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France

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Leon Trotsky

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Importante Discusión Entre la Izquierda

¿Deben Intervenir en Boston Tropas Federales?

Anti-Irish Hysteria

"Although police have not formally blamed the Irish Republican Army for the explosions, the public has, 'a November 22 wire story from London reported in the *Washington Post*. 'A wave of anti-Irish fury swept the country today, resulting in angry demonstrations by thousands of workers in Birmingham. . . ."

Mounting hysteria was reported in a dispatch the following day:

"Thursday's [November 21] bombings led to anti-Irish demonstrations in the industrial English midlands, with fist-fights between English and Irish workers in some factories.

"British Airways canceled four flights to Belfast and Dublin today after staff workers at Manchester and Liverpool airports refused to handle the flights in sympathy with the Birmingham bomb victims."

All of the nineteen persons killed and most of the 202 injured when the bombs exploded in two Birmingham pubs were young—under thirty. The details were horrifying. More than half the dead could not be identified. "They were like meat shoved under a grill," one doctor said.

Another said: "We got a young girl who'll most certainly be blind in both eyes. And a man came in, 30 years old, legs blown off, an arm blown off."

Although it is IRA tradition to claim all actions, the press did not wait for a statement from the organization to speculate about republican involvement. They based their speculation on two things: (1) a recent threat by reputed Provisional chief of staff Daithi O'Connell of stepped-up guerrilla activity in Britain; (2) a phone call to a local paper from a man with an Irish accent giving twenty minutes' warning of the explosion.

A dispatch to the *New York Times* from London November 24 reported that the Provisional IRA denied any connection with the bombings.

In the climate of shock, it could be expected that there would be many provocative rumors, as well as deliberate provocations.

According to a November 23 dispatch in the *Washington Post*: "A woman phoned the Press Association . . . in London today and said, 'It was Red Flag 74 that planted the bombs in Birmingham. We are a student group. We have no connection with Irish politics or the Irish Republican Army.'"

British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins announced he was preparing "emergency powers" legislation, which, the dispatch cited above said, "might mean some erosion of traditional civil liberties in Britain."

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The Rise of Hunger Around the Globe

By Ernest Harsch

[First of a series.]

Starvation and famine have been common occurrences throughout history. Before the industrial revolution, large parts of the world were swept by periodic famines, often reaching such scope and intensity that millions perished and entire countries were laid waste.

The 1769-70 Bengal famine in India took about ten million lives, one-third of the area's population. In ten major famines between 1860 and 1900, an additional fifteen million Indians starved to death. From 1876 to 1879, China was ravaged by one of the worst famines in its history, causing nine million deaths. France experienced 150 serious famines between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries—averaging one every six years. The Irish famine of 1846-49, the last great famine in western Europe, killed more than one million and drove an additional 1.5 million out of the country.

The industrial revolution of the mid-nineteenth century, which gave a tremendous boost to agricultural productivity, eliminated serious famine (not hunger) from the imperialist centers. But mass starvation still gripped the colonial world. About two million Chinese died in a famine in Hunan province in 1929, and the Bengal famine of 1943 claimed up to 3.5 million victims.

While the death and suffering associated with famines are the most apparent, the effects of continual hunger—the slow starvation prevalent in much of the semicolonial world—can be just as deadly.

The French agronomist René Dumont and Bernard Rosier, the authors of *The Hungry Future* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969), estimate that between 300 and 500 million persons are undernourished and that about 1.6 billion suffer from malnutrition.¹

1. Undernourishment results from insufficient food; malnutrition, from poor quality (not enough protein or vitamins, or improperly balanced diets).



Kwashiorkor victims: Doomed because of cutbacks in production of food.

"This means," they wrote, "that the world is now in the grip of a colossal famine. In developed countries it may affect only certain underprivileged classes (the old, the sub-proletariat), but it is a vast problem in the poor nations. . . . It should in fact be regarded as a disease, especially since famine in its modern form, less severe than previously when it could decimate a whole country in a few months, may be broadly defined as a chronic state of food deficiency which erodes the physical and mental capacities of its victims, ultimately causing premature death. Out of the annual total of 60 million deaths, 10 to 20 million are due to this relent-

less law."

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in a 1963 study, generally concurred with the estimates of Dumont and Rosier. The FAO stated that 20 percent of those living in the underdeveloped world were undernourished and 60 percent were malnourished, with some overlap. Adding those in the industrialized countries who had inadequate diets, the FAO concluded that "up to half of the peoples of the world are hungry or malnourished."

Although many of the world's hungry are not in immediate danger of death, the constant lack of essential vitamins and protein can make them vulnerable to disease or cripple them for life. Officials of the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that 700 million persons suffer from iron deficiency severely enough to impair their ability to work.

Children are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition. Hundreds of thousands of children, especially in Southeast Asia, go blind because of the lack of vitamin A. They contract kwashiorkor, a disease caused by protein deficiency, of which a bloated belly is a chief symptom. They are struck by marasmus, resulting from deficiencies in both calories and protein, which permanently stunts a child's growth. They die from such simple ailments as diarrhea and respiratory infection.

Figures released by WHO indicate that as many as 75 percent of those children who die before the age of five in the underdeveloped world are killed by malnutrition complicated by infection. Writing in the October 6, 1974, *New York Times*, Harold M. Schmeck Jr. put the number at fifteen million a year.

Continuing Famine

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz would have us believe that famine and hunger are a thing of the past. Speaking before a convention

of the Future Farmers of America in Kansas City October 18, he said, "The doomsdayers say we are already in trouble. I say this is false, that most of the world's people eat better today than at any time in history . . . I also believe this record of good eating will continue. . . ."

Unfortunately the reality is quite different. In an age marked by computer technology, nuclear energy, and space exploration, when agricultural productivity has reached the potential to adequately feed many times the earth's present population, famine is still very much a part of life in the semicolonial world.

Mass starvation has ravaged the countries of sub-Saharan Africa—Mali, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Upper Volta, and Mauritania—for the past six years, and has spread into Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, and Ethiopia. It is estimated that up to one million have died in the sub-Saharan famine and that another five to ten million are starving in the countryside or in the crowded slums and refugee camps. According to Ethiopian government figures, 400,000 died there. A relief group in Eritrea reported that 700,000 are seriously affected by drought in that province.

Diplomats in Bangladesh estimated that a million Bengalis could starve to death or die of related diseases there before the autumn crop is harvested, in the worst famine to hit Bengal since 1943. About five million persons are in immediate danger of starvation as a result of the massive flooding, poor harvests, faulty food distribution, and inadequate relief aid.

Thousands have already died in India in 1974 and tens of millions are in danger of starvation. In a dispatch from West Bengal published in the October 15 *Washington Post*, correspondent Walter Schwartz reported that at least 1,000 had already died in the district of Cooch Behar, and that hundreds more were dying every day in that district and in Bangkura, Purlia, and Jalpaiguri. "Everywhere there are people, especially small children and old people, so emaciated that they could scarcely survive, even if substantial relief were expected in the coming weeks. But no relief is in sight, and next month, when cold weather is added to hunger, the death toll in this state will climb."

While there are shortages of food in some parts of India, partly as a

result of the regime's inability to purchase enough grain from the wealthy farmers for its distribution system, food is generally available—for a price. "There is rice in the markets, within sight of people dying of hunger, but they cannot afford to buy," Schwartz wrote.

Nor is the situation in India likely to improve much in the next few months without massive foreign food aid. Next spring's harvest is expected to be poor because of the shortages of fertilizer and power for irrigation pumps. Foreign relief officials indicate that next year's famine may be even more severe because of the tight international grain market.

A New Era of Global Hunger?

In addition to outbreaks of massive hunger in a few impoverished countries like India and Ethiopia, an increasing number of government and UN officials, and agricultural and nutritional experts, have begun to predict some of the worst famines in human history, sweeping across dozens of underdeveloped countries on an unprecedented scale.

"During the last few months the world food crisis has developed from what once seemed to be another exaggerated doomsday forecast to a reality that is gnawing at the bellies of hundreds of thousands of people and threatening to take the lives of millions. . . ." wrote Boyce Rensberger in the September 19 *New York Times*.

"In the face of the African and Indian situations, some casual observers have been led to conclude that this is the beginning of what will eventually envelop the planet in a continuous famine."

● According to the October 3 *Wall Street Journal*, a recent State Department report declared, "History records more acute shortages in individual countries, but it is doubtful whether such a critical food situation has ever been so world-wide."

● Edward Chobanian, an economist with the Asian Development Bank, concluded at a recent conference on natural resources that famine throughout Asia was no longer just a possibility but had now become a probability.

● An October 19 report released by the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Department Operations, said, "In all probability, the world can expect more, rather than less, disasters as-

sociated with malnutrition. The world food crisis will not disappear spontaneously or soon and maybe never."

● Henry Labouisse, the executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), warned in May that the threat of severe malnutrition now faced 400 to 500 million children in the underdeveloped countries.

● In January 1974, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his development of high-yield strains of wheat and rice, predicted that as many as twenty million persons may starve to death during the year, primarily because of cutbacks in the production of fertilizer. He later predicted, according to the July 26 *New York Times*, that unless India received massive international aid, from ten million to fifty million Indians could die of hunger within twelve months.

● United Nations experts have released a list of thirty-two countries whose inhabitants are most in danger of mass starvation. Among those countries with the lowest average caloric intakes included on the list are Bangladesh, El Salvador, Guinea, Haiti, Yemen, Upper Volta, Somalia, Mali, and Mauritania (there were no caloric intake figures for India).

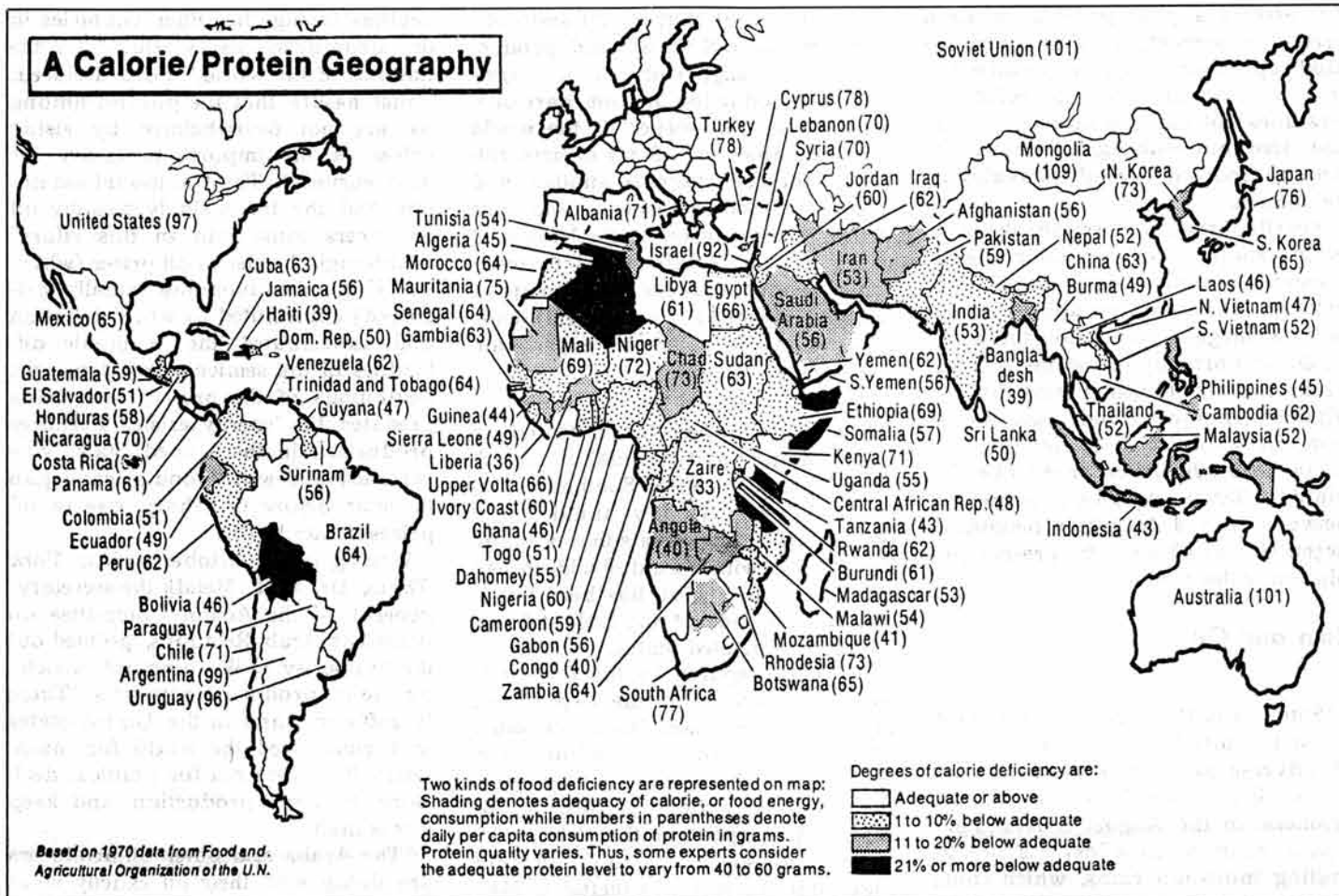
UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim warned September 27 that these thirty-two countries were running out of food reserves and estimated that their food deficits for 1974-75 could total between \$4 billion and \$5 billion. The FAO calculated that cereal production in the underdeveloped countries would be about fifty million tons below that required to feed their populations at the 1970 level.

Agriculture Secretary Butz, according to the May 13 *New York Times*, had some advice for those countries facing food shortages. He said, ". . . hunger is relative—if your larder is empty, you cut back some." But for the millions that already live on the edge of starvation, such a food shortage in the semicolonial world could spell disaster.

'Too Many People'?

Why has the threat of catastrophic famine reemerged on such a massive scale today? Some "experts" will point to the "population explosion," others will cite bad weather, and those in the White House will blame it all on

A Calorie/Protein Geography



New York Times

the Arabs and the "energy crisis."

A major article in the August 14 *New York Times* by Gladwin Hill, for instance, stated, "Recent shortages of oil and other commodities . . . have elevated to uncomfortable urgency the long-avoided issue of how long the inhabitants of a finite planet—only 8,000 miles in diameter—can keep on multiplying. . . ."

"World population long since outstripped food supplies."

Wall Street Journal staff reporter Robert Keatley, in the July 26, 1973, issue, began by quoting the original theorist of "overpopulation," the Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus. "Famine," wrote Malthus in 1798, "seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to provide subsistence . . . that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race."

Addeke H. Boerma, the director general of the FAO, likewise paid homage to Malthus in a speech before the International Development Conference in October 1973. "Do not think that the

ghost of Malthus has been exorcised," he said.

Malthus, who preached that population grew much faster than food production, was opposed to any form of relief or charity to the poor. In the 1803 edition of *An Essay on the Principles of Population*, he wrote, "A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if society do not want his labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is." He justified his opposition to relief for the poor by pointing out that it would only encourage them to multiply—an evil to be avoided at all costs.

A recent study entitled "The Ethics of Humanitarian Food Relief" drafted by Dale Runge of the System Dynamics Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology rehashed this page from Malthus. Writing in the August 10 *New York Times*, Walter Sullivan explained, "Its conclusion, in essence, is that food relief—if it promotes fur-

ther population growth in the relieved area and denies food to those elsewhere committed to population control—can be 'unethical.'"

The theories of Malthus and his apostles have repeatedly been proved wrong by the tremendous advances in agricultural technology since the industrial revolution. In his essay "Food and Population" published in the September 1974 *Scientific American*, Roger Revelle, the director of the Center for Population Studies at Harvard, noted that the world's population increased by less than 50 percent between 1951 and 1971, while world production of cereal grains, the main food staple, *more than doubled*. "Thus cereal supplies per person rose substantially, by about 40 percent, over the 20-year period," he wrote.

Most of this gain in food production, however, never reached the masses of the semicolonial world. More than half of the increase was absorbed by the developed countries, which account for 30 percent of the population. In the underdeveloped countries food production advanced

2.9 percent a year while population grew 2.6 percent. This gap between food supplies in the semicolonial countries and the advanced capitalist centers does not have to do with population size, but with agricultural productivity and the level of industrial development.

Revelle further undermined the myth of "overpopulation" by citing the explosive potential of agricultural productivity. In a conservative estimate of how large a population the world could support—by increasing the land area under cultivation and by applying technology and intensive labor—he wrote, "... a diet based on 4,000 to 5,000 kilocalories² of edible plant material could be provided for between 38 and 48 billion people, between 10 and 13 times the present population of the earth."

Rain and Oil

"Some experts believe that mankind is on the threshold of a new pattern of adverse global climate for which it is ill-prepared," wrote Harold Schmeck in the August 8 *New York Times*. Some of these "experts" predict shifting monsoon rains, which could cause prolonged drought in Africa and northern India. Others hypothesize that a new ice age may descend over the earth.

During his April 15 speech to the United Nations, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, while discussing the problems of food shortage, also voiced the notion that shifting weather patterns could threaten world famine. "The poorest nations," he said, "already beset by manmade disasters, have been threatened by a natural one: the possibility of climatic changes in the monsoon belt and perhaps throughout the world."

While periodic bad weather can certainly destroy crops, modern technology and rational planning can easily minimize its effects on food supply. Almost every area of the United States has been hit by drought at one time

or another, but that hasn't seriously damaged overall U.S. food production. Technically, a high level of agricultural production in one part of a country or one corner of the world could dampen the effects of drought-caused food shortages in another, and adequate food reserves could tide stricken areas through the leanest of years. But such safeguards to overcome sudden climatic shifts require rational planning on a world scale, a measure the bourgeois experts automatically rule out.

Science even has the potential to alter climate and to make uncultivable land arable. Southern California has a very low annual rainfall and its aridity equals that of many deserts. Yet with the aid of widespread irrigation, the region has been transformed into one of the lushest farmlands in the United States.

A study prepared by the Economic Research Service of the Department of Agriculture³ takes issue with those who blame "overpopulation" and weather for the food crisis. *Washington Post* staff writer Dan Morgan described the report in the October 21 issue: "The study . . . contradicts the view that the world is facing a 'Malthusian crisis' in which population growth outstrips the ability of nations to produce enough food. . . .

"The study asserts that the world is far from running out of land for cultivation, since there is twice as much land available for farming as is currently in use. The study's authors also say they can find no definite evidence to support the claim of some meteorologists that the world is entering a period of prolonged bad weather, or even a new 'ice age.'"

President Ford, in his address to the United Nations September 18, and Kissinger in his September 23 speech before the UN, attacked the policies of the oil-producing countries and blamed them for the economic dif-

ficulties facing the other countries in the underdeveloped world. "... the nations of the world," Ford declared, "must assure that the poorest among us are not overwhelmed by rising prices of the imports necessary for their survival. The traditional aid donor and the increasingly wealthy oil producers must join in this effort."

Although the rise in oil prices (which the U.S. oil monopolies initially welcomed) contributed to world inflation and exacerbated the economic difficulties of the semicolonial states, the beginnings of the present food crisis predated the "energy crisis." Fertilizer production in the United States was cut back and world food prices began to soar *before* the sharp rise in oil prices in late 1973.

Writing in the October 4 *New York Times*, Dr. M. T. Mehdi, the secretary-general of the Action Committee on American-Arab Relations, pointed out the hypocrisy of Washington's attacks on the oil-producing countries: "There is sufficient land in the United States that could feed the world for many years if it were not for political decisions to limit production and keep prices high."

"The Arabs and other oil-producers are doing with their oil exactly what America has been doing with its food and agricultural products."

All these "explanations"—laying the blame for world hunger at the door of "overpopulation," weather, and the Arab states—are designed to mask the central role of U.S. imperialism and the U.S. agriculture monopolies in the present food crisis. The real roots of that crisis can be discovered in the shift in Washington's agricultural policy in 1972. That shift resulted in the elimination of the U.S. grain reserves, which were the major grain reserves in the world; allowed U.S. agribusiness interests to drive up world food prices; and heralded a new offensive by U.S. imperialism to tighten its stranglehold over the international food market. □

2. A kilocalorie is the same as a large calorie (1,000 gram calories), the unit used in diet measurements. The minimum daily caloric intake advised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization is 2,300. The average for the United States is 3,000. In countries like Bangladesh, El Salvador, Haiti, and Upper Volta it is below 2,000.

3. In the October 21 *Washington Post*, Dan Morgan noted that the report had not yet been published because it was considered controversial. Several sources in the Agricultural Department said its release was being postponed until after the World Food Conference, which opened in Rome November 5, since its earlier release could undermine the U.S. delegation's "low profile." The *Washington Post*, however, obtained a copy of the 300-page report.

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Food Conference: No Relief to the Hungry

By Ernest Harsch



Szep/Boston Globe

From the very beginning, the United Nations-sponsored World Food Conference in Rome was characterized by empty promises and deliberate mystification. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger set the rhetorical tone on the opening day, November 5, when he spoke before the representatives of about 130 governments and scores of organizations.

"Today," he declared, "we must proclaim a bold objective—that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacities will be stunted by malnutrition."

The participants in the conference did nothing to advance such a future. Nor did they generate much immediate relief for the millions of starving poor around the globe. The main goal of the conference (which was originally called by Kissinger in September 1973) was to shift the blame for the world food crisis away from the profiteering agribusiness interests in the United States. To that end, the conference partially served its purpose.

One of the proposals adopted in Rome called for the establishment of an international system of grain reserves to ensure against bad harvests or sudden reductions of grain supplies on the international market. Although the details were not resolved, the U.S. delegation made Washington's position clear: that the bulk of the reserves should be set up by the other capitalist states, that they total between thirty and sixty million tons, and that any reserves held in the United States

would not be government-owned.

Some food experts maintain that even sixty million tons of grain in reserve would not be enough, that at least ninety million tons are needed to avoid widespread famine. Writing in the November 3 *New York Times*, Leslie H. Gelb quoted one U.S. government official as saying that the proposal for "nationally held" reserves would never work since "it's a cover for putting the decision in the hands of farmers and private traders, and they have little incentive to hold stocks."

The conference also passed a resolution calling for a ten-million-ton-a-year, food-aid program for those countries most in danger of famine. Gelb quoted another food expert as saying, "When you look at India's needs alone, 10 million tons of emergencies is pitifully low."

Washington also made it clear that it would provide only a small portion of the proposed ten million tons. When three members of the U.S. delegation cabled Washington asking for an increase from one million to two million tons in the "humanitarian aid" portion of the so-called "Food for Peace" program, President Ford rejected the suggestion.

The State Department has consistently used the aid given through the "Food for Peace" program for political purposes. Only about 20 percent of the amount allocated this year is destined for those countries in desperate need. A large part of the food aid over the past several years has gone to strengthen the regimes in Saigon and Phnompenh. This year, Washington increased its food shipments to Chile, Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. As U.S. Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz stated at the World Food Conference, food is a "tool in the kit of American diplomacy."

With plenty of paying customers in the world, the U.S. agricultural monopolies and their backers in Washington would rather sell the crops than give them away. Consequently, Washington has been pushing the other imperialist powers—

Canada, Australia, and the European states—to increase their food aid commitments to the underdeveloped countries.

In addition, Kissinger stressed that the oil-exporting states had a "special responsibility" to help finance the food imports of the semicolonial countries. Such financing would eventually flow into the coffers of the big U.S. grain-exporting companies.

However, even if the other capitalist states increase their food aid to the poorest countries, such relief may fall short of the ten-million-ton figure. Dan Morgan wrote in the November 9 *Washington Post* that much of the unsold food "has already been committed to cash paying foreign buyers or domestic users."

Startaj Aziz, the deputy secretary-general of the conference, said that "unless we can find more grain, we face literally mass starvation in the coming months. This is the test. If the conference doesn't solve this, we don't avoid starvation."

The Rome conference also set up various bodies to conduct research and provide "technical aid" to the underdeveloped countries. To cap off this bureaucratic maze, a World Food Council under UN auspices to "coordinate" the activities of the other organizations was formed. Since the U.S. food trusts control the world market—and Washington pulls the most strings at the UN—the World Food Council will scrupulously avoid interfering with the "free trade" in food.

In fact, the agribusiness interests themselves played a role in the conference. According to S.A. Marei, the secretary-general of the conference, about 150 of the world's top corporations pledged to "cooperate" with the Rome proposals and work through the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Industry Cooperative Program.

Smelling potential customers, the U.S. and European food companies even sent their sales representatives to Rome. Dan Morgan reported in the November 17 *Washington Post*, "Present are makers of new foods, pesticides, fertilizers, mass feeding processes, mini-tractors for small farms and countless gadgets required in modern agriculture."

Prominent among the corporations were Cook Industries, one of the largest U.S. grain companies, and Continental Bakery, a division of International Telephone and Telegraph. □

Millions Stop Work in French General Strike

By Dick Fidler

More than a million workers are reported to have marched in demonstrations throughout France, and millions more stopped work, in the general strike on Tuesday, November 19. The strike was called by the country's major trade unions in support of strikes by post office workers and other government employees currently under attack from the Giscard d'Estaing government.

In Paris, the march from the Place de la Bastille to the Gare de l'Est was "the biggest trade-union demonstration since May 1968," according to *Le Monde*. Some 400,000 persons marched behind the common banner of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT—Confédération Générale du Travail) and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT—Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail). The banner read: "The workers in the public and nationalized sector, and in the private sector, demand that the government negotiate in good faith to meet their demands." Another banner was inscribed: "For respect of the right to strike; no restrictions on the unions."

Marching at the head of the demonstrators with linked arms were the leaders of the CGT and the CFDT, which had called the strike, and of the teachers union, the National Education Federation (FEN—Fédération de l'Education Nationale), which had thrown its support behind their initiative.

Following them, *Le Monde* reported, came "an army of postal workers and delegations from all the sectors on strike: gas and electricity workers, railway workers, public service workers, teachers, municipal workers, hospital personnel, and so on. Immigrants in their blue work uniforms—chants of 'Same bosses, same struggle'—nurses in their white caps, garbage collectors in their leather aprons, immigrant workers from the Antilles wearing dashikis. [More than 80 percent of the garbage collectors in Paris are immigrants, and three out of four of them come from Africa or the



GISCARD: Tells strikers his "austerity" program is "not negotiable."

French colonies in the Caribbean.]

"And especially, everywhere in the crowd, the blue and gray caps of the post office, telephone, and telecommunications workers. An immense, joyous throng, elbow to elbow, singing 'La Carmagnole' [a Jacobin song from the French revolution] or the tune of 'Nini peau de chien' but with new words: 'At the post office, we're fed up with being exploited!' . . .

"A multitude of uniforms, of choruses and slogans: 'Lelong, c'est fichu, les postiers sont dans la rue!' ['Lelong, you're done for, the postal workers have taken to the streets'; Pierre Lelong is the minister for Postal and Telecommunications Services]; 'Chirac, tu matraques, tu vas casser la baraque!' ['Chirac, if you bludgeon us, you'll bust up your whole outfit'; Jacques Chirac is prime minister]; 'Valéry au tri, Anne-Aymone au téléphone!' [which would make President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing a mail sorter, and his wife a telephone operator].

"And members of the Ecole Emancipée [Emancipated School, a left-wing faction in the FEN], marching to a syncopated, rhythmic tune: 'La hiérarchie, c'est comme les étagères, plus c'est haut et moins ça sert!' ['The hierarchy are like shelves, the higher they are the less useful they are']."

Another chant was "Postiers, usagers, solidarité!" ("Postal workers, post office clients, solidarity!")

Le Monde's reporter noted a significant feature of the demonstration: "It was the first time in a long while that the slogans of May 1968, chanted by a great many young people, had been heard in a trade-union demonstration."

Massive demonstrations were held in other cities, too. Here are some official union statistics on their size, as reported in the November 21 issue of *Le Monde*:

Marseille, 60,000; Toulouse, 50,000; Lyon, 30,000 to 40,000; Bordeaux, 30,000; Grenoble, 30,000; Saint-Etienne, 20,000; Dijon, 6,000; at Lille and Saint-Brieuc, 5,000 each. The police reported 8,000 demonstrators at Brest; 5,000 to 6,000 at Toulon; 10,000 at Nice; 4,000 at Orléans; and thousands more at many smaller centers.

The 24-hour general strike shut down a large part of France's public-transportation sector and many schools, as well as a considerable number of private firms throughout the country.

The general strike and demonstrations had been called by the CGT and CFDT under the pressure of the strike wave touched off by the post office workers' struggle, which began in mid-October. The strikers' key demands include a 200 francs (1 franc equals about US\$0.22) across-the-board increase in monthly wages to counter inflation; a minimum wage of 1,700 francs a month; and the hiring of more full-time workers to cope with the growing work load.

Substantial wage increases and creation of more jobs are at the center of

demands by the unions in the civil service and nationalized industries, the focal point of the current strike wave.

Retail prices in France are rising at an annual rate of 17 percent. And the latest unemployment statistics, published November 22, revealed that 630,000 workers (the figures are "seasonally adjusted" and thus understate the actual number) are listed as looking for work—an increase of 100,000 in a month.

An elaborate government scheme to provide full take-home pay to most workers laid off for economic reasons, scheduled to begin in January, has failed to stem the workers' upsurge.

