

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

Un service de presse ouvrier

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driver told his wife, "I'm going to kill some Communists." She called the police. They did nothing, however, and Waniolek appeared at the Eugene V. Debs Hall, the headquarters of the SWP local, where he found the three young men.

He asked to see some books by Lenin. He then pulled out a gun and ordered the three socialists, "Line up against the wall. You're all a bunch of Commies."

As he fired at them with an automatic pistol and a rifle, they fell to the floor. Leo Bernard died from a bullet through the heart.

Both the Socialist Workers party and the Young Socialist Alliance have been prominent in the antiwar demonstrations that have swept the United States in the past year. The two organizations have pressed in particular for the slogan, "Withdraw the U.S. Troops Now!"

They have also been active in the civil-rights movement. Detroit was the main center of the efforts to organize a Freedom Now party in the 1964 elections.

Several months ago the political assassin visited the consulate of the Union of South Africa seeking a visa. The consulate got in touch with U.S. authorities. Lt. Rollins of the Special Investigation Bureau of the Detroit police said that the U.S. Secret Service asked him about Waniolek March 4. According to Rollins, "Waniolek claimed that the United States was overrun with Communists. He told the people at the consulate that he was armed and prepared to fight against the Communists."

Evidently the racist-minded, ultrareactionary Waniolek had been attracted by the role of Verwoerd's South Africa in recruiting white mercenaries for use in places like the Congo.

The tragic death of Leo Bernard aroused the entire radical movement in the United States. Leading spokesmen of all groups sent messages of sympathy and solidarity and offered to participate in the memorial services planned in various cities.

The blow, it was felt universally, was symptomatic of the war hysteria which the administration has been seeking to whip up as part of its escalation of the war in Vietnam. While these propaganda efforts have not succeeded with the majority of the American people, who remain resistant to Johnson's war, it has heightened the inclination of the ultrarightists to engage in violence.

Recently the San Francisco headquarters of the DuBois Clubs was bombed. No one was injured, since the blast went off during the night when the building was empty. Subsequently the headquarters of the Vietnam Day Committee in Berkeley was bombed, too. A number of people were in the building. By sheer chance, no one was killed.

The entire antiwar movement in the United States mourned the

death of Leo Bernard. Although everyone felt deeply moved, there were no signs that the tragedy had aroused fear. On the contrary, the immediate reaction was to rally and fight harder than ever. A clear indication was the way students at Wayne University and others in Detroit appeared at the hospital spontaneously to offer blood for the victims.

And it was clear in the appeals from all sectors of the anti-war movement to close ranks and step up the struggle against Johnson's "dirty war" in Vietnam.

"HE HATED THE WHOLE SLIMY WAR"

The rising opposition to the dirty war in Vietnam appears to be nettling President Johnson. At a fund-raising dinner May 17 for the Cook County [Chicago] Democratic party, the Commander in Chief of the colonial army of conquest decided to open a counterattack. One of his remarks was widely reported and commented on:

"There will be some nervous Nellies and some who will become frustrated and bothered and break ranks under the strain and turn on their own leaders, their own country, and their own fighting men. There will be times of trial and tension that will exact the best that is in all of us."

Among those the president of the United States may have had in mind was Juanita Butcher, who was married to a Vietnam combat hero Sgt. Reubin Butcher, of Queens, New York. She was informed May 14 that her husband had been killed by a barrage from his own unit's artillery fire. His body was to be flown to New York in a metal casket May 18. She was interviewed by Barry Cunningham of the New York Post. He found the young widow's eyes reddened with anger as well as tears.

"I've been crying since last Saturday," she told the Post reporter. "What good does it do? This war is useless. My husband said so in his letters before he died. He hated the whole slimy war."

The father of the 22-year-old widow, Robert L. James, an employee of the New York subway system, was angry, too.

"Gangsters," he said referring to the telegram from the Defense Department. The words, "died of wounds from friendly artillery fire" were underlined in pencil.

"To me that sounds like a bunch of gangsters shooting at one another in the same room. We don't know who we're fighting there, do we? We're just shooting and killing every which way."

Sgt. Reubin Butcher was first wounded last February. He was "worried about not being able to write" to his wife because of his

wounds. Still he had managed. And he had told his wife that as "desolate" as things were during his stay in Korea in 1963, "It's twice as bad in Viet Nam."

Said Juanita: "He wrote to me that he had killed a man. He saw some of his friends killed. I couldn't take it any more."

"I told him to keep writing me, but please don't say anything about the blood."

Mr. James spoke up. "I've been listening to this man from Arkansas -- Mr. Fulbright, and Morse, too. They say we're getting nowhere in Viet Nam. I agree with them."

"These pickets and the boys who burn their draft cards aren't crazy."

He added that his son-in-law had written home that "most of us don't know who we're fighting or why we're here."

Mr. James seemed to be worrying about something else in addition. "You don't have freedom of speech when you're in uniform. You're afraid to say anything. I know. I'm a city worker. I'm afraid to say anything in fact, maybe I shouldn't say this, but my son-in-law's death was a waste."

If these people, and millions like them in the United States were suddenly to say out loud what is really on their minds, and take action accordingly, it's for sure one nervous Nellie could be dug up -- the man responsible for escalating the slimy war in Vietnam.

WASHINGTON NERVOUS OVER OPPOSITION TO WAR IN VIETNAM

Ky is doing his best to reestablish his dictatorial rule along the lines suggested, it appears, by Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge; namely, by bringing down the mailed fist on the dissidents in Danang and Hué. It is doubtful that Ky could have succeeded even in March when this line was first proposed by his American "advisers." Ky had enough sense of the realities at the time to feel that this would surely signify his own early doom.

Why he decided to take the desperate gamble at present is not clear. Most likely his American advisers, or a section of them, decided to push him into it, the idea being that the situation was slowly disintegrating anyway and it couldn't get any worse with a bit more killing, while if the operation succeeded it might open up the possibility of "postponing" the promised elections. This, together with a string of military victories, ought to boost sagging morale in both Saigon and the USA.

Ky's "act of treachery," however, besides touching off a chain reaction in south Vietnam which has further undermined his regime and which could cause him to be offered up any time as a scapegoat, has had big repercussions in the United States. The opposition to the "slimy war" in Vietnam has gained fresh impetus.

And this growing mood, coupled with the developing opposition in south Vietnam among those whom Ky is supposed to represent, has begun to trouble the powers that be in Washington.

Johnson has insisted on keeping up the massive bombings in both north and south Vietnam. This is in accordance with the line of the Pentagon, which has held from the beginning that the way to win is to kill. The May 15 New York Times quoted a U.S. general as saying in 1962: "The French didn't kill enough. If you kill enough you win the war."

At the same time, Johnson, who is also head of the Democratic party, has begun to worry about the elections this fall even though it is an off year. At a party fund-raising dinner in Chicago May 17, Johnson made his policy in Vietnam a key issue. He indicated as plainly as possible that he wanted the Democratic candidates to get out and campaign for his line in Vietnam. Anything less would amount to an unpatriotic attitude toward the country. He struck out against the "nervous Nellies" and those "who will become frustrated" and "break ranks under the strain and turn on their own leaders, their own country, and their own fighting men."

The speech provoked an outcry. Prominent critics of Johnson's Vietnam policy, like the New York Times, scored him for implying that criticism amounted to lack of patriotism.

In the Democratic party itself there was anger. Many candidates, well aware of the mounting antiwar sentiment, had been counting on at least ducking the war issue if not wearing the mantle of a "peace" candidate -- claiming that much as they admired and supported the president, on this issue they had a "difference."

The liberal wing of the Democratic party in particular has begun to show restiveness. Some of the labor leaders are whispering about clearing their throats and saying something on Vietnam. The New York Post, one of the leading newspapers of the liberal Democrats, even came out in a front-page editorial May 18, calling for the resignation of Dean Rusk as secretary of state.

In rather embarrassed tones, the Democratic editor explained: "It can be argued that the President bears ultimate responsibility and that attempts to make Rusk a scapegoat are cowardly substitutes for taking the President to task. Certainly Mr. Johnson cannot be granted immunity. But the truth is that Presidential decisions in foreign affairs depend heavily upon the counsel and recommendations of the Secretary of the State."

The Post argued that so long as Rusk remains the head of the

State Department, "the White House will lack the guidance it needs, the United States will fumble and falter in foreign affairs."

As to what should be done in Vietnam, the Post had nothing to say. It wrung its hands over the "new debacle" in Vietnam, a "disaster that climaxes a long history of futility and sterility in Mr. Rusk's State Dept." But all it could suggest was a new secretary of state "who will dare to think 'unthinkable thoughts.'"

Much further to the right in the Democratic party, another figure spoke up May 20. This was L. Mendel Rivers, the head of the powerful House Armed Services Committee. The South Carolina Democrat first expressed a thought that is considered highly thinkable in Washington. He said that the port of Haiphong should have been "knocked out yesterday." He said he was opposed to withdrawal, if at all possible. Then he uttered a thought that is considered highly unthinkable in official circles in Washington:

"I don't think America is going to tolerate this fratricidal strife and attacks on our boys. This is something we didn't anticipate. I'm getting tired of it."

He was then quoted as saying that "we may have to make a decision damned soon" about whether to pull out of south Vietnam altogether.

Some nervous Nellies appeared to be showing up in the Pentagon itself. Hanson W. Baldwin, the military writer who is generally well informed about the thinking going on among the top brass, reported in the May 22 New York Times that officials in the Pentagon are "seriously worried about the effects of the Vietnamese political turbulence on public opinion in the United States." He quoted an officer as saying:

"It's going to be damned hard to justify to American mothers the sending of their boys to Vietnam unless those people out there get together."

The Pentagon is "gloomy" about developments in south Vietnam. "Indeed," continues Baldwin, "the gloom in the Pentagon was perhaps even thicker than elsewhere, since -- as one officer expressed it -- 'it looked like we were doing all right' in combat until South Vietnamese factionalism and dissidence interfered with military operations."

