

Intercontinental Press

combined with **Imprecor**

Vol. 16, No. 32

© 1978 by Intercontinental Press

August 28, 1978

USA 75¢

UK 30p



CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Ten Years After Soviet Invasion

Alan Jones:

Healy's Rejection of Dialectical Materialism

NEWS ANALYSIS

In Defense of Rudolf Bahro

By Alain Brossat

It is not good to be a communist in the land of "existing socialism." After the exiling of Wolf Biermann and dozens of other young workers, writers, and artists who consider themselves socialists and Marxists, and the placing of Robert Havemann under house arrest, the sentencing of Rudolf Bahro to eight years in prison offers additional proof of this.

It is for "espionage" that Bahro has just been sentenced, shamefacedly and in secret. This simple fact could suffice to indicate the extreme weakness of the East German bureaucracy—moral as well as political—in face of its communist opponents. It was with good reason that Wolf Biermann pointed out, shortly after Bahro's sentencing, that the criticism by elements favoring a restoration of capitalism in East German does not frighten the high muckamucks greatly, that the Christian opposition irritates them, but that, if push comes to shove, they can accommodate themselves to it. But in contrast to this, when a communist opposition appears, throwing Marxism back at the bureaucracy both in letter and in spirit, taking the official doctrine as a starting point for discussions, and claiming the mantle of communism, the functionaries react with a viciousness that, in the final analysis, is nothing but a symptom of panic.

Putting Dissidents Out of Circulation

Thus, their only recourse consists of lies, seamy Machiavellian maneuvers, and outright cynicism. To put a Bahro, a Biermann, or a Havemann out of circulation, they shrink from nothing. They are prepared to instigate a witch-hunt among the youth and intelligentsia of their country, to see their prestige sink even lower abroad, and to pay the price of isolating themselves still further to get these troublemakers off their backs.

They are prepared to pass off as a "spy" the author of one of the greatest Marxist theoretical works of the postwar period; to say that a veteran of Communism, of the resistance to Hitlerism, like Havemann, has sold out to the class enemy; to swear that Biermann slandered his socialist fatherland in West Germany, whereas millions of Germans in the East and West watched a television broadcast of the concert on which this charge is based. Throughout it, Biermann defended the Democratic Republic as "the best part" of Germany.

The reason why they are willing to commit all these perjuries is quite simple. It is that Biermann, Havemann, and Bahro are popular in their country. It is because for years and years, tapes of Biermann have been circulating by the hundreds among hundreds of thousands of East German youth, and because his songs, while drawing up a pitiless, stinging indictment of the bureaucracy, propose a different socialism, a different communist hope, a different communist world view than that of the high priests of the old Stalin-Allee. Because Rudolf Bahro's book *The Alternative*, brought out by a publishing house with ties to the West German trade unions, and banned in East Germany, is finding its way into the clandestine communist libraries, and is being read, discussed, and recopied in that country as no text by Brezhnev or Honecker ever will be.

In a word, the bureaucrats are green (or red) with fear of this current, because even though political activity by the East German working class is very slight, they know that it represents a genuine alternative, a hope, for thousands of young people. This is a thousand times more dangerous for the watchdogs of bureaucratic socialism than the desires of a few thousand East German citizens to cross over to the West.

That such an alternative exists—although as yet weak and unsure, of course—is shown by the response that the invasion of Czechoslovakia evoked in East Germany ten years ago, not only the protests of intellectuals like Havemann (or his son Floria, who hung a Czechoslovakian flag from his window), but even more moving displays, such as those the East German writer Rainer Kunze describes in his book *The Wonderful Years*, such as the flowers placed by an unseen hand on the doorstep of a woman of Czechoslovakian birth. Or again, the veritable rebellion of intellectuals that followed Biermann's exiling in November 1976, the effects of which are still being felt, particularly in artistic circles.

A regime that forces into exile, or reports, not all (as some Western propaganda would have it), but the best of its artists and intellectuals—as does the East German regime—such a regime sits in judgment on itself. A writer like Sarah Kirsch, who was active in the Communist Party, who was never an outspoken oppositionist like Biermann, who strove loyally

in the cultural sphere to do her part to build the new society, has had to leave, owing to the lack of guarantees of being able to work unhampered and be published. Others keep still, others have ceased to be communists and have left, like Rainer Kunze.

Crass Stupidity

With the crass stupidity of functionaries, the East German bureaucrats do not realize that times have changed since the Kravchenko affair, that all exiled opponents who flee to the West do not automatically become hostages of the CIA or of Western propaganda. Wolf Biermann lives in Hamburg, and his communist convictions have not changed; his songs are still finding their way to Berlin, Leipzig, and Jena.

More recently, the government exiled a group of young workers from Jena, the young writer Jürgen Fuchs, and two singers, Kunert and Panach, who had all presumed to spit in the cold soup of socialism Honecker-style. All were in Paris a few weeks ago, to take part in a rally of solidarity for Rudolf Bahro, where as communists they defended communist principles.

So the bureaucrats do not realize that they are not even making up in domestic tranquility what they are losing abroad in terms of prestige. Ideas know no frontiers. Driven out through the Brandenburg gate, Biermann's songs come back in through the window—by way of Western travelers, and West German radio and television.

The books of Rainer Kunze and Jürgen Fuchs are an admirable indication that a young generation exists in East Germany, whose freshness of intellect, passion for truth, irreverence, aspiration to live freely, and often, authentically Marxist political consciousness are a constant nightmare for the bureaucrats.

Another indication is the experience of those young workers from Jena, who had organized a cultural circle whose antibureaucratic spontaneity and popularity alarmed officials of the regime to such an extent that they wasted no time in dissolving it.

It is among these youth that the ideas and communist hopes of a new Bahro, Biermann, or Havemann are germinating. And that is why the bureaucrats are afraid, why they strike so savagely.

An International Campaign

In West Germany and in other Western European countries, a campaign has been launched to win Bahro's release—a campaign whose voice does not blend in with that of the right. In West Germany, dozens of rallies have been held, bringing together not only members of far-left organizations, but also representatives of the SP left and trade-union activists. In West Berlin, a protest rally drew 2,000 persons a few days

after Bahro's sentencing. In London, a protest rally was held in front of the East German embassy. In France, *l'Humanité* condemned the sentence meted out to Bahro without beating around the bush.

Of course, the West German authorities will spare no effort to win the franchise for liberalism by offering to "exchange" Bahro for some hard cash—this same Bahro who, if he were a citizen of the Federal Republic, would undoubtedly be hit by repression.

But it seems that Bahro refused such an exchange prior to his trial. It is his unalienable right, as an East German communist oppositionist, to fight for his ideas in his country, which he defends. And for our part, we will fight unstintingly, not for his barter, but for his release, so that his right to live, work, and struggle in that country, the German Democratic Republic, may be respected. □

Antinuclear Protests Mark Hiroshima Day

By Fred Murphy

The dates of August 6 and 9 have become well established as occasions for antinuclear protest. On those days in 1945, U.S. air force planes dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the first and only wartime use of nuclear arms.

Some of the largest actions this year were in Australia, where 25,000 persons marched in Melbourne August 6 to demand a halt to uranium mining. A similar action in Sydney August 5 drew 12,000. These protests took on added importance after government announcements in June and July that nuclear reactors and fuel-enrichment facilities will be built in Australia.

The August 6-9 demonstrations in the United States this year were the largest since the early 1970s, when the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Days were an important focus for the anti-Vietnam War movement.

The biggest action was at San Luis Obispo, California. More than 3,000 persons attended an August 6 rally on a beach near the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. Later more than 500 persons entered the plant illegally in a civil-disobedience protest. Almost all were arrested and jailed in a nearby state prison.

Two thousand persons participated in another California rally on August 5, at the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station near Los Angeles. The rally protested the storage of nuclear weapons at the Seal Beach facility.

At Rocky Flats, Colorado—the site of the U.S. government's main factory for the plutonium components of hydrogen bombs—600 persons demonstrated on Au-

gust 6. On August 9, 50 persons were arrested at Rocky Flats in a civil-disobedience action. Among those detained were peace activist Daniel Ellsberg and poet Allen Ginsberg.

Another civil-disobedience action took place at the Trojan nuclear plant in Rainier, Oregon, where 136 persons were arrested on August 6. The day before, 1,200 persons had rallied in Portland, Oregon, to protest nuclear weapons and nuclear power.

Other smaller protest actions were held in the United States during the August 6-9 period. Sixty persons marched to the Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire. Pease is the headquarters of the 509th Bomb Wing, the unit that carried out the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Additional actions included marches of 200 and 500 persons in the New York City area, a rally of 300 at the Perry nuclear plant near Cleveland, Ohio, and a rally of

100 persons in Atlanta.

In Hiroshima, Japan, 40,000 persons gathered for August 6 ceremonies marking the thirty-third anniversary of the near-destruction of the city in the first atomic attack. The day before the ceremonies, 6,000 persons marched to demand a total ban on nuclear weapons and improved care for the surviving victims of the 1945 bombing. Later another rally of 8,300 persons was held by the World Congress for the Total Banning of Nuclear Weapons.

On August 9, 7,000 persons demonstrated in Nagasaki. They passed a resolution opposing the planned docking of the nuclear ship *Mutsu* at the Sasebo shipyards in October. Sasebo is located thirty miles from Nagasaki. The *Mutsu* developed a leak in its reactor on its maiden voyage in 1974 and since then has been unable to return to any Japanese port for repairs owing to antinuclear protests. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: August 18, 1978

FEATURES	957	Stalinists Mourn "Progressive" Pontiff—by Matilde Zimmermann
	966	Healy's Rejection of Dialectical Materialism—by Alan Jones
PORTUGAL	956	Capitalists Name One of Their Own as Premier—by Gerry Foley
ARGENTINA	956	Save the Life of Ana Maria Piffaretti!
CUBA	958	"Granma" Blasts Peking's Foreign Policy
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	959	Ten Years After the Soviet Invasion —by Niklaus Kroeger and Anton Peschke
	965	One Hundred Years of Czech Socialism
NEWS ANALYSIS	954	In Defense of Rudolf Bahro —by Alain Brossat
	955	Antinuclear Protests Mark Hiroshima Day—by Fred Murphy
DRAWINGS	957	Pope Paul VI—by Copain

Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and third and fourth in August.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Editor: Joseph Hansen.

Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Michael Baumann.

Editorial Staff: Jon Britton, Gerry Foley, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Susan Wald, Matilde Zimmermann.

Business Manager: Harvey McArthur.

Copy Editor: David Martin.

Technical Staff: Paul Deveze, Larry Ingram, Arthur Lobman, Kevin McGuire, James M. Morgan, Sally Rhett.

Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-

fects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

To Subscribe: For one year send \$24 to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates on first class and airmail.

In Europe: For air-speeded subscriptions, write to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP, England. In Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 151, Glebe 2037. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 1663, Wellington.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address as well as your new address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

Copyright © 1978 by Intercontinental Press.

Portuguese Capitalists Name One of Their Own as Premier

By Gerry Foley

On August 9, Portuguese president General Ramalho Eanes designated Alfredo Nobre da Costa to form a "government of presidential confidence" to replace the coalition government headed by Socialist Party leader Mário Soares.

The new government is to be composed mainly of "independent experts," as Nobre da Costa is supposed to be. In fact, a look at the history of the premier-designate's career shows what kind of a government it will be.

At the age of twenty-seven, Nobre da Costa took over the management of a cement company. From 1954 to 1962, he was technical and industrial director of the Portuguese steel trust, Siderurgia Nacional. At the time of the fall of the Salazarist dictatorship in 1974, he was chairman of the administrative board of SACOR, the major Portuguese petroleum trust.

During the mass upsurge in 1975, when the government was forced to carry out a wave of nationalizations, he withdrew to the background. Once the mass upsurge was diverted, he assumed the post of secretary of state for heavy industry in the Sixth Provisional Government, which was installed at the end of September 1975.

As the government shifted to the right, Nobre da Costa moved forward. In March 1977, he was appointed minister of industry. In this post, he began to implement a policy of returning nationalized enterprises to their former owners. However, apparently he had no confidence in the ability of an SP-dominated government to carry through this line.

In January 1978, when Soares was forced to form a coalition with the smaller bourgeois party, the Centro Democrático Social (CDS), in order to stay in office, Nobre da Costa refused to continue in the new cabinet. This decision coincided with a hardening attitude on the part of the major bourgeois forces, which were pressing for more rapid liquidation of the concessions made to the workers and peasants in 1974-75.

In fact, the SP-CDS government proved incapable of pushing the offensive against the working masses as hard as the bourgeoisie demanded. Right-wing farmers mobilized to demand a turning back of the land reform. This brought pressure to bear particularly on the CDS, since they form a major part of its support.

In July, the CDS provoked the collapse of the government, accusing Soares's minister of agriculture, Luis Saias, of having a tacit agreement with the Communist Party

to maintain the essential status quo in the south-central farming areas, where many of the big landed estates were taken over by the peasants in 1974-75.

The center of the land takeovers, Alentejo, is where the Communist Party has one of its solidest bases. The SP has made important inroads there, although its popular vote declined significantly in the April 1976 general elections, after it had held governmental responsibility for about half a year.

The SP could not push a policy of across-the-board givebacks to the landlords without losing its base in Alentejo altogether and thus severely damaging its credibility in the electoral arena as a "nationwide party."

However, much more was at stake in the July governmental crisis than the expropriated lands in Alentejo. The main effects of the austerity program imposed on Portugal by the International Monetary Fund are expected to begin to be felt fully this fall. Apparently, the Portuguese capitalists wanted a firmer hand on the wheel when the government starts to run into stormier weather.

In dumping Soares, Eanes violated the

provision of the constitution requiring him to "consider the election results" when he appoints a premier. No one can claim Nobre da Costa represents the voters.

When the SP denounced him for setting up an unrepresentative government, Eanes replied that he had been given a mandate by 61 percent of the electorate. That was the unkindest cut of all for the SP leaders. It was only open SP and tacit CP support that enabled him to get a majority. Moreover, despite their best efforts the SP leaders failed to get a major section of their supporters to vote for him.

Jolted by the president's move, the SP began to criticize him for the first time. It even threatened to mobilize the workers in the streets to block any rightist threat. The SP, of course, is now obliged to try to recover the credibility it has lost among the workers. But it has good reason to be frightened at the sight of Eanes emerging openly as a political strongman backing a government of capitalist offensive.

The class struggle in Portugal is reaching a decisive phase. Only a united mobilization of all the workers parties can block the offensive of the right. □

Save the Life of Ana Maria Piffaretti!



ANA MARIA PIFFARETTI

[The following appeal is being circulated by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA).]

* * *

Ana Maria Piffaretti, a trade unionist and activist in the women's movement in Argentina, has joined the ranks of several thousand Argentines who have "disappeared" in the last two and a half years of brutal military rule.

On June 28 of this year she was abducted by uniformed police from the Guemes Clinic in Buenos Aires, where she works as a nutritionist and dietician. But authorities have so far refused to admit to inquiring friends and relatives that she has been detained. Nor has there been any response from the courts to the writ of Habeas Corpus that was immediately filed on her behalf.

In Europe, a campaign is under way to discover her whereabouts and obtain her

release. The London headquarters of Amnesty International, among others, has taken up her case. In Sweden, Amnesty has requested of the Swedish government that she be granted asylum in that country upon her release. Other activities in her behalf are also under way in England, France, and the United States. An international campaign is imperative to save Ana Maria from torture and possibly death.

Ana Maria, 32, was born in the city of Rio Cuarto in the Province of Córdoba. Her father is a doctor and her mother a biochemist.

Ana Maria graduated from a Catholic high school and attended college in the city of Córdoba, where she became a dietician. Once graduated she went to work at the Emergency Hospital in that city. At her job, her co-workers elected her as a delegate of the infirmary and kitchen section of the hospital.

In 1974 she moved to Buenos Aires to take advanced courses at the Clinical Hospital of the City of Buenos Aires, graduating with highest honors. She settled in Buenos Aires and went to work at the Ford plant in the town of General Pacheco where, as a dietician and nutritionist, she was put in charge of one of the cafeterias.

In April 1978 she went to work at the Guemes Clinic in Buenos Aires. During this time she also worked in a health care center in her community, a small city called Ituzaingo, near the capital.

