learn something from.

THE REUNIFICATION CRISIS

Healy's political outlook in 1961 was based essentially on the positions worked out in common struggle with the French Lambert group and the SWP. There is no indication of any distinctive ideas contributed by Healy himself. His conceptions of Pabloism were derived from that common source.

Healy's approach to international matters was influenced by the state of his own organization. It had definitely grown. The losses in forces from the Stalinist milieu had been more than compensated for, if not politically, then in numbers, from the youth work. The SLL was fast becoming the dominant influence in the Young Socialists. The Newsletter was being produced quite professionally and the print shop was expanding. Money was coming in. He had very much of a good operation going and his competition--the tiny Cliff and Grant groups--were hardly in the running. Membership was probably around 600. The SLL was one of the largest and most active Trotskyist groups in the world.

All this encouraged Healy in the conviction that he needed no one else internationally anymore. He could do it himself. He became more and more convinced that he personally would lead a revolution in England and that this act would allow him to straighten out the world Trotskyist movement on his terms.

Then the Cuban Revolution broke out and took a very radical course leading to the development of a new workers state. Healy was illprepared for this event. He had not done his homework on the old disputes in the international movement dealing with the process whereby workers states have been created in the postwar period.

The Cuban Revolution gave a new impetus to the long-stalled efforts at reunification. The SWP had maintained since 1957 that there was a political basis for fusion with the IS. Now they found that they held an identical position with the IS on Cuba. This, they felt made reunification, long needed, an immediate necessity.

Healy appears to have been determined from the beginning to try to block reunification. This desire had been expressed as early as 1957, so it cannot be explained away simply on the level of political differences that he held with both the SWP and the IS over Cuba. Clearly, even more vehemently than in 1957, he wanted nothing whatsoever to do with the Grant group. And he felt he did not need much, in any event, outside of himself and his own group. He was determined on an autarchic, national course which would lead more and more in the direction of political sectarianism. In our opinion, bits and pieces of political ideas were patched together to justify a course determined by other factors--essentially by concern to preserve his regime.

Only this explains the completely confused and largely incorrect theoretical contribution Healy made in that period. What, after all, is "Pabloism?" The heart of Pabloism was a series of political positions on Stalinism all of which flowed from a wrong theoretical understanding of the social overturns of the postwar period. A new social overturn had occurred in the fall of 1960 in Cuba. Therefore, if any clarity was to be gotten at all, one had to theoretically tactic this new phenomena. It was not accidental that Cuba figured so largely in the reunification discussion. It was natural. Cuba was the most important revolutionary development of that time and as such touched upon all aspects of revolutionary theory and strategy.

Healy's problem was simply that he was completely wrong and bankrupt on Cuba. He was enough of a politician, if not a theoretician, to sense this. Thus, much of his effort in the period

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Healy seeking to avoid what had to be discussed. The result was; (1) to attempt to sabotage the very process necessary for the future clarification of the Fourth International--unification; (2) to maintain a completely false and non-Marxist theory on the nature of the Cuban state; (3) to make a major revision of Marxist philosophy to cover up the falsity of his own method; (4) and to prepare the ground for his own break in England with a strategy of 17 years of Labour Party work and with the transitional program itself.

Healy's position on Cuba was simply a gross distortion of Trotskyist orthodoxy. He preserved the orthodox position of the need for the revolutionary party, the Trotskyist party, in Cuba and in other underdeveloped countries by the simplistic trick of denying reality--the actual social overturn taking place on the island.

At the time Healy's American supporters within the SWP could not accept this "theory" of Cuba. The group held that Cuba was a workers state but that we should give no political support to the Castro leadership and fight in Cuba as elsewhere for the building of independent Trotskyist parties. Healy did his best to divert the discussion away from Cuba.