The unions are also protesting the government's announced plans to dismantle some vital public services as part of its current "austerity" program. Some government members in the National Assembly have even gone so far as to demand turning over the post office (which includes France's telephone system) to private enterprise.

The government has rejected out of hand the unions' demands for a renegotiation of 1974 contracts to take account of inflationary inroads on the workers' salaries. This question, it says, should be left to the negotiations over next year's contracts. Giscard has stated flatly that his government's economic policy is "not negotiable."

In a November 18 interview with the Paris daily *France-Soir*, Finance Minister Jean-Pierre Fourcade charged that the unions are seeking to "blow up the 1975 budget" and to "dislocate the economy." The minister expressed unease that if "the social crisis is aggravated," France could "slide toward an Italian-style situation."

Premier Chirac has bitterly attacked the strikers for "challenging the state institutions" and called the postal workers "demons" acting against "the interests of the French people." In a television interview on the eve of the November 19 general strike, he launched what was perhaps his most vicious attack to date, labeling the unions "wrecking teams."

The government's hard-line approach has not been limited to public slanders of the unions. In several cities, riot police have been sent against the post office strikers, and the army has been called in to sort mail and collect garbage.

These actions belie the government's claim that it is the trade unions that have "politicized" the current strikes,

that is, set out to provoke a confrontation with the regime. Any strike by government employees has "political" implications, of course. And, as CFDT leader Edmond Maire pointed out in a November 6 speech, even the most elementary demands of the workers necessarily run counter to Giscard's austerity program.

The regime's confrontationist approach has been bolstered by the trade-union bureaucrats' expressed readiness to make concessions. CGT leader Georges Séguy, a longtime Stalinist, has been particularly forthcoming in this respect. In a November 5 "open letter" to the president, the prime minister, and the head of the employers council, Séguy proclaimed his union's desire for "acceptable compromises" in a "responsible and constructive spirit."

In a front-page article published in the November 18 issue of *l'Humanité*, the Communist party daily newspaper, Séguy repeated that "when a conflict of this scope occurs, it is necessary to know how to make concessions, if you want to end the conflict."

"We are ready to do so. . . ."

The government has shown little inclination to accept the union leaders' offers of compromise, however. For example, the post office workers have demanded the creation of 30,000 new jobs; the ministry itself has stated that 12,000 are needed to keep existing services up to standard. But Fourcade's proposed budget projects an increase of only 4,000—indicating the government's readiness to downgrade services in the interests of "belt-tightening."

Confronted with the continued upsurge of workers' militancy, some elements in the bourgeoisie are calling on Giscard to moderate his stance.

In the November 19 *Le Monde*, Pierre Vianson-Ponté, an editor of the influential Paris daily, urged the government to seek a "political solution" to the strikes.

"To assure economic coherence and political stability to a regime based on the rejection of the workers' demands and the crushing of their organizations," he wrote, "that regime must arouse at least positive acceptance, if not enthusiasm, among other social layers—the big bourgeoisie, the upper-middle and middle classes, professional layers, and farmers, and it must eventually, through its success

in doing so, rally the support of a section of the working class. But while the civil servants and the working class are saying no to Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, it does not appear that the manufacturers, the businessmen, the professionals, peasants, technicians, white-collar and salaried workers are ready to take to the streets to give him their support."

In fact, Vianson-Ponté observed, the government has failed to measure up even to the expectations of the voters who last May gave Giscard a narrow victory over his popular-front opponent, François Mitterrand. As the French economy encounters increasing difficulties, he said, "the government has seemed disconcerted, giving the impression that it lacks ideas, imagination, a capacity to act, in short, a policy. . . . It has disoriented its most loyal supporters, and has failed to win the lasting support of those inclined to hesitate and ask questions. Doubts and disappointment have developed among its electorate of yesterday, while the Left, despite its divisions, has gained confidence and again begun to demonstrate a resilience whose firmness and scope derive from the hopes borne within it."

The *Le Monde* editor was rather vague on just what sort of "political compromise" the Giscard government should or could propose, however.

Meanwhile, the workers are standing firm against the government assault. When Chirac rejected union demands to reopen negotiations with the postal workers, claiming the government had made enough concessions, reporters noted that the government had not yet succeeded in getting a contract agreement with any union, not even the conservative Force Ouvrière (Workers Power) or the Catholic unions. □

Eleven Injured in Mexican Bombings

Fifteen bombs exploded on the night of November 17-18 in banks, American-owned department stores, and government offices in three cities across central and southern Mexico. In Guadalajara, 380 miles northwest of Mexico City, eleven persons were injured by flying glass. Explosions also occurred in Oaxaca, about 350 miles south of the Federal District, and in the capital itself.

Leaflets were reportedly found at some of the bomb sites denouncing "millionaire Mexicans and gringos" as responsible for inflation and unemployment.

Palestinian Protests Sweep Occupied West Bank

By Peter Green

The appearance of Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat before the United Nations General Assembly on November 13 has been followed by demonstrations of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank of the Jordan River. Not since the upsurge in 1968 has there been such a widespread wave of protest against the Zionist occupation.

Demonstrations took place for nine consecutive days, with actions in every major town on the West Bank. High-school students stood in the vanguard as entire student bodies turned out. Demonstrators waved Palestinian flags and chanted, "Palestine is Arab" and "Long live Arafat."

The actions began November 13 in Nablus, where shopkeepers staged a general strike and hundreds of schoolchildren demonstrated in the main square.

"Israeli paratroopers and policemen wielding clubs charged the jeering, whistling crowds of children and scattered them into narrow side streets," Terence Smith reported in the November 14 *New York Times*. Truckloads of paratroopers then raced through the town, "beating their long white riot batons on the fenders to frighten away bystanders. . . .

"Whenever they found more than a few people standing together, the paratroopers screeched to a stop, leaped from the truck and charged toward the group with their batons swinging over their heads on rawhide thongs. At one point a soldier chased three young boys for more than a block before they escaped down a sidestreet."

Demonstrations were also reported in Ramallah, Jenin, Al Birah, Halbul, East Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Tulkarm, and Jericho. During a general strike in Hebron on November 17 barricades were erected in some streets. Barricades were set up in other towns as well, and a number of clashes with Israeli motorists occurred.

At a news conference in Algiers November 18 Arafat hailed the demonstrations, calling on the West Bank

Palestinians to "continue and escalate your resistance and sacrifices" in the campaign for independence. "We are with you," he said. "You have our complete support."

Zionist authorities reacted by imposing stringent repressive measures. Curfews have been enforced by the Israeli occupation forces, and schools have been closed down in some areas. West Bank mayors and school principals have been told that they will be held responsible for demonstrations and that their schools will be shut if they fail to stop the protests.

By November 20, more than 500 Palestinians had been arrested, the London *Economist* reported. Many of those jailed have already received stiff fines and prison sentences.

About ten Palestinians had been killed and fifty wounded in thirty-six hours, PLO spokesman Shefiq al-Hout told a New York news conference November 18. One of those killed was a teenage Palestinian woman, murdered in Jenin on November 16. The Israelis claimed she was hit by a stone; actually she was crushed by an Israeli tank, the PLO spokesman said. Thousands attended the woman's funeral, which turned into a demonstration against the Israeli occupation and was attacked by Israeli troops.

On November 18 the demonstrations spread for the first time to East Jerusalem, which Israel has formally annexed. Israeli riot police and soldiers attacked the protesters with clubs and used a water cannon to try to disperse the crowd.

"At the Ibrahimiya College in East Jerusalem," the November 19 *New York Times* reported, "the police and soldiers beat the protesting students as they dragged them from the courtyard. Several students were bleeding as they were pushed into police vans."

The Zionist forces were even more brutal at the Kalandria Vocational School near Jerusalem. More than 100 police and soldiers attacked after students demonstrated in the school yard waving the Palestinian flag and shouting slogans. The headmaster of the

school reported: "Even the assistant headmaster, who was trying to calm the students, was caught and beaten over the head. We sent him to the hospital with a concussion."

A militant demonstration by several hundred Palestinians in Jerusalem on November 22 was dispersed only after Israeli troops fired automatic weapons over the heads of the demonstrators. The demonstrators had started from the Al Aksa mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem and marched through the streets, carrying Palestinian flags and anti-Zionist placards. More people joined along the way. They were halted by club-swinging troops and a water cannon at the Damascus Gate, where they were forced to scatter as the soldiers opened an attack. Thirty Palestinians were arrested.

The Israeli occupation authorities cracked down further on November 21, imposing harsh economic sanctions on the town of Ramallah. As punishment for a general strike by Ramallah's merchants, the Israeli military issued an order cutting off trade between Ramallah and Jordan, where most of the town's produce is sold.

Israeli authorities also deported five prominent Palestinians, among them Dr. Hanna Nasser, deputy mayor of Bethlehem and president of Bir Zeit College. He is a cousin of Kemal Nasser, a former official of the PLO who was murdered by Israeli commandos in Beirut last year.

The Palestinians in the West Bank received renewed support November 22, when the United Nations General Assembly formally recognized, by a vote of 89 to 8, their right to independence and sovereignty in Palestine and the right of the PLO to permanent UN observer status.

The Israeli regime can be expected to intensify its repression. The November 22 *New York Times* quoted "reliable sources" as saying that the government was planning even sterner reprisals if it considered them necessary, including closing all the bridges across the Jordan River. □

Irish Agriculture: Britain Calls the Shots

By James Conway

[The following article appeared in Vol. 2, No. 12 of *The Plough*, the newspaper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the Irish section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Irish agriculture is in the midst of the severest crisis experienced for many years. Farmers are not the only ones concerned with the crisis. The whole Irish economy, and hence the whole of Irish society, is affected. For example, 62% of the entire labour force is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. Agriculture contributes vastly more to the gross national product of Ireland than does the agriculture of any other country in the EEC [European Economic Community] (in major "agricultural" countries like Denmark and Italy, agriculture accounts for roughly less than half as much of the GNP as it does in Ireland). In the area of exports, so vital for economic growth, agricultural products account for 42% of total exports. From these proportions it is easy to understand the general importance of the farm crisis.

But it is not simply these quantitative relations that are responsible for the widespread effects of the depression in agriculture. They are caused more fundamentally by *class and production relations*. Put more plainly, this means that the agricultural crisis stems from the subordination of the Irish economy to British imperialism and in turn calls that relationship into question. That is why the crisis takes the form not of a conflict between town and country (industry/agriculture) but on the contrary, a struggle between the small farmers and wage workers on the one hand and the ranchers and the employers on the other.

Irish farmers are divided into two sections, one of which is small but controls a disproportionately large share of the land. For instance, holdings over 100 acres account for only 10% of all holdings but cover 40% of all land, while holdings of under thirty acres account for 50% of holdings and only 18% of land. Because of this there is a tiny number of large farmers who can make enormous profits by using their land extensively, while the majority of farmers need to use their land intensively to get good returns.

In a rational society the natural policy of government would be to encourage

tillage farming and the like, which would intensify and maximise the use of land and permit reasonable returns for small farmers. But because of the capitalist nature of agriculture, the Irish economy, and the imperialist framework within which it works, such rationality is not possible. Owing to British exploitative and oppressive policies in Ireland in the past and currently, the domestic market remains impoverished and the only major outlet for agricultural production is in Britain. Since the turn of the last century, the strongest demand there has been for beef or live cattle almost ready for slaughter. This of course favours the big farmers, who can use their large holdings extensively to fatten and later export or slaughter such cattle.

The interests of small farmers, who do not have the necessary scope to orientate towards and compete on the British market, have been totally sacrificed to those of the big farmers. Successive governments have had a policy of either driving them from the land altogether or of turning them into servants for the ranchers. The first arm of that policy is demonstrated in the tremendous decline of small farmers over the past fifty years. The second arm is seen in the manner by which agricultural policy actively channels small farmers into the production of young cattle. This is not done in the interests of the small farmer, who makes at the very most 30% of what the rancher makes by fattening the cattle, and who would be more at home with tillage farming anyway. Such a policy is in fact solely in the interest of the big farmer, who needs a plentiful and cheap supply of young cattle for finishing.

This latter policy has led to repeated windfalls for the rancher and one crisis after another for the small farmer. The latter is encouraged to increase the number of young cattle over the longest period of time possible. Egged on by the government and the ranchers, the small farmer quickly becomes overstocked, tillage declines, fodder becomes scarce, and there is no way of maintaining the young herd. The small farmer is left with no alternative but to sell off his calves and young cattle at a nominal price or let them starve. The large farmer is then able to buy these young animals at minimal cost and sell them later at a huge profit.

For a long time this mechanism for fleecing the small farmers and fattening

the bankroll of the ranchers was automatically kept within tolerable limits. But the change to free trade with Britain in the sixties and entry into the Common Market in the seventies removed many natural constraints. This has been achieved with the aid of a general policy of artificial incentives and manipulation of the market.

The *First Programme for Economic Expansion* (1959) took a determined turn in orientating the whole economy towards British and international markets. The interests of the ranchers were officially enshrined in government policy and everything else in agriculture was considered subordinate. For example, the *Calves Heifer Scheme* was introduced in 1963 and increased the number of cows by 16% in two years. But not a penny was spent to protect small farmers in case of overstocking or a collapse in prices—both of which occurred in 1966. Young cattle declined in price by 12% while calf prices dropped by 40%, with crushing results for the small farmer.

The effects of this crisis lasted for several years and no sooner was the small farmer recovering from this than the government and the ranchers were planning to make use of him again in preparation for the EEC. Beef prices in the EEC were expected to be 56% higher than those available outside at the time of admission. Preparations were made to get huge stocks of calves and young cattle on hand so that the ranchers could rapidly replenish their mature herds and take full advantage of market opportunities once the EEC had been enlarged. The 1969 *Beef Incentive Scheme*, abundant credit from the Commercial Banks and the Agricultural Credit Corporation, and a number of other conjunctural factors combined to set in train the greatest explosion of cattle numbers in the history of Irish agriculture.

But the lucrative gap between Irish and EEC beef prices was only a temporary phenomenon arising from hoarding in the EEC, elimination of tariffs, devaluation of the pound, etc. When large farmers found no genuine price rise after EEC entry, they stopped selling their cattle and waited for better opportunities. In this decision they were backed by EEC and government policy. The *EEC Beef Intervention Scheme*, by guaranteeing high prices, enabled the rancher to hold on to his stock without fear of any losses. In addition, the government decision to increase

the slaughter premium on cattle by 500% encouraged the ranchers to maintain their herds and get them into condition for slaughter, while the minister for agriculture's pursuit of the Green £ encouraged them to hold out for better prices in the EEC.

The result of all this was disastrous for the small farmer. While the rancher was holding on to his stock he had no need to buy calves or young cattle, and the bottom fell out of the calf and young cattle prices once again. As already mentioned, the EEC and government policies deliberately helped the big farmer hold on to his stock and thereby made the small farmer bear the full brunt of collapsing cattle prices. But the EEC and government went further than that—they actively attacked the small farmer when he attempted to cushion the blow. When small farmers attempted to export their calves and young cattle, the minister for agriculture went rushing off to Brussels to get permission to raise the level of tax payable to EEC funds on the export of young Irish cattle! So the rancher will now have it both ways. For the moment he need not buy young cattle, but when cattle prices rise and he begins selling off his present stock, he will have a plentiful and cheap supply of calves and young cattle to restock from.

It is not only the small farmers who are suffering from the current crisis in agriculture. Workers are also affected, since they have to pay the higher prices which are deliberately fostered by the ranchers withholding their products. They also pay by bearing a greater share of taxation and accepting lower welfare standards so that the ranchers can remain "competitive," i.e., make greater profits.

When the industrial employers try to get away with that kind of manoeuvre, the working class fights back. So why should they tolerate the machinations of the ranchers? More importantly, why be used by the ranchers to crush the small farmers, who have been and will be a vital ally in all the struggles confronting workers? There are obviously no reasons at all for this. Workers have every interest in combating the large ranchers and co-operating with the small farmers.

But just as trade-union leaders are afraid of the employers, they are also afraid of the ranchers. In the present crisis they have no policy except to warn farmers *in general* not to disrupt traffic! The task falls to socialists and class-conscious trade unionists to fight within the trade unions for a campaign against the ranchers as part of an overall offensive against the attacks of the capitalist system in Ireland.

It is essential to fight for workers and small-farmers unity by calling on the trade unions to campaign for withdrawal from the EEC, for the release of interven-

tion beef, for income tax on large-farm profits, nationalisation of large farms, credit facilities for small farmers, joint worker and small-farmer co-ops to buy and distribute food as cheaply as possible, joint trade-union and small-farmer consumer protection groups, etc. Such a campaign will have to go further than

words. The trade unions will have to actively encourage small farmers to break away from rancher organisations like the IFA [Irish Farmers Association] and the ICMSA [Irish Creamery and Milk Suppliers Association] and organise joint worker and small-farmer demonstrations for the above demands. □

For Reporting Activities of Helder Câmara

U.S. Journalist Tortured in Brazil

Fred B. Morris, a U.S. journalist and former United Methodist missionary, was recently arrested and tortured by military officials in Recife, Brazil. Morris, 41, had lived in Brazil for most of the past ten years. He was working as a stringer, or part-time correspondent, for the U.S. newsweekly *Time* when he was jailed.

In the November 18 issue of *Time* he reported the treatment he had received at the hands of Brazilian authorities:

"After a chance meeting on the street, my Brazilian friend Luis Soares de Lima, 27, and I were getting into my car when about a dozen men in jeans and sports shirts, armed with machine guns and .45-cal[iber] automatics, surrounded us, covered our heads with hoods, forced us to the floor of a station wagon and roared off."

Morris and Soares were taken to Fourth Army headquarters. They were separated, Morris was ordered to take off all his clothes except his underwear, and was placed alone in a small cell. Within fifteen minutes he was taken for his first "interrogation": one-half hour of questions about his and Soares's political affiliations, accompanied by beatings. This was followed by another hour of questions interspersed with high-voltage electric shocks.

After a fifteen-minute respite, the tortures and interrogation began again, continuing for eight hours.

"Finally," Morris reported, "the real reason for their interest in me emerged: my inquisitors began asking endless questions about Roman Catholic Archbishop Helder Câmara. . . ."

Helder Câmara has received wide publicity for his outspoken criticism of the Brazilian dictatorship's denial of human rights. But because of his massive popular following in the

country and his reputation abroad, the regime has been unable to silence him with its customary methods.

Morris had filed several stories with *Time* and the Associated Press about Helder Câmara's activities.

At one point during the first day's questioning, Morris reported, his life was threatened by the most vicious of his torturers, Luis Miranda Filho, known in Recife to have conducted countless torture sessions. Morris also identified Colonel Meziat, chief of intelligence for the Fourth Army, as one of his torturers and the man responsible for his arrest.

On the third day, reported Morris, "They used a new (to me) shock device. It was some kind of wheel with spikes on it, which they rolled across my back, scratching me. As they pushed down on it, it also gave me a severe electric shock."

On the fourth day, Morris got some relief. The U.S. consul, Richard Brown, was allowed to see him, and he began the process of getting Morris released.

After seventeen days, an order for Morris's expulsion from Brazil was issued. He was escorted to the airport in Rio de Janeiro and told that he would go to prison for up to four years if he ever returned to the country. No official charges had ever been made against him.

Volkswagen Sales Off \$8.8 Million

Volkswagen, the West German automobile giant, announced November 19 that its worldwide sales dropped \$8.8 million during the first nine months of this year. It had earlier predicted that it was heading for its first postwar financial loss, estimated to reach \$160 million by the end of 1974. A 25 percent decline in sales in the United States was reported to be a factor in the company's losses.

With Gerald Ford All the Way to Vladivostok

President Gerald Ford made it official November 15—he intends to run for the presidency in 1976. With this announcement, he made "nonoperative" the solemn assertions when he was sworn in that he did not intend to seek nomination for another term.

Two days later, he opened his campaign with a publicity junket to Japan, South Korea, and the Soviet Union. The formula is the same as the one perfected by Nixon—preempt prime time on television with travelogues featuring exotic scenes like eating with chopsticks in Tokyo and toasting Brezhnev with diet cola.

John Herbers observed in the November 17 *New York Times* that as the Nixon administration's public opinion ratings plummeted on domestic issues, the polls remained favorable in the area of foreign policy. "The new President associated himself with those policies and is now eager to display his own expertise," Herbers wrote. "He went to Mexico for a day in October. In addition to his Asia trip, he plans to meet President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France on Martinique in mid-December."

The themes that worked for Nixon have been taken out of mothballs to give Ford an irresistible image. "President Begins Journey to Asia, Stressing Peace," declared the November 18 *New York Times*. As he left Anchorage, Alaska, for Tokyo, Ford recited such choice bits as, "I would rather travel thousands of miles for peace than take a single step toward war."

Ford's visit to Tokyo was featured as the first by any president of the United States while in office. A projected visit by Eisenhower in 1960 was canceled in the face of massive demonstrations throughout Japan protesting the U.S.-Japanese Mutual Security Treaty. Nixon also planned to visit Tokyo in 1974 but couldn't keep the appointment for reasons beyond his control.

From the dinner with Emperor Hirohito to attendance at a judo match, the scenario was designed for maximum impact on American television. The script for the discussions

with Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was evidently written in Washington. In fact, the joint U.S.-Japanese communiqué that was released November 20 had actually been completed a week before Ford left Washington.

The demonstrations opposing the Ford visit caused the Japanese government to organize security on a massive scale. Ford's reaction hardly enhanced his image. At times he looked frightened; generally his face was merely blank, reflecting what was going on inside his head. Government officials in both Tokyo and Washington claimed that Ford had been well received. Significantly, there was little news coverage of the November 19 strike staged by more than three million railway and postal workers to protest Ford's visit.

In Seoul, Ford toasted the dirty dictator Park Chung Hee, and assured him that he had "no intention to withdraw United States forces from the Korean Peninsula."

The Pentagon is maintaining 38,000 U.S. troops on an indefinite basis in South Korea and has earmarked \$400 million to \$500 million to modernize Park's military forces.

During Ford's visit, opposition groups staged demonstrations protesting the dictatorial practices of the Park regime and the support given them by the White House.

Ford turned a blind eye, a deaf ear, and a cold shoulder to the demonstrators.

At Camp Casey in South Korea, Major General Henry E. Emerson gave his troops a pep talk as Ford's helicopter approached:

"He's not just our Commander in Chief. He's Commander in Chief of all the American troops. He's Commander in Chief of the whole free world, and he's going to talk to the Russian Communists."

"He's a hell of a man. He's an all-American football player, and I guess that tells you what kind of a guy he is. He's putting our country back together and he's putting the world back together."

After being televised eating chow

with the troops, Ford said:

"As Commander in Chief, I am very proud of this great division. I am very impressed with the people I have met and the exhibition that I have seen. This is the kind of strong, vigorous American spirit that has made America in 197 years a country in which all of us have tremendous pride."

In Vladivostok, Ford and Brezhnev hammed it up for the viewers. Striking a gay pose, Ford wore a floppy mink hat, Brezhnev an astrakhan (leaving their ears showing in the presumably bitter frost).

Brezhnev, who has evidently studied American television techniques, borrowed the wolfskin coat Ford had brought from Alaska and posed as a Communist sheep in wolf's clothing while he shook hands with the grinning former beef-squad star.

Ford, however, claimed credit for the idea, saying: "I'm a sheep in wolf's clothing. I told the First Secretary I'm going to get him one."

The pair went into secret sessions, presumably to talk about arms limitations—or to joke about them.

Ford received detailed reports each day on the publicity he was receiving in the newspapers and on television in the United States. "On Tuesday, for example," the November 24 *New York Times* reported, "Mr. Ford was sent a 13-page report listing the Page 1 headlines that morning in The Washington Post, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, reciting the opening paragraphs on articles in six morning newspapers about his meeting with Emperor Hirohito and giving a detailed account of what the television correspondents, by name, said on the morning news broadcasts about Mr. Ford's trip."

According to the same source, the news summary given to Ford each day "carries a detailed breakdown of how much time the three major television networks devoted to each story in their evening news broadcasts. . . ."

On the folder containing the news summary, the warning "eyes only" still appears, exactly as in the days of the Nixon administration. □

Roots of the Struggle in Bihar

By Sharad Jhaveri

Bihar is one of the poorest states of India. Despite the exploitation of its abundant mineral resources, the existence of major heavy industries, and the use of three excellent canal systems, poverty is endemic. Located in eastern India south of Nepal, Bihar has the lowest per capita income in the country—lower even than such small and industrially undeveloped states as Manipur and Tripura. Despite its large territory, the population density of 324 persons per square kilometre is among the highest in India. The total population is more than fifty-six million.

Floods and droughts are a regular feature of Bihar, as is the inadequacy of relief measures. The population of more than 50 lakhs¹ in the northern districts has been hit by four successive waves of floods between July and September. The floodwaters destroyed 60 percent of crops valued at 225 lakhs rupees [one rupee equals about US\$0.125], covering thirty-six lakhs of acres. Droughts in Chota Nagpur and the Santal Parganas have damaged 90 percent of the crops. This is the third successive year Bihar has faced a food crisis.

Bihar's industrial development is lopsided. The north has been neglected, while the south concentrates on mineral production. Unskilled labor prevails.

The central government has completely ignored Bihar, and industrial licenses have been few and far between (only nine were issued in 1973). Other noteworthy features include the existence of only eleven industrial estates, an extremely backward agricultural system, and the fact that rural electrification has reached fewer than 10,000 of the state's 67,665 villages.

Political instability is another marked feature of Bihar. In the last thirteen years, Bihar has had fourteen different ministries. Four dominant castes account for only one-sixth of the population but have appropriated most of the benefits of economic

development. The conflicts arising from the caste-ridden political structure are a major source of the deep-rooted factionalism that accompanies the political instability and corruption.

In Bihar, the pro-Moscow Communist party of India and the Communist party of India (Marxist) are forces to be reckoned with. In the district of Purnea and in Mushahari struggles by Naxalites against the landlords and the government have taken place.

This is the political and economic background of the massive demonstrations that have taken place in the streets of Bihar. The immediate causes of the struggle are, of course, rooted in the food crisis. The increasing occurrence of deaths by starvation, resulting from hoarding and the smuggling of food grains out of Bihar, has aggravated the crisis.

Food shortages in the hostel messes and canteens triggered a student revolt at the beginning of this year. Since January 1, when a militant student demonstration took place, the students have been in the forefront of this struggle and have proved to be its mainstay during all the ups and downs of the last year.

The main leadership of the student movement rests with Bihar Rajya Chattra Sangharsh Samiti.² According to a report by Narendra Panjwani in the September 21 issue of the *Bombay Economic and Political Weekly*, this student leadership refuses to permit democratic decision-making.

"Students from outside Patna," Panjwani reported, "complain that in spite of repeated requests, there is still no district-wise representation on the Bihar Rajya Chattra Sangharsh Samiti—the main decision-making body. 'The programmes and instructions come from the top and we have to act according to them irrespective of whether they are feasible or not, whether we agree with them or not,' said [a student] from Monghyr."

Panjwani also noted the leadership's reverent attitude toward 72-year-old

2. Bihar State Student Struggle Committee.

Jaya Prakash Narayan, one of the main leaders of the Bihar struggle.

This has left the ranks of the student movement unprepared for the dangers of Narayan's class-collaborationist approach to the problems of corruption and the lack of democracy. It has also meant that there is no clear understanding of the fact that corruption, food shortages, and unemployment will not end with the dismissal of the corrupt Abdul Ghafoor Ministry and the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly. Instead of showing that these social evils are intimately linked with the backward capitalist system and capitalist state in India, the leadership portrays them as the result of a moral lapse by this or that politician.

While Narayan lays more and more stress on developing mass struggles capable of paralyzing the entire state apparatus in Bihar, he continues to emphasize the nonviolent character of these struggles against a heavily armed and increasingly brutal state. More people were killed in one three-week period in Bihar than were killed in the entire three-month struggle in Gujarat earlier this year. (See *Intercontinental Press*, April 29, p. 522.)

In the face of such determined use of naked force by the capitalist regime, Narayan disarms the movement by failing to call for the formation of defense committees. Nor does he provide a real solution to the question of what to aim for next after the assembly is dissolved. He demands new elections and the right of recall, but within the framework of the capitalist state's present electoral laws. He remains scrupulously silent about capitalists, hoarders, and speculators.

To date, the Bihar struggle has not had a clear working-class perspective and leadership. In fact, workers and landless peasants played a significant role only during the January 21 Bihar bandh [general strike], in which nearly 500 trade unions and other associations participated.

Narayan has no programme for the working class and the landless peasants. When the Patna Town Action Committee decided to organise a Patna bandh on May 8 to support the railway strike, the decision was vigorously opposed by Narayan's followers, who argued that the railway strike was unjustified and that it was harming the nation.

The Communist party of India has

1. A lakh equals 100,000 units.

given full support to the Gandhi regime's efforts to crush the Bihar struggle.

The Communist party of India (Marxist) has not offered any clear working-class programme and perspectives for this movement and has remained content with merely penetrating it locally and in an isolated manner. Its class-collaborationist practices and its concept that a people's democratic revolution and not a socialist revolution is on the agenda for India have prevented it from providing a real alternative to Narayan's leadership.