Certain statistics look particularly foreboding to the Pentagon. One is the increasing ratio of American casualties compared to those in Ky's forces. Another is "the growth in Vietcong and North Vietnamese strength despite heavy casualties."

"The Pentagon would not be too concerned about the prospects," declares this expert, "if the political situation did not presage a marked deterioration in the military picture. That deterioration is already occurring."

BRITISH SEAMEN HIT THE DOCKS

Having decisively defeated the Tories in the March 31 election, the British workers now want to cash in on their victory. The seamen have the honor at the moment of standing at head of the line.

It was about time. The action begun May 16 was the first official strike called by the National Union of Seamen since 1911. It was directed against a 56-hour workweek that was slipped into a sell-out contract signed March 29, 1965, against the lowest rates of pay for seamen in all of Europe except Spain, and against feudal-like working conditions codified in the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894.

As the seamen in the NUS, reported to number from 62,000 to 65,000, began climbing off their ships upon arrival in port in Britain, they emphasized their readiness to stay out for months if necessary. They appealed to other sectors of the country's powerful union movement for solidarity and appeared to be meeting with a sympathetic response.

Their immediate demand is for reduction of the workweek to forty hours but without a reduction in the basic pay included in last year's contract. This would require the payment of overtime for work on the weekend, signifying, it is estimated, an immediate increase of seventeen percent in wages.

In addition the British seamen want such things as better food and the scrapping of the 1894 law. (Among the world's seamen, Britain's "hungry" ships are notorious. Under the 1894 Act seamen are jailed for missing a ship or jumping ship in a foreign port; their pay can be docked by the company for infractions of work rules; the captain wields dictatorial powers over the crew.)

The 1965 contract provided for a 56-hour workweek instead of the previously won 44-hour week. The monthly pay for an adult seaman with five or more years rating was £59.7s.6d [about \$166.25] -- or less than £15 [\$42] for a seven-day week. The hourly pay was thus about 5s.4d [\$.75]. Overtime was virtually eliminated and the ship-owners took full advantage of this sweetheart contract to put their crews to work on weekends instead of observing the customary rule at sea of doing only what is necessary to keep the ship running.

Britain's long-suffering seamen began rebelling against these monstrous conditions which put them close to the bottom of the scale among the world's maritime nations. Union officials began to feel the pressure and realized that if they did not take action they would be faced with an unofficial strike that could get completely out of hand.

The shipowners appear to have recognized that they went a bit too far last year. Still, in view of the union's exceptional 55-year record in policing the seamen, they thought the situation could be milked a bit longer. They offered to reduce the workweek in three

stages over a two-year period, which in terms of overtime would finally amount to a total increase of about thirteen percent.

As for work conditions, they offered to institute an "inquiry" into the seamen's grievances!

The temper of the rank and file was such that the union officials did not dare accept this insulting offer. They rejected it and went ahead with strike preparations.

The strike is now moving ahead in the classic pattern of a major struggle in the maritime industry. The seamen, hitting the docks, are in daily contact with the port workers. Thus there is a strong tendency for the strike action to extend to the dockers, the warehousemen and the transport workers.

Inherent in a situation of this kind is the possibility of a general strike.

As was to be expected, Harold Wilson, while recognizing that the seamen have legitimate grievances, particularly in relation to the 1894 maritime law, has come out on the side of the shipowners. He stated on television May 16 that his government was not "taking sides" in the wage dispute, which was a neat way of saying that the Labour government was not backing the seamen.

He then went after the strikers with a club, saying that their action would have "grave consequences for our country," that the strike "will settle nothing" but only "delay" a settlement.

Most important of all, he indicated that his government would stand tough against the seamen. "What is at issue here is our national prices and incomes policy."

According to Wilson, if the seamen won their wage demands, this would breach his policy of freezing wages. The main consequence of this would be "that we should be priced out of export markets abroad." Wilson appeared particularly fearful that shipping costs would go up and that the immobilization of the merchant fleet would make it difficult for manufacturers to deliver goods abroad on schedule. Export markets might be lost! "Export markets once lost," said Wilson, speaking like a political representative of British merchant and manufacturing interests, "will not easily be regained, because, no less than price and quality, our overseas customers demand, rightly demand, certainty and speed of delivery."

As the strike got underway, the shipowners and the government initiated the usual countermoves. They raised the question of keeping up shipments where "lives" are involved, of shipments for the Royal Navy, of shipments to isolated communities, and so on. The union bureaucrats appeared to be giving way on these demands.

As to the next logical step, of moving British ships away from docks to make way for cargoes in foreign ships, the rank and

file will probably resist this maneuver to breach their picket lines. It can be expected that the issue of "perishable cargoes"; i.e., shipments of fresh fruits, vegetables, etc., will be raised next.

But if the ranks stick tough, and particularly if they succeed in winning sympathetic action from the dockers and other maritime workers, they are certain to win. The strategic position of Britain's seamen is well known in theory. Now for the first time in more than a half century they are in position to demonstrate it in practice.

TRIBUNE JOINS IN APPEAL FOR POLISH COMMUNIST VICTIMS

[The April 29 issue of the British Tribune, an independent weekly of the Labour movement, carried the following editorial on the case of Ludwik Hass, Karol Modzelewski, Kazimierz Badowski, Romuald Smiech, Jacek Kuron and others imprisoned in Poland because of political views to the left of the regime. The editorial is entitled, "Stalin's Victims Suffer Again -- in Poland."]

* * *

The Government of Poland used to claim that since the revolution of 1956 which ousted the Stalinists and restored Gomulka, there were no political prisoners in Poland. That is an honourable claim for any government to make. But now it can no longer make it. At secret trials held last July and January, between 12 and 15 members of the Polish Workers' Party were condemned for circulating "false information detrimental to the State and its supreme authorities." In fact their crime was to have published a twenty-page pamphlet critical of the regime and its policies. For this one person has received three and a half years' imprisonment, and four others sentences of three years.

This return to Stalinism, following as it does hard upon the Soviet writers' trial and a new campaign against intellectual freedom in East Germany, is both depressing and disgraceful. It has rightly provoked protests from Socialists in other countries, most notably, perhaps, from Mr. Isaac Deutscher, who this week has addressed an open letter to Wladyslaw Gomulka.

It is not only Mr. Deutscher's eminence as a student of Communism that makes his protest important, but the fact that he was a founder-member of the Polish Communist movement, who now only rarely intervenes in Polish politics. As he points out, these persecuted men are Communist idealists who have already suffered for their beliefs. (One of them, Ludwik Hass, spent 17 years in Stalin's prisons.) There is a terrible irony in the fact that they have been treated more brutally than Polish anti-Communists ever have been. We join with Mr. Deutscher and others in appealing to the Polish Government to redress this appalling act of harsh injustice.

WHEN WILL THEY EXPLAIN THE TRAGEDY IN INDONESIA?

By Ernest Mandel

[The following article has been translated from the May 14 issue of the Belgian left-socialist weekly La Gauche.]

* * *

At the same time that we were reporting the terrible defeat of the Communist and workers movement in Indonesia, both the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese Communist parties tried to minimize the affair. Our conclusions were said to be "premature" and information "incomplete."

The Chinese press service, Hsinhua [New China], has just published two reports, however, one on April 20, and another April 26 (in the English edition), which completely confirm our version of the catastrophe suffered by the Indonesian masses.

The first of these articles is signed by the editor-in-chief of Hsinhua himself. It is entitled, "Rightest reactionaries plunge Indonesia into a bloodbath," and it reports that the Indonesian reactionaries have transformed, "this magnificent and fertile nation of three thousand islands into a hell of White terror. They have massacred hundreds of thousands of patriots and innocent people in Indonesia." [Emphasis added.]

The article contains a long series of quotations from the reports of bourgeois journalists that have appeared in Asahi Shimbun, on the wires of Agence France Presse, on the wires of the Associated Press, in the London Sunday Times, in the Manchester Guardian, and in the New York Times, giving the horrible details of the massacres in Indonesia. The editor of Hsinhua correctly characterizes these measures as fascist.

The April 26 article quoted extensively from the Washington Post in the same general vein.

It seems to be an established fact that the Communist party, the trade unions, the youth and women's organizations have been decimated, the majority of their leaders and cadres murdered and a large part of their members killed or imprisoned.

Rarely in its history has the workers movement suffered such a vast and terrible defeat. The only two historical precedents that can be cited in this connection are the massacres of the Chinese Communists in Shanghai and Canton in 1927 and the terror against the German workers movement after the Nazis took power.

The crimes against humanity that have been committed in Indonesia cry out for vengeance.

Once again, we must denounce the hypocrisy of those who -- in the name of the "rights of the human individual" -- loudly protest the slightest violation of democratic rights in the countries that have abolished capitalism but stand silent and approving before the massacres of hundreds of thousands of human beings, including women, children and old people in Indonesia.

But having said this, we must repeat with insistence the questions that we posed in a previous article on this subject, which appeared in the February 26 issue of La Gauche [see World Outlook March 11.] Neither Drapeau Rouge [Red Flag -- the organ of the pro-Moscow Belgian CP] nor Voix du Peuple [Voice of the People -- organ of the pro-Peking CP] have been able to say a word in reply to the following:

(1) How could the "rightest reactionaries" take power in a country where the CP had three million members and a mass base of more than ten million men, women and youth?

(2) Why was there no real mass resistance to the fascist coup from the millions of Communist party members and sympathizers?

(3) Why did the arms with which the reaction was able to inflict a bloodbath on the Indonesian people come largely from the Soviet Union and to a less extent from China?

(4) Why did the Communist party of Indonesia sit for many years, and even after the fascist coup, in a coalition government beside the principal planners and organizers of the coup, including the three present "vice presidents of the council" who are the real rulers of Indonesia today?

(5) Why have neither Moscow nor Peking undertaken the least critical analysis of a political course which ended in such a catastrophic defeat?

