

WORLD POLITICS

A REVIEW OF THE WORLD'S TROTSKYIST AND REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

CONTENTS

PAGE	1	Trotskyism versus Stalinism in the Cuban Revolution	by Joe Hansen.
"	20 :	The lesson of Indonesia	Fourth International statement.
"	29	When will they explain the tragedy in Indonesia?	by Ernest Mandel.

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 C.P. However, Blas Roca has remained a prominent figure in Cuban politics, despite the decline of such old-time fellow bureaucrats as Anibal 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 for ever 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 shall consider them in the process of analysing Blas Roca's contribution in detail.

AN EMERGENCY OPERATION

The basic content of Blas Roca's article in the May 1 issue of Politica merely echoes 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 NR-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 sub-groups, 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 demagoguery 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 Krushchevists, Macists, 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 towards 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 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 of a major split in the world Trotskyist movement in 1963 - a split 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. *

* The "theoreticians of the Socialist Labour League consider that their abysmal ignorance of Latin-American politics endows them with the 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

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 Trotskyite 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 in 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 favours 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.

BLAS ROCA'S WONDERFUL "PROOFS".

Let us now consider Blas Roca's argumentation on how the Trotskyists allegedly serve as "very active auxiliary forces² 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 of 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

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"?

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 Latin America that has been influenced by The Newsletter? We shall 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 should 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 co-thinkers combed the pages of The Militant and the International Socialist Review, the public declarations of the American Trotskyists and their pamphlets and their 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 now familiar way. 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 Giron 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 Jan. 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 text-books on the polemical methods of the Stalinists.

EVADES CHALLENGE OF THE "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 the 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 shall 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 the 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 Krushchev 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 tributes 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 Che 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 LEG 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 Politica, 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 Diaz 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 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 war-

-mongers.

"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 the 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 revolutionaries 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 revolutionists who argued for a position he disagreed with. His language could be forceful - 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 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.

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 democratic rights of that group. 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 recognise 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 ultraleftists 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 the Cuban counter-revolutionaries financed, armed and instigated by the CIA. Under the tightening grip of the imperialist blockade Cuba necessarily took 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 "super-revolutionary" 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 90 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 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 supported 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 Giron. "

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 smoke-screen 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 "superrevolutionary 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 counter-revolution 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 number one.

The Castelo Branco coup d'état in April, 1964, demonstrated in the most emphatic way that the line of the "two stage" revolution is still quite capable of paving the way for a "two stage" counter-revolution. 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, 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 90 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.

THE LESSON OF INDONESIA

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(The following statement on the meaning of the catastrophic defeat suffered by the workers and peasants in Indonesia at the hands of indigenous counter-revolutionary forces and their foreign imperialist backers was issued March 20 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.)

(1) The United Secretariat of the Fourth International vigorously condemns the barbaric repression of the leaders, members and sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party unleashed by the reactionary Indonesian army, the comprador and "bureaucratic" bourgeoisie and the clerical wing of the petty bourgeoisie. In this repression, the lives of more than 100,000 Communists have been taken and tens of thousands of Communists and other left wingers have been imprisoned or fired from their jobs, which is often equivalent to condemnation to starvation in face of the current mass unemployment. The Communist Party press and mass organizations, including the largest trade-union federation in the country (SOBSI), have been officially banned. Many leading Communist Party cadres have been murdered, and Njono, the general secretary of the SOBSI and a member of the Political Bureau of the Indonesian Communist Party, has been executed after a farcical trial. All this was capped on March 12 with the official banning of the Communist Party (PKI) throughout Indonesia.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International asks the working-class organizations in all countries to start a mass protest campaign, demanding the immediate release of all political prisoners, the immediate legalization of all working-class parties, including the PKI, the Partai Acoma and the Partai Murbah. It calls for establishment of an international working-class Commission of Inquiry to investigate the fate of the top PKI leaders, Aidit, Lukman and Njoto, who, according to many sources, have been murdered by the military.

Out of solidarity, the international working class must be mobilized to the fullest extent to stop the dirty war being waged by the reactionary forces against the left in Indonesia!