Prime Minister Gandhi is still adamant. After the experience of Gujarat, she is well aware of the dangerous implications that acceding to the demands of the Bihar struggle would have for the stability of the Congress

party's regimes in other states where similar social evils are rampant.

Gandhi has adroitly combined several manoeuvres into a well-knit strategy. On the one hand, she has sought to present the struggle as a law-and-order problem, unleashing a veritable reign of terror and repression in Bihar. On the other, she has tried to win Narayan over to negotiations behind the back of the masses. He has already asked Gandhi for an audience so that some arrangement can be reached.

The Bihar struggle has entered a crucial phase. The logic of the struggle demands a clear and carefully conceived anticapitalist programme of transitional and democratic demands that link the Bihar struggle with those developing in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and New Delhi. □

At Expense of British Workers

Wilson's Budget Gives Profits Top Priority

By Tony Hodges

London

"In the last few months we have learnt, as never before, how totally dependent we are, each upon the other. Every one of us now knows we can inflict serious and often terrible damage upon some other section of the community. There is no need to go on flexing muscles to prove it."

This was Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson's class-collaborationist theme at a major speech, November 11, designed to bolster support for his government's social contract. "The misuse of power by the big battalions," continued Wilson in a direct reference to the unions, "against which I warned in my speech to the TUC [Trades Union Congress], the theme of interdependence which I adopted in that speech, means each section of the community trying, that little bit more, to understand the others."

Wilson's message to workers was to "understand" the need of the British capitalists to boost their profits by keeping to the terms of the social contract—a deal between the Labour government and the trade-union bureaucracy designed to convince workers to hold down their wages "voluntari-

ly" and not take strike action to defend their living standards from the ravages of inflation.

Just one day after Wilson's plea to the unions to stick to the social contract, his government made it very plain which "section of the community" it was out to aid. Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey announced the government's budget—a string of pro-business measures and attacks on the interests of workers.

"The most cheerful of his listeners on Tuesday [November 12] were Tory MPs . . .," the *Economist* was glad to report in its November 16 issue to its readers in the business world. "The least happy were the left wing of the Labour party, one of whom, Mr Sydney Bidwell, later described it as 'a budget for the CBI' [Confederation of British Industry], and, another, Mr Norman Atkinson, as 'a victory for the Treasury over the Labour party.'"

Ian Aitken, writing in the November 13 *Guardian*, said that "Mr Healey's rescue operation for Britain's cash-starved private industry last night won him the approval of Labour's right wing and the grudging

endorsement of a substantial section of the Conservative Party. But it landed like a lead balloon with Labour's left-wingers."

Tribune, the weekly newspaper of the "left wing" of the Labour party, felt forced to denounce the budget as one that would be "greeted with dismay and anger by most of the Labour movement."

What had Healey done? His overriding aim was quite simple: Labour's budget was designed to bolster the profits of the giant corporations. The November 16 *Economist* estimated that the net effect of the budget's measures was to shift a further 2 percent of gross national product towards company profits. "Half of this," the paper explained, "comes from the crash deferment . . . of nearly £800m of corporation tax that would otherwise have been paid this January, and the other half from a relaxation of price controls . . . which will bring companies about another £800m a year."

Healey also announced that a government-backed body known as Finance for Industry (FFI) would co-operate closely with private financial institutions to channel £1 billion of funds towards capitalist enterprises in the next two years. It was this decision, above all, which seemed to spark the greatest anger from the Tribunites.

The Tribunites saw Healey's announcement of massive transfusions of funds into private industry with no strings attached as a betrayal of the party's election programme, which called for the creation of a "National Enterprise Board to administer publicly-owned share-holdings" and to "extend public ownership into profitable manufacturing industry by acquisitions, partly or wholly, of individual firms."

These preelection promises, weak though they were, now seem to have been shelved by Healey's budget. The only real solution to Britain's mounting economic crisis—nationalisation of the major industries under workers control and socialist planning of the economy—has never been demanded by the Tribune "left wingers" any more than it has been by the Wilson leadership of the party.

The budget's biggest immediate blow to workers will be its effect on prices. It was an inflationary budget through and through, calculated to

add 3.5% to the Retail Price Index (RPI) over and above price rises caused by other factors. An 8.5 pence rise on the price of a gallon of petrol was announced, adding 0.5% to the price index. The removal of a series of restrictions in the Price Code, announced by Healey to allow firms to raise their prices to aid their profit levels, will lead, it is estimated, to a 1.5% rise in prices.

Furthermore, the order that nationalised industries wipe out their present £1 billion deficit will bring massive price rises for electricity, transport, gas, telephone and postal services, and coal. These are likely to raise the RPI by an additional 1.5%.

These new price increases come in a context of uncontrolled inflation. According to the November 16 *Guardian*, "between June 1970 and February 1974 retail prices rose 39.5 per cent overall while food prices soared 54.4 per cent." The month of October alone saw a 2% rise in retail prices and a 3.2% rise in raw material prices, heralding further big retail price increases on the way. Retail prices in October stood 17.1% higher than a year previously.

The inflationary effects of Healey's budget prompted many observers to cast doubts on the government's ability to keep the social contract afloat and persuade union members to hold down wage demands. The London *Times* noted in its November 12 issue, on the eve of Healey's budget speech, that if the chancellor announced further price increases, these "might be the despair of those prominent trade union leaders who are still struggling to uphold the social contract."

This worry seemed to be on the minds of some of the Labour members of Parliament as they heard Healey speak. "The mass of Labour members," reported the November 16 *Economist*, "heard Mr Healey in troubled silence, realising the necessity of the harsh measures that he was spelling out, but fearful of the strains which the inevitable price rises, generated by Mr Healey's proposals, would place on the social compact. What they were listening to was, in effect, a bald announcement, that henceforth the social compact would no longer be the only buttress on which Labour's economic strategy would rest. If the social compact failed, the Chancellor

made clear, 'the Government will be compelled to take offsetting steps to curb demand; and the effects on the financial position of the company sector are bound to lead to unemployment.' The iron hand was revealed beneath the velvet glove."

Healey's statement amounted to a



HEALEY: Promises close collaboration with British capitalists.

warning to workers that if wages are not kept down, the consequence will be high unemployment.

But even without new deflationary policies unemployment is bound to rise, irrespective of all the handouts to big business. The November 16 *Economist* reported that "after this budget, the Treasury reckons that Britain's real gdp [gross domestic product] should rise between the second half of 1973, and the first half of 1975 at an annual rate of 1.5 per cent, which is so far below capacity that it should imply a rise in unemployment beyond the 1m which Mr Healey thinks will not be reached."

The *Economist* ridiculed Healey's prediction that growth would be boosted by a rise in investment and export orders. The Treasury, it noted, predicts a 6% fall in investment in the next year, and the outlook for British capitalists' exports in a recession-hit world market looks gloomy. Industrial output has already slumped 1% below its level a year ago. So unemployment seems bound to rise above a million in the coming months.

Last but not least, the budget revealed that the new majority Labour government plans to do nothing to halt the growing cutbacks in social services and benefits. Public spending, Healey announced, would be limited to an average annual increase of 2.75 percent a year for four bleak years, a decision which—in this period of steeply rising costs—can only spell four years of deteriorating hospitals, schools, housing, and welfare services.

It is true that Healey did announce small increases in pensions and family allowances from next April, but these will do no more than partially make up for past inflation. "... there is unease," the November 13 *Guardian* reported, "among the vulnerable groups whom the social contract is supposed to protect about how they will manage to survive a harsh winter of driving inflation."

Labour's budget, for all its anti-working-class and pro-business measures, was not enough for the capitalists and their spokesmen, the Conservative party. "Totally inadequate, Mr Heath called it, in no way measuring up to the nation's need." So reported Norman Shrapnel in the November 13 *Guardian* after listening to the Tory leader's reply to Healey's speech. The Tories did not disapprove of Healey's decisions. They just wanted more. As the November 16 editorial in the *Economist* put it: "Almost all Denis Healey's budget measures on Tuesday were too small advances in broadly the right direction." The budget was another indication of the totally pro-capitalist nature of the present Labour leadership.

The trade-union bureaucrats were lavish in their praise for the budget. "The measures," a TUC statement said, "will be generally seen as a courageous endeavour to protect employment, stimulate investment, and promote social fairness."

It is too early to predict the response of the rank and file of the labour movement. But one thing is certain: This budget means a further drop in the living standards and quality of life for working people. It means higher petrol prices, bigger gas and electricity bills, staff shortages in the schools and hospitals, increased telephone and postage rates, and higher transport costs. It was a bosses' budget. □

Labour Abandons Victimized Building Workers

By Robin Hunter and Tony Hodges

London

"If it is true, and it may be, that the deterrent effect of the original sentence has contributed to a period of relative peace, this court would be undoing the good work the sentences have done if we decide to set aside the sentences." With these words, Lord Widgery, "Lord Chief Justice," turned down appeals brought by two building workers, Des Warren and Eric Tomlinson, against jail sentences meted out by a court in Shrewsbury last year under the Tory government.

Widgery's judgement came October 29, less than three weeks after the reelection of the Labour government. It put the Shrewsbury Two back in jail—Warren for three years and Tomlinson for two—for the "crime" of picketing during the 1972 building-workers' strike. They had been found guilty last December under the anti-union Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875, an act which the Labour government has still not seen fit to repeal. (See *Intercontinental Press*, February 11, p. 134.)

The 1972 building-workers' strike had provoked the ruling class's ire because of the militant methods of struggle employed by the strikers. "Flying pickets" travelled from one building site to another, spreading the strike all over the country. The militancy and determination of the rank and file won a 20 percent wage rise, way outside the norm for wage increases set at that time by the Tories' "voluntary" incomes policy.

The victories scored by the building workers—and the miners earlier that year—prompted the Tory government to try to clamp down on strike picketing. Some months after the end of their strike, twenty-four building workers were arrested and charged with illegal picketing under the 1875 act. The arrests were all made in the west of England and north Wales, areas where trade unionism in the construction industry is weak and where the government felt that it could get away with a frame-

up without provoking a major protest from the unions.

Six of the twenty-four were convicted, Warren and Tomlinson receiving the harshest sentences. Almost nothing had been done by the bureaucrats of the two main construction unions—the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT)—to build a defence campaign. The UCATT's do-nothing attitude had, in fact, been well put by the union's general secretary, George Smith, some weeks before the trial: "If these lads are innocent," he said, "then British justice being what it is will find them innocent."

Only after prison sentences had been announced did the union leaders, the Communist party, and the Labour party "left" begin to stage token protests. Their failure to mount a mass, militant campaign of demonstrations and strike action to demand the release of the Shrewsbury workers and the dropping of all the charges allowed the Tories to carry out the frame-up without any real opposition.

The union leaders' failure to build a powerful defence campaign also let the Labour party leaders off the hook when a Labour government was formed after the February generalelection. Though Warren and Tomlinson were eventually released from jail on bail pending the hearing of their appeals, the Labour government refused to order the charges to be dropped and kept the 1875 act on the statute book.

In this context, Widgery could be more than confident that his rejection of the appeals would not set off much response from building workers or other trade unionists.

Len Murray, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, confined his protest to a polite letter to Home Secretary Roy Jenkins to inform him that "the TUC general council is very disturbed both by the use of criminal conspiracy charges against pickets for the first time in recent years, and by

the severity of the sentences." Murray put forward no action proposals.

Sporadic local protests broke out in several towns, an indication of the potential for a powerful campaign of action if the leadership had been forthcoming. Thousands of Liverpool building workers shut down building sites after Widgery's ruling. And in London, thirty sites stopped work to support a rally held by the London region of UCATT, November 5. One-day strikes were held in Scotland, too.

The London region of the TGWU proposed "giving the same treatment to this attack on the trade union movement as we did to the imprisonment of the Pentonville 5"—five dockers who were jailed in 1972 under the Tories' anti-labour Industrial Relations Act and then promptly freed when a wave of spontaneous strikes swept the country, forcing the TUC to threaten a one-day general strike.

The Labour government appears to have no intentions at the present time to release Warren and Tomlinson. □

Velasco Bans Two Magazines, Deports Ten Journalists

The Peruvian junta of General Velasco Alvarado closed down two of the last three independent magazines November 20, deported ten journalists, and ordered the arrest of five prominent lawyers.

The targets of these measures reportedly represented a spectrum from the conservative *Opinion Libre* to the "moderately left" *Oiga*. The one thing that all apparently had in common was that they had publicly criticized the contract the government signed recently with Japanese companies for the construction of an oil pipeline.

The five lawyers jailed were leading members of the Lima Bar Association, which has declared the contract null and void because it contains a clause providing for third-party arbitration of disputes not covered by the terms of the agreement. Such clauses have been denounced previously by the demagogic bourgeois-nationalist government as inconsistent with national sovereignty.

Whitlam Prescribes Strong Dose of Wage Controls

By Sol Salby

[The following article analyzing the supplementary budget announced by the Labor government of Gough Whitlam appeared in the November 15 issue of *Direct Action*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in Sydney.]

* * *

Unemployment has already reached new record levels and appears to be heading higher still. At the same time Whitlam's November 12 mini-Budget has virtually guaranteed that next year's inflation will surpass anything seen so far. This conclusion now appears unavoidable.

The mini-Budget was brought down as a result of strong pressure from both the trade-union movement and business interests. This pressure was intensified following the release of the latest unemployment figures by the Minister for Labor and Immigration, Clyde Cameron.

The actual number of registered unemployed increased by 28,742 in October to 149,701. For the first time, however, a seasonally adjusted figure was also issued. Following a change in the definition of school leavers last year, the Department of Labor suspended issuing seasonally adjusted figures till the new series became available. On this basis the total unemployed reached the staggering figure of 189,246 or 3.2 per cent of the work force, the highest figure since the Government started collecting these statistics immediately after the end of World War II.

The deteriorating employment situation can also be gauged from the size of the last increase in seasonally adjusted terms, which was 45,000. According to Cameron, this is going to be the standard increase from now on. Writing in the November 9 *Australian*, Paul Kelly quoted unnamed government sources as expecting unemployment to reach 4 percent. As the actual figures are higher in January than the seasonally adjusted ones, unemployment could climb even higher. In fact, the economics editor of the Melbourne



Whitlam: Hiding real inflation figure?

Age, Ken Davidson, stated on the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Commission—the government radio and television network] current affairs program "This Day Tonight" that he expected unemployment to reach 5 to 6 percent by January. This is approximately double the record rate reached in 1947!

If further indicators were needed, then on the very same day as Cameron's announcement the Ford Motor Company sacked more than 500 workers at its plants in NSW [New South Wales] and Victoria.

The president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU], Bob Hawke, immediately called on the Government to bring down a mini-Budget. Within four days the Labor Government obliged, with Whitlam himself, rather than Treasurer Frank Crean, bringing down a number of measures designed to reduce unemployment.

Whitlam's measures, however, present a serious danger. Once again the key theme of the Labor Government's effort in "fighting inflation and unemployment" is a new wage freeze, under

the guise of an "indexation" scheme.

Much has been made of the tax cuts announced by Whitlam. The income tax cuts are more substantial than the cuts introduced in the September Budget.

But Whitlam is making sure that any gains to working people will be more than offset by his other plans. The Government has notified the Arbitration Commission, which is currently considering an ACTU application for wage indexation, that the tax cuts should replace any wage increases based upon price increases in the December quarter of this year. The point, however, is that the increase in the consumer price index is expected to hover around the 5 percent mark, while the tax cuts are much lower. In fact, a person on average weekly earnings will have his or her net income increased by 2.35 percent, while prices should rise by at least double this figure according to Whitlam's own estimation! But the Labor Government maintains that no wage increases in the December quarter are justified.

The whole purpose of the mini-Budget is to try to induce trade unionists to accept cuts in their standards of living. The indexation scheme, or quarterly cost-of-living adjustments, is a fake indexation scheme. Control of the cost-of-living index is to remain in the hands of the Government. Speculation about the manipulation of the index by the Government in order to obtain lower increases have been rampant in the press in recent weeks.

Following the tax cuts, which were not accompanied by any cuts in expenditure, the 1974-75 Budget will now have the biggest deficit in history. As *Direct Action* has emphasised in the past, this deficit spending is the main cause of inflation. Taken together with the removal of many restrictions on overseas borrowing and the recent devaluation of 12 percent, runaway inflation is on the order of the day for 1975.

Whitlam made the aims of the mini-Budget crystal clear. At the same time as he asked unions for wage restraint, he took action to enhance business

profitability. Whitlam's request to the Prices Justification Tribunal to grant higher prices must be just about the most imaginative and ingenious solution to inflation yet conceived.

The reactions to the Government's package deal tell their own story. The *Australian Financial Review*, an important voice of the employing class in this country, welcomed the mini-Budget, as have many other business representatives. This is not a surprising reaction to measures that lower company taxes and make more money available. The Government is now doing virtually everything in its power to increase profits.

However, Bob Hawke also welcomed the Government's measures. According to the November 13 *Australian*, he said that the trade-union movement will buy the Federal Government's tax-cut decision as the first instalment of indexation.

Thus the ACTU president has endorsed a package deal which combines higher inflation with a wage freeze while promising only a hope for reduction of unemployment at some time in the future.

But the ranks of the trade-union movement are not likely to accept cuts in their standards of living. A fake indexation scheme with no other wage rises to speak of, at a time when prices are to rise at a higher rate than ever before, cannot succeed.

A conflict will thus arise within the entire trade-union movement between the rank and file and Bob Hawke and others of his ilk. Within this conflict, the alternative socialist policies against inflation and unemployment will play an increasingly important role. This is because unlike the solutions of Whitlam and Co., the socialist alternative can remove the effects of inflation and unemployment.

Unemployment can be combated by the sharing of all the available work between all workers without any loss of pay. This guarantees that no worker is victimised by the faults of the capitalist system.

Similarly, the fake indexation scheme can be replaced by a real indexation scheme, one in which control of the cost-of-living index is maintained by the trade-union movement itself. Cost-of-living increases should be granted monthly, not quarterly, in order to protect workers immediately prices rise. □

Demand Better Housing, Jobs, and Medical Care

Australian Blacks Protest in Canberra

Blacks from all over Australia gathered in Canberra October 29 and 30 to protest the Labor government's lack of action in meeting their demands for more jobs, better housing, and improved medical care.

The more than 100 Blacks who demonstrated outside Parliament House on October 30 jeered Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's attempt to justify government policy. To further dramatize their protest, the demonstrators set up an Aboriginal mission, similar to the Aboriginal Embassy that stood for two years on the parliament lawns.

In all, eighteen organizations were represented in the protests, a broad cross section of the Black movement in Australia. The initiative for the action came from the Organisation for Aboriginal Unity, a newly organized coalition of Black groups based mainly in Sydney.

One of its organizers is Denis Walker, a leading militant from Queensland. Walker is at present facing extradition proceedings in Sydney, an attempt by the reactionary Queensland state government to bring him back to face trumped-up charges.

Walker told the revolutionary-socialist newspaper *Direct Action* that the Canberra protest stemmed from the Labor government's failure to take action to guarantee democratic rights and better living conditions for Blacks. He said that the immediate cause of the protest was the government's refusal to grant adequate funds to "survival" services, such as the Aboriginal Legal Service and the Aboriginal Medical Service.

Instead, the government is trying to control the political activities of the Black organizations by restricting their financial resources. The minister for Aboriginal affairs, Senator Cavanagh, and the secretary of the Aboriginal affairs department, Barrie Dexter, have tried to "single out individual organisations, and attempted to take away their self-determination, to bring them into line, and generally to take them out of the political sphere in their particular area," Walker said.

Walker estimated that at least two-thirds of the A\$163 million [US\$215 million] the Labor government allocated to Black affairs in the last budget

is lost in the white-controlled bureaucracy. Very little actually gets to the Black community.

Walker outlined the main demands that the Black organizations are directing toward the federal Labor government:

1. Total Black control of the Aboriginal affairs department.
2. Removal of Senator Cavanagh as minister of Aboriginal affairs and of Barrie Dexter as head of the department.
3. Abolition of the racist Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Acts, as the federal government has consistently promised, but failed, to do.
4. Government action on its unfulfilled promises of self-determination for Blacks—in particular land rights and compensation.
5. Adequate financing to deal with the medical, legal, housing, employment, and other problems of Blacks.

As an example of the present conditions of Blacks in rural areas, Walker pointed to the atrocious housing and medical situation in Wilcannia, in New South Wales, and said that conditions there were no better than they were before Labor came to power. "People will die this summer if nothing is done," he said.

The general feeling of Blacks in Australia was summed up in the statement issued by the Canberra Aboriginal mission. The statement said, in part:

"We . . . challenge the Australian Government to meet us and justify their callous disregard of our problems. . . .

"Look at the disproportionate numbers of Blacks in your jails, look at the dual standards of housing, employment and prosperity. Listen to the death cries at Blacks' camps [of] children who constitute one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, return to our old people, and listen in the schools as white teachers claim that Australian history began in 1770. . . .

"No more promises. We will now sit down in Canberra and we will not go until we can see that our people are getting those things they have been promised . . . NOW WE MOVE." □

A 'Recession'--And It's Getting Worse

By Dick Fidler

At the end of 1973, *Business Week* which is widely read in management circles in the United States, made an economic forecast for 1974. It was based on the opinions of twenty-five economists on the payrolls of leading corporations and banks, and seven econometric models at prestigious universities.

"In December 1973 the energy crisis was hard upon us, and neither the economists nor the model-operators were glowingly optimistic about the year that was about to begin," wrote Lindley H. Clark Jr. in the October 28, 1974, *Wall Street Journal*, recalling the survey. "But nobody saw this year's setback in anything like its full dimensions."

In fact, the "experts" consulted by *Business Week* muffed it completely.

All the economists but one thought the country's total production of goods and services would increase, or at least hold its own. Only one saw a decline. And he underestimated the actual drop in real gross national product, which in the first three quarters of this year slid downward at an average annual rate of 3.8%.

The economists predicted inflation rates ranging from 4.7% to 7.5%. In fact, the consumer price index has gone up at an annual rate of 14.2% in the past three months, and the wholesale price index has been going up even faster.

The U.S. economy is now in the throes of what promises to be the most severe recession since the second world war, coupled with the heaviest rate of inflation since the Civil War. And all signs point to a deepening of the recession, with little indication of any letup in inflation.

In late October the Commerce Department released its monthly compilation of leading economic indicators, revealing that in September the index took its sharpest drop in more than twenty-three years.

New York Times reporter Peter T. Kilborn summarized the findings October 31. "The automobile and con-



struction industries, along with Wall Street, have been in a slump all year. But now workers are losing their jobs in industries that produce such goods as appliances, textiles, television sets, furniture, lumber and semiconductors. And corporate executives are cutting back their spending for new plants and equipment."

On November 1, the Labor Department announced that 6% of the labor force was listed as unemployed—5,513,000 workers, according to "seasonally adjusted" figures—an increase of 1.3 million from a year ago. And these figures did not include thousands of workers being laid off in the automobile industry during the last two weeks of October.

As of mid-November, 69,000 production workers were laid off in the auto industry, 10% of the industry's hourly paid work force. The motor companies have laid off thousands more white-collar workers, including engineers and draftsmen.

Since then, the companies have announced that about 180,000 auto industry workers will be laid off for periods in December.

In the construction industry, the jobless rate is more than 12% and will go much higher during the winter months.

From Bad to Worse

Economists are now predicting a massive increase in unemployment in the months ahead—as high as 10% of the labor force, or close to 10 million unemployed.

"There is a real danger," says James H. Wishart, research director for the Almagamated Meat Cutters union, "that there might be something even more serious than what is defined as a recession."

Nathaniel Goldfinger, chief economist for the AFL-CIO, the U.S. labor body, says:

"It's deepening and widening, with no evidence of where the pickup will come from. No sector of the economy shows any strength—just varying degrees of weakness."

The crisis of overproduction is revealed in the massive size of inventory stocks. Responding to backlogs of orders in the aftermath of the 1971-72 recession, businesses increased inventories at an extraordinary annual rate of \$29 billion in the fourth quarter of 1973, and they continued to grow unusually fast through the middle of this year. While much of this increase was in prices, not physical volume, inventories calculated in constant prices (with the inflation factor removed) are still very high compared to sales.

Reacting to a drop-off in sales (in automobiles, for example, down 38% from a year earlier) businesses are now proceeding to liquidate those swollen inventories as fast as they can. One economist, A. Gary Shilling—the same who correctly predicted a decline in real GNP in the *Business Week* survey—thinks the U.S. economy could be in for a \$9 billion or \$10 billion rate of inventory decline in the second quarter of next year, the *New York Times* reported.

By comparison, "the 1957-58 recession, the worst in the postwar period, saw businesses liquidate over \$6-billion of inventories within one year," the *Times* noted.

Already, according to a survey by McGraw-Hill business publications, U.S. industry is operating at only 81% of capacity, compared with 87% a year ago.

Particularly alarming to the forecasters are the growing signs that business is cutting back on investment in plant and equipment. This could portend a long and deep recession. Lynn Townsend, chairman of Chrysler Corporation, has disclosed that his company has already chopped its 1975 capital spending plans to about \$475 million from \$525 million and wants to reduce it more.

"Numerous utilities are asking power-plant suppliers to put off delivery for six months or a year until interest rates fall," Peter Kilborn reported in the October 31 *New York Times*.

"Airlines, troubled by soaring fuel costs as well as high interest rates, have canceled orders for some planes and mothballed others."

Also alarming to the economists is the depth of what they call consumer pessimism. "If a majority of consumers expects a depression, as a Gallup poll last week reported they did," Kilborn wrote, "experts say they might suppress their buying enough to help bring one on."

"In terms of the consumer, this is already the worst recession since the war," says Otto Eckstein, a Harvard economist and business consultant. He estimates that real disposable income (adjusted for inflation and taxation) could drop to less than \$600 billion next year, from a peak this year of \$623 billion.

When did the slump become a recession, and when will it end? The answers vary according to who gives them. Kilborn reported that many economists are saying it began a year ago, "though few identified it then, and most of a dozen economists interviewed doubted it would end before late next summer. It would therefore run about 20 months, eight more than the slump of 1970-71 and twice as long as any of the three other recessions since World War II."

Faced with the undeniable evidence, the Ford administration finally conceded—a week after the congressional elections—that it is, indeed, a recession, with the qualifier that it began "this month."

The White House's reluctance to acknowledge what has been obvious for some time cannot be attributed solely to narrow political considerations. The government's role in modern capitalist economy is so central that merely defining the situation as "recession" can touch off further skittishness among

investors and corresponding calls for strong measures to correct the problem.

Paradoxically, the fundamental reasoning behind official attempts to minimize the gravity of the situation is that Ford wanted to continue to pursue mildly recessionary policies without being overwhelmed by pressure for expansionist, antirecessionary measures.

'Slumpflation'

The Ford administration is centering its fire on inflation as "Public Enemy No. 1," arguing that inflation is the source of all the other problems in the economy.

Edgar R. Fiedler, assistant secretary of the Treasury for economic policy, says that "the same forces causing prices to rise so virulently are also producing the economic downturn."

Inflation, he says, "has dried up the supply of mortgage credit and sent housing into a tailspin." It "has crushed consumer confidence and put the brakes on consumer spending. . . . These are the two weakest sectors of the economy, and thus it is the inflation itself that is the basic cause of our economic sluggishness and rising unemployment."

This description exaggerates the autonomy of the credit cycle in relation to the cycle of production and sale of commodities. Overproduction in relation to the market (not human needs) is the underlying factor in industrial cutbacks and the resulting unemployment.

But the Treasury official's description does emphasize the "multiplier" effect inflation is having on the current economic downturn.

According to conventional wisdom, prices should come down in a recession, as demand falls and inventories pile up. But this recession is characterized by a peculiar phenomenon: "stagflation," or "slumpflation," as the White House calls it—that is, the simultaneous appearance of a decline in production and a sharp rise in prices.

The fact that for a whole year now the rate of inflation has not gone down but increased, despite the recession, is a source of considerable concern to all bourgeois economists. Harvard's Otto Eckstein "thinks that this trend poses 'a major test' for the capitalist system in the months ahead,"

the *Washington Post* reported November 7.

For the last forty years, capitalist economic policy has been based on the Keynesian concept of balancing inflation against unemployment. In theory, serious unemployment levels could be staved off by following expansionary policies, mainly through inflating economies to keep up purchasing power. Aggressive government spending was to fill in where private "effective demand" was inadequate. Conversely, a serious inflation problem could be countered by slowing the rate of growth of the economy through such governmental action as restricting the money supply, raising taxes, and allowing unemployment to increase.

These theories are now proving inadequate to deal with global inflation.

The *Washington Post* acknowledged this in a November 3 editorial, entitled "Mr. Ford and the Economic Tiger."

"While we are obviously in a recession, it is unlike any other recession in our history. The great difference is the extraordinary new power of international markets on our domestic prosperity. The tremendous foreign demand for our food, and the shocking rise in the costs of our oil imports, are the most important examples, but they are not the only ones. These extraordinary events are profoundly aggravating a simultaneous inflation and recession, preventing us from controlling either of them by the conventional devices that economists have developed in the previous swings of the business cycle since World War II."

Role of World Trade Rivalry

While the *Washington Post* correctly identified some of the symptoms of world inflation, its diagnosis omitted a rather important consideration—the impact of the sharp increase in commercial and financial rivalry among the leading capitalist countries in recent years.