(6) Why does the Soviet government continue to officially ignore the fascist massacre in Indonesia and maintain "excellent relations" with the fascist regime of Djakarta? It is organizing -- what irony! -- "an exposition devoted to the life of Lenin," while the prisons are bursting with prisoners who claim allegiance to his ideas and the rivers and streams are choked with thousands of bodies of those who considered themselves his adherents?

The argument that a workers party under attack by the class enemy cannot be criticized is demagogic and unworthy of Marxism. The terrible repression of the Paris Commune did not prevent Marx from condemning what he considered to be errors or weaknesses in the policies of the Commune. Immediately after the victory of Hitler, all the parties and all the political tendencies in the international workers movement, carried on an extensive analysis of the causes of a catastrophe of such a magnitude. A party or political tendency that does not dare confront a public criticism of the errors that led to a disaster as terrible as that suffered by the

Indonesian Communists is a party incapable of correcting its errors and incapable of setting itself on the path to victory.

As for us, we have made our analysis.

The victory of reaction in Indonesia was the result of the false and disastrous policy of subordinating the workers movement to the so-called "national" bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped world.

Instead of maintaining strict independence with respect to this bourgeoisie -- which is incapable of carrying out the tasks of political independence, and even less those of national economic independence -- and limiting itself to critical support of its periodic anti-imperialist moods, the leadership of the Indonesian CP, with the approval first of Moscow and then of Peking, completely subordinated itself to Sukarno and the group around him and abdicated leadership of the Indonesian revolution handing it over to the bourgeoisie.

Instead of fighting for the conquest of power by the workers and poor peasants as the solution for the urgent social and economic problems faced by Indonesia (decline in production, raging inflation, millions without jobs and housing, the state resources plundered by the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie," millions of small peasants crushed by the moneylenders and landlords), the leaders of the Indonesian CP formed a national front with the "national" bourgeoisie and the heads of the army -- today the leaders of the fascist reaction! They contented themselves with a policy of pressuring Sukarno to achieve their ends.

They left the initiative to the right, which struck hard blows, although it could have been isolated and eliminated by an increasing mobilization of the broad masses in revolt against the misery to which they are still doomed almost twenty years after the independence of Indonesia.

As long as the workers parties follow this course of subordination to the "national" bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped world, defeats like that in Indonesia are inevitable.

MASS MURDER IN BALI

"We have had word from a reliable source in Bali. The horrors continue. The local police say they have crossed 66,000 homeowners off their lists; a further 100,000 have been 'secured' (the euphemism for murdered); and another 40,000 are being hunted down. Bodies lie in unburied heaps by the roadside because no one dares to bury them. In the really 'red' areas all the males have been killed and in several cases everyone over the age of 10 was slaughtered. The Army technique was to send in the paratroopers who enter the villages and demand that the local communists be pointed out. If the headman refuses, they shoot him. If he agrees, the para-

troopers tell the other villagers that the one way they can prove they are not communists is to murder the communists -- which thereupon they usually do. The death toll for Bali as of late January was about 200,000. East Java is at least as bad. For Indonesia as a whole 500,000 is probably the minimum.

"Prominent left intellectuals are being murdered now. Ninety-five per cent of the CC-PKI [Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist party] have been murdered; the others are being held for trial or are abroad."

-- International Socialist Journal
[January-February 1966].

A SILENT PURGE IN THE ITALIAN CP APPARATUS

Rome

Following the last congress of the Italian Communist party, commentators did not fail to call attention to the fact that those who had supported Ingrao and voiced a leftist orientation saw the size of their representation in the Central Committee reduced, although that body was considerably enlarged, their weight in the leadership cut down, although that body was likewise enlarged, besides having a certain number of leaders eliminated who stood out in the left itself because of their more radical attitudes.

Three months after the congress, the latest reports enable us to get a clearer idea of the operation which the winning group had in mind. What they wanted in particular was to assure the "homogeneous" character of at least the central apparatus by lining it up completely on the majority positions. Consequently they have been progressively eliminating from this apparatus a whole series of elements who favor Ingrao or who at least are leftist opponents. The more particular target has been the nucleus at the center which played a certain coordinating role for the left during preparations for the congress.

Multiple pretexts are offered, varying according to the case (these go from charges of displaying a factional attitude to accusations of sympathy for Trotskyism). But the aim is the same -- the bureaucratic center is seeking to reinforce its grip on power by leaving to the leftist elements only a minimum number of positions in the apparatus that could not be eliminated without provoking repercussions in the party and public polemics.

The first victim was Rossana Rossanda, a militant in charge of the party's cultural sector who became the prime target of the bureaucratic Alicata, especially after the appearance of an article by her in which she rather openly criticized a series of Togliatti's conceptions. In reality Rossana Rossanda had been eliminated even

before the congress and now she has even been officially transferred to a new, much less important function. (At the same time she has suffered real ostracism in her own federation, the Milan federation controlled by the "toughs.")

Another well-known leader of the left, Luigi Pintor, was also shifted from the central apparatus and sent to a peripheral regional committee, while Aniello Coppola, a leader of the left in Milan, was relegated for the time being to a completely subordinate function on the staff of the party's official weekly.

The assistant editor of the theoretical magazine Critica Marxista, Romano Ledda, also lost his place, and he now has only an obscure role in an absolutely secondary regional committee.

Luciano Barca, in charge of the commission for mass work on a national scale, has also been shelved.

As for Luciana Castellina and Ninetta Zandigiaco, two militants of the left, they have likewise vanished from the central apparatus and are now working in the women's organization. (Ninetta Zandigiaco had already been eliminated from the Central Committee.)

Others are awaiting final disposition. They no longer hold their former posts but they have not been given anything new. At least in certain cases the bureaucratic center would like to reduce them to such demoralization as to resign spontaneously from the apparatus.

There was also a rather grave episode. Silvio Paolicchi, a former national leader of the cooperatives and a member of the Central Committee before the congress (on several occasions he took the floor to make leftist speeches), was not only eliminated from the central apparatus but also laid off as a permanent employee. The accusation against him is that he contacted leaders of the Italian section of the Fourth International.

Accusations of the same kind were levelled against Augusto Illuminati, former secretary of the Socialist Youth of Rome and a permanent employee of the central apparatus. At the congress of the Rome federation he came out for the left and was excluded from the slate of candidates for the Federal Committee after a sharp struggle. Illuminati was also laid off and it is rumored that he may face expulsion.

In addition, a kind of offensive has been launched even at the level of the provincial federations where Ingrao's partisans hold a majority. For example, at Venice the secretariat has been altered to give closer control over the secretary, who spoke in favor of Ingrao at the national congress. In other cases much greater caution is being displayed for the time being, but the line is absolutely clear.

The designs of the leading group are all the more dangerous inasmuch as all this is occurring without any noise. There is little stirring behind the scenes and even those who are the targets of the reprisals seem to be reacting in extremely feeble fashion. However, the stakes are considerable, and not only for the people in the line of fire.

GERMAN UNIONS REJECT ANTIDEMOCRATIC LEGISLATION

Frankfurt

An important victory was won at the seventh congress of the German Confederation of Trade Unions [DGB] which was held in Berlin May 9-14. Despite heavy pressure from the government, the mass media, and all the political parties, including the Social Democrats, the delegates -- by a vote of 251 to 182 -- refused to give up their opposition to the projected "emergency laws" which would have conferred dictatorial powers to the government in times of "tension."

The decision naturally saddened the bourgeois press. Complaints were registered that the unions, despite big wage increases and a shorter work week, are not willing to support the "free and liberal" state unless it is headed by a regime to their liking.

Without doubt the attitude of the unions will help stiffen the resistance of the Social Democratic party to the proposed legislation, particularly the ugliest sections.

Lübke, the president of the German Federal Republic, appeared in person at the Berlin congress in hope of winning over the delegates. He was received with boos -- the first time this has ever happened to the person holding this sacrosanct office.

The outcome of the bitterly debated issue must be weighed in the light of the fact that the delegates were not only unionists but members of the Social Democratic party -- many of them holding official positions (in municipal councils, the Landtag, etc.) in both organizations.

In a last minute maneuver, four Social Democratic members of parliament, who stand at the head of the Building Workers, Railway Workers, Mine Workers and Postal Employees and Workers unions, pressed for passage of a resolution calling for a special DGB congress to decide on the question just before the "final draft" of the legislation is presented for a vote in parliament. Even this trick did not work.

This means that for the first time a serious rift has developed between union officials and the heads of the Social Democratic party. The question of "dual loyalty" can be settled only with great difficulty in the long run.

Meany and his emissaries have been prodding the DGB to support the U.S. war in Vietnam. On the other hand there is a growing feeling of horror among the German people over the U.S. war crimes in Vietnam which are shown quite freely on television newscasts. Among union members sentiment is strong for withdrawing the American troops and letting the Vietnamese people decide for themselves how they want to run their country. Caught between these pressures, the top union leaders passed an equivocal resolution calling on the German government to use its good offices to bring about a "peaceful settlement" in Vietnam.

An encouraging change in attitude toward the workers states was registered at the congress. Resolutions were adopted to foster increased travel to countries like Poland and the USSR and to develop contacts with the trade unions there. With regard to East Germany, however, the attitude will be determined in accordance with the outcome of talks scheduled for July with the SED [Socialist Unity party -- the Communist party of East Germany] which were initiated by the Social Democrats.

PROTESTS SAVE LIFE OF IRANIAN POLITICAL PRISONER

Conceding to widespread international protests, the shah of Iran has commuted the death sentence passed against Mohammad Bodjnourdi, the main defendant in a secret trial involving fifty-five political oppositionists who were accused of plotting an armed rebellion to overthrow the shah's regime. Fifty-four of the defendants were found guilty by the military court.

Two death sentences in another trial still appear to stand, however. The arrest of Ali Khavari and Parviz Hekmatdjou, their trial (behind closed doors), and the verdict of a death sentence were all announced the same day in the Teheran press. All that is known about the case is that they were accused of "espionage," a charge commonly levelled against alleged members of the Tudeh party.

