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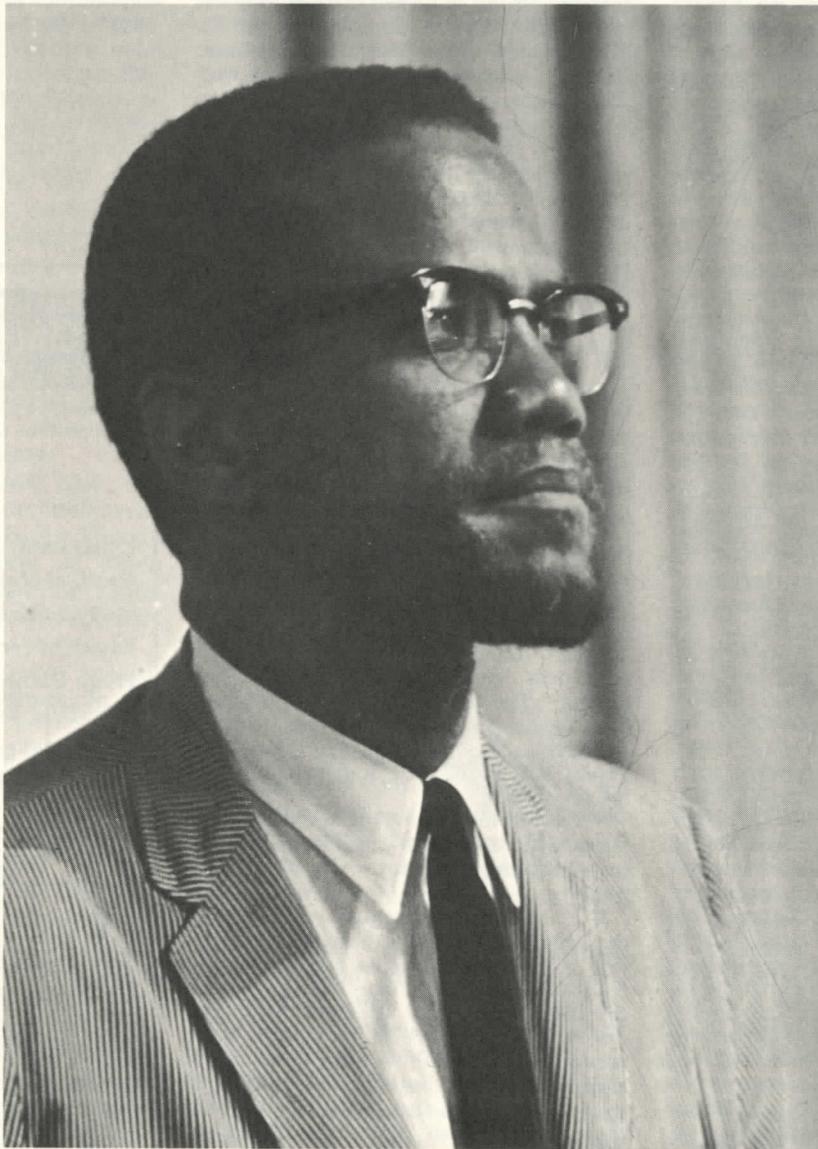
# INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

A CRITICAL REVIEW

*Marxism and Existentialism:  
Are the Two Compatible?*

By George Novack

**MALCOLM X**



May 21, 1925 – February 21, 1965

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# Hands Off the Vietnamese Revolution

[The following statement on the latest military attacks by American imperialism against the Vietnamese people was issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on February 16.]

Repeating the pattern of military aggression last August, when it bombed North Vietnam sites in "reprisal" for alleged attacks on naval craft in the Gulf of Tonkin, American imperialism, in combination with its puppet South Vietnam forces, launched two air assaults on villages of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on February 7-8.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International condemns these bombings with the deepest indignation as acts of the most barbarous aggression aimed at intimidating the Vietnamese people in their struggle for freedom and social emancipation. The attempt to intimidate the Vietnamese people has no chance whatever to succeed. But it threatens to take humanity, through "escalation," over the brink into a world nuclear holocaust.

The American imperialist aggression comes at a time when the counterrevolutionary forces in South Vietnam are suffering defeat after defeat and when their regime is in a state of complete disintegration. Already in control of three-fourths of the territory of South Vietnam, moving in bigger and bigger formations, the heroic guerrilla fighters of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam have for some months been directly attacking the American military bases set up on South Vietnam territory under the guise of centers for military "advisers." In reality these centers are bases for 23,000 officers and soldiers of the American armed forces, who are involved in a direct and savage way, with the employment of immense military equipment, against the guerrilla forces of the Vietnamese people.

It is possible that in their blind arrogance, the heads of the Pentagon really think it sufficient to bomb North Vietnam territory to convince Hanoi and Peking to "put a stop" to the South Vietnamese guerrilla operations against the American bases and to leave the Pentagon free to crush the revolutionary struggle at its leisure. Such a belief merely reveals how little the American rulers understand the real feelings of the anti-imperialist forces in Southeast Asia and how abysmally ignorant they are of what has happened in South Vietnam.

It is not a question of a "conspiracy," the strings of which are skillfully "manipulated" by the "aggressive Communists" of Peking and their Hanoi "allies." What is

involved is a genuine mass revolution. In fact, the uprising of the South Vietnamese peasants after the Geneva conference of 1954 against the bloody Diem regime and against the confiscation of peasant land holdings in favor of the feudalistic landlords, occurred before the formation of the National Liberation Front. A new stage has now opened in the Vietnamese revolution. This is marked by the movement of the urban masses, Buddhist demonstrations, workers' strikes, and student actions. These began spontaneously, before the National Liberation Front launched action slogans in the cities. Even if the Kremlin and Peking wanted to sacrifice South Vietnam for the sake of an over-all deal with Washington, they are powerless to stop the revolution.

It is the popular base of this revolution, which includes the immense majority of the inhabitants of the country, that makes the revolutionary audacity of the young guerrillas—and not "instructions" from Peking—that is behind the attacks on the American military bases. Against the power of the revolutionary masses, American imperialism, including its military "advisers" and its bomber pilots, is impotent. They can massacre thousands of innocent victims in inhuman "reprisals" that recall the Nazi reprisals against Lidice and Oradour; they cannot destroy the revolution. French imperialism found this out in the case of Algeria. In reprisal for Tunisia's aid to the guerrilla fighters, the French bombed Bizerte and Sakiet, but these bloody acts of vengeance did not stop the Algerian freedom fighters from winning political freedom for their country. In truth, the American bombings of North Vietnam villages are self-defeating. The more barbarous and inhuman the American militarists become, the greater the indignation of the masses grows and along with it their support to the revolution.

The bombing of the North Vietnam villages only expresses the dilemma faced by American imperialism in Southeast Asia.

If it "hardens" its positions, "escalating" the policy of intervening in the civil war into a policy of waging war on North Vietnam and even China, the Asian workers states will quite understandably increase their support to the South Vietnamese revolution by more and more radical means, including a massive build up of volunteers. Imperialism will then be confronted with the perspective of an immediate defeat on the scene in South Vietnam unless, in turn, it increases its

armed forces there, including infantry. But this would mean a new "Korean-type" war in South Vietnam in which imperialism would become more and more bogged down, draining its forces without the slightest perspective of victory. Under these circumstances, the Soviet bureaucracy, which up to now has maintained an attitude of criminal passivity in face of the imperialist aggression—particularly last August—a passivity which in fact encouraged imperialism to do whatever it felt like and to step up its aggression, would be obliged on its side to furnish diplomatic, economic and military support to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the South Vietnam revolution, still further reducing the chances for an imperialist victory in that part of the world.

This "hard" line, which is advocated by certain influential circles in the

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**SOME REFLECTIONS ON*****The Life and Death of Malcolm X***

By William F. Warde

Afro-Americans have produced many remarkable leaders from Crispus Attucks to Frederick Douglas. Malcolm X was the latest and not the least of these revolutionary representatives of the black people. His sensitivity enabled him to establish instant communion with the oppressed millions who impatiently await the emancipation and equality they have been promised. He was faultlessly attuned to their feelings of frustration, indignation and rebellion. "He made it plain, he tells it as it is," was their spontaneous response to his indictments from the platform, on TV and in the streets of Harlem, of the torments capitalist America inflicts on its Negro citizens—and to his summons to resist and abolish them by any available means.

Malcolm's intransigence had the same powerful appeal to the rebel youth, black and white, in the United States as the personalities of Fidel Castro and Hugo Blanco in Latin America. He merited such admiration.

Malcolm's life of 39 years passed through three distinct periods. In his youth he was the victim of the cruelties and deprivations of the Northern big city ghettos. But he was not an unresisting one. He hit back by resorting to jungle methods in order to survive in the asphalt jungle.

The prison he entered did not further corrupt him but served as a school in which he first learned about the Black Muslims. His conversion to their doctrines and practices regenerated and steeled his character, arming him with a gospel of racial salvation opposed to the hypocritical white man's Christianity which sanctified the black man's servitude.

He rose to national prominence as the foremost spokesman and organ-

izer of Elijah Muhammad's brotherhood. His call for Negro self-reliance, his condemnations of the moderate Negro leaders tied to the established power structure and his outspoken justification of the right and duty of self-defense against racist violence made him the target of vilification and misrepresentation. Malcolm was crucified by the paid press long before he was martyred by the assassins' bullets.

Regardless of their beliefs, most Negroes welcomed Minister Malcolm's message. He expressed what they really felt and thought about white America. At the same time the Freedom Now movement could not be channeled within a narrow religious sectarianism which turned away from social and political struggles. The insurgent black masses had to be united around a social program which combined methods of vigorous mass action with the building of independent power on all levels of national life.

**Political Sagacity**

Malcolm demonstrated his exceptional political sagacity by recognizing that the theocratic cultism of Elijah Muhammad ran counter to the imperative needs of the Negro revolt. Early in 1964 he parted from the man he had revered as Allah's messenger and the fountainhead of wisdom.

This rupture ushered in—and possibly prepared the termination of—the final chapter of Malcolm's brilliant and too brief career. To cut loose from the tutelage and ties of the Nation of Islam required personal, moral and intellectual courage of a high order. Malcolm had to repudiate the anti-political, sectarian and anti-white teachings of the Black

Muslims. He had to construct a new organization from the ground up while adding more enemies to an already extensive aggregation of opponents.

Well aware of the risks, Malcolm moved forward fearlessly on his new course. He separated the religious side of his activity from the projected Organization of Afro-American Unity. He started to assemble his numerous and scattered supporters. He made a pilgrimage to Mecca and visited the Near East and Africa where he discussed the problems of liberation struggle with some of the principal figures of the anti-imperialist forces from Premier Nkrumah of Ghana to Muhammad Babu of Tanzania and Che Guevara of Cuba. He sought support for the human rights appeal he was to submit to the United Nations on behalf of the 22 million American Negroes.

He set about to formulate a program and outlook which could redirect the Freedom Now movement along more effective lines. He was about to announce the first results of his thinking when he was gunned down in the Audubon Ballroom.

During these last months Malcolm was shedding old ideas, absorbing and emitting new ones with astonishing rapidity. He was learning, growing, changing. He adopted not only the official Muslim creed but also many ideas shared by the most uncompromising African, Asian and Latin American freedom-fighters and by the revolutionary socialists of the United States. He became willing to collaborate with everyone who refused to cower before the ruling powers and stood ready to battle for the rights of the Negro population.

Unfortunately he was not given

time to formulate a comprehensive program, impart it to his followers and build a strong nationwide organization. In a discussion with him and his colleague James Shabazz at his Harlem headquarters several weeks before his murder, we referred to the speeches he was planning to give in February. "I hope they are better than the one I gave last Sunday," he said. "Why?" I asked, "were you suffering like so many of us from a touch of the flu?" "No," he repeated twice, "I am just tired. Mentally tired." This fatigue came from the immense burdens Malcolm bore in launching a new revolutionary organization with inadequate resources and forces, besieged by rich and relentless foes who never ceased harassing him. He tried to surmount these difficulties through a strong will and untiring exertions. He knew that he was working as a marked man on limited time.

Unlike Toussaint L'Ouverture, Malcolm X was unable to display all the qualities of generalship that he possessed. Nevertheless, he towered so far above his contemporaries that his death leaves the struggle for emancipation shorter by a head.

Figures like Martin Luther King, honored and backed up by the Establishment, continue to hold the limelight in the civil rights movement. But they are luminaries of the moment, representatives of a passing phase in the march of black liberation in the United States.

### Prophet

Malcolm, whose memory they can patronize now that he has been silenced, was the herald and authentic spokesman of its future. His amazing ascent from the pit of degradation to the heights of national and international leadership indicate what a treasure of talents and creative capacities are hidden in the black ghettos which can be called forth by the unfolding revolt. It indicated how fast the best of the freedom-fighters can move in the heat of battle toward the most advanced viewpoints and positions. He progressed in a few years from depravity and demoralization to the goal-directed enlightenment and energy of a mass agitator and then from religious sectarianism to revolutionary social action. He passed from hatred, fear and suspicion of all whites as an understandable conclu-

sion from humiliation and oppression to the view that the actions and convictions of a person and group are more important than the tint of their skin. He solicited the cooperation of all opponents of Jim Crow so long as this involved no sacrifice or subordination of the welfare of the black masses to the white majority. He looked forward to an alliance of black men and women with white revolutionaries in anti-capitalist struggles to bring equality and justice to all of our countrymen.

### Warning

The capitalists and white supremacists would do well to heed and remember Malcolm's warning that the racial explosion arising from the dissatisfaction of the black people can be more dangerous to them than an atomic explosion. There are other potential Malcolms among the youth who will be inspired by his life and death to carry forward his work. They will help consummate his unfinished tasks by fusing the progressive black nationalist aims of equality, dignity, jobs and justice with the goals of a socialist America.

*March 1, 1965*

## Malcolm X: Voice of the Black Ghetto

By Robert Vernon

The embattled black people of America suffered an irreparable loss when bullets fired by assassins struck down Malcolm X in New York, on February 21, 1965. This criminal act did more than silence the voice of the most articulate spokesman for the poor of the teeming black ghettos of our northern metropolises. It robbed all the oppressed—black and white, yellow and brown—inside and outside the United States—of a brother, of an incorruptible voice, of a revolutionist of uncommon talent and ability who was yet to reach his peak as a brilliant revolutionary agitator and mass leader.

Since the underprivileged and oppressed masses of black people in the

large cities of the north constitute a key sector of the American working class, surpassing all other sectors in combativity, in group consciousness, in concentration, and in estrangement from the affluent Great Society, this loss must be seen as a terrible blow to the development of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary organization in America.

At this stage in the development and reconstitution of American radicalism, including black radicalism, cadres and leaders of ability are precious assets. A unique leader of the towering potential exhibited by Malcolm X, who gave voice to the feelings and aspirations of a crucial sector of the oppressed masses, and at the same time possessed a horizon of vision and ability to learn and develop which would have later rendered him an effective leader of white students and white workers as well, could advance the progress of revo-

lutionary politics on a mass scale by leaps and bounds.

Malcolm X's potential as effective agitator and mass leader was proven in action in the movement which reshaped him and which he helped shape into a mass movement, the Nation of Islam (or "Black Muslims"). This apocalyptic religious movement, a product of the black ghettos of Chicago and Detroit, was the first movement since Garvey's time to interact effectively with the ghetto masses on a mass scale, and differed from all other religions and all other mass movements in its close association with those ghettos. Malcolm X was a major factor in the swift expansion of this movement in the past decade. His contribution was quantitative as a dynamic recruiter and qualitative as a two-way link between the turbulence of the ghetto and the movement.\*

The development of this peculiar

*Robert Vernon, frequent contributor to the ISR, is the author of the recently published pamphlet, The Black Ghetto, with preface by Rev. Albert B. Cleage Jr. and introduction by James Shabazz. Published by Pioneer Publishers, 5 East Third Street, New York, N. Y. 10003.*

religious mass movement, with its strong appeal to black workers in the ghettos, was a puzzling symptom manifested by social forces at work. What were those social forces? Why should their first manifestation be a religious one? If a religion could become a mass movement, what was holding back the development of an effective political mass movement attracting the same layers of the exploited?

In addition to the usual comforts of religious spirituality, the Nation of Islam had developed a slashing indictment of Christianity on a religious-political basis which struck home deep to many black people, utilizing the very Bible of the Christians to illustrate in vivid terms the hell the black man was experiencing in America.\*\* This was accompanied by a pungent indictment of white society in general, in words and imagery which resonated in the consciousness of their black audiences.