As the strongest imperialist power, the United States has used its strategic dominance in the world trade of key commodities, for example, to raise prices and maintain them at vastly higher levels than a few years ago. This has been most obvious in the petroleum and grain markets, where U.S. trusts predominate. The enor-

mous increase in the price of these imports has upset the balance of payments, lowered currency values, and increased production costs of some of the United States' leading competitors, as well as driven the economies of some semicolonial countries toward bankruptcy.

With all countries attempting to counteract stiffer competition and a general slowdown in the growth of production by practicing parallel nationalist "Keynesian" policies, inflation is rapidly "exported" from one country to another. Where inflation rates are highest, the high prices attract foreign sellers, pulling up prices elsewhere. The resulting increase in world trade tends to draw the movement of world economies into closer synchronization—and to accelerate inflation without lessening the underlying recessionary forces.

The simple fact is that Keynesian methods, such as manipulating the money supply, lose their effectiveness as antirecessionary instruments when a recession is occurring simultaneously in the major capitalist economies.

Another reason why prices have not tended to fall under the impact of slowed demand is to be found in the impact of the monopoly structure of much industry in the United States. Instead of responding to changes in demand, monopolies set prices and to some degree determine demand itself. Why have the giant automobile manufacturers not lowered prices to sell more cars? The automobile trusts have deliberately responded to evidence of a worldwide glut in auto production by deliberately deciding to sell fewer cars at higher prices.

A logical approach to fighting inflation would be to cut out the biggest single inflationary item in the U. S. budget—the 27% allocated to arms spending. The Pentagon's official budget of \$84 billion in the current fiscal year represents a huge mass of unproductive investment for which there is no corresponding purchasing power created in the economy. But the capitalists, of course, have no intention of eliminating this profitable item. On the contrary, the Ford administration has made known that it is prepared to shift the official war budget up to almost \$100 billion during the next fiscal year, in response to Pentagon demands for higher appropriations—to counter the effects of inflation on arms costs, of course!

The White House strategy is to count on increasing unemployment and higher taxes to "cool" the economy, lower demand, and reverse the direction of prices. One of Ford's top advisers, Paul McCracken, told reporters October 23 that the administration is



FORD: Admits, after elections, that it's a recession.

anticipating a "V-shaped recession," a sharp but brief downturn followed by a sharp reversal and recovery.

Discussing this perspective, *New York Times* economic analyst Leonard Silk expressed some skepticism. "If capital spending breaks downward," he wrote November 6, "there would be a worsening of the inventory runoff, much of which is in the form of raw materials for building factories, mills, dams, etc.

"If that crucial prop to the economy gives way, the relatively hopeful scenario sketched by the Administration's economists would be doomed, and the economy would be headed for a deepening recession, rather than a recovery, in 1975.

"A growing number of private forecasters now hold to that gloomier view."

Silk added that "the worry of Administration critics is that, by risking a long and deep United States recession, the danger of a world depression will be intensified."

Harsher Measures Threatened

The administration's failure to stem the spiraling inflation threatens much harsher measures in the not too dis-

tant future. *Wall Street Journal* analyst James P. Gannon outlined a possible scenario November 5. Even if the inflation rate declines somewhat in the next period under the impact of rising unemployment and "stagnant or slipping production," he wrote, "the combination of a rising unemployment rate and a declining inflation rate would create almost irresistible political pressures early next year to focus government economic action on stimulating the economy rather than on restraining still-virulent inflation."

And if that were to happen, "inflation rates of 15% to 20% within a year would be all too likely, White House economists worry. They see in this a disturbing parallel with the experience of the British, to whom stagflation has become an ever-worsening way of life.

"To carry the chronology to its logical conclusion, the final chapter would have to be a new set of wage and price controls for 1976."

Treasury Secretary William Simon spelled it out in a New York speech October 24. "Another round of rapid inflation," he said, "would create almost irresistible pressures to establish a new system of mandatory wage and price controls. . . ."

The *New York Times* followed this up with a November 3 editorial claiming that "the current inflation, though kicked off by a burst of excess demand resulting from huge budget deficits and too rapid an increase in the money supply, has become a cost-push inflation." Decrying "a level of wage settlements that could build high inflation into the price structure for years to come," the *Times's* editors called for a "social compact" linked to a "wage guideline" that "would permit an early return to noninflationary wage settlements."

Already, some sectors of the ruling class—those hardest hit by the recession—are clamoring for a turn in White House policy in the direction of expansionary (and more inflationary) policies.

Chrysler Chairman Lynn Townsend took the unusual step October 23 of calling a news conference to publicly demand that Ford change his line.

According to the auto magnate, the president should "reverse the tone of his speeches and urge customers to spend; get in touch with Dr. Arthur F. Burns, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, and ask him to in-

crease the availability of credit; and put a moratorium on further additions of safety and pollution equipment on cars," the *New York Times* reported.

Industrial safety and antipollution measures are among the casualties of the current recession, as the capitalists look for ways to cut costs. Other casualties include some of the major social gains won during the preceding decade by national minorities and women. Blacks, women, and youth are among those hardest hit by layoffs and unemployment. Already, many bosses (and, unfortunately, some union leaders) are challenging preferential hiring provisions in laws and union contracts.

Explosive Struggles Ahead

These developments raise the possibility of explosive struggles in the next period, with especially oppressed sectors of the working class leading the way.

The kind of reactions that can quickly develop were illustrated at a public meeting in Detroit called to protest Chrysler's threatened closure of its Jefferson Avenue assembly plant. If the plant closes, more than 5,000 workers, 60% of them Black, will lose their jobs.

According to the U.S. Trotskyist weekly *The Militant*, the largely Black audience of 500 persons responded with enthusiastic applause to demands for a strike to head off the closure. The featured speaker, Black community leader Jesse Jackson, stated that "There is no legal solution to the taking away of jobs. Those under the illusion that the Democrats and Republicans will free us are wrong—the people have to speak."

Seeking to assess the probable impact of the recession on the mood of American workers, the *Washington Post's* business columnist Hobart Rowen interviewed Jerry Wurf, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and described by Rowen as "a sober and responsible man."

Wurf "makes the point that, even at the height of the big depression, the labor movement remained largely pro-Establishment, in marked contrast to what happened elsewhere in industrial societies," Rowen reported November 10.

"But confrontation politics in the 1960s on race issues and the Vietnam war, and more recently the bitter struggle in New York and Boston on school issues, point to the possibility of direct action by groups of workers in striking contrast to labor's traditional role of working within the system. . . .

"Now, labor leaders' failure—including his own—to keep the bulk of the labor force 'equal to where they were—let alone reaching out for the new sights that they've been led to expect is their right'—is causing a basic upheaval, Wurf says.

"It's probably too early to predict a rank and file rebellion against the present union leadership, Wurf says. But there is a stirring:

"'At this moment, it is a sort of gradual, grumbling discontent, and it seems to escalate as they get closer and closer to the (economic) precipice.

"'You take those auto workers. They're not making a lot of noise right now. But when they use up the supplementary unemployment compensation that's part of their union contract, and when they use up unemployment insurance, listen loud and clear. They're not going to be content to sell apples on the corners, you believe me!'"

The union leader warned that "workers may reject the restraining influence of their leaders, and take to the streets," Rowen said.

And this is another major reason why the traditional concept of using

unemployment as an anti-inflation tool arouses some unease among the capitalists today. "Further increases in unemployment—which seem almost inevitable now—would not only mean lost production, income, and profits but would heighten social tensions and might set the stage again for riots in the cities. . . ." the editors of *Business Week* wrote November 9.

"Once it was possible to think in terms of a trade-off between inflation and unemployment. . . . In the 1950s and early 1960s, a little rise in one would be matched by a decline in the other. But if such a trade-off still exists, the numbers involved are so enormous that they are politically out of the question."

But within the framework of capitalism, is there any alternative to increasing unemployment, as well as the prospect of an incomes policy—with all the social consequences they imply? Bourgeois economic theorists have failed to come up with any.

It is this prospect of sharpening class conflict within the United States that preoccupies the more farsighted of the ruling class and their agents in the trade-union bureaucracy.

To the degree that rising labor militancy goes beyond the bounds of "working within the system," and moves in the direction of anticapitalist struggle, the relationship of forces will turn increasingly to the disadvantage of the bourgeoisie, spelling the doom of all their efforts to surmount the developing crisis. □

Franco Regime Charges Feminist in Assassination of Carrero Blanco

Two persons have been indicted in connection with the assassination of Spanish Premier Luis Carrero Blanco last December. They are also charged with membership in the Spanish Communist party.

The indictments, handed down November 13, named Dr. Genoveva Forest de Sastre, feminist and wife of a leading anti-government playwright, and Antonio Duran, a construction worker.

Forest and Duran were arrested as part of a group of nine alleged Communist party members last September. All were accused of participating in the Carrero assassination and of collaborating with ETA (Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna), a Basque nationalist organization, in the September 13 bombing of Bar Rolando in Madrid (see *Intercontinental Press*, October

21, p. 1357).

A report of the indictment that appeared in the November 14 *Washington Post* mentions only Forest and Duran and does not specify whether charges concerning the Bar Rolando bombing were included in the indictment.

When finally allowed to see her lawyer November 2, Forest stated that she had been physically and mentally tortured by the police after her arrest. Since Duran is still being held incommunicado, it is not known what treatment he has received.

An international campaign in behalf of Forest and Lydia Falcon, another of those arrested in September, has been launched by the Swedish section of Amnesty International (see *Intercontinental Press*, November 18, p. 1506).

A Long-Term Crisis in U.S. Auto Industry

One of the major indicators of a long and deep recession in the United States is the crisis in the automotive industry.

Retail sales of new cars were down by 38 percent in early November from a year earlier. Although the four major auto manufacturers originally estimated their 1975 model sales at between 10 million and 10.5 million, new cars are currently selling at an annual rate of 7.6 million.

Confronted with swollen inventory backlogs ranging from two months supply of unsold cars to three and even four months for some models, the companies are making drastic cuts in production. (The current cutbacks are primarily in the smaller cars built to counter foreign competition and growing customer resistance to big cars.)

As of November 22, 198,000 production workers—well above one-quarter of the total—were slated to be laid off for most of December.

The downturn in the automobile industry will have major repercussions throughout the U.S. economy.

"The auto and trucking business," *New York Times* business editor Thomas E. Mullaney wrote November 3, "ordinarily accounts for almost one-sixth of the gross national product, and consumes some 20 per cent of all steel production, 9 per cent of aluminum, 60 per cent of rubber, 8 per cent of copper and 33 per cent of the country's zinc."

In addition to its own work force of 700,000 hourly paid employees, the industry provides thirteen million jobs in allied businesses.

"... so far, at least," Mullaney said, "the ripples have not spread very broadly because the steel, aluminum, glass, fabric and other supplier industries for autos have been enjoying a peak demand for their products from many nonautomotive customers in a shortage-plagued economy."

But the described situation simply reflected the uneven development of the recession. "Now," Mullaney wrote, "... many of those supplier companies have caught up fairly well with their over-all demand and may be

much more vulnerable to declining orders from Detroit."

Why the sharp downturn in automobile sales? The main factors are obviously the decline in real income of the average American worker, and the huge increase in new-car prices, up by almost \$1,000 on the average model during the last year.

It is the monopoly structure of the industry that explains why prices are so unresponsive to the decline in demand. The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* noted November 1:

"General Motors, which traditionally has produced more than half of U.S.-built cars, has the biggest efficiencies of scale. Some theorists figure it could have put its domestic competitors, Ford, Chrysler and AMC, out of business years ago if it had chosen to use its superior efficiency to cut prices. Instead, it apparently has chosen to merely take bigger profits; its profit-to-sales ratio has tended to be about double Ford's and triple Chrysler's."

The *Wall Street Journal* editors suggested that GM's conduct was a result of antitrust legislation. "If GM axed its competitors," they wrote, "the anti-

trust division would have just cause to ax GM, splitting it up into several pieces to restore competition."

What it really indicates, however, is that the auto trusts, far from "competing," have deliberately conspired to raise prices.

The crisis in the automobile industry reflects in part the end of the long boom in auto production of the 1950s and 1960s.

This is indicated by the failure of car sales to improve with the end of the gasoline shortages. It is also indicated by a continuing increase in the use of public transit.

A survey of 120 U.S. cities in September showed that there were 7.8 percent more transit customers in these cities than a year earlier. "Patronage on the nation's urban transit systems has risen nationally for 12 consecutive months, ending a decline in the use of public transportation that began after World War II and continued virtually unabated for more than 25 years," the *New York Times* reported October 28.

Short of a significant increase in the real wages of working people, or major cost-cutting technological innovations and a sharp cut in prices, no major improvement in automobile sales can be anticipated. This points to a long-term crisis in the auto industry, with far-reaching ramifications throughout the whole U.S. economy. □

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French Reformist Parties Jockey for Position

By Alain Krivine

[The following article appeared in the November 14 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly news bulletin of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

In the past few weeks three parties of the French left have held national meetings whose implications are extremely important for the workers movement. There was the National Council of the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU—United Socialist party), at which the leadership found itself in a minority; there was the "Assises pour le Socialisme" (Assembly for Socialism) organized by the Socialist party, which laid the basis for the integration into the new Social Democracy of a faction of the PSU and a section of the apparatus of the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT—French Democratic Confederation of Labor); and there was the special congress of the Communist party, which laid out the perspective of a government open to the Gaullists. These three meetings represent a significant stage in the process of recomposition of the French workers movement that began after the general strike of May-June 1968. To understand the import of these meetings and to draw their consequences for revolutionary Marxists it is first necessary to recall briefly the main features of the political situation after Giscard d'Estaing's victory in the presidential elections last May.

An Unstable Situation

The electoral victory of the right, which was fully united and still won by less than 1 percent, in no way strengthened the system of bourgeois rule that had been shaken in 1968. Confronted with a very high inflation rate (prices going up 15 to 20 percent a year) and with the beginning of a recession, the government today is incapable of halting the spread of unemployment (which threatens to hit the one million mark in the next few months) or of preventing the bankruptcy of hundreds of small and middle-sized companies that are falling victim to the policy of restriction of credit. At the time of the elections the present ruling group, while a minority among the wage earners, was able to group together virtually the entire right and far right against the peril of the Union de la Gauche (Union of the

Left, the bloc of the CP and the SP, supported by the Left Radicals). But this mass of ballots failed to lead to the construction of the body so fondly dreamed of by de Gaulle's successors: a real conservative party able to assure the regime a minimum of stability. The contradictions among the bourgeoisie were too strong, and Giscard d'Estaing now has to try to maneuver without a party and with a very narrow social base, drawing his support essentially from the state apparatus. The first decisions of his government were aimed basically at winning over a few hundred thousand leftist voters by adopting some of the demands of the Common Program (the program of the Union de la Gauche). Thus it was that with a great swell of demagoguery the right to vote at eighteen was granted, a few sham measures were taken on police repression (like the official elimination of wiretapping), and abortion was legalized. But all this daring failed to move the masses of workers, who are concerned above all with rising prices and the threat of unemployment.

In this area the impasse is total, and while the bourgeoisie agrees to negotiate with the trade-union organizations, it is only to tell them that not much can be granted, particularly in the nationalized and public sector, where wages are lowest. The problem is posed concretely: How to ward off a groundswell of social struggles that is foreseen by everyone? Since the experience of the struggle at the Lip watch factory, the only effective decision made by the government has been to grant one year's wages to all workers who fall victim to collective layoffs. In the absence of a generalized movement of the working class, a measure like this could lead to an effective demobilization. But there is the decisive question. The level of combativity of French workers has attained a threshold such that threats of unemployment no longer generate timid reactions; on the contrary, they lead to tougher and tougher struggles. Thousands of workers are now posing the problem of the recession in political terms. It is this radicalization of the masses that has forced the CP and SP to listen and prevents the regime from imposing in the immediate future a presidential system that would result in political life consisting of the alternation in power of the right and a Socialist party that had burned its bridges to the CP.

The French bourgeoisie today is unable

to stabilize its regime without winning a decisive victory over the working class.

Workers Parties and Workers Combativity

As we have indicated in previous articles, the Union de la Gauche created by the CP, the SP, and the Left Radicals on the basis of a common governmental program was the only response the reformist leaders were able to offer to the new political concerns of the workers, who since the 1968 experience are no longer satisfied with a few economic gains, but more and more want to "change life." Broader and broader layers of workers are taking up themes like unifying demands and self-organization. Many workers are lending a political perspective to their struggles, which is a change from 1968. At the present stage, what they see in the Union de la Gauche is more the unity that has been established between the two big workers parties than the fact that this unity is based on a program of class collaboration. The breadth and duration of the social struggles going on comes from the combination of the effects of the crisis and the existence of the unity of the left parties; the content of this unity will bring about the betrayal of these struggles.

Along with the general new rise of struggle in the country, there has been the development and more systematic intervention of a broad workers vanguard that has seen through experience in struggle the impasse of the reformist program but nevertheless suffers from great political confusion and has not assimilated the perspectives upheld by the revolutionary organizations, which have not yet sufficiently proven themselves on the field of struggle.

These observations make it understandable how the continued credibility of the reformist program in the eyes of the masses can be accompanied by the development of centrist currents and the strengthening of the revolutionary Marxists. These three elements—reformism, centrism, and revolutionary Marxism—are contributing to shaping the phenomena of recomposition now going on within the workers movement.

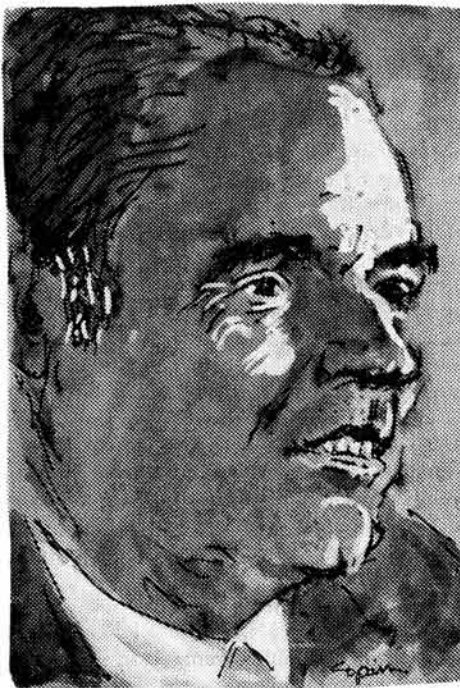
The current policy of the leaders of the CP and the SP is thoroughly dominated by their preparation for entering the government. They are hoping this will come

about through the growing defection of deputies from the UDR, the Gaullist party, from the present parliamentary majority. This could result in the scheduling of new legislative elections in which the left could win more than 50 percent of the vote. Nevertheless, while the CP and the SP are facing this situation with a common program, their immediate concerns are different, for they are parties different in character. That is the key to understanding the paradoxical attitudes taken by these parties during their recent congresses. While the Communist party is explaining that the task of the hour is not socialism, that we must not go beyond the Common Program, and that the present alliance must be broadened to include the Gaullists and the "nonmonopolist" employers, the Socialist party drafts a Charter explaining the necessity for socialism, self-management, and a "class front" against the bourgeoisie. A Rip Van Winkle might wonder what's going on. The Social Democrats are developing a more radical program than the Stalinists! The explanation can be given in one sentence: In the current period, the French Communist party has to get recognized by the bourgeoisie as a valuable interlocutor, while the Socialist party, in order to become useful to the bourgeoisie, has to do all it can to reestablish its ties with the working class and begin to challenge the CP's monopoly in this field. When you're talking to the bourgeoisie, you push a chauvinist right-wing policy; when you're talking to the working class in a period like this, you have to sound a little more leftist.

Revitalization of the Social Democracy

Although it was a minority in the working class at the time of the Liberation, the Social Democracy never completely disappeared in France; it always retained a working-class electoral base in certain regions with a Guesdist tradition.¹ The Socialists have hegemony in the Federation de l'Education Nationale (National Education Federation, the teachers union), and they retain control of the third-largest trade-union federation, Force Ouvriere. Nevertheless, with its 80,000 members, some 20,000 of whom were elected officials, the old SFIO (Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere—French Section of the Workers International, that is, the Second International) was in process of

disappearing. The weakness of its ties to the working class made the SFIO not very useful to the bourgeoisie, which accepted the Social Democrats' loyal services one last time in wrecking the Fourth Republic and setting up the Gaullist strong



MITTERRAND: Adept at talking out of both sides of mouth.

state in 1958 but no longer had any need for them under the Fifth (Gaullist) Republic itself.

The Socialist party's death agony was arrested by the entrance into the party of Francois Mitterrand, who was able to point out the road to renovation to the collection of beggars in search of a king. In this sense, Mitterrand did not change the character of the SP; on the contrary, he tried to make it really play its role as a workers party. He understood that the only way out for the Social Democratic party was to preserve and develop its ties with the working class in order later to be capable of conducting a policy of class collaboration credible to the bourgeoisie. This "return to the class" could not be carried out in just any old way. The SP had to take account of the Communist party's hegemonic weight in the processes of political radicalization. The task thus became clear. The only way to renew the ties with the working class was through unity in action with the CP—provided that the SP would be simultaneously able to differentiate itself from the CP on the level of recruitment of members by stressing all the weak spots of the CP, raising questions of democratic rights and Stalinism and advocating self-management, which correspond to the workers' desire to challenge the bureaucracy and the hierarchy and to

their will to assert their own control.

It was along that axis that after the Epinay Congress of 1971 the new SP began to recruit both to the left and to the right of the CP, making a real impact among the cadres of the CFDT (the second-largest union federation), who were seeking a political party capable of bolstering them in their competition with the CGT (Confederation Generale du Travail—General Confederation of Labor, the largest union federation), which is led by the Communist party faction. A good number of CFDT unionists who had been politicized in May '68 were repulsed by the practices and methods of the CP; in a confused fashion they recognized in the theme of self-management the aspirations shared by a whole section of the broad workers vanguard. Their confused anti-Stalinism was susceptible to manipulation by the reformist leaders of the union, who understood the workers' sensitivity on this score and cleverly substituted anti-Leninism for anti-Stalinism.

But the new credibility of the SP was in part forged by the CP, which by rallying to the support of Mitterrand's candidacy in the presidential elections allowed the SP to capitalize on all the increased prestige generated by the electoral breakthrough of the Bonaparte of the left.

Mitterrand organized the Assises pour le Socialisme flushed with this success. The Assises represented a very concrete attempt to complete the first stage of reconstruction of the SP by lending it a trade-union base through incorporating the leadership of the CFDT and a left cover through absorbing the leadership of the PSU. This operation succeeded on the whole. The Assises were officially organized by the SP, the leadership of the PSU, and the "third force," that is, several thousand CFDT militants, among them the majority of the national leadership. A Charter was adopted unanimously, and thus was prepared the fusion of these three currents during the January 1975 SP congress, at which will be born the new Parti des Socialistes (Party of Socialists). In point of fact, however, this will amount to a pure and simple integration of the other forces into the present Socialist party.

As a program designed to bolster recruitment, the Charter certainly has nothing at all to do with the future electoral program of the party. But it nevertheless represents one of the most advanced documents of European Social Democracy. What a sign of the times! Let's look at a few examples. In the section that explains that "socialism is on the agenda," self-management is presented as "the key-stone," and it is even explained that "beyond a certain level, control can be exercised only in terms of specific directives and these can be furnished only by the (national economic) plan. . . . Democratic planning of priorities is inseparable from

1. Jules Guesde was a founder of the socialist movement in France and the leader of the French Socialist party. Before the first world war he polemicized against Jaures from the left, but ended up entering the national union government when the war actually broke out.—*Inprecor*

self-management and is its generalized form." Stress is also placed on the forms of delegation and control: "Election of administrative bodies and of management bodies by the workers concerned must take place in all factories." To be sure, the manner in which the members of such bodies could be recalled is not detailed; the document simply insists on the necessity for "precise and controllable mandates."

So far, so good. But as might have been expected, our Social Democrats do not cross the Rubicon. For our new Socialists, occupation of the state apparatus *precedes* the conquest of power. It is a question of "an overall political fight aimed at conquering the state, transforming it, and, in time, overthrowing the regime of the ruling class." That's the whole problem. First the state must be managed and then "democratized" before power is taken. But because of the example of Chile, the document adds later on: "To maintain the structures of the capitalist state would be to perpetuate the rule of the bourgeoisie and to place a question mark over the conquests of socialism at any moment."

Of course, we have no illusions about the fine programmatic words of the Social Democrats. But it would be wrong not to understand the significance of such a document. For a Socialist party that may be on the eve of power to be obliged to draft such words in order to be able to recruit among the working class really shows that something has changed and is changing among this class. "Socialism," "class front," "self-management," coming out of the mouths of Social Democratic leaders! That means that hundreds of thousands of workers today are sensitive to the themes put forward by the vanguard. In writing this way the SP, which must have more than 110,000 members, more than half of whom never belonged to the old SFIO, is letting some wolves into the manger. When the practice of the party clashes with the exigencies of the class struggle, it will not be very easy to tame those wolves.

Hence, we can expect the emergence of centrist currents within this party, which is totally dominated by the apparatus of Mitterrand, who in his own organization is already playing the role of a Bonaparte between the "left" and the still silent but nevertheless powerful right. The official left of the party (which includes about 20 percent of the membership) is represented by the CERES (Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes Socialistes—Center of Socialist Studies and Research, led by J.-P. Chevenement, G. Sarre, G. Martinet, and D. Motchane) and has twenty parliamentary deputies. It has been strengthened by the regroupment process but has not yet differentiated itself from Mitterrand, who has temporarily stolen its principal

themes. The left might be thrown out of the leadership, which no longer needs it to hold a majority; in addition, it may prove incapable of attracting new layers of adherents, who may subsequently group together elsewhere.

So far, before things are clarified by the next steps, it is Mitterrand who is coming out of the operation as the big winner. The SP is beginning to implant itself in the factories; it is in process of overtaking the CP on the electoral field; it has in part broken the prestige of the PSU, a small left-socialist formation led by Michel Rocard (with 10,000 declared members); it is incorporating the leadership of the second-largest trade-union federation in the country. It will soon be ready to be drafted into service; but first the bourgeoisie will have to be fully assured that the SP will not be outflanked. However, in spite of its leftist allure, the Assises pour le Socialisme operation ran into strong opposition in the PSU and the CFDT. Thousands of trade unionists and some national union federations (banks, construction, textile, fur and leather) opposed the position taken by CFDT Secretary Edmond Maire in favor of the Assises pour le Socialisme and refuse to see rallying to the SP as the solution and outlet for their struggles. Within the CFDT, debate has been opened up on all the fundamental questions of the workers movement. The first regroupments occurred when the majority of the PSU condemned the policy of the party leaders, who had officially committed the PSU to the process of integration into the new SP.

The Crisis of the PSU

The PSU was a grouping of left Social Democrats, centrists, and revolutionaries. The left Christian origins of the majority of the membership explains the combination of the party's verbal leftism and Social Democratic practice. After May '68, when ultraleftism was at its height, the PSU tried to play the role of arbiter between this current and Trotskyism. Then the development of the Union de la Gauche shifted the center of gravity, and the PSU tried to be a bridge between the revolutionary far left and the reformists, all the while increasingly being caught up by the latter. It was at that time that more than 200 PSU members decided to leave the party and join the Ligue Communiste, then the French section of the Fourth International. With Mitterrand's candidacy in the presidential elections, the PSU cast its lot basically with the SP, which resulted in the departure of a few hundred militants close to Mao-populism. The proposal by the left of the PSU to present Charles Piaget, a central leader of the Lip struggle, as a candidate in the presidential elections permitted this ten-

dency to line up 30 percent of the party's vote against the Rocard leadership.

During the last National Council meeting more than 60 percent of the votes were cast against joining the SP. The outgoing leadership was beaten and replaced by a new leadership led by Michel Mousel, secretary of the PSU's Paris federation, and supported by Charles Piaget. Former members of the CP now in the PSU played a not inconsiderable role in this overturn. In the coming weeks the deposed right, which controlled the old leadership, is going to leave the PSU to join the SP, taking with it a thousand members at the most.

Once again the PSU finds itself facing important choices. Its new leadership stands on the ground of the revolution, but it is encumbered by a whole series of illusions about the possibility of creating a vast "movement for workers control and self-management" by grouping together what they call "the vanguard of struggles" as the basis for a future revolutionary party whose role, functioning, and goal they do not explain. These comrades quickly draw an identity between Stalinist party and Leninist party.

To be sure, the PSU will not have a body of militants stronger than the FCR (Front Communiste Revolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Front, the French Trotskyist organization), but it has influence among sectors of the working class and among leftist trade-union currents, especially in the CFDT. Lacking "recognition" from the reformist parties, the PSU will have to work out its own strategy and its own tactics of alliances. Nevertheless, because of its type of functioning and its theoretical flexibility, the PSU will remain an organizational pole for a section of the broad vanguard not yet prepared to make the leap into the camp of revolutionary Marxism.

Thus, while the strengthening of the SP expresses in a deformed way a certain politicization of the masses, the split in the PSU expresses in its own way the growing impact of revolutionary ideas within the broad vanguard. But this period of politicization is also enabling the Communist party to develop and increase its audience among some sectors—at the cost of growing contradictions, however.

