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DRAFT PROTESTS CHALLENGE CARTER'S WAR MOVES



Thousands of young people have taken to the streets in scores of cities and campuses across the U.S. to protest Carter's war moves. Shown above, from left are antidraft demonstrators in (top) Princeton, New Jersey, and New York City; (middle) Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Ann Arbor, Michigan; and (bottom) New York City.

Behind the Recent Soviet Economic Reforms

Draft Protests Vex Carter's War Plans

By Janice Lynn

President Carter is encountering strong opposition to his attempts to rebuild Washington's capacity to intervene militarily against revolutionary struggles. He has made no headway in reversing the deep antiwar sentiment among American workers and students that has successfully tied his hands—in Indochina, in the Caribbean, in Central America, and in the Mideast and Central Asia.

Since the new year, opposition to his plan to reinstitute draft registration has mushroomed. Thousands of young people have marched in the streets and rallied on the campuses against the draft.

Carter has met stiff opposition from many athletes and governments to his call for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics.

And his major opponents in the Democratic Party primaries have attempted to exploit this antiwar and antidraft sentiment, in hopes of boosting their own campaigns.

Since Washington's defeat in Vietnam, the American ruling class has been looking for ways to restore its ability to send U.S. combat forces against anti-imperialist struggles.

Carter's call for reinstituting draft registration was a big test for Washington. This was underscored in a February 10 editorial in the *New York Times*:

At the moment we see only one powerful reason to ask young Americans to register for an eventual military draft: to demonstrate that the public and especially the generation that grew up with Vietnam, is once more ready to contemplate conscription for military action abroad.

Using events in Iran and Afghanistan as a pretext, Carter hoped to show that the antiwar sentiment could in fact be reversed. But the actual response was just the opposite.

Within days of his announced plans to revive military conscription, sizeable anti-draft/antiwar rallies and marches were organized throughout the United States. Eighteen to twenty year olds, the ones who would be the first to go, were among the most vocal.

'We Won't Kill for Exxon'

In addition, a national mobilization against the draft has been called by a coalition of groups for March 22 in Washington, D.C. The demonstration was announced at a February 14 news conference attended by some fifty reporters.

A major theme of the antidraft demonstrations has been adamant opposition to

fighting and dying for the interests of big business.

"Hell no, we won't go—we won't fight for Texaco" and "Exxon, Mobil, what do you say, we won't fight your war today" have been among the most popular chants. Many protesters carry signs that read, "We won't kill for Exxon" and "No blood for oil."

These slogans reflect not only deep antiwar consciousness, but also a growing recognition that a war against the oil-producing nations is not in the interests of U.S. working people.

Despite Washington's massive propaganda effort around recent events in Iran and Afghanistan, American workers have not been convinced that they have a stake in sacrificing for U.S. foreign policy objectives.

One example of this is an antidraft resolution passed at a recent gathering of the California International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), which represents more than 150,000 workers in that state. The resolution stated in part: "There are no American working people's interests served in Afghanistan or Iran, only Multi-national interests."

The resolution continued, the "California Conference of Machinists stand opposed to the registration and draft of both male and females to defend and protect Multi-national interests any place in the world."

So, right from the start, organized labor is beginning to take its place in the ranks of the antiwar opposition. During the anti-Vietnam War protests, in contrast, the labor movement only began to get involved toward the final stages of the struggle. American workers' opposition to being dragged into new wars, and their overall greater combativity and political consciousness compared to a decade ago, are important signs that trade-union power can begin to be exerted against Carter's war plans from the outset.

Sections of the labor movement are already involved in the planned March 22 march on Washington against the draft.

Next Week . . .

Majority and minority resolutions on Afghanistan from the January meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

At the press conference announcing the demonstration, a New York staff member of the United Auto Workers (UAW) read a statement of support from two UAW officials. A spokesperson for the coalition announced plans to approach "each and every union" to get support for the march, as well as Black and Latino groups, anti-nuclear groups, and women's organizations.

Working-Class Opposition

Debates on the draft, war, and U.S. foreign policy are daily occurrences in factories, offices, mills, and mines across the United States. American workers know that the U.S. government lies. They remember Vietnam, the Pentagon Papers, and Watergate. They want to know the truth about what is going on in Afghanistan and Iran. They want to discuss the price they are being asked to pay and whose interests are really at stake.

Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican workers are among the most outspoken in their opposition to fighting in another Vietnam. Many have brothers, relatives, and friends who came back maimed and crippled—or did not come back at all.

Rev. Ben Chavis—a defendant in the Wilmington Ten frame-up recently released from prison—spoke out against the draft at the February 2 anti-Ku Klux Klan rally of 7,000 in North Carolina. He received a thunderous ovation from the largely young Black crowd when he declared:

There ain't going to be no reinstituting the draft! We're not going to fight no more wars for capitalism! We're not going to fight no more wars for imperialism! But I'll tell you what we are going to do. We're going to be drafted in the freedom struggle. . . .

In an unsuccessful attempt to cut across this sentiment of Black youth, Carter sent Muhammad Ali on a tour of Africa to drum up support for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Carter has threatened a postponement or cancellation of the Summer Olympics unless the Soviet Union withdraws its troops from Afghanistan.

But in one African country after another, Ali encountered not only opposition to the boycott, but also sharp questions about Washington's racist and oppressive foreign policy.

At a press conference in Tanzania, Ali responded, "Maybe I'm being used to do something that ain't right. You all have given me questions which are good and are making me look at this thing different."

Under pressure from Washington, however, Ali later backed off from such statements.

But other voices in the U.S. Black community didn't.

The February 9 *Amsterdam News*, an influential New York City Black community newspaper published in Harlem, carried coverage of Ali's trip under the head-

line, "Muhammad Ali Tricked By State Dept." The February 2 issue ran an editorial that said:

... arguing that the Olympics has political overtones doesn't sit well with Black Americans who remember that our government once claimed that politics didn't apply to the games. Of course, that was when Blacks and other minorities challenged South Africa's participation because of its inhuman and repressive regime.

Athletes Resist Olympic Boycott

Opposition to the boycott among Olympic athletes is overwhelming. Many have publicly spoken out against it, both in the United States and in Europe. Dozens of athletes training at the U.S. Olympic Center in Colorado called a news conference last month to speak out against the boycott.

And despite many predictions in the capitalist media about possible violence against Soviet athletes at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, not one hostile incident has been reported. In fact, the Olympic athletes—who have come to test their skills against the best athletes from throughout the world—are nearly unanimous in their desire to compete against participants from the Soviet Union. At a February 15 event, the Soviet athletes received a rousing applause from both the spectators and other athletes.

Carter suffered another setback when the International Olympic Committee voted *unanimously* February 12 to reject Carter's call for moving or cancelling the Moscow Olympics. All seventy-three members present voted to keep the Summer Games in Moscow.

Democratic Party Primary

The capitalist press and opinion pollsters have tried to create the impression that Carter's bellicose moves are merely a response to growing popular impatience over the hostages in Iran and Soviet troops in Afghanistan—that the American people are out for blood.

But this is clearly not the assessment of Carter's two main challengers for the 1980 Democratic Party presidential nomination—Senator Edward Kennedy and California Governor Jerry Brown.

Hoping to revive their sagging campaigns, both Kennedy and Brown have come out against draft registration and stepped up their criticism of Carter's foreign policies.

Kennedy has charged that Carter's military moves in the Arab-Persian Gulf are "getting us very close to a war-type hysteria." Kennedy's statement that war in that area would mean "a nightly television body count of America's children" brought cheers from Harvard University students at a February 12 campaign speech.

Of course, Kennedy's accurate reading of the antiwar and antidraft mood in the country has nothing to do with the policies

he would actually carry out. As a loyal spokesperson—and member—of the U.S. ruling class, Kennedy's political aims are the same as Carter's. That is, to protect the interests of U.S. banks and corporations.

Carter, too, had expressed opposition to draft registration as recently as several months ago.

The thousands of young people who

have already demonstrated against the draft, the planned March 22 antidraft action in Washington, and the beginning of labor's involvement in this developing movement are a powerful answer to Washington's war plans.

This movement has the potential to stop the draft before it begins and help prevent another Vietnam. □

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Who Are the Antigovernment Guerrillas in Afghanistan?

[The following article by James P. Sterba appeared in the February 9 *New York Times* under the title "Afghans Resist New Rights for Women." It gives an indication of the political program of the counterrevolutionary groups fighting the Afghan government.]

* * *

DUKI, Pakistan, Feb. 8—Land reform attempts undermined their village chiefs. Portraits of Lenin threatened their religious leaders. But it was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting of new rights to women that pushed orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns.

The Government move last April triggered armed attacks against Government officials, workers and soldiers. Declaring themselves Mujahedeen, or religious fighters, the villagers asserted that they had killed hundreds of Kabul "Communists" before being driven into Pakistan by Afghan tanks and Soviet bombers. Now they sit around refugee tents in the cold Baluchistan desert, waiting for the spring thaw, subsisting on handouts from the Pakistan Government and church relief groups, begging foreign visitors for weapons and telling war stories, mostly to each other.

"The Government said our women had to attend meetings and our children had to go to schools," said Shahab Uddin, a 40-year-old farmer who fought and then fled eight months ago. "This threatens our religion. We had to fight."

Attacks in Response to Changes

There are some 11,000 refugees living in a sprawling tent village five miles south of Duki. The men here told of many battles including a four-day gunfight in the village of Shinkai, east of the Afghan town of Kalat, in which they claimed to have killed at least 60 Afghan Government officials and soldiers. Of those, they said, 25 were first captured and then put to death before Government reinforcements arrived.

It was one of several attacks the villagers here said they mounted last spring in response to changes initiated by the Marxist Government of Noor Mohammad Taraki and his Khalq Party workers. The Taraki Government, which came to power in April 1978, began moving into the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan early last year, replacing officials of the former government with Khalq Party officials in an effort to break down Islamic ethnic rule.

"The Taraki Government set up parallel institutions, Khalq Party centers, in the villages and began preaching socialism," said a former middle school headmaster and refugee leader here. "They told people that Islam was a tired religion no good for progress. They invited women to attend meetings."

For the Pashtoon villagers, such notions were deeply offensive. For the mullahs, the religious leaders, who have traditionally interpreted Islam for their villagers, the reform efforts were directly threatening. They urged their followers to fight.

"The Government imposed various ordinances allowing women freedom to marry anyone they chose without their parents' consent," said the former headmaster, who has adopted the fighting name of "Zamari."

Portraits of Lenin Distributed

He said hundreds of portraits of Lenin were distributed in Shinkai early last year. They were hung in all Government buildings and people were asked to display them in their homes.

It was on the first anniversary of the April revolution in which Mr. Taraki came to power that Shinkai village women were asked to attend a meeting at the Khalq Party center. "The moment the women were invited to the meeting, the fighting started," said Zamari. The village men met secretly, he said, and organized an attack, which began on April 12. Although more than 1,000 villagers took part, he said, only about 100 had weapons.

Two other refugees here described how they and 50 other men, only 20 of whom were armed, cut the road 10 miles west of Shinkai with boulders to stop Afghan

troops from rescuing the trapped Government workers in the village.

Workers and Troops Surrounded

The Mujahedeen surrounded a small Government cantonment in the village after about 140 Government workers and 60 Afghan troops took refuge there. Zamari and other men here said they very slowly "picked off" several soldiers, mostly at night, and captured Government workers at night. "Some of them surrendered and submitted to us," Zamari said. "Those who were just helpers we spared. The Khalqi workers we did not spare. We killed them." He said some 25 Khalqi members who were captured alive had been taken to the edge of the village and shot.

After two days, four tanks and several hundred soldiers with Soviet advisers broke through the blocked pass with the help of air strikes against the sniping Mujahedeen holding the high ground. The rebels said they then fled with their families and moved by night to avoid artillery bombardment and air strikes over the mountains into Pakistan.

The rebels in the refugee camp here said they had left their weapons at an encampment near the Afghanistan border, 100 miles northwest of Duki. A small contingent of rebels used the encampment as a staging area for forays back into Afghanistan to persuade other villagers to join their fight.

"Sometimes we have to catch them and bring them with us forcefully until they see that our cause is right," said Shahab Uddin, who added that he came to Duki only to insure that his eight-member family was secure, and that he would return to the border base camps in 20 days. □

Bani-Sadr: 'No Aid to U.S.-Backed Afghans'

A victory by the antigovernment Afghan guerrillas would result in the imposition of U.S. imperialist domination over that country and the establishment of a repressive regime like that of General Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan.

This simple fact was implicitly acknowledged by Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr in a February 11 interview with Eric Rouleau for the Paris daily *Le Monde*.

Rouleau asked, "Have you already begun to supply the multipurpose aid that you had promised" the Afghan guerrillas?

"No," Bani Sadr responded, "because we must first distinguish between the Afghan groups attached to the U.S. and to Pakistan and those really fighting for the

independence of their country, these being the only ones we would like to support. The task is not easy and takes time."

The Iranian people, Bani-Sadr told Rouleau, have "designated the U.S. as their principal enemy. But since the occupation of Afghanistan, they have become worried about Soviet expansionism."

Yet this statement itself is an indication of the pressures on Bani-Sadr from the Iranian toilers, who see the U.S. government, not the Soviet Union, as the "expansionist" danger to their revolution. They do not identify their anti-imperialist struggle with the fighting by the Afghan rightists. □

Capitalist Press Tangled In Its Own Lies

By David Frankel

When you read a newspaper headline that says, "Report 2,000 USSR casualties in Afghan," isn't it natural to assume that there must be some factual basis for the report?

Such headlines have appeared in newspapers throughout the United States. *New York Times* correspondent David Binder reported February 3: "American analysts estimate that the Soviet expeditionary force in Afghanistan has been suffering casualties at a rate of about 500 killed and wounded a week since it invaded the neighboring Asian country five weeks ago."

Five hundred casualties would be comparable to the losses sustained by U.S. forces during the Vietnam War. But Binder gives no indication that the figures given by "American analysts" might be high.

But it is worth noting that on January 27 the *Washington Post* reported: "A Soviet soldier in Kabul has been shot by a sniper in the first incident of violent opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan witnessed by Western reporters." (Emphasis added.)

A substantial part of the international press corps has been trooping through Afghanistan, camping out with rebels in the mountains, haunting the Afghan-Pakistani border, looking for just such incidents. Either the reporters are unusually incompetent, or the incidents are not so common.

Nevertheless, an article citing "the latest U.S. intelligence reports from Afghanistan" appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* February 4. According to the *Journal*, U.S. "analysts painted an almost pathetic picture of the 80,000 Russian troops in Afghanistan. The soldiers face a sullen Afghan population and a mutinous Afghan army; they are forced to steal food from local stores because of inadequate supplies, and they are plagued by hit-and-run insurgent forces that 'block roads, raid camps and slit throats,' the U.S. officials said."

After six paragraphs of such details, and after reporting the 500-casualties-a-week figure, the *Journal* notes that "the catalog of Soviet woes cited in the U.S. intelligence reports probably should be discounted, because much of the information appears to come from the insurgent camp. The U.S. analysts conceded that some of the rebel reports—claiming that 10,000 Soviet troops were killed in one week and asserting that the Soviets are using chemical weapons—aren't believable."

