

Summer 1960

# INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

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## CHINA *versus* INDIA

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# Periodicals in Review

by Tim Wohlforth

The past few months have witnessed numerous articles on youth in the liberal, radical and conservative press. These articles have been a reflection of — and in rare cases an attempt to deal with analytically — the change of mood on the American campus.

The new mood has produced a series of actions in widely different fields, all of which are aimed against the status quo. These include the sit-in campaign of Southern Negro Students; the supporting picket lines that have spread to every important campus in the North; widespread opposition to compulsory ROTC which has reached even colleges without a political past such as Lehigh University. New York City has been the scene of anti-civil defense protests involving several thousand high school and college students. San Francisco Bay Area students engaged in protest demonstrations against the execution of Caryl Chessman, in the course of which they marched across the Golden Gate Bridge, conducted an all-night vigil at San Quentin and a trek to Sacramento to picket the Governor's mansion. Next they turned out in even greater numbers to protest the school probe of the witch-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee in San Francisco and stood their ground against a brutal police attack.

While there had been sentiment on all these issues prior to this spring, the widespread nature of the recent actions is without precedent since the era of the cold-war "silent generation" began. For instance, a year ago less than twenty-five persons defied civil defense regulations in New York. This year thousands turned out. Previous witch-hunt hearings in San Francisco have met with protest, but never with such massive student demonstrations. Isolated campuses in the South have been involved in integration battles, but never before has the movement swept through virtually every Negro college in the whole South. Northern students have supported integration struggles in the past, particularly in the Youth March on Washington movement, but never on a national scale and never drawing in so many "non-political" campuses.

Many of the demonstrations appear to arise out of issues particular to a specific area. Thus the particularly intense witch-hunting traditions in San

Francisco made it a more natural locale for its type of demonstration, though the area had not mobilized support for the picket-Woolworth campaign or for the anti-civil defense demonstrations on any comparable level.

The fact that there exists in New York City a rather large milieu of high school and college students with some previous radical contact and with strong feelings on the peace issue undoubtedly contributed to the extent of the resistance to the civil defense tests.

Certainly the direct discrimination felt by Southern Negro Students made action on the integration issue more meaningful for them than action on any other issue.

But despite these individual peculiarities there exists a general pattern of protest to be found in the demonstrations when viewed as a whole. Many of the same individuals took part in several of these different actions feeling almost equally attracted to the different issues involved. All the actions illustrated that there is a new responsiveness on the campus to political and social issues of our times.

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The reaction of the liberal press has been generally favorable, recognizing, even if superficially, that the initiative in this country has passed to the youth because of the default of the elders — including the liberal elders. The *New York Post*, while occasionally scolding the youth for "going too far," as in the case of the sit-in conducted by the New York Youth Committee for Integration, has generally reported favorably the actions of the students.

Much of the same mood of sympathy can be seen in the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. The general sparsity of their reportage of student actions, however, shows a certain isolation of the older generation of liberal intellectuals and professionals from the new generation on the campus.

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The *Nation* has produced a very fine on-the-spot story May 7 on the Southern struggle, "Eye of the Storm," by Dan Wakefield. This article tends to confirm the thesis of James Lambrecht in the *Young Socialist* in the May and Summer 1960 issues that the leadership of the sit-in movement in the South is in the hands of a group of student leaders who have come to the fore in the struggle itself and is not dependent on any of the old organizations like CORE, NAACP or Rev. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In fact these youth are not only separate from the adult Negro leadership but tend to distrust it.

Wakefield says, "The question of the role of adults in the student movement was a ticklish one, for in a sense the movement is a protest not only against

segregation practices, but against the older Negro leaders."

The factual basis of this view is also supported by Mike Walzer in his article, "A Cup of Coffee and a Seat," in *Dissent* (Summer 1960). Even the Southern "liberal," Hodding Carter, adds to his description of the movement in the *N. Y. Times Magazine* a note of alarm at this division between the younger and older generations, an alarm quite appropriate to someone committed to the status quo. (For further discussions on this question see articles by Myra Tanner Weiss in the *Militant*, May 2 and 16 and Bert Deck in this issue of *ISR*.)

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There has been little in the way of *analysis* of the new student mood in the liberal or, for that matter the radical press. The *Nation* in its editorial May 7 goes little beyond a recognition of its existence and the same can be said of the *New York Post's* editorial on the San Francisco demonstrations.

The Communist party press has generally tailed the developments, echoing in its own jargon the sentiments of the liberals. For instance, the March *Political Affairs* publishes the latest CP resolution on "The Youth Question." The resolution, noting among other things that the Young Democrats are "entering the struggle for a progressive platform," goes on to urge more concern with juvenile delinquency by "all peoples organizations." The resolution from beginning to end confounds a social worker's treatment of juvenile delinquency with the actual political struggles of students and youth themselves and the organization of a radical youth group. Such a mixture gives the resolution the unmistakable flavor of a document written by adults *about* youth; adults moreover who are separated not only by age but by their very spirit from the young generation of radical and even liberal youth.

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The summer issue of *Dissent* features a large section titled, "The Young." Most of it is old hat and not of any real interest (outside of Mike Walzer's good reportage of the sit-ins). But there is one article which demands comment, Arthur Mitzman's "The Campus Radical in 1960." This article at least attempts to analyze the new situation and in so doing offers some useful insights.

Mitzman notes that the new campus mood is marked by a desire to act, and a concomitant lack of interest in programmatic questions and disputes. As he puts it, "The area of vision is different, and the organ of response has shifted from the brain to the intestines."

This "coolness towards program," Mitzman feels, can be at least partially blamed on the shortcomings of the "old campus radicals." To prove this Mitzman draws on his own rather narrow

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# Three Radical Parties and the 1960 Elections

by Murry Weiss

**N**EVER has the need been greater than now, in the 1960 elections, for socialists to conduct a campaign for their own program and in their own name against the bipartisan program and machines of U. S. capitalism, the Democrats and Republicans. Yet, of the three main socialist organizations in the country—the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation, the Communist party, and the Socialist Workers party—only the SWP is vigorously fighting in the electoral field.

The last few months have been rough on the illusion that the Democratic and Republican parties can somehow be used as instruments of struggle for civil rights, for civil liberties and against nuclear war.

The SP-SDF and the CP have been, each in its own special way, both the victims and the perpetrators of policies based on this illusion among radical workers and youth.

But how does the policy of supporting “good” capitalist politicians stand up when we examine the conduct of the Democratic and Republican parties and all their major spokesmen during the events of the last few months?

In April and May we witnessed a worldwide wave of mass demonstrations, strikes and revolutionary uprisings aimed at a whole string of despotic regimes, firmly linked to U.S. imperialism as “free world” allies. The movement swept through South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and Japan. The Cuban revolution in the same period deepened and reverberated throughout Latin America, despite the all-out campaign of slander, economic pressure and military threats from Washington. And in the North and South of the United States a new generation of youth, with the Negro students of the South leading the way, made its dramatic entrance onto the stage of social and political struggle against racism, witch hunting and preparations for war.

In these events the bipartisan cold-war bloc in the U.S. Congress acted as one with the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department in lining up solidly with reaction and counter-revolution against the revolutionary masses. Not a single leader of the Democratic or Republican parties favored an economic boycott

against South Africa to compel the white-supremacist regime to stop the massacre of workers and youth fighting for their elementary human rights.

Not a single one of them favored the just cause of the South Korean students against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Syngman Rhee; instead they joined in making pious statements “deploring,” in effect, the fact that our gallant “free world” ally had been caught red-handed stuffing ballot boxes, murdering political opponents, strangling all freedom of speech and press and filling the jails with trade unionists and students.

The bipartisan cold-war bloc joined to a man in the chorus of lies against the Cuban revolution. On this question, which directly touches the vital interests of Wall Street’s colonial empire in Latin America, the capitalist politicians do not permit themselves even the slightest leeway of “criticism”: they are all as one in trying to whip up a frenzy of hatred against a valiant people who have dared to take their fate into their own hands.

And where is the Democratic or Republican contender for the presidency who has walked a picket line with the Negro students fighting for equal rights? Nor did one of them at least have the guts to differ publicly with the foul racist attack of Harry Truman against the Negro student lunch counter sit-ins.

Look at the way the two capitalist parties acted in the cold-war crisis brought about by the collapse of the Summit Conference in Paris. The Paris blowup put a spotlight on the aggressive military and espionage policies of U.S. imperialism. The cynical mendacity of Washington in demanding nothing less than the “right” to invade Soviet territory with impunity shocked the entire world.

Facts emerged in clear view: It isn’t the Soviet Union that has built a ring of military, naval and aircraft bases for launching a nuclear bomb attack around the borders of the United States. It happens to be exactly the other way around. The Soviet Union doesn’t have troops stationed at the U.S. borders in Mexico and Canada. The troops and the nuclear-armed aircraft of the U.S. are instead poised at the borders of the Soviet

Union. These facts have begun to dawn on millions of people in the U.S.

But when the provocations of Eisenhower and the State Department around the U-2 incident led to the collapse of the Summit Conference, was there a single voice in the Democratic "opposition" party that dared to utter the truth and call for a basic change in U.S. foreign policy? Not one. The Democratic contenders for the presidential nomination lined up with their Republican colleagues in a common oath never to be divided by the "aggressive" Russians.

Then came the most despicable fraud of all: the Republicans and the Democrats agreed to "debate" the U-2 incident during the presidential election. What is to be debated, however, is not basic foreign policy. That would be giving aid and comfort to the Enemy. Such debates are conducted in secret, in the Pentagon, the White House and the State Department. What the American people will be allowed to hear is a censored squabble over whether "bungling," "mis-timing" and inter-departmental slip-ups didn't hurt the effectiveness of the cold-war, bipartisan foreign policy.

For all the adjectives he uses, Stevenson, the foremost "critic" of Eisenhower's handling of the Summit Conference, isn't saying a thing more than: I can run this cold war better than Ike; I can lie quicker and

more skillfully than he can — so I ought to be the Democratic candidate for President.

This is all that the "peace forces" in the Democratic party have done. Yet the Communist party is enthralled once more with Stevenson. A headline in the May 29 Worker reads: "Stevenson's Blast on Ike Gains Wide Support." And on page four of the Midwest Edition: "Stevenson Urges Change in U.S. Foreign Policy." Read Stevenson's speech, however, and you discover that he proposes nothing of the sort. He proposes only to carry out U.S. foreign policy more effectively than Eisenhower. Is this something to cheer about? Or should we not understand and explain that if their common foreign policy were to be carried out more effectively it would bring the human race that much closer to destruction?

It is, of course, completely possible for two wings of American imperialism to differ on what is the best foreign policy for capitalism. Under such conditions socialists, in our opinion, never become partisans of one capitalist policy versus another. They advance their own foreign policy for the country, utilizing the debate for that purpose. But in this instance there hasn't even been a real breach in the bipartisan line-up behind Wall Street's cold-war foreign policy. Nor has the Democratic party dared as yet to seize the issue of peace for an all-out demagogic campaign—as it has done so often in the past. The CP nevertheless is sinking its forces deeper into the Democratic party mire — today in the "Boost Stevenson" committees. And tomorrow? Will Kennedy or Symington be too much for them to swallow? Past experience with the CP in relations to cold-war politicians like Harriman and Wagner has shown that once embarked on the opportunist path in the Democratic party, nothing is too much for them.

The Communist party leaders justify their policy with the argument that it helps promote the cause of "peaceful coexistence." According to this conception of peaceful coexistence, first introduced by Stalin and "perfected" by Khrushchev, the class struggle and the socialist revolution have become antiquated as means for fighting imperialist war and bringing about a lasting peace. Lenin's analysis of imperialism, which proved that the imperialist drive towards war was not a matter of evil choice but stemmed from the inexorable laws of capitalism to expand, subjugate the colonial people, and crush all attempts of the working class to free itself from exploitation, was also declared "outmoded" by Stalin and Khrushchev.

Instead of the Leninist concept of struggle for peace the Stalinists introduced the theory and practice of seeking salvation from war by appealing to the "peace-loving" elements in the warmaking capitalist class. Thus the Communist parties are transformed from revolutionary workers organizations fighting for socialism into agencies for finding "peaceloving" capitalist politicians and then helping them to ascend to supremacy within the capitalist parties.

This very policy has led to such devastating defeats and demoralization in the past few decades that it may appear to some that there is no point in debating it again. But it is far from pointless. The stakes are noth-

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

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

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Vol. 21 — No. 3 — Whole No. 152

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S.A. and Latin America, \$1.25 a year (four issues; single copies, 35 cents; bundles, 25 cents a copy for five copies or more. Foreign and Canada, \$1.50 a year (four issues); single copies, 35 cents; bundles, 26 cents a copy for five copies or more.

ing less than the survival of the human race. A revolutionary class struggle policy is the only way to link the advanced sections of the working class to the great social revolutionary movements in the world today. And only these movements have prevented capitalism from pushing the world into the abyss of war. The militant students of Japan are striking more powerful blows for peace than a hundred Paris conferences — even if they were held — could dream of accomplishing.

There are many independent radicals who agree with Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" policy. Yet it is instructive that among these there is a growing number who refuse to go with the CP in its policy of supporting capitalist politicians. We differ with these socialists about many questions but we believe that their position is of vital importance to the future of the socialist movement. We think that their support of independent socialist electoral action, including support of the SWP candidates, despite differences they have with some of the points in the party's program, will lead to a re-examination by them of the source of the CP's ruinous policy.

Such a re-examination would disclose, we believe, that there is a profound difference between peaceful coexistence as the policy of the Soviet Union under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership, and the *Stalinist* concept of peaceful coexistence. In the first case, the Bolsheviks simply recognized that negotiations, trade agreements, concrete diplomatic and military arrangements, etc., between a workers state and capitalist countries was not only permissible but necessary. Trotsky was one of the main teachers of the socialist movement on this question, conducting many a battle against infantile "leftist" misconceptions on this score.

But negotiations and concrete pacts are one thing and the political subordination of the working class parties to the political parties of their class enemies — for the sake of diplomatic deals — is something quite different. That is not peaceful coexistence — it is peaceful suicide.

The special illusion dispensed by the SP-SDF has fared no better than those of the CP. The Social Democrats accept the premise of the whole cold-war lie: that the U.S. is crusading for freedom against totalitarian tyranny. The function of socialists, according to the SP-SDF, is to be critical (constructively, of course) of how Washington conducts this "crusade for freedom" and to work in the two capitalist parties for more "progressive" and "liberal" methods in fighting the Soviet Union.

It is, however, this very premise of the cold war that is now beginning to be questioned by the American people and particularly by the new generation of youth. The stream of lies and brazen provocations emanating from Washington during the recent crisis has shaken large sections of the population from complacent acceptance of the cold-war mythology. Doubt and distrust is heard in many quarters. Young people are asking: If they lie so automatically about spy planes, and then justify lying as the highest form of patriotism, maybe they are also lying when they claim that the U.S. is fighting for freedom, truth and justice among men? Maybe there is something to the charge that they

are really fighting to police the world for the almighty American dollar.

Isn't it monstrous, then, for people who claim to be socialists, to continue to subscribe to the Big Lie and cover it with the good name of socialism at this time?

That is just what the recent convention of the SP-SDF has done. It refused even to demand that the U.S. government disarm. Instead it adopted what the *New York Times* described as a "liberal platform" on this issue. It decided furthermore not to put up candidates in the 1960 Presidential elections. The reasons for this were given by Norman Thomas in the spring issue of the *Socialist Call*:

(1) "The increasing complexity and difficulties of getting on the ballot in fifty states"; (2) "the increasing costs of campaigning"; (3) "the increased opposition of the AFL-CIO to any candidates who might draw votes from the candidates it endorses."

The first two reasons are certainly weighty considerations — as the SWP can testify. But the difficulties are not insurmountable in all the states — not if socialists believe what they say and take seriously the task of saying it not merely to themselves but to the working people and youth of the United States.

The third reason is of a completely different order. The opposition of the labor bureaucrats to independent socialist campaigns is not a valid reason for abandoning the electoral field. It is rather one of the chief reasons for socialists to enter the elections.

The official union leaders have foisted a political policy on labor that has left it wide open to the onslaught of reactionary, union-crippling legislation and reduced the organized working class to political impotence. They have imprisoned the unions in the party of the racist Dixiecrats; the party of the union-busting, open shop, corporate interests; the party that authored the notorious Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin Act; the party whose chief assumed the responsibility for dropping the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the party that launched the cold war, massacred millions of Koreans in Truman's authorized "police action"; the party that organized and inspired the witch hunt, perpetrated the crude frame-up and the cruel murder of the Rosenbergs, and sent Morton Sobell to prison for thirty years.

Should socialists cringe before the displeasure of labor officials whose political ties are not with the working class and the Negro people but with these capitalist enemies of labor?

The SP-SDF thinks so, and the Communist party is completely at one with them in this respect. But we doubt that the rank and file of either the CP or the SP-SDF will carry out this policy with anything but revulsion; and many will break with it in the course of the campaign — even before they enter the voting booth.

The SWP has entered the campaign with its candidates, Farrell Dobbs for President and Myra Tanner Weiss for Vice President, with the aim of arousing sentiment for a break with the capitalist political policy of the labor officials. The SWP candidates will call for

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# Challenge of the Negro Student

New leaders are now coming to the fore in the Southern Negro movement and are questioning all the doctrines of the past

by Bert Deck

**A**N ESTIMATED 100,000 Southern Negro students have participated in mass demonstrations against segregation since McNeil A. Joseph, 17, and three classmates "sat-in" at a Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina on Feb. 1, 1960 and ordered coffee.