Throughout her life, Ana Maria's activities centered around the struggle for women's rights. Since her early years in college she championed the feminist cause, fighting consistently for women's issues in the university, in the hospital, in the factory, and in her daily life. She was a founding member of several feminist groups, taught courses and gave lectures on the subject. And, as a dietician, she spoke frequently on television on such topics as women and the home, children, working women, etc. Her articles have been published in various newspapers.

When the military dictatorship took power in March 1976 it suppressed all democratic rights. Piffaretti continued her activities, risking without hesitation the dangers of the savage repression that has now made her a victim.

In an effort to form a women's movement under its control and in support of its policies, the junta recently called and campaigned for a "First Symposium of the Multinational Women's Center," organized by the United Nations' InterAmerican Women's Commission. Ana Maria criticized the symposium initially for the undemocratic circumstances under which it took place and later for what came out of it. She wrote, spoke, and organized meetings on this issue. The government's response was to kidnap her.

Like Ana Maria, hundreds of other unionists and political activists have been

kidnapped or "arrested" in Argentina, many being brutally tortured. Many have not survived. *Your help is urgently needed to save Ana Maria's life.*

• Please send letters and telegrams demanding to know her whereabouts and her immediate release to: Argentine Embassy, 1600 New Hampshire Ave., Washington,

D.C. 20009.

• Circulate the petition on her behalf among your co-workers or members of your organization.

Please send signed petitions, as well as copies of all letters and telegrams to: USLA Justice Committee, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, N.Y. 10003. □

Stalinists Mourn 'Progressive' Pontiff

By Matilde Zimmermann



POPE PAUL VI

There was an interesting papal obituary in the newspaper of the American Communist Party. Under the headline "Pope Paul VI: Reflected Desire for Peace," the *Daily World* of August 8 praises the church patriarch's "efforts for world peace" and paints him up to be a long-time fighter against the war in Vietnam. The obit notes some of the trips taken by the world's first flying pope, and remarks that "he did a lot of work for normalization of relations with socialist countries."

The Stalinists have even been too polite to comment on the fact that while on display in the warm Vatican City summer

the papal corpse turned a most unspiritual green—a development that received close and somewhat irreverent attention in the bourgeois press.

Pope Paul will actually be remembered not as a crusader for peace but as a hardliner in the Catholic Church's fight against women's rights. He was the author of the 1968 encyclical "Of Human Life," reaffirming the Church's absolute ban on contraceptive devices and abortion. Millions of Catholic women have simply decided in practice that they have more right than the pope to decide what to do with their lives.

Paul fought to the end against the legalization of divorce and expressed "profound suffering" when the Italian parliament passed a divorce reform law in 1970. He vetoed the ordination of female priests, declaring such an innovation unthinkable on the grounds that women do not look like Jesus. He railed against the new feminist movement, which he feared would lead to "either masculinizing or depersonalizing women." Paul's church is today on an all-out campaign to sabotage Italy's new abortion reform law and make sure that Italian women continue to be denied safe, legal abortions.

More than 100 old men will soon go into top-secret session to choose one of themselves to take up Paul's mantle. The only deviation in procedure from centuries past is that the chambers are now carefully searched for electronic snooping devices.

When the smoke has cleared and all the mumbo-jumbo is over, there will be a new pope. Leaders of the Italian Communist Party will undoubtedly be standing in line to embrace him. But neither they nor the *Daily World* will ever make a pope into anything except the czar of one of the world's most reactionary institutions. □

Sounds Plausible

Objecting to a California jury's award of \$128 million to a teenager severely burned in a Ford Pinto after a rear-end crash, Ford spokesman Charles Gumishian takes particular exception to the jury's publicizing of a Ford report that gas-tank design changes on the assembly line would have cost only \$10 to \$15 a car.

"They try to make it look as if we put a dollar value on human life," he says.

'Granma' Blasts Peking's Foreign Policy

The June 11 English-language edition of *Granma* features an extensive polemic against the reactionary foreign and domestic policy of the Peking regime. Published in Havana, *Granma* is the official organ of the Cuban Communist Party.

Granma says that the threat of world war is sharply increased by Peking's friendly attitude toward U.S. and European imperialism. The article says that a few years ago Mao was making wild and irresponsible statements about a world war with imperialism not being such a bad thing.

"What does the Chinese leadership seem to be after now? In its deeds, it advocates an anti-Soviet war with the same insanity. To this end, it tries to sharpen Soviet-U.S. contradictions and stir up war between the two countries. Would this be a war for China to rise up out of the ruins as the great predominating power? That would be a senseless hope, for it doesn't appreciate the extent of the devastatingly destructive power of nuclear weapons and of their current deadly stockpiling. It would certainly be a war that would entail the devastation of China itself. . . . But what is worse yet, the Chinese leadership seems to be thinking openly of war in alliance with the United States against the Soviet Union."

Granma points out that the Peking press openly praises NATO, quotes its representatives, and sends military delegations shopping for arms in the NATO capitals.

"The NATO generals," says *Granma*, are openly delighted with these visitors who passionately defend maintaining the military bases of this aggressive pact and who unreservedly support strengthening a military alliance aimed not only against the socialist countries of Europe but also against the liberation movements and progressive governments in Africa.

"It was NATO that sustained the colonialist Portuguese regime to the very end! . . .

"The NATO member countries sustain, arm and incite the bloody racist and fascist regime of South Africa. . . .

"China seeks its allies in countries such as France, whose government has been sending thousands of paratroopers to intervene in Zaire to save the corrupt and bloody regime of Mobutu Sese Seko!"

Granma asks: "Can the countries representing the system that has historically plundered Africa help in its independent development for the benefit of the African peoples?"

The Cuban newspaper explains that the ideological basis for Peking's reactionary

policies lies in a theory "that flatly denies class struggle," the theory of "three worlds."

"The Chinese place what they call 'the two superpowers'—the United States and the Soviet Union—in the 'first world.' Since they maintain that the USSR is the main enemy, all their attacks and all their actions are aimed against the country of the Soviets.

"They place the capitalist countries of Western Europe, Japan, Canada, Australia and some other countries in the 'second world.' Here, too, are the European Socialist Countries, which they consider to be 'exploited' by the Soviet Union.

"The Chinese leaders place the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America—themselves included—in the 'third world.'

"According to the Chinese leaders, all the countries of the 'third world' should unite with those of the 'second' and even collaborate with the U.S. 'superpower' so as to create a great alliance to destroy the Soviet Union."

The clearest illustration of how the Chinese rulers are betraying the world revolution, says *Granma*, is their campaign against Vietnam. The article quotes an official Peking statement warning Hanoi to put an immediate halt to the "ostracism, persecution and expulsion of Chinese residents," or else "bear full responsibility for all the consequences." *Granma* comments:

"Incredible! Do the Chinese leaders really think they can now intimidate a people that didn't yield to Yankee bombs and, long before that, had learned how to preserve its national identity over the centuries, in spite of invasions from Chinese territory?"

The Chinese refugees are fleeing nationalization of their property, not racial persecution, says *Granma*, and continues:

"It is the height of shamelessness for the Chinese leaders to assume the defense of capitalists whose property has been nationalized by a sovereign state that is building socialism!"

Cuba Defends Itself

Granma also responds to the vicious anti-Cuba campaign Peking has recently been waging.

"As for Cuba, Chinese propaganda rivals the imperialist press in its offenses, calumny and lies.

"Fine. Our people are used to measuring our abilities, successes and victories by the attacks dealt us by our enemies.

"What the Chinese leaders really can't

stand is that our consistent, daily practice of proletarian internationalism has become a serious obstacle to their aims of penetration in Latin America, Africa and other parts of the 'Third World.'

"The new Chinese mandarins seek to portray our noble, courageous, internationalist soldiers as mercenaries. This epithet can only arouse indignation, and not only among our people, but among other fraternal peoples, as well. In short, this serves to unmask even more, as if such were necessary, the Chinese leaders, whose betrayal has disfigured them and who cannot understand the generous sentiments of Communists and other revolutionary workers.

"Moreover, as part of the services they have rendered the United States, they have even described our country as a 'Soviet base' of aggression in the Caribbean. Let the peoples be the judge of this!"

The article quotes a May 1977 statement by Fidel Castro that "China opposes the lifting of the economic blockade which the United States imposed on Cuba and the return of the territory occupied by the North Americans at the Guantánamo base."

"Most recently," the article continues, "the Chinese have gone about openly egging the U.S. Government on to prepare a new aggression against Cuba. The Hsinhua news agency echoes every commentary that states that the U.S. Government should take up 'the challenge of the Soviet-Cuban intervention in Africa' . . ."

Granma says that the root of the Peking bureaucracy's counterrevolutionary policies lies in "the deep antidemocratic content characteristic of Chinese institutions." The article describes some aspects of this lack of democracy: "The working masses, the workers, the peasants and the intellectuals have no part at all in the exercise of socialist democracy. There is no legality, and the people are subjected to the whims and caprices of those at the top levels of leadership.

"The cultural revolution, begun in 1966, did away with the trade unions, youth organizations, women's federation and many other organizations.

"The Communist Party of China, following its adulteration and the persecution and liquidation of many of its middle-level cadres and no small number of the members of its Central Committee, holds its congresses clandestinely. One fine day, the Chinese people learns that there is a new Political Bureau and a new Central Committee and that figures who had been purged have been reinstated in their posts, or vice versa."

The only solution, concludes *Granma*, is a great popular uprising to do away with this reactionary bureaucracy:

"The Chinese are, without a doubt, a great people, and, one way or another, sooner or later, they will sweep away the scum and overcome this profound ideological and political crisis." □



Czechoslovakia Ten Years After the Soviet Invasion

By Niklaus Kroeger and Anton Peschke

Ten years later, the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia has not been forgotten. News continues to come out of the country regularly about the activity of the opposition and the repression to which it is subjected (this is true especially since the formation of the Charter 77 group).

However, the aim of the intervention and later of the "normalization" was precisely to stamp out the aspirations of the Prague Spring and restore the image of a gray, dull Czechoslovakia resting in the bosom of the Soviet bureaucracy. What is more, the "limited sovereignty" that Brezhnev wanted to impose by force on the Communist movement is being challenged by the Eurocommunist CPs. Thus, the military suppression of the Prague Spring continues to send tremors through the country and through the Communist parties.

A Preventative Coup d'Etat

But, while the bureaucracy had to pay a high political price for the intervention, it had no other recourse if it wanted to hang on to its power. At the decisive moment in 1968, the Czechoslovak CP "reformers" were induced to bow to Moscow's diktat.

Beginning in April 1968, the cautious reforms undertaken by the Czechoslovak CP—in particular the abolition of censorship and the unions' call for reconstituting factory councils¹—opened the way for mass activity. The masses tended to break out of the framework that had been laid down and threatened the foundation of bureaucratic power—the bureaucracy's exclusive control of the state apparatus and of the party.

The preparatory work for the Fourteenth Congress of the Czechoslovak CP, which was held in clandestinity immediately following the intervention,² shows

1. See the article "Am Beispiel der CSSR" by Sibylle Plogstedt in *Kursbuch*, December 1972. It deals with the development of self-management and workers councils in 1968-69. She notes that in the beginning, when the workers were called upon by the unions to elect factory committees, they elected a majority of technicians, although two-thirds of those who voted were workers.

2. See *Le Congrès Clandestin*, Seuil, Paris, 1970. In his introduction, Pelikan notes that "unlike the traditional programs, the draft theses view socialization of the means of production and planning not as a goal in themselves but as the basis for an ongoing process of liberating hu-

manity from all forms of alienation . . . up to and including the role of the state itself" (p. 14).

that the pressure of the masses seeking a radical change in the conception of socialism and of the "leading" role of the single party had an impact on the CP itself. In the factories, on the other hand, the formation of workers councils was not allowed to get very far. What was done essentially was to set up forms of joint management involving factory managers, technicians, and workers. However, the dynamic unleashed was sufficiently strong to strike terror into all the bureaucrats in the East European countries.

The August 21 military intervention was designed to forestall this development and reestablish the authority of the apparatus over the party as well as the state. Given a choice between being profoundly discredited, even among the CPs, and facing a threat of losing its power, the bureaucracy could not but choose the first. In so doing, it demonstrated to all those who thought that the bureaucratic system could be reformed gently that the bureaucracy's own caste interest, the defense of its monopoly of power in the East European countries—most importantly in the USSR—remains the decisive factor in its policies, despite all the verbiage about "the right of every party to follow its own road to socialism."

This brutal confirmation of the real nature of the bureaucratic regime immediately set off a chain reaction that was in proportion to the process of politicalization under way in Czechoslovakia and the hopes for a "socialism with a human face" that had been aroused throughout the world.

Inside Czechoslovakia, the movement for workers councils spread after the intervention. By December 1968, 78 had been formed; by the beginning of 1969, 120; and by the middle of 1969 there must have been about three hundred of them, representing 800,000 workers (out of seven million). Some 73% of these councils were in industry, 12% were in construction, 6% were in the municipal work force, 4% in the hotel and restaurant business, 4% in agriculture, and 1% in transportation.³

Internationally, having been unable to get the leading bodies of the Czechoslovak CP to legitimize the occupation, the Soviet bureaucracy also faced the disapproval or

3. The official figures given by Michael Lang and M. Barta and cited by S. Plogstedt.

condemnation of virtually all the CPs in capitalist Europe (with the exception of the CPs of West Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, and Portugal). But in 1956, none of these parties had condemned the intervention in Hungary. To the contrary, they had backed up the lie that there had been a "danger of capitalist restoration."

So, if the bureaucracy was able to reestablish its control over the state and the party by means of the intervention, it had to pay the price of a marked worsening in its relations both with the masses in the East European countries and with a substantial part of the "world Communist movement." Ten years after 1968, this crisis has not yet been contained and continues to dominate the situation in Czechoslovakia itself, as is well illustrated by the twists and turns of the "normalization."

Twisting Course of Normalization

In speaking of a "crisis," obviously it has to be made clear what its nature and limits are. The Prague coup restored the essential thing for the bureaucracy, that is, its monopoly of political power.

Police persecution, the sentences, administrative harassment, and the all-pervading presence of the bureaucratic machine and its lies had the principal result of totally atomizing the working masses and establishing a permanent climate of apathy and depoliticalization.

The bureaucratic dictatorship perpetuates day by day the heritage of bourgeois society. The search for an "individual way out" is the chief concern of all, especially the top functionaries! Ten years after 1968, the dominant tone, then, is one of demoralization of the masses. And in this respect, the "normalization" achieved its objective.

A quick comparison with the results of the 1956 intervention in Hungary, however, brings out the following important difference. Despite the mutual hopes of the apparatus and the conciliatorist wing of the opposition that formed around Dubcek, it has still not been possible to achieve "national reconciliation."

In 1961, five years after the Hungarian insurrection was put down, Kadar was able to begin to reconcile the factions in the apparatus by opposing the old Stalinist Rakosi clique, just as in the same period Khrushchev held the old guard at bay in the USSR. In Czechoslovakia,

Brezhnev was on Bilak's side. And what the Soviet chief most feared was that the "reform" wing that had allowed the masses to mobilize in the Prague Spring would manage to remain in the party.

Underlying these contradictions within the bureaucracy was obviously a completely different situation both domestically and internationally. On a world scale, the crisis of Stalinism had not gone as deep in 1956-60 as it has today. Not only did the insurgents in Budapest find no support in the CPs. The Sino-Soviet conflict had not yet broken out. Workers struggles were still in an incipient stage in capitalist Europe. And the crisis opened up by Eurocommunism had not yet emerged.

This deepening of the crisis of Stalinism is reflected by the continual tensions between the Western CPs and the Czechoslovak party, which have not diminished since 1968. At the time of the trial of dissidents in 1972, the correspondent for *l'Unità* [the Italian CP paper], Fernando Zidar, was expelled from Czechoslovakia. At the time of the trial of Ota Ornest, Jiri Lederer, and Vaclav Havel (signers of Charter 77), the correspondent for *l'Humanité* [the French CP paper] could not get a visa to enter the country! When the conference of European CPs was held in Prague, the Italian CP delegates had the political police dogging their heels, because the authorities feared that they would meet with oppositionists.

