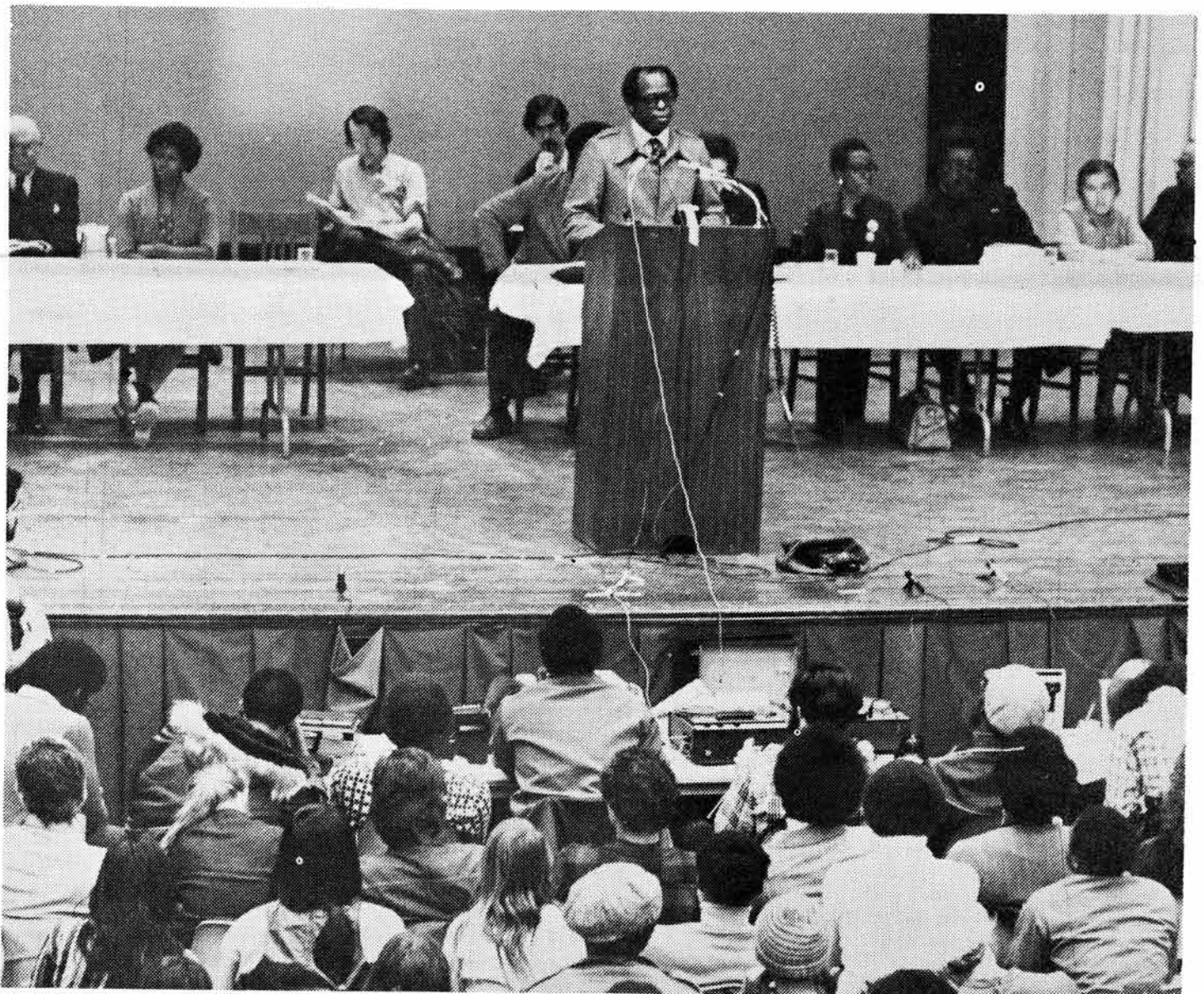


Boston NAACP Calls for National Antiracist March



Mary Jo Hendrickson/Militant

THOMAS ATKINS, president of Boston NAACP, speaking at National Student Conference Against Racism. See pages 292 and 312.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Threat of U.S. Intervention in Portugal

In an editorial February 17, the *New York Times*, an authoritative voice of American ruling circles, threatened U.S. intervention in Portugal.

The editors claimed that the danger of a Communist party "takeover" in Portugal had been increased by the prospect of elections in April:

"If, as pledged, these turn out to be Portugal's first free elections in a half-century, polls suggest that the Communists will do poorly. Having failed in their efforts to force postponement of the elections, the indications are that they will now encourage more leftist violence and intimidation in hopes of altering the outcome or even of preparing the way for a coup."

While raising a hue and cry over the alleged possibility of a Communist party-backed coup, however, the *New York Times* gave its blessing to the actual attempted coup by General Spínola in September 1974:

"At the time of the military revolt last April that overthrew the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship, the Communists, as the only organized political opposition in Portugal, secured key posts as advisers to some of the rebel military leaders. They bid successfully for influence in local governments, and obtained controlling positions in the news media, student organizations and labor unions, which they have since strengthened."

"In September, Gen. Antonio de Spínola was forced out of the Presidency when he sought to resist this trend."

Since Spínola's ouster, the editorial continued, the parliamentary conservatives and even the "democratic left" have also gone down under the Communist steamroller. "Last month, in a second major crisis, the Communists prevailed upon the military—over Socialist opposition—to approve a law providing a single labor confederation. Their control is assured in advance, since they already run most of the federations that will be joined."

"Through Communist maneuvers, Socialist protest demonstrations have been banned; leftist street violence has been used to break up the organizing convention of the country's main conservative party."

A publication with the news-gathering staff and resources of the *New York Times* could not be unaware that the demonstrations against the so-called Social Democratic Center party in Oporto were not backed, but were in fact opposed, by the Communist party. That, apparently, is why it used the

vague phrase "leftist street violence." However, this was put in a context that would give the impression that these demonstrations were part of a Communist party offensive.

The fact seems to be that the Communist party's bureaucratic and class-collaborationist method of defending its positions in the trade-union movement simply provided a handy means to the capitalists for portraying it as a dangerous power machine.

What the U.S. capitalists actually think about the Portuguese Communist party is probably much more accurately reflected in the *Wall Street Journal*, which is written specifically for business circles. In an article in the February 20 issue of this publication, staff reporter Ray Vicker wrote:

"In Portugal, Italy, France and Greece the Communists no longer threaten revolution, promote violence, advocate political strikes. When violence comes from the left today, it usually comes from Maoist factions or from splinter Communist groups that have severed connections with the Moscow line. A low profile also is maintained so as not to arouse any opposition from the religious, or from a middle class that might feel endangered by radicalism."

"Sometimes Mr. Cunhal [the CP general secretary] sounds so moderate that you have to recheck his history to make sure he doesn't belong to some middle-class party. He talks of seeing a place for private enterprise in Portugal's future. He discourages strikes, mutes any criticism of NATO, avoids vitriolic propaganda and extends a hand toward America."

"Moreover, he doesn't take a dogmatic position on the nationalization of industry. 'Certain sectors such as transport already are nationalized,' he says, 'and perhaps in the future those elements in basic industry also should be state-controlled. At the moment, however, the government policy is to seek economic stability, and this involves continuation of the private sector in operation of factories. We support that policy at this time because we favor economic stability.'"

As for Communist party influence in the trade-union movement, Vicker indicated that its effects were not all bad from the capitalist point of view:

"Currently the Communist Party even preaches moderation to unions. The annual inflation rate is estimated at 30%, and

demands for raises have generally been exceeding that level. The Communists say that raises should be held below 30%, but they don't commit themselves to any figure. Mr. Cunhal shakes his head over demands that might strain the economy. 'The strike weapon,' he says, 'is most efficient if it isn't used too often.'"

The vague references of the editors of the *New York Times* to "leftist" street violence, however, are an indication that any mass actions that "go too far" will be interpreted by U.S. ruling circles as part of a Communist party "coup" to block the elections. And even after the vote is held, they will not be reassured:

"The military junta, with Communist encouragement, shows less and less inclination to yield its present supervisory role and is expanding its powers. These trends have led the Popular Democratic leader, Francisco Sa Carneiro [Carneiro], to argue that elections will be academic if the centers of power are 'occupied' beforehand."

Such Communist party influence in the junta, the *New York Times* said, was giving rise to "intolerable dangers." It invoked the familiar "domino theory":

"These [dangers] go beyond the obvious strategic threat of a Soviet ally athwart the American naval lifelines to the Mediterranean and NATO Europe. A forcible Communist takeover in Portugal might encourage a similar trend in Italy and France; create problems in Greece and Turkey; affect the succession in Spain and Yugoslavia and send tremors throughout Western Europe."

The editorial in this way echoed the themes sounded by capitalist representatives when they opened the cold war and again when Washington intervened in countries like Korea and Vietnam.

"Détente, of course, would be the first casualty, as Moscow should note, if the close relationship between the Portuguese Communist party and the Soviet Union—which maintains a large, active embassy in Lisbon—is a factor in promoting a forcible takeover. *It would not be in the interest of either the Russian or the Portuguese people to have the popular will in Portugal denied free expression.*" (Emphasis added.)

In present conditions, U.S. ruling circles are not likely to relaunch the cold war. However, direct or indirect intervention in Portugal is all too likely. A much gentler warning was issued by the *New York Times* to the Allende government after the March 1973 elections in which the right was defeated. Such an intervention could, however, generate international tensions; and, in order to justify it, the Western capitalist powers would have to resurrect the "Communist menace" to some extent, with some implications for relations with the Soviet Union.

In the context of the détente, this warning serves the purpose of putting the Soviet Union on notice that the White House will not accept significant CP influence in any West European governments, no matter how well-behaved the CPs in question may be. It puts both the Portuguese government and the CP on notice that if they cannot keep the mass movement within what the United States considers acceptable limits, dire consequences will ensue.

It is essentially the mass upsurge in Portugal that frightens the U.S. capitalists, not the CP. This is indicated by the formulation that puts all street demonstrations and labor actions under the general heading of an alleged Communist party-planned coup.

The same type of thinking was evident in the case of Chile. It was not the Allende government and the Communist party as such that prompted the violent U.S. intervention through a brutal military coup and wholesale massacres of workers; it was the inability of these forces to restrain the mass movement, which was carrying out more and more seizures of factories and big estates and undermining the basis of capitalist property and bourgeois society.

What really worries U.S. ruling circles is peasants seizing estates despite the Communist party's appeals to them to wait for government action, and in particular, armed forces units showing solidarity with leftist demonstrators. It was the beginning of left-wing organization in the armed forces in Chile, for instance, that most directly sparked the decisive confrontation there.

Chile, moreover, was only the most recent of many examples of the dangers of trying to prevent a mass upsurge from going to the point where it can effectively defend itself against counterrevolution. The fact that the Communist party was in effective control of the Allende government and a united trade-union movement did not enable it to defend itself against the reactionary coup.

While U.S. ruling circles are trying to intimidate the Portuguese left into pulling back the mass movement, these threats simply prove that the only way to "defend democracy" is to mobilize the Portuguese masses and the ranks of the armed forces into a power that can defeat any intervention.

And that is possible only if the masses take full control of the economy and root out the material basis of reaction.

At the same time, the threats of the *New York Times* and Washington's bullying interference in Portuguese internal affairs are a warning to the working-class movement in the Western capitalist countries, as well as all antiwar forces, that they must begin to speak out now against intervention in Portugal. □

March 3, 1975

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The NAACP's Call for a May 17 Antiracist Demonstration in Boston

By Michael Baumann

Since the opening of the fall term in the Boston school system last September, the Black community there has been the target of a mounting racist offensive.

The racists have concentrated their fire on the busing of students, which was ordered by the courts to desegregate the schools. The racist offensive has included almost daily physical intimidation, at times reaching the level of lynch action. (See *Intercontinental Press*, October 21, 1974, p. 1352.) The Boston racists are supported by forces ranging from local officeholders of both the Republican and Democratic parties to President Ford himself, who has publicly declared his opposition to busing.

It is in this context that the Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has called for a national march on the city May 17 to mobilize support for the right of Black children to an equal education, including the right to attend whatever schools they choose. Thomas Atkins, president of the Boston NAACP, announced the call February 14 at a teach-in sponsored at Boston University by the National Student Conference Against Racism.

For the May 17 demonstration, he declared, "we will ask that thousands of people from around the country come to Boston to support school desegregation. We will be asking NAACP branches, 1,800 strong across the country, to assist us in organizing such a national show of support for school desegregation, and in organizing the national campaign against the effort to write the Black community out of the United States Constitution."

Atkins's call can be expected to meet with a significant response in the United States. The NAACP is the oldest, largest, and most influential civil-rights organization in the country. Founded in 1909 by such figures as Black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, it has 400,000 members.

An organization that has traditionally concentrated on legal-defense efforts (including the original lawsuit that resulted in court-ordered busing in Boston), the NAACP has at times responded to pressure in the Black community for direct action. Examples include its support for the sit-ins at Woolworth lunch counters in the early 1960s, the massive civil-rights demonstration of 250,000 in Washington, D.C., in

1963, and the freedom marches in Selma, Alabama, in 1965.

These actions are recognized as milestones in the struggle for civil rights in recent years in the United States.

In appealing to the student conference for its support in the effort to build the demonstration Atkins said, "It is my hope that this May 17 rally will be the result of a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals working together, each in their own way, to achieve one unified purpose." (Major excerpts from Atkins's remarks are printed elsewhere in this issue.)

The 2,000 participants at the conference responded by voting overwhelmingly in favor of the NAACP call to action. In workshops and plenary sessions they mapped out an entire spring campaign to mobilize a nationwide reply to the racist attacks. They adopted the following demands: "Desegregate the Boston schools now! Keep the buses rolling! Stop the racist attacks on Black students!"

To carry out these demands, the conference voted to form a new organization, the National Student Coalition Against Racism, and to begin on April 4 (the anniversary of the assassination of civil-rights leader Martin Luther King) a six-week campaign of local actions and educational activities across the country building up to the May 17 action.

An impressive list of speakers addressed the February 14 teach-in. In addition to Atkins, these included:

Jonathan Kozol, author of *Death at an Early Age*, which received the National Book Award for its detailed exposé of racial discrimination in the Boston school system.

James Meredith, the first Black student to attend the University of Mississippi.

Dr. Benjamin Spock, a leader of the U.S. antiwar movement and world famous pediatrician.

Willie Mae Reid, Socialist Workers party candidate for vice-president.

Messages of support were received from Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, and Shirley Graham Du Bois, widow of W.E.B. Du Bois. Kathy Kelly, president of the National Student Association, also sent a message, pledging the support of NSA officers and affiliates to the May 17 march. The NSA is a nationwide organization of student governments.

A measure of the breadth of the confer-

ence itself was provided in the credentials report. A total of 2,009 persons, including about 500 Blacks and Puerto Ricans, registered for the gathering. They came from 27 states and Washington, D.C., 147 colleges, 58 high schools; and 113 organizations. Members of 50 Black student groups were present; women made up 45 percent of the conference participants. Chartered buses came from as far as Houston (more than 1,900 miles), Atlanta, and St. Louis.

Lively Debate

Two topics that generated considerable debate at the conference were the role of white people and students in the fight against racism, and the relationship between the fight for quality education in general and the fight for the right of Blacks to an equal education.

Members of the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL), the youth organization in political solidarity with the Communist party, supported the May 17 action proposal but argued for three amendments. One was that April 4 be taken as the starting point for local actions leading up to the May 17 march. This proposal won general support.

Two other YWLL amendments were (1) to recognize the "special responsibility" of whites in fighting racism among whites, and (2) to recognize that students "are not in the leadership of progressive forces but can play a role" if they "subordinate" themselves to "the community."

Many conference participants found the latter two amendments confusing. One person asked, for example, whether the second amendment meant that this student conference could not make its own decisions but would have to ask for approval from some vague "community" forces.

Another speaker pointed to the leading role students had played in the antiwar movement and recalled how the Watergate tapes had shown the ruling class's fear of the student movement.

The maker of the YWLL amendment eventually agreed that the word "subordinate" was a bad one and should be deleted. He said the motion just meant that students should work in consultation with the Black community.

The meaning of the amendment on the role of whites also appeared to be unclear to many participants. Some who argued for it made such statements as: "You can't write off people as racists and refuse to have anything to do with them," and "Nobody in this room can say they are not racist."

Andrew Pulley, a Black leader of the Young Socialist Alliance, spoke from the floor and said that in his view "the white people here shouldn't wallow in liberal guilt, which seems to be part of the tone of this amendment. You whites who are here

are among the best, and you should go back to your local areas and get *all* kinds of people involved, to make the May 17 action the most massive possible."

Peter Camejo, 1976 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers party, also spoke from the floor, saying that he felt there could be agreement on all three amendments if they were clarified.

He said, "We're obviously all opposed to working with racists such as those in groups that exclude Black people. It is absolutely correct that we want to get as many white people, Black people, Chicanos, as many as possible, to come to the demonstration May 17. Whether a white person gets a leaflet for the march from a white person, or from a Black person, or from a Latino, that doesn't matter. I'm sure the YWLL would agree on this, that all of us want to try to reach out to the entire population to build this action.

"Nor would there be disagreement, I'm sure, that the Black community is leading its own struggle, and students are working with, consulting with them in one struggle."

After these clarifications, all three amendments from the YWLL were approved by the conference.

Like Right to Be Served at Woolworth's

Two different points of view emerged in the discussion over the best way to fight for quality education.

A proposal made by Robert Harper and Ray Sherbill, two of the conference coordinators, stressed the need to define clearly what is meant by quality education and to demand that "better educational equipment, instruction, and facilities immediately follow, if not accompany, the desegregation of the Boston schools."