The CP Special Congress

The CP's special congress was called around the same time as the Assises pour le Socialisme. In the CP cells it generated one of the most important debates since the Liberation. The draft resolution submitted to the membership perfectly summed up the objectives set by the leadership: The victory of the Union de la Gauche is at hand; achieving it necessitates not only going beyond the fateful 50 per-

cent mark in the elections, but also taking special care to avoid becoming isolated from the petty and middle bourgeoisie the way the Chilean left did. For CP General Secretary Georges Marchais, France is divided into two blocs: on the one side the monopolies and the representatives of the multinational firms; on the other side all the French victims of the monopolies. The latter camp includes the workers, the small and middle-sized employers, the nonmonopolist employers, career officers, and so on—"everyone in this country who is exploited by the big monopolies." The outlook, then, is simple. On the basis of the Common Program of the Left, the Union de la Gauche must be broadened into the "Union of the People of France"; on the political level there must be unity with the Gaullists, "who have been present in all the great national causes." In their attempt to attract the Gaullists, the CP leaders explained that socialism is not on the agenda, that things have to be limited to reforms, and that later on measures will be taken according to whatever is decided by the electoral majority. In any case, the role of the party, "a party for France today," is limited to "speeding up the changes." After having abandoned the perspective of socialism, the initial resolution proposed a new type of recruitment that would no longer be based on the potential member's will to construct socialism but rather on his will to be a leading fighter for the application of the Common Program. The resolution indicated that the "CP is open without restrictions to all those who want to take part in the fight for democratic change." This draft resolution triggered off a big debate throughout the party, especially since it was put forward just at the time that the CP had lost votes to the SP in five by-elections and since the CP youth had already implemented the line by officially meeting with the leadership of the Gaullist youth, the Union des Jeunes pour le Progres (Union of Youth for Progress), which is linked to the UDR and supported Chaban-Delmas in the presidential elections.

The political discussion in the CP's daily newspaper revealed a great uneasiness among the militants on three points: the policy of alliance with the small and middle bourgeoisie, the new definition of the vanguard role of the party, and the abandoning of socialism as a criterion for recruitment. The malaise among the ranks was so widespread that at the congress the leadership was forced to retreat and accept some formal amendments capable of calming down the membership without challenging the general orientation. The document that was adopted explained that "what we propose to our people is a new, precise, limited experience." "It is a change that conforms to reason." Then the resolution had to add that the CP is fighting for "a French sort of socialism" and that the

passage to socialism "can only be the work of a democratic movement of the majority of the nation."

For the immediate future, the problem was to apply the Common Program of the Left to establish the Union du Peuple de France, including the working class, intellectuals, artisans and merchants, officers discontented with the regime (which according to the CP questions independence and rejects a national defense policy), and, finally, "the directors of small and middle-sized enterprises affected by the measures of concentration of capital." The resolution said: "What threatens these owners is not the legitimate demands of their wage earners, supported actively by the CP, but the policy of the big companies, the banks, and the regime. This situation should lead them to act with all the popular forces for democratic change." As for the Gaullists, "who do not support a policy that leans away from the independence of France, limiting its proper international role," they have their place in the Union, for Communists and Gaullists "find themselves side by side in the essential battles for the independence and dignity of France. . . . That is what is new. That is why the Gaullists can see their place in a broad alliance whose goal is to assure unity, prosperity, and the grandeur and flowering of the national community."

Finally, the CP "is open without exclusion to all those men and women who want to act for the great democratic transformations." "To become a Communist," the resolution added, "is to participate in the fight for advanced democracy, to act for the ultimate triumph of socialism."

This general line is not new; it was applied during the Liberation. But in the new period today it arouses lively contradictions. Like the other mass Communist parties in Europe, the French CP has to propose a political solution to the crisis of the system of bourgeois rule. This is the only way the apparatus can avoid being totally outflanked and can maintain control over the masses. But for this Stalinist leadership, there is no question of considering challenging the European status quo by proposing to destroy the bourgeois state. Consequently, the alliance with the Social Democrats has to be accompanied by an alliance with the nonmonopolist sectors of the bourgeoisie. But the CP, unlike the SP, offers no guarantee to this bourgeoisie. Its Stalinist nature makes the CP constantly appear as a foreign element to the bourgeois state, as a representative of the Soviet state. Thus, the leadership of the French CP has to give the bourgeoisie the maximum guarantees in order to be accepted by the bourgeoisie and at the same time must set out a framework preventing itself from being outflanked on the left.

But this general orientation has given rise to big problems. The alliance with the SP has given the SP new life, and from now on the CP no longer holds a monopoly of intervention in the factories, because of the existence of factory fractions of the SP and of revolutionaries. Electorally, the CP is in process of being overtaken by the SP, and this is provoking a very lively reaction from militants who have been taught to judge the validity of a political line by the electoral results it produces.

But all this was predictable. A good reformist voter who wants to be more effective prefers today to vote for the SP rather than the CP. Here the CP is paying the consequences for its own orientation.

The CP thus has problems justifying its existence separate from the SP. Programmatically, it cannot distinguish itself from Mitterrand, who, as we have seen, sometimes talks a line to the left of the CP's.

Hence, Marchais had to wage a campaign about the possibility of the SP selling out, harping on the SP's past. This is simply "mouthing off" within the CP; it is reported throughout the press, but its only real effect is to harden up the CP ranks on the basis of their old distrust of the Socialists. The leaderships of the SP and the CP are condemned to work together. In the present period of workers combativity the CP leaders have to take account of two contradictory factors: on the one hand the real impact on broad masses of the Union de la Gauche as an electoral solution to the crisis, and on the other hand, the development of struggles that can appear to contradict an electoral solution.

This contradiction is dealt with today by what we call the "spanning tactic." The Stalinists have understood that they can no longer frontally oppose these struggles as they did in 1968 or openly denounce them as they did after the assassination in 1972 of the Maoist worker Pierre Overney, who was shot to death in front of the Renault-Billancourt factory by the company's private police. The bill to be paid for such a policy would be too high. Today, when they are confronted by a mass movement, the CP leaders prefer to allow the struggles to develop and to take leadership of them, even on a very radical platform, as is the case currently with the postal workers. (The workers are fighting for accreditation of 100,000 auxiliary workers, an equal wage increase for everyone of 200 francs a month [about US\$40], and no monthly salary less than 1,700 francs.) Then the CP leaders count on the time factor. That is, they wait for the regime to demonstrate that it will not give in, and then, in a second stage, they explain to the workers that the government has to be

changed, and since that is not possible immediately, they have to back down by emptying the platform of all its most subversive demands in order to find a new negotiating base. If the CP leaders are not discredited during the first phase of the struggle, they can more easily organize a response in the second phase. This tactic, linked to the Stalinists' classical knack for adapting, allows them to avoid being outflanked in a massive way and at the same time to make their electoralist political solution more credible, even if a more consistent broad vanguard emerges in reaction each time.

Thus, it would be wrong to anticipate a massive challenging of the CP's line in the present period. That will happen only after the CP directly sabotages a test of strength or after a few months of experience with a reformist government. But that said, we can expect the outbreak of local crises in which Communist militants through their experiences in struggle become conscious of the contradictions between the orientation of their party and the struggle itself. In fact, these crises have already begun. Generally, the CP militants do not have the political means to challenge the whole strategy of their party; the first breaks are beginning to take place around the concrete consequences of this strategy (in trade-union work, solidarity with Chile, work in the army, the women's movement, etc.). Leftist critiques are being developed in the CP and especially in the Communist Youth; but at the same time, we can count on the emergence of genuine Social Democratic currents, particularly among the intermediary CP cadres, who are both the agents and the products of the process of social democratization.

In the CP, twenty years of practicing peaceful coexistence without any left turn have educated a whole generation in the spirit of parliamentarism, electoralism, and legalism. The Soviet Union is no longer threatened as before, and is therefore dealing directly with American imperialism and the French bourgeoisie without the need for any diplomatic pressure from the CP, from which the Kremlin bureaucrats ask only one thing: that it block any revolutionary process. The French workers do not any longer join the CP in order to defend such a discredited Soviet system.

In this context, the links between the Soviet bureaucracy and the French CP apparatus, while they are still decisive, are nevertheless somewhat strained. (During the Union de la Gauche electoral campaign, the Soviet ambassador showed up of his own free will to pay a visit to and shake the hand of only one candidate: Giscard d'Estaing.)

The apparatus of the French CP is more and more intrigued by the stipends hand-

ed out by the bourgeois state and is preparing in every way to manage that state. Finally, the relations between the party itself and the working class are beginning to change.



MARCHAIS: CP leader calls for unity with the Gaullists.

The CP is no longer recruiting the vanguard of the struggles in the factories where there are already vanguard nuclei, but is tending to recruit less politicized workers for whom the struggle and adherence to the CP represent only an initial stage of politicization preparatory to essentially leaving the CP in a later stage. Thus, the CP (and the CGT) is losing members in the workers bastions that have a strong tradition of combativity,² while it is recruiting in the small and middle-sized factories.

The CP apparatus, well on the way to renovation, is increasingly composed of young members, managers of trade unions who are accustomed to breaking struggles and often lack the prestige of the older generation.

The dynamic of the CP's orientation is leading to a lowering of activity in the factory cells and an increase in that of the neighborhood cells.

In such a context, some currents could push this dynamic to its logical end and

2. In the Renault factories (33,000 workers) the CP claimed 2,500 members in 1971 and 1,300 members in 1974. At Peugeot-Sochaux (36,000 workers), the CP has 200 members. At Usinor-Dunkerque (12,000 workers) the CP claims 70 members. And so on.

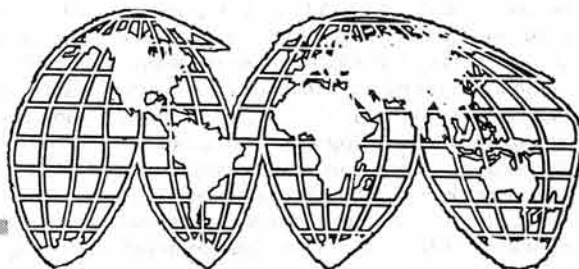
ask themselves questions about the reasons for the division of the CP and the SP. But there should be no illusions. They will be met with a strong ripost from the central apparatus, which is already waging (as yet without success) a vigorous campaign to revitalize the work of the factory militants and to reaffirm the Soviet Union as the international reference point. The Stalinists are ready to make many concessions, but they know how to guard their independence as a measure of self-defense. Thus, Fitterman, Marchais's personal secretary, declared at the CP congress: "There sometimes exists a tendency in our ranks not to appreciate the real value of the results achieved by the socialist countries. Today, by making known and understood the unvarnished reality of the socialist countries, we have the means to go on the offensive."

The French CP remains a Stalinist party, but its process of social democratization allows revolutionary Marxists new opportunities for intervention, especially within the bastions of the working class.

The phenomena of the restructuring of the French workers movement that we have analyzed briefly here are the results of the political and structural changes of the past few years. They are taking place at a time when the workers, after recovering from the aftermath of the failure of May '68, are preparing for great confrontations with the employers and the state. In coming weeks and months, we must expect the outbreak of struggles of great breadth around the problems of wages and employment. These struggles will lead to a strengthening of the revolutionary Marxists, but at the same time they will temporarily strengthen the reformists, who are armed with a political solution that remains broadly credible in the eyes of the masses.

In this framework, one of the tasks of the militants of the FCR is to address themselves to the various centrist currents produced by this radicalization, to open a political debate with them, and to do everything to organize unity in action. This unity has to be effected around two themes that are essential in the present political conjuncture: advancing unifying demands in the struggles and popularizing and actualizing all the forms of self-organization of the working class, the only means of effectively countering the class-collaborationist program of the reformist leaderships. This unity in action with the centrist and left Socialist currents will allow the broad vanguard to exert a greater weight in the struggles, to impose unity in action on the reformists in some sectors, and thus to effect the outflanking that can help in beginning to change the relationship of forces between the reformists and the revolutionaries, to the benefit of the struggle of the workers. □

AROUND THE WORLD



700 Attend IMG Rally in London

About 700 people attended a rally in commemoration of the Russian revolution held in London November 8 by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International. The rally, which was one of the largest ever organized by the IMG, was addressed by Tariq Ali and John Ross, two leaders of the IMG; and by Alain Krivine, a leader of the Front Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Front), who spoke about the perspectives of the French Trotskyists.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeois Democracy, a film made by the FCR illustrating the French Trotskyists' campaign against the far-right *Ordre Nouveau*, was shown. More than 400 pounds sterling (one pound equals about US\$2.32) was contributed by the audience to help expand *Red Weekly*, the IMG's newspaper.

No Shortage in Oil Profits

When *Fortune* magazine releases its list of the 500 largest industrial corporations next spring, General Motors, which has been in the number-one spot since 1955, is expected to lose its ranking to Exxon. While General Motors's nine-month sales

dropped from \$26.78 billion last year to \$22.15 billion in 1974, Exxon's jumped 66 percent from \$20.09 billion to \$33.37 billion.

Oh

"The Japanese have a distaste for nuclear weapons arising from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II."—Richard Halloran, reporting from Tokyo on Ford's neighborly visit to Japan, in the November 20 *New York Times*.

Report Labor Camps Planned in Chile for Children of Allende Supporters

The secretary-general of the International Commission of Jurists reported November 19 that the military junta in Chile was planning to set up labor camps to hold more than 600,000 children whose parents had supported Salvador Allende. The commission head, Niall MacDermot, a former Labour member of the British Parliament, testified in Washington before a joint hearing of two House Foreign Affairs subcommittees.

He said the junta planned "vast programs" of reforestation and land reclamation using those juveniles judged to need "rehabilitation."

"These are to include those whose family situation is thought to bring them into conflict with the norms of the established order of society," MacDermot said.

"In other words, it is proposed that children of supporters of the previous regime will be taken away from their parents and sent to rehabilitation camps. This is how the military authorities in Chile think to purify their youth."

Haitian Immigrants Face Deportation as Ottawa Rejects Appeals for Asylum

A young Haitian deported from Canada November 7 was arrested as he stepped off the plane in Port au Prince, according to sources in the Haitian immigrant community in Montreal.

He was one of 118 Haitians who have already lost their final appeals against deportation rulings. Ottawa has moved to deport up to 1,500 Haitian immigrants, despite threats by the Duvalier regime that it regards many of them as "essentially subversive" elements.

Immigration Minister Robert Andrashas

rejected demands that the Haitians be granted special status as refugees from their country's brutal dictatorship. These demands were backed in a demonstration October 24 in Ottawa by the *Comite d'Action Anti-Deportation*, a committee formed in Montreal to fight the deportations.

The committee's offices were raided recently by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As a result, two Haitian women, Rose Pradieu and Francisca Duiesne, have been charged with helping a Haitian immigrant stay illegally in Canada. The two women face up to six months' imprisonment as well as possible deportation.

According to the Canadian revolutionary-socialist fortnightly *Labor Challenge*, several Quebec trade unions are demanding that the Quebec provincial government offer to grant legal status to the Haitian immigrants. The Quebec government has challenged Ottawa in the past to grant it some authority over immigration into the French-speaking province.

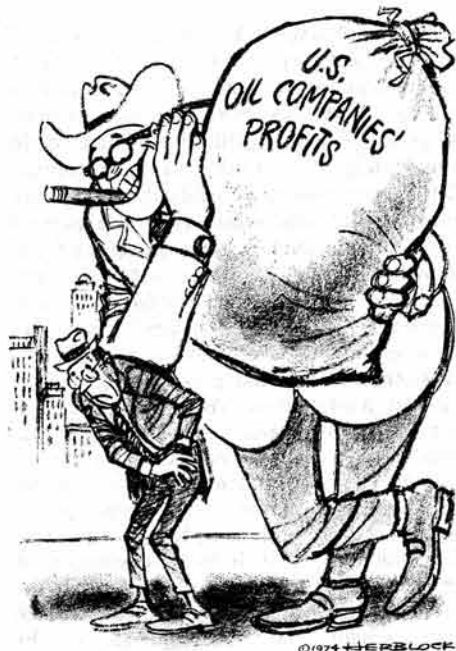
Ethiopian Military Regime Executes 60 Former Officials and Aristocrats

Ethiopia's military government has executed sixty former officials and aristocrats, Radio Ethiopia announced November 24. Among those killed were two former premiers, Aklilou Abde Wold and Endalkachew Makonnen; former government ministers, court officials, and provincial governors; and a grandson of former Emperor Haile Selassie.

The radio announcement said the executions were "an act of justice" and had been ordered by the military council for crimes committed against the Ethiopian people. Most of those killed had been arrested during the seven-month anticorruption drive by military officers that culminated in the overthrow of Selassie on September 12. The government announced on November 13 that the two former premiers and thirty-three other officials were being tried by a military tribunal for official neglect in connection with the disastrous famine in Wallo Province.

Also executed were Lieutenant General Aman Michael Andom, the chairman of the 120-member military council until a week ago; and two other members of the council. Conflict had been reported inside the council between Aman and the

"Keep An Eye On Those Ayrabs, Boy"



recently named leader of the council's inner cabinet, Major Mengistu Haile Miriam. Aman, who was from the northern province of Eritrea, reportedly favored negotiations with the Eritrean independence movement. Others in the military council are reported to support increased military action against the guerrillas of the Eritrean Liberation Front.

Junta Holds Laura Allende as Hostage

The Chilean Supreme Court has refused to issue a writ of habeas corpus for Laura Allende, sister of former President Salvador Allende. According to a report in the November 21 *Washington Post*, the court action cut off hope of obtaining her release or at least learning where she is being detained. Allende, who is sixty years old and suffers from cancer, was arrested in Santiago November 2. She is reportedly being denied cobalt radiation therapy while imprisoned as a way of forcing her son, MIR leader Pascal Allende, to surrender.

Three Basque Nationalists Get Stiff Jail Sentences

A closed court-martial in Burgos sentenced three Basque nationalists to long prison terms on November 19. The three—Jose Maria Yerza Echenique, Lorenzo Equia Lizaso, and Miguel Lascu-rain Mantilla—were accused of terrorism, armed robbery, arson, and the destruction of a monument to Spanish civil war dead. They received sentences ranging from 52 to 78 years in prison. The court declared they were members of the Basque nationalist organization ETA (Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna—Basque Nation and Freedom).

'Parade' for Jobs in San Diego

Thousands of workers marched November 1 in a "Labor Parade for Jobs" in San Diego, California, where 11 percent of the labor force as a whole and 40 percent of the construction workers are unemployed. The march was organized by the local labor council. Demonstration organizers estimate unemployment in the Black and Chicano communities of southeast San Diego to be 40 percent.

Pentagon Releases Report on Mylai Cover-Up

More than six and a half years after the Mylai massacre, the U.S. Army finally released on November 13 a long-suppressed report telling how that atrocity was covered up throughout the military command structure. Only two of four volumes of findings by a special inquiry group headed by Lieutenant General William Peers were released. The Peers report was submitted to then Army Secretary Stanley Resor and Chief of Staff William

Westmoreland in March 1970.

In releasing the report, Army Secretary Howard Callaway insisted that the report showed "no evidence of any kind" that the cover-up attempts went any higher than Major General Samuel Koster, the commander of the Americal Division of which William Calley's platoon was a part. The report shows that knowledge of the atrocity was widespread throughout the division and its headquarters.

The findings show that the crimes at Mylai included "individual and group acts of murder, rape, sodomy, maiming and assault on noncombatants and the mistreatment and killing of detainees," as well as the burning of dwellings within several sub-hamlets. A document in the report disclosed that an army census concluded in 1970 that 347 men, women, and children had been killed by U.S. troops at Mylai.

The report delicately cites "a permissive attitude" that the Eleventh Brigade of the Americal Division had developed toward the treatment and safeguarding of civilians. This attitude was "exemplified by an almost total disregard for the lives and property of the civilian population . . . on the part of commanders and key staff officers."

Out of all the officers and enlisted men involved in the atrocity and its cover-up, few were ever brought to trial. The only one convicted, Lieutenant William Calley, had his conviction overturned by a federal court in September and was released on bail November 9 pending appeal of this decision by the army.

Italy's Staggering Deficit

The Bank of Italy announced that Rome's balance-of-payments deficit for the first eight months of 1974 was more than seven times as high as that for the same period in 1973—\$4.2 billion, compared with last year's \$571.5 million.

Soviet and Ukrainian UN Ambassadors Refuse to Discuss Moroz Case

The Soviet and Ukrainian ambassadors to the United Nations have turned down a request by three prominent Americans to discuss the case of Valentyn Moroz. Moroz, an imprisoned Ukrainian historian, is reported to be near death from a hunger strike that began July 1.

In a letter to the Soviet officials October 28, the International League for the Rights of Man and Amnesty International's U.S. section had requested a meeting between the ambassadors and a delegation composed of historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr.; Roger Baldwin, founder of the American Civil Liberties Union; and Rose Styron, a writer.

The letter stated that the conditions under which Moroz is being held have led to his deteriorating physical and psychological health. It charged the USSR with



Alternativa

"Minimum wages."

"At least they aren't demanding fair wages."

violations of minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners adopted by the United Nations.

The two organizations further charged that Moroz's imprisonment violated his right to free opinion and expression and the rights of national minorities to cultural expression, guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by the Soviet government.

Coal Miners Send Bureaucrats Back to Bargain for Better Contract

On November 22, the bargaining council for the 120,000 striking soft-coal miners in the United States voted to reject a coal industry offer—which had been recommended by the union bureaucrats—that reportedly provided only for a 15 percent wage increase over three years, with a very limited cost-of-living adjustment. The miners' strike began November 12.

Treasury Secretary William Simon intervened personally in the bargaining sessions, and on November 24 agreement in principle was reached on a second version of the proposed contract. The terms have not yet been made public.

The Ford administration has been hinting that if the rank-and-file miners reject this proposal, the strikebreaking Taft-Hartley Act may be invoked against them.

Another key issue in the miners' strike is job safety. The dangerous conditions in the U.S. mines were emphasized by United Mine Workers President Arnold Miller as he announced the beginning of the strike. "While we sat and talked [with the mine owners] these past nine weeks," he said, "39 coal miners were killed in the mines. A man died every day we met."

¿Deben Intervenir en Boston Tropas Federales?

Por Joseph Hansen

[La siguiente es una traducción del artículo "Should Federal Troops Be Used in Boston?", que apareció en *Intercontinental Press* el 25 de noviembre].

* * *

El problema de movilizar una defensa eficaz contra las turbas de linchamiento que han recurrido a la violencia en las calles de Boston para evitar que los estudiantes negros tengan servicio de transporte escolar, ha desatado una discusión en el seno del movimiento radical de los Estados Unidos. A pesar de que hay otros puntos, el debate se ha centrado sobre la pregunta: "¿va de acuerdo con los principios que los socialistas revolucionarios apoyen la demanda de que se haga cumplir por la fuerza la ley referente a la integración, en contra de los racistas, incluso si esto precisa la utilización de tropas federales?"¹

Representantes del Socialist Workers Party que estaban activos en el lugar de los hechos han contestado, "Sí." Los representantes de otras corrientes han dicho, "No." Otros han dado respuestas ambiguas o han evadido el problema.

El problema es más complicado de lo que pudiera parecer. Sin un enfoque trotskista, es muy difícil llegar a una posición correcta o cuando menos a una posición que sea consistente, como veremos.

Experiencia Contradictoria

Antes que nada, consideremos la *experiencia* de la clase obrera de los Estados Unidos. Esta se remonta por lo menos hasta 1877, cuando el Pre-

sidente Rutherford B. Hayes utilizó las tropas federales para romper una amplia huelga ferrocarrilera.

El Presidente Grover Cleveland utilizó las tropas federales en 1894 contra una huelga nacional ferrocarrilera y el boicot de la Pullman Palace Car Company, hecho que tuvo profundas consecuencias en el movimiento obrero norteamericano. La violencia extrema que se utilizó para romper la huelga, el baño de sangre y la cacería de brujas, dejaron una impresión imborrable en la clase obrera. La American Railway Union [Sindicato Ferrocarrilero de los Estados Unidos], que había tenido un ascenso meteórico bajo la dirección de Eugene V. Debs, fue completamente aplastado, y Debs tuvo que pasar seis meses en la cárcel del condado de McHenry.

Uno de los resultados de esta experiencia fue muy positivo. Debs se volvió socialista y se dió un gran impulso al surgimiento de un movimiento socialista de masas en los Estados Unidos.

Durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los trabajadores obtuvieron una experiencia mayor según estas mismas líneas cuando Franklin Delano Roosevelt trató de aplastar en 1943 la huelga de los mineros del carbón, ordenando que el gobierno tomara las minas. En una lucha dura y larga, en la que estaba en juego el destino del sindicato—y de todo el movimiento obrero norteamericano—el "Presidente y Comandante en Jefe del Ejército y la Marina" amenazó con utilizar las tropas.

La respuesta que dieron los mineros se convirtió en un proverbio de los obreros norteamericanos: "No se puede sacar carbón con bayonetas."

De nuevo, durante el gran ascenso de 1946, Truman maniobró con la estrategia de utilizar las tropas para frenar la ola de huelgas. Recibió el mismo tipo de respuesta que habían dado los obreros a Roosevelt.

La experiencia que han obtenido los trabajadores norteamericanos con respecto al uso—o la amenaza—de las tropas federales para romper huel-

gas, es una adquisición muy valiosa de la lucha de clases. Los socialistas revolucionarios tienen la obligación de conservar fresca y viva esta memoria. Representa nada menos que una visión correcta, aunque burda, de la naturaleza del estado capitalista y de los intereses que representa fundamentalmente.

Desafortunadamente para quienes no pueden ir más allá del ABC de la política, el problema no termina aquí. En este caso, como en muchos otros, la experiencia es contradictoria.

Después de la Guerra Civil, durante varios años se utilizaron tropas federales en el sur para salvaguardar los derechos civiles de los negros. Las tropas permanecieron allí, de hecho, hasta que el Presidente Hayes las retiró, como parte del "Acuerdo de 1877", la negociación secreta reaccionaria por medio de la cual los capitalistas nortños devolvieron el control sobre los estados del sur a los Bourbons. Se puede decir que la consigna de Hayes era: "Fuera del sur las tropas; utilicenlas contra los huelguistas del norte."

La experiencia favorable de la utilización de las tropas federales para garantizar los derechos civiles en el sur después de la Guerra Civil, constituye parte de la memoria histórica de los oprimidos en los Estados Unidos. Algunos acontecimientos importantes de la últimas décadas han refrescado esta memoria.

Uno fue la decisión de Eisenhower, en septiembre de 1957, de enviar tropas federales a Little Rock, Arkansas, para que defendieran a los estudiantes negros contra las turbas de linchamiento y la policía estatal ("Guardia Nacional"), que habían sido movilizadas por el gobernador reaccionario Orval Faubus. La utilización de tropas federales en Little Rock dió un gran impulso a la lucha de liberación negra.

Otro acontecimiento fue el despliegue de tropas federales ordenado por Johnson en Selma, Alabama, en mar-

1. Para mayor información ver "Boston: 'Little Rock de 1974'" y "¡Parar la Ofensiva Racista!", que aparecen en este mismo número. Ver también "Racists Terrorize Boston Black Community" en el número del 21 de octubre de *Intercontinental Press*, p. 1352.

zo de 1965, para proteger a los manifestantes por los derechos civiles contra el ataque de la policía del estado, la policía local y las turbas. La acción constituyó una dura derrota para los segregacionistas de todo el país.

En estos dos casos el gobierno federal pasó por encima del gobierno estatal. Faubus en Arkansas y Wallace en Alabama usaron las tropas locales y el Ku Klux Klan, así como a otros terroristas de derecha, para reprimir sangrientamente el movimiento por los derechos civiles. Eisenhower trató de convencer a Faubus de que cambiara su curso. Cuando fracasó, ordenó que intervinieran las tropas federales. El mismo modelo se repitió en relación a Johnson y Wallace. Las tropas estatales y los matones locales retrocedieron, tanto en Little Rock como en Selma, ante las tropas federales que llevaban las armas dispuestas.

La diferencia que existía entre las autoridades federales y las estatales era, desde luego, únicamente táctica. En bien de los intereses de la clase capitalista norteamericana en su conjunto, el gobierno federal—debido a la creciente presión del movimiento de liberación de los negros—había adoptado la política de deshacerse de los peores rasgos del sistema de Jim Crow. Faubus y Wallace representaban a los sectores oscurantistas que sólo cederían si se veían completamente obligados a ello. A pesar de que las diferencias tenían un carácter secundario eran, sin embargo, reales; y el resultado fueron las victorias de Little Rock y Selma.

Eran estos casos los que tenían en mente los negros de Boston cuando pidieron que la Casa Blanca enviara tropas federales. Querían que se hicieran cumplir las leyes sobre los derechos civiles, y comprendían muy bien que esto no lo iban a hacer los gobiernos de la ciudad o del estado, que en realidad estaban a favor de los racistas y los estaban animando a poner a los negros en "su lugar."