These unprecedented actions on the part of the students caught friend and foe, alike, off guard. The apathy of the American students has long been the subject of complaints by shame-faced professors who had knuckled down to the cold-war witchhunt of the fifties. Conformism and narrow self-interest seemed to be a permanent feature of campus life. The "frat" boys ruled supreme and the generations were either beat or beaten.

Even more confounding was that the original source of the movement was the Southern Negro universities, which had developed the reputation of being even more middle class, more apathetic and more conservative than the general run of deadening American universities.

Yet seemingly out of nowhere a "spontaneous" movement erupted and wise heads conjured with it and noted the apparent relationship with the action of the students in Korea, in Japan, in Turkey, in Cuba.

"An older generation was passing," commented the liberal *Nation*. "The objective had to be more than to endure an hour and see injustice done."

Mass uprisings and revolutions are considered commonplace for the Far East, and the Middle East. But "All Quiet on the Western Front" was to

be the epitaph over *our* tradition of rebelliousness which was thought to be buried forever. However, a new generation has announced itself and proclaims that nothing is going to be the same again.

\* \* \*

The new Southern Negro movement is understood by all to be a *student* movement. The adults and their organizations enter as supporters of the actions. Student organizations for social or educational purposes are readily understandable. But how explain an independent student movement on a social question which affects, not only the students, but the entire population?

"... the movement is a protest not only against segregation," writes Dan Wakefield in the *May 7 Nation*, "but against the older Negro leaders ... The sit-ins have brought the students' feeling of protest over the adults' 'slow' tactics into the open."

Martin Luther King, Jr., at a Raleigh, North Carolina conference of student leaders on April 15, described the student movement as "... a revolt against the apathy and complacency of adults in the Negro community; against Negroes in the middle class who indulge in buying cars and homes instead of taking on the great cause that will really solve their problems; against those who have become so afraid they have yielded to the system."

In other words the existence of independent student organizations is a *de facto* criticism by the youth of policies followed by the old established organizations. Their situation as students gives them a formal basis

for separate organization and they have taken advantage of it.

**T**HE deep gulf between the new generation and the conservative NAACP leadership is well understood by all commentators. What is not yet fully appreciated is that the students are likewise separating themselves from the leadership of the radical pacifists such as Reverend King and The Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Wakefield, an unqualified supporter of King, writes, "The students now have their own organization, which will work with, *but not be led by* adult groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) and the NAACP, as well as local church and civic groups." (Our emphasis.)

As the leaders of the King generation (late twenties and early thirties) rose to challenge the narrow policies of the NAACP a few years ago, so now an even younger group of leaders is taking shape and probing deeper into the fight for full integration.

The last previous high point of the Negro struggle was reached by the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56. It taught that the power of mass action was superior to individual resistance or the strictly courtroom road to integration. The students learned from the Montgomery experience that bold moves could inspire and win the support of the community as a whole. Indeed, an inspiring victory was won when the courts went even further than the

original demands of the Negroes. They desegregated the busses altogether which was more than the boycotters had hoped for at first.

In spite of this victory won by the mass action and confirmed by the courts, the old pattern has since largely reasserted itself. Seating from rear to front by the Negroes is once more the rule on Montgomery busses. How could this have happened?

By their courage and unity in action the Negroes forced a concession from the racists. But the latter, through the Democratic party, hold state power and wield it as a bludgeon against the mass movement. Any victory of the integration movement is immediately challenged by this machine. What it is forced to give with one hand, it seeks to take back with the other. Every victory has a question mark placed over it. It becomes partial, transitional and in the last analysis, subject to the test of further struggle. This will be the case as long as the racists are permitted to remain entrenched in the very seat of economic and political power in the South.

The danger of a setback in Montgomery was implicit in the partial character of the victory and would have been present even under the best of leadership. However, the inadequate ideology of pacifism, which refuses to recognize the existence of irreconcilable social forces, undoubtedly contributed to the weakening of the mass movement.

**T**HE Montgomery movement threw up a group of new leaders among the younger ministers led by King. These ministers joined with their counterparts throughout the South to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. There is no doubt that the more militant section of the Negro movement looked hopefully at first to this new organization to spark mass actions on a South-wide basis. However, the Conference proved unable to fulfill this hope and the initiative for the next round of mass actions came from a new source: the students.

An unmistakable quality of this new generation of Negro fighters is their unconditioned demand for full equality. They are in favor of im-

mediate and total abolition of all forms of discrimination. They have no other interests or causes which conflict with this program. In fact any social cause standing opposed to total and immediate desegregation is for them unsupportable and evil — by definition. If any political, economic, social institution or any philosophy stands in the way — then let it go down! These students apparently have sensed that a number of their aspiring adult leaders have “divided” loyalties; thus, their independence.

Montgomery has shown that before the liberation movement can be assured an irreversible and total victory it must become a political power itself dedicated to establishing a government committed to full integration; a government which by its composition, its social base and stated program will be capable of enforcing Negro rights.

To speak now of a “new” type of political power in the South may seem far-fetched; a rushing of the season, at any rate. But a new generation is now preparing itself for the long march to full victory and it is necessary to understand their struggle in perspective.

At the present time the liberation movement is a minority. How can one realistically propose its becoming the political power? The question assumes that all things will remain the same in a world where nothing remains the same. If the present relationship of forces were to freeze then the cause of integration would be a hopeless one. There is no historic precedent of a minority defeating a hostile and *organized* majority. The struggle, itself, presupposes that the relationship of forces will change.

The strategy for victory then resolves itself into ways and means of splitting the majority; winning over one section, neutralizing another, and reducing the hard core racists to an impotent minority.

\* \* \*

The pacifists have a proposal for winning a majority. Dave Dellinger, an editor of the pacifist monthly *Liberation*, describes the strategy of pacifism as follows:

“When non-violence works, as it sometimes does against seemingly

hopeless odds, it succeeds by disarming its opponents. It does this through intensive application of the insight that our worst enemy is actually a friend in disguise. The non-violent resister identifies so closely with his problems as if they were his own and is therefore unable to hate or hurt him, even in self-defence.”

James Bristol writes a *Primer for Pacifists*:

“There is tremendous power in love, non-violence and good will both to change people and to alter social situations. This follows naturally from our first conviction that people can be appealed to by love, no matter how brutal they may be . . .”

Pacifism holds that all men, regardless of their material interests, can be won through love. It denies that social relations can place men in positions of irreconcilable opposition to each other.

For the pacifist, then, the integration movement will triumph when a majority is convinced of the moral superiority of the minority.

There is another aspect of the modern pacifist movement, at least one wing of it, which requires further comment. That is the attempt of such individuals as Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin to incorporate within the basic strategy of pacifism the techniques of mass action (strikes, sit-downs, boycotts, etc.) which were first developed, not by the pacifists, but by the labor movement.

The techniques of mass action tend to run counter to the basic philosophy of pacifism. On the face of it, mass actions are not the exertion of *love* on the enemy. They are effective in so far as they exert the *force* of numbers in the defense of a rightful cause.

**K**ING is vaguely aware of this contradiction. At the Raleigh conference he expressed his fear that the students would draw other than pacifist conclusions from their experience in the sit-in movement. He warned:

“Resistance and non-violence are not in themselves good. There is another element in our struggle that then makes our resistance and non-violence truly meaningful. That element is reconciliation. Our ultimate

end must be the creation of the beloved community. The tactics of non-violence without the spirit of non-violence may become a new kind of violence."

It is the acceptance of the legitimacy of mass action by some pacifists that makes possible limited united actions with the Marxists such as occurred in the Northern student supporting movement, i.e., the picketing of Woolworths and other Jim Crow chains.

While the Marxists can cooperate with the pacifists in specific mass actions they are careful to point out that the "spirit" of pacifism endangers the effectiveness of mass techniques. The "spirit" of pacifism directs the mass movement toward the undefined conscience of the opponent and thus misdirects the fire of the action. The Marxists, on the other hand propose that the mass actions be directed at the material interests of the enemy in order to destroy the basis of his power. The Montgomery bus boycott and the current sit-ins have this in common; they both affect the economic condition of the oppressors.

\* \* \*

The Marxists approach the problem of winning a majority to the

integration movement in a completely different fashion from the pacifists.

Their analysis of history, Negro history included, discloses that every social movement has at its base the material interests of the classes it represents. They discovered that behind every struggle between "justice" and "injustice" lies the social and economic positions of the combatants, which determine their conceptions of these terms. They conclude, therefore, that the majority of whites in the South will see that "justice" is on the side of the Negro when they first see that their own interests can be served by the victory of the Negro. Is such a situation possible?

Despite its ominous outward appearance the Solid South is torn with internal fissures.

Harrison Salisbury writes in the April 15 *New York Times*:

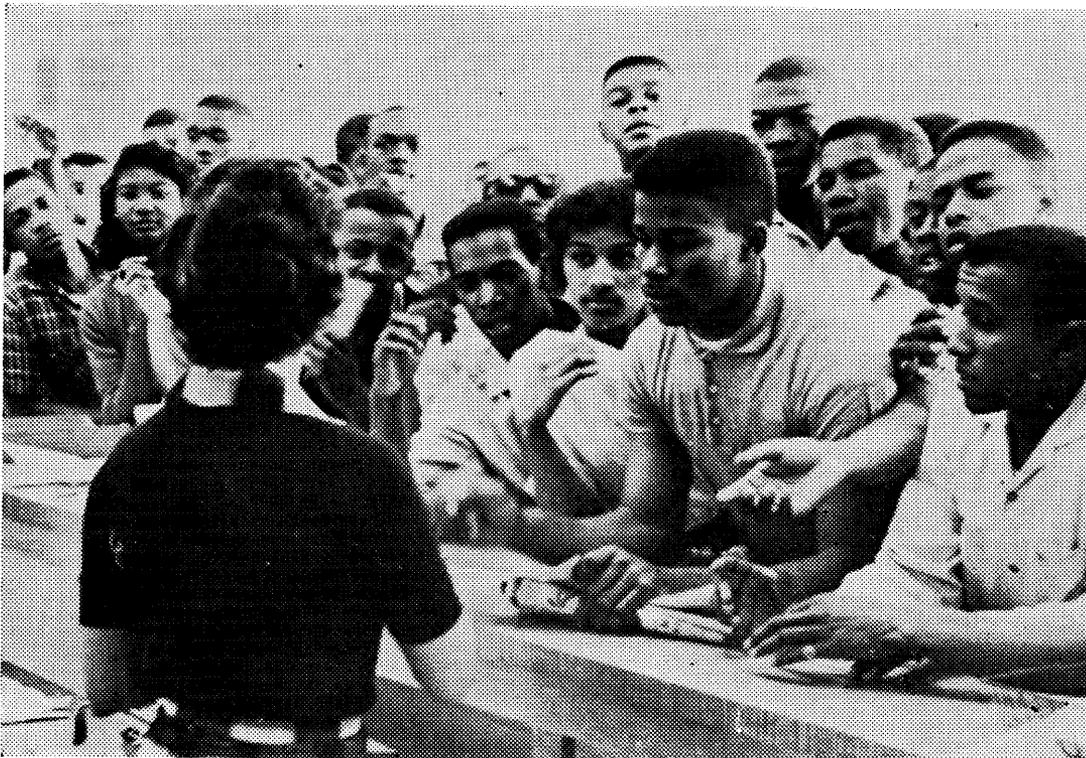
"Under the erosive impact of the segregation issue, Alabama's political and social structure appears to be developing symptoms of disintegration . . . Even if Alabama had the political will to achieve positive solutions of its problems it would be badly handicapped by existing disenfranchisement which affects whites almost as much as Negroes . . . the Black Belt counties (i.e. the tiny

minority of white merchants and landowners who rule the predominantly Negro counties—B.D.) would not be able to maintain their stranglehold on state government and their retrograde influence on state policy were it not for a powerful ally, the big industry of Birmingham. The biggest of Birmingham's so-called "big mules" is U.S. Steel, whose subsidiary Tennessee Coal and Iron, dominates the city economically and, to a considerable extent, politically.

"The 'big mules' and the Black Belt cooperate and, together, usually run the state . . ."

Salisbury, who is no Marxist, nevertheless sees the fracturing of the white community along class lines. He observes that the present rulers of the South are not the white community as such but only a small section of it: the Northern industrialists and their Southern counterparts in alliance with the county merchants and landowners.

The segregation system is indispensable to the rule of this capitalist coalition. Not only does segregation keep the general wage level of the South depressed, but it inhibits the potentially anti-capitalist sentiments of the majority by directing all animosity toward the Negroes. Race



Hundreds of students at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, lined up at registrar's office to ask for forms to withdraw from the school in protest over the expulsion of sixteen of their classmates, who were victimized for conducting lunch-counter sit-ins on March 30.

Prior to their expulsion, the sixteen were jailed. This led to a protest demonstration on the steps of the state capitol by 5,000 Southern University students.

When the sit-in students were suspended the withdrawal movement began.

prejudice has been the traditional cement used by the Southern rulers to patch up their class-torn white society.

**F**OR the majority of Southern whites are not industrialists, landowners and merchants; but rather workers and poor farmers. They are economically exploited and politically disenfranchised by the ruling class. Their only hope is to form an alliance with the Negro masses, with whom they would constitute an overwhelming majority, and thus could become the political power in the South.

Such, at any rate, has been the general Marxist forecast: that the Negro minority could solve its social problem because the white majority would divide along economic lines, opening up the possibility for a majority coalition which could serve the material interests of both the Negroes and the oppressed whites.

This will be no easy road; in fact, no *easy* road exists. The Negroes are fully aware of the deep hostility directed toward them from the oppressed white community. The color line barrier seems as unbreachable as it is irrational.

Yet, there is an historical precedent for just such a breach. Southern workers in the thirties, who had emigrated to the North, became so imbued with the idea of industrial unionism that they were prepared to suppress their deeply ingrained prejudice against their Negro fellow workers. They needed the cooperation of the Negroes to get what they wanted. Without that cooperation, *they could not have built the unions.*

The ex-Southern worker of the thirties, who had previously followed the lead of the extreme racists, found himself in a new social situation with the coming of the CIO. The Negro was supporting the white worker's right to form a union. A number of the white workers passed out of the control of the racists while others became outspoken supporters of full equality. The white and Negro workers formed an alliance against a common enemy and the interests of both groups were thereby served.

There is no reason to doubt that a changing social situation in the South today will not effect similar shifts. The Negro youth are already on the march. They are not waiting

for the white workers, nor does wisdom dictate that they should. Salisbury has observed that the Negro struggle has gone a long way to break down the cohesiveness of traditional Southern society. The Negro action in its own name for its own cause has already had serious effects inside the white community.

Every success of the students will embolden the entire Negro community, especially the workers. As the movement increases in power it can speak to the oppressed whites with the voice of authority. The age-old cries for "justice" and "morality" too often fell on deaf ears. But as an organized power the Negroes will have a new appeal for the white workers and poor farmers; for they



will be in a position to offer the latter *real* help in their own struggles.

There is a very real possibility that *the Negro movement will become the leading spokesman for the interests of all the Southern oppressed.*

This much, at any rate, can be said at present. The Negroes, especially the students, have taken the first initiative. Also by organizing *independently*, the Negro students have taken upon themselves the responsibility to formulate a new program. The stage is being set for an even broader attack on the racist industrialists, landlords and merchants.

**T**HE new crusade (as the students term it) will find that it must remove the number one political obstacle on the path to victory: the Democratic party machine.

This is the muscled arm of the ruling class. It staffs the local and

state apparatuses; the police and sheriff's departments, the courts, the mayors' offices. It sets the policies for all public educational institutions through patronage and political appointments.

It is the open avowed policy of the Democratic party to hold the line against integration. In fact it is the broadest, most effective weapon in the hands of the racists. It is *the* anti-civil rights movement. The KKK and the White Citizen Councils are mere factions of it. "Legal" equality for the Negro in the South would be little more than a farce as long as this venal machine retains its grip on Southern society. The logic of the integration movement means the smashing of this machine and its replacement by one independent of the capitalist rulers: a coalition of all the oppressed, Negro and white, with the Negroes playing a decisive role.

But if the Southern wing of the Democratic party is smashed by the integration movement what happens to it nationally? The Southern wing is necessary to the party for its survival as a national force. Even a united party is threatened with a decline at present. A divided party would signal the end altogether.

This would mean the end of the most effective tool in the hands of the capitalists to forestall the independent political organization of the labor movement, the Negro people and the small farmer. The most likely outcome of the disintegration of the Democratic party would be the formation of a Labor party which would challenge the capitalist structure of the North as well as the South.

This inescapable logic of the Negro rights movement is what gives pause to many of the present spokesmen of that movement. They are hoping against hope that a way can be found to circumvent necessity. Not class struggle but "reconciliation." They seek to temper the struggle long enough so that they may carry out their vain search for the non-existent path to Negro equality which leaves undisturbed all the other abominations of capitalist society. For in their heart of hearts they would prefer a capitalist Jim Crow society to the struggle for a non-capitalist one of human equality.

# Ideology of the Cuban Revolution

Jean Paul Sartre believes it was a "blind" revolution; while Che Guevara holds that it has revealed a new road to power. What is its meaning in light of Marxist theory?

by Joseph Hansen

**J**EAN Paul Sartre relates that at the beginning of the year some Cuban friends came to see him. "They talked at length, with fire, of the Revolution, but I tried in vain to get them to tell me whether the new regime was socialist or not."

Sartre was prevailed on to visit Cuba and determine for himself. Upon leaving, he offered his impressions in an essay of unusual interest, "Ideología y Revolución" (Ideology and Revolution), which was published in the March 21 issue of *Lunes de Revolución*.