This admission, however, did not stop the *Journal* from starting out its lead

editorial *that same day* by saying: "Government officials privately confirm that Soviet forces have used nerve gas known as Soman against Afghan tribesmen."

Four days after the appearance of the *New York Times* article detailing supposed Soviet casualties in Afghanistan, *Times* military analyst Drew Middleton warned the too-trusting reader: "Nothing in the military situation suggests that the Soviet forces are getting bogged down in a long guerrilla war. . . ."

"The assertion by unidentified Washington sources that the Soviet forces had suffered anywhere from 2,000 to 10,000 casualties is questioned by military sources."

Although Middleton politely labels the lies about Afghanistan as coming from "unidentified Washington sources," there is no mystery about the source. As Bernard Gwertzman explained in the January 26 *New York Times*, the U.S. government has "relaxed" its "accuracy code" around the events in Afghanistan.

In other words, it's lying.

"Now the State Department and White House routinely publicize information about Afghanistan received here, even when its authenticity is questionable. Sometimes this is done by spokesmen and sometimes by officials who request anonymity."

Gwertzman cites the State Department's Hodding Carter as the source of the 500 casualty-a-week figure and as one of those who had contributed to the charges of chemical warfare by the Soviets in Afghanistan. "The result of these kinds of statements is to produce accounts suggesting Soviet actions for which the Administration itself has no solid confirmation," Gwertzman notes.

Meanwhile, the mass media—the *New York Times* included—continues to publish articles based on Washington's "relaxed" accuracy code. (This, remember, was the

code that guaranteed us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth during the Vietnam War, the destabilization of the Allende government in Chile, the Iranian revolution, and similar events.)

The latest sensation manufactured by the capitalist media is the alleged massacre of more than 1,000 Afghans in the village of Kerala in April 1979. (Reports at that time claimed 300 were killed.)

According to a dispatch in the February 4 *Christian Science Monitor*, "The shooting was ordered by a dark-blond, green-eyed Russian officer. . . ."

According to the February 11 issue of *Newsweek*, "The Afghan commander consulted briefly with a senior Soviet adviser, a stocky, green-eyed man with dirty blond hair. The Russian, in turn, spoke by radio to a Soviet helicopter that was hovering overhead. Suddenly the chopper flew off and the Russian barked 'Fire' in Pushtu."

Newsweek and the *Monitor* even "quote" the Soviet adviser as taunting women of the village as the bodies were buried.

As it turns out, the "Soviet helicopter," the "stocky, green-eyed" Soviet adviser, and his malicious taunts were all figments of the imagination.

When Associated Press reporter Barry Schlachter finally reached the village where the incident had taken place, it turned out that a rogue Afghan army unit was responsible. One survivor told Schlachter, "There was a rumor that Russians were coming to take the women away in buses. But there were no Russians."

None of the Afghans Schlachter talked to claimed that Soviet troops or advisers had taken part in the killings, which he now places at 640. On the contrary:

"Among the dead, it was said, were Wazir Mohammad, a local Communist official who was the principal of the girls' school at nearby Chigha Sarai, and Mohammad Yashteen, also a staunch party member, who taught at the local primary school."

To return to the question posed at the beginning of this article: Isn't it natural to assume there must be some factual basis for the reports we read in the capitalist press?

Yes, it's natural. But it's also a mistake.

Turkish Workers Resist Austerity Moves

Vowing that those who "aim to turn Turkey into another Korea, Afghanistan or Cuba, will suffer," Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel is trying to repress massive resistance to the savage austerity program he announced January 24.

On February 14 several thousand troops, supported by tanks, armored cars, and reconnaissance planes, surrounded the Tarsis spinning factory in Izmir, Turkey's main port and third-largest city, which has

been a center of resistance to Demirel's attack on the workers and peasants.

Demirel bragged that "the state has enough power to crush all of those who will disturb the order in Turkey."

But despite the show of force in Izmir, where tens of thousands of workers have been involved in strikes, street demonstrations, and battles with the police, it is clear that Demirel's troubles are far from over.

With unemployment pegged at 25 percent of the workforce, with inflation run-

ning at nearly 100 percent, with industry operating at only 30 percent of capacity, and with widespread shortages of basic goods, the Turkish economy is threatened with collapse.

Demirel's response to the crisis has been a brutal attack on the living standards of the workers and peasants. The Turkish lira was devalued by one-third; all price controls and price subsidies were lifted; and massive layoffs in state-owned industries—which account for 50 percent of industrial production—were initiated.

As a result of Demirel's program, meat, eggs, and sugar have doubled in price. Rail tickets have gone up 175 percent, electric rates jumped 78 percent, and the cost of essential fertilizers has soared by 500 to 750 percent.

These measures, Marvine Howe noted in the February 11 *New York Times*, "have raised new confidence among foreign governments and bankers. . . ."

According to an editorial in the February 12 *Wall Street Journal*, "The International Monetary Fund and other Western aid agencies are enthusiastic about [Demirel's] measures, and some \$400 million in credits have been released in the last few weeks."

However, the Turkish masses have not been quite as happy as the international bankers about the regime's austerity plan. Supermarkets in Ankara and food trucks in Istanbul have been seized and their contents distributed for free.

Tension between classes and armed clashes are on the rise. *Hurriyet*, an Istanbul daily, recently published a map showing that thirty-one of Turkey's sixty-seven provinces are divided into areas controlled by either right-wing or left-wing groups.

Protests reached their greatest pitch in Izmir after the regime initiated mass layoffs at the Taxis factory and sought to purge the union leadership there. The rebellion at the Taxis factory spread to the entire city.

"Large slum areas are now controlled by the militants, who have started to get up so-called people's committees," Sam Cohen reported in the February 14 *Christian Science Monitor*.

According to Cohen, "Kurdish separatists also are taking advantage of the disturbances. In Izmir, slogans for Kurdish independence have been widely echoed in the chorus of 'anti-fascist' propaganda conducted by leftist militants."

Former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, the leader of the main bourgeois opposition group, accused Demirel of using "the cruelest Nazi methods" to terrorize the masses and put down the protests. He complained February 14 that the regime's policies were making the workers "easy prey" for left-wing groups.

The following day, according to a dispatch by Howe, "the two main cities in the west, Istanbul and Izmir, were almost paralyzed by anti-Government protests."

12 HKE Prisoners Now Free— Urge Release of Last Two

[Two more members of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) have been released from prison. They are Hormoz Fallahi and Mustafa Seifabadi, who were held in Karoun Prison in Ahwaz. Of the fourteen HKE prisoners jailed last summer, only two women HKE members are still being held. The following appeal for their release is being circulated among supporters of the Iranian revolution in the United States. Telegrams should be sent to President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, Tehran, Iran, and to Ahmad Janati, Islamic Revolutionary Court, Ahwaz, Iran.]

* * *

I am a supporter of the Iranian revolution and an opponent of the U.S. government's threats against it. I appeal to you for the release of two women prisoners in Iran—Mahsa Hashemi, currently imprisoned in Behbahan Prison, and Fatima Fallahi, who is now hospitalized in Ahwaz.



HASHEMI

FALLAHI

These two women, members of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), are staunch antishah and anti-imperialist fighters. They are innocent of any crime, as shown by your government's decision to free the twelve other HKE prisoners jailed with them.

I urge you to speed the release of Hashemi and Fallahi, which would strengthen the Iranian revolution in the eyes of the world.

Italian CP Ranks Rebuke Leaders on Afghanistan

By David Frankel

Leaders of the Italian Communist Party are meeting widespread anger from rank-and-file party members over their condemnation of the Soviet decision to use troops against proimperialist forces in Afghanistan. The CP leaders called the Soviet intervention "a violation of the principles of national independence and sovereignty" and "a danger to world peace."

But their real considerations were less lofty. As Henry Tanner pointed out in the February 12 *New York Times*, the chances of the Italian Stalinists "entering the Government will depend largely on convincing non-Communist parties that they are independent from Moscow. It is thought that if the party had not come out unambiguously against the Soviet move, its hopes of respectability would have been set back many years."

CP officials have had to appear at hundreds of local meetings to try to placate the workers who compose the party's mass base. Letters to the CP's daily *L'Unità* are said to be running five to one against the leadership's position. One worker asked at a neighborhood meeting in Rome: "Is it worth it to trade our revolutionary heritage for a ministerial seat in the Cabinet?"

Enrico Berlinguer and the rest of the Stalinist hacks who run the party apparatus are not revolutionaries, and for them a



CP-leader Enrico Berlinguer

seat in the Italian cabinet is indeed the highest aspiration. But there are tens of thousands of Communist workers who joined the party because they were looking for a party that stood on the side of the oppressed of the world and against the capitalist oppressors. Their revulsion to proimperialist stands by the CP leadership, such as that on Afghanistan, will increasingly open their minds to revolutionists who consistently oppose imperialism and class collaboration. □

Interview With Exiled Left-Wing Soviet Dissident

[In late 1978, there were reports from the Soviet Union that the Kremlin bureaucracy's security police, the KGB, had broken up a commune in Leningrad and arrested several young activists. They were part of a grouping calling themselves the "Left Opposition."

[On December 5, 1978, in Leningrad, some 200 high school and university students had a demonstration outside the Kazan Cathedral protesting these arrests.

[Radicalized by their opposition to the stifling effects of Stalinist bureaucratic rule over all areas of their lives, these young people look to a variety of left-wing political perspectives—Marxism, anarchism, and various "new left" thinkers abroad. Most information about these ideas is available only in samizdat form.

[The grouping in Leningrad had established sufficient links with other pro-socialist and left-wing groupings in other parts of the USSR that it decided to hold an "All-Union Conference of the Left Opposition." To facilitate the organization of such a conference, the Leningrad grouping began putting out a journal called *Perspectives*. Its articles were to serve as a basis for political discussion at the Conference.

[After the KGB arrested some of the key activists, it also moved against other participants in and around the grouping, expelling some from the Young Communist League and from their schools and universities. Others were called into the KGB offices and told to emigrate or face arrest.

[The following is an interview with one of these Leningrad activists who was forced to emigrate. Now eighteen years old, he had to leave the USSR in November 1978.]

* * *

Question. Some of the key figures in the Left Opposition grouping had been active since February 1976. What happened at that time?

Answer. Young people, high school and university students, made leaflets at the time of the 25th Communist Party congress in 1976. The leaflets were procommunist, calling for communism with a human face. The KGB arrested Andrei Reznikov, Aleksandr Skobov, and others.

Reznikov was a student at the Institute for Computer Programmers. Because he was only seventeen, Reznikov could not, according to the law, be sent to labor camp. After two months in the KGB prison, he was sent before a commission for juvenile offenders. He was expelled from

the university and drafted into the army for two years.

Skobov was at that time a student at the Faculty of History at Leningrad State University. Others involved were in the last grade of high school or the first year of institute or university.

Their leaflet ended with the demand "Long Live Communism! Long Live the New Revolution!" The group was procommunist, pro-Marxist, but it also included anarchists and socialists.

Q. How did the grouping develop after that?

A. In Leningrad there are many places where artists, political people, and dissidents can meet. They meet in people's apartments, in cafes, and in communes.

After the leafleting attempt in 1976, Skobov organized a commune in Leningrad. Arkady Tsurkov was then studying at the University of Tartu, where he had many friends.

It is very popular among young people to travel by hitchhiking. And there is a particular system for doing this. For example, if you are going from Leningrad to Odessa or to Novorossisk, you can get addresses of people's places where you can go to eat and sleep. Therefore, you discover there are communes in these places. In this way, a specific network of young people developed who had contact with each other.

At Skobov's commune in Leningrad many people came together to talk about art, politics, and philosophy. These people were not only from Leningrad but from Moscow, the Baltic republics, and from Siberia. If they came to Leningrad, they stayed at the commune. Tsurkov and Reznikov came to the commune and sometimes lived there. They, with Skobov, formed the core of the Leningrad grouping.

Q. How did you become involved with the commune?

A. I had a lot of friends in the Academy of Arts in Leningrad. These people—artists and painters—tended to find each other in cafes like the Sphinx or Red Castle in Leningrad. I had friends who came there often, even from Moscow. And they needed a place to spend the night, so we would help them. Through this, I became acquainted with people who knew Skobov and introduced me to him. We became friends.

Q. Would you describe the commune?

A. Our commune was on the edge of the

city, on Primorsky Prospect, about a half hour by train from the center of the city. It was on the first floor of an old two-story wooden home.

The commune had a set of statutes written by Skobov. It defined the commune to be like a small communist society. Everything was for everybody. Skobov repudiated private property. He was opposed to violence. There was a cash box for whatever the commune needed. Its doors were always open. Everybody knew where the key was kept. From five to ten people lived there at any one time, but a lot of people came in from other cities.

Q. How did the commune become the center for a political movement?

A. At the commune, we had many discussions. We talked about the internal situation, foreign policy, about the latest cultural news, philosophy, and so on.

We wanted more freedom. Outside the commune we weren't free to express ourselves. We couldn't even listen to the music we wanted to hear.

We didn't like the passport system. We couldn't travel abroad. For example, tourists from Finland could come to Leningrad, but we in Leningrad could not travel to Finland.

We felt the system was hypocritical. There are so many lies.

We didn't like the economic system because of the way it was planned with all the decisions made on top. It didn't work—there is a big black market.

The education system was bad. Everything we studied was the official version of Marxism, the official Communist Party documents, Brezhnev's book, and so on. You could only analyze history or literature from the official point of view.

There was a typewriter in the commune. We put out proclamations about the policies of the Communist Party and about the state, and what we had to do against it.

There were calls to have demonstrations and to speak out. Usually we attempted to expose that the Soviet Union is not communist or Marxist, and that the Communist Party is not Marxist, because in the Soviet Union all the power is in the hands of the state.

Communism should be a free society. We could understand a state being necessary to build communism. But in the USSR, the state only serves the interests of the upper class, the bureaucrats.

Q. What were the main political currents in the grouping?

A. There were three main political currents.

There were the Marxists like Tsurkov and Reznikov and Fedorova.

There were anarchists like Khavin and me. Skobov was half Marxist and half anarchist.

There were three left democrats like Victor Pavlenkov, who was from Gorky. His father was a famous dissident and he had many friends in Gorky and Moscow. The left democrats weren't Marxist or anarchists, but simply took part in the democratic movement for human rights from a left-wing point of view.

There were also disagreements over strategy and tactics. There wasn't one single point of view.

Q. The "Left Opposition" grouping was planning to hold an "All-Union Conference of the 'Left Opposition.'" How did this plan come about?

A. Skobov, Tsurkov, Fedorova, Reznikov

and others from Leningrad went to Moscow for a meeting. There were only people from Moscow and Leningrad at the Moscow meeting, but they were planning to have a conference in Leningrad that would be on a larger scale.

We began to put out *Perspectives*. We prepared it in our commune because we had a typewriter there. Then we made copies and distributed it. We wanted to distribute it in the universities and high schools to present our views and get supporters.

Although we would make only ten or fifteen carbon copies of each issue of *Perspectives*, many people read it. One person reads the copy and then passes it on to a friend. And a lot of people learned about our magazine.