(2) If it is now an elementary duty to defend the victims of reaction in Indonesia, this by no means signifies that there is less need to analyze the debacle suffered by the biggest Communist Party in any capitalist country, a party with three million members and millions of sympathizers in various "front" organizations, and to draw the proper lessons from it. The main reasons for the tremendous defeat are as follows:

(a) The leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party granted leadership of the Indonesian revolution to Sukarno, questioning that the state apparatus on which he stood was bourgeois in character; and, in contradiction to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state, presented this apparatus as a

"people's State," a "national democracy" having "two sides"-"one for the people, one against the people." The PKI accepted the theory of "revolution in stages," limiting the "first stage" in reality to the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle; and in practice even abandoning the fight for a proletarian, Communist leadership during this stage although it is declared necessary, in theory at least, by the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and even by Aidit himself in some of his writings. (1)

In fact, the leadership of the Indonesian CP went so far as to boast about its close collaboration with the Indonesian bourgeoisie, (2) and to openly express its support for Sukarno's ideology of the "Pantja Sila" (five principles), although one of the five is "belief in a single god." The Aidit leadership stressed its position that the "union" of the ideology of the "revolutionary classes" (including the "national" bourgeoisie!) was needed by the Indonesian revolution as long as Communism was not "eliminated" from the union. (3)

(1) "The Indonesian revolution is at the present stage bourgeois-democratic in character and not socialist and proletarian. But the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Indonesia no longer belongs to the old type, and is no longer part of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, which belongs to the past; it is a revolution of a new type, which is part of the proletarian socialist world revolution, firmly opposed to imperialism.... Given the fact that the Indonesian revolution is a bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type, it is the historical duty of the proletariat to struggle to conquer its leadership." (D.N.Aidit: The Indonesian Revolution and the Immediate Tasks of the Indonesian Communist Party. pp. 15-16. Peking. 1965)

(2) In a speech at the School of Advanced Studies of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Peking, September 2, 1963, D.N.Aidit, chairman of the Indonesian C.P. made the following quite blunt statement: "The alliance with the national bourgeoisie has also been realized. The national bourgeoisie starts to return (!) to the side of the revolution, particularly since the party formulated a correct policy and overcame sectarianism in its ranks... We have now collaborated with the Indonesian bourgeoisie for nearly ten years, and the revolutionary forces have continually developed rather than grown fewer during this time, whereas the reactionary forces have experienced failure after failure. Even the public anti-Communist clamor of five or six years ago is officially condemned today as... against unity. President Sukarno has played an important role in the struggle against Communophobia and for national unity." (D.N.Aidit: *ibid.* pp. 82-83) It would be difficult to find a better example of self-delusory opportunism paving the way for a tragic defeat.

(3) "Another concept which also reflects the unity of the nation and the unity of NASAKOM is expressed by the Pantja Sila or five principles: (1) belief in a single god; (2) humanitarianism or internationalism; (3) nationalism or patriotism; (4) democracy and (5) social justice. The Indonesian Communist Party supports and sustains the Pantja Sila, although one of its principles is belief in a single god, in view of the fact that the Pantja Sila, rather than being an attempted substitute for the philosophy of all its supporters,

(b) For these reasons, the Indonesian C.P., concentrating on "mass recruitment", and failing to provide adequate ideological education and revolutionary training for most of its members, bowed to Sukarno's initiatives for many years, abstaining from any appeal to mass struggles that could decisively change the relationship of social forces in the country. Sukarno arbitrarily suspended the constitution and reduced the Communist Party to 30 seats in his new "appointed parliament" of 260 members; when he suspended democratic freedom and ordered all parties to register for government authorization, the PKI accepted these infringements of its rights and even agreed to participate in the various cabinets which Sukarno subsequently formed. Included in these governments were such reactionaries as General A.H.Nasution, Hamengku Buwono, the sultan of Djokjakarta and the leading bourgeois politician, Ruslan Abdulgani. Today they are the main political brains behind the counter-revolution and members of the counter-revolutionary Suharto cabinet. Yesterday the PKI leadership treated them as "brother revolutionists" and "allies" inside ~~NASUTION~~ and Sukarno's cabinets. They even tried to use these arbitrary forms of Bonapartist government to eliminate some of their own competitors in the labor movement. But these very same rules and regulations have been used since October 1, 1965, to suppress the PKI itself. Discerning bourgeois observers have noted that the logic of the PKI policy was to leave the initiative with the anti-Communist forces. (4)