"What first surprises one in Cuba — above all if you have visited the countries of the East —" he wrote; "is the apparent absence of ideology. Yet it is not ideologies that are lacking in this century; here too, they have representatives who from all sides offer us their services. Your leaders are not ignorant of them; they simply don't employ them. Their adversaries formulate the most contradictory reproaches: for some, this absence of ideas is nothing more than a trick; it hides the most rigorous Marxism which does not yet dare name itself; some day the Cubans will remove the mask and communism will be installed in the Caribbean, a few miles from Miami. Other enemies — or, on occasion, the same — accuse them of thinking of absolutely nothing: 'They are improvising,' I have been told, 'and after having done something they elaborate a theory.' Someone adds politely: 'Try to speak with the members of the government; perhaps they know what they are doing. As for us, I must confess that we know absolutely nothing.' And a few days ago at the University, a student declared, 'Autonomy becomes all the more indispensable since the Revolution has not defined its objectives.'"

In reply to all this, Sartre continued, he had heard a thousand times: "The Revolution is a *praxis* which forges its ideas in action." This reply, the French Existentialist philosopher and playwright held, was logically unassailable, but a little abstract. Citing a practical interest in clearing up the question of the theory of the Cuban revolution, he declared: "It is necessary to understand, certainly, the uneasiness — sincere or feigned — of those who say that they don't know anything or who reproach

the revolutionary movement with not having defined its aims." Mentioning his first query — is the Cuban revolution socialist or not? — Sartre recognized that the question was not well put, due to the fact that from a distance one tends to be a "little abstract, falling into those big words that today constitute symbols rather than programs." Nevertheless, "Socialism? Liberal economy? Many intellectuals ask; they are convinced in good faith that a Revolution ought to know where it is going."

Sartre believes they are wrong. The French Revolution of 1789 was "totally blind." The same ones "who voted for the Republic were monarchists two years before. Everything terminated in a military dictatorship that saved the rich and reinstated the monarchy. And, through the mirages of an inflexible rigidity, how many vacillations, how many errors, how many slips backward the Russian Revolution experienced during its first years!" A NEP imposed by circumstances "failure to foresee" the wreck of the revolutionary movements in Europe or even its own isolation. "The new ideas were expressed within the framework of an ideology without flexibility, becoming converted into hernias: Socialism in one country, the permanent revolution; inventions which it was believed could be justified through quotations."

Sartre, presenting his credentials in this field, is clearly not to be taken as a serious theoretician of revolution. From his brief remarks about Europe's two greatest revolutions, it would be hard to escape the conclusion that revolutionary theory is of little use. Nevertheless, he finds it scarcely satisfying to reply in response to the question in Cuba, "Are you going to build Socialism?" that "*praxis* will define its own ideology."

Sartre found among the leaders of the Cuban Revolution two conceptions which he at first thought were contradictory. One of the leaders told him that the Revolution is unable to take a long-range objective "because it is a *re-action*, or if you wish, something that rebounds."

"He meant by this that your people, placed before a too powerful neighbor, never had the absolute initiative and

saw themselves obliged to employ every recourse of intelligence and energy to *invert* a counterblow. And he added: 'How can we make long-range plans when we can find ourselves invaded tomorrow, or suffer the most intense economic pressure? Guerrilla war, resistance to economic blockade, would necessarily change the structure of our society. All we know is this: we will not be defeated. But the conditions of our struggle would change us: it will be *another* Cuba that sees the victory.' I understood that he meant that your 'improvisations' are not, in fact, anything but a defensive technique: the Cuban Revolution must *adapt itself* constantly to the enemy maneuvers. Perhaps the measures of *counterblow* will give birth to a counter-ideology?"

## Leaders Became Radicalized

However, other leaders talked about themselves. "I asked them questions about their lives, about the evolution of their thought. All of them told me that the Revolution had dragged them far beyond their first positions. Violent clashes had occurred and they had to confront severe realities: some of their old friends had not followed the movement; others, reluctantly in the beginning, had become *radicalized*."

The two concepts at first seemed incompatible to Sartre. "In the first case, I thought, one adapts himself, one temporizes, everything must remain fluid and principles must not constitute a hindrance. In the second, the revolutionary movement becomes more profound, in a sure and, as a whole, regular manner; there exist then an order of march, points of reference, a direction. Perhaps it would be too ambitious to call the discovery of an orientation an 'ideology,' but it must be admitted that the demands of *praxis* have changed the ideas of these revolutionary leaders."

Observing the reciprocal relation between Havana's masses and Castro, during the Cuban leader's speech following the blowing up of the freighter *La Coubre* as it was unloading munitions for the defense of the country, Sartre came to the conclusion that the two concepts "counterblow" and "radicalization" were actually interrelated and that they marked the entire course of the Cuban

Revolution. In the rest of his essay he sketches this interrelation, beginning with the appearance of bourgeois-democratic patriots who had to find a class base in the "agricultural workers" in order to build an effective movement, then take up the agrarian cause to carry through the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship, and finally undertake radical economic measures to consolidate the victory and defend the country against imperialism. Sartre sees as the possible end point of this development, should the foreign pressure prove sufficient, "self-radicalization" of the Cuban Revolution and, as its economic counterpart, "radical socialization."

IN APRIL, a few weeks after the appearance of Sartre's observations, a book by Ernesto "Che" Guevara was published in Havana.\* As one of the top figures of the Cuban government, anything that Guevara writes is, of course, to be studied. In the particular field covered in the book, guerrilla warfare, he is an undoubted authority, having proved this by his military leadership in the civil war. At present, as head of the National Bank, he is in charge of Cuba's foreign trade, a post of key importance in the defense of the country and in the development of economic planning. *La Guerra de Guerrillas* will undoubtedly be widely discussed in revolutionary circles throughout Latin America where Cuba is now pre-eminent as a source of inspiration.

Largely a handbook, the author deals in considerable detail with the practical side of guerrilla warfare in a country like Cuba under the conditions of a dictatorship like Batista's. As Guevara stresses, virtually everything he presents is taken from the Cuban experience and may not be applicable in every instance to other countries even those having much in common in the way of climate, topography and socio-economic inheritance. I shall not deal with this aspect of the book save to note the striking portrait that emerges of the average Cuban guerrilla fighter.

Recruited from the countryside, chances were that he came to the Sierra Maestra barefoot and unable to read or write. He had gone through a period of testing, not least of which was to obtain his own gun and ammunition, most likely by a raid on a contingent of Batista's armed forces. He did not come with blind faith. Observing the guerrilla leadership in action he had become convinced of its honesty and fairness, the sincerity of its program of agrarian reform and its will to carry the struggle through to the end.

The guerrilla's life was not easy — under constant threat of death, he was often like a hunted animal, scurrying from cover to cover. He had to make

lightning marches by night, attack, and flee. Sometimes as much as three days went without food. Sleeping in a hammock at best, under a strip of nylon to keep off rain and insects, tension was never absent. A bath, a shave were luxuries to dream of. (Guevara notes that each man could be told by his individual odor and the whole force by its acrid smell, "repelling strangers.")

The firmest asceticism prevailed; the fighters living like monks or Spartans. An iron principle of the leaders was to lead by example ". . . the chiefs must constantly offer the example of a crystal clear and self-sacrificing life." All, leaders and ranks, shared and shared alike — no exceptions. This included not only the occasional handouts of tobacco but the rugged fare, the hunger, the risks and the worst hardships. As the guerrilla fighter's horizon widened under indoctrination, he became a revolutionary, charged with the conviction and fervor so characteristic of forces dedicated to a great cause.

The small guerrilla bands grew until they were able to hold considerable territory where, as a power dual to that of Batista, they were able to give a demonstration of what their government would be like. The guerrilla forces developed into a full-fledged army of such force, hardness and skill that nothing in the country could stand against it. Batista's forces melted away. The *barbudos*, the bearded ones, marched in triumph into Havana, many of them seeing the wonders of the nation's capital for the first time.

### Guevara's Conclusions

Is it possible to draw more general lessons from this experience than the best practical way to organize guerrilla forces and later convert them into an army? Guevara thinks so. He presents some rather far-reaching conclusions. It is these, of considerable ideological interest, rather than such items as a good recipe for making a Molotov cocktail, or how to trap a Sherman tank, that will undoubtedly arouse most interest. Here is how Guevara begins:

"The armed victory of the Cuban people over the Batista dictatorship has been, in addition to the epic triumph recognized in the news of the entire world, a modifier of old dogmas on leading the popular masses of Latin America, demonstrating palpably the capacity of the people to liberate themselves from a suffocating government through guerrilla struggle.

"We hold that the Cuban revolution made three fundamental contributions to the mechanics of the revolutionary movements in America. They are:

"(1) The popular forces can win a war against the army.

"(2) It is not always necessary to wait until all the conditions are ripe for the revolution; the insurrectional center can create them.

"(3) In underdeveloped America, the terrain of the armed struggle must be fundamentally the countryside."

Explaining his first two conclusions, the Cuban revolutionary leader says that they speak against "the quietist attitude of revolutionaries or pseudo revolutionaries who take cover, and cover for their inactivity, under the pretext that against a professional army nothing can be done, and some others who feel that they have to wait until, in a mechanical form, all the necessary objective and subjective conditions are ready, without preoccupying themselves about accelerating them."

Guevara recognizes, of course, that certain minimum objective conditions must ripen before the "first insurrectional center" can be set up. "Where a government has come to power through any form of popular consultation, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, it is impossible to precipitate guerrilla warfare since the possibilities of civic struggle have not been exhausted."

On the third point, which is of greater interest, both in itself and as indication of how at least this top leader views the Cuban revolution in its wider aspects, Guevara declares:

"The third contribution is fundamentally of strategic import and must be a call to attention for those who attempt with dogmatic criteria to center the struggle of the masses in the movements of the cities, completely forgetting the immense participation of those in the countryside in the life of all the underdeveloped countries of the Americas. Not that struggles of the masses of organized workers are to be depreciated, the analysis simply chooses a realistic criterion to estimate the possibilities under the difficult conditions of armed struggle, where the guarantees that customarily adorn our Constitutions are suspended or ignored. Under these conditions, the workers' movements must be clandestine, without arms, in illegality and running enormous dangers; the situation in the open field is not so difficult, the inhabitants supporting the armed guerrillas and in places where the repressive forces cannot reach."

Developing his point further, Guevara specifies that since guerrilla action is best conducted "in wild and little populated places" the struggle for the demands of the people is centered "preferentially and even almost exclusively, on the plane of changing the social composition of land tenancy; that is, the guerrilla is above all an agrarian revolutionary. He expresses the desire of the great peasant mass to be owner of the land, owner of their means of production, of their animals, of all that they have dreamed of for years, of what constitutes their life and will also constitute their cemetery."

Of the two types of guerrilla warfare, Guevara sets aside the one which is

\* *La Guerra de Guerrillas*, by Che Guevara. Published by the Department of Instruction of MINFAR (Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces), Havana, Cuba. 1960. 187 pp. \$1.

complementary to the struggle of big regular armies "such as the case of the Ukrainian guerrillas in the Soviet Union." "What interests us," he continues, "is the case of an armed group which continues progressing in the struggle against the constituted power, whether it be colonial or not, which establishes a single base and which continues progressing in the rural surroundings. In all these cases, whatever may be the ideological structure that animates the struggle, the economic base is given by the aspiration to possess the land."

Seeking other examples to support his generalization, the Cuban leader points first of all to China:

"Mao's China begins as an eruption of workers' nuclei in the South that is defeated and almost annihilated. It becomes established and initiates its ascendant march only after the long march to Yen-an when it settles in rural territories and places as the base of demands the agrarian reform. The struggle of Ho Chi Min in Indochina is based on the rice-growing peasants oppressed by the French colonial yoke and with this force it continues progressing until it defeats the colonialists. In both cases there is an interruption of patriotic war against the Japanese invader, but the economic base of the struggle for the land does not vanish. In the case of Algiers, the great idea of Arab nationalism has its economic replica in the exploitation of almost the entire arable land of Algiers by a million French colons; and in some countries like Puerto Rico, where the particular conditions of the island have not permitted a guerrilla outbreak, the national spirit, wounded to the depths by the discrimination committed daily against them, has as its base the aspirations of the peasantry (although in many cases it is already proletarianized) for the land which the Yankee invader seized; and this same central idea was what animated, although in different projections, the small holders, peasants and slaves of the haciendas of eastern Cuba who closed ranks to defend together the right to possession of the land during the thirty-year war of liberation."

Guevara does not rule out the action of the city proletariat altogether. But, since city terrain is the most unfavorable for guerrilla warfare, only limited acts are possible. In other words, reversing the situation of the Ukrainian guerrillas, the workers can only complement the struggle of the guerrilla fighters in the countryside. At a final point in the civil war, however, when the guerrilla forces have swelled into a peasant army capable of regular battle, the city proletariat can find it possible to engage in mass actions "whose final result is the general strike."

IN THE closing section of his book, "Analysis of the Cuban Situation, Present and Future," Guevara offers some additional considerations. After more than a year in power, it is necessary, he thinks, to take "the exact dimension" of the Cuban Revolution. "This national Revolution, fundamentally agrarian, but with the enthusiastic participation of the workers, the people of the middle class and even today with the support of the industrialists, has acquired great continental and even world importance . . ."

The Agrarian Reform, "extremely harsh" for those whom it displaced from ownership, put in motion INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform) which now "advances like a tractor or tank" breaking up the big landholdings. The Agrarian Reform was "antifeudal" but occurred in "capitalist surroundings" and against the monopolies. Thus it had to help the peasants and agricultural workers with credit and with machinery and "People's Stores."

"Of all the characteristics distinguishing it from the other three great agrarian reforms of the Americas (Mexico, Guatemala and Bolivia), what appears most important is the decision to carry it through to the end without favors or concessions to any class."

Production of such important items as rice, grain and cotton is developing rapidly, constituting "the center of the process of planning." Cuba's rich subsoil resources have been retrieved through petroleum and mining laws which may turn out to be "as important" as the Agrarian Reform. The profits of foreign monopolists have been limited. The small island of Cuba is leading the anticolonial struggle in the Americas and has been permitted to take "the heroic, glorious and dangerous post of the vanguard."

"Small countries have sought before now to maintain this position; Guatemala . . . which fell before the direct aggression of the colonialists; and Bolivia . . . which yielded before the terrible difficulties of the struggle despite having provided three of the examples which served the Cuban Revolution in a fundamental way: the suppression of the army, the Agrarian Reform and the nationalization of the mines . . ."

Cuba knows these examples, knows the pitfalls and the difficulties, but knows also that we are in the dawn of a new era in the world; the colonial pillars have been swept down by the popular national struggle in Asia and in Africa. The tendency today toward unification of the peoples does not come from their religions, from their customs, from their appetites, racial affinity or lack of it; it comes from the economic similarity of their social conditions and from the similarity of their eagerness for progress and recuperation. Asia and Africa shook hands at Bandung; Asia and Africa will shake hands with native

and colonial America through Cuba here in Havana."

Guevara notes the decline of the old colonial empires in face of the popular upheavals. "Belgium and Holland are two caricatures of empire; Germany and Italy lost their colonies. France debates in the bitterness of a war she must lose, and England, diplomatic and skillful, liquidates her political power while maintaining economic connections."

The United States has replaced some of the old capitalist colonial powers but knows that this is "transitory." Wall Street's main field is Latin America. But if "all the Latin-American people raised the banner of dignity, like Cuba," the monopolists would tremble and have to accommodate themselves to a "new politico-economic situation and to substantial pruning of their gains." That is why the monopolists today attack Cuba as a "bad example." They accuse Cuba because of the road it has pointed out, "the road of armed popular struggle against the supposedly invincible armies, the road of struggle in wild areas to consume and destroy the enemy outside its bases, in one word, the road of dignity."

Guevara winds up discussing the possible variants of imperialist aggression against Cuba and the means of combating it. For defense he counts heavily on "international solidarity" and guerrilla warfare. Finally, he suggests, "The cult of labor, above all collective labor and with collective aims, must be developed." This together with a people in "international solidarity" and guerrilla warfare makes Cuba's future "brighter than ever."

LEON Trotsky remarked in 1940, "The life-and-death task of the proletariat now consists not in *interpreting* the world anew but in *remaking* it from top to bottom. In the next epoch we can expect great revolutionists of action but hardly a new Marx."

Cuba, it would seem, has done her share toward verifying this observation. In their pattern of action, the Cuban revolutionaries feel certain that they have pointed the way for all of Latin America. The proof is their own success. But when we seek to determine the exact meaning of their deeds, Marxist clarity is not easily found.

Are we to understand from what Guevara says that the peasantry has displaced the proletariat as the leading revolutionary class — in the underdeveloped countries at least?

If so, what does this signify for revolutionary perspectives in the highly industrialized countries? Must the perspective of proletarian revolution be considered unrealistic there? If so, how does this affect the defense of revolutions like the one in Cuba? And what does it signify for humanity on such an issue as the possibility of a Third World War? Can the proletariat by revolutionary means hope to prevent a nuclear

conflict or must this possibility be relinquished as utopian — unless the farmers take the lead by mounting guerrilla warfare?

Guevara insists, quite correctly the facts testify, that Cuba now stands in the vanguard of the Latin-American revolution. This would seem to impose an obligation to examine the theories and programs affecting that revolution, particularly if Cuba has made a new discovery. Why did the others happen to go wrong? How did the Cubans happen to stumble upon the right road? If for no other reason, such an examination could prove fairly decisive for the defense of the Cuban revolution. Yet even Guevara seems to evade such questions, confining himself to a cryptic reference — the “quietist attitude of revolutionaries or pseudo revolutionaries.” What revolutionaries or pseudo revolutionaries? The Stalinists? The Apristas? We are left in the dark.

It is quite true that the Cuban revolutionaries do not have any time for spinning fine theories. They are practical people, swamped with tasks. They scarcely have time to look up from the day-and-night schedules they have had to follow since they came to power.