Q. What did Perspectives contain?

A. Many kinds of articles, excerpts, poems. The second issue contained ana-

lyses of the present situation in the Soviet Union and drew some conclusions. We concluded that what was needed was to make a revolution.

Q. Was the conference held?

A. No. On August 12, the militia came and smashed the commune. And after that, it ceased to exist, although some people continued to come there. But it was dangerous for them. They were followed by the militia.

Q. What happened to the commune's leading figures?

A. On October 14, 1978, Skobov was arrested. On April 16, 1979, his trial was held, and he was sentenced to compulsory psychiatric treatment for an indefinite period.

Arkady Tsurkov was arrested October 31, and in April 1979 he was sentenced to five years in a concentration camp and three years internal exile.

On April 16, Khavin was arrested. He was sentenced to a six-year term.

Reznikov and Fedorova were sent to Altai.

Viktor Pavlenkov had to emigrate like I did.

And a friend of mine from Leningrad has told me that now the school where I went has been changed. My school was one of the best high schools in Leningrad, a school for the privileged, for children of important artists, big party members, etc. It was a ten-grade school and had a special French school—there were only six such French schools in Leningrad.

After the December demonstration, when the ninth and tenth grade students came to the demonstration, the KGB came to the school and now it is only an eight-grade school, because the ninth and tenth grades were closed. A lot of teachers were dismissed.

So now it is an incomplete school, a poor quality one, like the schools that they have here in the United States for Puerto Ricans and Blacks. An eight-grade school is not a good school.

But the KGB thought there were bad influences in the ninth and tenth grades and, it seems, has closed them.

Q. What can pro-socialist forces abroad do to support the movement of young militants in the Soviet Union?

A. I think the movement in the Soviet Union is continuing. There should be a defense campaign organized here for Skobov, Tsurkov and Khavin to run articles, organize demonstrations and committees, and carry out other actions.

And if the comrades of the Fourth International here and in Europe would work on this, it would help us. □

New Arrests of Left-Wing Youth in USSR

By Marilyn Vogt

Recent reports from the USSR indicate continuing ferment among pro-socialist young people dissatisfied with the economic, cultural, and political stagnation under Stalinist bureaucratic rule. Issue No. 20 of *News Brief* reported on the arrest of two such activists in Leningrad in October 1979.*

Vladimir Mikhailov, born in 1952, a worker from Ukraine, and Aleksei Stasevich, born in 1957, a musician, poet, and artist, were arrested October 7 after leaving the commune they lived in. A third person, Aleksei Osipov, who had left the commune with Mikhailov and Stasevich, found the KGB was waiting for him at home. They searched his apartment and hauled him in for questioning.

Meanwhile, the Stalinist authorities were also carrying out a search at the commune itself. Among the items confiscated were drafts of leaflets signed "Movement of Revolutionary Communards"; books published in the Soviet Union, including brochures by Karl Kautsky and by August Bebel (*Women and Socialism*); books by Herbert Marcuse, Eric Fromm, and Isaac Asimov; as well as various samizdat writings put out by banned religious groups and issues of the illegal *A Chronicle of Current Events*.

According to the *News Brief* dated January 15, 1980, Mikhailov and Stase-

vich were tried December 25, 1979, and sentenced to three years in a hard labor camp. Prosecution witnesses claimed the defendants had painted "Democracy—Not Demagoguery" and "Down With State Capitalism" and pasted up a leaflet on walls along the street. Mikhailov and Stasevich were apparently sentenced on a criminal charge of "hooliganism."

At the trial it was also reported that Kremlin authorities claimed that leaflets were printed at the commune and people dispatched from there to paste them up.

The Stalinist bureaucracy and its KGB are also showing that they, like the capitalist ruling classes and political police, can exploit antidrug laws as a means to victimize political activists.

Kremlin authorities allege that during the search of the commune, "a certain quantity of narcotics were uncovered in a cupboard" and elsewhere in the apartment. Apparently, no one was sentenced on drug charges in this case.

However, for Aleksei Khavin, one of the activists in the "Left Opposition" (see accompanying interview), the matter turned out differently.

Following Khavin's arrest in April 1979, he was searched and nothing found. The KGB took his clothes away, however. It later reported that it had "found" narcotics hidden in three places in the clothing. Khavin was subsequently sentenced to a six-year term in a labor camp on a narcotics charge.

**News Brief* is a bimonthly Russian-language newsletter published in Munich.

Sinn Féin Debates Proposed Social Program for Ireland

By Gerry Foley

The *ard-fheis* (national conference) of Sinn Féin [the legal political organization associated with the Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army] held in Dublin over the weekend of January 19-20 was dominated by discussion of a proposed social program for the Republican movement, entitled "The Social Dimension." This was put forward as a new introduction to *Eire Nua* (New Ireland), the programmatic reference document of the Provisional Republican movement.

In fact, the 15 point "Social Dimension" constituted a fairly rounded general program. It took as its starting point the most radical statements of Patrick Pearse, the president of the provisional republic proclaimed in 1916, citing a paragraph from the program adopted by the revolutionary Irish parliament during the war of independence:

We declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions: the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation, and with Pearse we re-affirm that all rights to private property must be subordinate to the public right and welfare.

From this, the "Social Dimension" document went on to make proposals that opened the way for advocating carrying out a socialist revolution. For example, point 7 stated among other things:

We deny the right to personal ownership of productive property such as a large farm or a large factory. This type of ownership involves the exploitation of other people's labour for personal gain and is alien to Republican principles.

Point 9 stated:

Private enterprise will have no place in key industries and state incentives will favour co-operative projects as the most socially desirable.

However, such proposals remained mixed up with the populist notions incompatible with a collective, planned economy. For example, point 8 included the statement: "Each individual worker will own an economic unit of the means of production."

Moreover, the document offered no realistic internationalist perspective, without which the establishment of a socialist economy in Ireland is inconceivable. It called only for "neutral" foreign policy and for expanded trade and contacts with the "third world."

The debate over the document was sharp, and a certain political tension was

obvious. *Republican News*, the weekly paper of the Republican movement, took note of this conflict in its account of the *ard-fheis* in its January 26 issue. It quoted one delegate, George Stagg, who was elected to the eight member national executive, as saying that he opposed the document because it could be the "thin edge of the wedge" in a "trend of left-wing socialism" that would "alienate us from the people." *Republican News* pointed out that this view received some support, but that the document was nonetheless adopted overwhelmingly.

A number of delegates, mainly from rural areas, did voice suspicion of a supposed trend towards "Marxism." But they proposed no alternative programme and did not wage a concerted fight against the adoption of the "Social Dimension" document.

The discussion of the defense of Republican prisoners, which was conducted in open session, was marked by very sharp conflict. Jimmy Drumm, one of the most prominent older Republicans, raised strong objections to the movement's attitude to the National H-Block Committee—the main organization trying to mobilize broad support for the most persecuted section of Republican prisoners.*

Drumm said that the Republican movement had been "inconsistent" in its attitude to the H-Block Committee. He complained that the Republicans had waged a campaign against Bernadette Devlin McAliskey—the only candidate in the elections to defend the H-Block prisoners; that it had accused her of trying to "rise to power on the backs of the prisoners," and had then allowed her to play a prominent role in the H-Block Committee only a couple of months later.

As in previous national conferences of Sinn Féin, it was the president, Ruairi O Brádaigh, who served as the center-weight in the balance among the various tendencies.

In his presidential address, O Brádaigh defended the National H-Block Committee, saying:

Sinn Féin is gratified at the establishment of the broad-based National "Smash H-Block Com-

*The British government stopped recognizing the political status of Republican prisoners arrested for offenses committed after March 1, 1976. In protest, anti-imperialist prisoners have refused to wear prison clothes or do prison work. Hundreds have been held "on the blanket"—locked in cells under brutal conditions in the notorious H-Block of Long Kesh prison.

mittee" on the simple platform of the five demands by the prisoners themselves for the restoration of prisoner-of-war status. We urge our members to redouble their efforts with the assistance of nonmembers on this great issue of human rights.

Much of the presidential address was devoted to answering accusations that the movement was undergoing a major political change. O Brádaigh said, for instance:

It has been suggested that those who reorganized the Republican movement at the time the present phase of the struggle began in 1969-70 must now be disappointed and that the Irish Republican leadership today is quite different from that which took up the challenge in 1969.

O Brádaigh replied to these accusations by saying that in every generation conservatives had tried to attack Republicans by claiming that they had become something different from, and alien to their predecessors. He said:

The only difference between the current phase of the age-old Irish Republican struggle and any other former generation is that it has gone on longer, has achieved more, and is nearer ultimate success than anything in the past.

At the same time, leaders of the Republican movement have felt it necessary to make public assurances that there are no Marxists in the movement. Such statements create a glaring contradiction and political incoherence. In particular, what would it mean if there were no Marxists in the Republican movement now, since there were Marxists—most notably James Connolly—in the 1916 Easter rising against British colonial domination?

The statement made at this conference by Vice-president Gerry Adams that a purely military victory was not possible did seem to promise a move toward greater realism. The main policy resolution proposed by the leadership is the logical conclusion of this realization:

That this Ard-Fheis endorses the need to build a diversified struggle on many fronts in pursuance of these objectives and, therefore, supports the proposal to build an economic resistance campaign.

The adoption of the "Social Dimension" document will not be a step forward for the Republican movement unless it opens up the way for a more concrete and realistic discussion within that movement of how to achieve a social revolution in Ireland.

The demand for a program for social revolution clearly came from the young fighters in the movement who have learned by harsh experience who the ene-

mies are and what is needed to achieve real victory.

Such a program has to be concrete and to be fought for by specific policies and means of action that flow from these concrete objectives. There was no discussion of a concrete campaign of social action and mass mobilization at the conference.

On the other hand, the adoption of a number of radical general propositions is going to provide more of a focus for fire from the right. If this pressure is not effectively resisted and concrete campaigns of social and political action are not advanced, the result could be political paralysis and greater isolation from the masses of the oppressed and exploited Irish people. □

'The Shah Must Pay for So Much Horror'

[The following article appeared in the December 15, 1979 issue of *L'Express*, a mass circulation weekly news magazine published in Paris. Written by Jacques Buob, it is based on interviews with survivors and relatives of those who did not survive the shah's prisons and torture chambers. It is a graphic reminder of why the Iranian masses are demanding the return of the ex-shah to stand trial for his crimes. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*]

* * *

It all began with Ahmad, the oldest child. Already, in primary school, he was into politics. He would cut his classes in order to go to the Hedayat Mosque to listen to Ayatollah Taleghani and Mehdi Bazargan talk about liberty and justice. At the age of fourteen, he made the decision: to let his studies go in order to found with Badi Zadekan and Hanif Nejad the Mujahedeen movement in Iran.

Ahmad died one day in February 1972, in a street in the southwest of Tehran, where SAVAK had found him. He blew himself up with a grenade, taking along with him those who wanted to arrest him. His brother Reza gave his life for the same cause. Their sister, Sedighen, preferred cyanide rather than fall into the hands of the shah's political police. She was nineteen years old. She didn't want to have to undergo the treatment inflicted upon her other brother, Mehdi, the fourth to die.

The fourth to die, the martyr of martyrs of the Reza Rezai family, Mehdi was tortured to death in SAVAK's prisons in September 1972. When his father saw him, before the trial, he no longer had any fingernails, his body was nothing but one big sore, burned by electricity and cigarette butts. His teeth were all broken.

The regime was getting ready to open its first big political trial before international observers. Before his military judges in full-dress uniform, Mehdi was supposed to admit his errors and proclaim the greatness of the empire. This would save his own neck and allow the shah to triumph over all who accused him of violating human rights.

Mehdi was sent to the hospital for twenty-five days to be patched up and

made presentable again. But the young man was stubborn. Sabathi, assistant to the sinister colonel Nassiri (then the head of SAVAK) grew agitated. In Evin prison, next to the Tehran Hilton, he ordered: "Shout 'Long live the shah' or I will piss in your mouth!"

"If you do that," Mehdi answered, "I can always clean my mouth out with water. But if I pronounce that man's name, I can never get rid of the odor of this shit."

So they pissed in his mouth, before his father's eyes. During the trial, Mehdi did not weaken. He recounted the torture he had been subjected to and his hatred of the regime. He had been sentenced to death three times. One time for each SAVAK agent they accused him of having assassinated. But he was not executed. For having ruined the great trial that was going to prove to the world the equity and clemency of imperial justice, they tortured him again. And this time, tortured him to death.

Throughout Iran, from then on, the name of Reza Rezai, resounded as the symbol of all the crimes of SAVAK, the security and information organization of the Iranian state. This most formidable political police was created in 1956, with the aid of CIA specialists, to combat the Tudeh Party, the Iranian Communist Party. But it quickly went beyond just that objective.

During the shah's regime, when this word was pronounced in Tehran or elsewhere, everyone's face would become frozen. Iranians became deaf and dumb. More than just the armed wing of the regime, SAVAK was the structure on which the whole imperial edifice rested. There were three or four thousand agents, plus 50,000 informers spread throughout the country in all milieus, in all professions. They led an insidious hunt after all enemies of the empire and after any one who dissented. SAVAK evoked throughout the country the specter of torture and death.

* * *

Morteza is thirty years old. He takes off his shoe and puts his bare foot on the table. A large scar appears on the sole of his foot. Dead skin falls off. Four years

after, the wound has still not healed and he still limps.

The police came to arrest him in the library where he worked, opposite the University of Tehran. This was in 1975. He was a member of the Fedayeen. He had already been arrested twice. He remained for thirteen months shut up in the fortress of Kizil Chalaa, which has since been destroyed. He is one of the printers for the movement. When he sees the men in uniform approach him, he knows that this time, he is going to suffer the worst.

They blindfold him, and—classical scenario—they send him to an unknown prison. He knows quickly that he is at "Komite," one of the main SAVAK centers. A brick building next to the main post office, in the quiet neighborhood where the ministries are located, protected by armed men and panels on which are written, "No photographs allowed."

It is here and in other prisons and other more anonymous buildings that SAVAK agents perform their work.

Morteza is thrown into a dark cell where he remains for forty-eight hours, cut off from the world. On the second day he is taken to be interrogated, before a door on the ground floor, at the end of a kind of four-story-high tank, onto which the cells open out. This is the domain of Hosseini (his real name is Chabani), the chief jailer, the all-powerful head of these places. He is a roaring giant the sight of whom was terrifying.

It was often necessary to line up in front



A small boy in Tehran whose arms were cut off by SAVAK in the presence of the child's father to try to make him reveal information.

of the downstairs door to wait your turn, closing your ears to the cries of agony that came through the walls, the cries of those who were being systematically and consciously tortured. And it is unbearable waiting to enter.

On this day, Morteza met his executioners. Like Hosseini, the SAVAK men give themselves phony last names. These two called themselves Rasouli and Rahmani. Each day for two whole months they are going to make him suffer so that he will reveal the names of his friends. Each day Morteza is brought down to the chamber. It is 30 square meters. On the wall hang electric cables of different widths. They strap him on a table and beat all over his nude body, his hands, and the soles of his feet. His wounds become infected. He can hardly walk. They strike him again on his abscessed wounds. He does not speak. They hang him by the hands from a hook on the ceiling. His feet don't touch the floor and they send him crashing against the walls. Morteza still does not speak.

