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years since the establishment of the People's Republic, rigidity had set in. That rigidity had to be broken before China could move forward. The fact that China had achieved much in the realm of production and distribution and that starvation had been virtually wiped out did not mean that the revolution was to be disbanded. The vision of a "new Chinese society" goes further than filling people's stomachs.

The key theme of the Cultural Revolution was that men in power had become alienated from the people, and had tried to push China forward from their city offices through coercive domination. Like many of our own liberal bureaucrats, they claimed experience, status, and expertise. The fading of America's liberal dreams suggests that Mao and Lin may have had a point in smashing China's power structure, loosening up the country, and decentralizing power concentrated in too few hands. Although a great power, China is still a developing country with many steps to climb, and maintaining a status quo can only work against her. It is also worth remembering that every time Lin Piao waves his Red Book, he is not signaling his opportunism, *i.e.*, waiting for Mao to die. He is symbolically reaffirming his commitment to the notion of permanent change and revolution even if it means another Cultural Revolution.

At this point one might suggest that the reader simply ignore the first 153 pages of *Lin Piao*, and turn directly to the documents in the back of the book. These were written by Lin himself, and it is here that one gets a sense of what revolution means in China. Mr. Ebon, early in the book, has pointlessly rehashed all the biographies of China's leaders as though politics in Peking were just a game of King of the Castle. All men have egos and, no doubt, a fascination with power. But to see the

events in China as just another struggle between power-hungry personalities out to conquer the world is to miss the crucial role that politics and social vision have played in China. One can only suggest that Mr. Ebon try a book on the heir apparent to the Taiwan throne, Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-kuo. There, where politics and idealism are unknown, he might be more at home.

*Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell are co-directors of the Bay Area Institute in San Francisco, and co-editors of "The China Reader," a three-volume collection of essays.*

## GUERRILLAS IN POWER: The Course of the Cuban Revolution

by **K. S. Karol**  
translated from the French  
by **Arnold Pomerans**

Hill & Wang, 624 pp., \$12.50

Reviewed by *Georgie Anne Geyer*

■ After four visits to Cuba (two in 1961, one in 1967, and one in 1968), during which he was frequently at Fidel Castro's side, K. S. Karol has come to some conclusions that will please neither fervent Castro supporters nor unyielding opponents.

The realignment of Cuba with the Soviets in 1968 was not caused only by the island's total dependence upon Russian economic aid, he points out. Castro had arrived at the realization that Cuba must go through a Stalinist period in order to industrialize as fast as possible, and at whatever cost. "Their return to the [Soviet] fold in 1968-69 was not based on the same old naïve illusions but was the unavoidable



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consequence of their failure—perhaps temporary—to build a Cuban road to socialism,” Karol writes. “Barely perceptible at first, the new doctrine became more and more obvious until, at the end of 1969, it culminated in the official declaration that the Soviet model of the 1930s was perfect for Cuba and that it was being applied at full speed.”

All this saddens Karol, a Polish-born Marxist who spent the World War II years in prison camps in the Soviet Union and now contributes to the *New Statesman*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and *Le Monde*. Like many early East European Marxists who were disillusioned by the oppressions of Soviet communism, he was enchanted with the original free-wheeling, free-thinking brand of Castro communism. While he is disappointed with Fidel and the growing totalitarianism of his régime, it is a hurt born of love.

*Guerrillas in Power* deals not merely with Castro's ascent to power but with the entire modern history of Cuba, emphasizing the role of the traditional Communist Party there and its ties to Moscow. This party, of course, failed to support Castro, thinking him (at best) a bundle of leftist juvenile disorders; indeed, for two decades, in the name of a united front, it backed the hated dictator Fulgencio Batista. In one of his rare humorous passages Karol chides the Batistianos who rushed to Miami to proclaim that Castro had always been a communist. Actually, he correctly argues, they knew much better, because the communists had been on *their* side.

One of the book's most fascinating sections is that on the missile crisis. In detail and at length Karol offers a new explanation of why Khrushchev daringly placed missiles in Cuba. Briefly, the author believes that the Soviet premier, with “no miracles possible on the home front, decided to stake everything on a grandiose international scheme” to achieve peaceful coexistence. “To the Russians,” he continues, “it seemed obvious that America did not want global coexistence; hence, she had to be made to accept it, not by means of interminable discussions or demonstrations and petitions—no, the era of peace conferences had long since passed—but by a show of strength on America's very doorstep.” His long and reasoned exposition of this fascinating and certainly questionable theme is well worth reading.

The Cubans' utter disgust with the Russians for withdrawing the missiles passed in only six years. And during this time Fidel changed. He broke off his formerly warm relations with the Chinese when they refused to raise his rice quota and insisted on being free

to propagandize right in the ranks of Fidel's army.

There are a number of points where one feels that Karol, for all his apparently meticulous research, is too trusting. He takes for granted, for instance, that Che Guevara's peculiar farewell note to Fidel, written in a style not even vaguely his own, is authentic. Throughout, Karol is a little too enamored of Che, and somewhat excessive in praising his virtue and humanity.

But in other areas the author shows a keener critical sense. While he admires Castro for his indefatigable sprints about the island, watching this plant grow, urging this peasant on, being close to this representative of the people, Karol nevertheless asks, “Why on earth must he bother with such a plethora of sheer trifles?” He is uneasy about the unquestioning acceptance of Castro's every thought and word by his colleagues, and about the lack of intellectual inquiry in general. Karol reports (and this will horrify the young American New Leftists who extol the solidarity of the Cuban workers) that laborers, lacking the incentive of material gain, perform no more than four productive hours of work a day.