(c) At various times in recent years the Indonesian masses moved into action against the declining standard of living due to mass unemployment, inflation, high prices, plunder of state property by the army high command, rampant corruption in the state administration, etc. Again and again they seized imperialist property, occupied plantations and factories, sought to divide the holdings of the big landowners. And again and again the Sukarno regime and its stooges, with the help of the army, drove out the masses and placed the administration of the properties in their own corrupt hands. Again and again the PKI leadership refrained from supporting these mass uprisings, refrained from educating the masses and their vanguard in the spirit of preparing to fight for power. It even refrained from systematically denouncing the dangerous reaction looming not only in the religious organizations but also in the army high command in particular. Aidit referred over and over only to the parties suppressed by Sukarno - the Masjumi and the Social Democratic party - as agents of imperialism and feudal reaction. (5)

combined (4) all existing ideological tendencies in society. The party is, however resolutely opposed to those who seek to transform one of the five silas into the leading dominant tendency." (D.N. Aidit: *ibid.* p.85)

(4) An American liberal bourgeois observer, Donald Hindley, correctly summed up the political situation in Indonesia resulting from Aidit's tactics: "Meanwhile, however, the fate of Indonesia would be determined largely by the action or inaction of the non-Communists." (The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951-1963. p.304. University of California Press, 1964.)

(5) D.N.Aidit: *ibid.* p. 85.

As a result the military coup of October 1-2, 1965, caught the masses completely by surprise.

It is true that a few months before the counter-revolutionary coup, Aidit shifted his line somewhat to the left. He began to call on Sukarno to arm the workers and peasants (which the Indonesian Bonaparte, of course, carefully refrained from doing). Aidit called on the masses to "seize" the imperialist properties as well as the nationalized properties administered by the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" or the army. (Speech, September 25, 1965, at the closing rally of the sixth congress of the plantation workers trade unions, reported in the September 27, 1965, issue of the party's central organ, Harian Rakjat.) It is true that in the same speech he warned the masses in an obscure and indirect way: "History has compelled the people and the working-class of the entire world to choose between being an anvil and a hammer. If they become an anvil, they will be like the Indonesian working-class at present, suffering blow after blow from the bureaucratic capitalists, embezzlers, grafters and other exploiters and oppressors." (In his long report to the school of the Chinese CP's Central Committee, mentioned above, not a word is said about these blows.) "The workers, with back-breaking toil, earn barely enough in a month to last a week, while the bureaucratic capitalists, embezzlers and grafters wallow in luxury, thanks to the blood and sweat of the working class. If they do not want to be an anvil, they should become a hammer; not an ordinary hammer but a huge hammer. Therefore the Indonesian working class should adopt the following attitude: Boldness, boldness and boldness again! Take over, take over and take over again! Act, act and act again!"

But these warnings, voiced on the very eve of the army's counter-revolutionary coup, then already in full preparation, came without any previous or accompanying measures for broad mass mobilizations, without preparation for a general strike, without preparation for arming the masses, without concrete warnings about the intending army coup. The warnings could only heighten the determination of the counter-revolutionaries to strike immediately. They could not create adequate means to prevent or to reply to the counter-revolution. It is not surprising that under these conditions the only concrete response this belated warning evoked was the desperate action of a small group around Lieutenant Colonel Untung and not a mass uprising.