Then one day they cover his head with "Apollo." SAVAK saves "Apollo" for members of leftist groups. It was a specialty reserved for the choice prisoners.

"It is called this because it resembles the helmet of an astronaut. They put it on your head and begin to hit you. And you scream. Your screams are amplified by microphones which resound in your head, breaking your eardrums. These are your own screams, you understand? And your own screams of pain are driving you crazy."

In another corner of the chamber shines a metallic bed without a mattress. SAVAK makes the prisoners sit down. The bedsprings had been heated red hot. The skin was burning, falling off in sheets in an odor of burning flesh.

Ali Reza rolls back down his pants, uncovers his arms and exhibits his large scars.

Nourredine looks at him, his eyes fixed. Brown and emaciated, from time to time he smiles sadly. He must still receive regular care for his psychological problems. He remains in the SAVAK jails. You never forget them.

The police came to arrest Nourredine at the agricultural complex where he was working in 1974. Nourredine was active in a Marxist organization, Red Morning. This was in Khuzestan.

He was blindfolded, transferred to an unknown prison and beaten. SAVAK wanted to know the names of the members of his group, its structure, how they received the Marxist pamphlets that they distributed among the students.

Nourredine was burned with a candle; raped several times; thrown into a mirror; placed in a swiveling chair, swung around at full speed, while the SAVAK agents used razors to cut gashes in his body as he was spun past them. Blood was flowing all over. He fainted. Nourredine goes from

prison to prison. He is kicked; his eardrums are broken; he becomes crazy.

A mission of the International Red Cross demands that he be hospitalized. In order to prove its humanity, SAVAK goes even further. He is freed. Supreme sadism. Twenty days later, shortly after the Red Cross leaves, he is arrested again.

This time his stomach is crushed with a press. He suffers the agony of "Apollo." "Every three months I cracked up. They sent me to the hospital and it began again." Nourredine saw a friend of his, Azim Assad, die—ripped apart by a stick kicked into his anus.

February 1979—SAVAK lost; the Shah was forced to flee. The masses took over Evin prison where Nourredine had ended up. The political prisoners were freed. The masses carried them triumphantly throughout the city.

Nourredine stares into space with his

burning eyes, strangely wide open. "We were gotten out of there more or less in one piece. But how many died? At least 150,000. How many cripples, handicapped, sick people? Tell the world that the shah must pay for so much horror, and the United States also, for having created such executioners, whom they continue to support."

Through the open window you can hear the shouts full of hatred chanted by the crowds in front of the gates of the U.S. embassy nearby. Mr. Reza Rezai, father of four children who are dead because they wanted to fight SAVAK, sets out again. He is carrying under his arms Mujahadeen placards bearing a photo of Mehdi and the memory of his three other children who died in combat against the shah and his SAVAK. At his side, his wife, their mother, hides her face under her chador, a face frozen in eternal pain. □

More of Washington's Lies Exposed

Fact and Fancy in Kampuchea

[Despite U.S.-backed propaganda efforts such as the recent "March for Survival" on the Thailand side of the Thai-Kampuchea border, facts have begun to come out during the past month about the real situation in Kampuchea. They give the lie to imperialist slanders of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean governments and to Carter's pretension of "humanitarian" concern for the Kampuchean people.]

[Washington's actual goal is to prevent Kampuchean and Vietnamese troops from mopping up the remaining military forces of mass murderer Pol Pot and other reactionary bands fighting the Heng Samrin government in Pnompenh.]

[The following is excerpted from an article headlined "The Fancies and the Fact" in the February 18 issue of *Time* magazine.]

* * *

After a tour of the Thailand-Cambodia border last week, *Time's* Hong Kong bureau chief, Marsh Clark, found that conditions have changed so much in the past 13 months that the Western public's perception of Cambodia is a mixture of fact and fancy. Clark's report:

FANCY: The Cambodians are in imminent danger of being wiped out as a race.

FACT: There are now about 150,000 Cambodians in refugee camps well inside Thailand. An estimated 740,000 Cambodians, mostly civilians, are within a short distance of the border on the Cambodian side; it takes a considerable amount of imagination to speculate that they will all die of starvation or be killed.

FANCY: Since international relief efforts are only a "drop in the bucket" (as they are often characterized), the Cambodians are still dying of hunger and disease by the hundreds of thousands.

FACT: While the situation is bad, it is an improvement over the famine of last summer and fall. The Vietnamese have allowed peasants to keep the rice crop just harvested. This move, combined with the arrival of international relief supplies, has eased the crisis.

FANCY: The Vietnamese and the Phnom-Penh government have systematically prevented international relief supplies from being distributed to the starving inside Cambodia.

FACT: Most visible evidence suggests this is not true. While relief stores have piled up at the port of Kompong Som and at Phnom-Penh, there is no proof that Hanoi or Phnom-Penh is deliberately obstructing delivery. Distribution delays appear to be due to the lack of Cambodian administrators, the shortage of transportation, and continued fighting between the Vietnamese and forces loyal to the deposed Pol Pot regime.

FANCY: Now that the world has been alerted to Cambodia's plight and huge amounts of food are being channeled into the country, there will soon no longer be a need for an aid effort.

FACT: At least 200,000 tons of additional food must reach Cambodia, and 40,000 more tons of pesticides and seeds, if a major famine is to be avoided later this year. □

Selections From the Left

[This week's column is devoted to assessments of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.]

Socialist Worker

Newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party. Published weekly in London.

Taking a gloomy view of the prospects in Afghanistan, John Blake says in the January 19 issue:

"It is the tragedy of the Afghan communists that they tried to build socialism behind the backs of the people when it was too difficult to build it among them.

"They are reaping the consequences, prisoners of helicopter gunship socialism. . . .

"Do we back the rebels?

"No. They are a mass popular movement, but they were not created by the Russian invasion. They are a movement against communism, against unbelievers, against land reform, against the emancipation of women.

"It is the tragedy of the Afghan people that poverty, oppression and imperialism have produced a form of right wing 'Islamic' politics.

"For socialists it is an awful lesson against making a revolution over the heads of the people.

"It is a time for mourning the lost hopes and the horrors to come: the refugee camps, the napalm, the famines, the dead children.

"No good will come of the Russian invasion, but many tears will flow."

What about the part played by British imperialism in supporting Washington's economic and military offensive in the region? Those who look closely will find a small headline advising that "The enemy is at home"—provided their eyes are not blinded by tears.

Guardian

An independent radical newsweekly, published in New York.

"Detente between U.S. imperialism and Soviet hegemonism is now in extreme jeopardy," says a front-page editorial in the January 16 issue. "A new cold war involving the only two powers which could destroy much of the earth in a nuclear conflagration is a serious possibility."

While claiming to "have no illusions about detente," the *Guardian* argues that "detente functions partially as a tempor-

ary restraint on superpower contention, without which the aggressive designs of imperialism and the hegemonistic ambitions of the Soviet Union would clash sooner rather than later, bigger rather than smaller."

The editorial argues that both Washington and Moscow are to blame for the danger of war. "Leading sections of the U.S. ruling class" are "seeking to revive aspects of the golden era of the 1950s and 1960s when Washington acted as if it ruled the world and was an unrivaled superpower.

"The Soviet Union, for its part, has evidently expanded its hegemonistic ambitions, now seeking to extend its influence through armed aggression for the first time outside the East European bloc it has occupied since the end of World War 2.

"Moscow was wrong to invade Afghanistan and its 50,000 troops should be withdrawn. The USSR cannot justify limiting the sovereignty of socialist Afghanistan, regardless of pretext. . . .

"The Washington government must also be condemned for the cynical, imperialist advantage it is attempting to extract from the Soviet aggression. . . . The losers in this superpower scramble are not only the people of Afghanistan but the people of the entire world."

Militant

The Marxist paper for labour and youth. Published weekly in London.

In the January 18 issue Ted Grant argues that "the Russian bureaucracy intervened directly [in Afghanistan] because they could not tolerate the overthrow, for the first time in the post-war period, of a regime based on the elimination of landlordism and capitalism, and the victory of a feudal-capitalist counter-revolution, especially in a state bordering on the Soviet Union."

Grant insists that "the ending of feudalism and capitalism in a country like Afghanistan opens the way to bringing this archaic society into the 20th century, and is therefore a progressive development. If we just considered the Russian intervention in isolation, we should have to give this move critical support."

However, as Grant sees it, the interests of the Afghan workers and peasants happen to be secondary. He claims that in this case, what is good for Afghanistan is bad for the world revolution.

". . . because of the reactionary effect it has on the consciousness of the world

working class, which is a thousand times more important than the developments in a small country like Afghanistan . . . Marxists must oppose the Russian intervention.

"The over-riding danger under contemporary conditions is the alienation of the workers of Japan, Western Europe, USA and other advanced countries from the ideas of socialism and socialist revolution."

Of course, it is precisely in the unfolding of the revolutionary struggles around the world—including in "small countries like Afghanistan"—that the workers in the imperialist countries will come to understand their own class interests.

Grant ends up by totally capitulating to the imperialist propaganda campaign. As he puts it, "The Russian intervention in Afghanistan must be condemned, despite its progressive aspects, because it is spitting at the opinions of the world working class."

The Call

Organ of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist). Published weekly in Chicago.

A front-page article in the January 21 issue hails the United Nations vote denouncing the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and declares that "past alliances and traditional ideologies are no longer the cutting edge in demarcating friends from enemies in the international arena. Today, a worldwide united front against hegemonism is taking shape and becoming a living reality."

While gleefully claiming that "President Carter has already taken stronger measures against the Kremlin than that of any other administration in the last 15 years or more" (apparently the editors of *The Call*, like Carter, have chosen to forget the war in Vietnam), the article warns:

"Though now on the defensive, the advocates of 'detente' are by no means dead in the current foreign policy debate. A virtual flood of pro-appeasement propaganda in the American press has continued to belittle the significance of Moscow's Afghan takeover."

Another article describes how the pro-Peking Stalinists are organizing a demonstration in Philadelphia together with pacifists, religious groups, and anticommunist liberals. The CP(ML) was also successful in getting the Philadelphia Committee Against Intervention in Iran to shift its focus from opposition to the U.S. government's threats against the Iranian revolution to support for Washington's latest propaganda drive. As *The Call* put it:

"After a good deal of back and forth discussion, the committee—with the exception of one member organization, the Socialist Workers Party—united in opposition to the Soviet actions in Afghanistan."

Bandera Socialista

"Socialist Flag," newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in Mexico City.

A polemic in the January 28 issue takes up the Mexican Communist Party's declaration opposing the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, pointing out the similarity between the Mexican CP's position and that of the Mexican government.

Héctor de la Cueva notes that "various writers in [the Mexico City bourgeois daily] *Uno más Uno* have attacked the position taken by the PRT of defending the Soviet workers state against imperialist maneuvers in the region, of defending the maintenance of Soviet troops in Afghanistan as a defensive act, and of opposing the propaganda campaign mounted by imperialism and the reprisals that it has threatened. This appears to Roger Bartra to be 'Trotskyist workerist sectarianism.' Sectarianism against whom? Against the Mexican government? . . . Is it workerism to take a class position on the conflict, to take the side of the workers state and not of the Mexican bourgeoisie?"

十月评论

"October Review," Trotskyist monthly magazine published in Hong Kong.

In the February issue, the editors urge the international working class to "demand that the Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan."

"This means," they continue, "that the Soviet troops should leave all military matériel behind and transfer it to the Afghan toiling masses. Soviet personnel staying behind in Afghanistan must limit themselves to giving military training to the people, and their stay must be based on genuine invitation from the Afghan people."

"This attitude of Marxists has nothing in common with the imperialist demand that the Soviet Union withdraw its troops: the imperialists aim at undermining the offensive force of the Afghan people so that the Muslim forces propped up by them can win."

"But we have never in general opposed or called for the rejection of military aid given to another country by a workers state. We demand only that this aid be given in strict adherence to revolutionary internationalism and not damage the interests of the workers and peasants of that country."

"Since the troops under Soviet command inevitably play a role of oppression on the local people in the place where they are stationed, the Afghan toiling masses must discriminate, before the Soviet troops withdraw, whether the targets of the Soviet

troops are the reactionary Muslim guerrilla forces or are workers and peasant forces that support social reforms and oppose bureaucratic autocracy.

"If the latter force does exist, and is repressed by the Soviet troops, the Afghan toiling masses must support it in opposing repression by the Soviet troops."



"Socialist Struggle," organ of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Colombian section of the Fourth International. Published in Bogotá.

An article by Luis Rodríguez in the February 1 issue describes the background to the conflict in Afghanistan, detailing the reforms made after the overthrow of the Daud dictatorship and the growth of the rightist resistance.

Rodríguez argues that "Although the 'invasion' must be evaluated in the framework of the danger for the USSR of a hostile regime supported by U.S. imperialism on its border, the cynical methods of the Stalinists—the execution of Amin and the installation of his successor—have permitted a worldwide imperialist propaganda campaign to discredit socialism."

In regard to the imperialist threat, he says, "Utilizing the crisis in Afghanistan as a pretense, Washington and its allies are increasing their military forces in the Persian Gulf and in the Mediterranean in order to use them in the future against the Iranian and other revolutions that develop in the Middle East. . . ."

"The world working class must say NO to the imperialist campaign against the Afghan revolution."

"Defend the Afghan revolution from landlord, tribal, and clerical reaction supported by imperialism!"

"No to the imperialist boycott against the USSR!"

"No to the imperialist war preparations!"

Lebanese RCG

In a statement issued January 8, the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanese section of the Fourth International, demands the "immediate withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan."

The statement says in part: "The only two cases in which the army of a state that pretends to apply the principles of Leninism may intervene in another country are self-defense and support to a revolution threatened by external imperialist aggression. . . ."

"What is happening in Afghanistan does not fit in either category. It is impossible even to imagine that the Islamic movement in Afghanistan could launch a military attack against the Soviet Union

or threaten its military security. . . ."

"Nor is there any evidence of an intervention by foreign reactionary forces superior to the support and training the USSR made available to the Afghan regime's army prior to its direct, massive intervention. . . ."

"... the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, rather than helping to drive back Islamic reaction and reducing the danger to the Soviet Union, can only have the result of strengthening the Islamic movement, pushing it in a reactionary direction in opposition to the USSR, not only in Afghanistan but in the Muslim world as a whole. . . ."

"... It was a decision harmful not only to the Soviet Union but also to the cause of communism. . . ."

"In light of the above considerations as a whole, and on the basis of our Leninist convictions and our unconditional defense of the USSR against imperialism, we demand the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan."

"This in no way signifies that we support the Afghan 'Mujahedeen.' We support, to the contrary, the Afghan forces fighting against the religious and feudal reaction that is leading the 'Mujahedeen' and against their imperialist backers."



"The Left," French-language paper of the Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in Brussels.