For the opposition that has emerged in Czechoslovakia since 1968, these changes in the general situation are of vital importance. They can base themselves on the internal differences in the "world Communist movement" to carry on their struggle. Moreover, far from promoting reconciliation, these divergences are widening the lines of cleavage. The reformers of 1968 themselves should draw some conclusions about the line they followed when they hear Santiago Carrillo saying today that he would have taken up arms to resist the intervention!

The second major difference from Hungary is that there was a markedly higher level of politicalization in Czechoslovakia. As we have already mentioned, the growth of the workers councils movement came mainly after the intervention. The Soviet bureaucracy controlled the situation militarily, but it was far from having a grip on the party and the unions, to say nothing of the workers. This state of affairs offered a certain room for acts of resistance, an opening that could have been exploited to at least maintain some of the gains of 1968.

Faced with the refusal of the Czechoslovak CP to legitimize the intervention,

4. Bilak is the representative of the hard-nosed wing of the bureaucracy, one of the few members of the Czechoslovak CP who "appealed to the USSR for help."

Brezhnev sought first to use Dubcek himself as a lever for normalizing the situation. The fact that Dubcek and the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP accepted the Moscow Protocol opened the door to such a possibility. They agreed to reintroduce censorship, to abrogate the authority of the underground Fourteenth Congress of the Czechoslovak CP, to ban the newly formed Social Democratic Party, and to remove the individuals Moscow did not approve of from their positions.⁵ These capitulations had at first a demoralizing effect on the masses.

However, beginning at the end of 1968 and continuing throughout 1969 the students first and then the workers mobilized spontaneously in major defensive actions independent of the Dubcekite reformers. This began with the student strike in November of 1968 in support of the liberalization. Then came the mobilization to defend Smrkovsky from being ousted from his post. Next the students signed a unity agreement with the steelworkers union to work together to defend the gains of the Prague Spring.

It was in this period, in November 1968, that a first attempt was made to coordinate the factory committees in order to try to go around the official union confederations. It was followed by the meeting of a coordinating committee of the workers councils on January 10-11, 1969. For the first time in the history of "socialist" Czechoslovakia, a kind of "collective bargaining" took place between the government and the unions, who backed up their demands by strikes, which were legally tolerated.

During the same period, the radical wing emerging from the student movement tried to form a new revolutionary organization, the Revolutionary Socialist Party.⁶

These elements of resistance, nonethe-

5. Primarily, the members of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP who opposed ratification of the Moscow Protocol after the intervention—Kriegel, Sabata. When he was expelled from the Central Committee at the end of May 1969, Kriegel reiterated: "This accord was not concluded with a stroke of a pen but under the threat of arms and cannon . . . my expulsion represents a process of restoration aimed at legitimizing the intervention in August." The resistance in the Czechoslovak CP, thus, persisted for a certain time.

6. The statement of the PSR can be found in German in the book *5 Jahr Normalisierung*, Verlag Association, Hamburg, 1973, along with the main documents in the trial against its founders. The statement of the PSR, as well as the Manifesto of Czechoslovak Revolutionary Youth, was also published in French in *Le complot trotskyste en Tchécoslovaquie*, Cahier rouge spécial, Maspéro, 1970. [For an English version, see "Manifesto of the Czechoslovak Revolutionary Youth Movement," *Intercontinental Press*, March 10, 1969, p. 238; and "New Revolutionary Party in Czechoslovakia," *Intercontinental Press*, October 6, 1969, p. 885.]

less, remained in embryonic form because of the lack of any political alternative. The Dubcekite reformers, to whom the masses largely looked for leadership, refused to base themselves on these struggles to defend the gains that had been made. Jan Skala was quite right when he noted in his balance sheet of normalization that "there was no causal link between the preponderant military power that was brought to bear and the total political defeat of the reform movement. This defeat was essentially consummated by the political capitulation of the Dubcek leadership after the intervention."⁷

Despite such services, Dubcek proved incapable, in the eyes of the Soviet bureaucracy, of carrying through the normalization. Even timid acts of resistance showed that the party did not have a grip on the situation. Dubcek was dumped and replaced by Husak. Like Kadar, Husak had spent ten years in prison during the Stalin period. Moreover, he was a Slovak, and he played on the national antagonism between Czechs and Slovaks to get his way. In order to get rid of Smrkovsky, for example, he waged a campaign around the theme that the post of the chairmanship of the National Assembly should go to a Slovak. And before long the Slovak federation of unions was condemning "the ill-considered actions of the Czech workers."⁸

Nonetheless, Husak could not play the same role as Kadar did in Hungary, simply because the level of politicalization, including in the Czechoslovak CP, was too high for him to be able to carry out the "normalization" that Moscow wanted. Beginning in 1971-72, the wing of the Czechoslovak CP supported by the Soviets raised its head again and limited Husak's opportunities for playing the sort of conciliator's role that he wanted to. It pushed him toward a policy of systematic repression.

Husak's Body Count

There is no better index of the level of politicalization that existed in Czechoslovakia than a simple list of the Husak' leadership's exploits.

- 150,000 members of the Czechoslovak CP walked out of the party, of whom 50% were workers. Some 350,000 others were dropped from the party rolls or expelled.

- The average age of party members has risen to fifty. In the city of Prague, it has gone up to fifty-seven. The percentage of workers has dropped from 30% in 1968 to 18%. In Prague, it has fallen to 12%.

- 25,000 elected officials have been removed from their posts. A third of the officer corps have lost their rank.

7. Jan Skala, *Der 'Normalisierungsprozess'* (Menschenrechte in Jahrbuch zu Osteuropa, Rororo Aktuell 1977), p. 189.

8. Today there is still a relatively small number of Slovaks in the Charter 77 group.

• In the various professions, 40% of the economic functionaries, 40% of the journalists, 1,500 employes of Czechoslovak radio, and 9,000 teachers have lost their jobs. Four hundred writers have been black-listed.

• In the unions, 30% to 50% of the functionaries and shop stewards were ousted as a result of the development of the workers councils. In December 1969, the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak CP explained that "the very extensive powers of the councils have undermined the position and the possibilities for effective work of the leaderships and administrations . . . since the great majority of these councils are made up of factory workers." A systematic campaign was organized, with the help of a questionnaire and with the police going after the reticent, to convince the workers that:

Right-opportunist forces are calling for self-management and the withering away of the state, which at best could only be a far-off goal. Today, self-management and the greater responsibility for the workers that it involves would take too much of their time, too much of their intellectual energy, and would cut into the leisure time that they need.

This bureaucrat went so far as to add a compassionate note: "We will make the sacrifice of doing these disagreeable chores for the workers."

• Beginning in the spring of 1971, a wave of trials was organized, hitting first the revolutionists around Petr Uhl, who was accused of having formed a "Trotskyist group." Obviously, the bureaucracy was still more afraid of the oppositionists in the Czechoslovak CP itself, who could have become a political alternative and who organized the boycott of the rigged elections in 1971.

• In the summer of 1972, forty-seven well-known activists were sentenced. Three of these were former members of the Central Committee—Jaroslav Sabata, Milan Hübl, and Alfred Cerny. The first two got six and half years; Cerny got three years. Petr Uhl was sentenced to four years in prison. In all, 4,000 persons were brought before the courts.⁹

So, it is no exaggeration to say that the "normalization" was a veritable counterrevolution, reaching into the ranks of the CP itself! But, again unlike Hungary, this process was not crowned by the execution of those who had been the main leaders during the Prague Spring. This is because of the international crisis created by the intervention, including in the "world Communist movement." But the gap has continued to widen, making any reintegration of those expelled in 1968 very difficult for the Husak leadership.¹⁰

9. This table is based on data provided by Jan Skala and Sibylle Plogstedt. Plogstedt cites the statements by the bureaucrats after 1968.

10. The Czechoslovak CP proposed reinstating

Those sentenced in 1971-72 were hardly out of prison before several of them, including some of the best known, resumed political activity. For example, some became active in Charter 77. Another example of their activity is the recent document "A Hundred Years of Czech Socialism." (See p. 965.)

In a few years, then, the bureaucracy was able to recast the Czechoslovak CP in its own image. But its social base and political credibility have been profoundly undermined. Forced to carry out a policy of purges, Husak finds himself alone, in constant conflicts with the hard-nosed wing of the party. The authorities' hysterical reactions to Charter 77 have clearly shown the bureaucracy's political weakness.

The bureaucrats attempted to repeat the old Stalinist trial charges, accusing the signers of Charter 77 of being "discredited organizers of the 1968 counterrevolution who acted on the orders of anti-Communist and Zionist ringleaders." But such charges had no credibility for the masses, and so the apparatus had to retreat somewhat at the time of the trials.

Looking at things from a general standpoint, greater flexibility would certainly enable the bureaucracy to bring about a relaxation in the climate both internationally and domestically. (For example, it is not uncommon for factory managers to complain of excessive political restrictions on hiring qualified professionals who were previously sentenced for their attitude in 1968!)

However, Husak does not seem to have the political means to put such a policy into practice. This is made even more difficult insofar as any loosening of the grip might be interpreted by the masses as an opening for a new "process of reforms."

Situation of the Working Class

Why has this latent crisis, which has been evident since 1968, come out into the open? Why is Husak holding on despite the worsening of the situation? The answer to these questions is all the more important inasmuch as the reformist wing of the opposition, even in connection with the founding of Charter 77,¹¹ counted on being able to find its old place in the sun by isolating the new leadership.

The reformists' hopes are based essentially on their experience inside the apparatus and not on the social forces present, that is, most importantly, the situation of the working class. However, as in 1968, the decisive factor is whether or not the work-

expelled oppositionists on the condition that they make a self-criticism. These proposals were sharply criticized by the opposition, especially in *Listy*.

11. See the section below entitled "Where Does the Opposition Stand Now?"

ing class goes into action—that will determine whether or not the crisis comes out into the open.

Some 500,000 Warsaw Pact soldiers have been kept in Czechoslovakia (despite the promise that they would be withdrawn after a few months) for an obvious purpose. It is to remind people that "nothing can be done" as long as the Soviet Union is bringing all its weight to bear, and thereby to maintain the demoralization and depoliticalization of the workers.

However, this apathy is not entirely the result of the repression. One figure can serve as an indication. The statistics for 1976 show that the Czechoslovak CP has grown again by 150,000 members and that the percentage of working-class members has increased. Between 1971 and 1976, the party brought in about 100,000 workers. They represented 62% of the new candidate members. The average age for 90% of them was thirty-five; for more than half, it was twenty-five. This growth can be explained to some extent by the youth of the new candidate members, who did not experience the events of 1968 in a conscious way. But that does not explain everything.

Those who characterize the degenerated workers states as "capitalist" countries always run up against one contradiction. How can it be explained that the existence—and in the case of Czechoslovakia, the restoration—of a dictatorial regime is not reflected in a drastic reduction of the living standards of the working masses? What occurs in a capitalist system does not happen in a bureaucratized workers state precisely because the bureaucratic dictatorship cannot crush the working class without finding its own power immediately threatened.

Of course, it can be observed, and it is an evident fact, that the standard of living of the Czechoslovak workers, even taking into consideration all the social benefits they enjoy, remains lower on the average than that in the developed capitalist countries. In particular, it should be stressed that their income does not in general enable them to obtain regularly the quantity and quality of consumer durables and goods for immediate consumption that they want.¹²

On the other hand, it is also important to note that since 1968, the living standard of Czechoslovak workers has risen overall, reaching, along with the German Democratic Republic, one of the highest levels in East Europe and one that is not far from that of the developed capitalist countries. This is shown by tables 1 and 2. In particular, table 2 shows the marked improvement in the supply of consumer durables since the economic reform of the 1960s.

This trend does not seem destined to

12. The growth in savings (see table) is a sign of this.

change. For the next five-year period, the chairman of the State Planning Commission, Vaclav Hula, has set the goal of selling 150,000 private cars. In doing so, he specified: "Consumer durables must continue to be the pacesetters in sales of industrial products."

The figures given in the tables obviously do not tell the whole story. Czech washing machines and refrigerators are not as perfected as they are in the West, and repairs continue to be a headache. For Czech workers, moreover, what is most decisive is not so much getting a TV or a car as it is what they can see on the TV screen or in the countries they can visit. Unlike in Poland, the material situation of the working class has not deteriorated. In Poland this is what brought about the explosive combination between a working-class rebellion and a political crisis, which came together following the events in Ursus and Radom.¹⁵

It is quite likely that the bureaucracy has to some extent promoted this policy of raising living standards in order to at least neutralize the workers, since it could not rely on their support. The influx of new members into the Czechoslovak CP fits into the same framework. It does not necessarily reflect support for the regime but simply makes it easier to "get along" day by day.

However, it would be wrong to attribute all this to a conscious policy by the bureaucracy to co-opt the workers. It does not have the means for this. Moreover, the planners strive constantly to achieve exactly the opposite, to reduce the relative growth of income and to tie it much more closely to increased productivity (e.g., the change of norms, the attempt to introduce piecework wages, etc.). At the end of the 1971-75 plan, it had to be recognized that the planners' objective was not achieved.

The UN experts note that "in many countries, the growth of real income over the preceding five-year period has largely exceeded expectations. Thus the setting of lower targets in the 1976-80 plan may reflect the intention to restore the structural relationship between increases in in-

1. Average Per Capita Wage and Savings in 1975¹³

Country	Net Monthly Wage in Local Currency	In East German Marks	Savings in E. German Marks
Bulgaria	146 leva	531	3,168
Czechoslovakia	2,304 crowns	737	2,521
East Germany	889 marks	889	4,470
Poland	3,562 zlotys	662	1,654
Romania	1,813 lei	621	--
USSR	146 rubles	466	1,143
Hungary	2,821 forint	612	1,672

2. Consumer Durables per 100 Households, 1965-75¹⁴

	Czechoslovakia		East Germany		Soviet Union		West Germany
	1965	1975	1965	1975	1965	1975	1973
Radios	112	171	87	96	59	79	99
Televisions	51	93	49	82	24	74	89
Refrigerators	30	79	26	85	11	61	93
Washing Machines	67	110	28	73	21	65	75
Automobiles	10	30	8	26	?	?	55

come and increases in production."

In Czechoslovakia, this tendency is seen clearly from the figures in table 3.

Here the planners are running up against the longest-standing contradiction in the bureaucratic system, one that the industrialization of the last fifteen years has only deepened. It is the objective social power of the working class.

In the recent period, all the East European countries except Poland and some republics in the USSR have reached the limits of their labor reserves (considering, of course, the nature of the existing regime and its army of parasites.) In Czechoslovakia, the growth of employment has clearly slowed in the last five years, and no better is expected in the coming five years.

From 1966 to 1970, the increase in the work force was 556,000. For 1971-1975, the increase was only 402,000. The 1976-80 plan projects an increase of 200,000. And an increase of 80,000 is expected in the five following years. It does not seem that there will be a massive influx of new workers coming from agriculture, in view of persisting sluggishness in the industrial organization of this sector. Moreover, there has already been a considerable increase in wage labor of the industrial type in agriculture.

Over recent years, the female population has essentially been incorporated into production. Some 86.5% of women of working age hold regular jobs, as against 88.7% for men. The increasing use of maternity leave is an index of the incorporation of women into the work force. In 1970,

145,000 women took such leaves; in 1973, it was 227,000; and in 1975, it was 345,000. Finally, even pensioners are working. Some 600,000 of them hold jobs, that is, between 8% and 10% of the economically active population.¹⁷

Despite this extraordinary mobilization of the available labor power, the planners complain about the number of jobs that cannot be filled. In its October 30, 1975, issue *Rude Pravo* indicated that there were 300,000 unfilled jobs in transportation and construction. Two years later, V. Hula noted, moreover, "a serious problem remains in stabilizing the work force in rail transportation, where despite the measures taken the number of workers in the required trades is continually declining."

This objective power of the working class shows how explosive any rise in the consciousness of workers as a group can be. As a general rule, the reformist and democratic opposition fails to understand this. It cannot see beyond the present depoliticized and atomized state of the workers, a situation that the bureaucracy's lead seal is expressly designed to maintain.