It should be added that while the PKI leadership at first expressed solidarity with this desperate attempt to stop the counter-revolutionary generals from taking over the country, (6) they reversed their stand a few days later - after the counter-revolution won its first decisive battle -

(6) Harian Rakjat, central organ of the PKI, wrote in its Oct. 2, 1965, issue: "Whatever the pretext may have been, the coup d'état which the 'Council of Generals' wanted to perpetrate was in any case a counter-revolutionary action which must be condemned... The people... are convinced that what the Sept. 30 Movement did to save the revolution and the people was a correct action.. The Sept. 30 Movement will enjoy the support and sympathy of the people."

and disowned Untung's actions, thereby increasing the general confusion among their own followers. (7) As for the Kremlin, it denounced the September 30 events as a "provocation" without mentioning by a single word the preparations of the Reactionary generals to pull a coup d'état. (8)

According to a dispatch released February 15, 1966, by the Indonesian news agency Antara, the trade-union leader, Njono, a member of the Political Bureau of the PKI, stated during his trial that the impending counter-revolutionary coup of the Indonesian generals was discussed in the Political Bureau as early as July, 1965. Njono declared that opinion was divided on whether it would be better to react before the coup or immediately after it took place. In any case it was decided to leave the initiative up to the "progressive officers" who were prepared to act within the army against the generals. While it is possible that Njono's torturers falsified this report before executing him, his courageous and dignified stand during the trial, in which he publicly denounced his torturers and the counter-revolutionary generals, lends credit to this version of the facts.

(d) The strategy of the PKI was not to conquer power by mobilizing the masses, but to slowly "transform" the character of the state and the government by infiltrating sectors of the army and administrative cadre. Under this illusion, they gave completely uncritical support to Sukarno, hoping to take over when he died. This explains why they relied on Sukarno instead of mobilizing the broad masses in defense of the revolution and the PKI, not only before the reactionary coup of October 1-2, but even after the coup.

(3) These grave political mistakes of the PKI leadership were reinforced and magnified by the opportunist policies of the Kremlin and Peking, both governments supporting Sukarno uncritically, presenting him as the prototype of the "noncapitalist" leader of "national democracy", the world leader of the "newly emerging forces" and similar empty, misleading formulas.

For diplomatic reasons - Sukarno's temporary posture against Anglo-Dutch imperialism in the West Irian and Malaysia affairs - the Kremlin gave

(7) The October 5, 1965, issue of Harijan Rakjat disowned the Sept. 30 Movement.

(8) "The fact that the Communist Party of Indonesia, as early as October 5, published an official declaration in which it dissociated itself from the organizers of the unsuccessful conspiracy and characterized it as 'an internal affair of the army' is being completely ignored. Even if we assume that individual members of leftwing organizations lent themselves to the provocation and had something to do with the events of September 30, nevertheless this can in no way justify repressions against the Communist Party of Indonesia." (Pravda, October 26, 1965.)

full uncritical support to the Sukarno regime, not only internationally but even on the domestic level, supplying his army with many of the weapons now being used to kill the cadres and members of the PKI. After the October 1-2 military coup the Kremlin leaders continued this criminal policy, even trying to blame "putschist" and "adventurist" elements in the PKI for the defeat and calling repeatedly for the "unity" of the Indonesian "revolution" around NASAKOM; i.e. for "unity" between the butchers and their victims. On October 12, after Sukarno had already called for a thorough purge of those involved in the "September 30 affair" and had permitted PKI leaders to be arrested and murdered in Djakarta, Brezhnev, Mikoyan and Kosygin sent him a special message in which they wrote: "We and our colleagues learned with great joy(!) that your health has improved... We have with interest heard about your radio appeal to the Indonesian people to remain calm and prevent disorders... This appeal will meet with profound understanding." (Pravda, October 12, 1965.) Not until December 26 did the Soviet press publish a clear condemnation of the anti-Communist regime in Indonesia. Before then reporting on the events in that country was limited to reproducing short items from the bourgeois press agencies coupled with "regrets" about the "anti-Communist measures." And at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, the Soviet delegation displayed a shameful attitude, trying in every way to block public condemnation of the counter-revolutionary terror raging against the Indonesian Communists, an attitude which won public praise from the counter-revolutionists in Djakarta. (9)