The Harper-Sherbill proposal made clear, however, that the demand for "quality education" was not *counterposed* to the fight for equal education but was intended to suggest that the fight to desegregate the schools is but the starting point in the struggle for improved education.

Other speakers, including supporters of such Maoist-influenced groups as Party for Workers Power, Revolutionary Student Brigade, and Progressive Labor party, held that the demand for quality education should take priority over, or be substituted for, the demand to enforce the desegregation order.

They argued that Black students should give up the struggle for busing Black students to schools in white neighborhoods. In their view busing leads only to Black students being attacked by racists. It cannot provide a decent education, since the white schools are no good either. One proposal was to demand that white schools like South Boston High School be shut

down and to give up defense of the right of Blacks to go there.

The conference voted almost unanimously for the Harper-Sherbill proposal. Several speakers pointed out that although it was true that all the schools, including those in white neighborhoods, could stand great improvement, the immediate issue was the right of Black students to attend school anywhere they choose.

To retreat from this demand, it was pointed out, would amount to capitulation to the racists. The racists use the demand for "quality education" in such a way as to cut across the fight for school desegregation. They use it as a code word for maintaining their privileged position in a racially segregated school system.

In one of the workshops a participant, recalling the struggle to integrate the nationwide chain of Woolworth lunch counters, asked what would have happened if, when racist opposition mounted, the students had simply said, "Well, maybe we should just go eat somewhere else. After all, what kind of food can you get at Woolworth's? We aren't interested in the right to eat this rotten food."

Another issue debated by the conference was the demand made by leaders of the Boston Black community that federal troops be sent to enforce the desegregation order against the racists. The majority of the conference was clearly in favor of demanding that all necessary force be used to stop the racist mobs, including federal troops.

However, when the question was raised on the floor, it was decided that the conference should not take a position on the demand for the time being. Several speakers urged that discussion continue within the student movement on this important question. In the meantime, it was felt, all could work together under the three slogans adopted for the May 17 march.

Agreement Reached on Organization

Proposals for the structure of the new organization were thoroughly discussed at the final plenary session February 16. The conference voted for a compromise formula. It maintained the coordinators' proposal that the new organization's steering committee be a broadly representative body open to delegates from the local chapters. It also included a YWLL proposal that each national group assign one person to work full time in the new organization's national office.

Nevertheless, speakers for the YWLL, including the group's organizational secretary, Matty Berkelhammer, insisted that local chapters should be excluded from the steering committee. Berkelhammer asked that this section of the YWLL proposal be submitted as an amendment to the com-

promise proposal. The amendment was voted down by a wide margin, and the compromise proposal was adopted with only a dozen or so persons voting against it.

Upon adoption of the main action proposals, as well as the compromise proposal on structure, the entire hall burst into applause. It was generally felt that the conference had scored a major success in debating all views democratically, drawing up a plan for united action, and holding together so many forces of divergent views and backgrounds.

In addition to the student and Black-community groups that were present, virtually every organized tendency of any influence in the workers movement was represented at the conference. Not all took the floor, however. The point of view of the Communist party tended to be expressed by the sizable contingent from the YWLL, while the CP limited its direct participation to organizing a literature table and distributing the *Daily World*.

A few individuals from the Healyite Workers League were noted selling their newspaper, the *Bulletin*.

The ultraleft sect *Workers World*, and the youth group associated with it, Youth Against War and Fascism, likewise limited their participation to selling literature, as did a number of other groups.

Disruption Attempt Defeated

At one point some participants attempted to break up the conference. When the evening plenary session began February 15, a group of thirty or forty persons assembled in the aisles, hooting and jeering. They took over one of the floor microphones and demanded to speak as long as they pleased.

This move had been planned at a closed meeting composed mostly of members of a New York Maoist sect called the "Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization." Their main political point was voiced in the red-baiting charge that the Socialist Workers party and the Young Socialist Alliance were "dominating" the conference. Although the disrupters used radical-sounding phrases, one of their leaders was Lawrence Elliot, a Black Democrat who heads a city commission in Detroit.

The disrupters sought to provoke a physical confrontation. One of them brandished a knife. During the confusion, people stationed at different points in the hall blew whistles in an apparent attempt to create panic. Members of the sectarian Spartacist League yelled encouragement to the disrupters.

The conference participants voted to allow the disrupters to speak. The speakers attacked the conference, the struggle to desegregate the schools, the NAACP, and the court-ordered busing. When it became clear that the audience was not welcoming

such sentiments, and that the conference marshals surrounding the disrupters were ready and willing to defend the democratic right of the more than 1,900 other participants to proceed with the discussion, the disrupters ended their performance by calling for a general walkout.

They set the example, one of them shouting as they left, "We demand an end to busing, an end to federal troops, and an end to this whole fucked-up reactionary conference!" Of the few who left with them, some returned to the conference after briefly attending the disrupters' countermeeting.

Malik Miah of the Young Socialist Alliance took the floor to answer the attacks on the YSA. "It's totally false that this conference is dominated by the YSA or SWP," he said. "Of the 2,000 people who have registered here, the overwhelming majority are not affiliated to any particular political organization. The red-baiting attacks that have been made here are an attack on all of us here."

Red-baiting against the SWP and YSA, he said, was merely a cover for attacking the aims of the conference itself. He stressed the positive role the YSA had played in publicizing and building the conference, and urged all other groups to do the same for the May 17 demonstration. "We're involved," he said, "because we support the aims of this conference, we support desegregation of the schools, we support keeping the buses rolling, and we support stopping the racist attacks on Black people."

As the conference drew to a close, the feeling of many of the participants appeared to have been accurately summed up by a student from San Francisco State College. She said from the floor that she had been sent to the meeting by her student government, and that it had been the "most exciting conference I have ever attended."

Remindful of Antiwar Meetings

The conference represented the first major gathering of student activists since the planning meetings in the antiwar struggle that compelled Nixon to pull the GIs out of Vietnam. It came at a time of growing social and economic crisis that has struck with particular force in the Black community.

The racists have made Boston the rallying point for their drive to turn back the gains Blacks won in the civil-rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. For this reason, the attention of all political forces throughout the country will be focused on the response mobilized to counter this attack. The breadth of the response will be taken as a gauge of what can be expected to result from future attacks on the rights of Blacks and of all working people in general. The conference thus represents a most

encouraging step in assembling the forces necessary for a powerful, united reply to the racists.

The initiative taken by the Boston NAACP is of special significance. It represents the reentry of the NAACP into the arena of mass action. Because of its size, its widespread roots, and resources, the NAACP can draw many other forces into active support of the May 17 demonstration.

Equally significant was the full support the NAACP call received at the student conference. Among the 2,000 participants were many veterans of the antiwar move-

ment. They will know how to present on the American campus the need to mobilize in force for the May 17 march.

A broad mobilization of students and workers, both Black and white, in response to the appeal of the Boston NAACP, can make May 17 a truly historic landmark.

As Thomas Atkins said in his call for the demonstration, "If school desegregation cannot be brought about in Boston, then it won't happen anywhere else in the North."

"That's why this fight *must* continue. And that's why we must win." □

For 'Authorized' Government Agencies

U.S. Firm Offers Assassination Equipment

Senator Lowell Weicker gave the public a glimpse of one of the more specialized branches of U.S. industry January 23. Speaking on the Senate floor, he explained, "Last December, I had placed in my hands . . . a document which one might term a catalog."

The catalog, read into the *Congressional Record* by Weicker, was for electronic assassination equipment. Using a strange mixture of James Bond and Madison Avenue, it described "explosive devices in various configurations and with various trigger mechanisms."

The devices, it said, "have been designed and manufactured for sale to authorized agencies of the United States Government . . ."

"The items offered are either concealed into everyday type objects, or packaged simply as 'black box' pieces of equipment . . . Upon request, this equipment can be delivered in a 'sterile' condition for foreign use. . . ."

"The devices offered are complete in their operation, with the exception of the explosive charge which is added by the user. All equipment in our 'Astro' category is manufactured to the highest standards in terms of reliability, dependability, lifetime, and performance under most weather variations. Highest grade electronic components are selected and all controls are permanently cemented into sub-miniaturized modules."

The B. R. Fox Laboratories of Alexandria, Virginia, which manufactured this assassination equipment, said that it was "specifically intended for application outside of this country."

Its prospective customers are known to have included the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration. A cover letter that came with the company's catalog, addressed to an unidentified government official called "Mitch," referred to a May

1974 demonstration of the equipment for the benefit of "Lou." "Lou" was later identified as Lieutenant Colonel Lucien Conein, acting director of a section of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Among the items offered for sale was a booby-trap device for telephones. "Use inside telephone handset," advised the catalog. "Automatic charge fired at—sec. following lifting of instrument handpiece."

"Easy and quick installation to underside of mouthpiece. Any desired delay can be preset. No switches, presetting, or batteries. Simply install 4-wire module."

"Solid-state, epoxied miniature unit . . . rugged and durable. All hand wired. Unlimited lifetime with proper handling," said the blurb, with no irony intended.

Also available is a "modified flashlight." "Standard Eveready 2 'D' cell flashlight has anti-disturbance electronics concealed inside where batteries have been removed. Remainder of the battery space is packed with explosive."

The sales pitch explains that such items "are all hand wired, and subjected to rigorous testing to assure operational status. Explosives are not included and is the only thing to be added."

But then, for "authorized agencies of the United States government," that shouldn't be any problem. □

Gasoline in Argentina Hits \$1.98 a Gallon

The Argentine government increased the price of gasoline by up to 45 percent on February 1. Premium fuel will now cost about \$2.20 a gallon; regular will sell for about \$1.98 a gallon.

Taxi fares were also raised by up to 66.6 percent, and costs of public services, including gas, electricity, and sanitation, were raised an average of 42 percent.

Thieu Cracks Down on Saigon Opposition

By Peter Green

Reacting swiftly to a new political indictment of his dictatorship, Nguyen Van Thieu's national police raided the offices of nine Saigon newspapers that were publishing the indictment February 2 and confiscated their press runs and printing plates. The statement had been drawn up by the opposition movement led by the Reverend Tran Huu Thanh.

During the next two days, mostly in predawn raids, the regime arrested twenty-four journalists and editors as "Communist agents." Five newspapers were shut down.

Those arrested in the crackdown included two publishers, three managing editors, Saigon's leading political cartoonist, and other well-known personalities. Some were subsequently released, but many of Saigon's other opposition and independent journalists reportedly went into hiding.

This second indictment has broader backing than the Indictment No. 1 issued last September. It is supported by twenty-two opposition groups—journalists, lawyers, and students, as well as the Reverend Tran's People's Anticorruption Movement to Save the Country and Restore Peace.

The indictment accuses Thieu of having become "a mortal enemy of liberty, democracy and justice," and says he should be "charged with high treason" for a series of political crimes. "As long as Mr. Thieu remains, there can be no peace, for he is a product of the war, he is nourished by the war and he can only survive with the war."

"... having enriched himself during war, peace has become his greatest enemy."

Thieu is also accused of having betrayed the army: "Now the soldiers have realized that they cannot any longer die for a corrupt clique, to consolidate the personal position of Thieu, to reinforce the generals bought by Thieu."

Despite the seizure of the plates and press runs of the nine newspapers, the indictment is circulating clandestinely in Saigon and the provinces. Apparently some newspapers had anticipated the police raids and had secretly printed several thousand copies. The Association of Newspaper Publishers denounced the regime's actions February 4 and called on the remaining four newspapers not controlled by Thieu to shut down in protest.

Duong Van Minh, the former general who has emerged as a spokesman for some of the opposition, also vigorously denounced



Szep/Boston Globe

the crackdown at a gathering at his Saigon villa February 5.

"This is not only an act of arrogance and arbitrariness," he said, "but also an act of contempt of the people, contempt of world opinion, an act of contempt toward all those who struggle for peace and who love peace and conciliation. By this action, the Government is now nothing but a tyranny."

The Thieu regime staged a news conference on February 6, where it presented what it called the "live evidence" of the Communist ring in the Saigon press.

"The two-and-a-half-hour conference," James M. Markham reported in the February 7 *New York Times*, "presided over by the commander of the national police, the Interior Minister and the Information Minister, featured two men who said they were former Communist agents who had specialized in subverting Saigon's press."

But the report pointed out that Vietnamese and foreign reporters were not permitted to question the two after they had spoken, and that the "Communist agents" didn't implicate any other journalists. An editor of one of the newspapers shut down by Thieu later denounced one of the "Communists" as a police agent.

On February 10—the eve of Tet, the Vietnamese lunar new year—protests in Saigon condemned the regime's crackdown. Opposition deputies and senators demonstrated on the steps of the National Assembly building, where they burned photos of Thieu. They chanted, "Grab Thieu's head and pull him down" and "Nguyen Van Thieu must resign," while a government sound truck blared out music in an attempt to drown them out.

A denunciation of Thieu signed by twenty-seven deputies and one senator was read aloud by Deputy Tran Van Tuyen. The statement charged that in January Thieu had purposely allowed the province of Phuoc Long to fall "to put pressure on the United States Government to give more military aid and to have an opportunity to oppress the opposition." It called on Thieu to step down so that "the war shall be stopped, corruption shall be swept away and national reconciliation shall be a reality." The deputies declared they would fast for a day in protest.

A group of twenty-seven Buddhist nuns also demonstrated near Thieu's palace. They carried posters saying "If you repress us, we will burn ourselves." Police seized a can of gasoline from them, herded them into vans, and took them away.

Plainclothes police attacked about fifty demonstrators on February 20 as they were marching to court to demand the release of the arrested journalists. Several of the demonstrators, who included National Assembly deputies and relatives of the arrested journalists, were injured when the police hit them with clubs and fists, the *Washington Post* reported February 21.

The attacks on the press were only a part of an offensive by Thieu to step up the repression. In a move February 5 aimed at strengthening his own personal power base, he promoted the commander of the national police, Major General Nguyen Khac Binh; the head of the Saigon police, Brigadier General Trang Si Tan; and four other ranking police officers.

He also reinstated Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Toan, putting him in charge of the military region that surrounds Saigon. Last October, under pressure from the opposition to clean up the army, Thieu had removed General Toan from his command in the Central Highlands. According to a report in the February 13 *New York Times*, Toan has "an established reputation for corruption."

The report said the police promotions and the "surprising resurrection" of General Toan were seen by Saigon politicians as signals that Thieu will be relying increasingly on the army and the police. "In particular, the choice of General Toan seemed to indicate the end of a period of concessions to the opposition. . . ."

Just before the crackdown on the press, Thieu ordered the dissolution of the Bao An, the 50,000-strong private militia of the anti-Communist Hoa Hao sect. The Hoa Hao has more than one million adherents, mostly in five provinces in the Mekong Delta. Hoa Hao leaders have been negotiating with the Saigon regime since last June for more arms for their militia. In a surprise move, Saigon's police seized the leading Hoa Hao general during a nego-

tiating session, and on January 30 police and militia units moved in to disarm the Bao An.

The Hoa Hao resisted. Their militia set up roadblocks along the highway near Phong Phu, a district capital ninety miles southwest of Saigon. Government troops removed the roadblocks and arrested members of the Bao An. Hoa Hao leader Luong Trong Tuong claimed that in the first three days of the rebellion against the government order, seven of the sect's members were killed, sixteen were wounded, and 600 arrested. The Hoa Hao later put the figure of those arrested in the thousands.

The confrontation was all the more significant in that the Hoa Hao was the only religious sect not to have joined the anti-Thieu opposition movement. The other large sect, the Cao Dai, based in the city of Tay Ninh, recently issued a "neutralist" appeal for peace.

One possible explanation for Thieu's attack on the Hoa Hao was reported in the February 14 *Far Eastern Economic Review*: Thieu's increasing difficulties in finding cannon fodder for his army. Until now, the Hoa Hao enjoyed virtual immunity from conscription. Thieu charged that the Hoa Hao had lured government soldiers into their own local militia and had given shelter to draft dodgers and deserters.

The press in the United States seemed to be rather embarrassed by Thieu's new offensive against the opposition. The challenge to Thieu by the press and the anticorruption movement "comes at a particularly awkward moment for the Government," since Ford is trying to get an extra \$300 million in aid from Congress, James M. Markham said in the February 4 *New York Times*.

An editorial in the February 5 *Christian Science Monitor* lamented that Thieu "sabotages his request for more American military aid when he squelches the fledgling trend toward freedom of the press in South Vietnam."

Philip A. McCombs reported in the February 4 *Washington Post* that "Western observers" in Saigon were "amazed and puzzled at Thieu's action. . . ."

Thieu's crackdown didn't seem to worry President Ford, however. He went right on with his attempt to set the proper atmosphere for additional congressional funding. An article in the February 14 *Far Eastern Economic Review* described Ford's campaign as coming "complete with Pentagon generals, dire predictions, a pleading Secretary of State, orchestrated press coverage and an outspoken Vice-President."

Ford even threw in a promise that would seem to have been completely discredited during the long years of U.S. escalation in Indochina and that not even the most cynical servant of Wall Street could use

again with a straight face. In an interview with the *Chicago Tribune* published February 9, Ford stated that if Congress would only meet his requests for the next three years, that would be the end of it.

"I would be willing to take sufficiently large amounts over a three-year period and say, 'This it it—if the Congress will appro-

priate it, I would agree not to ask any more.'"

Ford's memory may be short, but he would be advised not to project his own mental deficiencies onto the rest of the people in the country, most of whom will recall having heard that line before. At the time, they made their opinions known quite strongly to his predecessors. □

Six British MPs Score Trumped-Up Tax Claim

Attack on Russell Foundation Protested

The British government's attack on the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation* has begun to arouse wide protest. The foundation, which is active in defending political prisoners around the world, is threatened with a tax suit and eviction from its offices.

Members of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal II, which has been hearing testimony on the suppression of human rights in Latin America, have circulated a resolution in support of the foundation.