Como lo expresó el Reverendo Rafe Taylor manifestando los sentimientos de la comunidad negra: "Necesitamos cuando menos una división de tropas federales con tanques, con cañones antiaéreos, ametralladoras, granadas, bazucas y todo lo demás, para acabar con los apedreamientos y

la intimidación." 2

Esta lista del equipo que se necesita en Boston indica un estado de ánimo que vale la pena considerar. Es realmente una petición que responde a la situación real. El hecho de que haya sido planteada por alguien que difícilmente pueda ser considerado un revolucionario profesional, la hace todavía más significativa.

Evidentemente, en el centro de la petición de tropas federales se encuentra una comprensión correcta, aunque burda, de que los derechos civiles de las minorías oprimidas de los Estados Unidos no se pueden garantizar sin utilizar una fuerza a la escala de un ejército, o su equivalente. Más aún, está muy claro que la utilización de la fuerza al grado que se necesita para garantizar el cumplimiento de los derechos civiles, sería recibida con gran entusiasmo por la comunidad negra.

Los elementos del movimiento radical que no pueden ver las implicaciones de la exigencia de los negros de que se utilicen las tropas federales, no merecen ser llamados revolucionarios.

Llegamos así a una conclusión que puede parecer desconcertante. Se necesita algo más que experiencia para solucionar de manera definitiva el punto que está en discusión. Las tropas federales han sido utilizadas por el gobierno contra la clase obrera para romper huelgas. También han sido utilizadas para garantizar los derechos civiles de las minorías oprimidas, compuestas en su mayor parte por las capas pobres. Si bien no es difícil distinguir estos dos casos contrastantes, evidentemente tenemos que ir más al fondo para encontrar las bases correctas que permitan determinar una posición socialista revolucionaria sobre el problema.

Como parte del proceso, consideremos las posiciones adoptadas por algunos de los grupos que están activos en los sucesos de Boston.

Los Stalinistas Pro Pekín

La Revolutionary Union [Unión Revolucionaria], una de las corrientes maoístas de los Estados Unidos, resumió su posición de manera admirablemente sucinta en el titular del número de octubre de *Revolution* [Re-

volución]: "El Pueblo se Debe Unir Para Aplastar el Plan de Transporte Escolar de Boston."

Sucedía que ésta era también la consigna de las turbas de linchamiento. Esta coincidencia no pareció preocupar a estos seguidores del Pensamiento Mao Tsetung. Afirieron en un volante: "No podemos tachar sin más de racista a toda resistencia blanca contra el transporte escolar."

Los negros también, según *Revolution*, están en contra de que sus hijos sean transportados en autobuses a escuelas que están en otros barrios: "Los miembros de la RU en Boston afirman que muchos padres negros con los que han hablado están en contra del servicio de transporte escolar y consideran que es un verdadero engaño."

Según *Revolution*, "si no mejoran las escuelas; si no hay un mayor control de la comunidad sobre los fondos, los recursos y la contratación y despido del personal; si no hay más programas bilingües, etc., el plan de servicio de transporte escolar de Boston se reduce simplemente a que más niños blancos y negros estén juntas en las mismas pésimas escuelas, en vez de que estén en diferentes pésimas escuelas."

¿De dónde, entonces, surge la presión en favor del servicio de transporte escolar en Boston?

He aquí la respuesta que ofrece *Revolution*: "El plan de servicio de transporte escolar lanza a unos barrios contra otros, y a una nacionalidad contra otra, y no significa ninguna mejora real en las escuelas. . .

"Y la controversia sobre el servicio de transporte escolar es un ejemplo magnífico de un punto que enfatiza las contradicciones entre las diferentes nacionalidades, con el objetivo, por parte de la clase dominante, de hacer que los pueblos se peleen entre sí por migajas educativas."

En el pie de una fotografía que ilustra ese artículo y que se refiere a una lucha por servicio de transporte escolar en el occidente del país hace algunos años, *Revolution* declara: "La clase dominante ha utilizado repetidamente el problema del servicio de transporte escolar para crear desunión y desacuerdo entre los pueblos de las diferentes nacionalidades, que tienen que unirse para luchar por una educación mejor y contra la opresión y la discriminación nacional."

De esta manera, la Revolutionary

2. Citado en el número del 18 de octubre de *The Militant*.

Union mantiene una consigna sencilla: "Blancos y Negros Unidos en la Lucha." Todo socialista revolucionario—y muchos otros además—pueden estar de acuerdo con esto. Sin embargo, es evidente que hay algunas trampas para bobos que es necesario evitar al poner en práctica esta consigna. La "unidad" que proclama la Revolutionary Union exige que los negros cedan ante los prejuicios más nocivos de los obreros blancos atrasados.

En consecuencia, podemos entender por qué la Revolutionary Union ve con horror la demanda de la comunidad negra de que se utilicen las tropas federales: "La RU está totalmente en contra de la idea de que el gobierno de los EUA puede ser una fuerza que luche contra el fascismo, así como de la caracterización general de que quienes están en contra del servicio de transporte escolar en South Boston son 'pandilleros fascistas.'" 3

La posición de la Revolutionary Union era tan escandalosa, que obligó al *Guardian*—que representa en los Estados Unidos a otra corriente que se guía por el precepto "¡Que florezcan cien flores, que compitan cien escuelas de pensamiento!" Carl Davidson, en un artículo que escribió en el número del 30 de octubre de ese semanario neoyorkino, consideraba que hay elementos para "sospechar que quizás la RU haya caído finalmente en el pantano del chauvinismo blanco..."

El *Guardian* tiende a no comprometerse en lo que se refiere a los puntos más discutidos de la lucha.

"La comunidad negra de Boston tiene diferentes puntos de vista sobre el servicio de transporte escolar", afirmó Davidson. "Algunos lo apoyan, ya sea desde una posición integracionista o como medio de tener acceso a mejores escuelas. Otros se oponen a él y enfatizan la importancia del control comunal y de mejorar las escuelas negras."

3. Para mayores datos sobre la posición de la Revolutionary Union ver "Maoists on wrong side of barricades in Boston", escrito por Jon Hillson y publicado en el número del 25 de octubre de *The Militant*; y "Maoists join segregationists in Boston", escrito por Dave Frankel y publicado en el número del 8 de noviembre de *The Militant*.

La posición del *Guardian* sobre la exigencia de tropas federales sigue el mismo modelo. En un reportaje especial desde Boston que apareció en el número del 16 de octubre, se puede leer: "La comunidad negra ha exigido que la ciudad frene los ataques contra ellos y sus hijos. Han surgido dos puntos de vista sobre cómo debe hacerse esto. Uno, encabezado por el NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—Asociación Nacional para el Progreso de la Gente de Color], es el de llamar a las tropas federales y a la Guardia Nacional para que acaben con la resistencia racista. El otro, adoptado por grupos comunales y organizaciones de izquierda locales, es la autodefensa. Hay muchos que están a favor de los dos medios."

Los editores del *Guardian* debieron ser premiados con una copia autografiada del Libro Rojo. Como era de esperarse de estos buenos servidores del pueblo en el estilo maoísta, se han ungido de sabiduría y ahora pueden decir en situaciones como la de Boston: "En gustos, se cortan géneros."

'Workers World'

Es conveniente señalar de paso la posición que ha adoptado otro grupo que ha sido infectado por el maoísmo. El número de 18 de octubre de *Workers World* [Mundo Obrero] se lanza contra la Revolutionary Union:

"La Revolutionary Union (RU), una organización supuestamente 'maoísta', ha adoptado una línea profundamente equivocada sobre la situación de Boston. Su periódico, que se llama 'Revolution' declara en su titular de octubre de 1974: 'El Pueblo se Debe Unir Para Aplastar el Plan de Transporte Escolar de Boston.'"

"¿Es tan ciega la RU que no puede ver que las movilizaciones racistas de Boston están siendo organizadas en torno a esa misma consigna?"

"Los errores actuales de la RU sobre este punto no surgen meramente de una deficiencia teórica, sino del más vil oportunismo. Están capitulando al racismo blanco." (Subrayados en el original).

El *Workers World* critica más duramente a la Revolutionary Union que el *Guardian*. En otros aspectos, sin embargo, *Workers World* se queda atrás del *Guardian* en lo que se refiere a informar sobre los sucesos de Boston. Si se depende del *Workers*

World para estar informado sobre los puntos que están a discusión, nunca se sabría que la comunidad negra exigió que se usen tropas federales en Boston.

Esto resulta tanto más extraño porque *Workers World* parece no tener ninguna inhibición ni restricción para plantear exigencias al gobierno federal. El titular principal del número de noviembre 1, por ejemplo, dice: "El Gobierno puede Frenar los Despidos—¡Exijamos que Ford Actúe Ya!" El titular de otro artículo de ese mismo número dice: "¡Exijamos que Ford Haga Cumplir la Ley de Trabajo Para Todos!"

Se podría decir que estos titulares traicionan a la clase obrera porque crean ilusiones en la posibilidad de resolver el problema del desempleo sin derrocar el capitalismo y establecer el socialismo. No voy a plantear esa discusión, ya que es evidente que los editores de *Workers World* no intentan traicionar a la clase obrera. Sin embargo, parece oportuno preguntarles: "Si es correcto exigir que Ford haga cumplir la ley que garantiza trabajo para todos, ¿por qué no es correcto exigirle que cumpla la ley que garantiza los derechos civiles? ¿Por qué se quedan callados sobre este punto?"

Los Stalinistas Pro Moscú

El Partido Comunista de los EUA trató de subestimar los acontecimientos de Boston sin ignorarlos. Había asuntos delicados que considerar: la distensión, la "coexistencia pacífica" con el imperialismo norteamericano, los planes de una reunión cumbre entre Ford y Brezhnev. Además de todo esto, los choques en Boston ocurrieron justo antes de las elecciones, en las que el PC tomó la línea de servir de alcahuete de los demócratas. Estas cosas requieren un contorno sin exabruptos y que no se sacuda el bote.

En Boston, hay que añadir, el PC apoyó a los demócratas liberales que cedieron ante los racistas blancos y no querían presionar por que se cumpliera el plan de servicio de transporte escolar.

Esto explica por qué el *Daily World* [Mundo Diario, periódico del PCEUA] no cubrió dramáticamente los sucesos de Boston, por qué no lanzó una campaña para que se tomaran energéticas medidas contra las turbas racistas, y por qué no ofreció más que

un apoyo simbólico a la demanda de la comunidad negra de que intervengan las tropas federales.

En un editorial del número del 9 de octubre, el *Daily World* llamó al pueblo "de todo el país" a exigir "que se cumpla el plan de integración, y que el Alcalde Kevin H. White y el gobierno federal tomen medidas para proteger a los estudiantes negros y blancos que participan en esta medida democrática."

El plan de acción para el pueblo de todo el país fue planteado con una brevedad extraordinaria:

"Pueden empezar a enviar telegramas al Alcalde White, Alcaldía, Boston, y al Procurador General William Saxbe, en el Departamento de Justicia de Washington."

Evidentemente, los editores del *Daily World* viven todavía en los treinta, cuando el precio de un telegrama era razonable y el PC llamaba rutinariamente a bañar con ellos a los funcionarios gubernamentales. Actualmente, enviar un telegrama cuesta entre \$5 y \$10, y no hay ninguna garantía de que llegue a su destino.

Cuando el Presidente Ford anunció el 9 de octubre en una conferencia de prensa que no tenía la intención de hacer absolutamente nada en cuanto a la situación de Boston, y que él se "había opuesto consistentemente al servicio de transporte escolar como medio de lograr el equilibrio racial", el PC quedó al descubierto. Gus Hall y Henry Winston (el presidente nacional) hicieron una declaración en la que denunciaban a Ford. He aquí los últimos párrafos:

"El gobierno federal debe actuar: enviando tropas federales para acabar con el terror racista. El gobierno federal debe cortar todos los fondos federales a Boston y a cualquier otra comunidad que permita que los racistas determinen su política.

"¡La Democracia debe prevalecer en Boston!"

Como se puede ver, la delicada palabra "tropas" fue pronunciada finalmente por la dirección del PC.

Esto no parece, sin embargo, haber dado mucho impulso a la campaña de telegramas, a juzgar por la cantidad y calidad de los que han sido reportados en el *Daily World*. El número del 15 de octubre informa de una marcha de protesta de más de 1,000 negros en Boston. El reportaje apareció en la página 1, y continuaba en la página 11. En los

últimos párrafos, se menciona que un "telegrama dirigido al Presidente Ford pidiendo protección federal contra la violencia racista en Boston fue circulado entre los manifestantes y muchos lo firmaron."

El texto de este único telegrama, que fue presentado por Laura Ross, candidato del PC para el Congreso, dice lo siguiente:

"En Boston no tienen cabida los fascistas y racistas.

"Presidente Gerald Ford, exigimos que el gobierno dé igual protección según la ley para la seguridad de los ciudadanos negros y los blancos que los apoyan, que están siendo atacados en las calles de Boston.

"El gobierno de los Estados Unidos, que gasta \$100 mil millones al año en equipo militar que usa contra pueblos que están fuera de nuestras fronteras, tiene que poder encontrar los medios para proteger a nuestro pueblo aquí en este país."

No se menciona a las tropas ni a los alguaciles. Se deja a la imaginación de Ford la tarea de encontrar los "medios" para dar "igual protección."

La organización juvenil del PC, la Young Workers Liberation League [YWLL—Liga de Liberación de los Jóvenes Obreros] se ha visto obligada a hablar en un tono más combativo. El Comité de la Sección de Massachusetts-Rhode Island presentó un informe que fue citado en el número del 19 de octubre de *Daily World*: "Se necesitan tropas federales en Boston ya, decía el informe. Se necesita reunir tropas y que hagan muy visible su presencia en las calles de la ciudad, para hacer cumplir los estatutos federales contra la discriminación en las escuelas y para que los elementos racistas de Boston se graben muy bien el hecho de que se hizo cumplir la ley."

La posición de la YWLL se debe evidentemente a las necesidades de reclutamiento entre la juventud radicalizada y a la dura competencia que representan otros grupos, especialmente la Young Socialist Alliance [YSA—Alianza de Jóvenes Socialistas].

Los 'Capitalistas de Estado'

Los International Socialists [IS—Socialistas Internacionales], cuyo dogma es que en la Unión Soviética ha surgido "una nueva forma de socie-

dad de clases", a la que llaman "capitalismo de estado" o "colectivismo burocrático", han dado muy poca importancia a los acontecimientos de Boston. En el número de septiembre 17-30 de su periódico bimensual "*Workers' Power* [Poder Obrero], denunciaron los ataques contra los negros. "La protección policiaca", señalaban, "fue brutalmente poca."

"No parece muy posible", añadian, "que el gas lacrimógeno, los bastones, la picana eléctrica y los otros medios de fuerza que tan frecuentemente se utilizan contra los negros se utilizarán para acabar con estas turbas de cobardes." (Subrayado en el original).

Atacaron el servicio de transporte escolar:

"Los mismos negros no están muy entusiasmados con el programa de servicio de transporte escolar. Muchos tienen miedo de enviar a sus hijos a un medio ambiente tan hostil.

"Se ha obligado a las comunidades a tragarse el programa.

"La estructura política liberal de la ciudad, que apoya el servicio de transporte escolar como medio para lograr una educación 'igual', ha obligado a las comunidades a tragarse el programa.

"El resultado de estas diferentes fuerzas en conflicto es un terrible ataque contra los negros, especialmente contra niños que no pueden defenderse." (Subrayado en el original).

En vista de la falta de protección policiaca, que parece ser lo que pide *Workers' Power* en este artículo, se podría pensar que los International Socialists apoyarían el llamado de que intervengan las tropas federales.

Es cierto que en el artículo aparece una frase: "Los negros deben defender ellos mismos los autobuses." Pero esto no sería lógicamente contradictorio con la exigencia de que intervengan tropas federales, especialmente si se considera la tajante declaración final:

"Este ataque racista debe ser enfrentado directamente por una fuerza organizada, y derrotado definitivamente."

Un editorial del número de octubre 17-30, titulado "¡Alto a las Turbas de Linchamiento!", elimina cualquier ambigüedad que pudiera haber respecto a la posición de los capitalistas de estado. Vale la pena citar los párrafos centrales íntegramente:

"Los trabajadores negros y blancos necesitan unirse para obligar a los

ricos que controlan las instituciones políticas, a dar una buena educación y un nivel de vida decente para todos. Pero ahora los negros no pueden esperar que los blancos se unan a la lucha. Sus niños están siendo echados de la escuela por medio del terror.

"Los dirigentes de la comunidad negra han exigido que el estado los proteja, enviando más policías o tropas federales. Si bien es comprensible esta exigencia, también es peligrosa. En parte, refleja la debilidad de la comunidad negra en esta situación. La historia del movimiento por los derechos civiles en este país demuestra que la fuerza policiaca en esta sociedad sirve para preservar el sistema, para mantener a los negros en 'su lugar', no para protegerlos de los abusos racistas.

"No se debe permitir que entren a la comunidad negra las tropas federales ni la policía. No se puede permitir que las tropas impidan que la comunidad negra se organice para autodefenderse.

"Pandillas de blancos golpean a los negros en la calle. Ha habido poca organización en la comunidad negra, y es urgente organizar la autodefensa. La comunidad negra sólo logrará verdaderos triunfos si se basa en su propia fuerza."

Estamos totalmente de acuerdo en que "es urgente organizar la autodefensa" en la comunidad negra de Boston. En el proceso de organizar esta autodefensa a la escala que se necesita, ¿qué hay de malo en exigir que se utilicen las tropas federales? ¿Por qué se queda callado *Workers' Power* sobre los casos de Little Rock y Selma, que han sido considerados como victorias que impulsaron el movimiento negro nacionalmente? ¿Son incapaces los editores de *Workers World* de reconocer una victoria de la clase obrera cuando la tienen ante sus ojos?

Revisemos de nuevo la extraña frase que aparece al principio de la cita: "Los trabajadores negros y blancos necesitan unirse para obligar a los ricos que controlan las instituciones políticas, a dar una buena educación y un nivel de vida decente para todos."

¿Propone *Workers' Power* que se obligue a los ricos a utilizar su gobierno para garantizar el socialismo "para todos", incluidos los ricos? ¿O está proponiendo *Workers' Power* que sencillamente se pida al gobierno controlado por los ricos que dé una bue-

na educación y nivel de vida decente para la clase obrera y las minorías oprimidas? Pero si va de acuerdo con los principios exigir que un gobierno capitalista dé una educación adecuada y un nivel de vida decente para la clase obrera y las minorías oprimidas, ¿por qué no es igualmente principista exigir que haga cumplir los derechos civiles, incluso si esto implica la utilización de tropas federales contra las turbas racistas?

Finalmente, hay que destacar el paralelo que existe entre la inconsistencia del colectivista-burocrático *Workers' Power* y la inconsistencia del maoísta *Workers World*. Los dos piden al gobierno capitalista que acabe con el desempleo, pero son incapaces de pedirle que utilice las tropas federales para preservar los derechos civiles de los negros.

'The Torch'

Algunos otros que sostienen la posición del "capitalismo de estado", pueden no estar de acuerdo con la actitud de los International Socialists. Consideremos los argumentos de una variante más pura, la Revolutionary Socialist League [RSL—Liga Socialista Revolucionaria]. Un editorial titulado: "BOSTON: DEFENDER A LOS ESTUDIANTES NEGROS", que apareció en el número de noviembre de su periódico mensual *The Torch* [La Antorcha], ofrece material suficiente.

Según los editores, el servicio de transporte escolar es un "engaño total." Todo lo que propone es "distribuir a los estudiantes blancos y negros un poco más equitativamente en las pésimas escuelas. El pequeño e ilusorio triunfo de los negros se logra a expensas de los blancos; que son transportados a las escuelas de las que se está sacando a los negros."

El plan de transporte escolar refleja la moral burguesa: "Para los moralistas liberales y para sus secuaces 'socialistas', es apenas 'justo' que los blancos padezcan condiciones cada vez peores para dar margen a algunas reformas simbólicas para los negros." El que los socialistas revolucionarios apoyaran esta concepción, sería un "crimen terrible, aceptar de hecho las limitaciones del capitalismo, capitular ante su estrategia divisionista."

¿Y quién capitula ante esta estrategia divisionista y liberal-burguesa? Los editores de *The Torch* tienen una

lista a mano:

"Desafortunadamente, es precisamente esta traición al socialismo la que han hecho los grupos 'socialistas' que apoyan el programa de transporte escolar: el Socialist Workers Party, la Workers League, la Spartacist League, los International Socialists, etc."

En cuanto a los editores de *The Torch*, están totalmente por el derecho de los negros "a que asistan actualmente a las escuelas en South Boston y donde sea." Están igualmente por "el derecho de los blancos a asistir a las escuelas que escojan—y a no ser obligados a tener que ir a peores escuelas a cambio de un avance simbólico para los negros..." (Subrayado en el original).

En forma igualmente total, los editores de *The Torch* se niegan a dar cualquier tipo de apoyo al programa de transporte escolar. Y, desde luego, están totalmente en contra de las "exigencias" de que se den privilegios a los blancos "para excluir de manera racista a los negros."

¿El problema de las tropas federales? Se lo aborda dentro del siguiente contexto:

"Apoyamos el derecho de los negros a asistir a cualquier escuela. Apoyamos esto a través del programa de una educación mejor y más amplia para todos, a costa de los capitalistas. Para que estas reivindicaciones tengan significado, deben ir acompañadas con el programa de trabajo para todos a través de la escala móvil de salarios y horas de trabajo, y la reconstrucción de las ciudades a costa de los capitalistas, que son las demandas centrales del Programa de Transición. Defendemos a los negros y apoyamos sus demandas en la situación específica de este momento, al mismo tiempo que planteamos este programa para obtener estos derechos con medios revolucionarios.

"Finalmente, llamamos a la formación de *guardias obreras de defensa* para que protejan los derechos de los negros y de la comunidad negra contra la violencia racista. Llamamos a los trabajadores negros a formar organizaciones de defensa armadas y a que exijan que los sindicatos organicen oficialmente guardias obreras de defensa. Esto es lo que contraponemos al despreciable llamado del Socialist Workers Party para que intervengan las tropas.

"Incluso hoy la policía burguesa simpatiza abiertamente con los blan-

cos, e interviene sólo en el último momento para salvar a la víctima negra de las turbas blancas. Mañana volverán sus cachiporras y fusiles *abiertamente* contra las masas negras una vez más, y contra toda la clase obrera, blanca, y negra.

"Los socialistas deben llamar a la clase trabajadora y a los esclavos oprimidos del capitalismo norteamericano a que se autodefendan utilizando su propio poder de clase, no la policía y el ejército burgueses. Los socialistas deben llamarlos a autodefenderse por medio de su propio programa de clase, no por medio del programa burgués. Cualquier otra cosa es una traición al socialismo, a la clase obrera y a todos los oprimidos." (Subrayados en el original).

De todas las proposiciones aquí expresadas, la única que parece tener alguna relevancia inmediata para la situación que se vive en Boston en estos momentos, es el llamado a que los obreros negros formen "organizaciones de defensa armadas." Pero ¿cómo se *contrapone* esto a la exigencia de que la Casa Blanca haga cumplir los derechos civiles, utilizando las tropas federales para abatir a las turbas racistas? ¿No es posible que la demanda de acción federal *facilite* la formación de organizaciones de auto-defensa?

Esta posibilidad, desde luego, no existe para la Revolutionary Socialist League. Según ellos, el estado capitalista es un cadáver putrefacto y no quieren mancharse teniendo que torcerle el brazo. Además, es peligroso: el brazo puede acabar torciéndolo a uno.

La pureza de la Revolutionary Socialist League es tanta, que aunque exige una "educación mejor y más amplia para todos" y, junto con esto, "trabajo para todos", y la "reconstrucción de las ciudades a expensa de los capitalistas", no plantearían estas demandas, parece, a un gobierno capitalista. Ellos las van a exigir, "a expensas de los capitalistas", sólo a un gobierno socialista después del derrocamiento del capitalismo.

La Spartacist League

La Spartacist League [Liga Espar-taco], encabezada por su Presidente Nacional James Robertson, un talentoso archivista, ha tratado de hacer un balance de los desarrollos que han ocurrido en Boston, en las páginas de su periódico bimensual *Workers*

Vanguard [Vanguardia Obrera].

Workers Vanguard ha defendido el programa de transporte escolar en contra de los maoístas y de los capitalistas de estado, enfatizando al mismo tiempo que no tiene nada que ver con la solución que ofrecen los socialistas a los problemas del racismo y de la educación. El número del 27 de septiembre, por ejemplo, dice:

"Varias organizaciones ostensiblemente socialistas han dado alas al sentimiento racista de los obreros blancos oponiéndose a que los estudiantes negros sean transportados a los distritos blancos. A diferencia de estos serviles cobardes, la Spartacist League llama inequívocamente a aplastar la campaña racista contra el transporte escolar. Apoyamos totalmente la integración racial en las escuelas y en todas las demás áreas de la vida social. Apoyamos el transporte escolar. Este es, desde luego, completamente inadecuado en términos de una verdadera educación y de dar una buena educación a la minorías raciales oprimidas. Sin embargo, el transporte escolar como medio para lograr el equilibrio racial es una demanda democrática elemental, aunque algo artificial."

La Spartacist League toma una posición muy loable sobre el problema de la defensa contra los racistas:

"En lugar de depender de la protección del gobierno local o federal, los negros y todo el pueblo trabajador deben basarse en sus propias organizaciones para defenderse", declara el número del 11 de octubre de *Workers Vanguard*. "La Spartacist League plantea la formación de fuerzas de defensa birraciales, organizadas por los grupos negros y comunales y por los sindicatos, para proteger los autobuses y mantener el orden en las escuelas."

Sin embargo, después de este brillante avance, la Spartacist League cae en su sectarismo consuetudinario. Está totalmente en contra de exigir que intervengan las tropas federales contra los racistas blancos. El número del 8 de noviembre de *Workers Vanguard* contiene un largo artículo denunciando la posición adoptada por el Socialist Workers Party sobre este problema. La esencia del artículo está contenida en el siguiente párrafo:

"El SWP cree que el gobierno de los EUA no quiere enviar tropas a Boston para hacer cumplir las leyes de integración, de tal manera que exi-

gir que las mande 'expondrá' la verdadera naturaleza del gobierno. Es muy cierto que la burguesía no hará cumplir las leyes de integración, como señalamos antes. Pero muy bien puede enviar tropas; para *evitar* que los negros se organicen para defenderse. Llamando a que intervengan las tropas, el SWP no *expone* el carácter de clase del gobierno y sus pistoleros a sueldo, sino que ayuda a *encubrir* el hecho de que éstos son los enemigos de los explotados y oprimidos." (Subrayado en el original).

Si lo anterior es cierto, ¿no se desprende de ello que el transporte escolar tiene el objeto de *impedir* que surja una mejor solución y que, al apoyarlo, la Spartacist League no *expone* el carácter de clase del transporte escolar, y ayuda a *encubrir* el hecho de que no se trata más que de un soborno de la burguesía?

Si la Spartacist League contesta: "¡Tonterías!" entonces, ¿qué tiene de malo exigir que se garantice este soborno de la burguesía a través del soborno burgués de que el gobierno federal lo haga cumplir?

La inconsistencia de la posición de la Spartacist League se demuestra en otros puntos que son abordados en el mismo número de *Workers Vanguard*. Cuando llaman a lanzar una batalla contra el desempleo, los editores exigen la "*nacionalización sin compensación de la industria automotriz*." Pareciera que esa consigna va dirigida a Gerald Ford y no al nieto de Henry Ford.

Robertson puede argüir que la inclusión de esta demanda no fue más que un torpe error editorial y que de ahora en adelante vigilará que *Workers Vanguard* se apegue más a las normas sectarias. Está bien; pero ¿qué hay con el temerario titular que aparece en la página 11 (al que aplaudimos de todo corazón): "¡Fin al Bloqueo Económico de los EUA Contra Cuba!"

Nos gustaría saber mejor para cuándo plantean esto. ¿Esta demanda va dirigida al gobierno de Ford que está en funciones actualmente en Washington, D. C.? ¿O es simplemente lo que la Spartacist League se propone plantear al futuro gobierno socialista de los Estados Unidos?

Si el objetivo es ayudar a exponer al gobierno de Ford o ayudar a obligarlo a dar una concesión al nivel de la política exterior, ¿por qué no es válido proceder de la misma manera en la política interna, concreta-

mente en el campo de los derechos civiles en Boston en estos momentos?

La Workers League

Veamos ahora qué dice el principal rival de la Spartacist League en el campo del sectarismo ultraizquierdista en los Estados Unidos, la Workers League [Liga Obrera], dirigida por Fred Mazelis, su Secretario Nacional.⁴

La Workers League tiene una visión apocalíptica de los sucesos de Boston. Tal y como describen en su *Bulletin* [Boletín] bisemanal, el sistema capitalista se está derrumbando económicamente a escala mundial. De allí se desprende que la clase capitalista de los Estados Unidos ya no puede dar ninguna concesión a los trabajadores. De hecho, los capitalistas se preparan para instaurar una dictadura militar.

Por lo tanto, en Boston "El gobierno no está creando conscientemente las condiciones para que se den choques inter-raciales, en un intento desesperado por dividir a la clase obrera..." El objetivo del gobierno es "pavimentar el camino para que las tropas federales o la Guardia Nacional ocupen toda la ciudad." (*Bulletin*, 11 de octubre).