Yet there are some questions about which the Cubans should be able to say a good deal. For example, how did it happen that the once-powerful Communist party proved incapable of leading the revolution? How did it happen instead, that a handful of dedicated students were able to build a revolutionary movement from virtually nothing and accomplish what the Communist party failed to accomplish? The answer to that should prove instructive to all of Latin America and the entire world for that matter.

Such topics, however, are not very high on the agenda of the Cuban revolutionaries. Their boldness and sureness of touch in the field of action have no corresponding reflection in the field of theory. Despite Guevara's sweeping conclusions, the theoretical lessons of the Cuban Revolution have not yet been drawn.

By way of beginning this task, let us establish some preliminary points of departure.

The founders of the July 26 Movement started as petty-bourgeois democrats. Fidel Castro, for example, ran for Congress in the 1952 elections as a member of the Ortodoxo party (Partido del Pueblo). After Batista's March 10 coup d'etat, Castro shortly set out on the road to insurrection. This led him within a year to the famous assault on the Moncada fortress and then to prison and exile. On March 19, 1956, he declared his disillusionment with the Ortodoxo party and announced the July 26 Movement as an independent revolutionary organization. This proved to be primarily a party of action, dedicated to the overthrow of the Batista dicta-

torship. Although occasional blocs were made with other groups and parties, the essence of its politics was to remain independent and not to swerve from its primary objective. It was a revolutionary youth movement much closer to the campus in the beginning than to either the factories or the fields, although later it came powerfully under the social influence of the poorest peasants and agricultural workers.

Why weren't these youthful revolutionaries attracted by the Communist party? The answer would appear to be quite simple and even obvious. The Communist party was not revolutionary enough. In fact, it was not revolutionary at all. It was tainted by its support

of the Batista regime. Moreover, neither Stalin nor his heirs were exactly magnets to youth burning with the will to smash the dictatorship. Among other things, Moscow's policy of “peaceful co-existence”; i.e., maintenance of the status quo, which was faithfully echoed by the Communist parties throughout the world, was repellent to revolutionaries seeking above all things to alter the status quo.

The models and inspirational guidance they might have found in the early Soviet leaders were not available to them, or were at least obscured under the successive layers of Stalinist mud.

The Cubans turned to what was closest at hand — the leaders of the inde-

## Letter from Japan

Dear Comrades:

Thank you very much for the Militant and the International Socialist Review. They are of great help in our work and are being used especially to enlighten our young recruits . . . The Japanese Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL) is slowly but very steadily growing. JRCL was active in the May Day demonstrations in which 600,000 workers participated in Tokio alone. Together with the other groups of Zengakuren (National Student Council active in the current anti-U.S. struggle) we joined the demonstration with our huge red banner, THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, in letters of white . . .

Most of our members are university students and graduates, almost all of them being former members of the Communist party. Although the number of factory workers in our League is still relatively small, we already have strong and active connection with a number of unions.

On our policy towards the students: At the national conference of Zengakuren in June 1958, JRCL, together with the Communist League (a left centrist group which was expelled from the CP), ousted the Stalinist leaders from office. This bloc held the leadership until last year. When the JRCL was compelled to concentrate its efforts on the worker's movement, the Communist League succeeded in wresting the leadership from us . . . This year in order to suppress the mounting criticism against them among the mass of students, the CL, trampling on all democratic procedure, removed eight of our members from the Executive Committee of Zengakuren. They then held an extraordinary national conference with only their faction represented. We are preparing for a struggle at the coming annual conference around the issue of democracy within Zengakuren.

Zengakuren is now divided into three groups: the Communist League, JRCL and the Yagogi group.

The Yagogi group is affiliated with the

CP but is very critical towards the Stalinist leadership. With the recent growth of CP influence among the workers, this group is apparently increasing its membership. But with the growth of CP influence, the discontent within the lower organizations of the CP is also growing. The CP is planning to hold its postponed conference this coming October. At the last conference the Stalinist leaders were unable to pass their proposed party program owing to the vigorous criticism from the ranks. Student communists played an important role in the criticism . . .

Discussion on party program will intensify within the Yagogi group it is expected and the sharpest discussion will take place over the policy of “peaceful coexistence.” We are unfolding our propaganda among these students, counterposing the policy of international socialist revolution to the Stalinist policy of peaceful coexistence

The opposition within the CP holds strong positions on the following points:

(1) It is for the socialist revolution while the Stalinists call for a National Emancipation-Democratic Revolution.

(2) It emphasizes the workers' struggles against monopoly capitalism while the Stalinists emphasize the “struggle against feudalism.”

(3) It tries to develop influence within the mass movement, especially the labor movement, while the Stalinists concentrate on the party apparatus.

The opposition has its main strength in the industrial areas. Fortunately we have some forces in the trade unions and by promoting united actions in the class struggle we extend our influence among the workers and at the same time develop our contact with the opposition in the CP.

Tokyo, June 1960

pendence movement of the past century. These figures had a virtue lacking in the Stalinist movement: honesty. Implacable foes of tyranny of any kind, they were dedicated men capable of accepting martyrdom to advance the cause of freedom.

Thus it came about that the July 26 Movement marched under the banners of freedom, equality and independence, as if the main problem of a modern revolution boils down to re-enacting 1776, 1789, or — in Cuban history — 1868 and 1895. The 1956-59 struggle closely paralleled the struggle of 1895-98, including the opening landing and the final advance of the guerrilla forces. Although they did not consciously plan it that way, the Cuban revolutionaries, with their beards, even bore close physical resemblance to the heroes of the past century.

Moreover, they took power, as Guevara stresses, not at the head of the modern proletariat but at the head of the peasantry, a class that is vestigial from the pre-capitalist era.

The pattern seems to defy the Marxist theory that the proletarian revolution has superseded the bourgeois. Yet does it really invalidate the main laws of the world revolutionary process as much as it appears to when you look at the Cuban Revolution merely in isolation? If we connect it with the main international events of the past forty-odd years, two outstanding facts of contemporary history at once offer a key: (1) the deepening decay of capitalism, which impels revolutionary outbursts no matter what the barriers; (2) the decades of defeats of the proletarian revolution in the capitalist centers due to the pernicious influence of the Communist parties under control of the bureaucratic caste that usurped power in the first workers' state.

That the main thrust of the Cuban Revolution from the beginning was against capitalist imperialism is well understood among those who overthrew Batista. When McKinley intervened in the civil war in 1898, the freedom fighters had virtually won independence from the Spanish colonial master. McKinley aimed at blocking Cuba's independence and bringing the island into the orbit of Wall Street. American capital soon became dominant in both the island's economy and politics. Under the State Department, Batista, like Machado before him, ruled in the style of a gauleiter. Consequently, it is not difficult to see that the main motor force in the Cuban upheaval was American capitalism.

It is perhaps not so easy to see that Batista's rule of a quarter of a century was no more necessary than the similar span of Chiang Kai-shek's rule in China. Had the Cuban Communist party responded to Batista's seizure of power in 1933 with one-tenth the energy and singleness of purpose later displayed by the July 26 Movement, there can be no

doubt that among Roosevelt's headaches would have been a socialist Cuba. Instead the Cuban Stalinists used their influence in the working class to rally support to Batista just as the American Stalinists utilized their influence among the American workers to spread the debilitating cult of "FDR."

The pattern was fundamentally the same as that followed by the Communist parties throughout the world prior to World War II. This is the true explanation for the fact that more than forty years after the October 1917 Revolution, not a single Communist party has led a revolutionary struggle to success anywhere in the world save in China and Yugoslavia; and in both these instances the leaderships disregarded the line laid down by Moscow. *Stalinism proved to be the most powerful brake on revolution in the experience of the proletariat.* This was so not only in Germany, France and Spain before World War II, to mention only the most outstanding examples where the workers could easily have taken power, but after the war, when millions of workers flocked into the Communist parties in France and Italy and other countries. If twelve determined men on Pico Turquino proved sufficient to start the avalanche that buried Batista, what couldn't the Italian Communist party accomplish with its millions of members if it displayed similar revolutionary determination and devotion to the socialist cause which it claims to represent!

On a world scale, taking the entire span since the advent of Stalinism, it is the same default of leadership in the working class, due to Stalinist exploitation of the proletarian tendency to turn toward the first workers' state, that finally resulted in the extraordinary spectacle today of revolutions breaking out in dozens of countries — not under Communist, but under petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois nationalist leadership. One may imagine what Lenin might say of a Soviet Union capable of putting satellites in orbit about the sun and photographing the other side of the moon, yet incapable of giving direct inspiration to revolutionary-socialist struggles in other lands; on the contrary, sabotaging them, and thus creating a vacuum in revolutionary leadership!

However, the extension granted capitalism did not remove the objective necessity for transcending the system. The great new fact in world politics is that neither Stalinism nor imperialism, nor the combination of the two proved capable of suppressing the revolutionary process indefinitely. They could not prevent it from breaking out finally on democratic issues that might even mask the proletarian direction. They could not prevent the revolutionary process from finding leaders capable of at least making a beginning even though they might fail to meet the objective need — or oppose it — at the very next stage.

Unable to blast away the Stalinist

obstacle, the revolution turned back a considerable distance and took a detour. The detour has led us over some very rough ground, including the Sierra Maestra of Cuba, but it is clear that the Stalinist road block is now being bypassed.

### The Main Lesson

It is not necessary to turn to Moscow for leadership. This is the main lesson to be drawn from the experience in Cuba. And it is the lesson to be drawn above all by the working class in other countries, especially the underdeveloped ones where the revolutionary potential is high. Once this lesson sinks home we will witness an acceleration of the revolutionary process that will not leave the slightest doubt that the main power in society resides with the working class and that it will not forfeit its manifest destiny of leadership in the decisive battles now looming.

A single revolution under the guidance of the working class anywhere in the world today will reveal such energy and dispatch in breaking out of the old society that in retrospect even the dynamic Cuban Revolution will appear drawn out and grossly out of proportion in toil and agony. That, however, will not detract from the debt the working people of the world owe the Cubans. To finally break the hypnosis of Stalinism, it became necessary to crawl on all fours through the jungles of the Sierra Maestra.

Men and women capable of that, will prove capable, we think, of transcending the bourgeois limits set at the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. Already indications of this are visible. The July 26 Movement came to power not in 1898 but in 1959; and within a few months it became amply clear that not even the simplest democratic aims could be achieved without far-reaching alterations in the economy. Here the revolutionary models taken from the past century could offer little in the way of guidance. Their theory was inadequate.

But economic planning, thanks to the October 1917 Revolution, is no longer a matter of theory. Models exist and a vast practical experience, both good and bad. To help solve their own problems, the Cuban leaders are evidently seeking to come abreast of modern times and are turning in this direction.

Thus the inherent tendency of the Cuban Revolution to develop in the proletarian direction has been accelerated and there is every possibility that in an indirect way the fate of Cuba will be profoundly affected by the proletarian revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky. As this pattern of action cuts its way to consciousness, we may hope that the influence of October will be reflected directly in the ideology of the Cuban Revolution.

# Economics of Peaceful Coexistence

The president of Italy visits Moscow; the chancellor of West Germany flies to the U. S., while Krupp attends a trade fair in East Germany. What deals were made?

by Shane Mage

LET us now consider a more intricate aspect of the present world situation, the emergence of antagonisms between the capitalist powers which were previously submerged by the need to build the dominance of the United States through the military lineup of blocs. Today this structure has shown signs, not of coming apart, but of resolving itself into mutually incompatible elements.

Now one thing that must be understood to understand European politics today, and the politics of the Summit Conference also, is the importance of the European Common Market. It went into effect a year and three months ago and in the next four years will result in the elimination of custom barriers and trade restrictions among the nations of continental Europe. Now when I talk of the Common Market, I should really talk of the two common markets, the so-called Inner Six and the Outer Seven. This is one of the lines of conflict in capitalist Europe today and one of the most important ones.

The Inner Six are Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. If you go over them

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This article consists of excerpts of a report given by Shane Mage to the Founding Conference of the Young Socialist Alliance in Philadelphia on April 16.

The reporter presented to the conference a resolution titled, "The Fight Against War," which was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

Copies of this resolution may be obtained by sending twenty cents to: Young Socialist Forum, Box 471, Cooper Station, New York 3, N. Y.

you will see that these are the countries in which the Catholic and clerical parties hold real dominance . . .

Facing these countries is the Outer Seven which can be described as Britain and its satellites — the Scandinavian countries plus Austria, Switzerland and Portugal. The conflict seems to boil down to the conflict between British capitalism and the French and German capitalisms.

The French and Germans see a great potential in this Common Market, encompassing an area with a population equal to that of the United States with production close to it. The breakdown of barriers, the rationalization of European capitalism constitutes a great and real potential for the big and dynamic industries that can take advantage of it.

But this means a wall will be erected around the common market against the rest of the world. And the first country hit is England which will find itself increasingly squeezed out of its markets in Europe to the advantage of certain sections of the French and German capitalist class.

Now so far this seems fairly elementary. The lines are easy to see. Then comes another question which is much more difficult — the German question. It is only on the surface that the split is between France and Germany, on one hand, and England on the other. Now the German question is to be discussed at the Summit Conference and the economic background is going to be very important there so it will probably not appear in the newspapers.

In order to understand what's going on in Germany today, let's go over a few facts.

A year ago, German Chancellor Adenauer announced his intention to retire. He appointed his successor, a man named Franz Etzel. The faction of the majority party in the parliament decided not to accept, as chancellor, Adenauer's appointment, but to choose Erhard. Both of them are practically indistinguishable except that Etzel is a Catholic and Erhard, a Protestant. Both are liberals in the European sense, absolute free traders. Seemingly only a question of personalities. Adenauer decides this cannot be, thus another five years in office for himself.

The second fact: This year, the Common Market was to be accelerated. The targets for tariff reduction internally and increase externally originally set for 1962 were to be advanced to July 1, 1960. Adenauer went to Washington, got the approval, or at least what he thought was the approval, of the State Department for this. On his return he found that his party had decided against it, and the economic officers of the Common Market had decided against it.

THE third fact: While Adenauer was in Washington demanding that the United States stand firm, firm against any concession that could lead to a recognition of East Germany, a cozy little gathering under the title of International Trade Fair was being held in the city of

Leipzig, East Germany. It was “totally unpolitical” — no question of political recognition of anyone by anyone — just to talk markets, investments and other minor details like that. While Adenauer was visiting Washington, the cream of the Ruhr — people from Krupps, Siemens and so forth — were visiting Leipzig — to see their old relatives.

Now very clearly what is happening is an important split within the German capitalist class concerning radically different orientations. These are going to come out more and more in the years ahead. To slap a label on them, perhaps a bit arbitrarily, but in general it's good — the Catholic wing that wants to build a little Europe, people like Adenauer, who see their future in cooperation with the United States against Russia; against the Protestant wing, very important in the Ruhr, who have certain “sentimental” ties to the East, who haven't forgotten the *drang nach osten* and at the same time think they can do business with the English. The people around the distinguished Chancellor of the Exchequer Erhard are opposed to this Common Market idea even though they won't say so. They are opposed to Adenauer down the line and look toward the reorientation of West Germany's special politics, certainly to a bloc with England, ultimately to a deal with Russia.

All right, that's one or two or three lines of fissure in Western European capitalism. A different though not unrelated question, is the question of oil.

There is at the moment a war going on in Algeria in which thousands of people have died, in which the question of oil is not irrelevant. We can delineate four people, in the general sense of the word people, who control oil in the world. They control different kinds of oil. First of all, there's the French government, who has discovered oil in the Sahara and would like to be able to use it. It would be very useful in the Common Market. It would free France from dependence on the international cartel which as everyone knows is very friendly and harmonious, when they are not sticking knives into each other's backs. These are the American, English and Dutch oil companies

— the Dutch being a satellite of the English. A small French company which used to be the only one in France is also a satellite of the cartel. This cartel used to monopolize the world but the monopoly is cracking.

There's a third free-lance buccaneer in there. If you read in the paper about the sudden diplomatic sickness a few months ago, not of Khrushchev but of Gronchi, the president of Italy, his sudden recovery,



voyage to Moscow, one might recognize the fine Latin hand of Enrico Mattei, and the National Oil Company of Italy which has penetrated strategic sections of the Middle East. This company is making rather grandiose plans for marketing its oil in Germany and in the countries of the Common Market.

Then the fourth person, a man named Khrushchev, who also has a little oil to dispose of from places like the Caucasus and Baku. So when you see the divisions among these four, five or six, you get some idea of what is going to be said in those secret sessions at the conference of the four great powers who are going to be discussing “Berlin.”

**N**OW if the Soviet Union is no longer the butt, the goal of the attack of the West, if it's no longer threatened with immediate attack, immediate threat of nuclear destruction, one of the most profound reasons has to be found in that the Soviet Union has become an integral part of this very complicated game of power politics. And that each Western country, taken separately, thinks

that it can do better business with the devil than its neighbors can.

But the Soviet Union is not a country without its own problems. It has very real ones and its part of the Summit Conference is not an unselfish one. The facts of Soviet economic expansion since the war are very familiar. I don't want to go over them here and the basic analysis that we have worked out concerning the society of the Soviet Union is in the resolution that you have before you. I would like to state two things, though, about the Soviet Union in the present period.

First of all, up to 1956, de-Stalinization was a stormy process under increasing pressure from below. It was a process culminating in the mass movement for democratization throughout Eastern Europe in the summer of 1956, and the Hungarian and Polish workers revolutions in the fall of 1956. After the Hungarian revolution had been drowned in blood, the dominant section of the Soviet bureaucracy was able to consolidate itself and able to say very bluntly and openly to the workers:

“We'll make a deal with you. Don't press for democracy now, don't press for any more political rights than you have. We'll let up on the terror. We won't arrest people any more and we'll see that your communism is well-battered.”