But the overtones of a radical political mass movement as promoted by Malcolm X, interacting more closely with the *political* and *social* aspirations and problems of the working-class Harlems in America, set up an explosive disequilibrium in the Nation of Islam. A conservatism religious hierarchy appreciates any increase in influence, in members, and especially in income and property, but sees its priorities in stability and respectability. This led to an inevitable schism in the movement, and the freeing of Malcolm X from the religious cocoon.\*\*\*

This split, in early 1964, was consummated at a time of heightened turmoil and intensified searches for clarity and program in the civil rights movement and in black radical currents. Ghetto rebels were searching for concrete, effective ways to develop organizationally and politically. Civil rights activists, dissatisfied with white liberal leadership and control, and realizing the limita-

*\* In the New York Times Nov. 8, 1964, Black Muslim leaders Henry X and Joseph X of Muhammad's Temple No. 7 in New York complained that it was Malcolm X who put the ghetto where the religion was. "They said it was Malcolm who injected the political concept of 'black nationalism' into the Black Muslim movement, which they said was essentially religious in nature when Malcolm became a member."*

tions of "solutions" based on "integration" and "acceptance" by whites, cast about for new methods, new ideas, new allies. Revolutionary socialists were learning that the "Negro struggle" was not just civil rights, freedom rides, self-defense, equality-under-socialism and Negro-White Unity, and that the black ghettos were the key not only to the Negro struggle but also to the class struggle.

Malcolm X embodied in his person and thought all the contradictions and limitations of the black movement, and with them embodied also distinct possibilities of resolving these contradictions in a creative and dynamic synthesis.

Malcolm X understood, and stressed with penetrating clarity and pungent wit, that "integration" and "civil rights" could barely even begin to solve the problems of black people in America — that the friendship of a handful of remote white liberals and the passage of a few unenforced laws will not mean jobs or liveable conditions for black people, will not provide an adequate education for black children cheated by inferior slum "schools," will not stop rats from biting black babies, will not keep cops from putting their nightsticks and electric cattle prods upside the heads of black youth. At the same time, Malcolm X understood, and pointed out insistently to his Harlem audience, that endless talk about black nationalism and race pride, whatever its value, must not substitute for effective organization and effective action to produce results.

Malcolm X displayed an uncommon ability to think in unfettered, innately dialectical terms, free of fetishism and fixation on slogans. He saw clearly that mass struggles have to be joined in and developed further from the level of

*\*\* The Islamic or pseudo-Islamic ritual was entirely irrelevant to this process. So long as the movement had meaning to the ghetto poor in terms of their own experiences, and provided psychological and material therapy against the ravages of a white-dominated hell called America, the religion could have been Black Buddhism or Black Brahamism or Black Anything with equal effect.*

*\*\*\* "Any time I'm in a religion that doesn't let me fight a battle for my people, I say to hell with that religion."—Malcolm X, Nov. 30, 1964.*

consciousness of the people immediately engaged in them, and that the gains of an immediate struggle for partial ends and the experience acquired in such a struggle will lead to a next phase of broader, more uncompromising struggle.

Malcolm X did not limit his participation in struggle to a parochial identification solely with his Harlem following. Unlike the "dedicated, responsible Negro leader" approved by white liberals, Malcolm X spoke out loud and clear against the crimes of the U. S. government in the Congo, against American aggression in South Vietnam. "If we're going to be nonviolent at home, then let's be nonviolent abroad, too." Such an attitude is no way to win friends among white liberals, or to win invitations to White House luncheons, or to win Nobel peace prizes.

Malcolm X stood firm as a rock against the wild stampede to dive under Johnson's skirts for protection from the Big Bad Wolf Goldwater. Malcolm X would not yield an inch in his opposition to the "LBJ All the Way" hysteria which lined up all the Negro "leaders" at attention before the Great White Father in the White House.

In the last year of his life, Malcolm X voiced an unambiguous stand for socialism and against capitalism. His honesty, his contempt for dissimulation, the way he "told it like it is," stand out in sharp contrast to a degenerate society which lives on "images" and "postures," which rewards those who settle for part of the truth and part of the pie.

Shallow thinkers will measure Malcolm X through the shortsighted eyes of liberals, and speculate on his "changing" toward the "mainstream" of the Negro movement, i. e., toward the civil rights sector controlled by white liberals. In the time-honored manner in which dead revolutionists are transformed into harmless, toothless icons, reams of worthless literature will appear picturing Malcolm X as on the road to finding his place as a civil rights liberal when he met his tragic end. Such "eulogy" is actually insulting.

Malcolm X lived as a revolutionist, died as a revolutionist, and at his death was developing into a more effective revolutionist, on a local and on an international scale, in the fight for black people in America and in the fight for the oppressed all over the world.

# Revolt of the Peruvian Campesino

By Livio Maitan

The peasant movement of the Cuzco region has been the epicenter of the revolutionary struggle in Peru in recent years and remains of crucial importance despite tangible changes in the economic and social structure in some districts, despite Belaunde's "reformist" maneuvers, and despite repressive victimization of many of its leaders and cadres.

This peasant movement has now found an intelligent and sensitive chronicler who understands its deep-going causes and who has caught its moving spirit in both faithful and dramatic sketches. There is nothing novel, of course, in a journalist outside the revolutionary movement achieving a better living synthesis of a revolutionary process than authors whose main resources are their political ties and outlook. What others have done for other countries in other circumstances, Hugo Neira has done for the Cuzco movement in Peru. His book *Cuzco: Tierra y Muerte* [Cuzco: Land and Death] \* thoroughly merits the immediate success it enjoyed; and it deserves to be translated and circulated, at least among revolutionary circles, in all countries of the world. \*\*

In a one-page introduction, Neira succinctly summarizes the background of his trip to Cuzco and his account:

"Subject: In December 1963, the city of Quillabamba was taken by unions carrying out an order to go on strike issued in Cuzco by the Federation in order to win the release of imprisoned union leaders, among them, Hugo Blanco. Because of this,

\* *Problemas de Hoy*, Lima. 1964. Available in Spanish only.

\*\* Hugo Neira was correspondent of the *Lima Expreso*, and part of the book consists of his articles. The first two editions, although rather sumptuous with their evocative photographs, were quickly sold out. A more popular new edition was issued in mid November.

'Civic Committees' were organized in the cities against the trade union league of the Cuzquena federations . . . Then I was sent to Cuzco to determine what was going on among the peasants.

"Time: From December 1963 to March 1964. But it can occur again at any time and with greater seriousness.

"Basic Problem: Ownership of the land in the South.

"Departments: Cuzco and Puno.

"Social Situation: Out of 9 million hectares of arable land and natural pastures, 3% of the owners possess 83% of the farm area and 97% of the owners possess 17% of the remaining area.

"Reason for the Conflict: There is no adequate agrarian law and the peasants, organized in unions, oppose the tenant system, demanding ownership of the land.

"Additional: They live in very bad conditions with a daily intake of less than 1,200 calories, comparable to that of a concentration camp. High infant mortality — smallpox, tuberculosis, whooping cough and dysentery. Three million exploited peasants at the margin of society.

"Maximum wage: Eight soles [about \$ .32] a day."

## Land Occupation

Thus the account opens at a phase of the movement marked by a new wave of land occupation. In certain zones at least, the struggle had already reached a climax — it is sufficient to note that the main inspirer and organizer of the peasants, Hugo Blanco, had already been held long months in prison at Arequipa. However, Neira shows us the Cuzco Peasant Federation in all its strength and prestige in action under the leaders who came forward with the arrest of Hugo and continued the struggle. He shows us a movement that has undergone many experiences, that has matured, is capable of struggling in different fields, that has gained real positions, maintaining in some zones at least the embryo of dual power.

He shows us leaders with whom the landlords have had to negotiate humbly at times, leaders who have acquired a style of their own in demonstrations and tests of strength. In other words, he shows us the elemental and irresistible powers of the masses and at the same time the audacity and sagacity of the leaders: all this on the backdrop of the ancient capital of the Inca empire, where the landlords, filled with fright and hate, wanted to avoid any rough and dangerous direct confrontation with the peasants in revolt.

## A Peasant Demonstration

The book opens with the description of a solemn demonstration of mourning over the death of a trade-union leader killed in a highway accident:

"Since dawn, along all the roads, the copper-colored people had been coming toward Cuzco, 'center of the world.' The crowd swelled in narrow Recoleta street, all the way to Tullumayo and Tres Cruces. In the midst of this taciturn multitude was the headquarters of the *Federacion de Campesinos* [Peasant Federation]. Here in a sea of trade-union banners, they were paying their respects before the remains of Emiliano Huamantica . . .

"Down through the streets, like a serpent of olden times, the cortege descended, this ancient people stirring from their lethargy to conduct in the sacred city one of the major ceremonies of Cuzco . . .

"I set out walking in the midst of this multitude, almost all of them in rags and tatters. They had an air, an obstinate fervor, a visible will to be, to persist despite the misery . . . I have never seen such faces — like the blind — resistant and bitter with sorrow . . . In the Avenue of the Sun, the funeral procession moved by the thousands. Other thousands watched from the sidewalks . . . But those going along the cobblestones were the politicalized Indians or mestizos."

The young daughters of the bour-

geoisie or petty bourgeoisie watched the cortege from above, from the windows of their homes:

"In response to the terrible spectacle at their feet, they showed the same awesome lack of consciousness as the bourgeoisie in the capital in face of powerful demonstrations that, in desperation, could tear their world, their pleasures, their privileges up by the roots."

### Politicalized Vanguard

The people participating in the demonstration felt a common emotion — they were united in a common grief. However, the Cuzco movement has a politicalized vanguard that reflects — in a relationship of forces particularly favorable to the revolutionary left — the differentiations in the world workers movement. Neira does not fail to catch this:

"Thunderbolts were hurled at 'Yankee imperialism,' 'the oligarchy and the bosses.' Today Raul Acosta, in his final days as General Secretary of the PCP [Peruvian Communist party], could be heard and one could feel the desperation or decadency of the old Stalinist guard. His speech was the weakest, the most inappropriate and heavy. This afternoon, Huamantica inspired Raul Acosta. The political career of this Arequipa

artisan was already finished — his heavy party machinery could not sustain the pressures of the world crisis of socialism. A few days later, in Lima, a lawyer . . . Saturnino Paredes was publicly presented as the General Secretary of Acosta's party. In Cuzco, then, I heard his political testament. He appealed, almost implored, for unity. That was all. The peasants looked at him, disconcerted . . . Who, finally, inherited Huamantica's place? This would be equivalent to knowing who commanded in Cuzco. No one completely. Those who spoke over his remains dwelt on the differences among Trotskyists, Communists in the party and out of it, Castroists and others. The Trotskyists associated their positions with the prestige of Chaupimayo, the region where Hugo Blanco demonstrated the advantages and also the defects of direct action. Thus when Luis Zarate, from Chaupimayo, spoke that afternoon, there was a rustling among the crowd."

This big demonstration of mourning was, in the final analysis, nothing but an opening expression of the fundamental situation reigning in that part of Peru:

"Because of the meeting, alarm arose among the *hacendados* [rich land owners]. This could be seen the

following day. They were fear-stricken. From the neighboring valleys men began to arrive whose names were synonymous with wealth, permanent power and *haciendas* [big land holdings]. They did not pause at the Cathedral or any office. With long strides they went to the *Perfeectura* [the authorities]. Their aim: to demand guarantees. Or, which comes down to the same, to solicit the dispatch of detachments of assault guards to their haciendas threatened by invasions.

"The situation was tense. The Prefect lacked orders to unleash police reprisals. The peasant leaders had thrown into the scales this multitude who had gathered together to say farewell to Huamantica. If they were looking for a sounding board, they had found it. It is difficult to imagine that the owners would remain impassive in face of an indigenous movement that publicly asked for their heads. Surreptitiously, they were arming two armies. One of owners. Another of invaders. It was a crafty way of waging war under a government that was inert or in complicity and which had decided not to take sides. Social war.

"Something had happened much more serious than an earthquake — the ownership of the land was being discussed. One invasion followed another. The peasants did not call them that. They gave them a different name: 'recuperation of the land.'"

### Occupation of the Land

Against this general background, Neira describes with vigor the development of the drama in its various aspects — from occupation of the land to more "peaceful" confrontations, which nevertheless disclose the depth of the crisis.

Here is a page on the occupation of the land:

"The invasions are peaceful. A crowd composed of peasants from neighboring localities, invades, almost always at dawn, the fields of a hacienda. But the ranch-house or neighboring home, and the servants of the bosses are left alone. Nothing is further from the character of the indigenous masses than to run wild. To invade, then, is not to sack, steal, burn or rape. It is simply to enter on the prohibited land of the hacienda. From their wooden balconies, the hacendados can see how their holdings change hands. But their lives are safe . . .



Hugo Blanco, Peruvian peasant leader, (second from left, standing) with fellow peasant union members. Blanco gained national fame as a leader of the peasant movement in the province of Concepción. He was arrested in the summer of 1963 for leading the campesinos in taking possession of land in that zone. He is still in prison waiting trial.



**Hugo Blanco, Peruvian peasant leader, (second from left, standing) with fellow peasant union members. Blanco gained national fame as a leader of the peasant movement in the province of Concepción. He was arrested in the summer of 1963 for leading the campesinos in taking possession of land in that zone. He is still in prison waiting trial.**

"They invade when the police are away. For the custodians of the law and order of the owners the game varies between boredom and the terrible. In places where the police wait, nothing happens. But the peasants invade other places. The Federation is more extensive than the steel helmets. There are more union locals than police garrisons . . ."

"The invaders wait for the authorities to become aware of the deed and to give it a form of lawfulness. The hacienda then has already been invaded. Thousands of peasants have installed themselves in a semicircle. They are an imposing force. More than a political party, they are a people on the march . . ."

It is scarcely necessary to state that sometimes these occupations end up in a bloody repression and the authorities, naturally, blame it all on "Communist agitators." Neira does not fail to emphasize, as against the official lies, the real logic of the phenomenon.

"It is not true, then, that the peasant masses are inspired by 'Communist extremists.' This is the most stupid accusation that can be made and it shows the most serious lack of understanding of the Cuzco events.

"The extremists are the masses themselves. They are tired of waiting. To imagine the opposite is to maintain that the Indian is incapable of thinking. It means believing once again in racial inferiority . . . A new human condition is appearing. It is called intransigence and desperation . . . In Cuzco there is no militia; there are assemblies. And in these everyone is both the mass and the command at the same time, governors and governed in this Andean pattern of direct democracy.

"The whole Sunday I scouted around in the provinces and districts surrounding Cuzco. In every village I found assemblies in which people were voting to continue the struggle for the land. In any other place in the Republic, among any other social classes is there more equality in reaching decisions than here? In any other level of our society is there an equal capacity for sacrifice?"

The pressure of the peasant mobilization and the power of the union organization were such that the landlords were compelled to go to the union if they wanted to negotiate an agreement. Sometimes they even had to let the leaders of the Federation decide on their differences with the

peasants.

"In Recoleta street there is a house with flimsy green balconies . . . It is the headquarters of the powerful *Federacion de Campesinos de Cuzco*.

"Men and women come here from all corners of the Department. They talk to the leaders in Quechau . . ."

"And the hacendados themselves go there.

"It is the best way to reach a quick agreement. The peasants won't budge an inch unless they are told to by their local, affiliated to the Federation . . ."

### The Federation

"Because of this the hacendados come to Recoleta. They go to discuss with them. In this way they avoid judges, loss of time, invasions, hostilities, etc. The Federation is the true Ministry of Indigenous Affairs."

The correspondent of *Expreso* seeks to understand not only the fundamental significance but also certain specific characteristics of the essentially revolutionary process of which he was a witness. Two short chapters appear to us especially worthy of attention.

In the chapter, "The Peasant Enters the Peruvian Scene," he writes: "We have here an evident fact: the peasant unions are organizing under banners carrying the slogan 'Land or Death, We Will Win.' Yes, this is the influence of Cuba. Let us then recognize this reality. Is it perhaps a case of better penetration of the Communist party in this region? Not necessarily. Besides, everybody knows what a headache Cuba and the innumerable Castroists — the example of the violent road and guerrilla warfare — are for the bureaucratic Communist cadres of Latin America. We face a genuinely radical phenomenon. We live in a smaller universe. The geographical frontiers are enormous. But the evils of Peruvian society are even more enormous . . . And the radio reaches the most remote hamlets. In the cold of the *jalca* [high Andean tableland] or in the hot, malarial valley bottoms, between loneliness and hunger, the peasants listen.

"'Land or death.' Up to now, only death."

As for the more properly political lineaments of the movement, Neira states in another chapter:

"This peasant movement is bringing together new multitudes. We should not fool ourselves: under the old poncho, in the midst of an ap-

parently traditional or routine scene, these people have learned and consequently have changed. Unionism is a mutation. A spark can set fire to the whole sierra.