"El gobierno y el ejército están utilizando a Boston como campo de experimentación para el uso de las tropas y de la dictadura militar contra

toda la clase obrera." (*Bulletin*, 18 de octubre).

De allí se desprende que todo aquél que pida que intervengan las tropas federales, está actuando prácticamente como agente del gobierno de Ford, y es así como el *Bulletin* considera al Socialist Workers Party.

"El SWP no sólo parte de las divisiones raciales que hay entre la clase obrera, sino que trata de mantenerlas y lo hace de tal manera que ésta quede paralizada ante los planes de los capitalistas de propiciar el desempleo masivo y la inflación..."

"Con su llamado a que intervengan tropas federales, el SWP se aleja del tremendo movimiento y fuerza de la clase obrera, y se apoya en la fuerza de la clase dominante. Es incapaz de luchar en los sindicatos y entre la juventud por una política que defiende a la clase obrera." (*Bulletin*, 15 de octubre).

El *Bulletin* presenta varios argumentos insólitos para sostener esta afirmación. Uno es el caso de Irlanda del Norte:

"La historia reciente de la utilización de tropas en Irlanda del Norte hace totalmente claro qué es lo que pide el SWP: aplastar al movimiento obrero bajo el peso de tropas que están dispuestas a recurrir a cualquier tipo de represión que se necesite para que sobreviva el sistema capitalista."

La distorsión, que es muy característica de la escuela de Healy, es deliberada. Los editores del *Bulletin* saben muy bien que el Socialist Workers Party está totalmente en contra del despliegue de tropas británicas en Irlanda del Norte y que ha respaldado al movimiento que pide que se retiren inmediatamente.

Sobre este punto, hubiera sido una analogía mucho mejor la posición que tomó el SWP en relación con la utilización de las tropas norteamericanas en Vietnam. En otras palabras, ¿por qué apoya el SWP la exigencia de que se envíen tropas federales a Boston contra las turbas racistas, cuando en el caso de los luchadores por la liberación de Vietnam planteó desde el principio la consigna "Retiro Inmediato de las Tropas Norteamericanas", y logró que se convirtiera en la principal consigna del movimiento contra la guerra en los Estados Unidos?

Probablemente los editores del *Bulletin* prefirieron no usar esta analogía debido a que ellos tienen un consistente récord de haber gritado "¡Trai-

ción!" durante toda la lucha.

Pero trátase de Irlanda o de Vietnam, ¿qué se puede concluir de su señalamiento? Solamente que en general los gobiernos imperialistas recurren a las tropas para cumplir sus objetivos imperialistas, y que es necesario oponérseles en este punto.

¿Qué tienen que decir de los raros casos en que se recurre a las tropas contra los racistas, como una concesión a un poderoso movimiento por los derechos civiles?

Los casuistas de *Bulletin* habían anticipado la pregunta: llamar a que intervinieran las tropas federales en Little Rock estuvo "totalmente equivocado" entonces; y hacer un llamado similar ahora, es extremadamente peligroso. Se extienden sobre este tema en el número del 25 de octubre de *Bulletin*:

"Cuando tuvo lugar la lucha de Little Rock, la economía norteamericana estaba todavía en un período de relativa prosperidad, y en los primeros años de la década del sesenta el auge de posguerra apenas comenzaba a derrumbarse..."

"Si el gobierno hizo alguna concesión entonces, esto sólo fue posible porque todavía no había estallado la crisis económica."

"En 1965, nuestro movimiento dijo que la única manera en que la clase obrera negra podría combatir el terror policiaco organizado, era *armándose*, no haciendo peticiones al gobierno."

"Pero por muy equivocado que fuera entonces llamar a que intervinieran las tropas, actualmente es un millón de veces más peligroso, porque estamos en el momento del colapso internacional del sistema capitalista."

Son sorprendentes las falacias que hay en este argumento. Si un gobierno capitalista "puede" hacer concesiones, ¿hay que rechazarlas o aceptarlas? ¿Hay que plantear exigencias, aunque el gobierno capitalista "no pueda" cumplirlas? Si una demanda es "peligrosa"—pesadilla que frecuentemente tienen los sectarios—¿es ésa una razón para no plantearla?

Lo más sorprendente es la ceguera política de la Workers League. Nunca se les ha ocurrido a estos "trotskistas" autoproclamados que los gobernantes norteamericanos puedan hacer concesiones en lo que se refiere a la utilización de la fuerza militar. Wall Street puede hacer concesiones no sólo en cuanto a retirar tropas, como

4. Hasta hace poco tiempo, la Workers League estaba dirigida por Tim Wohlforth, que en el pasado competía con James Robertson por el cariño de Gerry Healy, de la Socialist Labour League [Liga Obrera Socialista] de Gran Bretaña (esta organización se llama ahora Workers Revolutionary Party —Partido Obrero Revolucionario). Según un informe aparecido recientemente en *Workers Vanguard* [Vanguardia Obrera], que parece estar muy contento de que así haya sucedido, Healy depuso a Wohlforth. Healy no ha confirmado el informe, pero éste parece tener algo de cierto, ya que el nombre de Wohlforth ha desaparecido de las páginas de *Bulletin*. Wohlforth no fue mencionado una sola vez en un artículo de conmemoración del décimo aniversario del periódico que él fundó. Sin embargo, puede ser que Healy sólo haya reducido temporalmente a Wohlforth al estado de una "no-persona."

en el caso de Vietnam, sino también para proteger a los escolares negros o para contener a las turbas racistas, como en el caso de Little Rock y Selma.

Los sectarios de la Workers League no pueden admitir esta posibilidad, porque no son capaces de utilizar el método dialéctico. En su esquemático pensamiento, las tropas federales entran en la categoría de "violencia armada contra la clase obrera", y excluyen cualquier otra posibilidad.

Si los hechos demuestran que la realidad es más rica que su concepción, peor para los hechos y la realidad. Durante varios años han ridiculizado la observación de Lenin, por considerarla muestra de empirismo o pragmatismo, de que: "Los hechos son tercos, como dice el proverbio inglés, y tienen que ser tomados en cuenta, aunque no nos guste."

El Porqué de Little Rock y Selma

¿Es tan difícil ver que el gobierno hizo concesiones en los casos de Little Rock y Selma, y que estas concesiones fueron hechas debido a la realidad de la lucha de clases en los Estados Unidos?

Lo que motivó a Eisenhower y después a Johnson, fue el temor a las consecuencias que tendría la lucha extraparlamentaria de las masas impulsada por millones de negros descontentos y sus aliados, sobre el movimiento obrero y la juventud radicalizada.

La Casa Blanca trató de enfrentar esta lucha dando algunas concesiones modestas, como parte de un calculado intento de hacer que los dirigentes negros regresaran a los partidos Demócrata y Republicano y de desviar el movimiento por los derechos civiles hacia canales electorales. Los estrategas de la Casa Blanca también tenían el objetivo de crear ilusiones en el gobierno federal, para ayudar a desarmar y desmovilizar el movimiento de masas, evitando que tomara un curso independiente, que avanzaría inevitablemente en dirección del socialismo revolucionario.

Hay que destacar el hecho de que las concesiones fueron ganadas realmente por la comunidad negra, como resultado de una lucha de masas; pero también es necesario mencionar el hecho de que la estrategia de la Casa Blanca tuvo un éxito considerable. Una de sus consecuencias fue la actual debilidad de la comunidad negra de

Boston. Este fue un factor importante en la decisión de Ford de no enviar tropas federales a esa ciudad.

La Última Burbuja

La visión apocalíptica de que las tropas van a tomar Boston como prueba para establecer una dictadura militar en todos los Estados Unidos, estalló como una burbuja cuando Ford dijo, "No" a la petición de que el gobierno federal hiciera cumplir las leyes sobre los derechos civiles. Los editores del *Bulletin* no perdieron el equilibrio. Sencillamente tomaron la pipa y soplaron una contraburbuja:

"Si Ford no ha enviado hasta ahora tropas a Boston, esto se debe a que sabe que tal acción encontraría una poderosa resistencia de la clase obrera." (*Bulletin*, 29 de octubre).

¿No pudieron prever y predecir esto los sabihondos de la Workers League? Se necesita una mayor explicación. ¿Qué sector específico de la clase obrera presentaría la "poderosa resistencia"? ¿Los racistas blancos? No es muy probable. En los casos anteriores en que las tropas fueron utilizadas para defender a escolares negros, los racistas retrocedieron ante la fuerza superior.

Desde luego, la tesis de la Workers League es (o más bien, era) que las tropas serían utilizadas tanto contra los negros como contra los blancos, en un complot del Pentágono para tomar el poder. Contra esto, según la tesis, habría una "poderosa resistencia", porque "ahora la crisis económica está obligando a masas de obreros a lanzarse a la lucha para defender su nivel de vida y sus empleos." (El punto del servicio de transporte escolar era, por lo tanto, sólo una parte de la conspiración del gobierno).

Una explicación más realista de por qué Ford se negó a enviar tropas, es la que dice que estaba siguiendo la "estrategia sureña" de Nixon de tratar de ganar los votos de los racistas. Naturalmente, se ganó el aplauso de los racistas de Boston con mantener las tropas fuera. La Workers League está demasiado enredada en las fantasías healyistas para pensar en eso.

¡Láncenles una Petición!

Si fuera cierto que Ford y el Estado Mayor Conjunto han organiza-

do un complot para utilizar a Boston como campo de pruebas para el despliegue de tropas, con el objetivo de establecer una dictadura militar en los Estados Unidos, se podría esperar que los que plantean esta tesis propusieran un programa de acción muy concreto para hacer frente a la emergencia. Sin embargo, los profetas de la Workers League se limitaron a hacer pequeñas revisiones de lo que propusieron las sectas con menos visión:

"El problema no es únicamente el servicio de transporte escolar, o las divisiones raciales entre la clase obrera, sino la lucha por unificar a todos los obreros en un combate común por escuelas decentes, por que se sustituyan las casas deterioradas o inadecuadas, por que se creen decenas de miles de oportunidades de empleo; en la lucha contra los despidos y contra el aumento de los precios. Esto significa luchar por la nacionalización de la industria; por una semana de trabajo más corta; por que se dediquen miles de millones de dólares para la educación, la atención médica y la construcción de casas. Esto significa la lucha en los sindicatos por la construcción de un partido laborista que unifique a todas las secciones de la clase obrera." (*Bulletin*, 15 de octubre).

¿Hay alguna ciudad de los Estados Unidos a la que no se aplique esto, hoy en día, en el pasado y en el futuro? ¿Y hay algo en este excelente programa que impida plantear demandas importantes al gobierno capitalista, como parte del proceso de movilizar a los obreros para que establezcan su propio gobierno?

En el párrafo siguiente, el último de esta exposición de la posición de la Workers League, el *Bulletin* trata casos concretos:

"Mientras que los revisionistas piden que el ejército intervenga en Boston, la Workers League lucha por un programa de acción para que los sindicatos defiendan a todos los jóvenes [la mayoría de los cuales son blancos, en los Estados Unidos—J.H.]. Se ha iniciado una campaña de peticiones para llamar a los sindicatos a defender el derecho de todos los jóvenes a tener una educación decente: a proteger a la juventud negra de los ataques racistas [irrealmente se les da un lugar de honor!—J.H.]; a exigir que la policía abandone las escuelas; y a luchar por movilizar políticamente a todos los obreros contra las infames condiciones que existen en Boston

por medio de la construcción de un partido laborista."

¡Se hace circular en Boston una petición que no menciona el problema del servicio de transporte escolar! ¡Nada menos! Esta acción concuerda perfectamente con los principios de la Workers League.

El Socialist Workers Party

El curso que ha seguido el Socialist Workers Party en Boston está bien documentado en *The Militant*, que es el periodico radical que ha cubierto mejor la lucha de la comunidad negra contra las pandillas racistas y quienes las apoyan políticamente. Dos ejemplos típicos del tipo de material que ha publicado *The Militant* aparecen en este mismo número de *Intercontinental Press*. También recomendamos la magnífica presentación de Peter Camejo: "Busing: What Are the Issues? The Racist Offensive in Boston", que apareció en el número de diciembre de *International Socialist Review*.

Debido a la cantidad de material de lectura disponible, me limitaré aquí a hacer algunas observaciones destinadas a demostrar el contraste que hay entre la política del Socialist Workers Party y la de los diversos grupos que analicé anteriormente.

A diferencia de los maoístas de todos tintes, el SWP no tuvo ninguna dificultad para distinguir entre los obreros blancos racistas y los negros que estaban siendo victimizados, y en tomar el lado de los negros. El SWP se guiaba por las enseñanzas de Lenin y Trotsky, particularmente sobre el problema nacional.

La larga experiencia del partido en la lucha de clases de los Estados Unidos fue también útil. Los obreros blancos participan en la lucha de clases a pesar de sus prejuicios. Resulta fatal, sin embargo, ceder aunque sea mínimamente ante las actitudes venenosas que minan la unidad, debilitan a las fuerzas obreras y abren el camino para derrotas terribles en manos de las corporaciones y de sus agentes políticos. Los prejuicios de los obreros blancos se pueden llegar a superar, pero sólo a través de tener una posición muy firme.

En Boston hay que demostrar esto concretamente, enfrentando directamente a los obreros blancos prejuiciados en el punto del conflicto sobre el transporte escolar. A pesar de las

deficiencias de este punto, la clase enemiga lo ha escogido como el campo de batalla y es allí donde todo el mundo tiene que tomar posición y ser tenido en cuenta.

Las principales características de la crisis que se desarrolló tan rápidamente en Boston, fueron la falta de preparación de la comunidad negra y la falta de una dirección adecuada. El problema central, por lo tanto, era el de superar estas carencias. ¿Qué curso se debía seguir para lograrlo?

Los sectarios tenían lista una respuesta: predicaron verdades generales. Aunque estas verdades son totalmente válidas para todo un período y para el país en su conjunto, los sectarios no pudieron conectarlas con la situación concreta de Boston.

El SWP se puso a trabajar para ayudar a las corrientes de la comunidad negra que trataban de movilizar fuerzas masivas. Al principio sólo se podían realizar acciones pequeñas e insuficientes; pero ningún otro camino podría llevar a tomar medidas efectivas contra los racistas.

En la misma comunidad negra, había un gran sentimiento a favor de que se utilizaran las tropas federales. El hecho de que este sentimiento haya sido expresado por dirigentes inmersos en la política del sistema bipartidista, podría parecer elemento suficiente para descartarlo. En realidad, este sentimiento sí surgía en parte de las ilusiones en el gobierno federal. Pero reflejaba también el conocimiento que hay entre las masas negras de que los racistas se calman muy rápido cuando ven las bayonetas enfrente.

Haber descartado este sentimiento hubiera significado negarse a aprovechar una gran apertura. Desde luego, si aprovechar la oportunidad implicaba violar los principios socialistas revolucionarios, entonces no hubiera habido más alternativa que condenar la exigencia de que se enviaran tropas federales, como hicieron los sectarios.

Para los socialistas revolucionarios el problema esencial era el siguiente: ¿Es equivocado *per se* plantear demandas al gobierno capitalista como parte del proceso de movilizar a las masas por objetivos revolucionarios? Si no es equivocado en general, ¿hay excepciones a la regla? Esto es, ¿hay *ciertas* demandas que nunca se deben hacer por principio? Si es así, ¿cuáles son? ¿Es principista, por ejemplo, exigir que se dé trabajo

a los desempleados, pero rompe principios exigir que se hagan cumplir las leyes sobre los derechos civiles?

Si se piensa a fondo el problema, está claro que en todos estos casos se trata del mismo principio. Es el principio de que las demandas al gobierno capitalistas deben ser planteadas de tal modo que no creen ilusiones en el gobierno y en el sistema capitalista que éste representa. Esto es decisivo. Cómo determinar la demanda y la forma de plantearla, depende de la situación concreta, de qué otras demandas hay, cómo se van planteando demandas cada vez más radicales y cómo se explican. El método delineado por León Trotsky en el Programa de Transición permite proceder confiadamente en ese tipo de problemas, no sólo de acuerdo con los principios al nivel de la teoría, sino de acuerdo con los principios al nivel de la práctica.

Teniendo estas consideraciones en mente, el SWP no tuvo ninguna dificultad en aplicar correctamente los principios socialistas revolucionarios en la situación de Boston. El objetivo central del SWP era desatar acciones de masas. Esto sentaría una base firme para la autodefensa. El apoyo a la demanda que planteó la comunidad negra de que se enviaran tropas federales para hacer cumplir las leyes sobre derechos civiles, entraba dentro de este contexto. El objetivo, permítanme repetirlo, era facilitar la organización de una autodefensa eficaz.

De esta forma, el curso que siguió el SWP contrasta abiertamente con el de los sectarios que se autoproclaman "trotskistas." En el mejor de los casos, estos sectarios no hacen más que parafrasear demandas contenidas en el Programa de Transición, ordenándolas en su propaganda como una lista de compras cuando uno va al supermercado. Trataron de imponer sus esquemas prefabricados a la situación de Boston.

Por eso es que sus proposiciones resultan sorprendentemente similares, en su inconsistencia, sus errores, su alejamiento de la realidad y hasta en la convicción de que no se puede hacer nada hasta después de la victoria de la revolución socialista.

El SWP utilizó el Programa de Transición en la forma en que Trotsky enseñó que se debía utilizar: como una guía para la acción en situaciones concretas, y que necesariamente tiene que variar de manera importan-

te de un caso a otro. Fue por esta razón que el SWP se mostró tan sensible a las iniciativas que tomaba la misma comunidad negra, incluida la demanda de que intervinieran tropas federales. El SWP consideró las iniciativas de la comunidad negra como puntos de partida para luchar por medidas más adecuadas.

* * *

Los stalinistas pro Moscú apoyaron tanto el plan de transporte escolar como la exigencia de que se lo hiciera cumplir recurriendo a las tropas federales. Sin embargo, la posición del Partido Comunista no era la misma que la del SWP. Las diferencias resultan bastante claras en la forma en que las dos organizaciones manejaron los problemas y en los objetivos que perseguían.

El SWP tenía el objetivo de desarrollar manifestaciones de masas y de organizar la autodefensa en una escala amplia. El PC trataba de ayudar al Partido Demócrata y de mantener la lucha dentro de los canales electorales y parlamentarios.

De esta manera, por la forma en que apoyó el plan de transporte escolar y la exigencia de que se enviaran tropas federales—forma que estaba determinada por el objetivo—el PC trató de crear ilusiones en el gobierno capitalista y, sobre todo, en el Partido Demócrata. Si bien el SWP apoyaba las mismas demandas, lo hizo de tal manera que expusieran al gobierno capitalista y a los partidos Demócrata y Republicano.

Como la crisis de Boston surgió en la última etapa de la campaña electoral de 1974, no era difícil resaltar las diferencias de principio que había entre los dos enfoques. Los candidatos del SWP que estaban en el lugar de los acontecimientos jugaron un papel central para explicar y ampliar los puntos y para poner la lucha de Boston dentro del contexto de la lucha de clases nacional e internacional.

* * *

Los acontecimientos de Boston son de importancia mundial. Un signo revelador de esto es la preocupación de la burguesía británica, que temía que un triunfo de los negros en Boston produjera un reavivamiento de la lucha de clases en Gran Bretaña. El *London Times*, periódico autorizado y que representa una opinión ca-

pitalista muy bien pensada, se puso firmemente del lado de los que lanzaban piedras y trataban de linchar negros, declarando que "El servicio de transporte escolar no es para Boston", en un editorial del 11 de octubre.

"Muy pocos padres blancos pueden sentir otra cosa que angustia y resentimiento", dijo el *Times*, "si sus hijos . . . tienen que ser transportados en autobuses a través de la ciudad a otra escuela extraña, donde según todas las probabilidades los niveles de educación son muchos más bajos; o . . . si su escuela local es invadida por una multitud de niños cuya capacidad de aprendizaje es mucho menor (no por culpa suya) . . ." ⁵

En contra de estas clasistas declaraciones de solidaridad con los ra-

5. Citado por Roy Wilkins en el número del 9 de noviembre del *New York Post*.

Boston: 'Little Rock de 1974'

[La siguiente es una traducción de un extracto del discurso pronunciado en un acto de la campaña electoral por Willie Mae Reid, candidata en 1974 al Congreso de los Estados Unidos por el Socialist Workers Party, en Illinois. Este extracto apareció en *The Militant* el 15 de noviembre.]

* * *

Boston, Massachusetts, la llamada cuna de la libertad, se ha transformado en el Little Rock de 1974.

Un racismo profundamente arraigado entre la clase obrera blanca, se ha expresado en violentas reacciones hacia los estudiantes negros que son transportados a las escuelas blancas.

El Boston de hoy nos recuerda el Sur en la década del sesenta, cuando el sistema de Jim Crow estaba siendo liquidado. Los niños negros que son llevados en estos días en autobús a una comunidad totalmente blanca de Boston, son recibidos por las mañanas por las mismas turbas de blancos llenos de odio.

Los racistas mostraron su oposición a la integración, organizando un boicot, el mismo primer día de clases. En South Boston la resistencia tomó la forma activa de ataques

cistas de Boston, los revolucionarios proletarios tenían que demostrar su solidaridad con la comunidad negra de Boston que estaba siendo atacada; y debían hacerlo de manera suficientemente clara.

Por el momento, la lucha en Boston ha descendido. Esta baja, sin embargo, muy probablemente será sólo temporal. Los racistas, conscientes de lo que Boston puede simbolizar para todo el país, están organizando y preparando nuevos ataques con los que esperan encerrar definitivamente a los niños negros en las escuelas de sus ghettos.

La comunidad negra no tiene otra alternativa que tomar contramedidas. Cualquier otro curso no haría más que incitar a que tuviera lugar un pogrom feroz. Pueden contar con que el SWP jugará un papel efectivo en la preparación de la defensa. □

físicos.

Bandas enfurecidas de blancos salieron temprano por la mañana al encuentro de los autobuses, antes de que estos llegaran a las escuelas. Piedras, botellas y caños de hierro fueron arrojados contra los mismos, rompiendo ventanas, hiriendo niños, conductores y guardas.

Cuando la fuerza policial de Boston fue requerida, fue muy poco lo que hizo para calmar a la turba racista y proteger a los estudiantes negros.

Los estudiantes negros eran atacados en las aulas e incluso en los corredores de la escuela por adultos blancos que habían entrado a la misma.

Había policías presentes, pero no apresaron o contuvieron a los mero-deadores blancos. Apresaron o contuvieron a los estudiantes negros.

En el centro de la ciudad, en la sede del gobierno municipal, el alcalde demócrata, Kevin White, se retorció las manos angustiosamente por esta "infortunada situación." Pero de su boca mentirosa salieron expresiones de "comprensión" para quienes se oponen a la integración.

Las fuerzas "antitransporte" de toda la ciudad se revitalizaron con esta capitulación a la turba racista. Co-

menzaron a organizar manifestaciones en toda la ciudad.

Al frente de la resistencia racista estaba el Ayuntamiento de la ciudad, incluyendo a Louise Day Hicks, ampliamente conocida por su oposición a que se dé servicio de transporte escolar a los niños negros.

Junto con ellos estaba el comité escolar de Boston, que ha mantenido el status quo segregacionista en las escuelas.

Contando con esta aprobación de tan alto nivel, los racistas de todo el país se unieron. El Ku Klux Klan vino a Boston.

Hicieron un acto de más de seiscientas personas. Entre los presentes había gente que gritaba que el verdadero problema no es el servicio de transporte escolar obligatorio, sino los negros.

El parásito del racismo se expresaba cada vez más abiertamente. Los negros que trabajan en South Boston eran atacados en su trayecto de ida o de regreso del trabajo. Grupos de blancos enloquecidos recorrían el transporte subterráneo, saltando a los trenes, tarde por la noche, atacando pasajeros negros aislados, y saltando fuera antes de que las puertas cerraran.

En Columbia Point, que está ubicada en una península a la que sólo se puede llegar cruzando South Boston, los residentes son predominantemente negros y puertorriqueños. Se convirtieron en blanco de las prácticas nocturnas de los pandilleros racistas portadores de rifles.

Cuando los residentes de Columbia Point formaron patrullas de observación para contrarrestarlos, la policía fue llamada para parar sus esfuerzos de autodefensa.

La primera noche que yo estuve en Boston, las fuerzas antintegracionistas organizaron una manifestación con automóviles, en respuesta a la manifestación que la comunidad negra había llevado a cabo el día anterior. Un millar de automóviles se reunieron en South Boston y se desplazaron por la ciudad haciendo sonar sus bocinas.

Louise Day Hicks encabezaba la caravana de automóviles con un amplificador de sonido. Guió la manifestación al Hotel Sheraton, donde Edward Kennedy estaba hablando en una cena de recolección de fondos.

Realmente repulsivo, ¿verdad? Y ese gran padre blanco liberal, Kennedy,

no ha hecho absolutamente nada durante toda esta viciosa campaña contra la comunidad negra más que ofrecer sus plegarias.

La creciente violencia creó una at-



Bruce Bloy/Militant

WILLIE MAE REID

mósfera que casi llevó al linchamiento de Jean-Louis Yvon, un haitiano negro que trabaja como mozo en una panadería en South Boston.

Su esposa también trabaja en South Boston.

El 7 de octubre, Jean-Louis Yvon cumplía su rutina diaria. En el camino que recorría para ir a buscar a su esposa al trabajo, se encontró con una turba que estaba esperando a los transportes escolares para atacarlos. Lo vieron. Frustrados porque los autobuses habían cambiado la ruta, encontraron que él era tan "bueno" como cualquier otro negro.

Gritando: "¡Agarren al negro!", se lanzaron sobre Yvon. Fue golpeado y castigado con cachiporra en la cara, toda la cabeza, cuello y espalda. Cuando cayó, lo pisotearon y le dieron patadas. Finalmente uno de los policías disparó su arma y detuvo a la turba el tiempo suficiente como para que llegaran más policías y pusieran a Yvon a salvo.

Su esposa tuvo que dejar el trabajo y varios días después Yvon aún permanecía en cama. Hablaba incoherentemente y su cara tenía un aspecto increíble.

El gobierno municipal tenía que ha-

cer ahora una mejor maniobra. Así, el alcalde White le arrojó la pelota de la responsabilidad al Juez Arthur Garrity. Garrity se la devolvió. Lo mismo hizo el Presidente Ford, que dijo que él también estaba contra el servicio de transporte escolar. Y la pelota ha estado rebotando muchas veces desde que la lucha comenzó.

Finalmente, el Gobernador Francis Sargent envió policía estatal en un número más o menos igual a la de Boston, que ya había demostrado su incapacidad para proteger a los estudiantes negros.

La primera mañana que yo estuve allí había seis autobuses llenos de policías especiales en South Boston, y los niños negros fueron escoltados a las escuelas.

Yo estaba en uno de los autobuses escolares como guarda. Considerando toda la violencia que hubo anteriormente, no se podía creer que hubiera tanta calma. Pero aún se veían los letreros que decían "Mate Negros", cuando pasaban los autobuses. Uno sabía que la calma era sólo temporal. Y dentro de las escuelas los blancos aún están provocando peleas.

Cuando uno lee los periódicos, recibe la impresión de que esta erupción de violencia en las escuelas, fue iniciada por los estudiantes negros, mientras que los blancos sólo están defendiéndose.

A propósito de esto, algunos de los estudiantes negros con los que hablé, me dijeron que las dos primeras semanas, todo estudiante negro era revisado al entrar en la escuela, pero no los estudiantes blancos.

Cuando estalló la violencia y tuvo que intervenir la policía en las escuelas, encontraron a estudiantes blancos con cadenas y latas de sustancia paralizante. ¡La explicación que dieron fue que tenían que protegerse de las peinetas africanas que los negros usan en sus cabezas!

Uno se puede preguntar cómo se está defendiendo la comunidad negra en Boston.

No es necesario decir que los padres están indignados, y un poco asustados porque las probabilidades están en su contra. En comparación con Nueva York, Chicago, Washington, D. C. y Detroit, la comunidad negra de Boston es pequeña.

Naturalmente llevan a cabo reuniones de la comunidad para expresar su protesta y exigir algún tipo de acción, especialmente después del casi

linchamiento de Louis Yvon. Insistieron mucho en que debía proveerse protección "con toda celeridad." Exigieron tropas federales. También han organizado algunas manifestaciones.

En las universidades, grupos de estudiantes negros, profesores, y socialistas revolucionarios de la Young Socialist Alliance se están organizando para contar lo que está sucediendo en Boston.

El movimiento sindical de allí es como el de la mayoría de las ciudades. Está dominado por burócratas que no están interesados en hacer nada. Pero algunos se han pronunciado. En Massachusetts brindó su apoyo a la integración, el comité por los derechos civiles del consejo estatal sindical de la AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations—Federación Obrera Norteamericana-Congreso de Organizaciones Industriales].

¿Qué puede usted hacer por Boston? Si está en un sindicato, proponga que éste tome posición apoyando el servicio de transporte escolar obligatorio. Aliente a su sindicato a que notifique a Ford cuán importante es que proteja los derechos democráticos de los estudiantes negros de esa ciudad.

Si usted es estudiante, consiga que el gobierno estudiantil de su escuela haga una declaración de apoyo a los estudiantes negros de Boston. Organice reuniones en su universidad para dar a conocer lo que está pasando en Boston. Organice a los grupos de su comunidad, a los grupos de su iglesia, a los grupos sociales. Cuente lo que está sucediendo.

