

**Contents:**

- *Basic biographical data*
- *Biographical sketch*
- *Selective bibliography*
- *Sidelines, notes on archives*

**Basic biographical data**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Pierre Frank</b>
<b>Other names (by-names, pseud. etc.):</b>	<b>Paul ; P.F. ; P.Fr. ; Pedro ; Pierre ; Pierrette; F. Match ; Pierre Franck ; Raymonde ; Cousins <sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Date and place of birth:</b>	<b>October 24, 1905, Paris (France)</b>
<b>Date and place of death:</b>	<b>April 18, 1984, Paris (France)</b>
<b>Nationality:</b>	<b>French (since 1927)</b>
<b>Occupations, careers, etc.:</b>	<b>Chemical engineer, political organizer, writer, editor</b>
<b>Time of activity in Trotskyist movement:</b>	<b>1927 - 1984 (lifelong Trotskyist)</b>

**Biographical sketch**

*Note:* This biographical sketch is chiefly based on biographical notes found in *Pour un portrait de Pierre Frank : écrits et témoignages*, Montreuil, 1985 and in Prager, Rudolf: *Frank Pierre*, in: *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, publié sous la dir. de Jean Maitron, partie 4, 1914-1939, t. 28, Paris, 1986, pp. 246-250.

Pierre Frank was born in Paris (IXe arrondissement) on October 24, 1905 as son of Aron Frank (b. 1876) and his wife Anna (b. Schirmann, b. 1876), Jews who emigrated from Russia to France in 1904, settled at Paris and earned their living as tailors. The Frank family got French citizenship only in 1927. After having attended high school, Pierre Frank graduated with a diploma from the *Ecole de Physique et de Chimie Industrielles de Paris*. In the course of his studies as a chemical engineer he participated in the founding of the *Union Générale des Etudiants Techniciens de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Agriculture (UGETICA, General Union of Technical Students in Industry, Commerce and Agriculture)*; as a trade-unionist Frank was active in the *Fédération des Produits Chimiques (Chemical Federation)* which was affiliated to the communist-led *Confédération Générale du Travail Unifié (CGTU, United General Confederation of Labour)*. In 1925 he became an active member of the *Parti Communiste Français (PCF, French Communist Party)*.

Frank was one of those French CP activists who supported the 1927 (Russian) platform of the *United Opposition* (Trotskyists and Zinovievists) and who sided with the anti-Stalinist and anti-Bukharinist tendency within the *CPSU* and in the *Comintern*. Two years later and as a consequence from sympathizing with Trotsky's *Left Opposition* Frank was expelled from the French *CP* in 1929. Together with

1) *Cousins, Pierrette* and *Raymonde* are pseudonyms which were used by Pierre Frank together with Raymond Molinier.

other renowned oppositionists and expellees, in the same year he launched the French journal *La Vérité (The Truth)* – one of the eldest Trotskyist papers – and became its managing and contributing editor. Several months later, in April 1930, Pierre Frank was elected member of the executive committee of the *LC (Ligue Communiste [Communist League])*, the first French Trotskyist organization affiliated to the *ILO (International Left Opposition, Bolsheviks-Leninists)*, the international tendency created and led by Leon Trotsky and considering itself at that time as an external faction of the *Comintern*. In 1932 Frank became a member of *ILO's International Secretariat* and in this capacity he travelled several European countries participating in unification negotiations and various other organizational activities.

From July 1932 to June 1933 Frank settled at Büyük Ada (Prinkipo Islands, Turkey) and served as one of Trotsky's secretaries, accompanying him to Copenhagen in November 1932 where Trotsky delivered his famous last public speech which dealt with the Russian revolution on the occasion of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Back in France, Frank got deeply involved in the political battles within the French workers movement in face of the fascist danger. When at the end of 1934 the *Ligue Communiste* decided – on behalf of Trotsky and in accordance with his recently launched tactical orientation towards *entryism* – to send all its members and supporters into the French Socialist Party (which at that time was called *SFIO, Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière [French Section of the Workers' International]*), the French Trotskyists formed the *GB-L (Groupe Bolchevik-Léniniste [Bolshevik-Leninist Group])* as a faction inside the *SFIO*. This new policy of *entr(y)ism* also became known as the *French turn* because the French section was the first one applying the new entrism tactics. Frank was elected an alternate member (for Jean Rous) of the leading body of the *SFIO* in June 1935 but already some months later was expelled from it, just as the majority of the *GB-L* faction.

