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AND NOW THE FUMES OF JOHNSON'S PROPAGANDA

In face of the universal anger and bitter protest that swept the world when it was learned that the U.S. was using noxious gases in South Vietnam in addition to napalm and white phosphorus, the Johnson administration winced a little. But its reaction offered not the slightest hope that the monster in the White House intended to back down at all in his "escalation" of the conflict.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk made an unusual personal appearance at a news briefing March 24 to arrogantly tell the world that the administration he represents will continue to use gas.

He tried to soften this announcement by saying that noxious gases will be used "only in riot control or situations analogous to riot control." He added, "There has been no policy decision to engage in gas warfare in Vietnam."

How much trust can be placed in Rusk's word that Johnson has not really decided to engage in gas warfare? Not much. This can be judged from the revelation on how Rusk came to give this answer. It was not the result of an honest consideration of the repercussions of the preliminary employment of gas in South Vietnam but the outcome of something quite different.

Thus David Wise of the New York Herald Tribune's Washington Bureau revealed March 28 that the Washington policy makers were caught by surprise by the world-wide reaction to the U.S. use of gas. As he put it, "the men in high office cannot anticipate everything. From time to time something goes wrong."

What went "wrong," however, in their opinion was not the use of gas but the failure to have prepared for a "potential propaganda black eye for the United States around the world." As they saw it, the "enemy" had scored a propaganda triumph that must be met on the same level -- by counter propaganda.

For unexpected situations like this, the planners of U.S. imperialist strategy have prepared a whole series of advance combinations and permutations of poses to be assumed in public by top officials in Washington. As Wise explains it, in this instance, the answers kept on file for emergency use "basically broke down into five." These were the following:

"1 -- Silence, say nothing.

"2 -- Deny everything.

"3 -- Admit the use of nonlethal gas in Vietnam, term it a low-level decision, a mistake, and order that use of the gas stop immediately.

"4 -- Admit the use of gas, defend it as a decision made with full presidential knowledge, and announce that use of the gas will continue when necessary.

"5 -- Admit the use of gas, defend it as human, disavow presidential responsibility and indicate that the gas will be used in the future when necessary."

According to Wise, "The Johnson administration chose the last option, as the best way, in its judgment, to salvage something out of a bad situation."

Out of the five possibilities, which were probably the end

results of variants put into electronic computers, the Dr. Strangeloves who are advising Johnson chose the one which they thought would prove least damaging. The alternative of stating the truth is, of course, excluded from "psychological warfare."

Thus, unfortunately from the White House point of view, the administration "could scarcely have said nothing, or denied all, because an Associated Press photographer had seen gas canisters and the story would have been difficult to suppress."

An outright lie, the happiest course for the imperialist propagandists, being excluded, these representatives of the "free world" then considered alternative No. 3. The administration couldn't use that because it "would have amounted to an admission that it had goofed, and that the president didn't know what was going on." It is, of course, not good publicity to reveal that the president of the United States is a mental as well as moral cretin.

To have used No. 4 would have "involved presidential prestige in the use of nauseating gas, an unpleasant option."

Thus by process of elimination of what they thought would be the most damaging propaganda, the White House advisers came to the "option" which they considered the least damaging. Hence the propaganda actually issued by the State Department and by Johnson himself. They reluctantly admitted using gas in South Vietnam, but claimed that really it wasn't so poisonous after all. In addition, it was not the sort of thing that usually comes to Johnson's personal attention, although of course he was not unaware of it. And while "no new directives" have been issued by Johnson about using it, still it will be used in the future "when needed."

Thus, after being given an object lesson in how the Pentagon is using the Vietnamese as guinea pigs in testing out all kinds of novel new technological weapons invented and stockpiled in preparation for World War III, international public opinion was given an additional object lesson in the kind of propaganda to be expected as Johnson escalates the world closer to a nuclear catastrophe.

Only the spokesmen and apologists of the Wilson government came close to matching their American cousins in defending and covering up the Pentagon's use of gas. These experts in the application of the human tongue in services best appreciated by figures like Johnson and Wilson aver that it is much kinder to use gas than to sear the Vietnamese with napalm or white phosphorous or to blast them with bombs or to cut them up with machine-gun fire.

A columnist in the liberal Observer [March 28] dubbed the actual use of the gas as "slightly comical." The whole furor, in his opinion, could be put down as a "toxic but non-lethal cloud" of alarm due to mere "bungles" and "ill-chosen" words.

"HYGIENIC, PASTEURIZED GASES. . ."

The reaction of the French political satirists to Washington's use of noxious gases in Vietnam, offers a good indication of how bourgeois public opinion in Europe took the official admission. As can be seen from the examples below, the Johnson administration did not score any spectacular applause in these circles of its allies.

* * *

Under the title, "For a Laugh," André Frossard wrote in Le Figaro [March 24]:

"After the napalm, gas. But the gases used by the American army in Vietnam are, naturally, hygienic, pasteurized gases, like ether and laughing gas, since it is characteristic of military men to laugh.

"These gases, which are sprayed like an insecticide, have the double virtue of knocking out the enemy and of restoring good humor to the American command.

"As a high functionary of the United States embassy put it to Max Clos, Figaro's Saigon correspondent: 'We have shown that we are strong enough to do what we want to without having to take international opinion into account.'

"It was hardly to be expected that this would be heard from an official missionary of Western democracy, but we must take into account the euphoria drifting from the villages and seeping into headquarters.

"Oh, it's wonderful to be sure of yourself! There's plenty of time to demonstrate, after trying out all the modern technological weapons, that there's no lack of psychology either."

* * *

Le Canard Enchaîné, the satirical Paris weekly, ran the following bit [March 24], entitled "Getting Gassier" [ça gaze]:

"Yes sir, it's getting gassier all the time in Vietnam. The welcome mat of napalm bombs no longer being sufficient to rally the Vietnamese 'to the camp of freedom,' the Americans have decided to spray them with a little gas. Just a squirt of perfume no doubt.

"But the good anticolonialist souls in the United States can stay relaxed. On the word of the Pentagon -- the 'Goldfinger' Pentagon -- it's only for purely humanitarian aims that the U.S. is resorting to such methods.

"Just to make the Vietcong cry. . . In the long run to make them laugh. Nice work!

"Continuation of the escalation is not being halted. Tomorrow we will learn perhaps that the Americans are sending explosive pencils to the Vietnamese villages.

"As part of the struggle against illiteracy.

"Real Puritans!"

[In that last sentence, the French word is "puritain," which, of course, is easily distinguished from the other French word "putain," meaning "whore." Nevertheless, many readers of Le Canard Enchaîné will smile wryly at the close similarity of the final wise-crack to a common vulgar French phrase.]

* * *

Robert Escarpit, Le Monde's satirist, wrote the following [March 25] under the title "Nausea":

"Of course there's gas and gas. What the Americans are using in Vietnam is not mustard or phosgene. Our benevolent civilization has humanized even this once dreaded weapon.

"The American vomiting and hallucinating gases put the enemy out of combat without really hurting him at all.

"However, their effectiveness can be questioned. Hallucinations are not incompatible with fighting; quite the contrary. If you want to really imbue the soldiers with the Grand Illusion, it's well to let them see the moon look like green cheese.

"As for vomiting, do you really believe a gas is necessary to make one's gorge rise and give birth to the fierce anger of bloody liberation struggles?"

* * *

The shortest comment, yet as apt as any in voicing the nausea felt by the whole world, was the following headline which Le Canard Enchaîné printed on two placards, one for each of its famous ducks to display at the very top of the front page:

"These gases in Vietnam. make one vomit!"

CASTRO'S APPEAL FOR EFFECTIVE AID TO VIETNAM

[In commemoration of the martyrdom March 13, 1957, of the student leader José Antonio Echeverría and other members of the Revolutionary Directorate, Fidel Castro made an important speech in Havana which was reported in the European press under date of March 16 and referred to in World Outlook of March 19. The text of this speech now having become available we offer the following translation of the sections dealing with the situation in Vietnam and how Castro proposes it should be met.]

* * *

The Revolution has powerful enemies -- it has in particular one powerful enemy, American imperialism. This enemy is now threatening us and will continue to threaten us for a long time. This enemy will not easily become resigned -- although it has no other recourse -- to the revolutionary successes of our people. This enemy, not here, but thousands of miles away, attacks other peoples as it is at this moment attacking in criminal fashion the people of North Vietnam and the revolutionary people of South Vietnam (applause).

This enemy intervenes in the Congo; this enemy sends its ships, its Marines and its planes to every corner of the world; this enemy takes advantage of the lamentable divisions existing in the socialist camp. Unfortunately, it calculates, analyzes and profits from everything that might weaken the revolutionary front.

This means that present circumstances are such that all peoples are endangered -- our people as well as the others who, in all parts of the world, are struggling for their independence and their freedom. Thus there is no lack of dangers.