Signers of the statement included French mathematician Laurent Schwartz, Yugoslav philosopher Vladimir Dedijer, Argentine novelist Julio Cortazar, and Professor James Petras of the State University of New York. It said in part:

"This Tribunal has learned with dismay the news that the British authorities are pursuing two separate initiatives which imperil the continued existence of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which was established by Bertrand Russell to carry forward his campaign for peace and against oppression, without fear of or favour from oppressors of any kind. . . .

"If the foundation is driven out of existence this will be a serious setback for all those of us who are pledged to continue and develop Russell's work."

A letter from six Members of Parliament published in the January 21 London *Guardian* reflected the same concern:

"Knowing of the valuable work done by the Russell Foundation on behalf of political prisoners everywhere, we are disturbed that the Inland Revenue should use public resources to make a test case involving such a body."

Signing the letter were Audrey Wise, Tom Litterick, Martin Flannery, Bob Cryer, Jo Richardson, and Stan Newens.

The foundation has explained in a fact sheet sent to its supporters that the tax dispute dates from 1968. Inland Revenue demanded £35,200 from the foundation in corporation tax assessments on £80,868 the

group had received during 1966-68 in royalties on sales of the first volume of Bertrand Russell's autobiography.

On the basis of legal advice, the foundation appealed the claim. The case was heard by the Special Commissioners in February 1973, at which time the attorney for Inland Revenue admitted that no corporation tax could properly be charged on the royalties.

Subsequently Inland Revenue and the foundation's attorneys agreed that £6,638 in capital gains tax would be paid on the receipts.

However, in August 1974, Inland Revenue announced that it would appeal the Special Commissioners' decision, viewing the matter as a convenient issue for a test case.

A further assault on the foundation's ability to function came in the form of a recent order by local Nottingham authorities for the demolition of the foundation's printing press and offices.

Foundation director Ken Coates pointed out in a February 18 letter that "there is no conceivable justification for the Compulsory Purchase Order, since the local authority has not yet even begun to prepare its plans for the alternative use of the site."

The foundation has requested that letters of protest against the tax suit be sent to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, 10 Downing Street, London, England. Letters protesting the threat to demolish the foundation's offices should be sent to the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Old Market Square, Nottingham, England. Copies of all protests should be sent to the foundation at the Bertrand Russell House.

The foundation estimates that a minimum of £30,000 will be required to assure the continuation of its work. □

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Papuan Separatists Demand Independent Republic

By Sol Salby

[The following article appeared in the February 7 issue of *Direct Action*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in Sydney.]

* * *

Plans for the smooth transition of Papua New Guinea to nominal independence were seriously jolted with the declaration of a republic by Papuan separatists on January 18. The separatists who issued the declaration represent a wide cross section of Papuan political forces.

According to Patrick Boyce, in a dispatch to the January 20 *Sydney Morning Herald*, the separatists are led by Josephine Abaijah, the only woman member of the House of Assembly and a leader of the Papua Besana (Tribe) movement, and Simon Kaumi, a former chief electoral officer currently suspended from the Public Service.

Boyce added: "Miss Abaijah claimed the group also included the majority of Port Moresby City Council, the black power movement, trade-unions and the Socialist Worker Party."

The *Australian* of the same day added the Papuan Liberation Movement and the Papua Socialist Group to the list of participants. The paper also reported the establishment of what the separatist group calls Papua's first interim government.

Papuan separatism has been a growing force for several years now. (Papua, the southern part of the country, is technically an Australian territory. New Guinea is technically a United Nations Trust Territory administered by Australia.)

There are good reasons for separatist feeling. Papua has been kept less developed than New Guinea. Proportionately, it produced far less coffee and cocoa than New Guinea and slightly less coconut products. These are Papua New Guinea's three major agricultural exports. In terms of the country's other major export, copper, Papua is in an even worse situation. While the Panguna copper mine on Bougainville Island (which is part of New Guinea) is in operation, the OK Tedi project in Papua has still not been begun. Given the low copper prices that prevail at the moment, it might not get under way at all.

Discrimination against Papua also exists in the distribution of government spending. This is disguised somewhat by the fact that a large amount of government spending is concentrated in the national capital, Port Moresby, in Papua.

However, many of the residents of that city are New Guineans.

It has been argued that because the division between Papua and New Guinea is a completely artificial one determined in the last century by the conflict between British and German imperialism, Papuan nationalism can be of little relevance. This argument is usually supplemented by the statement that since there are 700 different languages in the country consistency would require 700 national movements, not just the Papuan.

These arguments fail to understand the reality of the situation. The various Papuan tribal and language groups do have common links. One such link is the dominant language, Police Motu. There has been a continuous history of discrimination against this language in favor of New Guinea's dominant language, Pidgin. Under Australian rule, there was (and there still is) no compulsion for Australian officers to learn any local language. However, many learnt pidgin and only a few learnt Motu.

Support for Police Motu is quite strong. Even Papuan ministers in Somare's government who have opposed the separatist movement have been forced to defend the language. Christopher Ashton reported in the July 15, 1974, *National Times* that the deputy chief minister, Dr Guise, threatened to recall every Papua New Guinean broadcaster with Radio Australia in Melbourne unless news bulletins were read in Motu as well as Pidgin and English.

The separatist movements have been growing more quickly over the last year as a result of the deteriorating economic conditions in both Papua and New Guinea. The economic decline has resulted in many Papuans demanding control of their own economy. As an underdeveloped country heavily dependent on Australia, Papua New Guinea is suffering from a very high level of inflation. Many prices are higher than in Australia, with staple commodities like sugar selling at double the Australian prices. At the same time, wages are extremely low. The rural minimum wage stands at A\$10 [about US \$13.40] a week.

In the middle part of last year, several thousand women led by Abaijah marched in the streets of Port Moresby against the Somare government's inability to control inflation. Now, they are demanding more action. Abaijah was quoted in the January 20 *Sydney Morning Herald* assaying, "We're going to fight for the freedom of Papua. We have been talking about this

long enough. This year is the year for action—we are no longer playing." This is far more militant language than she has used before.

The declaration of the republic follows earlier action by Abaijah's associate in the current moves, Simon Kaumi. On January 15 he led 150 members of the Papuan Republican Army to occupy the Joropa coffee plantation. According to a district officer quoted in the January 15 Papua New Guinea *Post-Courier*, the army has been trained by an ex-police sergeant. The *Post-Courier* also reported that the army was formed by the Ariwo Development Association, which has 5,000 members. (Ariwo means wake up.) The army has apparently found increasing support, and Kaumi plans to make it a Papua-wide organisation.

Kaumi's army marched on the plantation because the villagers represented by the Ariwo Development Association wanted to take over the plantation. Apparently the villagers had built up a village and a trade store on the plantation site before the occupation.

The significance of the occupation of the plantation did not escape the government's attention. Plantations, owned by Australian colonialists, form the backbone of Papua New Guinea's agriculture. Writing in the March 25, 1974, *National Times*, Christopher Ashton summarised the situation: "Their [the plantations'] contribution to export income and Government revenue is out of all proportion to acreage and numbers; in copra 63 per cent; coffee 28 per cent; rubber 90 per cent; cocoa 68 per cent; tea 81 per cent; and of PNG's cattle population 85 per cent, graze on [Australian] expatriate pastoral leases."

Thus the take-over of a coffee plantation represents a serious attack on the imperialist interests in Papua New Guinea. For the time being the Somare government has decided to play down the whole affair. The plantation take-over is so much intertwined with the Papuan nationalist movement and is so immensely popular in itself that the government is limited in its options.

The government's action so far has been limited to issuing mild threats. Speaking from his Wewak home, Somare said that Abaijah and Kaumi had advocated direct confrontation with the government.

"They will now have to face full responsibility for their actions."

"Miss Abaijah and Mr Kaumi are out

of touch with reality. The proposed provincial government system will provide the avenue for village people to take greater control of their own affairs.

"The Government will not tolerate greedy and unscrupulous politicians who manipulate innocent people to further their own personal ambitions," he said.

Within a week Somare was to discover just how far Abaijah and Kaumi were "out of touch with reality." Papuan separatism was so strong that Somare could not get a joint declaration condemning the separatists out of his own Papuan cabinet ministers.

The Australian government, which still officially administers Papua New Guinea and will continue to do so until formal independence, has remained silent. It wants the PNG government to take all action at this stage. But there is no question that if the need arises Canberra will intervene economically and militarily to stop the Papuan and any other separatist movement. The *Australian* made this clear in the last paragraph of its January 22 editorial:

"The National Coalition is equipped to lead Papua New Guinea to nationhood and independence; the Opposition in the House of Assembly is loyal to the same goal while differing in a rigorous and healthy way when it sees fit. The many separatist groups in the country show signs of feeding off each other, none deserves to be fostered, all should know that their efforts debase the worthy aim of unity and that *whatever strength is needed to dissuade them will be exerted.*" (Emphasis added.)

The current efforts by the separatist movements are, by virtue of necessity, rather limited. It appears that the current nationalist upsurge will be followed by bigger ones in the future. In the meantime the Australian labor movement must make it clear that for its part it stands for complete self-determination of the peoples of Papua New Guinea and will oppose any Australian intervention. □

CIA Official Warns Agents They May Face Prosecution

The Central Intelligence Agency has warned its employees that they may be prosecuted for past agency practices and has reminded them of their "constitutional rights to remain silent" if questioned by the Justice Department.

According to a report in the February 15 *Chicago Tribune*, the agency issued an interoffice memorandum February 6 advising employees to hire private attorneys and leaving the impression that if prosecuted they would be on their own. The memorandum was signed by David Blee, deputy director of the CIA's clandestine Operations Division, better known as the "dirty tricks" department.

Australian Labor Government Refuses to Issue Visas

Why Whitlam Banned the PLO

By David Nizoz

Sydney

In a complete reversal of Labor party policy, the Whitlam government banned a delegation from the Palestine Liberation Organisation from visiting Australia. The decision was taken by the full cabinet January 29, following three days of hysterical outcry by the capitalist press.

The PLO was invited to Australia by an unofficial labor movement delegation that visited the Arab East last year. The visit was organized through an ad hoc committee, the Palestine Australia Committee, which was composed largely of the Australian delegation. This committee included Bill Hartley, a member of the federal executive of the Labor party; George Petersen, a Labor member of the New South Wales state parliament; and Tom Ryan, federal secretary of the Food Preservers Union.

After the invitation was issued, Hartley approached Gough Whitlam, the prime minister, and Clyde Cameron, the minister for labor and immigration, for assurances that visas would be issued to the PLO delegation. These assurances were readily granted. The organizers of the tour were therefore quite confident that regardless of the recommendation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Immigration, Cameron, as minister in charge, would grant the visas.

Both supporters and opponents of the issuing of the visas were aware of a recent precedent. In 1974 the Department of Labor and Immigration recommended denial of a visa to the well-known Belgian Marxist economist Ernest Mandel. However, Cameron reversed the decision and allowed Mandel to enter the country.

Thus the Zionist circles that opposed the tour knew that the only way they could block the Palestinians' entry was through transferring the decision to the full meeting of cabinet. There they had a powerful Zionist lobby to help carry the decision their way. In order to do so they had to orchestrate a "public outcry" against the PLO.

When Hartley returned to Australia January 25 with final plans for the tour, the Zionist opponents were well prepared. As soon as Hartley announced the tour plans they launched their campaign.

The capitalist media did not require too much encouragement. The nationwide newspaper the *Australian* headed its initial

report: "Violence fear on PLO tour around Australia." This was typical of the approach of all the major newspapers around the country.

In reporting the Zionist opposition to the tour they made much use of the most prominent spokesman for the Zionist cause within the labor movement—Bob Hawke. As president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Hawke has established a reputation as an all-out supporter of the Israeli state. He is also president of the Australian Labor party and has clashed publicly with Whitlam over Labor's official "even-handed" approach during the October 1973 war.

On this occasion Hawke told the press: "I don't believe they should come to this country. These people have a record for terrorism and I don't believe it is in the interests of this country that their representatives should come."

Later, in commenting on the security checks on members of the proposed delegation being undertaken by the government, Hawke said: "That sort of exercise is academic because all these people have blood on their hands. They are all guilty by association."

Others were soon to follow Hawke. The Labor premier of South Australia, Don Dunstan, announced that his state would not provide any facilities to the PLO delegation. In fact, such facilities were not sought in the first place by either the PLO or the tour organizers. Nevertheless, Dunstan's comments helped to build up the atmosphere of hysteria, and there was a rush by other premiers and state opposition leaders to follow suit.

Such labor figures as John Ducker, the NSW president of the ALP and assistant secretary of the NSW Labor Council, also felt compelled to speak out: "I am totally opposed to violence and that leads me to oppose the track record of the PLO, which is one of atrocity after atrocity," he said. Ducker's own track record on matters of opposing violence has not exactly been a good one. His opposition to any strike action in support of demonstrations against the war in Vietnam is still well remembered within the labor movement.

A West Australia Labor member of parliament, Joe Berinson, also chimed in. Berinson, who is a member of the Friends of Israel, made one of the most arrogant

statements. "I would oppose the issue of them [the visas]. I see no obligation on the Government to facilitate the entry of the group whose sole policy objective is entirely contrary to the policy of the Government and the Labor Party on the Middle East," he said.

Meanwhile, the press continued its attacks on the tour, extending its opposition to editorial comment. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, one of the most anti-Labor newspapers in the country, began to take interest in the future of the Labor party: "If the PLO party comes here there will be, quite evidently, a blazing row. It will occur in the Labor Party, which is already uncomfortably divided because public figures like Mr Hartley, on one side, and Mr Hawke, on the other, cannot see that public expression of their private opinions invariably produces party schisms."

The *Australian* was even more direct in its advice to the government: "The intended visit to Australia of a Palestine Liberation Organisation should not take place. The Government, which still has the option, should announce now that it cannot issue the necessary visas 'at this time.'"

In its January 28 editorial, the *Australian* displayed its downright racism and hypocrisy: "... there is likely to be a dog fight between the Hawke and Hartley forces at this week's A.L.P. Federal conference, and a convulsion of Australia's large and loyal Jewish population." Not a word about Australia's much larger Arab population.

The editorial continued: "In the meantime the hapless mission would be left to preach to the converted views and information which are already being actively propagated in Australia by the Arab Information Centre, the several Arab embassies, and the group known as Friends of Palestine." Quite apart from the unwillingness of the Arab embassies to put forward the Palestinian viewpoint, the *Australian* displayed its hypocrisy in relation to the Friends of Palestine.

On January 29 Tony Maron, the general secretary of the Friends of Palestine, went to the *Australian* to place an advertisement. He was taken to the paper's legal department, which approved the text of the ad. He was then told to return the following day to inspect the proofs before paying for it. Just before he was due to leave home he was telephoned by a representative of the advertising department who told him that the ad had been rejected by the top management, which refused to give any reason for the decision.

For their part, the Zionists continued to hint at the possibility of violence directed at the delegation. Russell Skelton reported in the January 29 Melbourne *Age* that the "Australian Jewish community has also threatened to stage demonstrations and

possible violence if the PLO delegation is allowed into the country."

All this propaganda had the desired effect. Cameron passed the decision to the full meeting of cabinet. After much debate a "compromise" resolution was moved by



WHITLAM

Kim Beazley, minister for education, advising the PLO delegation that the decision could not be granted "at this time." No figures were issued but newspaper reports indicated a narrow majority of only one or two votes for the resolution.

In announcing the ban in his weekly press conference, Whitlam decided to demonstrate his "even-handedness." He attacked both Hartley and Hawke for expressing their private opinions in public. "Mr Hawke and Mr Hartley have been responsible, as much as anyone, for exacerbating divisions in Australia on the Middle East," he said. "They have been far too outspoken—as individuals, of course—on this matter and it has not helped discussion of this matter."

Mike Steketee reported from the press conference in the January 30 *Australian*: "Mr Whitlam said the decision not to grant the visas had been made because such a visit now would worsen divisions within the Australian community. Another important reason not mentioned by Mr Whitlam was that if the Government had allowed the visit to go ahead, it would have created new tensions between opposing factions of the A.L.P."

The decision stunned many Labor supporters, but opposition to the ban crystallized immediately. The Australian Union of Students, meeting in Melbourne at the time,

condemned the government's decision. The union, which represents 210,000 tertiary students, passed the motion almost unanimously, with only one campus (out of more than fifty present) voting against it.

The motion read as follows: "This January annual council of the Australian Union of Students expresses its concern and disgust at the decision of the Australian Government to deny entry visas to a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation whose aim while in Australia was to present a viewpoint not usually heard in Australia on the plight of the Palestinian people."

"This meeting notes that the Australian Government, which in Opposition made strong objections to the then Liberal Government's refusal to permit Dr Ernest Mandel and Dick Gregory to enter Australia and present their viewpoint to the Australian people, when in office refuses entry to representatives of an organisation that has been invited to present its case at the United Nations."

Members of the Australian Young Labor Movement were also quick to criticise the government's ban. The Young Labor leaders from four states attacked the government's denial of civil liberties. "We did not work for the return of the Labor Government to deny our civil rights," said Andrew Jamieson, a spokesman for the group who is senior vice-chairman of the Victorian Young Labor Association.

The Young Labor leaders' comments included a strong denunciation of Hawke. "We especially condemn the racist hysteria generated by the Federal president of the ALP, Mr R.J. Hawke. In persistently issuing anti-Arab pronouncements Mr Hawke has shown himself to be a person unfit to be president of the Australian Labor Party," they said.

The Australian Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance have played a major role in mobilising the opposition to the government's ban. Earlier, the SWL made one of its leaders, Sol Salby, available to act as full-time national coordinator of the tour. Salby, the managing editor of the revolutionary-socialist fortnightly *Direct Action*, was born in Israel and lived there for sixteen years. He is well known as an outspoken defender of the Palestinian revolution.