On May 15, 1961 he wrote his American supporters:

"The discussion of Cuba should be more or less dropped.... Replace some of the long-winded discussion on Cuba and the interminable speculation which must inevitably accompany such discussion with some down-to-earth talk about what should be the future steps

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of finding a road to the trade unions in the United States." (41)

By July 24, 1961 Healy had received a discussion article from his American supporters characterizing Cuba as a workers state. He was clearly upset.

"I have received your draft on Cuba. I sincerely hope that this is for our internal discussion and not to be thrust into the SWP at the moment. ...Whilst we can continue to discuss the Cuban situation, it is as we have always maintained quite subordinate." (42)

Then on August 14, 1961;

"...I don't think that Cuba is going to become a satellite of Moscow. There is still far too much danger that in a changed situation Castro, or elements in his administration, could still find accommodation with US imperialism.

"We refuse to be rushed on this question of Cuba not because we are slow to take political positions or faster than other people. The education of a revolutionary cadre needs time and not adaptation to frenzied debates." (43)

Finally on ⁽⁵⁾December 13, 1961:

"Looking at your position from afar, I am still of the opinion far too much time is concentrated on Cuba and too little on the work of the construction of the SWP." (44)

Unable to get very far on Cuba, because he was so obviously wrong that his international supporters did not even agree with him, Healy sought to shift the terrain to Pabloism in general. But the problem was that Pabloism "in general" led him right back to Cuba specifically. Finally, with some help from Cliff Slaughter,

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he discovered "method." This was about as general as you could get. It was nice safe cloudy terrain.

The reasoning went this way. Pabloism is in essence a break with the Marxist method in the direction of empiricism, pragmatism, and impressionism. This was an alien method and the source of all that ever had gone wrong with the movement. Naturally, therefore, one could not unite with such a method.

This approach gave Healy a very important fringe benefit. Many comrades in and around his movement were upset by the clash between the evident facts of what was happening in Cuba and his own theory. Healy could then seek to convince these comrades that this preoccupation of theirs with matters of fact was perhaps a deviation in the direction of empiricism and pragmatism.

Healy justified this position by referring to the 1940 struggle between Trotsky and the Shachtman-Burnham-Abern group. In the course of that struggle Trotsky had accused this group of abandoning dialectics for pragmatism.

There was, however, a basic difference between Trotsky's approach in 1940 and the Healy-Slaughter approach in 1962-63. Trotsky applied dialectical materialism to all the complex detailed facts involved in the Soviet intervention in Poland and Finland, and through this process developed further his own theoretical position on Stalinism. He answered the position of Shachtman and Company point for point. Then, and only then, he explained the philosophical roots of the Shachtman grouping.

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Healy, because of his own theoretical bankruptcy, was forced to leap over the stage of the development of a Marxist theory of Cuba and relating it to other postwar social overturns, and to discuss method abstracted from theory. But the Marxist method is a materialist method which is expressed through theory which explains the totality of the factual development of the material world to the extent possible.

This is the origin of Healy's idealist approach to Marxist philosophy. He separated dialectic^s from a scientific study of matter in motion in the social and natural spheres. Once this step was taken, theory and political line became freed from the scientific rigorous demands of actual living development. Philosophy could become, as it did with Healy, a justification of sectarian positions out of touch with the actual development of the capitalist economy and the real thinking and practice of masses of workers.

Healy was, in our opinion, wrong in that period on Cuba. But let us assume, for a moment that he was right on Cuba or even partially right and the SWP and IS wrong. Would this have justified his position on reunification? Only if Healy could prove that: (1) the evolution of the IS since 1953 had been in the direction of a deepening of the political differences rather than a lessening of them; and (2) the SWP and its supporters in a matter of a year or two had completely changed in character from a revolutionary party into a centrist and revisionist one.

We have already seen that Healy failed to make a good case

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on the first assertion in 1957 and had therefore abandoned his efforts on this score within the IC between 1957 and 1961. It is one thing to make a case that questions of considerable theoretical importance remained to be clarified and quite another to deny the actual changes in political positions which had taken place over the years.