"Each day brings evidence that the Russian invasion is, as we have already written, in flagrant contradiction to the interests of the world working class." This is the lead paragraph of a January 17 article entitled "There is No Political Justification for the Russian Invasion."

The brief unsigned article then lists six reasons why this is so.

It is the "perfect pretext" for "American imperialism's attempt to relaunch its strategy of world domination."

It confuses "millions of workers" by allowing U.S. imperialism "to present itself as the champion of freedom and independence."

It "cheapens the image of socialism" by giving credence to the idea that "communism destroys freedom."

It pushes the Afghan poor peasants and mountain tribes "even further into the hands of the big landowners and reactionary clerics."

It gives the European "hawks" an excuse "to justify the strengthening of NATO and the installation of new missiles in Europe."

It drives the progressive forces of the world toward "a (false) choice between the Russian invasion and American aggressiveness."

AROUND THE WORLD



Attacks on ZANU Increase in Zimbabwe

Will Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) emerge at the head of a black-ruled Zimbabwe? The British imperialists and white settlers who ran Rhodesia until now are clearly worried that the answer is yes.

Upon his return from exile, Mugabe was welcomed at Salisbury by a throng estimated at 250,000 by *New York Times* correspondent John Burns. With the election scheduled for February 27-29, Burns notes that "Mr. Mugabe enters the final stage of the campaign as the clear front-runner."

Mugabe's opponents have responded with two assassination attempts. On February 6 a hand grenade was thrown at his house. On February 10, an eighty-pound bomb narrowly missed destroying his car as he drove away from a campaign rally.

"The attack on my life," Mugabe declared, "was just one of many incidents in a strategy mounted by the British, the South Africans and the Rhodesians to disable my party."

Mugabe has not been the only target. There have been at least twelve attacks on ZANU officials, including a grenade attack in the town of Chipinga February 9 in which two of Mugabe's supporters were killed.

Lord Soames, who has dictatorial powers as British colonial governor until the installation of a new government, responded to the assassination attempts against Mugabe by charging *Mugabe and ZANU* with using intimidation against their opponents! Soames banned Enos Nkala, a key ZANU candidate, from playing any further role in the election campaign, and on February 12 he threatened to cancel the voting in three areas where nearly half the Black voters live and where Mugabe is expected to do well.

In addition to such maneuvers, aimed at preventing a Mugabe victory by disenfranchising much of the Black population, there have been threats of a military coup if Mugabe should win the vote.

The imperialists are fearful that a clear-cut victory for Mugabe at the polls would inspire the masses of workers and peasants to push forward their demands for economic and social changes in their interests. On the other hand, lack of a clear majority by any one group—including the other main liberation organization, the Zimbabwe African People's Union led by Joshua Nkomo—would give the imperial-

ists greater room to maneuver and play off one group against another.

However, as Mugabe pointed out earlier this month: "We are the party that started the war, and we are the party that brought the peace. Let no one believe that we cannot go back to war again if we are denied a legitimate victory by peaceful means."

Chile Copper Miners End Strike

The largest and most significant labor battle since Chile's 1973 military coup ended February 1. More than 10,000 miners at the El Teniente copper pit returned to work after voting to accept the state copper company's offer of a 9 percent wage increase.

The strike began January 18, with workers demanding a 33 percent wage hike over cost-of-living increases. The workers voted twice to turn down company offers, first against a 6 percent increase and then rejecting the 9 percent offer that was finally accepted.

Management at El Teniente had tried to intimidate the workers with threats that the leadership of the strike would be turned over to the military authorities and warned that the entire work force of 10,630 in the mine would be fired if the strike continued. Chilean labor law gives management that right in a strike.

Save James Mangel

An international campaign has been launched to save the life of James Mangel, a Black South African freedom fighter who has been sentenced by the apartheid regime to die on the gallows.

Mangel was one of twelve young Blacks brought to trial in Pietermaritzburg on charges of "high treason." They were accused of being members of the outlawed African National Congress, of leaving the country for military training, and of engaging in or preparing for guerrilla warfare.

Throughout the two-month trial in 1979, the accused refused to recognize the validity of the court proceedings or to take any active part in the trial. Instead, they sang freedom songs, shouted political slogans, and displayed placards with slogans like "Apartheid is high treason," "Apartheid is a crime against humanity," and "Never on our knees."

Although Mangel himself was not actually accused of engaging in any armed

actions, the judge singled him out for his role in leading the courtroom protests. When the defendants were sentenced on November 15 following their conviction, the twenty-four-year-old Mangel received the death sentence. The eleven others drew prison terms of between fourteen and nineteen years.

A series of protests have been staged in London, the Netherlands, and other countries against the death sentence and the Student Representative Council at the all-white University of Cape Town demanded that the sentence be commuted. B. Akporode Clark, the chairman of the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid called for international pressure on the apartheid regime to save Mangel's life.

For further information, contact: ANC Treason Trial Defence Committee, c/o 89 Charlotte St., London W1P 2DQ.

Canadian Farmers Fight Freeze on Grain Sales to Soviet Union

Canada's National Farmers Union (NFU) wants no part of President Carter's attempt to use food exports as a weapon against the Soviet Union.

In a telegram to Canada's three main political parties, NFU President Bill Mayne condemned Carter's embargo on grain shipments to the USSR and urged the Canadian government not to cooperate with the U.S. measures.

This stand was backed by a joint Canadian Labor Congress-National Farmers Union conference held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, January 8-9.

Objecting to the use of grain as a political weapon, the conference urged that all Canadian grain-sale commitments to the Soviet Union be honored and that the Canadian Wheat Board aggressively pursue all future sales opportunities.

Two Basque Activists Murdered by Rightists

Two members of the Francoist *Fuerza Nueva* organization were arrested for the February 2 murder of two Basque activists. The victims were Yolanda González Martín, a young member of the Spanish Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST), and José Miguel Zubikararai, a supporter of the Basque nationalist *Euskadiko Eskerra* organization. The Spanish PST is affiliated to the Bolshevik Faction, which split from the Fourth International last year.

Responsibility for the murders has been claimed by the so-called Spanish Basque Battalion.

The Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state, issued a declaration stating that the "murder of Yolanda González and José Miguel Zubikararai at the hands of the so-called Spanish Basque Battalion represents a very important and very serious step up in the fascist attacks against the workers, the youth, and the left forces." It further noted that the murders show the "growing impunity" with which the fascist gangs are acting, and points to the close connections they have with sectors of the state apparatus.

Syrian Regime Faces Rising Opposition

Inflation, shortages of food and other basic items, corruption in the government, and repression have increasingly isolated the regime of Syria's President Hafez al-Assad.

Protests against repression have come from writers, journalists, lawyers, and other professional groups. Members of the four regional lawyers syndicates have threatened to strike if special security courts are not abolished, according to a dispatch from Damascus by Helena Cobban in the February 1 *Christian Science Monitor*.

According to Cobban, "A rash of workers' strikes meanwhile has highlighted the economic grievances expressed by many social groups against the Assad government. Fifteen thousand workers at oil installations in Rumeilan, north Syria, recently had all their demands granted after a three-day strike."

Finally, Cobban cites "usually reliable sources" in Damascus who report that more than 2,000 commandos were airlifted to Aleppo—a city of nearly one million—shortly after January 20. Cobban's sources claimed that seventeen of these commandos were killed in an ambush.

Witch-Hunters at Work in Britain

British red baiters are once again complaining about the existence of Trotskyists within the Labour Party. An article by Michael Jones and Alison Miller in the January 13 issue of the London *Sunday Times* declared:

"Conclusive evidence that a Trotskyite faction, which has penetrated the Labour party, has successfully set up a national network aimed at turning the party into a revolutionary Marxist body has been acquired by The Sunday Times."

The immediate target of the red baiters is the *Militant* group, which has functioned within the Labour party for many years. But the ultimate aim of the witch-hunters is to silence all left-wing criticism of the Labour Party leaders, and to undermine working class solidarity, especially in regard to the embattled steelworkers who are

now in the second month of a countrywide strike.

Lord Underhill, who has led the red baiting campaign, calls the presence of Trotskyists in the Labour Party a "cancer." Former Prime Minister Harold Wilson refers to it as an "infestation."

Despite the red baiting, the Labour Party National Executive Committee voted not to publish a report on the alleged "infiltration." Labour MP Eric Heffer told a rally of 2,200 Labour Party Young Socialists February 2 that the real infiltrators were those with "Tory concepts" acting as "a fifth column inside the Labour Party."

Protesters Gunned Down in Senegal

In late January, primary school students in Ziguinchor, the capital of Senegal's Casamance region, launched a strike to protest against misconduct and corruption by a school administrator. When the authorities failed to act on their grievances, the students went out into the streets, where they were joined by relatives and parents.

As the protesters marched through the city, the police opened fire on the crowd, killing at least one student and injuring several other demonstrators.

In Dakar, the capital of the country, high school and university students staged solidarity actions. A planned march on downtown Dakar was halted when police surrounded the entire campus of Dakar University, where the protesters had gathered.

Around the same time, other signs of opposition to the proimperialist regime of Léopold Sédar Senghor surfaced. In Paris, followers of Ahmed Niasse, an Islamic religious leader and head of the Senegalese Islamic Party, claimed credit for the burning of a hotel in Ziguinchor. In Senegal, nine followers of Niasse were arrested on charges of smuggling in 1,500 cassette tapes of a Paris news conference in which Niasse called for the establishment of an "Islamic republic" in Senegal.

Irish Activist Arrested

As part of the continuing harassment and intimidation of groups active in the Irish freedom struggle, police in Dublin arrested Mairtin Mac An Ghoill January 10. Mac An Ghoill is a member of Peoples Democracy (PD), a revolutionary socialist organization in Ireland, and of the National Smash H-Block Committee, which has led protests in behalf of political prisoners held in Northern Ireland. He was arrested at the headquarters of the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP).

While in custody, Mac An Ghoill was accused of taking part in several bank robberies and kidnappings. When he denied all knowledge of such activities, he was pushed against a wall and threatened with "self-inflicted injuries."

A statement on Mac An Ghoill's arrest by the People's Democracy declared: "Both

PD and the IRSP are legal political parties engaged in legal political activities. The Special Branch continually attempts to harass those campaigning against the presence of British troops in Ireland and their collaboration in the 26 County government. We demand that the Offences Against the State Act and all other repressive legislation used to intimidate republicans and socialists be abolished immediately."

Arab Girl Gets Jewish Kidney—Zionist Racists Protest

A storm of protest has been raised in Israel because a twelve-year-old Palestinian girl received the kidney of a Jewish religious student killed by Palestinians in Hebron.

A nurse at the Jerusalem hospital, where the transplant was carried out, complained that Amira Aabi Bukassah "had been filled with P.L.O. propaganda" and that she wore a necklace with a Palestinian nationalist emblem on it.

Menachem Porush, a member of the Israeli parliament, announced that he will propose an investigation into the transplant decision and a change in the law that allows transplants without the permission of relatives.

"She spoke all the time against Jews," Porush said, referring to Bukassah. "In this case, a boy has been killed by Arabs. To transplant his kidney into an Arab girl who is hating Jews, this is too much."

It certainly is—for a racist like Porush.

Partisan of Cuba Dialogue in U.S. Switches Sides, Echoes Rightist Line

Rev. Manuel Espinosa, a Miami minister and one of the initial participants in the dialogue between the Cuban government and Cubans abroad, has suddenly attacked the movement for normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States. Espinosa called a news conference January 31 and named more than twenty-five participants in the dialogue as Cuban "spies." These included the president of a Miami bank, a priest, and a veteran of the CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Espinosa asserted that he had never believed in what he was saying or doing to promote the dialogue, but had assumed a pose to "infiltrate the enemy." He urged an "all-out-war" against Cuba.

Participants in the dialogue attacked by Espinosa rejected his charges and vowed to continue their activities. "Our work will continue," declared Albor Ruiz, the executive director of the Committee of 75, which helped initiate the dialogue. "Our office is still open."

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Four MAP/FO Leaders Sentenced to Two Years Public Works

Sentences of two years at public works on charges of "seeking to damage the popular interests" were handed down in Managua February 11 against four leaders of the Movimiento de Acción Popular/Frente Obrero (MAP/FO—People's Action Movement/Workers Front), an ultraleft sectarian Stalinist current.

In the same issues that reported the sentences, the Sandinista daily *Barricada* and the bourgeois daily *La Prensa* announced the discovery of a second arms cache linked to the MAP/FO.

Last October the revolutionary government had called for all citizens not belonging to militia units to turn in their arms. No charges have yet been filed in connection with the two arms caches, however.

Those sentenced were Melvin Wallace Simpson, editor of *El Pueblo*, the daily reflecting the views of the MAP/FO, which was shut down by the government January 23; Juan Alberto Enríquez Oporta, assistant editor of *El Pueblo*; Carlos Domingo Cuadra Cuadra, *El Pueblo* business manager; and Isidro Téllez Toruño, a leader of the FO who had accepted responsibility for the first arms hoard.

They were convicted of violating Article 4, Section C, of the Public Order and Security Law, which prohibits distribution of propaganda that "seeks to damage the popular interests and abolish the conquests achieved by the people."

A summary of Judge Víctor Manuel Ordóñez's ruling, reported in the February 11 *Barricada*, set forward the following as the reasons for the conviction and sentencing of the four defendants:

[They] attacked the revolutionary process and the authorities of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction and the Sandinista National Liberation Front, without taking into account the profound social transformations that have been carried out to the benefit of the great majority, using the distribution of their press to attack public order. . . .

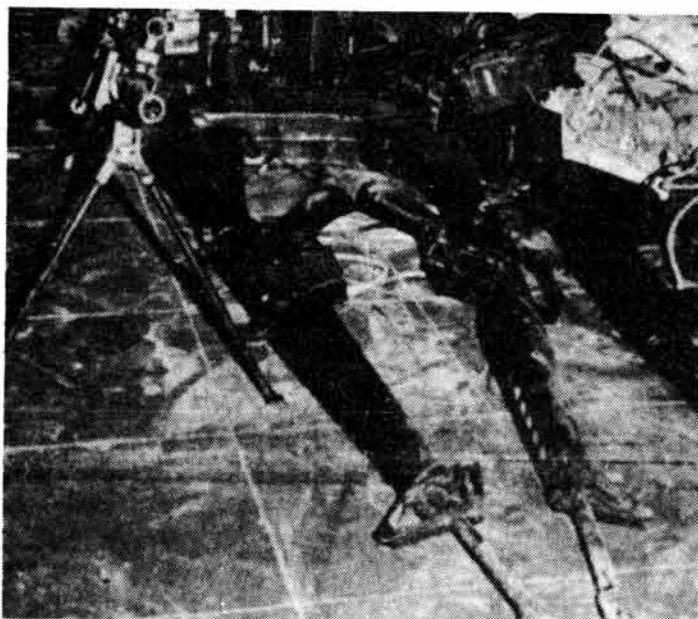


Photo from *Barricada* showing weapons reported seized in Managua apartment, along with Frente Obrero documents and banners. Equipment shown to reporters included rifles, some 300 pounds of ammunition, contact bombs, wiring and detonators for dynamite, uniforms, helmets, and walkie-talkies.