I am not going to dwell today on the problems of the divisions and discords in the socialist camp, problems which we are not yet prepared to discuss to the bottom; because the problem is not to talk for the sake of talking (applause), but to speak on definite things with definite objectives; the problem is to talk when something positive and useful can come from conversations and discussions and not something that is positive and useful only for imperialism and the enemies of the people.

But we, the small countries, who are not based on the armed force of millions of men, who are not based on atomic power; we, the little countries -- like Vietnam and like Cuba -- we have sufficient instinct to see calmly and to understand that these divisions and these discords that weaken the socialist camp particularly affect us who are in special situations -- here ninety miles from American imperialism, there under the attack of American planes.

We have no intention at this time of analyzing on the theoretic-

tical level, the philosophical level, the questions in dispute, but of taking into account a great truth: in face of an enemy who is attacking, in face of an enemy who is becoming more and more aggressive, division has no grounds for existence, division has no sense (applause). And in every epoch of history, in every period of humanity, since the first revolutionist appeared, since the time revolutions became social phenomena, since the time the masses acted instinctively up to the time they became conscious, when tasks and phenomena became fully understood by the peoples -- which occurred when Marxism-Leninism appeared -- never has division in the face of the enemy been a correct strategy, a revolutionary strategy, an intelligent strategy.

We in this revolutionary process, we all became educated from the beginning in the idea that everything that divides weakens, that everything that disunites is bad for our people and good for imperialism. And the masses of our people understood, from the first moment, the necessity of unity, and unity became an essential question for the Revolution, unity became the unanimous cry of the masses, unity became the slogan of the whole people everywhere. And we ask if the imperialists have disappeared; we ask if the imperialists aren't attacking North Vietnam; we ask if men and women of the people aren't dying there (applause).

And whom can you convince, whom can you bring around to believing that this division is best, that this division is useful? Don't you see the strategy employed by the imperialists to crush the revolutionary movement of South Vietnam -- first attacking North Vietnam under pretext of taking reprisals, and then arrogating the right to attack whenever they please and to continue utilizing masses of planes against the combatants of South Vietnam?

What is the situation right now? Well, the imperialists are talking about a blockade, landing their Marines in South Vietnam, sending airplane carriers, mobilizing masses of planes to crush the revolutionary movement in South Vietnam, about attacking the guerrilla fighters of South Vietnam with all the means at their disposal, while they reserve the right to attack North Vietnam whenever they please, about carrying this kind of air war to its very end, without any sacrifices on their side, by bombing missions of hundreds of planes with the luxury of following up with helicopters to rescue the pilots brought down. It is evident that the imperialists want a very pleasant kind of war. It is evident that the imperialists want a kind of war that only involves industrial losses; that is "so many planes lost."

It is evident that the people of South Vietnam and the people of North Vietnam are the victims of all this, and that they are doing the suffering, because there are men and women who are dying there, victims of machine-gunning and victims of American bombings. And the Americans declare without the slightest hesitation that they propose to continue to the very end because even the attacks against

North Vietnam have not silenced the divisions within the socialist family. And who can doubt that this division encourages the imperialists? Who can doubt that a united front in face of the imperialist enemy would have made them hesitate, would have made them think before launching these adventurous attacks and their more and more impudent intervention in this part of the world? Can they convince anyone? With what arguments and with what logic? And who are the beneficiaries? The imperialists. Who are the victims? The Vietnamese. And who suffers from it? The prestige of socialism, the prestige of the international Communist movement, the international revolutionary movement, and this is genuinely painful to us, because for us the words "freedom movement" are not demagogic words, but a slogan that we have always felt deeply.

Because we are a small country that does not aspire to become the center of the world; because we are a small country that does aspire to become a world revolutionary center. And when we speak of these problems, we speak with absolute sincerity; we are absolutely disinterested; we who gained revolutionary power not through bourgeois elections but arms in hand. We speak in the name of an unbreakable people who for six years have resisted without the least hesitation against the attacks and the threats of imperialism (applause); we speak in the name of a people who have not hesitated, who are for a strong revolutionary movement, for firmness and determination in defending the Revolution against the imperialists, who did not hesitate to face the dangers of thermonuclear war, even in our country and on our territory, when, exercising our full right (which we do not disavow) and through an absolutely legitimate act of which we will never repent, we agreed on installing strategic thermonuclear projectiles.

And, in addition, not only were we in agreement that they should be brought here, but we were not in agreement that they should be taken away (applause). And I believe that this is no secret to anyone.

We speak in the name of a country and a people that is receiving neither American credits, nor supplies for peace, and which has no relation with the imperialists. This means that in the question of revolutionary conviction and sincerity, no one can give us lessons, just as no one could give lessons to our liberators of 1895 and of 1868 in following the road of independence and dignity (applause). We are the people of the First and the Second Declaration of Havana, a Declaration which we didn't copy from something else, but which was the expression of the profoundly revolutionary and highly internationalist spirit of our people.

In view of the fact that these are the feelings and the thought of our revolution, and that we have demonstrated it as often as necessary without hesitation of any kind, without submission of any sort, and without the least opposition, we have the right to ask -- the same as many other peoples must ask themselves -- who profits

from these discords if it is not our enemies?

And obviously we are within our rights, it is our full right -- and I believe that no will dare to deny it -- to proscribe from our country and from among our people these discords and these byzantine battles.

It is worth indicating that here it is our party that conducts propaganda (applause); it is our party that gives the line, that this is a question that for us concerns our jurisdiction and that if we don't want anyone to bring the apple of discord here, no one can smuggle it in as contraband, and, finally, that our enemies, our only enemies, are the American imperialists (applause), our only insurmountable contradiction is with American imperialism (applause); the only adversary against whom we are inclined to cross swords is imperialism.

As for the rest, we don't understand any other language, we don't understand the language of division. And in face of the concrete case of a country suffering the aggression of imperialism, like Vietnam, we have one and only one position. . . .

We are not the kind to become terrorized at these happenings; on the contrary -- and our position is clear -- we think Vietnam should be given all the necessary aid (applause); we are in favor of aid in arms and men (applause); we are for the socialist camp risking everything required for Vietnam. (Cries of "Fidel, Fidel, give the Yankees hell!" "Cuba and Vietnam; we will win!" Prolonged applause.)

We are perfectly aware that at the least international complication, we will be one of the first targets of imperialism; but this does not disturb us and has never disturbed us; and we will not take the position of remaining silent and acting like idiots in hope they will spare us (applause).

Frankly, and in all sincerity, our reasoned, unemotional position, derives from our right to think, to reason, derives from our legitimate and inviolable right to take measures and to act as seems most correct and most revolutionary to us, and let no one be under the illusion that he can give us lessons in revolution (applause).

And I hope that no one will make the mistake of underestimating or ignoring the temperament of our people; because American imperialism has committed tons of errors of this kind; because one of its characteristics is to despise and underestimate small countries, and this imperialism has committed enormous errors in underestimating our revolutionary people; it would be lamentable for others to commit similar errors. Our sincere policy has been and remains that of uniting because we are not and never will be anyone's satellite (applause). And we have maintained a very reasonable, very

honest and very sincere position throughout this problem.

This is not the time to be rummaging in the records and archives. I believe that when imperialism is at our doors attacking us, it is ridiculous to lose time in arguing as they did in the fable about finding out if they were hares or rabbits and whether they were made out of iron or paper. Let's leave aside the historic records and archives and let History say who acted correctly or not; let History show everything that each one thought, everything that each one did and said, but let History do it. Because it is shameful to wash dirty linen in the face of the enemy, and above all enemies who are not attacking the most powerful but the smallest and the weakest (applause).

We have much to do. We are faced with many very hard and very difficult tasks: millions of tons of cane to cut in order to beat the American blockade, and they are not cut with paper, but with work, with sweat; they are cut with the machete.

Great perils threaten us, but you don't struggle against them with byzantine discords, with academic talk; no, you fight them with revolutionary firmness, revolutionary honesty, an inclination to struggle. You can't fight in an effective way against the imperialist enemy anywhere in the world with divided revolutionaries, with revolutionaries who insult each other, who attack each other; on the contrary, unity and cohesion are necessary in the revolutionary ranks to combat them. And to those who believe that this tactic is not correct for the international Communist movement, we assert that for us here, in our little island, in our territory, in the front-line trenches, ninety miles from the imperialists, it is really the most correct (applause).

And we will regulate our line and our conduct in accordance with this idea. . . .