However, between the two poles of revolt and passivity, this relationship of forces leaves the workers a certain margin for maneuver to achieve solutions of individual problems or even for forms of limited resistance. According to *Informacni Mate-*

16. See note 14.

17. See note 14.

13. Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (*Handbuch DDR 1977, Rororo Aktuell*) established these data (p. 241) on the basis of COMECON statistics. This institution, which can hardly be suspected of presenting a positive image of the East European countries, notes itself that in the German Democratic Republic "the stock of consumer durables in households has reached a relatively high level" (p. 236).

14. UN Study on the Economic Situation in Europe, 1976, Part 2, p. 126 (comparison with the German Democratic Republic on the basis of source note 13).

15. At the time of the pop concert last year, which was severely repressed, for the first time demonstrators were heard shouting against price increases. This is the sole instance known as of now.

rially,¹⁸ several strikes occurred in the final months of 1973, which generally forced a return to the old norms and system of wages. In some cases (for example in the Prague subways), workers assemblies voted against the firing of signers of Charter 77.

However, passive resistance, in the form of absenteeism, remains predominant. In its September 24, 1976, issue, *Rude Pravo* wrote that "pure negligence costs the country 2.5 billion crowns a year, since 300,000 persons a day fail to come to their jobs." This is an absenteeism rate of almost 5% of the total work force.

The low level of productivity in the economy as a whole thus remains the major difficulty the bureaucracy has to face. It is a problem whose origins are primarily political and social and not technological, as is shown by this passive resistance of the workers. However, the workers are far from being the only cause of this low productivity. The bureaucratic system creates a constant waste of resources, which is regularly reflected by the official press.

In its December 2, 1977, issue, *Rude Pravo* published Hula's report to the Central Committee. It seemed to be a veritable alarm signal. Some 10% of the enterprises had not fulfilled the plan. And of those that did fulfill it "many did not meet the targets with respect to the structure of production. They did not always succeed quickly and efficiently enough in eliminating some longstanding deficiencies in large-scale projects, especially in concentrating forces in the key building sites and putting the new facilities into service in the time allotted." He warned the managerial staffs: "No one who has responsibilities can expect to have a comfortable life."¹⁹

It seems that already the plan's projections have had to be scaled down, at least in some important sectors, such as construction projects, transportation, and trade with the capitalist countries, in which the targets have not been met.

A high consumption of energy throughout the economy, moreover, is one of the gravest problems in the degenerated workers states. And, although the impact of the world economic crisis has not been as immediate in these countries, it has aggravated this problem. All the five-year plans for 1976-80 devote a preponderant attention to increasing energy resources. To this end, common projects are being developed in the framework of COMECON.²⁰

Czechoslovakia plays an important role

18. Journal of the revolutionary-socialist Czechoslovak opposition, published clandestinely beginning in 1969. *Informacní Materialy* and *Listy* are opposition organs that have been appearing regularly for several years.

19. *Hospodarske Noviny*, 20/77 (French edition).

3. Annual Increase in Wages (Czechoslovakia)¹⁶

Real Per Capita Income Real Per Capita Wages

1966-70	6.1%	3.6%
Plan 1971-75	4.1%	2.5 to 3.0%
1971-75	4.5%	3.4%
Plan 1976-80	4.2%	2.5 to 2.8%

in these projects, especially in the equipping of nuclear power stations, which are the main pilot projects in heavy industry. But in view of the delays in completing these projects, the gap between needs and resources is going to remain wide. Hula has already warned the workers about this:

"It will be possible to maintain an uninterrupted supply of oil, natural gas, and gas for lighting only by maximizing savings in distribution and consumption.

The desire of some consumers to burn oil, even though there are reasons for this, is unrealistic. We are going to use more and more crude oil as raw material for the chemical industry and not for heating. This is an objective necessity."²¹

In transportation and construction, similar contradictions are showing up. According to the official statistics, the underdevelopment of the transportation and warehouse industries results in the loss of 10% to 15% of all shipments of fertilizer. The lag in construction, in turn, holds back development as a whole. To cite Hula once again, 42% of construction firms (as opposed to 25% in 1976) failed to fulfill the plan in 1977. This is despite an influx of new workers into this industry. In 1976, there were 9,000 new workers out of a total of 542,000. Moreover, the average wage in the industry is high—2,675 crowns, an increase of 3.6% in the last six months of 1977.

In this case, once again, it seems that the bureaucracy is going to have to make some drastic decisions in order to avert this sort of bottleneck in the work on the big projects. It will have to sacrifice building and modernizing housing, which are sore points from the standpoint of the workers' living standards. Try to get them to understand the blessings of socialism with inadequate housing and without oil heat!

Such "classical" problems of all the degenerated workers states are compounded in Czechoslovakia by structural problems arising from the forms of indus-

20. The essential part is to be developed in the USSR, with the aid of the other COMECON countries. The UN (see note 14) gives some important indications on this subject, showing that these projects are going to increase the dependence of the COMECON countries on the USSR for their energy needs.

21. *Hospodarske Noviny*, 28/77 (French edition).

trialization. As a producer of machinery and manufacturing products, the country is highly dependent on foreign trade. In COMECON, the sort of trade that is carried out is strongly marked by the needs of the Soviet Union to overcome the backwardness of its agriculture. East Germany and Czechoslovakia have long specialized in the production of chemical fertilizers and agricultural machinery.

Beginning some years ago, economic cooperation has extended to the energy-producing industries, the building of computers (the production of high-power semiconductors occupies the third most important place in the pilot projects in the Czechoslovak heavy manufacturing sector), petrochemicals, and the exchange of technology. This cooperation is tending to force every country in COMECON to specialize, thereby magnifying the conflicts between the bureaucracies, as over the supply the raw materials, for example.

On the other hand, this relationship in COMECON does little to help the advanced countries meet their needs for developing modern transportation and construction industries. This is why some years ago the Czechoslovak planners began stressing greater self-sufficiency in agriculture²² and especially a complementary contribution from trade with the capitalist countries.

However, such trade with the capitalist countries cannot play the role of a corrective, since it is subject to the vicissitudes of the capitalist crisis. In the last analysis, for the bureaucracy the solution of these problems requires increasing the productivity of labor. This is true even for it to be able to export to the capitalist markets, taking advantage of lower wage costs. Commenting on the plan, the Czecho-

22. This concerns most of all cereals, which are indispensable for the regular supply of meat (which has markedly increased in East Germany and Czechoslovakia). On the other hand, for other products such as fruit and vegetables, "self-sufficiency" is far from having been achieved, and the supply to the market is irregular. This type of development is typical of the way consumer needs are met under a bureaucratic regime. As for TVs, radios, cars, the bureaucracy centers the plan around supplying certain products (typically, Western "prestige" items) but is incapable of widening the range of goods available, to say nothing of outstripping the capitalist countries.

slovak premier said that growth would have to be achieved "through the efforts of the existing work force."

In practice, this means both a relatively more modest growth in consumption (so as to release investment funds) and changes in the system of wages and prices. As we saw in the case of oil, when the economy as a whole is in a precarious balance, such a policy tends to sharpen the conflicts between the sort of investments the planners want to make and meeting the needs of the masses.

In 1972, the average wage was set at 2,144 crowns. But there are important differences. Miners earn 2,884 crowns; truck drivers, 2,475; textile workers, 1,854; and garment workers, 1,683. Women's wages are still about a third lower than those of men. In the plan for 1976-80, the planners project raising the average monthly wage from 2,375 crowns in 1975 to 2,700 in 1980, or by between 13% and 15%. But previously prices had been very stable. Last year there were sharp rises in the price of coffee, sugar, chocolate, and textiles. We also saw that the mere appearance of Charter 77 at the beginning of 1977 caused a panic among the planners, who postponed certain price increases for some months.

In the light of these indices, the government's promises to increase the monthly income of households seem to mean only maintaining the buying power of the worst paid categories of workers. The objective to be achieved by 1980 is to assure a monthly per capita income of 1,300 crowns for 60% of households and to reduce by 10% the number of households where per capita income is under 1,000 crowns. So, the day when the Czechoslovak workers will gather the fruits of "building socialism" is not right around the corner!

Frightened by the rebellions in Poland, the bureaucracy is undoubtedly going to proceed cautiously in the area of wages and prices, as well as in introducing new work norms. But by its nature it cannot avoid getting into conflicts around problems that now threaten to become a source of deeper dissatisfactions in the working class.

Where Does the Opposition Stand Now?

It was in this general framework that the Charter 77 group developed, now more than a year ago. Its main contribution was to dare to exercise certain legal rights and begin to expose publicly the bureaucratic regime's most outrageous injustices. For example, it highlighted the regime's disregard of international agreements on human rights, its political blacklisting of oppositionists, its restrictions on trade-union activity, and its cultural repression. Like the forms of limited resistance put up by the workers, Charter 77 is playing a very important role as a form of public and immediate defense. To some extent, it is

breaking down the isolation of the opposition and all those the regime considers to be "nonconformists."

However, the significance of Charter 77 goes far beyond this. In late 1977, Jiri Pelikan, spokesman of the opposition magazine *Listy* [published in Rome], correctly stressed the importance of two aspects of Charter 77. In the first place, it represents a continuity of this democratic opposition with the mobilizations in 1968 and 1956. Secondly, he stressed the unity in action of several tendencies (reformers with a Communist Party background, revolutionists, Socialists, and Christians) that has made this work possible. Pelikan then tried to draw some more general conclusions.

He noted that "the working class plays an essential role in the movements seeking change." He pointed out that the workers "however, go into action only in a spontaneous way, without any program and without alliances, or only in a second phase after the events have been set in motion by the intellectuals." He drew the following conclusion:

Experience makes it possible therefore to conclude that such movements have the best chance of success when they bring together workers, progressive intellectuals, and youth; and are able to win the support, or at least assure the neutrality, of other groups; and can act in concert with opposition currents in the party.

However, Pelikan ran up against a contradiction. While stressing that rank-and-file movements can only be a "flash in the pan" if they fail to raise an echo in the party, he adds that "in the opinion of many former Communists, it will now be much more difficult, or even impossible, to find party members who will approve of changes going in the direction of liberalization or democratization."

This last observation confirms the balance sheet of the changes in the party that we drew above. Does this mean that change has become impossible? The development of Charter 77 proves the contrary, and to some extent invalidates Pelikan's judgment. Its first signers (for example, Mlynar) did in fact see it as a means of applying a new form of pressure on the "reformist" wing of the party and thus of winning recognition for the opposition that was expelled after 1968. The reaction of the authorities and the weakness of the echo that Charter 77 found in the apparatus quickly showed the error of their calculations.

On the other hand, Charter 77 found a broad echo among the new layers of intellectuals and youth who in many cases were engaging in their first political activity. The signers estimate that close to 200,000 persons have read the initial statement of Charter 77 and that its subsequent documents have been read by about 10,000 persons.²³

There is a problem with the very general conception of "alliances" that Pelikan puts

forward. These layers of intellectuals and youth are aroused primarily by the lack of possibilities for cultural expression. Their immediate concerns are still quite marginal to the day-to-day worries of the workers.

It is not that the workers do not care about democratic rights or rights of cultural expression (most of the youth, in fact, are young workers). But they understand very well that winning such rights in reality can only open up a political and social crisis from which they cannot be sure that they will emerge the winners (especially after 1968 and in view of the presence of the Soviet troops). So, there is no immediate and easy linkup among the various "components" of the antibureaucratic front that Pelikan wants to forge.

On the other hand, in the framework of Charter 77, among a much narrower vanguard section of the population, it is possible to begin to work toward such a linkup. The most characteristic thing about the Charter 77 movement is undoubtedly the revival of politicalization that it spurred. Unlike 1968, this process is not going on in a wing of the party but outside it. This process is bringing together a section of those expelled from the party in 1968, others who were active in that period, and new forces. It seems that a debate among the elements involved in Charter 77 has been initiated in recent months in internal bulletins. The publication of the document "A Hundred Years of Czech Socialism" is apparently an indication of this.

All the experience of antibureaucratic mass mobilizations shows that such semi-legal opposition groupings can become focuses for politicalizing and reactivating the workers, if they consciously orient toward them. The Charter 77 group's dossier on the trade-union question was a first step in this direction. But others are certainly possible.

The method of "public inquiries" that Charter 77 has begun to use could have a much broader impact (and begin to link up the concerns of youth, intellectuals, and workers) if they deal with price changes, housing conditions, public transportation, the situation of women, and so on. That is, in a nutshell, they can have such an effect if they take up the manifold forms of outrageous social inequalities and parasitism that plague the daily life of the workers. This is certainly called for at a time when Husak himself is declaring war on the "comfortable life" of functionaries.

If we stress the need for this sort of immediate perspectives for a movement such as Charter 77,²⁴ it is because we agree

23. The main documents have been devoted to blacklisting, the trade-union situation, and cases of repression. There have been about fifteen such documents.

24. In Poland, a journal entitled *Robotnik* [Worker] has appeared recently. This indicates the same direction.

with Pelikan that only a linkup between the struggle for democratic rights and the concerns of the workers will make it possible to build the broadest united front against the bureaucratic regime and win a hearing in the working class. But where we differ with his proposals is that we do not think that the decisive thing is "winning over" a section of the apparatus.

A much more decisive factor is the programmatic proposals that can be advanced by a socialist and revolutionary opposition. These can make an especially important contribution by pointing up the very close link that exists between the economic and social demands of the

masses (housing, rejection of the work norms, etc.) and democratic rights, such as freedom of association, the right to have unions independent of the state, and the need for direct control by the workers over the decisive options in planning.

The experience of decades of Stalinism and bureaucratic rule do not lead the most politicalized opposition activists to automatically focus their attention on such concerns. The entire history of the reformist and legalist opposition in Czechoslovakia from 1968 to the present day is a reminder of this. In the Charter 77 group, the debate waged by the revolutionary activists will be decisive. □

100 Years of Czech Socialism

[We are publishing below a document recently received from Prague that has been translated and circulated by Palach Press in London. It bears the signatures of prominent supporters of Charter 77. Ten years after the "Prague spring," this document reaffirms that the kind of socialism the workers movement tried to attain is not being instituted in Czechoslovakia.]

Socialist ideas made their first appearance in Czechoslovakia on April 7, 1878, at the founding congress of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party held in Brevnov. The conditions were thus created for a political struggle for the elementary rights of workers and for civil rights.

These facts are generally known, but we wish to emphasize that Czechoslovak socialists and democrats still owe a debt to these century-old demands. Many points in the program have long since been achieved and even surpassed. Others, however, are still on the agenda. We consider it our duty to see to it that they are carried out.

The Brevnov program states that "in our present-day society, the means of production . . . are the monopoly of a single class." This has led to the dependency of the "working people, and it is the cause of poverty and enslavement." The authors demand that "the means of production be used for the common good," that there be a "just distribution of the fruits of labor," and that "class domination be abolished."

It is true that the major part of the means of production have been nationalized (beginning with a presidential decree on nationalizations on October 28, 1945), but it is doubtful whether the fruits of labor are always used for the common good, and whether the present system of remuneration is just.

The program demands "the equal right for all citizens twenty years of age or more to elect representatives to provincial and national assemblies and to local government." As early as 1907, the universal and

equal right to elect representatives to parliament became law, as a result of the efforts of workers parties and other democratic groupings. This principle was applied for the first time in local elections in 1919, that is, immediately after the founding of the Czechoslovak republic. But the pioneers of our workers movement certainly did not envision an electoral system in which the citizens could vote for only one candidate, as is the case today.

Another demand was for "total freedom of the press, of association, of meetings and organization." The workers had largely established these freedoms. But what remains of them today? How many organizations and newspapers (political and non-political) were banned after 1948? And how many after 1968? In 1977, a great number of citizens were harassed in various ways in connection with the Charter 77 petition, which, however, deals only with the necessity of implementing the laws passed by higher legislative bodies.

The first socialist program demands "the independence of the judiciary," the introduction of "judicial proceedings and legal assistance for all, at no cost," and "abolition of the death penalty." The monstrous trials of the 1950s prove that our system in no way guarantees the independence of the judiciary, while doubts have been expressed in Czechoslovakia and abroad as to the justification and fairness of the political trials of the 1970s. To this day, legal proceedings are not free, any more than legal aid. As for capital punishment, our supreme legislative bodies and the mass media have not yet broached the discussion of this topic.