[They] cautiously proclaimed their intent to disobey the line of the Junta and the FSLN, with the aim of defending very individual interests. . . .

[They sought to] disturb public order [through their press].

"There may be those," said Judge Víctor Manuel Ordóñez in his ruling, "who consider that such constant and permanent attacks (veiled and open, cleverly used) do not amount to a crime but rather constitute 'criticism' (severe perhaps, but simply 'criticism')."

However, he added, "all Nicaraguans should carefully examine page 2 of the January 21 issue of *El Pueblo*. . . .

"In particular, the court considers the following paragraph from the article to be of singular importance:

Since the government—as was said at the plenum of the Communist Party of Nicaragua—has from the outset promoted capitalism politically and economically, and since the FSLN has deepened its alliance with the national and international bourgeoisie, it is obviously not very likely that attacks on the government will come from these forces. However, if some sector of international reaction does decide to carry out such an attack not only is it not possible to support the government but instead we must demand that it be replaced by a government that can really defend our self-determination in face of such an attack or, at minimum, that this

government actually fight for independence and self-determination.

"From this quotation," the judge's ruling stated, "it can clearly be seen that our government, our vanguard [the FSLN], and our revolutionary process is not only being accused of lacking self-determination and independence, but that this has been taken to the extreme, under the cover of freedom of the press, of demanding that—in case of an attack by foreign reactionary forces against our government—such an attack by foreign reactionary forces be used as the opportunity to replace our government."

The ruling concluded: "If there existed any doubt as to the clear posture and line of the daily *El Pueblo* and, as a consequence, of the criminal responsibility of Señors Melvin Wallace Simpson, Carlos Domingo Cuadra Cuadra, and Juan Alberto Enríquez Oporta, who in their response to the charges claim as their own the opinions expressed in *El Pueblo* . . . this issue of *El Pueblo* constitutes a clear call for the abolition of our government, of the vanguard of our very revolutionary process, in alliance with foreign reactionary forces that may attack our government."

In their response to the charges, the three *El Pueblo* defendants maintained that their editorial point of view was simply one of presenting as "the main task of the working class the taking of political power." They also said that they had "spoken out against the economism of certain currents in the working class but have always sought to make clear that our newspaper openly supports and reflects the struggle of the workers against the pretensions of the capitalists who, covering themselves with the mantle of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, are working toward and thinking about increasing the exploitation of the working class; to these elements we are opposed. . . ."

In reference to several recent strikes in Nicaragua, they said: ". . . workers have gone out on strike—we consider these strikes just and support them without reservation."

Both of these views were cited by the court as examples of statements "harmful to the popular interest."

Four other leaders of the FO brought to trial on the same charges were found not guilty. A fifth, additionally charged with fleeing arrest, is scheduled for a separate trial. □

The 1979 Soviet Economic Reforms

By Benjamin N. Bastida

In July 1979 the principal executive bodies of the Soviet Union—the Communist Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers—jointly promulgated a 63-point decree establishing a “general reform in the methods of planning and the system of managing the economy in the USSR.”

Will this involve a major economic reform, a change in orientation with regard to the 1965 reform? At this point it is still difficult to tell. The text of the decree is quite ambiguous on several points and states several times that concrete regulations will follow later.

The few commentaries on the decree that have appeared in the West have interpreted it in totally contradictory ways. Some see the decree as tending to strengthen the orientation of the 1965 reform. Others view it as an end to the already rather restricted experience of the 1965 reform and a return to earlier methods of management, based on administrative orders.¹

It will be necessary to wait several years before assessing the real thrust of the 1979 reform. But even now we can state that this is a purely bureaucratic reform (possibly even more pronouncedly bureaucratic than the one in 1965), and is one that will not change the basic way the Soviet economy is managed.

Whatever the difficulties in making a hard assessment, several significant aspects can already be noted.

The Precedent of the 1965 Reform

The immediate starting point in analyzing the 1979 reform is to look at the 1965 reform and the circumstances that brought it about. In the years immediately following the 1965 economic reform, there were quite a number of commentaries and studies of varying accuracy, which contributed to knowledge of it.

These commentaries were later followed by assessments of the first decade of the reform's application. These assessments generally were marked by striking and justified skepticism with concern to the disparity between the results attained and the initial hopes for the reform.

The purpose of this article is not to discuss either the hopes for the 1965 reform or its results. But it is necessary to briefly summarize the *problems* that led to the 1965 economic reform, in view of the striking parallel with the problems that are today providing the motivation for the 1979 reform. And we should examine the *solutions* proposed by the bureaucratic leadership of the Soviet Union in 1965, in order to note the contrasting solutions that these same bureaucrats are now putting forward some fifteen years later.

The Economic Problems in the 1960s

The problems that led to the 1965 economic reform are well known. Despite the unquestionable progress of the Soviet economy, which was able to overcome underdevelopment and dependence relatively rapidly (at what price is another question), a series of serious deficiencies appeared in the middle of the 1950s. These deficiencies had been latent until then, hidden by the effects of the war effort and the postwar reconstruction period.

The effect of these problems accelerated during the 1960s and was reflected in the statistics. There was a decline in the growth rate. There was also a decline in the “return” on investment, meaning a decline in the amount of new production that resulted from a given amount of new investment. This is known as the fixed investment/product relationship.²

These deficiencies were pointed to by a number of Soviet economists who supported the 1965 reform: Liberman, Nemtchinov, Birman, Vaag, Zakharov, Trapenikov, and others.

The concrete manifestations of this declining economic efficiency were noted: waste in utilizing productive elements, inability to rapidly assimilate technological innovation, production that did not correspond to what was needed, deficiencies in product quality, delays in executing plans and contracts, and systematic underestimation of productive capacity by factories.

In the Soviet economy, where high rates of investment are virtually considered an article of faith, the growing ineffectiveness

of these investments threatens to lead, through a fall in the standard of living, to incalculable social consequences.

How the 1965 Solutions Were Applied

The growth model of the Soviet economy was losing its effectiveness around 1965. That model was based on what is often termed “extensive” investment. This means that production is increased primarily by investment in new facilities, as compared to an “intensive” model where production is increased primarily by improving the productivity of existing facilities.

The problems with the old growth model were leading the economic system to a dead end, to economic stagnation in the not too distant future. This critical situation forced the leaders of the bureaucracy to begin an economic reform along the lines of the proposals made by the economists mentioned above. The general line of the reform was sketched by Kosygin at the September 1965 Central Committee plenum of the Soviet Communist Party, and was then developed in detail in subsequent decrees.

With the reform it was hoped that the Soviet economy could regain the high growth rates of the first half of the 1950s, or at least arrest the alarming decline in growth in order to later achieve higher rates.

This required improving the level of efficiency of the economy as a whole, especially improving productivity and utilizing all the productive resources. In other words, the Soviet economy had to go from extensive growth to intensive growth.

In theory the bureaucratic leaders in the Kremlin could choose to travel either of two routes in developing this model of intensive growth:

1. They could increase their control over the productive process, bring to light the hidden productive capacity, penalize waste, and impose “labor discipline,” meaning they could increase the bureaucratic centralization of the entire economy.

2. Or they could interest the “enterprises” themselves, meaning primarily if not exclusively the bureaucrats in charge of the enterprises, in actively trying to maximize efficiency in their area under the prod of “material incentives.”

The 1965 reform falls into the general framework of this second route. But the adoption of this second option was colored by interbureaucratic tensions and struggles between what was called the “conservative” wing, mostly associated with the central planning agency GOSPLAN and the central administration, on the one hand, and the so-called “reformist” wing, primarily made up of factory managers and directors of economic organs at levels below that of ministers. It was a compromise measure.

But the 1965 compromise did not end these interbureaucratic struggles. These

1. Among these commentaries are the article by Marie Lavigne in the September 1979 *Le Monde diplomatique*, the article in the August 22, 1979, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and the note from France's commercial counselor to Moscow in *Problèmes économiques*, October 10, 1979.

2. Gomulka uses the formula “industrial capital/industrial production relationship.” From the standpoint of Marxist economic theory it is wrong to speak of “industrial capital” in the USSR, the means of production not being commodities.

fighths went on constantly, even at the level of the "supreme leadership," and were expressed in alternating plans and counterplans, obligatory goals and voluntary goals, central allocation of raw materials and machines and direct contracts (relations) between enterprises without going through the "center," and so forth.

This was an interbureaucratic battle. The Soviet working class and the people in general did not take part in it. They could not even judge the results as spectators since they manifestly lacked the information necessary to make such judgments.

To summarize the meaning of the 1965 reform, of course in a quite incomplete way, we can say that the reformist wing was able to lay down the grand outlines of the reform on the level of abstract generalization and obtained some concrete decrees regarding its application. But the conservative wing kept its hands on the basic mechanisms that guaranteed their decision-making power over the economic process as a whole, even when that went against the documents and decrees of the reform.

The legal text, for example, established a tax "on productive assets." It was hoped that this "indirect mechanism" would spur fuller utilization of existing productive capacity. The reform also reduced the number of "obligatory goals" that had to be met to fulfill the plan to six. This was designed to allow directors of enterprises to choose between different variants in order to achieve profitability, which itself was one of the six obligatory planning goals to be achieved by the enterprises.

The percentage of the "profit" that would remain at the disposal of the enterprise was increased. These retained profits

were to be used for certain "decentralized investments" within the ministry (later however they became "centralized investments") and to increase the "fund of material stimulants" (meaning distribution of bonuses above regular salaries and wages).

But the conservative wing always retained its hold over the supplying of tools and raw materials to enterprises producing capital goods. Determination of prices and the methods used to determine prices also remained the prerogative of the central administration. This meant that "the freedom of choice of enterprises" was extremely limited.

These few examples suffice to show the hybrid character of the 1965 reform. Each sector of the bureaucracy defended its areas of power and sought to increase them, regardless of the fact that there was an economic crisis in the economy as a whole.

As a result, the reformist measures were applied only slowly and contradictorily. And the reform itself became increasingly bogged down in the inertia of the system. The problems it was supposed to correct reappeared, and were sometimes even exacerbated by the measures that were designed to make them disappear.

Fifteen years later we can conclude, to the extent that the available data is accurate, that the contradictions in the Soviet economy have on the whole increased.

The statistics confirm this conclusion. Although the growth rate rose again in the first years after the promulgation of the 1965 reform, they resumed their decline beginning in 1971. The decline in the growth rate became even sharper for the 1971-1975 five-year plan, both with regard

to the rates it projected and with regard to the achievements of earlier five-year plans.

The 1979 Reform

To the extent that the 1965 reform was actually implemented, to the extent it went beyond being a vague, ambiguous "general spirit" accompanied by some partial technical measures, it was able to halt the tendency toward stagnation in the Soviet economy for several years.

When the Soviet planners began working out the new 1980-1985 five-year plan, which is itself part of a longer term twenty-year plan (the previous twenty-year plan covered 1961-1980), they had to confront an economy that functioned on the basis of a hybrid combination of administrative orders and "enterprise brigandage," just like in the early 1960s, with all the consequences that flow from that in terms of a lack of efficiency.

A reading of the 1979 reform decree indicates that the leaders of the bureaucracy (who are, with few exceptions, the same ones as in 1965) seem to have opted in favor of the opposite solution from the one they chose in 1965. The reformist theses and practices initiated in that period have failed. To get better results, they now opt for the first route described above—increased centralization, strengthened administrative control over productive activities, increased penalties and sanctions for failure to achieve the norms and objectives of the plan, etc.

Let us look at some of the main points of the July 1979 decree in some detail.

1. *Plan and sanctions.* The concentration of decision-making at the top, which annuls the "liberties" theoretically granted to the enterprises in the framework of the 1965 reform, is quite evident, beginning with the elaboration of the plan itself. The higher planning bodies, starting with GOSPLAN, will occupy a key place in the new way of managing the economy.

In this sense we are seeing a return to earlier methods of planning, with increased importance given to goals that are expressed in physical units rather than in monetary "value" of production. The intention is to develop enormously detailed plans.

The five-year plan is then broken down into an annual plan, which flows directly from the five-year plan with very limited possibility for varying from the goals. In fact, with the emphasis on planning "from above," the only change an enterprise can make in the annual plan is to propose *surpassing* the goal contained for that year in the five-year plan, the goal decided by the central authorities.

The Soviet leadership seems to be reducing the question of planning to the question of the effectiveness of computers. This is seen in their answer to the classical criticisms concerning the functioning of planning prior to 1965—that it was internally inconsistent, rigid, and marked by

Relationship of Additional Industrial Investment to Additional Industrial Production

(The greater the number, the more investment needed to generate a given increase in production. 1960 = 1)

1951	0.98	1964	1.09
1952	1.00	1965	1.11
1953	0.99		
1954	0.98	1966	1.11
1955	0.97	1967	1.10
1956	0.99	1968	1.09
1957	0.99	1969	1.10
1958	0.99	1970	1.11
1959	0.99	1971	1.12
1960	1.00	1972	1.13
1961	1.02	1973	1.15
1962	1.03	1974	1.15
1963	1.05	1975	1.16

(Bold face indicates post-1965 reform)

Source: S. Gomulka, "Slowdown in Soviet Industrial Growth—1974-75 Reconsidered," in *European Economic Review*, no. 10, 1977.

excessive tensions. The Soviet leaders respond that these faults will be corrected through intensive use of data-processing as a technique of working out the plan, since computers enormously increase the central planner's ability to act rapidly.

Without denying the importance of these techniques, which is what the Soviet higher-ups used to do, we should clearly recognize that this attempt to coarsely reduce "socialism" to the work of the computer will simply result in new ideological smokescreens that will try to mask the fact that the Soviet working class and the people in general lack the right to determine the basic options and economic processes and to control their application.

With the return to detailed planning, the individual enterprise can no longer guide its activity on the basis of either the increase in the value of the production it sells or its "net profits" (to whatever extent this was a real guide after the 1965 reform, given the multiple limitations on these criteria that we indicated above). In fact, these two indexes have completely disappeared from the text of the new reform.

Furthermore, the considerable increase in the number of production goals to be met clearly signals the course that the enterprise must follow and leaves little margin for alternative options. The decree states that the enterprise must "manufacture products of good quality, in line with contracts signed with the clients [contracts fixed by the plan], while economizing on raw materials and labor power, and with an innovative spirit." There is a special provision regarding construction enterprises. They must complete their jobs within the projected time and budget.

This litany of "good intentions" is too general to allow us to judge it in the abstract, although some could lead to dangerous innovations that merit a separate commentary ("economizing on . . . labor power"). This code on the function-

ing of enterprises marks a return to the inefficiency that was denounced at the beginning of the 1960s. How is the collaboration of "enterprises," meaning the collaboration of their leading bureaucratic cadres, to be secured? This collaboration once again requires obedience to goals determined from above, but it also requires an open and rapid flow of information. It also needs (as is understood in various points in the decree) "aggressive executive spirit" and "the spirit of innovation" as antidotes to bureaucratic routinism.

But the authors of the 1979 reform do not provide evidence of any excessive confidence in the possibility of finding these eminent qualities (which reflects a healthy dose of realism on their part). That is why we find that the means proposed for carrying out the plan are increased and more flexible application of control, as well as sanctions "against illegal practices," which are denounced in some detail in the decree.