The French philosopher and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre issued the following statement which was published in the May 13 issue of the Paris daily Le Monde:

"The young Iranian patriot Mr. K. Bodjnourdi has just been granted his life. This act, of immense gratification to us, must not cause us to forget that the situation of the political prisoners in Iran remains as tragic as ever.

"The lives of two other Iranians, Hekmatdjou and Khavari, accused of belonging to the Tudeh party and of espionage, are in danger. The Committee to Defend the Iranian Political Prisoners asks all those in France who believe in democracy to appeal to the Iranian authorities in order to save these two human lives."

TROTSKYISM VERSUS STALINISM IN THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

By Joseph Hansen

[The following article is in reply to Blas Roca's attack against Trotskyism published in the May 20 World Outlook.]

* * *

Why did Blas Roca feel impelled to take up the cudgels against Trotskyism? He says that Trotskyism, "in its politics and theory," is a "corpse." Wasn't Trotskyism reduced to that state by the late Stalin himself decades ago; not just once, but repeatedly, and not just polemically, but with frame-up trials, deportations and executions? Didn't both Khrushchev and Mao in their polemics finish the dead dog once again? Finally, wasn't the cadaver disposed of so effectively by Fidel Castro in his speech of January 15 that any hope of its ever being resurrected was ended once and for all?

What an unexpected sight, then, only three months after Castro's speech against Trotskyism, to see the Earl Browder of Cuba* rushing to the rescue of the prime minister, as if unexpected weaknesses had suddenly been exposed in the January 15 speech -- or unexpected life in the overkilled corpse!

Karl Marx, and Hegel before him, taught that what men propose -- even the most powerful and authoritative -- often fails to be realized and, indeed, can end in just the opposite of their aims and intentions. This appears to have been the case with that section of Fidel Castro's January 15 speech which was directed against the "Trotskyites" and intended to consign them to oblivion.

By employing old Stalinist slanders, long ago exposed as frame-ups, by lumping opposites together -- the method of amalgam typical of Stalinism -- by eschewing reasoned political argument, Fidel Castro's attack led to an outcome utterly unexpected by the advisers who supplied the prime minister with the material he used in his speech. Three things happened:

*Blas Roca became secretary general of the Cuban Communist organization, if we remember correctly, shortly after Stalin initiated "popular frontism" in 1935. Like his American counterpart, Blas Roca did much to advance Stalin's class-collaborationist line, achieving enduring fame for a conspicuous success -- a coalition with Batista. The revolution that toppled the hated dictator also displaced the old CP. However, Blas Roca has remained a prominent figure in Cuban politics despite the decline of such old-time fellow bureaucrats as Aníbal Escalante. Recently he served as editor of the official party publication Hoy until it was supplanted by Granma; and last October he was named to the Secretariat of the restructured Communist party of Cuba which is headed today by Fidel Castro.

(1) The slanderous charge that "Trotskyism became...a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction" was not accepted. The days of the Stalin cult are gone. The de-Stalinization process has destroyed forever the atmosphere when such vile accusations need only be asserted from on high to be believed. Castro's attack, on the contrary, provoked shock and dismay and led to widespread protests. The editors of the Monthly Review only voiced the general reaction in radical circles when they recalled that "the accusation has no foundation whatever, as anyone who has seriously studied the history of the communist movement since the October Revolution must know"; that it was "precisely this accusation which provided the rationalization for the Soviet purge trials of the 1930's"; that if "anything has been proved -- and not least by the Soviet government itself -- it is that the trials were a shameless frame-up"; and that Fidel Castro "should not deceive himself that he can sway any but cowards and sycophants by mere denunciation."

(2) Through the wide publicity it afforded and the sympathy it evoked for the slandered movement -- undoubtedly the most maligned in all history -- Castro's attack had the unanticipated effect of stimulating interest in the cause of Trotskyism and attracting further attention to its authentic ideas.

(3) In the resulting discussion, the key issues involved in the attack began to emerge. They happen to be of vital concern to every revolutionary socialist and colonial freedom fighter: (a) What is the nature of the revolution now on the agenda in many countries, particularly Latin America? Must it first go through a bourgeois-democratic stage under bourgeois leadership? Or can a victory be projected under the leadership of a revolutionary-socialist party that frankly espouses from the very beginning the need to pose socialist tasks? (b) What is the role of proletarian democratic norms in the revolutionary process, including free discussion and the exclusion of such abominations as slandering or muzzling oppositional views? Are these norms utopian, or are they really applicable and, in fact, a vital necessity?

These issues lie at the heart of the dispute and constitute its main interest. We will consider them in the process of analyzing Blas Roca's contribution in detail.

An Emergency Operation

The basic content of Blas Roca's article in the May 1 issue of Política merely reechoes the central theme of Castro's attack: Trotskyism is "a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction" -- which itself was an echo of the standard Stalinist slanders. He repeats the very phrase insistently, as if mere repetition a number of times by someone as authoritative as Blas Roca would make up for Castro's unaccountable failure to make it stick.

There are, however, some instructive differences between the two attacks. While, in Castro's speech, the target was the Fourth International, you would never know that the references were to a

fake "Fourth International" set up by one J. Posadas. Castro did not even mention the name of Posadas. The connection of members of this group with the MR-13 guerrilla movement in Guatemala was used to brand that movement as "infiltrated" by "Trotskyites" whom Castro dubbed "agents of imperialism" under the general slanderous charge levelled against Trotskyism as such. Then independent journals, or the journals of organizations having no connection with Trotskyism, were amalgamated with the fake Posadas "Fourth International" either because they raised questions about Guevara's leaving the Cuban political scene or because they published articles by Adolfo Gilly, a revolutionary-socialist journalist, whose views on some points demonstrably coincide with those of Posadas. In brief, Castro's attack read a great deal like similar attacks made by Blas Roca himself as far back as 1961. (See, for instance, Blas Roca's book The Cuban Revolution or the pamphlet I wrote in 1962, Trotskyism and the Cuban Revolution -- An Answer to Hoy.)

In contrast to Castro's original presentation of "Trotskyism" as a single movement, the nature of which could be judged from statements judiciously selected from the writings of the unnamed Posadas, or the statements of a creature of the UPI like Felipe Albaguante, who was exposed in 1963 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, Blas Roca now presents "Trotskyism" as "a medley of such confusion, of groups and subgroups, that some Trotskyists deny that other Trotskyists are Trotskyists." As a result, for the first time to my knowledge, Blas Roca deigns to identify Posadas as the author of some of the quotations which he finds so useful. He refers to a genuinely Trotskyist newspaper, The Militant, for the first time, although in a very peculiar manner, as we shall see. And, ranging far and wide, he brings in The Newsletter, the newspaper of the Socialist Labour League in Britain.

The purpose of this procedure soon becomes obvious. Responding to the emergency, Blas Roca is picking up the pieces of Castro's January 15 attack on Trotskyism and trying to build a better structure by using more boards, stronger glue, sturdier mortar to plaster the cracks and a thick coat of demagogy to paint things up and dazzle the eye.

This is a small-scale replica of the pattern Stalin followed in his notorious series of frame-up trials from 1936 to 1938. When glaring contradictions exposed the falsifications of his political police in a given frame-up, Stalin made up for it by staging a bigger and more imposing show trial. To use such methods in an effort to forestall Castro from rectifying a serious error -- due, we may suppose, to bad advice -- really injures the prestige and authority of the Cuban Revolution; that is, if Blas Roca can get away with it.

Some Deny Others Are Trotskyists

Now that he admits it involves something broader than the tiny Posadas group, Blas Roca seeks to ridicule the Trotskyist movement by saying that in it such confusion reigns "that some Trotskyists deny that other Trotskyists are Trotskyists." The argument only

makes its author look ridiculous. Ultrareactionaries likewise sneer at some Communists denying that other Communists are Communists; and they point to the polemics, which are not always models of comradeliness, between the Khrushchevists, Maoists, Titoists and...Fidelistas.

What would an independent-minded revolutionist, who knows the positions of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, say if someone argued like Blas Roca and coolly told an audience that the Cuban leaders were "imperialist agents," the proof being the evident confusion and mutual recriminations because of different positions taken on crucial issues by the Communist capitals -- such as Belgrade's friendly attitude toward the Betancourt-Leoni government in contrast to Havana's hostility, Moscow's class-collaborationist attitude toward U.S. imperialism in contrast to Peking's intransigence, and Peking's sectarian rejection of a united front in defense of the Vietnamese Revolution in contrast to the appeals of all the others for a common front? The revolutionist would shout that this is utter nonsense and that the Cubans have their own positions -- very good positions as can be determined by reading their declarations and judging their actions. To which the orator would respond in the crushing style of Blas Roca: "What a joke! Everyone in this medley claims to be a Communist, whatever they call each other. I repeat what I said about the Cuban leaders no matter how much you squirm, and as proof I have scrupulously copied down the following stupidities from Hsinhua on the united front."

The truth is that Blas Roca belongs to the Stalinist school which considers any critical opposition to the monolithic line handed down from the unchallengeable leader to be a reflection of imperialist pressure, if not a direct plot fomented by such agencies as the CIA. That the revolution should really be a "school of unfettered thought" is inconceivable to such ossified bureaucrats, for in a revolutionary party this involves the right to form tendencies and factions; and in a workers state it means the right of the proletariat to form a multiple party system so long as the various parties remain basically loyal to the revolution and its conquests. Democratic centralism means democracy in reaching decisions as well as centralism in carrying them out.

To rise to the level of the great tasks it faces, a revolutionary party before and after coming to power requires the free play of thought, not only because this is the best way to develop and lift the intellectual level of its members and leaders, but because it is the most efficient way of exploring all possible political variants and of reaching solid decisions that truly reflect reality and thereby enable the revolutionary party to intervene in the national and international class struggle most effectively. This view is not peculiar to Trotskyism; it is as old as scientific socialism and constituted the essence of Lenin's method of party building.