The program also demands "the elimination of all social and political inequities," and bases itself on the struggle of the working class and on the struggle for "equal rights and obligations." Current practices are far removed from these moral and political principles.

Citizens are persecuted for their convictions, in some cases long after having

expressed them. The principles of equality and justice have been largely abandoned with the practice of naming chiefly Communist Party members to higher posts in all sectors of social and economic life. This means that frequently the criterion for assigning someone to a responsible position is not scientific knowledge, ability, or moral qualities, but servility, lack of scruples, and skill in grabbing a share of the spoils. Nowadays, many workers no longer consider the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia a workers party, but a party of "lords."

The signers of this statement proclaim their allegiance to the early traditions of our workers and socialist movement. The Communist Party, the ruling party in our country, also claims to support them. However, many of the principles formulated by the pioneers of this movement are scarcely adhered to by the current regime. As socialists and democrats, we feel ourselves personally responsible for putting these principles into effect.

April 7, 1978
Brno and Prague

Rudolf Battek, sociologist, former member of the Czechoslovakian National Council (parliament), former political prisoner.

Vaclav Havel, playwright, former spokesman for Charter 77.

Ladislav Hejdanek, Protestant, official spokesman for Charter 77.

Premysl Janyr, worker, son of a Social Democratic leader now in exile.

Bozena Komarkova, aged 75, retired, imprisoned by the Nazis for five-and-a-half years.

Anna Koutna, worker, former full-time member of the CP regional committee in Brno, widow of a political prisoner.

Frantisek Kriegel, former president of the National Front, the only member of the Dubcek team who refused to sign the Moscow pact at the time of the invasion.

Karel Kyncl, prominent communist journalist.

Milan Machovec, philosopher, former Communist Party member.

Jaroslav Meznik, historian, former political prisoner.

Ervin Motl, journalist.

Jiri Muller, former student leader, sentenced to five-and-a-half years imprisonment in 1972.

Petr Pithart, attorney, former eminent political theorist of the CP, now a gardener.

Ales Richter, former political prisoner.

Zuzana Richterova, housewife, former political prisoner.

Gertruda Sekaninova-Cakrtova, former delegate to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, former member of the Federal Assembly (parliament).

Jaroslav Sabata, psychologist, former secretary of the CP regional committee of Southern Bohemia, sentenced to six-and-a-half years in 1972, now a worker and spokesman for Charter 77.

Jan Sabata, worker, former political prisoner.

Jan Simsa, minister of the Czechoslovakian Evangelical Church of the Congregation, now a worker.

Jan Tesar, historian, sentenced to six years in prison in 1972.

Jakub Trojan, clergyman.

Zdenek Vasicek, historian.

Jan Vladislav, poet and writer. □

Healy's Rejection of Dialectical Materialism

By Alan Jones

"Dialectics cannot be imposed upon facts; it has to be deduced from facts, from their nature and development."—Trotsky.

One of the chief claims of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the "International Committee of the Fourth International," the ex-Trotskyist sect led by Gerry Healy, is that it stands on the ground of the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism. Yet the Healyites disregard even the most elementary positions, not only of Marxist politics but also of its philosophy, as can be seen in virtually every article they write.¹

The prime role that "dialectical materialism" serves for the WRP and the "International Committee" is to provide a pseudo-Marxist smoke screen behind which they settle their real business by virtually the sole weapons they are now capable of utilizing or understanding—falsification, lying, slander, and physical violence (see accompanying box). As Joseph Hansen has rightly put it:

Healy's "dialectics," it is clear, serves a quite utilitarian purpose. In the factionalism promoted by the headquarters gang, it is handled as a battle weapon like lying or mud-slinging. Insofar as it amounts to a logic, it merely reflects Healy's organizational methods. . . . "holding opposites fast" means calling a group of critical members into the Centre for "interviews" and giving each one a good clobbering.²

The Healyite leaders also use "dialectics" in another way—awing their supporters into believing that these gangster methods are the height of Marxism. Again as Hansen has put it:

Its adherents genuinely believe in it, or at least are awed by the claims made for it, or are wary

of the perils that can face those who voice doubts.³

The bases of Healy's departures from Marxism on dialectical materialism and politics have been many times previously dealt with in *Intercontinental Press* and elsewhere.⁴ However a number of new developments in the last period make the matter worth returning to. These are:

- The political course of the Healyites has reached a new, qualitative point of degeneration with the WRP's explicit alliance with the demagogic, bourgeois nationalist regime of Qaddafi of Libya and the WRP's campaign in Britain to bring down the government of Labour ministers kept in office by the Labour-Liberal pact.⁵

- The Healyites have stepped up their slander campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack with a further escalation of false charges.⁶

- The WRP's resurrected "theoretical" journal *Labour Review* descends to such a level of falsification and slander in contrast to the fine journal of the same name their predecessors were able to put out in the 1950s that it represents a real yardstick of degeneration.⁷

- The last two or three years have seen

3. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

4. See the various articles by George Novack reprinted in *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism*.

5. See "Healy's Political Pact With Qaddafi" by Steve Wattenmaker in *Intercontinental Press*, December 12, 1977, p. 1377.

6. See "JOSEPH HANSEN: A double agent at work" in *News Line*, February 25, 1978.

7. This journal, particularly its editorials, is a perfect reflection of the ignorance, insularity, and falsifications of the Healyites.

The editorial in the first issue "Introducing the new journal" got off to a start in usual Healyite style by announcing that the most important development in the world at the time was unfolding in Britain—with the WRP in the leadership of course:

"It [*Labour Review*] appears during a period of the deepest-ever crisis for the world capitalist system and for its agencies inside the international working class movement—Stalinism and social democracy. *Nowhere is this crisis sharper and more revolutionary in its implications than in Britain.*" (*Labour Review*, June 1977, p. 1. Emphasis added.)

On the Healyite provincial scale of values the situations in Italy, France, Spain, and southern Africa all pale beside the one in Britain!

Following this is an even more bizarre display of chauvinist insularity:

"... we are convinced that *Labour Review* can and will be a decisive weapon in the coming

a number of "theoretical" productions of the WRP leadership that show an even greater departure from Marxism than that of the 1960s or early 1970s.⁸

- The continuing degeneration of the WRP has been paralleled by crises and splits among various tendencies that attempted to build organizations on the basis of defending the supposedly correct positions taken by the Healyites at the time of, or immediately following, their break with the Fourth International in 1963.⁹

English revolution." (*Ibid.*, p. 5. Emphasis added.)

That, at least, well and truly puts the people of Scotland and Wales in their place!

All this is, of course, in addition to the usual charge that the Fourth International is covering up the exposure of Hansen and Novak as "accomplices of the GPU."

We need merely compare these ravings to the *Labour Review* of the late 1950s to measure the degeneration of the Healyites in the field of theory. The original *Labour Review* was a fine theoretical journal. Articles by Brian Pearce on the early history of the British Communist Party and the history of Bolshevism can be read with profit even today. Tom Kemp wrote serious reasoned articles on the class nature of the Soviet Union and economic situation. A Cliff Slaughter of different vintage was acknowledging the importance of Gramsci and even Lukacs. Isaac Deutscher, the very mention of whose name in a "Pabloite" publication today would arouse the Healyites to a frenzy of denunciation, was a contributor. *Labour Review* was not even presented as a specifically Trotskyist journal but was projected in a way that would be denounced as the last word in "liquidationism" today:

"We do want, however, to emphasize that *Labour Review* is not a sectional, Trotskyist journal. We wish to make it the main journal for conducting the principled discussion of every aspect of revolutionary theory. . . . Our columns are open to all who wish to put a point of view on how Marxist science is to be enriched." (*Labour Review*, March/April, 1957, p. 36. Emphasis in original.)

The descent of *Labour Review* from its original achievements to its present level of falsifications and display of ignorance offers a case for the textbooks on how the Healyites carried out their self-proclaimed central task of "developing theory."

8. See for example Slaughter: *Marxism and the Class Struggle* (London: New Park Publications Ltd., 1975); Banda and Jeffries: *A Reply to the British Agents of the OCI Liquidationists* (London: Workers Revolutionary Party, 1974); *What Makes Wohlforth Run?* Workers League Political Committee Statement (New York: Labor Publications, Inc., 1975); Banda: *Whither Thornett?* (London: Workers Revolutionary Party, 1975). This last hack job in particular takes the prize

1. A record of all the Healyite revisions of Marxism would take too long to deal with fully here. For an extensive discussion, see *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism: The Record of Healy's Break With Trotskyism* (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974). For examples of the Healyites' gross breaks with even the most elementary Marxist positions, readers are referred in particular to the sections in this collection on Healyite revisions involving economic theory, philosophy, Black nationalism, permanent revolution, Ireland, and the oppression of women.

2. "The Secret of Healy's 'Dialectics'" by Joseph Hansen in *Intercontinental Press*, March 31, 1975, p. 442.

All this should give food for thought to those who did not see the WRP as having degenerated, or who failed to appreciate the true roots of the degeneration and were unable to find their way to the Fourth International. The aim of this article is to examine a few of the Healyites' revisions of Marxism—in particular those connected with rejection of dialectical materialism—that provide a smoke screen for their real political positions.¹⁰ By showing some of Healy's most obvious departures from Marxism it is hoped that those militants at present breaking from the WRP, or having suffered reverses in attempts to create organizations based on its allegedly progressive features in the 1960s or early 1970s, will be led to making a more thoroughgoing study of the sources of the Healyites' break with Trotskyism.¹¹

for ignorance and falsification. It enables us to see why the Healyites stopped even pretending to deal with the arguments of their opponents and proceeded to the simpler business of frame-ups of people as "GPU accomplices," "FBI informers," and the like.

9. The Bulletin Group, which considered that even in October 1975 "the WRP remains a Trotskyist organization" (*Marxist Bulletin*, Winter 1976, p. 7), has split into two groups. The Workers Socialist League, which defended the policies of the WRP up to 1973, has suffered three splits—the most recent being in February 1978 when around fifteen to twenty percent of its members left in favor of fusion with the Spartacists of the United States.

10. I have chosen to deal with the particular question of Marxist philosophy, and its relation to some fundamental questions of politics, for a number of reasons:

- It is where the Healyites make the greatest pretensions, attempting to awe their supporters, but where their abandonment of Marxism stands among the most grotesque and complete.
- It is possible here to show quite clearly that the current glaring degeneration of the Healyites is rooted in their breaks with Marxism in the late 1950s and early 1960s that culminated in their split with the Fourth International in 1963.
- It allows us to demonstrate clearly why Healy is forced to stage his frame-up of Joseph Hansen and George Novack. From 1960 onwards Healy proved incapable of dealing with any major political question in his polemic against the Fourth International and the SWP. He avoided all such serious discussion and staked everything on his alleged defense of dialectical materialism against revisionism. However, as we shall see, the Fourth International and the SWP in general, and Joseph Hansen and George Novack in particular, exposed the Healyites not merely as revisionists in Marxist politics but also as abandoners of dialectical materialism. Healy's pretensions and falsifications were totally unmasked—as anyone reading the material would realize. Therefore Healy had to attempt to block serious study of the writings and positions of Hansen, Novack, and the Fourth International. Hence the frame-up campaign accusing his opponents of being "GPU accomplices," "FBI informers," and the like.

11. The most important source for this is, as indicated above, *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism*.

Finally there is a more general reason for taking up the question of Healy's falsifications of Marxist philosophy. Dialectical materialism has always been one of the chief targets of assault not only by bourgeois ideologues but by political reformists and centrists. They deny it is scientifically correct, and present it as a ridiculous rigmarole of quasi-religious obscurantism, whose role is to allow total falsehoods to be presented in authoritative guise. There is no doubt that despite limited dissemination the distortions of the Healyites have aided reformists and centrists in their denigration of dialectical materialism. By not treating dialectical materialism as a serious study, but abusing its terminology as a form of mystification to cover over their political gangsterism, the Healyites have served to travesty Marxist philosophy—much in the same way that for a period they succeeded in discrediting the name of Trotskyism itself in Britain. To show that the diverse interpretations of Marxist philosophy have an influence upon the way current political problems are taken up and trends formed within the workers movement, we need only look at the reformist and ultraleft use made of the views of the younger Lukacs, the reformist and centrist utilization of Colletti, the disparate utilization of Althusser. Clearing away the Healyite ideological rubbish, and opening the way for

1. Historical Materialism and Facts

In the last major document they put out before splitting from the Fourth International in 1963, which they aptly titled *Opportunism and Empiricism*, the Healyites spelt out their conception of the relation between theory and the facts of material reality against the alleged "empiricism" and "revisionism" of Hansen, Novack, the SWP, and the Fourth International. They stated:

Dialectical analysis insists on seeing facts in the context of a whole series of interrelated processes, not as finished, independent entities about which 'practical' decisions have to be made.¹⁵

* * *

When we attack empiricism we attack that method of approach which says all statements, to be meaningful, must refer to observable or measurable data in their immediately given form.¹⁶

* * *

"Facts" are Abstractions.¹⁷

* * *

This method [empiricism—A.J.] insists that any "abstract" concepts, reflecting the general

serious work thus becomes a necessary task of theoretical clarification.¹²

* * *

I do not intend to follow the Healyites through all their labyrinthine meanderings on dialectical materialism. This would be both pointless—a large part of their writings are either meaningless¹³ or openly revisionist for totally pragmatic ends¹⁴—and in any case it is unnecessary to take up all their nonsense. The Healyites have quite clearly taken their central philosophical stand. They launched their offensive against Hansen, Novack, and the rest of the Fourth International for unequivocally stating that Marxism proceeds from facts. As this question concerns the basic proposition of dialectical materialism—and any other school of materialism—it is well worth pursuing.

The issue can be put quite simply. Does Marxism, like all correct science, proceed from facts? Marxism, dialectical materialism, Hansen, and Novack say Yes. The Healyites say No. By that answer they reject the keystone of the structure of Marxist philosophy and science, so it is unnecessary to follow the Healyites through all their sordid byways. As we shall see, the Healyites' rejection of the position that Marxism proceeds from facts leads them to reject the foundation of dialectical materialism.

and historical implications of these "facts" are meaningless. It neglects entirely that our general concepts reflect the laws of development and interconnection of the process which these "facts" help to constitute. Indeed the so-called hard facts of concrete experience are themselves abstractions from this process. They are the result of the first approximation of our brains to

12. Which is not to say that an immediate identity can be drawn between politics and philosophy, as the Healyites insist. However, rejection of dialectical materialism is usually a highly symptomatic sign of movement away from Marxist politics. Trotsky's admonition should nonetheless be borne in mind: "To demand that every party member occupy himself with the philosophy of dialectics naturally would be lifeless pedantry." ("A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party" in *In Defense of Marxism* [New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc.], p. 45.)

Trotsky pointed out:

"Philosophic materialism is a theory imbedded in the foundation of natural sciences; while historical materialism explains the history of human society. . . . It is difficult, if not impossible, to be a Marxist in politics and remain ignorant of historical materialism. It is quite possible to be a Marxist in politics and not know about philosophic materialism; such instances can be adduced to any number." (Trotsky: "Marxism and Military Knowledge" in

the essential interrelations, laws of motion, contradictions of the eternally changing and complex world of matter . . . of which they form a part.¹⁸

They conclude from this:

Only higher abstractions, in advanced *theory*, can guide us to the meaning of these facts.¹⁹

It is from these 1963 positions that the later "developments" of Healyite philosophy flow, such as: "By starting from the primacy of facts and deriving the significance of dialectics from them, you [Novack] actually deny the dialectical character of knowledge and its development."²⁰ And equating the concrete with appearance, as in: ". . . the process of movement from abstract to concrete, from essence to appearance. . . ." ²¹ Plus the view that the particular is appearance, as with: ". . . the appearance (the particular). . . ." ²²

It is precisely because Hansen, Novack,

and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International reject all this nonsense, and instead insist that Marxism proceed from facts, that the Healyites launched their tirades concerning "empiricism," "revisionism," etc.