"For the moment no party as yet holds a monopoly on this network of realities. The leaders come from various groups. It seems that those with the most weight are from the FIR [Frente de Izquierda Revolucionario — Front of the Revolutionary Left], the MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria — Movement of the Revolutionary Left], Trotskyist people. But there are also peasant leaders of great capacity linked to the PCP . . ."

"Whether Valer is a Trotskyist, Sumire a Communist doesn't interest the peasants much. The peasant brushes these things aside. He only knows that these men are his leaders. As in the Gospel, only deeds count — the revolutionists are the ones who are with them physically in their demands to take the land from the usurping hacendados . . ."

"And his allies are only those who speak to him — and in Quechua. Thus the peasants only respect those who understand that the land must be theirs, here and now, without delay . . ."

### Peasant Leaders

Sketches of a number of union and peasant leaders appear in Neira's pages. Emiliano Huamantica, a Communist who represents "the prudent left," Saturnino Huilca, "the new Indian," Manuel Concha Llerena, embodiment of the "fighting spirit" of the *Federacion de Convencion*, Angel Baca, "the reformist." Among the Trotskyists, the most outstanding figure is Vladimiro Valer.

"Vladimiro Valer spoke. Like almost all the Cuzqueno leaders, he is very young. A thick mustache, still thicker glasses, the bearing of a serious university student. And he is. But not in an academic way. He has studied the living reality of the peasant, and he discovered a weapon that no custom house can confiscate because it is more in the consciousness of men than in any thing or object — the weapon of union organization. This is what he calls, paying tribute to his brother-in-law Hugo Blanco, the spirit of *Chaupimayo* . . ."

"Valer spoke calmly. They had told me that he is a Trotskyist. I asked him and he replied frankly:

"'Certainly, I am a Trotskyist. Our party is the FIR, and its chairman

# Hugo Blanco Correspondence

is Hugo Blanco.' And he added: 'What is important for us is that the leadership should be unionist, revolutionary.'

"And if it happens to involve members of the Communist party?' I asked him.

"We hold discussions on theory. But the peasant movement is unifying the left."

As we have said before, Neira's report covers a period six to nine months after the arrest of Hugo Blanco. But Hugo Blanco, whose name appears almost everywhere on the walls of the houses in Cuzco, and is even painted on the Inca ruins, astonishing the few American tourists, dominates the scene everywhere as the main inspirer, the genuine leader of the revolutionary peasant movement. The Indians acclaim him in their meetings and are waiting for him to resume his place. In the Cuzco prison, the prisoners told a journalist who was questioning them. "He is our union leader." "He is the leader of the peasants."

Here are some more quotations from the book:

"Fought by the right, his image distorted by prestige due to erroneous reports about him being a guerrilla fighter, injured by the silence, if not sabotage, of the traditional, bureaucratic groups of Communism, extolled by the FIR, feared and hated by the unorganized *yanaconas* [Indians bound to personal service to the landlords] and the *hacendados*, admired by the union ranks, Hugo Blanco looms over the whole South.

## Hugo Blanco

"This is the straight truth, without falsification, of what this man, who is a prisoner today in Arequipa, means to the peasant masses . . . 'We owe him everything,' say the peasants. In fact every change in Convencion and elsewhere in the country, was accelerated due to the danger they saw in the peasants having no hope other than hope in the revolutionary unionism of Blanco.

"Devotion to Blanco is total; they don't dare bring him to trial. I am referring to the unionized peasants. 'He is our chief,' they say . . . And in every peasant's home there is an empty bed. It's the one that was waiting hopefully for the leader when he was going around the region organizing or when he was passing during the night, under the stars, fleeing from the police . . .

*The following letters were published in Argentina by the Marxist magazine Estrategia, Volume One, No. 2, edited by Nahuel Moreno. Hugo Blanco's name appears on the masthead of the magazine as a member of the editorial board. The letters comprise part of an extensive discussion on the tactics and strategy of the revolution in Latin America in which the Cuban experience enters as a very important component.*

## Comrades:

We have always recognized that many of our positions were abstract. But it is necessary to point out that in spite of their abstract character, those positions were correct. Today, when everyone opens his mouth to point to the agrarian revolution and the seizure of land as the most important phenomenon of Peru — and possibly of Latin America — and accepts Cuzco as the vanguard of that process, it is necessary to remember that it was we who took especial note of

"In the Plaza de Armas in Cuzco, the evening came, dressed in red, flaming. The meeting of the peasants was languishing. The crowd, disciplined, standing, listened, applauded, laughed or yawned.

"Then a student came forward. It could have been Valer or Fausto Cornejo. He took the mike and shouted in Quechua:

*"Causachu companero cuna. Hugo Blanco . . .*

"The crowd awoke and responded with great shouts:

*"Causachu, causachu, causachu.*

"Long live! Long live! Long live!

"I saw this repeated throughout the South. No other name arouses greater fervor among the men in striped ponchos who speak the euphonious Quechua. The shadow of Hugo Blanco was present at all the interviews I conducted in the South.

"I am not exaggerating: the unity of this agrarian movement that has no limits, like an immense ocean, whether in ideology or comportment, which can just as well turn peaceful and co-operative as explode in blood and gunfire, has, nevertheless, a name that unites the people of the mountains and the valleys, of the hacienda and the community—Hugo Blanco . . .

this phenomenon and pointed to this perspective. We should not forget that for one second, and in the face of the attacks of the pseudo-revolutionaries, our answer should be the citation of our documents, where we insisted that since Cuzco, a process of agrarian revolution had begun in Peru, that the unionization and the seizure of the land would be uncontainable and even more: we foretold that the main slogan would be "land and votes for the *campesino* [farm workers]" for this entire period of the Peruvian revolution.

In carrying out this program, we found that all the defeats and setbacks which we suffered were the products of factional and methodological struggle against this method and against the principle of centralized leadership. Without forgetting these hard experiences of actions and errors, we should now try to continue to advance. In order to do so, it is important to consider four fundamental aspects of our activity: first,

"The peasant hasn't forgotten and he is waiting. The persecution, the anemia and troubles suffered by Blanco have converted him, perhaps more than his political theories, into a man whom the South will not forget."

During the period covered by Neira and immediately after, the police repression came down violently on the Cuzco movement and on its main leaders. Almost all of them were imprisoned or deported. When I visited Cuzco at the end of November, its frightful prison still held almost two hundred peasant leaders of the region, including some forty Trotskyists. And of course Blanco, along with Molina, Cartolin and Huallpa — all Trotskyists — were still held in Arequipa. This massive repression created grave difficulties for the Federation and inspired terror throughout the region.

Nevertheless, the government and the landlords cannot delude themselves. The movement described by Neira in his magnificent account has profound roots and has already attained such a level of consciousness and organization that any "success" for the repression will prove quite ephemeral.

the danger of falling into propagandism; second, how to develop dual power; third, what our policy should be towards the government; and fourth, how to build the revolutionary party definitively.

### 1. Building the Party Without Falling into Propagandism

We were the ones who pointed out that our organization was a *tendency*, and that in order to become a *party*, it still had far to go.

To the comrades who have remained at liberty, falls the historic task of solving this problem — of transforming our tendency into a true Marxist party, proletarian in content and form. It is in this way that you have heroically battled putchism and exposed its profound meaning — ignorance of the necessity of the party and the mass movement.

You have made efforts in three fundamental aspects: strict centralization and discipline, clearly distinguishing between the party and its militant friends; study of the real nature of our country, synthesized in a program; and essential penetration of the *campesino* movement. Everything done along these lines by you comrades is of incalculable importance.

But even if these tasks are of fundamental importance, there exists the danger of falling into propagandism, believing that the party is essentially built by recruiting militants and penetrating the movement of the *campesinos*. Only broadening the sphere of influence of the organization would be a grave error, because a revolutionary party is not measured essentially by the number of its militants and its penetration in the mass movement, but as a qualitative phenomenon. That is to say, recruiting and penetrating are permanent fundamental tasks of our organization, and even more in our country where there haven't been consciously developed revolutionary cadres, where all we militants were formed in independent ways, almost left to our own initiative. We must recruit the best leaders of the *campesinos* and of the workers, and at the same time educate them in a method and in a centralized organization, which must be our organization and can be no other.

But that is not enough. Our party would then develop quantitatively and not qualitatively. As important as is that task, is the organization's conscious confrontation of the tasks before the Peruvian masses in action.

You know better than I do that all revolutionary parties have three basic methods as means for the education of the workers and its vanguard: propaganda, agitation\* and action. (I leave aside the fundamental importance of theory — to arrive accurately at the essential slogans which tie the party to the mass movement and raise its consciousness — for this is best accomplished internally.)

The development of our organization has revolved around one primary slogan: "Land or Death." The application of this demand has been picked up among the leadership of the *campesino* masses, especially by those in the vanguard, the ones of Cuzco: "Take over the land or let us prepare to take the land." This slogan is used in two stages. The first is when we raise it in an agitational manner to win the *campesino* base, and we counterpose it to the opportunist program of the Khrushchevite leaders who, by act or deed, are against it. That is the propagandistic and agitational stage, to win the vanguard of the *campesino* base and to defeat through propaganda the opportunist leadership. The problem arises when we have gone through this stage.

When this happened we find ourselves in a new situation, at a new stage. Propaganda and agitation are over. We have entered the stage of action and the conscious realization of previous propaganda and agitation. If at this stage we continue to pose as the fundamental tasks penetration, recruiting, propagandizing, and agitation for our slogans "land or death," "let us take over the land," or better yet, "let us prepare carefully for the mass take-over of the land," we commit a crime, that of propagandism, that of becoming commentators and advisors to the mass movement, abandoning our true role as *leaders and guides to action of the mass movement*. An organization, a revolutionary party is finally just this: those who direct and consciously prepare the actions of the mass movement. A small party that has won leadership in one sector of the *cam-*

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\* *The distinction in Marxist terminology between propaganda and agitation is that the former refers to the dissemination of many ideas to a few people (the vanguard) while the latter refers to a few ideas (slogans) addressed to the mass.*

*pesino* movement and answers this question in a centralized manner — how to take over the land and defeat the reaction — is already a revolutionary party, although numerically weak.

This has been the methodology of all the polemics against putchism. Our struggle to build a party had this consideration before any other. Our efforts to transform a movement or tendency into a party were not based only on arguments about numbers, but on qualities. For us, a party was a group of militants, it did not matter how many, who would act with an understanding of the period we are living in in Peru, who would have a program and be perfectly organized. We were a tendency precisely because we did not fulfill these requirements.

\* \* \*

In Europe, as Nahuel Moreno has pointed out in his work on the Latin American revolution, the building of the parties was evolutionary. There was theory first, propaganda and recruiting of the vanguard next, agitation later, and action in the end.

Our party cannot be built by following these rules, but by combining them, jumping over stages, or by beginning at the end. This is a consequence of the epoch of our Latin American countries. That is why, without adequately completing the stage of theory or propaganda we are confronted with the stage of action. Whoever responds to this call can accomplish perfectly well and in a parallel form the other tasks of propaganda and agitation — but not vice-versa.

For example, if those of us in Cuzco take the leadership of the *campesino* movement, consciously answering in an organized manner to the stage that is now opening up, essentially centralizing and organizing the *actions*, we can continue to grow, propagandizing, agitating and penetrating. But if on the contrary we decide at this stage, in which we are the recognized leadership, to continue to propagandize and to agitate, advancing slogans as a guide to the *campesino* movement, but not centralizing and leading its actions, we cannot continue growing in an organized manner.

This is the perspective posed to us now, to become at this time the true revolutionary party. We either centralize, organize and direct actions, where we have the leadership of the

*campesino* movement, or disappear as a revolutionary party, as our propaganda and agitation find less and less response.

One clarification is necessary: When we speak of the leadership of the *campesino* movement we don't mean the formal act of taking the leadership or recruiting opportunist leaders because our leaders are more loved and honest. We mean taking the leadership because the *campesino* movement and its vanguard supports our slogans and positions. If we exchange ideas, capturing leading posts with authentic conscious leadership, we are ready.

## 2. Dual Power in the Countryside and Open Struggle

In the previous chapter we insisted on the thesis that when our organization arrives at real leadership of the *campesino* movement in a department or zone, there is a qualitative change in our situation, which brings us obligations of a completely new type. We have not defined these new obligations because it would be a serious error to seek to define these new tasks without observing the phenomena from another angle: That of the struggles of the *campesinos* themselves or, according to the definition we have given the present stage of this struggle in our country, from the angle of the development of dual power in the countryside.

Before anything else, let us observe the process as it is before we take leadership of the *campesino* movement. This process has been taking place as we foresaw it. The *campesinos* continue to unionize themselves in a massive manner and continue taking over the lands in all zones of the country. This development of organizing and taking over of the lands is accompanied by two processes, one internal to the *campesino* movement, the other external. The internal is the struggle for the leadership of the *campesino* movement between ourselves and the Khrushchevite opportunists. We press for the taking of the land and pose a course of permanent mobilization of the unions, in order to attain the revolutionary objectives of the *campesino* movement. The opportunists put brakes on the taking of the land and try to channelize it towards negotiations and the most minimum demands of the unions. In that way a ferocious struggle is opened between ourselves and the opportunists for the leadership of the movement.

Parallel with this process, we have outside the *campesino* movement another force which is decisive — the bourgeois parties and the government itself with its repressive apparatus. The landowners arm themselves at the same time that their parties pressure the government to adopt a policy of total repression against the *campesino* movement and particularly against its most outstanding leaders. Sometimes the landowners take action themselves. The government has a much more cautious attitude, but just as reactionary as far as its real aims. It combines negotiations, concessions and promises with repression of the leaders and, at the right time, against the very *campesino* masses that have taken land. For this repression, detention of the *campesino* activists and leaders, suppression of the land takeovers, they use the forces of the regime.

As we have said, the landowners are not satisfied with the government's cautious policy and demand total repression. This provokes friction between the landowners, the government and the big parties of the bourgeoisie. We will discuss them in the next chapter of this letter which deals with our policy towards the government and the different political parties.\*

What we wish to point out here is that the landlords, as well as the government, do not confront *campesino* unionization haphazardly. They have a conscious centralized policy of armed repression.

\* \* \*

We have insisted on the slogan of "departmental *campesino* congresses" in order to organize and consciously centralize opposition to this process. This slogan has been, and will continue to be, very useful, much more than the one for a "National *Campe-sino* Congress" which was put forward as a centralizing factor of dual power. Dual power takes place in a molecular form, atomized — or what is the same — takes place unconsciously without any central or coordinated

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\* *In the text of the first letter, published in Estrategia, mention is made of policy towards the government of Belaunde as a point to be developed. It was eliminated from publication, although considered of great importance, in order to keep the entire letter within the framework of "abstract" and "general" characterizations.*

path.

The danger exists that in the unconscious development of dual power, the taking of real leadership of the *campesino* movement by our organization will not signal a qualitative change. Put another way: the process may follow the same pattern even after we have the leadership, and the *campesinos* may continue to take over the land by the grace of God, without a consciously elaborated central plan. That is, in spite of our leadership, as a matter of fact, dual power will continue unconscious, continue atomized.

This can be said in our terminology: There is the danger that taking the leadership of the *campesinos* will not change the revolutionary process qualitatively, but only quantitatively. More lands are taken over, we convince many more communes or unions to do so, but nothing else. No new methods, nor centralized plans, consciously orient the overall process.

If it were that way, and unfortunately we think that it is, we would commit a double crime, against the development of the party, and of the *campesino* movement itself. *The taking of the leadership of a campesino movement should mean a total change for the party and for the campesino movement. I insist: This total change, this colossal leap, which should be reflected in a change of our activity and of the unions we lead, can be none other than the transformation of the union or campesino organization into a conscious revolutionary organization.*

A union or federation which we come to lead should change qualitatively. Let us begin with a change that is significant given the present stage of our organization: propaganda and agitation. The union should try to take over the radio and publish bulletins and mass newspapers in order to popularize deeply all our slogans.

But this is secondary. What is more important is that when we take the *campesino* leadership a fundamental change should take place in respect to our own tasks and those of the *campesino* movement. We should elevate ourselves and transform ourselves into the conscious directors of the revolutionary process. That means elaborating scientifically-thought-out plans and executing them in order to answer the repressive designs of the landowners and of the government and the unconscious action of the masses taking over the

land. Our plans, then, should take into account these two questions: how to counter the plans of repression and how to achieve taking over the land.