These practices include connivance between suppliers and clients and between enterprises and the ministries they are part of. The connivance between suppliers and clients involves things like mutually agreeing not to apply contract penalties for delays in delivery or poor quality goods, while the connivance between the enterprises and ministries involves things like lowering the goal the enterprise is assigned in order to enable it to "overfulfill" the plan at the end of the planning year.

2. *Productivity of labor.* The passages in the decree dealing with the productivity of the work force merit separate examination. According to the authors of the decree, the present levels of labor productivity are so low they have reached alarming proportions. Three kinds of measures are proposed to overcome this deficiency.

The first concerns the supposed cause of the failure of the material incentives

chosen in 1965: the shortages of consumer goods (why work harder for more money if there's nothing to buy?). The decree asserts that the production of consumer goods will be adapted to demand, with particular reference to the "variety and quality of the products." But how will this production to demand be attained? The entire context of the decree clearly implies that the needs of the consumers will be determined by . . . GOSPLAN!

The second measure to increase the productivity of the work force is the call for managers to achieve "economies of labor." The absence of details does not make it possible to clearly state whether this opens the door to greater layoffs, along the lines of the experience of the Chitchenkino chemical complex.³

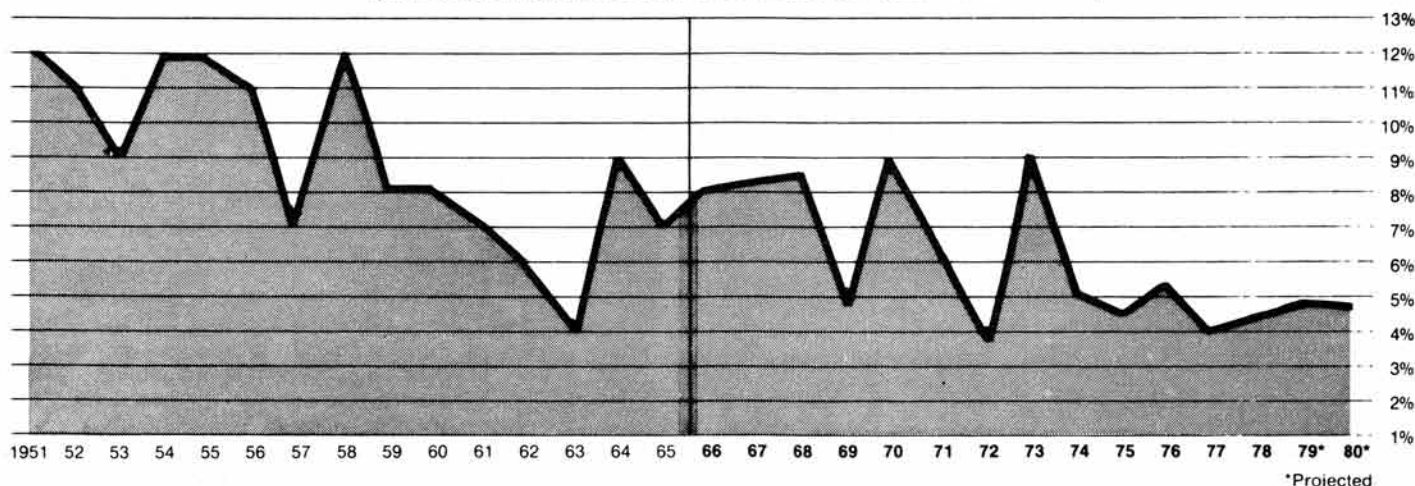
The third measure concerns the *organization of work by brigades*, in light of experiences in construction, where this has been tried for some time. This consists of delegating certain of the manager's powers to "brigades" that get the right to fix hours of work, the tempo of the internal organization of the small group (division of labor), etc., on the condition that production objectives laid out by the plan are achieved within the specified time period and costs, and with acceptable quality.

The brigade receives the total wages

3. Within the Chitcheikino chemical combine, some 200 kilometers south of Moscow, the wage fund has been frozen since 1967; 1,000 out of 7,500 jobs have been eliminated, the majority of the workers effected by the elimination of jobs finding new jobs in a new synthetic fibers branch. The workers who continue to be employed at Chitcheikino receive supplementary income (around a 30 percent increase in income per person), the productivity of labor has increased considerably, new workers and technicians have acquired new skills. J. Delamotte dealt with this experience in a work entitled *Shchekino, enterprise soviétique pilote*, Paris, Editions Ouvrières, 1973.

Annual Growth Rate of National Income of USSR

(At constant prices. Bold face indicates after 1965 reform)



budgeted for the job, and it then has the right to divide that total according to criteria it determines itself.

It would seem that many production processes do not readily lend themselves to brigade organization. Moreover, this idea raises a large number of questions. Who decides, and how, within the brigade? Are decisions made hierarchically (by foremen, etc.) or collectively? Isn't the aim to impose work discipline (and economy of labor power, as in the "Chtchekino model") through confrontation between work mates?

In any case, this "mini self-management" is not even an embryonic form of real workers control, not to speak of real workers management, of the productive process.

3. *Eliminate the (rival) bureaucrats.* The experience of economic organization in the Stalin era prejudiced the bureaucracy of the central bodies against the bureaucrats in the ministries. The obvious impossibility of imposing absolute and rigorous centralization, even during that period, had given the ministries small areas of power that could not be controlled by the central bodies, raising the possibility that the ministries could confront the central bodies themselves, which were theoretically superior to the ministries in the hierarchical structure.

This is the reason that the decree denounces the "illegal" practices of the ministries and calls on them to change the

way they manage the enterprises in their field. There is an attempt to move the ministries further from the centers of political decision-making—from the leadership of the bureaucracy in fact—and to subordinate them to GOSPLAN, the central planning agency. The attempt is to transform the ministries into *technocrats* of economic management rather than decision-makers.

Even the internal functioning of the sectoral ministries would be determined along the principles of *Khozrachat* (individual profitability of enterprises), to be introduced progressively, which would transform these ministries into a sort of giant "trust" enterprise.

The Future of the Reform

What results can we project for the 1979 reform? The observers are expressing skepticism, not only regarding the objectives decided upon, but also regarding the real possibilities for general application of the decree, notwithstanding the energetic and aggressive tone of the decree itself.

Unquestionably, real problems of the Soviet economy are being denounced here to one extent or another by the Soviet leaders themselves. Moreover, these problems are confirmed by the naked figures in the statistics. The attempt to return to rigorous centralization, the strengthening of economic controls had, moreover, been predicted by the specialists in the field. It is quite possible that, as in the case of the 1965 reform and its sequels, the text of the 1979 reform reflects interbureaucratic

struggles that are taking place, and the ossification and isolation of the main Kremlin leaders, which has been expressed in nearly all their speeches and reports in recent years.

The appearance of ever graver problems, of openly denounced deficiencies, the succession of one failed reform attempt after another leads to thinking about a *fundamental contradiction* that is at the base of the ossification, the isolation, and the muted interbureaucratic struggles. That is the *contradiction of administering the "homeland of socialism" in accordance with the special interests of a bureaucracy* (privileges, status, conservation of gains).

Reference to the "homeland of socialism" is not meant as a simple play on words reflecting a bitter irony. The phrase also makes it clear that the general framework of the economic system, which was won by the working class in a revolutionary fashion, is counterposed to the interests of its bureaucratic leaders. In the Soviet Union they cannot radically reduce public expenditures for health, education, pensions, and the like. Nor can they extend unemployment to whole sectors of industry, to cite only these examples. They cannot frontally attack the gains that the Soviet working class considers basic.

And from this flows the presently insoluble contradictions of bureaucratic management, and the limits beyond which a simple reform of this management cannot go. □

The 'International Spartacist tendency'

Case History of National Chauvinism, Bureaucratic Methods

By Libby Schaefer

[Libby Schaefer joined the Spartacist League (SL) in the summer of 1968. She is a former national secretary of the Spartacist Youth League (SYL) and managing editor of its newspaper, *Young Spartacus*. As youth representative, she was a full member of the Spartacist League Central Committee. After leaving the SYL, she was elected an alternate member of the Central Committee. She later functioned in various capacities for the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), including organizer of the Spartacist Nucleus of Israel, editor of *Spartacist Canada*, and member of the Trotskyist League of Canada Political Bureau. After severe organizational measures were taken against her following a series of fights on political and organizational questions, she resigned from the Spartacist tendency in the summer of 1976. She has recently become a member of the Fourth International.]

The 1976 Quebec Air-Traffic-Controllers Strike

In June 1976 Québécois air traffic controllers demanded the right to use French in ground-to-air communications between Francophone pilots and Francophone controllers. They pointed to well known international airports which were bi- and trilingual, without endangering safety, and demanded their language rights as an oppressed national minority. The government agreed to adjust federal air-traffic-control regulations to allow for bilingualism. The Anglophone controllers went on strike against the use of French in the air. It was "unsafe," they said. But English-Canadian chauvinism was the real reason.

At the time of the 1976 Quebec air traffic controllers strike, I was a member of the Trotskyist League of Canada (TLC), sym-

pathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency in Canada.

When we discussed the issue in the Political Bureau, I put forward the position that the English-speaking controllers' strike was reactionary and deserving of no support. Rather, we should support the use of French in the air between French-speaking pilots and controllers. The rest of the Political Bureau agreed. The Political Bureau presented its position to the TLC's local branches in Toronto and Vancouver, which supported it too.

In fact, the natural response of most of the Canadian membership had been to oppose the strike, and several members had come to the position independently. There was no opposition to the Political Bureau position.

We quickly heard from New York that we had taken a bad position and, as in the

case of minor questions of difference as well, representatives of the central leadership were quickly dispatched to straighten the matter out. The New York leadership had taken the position that "safety" was the main issue, that English is the international language of the air, and that our opposition to the strike reflected an anti-working-class tendency to trail petty-bourgeois Québécois nationalism.

This strike took place amidst a quick growth of the Québécois national liberation sentiment. The Québécois working class has been a stronghold of pro-separatism and the mood has also been strong among Québécois students, professionals, farmers and small businessmen. The strike turned out to be a catalyst that brought together various streams of the nationalist movement, culminating in the election of the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois (PQ), under the leadership of René Lévesque. It is a measure of Spartacist insensitivity to national oppression and blindness to major events in the class struggle that they did not recognize the importance of this struggle and what the line-up of forces meant.

The debate in the local was noteworthy for the central leadership's readiness to cite "factual" reports of reactionary sources regarding safety, despite the fact that numerous pro-separatist and neutral air-traffic-control experts had claimed that bilingualism in the air was safe. My description of the various major international airports that were bi- and tri-lingual, and had good safety records, was ignored. The simple fact that it is safer to have a Francophone controller speak French to a Francophone pilot trying to land was ignored.

Abstract, Negative Concept of Self-Determination

This political fight served to clarify my growing disagreement with Spartacist politics on national oppression. I had been disturbed for a couple of years—since the SL began to attempt writing a program on Israel and Ireland—by the increasingly abstract quality of their analyses, and their ability to define "self-determination" in negative terms only, a break from Lenin's writings on this subject.

In the case of the air traffic controllers strike, the SL's theoretical abstractions had turned into a concrete demonstration of support for the chauvinism of the oppressor group. I began to understand better what was wrong with the Spartacist view on Israel and Ireland and how the theoretical haze they had produced on these questions was merely an ill-wrought cover for Israeli chauvinism and English chauvinism.

In my resignation letter (August 17, 1976) I noted that SL documents on Ireland and the Middle East did

... little more than introduce abstract defini-

tions in the negative of the right to self-determination in the imperialist epoch . . . , failing to explain how Lenin's definitions in the positive might apply. The thrust of the position is a recognition of the right to self-determination, coupled with the assertion that it is impossible for it to be carried out in the case of "intermingled peoples"—although one would still call for the right to self-determination. (The fact that the term "intermingled peoples" applies to an enormous number of situations in the world today, there being very few "pure nations" around these days—[is] not dealt with.)

The SL conceived of the right to self-determination, I wrote, as solely "a slogan directed . . . at the consciousness of the workers, but which has no application in concrete reality." By this I did not mean that a position was taken against separation as a state, but that the conception existed that separation as a state was an impossibility. Lenin insisted that self-determination had no meaning without the right to separate as a political entity. Any abstract, idealist conception of self-determination bears no relation to Leninism.

I noted that the term "intermingled peoples" was not a Leninist category. In fact, the nation in the imperialist epoch is almost always a collection of nationalities and religious or ethnic groupings. This is true not only of the colonial and semicolonial world, especially those areas which were balkanized, that is, where artificial boundaries were drawn, following the two world wars when the imperialist powers divided up the spoils—but is also true of the older bourgeois nation-states—for example, the Québécois in Canada, the Basques in Spain, the Flemish in Belgium and the Netherlands, and the various language-national groupings in Germany.

I was forced to conclude that the Spartacists' position reflected the influence of American and English-language chauvinism on a group long isolated in the strongest imperialist power in the world today. This chauvinism is reflected in position after position of the Spartacists.

The SL's chauvinism on Quebec was reflected again over language rights under the PQ government. Supported by the vast majority of the Québécois, the PQ sought to pass Bill 101 making French the official language of Quebec. The Spartacists opposed this bill and in article after article moaned about the oppression of English-speaking Quebecers. This "misplaced emphasis," that is, worrying about the rights of the oppressors while the oppressed struggle for their liberation, finds its echo in the SL position on the Middle East.

Equating Oppressor and Oppressed in Israel

In my resignation letter I noted that the SL's "negative definition" of the right to self-determination was well "expressed in the introduction to the reissued *Youth, Class and Party*," a pamphlet produced by the SL youth group, the Spartacus Youth

League. The passage I was referring to was:

For geographically interpenetrated peoples such as the Palestinian Arabs and the Hebrews, an independent nation state can be created under capitalism only through forced population transfers. The democratic right of national self-determination for both becomes abstract, since it can be exercised only by the stronger national group denying that same right to the weaker group through expulsion and/or national oppression. The conflicting and counterposed national claims of geographically interpenetrated peoples can be equitably and democratically resolved only within the framework of the proletariat in power. Under capitalism the right of self-determination for interpenetrated peoples takes on a strictly negative character: against the abuses of the national rights of either the Palestinian Arabs or the Hebrew-speaking population.

Key to this conception is the equation drawn between Palestinian Arabs and the Hebrew-speaking population. The terms "stronger national group" and "weaker group" substitute for the Leninist terms "oppressor nation" and "oppressed nation." To insist that independent nation states can be formed only through "forced population transfers" and are therefore undemocratic means that nowhere should the Spartacists be calling for the right to self-determination since nowhere does a pure nation exist without some national, racial, ethnic or religious mingling. Or it means that in all cases the SL must call for self-determination for "stronger" and "weaker" alike.

Certainly the Spartacists know there is a sizable English-speaking population in Quebec, to take one example. When will they drop their call for the right to self-determination for the Québécois, and call for the right to self-determination for Francophone and Anglophone Quebecers alike? Perhaps their position on the air-traffic-controllers strike and Bill 101 has put them on the road to changing their position.