That serious differences appeared in the world Communist movement after the decades of Stalinist monolithism was in itself

a progressive development. Arising fundamentally from the victory of the Soviet Union over German imperialism, the postwar advance of the colonial revolution, and a balance of world forces favoring the socialist camp, these differences have helped pave the way for a resurgence of revolutionary Marxism. What is bad is the absence of provisions, customs and institutions to carry the discussion of the differences forward to a democratic conclusion. And that lack reflects the continued existence of narrow, self-serving bureaucratic interests that deliberately block a normal resolution of the differences through the process of free discussion.

The Trotskyist movement did not remain unaffected by the advance of the colonial revolution, by the commencement of de-Stalinization, by the differences revolving around the Sino-Soviet conflict, and by other events. In fact the differential consequences of these developments can easily be found in the positions advocated by the various tendencies claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

A first-rate example of this was the impact of the Cuban Revolution. The overwhelming majority of the Trotskyists throughout the world considered this to be the opening of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere. The appearance of a new leadership, generated in the very process of a revolution, untainted by Stalinism and imbued with revolutionary determination, was hailed with immense enthusiasm. In the United States, the Socialist Workers party took up the cause of the Cuban Revolution as its own and its candidates put defense of revolutionary Cuba as the first foreign-policy plank in their national election platform in 1960 and 1964. The Fourth International as a whole responded in the same enthusiastic way. This common estimate provided one of the main grounds for the healing in 1963 of a major split in the world Trotskyist movement that had lasted almost ten years.

Posadas and Healy

Two groupings, each of them representing small minorities, stood in opposition and came to consider their differences to be so great as to transcend their duty to adhere to the principles of democratic centralism. One of these engaged in a split (Posadas of the Latin-American Bureau) and the other rejected participation in the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement (Healy of the Socialist Labour League).

Posadas, an energetic organizer, had been developing rather eccentric positions of his own inside the movement, and on splitting he cast aside all restraint. He advanced the idea that nuclear war and revolution are synonymous; i.e., a nuclear war will finish capitalism but not socialism, it is therefore to be welcomed, and in fact ought to be initiated in a preemptive strike by the Soviet Union. Among the various tendencies of the world Communist movement, Posadas expresses affinity with Mao's thought, which, as he indicates with satisfaction from time to time, often corresponds with his own "brilliant" analyses. Apparently he is convinced that Mao

reads his speeches and reports. The Posadas group could be dismissed as a rather bizarre cult were it not for the fact that it has a few followers in Cuba, has contacts with the Guatemalan guerrilla movement, claims to be the Fourth International, and thus serves Blas Roca as a convenient club with which to beat the "corpse" of Trotskyism.

The Healy group, reflecting British insularity, took the position that the Cuban Revolution has not reached the phase of a workers state, that Cuba remains capitalist, and that Castro is just a demagogue if not worse.* In this respect, the quotations selected by Blas Roca were accurate enough reflections of Healyite views. It happens, however, that Healy's position, clearly a prime example of ultraleft sectarian thinking, was thoroughly debated by the world Trotskyist movement and overwhelmingly rejected as not in consonance with the reality.

In presenting Healy's nonsense about Cuba as the position of the Fourth International or The Militant, Blas Roca is deliberately dishonest. I say this not as an epithet, but as an easily proved statement of fact. The very article in the February 5 Newsletter from which Blas Roca quoted ends up with an attack on the Socialist Workers party for its position in relation to the Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro.

Blas Roca could have brought in the conflicting position of still another group which claims to represent the Fourth International: a recent minor split-off headed by Michel Raptis (Pablo). Apparently this did not fit in with the immediate job at hand. Up to now this group has not developed views on Cuba differing distinctly from those of the Fourth International. Its differences are in other areas. It considers the de-Stalinization process to be irreversible and synonymous with democratization. In the Sino-Soviet conflict it favors Moscow over Peking and leans most strongly in the direction of Titoism. The sharpest differences with this group occurred over party-building methods, particularly the observance of democratic centralism.

*The "theoreticians" of the Socialist Labour League consider that their abysmal ignorance of Latin-American politics endows them with a special right to pontificate on the Cuban Revolution. Naturally this offers sport to Blas Roca, who chortles over such boners as their informing the British public that the independent weekly Marcha of Montevideo is an "organ of the ultraleft Posadas group." For those hardy souls who try to keep up with The Newsletter this is but another sad instance of the notorious unreliability of this publication in handling such pedestrian things as facts. But what should we say then of The Worker, the voice of the American Communist party, which, in its January 23, 1966, issue, printed a dispatch from its Havana correspondent listing Marcha as a "Spanish Trotskyite weekly"?

Blas Roca's Wonderful "Proofs"

Let us now consider Blas Roca's argumentation on how the Trotskyists allegedly serve as "very active auxiliary forces" in the effort of the Yankee imperialists "to destroy the prestige and authority" of the Cuban Revolution. He seeks to prove this by citing published statements by Posadas selected to coincide with the timing of various piratical forays fomented or engineered by the State Department or the CIA. Posadas coordinates his statements, if we are to believe Blas Roca, so that they appear in published form "as always" to "coincide with the intensification of the attacks of the imperialists..."

Doesn't this sound like the red-baiting formulas of a comic book? Must we really submit this kind of argument to serious analysis?

(1) What about the declarations made by Posadas between piratical forays? Did they fluctuate markedly in the direction of a friendly tone? If they did not, if Posadas maintained a uniformly critical position, then his declarations were not timed to coincide with the piratical forays -- and Blas Roca's case falls to the ground.

(2) If Posadas' purpose was to undermine the prestige and authority of the Cuban Revolution, why did he make such self-destructive declarations? The very quotations carefully selected by Blas Roca are devastating -- to Posadas. Read the sentences transcribed by Blas Roca from the article or report by Posadas on the discussions on architecture: "No congress of architecture can be posed without the war. It is insanity." And so forth and so on. Even Blas Roca is compelled to admit that the long text is "extremely confused and at times incomprehensible." He is completely correct. The utterances of Posadas damage only the prestige and authority of the author.

The alternatives are inescapable: Either Posadas appears bizarre to all who read such declarations, or the intellectual level of the Cuban cadres (and the cadres of the Latin-American revolution as a whole) is so incredibly low that they can be swept off their feet by extremely confused and at times incomprehensible nonsense. Does Blas Roca hold to the latter alternative?

Personally, it pleased me to see Blas Roca quoting so extensively from Posadas while at the same time clearly indicating who the author was. One could only wish that Blas Roca would be more honest about indicating that this is a small sect and not the voice of the Fourth International.

Is Blas Roca more fortunate with his quotations from The Newsletter? He asserts that the nature of The Newsletter position "explains the coincidence between the most brazen attacks of Trotskyist propaganda with the piratical aggressions of the Yankee

imperialists against Cuba"; but he does not even try to indicate any coincidence in dates as he does in the case of Posadas. Blas Roca relies on barefaced assertion and the impact of the outrageous theoretical and political positions voiced by The Newsletter.

We would like to know in greater detail from Blas Roca, however, exactly how The Newsletter proved to be a "very active auxiliary force" in the efforts of the Yankee imperialists. Can he name any group in all of Latin America that has been influenced by The Newsletter? We will go further. Can he name a single person in all of Latin America who considers himself a partisan of The Newsletter? The truth is that the position of The Newsletter on the Cuban Revolution is in such utter contradiction to the reality that the Healy group stands in absolute isolation. Its position on Cuba doesn't play the dirty game of imperialism, as Blas Roca maintains; it only plays into the hands of Blas Roca. Even the half dozen admirers of the Socialist Labour League to be found in the United States consider that Healy is completely wrong on this subject. They sedulously seek other reasons for praising him.

We thus come to a key question. Is this the best that Blas Roca can do in trying to bolster and shore up the contention that Trotskyism is a "vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction"? The answer is yes. That's the best he can do.

Some Telling Omissions

Two omissions from Blas Roca's list are truly telling. The first is the Fourth International. He does not offer a single quotation from the genuine publications of the Fourth International. In all its declarations -- and there are many of them -- he could not find a single phrase that lent itself to his work! The reason is simple. The Fourth International espoused the cause of the Cuban Revolution from the very beginning, has energetically participated in its defense, and has pointed again and again to the Cuban Revolution as one more mighty verification of the validity of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. That is why Blas Roca found nothing to say about the main stream of the Trotskyist movement when he set out to do his smear job.

The other omission is the Socialist Workers party. If Trotskyism became a "vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction" and the Trotskyists are "very active auxiliary forces" in the efforts of the Yankee imperialists to destroy the prestige and authority of the Cuban Revolution, the most crushing proof surely ought to be found in the imperialist U.S.A. itself. And this should be all the easier, one would imagine, because there is absolutely no question about who represents Trotskyism in the United States -- it is the Socialist Workers party.

Did Blas Roca fail to search here for evidence? We doubt it. He or his American cothinkers combed the pages of The Militant and the International Socialist Review, the public declarations of the

American Trotskyists and their pamphlets and books, looking for something that could be used in the attack against Trotskyism. They could not find a single sentence!

The truth is that among the radical groupings in the United States, the record of the Socialist Workers party is unimpeachable and outstanding; so outstanding, in fact, that Blas Roca himself has been very cautious about attacking it even when pinned down on the subject. For instance, in June of 1962, Blas Roca did a smear job on Trotskyism in Hoy, utilizing quotations from Posadas (whom he did not name as the source) in the way now familiar to us. But only a few months before that, in its April 16, 1962, issue, the National Guardian printed an exclusive interview in which Blas Roca was asked if he welcomed to the ranks of Cuba's friends and partisans in the U.S. "people of any orientation, for example Trotskyists..."

Blas Roca equivocated somewhat but obviously felt that he could not openly attack the American Trotskyists. "I am not well acquainted with those who call themselves Trotskyists in the U.S.," he said. "We are separated from Trotskyists in general by fundamental points of view, and from some in particular by their actions as enemies. But I think that all in the U.S. who sincerely defend and support the Cuban revolution, and the right of self-determination of the Cuban and other Latin American peoples, do a worthy revolutionary job and we value them whatever their ideological concepts may be...."