As for the Peking leaders, out of similar diplomatic considerations and manoeuvres - such as supporting Sukarno's walkout from the UN and trying to pit the "newly emerging forces" against the "old established forces" - they likewise gave full and uncritical support to the Indonesian regime. Even after the October 1-2 military coup they went ahead in Djakarta with the World Conference Against Foreign Bases, and without protest stood by as their Indonesian comrades were arrested in the conference hall itself! It is true that they began to denounce the counter-revolutionary activities much sooner than the Kremlin press. But even then they carefully refrained from any open and clear-cut criticism of Sukarno, trying to present things as if Sukarno

(9) In a dispatch from Djakarta, Feb. 14, the Indonesian news agency Antara gave the text of three resolutions adopted by the Indonesian parliament, Feb. 11. One deals with the Tricontinental Conference. After denouncing the refusal of the Preparatory Commission to seat the official delegation sent by the Indonesian government, the resolution states in Point 5.: "Expresses full appreciation (!) of the efforts of the delegations of Nepal, Mongolia, the Soviet Union and others at the Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, who successfully neutralized the efforts of the counter-revolutionists (!) of the so-called Sept. 30 Movement, and their protectors and leaders, to intervene in the internal affairs of Indonesia and to induce among the other delegations a hostile attitude toward the people and government of Indonesia."

had systematically opposed the repression of the PKI, whereas in reality he covered up the repression in good part, merely trying to limit it in order to maintain his own Bonapartist position.

Today some "friends of Peking" maintain that the Chinese CP leaders were in fact critical of Aidit's policies, but they did not want to criticize his party publicly in view of the fact that they were for internal discussion among all the Communist parties that refrained publicly attacking the Chinese CP and its friends. But this is no valid excuse for remaining silent about a problem of outstanding importance to the international Communist movement; it is only additional proof of the basically opportunist attitude of the Chinese leaders towards the Indonesian question.

(4) The events of recent weeks - the elimination of General Nasution from the government, Sukarno's declaration that "the revolution is again embarking on its leftwing course," the public collision between Sukarno and the ultra-rightwing forces of the Islamic students' organizations (more or less passively tolerated by the army) - inspired new illusions in official CP circles that the pre-October 1 situation could somehow be restored. Sukarno, a typical Bonapartist figure, representing the "national" and "bureaucratic" bourgeois forces in Indonesia, balanced between the "left", represented mainly by the PKI and its mass proletarian and peasant organizations, and the "right", represented mainly by the army and the clerical Moslem organizations, spokesmen of the comprador bourgeoisie and semifeudal landowners. The October 1-2 Military coup delivered a shattering blow to the left, leaving them leaderless and dispersed (while far from completely destroying them), thereby fundamentally upsetting the equilibrium on which Sukarno depended for his leading position. Naturally he then tried to bolster his position by looking for ways and means to somehow reduce the strength of the army high command and to divide its ranks. These leaders preferred not to take over rule immediately after October 1-2; in the first place because they were not yet sure of the support they could muster in the countryside, where Sukarno remained very popular; and in the second place because they did not want to assume responsibility for the mismanagement of the economy, the complete failure of the so-called "heavy rupiah" and the raging inflation plaguing the country. Therefore they left Sukarno in power for another six months, although he retained only the shadow of his previous Bonapartist strength. When he tried in desperation to re-establish the equilibrium by ousting General Nasution from his cabinet, they permitted the students to stage mass demonstrations (paradoxically, the ultraright-wing Islamic student associations could now appear to stand in the forefront of the fight against inflation and corruption due to the extreme weakening of the forces led by the PKI.) In conjunction with the pressure from the army high command, these demonstrations compelled Sukarno to turn over the leading role in the government to the army's "strong man", General Suharto.

(5) It is extremely unlikely, however that the counter-revolutionists now in power in Djakarta will be able to stabilize the situation for any length of time. The country's economy is stripped; and American imperialism, while able to shore up the new regime with a heavy underpinning of credits,