The second assertion was an even more difficult one to substantiate. After all Healy had been a close political collaborator of the SWP for many years. Right up to January 1961 Healy did not make a single political criticism of the SWP. Could anyone believe it had changed its basic character almost overnight simply in reaction to Cuba? In time Healy found this a most unsatisfactory explanation and thus tended to see the roots of the SWP's "degeneration" further and further back in its history finally settling on James P. Cannon as the main culprit. But Healy was, himself, a collaborator, admirer and follower of Cannon. Why he was unable to spot Cannon's "deviations" prior to 1961 he has never bothered to explain. By this time in his evolution philosophical mysticism covered over inconsistencies.

The truth of the matter is that complete theoretical clarity was the exclusive province of no section of the world Trotskyist movement. Unity was needed precisely to create the conditions for theoretical clarification over the long haul. Healy sought to short-circuit this necessary stage in the development of world Trotskyism. Now, fourteen years later, we are certainly in a position to judge which road in 1963 led in the direction of theoretical clarity and the serious development

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the conditions for the most widespread, thoroughly democratic, and politically uncompromising discussion process to take place. The result has been a growth of the world Trotskyist forces and an advancement on the theoretical front. The groundwork is being laid for further development of the movement.

One road has led to a cul de sac. The future will be along the other road.

FOOTNOTES

1. Joseph Hansen and others, Healy's Big Lie--The Slander Campaign against Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the Fourth International (New York: Education Department, SWP, 1977).

2. Tim Wohlforth, "Speeches At January 14 London Proest Rally", Intercontinental Press, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 94/

3. Mary and John Archer, "Notes on Healy's Role In Early Days Of The British Trotskyist Movement", Intercontinental Press, Vol. 14, No. 18, pp. 772-775. Unless otherwise noted this section is based on the facts as presented in this article. See also: Gerry Healy, Problems of the Fourth International (New York: Labor Publications, 1972) p. 7. See Also: "The Rise of Gerry Healy", Battle Of Ideas, Monthly Supplement to Red Weekly, No. 1, October, 1976, London.

4. Documents Of The Fourth International, The Formative Years (1933-40), (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973) pp. 268-270. It is worth quoting what the Fourth International said to the WIL considering the later evolution of Healy: "It is possible to maintain and develop a revolutionary political grouping of serious importance only on the basis of great principles. The Fourth International alone embodies and represents these principles. It is possible for a national group to maintain a constant revolutionary course only if it is firmly connected

in one organization with co-thinkers throughout the world and maintains a constant political and theoretical collaboration with them. The Fourth International alone is such an organization. All purely national groupings, all those who reject international organization, control, and discipline, are in essence reactionary." P. 270.

5. Ken Tarbuck, Tape Interview in the possession of the authors. Tarbuck was a member of the RCP in the immediate postwar period up to the fusion with Healy's group in 1949. He left with Cliff in 1950.

6. Gerry Healy, Letter to Comrade White, December 20, 1961.

"We were a very small faction in the British Revolutionary Communist Party at the time. Our minority ^umastered _^ about 30 or 40 people."

7. As quoted by Ken Tarbuck in Tape Interview op. cit. Unless otherwise noted the main facts in this ^{Section} come from this interview. See Also: John Walters [Ken Tarbuck], "Some Notes On British Trotskyist History", Marxist Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter 1969-70, pp. 45-48. Cliff's side of the organizational matters can be found in a statement "To The Members Of The Club", unsigned ^{and not} dated but issued in 1950. Grant's side can be found in "Statement To the B.S.F.I.", also unsigned and not date^d but issued in late 1950 or early 1951.

8. International Secretariat, "To All Members of the R.C.P.

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(British Section of the Fourth Int)", February 5, 1949, p. 1.

9. Ibid. p. 6.

10. Gerry Healy, "Letter to James P. Cannon, May 27, 1953"
International Committee Documents 1951-1954, Vol. 1 (Education
Department, SWP, March, 1974) p. 51.