*Concretely, comrades, taking leadership of the campesino movement in a zone or region of our country means to lift ourselves to a new stage, and to raise the campesino organizations to this new task which is neither more nor less than the art of open struggle. Inevitably, open struggle implies an art, a science, a plan, a technique to learn. It means applying a plan based on this technique; it requires a specialized apparatus.* All these are the inexorable terms of the revolutionary syllogism in our country. Not to draw the conclusions of this syllogism, is not only to be methodologically inconsequential, incoherent in forms of thought, but something much more serious: charlatans, commentators, propagandists of the agrarian revolution and dual power, but not its leaders or realizers.

That is the stage we have entered, the one which we should have entered a long time ago, if the putchist tendency we all know had not caused a deviation. I will not tire of repeating: The present stage of the class struggle in our country demands of us that we be the organizers, the centralizers, of open struggle of the *campesino* organizations, which will ensure the development of dual power in the countryside, which will ensure the conscious development of the *campesino* revolution.

This position was already expressed in our organization when the putchist deviation arose and when the essential task of having a party was posed. We always insisted that the open struggle should be initiated as quickly as possible and, for that, it was indispensable to have a party which would understand dual power, the *campesino* unions, and the taking over of land.

The criticism of the putchists was that they subordinated the open struggle to preparation and organization completely independent of the mass movement and the development of the party. We posed the contrary: immediate preparation of the open struggle and of the apparatus which would carry it out based on a steered party intimately tied to the *campesino* movement and its organizations. Ours was not a fight against open struggle but against putchism. That is why we did not reject the possibility of guerilla warfare; we only posed as a condition the necessity of a party

with iron organization, intimately tied to the *campesino* movement.

There were serious gaps as to the form, organization and methods of the specialized apparatus which would lead this open struggle. Today I have the impression that there should be only one central apparatus which covers all aspects of the open struggle and will depend on the only revolutionary party, *sui generis*, of the masses that exists in our country: the *campesino* unions.

When I say revolutionary party I am referring to a fact which I believe definitive. I do not think that in Peru there will arise another organism with the support of the masses that will be capable of directing and calling to revolutionary actions. I do not believe in the possibility of Soviets or large mass parties which could be able to call the revolution, themselves. The unions will play that role. That is the way the historic process has evolved and that is how we must deal with it. It poses before us a serious organizational and tactical problem. I will lay aside, as given, that the first norm of open struggle is secrecy of plans in order to surprise the enemy. Our apparatus will depend on the union, it will base itself and will organize itself on that base using all its fabulous resources, but it will be completely secret. (Or it will have a legal front of a defensive character. This is a technical problem to be resolved on the scene, based on the premise of total secrecy, but rest assured — always depending on the union.)

### The Call to Action

The serious problem is another: Who will issue the calls to action — the union with its leadership, or the specialized apparatus? From here, we must proceed with mere hypothesis, and with the certainty that because of the methodologically abstract character of our analysis, this will serve more as a working hypothesis than as a proven truth. Taking this reservation into account, it occurs to me that the unions can assume the legal responsibility of the actions, giving them a defensive rather than offensive character, principally against the detentions of the leaders in the defense of the lands that have been taken over. Defensive actions against the landlords, then, raises the political problem of what we must do in face of the government.

Before turning to that theme, however, it is necessary to sum up the

main lesson: Taking the real leadership of the *campesino* movement means a new stage for the agrarian revolution and for our organization, transforming the *campesino* organization and ourselves into the leaders and organizers of the open struggle.

### 3. The Definitive Construction of the Revolutionary Party

All we have expressed, insists on the new role that the unions must play from the time we take their leadership. The unions and federations of the *campesinos* will play the role of a truly revolutionary party, *sui generis*, which will organize the taking of power, and before that, the open struggle to destroy the organs of repression of the exploiters. To understand this role, they will be obliged to raise themselves to be revolutionary unions. This new historic category, given the process of class struggle in our country, poses a grave danger: ignorance of the importance of our own party with the consequence that we dissolve ourselves in this large revolutionary organism of the masses.

This danger will be aggravated if we do not count upon a prior organization, strongly organized and centralized, which must be the *FIR* (Front of the Revolutionary Left), and which we must have now. In this respect, it is fundamental that this iron-disciplined organization know its principal work in the *campesino* unions. This does not mean that we minimize the importance of our own organization. On the contrary, in Peru we continue to need it, and when we begin to direct the *campesino* union, we will need a party even more, a centralized organization, which will orient and unite the activities of the revolutionary unions, that will provide national policy and unity to the actions of these unions. That is why we have to develop to the utmost our organization, recruit militants, shape them, organize strongly. Although this will mean having few militants at first, we must not be deterred, since our great tool for the revolutionary mobilization of the masses will be the unions. While the work on the *campesino* unions goes well, all will go well, as long as the strong building of our organization continues to go on.

The opposite position, "it is enough for us to control the unions, it is not important to build a strong centralized party," will lead the Peruvian revolution to disaster. The *campesino* unions, by their own character, are

already susceptible to local pressures. Because of their limitations they tend to reconcile themselves to small or large partial victories, and therefore need an organization that will unify the struggles around clear and precise revolutionary objectives of a national character. The only organism that can absorb these local and partial pressures of the great *campesino* masses is the party, the revolutionary organization.

Only the party is capable of preparing the revolutionary future in the present, and of unifying all these struggles. But in order to achieve this it must be strongly organized and centralized. That is why we sound the alarm of the grave danger that the *campesino* unions led by us might turn toward syndicalism, attempting to supplant the party with revolutionary unions. On the contrary, the formidable role of these unions obliges strengthening the organization of the revolutionary vanguard specifically, which is its party, so that developing together we will be able to accomplish the fundamental task of this entire period: the taking of power.

Hugo Blanco  
January, 1964

#### Rosendo's Answer to Hugo Blanco

*On the Open Struggle.* I received your document in February. You pose the discussion of this problem. We had also begun the discussion.

Before anything, it is necessary to make clear that "whether we are or are not in agreement with armed struggle" is not under discussion but, "how to begin the open struggle," — the concrete forms it will take, the methodology, etc.

The central objective of all revolutionary strategy is the conquest of political power. Towards this proposition the *FIR* struggles for the establishment of a workers and *campesino* government.

The great masses are the motor-force of all authentic revolution, but it is the party which organizes and leads the masses in the conquest of political power.

In their climb to power, the people find in their way the armed forces, the backbone of the political machine of the exploiting classes. Consequently, the vast masses and the party should be prepared to unleash a revolutionary civil war against a powerful enemy. This poses the necessity of counting upon technical military organisms capable of maneuvering and acting effectively against the

armed enemy.

The principle of all authentic revolutionary policy is the mobilization of the masses. Moreover the problem revolves around how to mobilize, organize and lead the masses — through their struggles for their demands — to the level of the open struggle for political power. The merit of the *FIR*, and in particular of Hugo Blanco, consists in having begun to answer that question practically. This in the case of Peru.

In the countryside we find all the vices of the social system; the *campesino* masses constitute the most exploited and oppressed social group in the country and, logically, the countryside is the most explosive zone. Conscious of this, the *FIR* went into the countryside. Today it is the conscious factor in the awakening of the *Quechua campesinos* (Indians of the Andes).

From Convención to Sicuani, historical experience is confirming the line. Today the *campesino* revolution is an historic phenomenon, the development of which is determined by its own laws. It is astride the *campesino* movement that the *FIR* should face the open struggle for power. Since the event of La Convención, the agrarian movement has grown in amplitude and profoundness. Today the unionization, the *campesino* strikes with their alternating advances and retreats, cover all of Cuzco; and the *FIR* is the basic political force for centralizing this process. The Federation of Campesinos of Cuzco, led by the *FIR*, is an authentic mass center. This poses problems for our party.

When the authority of the party is accepted by the organized *campesino* masses who are struggling for land, in the zone where this occurs there takes place a radical change in the relationship of forces and there is demanded of the party higher forms of struggle. The political leadership must not only continue centralizing the unionization and taking over the lands, teaching the masses how to advance and retreat, but posing the armed defense of the conquests of the *campesinos*. There, the mass movement is joined in embryonic forms to the open struggle for power.

Open struggle is even more necessary in this stage since the government has delineated an unequivocal policy of violence in answer to the agrarian movement.

Now then. What organism prepares and organizes the open struggle? The union of the *campesinos*? The party?

What role do militias play? Is it possible to apply the tactic of guerrilla warfare as part of our mass policy in the countryside?

Is the party the organism that resolves the problems that are posed by revolutionary war of the people?

\* \* \*

The open struggle is a higher form of mass revolutionary struggle; it supposes the systematic confrontation of the armed forces, and that kind of struggle is carried out by organisms trained and disciplined in the science and art of revolutionary war. So the union will not be able to organize and lead the open struggle. Militas? Guerrillas?

The militia appears as a semi-military organism, generally created by the masses themselves. In armed defense of the land, the militia, if it is not capable of maneuver and movement, will be destroyed by the better armed forces, and upon maneuvering and moving, attacking and disappearing, etc., we enter the arena of the tactic of guerrilla warfare.

This imposes the necessity that the party assiduously study guerrilla warfare. Something more. The party should prepare and gather together chosen nuclei of *campesinos* in the guerrilla war — in a word, it should establish guerrilla nuclei.

The guerrilla should act in support of the conquests of the *campesinos*. To the punitive forces that are sent out to repress the *campesinos*, the guerrillas are an organism capable of engaging them in military maneuver, and in that way of diverting the repression towards themselves. Well trained and prepared guerrillas accomplish this task successfully.

If the party knows accurately how to combine its mass policy in the countryside with guerrilla warfare, the *campesinos* will see in the guerrillas their small insurgent army. They will then give them their sympathy and affection, and will shelter the guerrillas in their midst. This is a dialectical process.

The guerrillas imply the embryonic rise of the open struggle, but for a prolonged period the legal struggle of the masses — in diverse forms — will continue to be the dominant feature. The problem of when the open struggle should become the dominant feature will be worked out in practice.

Those are in general lines, my points of view in respect to the open struggle. Let us begin the discussion solely with the preoccupation of find-

ing the surest road. It is not too much to make clear that my position should not be confused with putchism.

Rosendo  
Lima  
April 6, 1964

### Hugo Blanco's Answer to Rosendo

The realities of the Cuban and Chinese situations were characterized by the lack of a previous existence of fighting mass organizations. The original armed group was correct to entertain caution with respect to the masses. That determined its nomadic guerrilla character. When it was able to win the confidence and aid of the masses it became stationary.

Within these conditions the guerrillas were the axis of the peoples struggle, the polarizing and organizing nucleus, the political vanguard. Armed groups, organized and prepared independently of the mass movement — since that barely existed —, were the progenitors of the organized mass movements.

In Peru *there already exist* organizations that group together great masses and in the zones they cover, the people who don't belong can be counted.

The fundamental question is, do you or do you not believe in the present existence of *dual power* in the countryside? If you do not believe it exists, you will incline towards the guerrillas, and if you are convinced of its existence, towards the militia.

After April 1962, separated from my comrades, and in spite of the heavy putchist vapors that still floated in my brain, the nagging pressure of reality made me write the report, *Liberated Zone Before the Insurrection*. Although I believe that it contains some erroneous concepts, its title alone shows how great an impression was made by the development of dual power that had been reached. You also know what I have written on *campesino* unions. It appears unnecessary to recall these things to a member of the *FIR*, "the conscious factor in awakening the *Quechua campesinos*," as you put it.

I do it because I have a suspicion that your opinions on the open struggle are the fruit of lack of knowledge, and separation from the mass work of the *FIR*.

For the open struggle, we start premises different from those of Cuba and China and our start must be different . . . that is the "dialectical process."

The guerrillas, as you say, should "win the sympathy" of the *campesinos*.

The militia is a product of the rise of the *campesinos*; the masses understand the necessity of open struggle and create the militia; the militia springs from the *campesinos* and, as such, it is born with their affection and cover. Don't forget that the *campesinos* have already agreed to organize defense committees; they are already conscious of their necessity, and they know that *they* must organize them.

You ask a question, "what organism will prepare and organize the open struggle? The *campesino* union? The party?" Other questions will help us give the answer: Who led the taking of the lands in Cuzco? The unions or the party? Who took power in Russia? The Soviets or the party? The answer to the three questions is the party, through the organizations of the masses — in our case, through the *campesino* unions. The only thing lacking is putting it into practice.

"This type of struggle is carried out by organisms trained and disciplined in the science and art of guerrilla warfare. So the union cannot organize or lead the open struggle." Those organisms are precisely the committees of defense of the *revolutionary union* led by the party.

I don't deny the great importance of the party. I recognize that the enormous weakness in '62 was the lack of the party. That weakness fostered others.

The party should have cells in the *campesino* unions. This is indispensable if we wish to lead the open struggle well. We should learn from experience; there would have been a different result if there had been a well organized party in Convencion and Lares at least.

That is the negative lesson of this experience.

But we should also learn the positive lesson of the experience. Why did I and my comrades last longer than any other group in spite of the lack of a party, lack of political clarity, lack of technical knowledge, etc? Because we were a group that came out of the *campesino* union, nourished and covered by its progenitor.

There are many characteristics of our situation that a guerrilla would describe as the "second stage." We have total knowledge of the population; the several *amarillos* [stoolies] are known, if they have not been jerked out of the zone (as was done in Qochpampa, Mesada, etc.). Almost

the entire population is organized. They will not only economically maintain, protect, inform and feed the armed groups, but much more, there will be times when the whole mass will disarm the enemy (it has already happened), when the entire mass will conduct sabotage and even when the entire mass will fight.

All these characteristics, similar to the "second guerrilla stage," give the armed group the possibility of remaining stationary within an ultra-favorable population. If problems arise due to excessive persecution of a certain militia, it can be moved to a union in another zone.

One of the fundamental conditions for the struggle of the militias is the area of the zone where the struggle develops. There should be many militias, one per union. Without this condition the militia becomes similar to the guerrilla unit, which the enemy will concentrate on, as well as the union.

### Guerrilla Tactics

As to the tactics of guerrilla warfare, I am completely in accord that they should be taught to defense committees. These should not be empiric, and in this respect, the vanguard party has a role to play. All knowledge of guerrilla tactics *which can be adapted* to our militia strategy must be taken advantage of.

Manco II, for example, who surrounded Cuzco ready to crush it, was abandoned by his troops because the time for planting or harvesting — I don't remember which — had come for potatoes. None of that interferes with the guerrilla organization. Some can be organized to aid the militias. But the fundamental organism for the open struggle in Peru will be the militia of the unions led by the party.

Let us take all the advantages of the peculiarities of our situation.

We will not part with anything, having advanced so much.

You say, "it is astride the *campesino* movement that the *FIR* should face the open struggle for power." I agree, it was so in Cuba. The difference lies in that they first grabbed the arms and then mounted the horse. We are on the horse but lack the arms. Why get off the horse?

I am sure that if my words don't convince you, your tie to the masses will; the sooner the better.

Land or Death! WE WILL WIN!

Hugo Blanco  
Lima  
April 7, 1964

# Apartheid in South West Africa

By Franz J. T. Lee

South West Africa, being mostly plateau and desert in the north and east, with an area of 318,000 square miles — considerably larger than France — and a population officially estimated in 1960 of 572,000 (477,000 Africans, 22,000 Coloreds, 73,000 Europeans), is dominated by the "white" Republic of South Africa as a mandated territory and is incorporated as a "fifth province."

Administratively South West Africa is divided into the "Police Zone" (the area conquered by the Germans) and the "Tribal Area" (Ovamboland and Okavangoland-Kaokeveld, in the north). The Africans are mainly Ovambos, Hereros, Namas, Bergdarmaras and the remains of the Khoikhoi (derogatively called Hotentots) and Bathwa (so-called Bushmen) tribes. In the Police Zone, are 170,000 Africans, 23,000 Coloreds and 73,000 Europeans.

South West Africa was occupied by Germany in 1884 but at the conclusion of the First World War it was declared a mandated territory under Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations: "[to promote and safeguard] to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory," following the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Article 2 of the Mandate of December 12, 1920, made South Africa responsible for the administration of the territory.

After the League of Nations was dissolved and the United Nations created, South Africa claimed that the Mandate was no longer valid, and that South Africa was entitled to annex the territory unilaterally — in spite of the rulings of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice against such a move. On November 4th, 1960, the Governments of Liberia and Ethiopia filed applications with the International Court of Justice against the Verwoerd regime for violating these decisions.

However, the Pretoria regime established military bases at Walvis Bay, at the Caprivi Strip on the border of South West Africa, and Northern Rhodesia, a secret air base at Swakopmund, a training camp in

Windhoek, and another on the Ondangua Air Strip for emergency service and any foreign invasion.