Australia's Arab community has planned to protest the ban with nationwide demonstrations February 13. An indication of the strong feeling in the Arab community was given in Sydney February 2. An organising meeting to plan actions protesting the government's decision, advertised in the Arab-language newspaper *El Telegraph*, was attended by 800 Arabs. □

'Officials' Turn Against Their Own Past

By Gerry Foley

[Second of a series]

While many of the issues in the split in the "Official" republican movement remain obscure, it is clear that at least one fundamental question is involved.

In an article entitled "I.R.S.P. Split Explained," the January issue of the "Official" organ, the *United Irishman*, said: "It is clear now that the Provisionals were a right wing split from the Republican Movement, they are now balanced by an ultra-left instant revolutionary organisation, the members of which have forgotten the fundamental premise on which Republicanism was founded, the unity of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter."

This view was spelled out more clearly in the December/January issue of *Rosc Catha*, the organ of Clann na h-Eireann, the "Official" organization in Britain:

"There is today only one kind of unity possible in Ireland—class unity. It is a unity rejected by Provos and Free State politicians alike, it is a unity that is also rejected by the bulk of Orange militants and their organisations.

"In such a situation there is little Republicans can do in the South except plod on, trying to create unity by example of involvement in grass roots working class issues.

"The decision of some members of the Movement, a small handful, to leave and with some ex-members form a new party, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was due to their rejection of this reality, and their belief that short-cuts are possible. Whether they agree among themselves on what the short-cut is, remains to be seen but, like the Provos before them, they will only demonstrate that founding yet another 'revolutionary party' may help them work off frustrations and escape for a short while from the real political situation, but it cannot help make the revolution and that is what it is all supposed to be about.

"Those of us who didn't bolt after the Provo/Fianna Fail New Ireland, or fall for the romantic magic formulas of Saor Eire are not very impressed by this new political animal—we know its pedigree."

Thus, the basic argument of the "Official" organs is that the new party has broken from the concept that "class unity" between Catholic and Protestant Workers must come before any deepgoing social struggles can be undertaken in Ireland. This conception is also coupled with the idea that the only way to achieve such

unity is through a long-range strategy of involving Protestant and Catholic workers together in economic actions so elementary and piecemeal that they will not raise "divisive" political questions. Those unwilling to "plod on" in this gradualist perspective are simply "ultraleftists"—the same kind of "political animal" as Provisional militarists or the tiny band of adventurers that assumed a Guevarist veneer and the name of Saor Eire.

The IRSP has apparently rejected the gradualist, narrowly economic strategy recommended by the "Officials" as the only way to "make the revolution." In a speech January 1 in the Ardoyne Catholic ghetto in Belfast, one of the main leaders of the new group, Séamus Costello, said:

"We want protestant and catholic unity—but on the basis of a principled political approach. That is unity on the basis of the effects of imperialist policy: There is absolutely no point in approaching the protestants on the 'ring road' only to have them a week later reject our position on the national question. . . . Social and economic grievances do exist on the Shankill Road [the main poor Protestant area facing the Catholic ghettos along the Falls Road in Belfast]. However, at present it is impossible to talk to protestants about these things in the right context. We must stand firm on the national question and put our class policies from there. . . . We recognise the importance of the present struggles, but the long term solution will have to be a socialist republic. Working class people will have to control the wealth. There is no future in a political solution short of this objective. . . . We do not want a 32 county free state. We do not want a border. We do not want capitalist rule. . . . We do not want to hinder unity. We want to unite on a broad front against imperialism. We issue a call for unity to individuals and organisations on short term demands such as these: end internment, British troops out, amnesty for all political prisoners and an end to bad debts accrued during the rent and rates strikes. . . . But our long term aim remains a socialist republic."

'Misunderstood Nationalists'?

The idea that the Protestants must not be "alienated" at any cost and must be catered to as misunderstood nationalists has been a traditional article of faith in republican circles.

This precept has been interpreted in various ways. Pádraig Pearse, one of the leaders of the 1916 rising, welcomed the Protestant militias that were formed to oppose implementation of the Home Rule Bill, believing that any group of Irishmen who took up arms against British policy were nationalists in fact and would come to make a common cause with other nationalists. This view was expressed with a fervent revolutionary idealism. But the hard fact is that such Protestant militias have maintained imperialist rule in one-fifth of Ireland for more than fifty years and subjected the nationalist-minded people to a regime of racist-like subjugation.

When the republican movement made a turn toward socialism in the 1960s, it adopted a "left" version of this principle, stressing the common "working-class" character of the majority of both the Catholic and Protestant population. In actual fact, this did not represent much of an advance. The bourgeois nationalist Fianna Fáil party has shown itself capable of explaining the need for unity and understanding between the poor of both communities. It has not been loath to turn the argument against nationalist militants, claiming that they were "alienating the Protestant working people."

Likewise, commentators in the bourgeois press anxious to avoid taking a stand in defense of the oppressed people have been quick to discover that "working-class unity" on economic questions is the solution and to deplore the stupidity of both sides for not seeing this.

However, if the republican movement in 1916 and 1918-22 had consistently followed the precept that Catholic-Protestant unity was the precondition for beginning the struggle against imperialist rule, it would have had to adopt a basically passive role, the role that was adopted in fact by the reformist Labour party.

Moreover, if the republican movement of the 1960s had followed this principle consistently, it would not have built the civil-rights movement. The most consistent advocate of this conception of Protestant-Catholic unity, Roy Johnston, the Stalinist political adviser of the "Official" republican leadership, realized this and said so when he resigned from the movement in 1972 to return to the Communist party. In an article in the March 31, 1972, issue of *Hibernia*, he wrote:

"In retrospect, I am now convinced that the timing was wrong [in starting the civil-rights movement]. We know that the mixture was explosive, but we underestimated, seriously, the difficulty of controlling the magnitude and direction of the blast.

"If the republican clubs had had a chance to find their feet, get engaged in local political activity, draw a few conclusions

for themselves, establish some links with the students, etc., the idea of a civil rights movement would have emerged naturally.

"This was beginning to happen. By 1966 the Belfast republicans were beginning to be interested in tenants associations; there had been successful agitations about pedestrian crossings, etc."

This appears to be the same point made by the editors of *Rosc Catha* when they wrote about the need to "plod on, trying to create unity by example of involvement in grass roots working class issues." Johnston's "apologia" indicates the real meaning of this. Back to "agitations about pedestrian crossings."

Influence of Stalinism

In fact, the idea that Protestant-Catholic unity must be achieved before beginning a fight for fundamental change is a result of the victory of Stalinist politics at the 1974 national convention of the "Official" republican movement and the apparent capitulation of the more left elements in the anti-Costello bloc to Stalinism.

It cannot be assumed that this line will be, or can be, carried to its ultimate conclusion, or that the present leadership and membership will swallow Stalinist politics and all that goes with it. But in the publications of the movement and in public statements, representatives of the "Officials" have already carried the logic of this turn quite far.

In its public line, since the dissidents were driven out, the "Official" republican movement has come full circle from the positive role it played in building and defending the mass civil-rights movement. It has come over in fact to the positions of its ultraleft critics in 1969 and 1970.

It is unfortunate that the editors of the *United Irishman* and *Rosc Catha* seem to have forgotten that adventurism is not the only form of ultraleftism. There is also a sectarian, or dogmatic, side to it, which consists of rejecting real struggles in the name of abstract schemas.

How far the "Officials" have come from the days of the civil-rights struggle is indicated by this passage in the February issue of the *United Irishman*:

"The outrageous and totally false statement that the leadership has over the past four years been deceiving members is easily refuted: The present leadership is basically the same group who innovated the changes in the early sixties, who developed the agitational tactics of the Movement, who turned the organisation from a narrow, nationalist, chauvinist organisation to a conscious, socialist, revolutionary organisation. . . ."

Thus, this representative of the "Official" movement has come to reject as "chauvinist" the past ideals of the move-

'Officials' Accused of Killing IRSP Member

A nineteen-year-old local leader of the Irish Republican Socialist party, Hugh Ferguson, was shot dead in Belfast on February 20. The national executive committee of the organization announced in Dublin that the assassins had been "positively identified" as members of the "Official" republican movement.

Ferguson was one of the leaders of the Whiterock club of the IRSP. According to the new party's statements, he had not been involved in any clashes with the "Officials" before.

Ferguson was apparently the "19-year-old construction worker" referred to in a February 20 dispatch to the *New York Times*, which reported:

"The dead man, a Roman Catholic, was singled out by gunmen from a group of workmen in the Catholic Ballymurphy area of West Belfast."

The *New York Times* included the shooting in a report of a series of attacks attributed to "Protestant extremists." This is an indication of the confusion that could result if an armed conflict developed between the republican organizations. No one could be sure who was carrying out the assassinations, and the repressive forces and Orange terrorists would have a perfect cover for opening a hunting season on nationalist militants. It is to be hoped that

the accusations of the IRSP are carefully investigated by the organizations in the Catholic community. Even a suspicion of a gang war among the nationalist organizations could constitute a serious danger to the Catholic community as a whole.

In particular, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and the Communist party of Ireland, which have been closely associated with the "Official" republicans, have an obligation to investigate this claim and condemn such an action if it proves to be, as the IRSP says, a political murder. The "Official" leadership would certainly take their opinion very seriously. And the Civil Rights Association did not hesitate to criticize actions by the "Officials" in the past that it thought were wrong, such as the Aldershot bombing.

On the other hand, the IRSP response to the shooting has not been the most effective. The party has called on members of the "Official" organization to resign in protest. This puts the ranks of the rival group in a position of having to disavow political positions in which they believe in order to oppose an act, which if the IRSP claim is true, they will nearly all oppose.

It is necessary to build the maximum unity against any actions that may endanger the militant organizations and the Catholic community as a whole.

ment and the struggle that led it to socialist conclusions. This statement in fact accepts the accusation that was raised against the movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s by ultraleft sectarians. The flipflop came not because the leadership of the movement continued to evolve toward the left but because it could not carry forward the revolutionary dynamic that it unleashed, and because it decided in effect to retreat.

In order to be able to carry out such a retreat, the leadership has begun promulgating a set of dogmas that promise to turn the political life of the organization into a hothouse of malignant sectarianism and the organization itself into a dying sect. The organization is in danger of turning into its opposite in the ugliest way possible. And that is symbolized by its slandering of its own past.

On the other hand, the Stalinist bent of some of the "Official" republican leadership that was fostered by the Stalinist agents from the beginning has finally emerged in a virulent form, so that this line and its fruits can be clearly judged.

Since the beginning of the mass civil-rights movement, the leadership has wavered between the influence of Stalinism and the attractiveness of mass action, which is

in harmony with the revolutionary ideals of the movement. Now at last it has clearly opted for one alternative, and although it has chosen the wrong one, this at least offers Irish revolutionists an opportunity to draw some basic political lessons and to settle accounts with some false ideas they have dragged along from the past. At last, the "Official" leadership has adopted a "consistent" position of counterposing a utopian concept of Catholic-Protestant unity to the struggle of the Catholics against caste oppression.

The Protestant Problem

Although not "alienating" the Protestants had been a principle of the movement, it was not consistently followed.

The republican leadership was even forced to wage a political struggle for an entire period against ultraleft sectarians who criticized them, with formal correctness, for their inconsistency on this question.

The sectarians argued that organizing the Catholics against their special oppression alienated the Protestant workers by threatening to deprive them of what they

had in order to redress the injustice to the historically oppressed section of the population.

The sectarians maintained that a struggle against the oppression and the greater exploitation of one section of the working class would only divide the workers. What was needed, they said, was a struggle against the exploitation of workers in general as a class. They denounced the "Official" republicans for polarizing the community on the basis of historic national identifications—for "petty-bourgeois nationalism."

The fight for Catholic emancipation, for civil rights, did polarize the Northern Irish population. But at the same time, the left sectarians found that the Catholic population moved toward the left and that in the process the hold of the Catholic church tended to be weakened rather than reinforced. At the same time, the Protestant workers would not listen to the most sympathetic chats about their immediate economic problems unless they were wholly convinced that the people doing the talking were "sound" on the question of union with Britain and preserving the Protestant ascendancy.

The "Officials" had the most extensive experience in this respect, among other things because of their guerrilla tradition. They were convinced that the Protestant paramilitary gangs, which engaged in activities similar to theirs and to a certain extent suffered the same penalties, had to have a revolutionary dynamic. There had to be something revolutionary about groups that were plebeian, or even working-class, in their social composition and engaged in violence "from below."

Some of the Protestant paramilitary groups did develop radical-sounding language that no doubt reflected distorted class feelings in the poor Protestant neighborhoods. However, the context and limitations of this were revealed in a striking way by two liberal Unionist journalists who shared the basic point of view of the members of the Protestant paramilitary groups, although naturally they deplored these groups' random murders of Catholics.

Not surprisingly, these journalists, Martin Dillon and Denis Leane, indicate that the "left" group that most appealed to the "antiestablishment" element among the Protestant gunmen was the one that most consistently justified the attitude of the defenders of Protestant ascendancy.

In their book *Political Murder in Northern Ireland*, they quote the revelations of Dave Fogel, a former leader of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), on the development of "left" ideas in one section of this paramilitary gang. After he fled to England to avoid assassination by his former associates, Fogel wrote in the London *Sunday Times*:

"My men will be surprised to learn that the late Ernie Elliot [who was assassinated, presumably by another faction] and I were engaged in talks with Two Nations [that is, the British and Irish Communist Organisation (BICO), an ultra-Stalinist sect whose prime tenet is that the Protestants are a nation and that therefore their struggle to maintain the Six-County state represents "democratic" resistance to Dublin imperialism]. This is the only Marxist group that recognizes Ulster. It wants Catholics to come out categorically for the continuation of the border. It's this which keeps the Catholics and Prod working class apart. Once the Prods lose their fear of Dublin then the way is open to a united working class. Well, these fellows came up from Dublin, one with a big black beard, and we had a couple of meetings in my house. Tommy Herron met them and was quite interested."

Dillon and Leane thought such attitudes represented a real hope.

"Fogel's views are very interesting. Though they may appear fairly tame to the outsider, they are quite extraordinary in the context of Northern Ireland at this time. His views on social conditions in both communities and his hostility to the Unionist Party are identical to the Official IRA's. So too is his attitude to a united Ulster working class."

Furthermore, Dillon and Leane argued, this "class approach" produced some important positive results. The UDA ordered an end, on January 3, 1973, to the random murders of Catholics. The two liberal Unionist journalists held that this was a first step toward "class unity."

"The decision to call off the Protestant assassins was at least in part prompted by contacts the existing leadership of the UDA had had with the Official IRA. This is not to say that there was any 'deal' involved. But it is to say that the decision to call the killers off the Roman Catholic community was a conscious response by people in the UDA inner council to the belief that there was a common ground of social discontent and genuine grievances that was shared by both the Catholic and Protestant working classes in Ulster."

However, the truce was short-lived. The same villains, who, according to many republican scenarios, have blocked the "natural tendency" of the Protestant workers to unite with their Catholic class comrades, were still active. That is, the right-wing Unionists once again snatched the Protestant workers back at the last moment before the long awaited union could be consummated.

"But Harding Smith was opposed to this ideology, and he was a formidable opponent. He was appalled by the signs of an accommodation between the Official IRA and the UDA. He saw this as another sign

of the decline and degeneracy in the ranks of the organization he had helped to build. He set himself to eradicate the malignancy, in all its forms, that had set in while he was away, and introduce a rigorous discipline throughout the Association. The lawlessness and racketeering would be curbed, and so too would the dangerous flirtation with the other side.

"Herron remained in East Belfast [where there is only a small Catholic community], but under pressure. Within the UDA as a whole, he was isolated and out-flanked by Harding Smith and the hard men in the West [where large neighborhoods of poor Catholics and poor Protestants face each other], who were backed by the UVF [Ulster Volunteer Force]. He was not strong enough to resist Harding Smith on his own. He agreed to a compromise. He accepted Harding Smith's takeover of the UDA's central structure. In return he retained the vice-chairmanship and his control in the East and he agreed to reduce the level of extortion in his areas to an acceptable level.

"The hard men in the West had been champing at the bit of enforced inaction. At the end of January, they were unleashed. On Monday 29 January with the killings of 14-year-old Peter Waterson, and James Trainor, 22, both Catholics, they showed that they were in business again. Twelve people were to die in the next seven days as the assassins, idle for four weeks, returned to their task."

On the other hand, the right-wing Unionists were not the only ones to blame for the breakdown of "class unity." The Catholic "sectarians" bore at least a share of the guilt, the two journalists argued. To back this up, they quoted the UDA statement ending the truce:

"We cannot control Protestant extremists in the face of IRA killings of UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment, the Northern Irish Home Guard] men, policemen, and civilian Protestants, and in the face of the attitude of Republican MPs who are not happy unless they are talking about oppression and injustice.

"Only four weeks ago we made an effort—we said the killing must stop and it did. But now the bombings by republican rebels have provoked them." Dillon and Leane drew this conclusion:

"The message was clear. The 'moderate' element in the UDA had tried to achieve peace. It had made a gesture—at considerable personal risk to those behind it—to the Catholic working class by calling off the assassins. The only response from the Catholics had been for the Provisionals to step up the campaign of bombings and killings of members of the security forces.

"One should not undervalue the significance of what had happened. The olive branch was there, if only someone on the Catholic side had clasped it. Just as the

Provisional IRA had been given an opening in June 1972 by the British government, so, too, in January 1973 the Officials were given a chance by the UDA. It was not enough for the UDA to call off the assassins. It required a *quid pro quo*."