What happened was the abandonment of the sixth five-year plan and the institution of the seven-year plan, which promises something like a 37 percent increase in the standard of living of the Russian people in the next seven years combined with a decrease in the work week from 48 to 40 hours.

This is a very, very big gamble that Khrushchev is taking. The reason it is a gamble is that he is planning to decrease the work week at exactly the moment that the empty classes, so-called, of the Russian population join the labor force; that is, those born in the years of the war, with huge infant mortality and a low birth rate.

**T**O keep his promise, rather cover his bets, Khrushchev has to rely on a very rapid increase in the productivity of labor and, at the same time, a rapid increase in agricultural

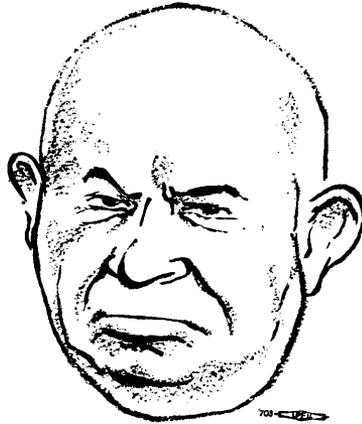
productivity. The second can be gained only by increasing the material incentives available to the peasants, since most agricultural property in the Soviet Union is privately owned in the form of collective farms, in which production takes place for the profit of the individual peasants. Khrushchev has gambled on turning the machine tractors over to the *Kolkhoz*; he's gambled in promising higher prices, greater latitude in production. What this means is that if the peasants don't come through, don't increase their production fast enough, the prices of agricultural goods will go up by the workings of the free market and the workers will have to pay for it. This at the very time that they're being asked to work harder, to be more productive. Here Khrushchev is faced with the basic contradiction of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and the rest of the Eastern Bloc — the contradiction between the imperative need to develop the productivity of labor and the bureaucratic yoke upon the workers. By denying political expression to the workers the bureaucracy must deny workers control over production in the factory and every attempt to increase productivity from below.

This contradiction will increase over the next years. This is one of the most inevitable things that we can predict. Novels like "Not By Bread Alone," which are concerned entirely with this problem will multiply. You can be sure that the coming crisis in the Soviet Union will break out over this issue.

Thus there is an imperative need from the point of view of Khrushchev for an economic agreement with the West that will allow a reduction of armaments if possible, some way to get around this crisis by making real concessions economically to the Russian people. Now fortunately for Khrushchev there are factors that lead the United States' ruling class to similar conclusions.

Any temptation, on the part of the U.S., to invest seventy to eighty billion dollars a year in armaments production at a rate the Soviet Union couldn't afford, has to be restrained because the American economy would crack first. It's not a question, they discovered, simply of factories, simply of economic planning. They dis-

covered they are operating a capitalist economy. To put on that type of war spending would involve such an enormous inflation that if uncontrolled it would lead to a collapse; if controlled, would require fascism: the smashing of the labor movement. Neither choice being acceptable, the alternative has been to hold the line on defense and to seek an agreement with the Russians to justify this. The result is that in the years of the Eisenhower administration the percentage of American gross national



product going to war production has declined by 30%.

ONE point is incontestable: that the managers of the American economy today, the ruling executive committee of the capitalist class so to speak, the cabinet and the Federal Reserve system, have come to a very deliberate decision that the health of the system requires a limit of government expenditures and of war expenditures. And this openly and validly has been the reasoning behind their decision.

So here is the outline — a very schematic outline — a picture of the present situation. These things that I sketched show the reasons why the United States and Western capitalist powers must accept "coexistence," must treat the Soviet Union as one of them, as a party to the settlement of international problems. But can the situation last?

There are three very powerful reasons why it cannot. It can last a certain period of time, but cannot

last indefinitely. Permanent peace on this basis is a Utopian idea.

First of all, if, or rather when, the American economy reaches a breaking point, reaches a crisis roughly on the order of 1929, a choice would be so inevitable between fascism and socialism, that the whole world situation could explode. Why would it be inevitable when the United States went through 1929, after all, without a revolution, without fascism?

Today the American labor movement is the most powerful in the world. The American working class has never been defeated, has grown used to a decent or almost decent standard of living. Because it has gone through the experience of the depression, knows what it means, the demand for action would come very rapidly and a decision would be reached quickly. A quick decision could equally well be fascism or socialism. That depends, among other things, on us. It could be fascism though. A fascist decision would mean a probability of world war — I would think an inevitability. Because fascism would mean a stepped-up arms race against the Soviet Union, an attempt to hold the colonies by force and a multiplication of the risks of war, of accidental war, calculated risks and perhaps deliberate war. Multiplication so great as to amount to an inevitability.

That's one factor which in itself should doom the idea of peaceful coexistence. But suppose we say, "Well, that's an outdated Marxist idea that capitalism must enter into a major crisis. Maybe it can go along with only minor changes and avoid this crisis forever."

All right, granting that, which of course we don't want to grant for a moment, but granting that, there's another fact that must be taken into account by the capitalists. This is that in the long historical view they are not going to be able to last very long. Above all they will not last very long in the colonial areas once they have been outstripped on their own terrain by the Soviet Union, once the Soviet Union passes them in living standards and total product and per capita product. While this is not an imminent prospect, it's an inevitable prospect. During the past five-six

*(Continued on page 90)*

# India and China — A Contrast

"Which road will lead to economic and social progress?" is the question being asked throughout the colonial world. The race between China and India indicates the answer.

by Daniel Roberts

**E**VER since the end of the second world war, hundreds of millions of people — first in Asia, then the Middle-east, sub-Sahara Africa and Latin America — have fought to end their colonial or semi-colonial bondage. They have struggled for national independence and against tyrannical puppet regimes of the West as the means of realizing a broader set of aims — namely, industrial development, an end to murderous exploitation, and participation with the rest of mankind in the forward march to abundance, freedom, security and human dignity.

Two former colonial countries in particular have commanded the attention of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples. These are China and India. They were the first in the postwar period to throw off the imperialist yoke and to gain more than nominal national independence. They are the biggest countries by population, not only in the economically underdeveloped areas, but in the entire world. In fact, they have nearly one half of the world's population between them. Both have undertaken economic-growth plans and have registered undeniable economic successes. Yet they pursue totally different "roads" to economic and social progress. And it is these contrasting "roads" and contrasting achievements that are being carefully studied throughout the entire colonial world.

To enhance the current contrasts, the two countries prior to India's attainment of independence in 1947 and China's overthrow of the Chiang Kai-shek regime in 1949, resembled each other in many essential features. Semi-feudal relations prevailed on the land in both of these primarily agricultural countries. They lacked national unity. They were ruthlessly exploited by foreign capital. Illiteracy, religious superstition, disease, and natural disasters plagued the atomized populations.

The war had brought about a differentiation between India and China as far as industrial development was concerned. It plunged China into chaos but spurred the growth of industry in India.

Here is how Wilfred Malenbaum, an American economist who has specialized in comparing Indian and Chinese developments, summed up the standing of the

two countries in 1952 after China had already substantially recovered from wartime devastation.<sup>1</sup> Per capita agricultural product was about 15 per cent higher in China than in India, he says. For the rest of the economy, however, output was higher in India that year. In heavy industry, India was ahead by at least a 20 per cent margin. Quantitatively, non-agricultural output might have been 10 per cent higher in India.

**H**OW did the countries fare in the competition in the subsequent years? During India's first five-year plan, 1951-56, the national product grew by 19 per cent, whereas Chinese output increased by 51 per cent during the first plan period, 1953-57. In total industrial production, China jumped from index 100 in 1952 to index 244 in 1957, while India rose from 100 in 1952 to 133 in 1957.

Again, says Malenbaum, gross investment ratios — calculated as the percentage of investment to gross national product — were close to the same levels in the two countries in 1950. Thereafter, the investment ratio increased three times faster in China than in India. As a result, the real level of gross investment in China in 1957-58 was about five times as high as it had been in 1950. In India it was not quite twice the level of 1950. Furthermore, China financed a greater proportion of its investment from domestic savings on current income and achieved some balance in its foreign trade. India, on the other hand, had a foreign-trade deficit and used up about 60 per cent of its foreign-exchange reserves.

Per capita income was of essentially the same order of magnitude in the two countries in 1950 — about 260 rupees or 130 yuan. In that year, China was investing about 50 per cent more than India out of essentially

1. "India and China: Contrasts in Development Performance." *American Economic Review*, June, 1959. Wilfred Malenbaum is Professor of Economics at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania. He also serves as Director, India Project at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for International Studies.

Malenbaum lists the following sources for his comparisons of India and China for 1952 and the years afterwards: "All data for India are my personal estimates based upon official materials available through 1956/57 and to a lesser extent for 1957/58 and 1958/59." For Chinese data, he uses W. W. Hollister, *China's Gross National Product and Social Accounts 1950-57*, one of several works by American bourgeois economists critically evaluating official Chinese statistics. To Hollister's computations, Malenbaum added 1958 data. These figures are lower than the revised official statistics for 1958.

the same real product. It appears, says Malenbaum, that the average level of household consumption in China was 10 to 15 per cent below that in India, but judging from the overall data, ". . . this situation changed rapidly. Sometime in 1955 or 1956—despite China's larger allocations to investment and to other governmental uses, and despite its more rapid rate of population growth—the per capita levels of household consumption began to forge ahead of the levels prevailing in India."

If we contrast the Indian and Chinese performances in detail, we get the following set of figures:

	China	India
Electric Power (millions of kwh)		
1950	4,580	5,112
1957	19,025	10,836
1958	23,000	12,198
Coal (million tons)		
1950	40.9	32.5
1957	130	43.5
1958	165	44.8
Fertilizer (Ammonium Sulphate — Thousand tons)		
1950	75	47.3
1957	535	383
1958	700	381.6
Textiles (million yards)		
1950	2,940	3,650
1957	5,825	5,315
1958	6,250	4,925
Steel (million tons)		
1950	.40	1.01
1957	4.26	1.35
1958	5.00	1.27

In the field of education and development of professional training, India also began with a definite lead, which China is reducing where it hasn't actually forged ahead.

Here are the figures cited by Malenbaum:

	China	India
Percentage of 6-14 age group in school		
1950	22.5	33
1958	60	45
Number of Engineers per one million of population		
1955	130	185
1958	200	220

In 1955, China was training annually 30.9 engineers and 11.2 medical doctors per million persons in its population. The comparable figures for India were 18.4 and 8.1.

In agriculture, Malenbaum lists the following performances:

	China	India
Food Grains (million tons)		
1950	122.72	53.5
1957	185	67.1
Cotton (Thousand Tons)		
1950	681.5	509
1957	1,640	835

From 1950 to 1957, says Malenbaum, aggregate output in agriculture rose by some 25 to 30 per cent in China and 15 to 20 per cent in India. The agricultural product increased at a lower rate in China than the overall

national product. In India, the agricultural output and the output of the rest of the economy kept in line.

In both countries, agricultural output was seriously influenced by weather conditions. Malenbaum believes that, of India's gains scored during the first plan period, perhaps 50 per cent are attributable to additional acreage put in cultivation, mostly the result of expansion in the area irrigated. However, he says there is no evidence that the upward trend has been resumed since that time. Weather conditions alone seem to account for fluctuations thereafter.

In China, of the estimated 20 per cent expansion during the first five-year plan period about 75 per cent represents increases in per acre yields. "Systematic change—the persistent growth in output, however small, and the consistency of the contributory factors—probably constitutes the most significant aspect of Chinese development in this area."

Though according to Malenbaum the record is not definitive whether China's persistent trend upwards measures success in overcoming "natural and human deterrents" to expanding production, it is notable that "Even in adverse-weather years, the Chinese did succeed in expanding grain output by about as much as population."

But, whereas it appears reasonably sure that China is making slow but persistent headway in increasing agricultural output thanks to government-directed irrigation works and massive fertilizer-collection drives, Indian leadership, over the past two years, "has increasingly questioned whether a basis for systematic expansion of food grain output has in fact been established in India."

**T**HUS in agriculture as in industry, the Chinese performance excels the Indian by a considerable margin. Malenbaum's overall judgment is as follows: "The present analysis . . . indicates economic developments overwhelmingly favorable to the Chinese effort, both with respect to actual performance and to potential for further growth."

Can the differences in performance be ascribed to China's receiving a greater amount of aid from the Soviet Union than India gets from the West? China has paid the USSR at full Soviet prices for all machinery and technical aid, except for what it received under two low-interest, long-term Soviet loans during the first plan. But these loans amounted to no more than 3 per cent of the total Chinese investment.<sup>2</sup> The Indians, on the other hand, have had access to the world market from which the Chinese have been barred by a U.S.-inspired blockade. Therefore, if China has acquired more foreign-made plants and equipment than India, this too reflects the greater effort of the Chinese in mobilizing national resources.

**C**AN the differences of performance then be explained by advantages in mobilizing manpower and resources that a totalitarian government supposedly has over a democratic one? It is true that a Stalinist-type dictatorship runs China today. But India is hardly a

<sup>2</sup> Choh-Ming Li, "Economic Development." *The China Quarterly*, Jan.-March, 1960.

democracy. Behind the parliamentary façade a small clique of capitalists run the country in the interests of the propertied classes and at the expense of the working people. The Indian government has never hesitated to invoke "emergency rule" to cope with strikes or mass demonstrations. Last year the Calcutta police fired on crowds protesting famine conditions, killing twenty people.

Landlords still boss the rural areas, despite agrarian reform laws, whose enforcement is often in the hands of officials tied to the landlord class. The caste system, too, retains a strong hold, though it has also been reformed on paper. The truth is that despite the various laws passed in India since independence, the country has not yet undergone a democratic revolution to extirpate root and branch the remnants of feudal and other archaic social relations.

Furthermore if "totalitarianism" has the magic power to bring about rapid economic development, how did it happen that all of Asia stagnated for millennia under despotism. Why weren't the tyrannical governments of Chiang Kai-shek and of the British Raj able to secure economic growth. And why haven't the American-backed puppet dictators in Southeast Asia carried through the economic transformation of their countries? Obviously, something other than totalitarianism is needed to bring about swift economic progress.

Actually, Stalinist-type rule in China has not spurred Chinese development but has proved an obstacle to it. Because they often disregard the needs and the consciousness of the masses, the Stalinist leaders have periodically imposed policies that disrupt the economic plan and throw production out of gear. A democratic regime of workers and peasants would eliminate bureaucratic mismanagement and waste and would thus insure an even better rate of growth than China has demonstrated during the last ten years. Indeed, within the Chinese CP, voices have been raised advocating that the mass of toilers be given a genuine voice in shaping the economic course, so as to bring the plans into line with what is most realistic.

It is noteworthy that Malenbaum, whose comparisons of the Indian and Chinese performances we have cited, does not believe that the issue of "democracy" versus "totalitarianisms" is integral to the problem. "Through a sequence of devices, culminating in today's communes," he writes, "China's government has played a fundamental role in organizing local resources — labor, existing plant, raw materials, savings (especially non-monetized) and leadership of both enterprise and public administration—to expand agricultural and industrial product." On the other hand "Indian leadership has not yet assumed the responsibilities for organization and planning required to meet these problems."

He concludes: ". . . the lesson to be derived from the comparative performance of the two countries over these years of intensive development planning is not that totalitarian methods serve better than those conceived and implemented under democracy. It is rather that government in nations aspiring to economic expansion needs to define the tasks of growth realistically; more,

government must implement them faithfully."

Malenbaum takes us closer to the heart of the problem. The Chinese government shapes an overall economic plan and implements it energetically in all of its branches. A democratic government might act in this fashion as well as a totalitarian one. The trouble with the Indian government is that it hardly acts in this manner at all.

But what accounts for these differences in the way the government directs the economy? An important clue will be found, I believe, in the outlook of India's ruling Congress party—a capitalist party with a pseudo-socialist program—toward the relationship of planning to social change. It is stated by a leading Indian economist, H. Venkatasubbiah, a supporter of the Nehru regime, in the following terms:

"The legacy of the socio-economic situation in a poor country is complex and any study of its arrested progress or socio-economic immobility would not be complete without examining sociological factors like religious attitudes, social stratification, law and convention regarding property, level of scientific and technical knowledge, and the traditional role of the state and the ruling class. All these variables together go to form the mould in which all events are shaped: each factor has a dynamic of its own and affects others intimately. Change therefore, means a change in the whole pattern; the mould in which events are cast itself has to be changed. This, historically speaking, takes place all the time. But planning means an accelerated change in selected sectors and the change differs from the rhythm of historical growth in its impact and intensity, and while discussing planning in this sense should be mentioned aspects of the economic matrix which have retarded growth."<sup>3</sup>

Venkatasubbiah then cites *poverty* "both in the sense of an insufficiency of economic goods and of the capacity to produce them in progressively larger and more various quantities" as the principal factor that has retarded growth. Let planned industrial development but overcome this, is his argument in effect, and the whole of society will be gradually revolutionized. Thus the "Indian road" to progress.

But it hasn't worked out that way. Far from industrialization breaking up the "religious attitudes, social stratification, law and convention regarding property . . . and the traditional role of the state and the ruling class," the archaic social relations have combined with capitalist profit-taking to keep India from really grappling with its inherited poverty and cultural backwardness.<sup>4</sup> The class interests of landowners and capitalists stand in the way of progress.

3. H. Venkatasubbiah, *The Indian Economy Since Independence*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, December 1958. Pp. 277-278. (Issued under the auspices of the Institute of Pacific Relations.)