WILSON'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER ATTACK

LONDON, March 29 -- There is mounting pressure upon the Wilson administration for a change in its Tory-aping foreign policy, particularly over its shameful support of American imperialism's escalation of the dirty, reckless war against the people of Vietnam. Not only have the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union and the National Union of Railwaymen formalized the grass-roots protests, long evident within the working class, by official resolution; not only has parliamentary opposition within the Labour party crystallized around a motion now signed by some 90 members and been underscored by the resignation of Frank Alaun from a junior post in the Wilson government; but the pro-Labour journals long the mainstay of

Wilson, like Tribune and the New Statesman, have become increasingly sharp in their criticism on this issue. Even The Times, that solid organ of the Establishment, has found it necessary to sound a note of caution -- lest Wilson go too far in alienating popular support in his adjustment to "reality" -- and to recall the social nature of the Vietnam war he is trying to gloss over. The more liberal bourgeois daily, the Guardian, has for some time been pressing similar arguments upon the Labour government.

The stepping-up of the arrogant and provocative bombings of North Vietnam and the boastful use of napalm and especially of gas, banned by international convention, has spurred the protest movement to a higher pitch in the course of the past week. Many Labour members not associated with the usual so-called left wing, but rather with the center and even the right wing -- like Philip Noel-Baker, Reginald Paget and Arthur Henderson, including also a vice-chairman of the group, Arthur Blenkinsop and several junior ministers -- have found it necessary to join in the parliamentary protest; and even to participate in a petition handed in to the U.S. embassy here, as well as in a telegram setting forth these views to Michael Stewart, the foreign secretary, who had been in Washington conferring with Johnson and Rusk on the subject.

As a result, Wilson in parliament, as well as Stewart in Washington, have been forced for the first time to utter a few feeble words tending to dissociate Britain from American imperialism's Vietnam war line, even as they were continuing to equivocate about their "general support" of it. No doubt, the existence of a cohesive and powerful Marxist wing in the Labour party could have organized this pressure much earlier, much more effectively and with far greater damage to the hold of Wilson's opportunism over the labour movement here. But even so the true feelings of revulsion within the working class, and the population generally, against any association with Washington's predatory war in the Far East are making themselves heard loudly and resoundingly enough to embarrass both Wilson and Co. and the Johnson administration, and perhaps to stay the hand of the latter in its nefarious escalation plans announced to come. It still remains to be seen whether the masters of the Pentagon will "show decent respect for the opinions of mankind" as Stewart, citing the Declaration of Independence, urged them to do.

Certainly, only massive protest actions that will dramatically demonstrate the revulsion of the mass of the population to the slaughter of a people and expose the craven collusion of Wilson and Co. with its perpetrators -- as Bertrand Russell, to his honor, has taken the most prominent lead in urging and demanding -- can arouse Britain and America from apathy before the nuclear brink is reached.

The uneasiness of the British Establishment in this situation is reflected in a leading editorial in The Times, which while patting Wilson on the back for "facing realities," reminds him of the

speciously motivated turnabout he has made regarding extension of the war in Vietnam since he became prime minister, and then admonishes him: "It is all too easy to over-simplify Vietnam and regard it solely as a confrontation between powers. . . The origins of the war remain those of a civil war, and there can be no solution that overlooks this fact. . . . Without letting the United States down, the British Government can best help by keeping the way open for negotiations which Americans do not exclude as their ultimate objective." (March 16 -- our emphasis.)

It is indeed tragic that the social root of the problem has to be pointed out to the Labour leader by an organ of the ruling class, fearful of being overwhelmed by the growing recognition of this fact in ever wider layers of the population here and everywhere. And this also accounts for the more strident tone in the hitherto pusillanimous Labour left and their press: "What is Mr. Wilson Waiting For?" (New Statesman), "Support the Americans who Speak for Peace!" (Tribune). It is only just occurring to them that the leadership is the one that is really rocking the Labour boat which they fear capsizing.

GUERRILLAS REPORTED IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

Guerrilla action in Brazil was reported to have occurred at two small towns in Rio Grande do Sul. Some forty men, according to the dispatch, attacked a post held by military police and seized a quantity of arms.

Authorities in both Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro brushed the report aside as of no importance, but the fact itself was confirmed by the Ministry of War March 26.

The men, dressed in the olive-green uniforms of the official armed forces, were headed by a former colonel, Jefferson Cardim de Alencar Osorio and by a former sergeant, Alberi Santos, according to the report. Both were expelled from the army and deprived of all civil rights following the April 1 coup d'état last year. They were accused of being "linked" to leftist circles.

The guerrilla fighters got away with a machine-gun, thirty rifles and a case of cartridges. They took over two radio stations and broadcast an appeal to the people of the area to support them and join the National Liberation Movement.

It was rumored that Lionel Brizola, one of the principal victims of last year's coup was the inspirer of the guerrilla force. It was also rumored that he was being financed by the "French Communist party." While the first rumor could not be verified, it is certain that the latter rumor is completely without foundation.

NEW REVOLUTIONARY PARTY FORMED IN ARGENTINA

The Buenos Aires weekly socialist paper Palabra Obrera [Workers' Word] reports that the organization it represents has united with the FRIP [Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular -- Revolutionary Indo-American Popular Front] to constitute a new organization, the Partido Unificado FRIP-Palabra Obrera [United FRIP-Workers' Word party].

The unification of the two organizations, which have participated in many class-struggle actions together, is an encouraging step forward in the difficult task of constructing a mass revolutionary-socialist party capable of winning political power, ending Argentina's dependent status, and opening the road for the construction of a socialist economy.

The speeches and other activities of the delegates at the founding congress, which was held in the north of Argentina at the end of January, testified to the spirit of solidarity and the high level of political consciousness reached by the two components of the new party.

The weekly Palabra Obrera and the biweekly Norte Revolucionario were designated as official organs of the new party and the following program was adopted:

I.

We must immediately solve the two catastrophic plagues from which the workers and the people suffer by immediately applying the following measures:

- (1) A fifty per cent increase in wages with no increase in the current prices of consumers goods.
- (2) Nationalization under workers' control of the wholesale trade, especially in meat and prime necessities, in order to keep prices from rising higher.
- (3) Nationalization of every factory, industry, plant or establishment that does not guarantee jobs or fails to pay on a biweekly basis, all the nationalized properties to be placed under workers control.

II.

Establishment of political democracy in the country and the initiation of a national workers' plan of independent development, to be financed by applying a single tax on the employers of twenty per cent of their real capital, basing this on the following measures:

(1) Repudiation of the concessions and economic debts contracted by the various fraudulent governments with imperialism.

(2) Expropriation without pay of the meat-packing plants, the oil companies and the big oligarchical and imperialist companies, the properties to be placed under workers control.

(3) Nationalization of foreign trade and the banking system. Funds and credits must be placed at the service of the nation.

(4) An agrarian reform based on the expropriation of all property above 100 hectares [1 hectare = 2.47 acres], to be paid with 20-year government bonds; on agrarian resettlement of the country into farms of 50 to 100 hectares; and on credits for tools and lodgings.

(5) Urban Reform. Credit for every worker who wants to build his own home, to be paid back at the rate of ten per cent of his monthly wages.

(6) Reduction of the government bureaucracy by half, moving it toward the agrarian resettlement and toward the new nationalized industries that will be developed. Special credit and temporary aid for the displaced office employees.

III.

Complete modification of our international policies. New political and juridical bases:

(1) Dissolution of all the pacts (OAS [Organization of American States], Rio de Janeiro, Cono Sur, etc.) tying us to imperialism.

(2) Support and unconditional defense of all the noncapitalist countries in face of imperialist attack.

(3) Solidarity with all the anticolonial and anti-imperialist revolutions of the world, and in the immediate and concrete form of Latin-American revolutionary processes.

(4) Unconditional support for and a Federative Union with Socialist Cuba.

(5) For the federative unity of the Latin-American workers and people's states.

IV.

In order to popularize, develop and ultimately put into effect this program:

(1) Create a Single Party of the Argentine Revolution with the unification of all the tendencies that accept this program as have the FRIP and Palabra Obrera.

(2) Replace the bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement. Demand the resignation of the leadership of the CGT [General Confederation of Workers]. Put into office new leaderships and adopt a program in a Rank and File Congress of the CGT, with delegates elected in the factories, that will reorganize the whole workers movement on antimanagerial and antibureaucratic bases.

(3) National and regional congresses of the CGT, with the participation of tendencies that represent the working class and the people, in order to discuss and apply a program embracing the necessities of the region or the country as a whole.

(4) Demand the calling of a completely free and sovereign Constituent Assembly, with the participation of all tendencies, sectors and personalities of the country, particularly General Perón, to institutionalize the program of the CGT and the workers and people's parties.

THE NEW STRUGGLES IN SPAIN

By Paul Arnault

Things are speeding up in Spain. Following the Madrid student demonstrations, the protest movement against the SEU [Sindicato Español Universitario -- the official government-controlled student union] and for democratic rights swept throughout the Spanish universities. [See World Outlook March 5 and 12.] On March 22 and 23 a new "Free Assembly," half underground this time, was held in Barcelona. Besides Barcelona, the universities of Madrid, Oviedo, Salamanca, Valencia and Bilbao sent delegates.