The Main Point for the UDA

Once again, the "Officials" were being criticized for their lack of consistency. Not only were they too slow to make the moves that followed logically from their position, however; they were clumsy enough to make a politically unacceptable overture to the UDA:

"Immediately after the announcement by Herron that the killings would stop, the executive of the Republican Clubs—a front for the Official IRA—issued an invitation to the UDA to take part in joint patrols to stamp out the killings. A spokesman said that he had always been confident that the UDA was representative of the Protestant working class. The offer was tersely rejected by the UDA which said in a statement: 'Under no circumstances will we meet the IRA. These people can praise us all they like, but we will never meet the IRA.'

"The Officials had made a blunder, and their offer can hardly have helped Herron and his followers in the power-struggle. The UDA needed no help from the Officials in keeping the assassins quiet. What it did need, however, was a similar move by the Officials to keep the Provisionals inactive. The response that the moderates in the UDA wanted was quite simple. They could hold back the hard men on their side if the Officials could stop the Provisionals' campaign of bombings and shootings."

The difference between the UDA murders and the Provisional terrorist campaign escaped Dillon and Lehane. The problem, as they saw it, was "sectarianism," that is, the traditional religious antagonism. Obviously, it takes two sides to create and maintain "sectarianism," and in order to oppose it, the "extremists" on both sides must be blamed. Dillon and Lehane could not see the distinction between racist-like terror against a subject population on the one hand, and, on the other, commando group attacks against the repressive forces of the state, attacks that, while they did not have the full force of the oppressed community behind them and certainly did not help to mobilize it, did express its feelings to a considerable extent.

Thus, these two journalists failed to notice that the UDA statement blamed not only the Provisional military actions but also "Republican MPs... talking about oppression and injustice."

The plain fact was that the most fundamental thing for these Protestant activists was to maintain the Protestant ascendancy. They focused on the Provisional military

actions only because these were the type of attack on this system against which it was easiest to arouse public opinion. They might have some social and economic aspirations. But the fundamental thing was the ascendancy. And they would not accept an alliance with anyone who was not prepared to join with them in the defense of this.

Which Is Fighting Oppression?

It is not necessary to equate Orangeism with fascism to think that the purge of the "left" in the UDA has much in common with the "Night of the Long Knives" in Germany, when Hitler liquidated the "left" wing of the Nazi movement. Any mass-based reactionary movement will have such contradictions. However, as long as its political basis is reactionary the right will have little difficulty in the long run in maintaining its control.

In this case, the fact that the Catholics continued to fight oppression, despite an offer of "peace," was sufficient cause in the eyes of this Protestant "left" element to justify wanton killing of ordinary Catholic workers, and even children, as well as subordination to the most retrograde forces. This is an illustration of the fact that the Protestant workers cannot win independence as a class without crossing the communal line and joining the struggle of the Catholics against Orangeism and all its institutions, including the border.

Whatever reactionary features derive from their religious identification, the struggle of the Catholics as Catholics in Ireland is progressive and leads in the direction of working-class consciousness and action. The actions of Protestants as Protestants in Ireland are reactionary and lead in the direction of repression and racist-like terror. Thus, "sectarianism" as such is an altogether secondary aspect of the conflict in Northern Ireland. What is

fundamental is the conflict between the oppressed Catholic population and its oppressors—imperialism and the Protestant caste.

Concessions to the Protestant caste mentality do not help Protestant workers cross the crucial dividing line. This remains true even when such concessions are approached by the "left" route of talking about opposing "all bosses both Catholic and Protestant" and agreeing with Protestant workers about the reactionary nature of the Dublin regime. The effect rather is to lead any elements that make this type of overture to compromise with Orangeism and imperialist rule.

The logic of putting Catholic-Protestant unity ahead of the struggle against the oppression of the Catholic population was very clearly expressed at the 1972 national convention of the "Officials" by Desmond O'Hagan, the member of the present leadership who seems to have gained most in prominence in the past year and a half. He said that the Provisionals were worse enemies than the British army.

The clear implication of this is that it is more important to fight the mere nationalists in the Catholic community, who "alienate the Protestant workers," than it is to fight imperialism itself.

Whether the "Official" leadership will follow this logic to the end, or whether the leadership will allow itself to be led to such a conclusion, remains to be seen. But the newspaper of the movement, the *United Irishman*, has already openly disavowed the nationalist past of the republican movement. And it is certain that some of those still in the "Official" leadership would have been horrified and disbelieving if anyone had told them two years ago where their course would lead them.

There is worse ahead if they continue on this path. □

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AROUND THE WORLD



Children Starving in Phnompenh

According to relief agencies in Phnompenh, instances of severe malnutrition are on the rise and children are already dying of starvation. The main cause has been the spiraling inflation, which has put even rice out of the price range of the poorest families. Rice has increased from 240 riels per kilo in December to about 340 riels in February. A year ago rice cost 80 riels per kilo, and in 1970 about 8 riels per kilo.

A medical team leader for the World Vision relief agency reported that "we are not beginning to see vitamin B deficiency among children as well as vitamin A, which leads to blindness."

Dow to Invest \$300m in Yugoslav Plant

Dow Chemical has signed a preliminary agreement with a Yugoslav state firm, Industrija Nafta of Zagreb, to jointly build and operate a \$600 million petrochemical complex in Yugoslavia. Under the agreement, signed at the beginning of February, Dow would have a 49 percent interest.

If completed, the project would be the largest joint venture in Eastern Europe involving an American company. Dow already has more than \$6 million invested in a joint venture with another Zagreb chemical firm to produce plastics. Under Yugoslav laws, Dow will be allowed to take its profits out of the country.

Park Releases Political Prisoners Following Referendum 'Victory'

Following his predictable "victory" in the February 12 referendum endorsing his unspecified "major policies," South Korean President Park Chung Hee announced February 15 that he would release all political prisoners except those he said were Communists.

Within two days, seventy of the 203 persons known to have been jailed in the repression last year were freed. These included Kim Chi Ha, the country's best-known poet; Professor Kim Dong Gil, dean of theology at Seoul's Yonsei University; Pak Hyong Kyu, the Protestant minister who heads the outlawed Urban Industrial Mission; and Daniel Chi Hak Soun, Roman Catholic bishop of Wonju.

Listed among those expected to have been freed were Professor Kim Chan Kook of Yonsei University, and Kang Shin Ok, the lawyer who defended in court many of those

charged. A spokesman for Park said that all students arrested would be released. However, twenty-two alleged members of the People's Revolutionary party, including seven condemned to death, are to remain in jail.

The release announcement mentioned prominently the "national consensus" supposedly displayed by the referendum returns. It was announced that 73 percent of the 80 percent of the electorate that voted supported Park. This result isn't very surprising, given the fact that opposition electioneering was banned, while the government carried out an extensive "enlightenment" campaign. In addition, the regime itself tabulated the returns.

What perhaps is surprising is the 25 percent who voted "I oppose the major policies of the president"—particularly in view of the personal danger involved in voting no, and the election boycott sponsored by the opposition. In Seoul, the center of political life in the country, Park's policies were actually supported by only about 35 percent of the population.

Huge crowds formed outside prisons in Seoul and other cities waiting for the release of the prisoners, many of whom reported that they had been tortured.

The easing of the repression may be short-lived. Justice Minister Hwang Sanduk warned February 19 that the government will revoke the clemency of those "who do not behave."

Yugoslav Regime Closes 'Praxis'

After eleven years of publication, the dissident journal *Praxis* has been forced to close by the Yugoslav Communist party. Without officially banning the magazine, the party ordered its units in the various printing establishments not to publish it. At a meeting with foreign reporters February 21, Jure Bilic, a CP official, said that the party felt that "critics or forces that try to limit the influence of the League of Communists in society are detrimental to social development."

The Yugoslav authorities tried to close *Praxis* in 1974 by withdrawing an annual subsidy to the Croatian Philosophical Society and the Yugoslav Union of Philosophers, which published the magazine. However, the magazine's editorial staff at Zagreb University and its contributors

decided to work without pay, and *Praxis* continued to appear.

The bimonthly magazine, which first appeared in 1964, has frequently criticized the Yugoslav CP and the Tito regime from a socialist standpoint. The contributors to *Praxis* were predominantly university professors in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana, many of whom were former CP members.

The last issue of *Praxis* carried an article by Dobrica Cosic, one of Yugoslavia's leading novelists and until 1968 a member of the Central Committee of the Serbian Communist party. Cosic's article criticized the cultural restrictions in Yugoslavia.

In January, eight professors at the University of Belgrade who were associated with the *Praxis* group were fired from their positions.

Watergate Crooks Sentenced

Nixon's three closest collaborators in the Watergate cover-up conspiracy were sentenced February 21. H.R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, and John Mitchell each received sentences of two and a half to eight years. Judge John Sirica also ruled that they must serve at least two and a half years before they become eligible for parole.

Haldeman's lawyer lamented, "Whatever Bob Haldeman did, he did not for himself but for the President of the United States. Whatever Bob Haldeman did, so did Richard Nixon."

Ehrlichman's newly hired lawyer, reportedly known for his interest in radical causes, made a plea for his client to have a chance to do a "good deed" to pay for the "bad" he had done. Ehrlichman was willing to do legal work for Native Americans in New Mexico, he said.

Mitchell, the former U.S. attorney general, remained cynical. "It could have been a hell of a lot worse. They could have sentenced me to spend the rest of my life with Martha," he told reporters in a reference to his wife, from whom he is separated.

All three defendants say they plan to appeal.

Iran, Colombia to Resume Diplomatic Ties With Cuba

Two more governments have ignored the U.S. blockade of Cuba and have announced plans to renew full diplomatic relations

with Havana. The Foreign Ministry of Iran declared its intention to exchange ambassadors February 10. On February 21, Colombian Foreign Minister Indalecio Lievano announced that Bogotá planned to resume relations with Cuba.

Venezuelan Students Protest Against New U.S. Ambassador

A number of students were reported injured and eleven were arrested in police attacks on demonstrations in several Venezuelan cities February 5 and 6.

United Press International reported that the demonstrators were protesting the naming of Harry Shlaudeman as the new U.S. ambassador to Caracas. Shlaudeman, who was stationed in the Dominican Republic during the 1965 U.S. invasion and in Chile at the time of the overthrow of the Allende government, was denounced as a CIA agent by the demonstrators.

Italian Court Eases Abortion Law

Italy's highest tribunal, the Constitutional Court, ruled February 18 that abortion is now legal in Italy when doctors determine that pregnancy is a serious threat to a woman's mental or physical health. The court said that an article in the penal code dating from the Fascist era was "partly unconstitutional." Until now, abortion has been a crime punishable by up to five years imprisonment. The ruling provoked an outcry from the Vatican, which denounced the decision as "questionable and of extreme gravity." A statement released by the Italian Bishops Conference February 21 said that while it respected separation of church and state, "no eventual concession by civil law can make an abortion morally legal."

A campaign to force a referendum for the abolition of all laws against abortion is gathering strength. In Genoa, the Radical party announced February 12 that 348 women had publicly declared they had received abortions. The statements were collected at a series of meetings in support of feminist Adele Faccio and Radical party National Secretary Gianfranco Spadaccia. Both were jailed on charges stemming from a January 9 police raid on a Florence abortion clinic. Spadaccia was released February 10, but Faccio remains in jail.

Doctor Found Guilty of Manslaughter in Massachusetts Abortion Trial

In a setback to the struggle to defend the right to abortion, a Black Boston physician was convicted of manslaughter February 15 for an abortion he performed in 1973.

After six weeks of "medical testimony" by activists in the "right to life" movement, a Boston jury sustained the prosecution's contention that Dr. Kenneth Ed-

lin had "killed" the fetus in the course of an abortion performed October 3, 1973.

At the time, Edelin was chief resident in the obstetrics and gynecology department at Boston City Hospital, and one of only two doctors at the hospital who would perform abortions.

When his trial opened in early January, Edelin told a local newspaper, "The anti-abortion forces didn't just stumble onto this case. They had been watching me for about two years."

In another interview, Edelin stated, "I believe very strongly in a woman's right to determine what happens to her body. During illegal abortions, many women died. And many women suffered. And the problem is, the women who died are poor women, and mainly black women."

On February 17, Edelin was sentenced to one year's probation. His attorney announced that the conviction will be appealed.

The response among abortion-rights forces to Edelin's conviction was rapid. On short notice, feminist organizations in Boston organized a demonstration of 2,000 persons, many of them Blacks. They marched through downtown Boston on February 17 chanting, "Not the church, not the state; women must decide their fate!"

Brazilian Bishops Demand Information on Missing Political Prisoners

The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops announced February 14 that it would continue its work to defend human rights in Brazil and, specifically, to discover the whereabouts of missing political prisoners.

The announcement came after a warning by Justice Minister Armando Falcão to those trying to "poison the minds of the uninitiated" and "disturb the peace." Brazilian authorities have denied having any knowledge of where the missing prisoners are.

Churchmen and lawyers submitted a list of twenty-two names to the regime last August. Since then, three of the persons have been located, but there is no trace of the others.

Pentagon Predicts Collapse of Lon Nol Without Additional Military Aid

Pentagon head James Schlesinger said February 23 that the Lon Nol regime would "absolutely" collapse if Congress did not provide the additional \$222 million in military aid requested by the White House. "I think that the chances of their surviving over a period of many months are minimal without that additional assistance."

Schlesinger's statement was the strongest so far by the White House in its campaign for more funds for Lon Nol and Thieu. Speaking on an ABC television program,



"Issues and Answers," he said that the loss of Cambodia would be a foreign-policy disaster for the United States.

He based his case on the "domino theory," which he said had been "overly discredited."

5,000 Students Protest in Spain

A demonstration of 5,000 university students and a consumer boycott that left most of the city's food stores empty of customers took place in Madrid February 20.

The students, who were protesting the government-ordered shutdown of the University of Valladolid, assembled at the University of Madrid. The protest was broken up by police, who fired submachine guns into the air. It was the first time the police had come onto the campus with such weapons.

The food-store boycott was called to protest inflation. There were signs of its effectiveness in both middle-class and working-class neighborhoods.

Shah Assures Israel on Oil

After meeting with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Zurich February 18, the shah of Iran indicated that the Israeli regime could rely on Iranian oil if it returned the Abu Rudeis oil fields in occupied Sinai in a settlement with Egypt. Speaking at a news conference, the shah said in reply to a question about oil to Israel: "Our policy is to sell oil to those who will buy it. Once the tankers are loaded, where it goes is of no importance to us. We don't mind where it goes, because it is a purely commercial transaction for my country."

The Abu Rudeis oil fields supply 55 percent of Israel's oil. Much of the remainder already comes from Iran.

La Crisis Económica Mundial del Capitalismo

[La siguiente resolución fue adoptada unánimemente por el Comité Ejecutivo Internacional de la Cuarta Internacional en su reunión de enero.

[La traducción es de *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

A pesar de la propaganda, durante años, de que no volvería a suceder, el mundo capitalista se ha hundido en su primera recesión generalizada desde la década de los treinta. Aunque sería aventurado predecir que el nivel de desempleo a escala mundial llegará a ser tan alto como el que se dio durante la Gran Depresión, el peligro de que esto suceda no ha sido eliminado. En todos lados el capital está llevando a cabo una creciente ofensiva en contra del nivel de vida de los trabajadores. Una suspensión prolongada de la inflación es imposible para cualquiera de las principales potencias.

1. Los socialistas revolucionarios predijeron, con bastante anticipación, la recesión actual en la economía capitalista internacional. En la etapa que va de 1948 a 1973 la producción capitalista mundial aumentó tres veces y medio su volumen con una tasa promedio de crecimiento del 5 por ciento anual. No hubo crecimiento en 1974. En los últimos tres meses de 1974, la producción industrial de los principales países imperialistas iba en declive. Los Estados Unidos se encuentran en su regresión económica más profunda desde la guerra, con un Producto Nacional Bruto (PNB) que desde 1973 descendió en un 2.2 por ciento. Su descenso es rápido. En Japón el PNB descendió en un 3 por ciento, después de 25 años de expansión.

Solamente algunos de los países capitalistas de menor importancia han escapado, hasta la fecha, los efectos inmediatos del declive (Suecia, Suiza, Noruega, Austria), ya sea por condiciones extraordinarias (el descubrimiento de petróleo en el Mar del Norte hecho por Noruega), o por sus relaciones particulares con el mercado mundial.

El volumen físico del comercio mundial no ha entrado aún en declive, aunque su ritmo de crecimiento ha disminuido notablemente. Las potencias principales están tratando de incrementar sus ventas al exterior, en la medida de sus posibilidades, para contrarrestar la recesión interna. La posibilidad de que el volumen del comercio mundial descienda depende de la duración de la regresión en los países más importantes (sobre todo los Estados Unidos, Alemania Occidental y Japón), y en el alcance de las medidas proteccionistas llevadas a cabo por las potencias en competencia.

Mientras que el descenso actual en la producción industrial es aún pequeño (excepto en los Estados Unidos) el aumento en el desempleo es pronunciado. De hecho, los datos oficiales en los países imperialistas correspondientes al invierno de 1974-75 pueden mostrar que el desempleo se ha incrementado, rebasando la cifra de 15 millones de desempleados. Esto de hecho comprueba el caso si además agregamos a la lista de desempleados aquellos que sólo trabajan medio tiempo porque no han podido conseguir empleos de tiempo completo. Probablemente hay alrededor de 8 a 10 millones de desempleados en los Estados Unidos; un millón y medio en Italia; un millón en cada país en Alemania Occidental, Francia y la Gran Bretaña; un millón en los países imperialistas menores de Europa Occidental (los países Benelux [Bélgica, Holanda y Luxemburgo], España, Dinamarca, etc.); un millón en Japón y un millón en total en Canadá, Australia y Nueva Zelanda.

La razón por la cual hay este aumento tan desproporcionado en el desempleo es dual.