## Political Organization

The post-war history of political organization in South West Africa begins with tribal chiefs dominating the scene. Their activities varied from conferences with officials of the South African Government to petitions to the United Nations. The Hereros were the most vocal group and they demanded trusteeship status for South West Africa, return of their lands and better social and educational facilities. In 1959, the Ovamboland Peoples Organization (OPO) and the South West African National Union (SWANU) were formed, based on a general demand for unity and a national basis for popular mobilization. In December 1959, these organizations effectively organized a boycott of Government municipal beerhalls, movie houses, dancehalls and busses in Windhoek.

Typically, the fascist regime answered this strike with violence. On December 10th, 1959, South African police and soldiers were flown to Windhoek to smash the boycott. Twelve patriots were killed and over 50 others were seriously wounded.

The formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 and the setting-up of the African Liberation Committee (Committee of Nine) did much to coax the leadership into unity, because they insisted upon granting financial or material assistance only to a "united front." Hence, in November 1963, mainly due to the South African National Liberation Front under the direction of such leaders as Dr. Neville Alexander and Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, a united front, also known as the South West African National Liberation Front (SWANLIF), was formed. Its objective is the forging of a fighting alliance between OPO, SWANU, all other minor democratic and socialistic-oriented organizations of the people, constituting a broad anti-South African United Front.

The scales of mutual jealousy, opportunism, careerism, racialism, tribalism and bureaucracy — all consequences of the imperialist divide-and-

rule policy, imposed by every administration from the German "scramble for Africa" on — are rapidly falling from the eyes of the various political groups. The merciless oppression of South Africa, backed chiefly by England, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Japan, has no respect for color, or differences between tribes, and has therefore driven the exploited people together for mutual protection. The dominant mood and overriding social motive is for unity against Verwoerdian fascism. The united front emerges as a *unity from below*.

## The Odendaal Report

In March 1964, the Odendaal Commission, instructed to study the possibilities of forming 10 Bantustans and "developing" South West Africa economically, handed in their report. The nonwhite population protested against institution of these pseudo-independent African states, which would be under the jurisdiction of the central white South African government. The Bantustan plan — due to protest from within, from the African politically independent states and from the UN — was dropped, and Verwoerd continued to "develop" South West Africa economically, by-passing the "White Paper" in Parliament towards the end of April, 1964.

When Verwoerd speaks, we hear the voice of Boer capital in South Africa. It is the laws governing the expansion of Boer capital in particular, and the movement of South African capital in general, which dictate the nature and direction of the Odendaal Report and White Paper recommendations. The Bantustans are by no means "pivotal" in the report, but its essence lies in its economic recommendations.

The Odendaal Report proposed that £78,000,000\* be spent in South West Africa over the first five years, as follows (in millions of pounds):

Hydro-electric power on Kunene River	24.50
Irrigation	11.50
New roads linking S.W.A. and Angola	16.25

\* One pound sterling (1 £) = \$2.80.

New arterial roads within S.W.A.	4.25
Windhoek Airport	1.50
Land to be bought from white farmers for Bantustans	20.00

The South African parliament has voted £55,000,000 for immediate use, of which £20,000,000 has already been set aside in the last budget. *Every single cent will be used to build up the economic infra-structure of the country and not for the thousands of starving Africans, living far below the bread line.*

### Economic Boom

The driving force behind these nefarious schemes lies in the South African economic boom. Since 1961, after South Africa recovered from the flight of foreign capital due to the Sharpeville massacre and the first signs of colonial revolution in South Africa, and the masses abandoned all hope of solving racial equality peacefully, South Africa began to experience unprecedented conditions of prosperity. Over \$3,900,000,000 of foreign capital are invested. Dividends continue to be the highest in Africa, if not the world; exports (excluding gold) have increased by 50 per cent; the 14,000 enterprises have an annual production of \$5,200,000,000; American investments bring a 27 per cent profit per annum; and the investments of Western Europe total \$787,000,000.

Table One shows South Africa's trade with the major capitalist countries. The British and American capitalists hold a 25 per cent interest in the seven mining and financial corporations which together control the whole diamond and gold mining industry. The balance is shared by South African, French, Belgian and West German monopolists. Foreign capital absorbs 10 per cent of South Africa's national income, or about £240,000,000 a year. Thus overseas investors, headed by Britain and the United States, have a stake in virtually every strategic sector of the South African economy.

### Inflationary Pressure

But now, because of this boom, inflation has become a big danger in South Africa. There are huge amounts of available capital and a shortage of skilled labor — because in most branches of industry the Afri-

cans are forbidden by law to do skilled labor. Building costs have spiralled by 25 per cent.

As the financial editor of one South African newspaper put it: "South Africa is suffering from a surfeit of money. There is simply too much of the stuff and the economy cannot cope with it. An indication of the pressure of capital came when a big tire company invited applications for £2,100,000 worth of shares. The fantastic amount of £83,000,000 was offered by hopeful investors whose money was seeking an outlet."

Thus the "colony" of South West Africa provides an easy market for the export of capital without exposing this capital to the risk of taking a flight. Odendaal is a laxative for the South African economic constipation. Already, a minor speculative wave of buying in sea-diamond shares is taking place in South West African concerns. Very successfully, Verwoerd has planned his strategy to mislead his overseas opponents—particularly those in the UN—by his "Bantustan red herring." He can just as viciously and mercilessly oppress and exploit the South West African nonwhites without Bantustans.

### UN Role

Since May 1st, the UN Special Committee on Colonialism has resumed discussion on the "South West African Question."

South Africa boycotts these hearings, considering the subject to be "sub judice." However, in spite of all the negative aspects, the UN is a use-

ful propaganda platform on which to expose the evils and violent schemes of the South African regime. Further, it serves to isolate South Africa internationally.

But these purposes are only valuable as a prelude to a full-scale assault by the South West African people themselves on the bastions of this regime, which claims to protect and preserve "the Christian, Western, European Civilization" at the foot of the Dark Continent. Without this direct mass action and the promotion of the struggle on the soil of South West Africa, all the fine resolutions by the "Special" committee are meaningless!

*If the United Nations takes over South West Africa, will we — the Africans — also be as happy and prosperous as our comrades in the Congo have been since 1960???*

On whose side is the World Court of Justice? It is worthwhile to recall that it was originally ordered that South Africa reply to the charges made against her by January, 1964. However, South Africa has been granted two extensions of time, undoubtedly to give full play to the propaganda surrounding the Odendaal Report. Ethiopia and Liberia now have until November, 1964, to answer South Africa's reply. The Court itself may announce its verdict in early 1965. It may even drag the case out for the next five years. In any case, the revolutionary movement will launch an offensive against the regime long before then!!!

TABLE ONE  
SOUTH AFRICAN TRADE

	Imports			Exports		
	1962	1962	1963	1962	1963	1964
		(Jan. — Aug.)			(Jan. — Aug.)	
Britain	155.2*	99.1	118.2	145.2	99.4	111.3
U. S. A.	134.5	57.4	65.3	42.9	27.1	27.2
West Germany	51.3	34.3	43.1	21.3	13.6	15.6
France	13.9	7.3	12.1	15.7	8.4	8.7
Italy	14.5	10.1	11.8	22.1	16.0	15.3
Canada	12.8	8.2	15.2	4.9	2.8	3.9
Holland	12.5	8.1	8.7	13.0	12.4	8.2
Belgium	7.2	4.0	4.6	19.2	12.3	13.5
<b>Total Trade</b>	<b>401.9</b>	<b>228.5</b>	<b>279.0</b>	<b>284.3</b>	<b>192.0</b>	<b>203.7</b>
<b>% of total trade that these countries represent</b>	<b>65.8</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>61.5</b>

\* millions of pounds sterling

# Marxism and Existentialism: Are the Two Compatible?

By George Novack

Existentialism and Marxism are the most widely discussed and widely held philosophies of our time. The first is dominant in Western Europe and gaining increasing popularity in the United States. The second is not only the official doctrine of all communist countries but, in one form or another, is accepted as a guide by many movements and parties throughout the world.

Over the past twenty years the proponents of these two schools of thought have engaged in continual debate with one another. The center of this controversy has been France. There Existentialism has found its most talented spokesmen in Jean-Paul Sartre and his associates who have developed their positions in direct contact and contest with Marxism. They live on a continent where, unlike the United States, socialism has influenced public life for almost a century and in a country where the Communist Party gets a quarter of the vote, is followed by most of the working class, and exerts heavy pressure upon radical intellectuals. These circumstances have compelled the so-called "Mandarins of the Left" to make clear their attitudes toward Marxism at every stage in the evolution of their views.

The development of Nobel prize-winner Jean-Paul Sartre has been especially paradoxical. He worked out his original Existentialist ideas under the sway of non-materialist thinkers like the Germans Husserl and Heidegger as a deliberate challenge to Marxism. In *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and his later essay *Materialism and Revolution* (1947) Sartre presented his philosophy as an alternative to dialectical materialism. Then in the late 1950's he made a turnabout and embraced Marxism—at least in words which for him, as he explains in the first volume of his recent autobiography, have had a reality greater than the objective world.

In his latest philosophical treatise *The Criticism of Dialectical Reason* (1960), the first section of which has been published in English as *Search*

*This article forms part of an extensive introduction to a paperback anthology entitled: Existentialism Versus Marxism: Conflicting views on Humanism, to be published late in 1965. It is printed by permission of Dell Publishing Co., Laurel Editions.*

for a Method, he declares that Existentialism has become a subordinate branch of Marxism which aspires to renew and enrich it. Thus the phenomenologist of existence who condemned dialectical materialism as false and a foe to human freedom in the 1940's has now been converted into an ideologist who proposes to marry Marxism and Existentialism.

To what extent, if any, can these philosophies be conjoined and a synthesis of the two be viable? This article intends to show that the contending world outlooks cannot be harmonized or integrated into one containing "the best features" of both. A legendary Indian thought that by putting together fire and water he would concoct that most desirable of delights, "firewater." Actually, the one nullifies or extinguishes the other when they come into contact. It is the same with Marxism and Existentialism. Their fundamental positions over a broad spectrum of problems extending from philosophy and sociology to morality and politics are so divergent that they cannot really be reconciled.

This piece can do no more than indicate the main lines of their disagreement on the most important issues. Let us first consider their opposing conceptions of the nature of reality and then of science, which is the highest expression of man's endeavors to investigate and know the world around us.

## 1. Science and the Absurdity of Reality

For Existentialism the universe is irrational; for Marxism it is lawful.

The propositions of Existentialist metaphysics are set in a context of cataclysmic personal experience. They all flow from the agonizing discovery that the world into which we are thrown has no sufficient or necessary reason for existence,

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no rational order. It is simply there and must be taken as we find it. Being is utterly contingent, totally without meaning, and superfluous.

Human existence as such is equally meaningless. "It is absurd that we were born, it is absurd that we die," writes Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. Man does not know where he came from, why he is here, what he must do or where he is going. "Every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of the weakness of inertia and dies by chance," says one of Sartre's characters in *Nausea*.

If the world is devoid of meaning and impervious to rational inquiry, a philosophy of existence would seem a contradiction in terms. In contrast to religious mysticism, philosophy aims to illuminate reality by means of concepts, the tools of reasoning. How is it possible to explain an unconditionally absurd universe or even find a foothold for theory in it?

### Elusive Reality

Kierkegaard did contend that it was neither possible nor desirable to think systematically about the reality of life which eluded the grasp of the abstracting intellect. Camus rejected Existentialist theorizing on similar grounds. It is hopeless, he asserted, to try and give rational form to the irrational. The absurdity of existence must be lived through, suffered, defied; it cannot be satisfactorily explained.

However, the professional thinkers of this school do not choose to commit philosophical suicide. They have proceeded, each in his own way, to elaborate a philosophy of "being in an absurd world." There is a logic to their illogicality. If everything is hopelessly contradictory, why should the enterprise of philosophy be an exception? The mission of man, they say, is to find out the meaning of meaninglessness—or at least give some meaning through his words and deeds to an otherwise inscrutable universe.

For dialectical materialism reality has developed in a lawful manner and is rationally explicable. The rationality of nature and human history is bound up with matter in motion. The concatenation of cosmic events gives rise to cause and effect relations which determine the qualities and evolution of things. The physical has produced the biological, the biological the social and the social the psychological in an historical series of mutually conditioned stages. The aim of science is to disclose their essential linkages and formulate these into laws which can help pilot human activity.

The rationality, determinism and causality of the universal process of material development do

not exclude but embrace the objective existence and significance of absurdity, indeterminism and accident.

However, these features are no more fundamental to reality than their contrary categories. They are not immutable and irremovable aspects of nature and history but relative phenomena which in the course of development can change to the extent of becoming their own opposites. Chance, for example, is the antithesis of necessity. Yet chance has its own laws which are lodged in the occurrence of statistical regularities. Statistical laws which derive regularities from a sufficient accumulation of random happenings, as in quantum mechanics or the life insurance business, exemplify how individual accidents are convertible into aggregate necessities.

Exceptions are nothing but the least frequent alternatives and, when enough exceptions pile up, they give rise to a new rule of operation which supersedes the formerly dominant one. The interplay of chance and necessity through the conversion of the exception into the rule can be seen in the economic development of society. Under tribal life production for immediate personal consumption is the norm whereas production for exchange is a rare and casual event. Under capitalism, production for sale is the general law, production for one's own use is uncommon. What was categorically necessary in the first economic system is fortuitous in the second. Moreover, in the transition from one economy to the other the

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bearers of chance and necessity have changed places and become transformed into each other.

Social structures which are rational and necessary under certain historical circumstances become absurd and untenable at a further stage of economic development and are scrapped. Thus feudal relations which corresponded to a given level of the powers of social production became as anachronistic as Don Quixote and had to give way before the more dynamic forces and more rational forms of bourgeois society.

The Existentialists go wrong, say the Marxists, in making eternal absolutes out of chance events and unruly phenomena. These are not unconditioned and unchangeable but relative and variable aspects of being.

As a result of their conflicting conceptions of reality, the two philosophies have entirely different attitudes toward science. If the universe is irrational through and through, then science, which is the most sustained and comprehensive effort to render the relations and operations of reality intelligible and manageable, must be nonsensical and futile. The Existentialists mistrust and downgrade the activities and results of science. They accuse the scientists of substituting the conceptual and mathematical abstractions for the whole living man, proffering the hollow shell of rationality for its substance, neglecting what is most important in existence, and breeding an unbridled technology which, like Frankenstein's monster, threatens to crush its creator.

Marxism, which holds fast to the rationality of the real, esteems scientific knowledge and inquiry as its fullest and finest expression. It believes that the discovery of physical and social laws can serve to explain both the regularities and irregularities of development so that even the most extreme anomalies of nature, society and the individual can be understood.

## 2. The Predominance of Ambiguity

In the eyes of the Existentialists ambiguity presides over existence. It is easy to see why. Ambiguity is a state between chaos and order, darkness and light, ignorance and knowledge. If the universe is ruled by chance, everything is inevitably and ineradicably indeterminate. The absence of cause and effect relations endows reality with a duplicity and disorder which renders it hopelessly obscure.

This uncertainty is exceedingly acute in the individual torn by the warring elements within himself. His predicament is all the more difficult because he is trapped in a maze of conflicting possibilities. He must act in a fog where indistinct shapes move in no definite direction and toward

no ascertainable destination. Since the given situation has no intrinsic structure, trends or signs which make one alternative superior to another, the Existentialist is entitled to pick whatever solution he prefers. What comes out is then a matter of chance or caprice.

### "Tragic Ambivalence"

"The essential form of spiritual life is marked by ambiguity," observes Heidegger in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Simone de Beauvoir tells us that "from the very beginning, existentialism defined itself as a philosophy of ambiguity." She has attempted to found an ethics on the tragic ambivalence of the human being who is tossed like a shuttlecock between pure externality and pure consciousness without ever being able to bring them into accord.

Merleau-Ponty likewise made ambiguity the leading principle of his social and political outlook. Men, he maintained, are thrust willy-nilly into situations where many conflicting forces are at work. These do not have any central line of development nor indicate any particular outcome. We must arbitrarily select one of the multifarious possibilities and act upon it amidst uncertainty and confusion. Our option makes and throws light on our character but cannot remove either the inherent ambiguity of the situation or the risk of the undertaking. Everything in life is a gamble.

Merleau-Ponty objected to historical materialism because it did not give accident primacy over necessity in history. He applied his sweeping indeterminism to the outcome of the struggle for socialism. "The possibility remains of an immense compromise, of a decaying of history where the class struggle, powerful enough to destroy, would not be powerful enough to build and where the master-lines of History charted in *The Communist Manifesto* would be effaced." This was the theoretical source of the scepticism behind his reluctance to join the Communist Party and which later led to his rejection of the Stalinized Soviet Union as in any respect socialist.