The Militant has consistently printed the main declarations of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara despite the limited number of pages at its disposal and is a well-known source of truthful information about the Cuban Revolution. At the big turns like Playa Girón and the 1962 "Caribbean crisis," The Militant went all out in defense of the Cuban Revolution and denunciation of American imperialism. It did this, not from outside the country, but inside the imperialist monster itself. And its record of activity in defense of Cuba is superior to that of Blas Roca's sister organization, the American Communist party.

The record of The Militant is so irreproachable in this respect, that Blas Roca was apparently puzzled as to how to smear it. His solution was the frame-up technique of the amalgam. He took the ultraleft sectarian position of the Socialist Labour League, which the Socialist Workers party had opposed so vigorously as to drive Healy to split from the Fourth International, and quoted it in close association with references to The Militant. To prove how deliberately this was done it is only necessary to take the January 31 issue of The Militant in which we first responded to the attack in Castro's January 15 speech, compare it with the February 5 issue of The Newsletter, which deals with the same subject, including an attack on the Socialist Workers party, and then check how Blas Roca pasted these opposites together in his article. It is an example for the textbooks on the polemical methods of the Stalinists.

Evades Challenge of "Monthly Review"

There is still another remarkable omission. When Blas Roca wrote his article, he had before him a copy of the April issue of the Monthly Review which contains the stand taken by editors Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy on Castro's January 15 speech. Yet he does not say a word about the Monthly Review or the very important issues raised by the two editors. He acts as if he had never heard about the deduction made by the Monthly Review concerning advisers who possibly supplied Fidel Castro with the material used in attacking "Trotskyism."

The proof that Blas Roca had this issue of the Monthly Review before him is, I think, compelling. In his article, he quotes the following sentence written by Adolfo Gilly, but without indicating its source: "The vertiginous political evolution of the Cuban leadership in recent months confirms the opinion that it is true that they have either assassinated Guevara or that they are restraining him by some means or other from expressing himself politically." The source of that quotation is page 29 of the April 1966 issue of the Monthly Review. This is the same issue that contained the editorial statement by Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy. (We will return to the question of Guevara.)

Blas Roca failed to refer to the Monthly Review in order to facilitate evading the cardinal political issues. This is the same pattern followed by Gus Hall, the main spokesman of the American Communist party, in his response to the stand taken by the Monthly Review. [See World Outlook May 6.] Huberman and Sweezy challenged Fidel Castro on the "ugly and perhaps ominous" aspect of his speech in which he charged that Trotskyists are "agents of imperialism." "It was precisely this accusation which provided the rationalization for the Soviet purge trials of the 1930's," they said. Fidel Castro has not yet responded to the challenge issued by Monthly Review. Blas Roca chose to step forward instead. But he remained silent about the reference to the Moscow trials.

Does he still support the "rationalization" used in purging Stalin's opponents or possible opponents? Does he think the Soviet government under Khrushchev was wrong in adding to the mountain of evidence proving that Stalin framed up his victims? He does not say.

However, we see that he proceeds as if Stalin had been vindicated. Thereby he provides a most illuminating insight into the nature of some of Fidel Castro's advisers and offers confirmation of the reasoning of the editors of Monthly Review that to revive the accusation used in the Moscow trials is a "sure sign of either ignorance or malice" and that in this matter "the malice comes from advisers who never abandoned the attitudes and methods which underlay the trials."

The Question of Che Guevara

Without naming the Monthly Review, Blas Roca does attempt an answer on Che Guevara's disappearance from the Cuban political scene. "Fidel," said the MR editors, "should be under no illusions that only imperialists and their agents are interested in Che's fate." They expressed the hope that Castro would soon clear up the mystery, but they asked: "Is Fidel Castro aware of the real issues at stake in the Guevara affair? And does he realize that every day's delay in clearing up the mystery brings anxiety and doubt to honest revolutionaries everywhere and joy to their enemies?"

Blas Roca simply repeats the accusations made in Castro's speech -- the sole interest in the matter allegedly lies with the Yankee imperialists, whose "very active auxiliary forces" spread all the contradictory rumors about Che Guevara in order to undermine the prestige and authority of the Cuban Revolution. The letter from Che read by Fidel last October was absolutely "definitive" for "genuine revolutionaries," says this prestigious authority.

Blas Roca takes up only one new point, a point which I happened to advance in the article published in the January 31, 1966, Militant from which Blas Roca quotes several times. On the assumption, which I accepted, that Castro told the truth about Guevara's taking a new assignment, I called attention to the disproportion in that part of Castro's speech. If it was true that imperialism was making a big and damaging campaign against the Cuban Revolution by raising questions about Guevara's disappearance, then it was completely out of keeping to use this as a springboard for an implausible attack on "Trotskyism" which would only prove divisive in the revolutionary movement and would be rejected by the majority of today's revolutionary vanguard. On the other hand, it would have been devastating for Che Guevara to imitate Mark Twain and write a letter of greetings to the Tricontinental Conference indicating that the rumors about his death were grossly exaggerated.

Here is Blas Roca's response: "But in view of the facts, of what use would it have been? If before, with the last letter from Che, read by Fidel himself, the slanders and malicious speculations of these elements not only did not cease but multiplied, wouldn't they have responded in the same way to a new letter?" As if the content and style of such a letter would not be sufficient to establish its authenticity!

This is Blas Roca's answer not only to The Militant but to Monthly Review, both of which raised the question from the viewpoint of honest revolutionaries concerned about the welfare and prestige of the Cuban Revolution. Does Blas Roca really think that the matter can be disposed of with the epithet "imperialist agents"? That kind of answer is alarming!

Since Blas Roca wants it that way, there is little choice but to raise some further questions:

(1) Does Che Guevara know about the speculation over his disappearance from the public scene in Cuba? Yes or no!

(2) If he does not know, how is this to be explained?

(3) If he does know, why does he fail to respond to the concern of his comrades and friends? Why doesn't he indicate to the world that everything is all right with him? At the moment, what single act by him could conceivably be of greater assistance to the Cuban Revolution?

Blas Roca becomes most effusive in praising the "stout and beloved comandante of our revolutionary war" Che Guevara and in defending him from the alleged slanderous attacks of the Trotskyists who, we are told, seek to pit him against Fidel. But Che's opinion of the Trotskyists is quite different from the view contained in the slanders put into Castro's January 15 speech. I noted this in the article in The Militant which Blas Roca cited. Blas Roca ignored the paragraphs quoting the tribute paid by Che Guevara to the Peruvian Trotskyist peasant leader Hugo Blanco who has been held in prison at Arequipa without trial for three years. Neither Guevara's tribute nor the picture of a Trotskyist leader rotting in a Peruvian jail for the "crime" of leading a peasant struggle can easily be fitted into Blas Roca's slanderous picture of Trotskyism as a "vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction."

While Blas Roca is answering the questions asked him above about Guevara, he might tell us also if he thought the stout and beloved comandante did wrong in paying tribute to Hugo Blanco. Speak up, Blas Roca, you have the floor...

Adolfo Gilly and Leo Bernard

Blas Roca singles out as one of his targets Adolfo Gilly and he tries to make something out of the fact that "other Trotskyists" should both "defend" him and "denigrate him and his group." "It seems strange," says Blas Roca. "...But this is in perfect harmony with the fundamentally confusionist and provocative role of Trotskyism."

And in the very week that Blas Roca's article slandering Adolfo Gilly in the foulest way appeared in Mexico City in Política, Adolfo Gilly was arrested by the Mexican police and held without bail because the charges were so serious that he might receive more than a five-year sentence. And what are the charges? That he engaged in a "Communist conspiracy" to overthrow the Díaz Ordaz government; that he was involved in such "crimes" as seeking to organize protest demonstrations against the visit of President Johnson!

Where does Blas Roca stand in this? With the witch-hunters and red-baiters of the corrupt Mexican bourgeoisie? Or with the victim? We hope that Blas Roca will take a correct stand in this and express solidarity in the defense of Adolfo Gilly and the other victims despite his political differences with them.

Does a stand like that seem "strange"? It is perfectly comprehensible to every militant. And in the same way, the stand of Monthly Review in disagreeing with Adolfo Gilly's negative appreciation of the Tricontinental Conference and his estimate of Fidel Castro's course while agreeing with him on other issues is completely rational and understandable. The position of most Trotskyists toward Adolfo Gilly is not fundamentally different. They consider that he has made valuable journalistic contributions; at the same time, insofar as he is influenced by the views of Posadas on some issues, they would like to see him take a more independent course. No matter how mistaken they might think him to be in his views, they would unanimously reject with indignation the Stalinist slander that he is an "imperialist agent."

If Blas Roca chooses not to understand this, perhaps another case will sink home. I had barely begun this reply when the news came from Detroit that an ultrarightist, racist-minded gunman had entered the Eugene V. Debs Hall, the local headquarters of the Socialist Workers party, to kill some "Communists." He ordered three young antiwar fighters there, one of whom belonged to the Young Socialist Alliance and two to the Socialist Workers party, to line up against the wall. He then pumped nine bullets into them, killing Leo Bernard and critically wounding Jan Garrett and Walter Graham.

As Staughton Lynd said, "Leo Bernard is the first person in the peace movement to be murdered." I do not know whether this political assassination was reported in the Cuban press or what stand Blas Roca took on it. In the United States the entire antiwar movement has rallied in a spontaneous expression of solidarity in face of this murderous blow struck against the movement as a whole.

The Communist party, U.S.A., made an official statement May 18 as follows:

"The deliberate political murder in Detroit, Michigan, on May 16 of Leo Bernard of the Socialist Workers Party and the shooting of Jan Edward Garrett and Walter Graham of the Young Socialist Alliance in an attempt to kill them is a shocking consequence of the anti-Communist campaign of the ultra-Right. These three young men who were active in the struggle to end the war in Vietnam are also victims of the domestic hatred engendered by the warmongers.