The inner-Trotskyist quarrels about the problems of tactics and party building which emerged as a consequence from their expulsion from *SFIO* eventually led to a sincere and long-lasting split of the French Trotskyist movement. Personal rivalries and a deep animosity put a strain on the relationship between the various leaders of the French Trotskyist movement. A minority of the French Trotskyists was led by Pierre Frank and by the brothers Raymond and Henri Molinier who advocated a broad regroupment outside the *SFIO* and thus got in sharp conflict with Leon Trotsky and with the majority of his French adherents.

The Frank-Molinier group launched a new journal called *La Commune* and in January 1936 founded a *Comité pour la IVe Internationale (Committee for the Fourth International)* which was renamed *Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI [Internationalist-Communist Party])* in March 1936.

Frank's and Molinier's *PCI* was not affiliated with Trotsky's *Movement for the Fourth International*, and only for a very short period (June-October 1936) it joined forces with the majority tendency organized in the *Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (POI [Internationalist Workers Party])*, before divorcing again. During the following years when France was governed by the *People's Front* the schism of 1935/36 lasted and even was perpetuated when in 1939 the Second World War began. In those years Frank wrote a lot of articles which chiefly appeared in the *PCI* papers *La Vérité* and *La Commune*. When in 1939 Frank was sentenced *in absentia* to prison for articles which had appeared in the journals he was editor-in-chief of, he went into hiding and eventually left France for Belgium where he launched the paper *Correspondance internationaliste*.

In 1940 he went to Britain where he got in contact with British Trotskyists as well as with Trotskyist immigrants from Belgium, France and other European countries. Shortly before Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico in 1940, Pierre Frank started a correspondence with him in order to find out about the possibilities of re-joining forces and reconciling the hitherto hostile Trotskyist tendencies.

Frank's uphold in Britain lasted till 1946; in 1940 he was arrested as a 'dangerous foreigner' and eventually interned in a detention camp on the Isle of Man until 1943. Shortly after the end of the War in Europe he was again arrested by British authorities and not released before February 1946.

He immediately returned to France via Belgium and participated in the first post-World War II interna-

tional conference of Trotskyists which was held in March 1946 at Paris. At this conference the re-unification of the Trotskyist forces was sealed. Already during the war, in February 1944, a clandestine conference of European Trotskyists in Paris (in which Frank of course could not participate because he could not leave Britain at that time) had resulted in the re-unification of three rival currents of French Trotskyism; the newly created French section of the *Fourth International* adopted the name of the pre-war Frank-Molinier group, *PCI (Parti Communiste Internationaliste)*.

In France at the end of the 1940s Pierre Frank represented almost alone the continuity with pre-war Trotskyism since most of the French activists and cadres of the 1920s and 1930s had been either killed during the years of War and fascist occupation or had abandoned Trotskyism or dropped from political activity completely. Some weeks before returning to France, Frank was elected *in absentia* a member of the *Comité Central (Central Committee)* and *Bureau Politique (Political Bureau)* of the *PCI* in 1946. He remained the outstanding leader and chief theoretician of the French section of the *Fourth International* till 1975 when he resigned for reasons of age.

Furthermore, Frank was assigned by the *PCI* to the leadership of the *Fourth International* and in 1948 became a member of its *IEC (International Executive Committee)* and *IS (International Secretariat)*, prominent positions which he held until 1979. From 1946 to 1971 he took responsibility, too, of the editing of *Quatrième Internationale*, the main theoretical French-language paper of the *IEC* of the *Fourth International* and of several other journals and bulletins. In 1952/53 Pierre Frank became the leader of a minority faction within the *PCI* when a sharp controversy took place about Michel Pablo's politics of *entr(y)ism sui generis* and about political issues like for example the class character of the USSR and of the Eastern European countries which then were called the *buffer-zone*. The French section eventually split again and in the *Fourth International* a schism occurred, too, resulting in the creation of a rival *FI*, the *International Committee of the Fourth International*, led by Cannon, Healy, Lambert et al. The split was only partially healed ten years later at the so-called re-unification congress in 1963.

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Pierre Frank travelled several countries of Europe, the Americas and Asia as a representative of the *International Secretariat* (from 1963: *United Secretariat*) of the *Fourth International* and he participated in all world congresses held by the *Fourth International* between 1948 and 1979. He was *FI*'s spokesman on matters of the anti-colonial revolution and was concerned once and again with the question of how revolutionary socialists should approach the phenomenon of Stalinism. For many years Pierre Frank shaped the profile of the *Fourth International* and was deeply involved in its day-to-day leadership together with Ernest Mandel, Joseph Hansen and Livio Maitan.