According to the Paris daily Le Monde [March 25], they approved the draft of a resolution to be submitted to the student movement as a whole. The resolution covers two points: (1) It indicates why the meeting had to be held "underground" and explains to the whole country the objectives of the student movement. (2) It calls for the organization of a union set up according to professions, independent of the authorities in the educational and political system, and really representative and democratic. Membership in the union should not be compulsory, although the delegates advised that it be so temporarily in view of present circumstances. Finally -- and this is important -- the delegates decided to cut off any further dialogue with the Franco government in view of the failure to carry out the promises made by Herrero Tejedor, assistant general secretary

of the Falange at the recent Villacastin meeting.

In addition, since the student demonstrations, the bourgeois opposition favoring an "evolution" of Francoism towards "enlightened bonapartism," has stepped up its activities. Among these should be noted the letter sent to Minister of Information Fraga Iribarne signed by 1,661 persons headed, naturally, by leaders of the Christian Democracy such as Manuel Jiménez Fernandez, José López Aranguren, Laín Entralgo, Aguilar Navarro, José María Valverde, as well as their accomplice and associate, the social democrat Tierno Galván.

In this letter, the signers, in order "to avoid the worst" (without doubt, the worst for these good bourgeois would be a new wave of strikes and demonstrations becoming more and more radical and even revolutionary) propose a series of "liberalizing" measures. "Alarm signals and serious warnings compel us," say the signers, "to propose various elementary and urgent measures: (1) Freedom of association and particularly trade-union freedom; (2) The right to strike; (3) Freedom of information and expression; (4) Amnesty for all those who were subjected to reprisals for having struggled in favor of these rights and liberties."

Professor Tierno Galván, leader of the domestic "moderate socialism," in a long interview granted to the Agence France Presse correspondent in Madrid, went along with this (he was one of the signers, as we have noted) and even spoke of a prerevolutionary situation in the country. By this, however, our professor referred not to what might be imagined, but to the discontentment of the . . . middle classes! Is the problem then a revolution of the middle classes? Or is it that Tierno Galván wants to be the political representative of these classes in the projected evolution of the Franco regime toward "bonapartist" political forms and the domination of the Spanish monopolies linked to the international trusts?

Not to be left behind, Arriba, the organ of the Falange, demanded [March 23] "the legalization of the opposition." "It would be good," the editors observed, "to make a small place for the opposition proper to any democracy. The political order could only gain from it."

What is happening in Spain? The current stirrings and their future direction cannot be understood without taking into account two essential facts: (1) The increasing number of workers' struggles, their growing extent and deepening content, of which everyone is aware. (2) The evolution of Spanish capitalism and its need to adapt itself for integration into the international "neocapitalist" currents, particularly those in Europe. This requires certain changes in the political structures of Francoism now blocking this development.

But the Spanish bourgeoisie is far from united on what to do. In fact two camps stand out more and more clearly as opposed to each other (up to a certain point, naturally) -- the "conservatives,"

partisans of the status quo and even in some instances of strengthening the dictatorship in order to crush the expressions of discontent; and the "liberals," partisans of evolution, actually of neocapitalism. Among the latter, the Christian Democracy seems to constitute the main force, which is understandable in view of the role of the Church in Spain.

But the workers' movement is stepping up its actions more and more. A significant event just occurred which ought to fill the Spanish bourgeoisie with uneasiness, whether "liberal" or "conservative." This was the demonstration March 12 at Mieres, a city of 65,000 in the Asturias mining region.

Some 8,000 miners from various parts of the area gathered in the town. What began as a demonstration for economic demands, rapidly changed into something quite political, even pre-insurrectional. After police arrested fifteen demonstrators, about 1,000 others took the police station by assault. They stripped it from top to bottom and in passing bashed the faces of some thirty cops they found inside.

The police had to send in an emergency call to Oviedo, the capital, for reinforcements, who finally managed to put down the demonstrators.

The shouts of the demonstrators were significant: "UHP!"* "Long Live Communism!" "Liberty!"

Thus, after twenty-five years of dictatorship, the old slogan of the 1934 insurrection in Asturias, the cry for proletarian unity, again echoed in the mine fields in the first assault of a police station since Franco's victory! The importance of such an action, even though it be an isolated one, should be obvious to everyone.

It appears that among the twenty miners who were arrested after the arrival of police reinforcements, there was a percentage of members of the Communist party. But it is self-evident that these militants -- like many others -- are not following the slogans of the leadership but are even going against the line of "national reconciliation" of the opportunist leadership of the Spanish Communist party.

In face of facts of such importance, the political fissures and contradictions among the Spanish bourgeoisie cannot help but grow. The advocates of evolution are forced to initiate new attempts to try to canalize the movement, to lead it along the way they want it to go. But in doing this, they deepen the differences; and the "gulf" that separates them from the "conservatives," still rather shallow, tends to deepen. . .

*UHP = Union de Hermanos Proletarios! [Unión of Brother Proletarians]

New events of all kinds will break out in Spain. Of this there is no doubt. Will the Spanish working class prove capable of organizing itself, of overcoming the old sclerotic apparatuses, of profiting from the contradictions of the bourgeoisie and guiding the general movement of discontent in the direction of socialism? This is the question now on the agenda.

DEFENSE PROBLEM GROWS MORE ACUTE IN ALABAMA

By Evelyn Sell

The cold-blooded murder of another civil-rights worker, this time a white mother of five children, near Selma March 25, brought nation-wide anger over the situation in Alabama to a new high. The problem of self-defense from the bestial racists of the South gained fresh acuteness as the four men arrested by the FBI were turned loose on bail, charged only with "conspiracy to violate" the murdered Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo's "civil rights," and President Johnson went on television to say that what the United States needs is more "legislation."

The problem was already under growing discussion among civil-rights workers throughout America. Their mood now leans more and more toward organizing themselves in an effective way despite the preaching of the American Ghandists about the high moral value of unresisting acceptance of the clubs and bullets of the Southern sadists.

To put things in better focus, it is necessary to indicate at least the highlights of the recent struggle in Alabama.

The voter registration campaign, launched at the end of January by the Rev. Martin Luther King, had been proceeding in a rather business-as-usual manner. King led registrants to the county courthouse in Selma where Negroes encountered legal technicalities barring or delaying their registrations. Fists, clubs, electric prods and arrests were employed by the county police force led by Sheriff Clark. The local city administration and police force in contrast tended toward a more "moderate" treatment of the repeated demonstrations. King went to Washington and met with President Johnson and Vice-president Humphrey. The Negro leader was assured that new federal legislation was being prepared to ease voter registration in the South.

The Detroit News of February 9 reported, "The officials heard Dr. King's proposals with a sympathetic ear. They also reviewed with considerable concern the militant forces who had attached themselves on the left of Dr. King's crusade and who have so far spurned

peace feelers in Selma."

As events unfolded there was increasing concern over the militant forces that threatened to burst through the more conservative approach of King.

Incidents of police brutality continued to pile up in Selma. On February 18 state troopers charged into 400 Negroes demonstrating in nearby Marion. A 26-year-old Negro, Jimmy Lee Jackson, was shot in the stomach when he attempted to defend his mother who had been clubbed by troopers; he died on February 26. But Jimmy Lee Jackson wasn't the only one to fight back that day -- Searcy Wright was arrested for hitting a trooper with a coca cola bottle. Unidentified Negroes threw bottles, bricks and rocks at the troopers before fleeing from the clubs. In another nearby town, Camden, right-to-vote marches were stopped by armed police.

On March 6 a very unusual march took place in Selma. A group of 60-70 persons, calling themselves "Concerned Citizens of Alabama," marched in the streets to protest discrimination against Negroes. The group included professors, businessmen, housewives, schoolteachers and other professionals. As they stood on the steps of the county courthouse they read a statement calling for an end to police brutality and asking that officials make it easier for Negroes to register to vote. While they marched and read their statement, a crowd of 500 whites jeered and taunted them; Jimmie George Robinson, the National States Rights member who hit Rev. King on January 18, yelled, "Communists, Communists."

Previously, similar sentiments had been expressed by other white Southerners but this was the first time that such a street demonstration had taken place in the South. White Southern students had been participating in civil-rights demonstrations since the sit-ins of 1960 but now the older generation was entering the picture in a new way.

The day after this sympathy march, on March 7, the infamous attack at the bridge leading out of Selma took place. State troopers, sanctioned by orders from Governor Wallace, halted Selma Negroes attempting to march to Montgomery, the state capitol. The marchers were ordered to turn back; instead, they knelt and prayed. Troopers using clubs, bull whips, ropes, tear gas, nausea gas and smoke bombs charged into the praying Negroes. Those who were able to, tried to escape the furious assault by running back to the shelter of Brown's Chapel AME Church, headquarters of the Selma campaign. As the troopers chased the Negroes into town a shower of rocks, bottles and bricks came from the Negro housing project near the church.