Los liberales que forman el gobierno están retrocediendo sobre la integración escolar, en este momento. Eso es porque ya no se trata solamente de abolir el sistema de leyes de Jim Crow. Actualmente, lograr una verdadera integración plantea el problema de la reorganización de una sociedad que debió reorganizarse hace mucho tiempo. Actualmente, integración significa no sólo escuelas integradas, sino también viviendas integradas, trabajos integrados, y toda la lucha por una vida decente para la clase obrera negra.

No podemos esperar que liberales como Kennedy, o cualquier otro demócrata o republicano, levante su voz o haga algo por la situación de Boston o por cualquier otro problema

de la clase trabajadora.

Por eso, debemos plantear la idea de una acción independiente de las masas para parar a los racistas. Es sólo nuestra propia fuerza colectiva organizada la que puede cambiar las cosas.

Organicemos piquetes o manifestaciones en solidaridad con la comunidad negra de Boston. Esta no es sólo una situación de Boston. Requiere atención nacional. Los racistas blancos comprenden esto perfectamente.

¡Parar la Ofensiva Racista!

[La siguiente declaración fue emitida en Boston, el 9 de octubre por Donald Gurewitz, candidato a gobernador de Massachusetts por el Socialist Workers Party; Ollie Bivins, candidato del SWP para vice gobernador; y Jeanne Lafferty, candidata del SWP para fiscal general.

[Esta es una traducción de esa declaración, que fue publicada en *The Militant*, el 18 de octubre].

* * *

Apoyamos totalmente la exigencia hecha por los líderes de la comunidad negra, de que las tropas federales sean enviadas inmediatamente a Boston para proteger a los estudiantes negros de la escalada de violencia racista.

Condenamos la negativa del Juez Garrity de enviar aunque sea el triste e inadecuado contingente de 125 alguaciles que había pedido el Alcalde White. A la luz de la declaración pública de White de que ya no puede garantizar la seguridad de los niños negros, la negativa del Juez Garrity a actuar significa una abierta invitación a las bandas racistas de linchamiento, para que realicen nuevos ataques contra la juventud negra y contra la comunidad negra en general.

También apoyamos incondicionalmente la marcha y manifestación llamada por la fracción de los representantes parlamentarios negros para este sábado (octubre 13) a las 13.30 en Carter's Playground. Participaremos en la manifestación y nos comprometemos a utilizar el acceso al público que nos brinda nuestra condición de candidatos, para ayudar a hacer una manifestación tan grande y amplia como sea posible.

Ellos suponen que si pueden ganar en Boston, pueden ganar en otras ciudades. Por eso tenemos que demostrar que hay una fuerza que es tan grande como la de los racistas blancos que actúan desenfundadamente en South Boston.

Y si usted no ha podido conocer la historia al detalle, compre algunos ejemplares de *The Militant*. Lévelos y véndalos a sus amigos y a todo el que pueda. Unase a nosotros para difundir la verdad. □

El casi linchamiento de Jean-Louis Andre Yvon por una banda aullante, el lunes, ilustra la escalada asesina de la movilización racista. La histeria anti negra ha alcanzado un punto febril. Bandas de maleantes están atacando negros.

En este clima, las tropas federales deben ser enviadas inmediatamente para defender la orden de integración y para proteger a los estudiantes negros que la están llevando a cabo. Se debe utilizar toda la fuerza que sea necesaria para aplastar la ofensiva racista y garantizar la seguridad y los derechos constitucionales de la población negra de esta ciudad.

A la luz del completo fracaso de los funcionarios de la ciudad y el estado en cuanto a proveer protección a la comunidad negra de Boston, y la continua negativa de los funcionarios públicos a realizar una acción defensiva para proteger a los estudiantes negros, nosotros apoyamos completamente cualquier medida que adopte la comunidad negra para organizar su autodefensa. Los residentes de Columbia Point consideraron necesario, recientemente, organizar sus propias patrullas de observación para proteger a la comunidad de los vigilantes blancos racistas y conocer cada paso que da la policía.

Lejos de acabar con la violencia racista, los policías han estado provocando a la comunidad negra, llevando a cabo ataques criminales contra los negros. Nosotros apoyamos totalmente el derecho de los negros a tomar medidas para defenderse contra los ataques racistas.

Los racistas alegan que las protestas son simplemente "por escuelas del vecindario." Esto es mentira. Los sucesos de Boston han destruido la fa-

chada de movimiento "contra el servicio de autobuses escolares para los niños negros" y han demostrado lo que es: una violenta campaña racista para mantener los privilegios de los blancos en las escuelas y revertir cualquier medida que tienda a dar a los ciudadanos negros sus derechos constitucionales.

Los políticos demócratas y republicanos que están en los cargos públicos, también son responsables de la campaña racista de Boston.

Su incapacidad para actuar y tenerla, sus continuos esfuerzos para disminuir la extensión y el significado de la ofensiva racista; y su adopción de la retórica "anti transporte escolar" usada por los racistas, han servido para envalentonar a las bandas.

Especialmente escandaloso es el papel jugado por el Senador Kennedy, que sintetiza la falsedad de los liberales. Kennedy, que es rápido para expresar su apoyo a los manifestantes por los derechos civiles de Alabama o Mississippi, se ha negado a volcar su considerable autoridad inequívocamente de parte de los derechos de los estudiantes negros de Boston de asistir a la escuela.

Aunque ha "deplorado la violencia", se ha negado a hacer un firme y claro llamado a todos los residentes de Boston a movilizarse contra la ofensiva racista y defender los derechos de los chicos negros de ir a la escuela.

Los políticos demócratas y republicanos han pedido a la comunidad negra que "mantenga la calma" y no haga nada que pueda "provocar problemas." Esto ha facilitado a los racistas movilizarse con total impunidad.

Lo que se necesita para comenzar a cambiar la atmósfera de esta ciudad, es que la comunidad negra y todos los que apoyan los derechos civiles tomen la ofensiva.

Las conquistas del movimiento por los derechos civiles fueron el resultado de acciones de masas, que presionaron moral y políticamente al gobierno, para que pusiera un alto a los ataques racistas. Las principales batallas por los derechos civiles libradas en los años cincuenta y sesenta en ciudades sureñas como Little Rock y Selma, se convirtieron en el foco de atención nacional e internacional.

Boston es el Little Rock y Selma de 1974.

Instamos a los partidarios de los derechos civiles y a los oponentes del racismo en todo el país a que realicen acciones en solidaridad con los estudiantes negros de Boston, y en apoyo a la exigencia formulada por los dirigentes negros de que se envíen tropas federales.

Instamos a los estudiantes de todo el país a apoyar la lucha, como lo hicieron con el movimiento por los

derechos civiles de los años sesenta.

E instamos principalmente al movimiento obrero a volcar su fuerza del lado de los derechos de la población negra de Boston.

Lo que está en juego en Boston es importante y se está volviendo cada vez más importante. El resultado de esta lucha tendrá un impacto que llegará más allá de la ciudad de Boston. Ahora es el momento de actuar. □

Antonio Maldonado Asesinado en Tlaxcala

[Esta es una declaración del Secretariado de la Liga Socialista, una organización simpatizante de la Cuarta Internacional en México. La declaración fue hecha pública el 17 de noviembre].

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Nuestro camarada Antonio Maldonado Franco y otros dos alumnos de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Puebla (UAP) fueron asesinados por la banda conocida como "Los Gavilanes", en la ciudad de Tlaxcala. Uno de los estudiantes respondía al nombre de Guillermo Ramírez; no sabemos el nombre del otro compañero asesinado.

Los tres eran profesores de la escuela normal Rafael Ramírez, que se encuentra en esa misma ciudad. Esta escuela ha sufrido repetidos ataques por parte de "Los Gavilanes." Estos son una fracción del PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), el partido oficial en México.

La banda de "Los Gavilanes" actúa como una banda de golpeadores, y está opuesta a la existencia de activistas radicales en la escuela normal Rafael Ramírez.

La primera víctima fue Guillermo Ramírez, que fue secuestrado a fines de octubre. Más tarde fue encontrado muerto. Su funeral, celebrado el día 8 de noviembre, fue una manifestación masiva en la ciudad de Puebla.

Las segunda y tercera víctimas fueron nuestro camarada Antonio y otro estudiante de la UAP. Fueron secuestrados el día 24 de octubre durante una "manifestación" que organizó el gobierno, y era el clásico acto de una fracción del PRI, para apoyar a su precandidato para Gobernador. Las elecciones para Gobernador de Tlaxcala, que tendrán lugar dentro de poco tiempo, han desencadenado

la violencia en diversas partes de ese estado.

Cuando la "manifestación" pasó cerca de la normal R. Ramírez, los golpeadores prendieron a Antonio y al otro compañero de la UAP. Los detalles son turbios, ya que la información nos ha llegado muchos días después, a través de activistas de la normal que llevaron la noticia a Puebla.

No sabíamos qué había sucedido; nuestro camarada simplemente había desaparecido. Sin embargo, uno de los secuestrados el día 24 era seguramente Antonio, ya que las descripciones concuerdan perfectamente con él (la ropa que usaba ese día, sus señas personales, etc.).

Después de haber sido secuestrado, Antonio fue llevado al edificio del Instituto de Estudios Superiores (IES), que habían tomado "Los Gavilanes." No sabemos cómo fue ultimado. Cuando la policía tomó después el edificio del IES, el 7 de noviembre, dijo de manera no oficial que había dos muertos; pero hasta el momento se ha tratado de acallar el hecho, y ni siquiera se ha podido identificar los cadáveres, ya que la policía no los ha entregado. Sin embargo, para todos es obvio que Antonio Maldonado y el otro compañero fueron asesinados.

El camarada Antonio Maldonado Franco tenía 18 años de edad. Había ido voluntariamente a trabajar como profesor a la normal Rafael Ramírez, cuando las autoridades estatales retiraron la planta de profesores de esa escuela "por falta de presupuesto." Nadie más que el gobierno represivo es culpable de su muerte.

Desde la ciudad de Puebla, los activistas de la UAP se han movilizado por el castigo de los culpables de los asesinatos de las tres víctimas. □

The Danger of Ultraleft Tactics in Fighting Fascists

By Leon Trotsky

[The following letter, dated March 2, 1934, was addressed by Leon Trotsky to his followers in France. It is printed by permission of Pathfinder Press from a forthcoming volume of the series *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1929-40)*. (Copyright 1975 by Pathfinder Press, Inc.) The translation from French is by Russell Block for Pathfinder Press.]

* * *

Dear Friends,

Since I am in Switzerland,¹ I cannot follow the events in France at close hand. But let me say that before emigrating here, I accumulated a certain amount of experience in these matters in Germany. And the Menilmontant affair² fills me with the direst foreboding. If things proceed along this line, catastrophe is inevitable.

What is the objective, not just for the moment but for the entire coming period? It is to get the workers to take up the struggle against the fascists before these elements have become the dominant force in the state, to get the workers used to not being afraid of the fascists, to teach them how to deal blows to the fascists, to convince them that they are stronger in numbers, in audacity, and in other ways.

In this period it is very important to distinguish between the fascists and the state. The state is not yet ready to subordinate itself to the fascists;

it wants to "arbitrate." We know what this means from the sociological point of view. However, this is not a matter of sociology but of giving blows and taking them. Politically it is part of the nature of a pre-Bonapartist, "arbiter" state that the police hesitate, hold back, and on the whole are far from identifying with the fascist gangs. Our strategic task is to increase these hesitations and apprehensions on the part of the "arbiter," its army and its police. How? By showing that we are stronger than the fascists, that is, by giving them a good beating in full view of this arbiter without, as long as we are not absolutely forced to, directly taking on the state itself. That is the whole point.

In the case of Menilmontant, as far as I can tell from here, the operation was handled in the diametrically opposite way. *L'Humanité* reports that there were no more than sixty fascists in a thoroughly working-class neighborhood! The tactical, or if you will, "technical," task was quite simple—grab every fascist or every isolated group of fascists by their collars, acquaint them with the pavement a few times, strip them of their fascist insignia and documents, and without carrying things any further, leave them with their fright and a few good black and blue marks.

The "arbiter" defended freedom of assembly (for the moment the state is also defending workers' meetings from the fascists). This being the case, it was totally idiotic to want to provoke an armed conflict with the police. But this is precisely what they did. *L'Humanité* is exultant—they erected a barricade! But what for? The fascists weren't on the other side of the barricade, and it was the fascists they came to fight. Was this an armed insurrection, perhaps? To establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Menilmontant? This makes no sense. As Marx said, "One does not play at insurrection." That means, "One does not play with barricades." Even when there is an insurrection, you don't erect barricades just anywhere, any

time. (You can learn something from Blanqui on this score—see the documents published in *La Critique Sociale*.)³

They succeeded in (a) letting the gilded youth⁴ return home in fine shape; (b) provoking the police and getting a worker killed; (c) giving the fascists an important argument—the Communists are starting to build barricades.

The idiot bureaucrats will say: "So, you want us to forget about building barricades out of fear of the Fascists and love of the police?" It is a betrayal to reject building barricades when the political situation demands it and when you are strong enough to erect them and defend them. But it is a disgusting provocation to build sham barricades for a little fascist meeting, to blow things up out of

3. Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-81) was one of the great revolutionists of the French working class. The *Critique Sociale* (Social Criticism), a collection of his writings, was published in 1885. Blanqui spent almost half his life in prison—thirty-seven years—because of repeated participation in the armed action of small groups. Engels in 1874 said of him:

"Blanqui is really a political revolutionary, socialist only in his emotions, sympathizing with the sufferings of the people, but without a social theory of definite, practical proposals for social reform; in his political action he is essentially a man of deeds, and is of the opinion that a small, well-organized minority, which strikes at the right moment, can carry with it the mass of the population and thus consummate a successful revolution. One sees that Blanqui is the revolutionary of a past generation."

4. "Gilded youth." Youths of wealthy background who sought excitement, including violence, in ultrareactionary movements. Until recent years, it was quite rare for youths of well-to-do families to find their way to the cause of the proletariat. References to the "gilded youth" and their readiness to play the role of "young bourgeois bullies" can be found in socialist literature going back to the 1840s.

1. The phrase "I am in Switzerland" is intended to help hide the author's identity. Actually Trotsky was living incognito in Barbizon, a village near Paris. Because of the pressure of the French authorities and threats emanating from both fascist and Stalinist circles, he could not take a public stand on subjects as sensitive as the one he discusses here. In view of these conditions, Trotsky did not sign the letter.

2. For material on the Menilmontant affair, see "Background to Trotsky's Letter on Tactics in Fighting Fascists" by Gerry Foley, which appears elsewhere in this issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

all political proportions, and to disorient the proletariat.

The task is to *involve* the workers in increasing numbers in the fight against fascism. The Menilmontant adventure can only isolate a small, militant minority. After such an experience, a hundred, a thousand workers who would have been ready to teach the young bourgeois bullies a few lessons will say, "No thanks, I don't want to get my head broken for nothing." The upshot of the whole undertaking was just the opposite of what was intended. And not to mince words, it wouldn't surprise me very much if it came out after a while that the ones who shouted loudest for the barricades were fascist agents planted in the ranks of the Stalinists, fascists who wanted to get their friends off the hook by provoking a confrontation with the police. If this was the case, they succeeded well.

What should the most active and perceptive elements have done on the spot? They should have improvised a small general staff, including a socialist and a Stalinist if possible. (At the same time it should have been explained to the workers that the neighborhood general staff should have functioned on a permanent basis on the eve of the demonstration.) This improvised general staff, with a map of the district spread out in front of them, should have worked out the simplest plan in the world—divide up one or two hundred demonstrators into groups of three to five, with a leader for each group, and let them do their work. And after the battle the leaders should get together and draw the balance sheet and the necessary lessons for the future. This second meeting could provide a good core for a permanent general staff, a good underpinning for a permanent workers militia in the district. Naturally, there would have to be leaflets explaining the need for a permanent general staff.

For the perceptive, revolutionary elements, the balance sheet offers the following lessons:

a. You have to have your own general staff for such occasions.

b. You have to anticipate the possibilities and eventualities in such conflicts.

c. You have to establish a few general plans (several variants).

d. You have to have a map of the district.

e. You have to have the proper leaflets for the situation.

This is all I can say for the mo-

ment. I am almost sure that these suggestions are completely in accord with your own ideas. So much the better. □

Background to Trotsky's Letter on Tactics in Fighting Fascists

By Gerry Foley

"An Unheard of Provocation," the headline said in the February 26, 1934, issue of the French Communist party organ *l'Humanité*, "They Are Holding a Fascist Meeting Tonight in the Twentieth Arrondissement of Paris! The Twentieth Section of the Socialist Party Rejects a United Front of Action. Workers Strike Back Under the Leadership of the CP!"

The meeting in question was a rally in the Twentieth Arrondissement staged by "national groups"—the Action Française, the Jeunesses Patriotes (Patriotic Youth), Solidarité Française, the Fédération des Contribuables (Taxpayers Federation) and others. It was to be held in the Salon des Prévoyants on the Rue des Pyrénées, in the center of the working-class Menilmontant district.

The Communist party's appeal for an antifascist action under its own banner, coupled with a denunciation of other working-class organizations for not participating, was typical of the ultraleft phase of Stalinism from 1928 to 1934.

The Comintern said that the world had entered the "Third Period," the period of the final and inevitably fatal crisis of capitalism.

Its concept of the "united front from below" was a corollary of this notion. Since revolution was on the immediate agenda, the primary obstacle was the reformist forces in the workers movement. But, in view of the momentum of the revolutionary crisis, the CPs could simply ride over them.

In the period following the Nazi victory in Germany, which was facilitated by the ultraleftist aberrations of the Comintern and the German CP, the Kremlin made a complete about-face. It began calling for a "Popular Front" with the bourgeois parliamentary parties that represented the same fundamental class interests as the fascists and that were bowing to fascism wherever capitalism was threatened.

The shift had a certain logic. It was,

in fact, just the other side of the coin of ultraleftism. Whereas the bureaucracy had hoped before to override the basic social laws by using its "muscle," now it was trying to do the same thing by diplomatic deals with sections of the ruling class.

Even after the Nazi victory in Germany, it took Stalin some time to decide to change the line. It was only in June 1934, for instance, that the French Communist party formally proclaimed the turn to "unity against fascism."

However, on February 6, 1934, the fascists had already come within an inch of taking power in the country during the Stavisky riots. It was fortunate that the capitalist class did not yet feel the need to rely on the fascists to "restore order." The police of the Daladier government fired on the fascist demonstrators and forced them to retreat.

Trapped by its ultraleft line, the Communist party was unable to respond to the fascist threat by projecting a line to mobilize the masses. In fact, it joined the fascist demonstrations of February 6, later echoing the fascist complaints about police "gun-slingers," apparently on the theory that since revolution was immediately on the agenda any challenge to the institutions of bourgeois legality opened the way for war on the capitalist state.

The fascist take-over attempt sparked a tremendous upsurge among the workers. The Communist party itself was swept along for a moment despite its sectarian line. At the last minute, it made a quick switch, coming out in support of the call for a nationwide one-day general strike on February 12, which turned into a massive demonstration of the potential power of the working class.

The development of these united mass actions by the workers was a resounding confirmation of the line put forward by the small French

Trotskyist organization, the Ligue Communiste (Communist League).

"Everywhere the Ligue had a nucleus or even an isolated activist," a participant recalled, "workers alliance committees sprang up. This was the case in Suresnes, Boulogne, and Corbeil, where these committees included organizations determined to struggle. In the provinces the Trotskyists were in the forefront of the street demonstrations. The power of their slogans was such that they were acclaimed at the Socialist party rally in Wagram, and for the first time a representative of theirs was able to speak—for ten minutes—at the big Communist rally in Bullier."*

However, this upsurge did not convince the CP of the need for united class action. Paradoxically, it may even have prolonged the plausibility of the Third Period line. Schooled in ultraleftism and get-rich-quick schemes, the CP cadres could have thought that now only a spark was needed to ignite a prairie fire.

In the first phase of an upsurge, the bankruptcy of ultraleftism is not as apparent as it is in quieter times, or at the decisive moment. Ultraleft initiatives can feed on the general radicalization and appeal in particular to the impatient. It is precisely in such phases, on the other hand, that ultraleftism presents its greatest dangers by threatening to disorient and destroy the most advanced and courageous elements and scatter rather than assemble the forces needed to win a decisive victory over capitalism.

The Menilmontant operation was a good example of such an ultraleft adventure:

"The assassins of the workers intend to use their strength to burn our district," the February 26 *l'Humanité* article declared.

"In spite of this threat, a leader of the Twentieth Section of the Socialist party has refused to discuss organizing a counterdemonstration jointly with the Communists.

"But the Socialist party workers of the Twentieth Arrondissement recognize the danger of this massive fascist onslaught and will once again join in a united front in action with the Communists, as they have already many

times in this struggle. *They will chase the fascists from the Twentieth!*"

This type of argument was hardly calculated to convince the Socialist party that the CP was really interested in united action; it put no pressure on the SP leaders either, since such appeals could easily be dismissed as arrogant Communist ultimatums or maneuvers.

The tactic that flowed from the conception of a "united front from below" aimed at drawing the Socialist party rank and file in behind the initiatives of the Communist party, by sheer momentum and force of example. Although the CP did engage in some negotiations for united action, they were subordinated to this perspective.

For example, the February 27 *l'Humanité* reported that three delegates from the SP Twentieth District had met with CP representatives before the demonstration of February 26 and that a common leaflet had been drawn up. There had, however, been no time to report this in the issue of the paper calling the action. Thus it was the CP's initiative that was held to be important, the example of "someone" attacking the fascists, not the achievement of working-class unity against the fascist threat.

This fact was shown clearly in the character of the demonstration. The action was a "propaganda" success, as the ultraleft CP saw it.

"The [fascist] meeting was small," the February 27 *l'Humanité* report continued. "Some sixty members of the JP, Croix de Feu, Solidarité Française, etc., dared venture into the meeting under the protection of more than 400 police who blocked the streets.

"But in spite of the masses of police protecting the fascists, the demonstration began at 8:30.

"One group began to demonstrate at Rue Vitruve. Another in the Rue Bagnole facing the Brasserie George [the fascist meeting was transferred there], where the windows were broken. Meanwhile another group demonstrated on the other side of the café on the Rue de Pyrénées. The 2,000 demonstrators raised powerful chants: 'Soviets everywhere!' 'Unity in action!' 'Down with fascism!' 'Jail Tardieu!'

"The police tried to cut off the demonstrators, but they managed to mount an assault on the fascist meeting place for an hour and a half.

"Around 9:30 a new column of 400 to 500 demonstrators marched toward the brasserie. They were driven back by a police charge, but they returned.

"At 10:30, protected by the masses of cops, the five or six dozen fascists began to leave two by two, after putting out the lights. Many were recognized and taught a lesson by the workers.

"It was a rout!"

"The demonstration had attained a magnificent breadth.

"Toward 10 there was a rally of workers around La Bellevoise. A column of a thousand workers marched down the Rue Menilmontant. At the intersection of Rue Panoyaux, two carloads of police charged into the crowd. There was a fight.

"Immediately the crowd took boards from a local market and built many barricades. A police car drove up. The workers welcomed it with a hail of stones. The car was forced to drive behind a barricade to escape.

"A police car coming from the direction of the Courronne metro station was received in turn with a shower of stones thrown by the workers behind the barricades. For many minutes, the workers battled the cops, pushing them back behind their car, and then more rocks were thrown. At this moment five shots from a revolver were fired at the workers. We have learned that one comrade has been grievously wounded by a shot in the head.

"Another comrade was wounded in the stomach, and two others were also hit. . . ."

The February 28 *l'Humanité* gave more details. A 19-year-old construction worker, H. Wilhem, was killed. But his funeral was another even more successful demonstration of "unity in action."

"There were 80,000 of us behind Wilhem's coffin. From Belleville of the barricades to the Pantin Père Lachaise cemetery there was a chorus of fraternal rage, a hundred thousand fists raised. . . .

"'We will avenge you, comrade.' 'The cops are murderers!' 'Jail the head cop Chiappe!' 'The soldiers are with us!' 'Down with Laval-Tardieu!' 'Soviets everywhere!'"

This action was another clear example of the ultraleft course Leon Trotsky had campaigned against in the case of Germany. □

*Yvan Craipeau, *Le mouvement Trotskyiste en France: Des origines aux enseignements de mai 68*, Editions Syros, Paris, 1971, pp. 95-96.

Bonn's 'Special Treatment' for Political Prisoners

[Holger Meins—imprisoned by the West German government since June 1972 as an alleged member of the Red Army Faction (RAF) led by Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader—died on November 9 after a hunger strike lasting nearly two months.

[According to the November 15 issue of the London fortnightly *Peace News*, Meins was seen in Wittlich prison by his lawyer shortly before his death. His lawyer tried to point out to the prison authorities that Meins had no more than two or three days to live. The authorities did not respond.

[Along with about forty other prisoners, Meins was protesting against the authorities' policy of isolating political prisoners from the rest of the West German prison population and against "Special Treatment," a euphemism for torture.

[What "Special Treatment" means in practice is described in the following document, which has been circulated by the Hamburg-based Committee to Oppose Torture of Political Prisoners in the Federal Republic of Germany.* The committee has called for an international campaign of protest.

[The text of the document is taken from *Peace News*.]

* * *

Special Treatment means social isolation over a period of years by means of:

- systematic segregation from other prisoners (RAF members have been segregated from the moment of their arrest). Any attempt to talk to other prisoners is answered with confinement to punishment-strip-cells for a period of days;

- special screens fixed outside cell windows, which distort any perceptions of the outside;

- solitary exercise with no opportunity to see or speak to other prisoners;

- handcuffing during yard exercises;

- a ban on all visits and mail except from relatives. Visits by relatives are supervised by the political police,

who take down every conversation in full in order to obtain information for illegal use in court;

- censorship and confiscation of books and papers.

In the case of certain prisoners, the system of segregating political prisoners from all human contact has been intensified by confining them in so-called "Tote Trakt," a completely empty wing of the prison where the prisoner is cut off from any normal human sounds. Since 1972 four political prisoners have been tortured in the Tote Trakt over periods of months.

Ronald Augustin has been held in the Tote Trakt of Hanover Prison since the beginning of May. He has been placed in a cell in a dead passage—so that no one will pass by. The inside of the cell door is insulated by an iron threshold 5 cm high. A soundproof screen has been placed on the cell window, which is so constructed that Augustin can see nothing but a wall.

The prisoner in the Tote Trakt is kept in a total sonic vacuum. Scientific research has established that torture through withdrawal of sound has the same effect on the human constitution as continued electric shocks. The object of this method is to destroy the prisoner's ability to function as a human and political being. Used over any length of time, the torture of the Tote Trakt leads to severe physical damage and ultimately death.

Torture employing the withdrawal of all sensory stimuli (sensory deprivation) is at present being investigated—and scientifically perfected—at the University Clinic Hamburg-Eppendorf. Here experiments are carried out on people kept in completely soundproof and sound-distorting rooms. Already new and technically perfected "annihilation cells" have been or are being built in Hamburg-Fuhlsbuettel, Berlin-Tegel, Berlin-Lehrter-Strasse, Bruchsal, Essen and Straubing. Based on the above model, these also employ constant levels of temperature (extremes of heat or cold from -30 to over 60 C [-22 degrees to more than 140 degrees Fahrenheit]), constant sonic background and constant TV surveillance.

The RAF prisoners are using the hunger strike as a weapon in their

fight for the equal treatment of political and other prisoners. The object of the hunger strike is to initiate a revolutionary prison movement which can become a possibility only through the self-organisation of the prisoners. The essential condition for this is the abolition of the separation between the political prisoners and all other prisoners.

The judicial system, which aims to destroy the ability of the prisoners to function as political beings, is attempting to break the hunger strike by denying the prisoners water and by force feeding. Since the end of September more than 30 prisoners have been force fed in West German prisons. Several prisoners have suffered injuries in throat and digestive tracts through having large tubes forced into their stomachs.

On October 14, Ronald Augustin was transferred from the Tote Trakt in Hanover Prison to a cell without any water facilities in the prison hospital in Lingen. The forced feeding was stopped. At the instance of the Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony, the prison doctors in Lingen deprived Ronald Augustin (who had then been on hunger strike for four weeks) of water for three and a half days. Instead of drinking water, the authorities placed milk and beer in his cell. The water provided for washing was poisoned with chemicals.

Withdrawal of drinking water is attempted murder. It leads within a few days to metabolic poisoning and irreparable damage, and after 6-8 days unavoidably to death. The prisoners declared at the beginning of the hunger strike that they would refuse to drink water if any one of the prisoners was refused water by the Judiciary. On October 17 they started a "thirst strike" which they kept up until Augustin was again given sufficient drinking water.

The Minister of Justice of Lower Saxony made a statement on the case in which he declared that the withdrawal of water was a legitimate means of breaking the hunger strike. The Senator of Justice of Hamburg (where 10 political prisoners are held) has explicitly reserved the authorities the right to use water withdrawal in order to break hunger strikes. □

*2 Hamburg 60-Alsterdorfer Str. 85, Germany.