It goes without saying that Pierre Frank was also an outstanding activist with regard to the support of the Algerian and Indochinese liberation struggle against French colonialism. It was in the course of such actions of solidarity that Frank was arrested and sentenced in 1956.

In the first half of the 1960s and after many years of stagnation, unsuccessful entrisms and setbacks, the *PCI* consisted of only a few dozen members, almost invisible to the public. Thanks to Pierre Frank this tiny nucleus of old but devoted revolutionaries could at least survive the so-called dog days and eventually was given a new lease of life when in 1966 the *JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Communist Youth])* was formed, emerging from a left oppositional current within the communist-led *UEC (Union des Etudiants Communistes [Union of Communist Students])*; *spiritus rector* of that group was the young Trotskyist Alain Krivine who simultaneously was a leading member of the *PCI*. Under his leadership and with the active and decisive support by Pierre Frank the *JCR* soon became a Trotskyist organization which undoubtedly played an eminent role during the events of May-June 1968 in France. During those weeks of turmoil Pierre Frank was arrested and jailed again.

In April 1969 Frank and Krivine engineered the fusion of both organizations, *PCI* and *JCR*, to form the *LC (Ligue Communiste [Communist League])*, which became the new French section of the

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2) In 1963, at the 're-unification congress' of the *FI* the *International Secretariat* was renamed *United Secretariat (USec, or, USFI)*.

3) Michel Pablo at that time was secretary of the *FI* and its main leader since the end of the War.

*Fourth International.* Pierre Frank was elected a member of the *Bureau Politique (Political Bureau)* of the *LC* which in 1973 was renamed first *FCR (Front Communiste Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Communist Front])* and short after *LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire [Revolutionary Communist League])*. The organization grew remarkably, could attract many – chiefly young – militants during the years after 1968 and soon became a constant political factor in France; *LCR* can be considered today [2005] as one of the most renowned and relevant political organizations of the radical left in Europe and as one of the strongest sections of the *Fourth International*, its 'flagship' so to speak. Pierre Frank was not only an indefatigable political organizer and Trotskyist activist but at the same time a very productive writer, editor and translator (see also our selective bibliography below); hundreds of articles and other contributions from his pen can be found in journals like *Quatrième Internationale*, *La Vérité*, *Intercontinental Press* and in almost all journals and bulletins issued by organizations affiliated to or in solidarity with the *Fourth International (IS/US)*. He also contributed articles, prefaces, postfaces and the like to a quite considerable number of books and pamphlets all over the world. Furthermore Pierre Frank translated some major works of Leon Trotsky from Russian into French language and he was editor of some relevant thematic compilations from Trotsky's writings as well as (co-)editor of a lot of French and international Trotskyist papers and newsletters. In the late phase of his life Pierre Frank wrote some historical monographs, e.g. a two-volume history of the *Communist International*, a short history of the *Fourth International* and a book on Stalinism.

After having retired from his political responsibilities during the second half of the 1970s, Pierre Frank died on April 18, 1984 at Hôpital La Pitié, Paris (XIIIe arrondissement) at the age of 78. He was survived by Marguerite Métayer (1916-2005), his companion and co-fighter for many years.

### *Selective bibliography* <sup>4</sup>

- ***Selective Bibliography: Books/pamphlets (co-)authored by Frank***

- Appunti per una storia della Quarta Internazionale / trad.: Giorgio Meucci. - Roma : Samonà e Savelli, 1969. - 175 pp. - (Cultura politica ; 53)
- Après de Gaulle / [Pierre Frank]. - Paris : Parti Communiste Internationaliste, Section Française de la IVe Internationale, 1961. - (La Vérité des travailleurs ; 1961,no.spéc.)
- Construire le parti révolutionnaire. - Paris : Ed. du Parti Communiste Internationaliste, Section Française de la IVe Internationale, 1965. - 31 pp. - (L'Internationale ; 1965,no.spéc.)
- Fjärde Internationelen : ett bidrag till den trotskistiska rörelsens historia / svensk övers.: Sven Vahlne. - Göteborg : Partisan Förl., 1972. - 159 pp. - (Röda böcker ; 1)
- The Fourth International : the long march of the Trotskyists / transl. by Ruth Schein. Introd. by Brian Grogan. App. on Trotskyists and the resistance in World War Two / Ernest Mandel. - London : Ink Links, 1979. - 189 pp. - (International series)
- Frankreich - einem neuen Mai entgegen? / Pierre Frank ; Alain Krivine. - Frankfurt a.M. : Internationale Sozialistische Publikationen, 1975. - 48 pp. - (Rote Hefte ; 4)
- Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale (1919-1943) / Übers. aus dem Franz.: Rudi Segall. - 1-2. - Frankfurt a.M. : ISP-Verl., 1981. - 806 pp.
- Die Geschichte der IV. Internationale . Im Anh.: Der 10. Weltkongreß der IV. Internationale. - Hamburg : Internationale Sozialistische Publikationen, [1974]. - 195 pp.
- Historia de la IV Internacional. - Spånga : Combate, [1977]. - 170 pp. - (Cuadernos rojos ; 22)
- Histoire de la IVe Internationale. - Paris : Service d'Ed. et de Librairie, 1950. - 40 pp.
- Histoire de l'Internationale Communiste (1919-1943). - 1-2. - Paris : Ed. La Breche, 1979-81. - 949 pp.
- The long march of the Trotskyists : contributions to the history of the Fourth International / introd. by Marijke