This action prompted Rev. James Bevel, 28-year-old director of King's Alabama project, to admonish Negroes the following day: "We almost had a flop yesterday. A few fellows came back to church and started throwing bottles and stones. If you see a guy get

emotionally out of control, you take his hand and quiet him down."

National reactions to the March 7 brutality were immediate and significant. The government announced that it would hold an investigation to determine whether "too much force" had been used by the state troopers. The civil-rights organizations responded quickly of course, but a new note was struck. The traditionally conservative National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] issued a statement that read in part: "Negroes must either submit to the heels of their oppressors or they must organize, underground, to protect themselves from the oppression of Governor Wallace and his storm troopers."

Roy Wilkins, head of the NAACP, declared, "There's going to be resistance with weapons, protection of ourselves with weapons, unless the Federal Government acts." He explained that when Negroes "start shooting back" the racists "start thinking twice about shooting." When Malcolm X voiced exactly the same idea, Wilkins among others, roundly denounced him for "preaching violence."

King immediately announced that he would return to Selma and lead a new march. "I must do this," he declared from Atlanta, "in spite of the dangers, possible beatings and the inhuman use of tear gas by state troopers. We have no alternative but to leave our opponents glutted with their own barbarity." He hurried to Selma to offer new victims to the far-from-glutted racists.

In Selma he repeatedly lectured mass rallies on the nonviolent philosophy which won him a Nobel prize last year. "We are going to suffer some more," he promised. "But we must let them know if they beat one Negro, they will have to beat 100 or 1,000."

He appealed to Christians across the nation to come to Selma and join in the crusade. Whites and Negroes, young and old, began pouring into the small city in an expression of commitment unparalleled in the civil-rights movement to date. A great many of the participants in this flood were members of religious bodies. Churches had published many expressions of support for civil rights but this was the first time such extensive physical involvement in the Southern struggle took place. Nuns singing "We Shall Overcome," the battle hymn of the civil-rights movement, faced grim troopers in many of the confrontations that followed. Three white ministers were attacked by racists on March 9; Rev. James Reeb of Boston died of his wounds two days later.

While this demonstration of solidarity was building up inside Alabama, sympathy demonstrations flooded the United States from the east coast to the west. Sit-ins took place in the Federal Building at Los Angeles and Detroit. Rush hour traffic in Chicago's downtown Loop was tied up when demonstrators lay down in the streets. Marches were held in Cleveland, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, New York City, Newark (New Jersey), Iowa City, Springfield (Illinois), St. Paul, Greensboro (N. Carolina), Syracuse (New York), Gary (Indiana),

San Francisco, Kansas City, San Diego (California), Cambridge (Massachusetts), Madison (Wisconsin), Buffalo (New York) -- this is just a partial list! Delegations were sent to Washington to put pressure on the White House and Congress to protect Negroes and insure their voting rights.

In the chants and picket signs and statements of these demonstrations, two significant facts must be noted: the first public attacks against Johnson were heard for his betrayal of the civil-rights program he espoused during the election campaign; and, the most explicit statements to date were made linking up the pro-civil rights and anti-Vietnam war sentiments of millions of Americans.

Rev. Robert Hoppe, director of the Detroit Council of Churches' Commission on Race and Cultural Relations and leader of the Michigan delegation to Washington, stated, "The president is dragging his feet. We want action to prevent further trouble in Selma."

In a confrontation between Vice-President Humphrey and a delegation of white and Negro civil-rights leaders, the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., Episcopalian bishop of Washington, said, "I'll tell you right now, the civil-rights movement and this administration have just about come to the parting of the ways."

Picket signs outside the White House read: "LBJ Just You Wait! See What Happens in '68!" "Keep Promises, LBJ," "LBJ, Is Selma Part of Your Great Society?"

The announcement that 3,500 Marines were being sent to Vietnam blazed across America's newspapers on March 7 -- the very day that Alabama troopers tear-gassed Negroes on the first March to Montgomery. The first wave of Marines landed in Vietnam on March 8 -- the day civil-rights advocates started streaming into Selma and sending delegations to Washington. The irony of Marines "defending freedom" in Vietnam while American Negroes were being tear-gassed in Selma was not lost on Americans.

Myra Wolfgang, secretary-treasurer of Local 705, Hotel, Motel and Restaurant Employees Union, wired Johnson: "If 3,000 Marines are justified in landing in South Vietnam, then 30,000 are justified in being dispatched to Alabama."

The Trade Union Leadership Council of Detroit (composed largely of Negroes) said in its wire to Johnson: "Surely the executive powers of the President which can send U.S. Marines to South Vietnam in defense of freedom can also be used to send Marines immediately to Alabama to protect Rev. Martin Luther King and the freedom fighters who were so brutally attacked by the state troopers for simply exercising their legal rights."

A statement issued by United Auto Workers leaders said, "The establishment of democracy is as essential in Selma as Saigon." In

another wire to Johnson, the Institutional Youth Guidance League of Michigan said, "We strongly and humbly urge you to speak out against the ill-treatment of Negro Americans inasmuch as we are called upon to shed our blood and give our lives to protect the peoples of other parts of the world, including the war in Vietnam."

"Send Marines to Alabama Not Vietnam" was the message of one sign in a picket line in Detroit. Roy Wilkins' reference to the Marines landing in South Vietnam was pungent and to the point: "Dammit, they can send somebody to Alabama and defend the government right here."

Johnson's domestic and foreign policies were not the only targets of dissatisfaction. King's behind-the-scenes deals and his strategy "to leave our opponents glutted with their own barbarity" drew increasing public criticism. Immediately after the first March to Montgomery was broken up on March 7, King vowed to personally lead a second march. Hundreds of white and Negro sympathizers came to Selma to march with him; Selma Negroes hurried out of the hospital to rejoin demonstrations, their bandages still fresh around their heads. However, a federal judge issued an order banning all further marches until hearings could take place. Another counter-pressure against the second March to Montgomery came in the form of LeRoy Collins, head of the federal Community Relations Service and President Johnson's personal emissary to quiet things down in Selma. King was caught in the cross fire between the militancy of the civil-rights forces and the legally sanctioned bodies attempting to dampen the struggle.

The night before the second march was to take place, Collins conferred separately with King and State Public Safety Director Al Lingo, a hated racist well known to Negroes. At first Collins tried to get King to call off the march entirely but it was too late for that; King could not call it off without taking the risk that it would be carried out without his moderating influence leading it -- and government officials are anxious to keep King and his nonviolent philosophy at the head of the civil-rights movement. So, a plan was worked out. King agreed in advance to turn back when the march reached the bridge (even this limited action was in direct violation of the federal court order -- the first time King ever violated a federal court order). Lingo agreed to let the Negroes hold a brief prayer session before turning back. King later revealed that Collins actually handed him the route he was to take!

On March 9 the demonstration took place. Many of the marchers had brought suitcases and bedrolls in anticipation of the several days journey to Montgomery. King had not told them of the plan to abort the march. When the long line of people reached the bridge, Operation Double Cross was set into motion and went over smoothly. Once he got them back into Brown's Chapel Church, King told the marchers, "This was the greatest demonstration for freedom, the greatest confrontation of the South. We were able to do something

in Selma today that we'd never been able to do before. We stayed on a highway of Alabama and had a prayer session and a freedom rally."

Not all the participants shared these sentiments. One young Negro exclaimed, "Sunday we went out there by ourselves and got our heads busted. Now we had all these white people from all over the country ready to take a chance with us and we didn't do anything but come back home."

After this aborted march the demonstrators were not allowed to parade at all but were confined within a Negro housing project. The younger Negroes argued, "Yesterday we could get over the bridge outside Selma; now we can't even get to the end of the street. You rouse us all up in the church and then you come out and stand in front of the police and do nothing but talk." A number of times the tension threatened to burst as demonstrators pressed against the barricades (dubbed the Berlin Wall) and the lines of club-swinging troopers.

While this was going on in Selma, a new crisis exploded in Montgomery. On March 15 mounted deputies rode their horses into a group of 300 civil-rights demonstrators. As the demonstrators retreated, they threw rocks and bottles at the charging police. A similar exchange took place the following day. Rev. King hurried to prop up nonviolence in Montgomery. At a church rally King opposed his views to the remarks made by James Forman, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee [SNCC]. Forman, speaking first, reminded the audience that President Johnson had said all Americans had the right to demonstrate. "We want to know if he means what he says. Is the President going to be made a liar? Or is he going to tell the truth?" Forman said he was prepared to go to Washington and lead "the most massive civil disobedience this nation has ever seen."

During the following days while King was negotiating with local officials, the nonviolent philosophy was continually preached to the civil-rights group by King's aides. When Rev. Bevel saw SNCC workers wearing protective plastic helmets he ordered, "Take those inside the church. All they're going to do is antagonize. If they're going to hit us, we're going to be unprotected." The SNCC workers put the helmets back on again, however, when the march to the state capitol building began.