4. In an article, "Political Stability and Economic Development," Wilfred Malenbaum writes: "Looking ahead, my economic judgment under present [Indian] programs is not only that a slower rate of growth will be accomplished [than under the first plan]; there is even some question as to whether the patterns of economic life characteristic of a static economy have actually begun to be converted into those characteristic of an economy which gives promise for some dynamic change . . . . Mostly, there is the question as to whether the approach of the governmental elites to the task of modernizing India has yet begun to grapple with realities of traditional India . . . . All this is not to gainsay the tremendous changes that have taken place in India over the past decade. . . ." *United Asia* (Bombay), Vol. 11, Number 5. The article is based on an informal talk Malenbaum delivered Jan. 16, 1959 in Washington, D.C.

INDIA will stagnate—if stagnation has not already set in—and the country will fall back into a semi-colonial rut, becoming increasingly an economic dependency of Western imperialism. The second five-year “socialist” plan is already more fiction than reality. It has undergone a “re-appraisal” as a result of which, says Venkatasubbiah, the government has ceased holding it up as a “physical” plan—that is, one which actually governs the country’s output. At best, the plan determines the amount to be expended for flood and irrigation control, for social welfare and for the few industrial plants the government is constructing. Parasitic landlords and big businessmen are left to look after the rest of the economy.

Meanwhile government corruption is rampant.<sup>5</sup> The burden of taxation falls on the masses. Unemployment is mounting. Famine and grain speculation stalk a number of areas. The class struggle is sharpening.

The Chinese have proceeded in a radically different fashion than the Indians. Through a mass revolutionary upheaval they liquidated at the outset all archaic social relations and went ahead to the abolition of capitalist property forms. The Chinese CP, unlike the Indian Congress party, did not merely pass laws. It helped the peasants organize for the expropriation of the landlords and for land division and helped the women organize for their emancipation from the ancient oppressive family forms. In 1953 the collectivization of agriculture was begun—an indispensable measure for eventually transforming the entire technical basis of Chinese agriculture and of raising productivity to the most advanced levels.

Then, by expropriating all foreign holdings and

5. The Congress party’s “integrity has . . . been vitiated by the politics of Tammany Hall,” says Venkatasubbiah. Op. cit., p. 37.

instituting a government monopoly of foreign trade, the Chinese ended the country’s status as a plundering ground for Western or Japanese imperialism.

Finally, though the CP’s program called for permitting capitalist enterprise to exist side by side with state-owned enterprises for a period of time, the government concentrated the nation’s efforts on building up the state-owned sector. In a few years, capitalist ownership had been reduced to a vestigial place in industry, and has now been virtually eliminated.

These social-revolutionary measures, which released tremendous energies among the population, created the conditions for a planned endeavor to remake the face of the country.

Low technological development remains a big obstacle for China as well as for India. It has distorted economic progress by promoting the growth of new social formations, such as the parasitic bureaucracy, whose interests are inimical to the construction of a socialist society. Nevertheless, the outmoded social relations that keep India hopelessly mired have been definitively removed. The road has been cleared for great economic advances. The figures tell the tale: China is bounding ahead of India.

As other of the economically backward countries—including India—take the Chinese road, the capitalist structure in the rest of the world will be undermined. The working class in the West will be impelled to join the struggle for socialism once again. The extension of the Chinese revolution to the rest of the economically underdeveloped areas of the world will thus be the prelude to the unity of the industrially advanced and backward countries in a worldwide socialist endeavor to eradicate poverty, disease, illiteracy and war from the face of the earth.

## .... Three Radical Parties

*(Continued from page 69)*

the formation of a labor party, democratically based on the unions and the mass organizations of the Negro people. They will spread the socialist platform on all the great issues to millions of people.

The hour-long television debate Dobbs had with a McCarthyite in Los Angeles, in which the standard slanders against socialism were refuted one after another before an audience of hundreds of thousands, is worth all the effort it took to launch the campaign. Many youngsters listening to that program got their first real view of socialism from a veteran union organizer and socialist leader.

The 1960 election campaign has exceptional significance for us because for the first time in many years a new generation of radical youth is stirring to life and gaining its first political experience. It would be a historic crime to allow these precious replacements to be dispatched into the political graveyard of “work in the Democratic party.” If the SWP campaign did

nothing more than to save this promising cadre of radical youth from such a fate it would be performing a service of incalculable value.

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# The World of C. Wright Mills

"War not Russia is the enemy," says the noted sociologist. But he relies on intellectuals and not the working class to prevent catastrophe

by William F. Warde

**A**CADEMIC sociology in the United States is a field where mediocrity prevails and a vast amount of scholarly industry produces little of scientific value or popular interest. The work of C. Wright Mills is a notable exception. Over the past decade this Professor of Sociology at Columbia University has come to tower above his colleagues like a mountain in a desert. No one who wants to know about the dominant forces and features of American society today can afford to ignore his work.

Mills has probed the strategic sectors of our society. These include the labor officialdom (*The New Men of Power*, 1948), our latest immigrants (*The Puerto Rico Journey*, 1950), the new middle class (*White Collar*, 1951) and the rulers of the nation (*The Power Elite*, 1956.)

Most professors play it safe and shun clear-cut stands on controversial issues. Mills has tackled such touchy subjects as the foreign policy of the U.S. imperialists, their suppression of civil liberties, the plutocratic prostitution of science, and the need for radical changes in our society.

In two of his books (*Character and Social Structure*, 1953 and *The Sociological Imagination*, 1959) Mills shows that he has thought deeply about the major problems of method. "To overcome the *academic prose* you have first to overcome the *academic pose*," he tells his students. In line with this advice, he has cultivated a colloquial style which

makes his reasoning and references clear to any attentive reader. And he can puncture learned bombast with well-aimed sarcasm.

In his latest books—*The Causes of World War III* (1958) and *The Sociological Imagination* (1959)—Mills displays the qualities that distinguish his earlier writings. In the first of these books, the subject of this article, he sets forth his views on the central question of international politics: who is responsible for the threat of atomic annihilation and what should be done to prevent it. His argument may be summarized as follows:

1. War, in becoming total, has become absurd as a means of national policy. Nevertheless the power elites of the U.S. and the USSR continue to be obsessed by a "military metaphysic" which does not take account of this reality. Their propagandists depict the world as divided into two camps, one "ours" and the other "theirs," in which devastating bombs and missiles are the sole guarantee of security.

2. To this lunatic definition of reality, American intellectuals should oppose a rational view of the world situation, proceeding from the understanding that "war, and not Russia, is now the enemy."

3. War is not fatally predetermined. Certain highly-placed officials in whose hands the means of destruction are centralized are irresponsibly and unthinkingly making choices that bring war closer. They should be brought to follow a different line that would promote

peaceful international relations and favorably affect the attitudes of the Soviet leaders.

4. The only way to effect this switch in American foreign policy is for the community of scholars, writers, scientists and ministers to stop buckling down before the mad strategy of the "brisk generals," put forward alternative proposals for action, get them debated and adopted.

Let us analyze this chain of assertions. The first point to be made is that, despite his plea for realism, the image Mills gives of the current international situation is highly unrealistic. It is no fancy but a grim fact that the world is divided into two armed camps. The basic cause for this hostility lies not in the psychology or ideology of the men at their head but in the opposing class nature of the contending camps and of the social structures they defend.

**M**ILLS has a less materialistic explanation. He argues that our power elite is hypnotized by a military metaphysic which induces them to keep piling up armaments in a race that serves no useful economic purpose and can end only in the destruction of mankind. As long ago as the fifth century B.C., Herodotus, the first historian, observed that no one is insane enough to prefer war to peace. This applies to the rulers of the U.S. Why, then, do they persist in their warlike course?

The political psychopathology of the power elite must have compelling material causes, the Marxists say. The policy-makers in the White

House and the Pentagon are not merely obsessed by delusions. There is method and meaning in their madness. Their capitalist clients have enormous interests at stake in the profit system which they are striving to maintain.

A second serious defect in Mills' analysis flows from his sociology of the modern superstates. He holds that the United States and the Soviet Union are both ruled by bureaucratic power elites of similar character. He regards them as convergent rather than divergent civilizations. "In surface ideology they apparently differ; in structural trend and in official action they become increasingly alike," he writes, thus holding the U.S. and the USSR equally responsible for the war danger.

Mills' definition of the two ruling groups dwells on superficial similarities in the military and political spheres and ignores the fundamental differences in their socio-economic structures. As he himself indicates, monopoly capitalist economy requires large-scale military production to keep operating at boom levels, while the military expenditures imposed on the Soviet states are a sheer waste which drain their forces and resources. Any halting of the military expenditures would provoke an alarming economic upset in the United States; it would immediately ease the burdens on the non-capitalist countries.

Finally, the historical right in this world encounter lies with the working class and its states, representing a superior mode of production which, despite grievous deficiencies and terrible bureaucratic deformities, has opened new vistas of social progress.

By leaving these factors out of account Mills fails to pinpoint the real source of the war danger: capitalism.

When Mills declares that "war, and not Russia, is now the enemy," he gets no closer to reality by substituting the abstraction, war, for the contradictions between social systems. War is not a super-class phenomenon. It is the function of a particular government dominated by a specific ruling class rooted in a specific socio-economic system. Preparations for war and the waging of war are integral parts of the politics of the class holding power and reflect the basic

drives and aims of its social structure.

Mills reverses the relationship between the war machine and the economic system: the military forces do not carry out capitalist aims; the economy serves the military machine! "I am *not* suggesting that military power is now only, or even mainly, an instrument of economic policy. To a considerable extent, militarism has become an end in itself and economic policy a means of it." Even though the arms race is so lucrative for Big Business, war today, he says, has no rational economic purpose. He forgets that under capitalism what is profitable is rational, no matter how deadly or dangerous it may be.

We can agree with Mills that another World War is not predestined; it can be averted by the action of men. But this does not mean that no determinism is at work in the world. On the political arena a conflict is proceeding between two determinisms stemming from opposing class sources. On one side, the monopolists are determined to defend their positions, privileges and profits at any cost, including an atomic holocaust. This is not a mental aberration of the capitalist warlords, as Mills implies, a result of their dogmatism, ignorance or incompetence which can be removed by persuasion. It is an inescapable necessity for the survival of their economic system which is being pressed ever harder by the challenge of the anti-imperialist forces.

ON THE other side are the masses of this country and the rest of the world who have everything to lose from nuclear warfare and dread its prospect, although they do not yet see the causal connection between capitalism and the threat of atomic annihilation. The issue of war or peace hinges upon which of these class forces and their determinism conquers the other.

Mills accuses the Washington policy-makers of acting irresponsibly. The charge is justified but superficial. The militarists act irresponsibly toward the American people and the welfare of humanity despite their protestations to the contrary. Their primary duty and allegiance is to private enterprise; their decisions are shaped to protect that system, even

though this squanders the nation's wealth, poisons the planet, and may exterminate mankind.

What is it worth to the plutocracy to hold on to their privileges? The A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, their vast military preparations, Dulles' brinkmanship, and the refusal to disarm indicate that, if it is left to them, they are ready, if necessary, to fire the missiles and drop the bombs. Eisenhower's original declaration that American planes will continue their spy-flights over Soviet territory underscores the provocative, dangerous and bellicose character of Washington's policy.

Mills thinks it is imperative to concentrate on changing the minds and the course of the men in power, because they alone have the means of making history in our time. Without disparaging his stand for peace, we must nevertheless question the efficacy of his method. His resolute opposition to the cold warriors has great significance in the reshaping of American public opinion. The learned men in this country have long been either terrorized into submission or silence or converted into adjutants of the military machine.

Mills, from the same university whence Eisenhower ascended to the White House, has issued a declaration of independence from the State Department. This is a fresh breeze in the heavy-laden cold war atmosphere. Mills has taken a lead which can encourage dissenting intellectuals to rally against the merchants of death and the witch-hunters.

Mills has demonstrated that the power elite is centralized and strongly entrenched. Can any form of individual protest action prevail against it? To combat its aims or change its course an equal or potentially greater force would have to be arrayed against it. Such a force does exist. It resides in the depths of the people, in the ranks of labor and the oppressed racial minorities. Mills has heard of its existence. But he has no confidence in its capacity for independent action, struggle and victory.

He therefore turns to another element, the one closest to him, the intellectual community. It seems that he cannot escape the company of an elite. In order to curb the monopolists

he calls upon his own special corps of writers, artists, ministers, scholars and scientists to wage one-man crusades against them.

In the person of this intellectual elite he claims to counterpose rationality, sobriety and realism to the irrationality of the high and the mighty. The belief that intellectuals are the special custodians of objective intelligence is a common article of faith in the credo of liberalism.

**M**ILLS, too, has an exaggerated sense of the social mission and political weight of scholars and intellectuals. He believes that, as the one uncommitted grouping, only they can "transcend the milieu" in which they live. They alone are free to survey the social scene without prejudice and come up with the proper recommendations for solving social problems.

Mills couples his deflation of the influence of the working masses with an inflation of the power of the intellectuals as the outstanding exponents of reason. This is neither reasonable nor realistic. Reason, that is, ideas which conform to the main tendencies and urgent demands of social progress, can become an effective social and political power. Marx pointed out that ideas become a material power when they penetrate into the consciousness of the masses who act upon them. The political function of progressive intellectuals is not to wage a solitary duel with the ruling power but to help enlighten, arouse, instruct the working people who have the power, by virtue of their numbers, organization and strategic social position, to change the course of history. In so far as Mills does this and persuades others to do so, he performs a valuable service. But, having ruled out the workers, he inclines to rely upon the intellectual community alone to halt the war drive.

To stop war and guarantee peace it is essential to deprive the capitalists of their power. For that, it is not enough to counterpose one set of ideas to another; it is necessary to *confront one class force with another*. To Mills such talk is outworn Marxist dogma, if not delusion and demagoguery. Throughout his book there is no suggestion that the working people can

play a part in halting war and making a peaceful world. The roar of the crowd is mute. The Public remains a pure spectator of national and world events. The passive masses are not the agents but the objects of history.

Our sociologist secretly cherishes the hope that those in power will sooner or later be brought to reason, because he entrusts the execution of his proposals to the existing governments. Thus he follows in the footsteps of his predecessors among the pacifist-minded dissenting liberals. If we stick to examples from Columbia University alone, progressive thinkers like the philosopher John Dewey sought to dissuade the capitalist rulers from embracing war as an instrument of policy as vigorously and vainly in the First World War as the historian Charles Beard did in the Second.

But, Mills argues, the present differs from the past. "To know the causes of the First and of the Second World War is not necessarily to know much about those of the Third," he writes. This contention is not very novel but it is worth examination.

There exist two major peculiarities in the current prewar situation. One pertains to the social character of the pending war. The previous world wars were waged primarily between capitalist rivals for world supremacy, with Germany heading one coalition, England and the U.S. the other. From the beginning, the next war would have a fundamentally different character. It would not be an inter-imperialist dogfight but a war conducted by a capitalist combination led by the U.S. against a bloc of workers' states headed by the USSR. This military encounter would also be at bottom an extension of the struggle between the pro-capitalist and anti-capitalist forces in the world.

The other unprecedented feature is the qualitative difference in the destructive power of the military machines which, in the existing "balance of terror," deters the warlords from setting them in motion.

Mills does not acknowledge the first factor at all but pins all hopes for peace on the second. He regards the destructive power of nuclear weapons as an absolute deterrent

which, however, the power elites obstinately refuse to recognize. In view of this latter fact, and so long as the uncontrolled elite in Washington retains command, it would be unwise to accept his or anyone else's assurance that war is henceforth unthinkable or impossible simply because of the horrors it would inflict. All the more so, because the same driving forces that brought on the First and Second World Wars, forces deriving from the unsolved historical crisis of world capitalism, remain operative. The resort to war as the ultimate desperate remedy has even become more urgent for imperialism as the anti-capitalist states, movements and forces have advanced and gained strength in the past fifteen years.

**W**AR and capitalism, peace and socialism are equally indivisible. These simple equations are stale stuff, according to Mills. He advises us to junk these Marxist stereotypes based on the class struggle between the capitalists and workers, do some independent analysis of recent developments, and come up with completely fresh ideas on the world situation. What does his fresh thinking on the main theme of his book amount to?

The causes of World War III, he says, are neither single nor simple but multiple and complex. He enumerates a string of them: the military metaphysic and moral paralysis of the power elites, the arms race, the profit hunger of the privately incorporated economy, the inability or unwillingness of the American capitalists to develop alternative policies, widespread political indifference and moral insensibility, the apathy and inertia of the mass society, the absence of an American program for peace. Military, political, economic, psychological, moral, cultural factors are all jumbled together as the causes of war. Mills does not sort out the primary from the second or third-rate factors or rank them in order of importance. All are apparently of equal worth and weight.

He devotes an entire chapter to the permanent war economy in which he demonstrates how indispensable the swollen war budget has become to the prosperity and stability of U.S. capitalism. Yet he refuses to

draw the indicated conclusion from these facts. He remarks at one point that the military metaphysic "often coincides" with the profit interests of the monopolists, as though that was no more than a happy chance and not a necessary relation.

War, like any other phenomenon, has many contributing causes. To this extent Mills' doctrine of plural causes is valid. But the causes are not equally potent in bringing about the phenomenon. Some are major, others minor. The task of social scientists is to establish the measure of significance of each of the factors in the process of historical determination.

According to Mills, the controlling factors are to be found in the mentality of the power elite, and, most vitally, in the metaphysical fixations of the high military. He regards psychological, and not economic; subjective, and not objective factors as the decisive determinants of World War III.

The *immediate* cause of World War III, he writes, "is the preparation of it." Its *ultimate* cause is the metaphysic of violence that obsesses the ruling circles of the U.S. and the USSR. If Mills itemizes a series of "leading causes," when it comes to selecting the leader among these, he nominates the military metaphysic. Thus from eclecticism he passes over to subjectivism and ends with an idealism which holds that ideas in the mind are the governing forces in our society.

Mills singles out for special attention one factor among the scattered cluster of causes he presents. That is the intellectual inflexibility of the power elite. "It is the rigidity of those who have access to the new means of history-making that has created and is creating the 'inevitability' of World War III," he writes.