The personages in the works of Existentialist writers exemplify the enigmatic duplicity of the human being. They do not have stable characters or predictable courses of conduct. They plunge into unexpected and uncalled-for actions which contravene their previous commitments. Their lives and motives are susceptible to multiple meanings and inconclusive interpretations which their authors are not concerned to clarify since misunderstanding must accompany the ambiguity of existence. The latest example of this is Edward Albee's new play *Tiny Alice* whose sym-

bolism and significances have puzzled not only the dramatic critics but the author and director.

The problem of ambiguity is very real; it arises from the contradictory content of things. While the universe has a determinate structure and a discernible order of evolution, its elements are so complex and changing that the forms of their development can assume highly equivocal and puzzling appearances. The question is whether these paradoxical manifestations must remain forever indecipherable and unsettled or whether the diverse and misleading forms can be correlated by scientific means into some lawful pattern which gets at the essence of things.

The Existentialists refuse to concede that the outcome of a situation depends upon the relative weight of all the factors at work within it; they want to make the settlement depend entirely upon the will of the individual. This runs into conflict with their observation that the results of man's activities are often at odds with their intentions, desires and expectations. If this is so, what other and underlying forces determine the outcome? The Existentialist have no answer but accident. For them arbitrariness remains the arbiter of all events.

### Reality

The materialist dialectician takes up where the baffled Existentialist leaves off. He proceeds from the premise that what can become definite in reality can find clear-cut formulation in thought. No matter how hidden, complicated and devious the perplexing contradictions encountered in reality may be, they can with time and effort be unravelled. The dialectical essence of all processes consists precisely in the unfolding of their internal oppositions, the gradual exposure and greater determination of their polar aspects until they arrive at their breaking point and ultimate resolution. As the contending forces and tendencies within things are pushed to the extreme, they become more and more sharply outlined and less and less ambiguous. The struggle of opposites is brought to a conclusion and maximum clarification through the confrontation of irreconcilable alternatives and the victory of one over the other. This is the logical course and final outcome of all evolutionary processes.

Marxists do not regard ambiguity as an impenetrable and unalterable property of things or thoughts but as a provisional state which further development will overcome. Any unsettled situation can give way to greater determination. Reality and our understanding of it need not be forever ambiguous any more than water must remain fluid under all circumstances.

Order and disorder are relative features of things. The greatest chaos has sources of order within it, behind it and ahead of it. The most crystallized form of order contains elementary traces of irregularity which can in time spread out, upset and overturn its symmetry and stability. Moreover, ambiguity can be as much of a challenge and an opportunity as an obstacle. It prods knowledge and practice forward. Science advances and action becomes more effective as men succeed in displacing what is indeterminate and problematic with definite ideas about objectively determined things.

The Existentialists make much of the ineradicable ambiguity of history. They emphasize that history does not move in a straight line or a uniform manner from one point to another; indeed some among them question whether mankind has progressed at all. Marxism does not deny that history is full of irregularities, relapses, stagnation and oddities. Despite its zigzags, however, history has moved onward and upward from one stage to the next, from savagery to civilization, for ascertainable reasons. It exhibits necessities as well as ironic contingencies, final settlements as well as unresolved issues. The French feudalists, the British Loyalists, the Southern slaveholders, the German Nazis and the Russian capitalists can attest to that.

### 3. The Individual and His Environment

For purposes of analysis, reality can be divided into two sectors: one public, the other private. There is the objective material world that exists around us, regardless of what anyone feels, thinks or knows about it. Against this is the inner domain of personal experience, the world as it appears to each one of us, as we perceive, conceive and react to it. Although these two dimensions of human existence are never actually disjointed and roughly correspond with each other, they do not coincide in certain essential respects. They can

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therefore be considered separately and studied on their own account.

Existentialism and Marxism take irreconcilable views on the nature of the relationship between the objective and subjective sides of human life, on the status, the interconnection and the relative importance of the public and private worlds.

Marxism says that nature is prior to and independent of man. Man as a product and part of nature is necessarily dependent upon it. Existentialism holds that the objective and subjective components of being do not exist apart from each other and that in fact the subject makes the world what it is.

### Idealistic Subjectivity

The contrast between the idealistic subjectivity of the Existentialist thinkers and the materialist objectivity of Marxism can be seen in the following assertion of Heidegger in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*: "It is in words and language that things first come into being and are." In accord with the conception that other aspects of reality acquire existence only to the extent that they enter man's experience, Heidegger makes not simply the meaning but the very existence of things emanate from man's verbal expression of them. To a materialist such functions of man as speech and thought reflect the traits of things but do not create them. The external world exists regardless of man's relations with it and apart from the uses he makes of its elements.

The whole of Existentialism revolves around the absolute primacy of the conscious subject over everything objective, whether it be physical or social. The truth and values of existence are to be sought and found exclusively within the experiences of the individual, in his self-discovery and self-creation of what he authentically is.

Marxism takes the reverse position. It gives existential priority, as every consistent materialism must, to nature over society and society to any single person within it. Nature, society and the individual coexist in the closest reciprocal relationship which is characterized by man's action in changing the world. In the process of subduing objective reality for his own ends man changes himself. The subjective comes out of the objective, is in constant interaction and unbreakable communion with it, and is ultimately controlled by it.

These opposing conceptions of the object-subject relationship are reflected in the conflict between the two philosophies on the nature of the individual and his connections with the world around him. The category of the isolated individual is central in Existentialism. The true existence of a person, it asserts, is thwarted by things and

other people. These external forces crush the personality and drag it down to their own impersonal and commonplace level.

The individual can attain genuine value only in contest with his external relationships. He must turn inward and explore the recesses of his being in order to arrive at his real self and freedom. Only at the bottom of the abyss where the naked spirit grapples with the fearful foreknowledge of his death are both the senselessness and the significance of his existence revealed to him.

Thus Existentialism pictures the individual as essentially divorced from his fellow humans, at loggerheads with an inert and hostile environment and pitted against a coercive society. This desolation of the individual is the wellspring of inconsolable tragedy. Having cut off the individual from organic unity with the rest of reality, from the regular operation of natural processes and the play of historical forces, Existentialism is thereafter unable to fit the subjective reactions and reflections of the personality to his envying conditions of life. Indeed, says Sartre, man's attempts to make consciousness coincide with "facticity," the world of things, is a futile business.

By a grim paradox, the solitary individual is completely sovereign in shaping his real existence. With nothing but his own forces to lean on and his own judgment as a guide he must confront and solve all the problems of life.

Existentialism is the most thoroughgoing philosophy of individualism in our time. "Be yourself at all costs!" is its first commandment. It champions the spontaneity of the individual menaced by the mass, the class, the state. It seeks to safeguard the dignity, rights, initiatives, even the vagaries of the autonomous personality against any oppressive authority, organized movement or established institution.

With individual liberty as its watchword and supreme good, Existentialism is a creed of non-conformism. "I came to regard it as my task to create difficulties everywhere," wrote Kierkegaard in describing how he turned to an existentialist view of life. The Existentialists are averse to routine, externally imposed ideas or disciplined modes of behavior, and whatever is uncongenial to the desires of the ego. All submission to pressures and presences not freely chosen is evidence of "bad faith," says Sartre.

The targets of Existentialist protest are as diversified as the interests and inclinations of its exponents. These have ranged from religious orthodoxies to philosophical systematizing, from capitalist exploitation to Stalinist regimentation, from bourgeois morality to workers' bureaucratism. Kierkegaard set about to disturb the peace

of mind of the hypocritical Danish middle class. Nietzsche heralded the superman who was to rise above the herdlike crowd and transcend good and evil. The favored heroes of Camus and Sartre are rebels and outsiders. Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre analyze writers like the Marquis de Sade and Jean Genet whose ideas and lives have outrageously flouted the ordinary canons of moral conduct.

### Conventional Values

It must be said that the heresies of the Existentialists do not always succeed in shedding completely the values of the society they rebel against. Kierkegaard assailed the sluggishness and self-deception of the smug citizens around him only to embrace the Christian God with more passionate intensity. And Sartre, who attacks stuffed shirts and stinkers for their egotism, clings to the concept of the totally free person beholden solely to himself as the pivot of his philosophy and moral theory.

Existentialism proclaims the urge of the individual to develop without hindrance. But its constitutional aversion to organized action of mass movements determined by historically given circumstances renders it incapable of finding an effective solution of the problem for the bulk of humanity. That is why it is non-conformist rather than revolutionary.

Historical materialism takes an entirely different approach to the relationship between the individual and his environment. Man is essentially a social being who can develop into an individual only in and through society. For Marx the isolated individual is an abstraction. Everything distinctive of man from tool-making, speech and thought to the latest triumphs of art and technology are products of his collective activity over the past million years or so.

Take away from the person all the socially conditioned and historically acquired attributes derived from the culture of the collectivity and little would be left but the biological animal. The specific nature of the individual is determined by the social content of his existence, by the wealth of his social connections. This applies not only to his contacts with the outside world but to the innermost fibers of his being; his emotions, imagination, and ideas.

Even the special kind of solitude felt by people today is an outgrowth of the social system. One of the major contradictions of capitalism is that it has brought humans into the closest "togetherness" while accentuating conditions that pull them apart. Capitalism socializes the labor process and

knits the whole world into a unit while separating men from one another through the divisive interests of private property and competition. Engels noted this when he described the crowds in the London streets in his first work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*: "This isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere . . . The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each is a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme." The "barbarous indifference, hard egotism and nameless misery" which he observed over a century ago still strongly permeates our acquisitive society.

However much it has been violated in practice by bureaucratic powers which speak in its name, the defense and expansion of individuality is likewise one of the persistent concerns and chief aims of the socialist movement. Marxism differs from Existentialism by denying that individualism as a philosophy can provide an adequate method of social change and political action. Since the social structure shapes and dominates the lives of individuals, it has to be transformed by the collective struggle of the working people in order to eliminate the conditions that repress individuality and create an environment suited to the unhindered cultivation of the capacities of each living human being.

### 4. Freedom, Necessity and Morality

According to its supporters, the supreme merit of Existentialism is its capacity to explain and safeguard man's freedom. It is superior to Marxism, they claim, because it does not subjugate men to determinism which robs them of free choice and moral responsibility for their deeds.

The problem of freedom and necessity arises from two apparently contradictory facts of life. Science teaches and practice confirms that nature and society have regularities which are expressed in laws. At the same time man deliberately selects between different lines of action. How can universal determinism coexist with freedom of choice?

The Existentialists cut this Gordian knot by depriving determinism of any sway over human beings. What is non-human may be subject to objective causation but man cannot be reduced to the status of a thing. To be human is to be totally free, that is to say, completely self-determined by successive acts of will. When external circumstances compel us to be or do anything against our will, we are not behaving like human beings but like automatons. It is only by detaching ourselves from the given situation that we can freely decide the character and course of our lives. Thus,

in order to preserve human choice intact, the Existentialists nullify determinism and lawfulness in favor of an unrestricted exertion of the will.

Marxism resolves the antithesis between scientific determinism and human choice in an altogether different manner. Man really becomes free by uncovering and understanding the laws of nature, society and thought. Our aims become effective to the extent that verified scientific knowledge enables us to control and change the world around us. The Existentialist demand for absolute personal freedom does not correspond to anything real or realizable. Men must act under the constraint of their conditions of life and cannot cast off their casual weight.

Human activity is an unequal synthesis of extrinsic determination and self-determination. Men react consciously and vigorously to their environment and take initiatives to alter certain aspects of it. The measure of control exercised by the objective and subjective components of the casual process changes and develops in the course of time according to the growth of man's mastery over nature and society. History has proceeded, by and large, toward greater freedom, toward a growth in man's ability to decide and direct an increasing number of activities.

The Existentialists regard determinism as an inveterate foe of human aims and aspirations. In reality, determinism can display either a hostile or friendly face to us, depending upon the given circumstances. Man became free for the first time in this century to travel through the atmosphere and even to leave this planet. This was achieved by finding out the principles of aerodynamics and utilizing them to design and construct the instruments to realize the aim of flight. In making aircraft we have succeeded in putting the determinism of the material world to work for us, rather than against us.

The same is true of social determinism. Men have been enabled to enlarge their freedom not by ignoring and rejecting the determinants of history but by recognizing them and acting in accord with their requirements. The American people acquired and extended their liberties by seeing the need for abolishing British domination and Southern slaveholding when national progress demanded such revolutionary deeds.

Far from being incompatible with freedom, as the Existentialist thinks, natural and social necessities are the indispensable foundation of all the freedoms we have.

The Existentialists, however, are more concerned about the narrower dilemmas of personal responsibility than with the broader problem of the interaction of freedom and necessity in social and

historical evolution. Both Existentialism and Marxism agree that our conduct has to be regulated and judged by relative human standards. Man is accountable only to himself and for himself and has no right to sanctify or justify his decisions by reference to any supernatural source.

### **Basis of Morality**

What, then, is the basis of morality? Where do our standards of right and wrong come from?

The ethics of Existentialism is uncompromisingly libertarian. The individual creates both himself and his morality through his utterly uncurbed choices. Authentic freedom manifests itself in the causeless selection among alternative possibilities and fulfills itself in the deliberate adoption of one's own set of values.

The Marxist theory of morality does not rest upon an inborn capacity of the individual to make unconditioned and unmotivated choices but upon historical and social considerations. Its position can be summarized as follows: 1. Morality has an objective basis in the conditions, realtions, needs and development of society. Its rational character is derived from a correspondence with given historical realities and an understanding of specific social necessities. 2. Morality has a variable content and a relative character, depending upon changes in social circumstances. 3. Under civilization to date, morality inescapably takes on a class character. 4. There are no absolute standards of moral behavior and judgment. Human acts are not good or bad, praiseworthy or iniquitous in themselves. All moral codes and conduct must be evaluated by reference to the prevailing conditions and the concrete social needs, class interests and historical aims they serve.

The rival theories of morality are put to a test in cases which pose conflicting lines of action. The

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philosophical and literary works of the Existentialists concentrate upon such "either-or" situations. To accept God—or reject Him? To join one side rather than the other? To turn traitor or remain loyal to one's comrades? To live—or die?

Existentialism insists that there cannot be any sufficient and compelling grounds within the situation itself, the individual's connections with it, or his own character to warrant choosing one rather than the other of mutually exclusive alternatives. Man, says Sartre, is the being through whom nothingness enters the world. This power of negation is most forcefully expressed in his perfect liberty to do what he pleases in defiance of all external circumstances. The exercise of fully conscious, uninhibited preference distinguishes man from the animals and one man from another. "By their choices shall ye know them."

### Choice Making

The historical materialists reply that, while we can make choices in situations permitting real alternatives—that is the crux of personal morality—these decisions are not made in a void. Making up one's mind about the possibilities of a confusing or conflicting situation is only a part of the total process of moral action.

Voluntary acts are links in a chain of events which begins with objective circumstances and ends with objective consequences. The given situation, personal character, motivation, decision, action and results form a continuity of phases which are lawfully connected with one another and "feed back" upon one another. The uniqueness of individual choice does not consist in its self-sufficiency or release from essential relations with other concomitant facts but in contributing its special quality of approval or dissent, collaboration or resistance, to them.

The Existentialists deny any causal ties between the psychological act of choice and the circumstances in which it takes place. They sheer away the moment of personal decision from all that precedes and follows it. This introduces an unbridgeable chasm between the act of choice and the environing conditions, motivations and consequences of human action. However, there is no empirical evidence that choice occurs apart from and unaffected by the totality of concurrent conditions; this is a purely metaphysical assumption.

In fact, the power of choice is far from unlimited. A multitude of social, historical, biographical factors enter into the process of moral determination. The real opportunities open to the individual are restricted by natural and social history, the forces operating in a particular situation and the trends of their development. These provide objec-

tive criteria which make it possible to ascertain beforehand whether one alternative is preferable to another or, after the fact, whether one was better than another. Moreover, the individual is predisposed, though not predestined, by his previous experiences and existing connections to take one path rather than another. Otherwise human behavior would be completely unpredictable.

The highest good in the Existentialist scale of values is personal sincerity which is certified by devotion to a freely chosen object of faith. This psychological quality, which is considered the most powerful manifestation of freedom, is the sole principle of moral worth. The feelings of the autonomous individual determine what is right or wrong in any given case.

Marxists judge actions to be good or bad, not according to the intentions or emotions of the agents, but by their correspondence with social and class needs and their service to historical aims. They are considered justified or unjustified to the extent that they help or hinder progress toward the goals of socialism. Good deeds must be judged by their consequences. They must actually lead to increasing man's command over nature and diminishing social evils.