Although the young militants are voicing their dissatisfaction with King's leadership, there are those who welcome such a leader. When County Prosecutor David Crosland received word that King was coming to Montgomery after the battles between police and demonstrators, Crosland exclaimed happily, "I never thought I'd see the day when I'd welcome a visit by Martin Luther King to Montgomery."

LIEGE MINERS STRIKE AGAINST PIT CLOSURE

BRUSSELS, March 26 -- Yesterday marked the eleventh day of a militant sit-in strike at a Liège coal mine. The miners are protesting the projected closing of the Batterie pit by the government Coal-Mining Directorate.

The strike is unofficial, not being recognized by either the "Socialist" or Catholic trade unions. It is receiving strong support, however, from the newly founded Walloon Workers party. A strike-solidarity committee has been set up, which is collecting money, blankets, food and other necessities for the men down in the mine.

Sympathy for the strikers is widespread throughout the Liège area. Collections amounting to 120,000 francs [\$2,400] were reported three days ago. Under the pressure, the Catholic unions took up the question of a 24-hour sympathy strike. Whether they will go through with this remains to be seen.

A similar sit-in strike broke out at the Tamines mine in the Namur region. The Walloon Workers party organized a strike-solidarity committee there, too. However this help proved insufficient to keep the miners going for more than a few days. In the majority they were Italian miners, vulnerable to the heavy pressure mounted against them by the Italian consulate and the Belgian authorities.

A number of other mines are due to be closed in coming months in the Liège area, but the government has deferred action until after the general elections scheduled for May 23. The Batterie strikers are appealing to their fellow workers in these pits to go on strike now against the projected closures in order to put heavier pressure on the government during the election period.

The wives of the Batterie strikers have shown remarkable fighting spirit, giving their men the fullest support since the beginning of the strike. To stop the bosses from selling coal stocked near the pit heads, they set up picket lines. In one instance they threw themselves on the road to block the trucks loaded with coal from getting out the gates.

Since the 1958 recession, the Belgian coal-mining industry has suffered from a severe structural crisis. Total output has been reduced from 30,000,000 to 21,000,000 tons a year, and the government expects to reduce it still further to 17,000,000 tons a year. The reduction is due to increasing competition from imported coal (West German, British, and especially American) and from other fuels such as gas and fuel oil.

Legally the government cannot close pits, as the industry is privately owned in Belgium. In practice, however, it works out otherwise. Most of the mining companies are heavily dependent on

big government subsidies. A decision to cut the subsidies is tantamount to a decision to close the pits.

For many years all the left-wing organizations in Belgium have campaigned for nationalization of the coal-mining industry. It is an official plank of the Socialist party, which is part of the government coalition. The Socialist trade unions also support the slogan. But when the present government was formed in 1961, the reformist leaders abandoned the demand. The reason for this was that their bourgeois coalition partners didn't agree with it. And so, instead of nationalizing the industry, they set up the "Coal-mining Directorate," a government body entrusted, allegedly, to co-ordinate and plan the administration of this private industry.

The miners are deeply opposed to closing the pits inasmuch as it is most often done without any compensating measures for industrial reconversion of the area involved. If they are lucky enough to find employment, they must travel to distant jobs or move their homes.

They find it exasperating, too, that many of the pits involved still have rich coal deposits, sometimes of high-quality anthracite, which could be profitably worked if it were not for the debt-ridden financial structure of the companies.

A particularly striking fact in the case of the Batterie pit is that the main debt owed by the company is to the miners' pension funds. Thus, in a way, the miners consider that they are entitled to take over the pit even from a capitalist point of view.

Since 1958, periodic revolts have broken out among the miners in different parts of Wallony against the successive closures of pits. A new feature in the current situation is that at the same time the Batterie miners started their strike, the miners at Houthalen, a coal mine in the Flemish province of Limburg, decided on a march to the provincial capital of Hasselt in protest against the threat to close their mine.

This is the first time a coal mine in the Flemish part of the country has been threatened with closure. It is heartening to see the Flemish miners reacting to the threat in the same militant way as their Walloon brothers.

PRISON SENTENCE FOR PLAYING BRIDGE

Alphonse Joseph Jaquesson, 55, was given three months in jail because he made a fourth in a game of bridge. Under South Africa's "Suppression of Communism" Act, he was banned from all gatherings. The Supreme Court held that his card game with three friends near Johannesburg was a "social meeting."

CARTOLIN AND MOLINA TO BE TRIED IN PERU

LIMA, March 24 -- After being held in prison at Arequipa for almost a year and a half, two leaders of the Peruvian peasantry, Antonio Cartolin Guillén, 25, and Máximo Molina, 35, have finally been told they are to face a military court. They are accused of being the intellectual authors of an "attack by armed force" at Ongoy, October 24, 1963.

The truth is that the assault at Ongoy was organized by armed bands under police protection. Thirty men, women and children were killed. The peasants had taken over ancestral lands and the landlords decided to drive them off at gun point.

Cartolin and Molina were arrested in Lima as they left the Palacio of the National Congress where they had sought to appear before parliament to denounce the massacre.

Cartolin is president of the Federación de Campesinos of the Department of Ayacucho, the organizer and leader of many land "take overs" or "recuperations" of the land by the peasants. He has the reputation of being a powerful orator in Quechua, the language of the Incas still spoken among the Peruvian peasants. He is a member of the Partido Revolucionario Obrero y Campesino which adheres to the Fourth International.

Molina, likewise a member of the PROC, is vice-president of the same peasant organization. He was elected by the Comunidad of Ongoy where the massacre occurred.

Both men have been held in the same prison in Arequipa as Hugo Blanco, Peru's outstanding revolutionary figure, whose leadership they acknowledge and whose example in organizing the peasantry they were following when seized by the government.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for the last part of April or the first part of May. According to their legal counsel, Dr. Alfredo Battilana, this may last only a few days, since it is occurring in a military court.

Under the military code, the two, if found guilty, can be given up to twenty years. It is not yet known what sentence the prosecution is demanding.

Defense counsel are demanding that the charges be dismissed as lacking any substance.

Funds are urgently needed for the defense and the two defendants have appealed for financial help. Contributions can be sent to the following address: Ismael Frias, Avenida Manco Cápac 239, La Victoria, Lima, Perú.

BOLIVIAN TROTSKYISTS OPPOSE BARRIENTOS

The unstable political situation in Bolivia was underlined March 22 by the attempted assassination of General Rene Barrientos, head of the military junta that seized power after Paz Estenssoro was deposed. Barrientos was wounded while riding in a jeep in Cochabamba. He was hit a number of times by someone using either an automatic rifle or a machinegun but was saved, according to the press, by a bullet-proof vest which he was wearing.

Following the assassination attempt, the junta indicated that it would postpone the elections which were scheduled for September 26. According to article 87 of the constitution, a candidate for the presidency must resign other posts six months before an election. Since Barrientos is one of the main candidates, there has been considerable pressure on him to live up to the constitution. He has displayed reluctance to do this, however, apparently feeling that this would weaken his grip in the junta.

The point was one of the principal topics discussed by representatives of ten Bolivian parties who met on invitation of the Ministro de Gobierno to discuss the political situation. [Five parties did not send representatives.]

In reporting the discussion, the Bolivian press quoted the positions of each of the participants. El Diario [February 16] said that "the most incisive of the representatives was Hugo Gonzáles" of the Trotskyist Partido Obrero Revolucionario [POR].

Gonzáles noted that some of the parties who had supported Barrientos last November were now demanding his resignation but that this did not indicate they had decided to oppose him. It was an indication of internal disputes among his backers. The position of the POR, he said, has not changed. It is opposed to Barrientos.

"We hold that the military junta does not express popular sentiment, because instead of responding to the uneasiness of the people it is turning in a different direction and encouraging the regressive tendencies."

"To try to reach the Bolivian people through the parties as General Barrientos proposes," continued the Trotskyist leader, "appears utopian to us because there can be no speaking with the traditional parties that are against the development of Bolivia."

Gonzáles observed that Barrientos was talking a lot about Busch and Villarroel, but what he ought to do is "attack the super state of the mining interests and break with the conservative forces. The problem that must be discussed is not the electoral one, because the working class and the peasantry are not interested in article 87 of the constitution."

"In the factories and in the mines," said González, "they aren't talking about the constitution but asking when will unemployment end and when will wages go up. The junta has increased salaries, a right we don't deny them, but we believe that all the workers in the country are entitled to similar consideration."

UN COMMITTEE CIRCULARIZES ALEXANDER CASE

A subcommittee of the United Nations General Assembly has sent out a general circular on the case of Dr. Neville Alexander, thus giving the case official UN status. The decision to do this was taken March 15 by the "Sub-Committee on Petitions" a subsidiary of the "Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa."

The circular listed the main facts in the case, including the names of the eleven defendants now serving sentences of five to ten years for their political opposition to the apartheid policies of the Verwoerd regime.