But Karol's questions are raised in a spirit of love, not hate. He still believes Cuba's to be one of the best and most hopeful revolutions on earth, though he wonders why Castro does not try to generate the initiative of the people the way he feels the Chinese communists have. “All his arguments betray an aristocratic spirit, a faith in the role of the élite, rather than trust in the converse of equals in fruitful exchange of ideas between the rank and file and its leaders.”

He worries that Castro, having approved the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and turned toward the forms of Stalinism, will become just as cynical about other new and burgeoning revolutions as he has accused the Russians of being. And he is disturbed that a man like Gustavo Arcos, a veteran of Castro's abortive 1953 attack on the Moncada fortress, should be imprisoned and “subjected to iniquitous police methods” for the crime of saying (as was charged) that Fidel was “crazy in the head.”

Karol's book is one of several from pro-Castro scholars that have recently appeared which seriously question the wisdom and justice of much that is happening in Cuba. But *Guerrillas in Power* is the best single chronicle of the stages of Castro communism.

Georgie Anne Geyer, a roving correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News Foreign Service*, is the author of “*The New Latins*.”



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## THE COTILLION, OR ONE GOOD BULL IS HALF THE HERD

by John Oliver Killens

Trident, 256 pp., \$6.50

Reviewed by Leonard Fleischer

■ *The Cotillion*, John Oliver Killens's fourth novel, is a considerable departure from his earlier work. It bears little resemblance to the gritty realism and near-documentary flavor of *Youngblood* (1954), *And Then We Heard the Thunder* (1962), and *Sippi* (1967). Rather, the author's latest effort, besides being more compact than its massive predecessors, is essentially satiric in thrust and far less shocking in execution. In a prose often buoyantly evocative and musical, Killens caricatures some of the more egregious foibles of black and white society.

The novel depicts the efforts of Daphne Lovejoy, born in the West Indies of a Scots father and black mother, to install her daughter Yoruba in the upper echelons of the black bourgeoisie. Her means is the Grand Cotillion, an annual debutante ball sponsored by an organization of middle-class Brooklyn Negro women known as the Femmes Fatales. Yoruba, one of five "culturally deprived" Harlem girls offered the privilege of "coming out," at first resists the efforts, preferring instead a romantic liaison with a young poet fiercely proud of his black heritage. But she eventually succumbs to her mother's desperate pleas, and much of the novel chronicles the preparations taken by the reluctant deb for her entrance into Society.

In the process Killens lampoons a status-seeking Negro middle class ashamed of its racial past, eagerly embracing white values. He offers a telling, at times genuinely funny, account of the caste system in New York City's black community. His book, though at times biting, is never bitter, and its concluding chapter, which finds mother and daughter rejecting the identity-destroying world of the black bourgeoisie symbolized by the Cotillion, describes a rebellion guaranteed not to trouble even the most paranoid white.

What Killens presents is, in effect, a cartoonlike case history of a cultural revolution, one in which the rituals and symbols prized by white society—and imitated slavishly by some blacks—are discarded in favor of modes of dress, hair styles, names, and speech patterns more firmly rooted in the black experience. Like such playwrights as Ossie Davis and Douglas Turner Ward, Killens makes use of stereotyped blacks by placing them in a context designed to satirize their willing ac-

ceptance of the standards of white culture. At the same time the author is mocking the rage for instant blackness:

There were cats who had skimmed through Malcolm's book and deliberately got themselves arrested for hustling pot and heroin, did a stretch in Sing Sing and came out and knighted themselves as the Black shining prince. . . .

It may be that this material can be handled more successfully on stage or in the films, for, despite Killens's unfailingly high spirits, there is a thinness to *The Cotillion*, a lack of resonance that results in its becoming little more than an amiable assault on some too obvious targets. Whereas there are marvelously diverting sequences, the narrative, which is closer to TV situation comedy than genuine satire, is not substantial enough to bear the weight of the author's ambitious ironies. In addition, Killens has still not shed the obtrusive didacticism that marred his earlier books. Here the messages are spiced with boisterous humor, but the tale, blatant enough in *The Cotillion*, is not permitted to make its own point. Killens's spokesman, Ben Ali Lumumba (slave name Ernest Walter Billings), attempting to undermine the Cotillion, tells Yoruba that "these colored cotillions are aimed against our race pride—against our sense of Black identity—against nationhood and unity."

Yet what is memorable in *The Cotillion* is choice: a rambling conversation in a Harlem barbershop covering such diverse topics as the relative merits of Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle, and the racial identity of Jesus Christ; a street-corner black nationalist named Billy "Bad Mouth" Williams; a hilarious misadventure involving a defective toilet seat, and the appearance of a ferocious black militant of the *Johnny Carson Show*. Killens does, however, pull his punches for, while he pokes fun at Mrs. Lovejoy's social climbing, he retains genuine affection for her. As she poignantly explains to her daughter: "I saw that the white man had all the pride and dignity in the world. My mother and her folks was the humble people. Whenever my white father walked, Black men bowed and scraped, so I despised the Black in me."

No such humanity is allowed the few white characters in the novel, all of whom are grotesquely portrayed. But *The Cotillion* is unlikely to offend. Not rich or probing enough to disturb, it is too likable to do more than entertain. And that it does reasonably well.

Leonard Fleischer teaches black American literature at the University of Akron, Ohio.