"For the past several months, the murderer had planned 'to kill some Communists.' On March 3rd, the Detroit police were warned that this was the plan of this political hoodlum and did nothing about it. The Federal agencies were told about the murder plan before March 3rd by a consulate in New York and did nothing about it except to tell the Detroit police. The murderer lined up his victims and started shooting with a shout, 'You are all Communists.' This is cold-blooded political murder and all who have responsibility must be called to account.

"This murder is related to the ultra-Right action organization of anti-Communist hoodlums in Detroit known as 'Breakthrough'

which tried to break up a meeting in Cobo Hall on May 6th at which Gus Hall was the main speaker. On that occasion, one who tried to break into the meeting carried a loaded 38 revolver with obvious intent to use it. That outfit gets its political direction from the Birchites.

"This is also related to the bombings of the Communist Party headquarters building in New York, the bombing of bookstores in Detroit, Los Angeles and Chicago, the bombing of the DuBois headquarters in San Francisco and the Vietnam Day headquarters in Berkeley, the acts of arson in Chicago and Indiana, the death threats through the mails and by telephone in various cities -- all of which are known to city and Federal authorities who do nothing about them. The Detroit murder must serve to halt this brand of terror in our political life. All who advocate peace, democracy and political freedom have the responsibility to speak up and strengthen these struggles."

Dorothy Healy, the Southern California chairman of the Communist party, voiced the following opinion:

"The monstrous murder of Leo Bernard and the wounding of Jan Garrett and Walter Graham is a direct outgrowth of anti-Communist hysteria. This anti-Communism, which provides the justification for military aggression in Vietnam and domestic repression at home, has taken the life of Leo Bernard just as it has killed the Vietnamese fighting for independence. All Americans fighting to end the war in the Mekong Delta and those fighting for freedom in the Mississippi Delta should join in demanding an end to the hysteria which produced this attack on members of the Socialist Workers party."

We leave it to Blas Roca to fit these statements into his slander about the Trotskyists being "very active auxiliary forces" of American imperialism when in reality they are recognized by friend and foe alike as "very active" in opposition to its "dirty wars" in Vietnam, Santo Domingo and Cuba! No doubt Blas Roca will say nothing. Even silver-tongued orators sometimes find that silence is golden.

Do Communists Stand for Democracy?

For a genuine revolutionary Marxist, it is not sufficient to determine that a position is "opportunist," or "ultraleft," or "sectarian." The reason why sincere and intelligent revolutionists can sometimes be found in any of the various blind alleys leading away from the road to socialism must be elucidated. Sociological reasons may be found, such as ties to the middle class or the pressure of a bureaucracy or caste.

Even if the analysis is carried far enough to reveal these underlying sources, a grain of truth may nevertheless be found lurking in their political positions. That is one reason why a figure of the stature of Lenin did not brush aside sincere revolu-

tionists who argued for a position he disagreed with. His language could be very forceful, of course, but he nevertheless engaged in a reasoned discussion and he did not hesitate to appropriate something of value in an opponent's position. In the hands of Lenin, proletarian democracy was a genuine revolutionary tool.

It was injurious to the Cuban Revolution to muzzle the Posadas group. Blas Roca quotes from the "mimeographed newspaper which was printed in Cuba by an organized Trotskyist group after the triumph of the Revolution with the assistance of Posadas and Adolfo Gilly." He does not mention that the newspaper was mimeographed because they were denied the use of a press. He does not add that even the mimeographed newspaper was put out of business through the arrest and imprisonment of those who produced and distributed it. Was the Cuban Revolution so weak ideologically that it was incapable of answering the arguments of even a Posadas?

It may have seemed troublesome to pay attention to the "long, extremely confused and at times incomprehensible" articles or reports by J. Posadas which constitute the main grist of his small propaganda mill. No doubt there are youth in Cuba, however, who might have liked to argue it out with the followers of Posadas as a way of sharpening their own thought and advancing their revolutionary education. The overhead cost of suppressing the group was rather high, for it gave substance to the false charge that the Cuban Revolution is going the way of the Russian Revolution; i.e., is becoming Stalinized.

Particularly in the United States where Stalinism has done untold damage to the revolutionary socialist cause, the suppression of the Posadas group did injury to Cuba. There were few campuses where the violation of the democratic rights of the Posadas group was not thrown at defenders of the Cuban Revolution, particularly Trotskyist defenders of the Cuban Revolution.

It is all the more brutally unfair of Blas Roca to tax the Posadas group with unwarranted criticisms of Fidel Castro in view of the unwarranted violation of their democratic rights. From their own experience they came to the conclusion that they had been given a raw deal and there are others who would agree on this despite the deepest repugnance for their political positions. The treatment of the Posadas group demonstrated that as yet the Cuban Revolution has not evolved institutional forms providing for the free expression of dissident opinion within the framework of loyalty to the Revolution. This is a grave weakness.

The mistake of the Socialist Labour League arises from the incapacity of its insular-minded leadership to recognize a revolution when they see one. This is quite a condemnation of their theoretical and political capacities and signifies their doom as a viable movement. But there is one kind of revolution they would deign to recognize (we hope) if they saw it. That is a revolution that organized workers power through soviets (or councils) and followed the norms of proletarian democracy laid down by Lenin in

State and Revolution. Since the Cuban Revolution has not yet achieved soviets, the SLL denies that a proletarian power exists in Cuba. From this they deduce that capitalism must still be in power no matter what measures have been undertaken and no matter what anybody says. They are, of course, mistaken. Their insistence on converting democratic norms into criteria marks them as sectarians; and their opposition to Cuba's revolutionary government despite its obviously tremendous achievements shows that they are ultralefts like Posadas. They are even less serious than Posadas, however. The entire colonial world remains largely a closed book to them. They are not really interested in it. They are quite content to vegetate in their placid little island where not even the cops carry guns. Periodically they announce grandiose plans about "reorganizing" the Fourth International and saving it from the "degeneration" brought about by such things as its support for the Cuban Revolution and the Castro team.

Nevertheless there is a kernel of truth in their criticism which must be recognized. Cuba does not yet have a soviet form of government. And this, too, is a grave weakness.

The mainstream of the world Trotskyist movement has held since the beginning that the Cuban Revolution is inherently the most democratic since the October 1917 Revolution in Russia. Evidence for this abounded in the early years. The blockade and armed aggression mounted by imperialism cut across this tendency and prevented it from flowering. For instance, the humanist Cuban leaders abolished the death penalty but had to reinstate it in face of the murderous forays and bombings organized by Cuban counterrevolutionaries financed, armed and instigated by the CIA. Under the tightening grip of the imperialist blockade Cuba necessarily took on some of the characteristics of a beleaguered fortress -- which is not exactly a greenhouse for the development and observance of the norms of proletarian democracy. And still the Cuban Revolution remained remarkably free of the bureaucratic sickness that wreaked such havoc in the Soviet Union. When the bureaucratic danger became acute in 1962, the famous move against Anibal Escalante and his cohorts was undertaken.

The Cuban leaders have indicated their awareness of the weakness in the Revolution on the side of political institutions and have expressed their intention many times of moving ahead in this field. They have made tentative experiments and have registered real progress in the construction of the Communist party of Cuba. But they still have a considerable distance to travel before it need no longer be said that every important policy hinges on the decisions and the life of a single leader. The slowness of the process of setting up democratic institutions of proletarian rule in Cuba is of concern to many supporters of the Cuban Revolution besides the world Trotskyist movement.

Bourgeois or Socialist Revolutions?

We come finally to what is really at the bottom of the attack against "Trotskyism." Blas Roca intimates it in his sneering references to the "superrevolutionary language" of the Trotskyists. You would think we were still back in the thirties when the Blas Rocas were defending the Stalinist (not Leninist) "thesis of the possibility of the triumph of socialism in one country" as against the Trotskyist position that the very defense of the socialist achievements of the October Revolution required the extension of the revolution and its culmination in an international revolution that would finally establish socialism in the industrially advanced capitalist countries. The correctness of the Trotskyist position has been confirmed by reality -- in the extension of the revolution into Eastern Europe, in the toppling of capitalism and landlordism in China, and last, but by no means least, by the revolution in Cuba itself, only ninety miles from the world's major capitalist power.

A single additional socialist revolution in Latin America today could end the isolation of Cuba from the American continent at one blow and assure the rapid spread of revolutions throughout the Americas. Never has the Trotskyist program had such reality as today! This is precisely what the Blas Rocas, representing the miserable remnants of Stalinism in the Western Hemisphere, fear and are seeking to block.

Consider the following paragraphs from Blas Roca's article, in which he really tries to come to grips with Trotskyism:

"With ultraleft slogans and calls for the immediate realization of the socialist revolution, they isolate this movement from the masses, they cut their road of development. With no little frequency they point to socialist Cuba; but in 1958 the Rebel Army did not proclaim the socialist revolution, but united the people in the practical struggle to overthrow Batista's tyranny and to destroy his mercenary army which served to support him and which was the instrument of neocolonialism and all the reactionary social forces."

Whatever quotations Blas Roca may find in the articles and reports of J. Posadas, the Trotskyists do not call for the "immediate realization of the socialist revolution." This is a caricature, like the Stalinist caricature of former decades which claimed that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution meant "simultaneous revolutions" everywhere.

"The Trotskyists," continues Blas Roca, "like to say that the measures of socialist transformation were taken in Cuba under the pressure of the masses; what they are not even capable of understanding is that the revolutionary leadership under the guidance of Compañero Fidel Castro prepared each step and took it in consonance with the same state of consciousness which they had created in the masses. In 1959 the proclamation of socialism would have divided the country; in April 1961 the masses unanimously sup-

ported the declaration of Compañero Fidel Castro on the socialist character of our revolution and carried it to victory, with their blood, on the beaches of Playa Girón."