The information on the case was provided by the Alexander Defense Committee of New York. The Defense Committee thanked the United Nations body for focusing attention on the case.

The general circular included the "Statement of Aims" of the New York Alexander Defense Committee. This is as follows:

"1. To publicize as widely as possible the case of Dr. Neville Alexander and his colleagues, who have been sentenced in the Republic of South Africa to long prison terms under the notorious 'sabotage' law.

"2. To provide funds for the defense of Dr. Alexander, his associates, and other political prisoners in South Africa, and to provide for the support of their families as long as they themselves are unable to do so.

"3. Through this case, to focus public opinion in the United States on the inhuman apartheid policies pursued by the present government of the Republic of South Africa and on the systematic destruction of civil and political liberties which is the inevitable consequence of the attempt to carry out these policies.

"4. To organize such action as may be possible within the United States to compel the government of the Republic of South Africa to renounce its apartheid policies, to amnesty all political prisoners, to repeal its undemocratic restrictions on the rights of free speech and free association, to respect the rule of law in all

prosecutions, and to ameliorate the unspeakable conditions under which political prisoners are held.

"5. To co-operate as closely as possible with all organizations in the United States and abroad which have similar goals."

A copy of the United Nations circular can be obtained by writing to the Alexander Defense Committee, P.O.Box 345, Canal Street Station, New York 10013.

DR. VICTOR ALLEN ON HUNGER STRIKE

Dr. Victor Allen, now serving a twelve-month sentence in Nigeria, went on a hunger strike March 17, according to the London weekly The Newsletter. Charged with plotting the overthrow of the government, although he was engaged in research work, Dr. Allen is protesting repeated adjournments of the hearing of his appeal against sentence.

Three Nigerian trade unionists, Sidi Khayam, Jonas Kiomasekenagh Abam and Olushengun Adebayo, were arrested along with Dr. Allen and similarly railroaded through the courts.

Dr. Allen sent a letter to his friends in England, the text of which was published in the March 27 Newsletter. The text of the letter is as follows:

"On June 16th, 1964, I was arrested in Lagos on charges which read like, and I think were, a plagiarism from a James Bond story. On November 10th, after a trial lasting more than four months, I was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment. On March 3rd, 1965, a motion submitted to a Nigerian High Court for an accelerated hearing of my appeal was adjourned until March 10th, when it was further adjourned to April 1st. These adjournments can continue until I have completed my sentence.

"But even if a date for my appeal is fixed on April 1st, it is unlikely that the appeal proceedings can be completed before the end of May. This means that taking into account remission, and assuming that I do not lose any for making this protest, I will almost have completed my sentence before hearing the appeal. Irrespective of the final result of the appeal, this constitutes a miscarriage of justice. I am completely innocent of the charges against me and have been persistently and unbelievably persecuted and intimidated by the Nigerian authorities even after my imprisonment. As the constant and vociferous protests made on my behalf in Britain have been ignored, I am compelled to take action myself.

"Therefore on Wednesday, March 17, I start an indefinite hunger strike which I will only voluntarily end when my appeal against conviction is heard. I will also engage in a non-violent protest by remaining in my cell and refusing to see or speak to anyone, whether they be doctor, lawyer or High Commission representative, unless it is to hear that my grievance is being redressed.

"I emphasise that this is not a token protest. I have taken a very serious decision but when an innocent person is gaoled and refused the means to protest his innocence, it is a very serious matter involving a principle of the higher order."

CANADIAN PICKETS DEMAND TRUTH ABOUT DELGADO

TORONTO, March 21 -- The Portuguese consulate in the heart of the shopping area here was picketed yesterday by a group carrying banners demanding to know the truth about the whereabouts of General Humberto Delgado and expressing solidarity with twenty Lisbon students held incommunicado since their arrest last January.

About fifty Portuguese-Canadians and a dozen supporters circled the Toronto building in which the consulate has offices. A leaflet was distributed to curious passers-by.

The leaflet, which was issued by the Portuguese Canadian Democratic Association, stated that rumors of Delgado's arrest at Badajoz in Spain had been affirmed by the Portuguese Democratic Association in North Africa. Delgado and several associates appear to have gone to Spain in order to group the "revolutionary forces inside the country [Portugal] to start the assault against the fascist [Salazar] regime." The leaflet expressed fear that Delgado had been arrested by Franco's police, turned over to Salazar's secret police and executed.

The demonstrators' placards urged support for the demand that imprisoned students be released, opposed Canadian aid to the Salazar regime (Ottawa recently admitted that Canadian military aircraft have been going to Salazar through the West German government) and demanded to know -- if General Delgado has not been murdered -- what charges he faces and that he be immediately freed.

APARTHEID IN THE MORGUE

In South Africa it is illegal for a nonwhite student to dissect a white body and he must leave the room when a post-mortem is performed on a white body.

THE LESSONS OF THE CEYLON ELECTION

[The following statement was issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International March 27.]

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A number of lessons must be drawn from the defeat of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's coalition government in the March 22 election in Ceylon, the main ones being:

- (1) The continued instability of bourgeois rule in Ceylon due to deteriorating economic and social conditions.
- (2) The incapacity of a coalition government like the one put together by Mrs. Bandaranaike to either solve these problems or to offer a realistic perspective for their eventual solution.
- (3) The deepening of the crisis as shown by the erosion of the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom party and its inability to bolster its position, except in the most superficial and passing way, by including the leading representatives of the organized working class in a coalition government.
- (4) The bankruptcy of the Perera-De Silva-Goonewardene leadership of the old Lanka Sama Samaja party, who, in return for posts of a few months duration in a bourgeois coalition government, threw away political capital painfully accumulated over a quarter of a century.
- (5) The confirmation that Ceylon is not an exception. It is proved once more what a fatal illusion it is to think that socialism can be won by parliamentary means. The only road remains that of the class struggle, overthrow of capitalist rule, the establishment of a Workers and Peasants government, the liquidation of capitalism and construction of a planned economy.
- (6) The glaring need for a mass revolutionary-socialist party in Ceylon, based on the program represented by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), to lead the way out of the present impasse.

The most striking feature shown by the March 22 election was the relative decline of the Sri Lanka Freedom party and the relative recovery of the United National party, the traditional ruling party of the Ceylonese capitalists and landlords and their imperialist backers.

From 30 parliamentary seats in the July 1960 election, the United National party increased its stake to 66. The 1960 figure for the SLFP was 75; its current strength is 41. The bulk of the new UNP seats were taken from the SLFP.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), which ran on a principled anticapitalist program, suffered an electoral setback ascribable to the confusion following the betrayal by the old Lanka Sama Samaja party leaders. The LSSP ran rival candidates in two of the four districts where the LSSP(R) nominated candidates.

In Colombo Central, where three seats were at stake, Bala Tampoe came fifth. Cafoor, a UNP candidate, received 68,372 votes; Premadasa, another UNP candidate, 64,438; P.Keuneman, the Communist party candidate, 41,478; and Ishak, the SLFP candidate, 32,132. Shanmugathan, the candidate of the pro-Peking Communist party received 2,427 votes. Tampoe won 4,559 votes.

In Bulathasinghala, the vote was: Mangala Moonesinghe (LSSP), 13,023; Fonseka (UNP), 10,433; and Edmund Samarakkody of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), 278.

In Moratuwa, the vote was: Rusken Fernando (UNP), 18,059; Abhayawardene (LSSP), 16,020; and Meryl Fernando of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), 1,048.

In Kankasanturai the vote was: Chelvanayagam (FP) 14,735; Baskeran (TC), 6,611; V.Karalasingham of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary), 2,257. The pro-Moscow Communist party candidate polled 958 votes, the pro-Peking 741.

The reformist LSSP lost two of its twelve seats in parliament. The losers were Colvin R. de Silva, who polled 21,363 votes as against 24,652 for the UNP candidate in his district, and Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardena, who polled 13,218 votes against 14,910 for the UNP candidate.

During her campaign, Mrs. Bandaranaike repeatedly charged that imperialism was flagrantly intervening in the election. At meetings in Kiriella and Dehiowita on March 11, for instance, she stated that American and British imperialists and foreign businessmen were financing the campaign of the United National party.

There can be no doubt of the imperialist interest in a UNP victory. Thus United Press International, the imperialist news service, stated March 23 that the victory of Dudley Senanayake, head of the UNP and now the new Prime Minister, "could be expected to improve Ceylon's deteriorating relations with the United States and end growing Chinese Communist influence here." The agency noted Senanayake's campaign promise to "allow American oil companies to start business in Ceylon again." The authoritative New York Times in a front-page headline March 24 described Mrs. Bandaranaike's defeat as having occurred at the hands of a "Pro-Western Unit."

But imperialism is decidedly unpopular in Ceylon and it can count on very few direct votes. How then, did it succeed in strengthening its positions in the island?