<sup>4</sup> TSB item numbers (e.g. <TSB 0716>) refer to Lubitz' *Trotskyist Serials Bibliography*, München [etc.] : Saur, 1993, which is out of print but [available as PDF file](#) within the framework of the *Lubitz' TrotskyanaNet* website. In TSB you can find detailed descriptions of the respective Trotskyist journals, newsletters, bulletins and the like.

- Colle. With contributions by Daniel Bensaïd & Ernest Mandel. - London : Resistance Books, 2010. - 202 pp. - (Notebooks on study and research / International Institute for Research and Education ; 50 [recte: 47])
- Mai 1968 : première phase de la révolution socialiste. - Paris, 1968
- May 1968 : first phase of the French socialist revolution. - New York, NY : International Socialist Review Publ. Assoc., 1968. - 48 pp. - (International Socialist Review ; 29.1968,5=188)
- Memorandum for an international control commission. - [S.l.], 1945. - 12 pp.
- "Novateurs" et "conservateurs" dans la question de l'URSS. - Paris, 1947. - 34 pp. - (Bulletin intérieur du Secrétariat International de la Quatrième Internationale ; 2.1947,16,suppl.)
- La Quatrième Internationale : contribution à l'histoire du mouvement trotskyste. - Paris : Maspero, 1969. - 155 pp. - (Les textes à l'appui)
- Revolution & counter-revolution in Europe from 1918 to 1968 / with a biographical introd. By Ernest Mandel. - Amsterdam [etc.] : International Institute for Research & Education [etc.], 2010. - 280 pp. - (Notebooks for study and research ; 49)
- La révolution coloniale depuis la 2ème guerre : cours de l'école des cadres de la IVe Internationale. - [S.l.], 1953. - 24 pp.
- La semaine du 6 au 12 février. - Paris : Ligue Communiste, 1934. - 40 pp.
- Une révision du trotskisme : (à propos de la rupture de Pablo avec la IVe Internationale). - Paris : Ed. de la IVe Internationale, 1967. - 40 pp. - (Quatrième Internationale ; 25.1967,30,suppl.)
- Le stalinisme. - Paris : Maspero, 1977. - 219 pp. - (Petite collection Maspero ; 198)
- L'URSS. - Paris, 1947. - 23 pp. - (Bulletin intérieur du Secrétariat International de la Quatrième Internationale ; 2.1947,15,suppl.)
- The worker-student uprising of 1968 : first phase of the French socialist revolution. - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1968. - 48 pp. [Reprinted from International Socialist Review]

Note: Some of Frank's writings are available in the WWW at the [Pierre Frank internet archive](#)