According to Blas Roca, "The Trotskyists like to say..." Again, it is Posadas who likes to say. The decisive element in the victory of the Cuban Revolution was unquestionably the leadership provided by Fidel Castro, who succeeded in overcoming the long default in leadership due to Stalinists like Blas Roca, by-passing them from the left. Naturally the masses responded. So did the Trotskyists and many other genuine revolutionists on an international scale. But Blas Roca's reference to Posadas here is only part of the smokescreen under which he advances a line in opposition to the line followed by Fidel Castro up to now of revolutionary struggle and declared socialist aims.

Blas Roca's line, as indicated in these paragraphs, is the same line as the one advanced by the U.S. Communist spokesman Gus Hall in his criticism of Monthly Review. It is the concept that the revolutionary process in industrially underdeveloped countries must go through two separate stages, a bourgeois-democratic stage led by the progressive-minded bourgeoisie and a later stage in which the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat can come forward. The concept is the one advanced and defended by the Mensheviks in opposition to both Lenin and Trotsky. Something more is involved, however, than just a long outmoded concept.

I do not deny that in 1959 a "proclamation of socialism" in Cuba would have been widely misunderstood. The reason had nothing to do with the class character of the developing revolution. It was due to the enormous discredit brought on the very name of socialism or communism by the record of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and in Cuba where the Communist party supported Batista. A "proclamation of socialism" would have been misunderstood as a "proclamation of Stalinism."

It was correct of Castro to avoid that misunderstanding; to which we should add that Castro himself had been repelled by the record of the Communist party and did not yet consider himself a Marxist. Instead of developing around a proclaimed program of socialism, the revolution moved forward under a slogan of action; namely, armed struggle against Batista. And even on this level, the Communist party under Blas Roca's leadership failed miserably, attacking Castro's movement as adventurist and putschist.

The truth is that Blas Roca's line, of avoiding the "super-revolutionary language" of socialism, of advancing the concept of two stages, had already been tried out in Cuba and had been found wanting, to say the least.

On December 4, 1939, the Cuban Communist party nominated its candidate for the office of president. His name? Colonel Fulgencio Batista, the Chief of Staff of the Cuban armed forces. Blas Roca and his fellow Stalinist leaders backed Batista because they considered

him to be a "man of the people," a good bourgeois democrat, a leader of the "first stage" of the revolution. And Batista rewarded his Communist party supporters by giving them posts in his cabinet.

Without this coalition, Batista could never have gotten into a position to establish his bloody dictatorship. There were two stages all right. Two stages of a counterrevolution. In the first stage, the revolutionary forces were hoodwinked and duped into supporting a bourgeois democrat -- a figure like Sukarno or Chiang Kai-shek, who was also touted by Stalin in the "first stage." In the second stage, the revolutionary forces were decimated as the counterrevolution consolidated its dictatorship. This tragic process was duplicated in Brazil two years ago when Goulart was pictured as the good bourgeois democrat on whom all reliance should be placed in stage No. 1.

The Castelo Branco coup d'état in April 1964 demonstrated in the most emphatic way that the line of a "two stage" revolution is still quite capable of paving the way for a "two stage" counterrevolution. This lesson has been freshened since October 1965 with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Communists in Indonesia. If Blas Roca's line is applied elsewhere in Latin America, it will most certainly guarantee another defeat as it did in Cuba in Batista's day, in China in 1925-27, Brazil in 1964, Indonesia in 1965 and many other countries where it has been tested.

The question then comes up: can a successful revolution be organized around a mere slogan of action as happened in Cuba under Castro? To answer, yes, implies two things: (1) The indigenous bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers have learned nothing from the Cuban experience. (2) The masses in Latin America have learned nothing from the Cuban example of going forward to the socialist stage -- in other words, "socialism" still has not recovered in their outlook from the terrible discredit brought on it by Stalin and his hand-picked lieutenants like Blas Roca.

Both conclusions are wrong, in my opinion. American imperialism and its stooges are far readier to act in the most violent way at the first sign of a revolutionary upheaval no matter what attempts are made to disguise it. Johnson's occupation of Santo Domingo and the repressive measures taken against the Peruvian guerrilla fighters in the past year are proof enough without adding the lesson of Johnson's escalation of the war in Vietnam.

On the other hand, the Cuban Revolution has had an immense effect on popular consciousness throughout Latin America and this effect will grow as the contrast between Cuba's gains and the stagnation in the rest of Latin America becomes more glaring. In record time Cuba achieved such things as the liquidation of illiteracy. Unemployment was ended, social security guaranteed, an education assured to every child. Despite all the difficulties of the imperialist blockade and a number of serious errors, the planned economy is developing and offers a bright perspective for the future. And what

an impressive fact -- little Cuba, only ninety miles from the imperialist U.S. has been able to hold out against the world's mightiest power for seven years now! "Socialism," Cuban-style, is bound to appear more and more attractive -- as the socialist revolution was to the masses of the world in the first years after the October Revolution. The Latin-American masses will become increasingly impatient to achieve what the Cubans did -- a socialist revolution. And why shouldn't they have it?

This rehabilitation of the word "socialism" and the program of socialism will likewise be listed in history to the credit of the Cuban Revolution and it will be achieved despite everything that the Blas Rocas, with their treacherous advice, can do to stop it.

In their editorial on Castro's January 15 attack against Trotskyism, Huberman and Sweezy made the following point:

"Whatever its role in Guatemala, Trotskyism is certainly not a large or important political force in Latin America as a whole. But if Fidel Castro and the Latin American Communist Parties duck the question of socialism, and still more if they attack as Trotskyites all those who openly struggle for a specifically socialist revolution, then the prospects for Latin American Trotskyism will be vastly improved."

Whatever it is called -- "consistent class struggle," "revolutionary Marxism," "revolutionary socialism," or "Trotskyism" -- the prospects for socialist revolution in Latin America are already vastly improved. The prospects for "class collaboration," "peaceful coexistence," "popular frontism," "coalitionism," or "Stalinism" are on the decline. The great dividing line was drawn by the successful Cuban Revolution. The popular appeal of the socialist goal, noted by Yon Sosa, the Guatemalan guerrilla leader, is but one indication of the deep processes at work in this direction.

The defeats and setbacks of the past few years will prove to be but temporary. Latin America's 200,000,000 people are gathering their forces for another giant step forward. Nothing will be able to stop them -- not all the dollars and guns of imperialism, and still less the pitiful labors of the Stalinist defilers of socialism.

"LA BATALLA'S" REPLY TO FIDEL CASTRO

[Among the publications which Fidel Castro attacked in his speech against "Trotskyism" last January was La Batalla, the organ of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista -- Workers Party of Marxist Unification), which is active in the Spanish underground struggle against Franco. We have provided below a translation of the reply which the editors published in the February-March issue of La Batalla.]

On January 20,* the final day of the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, Fidel Castro, the secretary of the Communist party of Cuba and head of the Cuban government, delivered a long and truly disturbing speech.

In his customary fashion, Fidel Castro strongly denounced the current offensive of imperialism throughout the world, and particularly in Latin America, and made a passionate plea in favor of extending the revolutionary struggle.

But, unfortunately, Fidel Castro devoted a large part of his speech to attacking in impermissible terms the Trotskyist movement, the Guatemalan guerrillas led by Yon Sosa and a whole series of groups and publications outside of the Communist movement in the orbit of the Russian bureaucracy, which have always defended the Cuban Revolution. (The Montevideo weekly, Marcha, the North American magazine, Monthly Review, Mondo Nuovo, the organ of the PSIUP of Italy, La Batalla...)

In replying to Fidel Castro, some of the groups and publications under attack have justly condemned the incredible amalgam made by the Cuban leader and have tried to spell out their particular positions. Before answering the remarks of special concern to us, we must state, with the authority due us as virtually the only defenders of the Cuban Revolution in the Spanish workers movement, in the face of sarcasms and insults of all kinds, that we reject Fidel Castro's slanderous attack in toto. Fidel Castro has a perfect right to defend his political positions and to criticize or combat any working-class or anti-imperialist tendencies that do not approve one or another of his actions. But what he has no right to do, is to employ the old, discredited arsenal of Stalinist slanders against anyone, no matter who it may be, to speak like some vulgar Escalante and not like the responsible leader of the Cuban Revolution.

After his unspeakable attack on "Trotskyism," Fidel Castro said: "In the issue of October 1965 of the newspaper Batalla, organ of the Spanish Trotskyites, it was stated that the mystery surrounding the case of Che Guevara ought to be cleared up. It said that friends of Che supposed that the letter read by Castro was false and ask themselves whether the Cuban leadership tends towards submission to the Kremlin bureaucracy."

Of course, we could begin by saying that we do not belong to any of the tendencies in the Trotskyist movement, that we are not part of the Fourth International, that we are an independent workers party. And, furthermore, we could add that Castro did not quote faithfully what we wrote in our newspaper about the case of Che Guevara.

*This is evidently a typographical error. The date was actually January 15 -- Translator.

But since the language that we speak and write in is the same as the one Fidel Castro speaks and writes in, we are not inclined to take that tangent. La Batalla had and has a perfect right to ask for political explanations on the Guevara case. La Batalla even has a right to criticize Fidel Castro; to say, for example, in common with the vast majority of the Spanish workers, that while we continue to understand the difficulties created by the blockade, we disapprove the present relations of the revolutionary government of Cuba with the Franco government. And, finally, La Batalla also has a right to protest against the attacks against "Trotskyism," reminiscent of the worst period of the Stalinist epoch.

We have defended the Cuban Revolution from the very beginning. We are defending it now and will continue to defend it. But today as in the past and always, we are not among those who applaud Castro in public and speak about him in private as "petty bourgeois" or an "adventurer." We are for freedom of criticism, which is one of the most precious assets of the international workers movement, and we feel hopeful that Fidel Castro and his compañeros will come to understand that Stalinist-type slanders can only compromise and isolate the Cuban Revolution, solely to the gain of imperialism, which, as the Cuban revolutionaries know from experience, has declared an unrelenting and merciless war against them.