First of all, its agents resorted to the most vicious type of election propaganda, playing on the reactionary themes of "Marxists" boring from within Mrs. Bandaranaike's government, of a "Marxist conspiracy" to destroy the Buddhist religion, and of a "Marxist plot" to hand Ceylon over to the "Chinese Communists."

However, red-baiting of this kind is to be expected from the reactionary agents and spokesmen of capitalism and landlordism. Such propaganda does not have an automatic appeal and, in fact, could have boomeranged. It could take hold and gain momentum only because there was no effective challenge from the left, a clear presentation in a massive way of a realistic alternative.

The Sri Lanka Freedom party offered no realistic alternative. Its reformist palliatives had long lost their appeal. The strong showing of the SLFP in the 1960 election had already been followed by a marked decline in the strength of this party. The tendency among the masses of Ceylon for the past several years has been to polarize around something much farther to the left. One of the most promising indications of this was the formation of the United Left Front, representing the trade unions and working-class parties, which struck a big popular response and which offered potentialities -- under a correct program and vigorous leadership -- of becoming a polarizing center that could have led to the establishment of a Workers and Peasants government in Ceylon. This was the perspective which the United Secretariat of the Fourth International favored and pressed for in accordance with the principles of the Transition Program of the Fourth International.

For the Ceylonese bourgeoisie, the United Left Front represented a deadly danger, a danger well understood by Mrs. Bandaranaike, one of their most astute representatives. About a year ago, she initiated a clever tactic with the double aim of eliminating this threat and at the same time counteracting the deteriorating position of her own party and its rule. She did this by offering posts in her government to the leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja party, seeking to make a deal with one of the party's popular mass figures, Dr.N.M. Perera.

Instead of exposing the trap set for the revolutionary-socialist movement in Ceylon, Dr.N.M.Perera advocated that the LSSP should seize the "historic opportunity." The left wing of the LSSP fought against his proposed betrayal of the basic principles of Trotskyism. In backing this struggle, the Fourth International called attention to Mrs. Bandaranaike's political aims. By associating the leaders of the LSSP in her government, the Fourth International warned the Ceylon Section, Mrs. Bandaranaike hoped to at least temporarily strengthen her party and bourgeois rule in Ceylon while at the same time greatly weakening if not eliminating the threat from the left, and, in the process, associating these "Trotskyist" leaders with her government so that they would end up compromised and discredited by her own failure to solve the burning

economic and social problems of the country.

In a letter to the Central Committee and members of the LSSP, dated May 25, 1964, the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International made the following appeal:

"It is clear that throughout Asia, the equilibrium reached at the time of the Geneva agreement of 1954 has been broken and that in every country in this part of the world the class struggle is again sharpening. If the mass movement does not move boldly now, reaction will inevitably set in and the present opportunity will turn into its opposite.

"In Ceylon, the SLFP government, acting as the agency of the bourgeoisie, is seeking through its proposals to disintegrate the United Left Front and to associate the LSSP with its bankrupt policies and further decline. The LSSP has reached a crucial moment in its history.

"Let the SLFP government appeal to you in vain!

"The only real alternative is audacious action by the LSSP. It should serve as the central driving force in mobilizing the ULF, appealing to the masses to establish a United Left Front government on the basis of a genuinely socialist program. This would prove highly attractive to elements that have been sucked into the SLFP because of its demagogy in the past, help reorient them and open up the possibility for a powerful bloc of the left organisations.

"The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International sends you its warmest comradely greetings. It hopes that the LSSP as a whole will remain faithful to its long tradition of uncompromising struggle against imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, and that it will successfully resist the maneuvers of the bourgeois government in order to open the road for genuine representatives of the masses to come to power.

"No coalition at the expense of socialist principles and the possibility of a socialist victory!

"Forward with the masses in struggle for a government of the United Left Front!"

Mrs. Bandaranaike succeeded in her enterprise. N.M. Perera used his influence in the United Left Front to convert this promising formation of the working class into a mere bargaining piece in the dirty game of parliamentary maneuvering. In return for a post as minister of finance and other emoluments, he destroyed the United Left Front, split his own party, played into the hands of reaction, and now stands completely discredited as the engineer of a major political defeat for the workers and peasants of Ceylon. Instead of standing firm against Perera's betrayal, Colvin R. de Silva and

Leslie Goonewardene, two other main leaders of the LSSP, capitulated in turn, following Perera's lead. By their capitulation they made it possible for Perera to win a majority in the LSSP, thereby wrecking the party. When the test came, they proved incapable of upholding and applying the most elementary lessons of Marxism and the long struggle against class-collaborationist People's Frontism.

As against supporting the reformism of the SLFP, what was required was a firm stand for the principles of revolutionary socialism. The bid by Mrs. Bandaranaike for a coalition government should have been interpreted for what it was -- a sign of weakness in her position, a proof of the beginning of a crisis in bourgeois rule in Ceylon, an indication that it would soon be the turn of revolutionary socialism to move into the center of the stage and that the Trotskyists must prepare for this. Mrs. Bandaranaike's bid should have been answered by reinforcement of the United Left Front, by the further clarification and elaboration of its program along class-struggle lines, by full representation for the plantation workers in the leadership of the United Left Front, by vigorous defense of the interests of the Tamil minority, by the proclamation of a radical agrarian reform program, and by active preparation for the formation of a Workers and Peasants government, including the organization and activization of rank-and-file committees on a nation-wide scale to meet the threat of a right-wing coup d'état.

Vigorous development of this course, which was what the Fourth International advocated, would have presented an inspiring alternative to the workers and peasants of Ceylon, capable of mobilizing them by the hundreds of thousands. It could even have swung the petty-bourgeois nationalist layers away from the poisonous, reactionary demagoguery of the forces centered around the UNP.

The attraction of such a program would have derived not simply from its correctness in the abstract but from its standing as the only realistic concrete alternative to the mounting economic difficulties, the demoralizing drift and the unrelenting pressure of world imperialism on the small island. Instead of the perspective of remaining in the blind alley into which Mrs. Bandaranaike had taken Ceylon, or of returning to the blind alley offered by Senanayake, the people could have been inspired with the very real possibility of making Ceylon another Cuba, of gaining an alliance with the other workers states, of putting Ceylon in its rightful place in the forefront of the freedom struggles and class battles of today which constitute the only road to a world of enduring peace and universal well being. Instead of this revolutionary socialist perspective, Perera and his collaborators could only offer -- Mrs. Bandaranaike! That, plus her assurances that they were really Buddhists at heart who had accepted the program of the SLFP. The election defeat, which appears to have caught them completely by surprise, was well earned.

Senanayake did not win the 76 seats needed for an absolute

majority. Consequently he, too, had to make a coalition. He succeeded in this mainly through a deal with the Federal party and the Tamil Congress, which hold 14 and 3 seats respectively. As a grotesque finishing touch to his career as a loyal servant of Mrs. Bandaranaike, N.M.Perera sought, after the returns were in, to appeal to these same parties, as representatives of the Tamils, to join with him in reconstituting the defeated Bandaranaike coalition. Previously, under the pressure of Ceylonese nationalism, he had displayed his depreciation of the political importance of the Tamil minority. Perera's bid was rejected. Mrs. Bandaranaike, who has consistently shown herself to be a much better practitioner of power politics than Perera, then revealed to the press that she had already informed Governor General William Gopallawa she would resign. Perera reaped nothing but contemptuous laughter from all sides. He began his coalition as a would-be big-time operator in bourgeois politics; he ended within a few months as a ridiculous clown in the shambles of his experiment.

The new Senanayake government is not a stable one. Its program of saving Ceylon for the Buddhist monks and the American oil interests will scarcely win it a strong mass following. The scourges of inflation and unemployment will continue to keep the country in turmoil. Thus, whatever the temporary consequences, the tendency of the capitalists and landlords to seek greater stability through a "strong" government, backed by imperialism and prepared to meet the demands of the workers and peasants by repressive measures, will reassert itself more clearly than ever. Far from lessening the danger of an extreme right-wing development in Ceylon, Senanayake's victory increases it.

The political tasks facing the Ceylon workers and peasants have consequently grown in acuteness. A period of increasing instability has opened in Ceylon that is intimately associated with the general situation in India and throughout Southeast Asia. Great opportunities as well as great responsibilities now rest with the Trotskyist leadership organized in the LSSP(R). We are confident that this leadership will prove capable of living up to the historic demands of the situation.

We ask every member of the LSSP who followed N.M.Perera and De Silva-Goonewardene in the illusion that the coalition represented something positive or out of the mistaken idea that this was the best way to keep the ranks together, to now study the grave lessons of Perera's betrayal. Your place is with the Trotskyists of the LSSP(R) who remained faithful to basic principles! Around these revolutionary socialists, it is possible, with the help of the Fourth International, to build the new leadership and the mass party that is the need of the hour in Ceylon.