### 5. The Destiny of Man

The ambivalence of Existentialism is most conspicuous in its view of human destiny. It is at one and the same time a philosophy of the utmost despair and of breathless effort to go beyond it. Existentialism swings back and forth between these extremes. At one end stand the principal characters in *Waiting For Godot*, a classic of the Existentialist theater. They wait and wait but nothing important happens, nothing changes, no one comes. Their expectations continuously disappointed, they are sunk in the futility of an empty existence which must go on without hope or help.

But most writers and thinkers of this school cannot remain in the unrelieved apathy and inertia dramatized by Beckett. His ending is their point of departure. After looking the worst in the face, they challenge the tragic absurdity of existence. Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between "bad" existentialism which wallows in pure negativism and "good" existentialism which strives to project itself beyond despair. Camus regards the revolt against nihilism as the basis of everything worth-while.

The mark of man's freedom, says Sartre, is his conscious refusal to submit to any externally imposed condition of life. The authentic person will pass from total negation to self affirmation in action, from nay-saying to yea-saying. The individual forges his genuine self by bucking against the "practico-inert" around him and surpassing

his given situation through involvement in a characteristic venture, a cause, a future.

The Existentialists take many divergent paths out of the original abysmal human condition. The religious, like Kierkegaard, Marcel, Buber, Tillich, try to find a way to God. The unbelievers seek a solution, a transcendence, in this world. This quest has led the most radically inclined among them toward the revolutionary struggle of the working masses. As Julian Symons wittily put it, they would rather be "waiting for Lefty" than "waiting for Godot."

Yet they cannot completely merge themselves with the aims of any movement because of their stand on the insurmountable ambiguity of everything. Existentialism remains fundamentally a creed of frustration in the midst of fulfillment. The most brilliant success turns into failure as coal into ashes.

The hazardous leap from what is to what should be inevitably falls short of realization. For Camus every act of rebellion against oppression is justified in itself but installs a new form of servitude. For Sartre the act of transcendence negates itself in the very process of materialization, trickles out and dies. It must be followed by a fresh exertion of creative revolt which in turn will not reach its goal.

Thus mankind hungers but is never fully fed. We ask for nourishing bread and receive a stone. The most promising road forward winds up in a blind alley. Life is not only a gamble; it is in the end a cheat. We are swindled by the limitations of time, history and death which nullify our fondest hopes. "The sorrows of our proud and angry dust are from eternity and will not fail." But man always will.

Sartre has epitomized this pessimism coiled in the heart of Existentialism in the famous aphorism from *Being and Nothingness*: "Man is a useless passion." So grim a humanism in which every venture must turn out to be a lost cause can stimulate spasmodic expenditures of energy in social struggle. But the expectation that defeat lurks in ambush spreads scepticism and cripples the steadfastness of the inwardly divided individual at every step.

The pessimistic irrationalism of the Existentialists clashes head-on with the militant temper of Marxism which feels sure of the victory of humanity over all obstacles. For the historical materialist man is above all the creative producer who has succeeded through his own titanic efforts in elevating himself from animality to the atomic age—and is just on the threshold of his authentically human career.

This belief in the rationality of social evolution and in the necessity of the socialist revolution to usher in the next stage of human progress is the theoretical source of the optimism which suffuses scientific socialism. Marxism points to the historical achievements recorded in man's rise over the past million years and incorporated in the accumulated knowledge, skills and acquisitions of world culture as tangible proofs of the worth of his work and as a pledge of the future.

The indomitable struggles for a better life among the downtrodden, the "wretched of the earth," the key role of the industrial workers in modern economy, the successes of the first experiments in nationalized property and planned economy even under extremely adverse conditions, give confidence to Marxists that the most difficult problems of our age are susceptible of solution through the methods of proletarian-peasant revolution and socialist reconstruction.

As in the past, many surprises, setbacks, disappointments and detours will be encountered enroute. These are part of the price exacted by the fact that man has to climb and sometimes crawl upward unaided by anything but his own collective efforts. Yet every great social and political revolution has added new stature and power to mankind despite the pains and even disenchantments attending it. The offspring of history have been worth the agonies of birth and the difficulties of their upbringing.

## 6. Alienation in Modern Society

Why do so many people nowadays feel that the major forces governing their lives are inimical and inscrutable and beyond their capacity to control or change? Where does this state of helplessness come from and what can be done to remove it? Their disagreements on the causes and cure of alienation in modern society constitute an impassible dividing line between the two philosophies.

Both Existentialism and Marxism recognize that men have become dehumanized by the alienations they suffer in contemporary life. Alienation expresses the fact that the creations of men's mind and hand—whether these are divine beings, a relentless and immutable nature or a social system—dominate their creators. The victims of this servitude become stripped of the qualities of self-determination and self-direction which raise them above the animal level.

For Existentialism man's alienation has neither beginning nor end. It is not an historical phenomenon but a metaphysical fate. It is a primordial, indestructible feature of human existence, the quintessence of "human nature."

The free and conscious human being is irrecon-

cilably estranged from the world into which he has been hurled. Although he can introject meaning, value, usefulness into it, this does not efface its alien and absurd nature.

Hostility is likewise built into the structure of interpersonal relations. The world whose meaning I create differs from that of others. This produces incessant friction between me and other people who strive to impose their views on me, nullify my authentic existence and divert me from my own needs and aims to serve their alien needs.

Finally, the individual is ill at ease with himself. Our inner being is rendered unhappy by the perpetual tension of conflicting impulses and claims. The goals we set are unrealized or result in something other than we expected or desired.

### **Like Original Sin**

Since all these sources of alienation are ineradicable, we can do no more than clear-sightedly confront and soicallly bear up under this somber state, trying to cope with it as best we can. All the diverse ways in which the Existentialists seek to transcend their fate—religion, artistic creation, good works, liberalism, social revolution—are by their own admission only palliative and superficial. They may make life tolerable and meaningful but do not and can not end the cause of alienation.

Free men are obliged to try and overcome their alienation in ways most suitable to themselves—that is their glory. But their efforts prove unavailing—that is their melancholy destiny.

Alienation plays the same part in the Existentialist metaphysics as Adam's fall from grace in Christian theology. It is the equivalent of original sin. Just as Jehovah expelled the erring pair from Paradise and condemned their descendants to sin and suffering on earth forever after, so through the fatality of our existence as humans we are eternally and ineluctably withdrawn from others and enclosed within ourselves. There is no release or redemption from such estrangement.

Instead of indicating any exit from the state of alienation, Existentialism makes it the permanent foundation of human life, reproducing and justifying it in metaphysical terms.

\* \* \*

Marxism gives a materialist and historical analysis of alienation. It is the product of man's impotence before the forces of nature and society and his ignorance of the laws of their operation. It diminishes to the extent that man's powers over nature and his social relations, and his scientific knowledge of their processes of development, are amplified.

The idolatries of magic and religion by which

men prostrate themselves before supernatural beings of their own imaginative manufacture are the most primitive forms of alienation. But the alienations peculiar to civilization are based, not upon man's subjection to nature, but upon his subjection to other men through the exploitation of labor.

This type of alienation originates in a highly developed division of labor and the cleavage of society into antagonistic classes. Bereft of the conditions of production, the mass of direct producers lose control over their lives, their liberties and means of development which are at the mercy of hostile social forces. This is obvious under slavery which was the first organized system of alienated labor. The alienation of labor is far more complex and refined under capitalism where it attains ultimate expression.

The wage workers are subjected to uncontrollable external forces at every step of capitalist economy. Having none of the material prerequisites of production, they must go to work for their owners. Even before physically participating in production, they surrender their labor power to the entrepreneur in return for the payment of the prevailing wage. While at work, the conditions and duration of the job are determined by the capitalist and his foremen. As men on the assembly line can testify, workers become degraded into mere physical accessory factors of production. Instead of intelligently exercising their capacities, they are constrained to perform monotonous, repetitious tasks which strain their endurance. The plan, process and aim of production all confront them as hostile and hurtful powers.

At the end of the industrial process the product does not belong to the workers who made it but to the capitalist who bought their labor power. It goes into the market to be sold. There the mass of commodities and money function like an untameable force which even the biggest groups of capitalists cannot control, as the fluctuations of the business cycle and periodical crises demonstrate.

On top of this, the competitiveness of capitalism pits the members of all classes against one another and generates unbridled egotism and self-seeking. The members of bourgeois society, whatever their status, are immersed in an atmosphere of rivalry rather than communal solidarity.

Thus the underlying causes of the alienations within capitalism come from the contradictory relations of its mode of production and the class antagonisms and competitive conditions engendered by them. The divisions rooted in the economic foundations of capitalism branch out into all as-

pects of social life. They appear in the collisions of class interests and outlooks on a national and international scale, in the opposition of monopolist-dominated governments to the mass of the people, in the struggle of the creative artist against commercialism, in the contrast between metropolitan slums and ghettos and luxury apartments and hotels, in the subordination of science to militarism and myriad other ways. Its cruelest and sharpest large-scale expression today in the United States is the deep-going estrangement between the black people and the white.

### Socialist Revolution

These stigmata mangle human personalities, injure health, stamp out the chance of happiness. They produce many of the mental and emotional disturbances which make up the psychopathology of everyday life in the acquisitive society.

Can the alienations of modern man be overcome? The Existentialists contend that they can not. Marxism replies that these characteristics of a barbarous past and exploitative present can be removed by revolutionizing outworn social structures. Now that mankind has achieved superiority over nature through science and technology, the next great step is to gain supremacy over the blind and anarchic forces in our lives. The sole agency that is strong and strategically enough placed to carry through this task of instituting conscious collective control over economic and political life is the power of alienated labor embodied in the industrial working class.

The material means for liberating mankind from the causes and consequences of alienation can be brought into existence only through the socialist revolution which will concentrate economic, political and cultural power in the toiling majority. Planned economy along socialist lines on an international scale can lead to such plenty that the circumstances permitting and even necessitating the rule over the many by the few will be wiped out forever.

When all the compulsory inequalities in the conditions of life and labor and in access to the means of self-development are done away with, then the manifestations of these material disparities in the estrangements of one section of society from another will die away. The equal and fraternal relations at the base of the future socialist culture will facilitate the formation of integrated personalities no longer at odds with each other or with themselves.

### 7. The Meaning of Life and Death

The cleavage between the two outlooks comes to a sharp focus over the meaning of life and death.

Humanism has traditionally upheld the supreme value of life on earth against the religious emphasis on death, resurrection and immortality. Death was to be countered by making the sole span of existence allotted to mortal creatures as productive and joyous as possible.

Despite their disbelief in divinity, even the secular Existentialists invert these values and reinstate the fact and fear of death to the centrality it had in Christian theology and church practice. Like a medieval meditation upon mortality, Jaspers opines: "Philosophizing means learning to die." Camus insists in *The Myth of Sisyphus* that suicide—that is, what answer to give to the question: is life worth living?—is the only philosophical issue. Heidegger defines life as a being-towards-death. "When you stand by the cradle of a new-born child, there is only one statement you can make of him with entire certainty," he says. He must die.

According to Existentialism, life acquires its deepest meaning, not from its own aims and activities, but only when the individual awakens to the full implications of his doom. Most men try to shut out this awful awareness by cowardly evasion. The ordinary citizen becomes immersed in everyday activities and distracting pleasures, the artist in his creative work, the philosopher in the cobwebs of thought he spins. These are nothing but diversions and illusions so long as the individual refuses to confront the realization of his annihilation with unflinching and complete consciousness.

Death is the foundation of morality and liberation because it compels every individual to make

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up his mind whether his life is worth-while and what he proposes to do with it. Every act of moral choice is literally a life-and-death matter. All the freely-created values of life are stacked up against the overwhelming prospect of death.

Heidegger declares that death is the only thing nobody else can do for me. If we embrace our finitude, our Being-for-Death, we internalize and integrate it into the totality of our existence and thus give it meaning. To Sartre, on the other hand, death is a meaningless external fact, a limit that cannot be interiorized in the sum total of our lives. The consciousness of death does not make us human. It merely heightens our individuality by prodding us to decide in defiance of conventional values. "The choice that each of us has made of his life was an authentic choice because it was made face to face with death," he says.

For the German death gives life all meaning; for the Frenchman it removes all meaning from life. These opposing evaluations show how difficult it is to extract a common position from the Existentialists. But, despite the extreme variations in their answers to this problem, the terrifying shock of the recognition of death overshadows their reflections on the meaning and worth of life.

### **Humanist Approach**

The Marxist approach is more in accord with the humanist mainstream. It is the first law of nature—as well as dialectical materialism—that everything has its day and then must perish. Nothing and no one is immune from this law. The processes of life and death emerged on this planet as the result of new biochemical reactions several billion years ago. Humankind is the highest product of this development.

Is life worth living, and, if so, how should the inevitable approach and advent of death be met? Marxism replies to the first question with a ringing affirmative. No matter what the toil, turmoil, pains and duration of personal and social experience, life is the supreme value for mankind. Not life as it is but as liberated mankind will make and remake it. The paramount practical-moral aim of socialism is to improve the quality of life without limit. By increasing men's power over nature and decreasing the power of man over man, a boundless potential of happiness and creative achievement can be released from generation to generation.

The prospect of our own death and the death of others we love and admire often causes anguish and sorrow. Such grief is a normal sentiment among civilized people and is morbid only when it becomes obsessive.

The dread of death is not the primal and central fact of human existence, an eternal attendant of man's condition, as the Existential metaphysicians contend. It is an historically conditioned psychological reaction. Many primitive peoples do not experience it.

Excessive preoccupation with death belongs to the psychopathology of civilization. The malfunctioning and disproportionate wearing out of our bodies, the multiple insecurities, disorders, stresses, sufferings and alienations of a crisis-ridden class society make life difficult and burdensome. Paradoxically, for all their hysterical fear of death many people desperately welcome and even hasten the ending of a too hard life.

The socialist movement aspires to transform and eventually eradicate such attitudes and feelings by changing the conditions of life and labor for all. The remodeling of humanity must begin with the transformation of social relations from antagonism into cooperation with its ever-enlarging possibilities of satisfying human desires. But it will not stop there. The scientists of the future in teamwork with highly conscious individuals will plan to reshape the physiological side of life and subordinate that to the control of reason and will. Biology and medicine will ease the processes of birth and postpone the incidence of death. The coming biological-social type of man will manifest a new psychology in which, among other things, he will no longer have reason to dread death. So long as it cannot be indefinitely put off or averted, the end of living will be greeted, not as a frightful calamity, but as the ransom of time.

The Existentialist displacement of the seat of value from life to death reflects both the ordeals of our age and a loss of vitality among sensitive souls who despair of triumphing over the dark and destructive forces of a sick social order. On the other hand, a lust for life, conscious participation in the collective struggle for a better world, an indestructible confidence in the real possibilities of unbounded progress characterize the working class humanism projected by Marxism. It is intent on making life what it could and should be—a serene and splendid adventure for all members of the human family.

### **8. Can Existentialism and Marxism be Reconciled?**

Are Existentialism and Marxism compatible? Are they opposites or affinities? Can they be synthesized into a coherent unit?

Most interpreters and adherents of Existentialism, especially the theists among them, do not think the two are reconcilable. They reject Marxism totally because it fails to recognize what to them is the most meaningful aspect of being: the

sovereign subjectivity and dignity of the individual. They maintain that materialist theory debases men to mere objects while socialist practice stamps out personal freedom.

Orthodox Marxists no less firmly insist that the contending philosophies have far too many principled differences to be welded into one.

In between stand a variegated group who agree with Sartre that the two can be fused into a single alloy that will reinforce both.

### **Erich Fromm**

In the United States the noted psychoanalytical sociologist Erich Fromm is the most ardent champion of the thesis that Existentialism and Marxism are substantially identical. In *Marx's Concept of Man* (1961) which presents Fromm's concept of Marx, he asserts that Marx's thinking is humanist existentialism. The doctrines appear alike to him since both protest against the alienation of man in modern society and seek ways to overcome it. "Marx's philosophy," he writes, "constitutes a spiritual existentialism in secular language and because of this spiritual quality is opposed to the materialistic practice and thinly disguised materialistic philosophy of our age. Marx's aim, socialism, based on his theory of man, is essentially prophetic messianism in the language of the nineteenth century."

This transmutation of the materialist Marx into a precursor and preacher of Existentialism is typical of radical humanists of very different backgrounds and beliefs. Fromm is the chief American representative of this trend which locates the "true" Marx in the early Economic and Philosophical manuscripts which mark transitional stages of his development instead of in the ripe conclusions of his mature thoughts. They contend that Marx has been misrepresented as a crude dialectical materialist by his orthodox disciples from Engels to Lenin until their revelation that he really was an ethical Existentialist.