The first part of these Healyite ramblings is of course pure bluff. No one in the Marxist movement or the Fourth International has ever held that statements to be meaningful or correct "must refer to observable or measurable data in their immediately given form." Indeed if any of them did hold such a position it would be unnecessary to engage in any theoretical work whatever, for, as Marx put it, "all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided."²³

The point at issue has nothing to do with "immediately given form" but with the relation of theory and facts. *The question is whether ultimately it is facts that are fundamental, determining theory, or whether it is theory that is fundamental, determining facts.*

Let us turn to what Marxism, as opposed to Healyism, has to say on this question.

Theory and Materialism

In order to approach the real relation of theory and facts the first thing that we may readily establish is that Marxism does indeed attribute tremendous significance to revolutionary theory. This point is obvious even from the evidence of the huge number of fundamental writings of Marx and Engels, the forty-five volumes of Lenin's *Collected Works*, the hundreds of books, pamphlets, and articles produced by Trotsky, Luxemburg, and all the other Marxists of note. Lenin phrased it scientifically when he said: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."²⁴ From this it follows that "to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree, means to strengthen bourgeois ideology."²⁵

To those outside Marxism, of course, this emphasis on, and disputes over, theory frequently seems absurd. However, the attitude of those who understand the significance of Marxism was summed up in an anecdote told by Lenin's companion Krupskaya:

Vladimir Ilyich and I recalled a simile that L. Tolstoy used somewhere: Once when walking, he spotted in the distance the figure of a man squatting on his haunches and moving his hands about in an absurd way; a madman, he thought—but on drawing nearer, he saw that it was a man sharpening his knife on the paving-stone. It is the same thing with theoretical controversies. Heard from aside, they do not

seem worth quarreling about, but once the gist is grasped, it is realized that the matter is of the utmost importance.²⁶

Crucial as Marxists consider theory to be, however, they also hold something else to be true. Marxism is a *materialism*. It does not consider that theory itself is the ultimate criterion of truth. *The final criterion of correctness or incorrectness is not theory but correspondence to material reality.* As Engels put it:

. . . the principles are not the starting point of the investigation, but its final result; they are not applied to nature and human history, but abstracted from them; it is not nature and the realm of humanity which conform to these principles, but the principles are only valid in so far as they are in conformity with nature and history. That is the *only* materialistic conception of the matter. . . . [Emphasis added.]²⁷

Having made these basic points we will now go through the Healyite argument section by section to show clearly where it departs from Marxism.

Facts and Processes

The starting point of the Healyite argument is, as we have seen, the following:

Dialectical analysis insists on seeing facts in the context of a whole series of interrelated processes, not as finished, independent entities about which "practical" decisions have to be made.²⁸

The last part of this sentence is a typical piece of Healyite bluff as no Marxist ever suggested that facts were "finished, independent entities" with or without making "practical decisions" about them. On the contrary all Marxists, and therefore Novack, Hansen, and other writers of the Fourth International, polemicize ceaselessly against this *real* idea of actual empiricism.²⁹ The first part of the Healyite sentence, however, although very badly formulated, is

26. Krupskaya: *Memories of Lenin* (London: Panther, 1970), p. 84.

27. Engels: *Anti-Duhring* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 54.

28. *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 4, p. 78.

29. We need only take a few examples. Thus George Novack in his book *Empiricism and Its Evolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1968) attacks the founder of the school of empiricism for the fact that "Locke . . . pictured the world as composed of independent, self-determining, unchangeable substances" (p. 33) and that "in Locke's view of nature only particular things exist. . . ." (p. 52).

In his article "Healyite Revisionism in the Field of Philosophy," reprinted in *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism* (p. 247), Novack precisely notes: "Marxists part company with the empiricists by considering facts, not as isolated, fixed, and self-sustaining entities, but as changing historical products that appear in concrete contexts and

Military Writings [New York: Merit Publishers, 1969], p. 110.)

13. For an analysis of some typical pieces of nonsense by the Healyites, see "WRP Puts Marxism on the Rack" in *Socialist Press*, June 12, 1975.

14. Thus, for example, at the time of Alan Thornett's resignation, and then expulsion, from the WRP, Healy suddenly discovered that unity and not contradiction was the fundamental feature of Marx's philosophy which had to be expressed. (See Healy: "Some Notes Towards a Study of Thornett's Philosophy"—WRP Internal Document, 1975.) The unbelievable Banda got himself into incredible knots in *Whither Thornett?* in attempting to defend Healy's blatant revision of the basic dialectical materialist point that contradiction is absolute and unity relative (see footnote 34 below). Healy's sudden stress on unity was somehow, we feel, not exactly unconnected to the fact that Healy wanted to stop more people from following Thornett out of the WRP! For a good exposure of Healy's maneuvers and revisions of Marxist philosophy at this time, see "Healy Revises Marxist Philosophy" in *Socialist Press*, March 20, 1975.

15. "Opportunism and Empiricism" in *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism* (London: New Park Publications Ltd., 1974), Vol. 4, p. 78.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

17. *Ibid.*, subheading p. 81.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82. Emphasis in original.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 82. Emphasis in original. Here, as in some of the preceding quotations, the Healyites are guilty of sophistry—trying to substitute a different subject for the one at issue. The dispute is not over the necessity of theory to ascertain the *meaning* of facts and to determine a correct basis for action in relation to them.

20. Falk: "An Open Letter to George Novack"; cited by Novack in "Facts Are Stubborn Things" in *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism*, p. 251.

21. Jeffries: "Marx and Classical Political Economy: Part 3" in *Workers Press*, May 3, 1972.

22. *What Makes Wohlforth Run?* (New York: Labor Publications, Inc., 1975), p. 14.

23. Marx: *Capital* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), Vol. 3, p. 817.

24. Lenin: *Collected Works (CW)*, Vol. 5, p. 369.

25. *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 385. Emphasis in original.

evidently intended as a paraphrase of the famous statement of Engels on dialectics:

The great basic thought that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes. . . .³⁰

This position of Engels is indeed a fundamental aspect of Marxist philosophy. It means, follows from, and entails that:

. . . the things apparently stable no less than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away. . . .³¹

In short, the entire apparently stable material world is in reality:

. . . in eternal coming into being and passing away, in ceaseless flux, in unrelenting motion and change. . . .³²

The driving force of this continuous change, this creation and destruction of things, is the relation—within the unity of contradictions that comprises each thing—between contradiction and unity. In the famous words of Lenin, which the Healyites sometimes also like to quote:

The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitive, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.³³

special forms and that have to be taken in their interconnections and interactions."

Innumerable other examples and concrete applications could be given. The Healyite attack on this point is a tissue of lies from beginning to end.

30. Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*. In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works (MESW)*, one volume. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968), p. 620.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 620.

32. Engels: *Dialectics of Nature* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 43.

33. Lenin: *CW*, Vol. 38, p. 360.

It is from this that we can see the real Marxist position on the nature of things and facts. A particular thing, or fact, is not something permanent but a temporary relative unity of opposites. The development of its internal contradictions finally leads to its breakup and replacement by some new thing or fact. Its contradiction is absolute and its unity relative. However, from the point that the thing or fact is a temporary relative unity of contradictions, it does not flow that it is unreal, merely appearance, and the like. *On the contrary it is a definite, real fact or thing with a specific form of manifestation.*

To illustrate this point we need merely take the case of capitalism itself. Capitalism really exists. It exists as a real actual social system and not at all as a mere figment of the imagination. But it exists as a unity of contradictions—in particular it contains the contradiction between a socialized mode of production and an individual mode of appropriation, which gives rise to the contradiction of working class and bourgeoisie.

Whether you hold that it is the *unity* of the

This question of understanding the *absolute* character of contradiction, and the *relative* character of unity, is indeed fundamental in issues of Marxist theory. It is this which is the source of *endless* change in reality, the creation and destruction of things, their continual transition one into the other. Again in Lenin's words:

The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their "*self-movement*,"

working class and bourgeoisie in the entity capitalism that is absolute, or whether on the contrary it is their *contradiction* that is absolute evidently determines the entire analysis of politics. If the *unity* of proletariat and bourgeoisie is absolute, and their contradiction *relative*, then the task becomes to conciliate between classes; and the class struggle is an unfortunate friction to be resolved as soon as possible. If, on the other hand, the *contradiction* of proletariat and bourgeoisie is absolute, and any unity in capitalism is merely relative, then the fundamental issue and policy is the irreconcilable struggle of the classes, which continues until the relative unity is destroyed and the entity of capitalism is replaced by a new entity—the dictatorship of the proletariat in transition towards socialism. Marxism of course gives its own answer on capitalism. It is precisely the contradiction of the classes which is absolute. But this does not alter the situation that capitalism is real.

On this point for once a Healyite publication got it right when Tim Wohlforth wrote:

"The existing workers movement is a *unity of opposites*—the leadership reflecting essentially the interests of the capitalists and the working class seeking to fight back against capitalist attacks. At the moment there is a *relative iden-*

in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the "struggle" of opposites. The two basic conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).

In the first conception of motion, *self-movement*, its *driving* force, its source, its motive, remains in the shade (or this source is made *external*—God, subject, etc.). In the second conception the chief attention is directed precisely to the knowledge of the *source* of "*self-movement*."

The first conception is lifeless, pale and dry. The second is living. The second *alone* furnishes

unity between the two and this identity cannot be destroyed except through the intervention of the conscious factor—our struggle to pit the working class against the leadership and in the course of this struggle build the parties of the Fourth International as the alternative.

"The breaking of the unity between the opposition forces of the rank-and-file workers and capital reflected through the leadership and its ideology is a necessary part of breaking the capitalist system itself which is a *contradictory unity* between capital and labour." (Wohlforth: "Revisionists in Crisis" in the August 25, 1969 *Bulletin*, supplement p. S-8. Emphasis added.)

Although this passage is not consistent with other parts of the same text this formulation is correct on the question of absolute contradiction and relative unity—and in sharp contrast to other Healyite writings. Perhaps this indicates that it was not accidental that Tim Wohlforth broke with Healy!

HEALY'S BIG LIE

The Slander Campaign Against Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the Fourth International

Statements and articles by Joseph Hansen, George Novack, "Red Weekly," Betty Hamilton, Pierre Lambert, "Socialist Action," Mary and John Archer, Ernest Tate, Sam Gordon, Sara (Weber) Jacobs, Charles Curtiss, Bala Tampoe, Jean van Heijenoort, "Bulletin Group," C.L.R. James, Charles van Gelderen, George Breitman, "Nea Poreia," "Socialist Press."

\$2 (£0.60) postpaid from the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

the key to the "self-movement" of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to the "leaps," to the "break in continuity," to the "transformation into the opposite," to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new.³⁴

One of the most blatant of the WRP's revisions of dialectical materialism came when Healy decided to attack Thornett for making this elementary point that contradiction is absolute and unity relative. When Healy's gross error was pointed out, it was left to the unfortunate Banda to try to save face for the Healyites. His attempt to do this (in *Whither Thornett?*, pp. 12-20) represents probably the most extreme departure from dialectical materialism the Healyites have ever made. The following are typical examples of Banda's nonsense:

The condition for the struggle of opposites is their unity, just as the conflict of opposites within the unity is the source of all development and change and the re-establishment of a new unity at a higher level (p. 12).

This is totally irrelevant to the point as to whether unity or contradiction is absolute. Banda then argues:

For Lenin the difference between the absolute and the relative is relative because the absolute is continually being transformed into the relative and vice versa (p. 16).

This is also totally irrelevant. While the relation of the relative and absolute is indeed relative, this doesn't at all alter the fact that contradiction and not unity is fundamental—indeed if this were not the case, then of course the central position of dialectical materialism would collapse.

Banda's argument that unity takes precedence over opposition in a contradictory relation was refuted over a century ago by Karl Marx in his criticism of the economist James Mill as follows:

Where the economic relation—and therefore also the categories expressing it—includes contradictions, opposites, and likewise the unity of opposites, he [Mill] emphasizes the aspect of the unity of the contradictions and denies the contradictions. He transforms the unity of opposites into the direct identity of opposites.

For example, a commodity conceals the contradiction of use-value and exchange-value. This contradiction develops further, presents itself and manifests itself in the duplication of the commodity into commodity and money. This duplication appears as a process in the metamorphosis of commodities in which selling and buying are different aspects of a single process and each act of this process simultaneously includes its opposite. In the first part of this work, I mentioned that Mill disposes of the contradiction by concentrating only on the unity of buying and selling; consequently he transforms circulation into barter, then, however, smuggles categories borrowed from circulation into [his description of] barter. (Marx: *Theories of Surplus-Value* [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971], Part III, p. 88. Emphasis in original.)

The understanding of capitalist exploitation exemplifies the dialectical connection between the objective fact, its theoretical explanation, and the effect of the latter upon the development of the class struggle. It is a pivotal fact that the capitalists receive more value through the laboring process than they pay in wages to the workers. That is the source of their profits. Though this fact was perceived by some earlier economists, its significance was not thoroughly and correctly explained in scientific terms until Marx elaborated his theory of surplus value. This epoch-making illumination of the precise mechanism of exploitation in all its ramifications provided an invaluable weapon for the proletariat and its Marxist vanguard in the struggle against the capitalist class, leading to the overthrow of the wage system.

Recognition of this state of affairs embedded in the capitalist relations of production as the driving force of its mode of exploitation becomes the foundation of socialist class consciousness and its organized economic and political activity. Hence the factual reality, its theoretical interpretation, and collective class practice in accordance with them constitute an integrated trinity for a genuine Marxist. The three elements of experience are completely interrelated.

The firm establishment of this point does not lead us to conclude that Marxists do not base themselves on facts, that there are no facts, or that in the final analysis facts must not be considered primary in relation to theory. On the contrary. *The necessity to understand the dialectical, contradictory, and developing processes of material reality leads not to disregard for facts but to an ever greater necessity to study facts in their greatest possible number and detail. Far from rejecting facts, referring only to the "so-called facts" and the like, Marxism insists on proof through facts.*

Lenin deals with this perfectly. He refutes bourgeois arguments based on considering merely one or two isolated instances. Lenin does not argue, à la Healy, that any reference to, or starting from, the facts is proof of empiricism; on the contrary he demands that all available facts be considered. While the Healyites refer to the "so-called facts," Lenin demands more and more facts. Thus he states:

The most widely used, and most fallacious, method in the realm of social phenomena is to tear out individual minor facts and juggle with examples. Selecting chance examples presents no difficulty at all, but is of no value, or of purely negative value, for in each individual case everything hinges on the historically concrete situation. Facts, if we take them in their entirety, in their interconnection, are not only stubborn things, but undoubtedly proof bearing things. Minor facts, if taken out of their entirety, in their interconnection, if they are arbitrarily selected

and torn out of context, are merely things for juggling or even worse.³⁵

However, if in contrast to this, an objective study of all available facts in their interconnection is made, then, far being "empiricism," it is a vital part of the Marxist method of analysis and proof:

We must seek to build a reliable foundation of precise and indisputable facts that can be confronted to any of the "general" or "example-based" arguments now so grossly misused in certain countries. And if it is to be a real foundation, we must take not individual facts, but the *sum total* of facts, without a *single* exception, relating to the question under discussion. Otherwise there will be the inevitable, and fully justified, suspicion that the facts were selected or compiled arbitrarily, that instead of historical phenomena being presented in objective interconnection and interdependence and treated as a whole, we are presenting a "subjective" concoction to justify what might prove to be a dirty business.³⁶

Or as Trotsky put it:

We Marxists are interested, above all, in facts.³⁷

Facts and Historical Materialism

That genuine dialectics is not imposed on facts but discovered and derived from facts determines the entire method of Marxist investigation. When working on *Capital* Marx did not, in Healyite fashion,

35. Lenin: *CW*, Vol 23, p. 272.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-73. This statement that those who ignore facts produce a "'subjective' concoction" to justify "a 'dirty business'" could well stand as an epitaph by Lenin on Healyism in general and its frame-up campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack in particular.

37. Trotsky: "The Belgian Dispute and the De Man Plan," *Writings (1934-35)* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), p. 211.

Trotsky's critique of Vereeken in this article reads like a prejudgment on Healy. We need only substitute "Healy" for "Vereeken" to see the parallel:

"Comrade Vereeken [a variant spelling—A.J.] predicted the absolute impossibility of the Bolshevik-Leninists developing their ideas within the Social Democratic party. He predicted the opportunist degeneration and the complete discrediting of our tendency. Does he make any attempt to analyze the real facts? Does he compare his predictions with the living reality? No, not in the least. He was implacable when it was a question of predictions, of discussions, of preliminary questions, but since it has become a reality, Vereeken has lost all interest in the question. This fact characterizes perfectly the abstract manner in which Vereeken approaches ideas and problems."