While it is true that full democracy and therefore a full exercise of the right to self-determination are not possible under capitalism, it does not follow that the socialists should stand paralyzed unless they can exterminate every single injustice or possible injustice in one fell swoop: self-determination for all! socialism for all! Fine, but this does not represent a path out of false consciousness and oppression, toward liberation. It is moralistic sloganeering at first glance, and a capitulation to the chauvinism of the oppressor when one looks more carefully—because it puts oppressed and oppressor on an equal plane.

Socialists seek to convince the working masses within the oppressor group that their class interests lie in making common cause with the oppressed group. We oppose any expression of racial or religious bigotry that may surface within the oppressed group, but we realize that the struggle of

the oppressed masses is the basis for all social progress. In rising up against their oppression, the oppressed set into motion social forces often beyond what their leaders might have initially intended. A situation favorable to socialist intervention and leadership is often created.

When the bourgeoisie of the oppressor nation mobilizes in defense of its "self-determination," however, the result is reaction, or reinforcement of the status quo, at best. After wading through the Spartacists' theoretical haze of "intermingled peoples," one can only conclude again that this "theory" is a cover for capitulation to the chauvinism of the "stronger national group."

The Spartacist position for "revolutionary defeatism on both sides" in a war between Israel and any Arab power similarly reflects the SL's capitulation to Israeli racism. And it is another example of their failure to understand the dynamic of major events in the world class struggle. With blinders firmly fixed on both sides of their heads, they looked at the 1973 Israeli-Egyptian war and saw two capitalist powers, one pro-U.S. and one moving toward the U.S., locked in battle, and abstained from supporting either side in the war.

The fact that Egypt is a semicolonial country that is exploited by world imperialism, while Israel is an outpost of imperialism that is subsidized by Washington to the tune of billions every year, does not enter into the calculations of the Spartacists. For them, the worldwide struggle against imperialist domination is beside the point. Another element the Spartacists miss, but which Washington understands, is the history of mass upheavals in all the Arab countries—making their governments extremely undependable as friends of imperialism.

Of course, the Spartacists can always come up with rationalizations for abstaining from the struggle and refusing to take a stand on the side of the oppressed. But identifying with the struggle of the oppressed and supporting it is the essential prerequisite for any revolutionary policy. It is a prerequisite the SL lacks.

In retrospect, my experience as a member of the iSt's Spartacist Nucleus of Israel (SNI) in 1974-75 confirms the analysis I have since arrived at. While the groups to the left of the Communist Party in Israel in 1974-75 were all very small (ten to thirty members each, with the SNI having four), Spartacist politics were just too out of touch with reality and insensitive to Arab oppression to recruit even a handful. The SNI had six or more Arab contacts coming to a regular class series, primarily due to the personal authority of one of the SNI members, an Israeli who had a ten-year history in Israel as an anti-Zionist leftist militant. Besides the class, the SNI put out several newspapers during the year, and participated in demonstrations and other events of the left. Despite

this, we recruited no one the whole year.

I talked at length with many Arab students in Israel about the need to "support the right of self-determination for the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking people" (a Spartacist slogan), but I could not get any of them to see the wisdom in the second half of that slogan. They saw the "Hebrew-speaking people" as their oppressors and it did not seem in the service of Palestinian liberation to call for self-determination to the oppressor. Similarly, the Spartacist slogan for "revolutionary defeatism on both sides" in the Arab-Israeli war led to confusion among our Arab contacts as to our support for the struggles of the oppressed.

SL Dead End on Ireland

In Ireland, the SL gets even more bogged down than in the Middle East. At least in Israel they know who the Hebrew-speaking people are (they speak Hebrew) and they know who the Palestinian Arabs are (they speak Arabic), but in Northern Ireland they never could quite figure out who the real parties in the conflict are.

In Northern Ireland the SL saw Catholics and Protestants, most of who were Irish in background but some of whom more closely identified themselves with England. The Spartacists did not want to call for self-determination for a religious group, only for a national group. But where was the nation? Was Northern Ireland a nation? It did not seem so. Were there two separate nations—Irish and British—in Northern Ireland? It did not seem so.

To this day, the SL does not have a worked-out position on Ireland. What they say boils down to a version of the economist slogan "black and white unite and fight" and offers no special demands for those suffering from national oppression.

The correct socialist slogan—for a united Ireland—is anathema to the SL, because it might be opposed by proimperialist Protestants in Northern Ireland. For the anti-Leninist SL, it would be just as correct to call for a united Britain as a united Ireland. The longstanding oppression of the Irish by the English and the history of Northern Ireland as part of the Irish nation does not make it through the Spartacist blinders.

If some of the Protestants in Northern Ireland want to ally themselves with the English oppressor, then it is the duty of socialists to try and change their minds, to make them see that their own oppression as workers is only enforced by an alliance with the English oppressors. In a military confrontation, it is the duty of socialists to take the side of those fighting for unity with Ireland.

SL's Chauvinist Trajectory

I noted earlier that the SL's long-time isolation as an American sect influenced it to take chauvinist positions. Its identifica-

tion with the oppressor carries over into other struggles, so that in Israel it reflects Israeli chauvinism, in the Irish struggle it reflects English chauvinism, and in Canada English-language and American chauvinism.

Nothing stays the same. The SL has continued along this trajectory to what appears to be an alarming conclusion. In the now notorious public speech that SL leader James Robertson made in 1977 (see article by Will Reissner, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, November 20, 1978, p. 1282), the SL national chairman had many things to say that struck racist, sexist and American-chauvinist chords. He had some comments on South Africa, for example, specifically about the Boers' "right to exist."

Robertson defended these remarks again in *Workers Vanguard*, December 15, 1978. While he maintains he is not for the "right to self-determination" for the Boers, he does support their "right to exist." The "right to exist" has never been a Marxist slogan. What is it that Robertson means? Has he suddenly become a pacifist? Surely slogans like the "right to exist" (that is, everyone has the "right to live" and it follows that no one has the "right" to take away someone's life) lend themselves to this interpretation.

Robertson spells out what he means:

There's a theory—it's a Stalinist theory—that all the people on earth are either progressive or reactionary. If you are progressive, not only do you have the right to exist, you have the right to do anything to your oppressors, but if you are a reactionary people, you have no right to exist and I have the right to kill you. Now, oddly enough, the peoples of the earth—the Irish, the Biharis, the Turks, the Armenians, the Jews in Israel, the Palestinians—they all want to exist. And I think maybe you ought to start with that, as a statement that maybe capitalism is rotten ripe for a social transformation, not for a genocide. . . ." (Quoted in *Workers Vanguard*, December 15, 1978.)

Thus, Robertson echoes the racist propaganda of the apartheid regime, indicating his view that the struggle of the Black masses in southern Africa is aimed against the white population and threatens the whites with genocide. One can only conclude from this that the white South Africans are trying to maintain their rule as an act of self defense!

The *Workers Vanguard* article goes on to say that "the question of the Boers is not an abstract moral question" and that "there's more than humanitarianism at stake." (Not widely known for his "humanitarianism," Robertson seems able to make an exception when worrying about oppressor groups.) While recognizing that most Boers would be in the reactionary camp in a South African proletarian revolution, the SL says it has "no desire to push every last white into the trenches by a nationalistic perspective of exterminating the entirety of the oppressor people."

In the coming revolutionary struggles in South Africa, Blacks can win some whites to the cause of Black liberation and socialism by speaking to the material needs of the white working population and by exposing the bourgeois white leaders as exploiters of white working people. In a military confrontation, it is the duty of socialists to take the side of Black liberation.

To talk about everyone's "right to exist" makes one either a misguided pacifist or a politician who has been infected by the chauvinism of the oppressor. One would be hard put to call the SL a pacifist organization. Translated into politics, Robertson's advocacy of the "right to exist" has become self-determination for the oppressed and the oppressor. This phony "humanitarianism" covers the reality behind the SL view of the Arab-Israeli struggle, the Irish-English struggle, the Québécois-English Canadian struggle, and, it seems, the struggle for Black liberation and workers power in South Africa.

As the SL has been pushed further into the corner by exposure of its racism, it has displayed its reactionary tendencies more and more openly. While Robertson's infamous 1977 speech was published by non-Spartacists, *Workers Vanguard* itself is now publishing such racist remarks. Not wanting to disavow the speech, the SL is hardening up on a chauvinist course.

Reactionary Position on Iran

The Spartacist League has been severely and widely discredited on the left due to the position it has taken on the past year's events in Iran. While their position on Iran represents an intersection of sectarian methodology and chauvinist ideology, and is thus a logical culmination of the direction their politics have been taking over the years, it also represents a significant further degeneration for the SL.

The SL did not come forward to defend the third Iranian revolution against the shah's forces—even with sectarian criticism of the non-Marxist leadership of the mass movement. The SL held that Khomeini and the mullahs were an evil equal to—or greater than—the Shah's forces. In effect, the Spartacists gave critical support to the Shah.

It is interesting to trace the development of the SL's line on Iran, because it begins with a spontaneous chauvinist reaction to the mass uprisings. An article on Iran in the November 17, 1978 *Workers Vanguard* noted that Muslim students attacked liquor stores, movie theatres, night clubs and a Pepsi Cola plant. While the average reader of bourgeois newspapers and the average member of the American community in Iran, as well as almost every leftist watching these events, knew that these were mainly political acts directed against symbols of U.S. imperialism, "only the Spartacist League" among the left said that these acts "once again provid[ed]

stark evidence that [the masses'] 'anti-imperialism' is nothing more than an obscurantist hatred for Western culture and modernization."

For the SL, culture runs the gamut from liquor stores to night clubs; more importantly, this "white man's burden" statement could not have been put more emphatically by a prewar British colonialist in India. And we all know how much "culture and modernization" British imperialism brought to India: about as much as American imperialist exploitation and the reign of its friend the Shah brought to Iran. Rather than culture and modernization, imperialist rule and imperialist economic exploitation have taken the natural wealth of the colonial countries and given nothing but oppression in return.

The January 5, 1979 *Workers Vanguard* offered an article entitled "Marxism Against Islamic Reaction," in which SL internal educationals given by Reuben Samuels and James Robertson are reprinted. From both talks, but Robertson's in particular, the reader must conclude that the SL gives critical support to the shah above Khomeini. Robertson lists the various examples of "modernization" and "culture" supposedly brought to Iran by the shah and says that Khomeini is much more backward. The source for this description appears to be the bourgeois press, colored by Robertson's own chauvinism. Racist remarks jump out at the reader, like Robertson's reference to Iranians as "pornographic Coke-swilling Persians."

After the racist slanders came the "theoretical" justifications. The SL articles on this subject might be characterized as "dancing on a dime." Under pressure of the Trotskyists' characterization of their position as "counterrevolutionary," the SL came up with such suggestions as returning the shah to Iran for trial (*Workers Vanguard*, May 11, 1979) and at least one admission that the Iranian workers and the strike movement formed a component of the antishah forces prior to the shah's leaving the country (April 13, 1979 *Workers Vanguard*).

These points directly contradict the SL's position, however, which was most fully delineated in "Why They Supported Islamic Reaction" (*Workers Vanguard*, April 13, 1979). The SL claims that the struggles between the masses and the shah's army did not constitute civil war and that victory for the shah's side would not have meant obliteration of the popular forces. One is breathless at the blindness and criminal stupidity of this view of events. The SL then goes on to characterize the Khomeini leadership as equal to a feudal priesthood. In terms of proposals for action, the SL makes no distinction between the politics of this supposed feudal leadership and the masses, and it makes no distinction between components of the mass movement. It concludes that a policy

of support to the mass movement is not warranted.

The SL's counterrevolutionary position was summed up in the slogan: "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!"

Anti-imperialist fighters throughout the world hailed the fall of the shah as a staggering blow to American imperialism. That was also the judgement of policymakers in Washington. But the Spartacists are still unable to see any difference between the "American king" and the leaders identified with the revolutionary struggle to overthrow him.

Within Iran, the success of the struggle against the monarchy has resulted in a completely new relationship of class forces, one that is greatly to the advantage of the working class and its allies. Despite repressive moves and temporary setbacks, the Iranian masses have made dramatic gains.

Peasant committees in the villages and workers committees in the factories are playing an increasingly important role. New parties and newspapers have been established. Oppressed nationalities have gained ground in the struggle for their rights. Many of Iran's ties with imperialism have been severed.

All this is either ignored by the Spartacists, or else they deny that it was the result of the revolution they opposed. And in keeping with its counterrevolutionary position, the SL reacted to the new confrontation between U.S. imperialism and the Iranian revolution that erupted in November by joining the anti-Iranian frenzy of the ruling class.

A front-page article ("Behind Mullah Madness") in the December 7 *Workers Vanguard* began:

American embassies ablaze from Tripoli to Islamabad, marine guards dead in the fiery ruins, diplomats in Teheran still hostage to huge crowds of fervent Khomeinists, gunbattles in Mecca's Grand Mosque, a tide of Islamic religious frenzy reaching an orgiastic crescendo of bloody self-flagellation—has the Sword of Islam been raised to crush the "infidel" once and for all?

And that is only one example of recent anti-Iranian hysteria in the SL press.

Next week: How the iSL's methods of intimidation and bureaucratic commands have made it a mockery of Leninist internationalism and democratic centralist organizational principles.

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More than 200 were killed when troops attacked January 22 demonstration.

U.S. 'Advisers' To Be Sent

Carter Approves Intervention in El Salvador

The Carter administration has given tentative approval to the sending of U.S. Army advisers and U.S. arms to help shore up the military regime in El Salvador.

According to a report by Karen DeYoung in the February 14 *Washington Post*, "The program calls for at least three 12-man

Army mobile training teams (MTTs) to instruct each of El Salvador's three army battalions in logistics, communications and intelligence techniques."

In addition, \$7 million in military aid, in addition to the \$50 million in economic aid already planned, would be provided.



200,000 participated in January 22 march.

According to DeYoung's sources, "a similar contingent of advisers has also been approved for Honduras but the teams have not yet been sent."

Social conflict in El Salvador is approaching the point of civil war. In the three weeks after January 22—when a demonstration of 200,000 in San Salvador called by the trade unions and leftist groups was savagely fired on by the military—more than 200 people died. Rightist death squads and police and military units regularly assassinate working class and peasant militants. Left-wing groups seeking the release of political prisoners have taken hundreds of hostages in embassies, banks, and government buildings.

The regime is based on the armed forces. Only the isolated Christian Democratic Party is backing it, and even elements within the Christian Democrats are opposed to any association with the discredited military. "The government has no friends," one State Department official admitted.

DeYoung notes that "even the Catholic Church, while professing its support for nonviolent change, has declared the junta unrepresentative and has begun to move toward the left."

But Washington, fearful of the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution, is determined to block new revolutionary victories in Central America. "The Pentagon's objective ultimately is to get the Marines in there and show that they can win a guerrilla war," one official told DeYoung.

Salvadoran Christian Democrats, however, fear that the arrival of U.S. forces would confirm their role as stooges for Washington in the eyes of the masses. They are trying to get the Spanish, West German, and Venezuelan regimes to join in the intervention so that it would not appear as only a U.S. operation. □

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