cannot move in on such a scale as to generate any real momentum in economic growth. The army leaders themselves will not readily give up their nationalist, anti-imperialist verbiage which reflects real conflicts of interest with British imperialism and the ruling comprador bourgeoisie and semi-feudal landowners of Malaysia. A large part of the budget will therefore continue to be squandered in maintaining a huge military establishment and in undertaking costly experiments like the attempt to make an Indonesian nuclear bomb. The masses, although leaderless and deeply shaken, have not lost all fighting potential, particularly in the countryside. It will prove impossible to get thousands of squatters to evacuate the imperialist-owned or "nationalized" plantations managed by corrupt army officers, or to compel the thousands of plantation and oil workers to revert to the "normal" working conditions of colonial times. And without such a shift to "normalcy", the Indonesian economy will not be able to develop in accordance with the neocolonial pattern. The incapacity of the military leaders to achieve some social and economic stability will undermine the counter-revolutionary dictatorship politically. This could even occur in the near future if the military prove unable to cope with the problem of inflation.

The defeat suffered by the PKI is of such depth that certainly no quick change in the situation can be forecast. It will take years to regain revolutionary possibilities as excellent as those lost in 1964-66 due to the opportunist policies of the PKI leadership. However, what remains of that leadership along with the surviving party cadres - especially the best educated, those steeled by the terrible experiences they went through in the past six months - will have taken the road of guerrilla war, if only out of self-defense. If they succeed in regrouping and in regaining a mass following in some regions of the countryside by calling on the peasants to immediately take over the land held by the landlords, the plantations and army administration, they could gain on a progressive scale due to the inability of Indonesian reaction to solve the country's basic economic plight and due to the divisions in the ranks of the army which that inability will undoubtedly provoke. It will become possible to link this peasant base to the working class when, under pressure of economic necessity, the urban masses overcome the stunning effect of the defeat and once again take the road of action. Such a comeback, involving a renewal of organized influence among the workers, is still possible - provided that all the main lessons of the terrible defeat are analyzed and assimilated.

(6) The main lessons to be drawn from this tragic defeat, which the Indonesian revolutionary Marxists must continually hammer home, while energetically participating in all attempts by revolutionary PKI elements to start armed resistance against the military dictatorship, are as follows:

(a) While it is correct and necessary to support all anti-imperialist mass movements, and even to critically support all concrete anti-imperialist measures taken by representatives of the colonial bourgeoisie like Sukarno, for colonial revolution to be victorious it is absolutely essential to maintain the proletarian organizations strictly independent politically and organizationally from the "national" bourgeoisie, to instill among the masses a spirit

of distrust towards this bourgeoisie and a spirit of self-reliance, to lead the masses towards organizing independent organs of power (committees, workers and peasants militia, etc.) as requisites for the victory of the revolution. The Indonesian events have proved once again that the theory of the capacity of the "progressive" forces of the "national bourgeoisie" to lead a "consistent" fight against imperialism as the "embodiment of the whole nation" - the theory of a "national democratic state" and a "bloc of revolutionary classes" - leads only to defeat.

(b) While it is correct and necessary during the first phases of the revolution in backward countries to place the main stress on the problems of winning national independence, unifying the country and solving the agrarian question (i.e. the historical tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution which constitute the most burning tasks in the eyes of eighty to ninety per cent of the population), it is indispensable to understand that the solution of these tasks is only possible when the working class, in alliance with the poor peasantry, has conquered leadership of the revolution, establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry and pushes the revolution through to its socialist phase. The Indonesian events once again confirm that the theory of "revolution by stages" - the first stage being a victory under a "national front" led by the "national bourgeoisie" - only paves the way to defeat. Either defeat under "national" bourgeois leaders or victory through the conquest of power and the establishment of a workers' state - this is the dilemma that faces all colonial revolutions.

(c) While it is necessary to win the broadest possible mass base in the countryside, a revolutionary party capable of applying that policy must be based upon a hardened proletarian cadre thoroughly trained in Marxist theory and revolutionary practice, without illusions about a "peaceful transition" to socialism or "national democratic states", a party that relies mainly on mass mobilizations and mass struggles instead of intrigues and infiltration for achieving its historical goals.

Only by thoroughly assimilating these lessons can the Indonesian Communists and revolutionists overcome the results of the present defeat and avenge the victims of the counter-revolutionary terror by organizing and leading the workers and poor peasants in their fight for power in Indonesia!

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 on 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 Feb. 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 criticised 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 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.