Given their similarity of method, and lack of interest in the facts, perhaps it is not so surprising that Healy has tried to utilize some of Vereeken's more recent nonsense in his frame-up campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack. (See Breitman "Vereeken's Differences with Trotsky," *Intercontinental Press*, November 1976, p. 1680.)

34. Lenin: *CW*, Vol. 38, p. 360.

go around stating that referring to facts was empiricism. On the contrary, he made the most gigantic and persevering study of all available facts. Marx's vast knowledge and pursuit of every single possible government record, economic statistic, factual and theoretical writing on political economy is well known. He utilized factual sources and records in the British Museum Library not only of the standard type but some that virtually no one else had even consulted before. Far from regarding all this as "empiricism" Marx insisted that this was the *only* correct way to proceed. Speaking of the method of inquiry, Marx said:

The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work has been done can the real movement be appropriately presented.³⁸

38. Marx: *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 102. (London: Pelican, 1976.)

While of course the issue of their concrete total lack of interest in factual data is a secondary question compared to their rejection of dialectical materialism and its relation to facts, nevertheless it offers an interesting sidelight on the method of the Healyites.

Marx's attitude towards the study of all available factual material was characteristic of all the great Marxists. Every single one of Engels's works is a model of research and grasp of the material data. One need only look at Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia* to see the wealth of factual data that is utilized—there are cited references to more than 500 different books, abstracts, research papers, and articles in this one volume alone, and Lenin in fact consulted far more in his research on the book. With *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, for which we possess Lenin's notebooks, the record of what Lenin consulted—and it is again probably only a small part of his research—runs to 232 articles, 49 periodicals, and 148 books! Similarly, a work such as Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, or *The Revolution Betrayed*, or any other of his works, is characterized by its immense grasp and study of the available facts.

In analyzing the Cuban revolution, the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International also considered it vital to study all possible evidence. The Healyites dealt with Cuba on the basis of their customary ignorance—virtually never dealing with actual developments in Cuba and making absolutely elementary and gross errors of fact on such basic questions as the agrarian reform. (See Hansen: "Cuba—The Acid Test," p. 14. In *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution*. [New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1968.]) As Hansen pointed out:

"The majority [of the SWP—A.J.] began by following the events with the utmost attention, gathering facts from all the sources at our disposal. . . . We thus assembled the major facts now at the disposal of both sides in the internal dispute in the party. The minority, perhaps because they are somewhat disdainful of 'empiricism,' contributed little to this." (Hansen: "What the Discussion on Cuba Is About," p. 15. In *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution*.)

In general, indeed, the entire method of the

The reason for this approach was well summed up by Marx and Engels in their famous statement of the distinction between historical materialism and all idealist forms of historical analysis and explanation:

This manner of approach [historical materialism—A.J.] is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts, as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.³⁹

In this classic passage Marx and Engels quite clearly spell out the distinction between Marxism and empiricism as it applies to the study of society and to historical

Healyite writings, following from their position on facts, renders them incapable of making, or even being interested in, any concrete analysis of particular developments or revolutions. What Hansen pointed out in the case of Cuba applies to virtually all their writings:

"This key article took us everywhere in the world, to Siberia and Bolivia, through time and space, everywhere but Cuba." (Hansen: "Cuba—The Acid Test," p. 27.)

This is not an accident but flows from the Healyite's entire method. Again as Hansen put it: "They dissolve the concrete into the abstract." (Ibid., p. 9.) This is quite apart from the fact that they are quite frequently wrong on the abstract as well!

39. Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*. In *Marx and Engels: Collected Works (MECW)*, Vol. 5, p. 37. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976.)

materialism. It is true that empiricism finished up with "dead facts." Why is this, and how does it differ from Marxism? It is certainly *not* because Marxism starts not from facts but from theory. On the contrary historical materialism itself, as Marx and Engels state, starts from the "empirical perceptible process of development under definite conditions." This forms for Marxism "the real premises and [it] does not abandon them for a moment." *The difference in regard to the method of empiricism is not that historical materialism does not start from this "empirically perceptible process of development" but that empiricism considers the elements of this process in "fantastic isolation and fixity." As a result its observations do not deal with real development but instead are lifeless "dead facts." Instead of this "fantastic isolation and fixity," Marxism itself considers the "active life process," the interconnections and contradictions of things. Or as Engels puts it:*

The proof must be derived from history itself. . . . This conception, however, puts an end to philosophy in the realm of history, just as the dialectical conception of nature made all natural philosophy both unnecessary and impossible. *It is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections from out of our brains, but of discovering them in the facts.* [Emphasis added.]⁴⁰

It is from this that we can see the real relation and attitude of Marxism to facts. Marxism does not deny or dismiss the reality of facts, or claim that it is an empirical error to start from the facts, but on the contrary demands a study of all the

40. Engels: *Feuerbach*, MESW, p. 631.

MARXISM Vs. ULTRALEFTISM: THE RECORD OF HEALY'S BREAK WITH TROTSKYISM

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY JOSEPH HANSEN

A collection of documents and articles dealing with the politics of the Workers Revolutionary Party (formerly the Socialist Labour League) and its founder, Gerry Healy. Includes Ernest Germain's "Marxism vs. Ultraleftism," and Joseph Hansen's "Healy 'Reconstructs' the Fourth International." For a copy, send \$2.50 (£0.75) to the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014.

facts and proves its positions and theories on the basis of them. The demarcation between Marxism and the bourgeois empiricists is not that the latter stand for proof through facts and the Marxists reject starting from facts. The argument on this matter is that frequently the "facts" of the bourgeoisie are indeed precisely "so-called facts"; i.e., not facts at all but distortions and falsifications of reality, that empiricism does not see the totality of facts, that empiricism does not study facts in their interrelation but rips isolated facts out of reality and thereby falsifies them, that empiricism does not grasp the processes

2. Dialectical Materialism and Facts

If we turn from the particular area of historical materialism to the foundations of dialectical materialism itself, we find an even more complete break of the Healyites from Marxism. *For dialectical materialism, the philosophy of Marxism, is itself based on and derived from the facts of experience verified by the sciences and the historical progress of philosophical thought. By rejecting proceeding from the facts, the Healyites thereby reject the foundations of dialectical materialism itself.*

As this point explodes the pretentious rubbish of the Healyites on their claims to being dialectical materialists, we will deal with the issues in detail.

Dialectics and Reality

The reason why dialectical materialism rests upon facts, and why dialectical analysis must be ever more fully based on them, should be obvious. It is built into the nature of materialism itself. As Marx put it:

... the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man and translated into forms of thought.⁴²

Or in Trotsky's words:

... our methods of thought, both formal logic and the dialectic, are not arbitrary constructions of our reason but rather expressions of the actual inter-relationships in nature itself.⁴³

It therefore follows that dialectical materialism is itself the conceptual expression of the nature of material reality. To be more precise, dialectical materialism is derived from "... the universe as a process—as a matter undergoing uninterrupted historical development."⁴⁴

And, therefore, in a well-known formula of Engels:

... dialectical thought, is only the reflection of the motion through opposites which asserts itself everywhere in nature, and which by the continual conflict of the opposites and their final passage into one another, or into higher forms, determines the life of nature.⁴⁵

and contradictions that constantly transform old or present facts into new facts by breaking up the apparently stable character of the things of reality, and therefore empiricism is incapable of grasping the dynamics these contradictions give rise to.⁴¹ *In short, empiricism bases itself not on the real facts but on impressions and mere resemblances to parts and aspects of reality.*

For the Healyites, proceeding from facts is illegitimate "empiricism." For Trotsky, "We Marxists are, above all, interested in facts." That is the measure of the gulf between Healyism and Marxism.

It follows that every correct theory, including, as we shall see, dialectical materialism itself, is determined by the development of reality and true knowledge of it. In short *dialectical analysis proceeds from the facts of material reality itself.*

... the inter-connections are not to be built into the facts but to be discovered in them. . . .⁴⁶

And, in the real position of Trotsky as opposed to the distortions of the Healyites:

Dialectics cannot be imposed upon facts; it has to be deduced from facts, from their nature and development.⁴⁷

Therefore in every field of study:

It is no longer a question anywhere of inventing interconnections from out of our own brains, but of discovering them in the facts.⁴⁸

In short, far from regarding the utmost attention to the facts as "empiricism,"

41. It is very illuminating that in denying that Marxists proceed from facts, the Healyites cite Georg Lukács as their "authority." The document *Empiricism and Opportunism* quotes a major passage from Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* as expressing the Healyites' point particularly well. (*Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 4, p. 79.)

But Lukács's book is fundamentally tainted with Hegelian idealism. It contains explicit polemics against the positions of Engels, the dialectics of nature, materialism, etc. No wonder that the Healyites can find support for their positions in this book!

42. Marx: *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 102.

43. Trotsky: "An Open Letter to Comrade Burnham," *In Defense of Marxism* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965), p. 84.

44. Engels: *Feuerbach*, MESW, p. 608.

45. Engels: *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 280.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

47. Trotsky: *Problems of Everyday Life* (New York: Monad Press, 1973), p. 233.

48. Engels: *Feuerbach*, MESW, p. 631.

dialectical materialism *demands* such a method of approach.

... in every field of science, in natural as in historical science, one must proceed from the given facts. . . .⁴⁹

Since dialectical materialism is a scientific method and bases itself on the results of the sciences, it conforms to the procedure common to all fields of science. Moreover, materialism itself undergoes change and development in the light of new discoveries of the facts of material reality:

... just as idealism underwent a series of stages of development, so also did materialism. With each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science it has to change its form; and after history also was subjected to materialistic treatment, a new avenue of development has opened here too.⁵⁰

Thus, for example, when Engels was faced with the tremendous scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century he did not proceed, on the Healy model, to start talking about the "so-called fact of the living cell," the "so-called fact of electricity," the "so-called facts of evolutionary theory," etc., but, on the contrary, showed how materialism itself progressed and was enriched as a result of the discovery of these new facts.

Finally, flowing from this nature of Marxist philosophy itself, so supreme are the given facts of material reality over all forms of theory that eventually dialectical materialism itself will become only an element in a profounder scientific view—although the prerequisites to achieve this will not exist until long after the destruction of capitalism:

Dialectical materialism is not of course an eternal and immutable philosophy. To think otherwise is to contradict the spirit of the dialectic. Further development of scientific thought will undoubtedly create a more profound doctrine into which dialectical materialism will enter merely as a structural material. However, there is no basis for expecting this philosophic revolution will be accomplished under the decaying bourgeois regime, without mentioning the fact that a Marx is not born every year or every decade.⁵¹

In short, dialectical materialism, far from being a form of pseudoreligion or sophistry, as it is portrayed by the bourgeoisie and as it actually becomes in the hands of those such as the Healyites, is the sole seriously and thoroughly materialist and scientific philosophical position of our time—the sole one that rejects any variety of formalism, rationalism, idealism, or appeal to nonmaterial "realities." It is the sole one in which, to quote the words of Engels again:

... the principles are not the starting point of

49. Engels: *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 64.

50. Engels: *Feuerbach*, MESW, p. 607.

51. Trotsky: *In Defense of Marxism*, p. 76.

For Additional Reading on Healyite Record

It was not possible in the accompanying article to deal with even a fraction of Healy's use of falsifications and strong-arm methods. That needs, and has received, much fuller treatment. It is only possible to indicate the chief sources where readers can follow the question for themselves.

The record of Healy's continuing campaign of falsification is detailed in *Healy's Big Lie—the Slander Campaign Against Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the Fourth International*.¹ For examples of early uses of intimidation and violence see the section "The Beating of Ernest Tate" in *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism—the Record of Healy's Break With Trotskyism*.²

For a record of Healy's use of slander and inquisitions inside his own organization see *The Battle for Trotskyism—Documents of the Opposition Expelled From the Workers Revolutionary Party in 1974*.³ A couple of excerpts from this book, the chief content of which is documents by Alan Thornett, will show what the internal regime of the WRP is

1. New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1976. With an introduction by Tim Wohlforth.

2. New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974. With an introduction by Joseph Hansen.

3. London: Folrose Ltd., 1976.

like. First, on the situation in the Central Committee of the WRP:

For years comrades such as Cyril Smith, Jack Gale, and Tom Kemp have been used as whipping boys by Healy at C.C. [Central Committee] meetings. Every C.C. member knows this to be true. These comrades have been reduced to tears many times in front of C.C. meetings when attacked as "anti-party" over contributions they have made. Cliff Slaughter was attacked for years as embodying "the most pernicious form of subjective idealism in the party." He abandoned party work for long periods.⁴

As regards the treatment of individual members of the WRP who opposed the leadership:

At 9:30 the same evening a car driven by Aileen Jennings picked up John Lister, Tom White (a member from Cowley and the one who has remained in the party in Oxford) and Kate Blakeney. They were taken to Healy's flat in Clapham. When they arrived Healy began screaming at John Lister, demanding to know what Alan Thornett's political position was. John Lister didn't know, having had only a brief discussion late on Sunday night with Alan Thornett.

During the interview John Lister was subjected to continuous vilification and intimidation. Later Healy switched his attention to Tony Richardson. He said he wanted him brought to London from Oxford, saying that he would get the truth out of him. He told Jennings: "Fetch the heavies—and I want

4. *Battle for Trotskyism*, p. 86.

them big." While she went away there was more screaming at John Lister. When she came back, Jennings said all that she could find were Paddy O'Reagan and Norman Harding. Healy said they would have to do and despatched them to Oxford, instructing them to take Kate Blakeney, John Lister and Tom White back with them.

At 3.15 a.m. on Tuesday morning they arrived at Thornett's house with John Lister. Thornett told the Control Commission that "it was obvious from John Lister's appearance that he had been subjected to severe intimidation."⁵

... [Tony Richardson] was called to Clapham for "discussions" in Clapham at 9.00 p.m. on Tuesday evening. The interview again was in Healy's flat. Alex Mitchell was present and so was Aileen Jennings. At this interview considerable physical violence was used on him. Tony Richardson gave a full detailed report of this to the Control Commission but of course not a single word was recorded. . . .

Tony Richardson arrived at Alan Thornett's house at 2.15 the following morning—physically and mentally shattered by the experience.⁶

For a record of Healy's methods on an international scale see "The Workers League and the International Committee" by Tim Wolforth in *Intercontinental Press*, February 24, March 3, March 10, and March 17, 1975. □

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

the investigation, but its final result; they are not applied to nature and human history, but abstracted from them; it is not nature and the realm of humanity which conform to these principles, but the principles are only valid in so far as they are in conformity with nature and history. [See footnote No. 27.]

This is indeed:

... the only materialist conception of the matter.

Here is the source of Healy's total break with Marxist philosophy. For Healyism,

3. Politics and Facts

If we now turn from basic questions of dialectical materialism to the realm of the relation of politics and philosophy, then the accusations of the Healyites are also clear—in particular in relation to the reunification of the Fourth International. The decisive development which promoted the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963 was the Cuban revolution. It was the essentially similar response made to this event by both the International Secret-

"Only higher abstractions, in advanced theory, can guide us as to the meaning of these facts."

For Marxism, ". . . in every field of science, in natural as in historical science, one must proceed from the given facts."

We need scarcely enquire whether it is the Fourth International, Hansen, and Novack, or the Healyites who have abandoned dialectical materialism in relation to facts! *By rejecting proceeding from the facts the Healyites in reality reject dialectical materialism itself.*

ariat and the International Committee, following similar common responses to the Hungarian political revolution and its suppression in 1956, that definitely demonstrated to the overwhelming majority of Trotskyists that, despite various remaining theoretical and political differences, both of the currents that had emerged from the split of 1953 remained forces *within* revolutionary Marxism.