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- La Commune : organe de regroupement et d'action révolutionnaire (Paris) <TSB 0346> [no. 2 sq. titled: La Commune de Paris]
- Correspondance internationaliste (S.l.) <TSB 0384>
- Fourth International / International Executive Committee of the Fourth International (Paris) [ISSN 0429-2790] <TSB 0535>
- Intercontinental Press (New York, NY) [ISSN 0020-5303 ; ISSN 0162-5594] <TSB 0657>
- Die Internationale (Various places) [ISSN 0535-4005] <TSB 0731>
- L'Internationale / Parti Communiste Internationaliste, Section Française de la IVe Internationale (Paris) <TSB 0733>
- The Internationalist / International Secretariat of the Fourth International (Nottingham; later: Paris) [ISSN 0444-3314] <TSB 0761>
- Internationalist Correspondence = Correspondance internationaliste (London) <TSB 0763>
- Quatrième Internationale (Paris etc., 1936- ) [ISSN 0771-0569 - ISSN 0765-1740] <TSB 1282>
- Quatrième Internationale (Paris, 1965-68) <TSB 1283>
- Trotsky, Leon: Ecrits 1928-1940 / Léon Trotsky. [Ed. et préf.: Pierre Frank]. - 1-3. - Paris : Rivière, 1955-59
- Trotsky, Leon: L'Internationale Communiste après Lénine : ou le grand organisateur des défaites / Léon Trotsky. Préf. et notes de Pierre Frank. (Trad. établi d'après le ms. original en russe). - 1-2. - Paris : Pr. Univ. de France, 1969. - LII, 597 pp. - (A la pensée ; 7.8)
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- L'Archibras (Paris)
- Behind China's "great cultural revolution" / Peng Shu-tse [et al.] - New York, NY : Merit Publ., 1967. - 63 pp.
- Bulletin de discussion / Parti Communiste Internationaliste (Paris, 1951)
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- Bulletin intérieur / Secrétariat International de la IVe Internationale (Paris) <TSB 0542>
- Bulletin intérieur de la Ligue Communiste (Paris) <TSB 0226>
- Bulletin intérieur d'information / Parti Communiste Internationaliste (pour la Quatrième Internationale) (Paris) <TSB 0229>
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- Permanente Revolution : Zeitschrift der Linken Opposition der KPD (Bolschewiki-Leninisten) (Berlin) <TSB 1192>
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- Pour un portrait de Pierre Frank : écrits et témoignages. - Montreuil : Presse-Edition-Communication, 1985. - 204 pp. - (Collection Les nôtres)
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122)

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Note: More informations about Pierre Frank are likely to be found in some of the books, university works and articles listed in the *Lubitz' Leon Trotsky Bibliography [ISSN 2190-0183]*, e.g. in chapters [7.2.04](#) and [7.5.07](#)

- ***Selective Bibliography: Books dedicated to Frank***

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### ***Sidelines, notes on archives***

— In 1936 Frank made a proforma marriage with Rebecca (nicknamed 'Véra') Lanis, a young woman from Romania. He did so as a special favour for his very friend and comrade Raymond Molinier who at this time was still married with another woman. Because of the proforma marriage Rebecca Lanis could avoid expulsion from France. Molinier later went to Argentina with Lanis as companion. In 1960 Frank was legally divorced from his "wife".

— When Pierre Frank died in 1984, a lot of obituaries and appreciations appeared all over the world; his decease was not only mentioned by the international Trotskyist press but by some renowned bourgeois papers like *Le Monde*, *Le Matin* and *Libération*, too. When the funeral celebration took place on April 27, 1984 at Père Lachaise cemetery, Paris, thousands of militants and sympathizers of the LCR as well as a great number of prominent and unknown Trotskyists from abroad paid him solemn homage. Even *Le Monde* and *Le Matin* made reports about this impressive memorial meeting.

— In 1962 it was Pierre Frank who organized the funeral at Père Lachaise of Trotsky's widow Natal'ia Sedova who died at Corbeil (near Paris) on January 23.

— When he gave up all his leadership responsibilities for reasons of age, Pierre Frank was elected a *consultative member* of the IEC of the *Fourth International* at its 11<sup>th</sup> world congress in 1979 as recognition of his unique contribution to international leadership.

— Some cursory remarks on archivalia: A considerable part of Pierre Frank's documents is contained in the Archives of the *International Secretariat/United Secretariat of the Fourth International* which is housed at BDIC (*Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre*); various archival material by/about him as well as a good deal of the many internal bulletins to which he contributed can be found in archives all over the world such as for example at the *CERMTRI* (*Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Mouvements Trotskyste et Révolutionnaires Internationaux, Paris*) or at *Hoover Institution Archives* (Stanford, Cal.). Frank's correspondence with Leon Trotsky and Lev Sedov is contained in the *Leon Trotsky exile papers* (MS Russ 13.1) at *Houghton Library* (Cambridge, Mass.) and in the *Trotskii-Sedov Papers (series 231 of the Boris I. Nicolaevsky Collection* in the *Hoover Institution Archives*, Stanford, Cal.) while his correspondence with Joseph Hansen is contained in the *Joseph Hansen Papers* which are held at the *Hoover Institution Archives* (Stanford, Cal.), too. Further archivalia can be traced in the *Lev Davidovič Trockij / International Left Opposition Archives*, the *Rodolphe Prager Papers*, and in the *Ligue Communiste (France) Archive*, all forming parts of the rich archival collections of the *IISG/ IISH (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam)*.

Wolfgang and Petra Lubitz, 2005  
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