(a) La actual crisis económica mundial fue precedida por un período de rápido progreso técnico (automatización) durante el cual la productividad aumentó fuertemente, sobre todo, en Europa Occidental y Japón (en los Estados Unidos esto se dio anteriormente). El crecimiento tecnológico iba acompañado, como siempre, por una erosión lenta en la tasa de ganancia, que el capital intentaba compensar por medio de acelerar la producción, la "racionalización", y otros métodos para reducir el costo de la mano de obra. Pero cuando la tasa del aumento en el rendimiento es alta, sólo un aumento substancial en la producción puede evitar un desempleo masivo. Si hay un declive real o tan sólo un estancamiento en la producción, el desempleo se remonta.

(b) En los países imperialistas desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial, ha habido un aumento dramático en el número de mujeres en busca de empleo. Hay dos razones fundamentales para este desarrollo. Una es que el salario promedio que recibe el hombre (ya sea trabajador industrial o de "cuello blanco") no es suficiente para satisfacer las necesidades básicas de la familia trabajadora. La otra es que las mujeres están mostrando cada vez más independencia tanto económica como social, reflejo internacional del movimiento de la liberación femenil.

Esta tendencia ascendente, junto con la creciente aparición, por temporadas, de estudiantes en el mercado laboral, han aumentado el suministro potencial de la fuerza de trabajo en el mercado de empleos

independientemente de las fluctuaciones cíclicas de la economía. Entre los trabajadores que buscan empleos en los países imperialistas hay sectores crecientes que son oprimidos sexual, racial y nacionalmente (en los Estados Unidos, los negros, los chicanos y los miembros de otras nacionalidades oprimidas; en Europa Occidental, los trabajadores emigrados), hecho que ha facilitado la formación de un ejército industrial de reserva real o potencialmente numeroso, aún en los períodos de alto nivel en el empleo.

2. La actual recesión capitalista internacional constituye un punto de gran importancia en los desarrollos de la posguerra.

(a) *Es la primera recesión generalizada desde la década de los treinta.* Ha habido muchas recesiones desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial: Por cierto, en la actualidad tal como en el pasado, el capitalismo no ha podido evitar las fluctuaciones cíclicas de su economía. Sin embargo el carácter no simultáneo de estas recesiones (por ejemplo, la ausencia de recesión en Alemania Occidental, Japón, Italia y Francia durante la severa regresión en los Estados Unidos durante 1957-58) han limitado su extensión y profundidad. Un país con un mercado interno cada vez más limitado podía exportar sus mercancías y su capital excedentes.

Pero ahora que todos los principales países imperialistas han sido atrapados simultáneamente en esta situación, los mercados de exportación se han estrechado. La posibilidad de hallar una solución por medio del incremento de las exportaciones a los estados obreros burocratizados y a los países exportadores de petróleo del Medio Oriente, es excluida de la misma manera. Estos mercados en potencia son mínimos en comparación a los que se necesitan para absorber la acumulación de excedentes en capital y mercancías.

Dado que la recesión ocurre simultáneamente en muchos países, ésta puede acumularse en su totalidad con una fuerza extraordinaria, la recesión en cada país agravando a las recesiones en otros países, y todas combinándose para crear una crisis mucho más grave que cualquier recesión desde la década de los treinta. Es particularmente peligroso si la recesión en los Estados Unidos se extiende durante todo 1975. Los Estados Unidos producen casi tanto como los otros 23 países miembros de la Organización de Cooperación y Desarrollo Económico (OCDE), organismo que agrupa a los principales países capitalistas. La economía norteamericana, dado a su tremendo peso, tiende a hacer girar a los demás alrededor de su órbita.

(b) *La recesión internacional actual claramente confirma observaciones previas*

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al respecto de que el prolongado boom capitalista de la posguerra había terminado.

El extenso período de crecimiento económico acelerado que sucedió a la Segunda Guerra Mundial incluyó regresiones cíclicas; sin embargo fueron más cortas y menos intensas que las de las décadas de los veinte y los treinta; y las consecuencias económicas y sociales para las masas fueron mucho menos dramáticas. Además del impulso dado al capitalismo mundial con la reconstrucción de Europa y Japón que siguió la destrucción causada por la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el uso masivo de medidas "anticrisis" por parte de los gobiernos imperialistas tendían a mitigar los descensos económicos, aunque el resultado final fuera solamente posponer el enfrentamiento con la realidad y establecer una inflación permanente.

De particular importancia ha sido el gasto militar de los Estados Unidos. Año tras año Washington ha vertido sumas colosales de dinero dentro de la economía nacional y mundial para armar y financiar a las fuerzas militares en los Estados Unidos y en el exterior, y para pagar los intereses cada vez más cuantiosos de la deuda militar acumulada. El déficit presupuestario necesario para llevar a cabo estas operaciones es desconcertante (se ha mencionado que el déficit presupuestario de los Estados Unidos para el año fiscal que empieza en julio de 1975 fluctuará entre 52,000 millones de dólares y 70,000 millones de dólares).

La panacea del "estímulo económico" por medio del gasto gubernamental deficitario no se restringió a los Estados Unidos. Para 1973 todas las principales potencias capitalistas estaban canalizando grandes sumas al gasto deficitario. La expansión precipitada del crédito a escala mundial elevó los precios en todos lados.

Aún más, cada recesión sucesiva requería una dosis mayor de gasto deficitario inflacionario para impedir un descenso peor. Esto se convirtió en un círculo vicioso.

La inflación creciente del dólar llevó a una serie de crisis y posteriormente al colapso, en 1971, del sistema monetario internacional establecido en Bretton Woods en 1944, indicando el fin del prolongado boom de la posguerra.

El pequeño boom inflacionario de 1971-73 fue tan sólo una fase pasajera en el inicio de un nuevo período duradero de contradicciones cada vez más graves del capitalismo mundial (que incluye un crecimiento mucho más lento) que empezó en 1967-68 y que se evidenciaba con más claridad en la actual recesión mundial.

3. La actual recesión es fundamentalmente una crisis clásica de sobreproducción causada por las contradicciones internas del modo de producción capitalista. No es un accidente, supuestamente causado por los "jeques del petróleo", como tampoco la

depresión de 1929 fue causada por la "especulación" con las acciones, o que las previas crisis económicas serias hayan sido causadas por "sobrepasarse" en la construcción del sistema ferroviario o por el comercio exterior.

De hecho, cada crisis de sobreproducción aparece como la combinación del fenómeno general que surge de la naturaleza misma de la producción capitalista, y del fenómeno particular que se presenta en una fase determinada de su expansión mundial y sus altas y sus bajas. Pero el mismo hecho de que estos "accidentes" ocurren con regular frecuencia, que pueden ser previstos y predichos, y que tienen todo una serie de características comunes, nos muestra que están estructuralmente atados al mismo sistema capitalista. Ni las economías pre-capitalistas, ni las economías poscapitalistas sufren las fluctuaciones cíclicas del desempleo, de la producción industrial y del ingreso nacional.

De la misma manera, las causas fundamentales de la actual recesión mundial se deben a las contradicciones internas del modo de producción capitalista puestas al descubierto ya hace tiempo por Marx. Después de un período de crecimiento económico, la tendencia a que la tasa de ganancia decline, necesariamente se vuelve más eminente. Esto es aún más cierto cuando el período de crecimiento económico es más largo y la tasa de ganancia más acelerada. La composición orgánica del capital aumenta en la medida que la automatización y la semiautomatización refuerzan la preponderancia de la maquinaria y otras formas de "trabajo muerto" acumulado en la producción. Los canales clásicos para contrarrestar los efectos del aumento en la composición orgánica del capital se cierran cada vez más.

El gran nivel de empleo y la fuerza social y organizativa cada vez mayor de la clase obrera dificultan al capital poder elevar significativamente la tasa de explotación (la tasa de plusvalía).

Los intentos mismos del capital de abaratar la materia prima crean tendencias divergentes entre los precios y las ganancias en la materia prima por un lado y los productos manufacturados por el otro. Esto conduce a una creciente desproporción en las inversiones de los capitales y la producción actual en ambos sectores. Tarde o temprano esto causa una escasez relativa de materia prima y un incremento radical en los precios de ésta en comparación al de los bienes manufacturados.

El descenso en la tasa de ganancia combinado con la intensificación en la competencia, a la vez, crea la necesidad de pedir prestado una cantidad cada vez mayor del capital necesario para las inversiones adicionales. Esta es la causa de la "crisis de fluidez" cada vez más severa por

la que pasan las empresas privadas tanto nacionales como internacionales.

Pero aún las corporaciones más grandes pueden enfrentarse a dificultades insuperables al tratar de reunir los fondos necesarios para una inversión lucrativa. En un momento determinado todas estas fuerzas que rebajan la tasa de ganancia, necesariamente conducirán a un creciente número de compañías capitalistas a estar bajo el peligro de quiebra o a la quiebra misma, hacia un descenso total del volumen de las inversiones (de la acumulación de capital), hacia una reducción masiva de la producción, hacia despidos masivos, que por sus efectos acumulativos creen una regresión generalizada en la actividad económica.

Por otro lado, hay una tendencia inherente en la producción capitalista a extender su capacidad productiva más allá del poder limitado de compra de las masas, que es determinado en última instancia por las relaciones antagonicas de clase dentro de la sociedad burguesa. Todo boom capitalista crea una tendencia a una capacidad excesiva y a una sobreproducción y a la consiguiente acumulación de mercancías no-vendibles en sectores claves de la economía. Al mismo tiempo en que aumenta esta capacidad excesiva y la sobreproducción, la producción y el desempleo se reducen, y la crisis se empeora de la misma manera.

En la actual recesión, la sobreproducción empezó en la industria automovilística y en la de la construcción. Se extendió rápidamente a la de artículos eléctricos, petroquímicos (fibras plásticas y sintéticas), textiles y ropa, el turismo y la industria de la aviación. Ahora ha llegado inclusive a la industria del acero, que hace todavía algunos meses estaba en medio de uno de sus más grandes booms debido a la concentración y a las reducciones drásticas de la inversión en esa industria a finales de la década de los sesenta, y a la escasez relativa de acero que se dio a principios de la década de los setenta.

4. Al mismo tiempo de que se enfatiza las causas estructurales de la actual recesión mundial, el análisis debe señalar con precisión los aspectos especiales que la diferencian de las crisis anteriores de sobreproducción, sobre todo los marasmos de 1929-33 y de 1937-38:

(a) La característica más importante que las distingue es la *inflación mundial*. Un aumento agudo en los precios coincide con el inicio de una recesión. La *economía capitalista mundial* pasó de un boom inflacionario a una "stagflation" [estancamiento e inflación] a una "slumpflation" [regresión e inflación]. En el pasado, si los precios no se derrumbaban, había un declive pronunciado de los precios durante las depresiones. La inflación coincidía con las crisis sólo en circunstancias excepcionales—guerras perdidas, guerras

civiles, trastorno total en la economía y en la producción; y aún así sólo durante períodos cortos.

Hoy en día la inflación mundial continúa (y en algunos países tales como los Estados Unidos, Gran Bretaña, Italia, Francia, (¡sigue en aumento!), a pesar del descenso en la producción y el empleo. Esto trastorna la función "normal" de una crisis de sobreproducción. Se supone que ésta estabiliza de nuevo la economía eliminando a las compañías más atrasadas, liquidando las existencias, y aumentando la tasa de explotación, por lo tanto prepara el camino para la renovación de las inversiones.

Pero la expansión inflacionaria del crédito prolonga la acumulación de existencias, ocultando la debilidad real de las compañías. Durante un período el aumento nominal de los salarios encubre la erosión real de los sueldos. Se crea el poder artificial de compra—artificial para las compañías que en última instancia no podrán mantenerse en la competencia; artificial para los trabajadores que simplemente no pueden pagar deudas una vez que el descenso de los salarios reales y el rotundo desempleo llega a determinado punto. De esta manera la expansión del crédito puede ir demasiado lejos. Puede preparar el camino para quiebras inesperadas y la clausura de bancos; en otras palabras, precisamente el tipo de desplome del crédito nacional e internacional que caracterizó a la depresión de la década de los treinta. Los mismos imperialistas no excluyen este peligro.

(b) Otro factor distintivo de la recesión mundial es la combinación de la recesión en la mayoría de los sectores de la producción, incluyendo las materias primas claves, *con una escasez aguda en dos sectores centrales de la economía capitalista mundial: el de la energía (especialmente el petróleo) y el de la alimentación (especialmente los cereales y el azúcar).*

Esta combinación no es el resultado de "catástrofes naturales", tampoco expresa los "límites del crecimiento" de las fuerzas productivas. Es el resultado de las desproporciones creadas por la competencia de los monopolios.

Precios relativamente bajos en la materia prima causan un flujo de capital de este sector a otros sectores. Las carestías son medios para aumentar las ganancias y atraer nuevo capital. Este proceso, a la vez, puede ser acelerado deliberadamente por las decisiones de los monopolistas.

El cartel internacional del petróleo (los siete "más grandes del petróleo") redujeron la capacidad de refinar y producir petróleo como parte de la política de elevar el precio de los energéticos y de las ganancias a nivel mundial. En función de mayores precios y ganancias, la industria alimenticia de los Estados Unidos, Canadá y Australia redujo la producción de alimentos. Esta es la causa básica de las actuales hambrunas en los

países del sahel africano [regiones semidesérticas] y del subcontinente indio.

Estas características específicas de la recesión mundial deben ser tomadas en cuenta para evaluar sus efectos económicos, sociales y políticos en varios países, sectores del mundo y clases sociales. Pero de ninguna manera cambian la caracterización de la recesión mundial como una crisis profunda del sistema capitalista en su totalidad.

5. Teórica y técnicamente, la transformación de la recesión actual en una depresión como la de 1929-32 no se excluye. Puede suceder si los gobiernos de los países imperialistas no llevan a cabo (por razones objetivas o subjetivas) las políticas económicas destinadas a mitigar la regresión. Tal depresión puede ocurrir si la demanda colectiva de los países imperialistas claves fuera cortada por fuertes reducciones en el gasto gubernamental y por grandes disminuciones en el crédito y que esto coincidiera con un fuerte aumento en el desempleo y un decline agudo en los salarios y las ganancias.

Tal acontecimiento implicaría:

Ya sea (a) que por alguna razón objetiva fuera del control de los gobiernos capitalistas (por ejemplo, un colapso en la confianza en el papel moneda, que incluyera al dólar, al marco alemán, etc., que condujera a un regreso al oro como la única forma final de pagar las operaciones internacionales) apareciera una fuerte tendencia deflacionaria en el dinero y el crédito en todos los principales países imperialistas, una tendencia que coincidiría con la sobreproducción. Esto fue lo que pasó en 1929-32, que al final provocó un fracaso internacional bancario.

O (b) que surja una tendencia entre los gobiernos capitalistas que presione para que se dé una deflación general del volumen del dinero y el crédito para poder "curar" radicalmente la inflación aún a costa de crear de 30 a 40 millones de desempleados a escala mundial.

Aún que la segunda opción es técnicamente posible, es muy remota. Aún el nivel de desempleo de la mitad o de la tercera parte del que se dio durante la década de los treinta es lo suficientemente aterrador como para inducir a los gobiernos a revivir la política inflacionaria (como ya es el caso de Washington y Bonn).

La recesión mundial ocurre cuando la lucha de clases y el nivel de organización de la clase obrera y su capacidad de resistencia son inmensamente más fuertes que en 1929 o 1937. Ocurre cuando la relación mundial de fuerzas entre el imperialismo y sus variados adversarios es mucho más desfavorable al mundo capitalista que antes de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Bajo estas circunstancias una depresión económica catastrófica como la de 1929-32 engendraría

una crisis explosiva social y política no solamente en Europa Occidental sino también en Japón y América del Norte.

Si los niveles del desempleo llegan a los 15 millones en los Estados Unidos, 5 millones en Alemania Occidental, 5 millones en Japón, y 3 millones de desempleados en Gran Bretaña, Francia e Italia, los paliativos a corto plazo no pararían la intensa rabia y la reacción explosiva de la clase obrera. El ejemplo de las economías planificadas no capitalistas a gran escala que pueden evitar el desempleo y la inflación a pesar de sus deformaciones burocráticas ayudarán a inspirar a la clase obrera de occidente para que rompan con el sistema de la ganancia privada, dándole a la arremetida socialista una inmensa fuerza cuando las masas vean los expedientes tácticos más efectivos usados en otras tierras. *Una repetición del tipo de depresión de 1929-32, bajo la relación actual de fuerzas sociopolítica a nivel nacional e internacional, claramente iniciaría la crisis más grave del sistema capitalista desde su comienzo.*

Para evitarse tal catástrofe, los gobiernos imperialistas, lo más probable es que se contengan de una deflación despiadada en el volumen monetario y de crédito del tipo que hizo inevitable la depresión de 1929-32. Los más fuertes aún tienen las suficientes reservas para seguir ese camino. No tienen más alternativa que la de continuar pragmáticamente, como de costumbre, y a veces con pánico, oscilando entre las medidas antiinflacionarias y las medidas antirecesionistas de tal manera que no provoquen "demasiado" desempleo o precios "muy altos." ¡Pero no podrán parar ninguno de los dos!

Sin embargo se puede hacer la siguiente pregunta con todo derecho: ¿Es posible que aún los gobiernos imperialistas claves pierdan el control de la situación? Es obvio que la inflación no puede continuar indefinidamente sin agotar sus efectos antirecesionistas y sin convertirse de un motor en un freno del crecimiento económico capitalista. El colapso del boom especulativo de 1973 y principios de 1974; la quiebra de varios bancos importantes; las grandes pérdidas que sufrieron los especuladores de divisas, de materia prima y de terrenos; el colapso de los precios de las acciones en las principales bolsas de valores en el mundo capitalista—todos estos fueron los presagios siniestros de un pánico mundial potencial. La extensión extraordinaria del mercado del eurodólar (alimentado además por los petrodólares); el peligro de una balanza de pagos deficitaria masiva en casi todos los países imperialistas (con la excepción de Alemania Occidental) como resultado del aumento precipitado en el precio de las importaciones de petróleo, que amenaza con provocar un colapso repentino en la confianza que tenga como resultado retiros

masivos del sistema bancario a nivel mundial.