No matter what different views had been

held by various people at the time of the split,⁵² or whether it was considered that such a split had been an error,⁵³ the evaluation of decisive events of the class struggle had shown that what existed were two factions within Trotskyism and not a split into two different class camps. This being the case, the duty of forces on both sides was to seek to unify the two factions into a single international organization. As Joseph Hansen put it in his article, "Cuba—The Acid Test":

In the school of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon—which is also the school of Lenin—I was taught that important as the books are and for all the time that must be put into mastering them, what is decisive is the revolution itself. A revolutionist who misses the test of revolution is a failure no matter how well he can quote the

52. For a summary of this see the "Introductory Note" by Fred Feldman in *The Struggle to Reunify the Fourth International (1954-1963)* (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1977), Vol. 1, p. 4.

53. See Peng: "On the suggestions and proposals on the unity of the world movement." In *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 3, p. 126.

texts. That is why the Cuban Revolution—not the ultraleft preoccupations of the National Committee of the SLL—provides the yardstick by which to measure their pretensions to Leninist leadership.

We suggest that the National Committee of the SLL take another look at the Cuban Revolution, "In the beginning was the Word! . . . The Word? . . . In the beginning was the Deed."⁵⁴

This document set off wild Healyite ravings and the charge that:

Hansen's document "Cuba—The Acid Test" . . . states explicitly the *empiricist* and anti-dialectical basis in *method* for the opportunist tendencies in the SWP's politics as well as for their unprincipled and un-historical approach to the problem of unity and development of the world Trotskyist movement.⁵⁵

Instead of proceeding to work for the reunification of the Fourth International, the Healyites developed their position that:

*It is time to draw to a close the period in which Pabloite revisionism was regarded as a trend within Trotskyism.*⁵⁶ [Emphasis in original.]

"Pabloite revisionism" is, of course, the Healyite code for the views of the overwhelming majority of the world's Trotskyists!

In reality the Healyite reaction to this document, along with their thoroughly false conclusion that Cuba under Castro remained a capitalist state, revealed drastically their own break with Marxism. It is therefore worth looking at the issues involved in greater detail.

Practice and Reality

In the previous discussion of Marxist materialism, we noted that Marxism asserts that the criterion of the truth and worth of any theory is its correspondence to material reality. However in respect to our present purposes we have to note something more. *Marxism asserts that the final criterion of correspondence to material reality is determination not by theory but by practice.* In the philosophical terms of Lenin:

. . . the practice of man and mankind is the test, the criterion of the objectivity of cognition.⁵⁷

This naturally does not mean, as we have already pointed out, that Marxism

54. Hansen: "Cuba—The Acid Test," op. cit., p. 52. As Hansen's last phrase is a quotation from Goethe's *Faust I* have taken the liberty to change the "Act" in Hansen's original to "Deed" as this is the usual English translation of the same passage in German used by Engels in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, and referred to below.

55. *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 4, p. 79.

56. "Letter of the National Committee of the SLL to the National Committee of the SWP January 2, 1961." In *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 3, p. 49.

57. Lenin: *CW*, Vol. 38, p. 211.

considers theory insignificant—on the contrary, as discussed above, it asserts its overwhelming importance. *What it means however is that within the relation, and conflict, of theory and practice it is practice which is the determinant criterion in the last instance.* Again in Lenin's words:

Nature is reflected in the human brain. By checking and applying the correctness of these reflections in his practice and technique, man arrives at objective truth.⁵⁸

Therefore:

The result of activity is the test of subjective cognition and the criterion of OBJECTIVITY WHICH TRULY IS.⁵⁹

In consequence:

The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge.⁶⁰

Or in the more colorful, but entirely scientific (not to mention Hansenite), formula of Engels:

Im Anfang war die Tat [In the beginning was the deed]. . . . The proof of the pudding is in the eating.⁶¹

These positions of Marxist materialism naturally do not mean that theory is *reducible* to practice, but they do mean that *in the final analysis* the criterion of the truth and worth of theory is correspondence to material reality as determined by practice. *Any other position, either the denial of the significance of theory or its reduction to practice, or denial that in the last analysis the criterion of the correctness of theory is its relation to material reality as determined by practice, means abandoning Marxist materialism.*⁶²

58. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

60. Lenin: *CW*, Vol. 14, p. 142.

61. Engels: *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, *MESW*, p. 385.

62. On these basic points of Marxism, it immediately becomes evident that two symmetrical deviations from Marxist materialism can occur.

The first is a denial of the relative autonomy and conflict of Marxist theory from and with practice and instead the assertion of the *identity* of theory and practice. Such a concept asserts either that theory is *reducible* to immediate practice—which, applied to politics, becomes in general a "justification" for spontanéism or hostility to Marxist theory, or asserts that theoretical error is *identical* to political betrayals—which *leads to abandonment* of materialist criteria.

The second deviation denies that *in the last instance* the criterion of correctness is not theory but practice and its relation to material reality. This leads into philosophical idealism and typically in politics into dogmatism and sectarianism as the political line becomes determined by theoretical constructs not based on material reality.

The Healyites generally succeed in combining both deviations.

We may now turn from these general criteria of Marxism to the particular question of the relation of revolutionary theory to the class struggle.

Marxism and the Working Class

In determining the scientific relation of revolutionary communism to the working class, Marxism necessarily utilizes, as we have seen, a definite materialist criterion. Marxism develops revolutionary theory, yet its positions are not some idealist construct but, as Engels puts it:

Communism . . . proceeds not from principles but from *facts*. . . . Communism insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the proletariat in this [class] struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat.⁶³

This *class* criterion is of course fundamental in all Marxist political concepts. Indeed it is a fundamental principle of Marxism that all political forces, institutions, parties, etc., are defined in class terms. Any attempt to define political forces outside of class criteria—to postulate "nonclass parties," "multiclass parties," "above class parties"—is to abandon Marxism. *Any serious Marxist analysis must by its very nature answer the question, "What is the class character of the political force being considered?"*

Class Criteria and Materialism

However, once having established the principle that all political forces must be analyzed in terms of class criteria, an evident question arises. *How is the class character of a political formation to be determined?* Marxist materialism, as we have already analyzed, leaves no scope for ambiguity on this question. Analysis of the theoretical positions of particular forces is of course of considerable use. However, it cannot be the finally deciding criteria. *Marxist materialism asserts that the final criterion of the character of any political force must be its relation to real material class forces.*

Thus in the case of revolutionary communism:

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, *actual* relations springing from an *existing* class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. [Emphasis added.]⁶⁴

And therefore, more precisely, as the political expression of the interests of the working class, *the correctness of the the-*

63. Engels: "The Communists and Karl Heinezen." In *MECW*, Vol. 6, pp. 303-04.

64. Marx and Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*. *Ibid.*, p. 498.

ory of revolutionary communism is in the final analysis determined by its materialist relation to the defense of the interests of the working class.

The Communists . . . have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.⁶⁵

What applies to the proletarian political trend—communism—by the same materialist criterion, of course, applies to all other political forces. Thus in the final analysis Social Democracy is a bourgeois agency not only because it has bourgeois ideas and theories but because in the real material clash of class forces it defends the interests of the capitalist class.⁶⁶ In the final analysis it is its support of imperialist war, its counterrevolutionary role in crushing even by force the struggle of the workers, and its other betrayals that define the class character of the Social Democracy. Similarly with centrism. This, typically, has totally confused, incoherent and false theories. However in the final analysis it is its real material vacillation between the interests of the working class and the bourgeoisie on decisive questions that defines centrism as a petty-bourgeois trend within the working class.

It is also from these basic points of Marxist materialism that the question of the proletarian revolutionary character of a political force is determined. The finally decisive question for this cannot be theory. Marxism asserts the extreme importance of theory. It asserts that false theoretical positions pose extreme dangers, and are typical symptoms of deviations from the interests of the working class. It states that contradiction between proletarian class position, as defined in relation to the material clash of class forces, and wrong theoretical positions is unstable—finally either the material class position leads to

65. *Ibid.*, p. 497.

66. What Trotsky said about Stalinism upon breaking from the Comintern in 1933 has general methodological significance in relation to this:

“. . . the degree of degeneration of a revolutionary party cannot, as a rule, be established a priori on the basis of symptoms alone. The living verification of events is indispensable.” (“It is Necessary to Build Communist Parties and an International Anew.” In *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971], p. 419.

a change to correct theoretical positions, or the false theory leads to abandonment of the defense of the interests of the proletariat. Nevertheless contradictions between material class position and theory do occur—particularly when big events in the class struggle are putting all previous positions to the test. While theory is a tremendously important guide to class position it is not the finally decisive criterion. *The only finally decisive criterion of class position for Marxist materialism cannot be theory but the relation to real material class forces. Proletarian political forces are defined in the last analysis not by theory but as those who in the real material clash of class forces fight for the position of the working class.*

This question also is decisive in the issue of unification. The finally decisive criterion for deciding whether a force moving to the left is revolutionary is not its theoretical position, which may soon be superseded. Marxists may temporarily not regard as crucial, false theoretical positions of groups that are advancing the class struggle. This does not mean that revolutionary Marxists overlook these false theoretical positions. To the contrary Marxists never make concessions on theoretical questions. However a favorable basis for discussion is established by the fact that such groups engage in actions that serve the interests of the working class.⁶⁷ Or as Joseph Hansen precisely put it:

67. An excellent example of the weight the Bolsheviks placed on practice as against mere theory in the material clash of class forces is provided in the founding of the Communist International. From an ideological point of view, the participating forces were utterly disparate. They included not only the Bolsheviks and Marxists who had arrived at positions close to those of the Bolsheviks but also syndicalists (e.g., Monatte and Rosmer in France), revolutionary trade unionists (e.g., the Industrial Workers of the World in the United States, and sections of the British shop stewards movement), and anarchists (e.g., Nin and Maurin from the Spanish CNT).

The common ground of these forces, and the justification for including them in the formation of the Communist International, was not their ideological congruence but their relation to the material class struggle—the fact that they had opposed the First World War and supported the Russian revolution. In discussing the necessity for a Communist party, Trotsky explained:

“It is self-evident that if we were dealing here with Messrs. Scheidemann, Kautsky or their English co-thinkers, it would, of course, be unnecessary to convince these gentlemen that a party is indispensable to the working class. They have created a party for the working class and handed it over into the service of bourgeois and capitalist society.

“But if what we have in mind is the proletarian party, then it is observable that in various countries this party is passing through different stages of its development. . . . Just because I know that the party is indispensable, and am very well aware of the value of the party, and

In the school of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon—which is also the school of Lenin . . . important as the books are and for all the time that must be put into mastering them, what is decisive is the revolution itself.

Comrade Hansen might have added that it is also the school of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Unfortunately it is a long time ago that Healy forgot any lessons he might have received there.

The Final Madness

Of course, it might be thought that the Healyites' abandonment of Marxist materialism couldn't get much worse after 1963.

However, there is a deadly logic once you break with reality. Already gross distortions and falsifications become positively grotesque when defended and developed. By the 1970s virtually even the appearance of Marxist materialism had been abandoned. Thus, for example, we find the American Healyites writing:

The SWP spokesmen Hansen and Novack maintained and maintain to this day that the starting point for Marxists is the same as for the empiricists: “the facts.”⁶⁸

This at least well and truly puts the

just because I see Scheidemann on the one side and, on the other, American or Spanish or French syndicalists who not only wish to fight against the bourgeoisie but who, unlike Scheidemann, really want to tear its head off—for this reason I say that I prefer to discuss with these Spanish, American and French comrades in order to prove to them that the party is indispensable for the fulfillment of the historical mission which is placed upon them—the destruction of the bourgeoisie.” (Trotsky: *The First 5 Years of the Communist International* [New York: Monad Press, 1972], Vol. 1, pp. 97-98.)

And:

“In France I had the opportunity of personally observing, at the beginning of the war, that the first audacious voices against the war—at the very moment when the Germans stood at the gates of Paris—were raised in the ranks of a small group of French syndicalists. These were the voices of my friends—Monatte, Rosmer and others. At that time it was impossible for us to pose the question of forming the Communist Party: such elements were far too few. But I felt myself a comrade among comrades in the company of Comrades Monatte, Rosmer and others with an anarchist past.

“But what was there in common between me and a Renaudel who excellently understands the need of a party. . . .” (*Ibid.*, p. 98.)

Naturally this did not mean that Trotsky was indifferent to theory, or that the anarchist and syndicalist theoretical positions on the party could long remain as they were without coming into total contradiction with their position as revolutionaries, but the class position of Monatte, Rosmer, etc., at that time, that of a proletarian revolutionary political force, was determined by their relation to the great material tests of the class struggle, which outweighed for the time being their false theoretical positions.

68. *What Makes Wohlforth Run?*, p. 13.

empiricist Engels in his place for holding as we have seen:

... in every field of science, in natural as in historical science, one must proceed from the given facts. . . .⁶⁹

The ultimate absurdity, however, probably came with the split between the Healyites and the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. According to the Healyites, this came when they put down a resolution at a youth congress at Essen, West Germany, which the OCI voted against, that started by declaring:

There can be no revolutionary party without revolutionary theory. Behind every opportunist development in the history of the workers movement, and especially of Stalinism, has been the revision of Marxist theory.⁷⁰

Here materialism is stood on its head. In reality "behind every opportunist development in the history of the workers movement" lies not any theory at all but material social forces—the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy in the case of Social Democracy, the bureaucracy of the USSR in the case of Stalinism, etc. Each such social force has of course expressed itself in revisions of Marxist theory; but that, in the final analysis, is not the determinant but the determined element. To reverse the order of determination, to say that what lies behind the opportunism is not a social force but instead a revision of theory is to abandon Marxist materialism for idealism.

The point is really not too difficult. We

do seem to remember an obscure fellow named Karl Marx who thought it rather important to assert such things as:

It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness.⁷¹

However, he was obviously a hopeless empiricist and by the Healy school of "dialectics," we can obviously use "higher theory" to "interpret" such facts and instead say that Marx really meant: "Consciousness is not determined by life, but life by consciousness." That, after all, is only to restate in a different form Healy's profound discovery that it is not theory which is derived from facts but facts which are finally interpreted by theory.

* * *

The road that Healyism has traveled has long since taken it completely outside Marxism. It is no longer even a question of rejecting fundamental particular elements of Marxist theory, but of overturning and rejecting the very starting point and basis of Marxism. The scientific foundation of Marxism, precisely its recognition that the facts of material reality are primary, is rejected by a doctrine which asserts that theory is the highest criterion. In its philosophical and theoretical base, Healy's position is not qualitatively different from the pre-Marxist idealist socialists.

The difference is that the great utopians, for all their faults, harnessed their idealist philosophies to positions that for their time were great progressive achievements,

whereas for Healy sovereign disregard of the facts serves only to cover up his degeneration as a Marxist leader. Today he is looking for salvation from the "Islamic socialism" of Colonel Qaddafi. Healy is just as ignorant of the most elementary aspects of Marxist philosophy as he is of any other aspects of Marxism. His bluffs and pretensions should be shown up on this field, as on every other, so that he is revealed for the small-time political gangster he is.

Conclusion

Just how far Healy has broken with Marxism is now being realized not merely by the general working-class movement, which has long known it, but also increasingly by members and former members of his own organization. Some genuine militants, however, while rejecting the present politics of the Healyites, unfortunately still think that their degeneration merely goes back a short time.

In reality, as we have shown here, Healy's present positions are merely the extension of those which his organization had already developed at the time of its break with the Fourth International in 1963—and whose origins go back even prior to this period. Those who joined the Workers Revolutionary Party, thinking it was Marxist, will find it illuminating to check the record of the other issues on which Healy based his split. They will find that on all substantive issues Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the other political leaders of the Fourth International were right and Healy was wrong. That is really why he slanders them so much now.

March 5, 1978

69. Engels: *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 64.

70. "Statement by the International Committee (Majority), October 24, 1971." In *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism*, Vol. 6, p. 30.

71. Marx and Engels: *The German Ideology*. In *MECW*, Vol. 5, p. 37.

定期購読で

インターコンティネンタル・プレスを!

"Regularly buy and read the periodical INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS!"

That's the handwritten advice from one of our supporters in Tokyo.

Right on!

We can only add that the easiest way to "regularly buy and read" is to subscribe.

So fill out the blank and mail it in.

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor
P.O. Box 116
Varick Street Station
New York, New York 10014

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is \$12 for six months.

Enclosed is \$24 for one year.