Fromm's equation of dialectical materialism with Existentialism is as ill-founded as his astonishing statement that "Marx's atheism is the most advanced form of rational mysticism." The atheistic Marx is no more a mystic than the Marx of scientific socialism is an Existentialist.

Ever since socialism became a powerful movement and Marxism its dominant ideology, attempts have been made to disqualify the dialectical and materialist principles of its method in favor of a different theoretical basis. At various times and places Kantianism, ethical idealism, positivism, pragmatism, and even Thomism have been nominated as replacements. None of these proposed supplements and substitutes or their eclectic com-

binations have proved convincing or viable. The Marxist system has such an integrated structure from its philosophical and logical premises to its political economy and historical outlook that it cannot easily be chopped up and recombined with other theories.

Sartrean Existentialism is the latest and most popular candidate for the office of eking out the real or alleged deficiencies of Marxist thought. It is unlikely to be more successful than its predecessors.

The Existentialists aver that the individual's sincerest act and tragic responsibility is his necessity to choose between anguishing alternatives and take the consequences. Sartre shrinks from doing this in philosophy. The confrontation of Existentialism with dialectical materialism is a genuine case of "either-or." But Sartre wants to embrace *both* Kierkegaard *and* Marx without choosing between them.

"To the marriage of true minds, let us admit no impediment," Shakespeare said. The trouble is that dialectical materialism and Existentialism are contrary-minded and oriented along diametrically different lines. They clash at almost every point on the major issues of philosophy, sociology, morality and politics. It is a bootless task to try and mate these opposites.

This has not—and will not—deter either radical-minded Existentialists or socialist eclectics from trying to coalesce the one with the other. The controversy between the philosophers of existence and the dialectical materialists, as well as those who mix the two, has steadily expanded its area over the last two decades. It is still in full swing and far from concluded.

The first commandment of Existentialism is, as has been said, "be yourself!" This is not a bad maxim and it ought to be applied as strictly to philosophies as to personalities. Let Existentialism be what it really is—the ideological end-product of liberalism and individualism—and not pretend to be something else. Let Marxism likewise be what it should be, that dialectical materialism which is the scientific expression and practical guide of the world socialist revolution of the working masses.

But let not the two be intermixed and confused. Only abortions and hybrids can be the result of such mismating in both philosophy and politics.

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# ...Crisis

(Continued from Page 34)

United States, fits in with the strategy of seeking a military showdown with China before it can become a nuclear power of major importance. One of the objectives would be to bomb the Chinese nuclear center in the Taklamaken desert. That this is seriously under consideration in White House circles is shown by the anxiety of the best-informed American newspapers, which, in contrast to the complacent attitude of the European press, particularly in Britain, act as if the Johnson administration is on the verge of irreparable decisions.

If American imperialism does not follow this course, but, on the contrary, recognizes the impossibility of consolidating the beachhead it seized in South Vietnam and utilizes the crisis touched off by its bombings in North Vietnam as a shield behind which to reach a "peaceful understanding" on the Vietnamese question, then fateful consequences of a different kind can occur. Through the transitional state of a "broad national government" and a "neutralist regime," the South Vietnam revolution can continue its march toward the complete destruction of the semifeudal vestiges and the power of imperialism and native capitalism, opening the way for achievement of a socialist Vietnam. In this case, imperialism would "lose" Laos and Cambodia in the immediate future. The announcement that a National Liberation Front has been set up in Thailand to co-ordinate the activities of the guerrillas already widely active there is the handwriting on the wall for

imperialism. Just as the revolution in South Vietnam followed the victory of the revolution in North Vietnam and the 1954 Geneva agreement, so the Thailand revolution will be touched off by the victory of the revolution in South Vietnam and this will unsettle Malaysia, the last solid imperialist position in Southeast Asia.

From the point of view of the interests of the revolution and of all humanity, it would be clearly preferable for American imperialism to choose as quickly as possible the road of retreat and withdrawal, even if by stages. But it would be a delusion and self-deception to believe that such a decision is certain, that "reason" will lead American imperialism to back down rather than opt for an immediate catastrophic outcome. The fact is that the latest imperialist aggression against North Vietnam, like that of last August and the imperialist aggression against Cuba in October 1962, shows that the first reaction of American imperialism, above all the heads of the Pentagon, is to strike without the least regard for either national or international law. Only the vigorous reaction of the revolutionary masses in the colonial world, the governments of the workers states, international public opinion and popular reaction in the United States itself can make it hesitate and draw back temporarily.

The latest imperialist aggression against North Vietnam, which could prove to be the opening move toward direct military confrontation between imperialism and the People's Republic of China, and then the USSR, underlines the warning repeatedly made by the Fourth International: The need to overturn the power of imperialism in the United States, of creating a socialist America, has become a problem of life or death for all of humanity. As long as American imperialism holds enormous

economic and technical power, capable of destroying mankind in a nuclear holocaust, the threat remains suspended over humanity. The struggle for the world victory of socialism is not only a struggle for a better society today. It has become literally a struggle for the physical survival of mankind.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International appeals to the workers of all countries to show in an energetic way, through action, their condemnation of the imperialist aggression against North Vietnam and their solidarity with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the heroic masses fighting in the South Vietnamese revolution.

We appeal to the governments of the workers states to set up an unbreakable United Front against imperialism and for the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Divisions in the anti-imperialist front can only encourage and facilitate the aggressions of the Pentagon.

We appeal to the British workers to protest vigorously against the criminal stand of the Wilson Labour government which has become an accomplice in the imperialist aggression against the Vietnamese people.

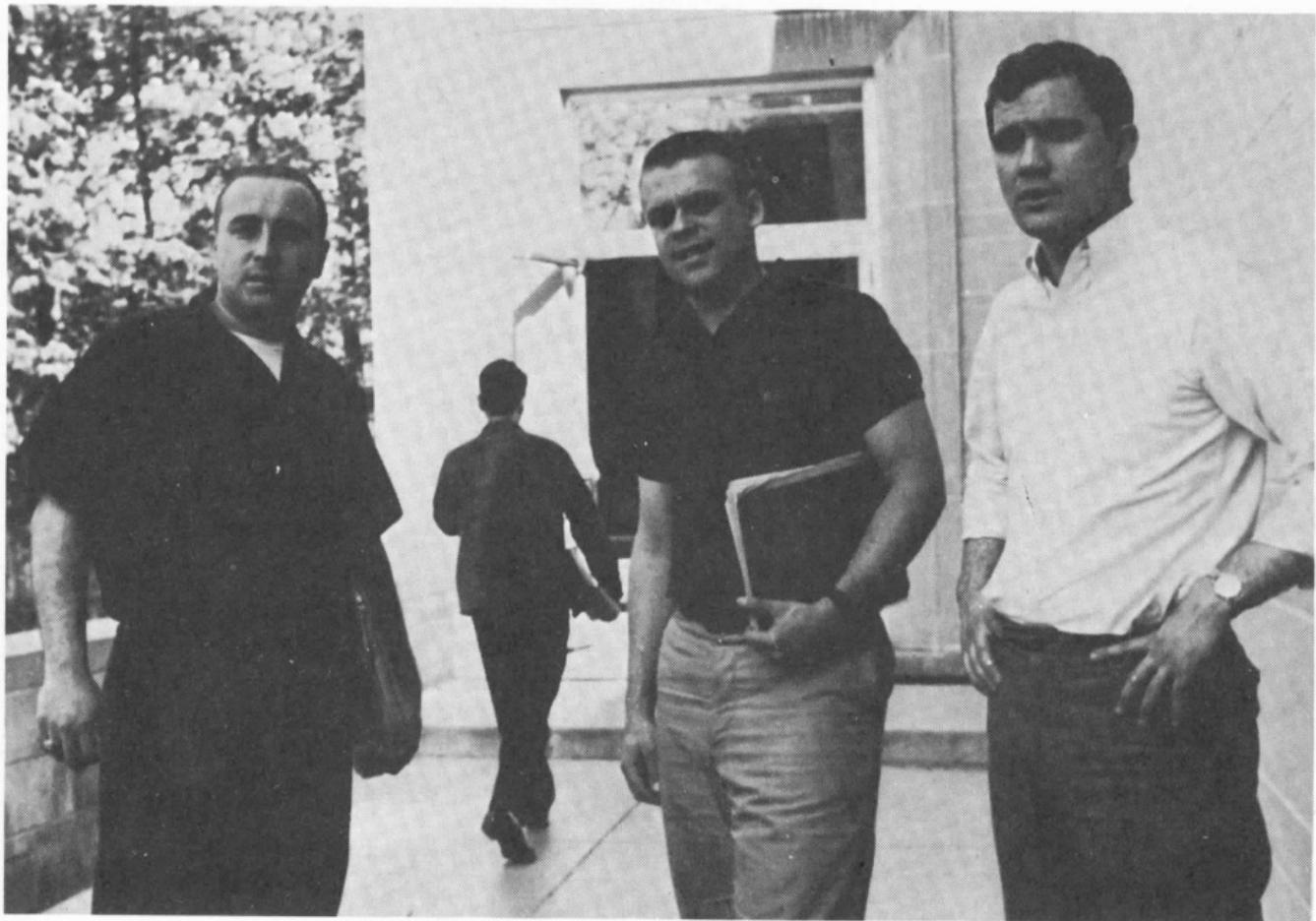
We appeal to the workers of the United States to oppose the irresponsible military clique who have deprived even Congress, the traditional body of bourgeois democracy, from deciding the country's foreign policy and who are ready, in brazen violation of the rejection of "Goldwaterism" in the last election, to precipitate the United States into a nuclear war. Let the American people themselves decide whether they want war or peace! Let the American people set up a new political and governmental framework capable of carrying out their will!

For international solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution!

For the world victory of socialism!



**The Bloomington Defendants, Ralph Levitt, Jim Bingham and Tom Morgan once again face possible prison terms because of their advocacy of socialist ideas at the University of Indiana. This most important civil liberties case in the United States was reopened Jan. 25, when the Indiana Supreme Court upheld the McCarthyite Indiana "Anti-Communism" act under which the students were originally indicted in 1963. In March, 1964, a local court in Bloomington, Ind., quashed the indictments on the grounds that they were unconstitutional. A nation-wide committee to combat this state witch-hunt has been formed and has over 800 sponsors. Funds which are urgently needed may be sent to CABS, P. O. Box 213, Cooper Sta., New York, N. Y. 10003.**



## Reviews in Brief

**POLITICAL AWAKENING IN THE CONGO:** The Politics of Fragmentation, by Rene Lemarchand. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964. 357 pp. \$7.95.

This book is a detailed description of Congolese political groupings from the pre-colonial period through the secession of Katanga in 1960. From this clearly defined standpoint, it sheds some light on the complicated problems of present-day Congolese politics, where over 200 political parties may be differentiated on programmatic, regional and ethnic grounds.

Mr. Lemarchand singles out many of the more important of these parties for extensive treatment, covering their localities, main leaders, and basic programmatic differences. His text includes a breakdown of the election results of the May, 1960, pre-independence contest.

However, much of the information which one would need for an adequate understanding of the unique Congolese proliferation of political parties is missing. Lemarchand's description of the eighty-year period of Belgian colonial rule is superficially limited to a discussion of the various boundary agreements between Brussels and the Belgian colons living in the Congo.

Lemarchand fails to trace the implications of this "divide and rule" strategy in the divisions between Congolese political groupings. His treatment of the Congolese economy and the extent of foreign control is also sketchy and incomplete, and makes no allowances for possible class divisions between the Congolese leaders, themselves.

For all its detail, *Political Awakening in the Congo* falls short of answering the question suggested by its subtitle: What caused the "fragmentation" of Congolese politics?

**AMERICANS IN BLACK AFRICA UP TO 1865** by Clarence C. Clendenen & Peter Duignan, "Hoover Institution Studies: 5," The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 1964. 109 pp. \$1.50.

With lengthy footnotes and an extended bibliography, this monograph is a useful handbook of American relations with Africa prior to the Civil War, excluding the slave trade. (A previous publication, *The United States and the African Slave Trade, 1619-1862*, in the same series, covers the omitted topic.)

The book describes "legitimate" trade, colonization, and exploration, with emphasis on trade. Details of the competition between America and other colonialist powers, over African wealth and markets are provided, and a description of the type and amounts of American imports and exports to Africa.

The founding of Liberia, and other

"back to Africa" colonization attempts are briefly mentioned. The monograph, however, makes no pretense at providing the African side of this story.

**THE WAR-PEACE ESTABLISHMENT** by Arthur Herzog. Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1965. 271 pp. \$4.95.

"Establishment," as Arthur Herzog uses it in the title of this book, does not refer to an economic or political institution, but rather to a conglomeration of ideas on military and peace tactics which have emerged in this country during the Cold War. From the opinions of Dr. Teller on one side of the spectrum, all the way over to those of A.J. Muste on the other, Herzog presents an easily readable account of many divergent ideas.

Unfortunately only for Mr. Herzog, one imagines, the period of transcendence for the "war-peace" controversy described in this book is over, and argument over more concrete issues, like the war in Vietnam, posing clearer alternatives, has replaced it.

Going back a few years, one has to forget that the people Herzog describes as "analysts," "realists," "government idealists," and "experimentalists," are almost unanimously lined up in support of the flagrant U.S. aggression against North Vietnam. Otherwise, it would be hard to take their ideas on the tactics for disarmament as seriously as Mr. Herzog demands.

In the long run, it turned out that this argument was fierce but futile. The U.S. government could build more and greater weapons of destruction, expand its arenas of aggression, and offer less and less excuse.

The peace movement could offer more and more elaborate schemes for resolution of the cold war, but the basic questions turned out to be principled, not tactical: for or against self-determination for the Vietnamese.

**MEMOIRS: 1921-41** by Ilya Ehrenberg, *trans.* Tatania Shebunina in collaboration with Yvonne Kapp. World Publishing Co., Cleveland, 1964. 543 pp. \$6.95.

This is the second of three volumes of the English translation of Ilya Ehrenberg's highly controversial autobiography, first serialized in the outspoken anti-Stalinist monthly, *Novy Mir*, beginning in 1960. (The final volume is scheduled for publication this year.)

The present volume, which Khrushchev personally criticized in 1963, deals with the two stormy decades during which Ehrenberg lived mainly in the West, as a propagandist and cultural diplomatist for the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Ehrenberg departs from previous official stands on many points, especially in his chapters on art and artists whom he knew. However, the recollections of

the great events of the 1930's—the Fascist victories in Italy, Germany, Austria and the Popular Front in France, and the Spanish Civil War—also depart from previous versions on important details.

Obviously moved by the power of the Spanish Civil War, to which he devotes many pages, Ehrenberg nevertheless describes it in the imagery of *Don Quixote*—as a gallant attempt doomed to defeat from the start. Here, he glosses over what he surely knows—since he took part—, the successful Stalinist drive to subordinate the revolution to the narrow-minded collaborationist aims of their diplomacy. Ehrenberg describes his own efforts to win over Anarchist workers to the policy of "first defeat Franco; then make the revolution," which ultimately succeeded in killing the revolution, itself.

For all his celebrated departures from the official lines, many a discredited Stalinist notion survives; and Ehrenberg's revelations of Stalin's crimes within the Soviet Union are carefully kept within the limits of what has already been officially revealed.

**HARLEM: A Community in Transition**, edited by John Henrik Clarke. The Citadel Press, New York, 1964. 223 pp. \$3.95

Much of the material in this handsomely published book, (illustrated both with line drawings and photographs), was previously published in the Summer 1963 issue of *Freedomways*. It is an anthology by leading writers, scholars, and artists on Harlem—its problems, its culture, and its consciousness.

Contributors include Langston Hughes—two short essays, Kenneth Clark—describing HARYOU, Milton Galamison—to bring in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Richard B. Moore—on Africa consciousness, and many others, including an interview with James Baldwin.

The collection is honest and convincing and pulls no punches. A brief notice cannot begin to cover the variety of topics—Harlem literature, music, politics, economics, theater and night-clubs, to mention a few,—which flow from its pages.

Arbitrarily, one might mention Langston Hughes' short concluding essay on the 1964 Harlem riots. With a mixture of humor and sarcasm, Hughes dismisses the "talking, writing, setting up committees to make reports . . ." which has gone on before and will again, and won't stop such outbreaks.

"Seemingly all that could conceivably be written or said," Hughes notes, "has been said—and Harlem is still the same old Harlem." But the real answers are there, and everybody knows them: "Prices . . . Rentals . . . Graft . . ."

The present volume, however, may be excluded from Langston Hughes' irony. The writing is direct, to the point . . . and aimed at changing things.

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