Después del desplome del Franklin National Bank en los Estados Unidos, I.D. Herstatt de Alemania Occidental y la crisis de los "bancos pequeños" de Gran Bretaña, los principales bancos centrales prometieron apoyar operaciones de rescate en favor de los depositantes, y hasta cierto punto, intentarán hacer esto en otros casos para evitar un desplome. Pero estos casos también ilustran lo limitado de estas operaciones. Cuando Alemania Occidental se rehusó al principio a apoyar los depósitos de Herstatt, los Estados Unidos tomaron represalias amenazando con congelar los valores alemanes y puso al sistema monetario internacional en un paro repentino hasta que se acordaron los tratados secretos. El European-American Bank [Banco Europeo-Americano] que se formó para sustituir al Franklin National ha advertido que casi no tomará ninguna cuenta extranjera de las de Franklin.

De la misma manera los Estados Unidos recientemente han advertido a todos los bancos norteamericanos a que reconsideren todos sus préstamos a mediano y a largo plazo a la industria italiana y al mismo gobierno italiano. La propaganda antiárabe y antiiraní que construyeron alrededor de los "petrodólares" los círculos bancarios, está dirigida con el propósito de forzar a los países exportadores de petróleo a comprometerse en operaciones de rescate de crédito internacional que los mismos imperialistas no quieren llevar a cabo.

Todos estos ejemplos nos muestran el hecho de que los intereses del capitalismo nacional le imponen fuertes límites a las posibilidades que tienen los banqueros centrales de mitigar la crisis internacional.

Entre más se profundice y dure la inflación más eminente es el peligro de que la especulación, las deudas y la crisis de fluidez del sistema bancario lleguen a ser de tal proporción que detonen un retiro masivo, motivado por el pánico, de los bancos, que traiga como consecuencia un colapso del sistema bancario y por consiguiente una crisis catastrófica, si no es en ésta entonces será en una recesión futura. Es por eso que la burguesía mundial está tan preocupada por la inflación. Es por eso que está tratando de alterar la relación de clases lo suficiente como para que sea posible el eventual uso de medidas deflacionarias radicales.

6. Sin embargo, lo que hace que esta situación sea tan grave para el capitalismo mundial, no es tanto el hecho de que esta crisis económica sea la peor que se haya experimentado desde el período de la posguerra—es mucho más ligera que las que ocurrieron en el período entre las dos guerras—sino el que ésta se combine con un nivel excepcionalmente elevado de organización, poder huelguístico y combatividad

de la clase obrera. La situación en la clase obrera es el resultado de dos décadas de crecimiento económico relativamente alto, un nivel de empleo relativamente elevado, de industrialización extensiva (Japón, Italia, Francia, España, Canadá, Australia) y de desarrollo intensivo (Estados Unidos, Alemania Occidental, Gran Bretaña), y un crecimiento general en el nivel de conocimiento técnico y la educación (aunque su expansión ha sido muy desigual y ha sido acompañada por la degradación, marginación, y despido de los trabajadores). Otros factores adicionales han fortalecido subjetivamente a la clase obrera. Estos incluyen la radicalización mundial de la juventud y la mujer; los avances de la revolución mundial en los países semicoloniales desde China a Cuba; el surgimiento de una nueva generación de trabajadores que no experimentaron las dos décadas y media de derrotas que prosiguieron a la victoria de octubre de 1917; la crisis del stalinismo; y el aumento generalizado a la oposición a la guerra imperialista.

Esto quiere decir que la *actual crisis del sistema capitalista mundial*, que empezó con los sucesos de mayo del 1968 en Francia, *será profundizada seria y significativamente por la actual recesión*, y que el papel central de la clase obrera industrial se acentuará con creces.

Pero también significa que la tendencia general apunta a que las tensiones y los conflictos explosivos entre los obreros y el capital se incrementen, y a que las crisis políticas cada vez más se agudicen en los países imperialistas claves. Los intentos de los capitalistas de "comprar" a los obreros disminuirán mientras que los intentos de infligir graves derrotas a la clase obrera aumentarán, con el objetivo de "resolver" la crisis a costa de los obreros reduciéndoles sus salarios reales, para así permitir que la tasa de ganancia suba de nuevo. Tal embestida en contra de los niveles de vida y de empleo de la clase obrera impone graves restricciones en los derechos democráticos de la clase obrera (controles de salarios estatutarios, arbitraje gubernamental en los conflictos laborales, limitaciones onerosas en el derecho a la huelga, legislación antisindical, etc.).

Sin embargo, la experiencia ha mostrado que mientras el capital no pueda lograr un cambio significativo en la relación de fuerzas actual entre las clases, los intentos de llevar a cabo tales medidas por lo general fracasan.

Esto no excluye intentos a corto plazo de evitar victorias revolucionarias por medio de reformas y concesiones. Pero, como en la década de los treinta, no pasarán de ser medidas provisionales. El agravamiento de la situación económica mundial descarta cualquier período significativo de relajamiento de tensiones entre las clases. Conduce a los antagonismos de clase cada vez

más cerca a una confrontación decisiva. La perspectiva amplia es ya sea el derrocamiento revolucionario del capitalismo, o una grave derrota para la clase obrera que permitiría al capitalismo imponer su solución—un fascismo aún más brutal que el de la década de los treinta.

7. En la actual recesión mundial, el proletariado se encuentra en una posición de fuerza mayor que durante la depresión de 1929-32. Entre otras cosas el desempleo no es de tal alcance y duración como el de la Gran Depresión y ha tenido un efecto de debilitamiento menor.

El desempleo masivo durante un período largo es por lo general altamente desmoralizante. Los momentos más favorables para la acción de los trabajadores son ya sea cuando el desempleo empieza (es por eso que la burguesía internacional teme tanto que un desempleo repentino y masivo pueda provocar una reacción inmediata por parte de los trabajadores) o cuando empieza a disminuir después de que ha comenzado un resurgimiento económico. Pero durante un período de desempleo masivo aquéllos que retienen sus empleos tienen un miedo excepcional a perderlos, el empleado y el desempleado se vuelven enemigos, como también el parcialmente empleado y el empleado de tiempo completo, los que tienen un alto nivel de seguridad laboral y aquéllos que no lo tienen. Todos estos factores tienden a limitar el número y la duración de las huelgas.

Por supuesto, algunas modificaciones tienen que hacerse en este documento en el análisis general. En particular, es necesario tomar en cuenta los "estabilizadores incorporados en la estructura misma" tales como el seguro de desempleo, la seguridad social, el socorro, servicio médico a bajo costo, etc., que fueron establecidos durante y después de la crisis de 1929-32.

Sin embargo, el desempleo a escala limitada, como el que actualmente se da en los principales países imperialistas, no tiene ninguno de estos efectos debilitantes, especialmente en vista de su combinación con la inflación y el nivel creciente de organización y combatividad de la clase obrera. Por lo tanto se puede predecir con bastante seguridad que *el efecto inmediato de la recesión mundial será el de fortalecer el surgimiento de las luchas obreras* (con una excepción a corto plazo de Alemania Occidental, por razones específicas vinculadas con todo el ciclo de la lucha de clases de la posguerra y de la conciencia de clase en ese país).

En Europa Occidental, la recesión incitará a la agudización de la lucha de clases y las tensiones de clase especialmente en los países donde la lucha obrera ha llegado a su nivel más alto: Francia, Italia, Gran Bretaña, España, Portugal, pero también en los países capitalistas de menor importancia como Dinamarca. El eje de la lucha se

cambiará cada vez más de las parciales a las generalizadas, y le dará un creciente impulso a la búsqueda de soluciones políticas de conjunto, a las profunda crisis social del capitalismo

El surgimiento de la radicalización y la combatividad obreras en los Estados Unidos y el Japón (como también en Australia, Nueva Zelanda y Canadá) tiende a acelerarse por la recesión, el proletariado en esos países por lo tanto empieza a seguir el mismo modelo que se vió en Europa Occidental desde 1968. Sin embargo, es aún muy temprano para poder predecir las formas y los ritmos de este proceso. Entre más se comprometan en la acción los trabajadores de Japón, los Estados Unidos y Canadá en los próximos años, sumando su peso a la lucha actual en Europa Occidental, más grande será el impacto a nivel internacional y más difícil será para el capitalismo mundial "resolver" su crisis actual a costa de este o aquel sector de la clase obrera mundial.

8. La intensificación de las rivalidades interimperialistas fue una de las causas que precipitaron la recesión mundial de 1974. Lejos de responder de conjunto, de tal manera que tendieran a evitar una recesión mundial y un posible colapso financiero, las naciones capitalistas en competencia han llevado a cabo una política limitada y egoísta. Aún más, ninguna potencia imperialista o grupo de potencias imperialistas, incluyendo a la más poderosa de todas—los Estados Unidos mismos—puede imponer sus propios intereses competitivos sobre todos los sectores de la burguesía mundial como un funcionamiento operante.

Las rivalidades interimperialistas han agravado las contradicciones fundamentales de la recesión. Desde el punto de vista de los intereses de conjunto del capitalismo internacional, el uso de medidas antiinflacionarias (ligeramente deflacionarias) simultáneamente en todos los principales países imperialistas obviamente no tiene sentido. Pero desde el punto de vista de cada clase capitalista, tomada por separado, sí tiene sentido "luchar contra la inflación" y tratar de salvar su moneda y su sistema bancario de un colapso.

Aquí tenemos tres intereses: mantener las mercancías extranjeras fuera del mercado interno manteniendo bajos los precios de las mercancías domésticas; penetrar los mercados exteriores a un nivel más grande ya que los precios de las mercancías extranjeras son más altos; y estabilizar la moneda nacional manteniendo una tasa inflacionaria menos acelerada. De esta manera, en la era de la inflación mundial simultánea, la lucha por mantener la tasa "propia" de inflación por debajo de la de los competidores se convierte en una preocupación central de las burguesías en competencia. A todas las potencias principales les gustaría transferir parte de la carga de la

inflación y la recesión a sus competidores.

Alemania Occidental, por ejemplo, mantuvo medidas deflacionarias hasta diciembre de 1974, cuando el espectro de un colapso mundial ya había estado amenazando las bolsas de valores durante la mayor parte del año. Se mantuvo en esta posición a pesar de la presión creciente por parte de sus competidores para que "reinflara" el marco alemán, ya que Alemania Occidental es el único país imperialista importante que no está sufriendo de una balanza de pagos deficitaria como resultado del aumento del precio del petróleo.

Una fuerte reinflación de la economía de Alemania Occidental significaría que las exportaciones alemanas (que ahora han dado alcance a las de los Estados Unidos) serían afectadas seriamente, mientras que el mercado interno de Alemania Occidental absorbería una porción más grande de las importaciones de sus competidores británicos, franceses, italianos, japoneses y norteamericanos.

Pero cuando el desempleo llegó al 3.5 por ciento en Alemania Occidental y amenazaba con llegar al 4 por ciento, Bonn desechó su programa antiflacionario. Se anunciaron gastos gubernamentales para estimular la economía, el tipo de descuento del banco central fue rebajado, y el capitalismo alemán ahora entrará de nuevo al juego en el que apostará en contra de la tasa de inflación del resto del mundo.

La crisis petrolera de 1973-74 señaló un cambio en la relación de fuerzas interimperialista a favor del imperialismo norteamericano, ya que los Estados Unidos son menos dependientes de las importaciones petroleras que las otras potencias imperialistas de peso, y los capitalistas en Europa Occidental durante años habían pagado menos por el petróleo (y la energía) que los capitalistas de los Estados Unidos.

Sin embargo, mientras tanto, el impulso acelerado que le han dado a la exportación sobre todo en Alemania Occidental y Japón, ha anulado parcialmente los resultados obtenidos por Wall Street por medio de las devaluaciones sucesivas del dólar y la crisis petrolera. Sin embargo, Francia y sobre todo Gran Bretaña e Italia, han tenido menos éxito con sus esfuerzos en la exportación y como consecuencia han sido golpeados más duro por el aumento mundial del precio del petróleo, tanto la Gran Bretaña como Italia están pasando por dificultades severas financieras y económicas.

Aún más, el fracaso de seriamente llevar a cabo una integración económica durante la recesión actual, que amenaza con abatir al Mercado Común, les impide a los capitalistas alemanes y de Europa Occidental ofrecer una dirección de alternativa plausible al sistema capitalista mundial.

Bajo estas condiciones, la crisis de dirección del capitalismo internacional en su conjunto está compuesto por la crisis de

dirección de la burguesía en cada una de las principales naciones imperialistas. Esto no cambiará en el futuro inmediato, con más razón mientras se sume a esta crisis la intensificación de la lucha de clases en cada país. La primera burguesía que logre imponer una derrota social y política de importancia a "su" clase obrera podrá, como en la década de los treinta, ganar un margen significativo de maniobra, dándole la oportunidad de comprometerse en intentos peligrosos de cambiar la relación mundial de fuerzas a su favor. Pero, de nuevo, esto no es probable que suceda a corto plazo.

El resultado será consultas interminables, negociaciones sucias, y tratos sombríos, todo una serie de disparates que se volverán cada vez más angustiantes mientras más se prolongue la recesión.

9. En los países semicoloniales, el efecto de la recesión mundial varía de acuerdo a la relación de sus economías con las exportaciones e importaciones de petróleo, cereales y azúcar. Los que exportan grandes cantidades de estas materias primas vitales, y que tienen un déficit pequeño (o no tienen déficit) de estos artículos tan caros, hasta la fecha no han sufrido por la recesión actual. (Un desplome de los precios del azúcar y una caída fuerte de los precios del petróleo no pueden ser excluidos si la recesión es duradera, aunque éste fuera el caso, los precios del petróleo no bajarán a los niveles anteriores a octubre de 1973).

Las clases dominantes de los principales países exportadores de petróleo son los que más se han beneficiado. Obtuvieron mucho más dinero de los ingresos por concepto del petróleo de lo que perdieron por el aumento en los precios de las importaciones o por la reducción de los mercados para la exportación de otros productos que no sean petróleo, debido a la recesión.

De hecho, la gran afluencia de ingresos y de reservas en oro y moneda adquiridos por los países exportadores de petróleo indica una redistribución de la plusvalía producida por el proletariado mundial, inclusive el proletariado de los países semicoloniales exportadores de petróleo, a favor de las clases dominantes de los países exportadores de petróleo y a costa de la burguesía imperialista. Esta redistribución (el surgimiento de una elevada renta en la extracción, en gran medida apropiada por las clases dominantes locales) es el resultado de las desproporciones económicas señaladas anteriormente y de un cambio político en la relación de fuerzas a escala mundial.

El imperialismo fue forzado a cambiar de un dominio directo a un dominio indirecto sobre sus antiguas colonias después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial porque el movimiento de liberación antiimperialista tomó fuerza y no podía ser derrotado militarmente en una lucha a escala mundial. Las potencias imperialistas trataron primero de

convertir a las clases dominantes de las colonias en socios menores sin tener que pagar un precio substancial económico por este cambio de forma de dominación. Hoy en día, a través de la crisis petrolera, la cuenta la está cobrando la historia. Algunos de los socios menores pueden exigir y obtener una parte considerablemente mayor del saqueo.

Mientras que el balance de fuerzas mundial no favorezca un ataque imperialista en el Medio Oriente y mientras que el imperialismo norteamericano favorezca que los precios mundiales del petróleo suban más de lo que admite públicamente, a ningún imperialismo le interesa ni siquiera la redistribución parcial de su riqueza con los subalternos. El peligro de una nueva guerra en el Medio Oriente es por lo tanto muy real, especialmente debido a las relaciones explosivas entre la lucha de liberación palestina, los regímenes árabes e Israel.

Mientras que los países exportadores de petróleo fortalecerán en lo general su crecimiento económico, e inclusive obtendrán una industrialización capitalista hasta cierto punto, para los otros países semicoloniales la combinación de la recesión mundial con el incremento precipitado en los precios del petróleo, el alimento y los fertilizantes se ha convertido en un gran desastre económico—el más grande que haya golpeado a cualquier parte del mundo desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Los países del subcontinente indio son los que más duro han sido golpeados. El aumento en sus gastos por concepto de alimento, fertilizantes y petróleo; la reducción de sus exportaciones como resultado de su inhabilidad para competir con las potencias imperialistas en un período de guerra comercial intensa; el descenso de su propia producción industrial detonado por todos estos desarrollos, que a la vez los llevan a dificultades graves en la compra de materias primas necesarias para la producción industrial normal; la explotación y acumulación despiadadas de las reservas alimenticias por las clases dominantes nativas; el colapso de la "revolución verde" resultado del fuerte aumento en los costos de los fertilizantes y la energía—todos estos factores han creado un incremento explosivo de miseria, inmenso desempleo, y hambrunas categóricas tanto en el campo como en las poblaciones.

Los ingredientes para una explosión social han sido reunidos. Pero la crisis de dirección del proletariado, que está bastante lejos de resolverse, ha aumentado el peligro de que las fuerzas derechistas de la reacción tomen la iniciativa de utilizar la crisis en beneficio propio a expensas de las masas, que pagarán esto con su sangre y su hambre.

10. El carácter no capitalista de las

economías de los estados obreros burocratizados se ha confirmado sorprendentemente—contrario a todas las mistificaciones de los que subscriben la teoría del "capitalismo de estado"—por el hecho de que no han sido atrapados en el torbellino del desempleo masivo y el declive en la producción que abarcan a los principales países capitalistas. Por otro lado, aquéllos que se mantienen en la mistificación paralela del "socialismo en un solo país" se enfrentarán a nuevas dificultades para poder explicar porqué estos países supuestamente "socialistas" no pueden cortar totalmente sus vínculos con el mercado mundial, por lo tanto permanecen siendo objeto de los efectos de la recesión capitalista mundial.