10. Socialist Outlook, Special Supplement, July 4, 1950. (Note
there is a mistake in numbering of footnotes).

11. "Statement To The B.S.F.I." , pp .2-3

12. Healy, Problems Of The Fourth International, p. 29-30.

13. Ibid., Healy dates Haston's dissertation of movement as hap-
pening in Fe(bruary, 1950 (see page 8).

14. Ibid. p. 31.

15. J.M.[Mark Jenkins] "Socialist Fellowship: 1949-1951",
Internal Bulletin No. 16, Bulletin Group. Unless otherwise
noted the material in this section is based on this article.

16. Healy, Problems Of The Fourth International, pp. 11-12

17. Gerry Healy, "Letter to Morris Stein, Farrell Dobbs, and

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Joseph Hansen , Feb. 19, 1953" International Secretariat Documents 1951-1954, Vol. 2 (Education Department, SWP, March 1974) pp. 82-83. This is the first letter so far published by Gerry Healy which refers to the issues in the impending split. Interestingly, it is not included in Healy's Trotskyism Versus Revisionism collection. It is clearly written by a partisan of Cannon's against Cochran who does not wish the discussion to be extended to opposition to Pablo. The line is consistent with the letter of May 27, 1953, the first to be published in Healy's collection, which has been previously quoted.

18. Cliff Slaughter, Trotskyism Versus Revisionism, Vol. One (London: New Park, 1974) p. 109.

19. "Letter To Morris Stein, Farrell Dobbs and Joseph Hansen", p. 82.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid. p. 83

24. Sam Gordon, "Letter to James P. Cannon, May 13, 1953" International Committee Documents, 1951-1954 (Education Department, SWP, March 1974) p. 49.

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25. Healy Letter, May 27, 1953, op. cit.

26. Gordon, op. cit.

26. The material in this section is based upon the forthcoming collection of materials from the International Committee 1954 - 1963. It will be properly footnoted when the material appears in published form. (Note mistake in footnote numbering)

27. Healy, Problems Of The Fourth International, p.18.

28. National Committee Socialist Labour League, "Statement On Procedure In Relation To Peter Fryer and L. Knight", Internal Bulletin No. 2 (undated but published shortly before National Conference which began June 4, 1960).

29. Peter Fryer, "An Open Letter To Members Of the Socialist Labour League And Other Marxists" (undated, issued in late 1959) p. 6.

30. Brian Behan, "Resolution on Peter Fryer (5.12.59)" Internal Bulletin No. 2, p. 14. See also: Fryer, op. cit. p. 7 .

31. Fryer, op. cit. p. 1.

32. Ibid. pp 1-2.

33. Ibid. p 2/

34. Ibid. p. 3.

35. "Statement by the Disaffiliated Nottingham Branch" (no date, issued some time in the middle of 1959).

36. Ibid. Also; Fryer op. cit.p. 3/

36a. Peter Cadogan, "The 1959 Situation In The Socialist Labour League" (no date). Also: "Stamford Faction Policy Statement No. 1" (December, 1959, signed by Peter Cadogan).

37. Gerry Healy, "Statement On Disciplinary Action Against Brian Behan", Internal Bulletin No. 3 (no date, published before June 4, 1960) p. 4.

38. C. Behan, H. Hope, C.W. Kirkby, "letter to National Executive Committee, May 7, 1960", Internal Bulletin No. 3.

39. Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Letter to G. Healy 10.5.60" Internal Bulletin No. 4, p. 14.

40. London Executive Committee, "Its Is Time To Decide", Internal Bulletin (not numbered but clearly the first of this series, no date but published prior to June 4, 1960) p. 10.

41. Gerry Healy, "Letter to Tim Wohlforth" (May 15, 1961) p. 2.
42. Gerry Healy, "Letter to Tim Wohlforth" (July 24, 1961) p. 1.
43. Gerry Healy, "Letter To Tim Wohlforth (August 14, 1961) p. 2.
44. Gerry Healy, "Letter to Tim Wohlforth" (December 13, 1961)
p. 1.