**F**ROM this semi-idealist outlook, Mills passes over to a frankly Utopian exposition of the prerequisites for peace. He presents eighteen "guidelines to peace." These include diverting increasing portions of the U.S. military budget to aid underdeveloped countries, no more testing of nuclear weapons, the abandonment of all military bases and installations outside the conti-

mental domain of the United States, immediate unilateral disarmament.

Every one of his proposals contradicts present governmental policy. It is reasonable to ask how these measures are to be implemented. What class, what political movement, what party is going to press for them? Here Mills thrashes about in confusion. In one place he says: "It is now sociologically realistic, morally fair, and politically imperative to make demands upon men of power and to hold them responsible for specific courses of events." Elsewhere he confesses it would be foolish to expect anything from that quarter. "To *appeal* to the powerful, on the basis of any knowledge we now have, is Utopian in the foolish sense of the term."

If the plutocrats cannot be converted, then perhaps the people can take up the struggle? Mills waves aside this alternative. The mass society is too apathetic, uninformed and impotent to initiate action effective enough to change the course of events. It is a basic assumption of Mills' school of sociology that modern society is so bureaucratized, so hierarchically organized and centrally directed that the mass, made up of atomized individuals, is manipulated like a herd. Most people today, he tells us, "are neither radical nor reactionary. They are inactionary."

Mills views the labor movement, as he does the rest of the social structure, from the top down, and exclusively from its present position and not its prospects. He says that the bureaucratized trade unions are integrated as a parochial interest in the middle levels of the established power setup and cannot decisively affect national policy. That is in fact the present state of the labor movement, and, if that status is considered frozen and final, nothing further can be expected from it. Mills has just such a static and narrow conception of the role of labor. He takes its existing condition for granted and underestimates the mighty potential in the working class. His empirical lens magnifies the powers that be and miniaturizes the power that is going to be.

Revolutionary events since 1917 have given Mills a sufficient glimpse

of labor's insurgency for him to qualify his estimate of its power with the escape clause: "at the present juncture." The recent steel strike provides a more immediate warning against low-rating the power of the workers. That strike not only disclosed the impotence of the union leadership but also the capacities for resistance latent in the ranks. It was, to be sure, a defensive action on the economic level. But, with a change in the surrounding circumstances and a different kind of leadership and program, this power could become an independent force of incalculable dimensions.

But that is not the case now, exclaims Mills, and we have to do something to stop the drift and thrust toward war under *present* conditions. At this point he leaves the ground of social reality altogether. The U.S. must abandon "the doctrinaire idea of capitalism" and adopt his program regardless of the prejudices of the power elite. If this seems Utopian, well then, today "Utopian action is survival action."

As radical as this sounds, it is exceedingly unrealistic advice from a sociologist who demands realism in thinking. The power of capitalism cannot be disposed of so easily and it cannot be wished away. The citadel of the power elite will not fall, like the walls of Jericho, at the blast of a professor's trumpet. Moral indignation may be an excellent stimulant to action but it is insufficient for sweeping political and economic changes.

**T**HE struggle for peace is a struggle to wrest the war-making powers from the hands of the capitalist rulers. This can only be a *class* struggle led by the workers in an independent political movement.

Mills wants to expand democracy, make the economy publicly responsible, replace the permanent war economy with a peace economy and subordinate the military to the people. Says he: "A real attack on war-making by Americans today is necessarily an attack upon the private incorporation of the economy, upon the military ascendancy, upon the linkages between the two." These are excellent fighting words. They ex-

press not only an anti-militarist but an anti-capitalist orientation.

Unfortunately Mills does not indicate any political means for achieving these praiseworthy ends. Aware of this lack, he complains about the absence of democratic parties, movements and publics where such issues could be debated. His Utopianism is not merely the result of his false sociological theories and intellectualistic bias but of the default of the union leaders who refuse to cut loose from the Republicrats and launch a labor party. This disorients and depresses dissident intellectuals as much as union and Negro militants by depriving them of any political vehicle for implementing their opposition to Big Business.

Since he wrote *The New Men of Power* in 1948 Mills has become more and more disillusioned about the labor movement and its social role and prospects. Influenced by the great strikes of 1945-47, he then saw in the labor movement the sole force that could combat the evils of capitalism: "Inside this country today, the labor leaders are the strategic actors; they lead the only organizations capable of stopping the main drift towards war and slump."

"There must be the power and there must be the intellect," he wrote. He envisaged this combination in an alliance of the labor leaders and the left intellectuals. "It is the task of the labor leaders to allow and to initiate a union of the power and the intellect. They are the only ones who can do it; that is why they are now the strategic elite in American society," he concluded.

In the eleven years since, none of the established labor leaders has shown any disposition to take on the job, or even to recognize its necessity. Disappointed in this elite, Mills now sees no alternative but to turn to the intellectuals without them.

Mills is a victim of the status quo, the low ebb of the labor and radical movements—and of his own theories which so hamper his "sociological imagination" and scientific insight that he cannot foresee the changes in store for American society and the key role the workers will play in them. That is why his explanation for the causes of World War III does not go to the heart of the problem.

## . . . Coexistence

(Continued from page 81)

years or more, the Soviet Union has been able to maintain growth at a rate of over 7 percent a year against an American capitalist economy that tends to fall below its normal growth of 3½ percent.

Project these trends and it's only twenty-five years, in the absence of any major depression in the United States, in the absence of a political revolution in the Soviet Union that would **really** unleash the productive forces—it's still only twenty-five years before the Soviet Union has caught up with the United States.

Therefore it might be said that Western capitalism has a life expectancy of thirty years. And this is the kind of trap where the doors shut slowly; they can feel it drawing shut and they are already worried. And as time goes along they will be worried further; and faced with this kind of prospect anyone can see the temptation to act before it is too late.

**A**ND the final explosive factor, very explosive, is as I sketched before, the hopeless contradiction in which capitalism finds itself in the colonial areas. The fundamental problem of imperialism is to find a solid base for capitalist growth in these countries. There is no such basis and no such basis can be found. The brutal fact is that there are not enough internal sources of capital. There are not enough skilled personnel available. There is not enough of an educational system for training them and population is expanding too rapidly.

The combination of these factors means that if the colonial countries are going to be able to grow at all—growth, of course, not being a mere physical thing but above all growth in the standard of living, growth in the cultural level, growth in per capita production—even if they continue to grow at all, they are going to continue to grow slower than the advanced capitalist countries of the West. The gap between the standard of living of the masses in the colonial countries and the general level of the advanced countries can only increase in size and an explosion from this cannot be delayed too long.

The conclusions that we draw from

this, and this is the essence of this resolution, are two-fold and they're simple:

1. While coexistence represents a reality of the moment; as a political idea, as a program for peace, it represents a very false way. It could easily become disastrous because by tying the cause of peace to the diplomatic maneuverings of the Soviet Union, it disarms the working class movements of the world, strengthens capitalism, gives capitalism an extra lease on life and therefore greater latitude for the forces working toward war.

2. While as socialists we oppose our capitalist government at every point, above all at those points where it is squandering the lives, health and money of American youth on war preparation, we never for a moment allow the struggle against war to become some kind of goal per se. "The enemy is war." The enemy is not war, the enemy is capitalism. The avoidance of war and the creation of peace for us **must be recognized as they are**, as the by-products of the destruction of the capitalist system throughout the world.

# THE FIGHT AGAINST WAR

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# W. Somerset Maugham and the Social Question

by Trent Hutter



**T**HE famous Paris-born English novelist and storyteller, essayist and playwright, William Somerset Maugham, is one of the world's most successful authors. Millions read and love his books.

He is more popular with the international reading public than with professional critics and arrogant literary coteries. Many college professors and sophisticates in general seem to imagine that being different is in itself proof of culture. Their preference goes to a literature for the few, obscure and full of vague allegories of which they can be the knowing interpreters. The intellectual snobs show contempt for almost anything the majority of the public likes. It has become an automatic reaction with them. They are the conformists of non-conformism.

While bourgeois high-brow critics frequently reserve their studies for dark concoctions of pseudo-symbolism and pseudo-Freudism, low-brow reviewers praise the conformist pseudo-realism of the Herman Wouk type, the best-sellers that advertise the morals of Suburbia and Madison Avenue. As for the pro-Stalinist circles, they are opportunists in politics and sectarians in the arts. They advocate a so-called "Socialist Realism" which tends to transform literature into fictionalized propaganda slogans.

Truly realistic fiction does not have to preach. Of course, it may carry a message, but this must organically grow out of a convincing story with lifelike characters and conditions. The Stalinists' "Socialist Realism" is an artificial, lifeless construction without realism, wrapped around the bureaucracy's watchwords and orders. It discards anything that does not strictly fit into the bureaucracy's universe. Every item is geared to a limited purpose, while genuine realism is never afraid of describing any aspect of reality, anything that has impressed itself on the writer's mind, anything he feels strongly or un-

easy about. There is no realism without intellectual honesty.

H. G. Wells undoubtedly was far more honest than the Stalinists. Yet he, too, saw in the novel not a work of art but primarily a means of discussing problems and important issues, a medium for the reader's instruction. He was no hack of any bureaucracy, but no one would claim his novels to rank with the masterworks of all times.

In *The Art of Fiction*, W. Somerset Maugham underlines that "a novel is to be read *with* enjoyment. If it doesn't give the reader that, it is, so far as he is concerned, valueless." To Maugham, the novel is above all a work of art intended for the reader's entertainment. If you don't enjoy it, if you are not asking yourself "What will happen next?" while reading it, if the story and its main theme do not captivate you, the novel has not achieved its purpose. A novel may even contain interesting discussions, splendid descriptions, stimulating ideas and still be a failure as a novel because as a whole it is boring, not entertaining.

To Maugham, the novel is no sugar-coating for a popular course on science or politics. It cannot provide a reliable shortcut to theoretical knowledge because it is much too subjective a vehicle to permit an objective scientific analysis. An enjoyable novel cannot be a valid scientific, political or philosophical treatise, or vice versa. Nor should the novel be too topical if it is to endure; for if it is as topical as today's newspaper or magazine, it will be as dead tomorrow.

Maugham indicates that the novelist has a right to deal with mankind's present problems: "We live in a troubled world, and it is doubtless the novelist's business to deal with it"<sup>1</sup>—and with its great topics, but they have to be "an integral element of the story he has to tell."<sup>1</sup> To dismiss a superb novelist as "a mere storyteller," as the professors and coteries often do, is absurd. Each tale reflects the author's outlook. He

offers "a criticism of life." — ". . . he is in his own modest way a moralist."<sup>1</sup> His views may not always be very original or profound, says Maugham, but there is "no such creature" as a "mere storyteller."<sup>1</sup>

Maugham's theory of the novel thus sharply contradicts that of the Stalinists or of the followers of H. G. Wells. It also contradicts the ideas of the super-sophisticated circles and the college professors who indulge in difficult-to-understand literary works for the few, in the meanders of tortured minds. James Joyce — whose gifts I certainly do not wish to minimize — is the learned professors' bread and butter.

Maugham's social thinking is reflected in his theoretical approach to the novel and to art and culture in general. He does not believe in an art for the few. The novel, for example, should be clear enough to be understood by every reader with a "fair education," which surely does not have to be a college education. Yet, in order to get true enjoyment out of a work of art, including a novel, you have to make a little effort of application. Quite often it will be amply rewarded. The artist can do nothing or very little for you if you are not willing to let him entertain or inspire you. The reader's imagination has to co-operate with the writer.

At this point my readers will perhaps ask me: "What about Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or Goethe's *Faust*?" Are these magnificent works for the many or rather for the few? What about Bach in music? Aren't we condemning some of the most marvellous creations of the human spirit if we reject an art for the few? — The answer is simple: The *Divine Comedy*, *Hamlet* or *Faust* may require explanations as to several difficult passages; but their basic stories and ideas do not require higher learning to be understood, nor does their poetical beauty. And as for Johann Sebastian Bach, an enquiry among the members of the Workers' Concert Society of Barcelona, which

Pablo Casals directed before the Spanish Civil War, showed that the workers' favorite classic composer was — Bach. Let us not be taken in by the old bourgeois myth that with their privileged education the ruling classes are the only ones capable of appreciating great art.

In *The Summing Up*,<sup>2</sup> one of the 20th century's most admirable books of wisdom, Maugham probes into the aim of art. He has "found little to admire" in those who "use art to escape the realities of life" and who "in their imbecile contempt for common things deny value to the essential activities of humanity." He rejects the aesthete. He does not at all reject beauty, but he holds that it is not reserved for "the chosen few": "I cannot believe that beauty is the appanage of a set and I am inclined to think that a manifestation of art that has a meaning only to persons who have undergone a peculiar training is as inconsiderable as the set to which it appeals."

Beauty, however, is not the ultimate goal of art. Maugham's concept of art, like his concept of culture, is not aesthetical but moral. "For art, if it is to be reckoned as one of the great values of life, must teach men humility, tolerance, wisdom and magnanimity. The value of art is not beauty, but right action." — The novel should not be tasted by a small circle of intellectual escapist, nor is it to be considered mainly an instrument for the reader's instruction; but to some extent it may contribute to the education of his character if it is enjoyable and entertaining enough to strongly engage his emotions, his attention — in other words: if it is a fine novel.

To Maugham, loving-kindness, goodness are the highest values. Although he respects and never ridicules the faith of others, and although, as an artist, he knows about certain mystic experiences — not necessarily religious — that are very real, yet not easy to explain, he cannot believe in God because there is so much suffering, cruelty, injustice. How could a good God tolerate this if he is almighty? And how could one believe in a God who is either not almighty or not good? . . . To Maugham, the supreme wisdom is not faith in the supernatural, in a reason beyond our human reason, but the right attitude in life. "Right action" inevitably implies right action toward our fellow men. This is the basis of his social conscience.

There are some novelists whose minds are keenly political. Ignazio Silone is one of their outstanding figures, and so was the late Theodor Plivier. And the late Bertolt Brecht, the foremost Marxist playwright, never ceased to think in terms of working class politics. Maugham has never claimed to be a political thinker, a political novelist or playwright. Some of his rather infrequent political utterances have been shaped by his habit of that world in which he developed and gained acclaim and a comfortable existence, as well as

by his non-chauvinistic brand of British patriotism.

Still, he has observed man and society since the end of the 19th century. In 1892 he started to work as a doctor of the very poor in London's St. Thomas's Hospital and saw their utter misery which deeply touched his sensitive nature. He travelled all over the globe in war and peace. In *The Summing Up* (1938) he has outlined his perspective of humanity's social advance:

"For he is blind who will not see that in the lives of the proletariat in the great cities all is misery and confusion . . . If only revolution can remedy this, then let revolution come and come quickly." . . . Despite the cruelty that we see in so-called civilized countries, mankind has made progress since past ages . . . The trend toward communism cannot be stopped by the ruling classes: "I cannot doubt that the proletariat, increasingly conscious of its rights, will eventually seize power in one country after another . . ." Maugham, used to the bourgeois world he knows, is not exactly anxious to live in a revolutionary society; but he bravely subordinates personal likes and dislikes and his material interests to social necessity: "I do not think I have such an attachment to my various possessions as to regret their loss for long . . . I should make an attempt to adapt myself and then, if I found life intolerable . . ." He is willing to commit suicide in that case, although to us it is obvious that a true workers' democracy — not a totalitarian Stalinist regime —, far from making his life intolerable, would honor a great artist like Somerset Maugham.

Although Maugham is not a Marxist and believes that evils like wars and exploitation cannot be completely abolished, it is remarkable that twenty years ago, when the fascist counter-revolution appeared to be so powerful and dynamic, he nonetheless predicted "economic changes that will transform civilization"<sup>2</sup> and realized that mankind was living "on the eve of great revolutions."<sup>2</sup> And wouldn't it be erroneous to assume that the open-minded observer who wrote "I enjoy the spectacle of the world and it interests me to see what is going to happen,"<sup>2</sup> was or is actually frightened by that perspective?

While Maugham is not a Marxist, his personal philosophy, which makes *The Summing Up* such a magnificent book, is related to Marxist materialist thinking. On various philosophical questions he has reached similar conclusions. He always thinks deeply. In his fiction, too, there is more deep thinking than in the novels and plays of writers who enjoy a reputation of profundity because they are nebulous. But he does not communicate his thoughts in a ponderous way, so much are they part of the exciting stories he has to tell. This also applies to his social thinking as voiced in his fiction. He does not shout. He often seems to keep his distance and prefers

irony and humor. This more discreet manner is rooted in his personal shyness but has obvious advantages. It is very refreshing. And with it he delightfully unmask hypocrites, fakers and frauds. His wit and the elegance of his art should not induce anyone into calling him superficial or a cynic.

Forty years ago, English critics liked to speak of the "cynical" Maugham because he pictured individuals and their behavior as members of society with unprejudiced realism. His insight into the complexities of the human psyche, which exclude the definition of any individual by any ready-made formula, and into the relationship between the individual and a given society, the social forces and conditions at work on the individual, their influence on his thinking and character, together with superb qualities of form and style, make Maugham one of the all-time masters of fiction.

His famous novel *Of Human Bondage*, one of the world's greatest, is almost autobiographical. But even in his other books and even when he appears to be more aloof, he is one of the most intensely personal and one of the most sincere writers.

Moved by the misery of the underprivileged, his experiences at St. Thomas's Hospital and in the slums of London, he wrote his first novel *Liza of Lambeth*, a pioneering one in the field of the modern proletarian novel. He rejected the view that suffering was salutary and enabled a person "to get into touch with the mystical kingdom of God . . . Several books on these lines had a great success and their authors, who lived in comfortable homes, had three meals a day and were in robust health, gained much reputation . . . I knew that suffering did not ennoble; it degraded." But even in a hospital you will not learn about human nature "if you have not the eyes to see . . ."<sup>2</sup>

To those who do not wish to read about "crime . . . immorality . . . poverty and unhappiness"<sup>1</sup> and say they anyhow can't do a thing about it — "a vast number of people, especially among the elderly, the well-to-do, the privileged,"<sup>1</sup> he replies "that he is interested in telling the truth, as he sees it, about the world he has come in contact with."<sup>1</sup> Not as "a pedagogue or a preacher"<sup>1</sup> but as an artist, he hopes to help prepare the young for "this difficult business of living."<sup>1</sup>

Maugham's portrayals of English society or life in the colonies may sound dispassionate, but their authenticity is striking. He is uncorruptible. While the social satire of writers like Oscar Wilde, for instance, actually contained a longing to be received and recognized by the same aristocracy they made fun of, Maugham is free from such snobbishness. Nor does any of his novels or short stories ever idealize colonialism in telling about the Far East, South East Asia and the islands of the Pacific. And he

doesn't go in for the description of far-away lands for exoticism's sake: While he conveys vividly pertinent impressions of those countries, he is concerned with stories of *people* in the special milieu of the colonies.

Maugham is a penetrating observer of American society, too. How lucid is his remark in *A Writer's Notebook*<sup>3</sup> about the hypocritical pseudo-democratic manners American employers often put on when talking to their employees, this back-slapping comedy of equality being actually more condescending and humiliating than the more formal behavior of British bosses! And in contrast with the reaction of quite a few flattered visitors to Dixie, he feels embarrassed by the submissiveness of Negro servants in the South. His sense of human dignity cannot be dimmed.

Free from snobbishness, he also lacks the superiority complex of many intellectuals. "There is no more merit in having read a thousand books than in having ploughed a thousand fields. There is no more merit in being able to attach a correct description to a picture than in being able to find out what is wrong with a stalled motorcar . . . The True, the Good and the Beautiful are not the perquisites of those who have been to expensive schools, burrowed in libraries and frequented museums."<sup>2</sup> — Nor does Maugham believe, on the other hand, that manual labor in itself is more honorable than other categories of work. He regrets Tolstoy's attempt at being a shoemaker. And he sees through the bourgeoisie's glorification of work as such — that capitalist fetish which the Tolstoyites and some anti-intellectual, non-Marxist tendencies inside the labor movement have transformed into a glorification of manual work only. "There is nothing particularly commendable in work. One works in order to enjoy leisure. It is only stupid people who work because, when not working, they don't know what to do with themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Maugham sees through the façade of the American bourgeoisie that deceives so many other foreigners. Writing of Charles Dickens' times, his irony directly hints at the present situation, too: "A hundred years ago the United States was a land where speech was free, so long as it did not offend the susceptibilities or affect the interests of other people, and where everyone was entitled to his own opinions, so long as they agreed with those of everyone else." Repeating "a hundred years ago" four times in the same paragraph of the essay on Dickens in *The Art of Fiction*, he makes it clear that he is thinking of today's United States as well . . .

Maugham has never engaged in political activities; yet that does not mean he denies the importance of public affairs "when men in millions are living on the border-line of starvation."<sup>2</sup> But he is a writer so completely that he does not feel called to do anything else, "thinking that not the whole of life was

long enough to learn to write well . . ." ". . . some of us are so made there is nothing else we can do. We do not write because we want to; we write because we must."<sup>2</sup> The writer is to concentrate above all on being as good a writer as he can. Maugham regrets that Goethe spent so much energy on non-literary pursuits, i.e. on various hobbies and administrative assignments. If this sounds strange to Socialists, let us remember that even the most politically conscious revolutionary writer of fiction of the 20th century's first half, the great Bertolt Brecht, a militant communist, still infused his fighting spirit into his plays and poems, devoting his main energy to his mission as a writer, knowing that was how *he* could best serve the cause of Socialism, far better than through other activities to which he was probably less suited.

The novelist need not be political or politically progressive in order to honestly picture social reality. Balzac was politically a conservative monarchist; yet through his realistic portraits of the French bourgeoisie of the eighteenth-thirties his novels played a role that was definitely progressive (— a word I am somewhat reluctant to use, since the Stalinists have discredited it by tagging it on whatever corresponds to their political line of the moment). The writer can, but is not obliged to, offer a solution to the problems he deals with in a work of fiction. Genuine social realism — not to be confused with the Stalinists' so-called Socialist Realism — is sufficient to make a novel progressive. Reactionary novelists are those who fake reality and make this pseudo-reality conform to the needs and aims of the ruling class. Reactionary writers like Herman Wouk dress up their falsification of social reality with a lot of realistic detail.

Even the realistic novelist does not actually photograph life because in fiction reality has to be arranged to suit

the requirements of a story, a work of art. And the more eminent a novelist he is, the stronger is the imprint his personality leaves on the figures he portrays. Thus, mediocre writers often "describe their surroundings with a greater faithfulness," as Maugham explains in *The Summing Up*. The mediocrities generally cultivate a more thorough reproduction of detail; but their novels are no powerful artistic creations.

Realism does not spell accurate imitation of reality. A novel is a composition; and few novelists have shown as brilliant a gift for composition and left as strong a personal imprint on their entire work as Maugham. Realism means that the writer avoids situations and coincidences that are wildly improbable, that he tries to convey to us a psychologically probable image of the persons he describes and that he depicts as honestly as possible a social milieu or several social spheres and the interrelation between individuals and social conditions. This is social realism. And this social realism is one of the qualities that have made Somerset Maugham a modern classic.

Maugham, who has just returned from a trip to East and South East Asia to his home on the French Riviera, is 86 and the dean of contemporary literature. More than they did in the past, professional critics occasionally pay homage to the celebrated master-storyteller, the public's perennial favorite. But neither the bourgeois critics, nor their Stalinist or pro-Stalinist colleagues care to mention the profound social significance of his fiction and non-fiction. (The bourgeois critics despise the term "social significance" anyway . . .)

In *The Art of Fiction* Maugham asserts that the 19th century — "if you are prepared to hold that it did not end till 1914" — produced greater novels than any era before or since. It "was a period of revolution, social, industrial and political." He convincingly indicates

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the relationship between this climate of changes and literature. However, the period of revolutions did not end in 1914, as Maugham himself points out in *The Summing Up*. Far from it! And I tend to believe that the age of the greatest novels did not end in 1914 either. W. Somerset Maugham's work is

an impressive part of the evidence bearing out this view.

1. W. Somerset Maugham, *The Art of Fiction*, Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, N. Y., 1955.
2. W. Somerset Maugham, *The Summing Up*, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1938.
3. W. Somerset Maugham, *A Writer's Notebook*, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1949.

## A Changing City

by Richard Garza

THE NEWCOMERS, by Oscar Handlin. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1960. 164 pp. \$4.00.

The author opens with a history of the peoples who came to New York City. He describes some of the problems they faced in adjusting to their new environment, and develops the theme that newcomers have always had problems, that the problems might vary a little with the national group; but that all groups overcame them to one degree or another and adjusted to life in New York City.

Handlin then turns to the last two waves of immigrants who came to New York: The Negroes and the Puerto Ricans. He notes that their total number in the metropolitan area is two million and will continue to grow in the foreseeable future. He sketches the problems that caused them to risk the uncertainties of the metropolis. However his remark, "Puerto Rico's central problem since its annexation to the United States has been overpopulation," accepting the current fad which reduces the effects of imperialism to overpopulation, should warn the reader of the limits of his examination. He ends the thought with, "Efforts at induced industrialization and at birth control showed encouraging signs of progress, particularly after . . . 1940, but they did not provide the means for utilizing or liquidating the surplus."

The Negroes and Puerto Ricans face the same problems as all newcomers but in addition, the factor of color. Also

the city has altered considerably since the last wave of immigration.

Handlin contends that ethnic antagonisms increased during the time jobs were scarce but that since 1939 and 1945 the antagonisms have abated due to a shortage of skilled labor.

Without going into the source of prejudice he deals with its manifestations and describes the vicious circle that confronts an oppressed minority.

The author claims, "In the past, New York benefited greatly from the presence of such laborers; but the city and the immigrants paid the cost in a debilitating social disorder. Recovery from the disorder came from the capacity to expand and from the freedom with which the newcomers could rise to opportunities created by the expansion."

From this observation he goes on to conclude that by showing "the will and energy, and their neighbors the tolerance," the newcomers will contribute as much as their predecessors.

Handlin does not examine the probability that the road to progress will be barred by a new depression. This failure can be explained by the fact that the work, the third in a series of a project devoted to an examination of the major problems confronting the tri-state New York region, proceeds from the premise that the fundamental social relations will always remain the same.

The last pages, pointing to the growing political awareness on the part of the Negro and Puerto Rican people, are instructive; but the book as a whole is of limited value.

## On the Bottom

by Robert Chester

IF THIS BE MAN, by Primo Levi. Orion Press, New York. 1959. 206 pp. \$3.50.

Capitalism, in its death agony, seeks scapegoats upon whom it vents its insolvable frustrations. Hitler's persecution of Jews and Marxists is a prime

example of the barbaric level to which modern "civilizations" can descend.

Primo Levi's autobiographical account of his experience in a German concentration camp is a well-written, carefully detailed and honest account of life "on the bottom." He presents a graphic pic-

ture of the social codes that result from the grim, desperate struggle for mere survival.

Levi was a Jewish Italian partisan who was captured by the Fascists in 1943 and turned over to the Nazis. With a trainload of other Italian Jews he was shipped to the Buna camp in East Germany.

The prisoners degenerated as the pressures of constant hunger, cold, hard labor and savage, inflexible discipline took their toll. The means of sustenance were a portion of gray bread in the morning and a bowl of soup in the evening. They also were the means of exchange in the vast barter system that pervaded the camp, where a piece of thread, a spoon or an extra shirt meant a significant increase in wealth. Each prisoner became the merciless competitor of all the others as he jockeyed in line to get his bowl of soup from the bottom, rather than from the top, of the vat.

The inmates lived and worked under an impossibly complicated system of rules, every infraction of which was cause for a beating. Favoritism and special privilege played the same role as anywhere in capitalist society. It seemed to operate, Levi writes, under the ferocious law "to he that has, will be given; to he that has not, will be taken away."

Hanging over their heads was the eternal threat of "selection." The sick, the weakened or those just unlucky were chosen as candidates for the ever-waiting gas chamber. It was the hope to avoid "selection" that drove men to their last gasp in dragging their heavy burdens in the snow and rain; to march for miles on infernal wooden shoes; and to tolerate the hunger and the beatings.

Even the approach of the Russians, signifying the end of the war for them, held little hope any more. They had been driven too low. Levi recounts how they were drawn up on the parade ground to witness the hanging of a prisoner. At the final moment the victim found the defiant courage to shout, "Comrades, I am the last one!" The author asks, "Did they respond?" No, their minds were more intent on the evening bowl of soup. Only after the hunger cravings were eased were they oppressed by shame.

When the Germans evacuated the camp, Levi was in the infirmary with a case of scarlet fever. All those incapable of marching were left behind. For the next ten days, before the Russians arrived, the camp disintegrated under the desperate struggles of the dying to hang on. Yet in this same period, the beginnings of cooperation among the sick started the prisoners along the road to normal human relationships. Those that survived began the long road up.

# ... Periodicals in Review

(Continued from page 66)

experience with the "old left" as a member of a two-man faction in the Young Socialist League, now extinct. He describes an incident which occurred a few years back when a YSL-influenced left wing in the Students for Democratic Action, a liberal group, won a majority in the national organization only to voluntarily relinquish it for fear of a split between SDA and ADA (Americans for Democratic Action). He then puts his finger on a highly important political trend — the spread of the disease of opportunism — which not only affected the old YSL but is today epidemic in such current groups as the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation, its youth organization, the YPSL and the Communist party. Keeping this in mind one can substitute SP-SDF-YPSL or CP for "Shachtmanites" as we quote from Mitzman:

"In the complex string of relations between the Shachtmanites and the SDA, SDA and ADA, ADA and the liberal Democrats, and the liberal Democrats and the Democratic party, one common factor emerges. Each group on the left side of a pair was firmly convinced that the agent of historical progress, lay in its partner to the right. The Shachtmanites, with their Marxist analysis, saw a future in a labor party, but had not the slightest confidence in their powers to produce such a thing; they counted on an amalgam of the labor movement and the ADA to bring it into being. Getting control of SDA was a step toward this objective.

"The ADA, in turn, accepted the same kind of relationship to the 'left wing' of the Democratic party. ADA could not dream of embarking on an independent political venture, but could only hope that the Democratic liberals might finally break from the Southern Democrats and form a genuinely liberal party. But of course the Democratic liberals had no intention of ruining their presidential chances by sending the South over to the Republicans. In short, each party of principle, realizing its impotence, played the game of *realpolitik* by supporting, while hoping to convert, the larger group to the right, until the chain reached the Democratic party — all *realpolitik* and no principle — which by this system received, with little expense, the support of everyone to its left."

Mitzman ends his article with an appeal, which has become a cliché in publications as varied (and yet sharing many similar prejudices) as *Dissent*, *Monthly Review* and the defunct *Amer-*

*ican Socialist*. Having rejected the "old left" for its deplorable *realpolitik* and noting that "perhaps the trouble now is that the students in the anti-bomb movement and in such groups as SANE have failed to be sufficiently ideological," he goes on to call for "a new radical theory."

In so doing Mitzman shows that he is made of the same sad stuff as the liberals who preach down to the new youth movement. He is showing that, in reality, he too is part of the opportunist "old left" and in fact one of its more worn-out and demoralized by-products — the beat radical. Actually it is Mitzman who seeks a "new theory" — an illusive will 'o the wisp he and others around *Dissent* were seeking long before the student movement experienced its resurgence. The youth movement now offers, he hopes, a place to dump his disenchantment with Marxism, his disillusionment with the radical movement of the past, and his vague musings about "mass society" which pass for a theory and a program in *Dissent* circles.

It is true that the new generation of radical youth have little use for opportunism, for *realpolitik* and maneuvers within the Democratic party. Many of them may not as yet reject such maneuvers from principled political considerations; they may find discussions of political theory boring and alien to their immediate needs for expressing protest. In their own way, however, they see far more clearly than those elders who use Marxist terms to rationalize the betrayal of socialism and are intent on peddling their unprincipled politics to the youth.

An increasing number of the new generation of young radicals are finding ideological expression for their rebellion in the body of principles of revolutionary socialism. This explains the growth in the recent period of the Young Socialist Alliance and its paper the *Young Socialist*, the only radical youth paper in the country.

\* \* \*

Murray Kempton in his *New York Post* column May 6 wrote a rather pathetic political "feeler" item. He reported that the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation had decided "to wait for the conventions of the major parties before deciding whether simple decency dictates the tender of an alternative." He said, "They will probably not run a candidate this time if the Democrats nominate either Stevenson or Humphrey. But if the Democrats run Stuart Symington, the Socialists feel that they must offer an alternative . . ."

The projected SP ticket, Kempton said, "would be Norman Thomas for President and A. Philip Randolph for Vice President."

Thomas was "not over anxious but dutiful" Kempton reported, and Thomas seemed to feel "there is a certain duty to the very young" particularly "with the possibility that the American left may be stirring again."

In the May 11 *Post*, New York Organizer of the Socialist Workers party, Richard Garza, says in a letter replying to Kempton, "The Socialist Workers party has already placed the names of Farrell Dobbs for President and Myra Tanner Weiss for Vice President on the ballot in Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The SWP is now preparing to qualify for other state ballots, including New York's. Its platform provides a means of registering protest against the continuation of nuclear tests and in favor of peace. It also provides means of registering condemnation of the racism which Southern Democrats uphold."

The Spring 1960 issue of the *Socialist Call*, received in the mail at the end of May, carries an article by Norman Thomas. Thomas writes, "Emphatically there is no moral imperative laid on Socialists to abstain from electoral action unless they can nominate their own candidates. Rather the contrary. Certainly there are better ways to invest time and money in advancing socialism than by vying with dogmatic sectarian Socialists of other parties for a pitiful handful of votes . . . We can work harder and more intelligently as Socialists within labor's ranks, and possibly in some states in the primaries of the old parties. We can organize teams to heckle candidates of old parties . . ."

A fresh generation of youth moves to the left and the worn out generation of radical opportunists moves to the right.

\* \* \*

The *National Guardian* which was also reported to be waiting for the capitalist party conventions before deciding, in Kempton's phrase, "whether simple decency dictates the tender of an alternative," has also jumped the gun on its own timetable. We find in the May 30 editorial:

"The Guardian, to the best of its ability in our years on the political scene, has advocated a strong independent third party as the best leverage on the old parties to produce programs and candidates reflecting the people's real concerns. Lacking such an instrument, the people can exert leverage on national policy only through the existing political machinery. The crisis resulting from the collapse of the Summit Conference — a collapse clearly engineered by an administration which hoped to keep its design covered up but could not — has now produced conditions making possible the forcing of the peace issue on a reluctant Democratic party."

# James P. Cannon

Still going strong at the age of 70, James P. Cannon became a revolutionary socialist when the campaigns of Eugene V. Debs were stirring all of America. A disciple of Vincent St. John, the great leader of the Industrial Workers of the World, Cannon knew and learned from such figures as William D. Haywood. But he also knew how to learn from the Russians. An outstanding figure in the rebel generation that founded the American Communist party, Cannon became one of its top leaders in the twenties.

But that was only his apprenticeship. His greatest contributions came after he took up the cause represented by Leon Trotsky and in 1928 founded the movement that later became the Socialist Workers party.

Cannon's writings are among the best the native American socialist movement has produced. We are proud to offer them to the generation now considering the best way to dedicate their lives to the service of mankind.

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