Estos efectos pueden ser resumidos en cuatro puntos:

(a) La recesión mundial reduce los mercados de exportación de los estados obreros burocratizados en los países capitalistas (excepto el petróleo, los cereales, el azúcar), mercados de exportación que estas economías urgentemente necesitan para poder aumentar sus exportaciones de equipo moderno. La burocracia tratará de compensar este declive relativo en su mercado de exportación acelerando su búsqueda de préstamos, que a cambio de éstos estará más dispuesta a pagar el precio político de no explotar las crecientes crisis sociales en occidente. La burocracia ha hecho lo indecible para dejar claro que no va a buscar convertir la recesión en una crisis revolucionaria y que se encargará de que los partidos comunistas hagan todo lo posible para mantener a los trabajadores dentro de los límites del colaboracionismo de clase reformista.

(b) La escasez de petróleo y de cereales trastorna algunos de los planes económicos de los estados obreros, especialmente los grandes importadores de estos artículos tales como la República Democrática Alemana (RDA) y Cuba. En estos casos puede causar una reducción en la tasa del crecimiento económico, sobre todo cuando se combina con un declive en las exportaciones a occidente.

(c) La escasez de petróleo y cereales, combinada con los efectos de la recesión, crean nuevas tensiones entre las burocracias. Vender el petróleo a los precios del mercado mundial a otros estados obreros (RDA, Cuba, Vietnam del Norte, Hungría, etc.) se vuelve tan lucrativo para las burocracias exportadoras tales como la URSS, Rumania y China que se les van a acusar de explotación.

(d) El cambio en la situación económica mundial ha aumentado el interés entre las potencias imperialistas de sondear a los estados burocratizados tanto como mercados para las exportaciones como fuentes de materia prima. La tendencia será la de buscar grandes acuerdos comerciales como

los que ya se han llevado a cabo para cambiar petróleo y gas natural de la URSS y China por oleoductos, plantas petroquímicas, refinerías y otro tipo de equipo. Sin embargo, cuantitativamente, no es lo suficiente como para contrarrestar los resultados de la retardación en el crecimiento del volumen del comercio mundial que se está llevando a cabo. Aún más, los acuerdos son a tan largo plazo que su efecto sólo se sentirá después de un período de años.

11. En vista del aumento general de las contradicciones y tensiones sociales y políticas como resultado de la recesión a escala mundial, el imperialismo se verá cada vez más inclinado a parar las explosiones sociales por medio de guerras locales, y a "absorber" parte de los efectos principales del declive prolongado en la tasa de crecimiento, impulsando la carrera armamentista. A pesar de la política de distensión y de coexistencia pacífica seguida con total sinceridad por las burocracias stalinistas, hay áreas en el mundo donde, por razones obvias, i.e., autodefensa, las burocracias no pueden retroceder indefinidamente sin poner en peligro su propia seguridad. Las fracciones dispuestas a adoptar una política de retiro ilimitado ante la renovada agresión imperialista en esas áreas probablemente enfrentarán una dura oposición, empezando por el comando castrense.

El Medio Oriente es, obviamente, una área clave de conflicto potencial hoy en día. La recesión económica que se extiende por todas las economías capitalistas internacionales combinada con el excesivo aumento en los precios de petróleo han creado, política y económicamente, un clima peligroso de agresión imperialista en esta área. Esta es la primera vez desde la recesión de 1949 que coincide una regresión grave en la situación económica del imperialismo con

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un aumento fuerte en las tensiones internacionales en una área donde es posible una confrontación militar directa entre el imperialismo y los ejércitos del Pacto de Varsovia.

Hasta cierto punto el imperialismo norteamericano puede llevar a cabo maniobras, tratos sucios y chantaje militar tanto con las clases dominantes árabes como con los dirigentes sionistas con el propósito de imponer un "acuerdo" en el Medio Oriente, fundamentalmente a costa de la lucha de liberación de las masas palestinas. El objetivo de mantener control fundamental sobre el petróleo del Medio Oriente será realizado por medio de empresas conjuntas con las clases dominantes árabes, que incluyen inversiones masivas de petrodólares en propiedades occidentales, para atar mejor a los dirigentes árabes al "orden económico" del capitalismo internacional.

Los dirigentes sionistas no son simplemente los títeres del imperialismo; tienen sus propios intereses independientes que defender. Al ver que el tiempo va en su contra, que la relación de fuerzas en el Medio Oriente puede convertirse cada vez más adversa al mantenimiento de un estado expansionista colonizador en esa área, podrían ser tentados a sacar provecho de su superioridad militar temporal en un momento determinado y llevar a cabo un ataque preventivo en contra de los países árabes vecinos. En caso de un fracaso parcial, o en caso de una fuerte represalia, pueden acudir a medidas extremas, inclusive al uso de armas atómicas. Esto podría traer consecuencias incalculables por la participación de las dos principales potencias nucleares.

El hecho de que la clase obrera mundial y las masas trabajadoras, incluso las de los Estados Unidos, se oponen fuertemente a una aventura guerrera es un freno a tal aventura desesperada por la clase capitalista. Al mismo tiempo que no se subestiman los peligros de una guerra pequeña y localizada en el Medio Oriente, es poco posible que el imperialismo busque una confrontación militar con los estados obreros burocratizados mientras que la clase obrera mundial no haya sufrido una derrota desastrosa.

Sin embargo, entre más graves sean las dificultades económicas del capitalismo mundial, más aumentan las tensiones sociales y políticas, más tenderán ciertas secciones de la clase capitalista a intensificar los preparativos de guerra y jugarán con aventuras militares. Ya sea que el peligro de guerra se intensifique y junto con él las formas de "estados fuertes" y de dictaduras antiobreras que tomen el poder, o el proletariado impondrá su propia solución poniendo fin a la agonía mortal del capitalismo—la conquista del poder por las masas trabajadoras, la victoria de la revolución socialista. □

DOCUMENTS

March on Boston May 17!

[Thomas Atkins, president of the Boston chapter of the NAACP,¹ spoke February 14 at a teach-in of more than 1,000 persons that opened the National Student Conference Against Racism. *The Militant*, the U.S. revolutionary-socialist newsweekly, published extensive excerpts from his remarks, which we are reprinting below.]

* * *

In 1896, in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, America decreed the establishment of a rigid color line, one which extended unbroken from the cradle to the grave.

Black babies had to be born in separate hospitals than white babies. Black mothers and fathers had to work on different and separate jobs from white mothers and fathers. Black children had to attend separate schools from white children. Black men and women had to be buried by Black undertakers in Black cemeteries. This case ushered in a vast system of discrimination against Black people, which touched every facet of American life. For all practical purposes, that system of separatism continued up till 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled that in the realm of public education there is no place for "separate but equal" and that separate schools were inherently unequal.

Just like the *Plessy* decision before it, the *Brown* case of 1954² had a pervasive impact. It became the backdrop of a broad new series of court decisions and statutes, which began to strip away the artificial racial barriers erected 58 years earlier.

Throughout American history there have always been those who, for their own selfish reasons, needed to have a nigger.

The southern plantation owners needed a nigger, because by no other

means could such cheap and strong labor be guaranteed. The northern financiers needed a nigger, because by no other means could personal profits be so quickly made or personal fortunes built. Poor whites needed a nigger, because even when they had nothing else, they could always point and say, "I'm better off than he is."

The *Brown* case constituted a grave threat to all those whose previous status had depended upon the existence of a nigger. Ever since 1954 there have been people and forces in this country seeking to re-create the nigger. We know them by many names. Today they are hunters of the dreaded bus.

In Boston today there are people who need to re-create the nigger. They serve on our school committee. They hide in a blue uniform. They carry the book of the teacher. They enter city hall daily. They congregate under our golden dome. Some of them lie in wait for the dreaded bus to come by and attack it with all manner of vegetables and pieces of dirt and cement from their poorly maintained streets in their neighborhoods.

But I say to all of them tonight that the nigger is dead and will never be re-created again. I say to them tonight that there will be no more Jim Crow hospitals for Black babies to die in, no more Jim Crow jobs with below-level wages, no more Jim Crow schools with below-level achievement, no more Jim Crow cemeteries for Black men, women, and children to be buried in.

I say to them tonight the racism in this country will never again be powerful enough to re-create the nigger—not a Black one, not a Brown one, not a Red one, not a poor white one, not a Yellow one, not a female one.

Because the forces of racism in this country have, from time to time, achieved tremendous strength, those of us who recognize the incalculable harm it has done must organize to oppose it.

We must resist the dedicated racists who know what they are doing. We

1. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a nationwide civil-rights organization with 400,000 members.

2. On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that racial segregation of schools was unconstitutional.

must resist the ignorant racists who are told what to do. We must resist the little racists who are being trained how to be big racists.

We must resist the good people who aren't racists at all, but who are allowing themselves to be led by racists. We must make them understand that when the signs on the streets around South Boston High School say, "Kill niggers," then it is not busing that is being opposed, but racism which is being proposed.

We must make them understand that they cannot win in a battle in which race becomes the issue, because in the world today, they are in a distinct and dwindling minority.

We cannot, those of us who love freedom, ignore the active threat to freedom which exists in this country. We cannot ignore the fascists who bombed the Los Angeles office of the Socialist Workers Party. We cannot ignore the criminals who have stolen from the American Indian all that he had and who now deny him the means of survival itself.

We cannot think that the antifreedom forces are either sleeping or tired. They are neither. At this very moment, the antidesegregation forces in Boston are planning a march on Washington for March 18 to intimidate the Congress into passing legislation to begin amending the Constitution. This amendment to the Constitution, though it will be billed as an antibusing amendment, will in reality be an antidesegregation amendment.

The Boston NAACP calls upon this conference to join us in organizing against those forces which could drag our country back to "separate but equal." We call upon this conference to support us in our effort to commemorate the historic *Brown* decision on May 17. On that date, we will ask that thousands of people from around the country come to Boston to support school desegregation.

We will be asking NAACP branches, 1,800 strong across the country, to assist us in organizing such a national show of support for school desegregation, and in organizing the national campaign against the effort to write the Black community out of the United States Constitution.

We know how important it is to show elected officials that racism is not the guiding force in this country, that there are thousands of Amer-

icans who will never allow the Constitution to be used again as an instrument of oppression against minorities, whatever their color, whatever their religious persuasion, whatever their economic status, whatever their way of life or their national origin.

We will insist that the May 17 rally be peaceful and law-abiding. We want to show the contrast between ourselves and those who have been attacking our children with bricks and sticks and every other weapon they can devise.

It is my hope that this May 17 rally will be the result of a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals working together, each in their own way, to achieve one unified purpose.

You should know that there will be no backing away from school desegregation in Boston—not one inch. We will be forming a coalition here of those who wish to work with us to plan for the May 17 rally in support of school desegregation and the Constitution. We will be seeking the support of others across the country who share our concern that to be silent in the face of evil is to help evil succeed.

We will seek the support of labor unions, professional organizations, civil rights organizations, senior cit-

izen groups, consumer groups, women's groups, student groups, church groups, antiwar groups, ecology groups, housewives, husbands, teachers, policemen, soldiers, businessmen, and all others who agree with us that Boston is the place, May 17 is the date, and this is the way to begin the national drive to protect the Constitution.

Such a rally here will serve not only to organize for the national fight, but also to show tangible support for the embattled Black students whose very right to enter certain parts of this city has been challenged. It will say to them that "you are not alone in this national struggle." It will encourage their parents to hold on. It will make all those who would gather in mobs to intimidate our children think twice.

Today only 80 of Boston's schools are involved in desegregation. In September, all 200 will be involved. We have already been told by the antidesegregation forces that they will renew their opposition and their resistance this spring, and that their numbers will grow. I believe them.

If school desegregation cannot be brought about in Boston, then it won't happen anywhere else in the North. That's why this fight *must* continue. And that's why we must win. □

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P. O. Box 116, Village Station New York, NY 10014

The Workers League and the International Committee

By Tim Wohlforth

[Second of four installments]

D. What the Recent YS Conference Reveals

This essentially centrist approach had to lead to *liquidationism*. The paper has been the first to suffer. The circulation of the paper has now fallen so low—at one time it reached over 20,000 per issue twice a week—that the party will no longer publish circulation reports in the press. Sub campaigns have been abandoned. Centralized trailblazers, which built such important new branches in Cleveland and Youngstown last year, have been abandoned.

The next area where this liquidationism has been revealed is in the public activities of the League. The Tenth Anniversary meeting of the *Bulletin* was a flop. That is the only objective judgment that can be made of it. Last year, the founding meeting of the twice-weekly was attended by over 400 people. This year, less than 200 came to the Tenth Anniversary meeting.

Now, public meetings in the name of the Workers League have been largely abandoned in favor of meetings of the Trade Union Alliance for a Labor Party. When, a number of years ago, we did the same thing with the Trade Unionists for a Labor Party, we were roundly denounced by the British for liquidationism. Their criticism was quite correct in my opinion.

The third area where this liquidationism has been most sharply revealed has been in the disintegration of the Young Socialist movement. The YS paper reflects no real activity among the youth. Each issue begins with the same abstractions and no concrete policies or actions are posed to youth. No demonstrations have been held.

While throughout the entire fall period, there have been real movements within the high schools and on the campuses brought about by the cutbacks, the YS paper has refused to take up a concrete campaign around these issues. Instead, each issue has been headed with some general abstraction from the September issue, with its head "The Crisis Affects You," to the December issue demanding "Youth Must Fight For Socialist Policies." Such heads are perhaps all right in a period when all one can do is work of a propaganda character because of the lack of any specific struggles in the schools or on the campuses.

However, that certainly has not been the nature of the fall period. As a result of their abstention from the real strug-

gles of the youth, not only in Boston but in the school crisis on the Lower East Side and in other cities, the YS has allowed the revisionist YSA¹⁰ to take the lead in these struggles.

At the same time that the actual agitational and campaigning nature of the YS has been destroyed so too has its theoretical side. Throughout the 1973-1974 period, the YS contained a two-page centerfold, first on the "Heroes of the American Labor Movement," then a series on Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* all original material not reprints from the *Workers Press*, claimed at the theoretical development of the YS members. In the fall period, no series has been run whatsoever; no original material has been written; finally, in a factional maneuver, the YS refused to print part four of the history of the early student movement in the US written by Tim Wohlforth.

The recent Eastern Regional Conference of the Young Socialists is final proof of the collapse of the Workers League under the centrist leadership of Mazelis. This conference was organized from the beginning without any serious fight or perspectives. The *Bulletin* did not even carry ads for the conference except in the Spanish section. It was seen as one activity among many while the main concern of the League centered on North's trips to the mines and to the hotel rooms of Washington, D. C.

10. "Revisionist YSA." The reference is to the Young Socialist Alliance. The adjective is inaccurate inasmuch as the stand of the YSA is for revolutionary socialism. The "YS" discussed by Wohlforth refers to the Young Socialists, a youth grouping fostered by the Workers League to compete with the YSA.

The YS appears to be virtually defunct to judge from the lack of interest displayed in its activities by the editors of the *Bulletin*. — IP

11. *Workers Press*, the "daily organ of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party," is published in London. Both the Workers League and the Young Socialists use it as the prime source of articles to be reprinted in the United States.

The *Workers Press* is notorious not only for its sectarian orientation but for its gross factual inaccuracies. It remains one of the most unreliable publications in the international radical movement, although its reporting has recently improved in the foreign field (for instance, the on-the-scene coverage of developments in Portugal and Greece). — IP

The conference was not prepared through any struggle in the whole preceding period. Not a single demonstration or other activity of any significance had been conducted by the Young Socialists. Two weeks before the conference, when I met with Comrades Mazelis and Halyard seeking to rejoin the party, I proposed that the Young Socialists mobilize a sizable contingent to the Boston Anti-Racism March. This would have been an important way to build the regional conference—to show in practice the politics of the YS as against the revisionists. But of course Mazelis decided on the course of complete abstentionism. A youth movement cannot be built through abstentionism. This conference certainly proved that.

The conference itself expressed the great changes in the League since the first regional conference on December 15, 1973. That conference was attended by over 350 youth, while this conference was attended, according to the *Bulletin*, by only 150 youth. Why is this conference, one year later, less than half the size of the earlier conference and perhaps only one third the size? Is it because the objective conditions are no longer favorable for building a youth movement? Clearly they are more favorable today than last year.

Could it be because key comrades needed to build the conference were "driven out" of the party in the interim? But the party had built a summer camp stronger than a year ago only in August and since then a group of comrades who had left the party have returned. Could it be the price the party is paying for the "mistakes" of the old Wohlforth leadership? Certainly, with almost four months having passed since I was removed as National Secretary, the new leadership can no longer blame the old leadership for their own failure to build a movement!

The YS conference illustrates the virtually complete liquidation of the Young Socialists under the Mazelis leadership. This is part of the general liquidation of the party. It can no longer be hidden. The conference is a product of the policies of Mazelis supported by Gerry Healy and Mike Banda. It proves once again that centrists cannot reach the youth.

Obviously, Mazelis has been forced to make an empirical recognition of this. The conference was called as a regional conference around the YS paper—which is precisely how we originally conceived our first regional conference. But it is reported as "the first annual conference of the Young Socialist newspaper." Not only is this statement a lie but it suggests that Mazelis has abandoned the notion of holding other regional conferences.

Last year we built a conference the size of this year's New York conference in the new area of Cleveland-Youngstown-Pittsburgh-Dayton-Detroit as well as holding conferences in Madison, San Francisco and Los Angeles. What if anything could be built there now? Why is it that not a single report has appeared in the *Bulletin* on Comrade Mazelis' recent tour? Does Mazelis even plan a national YS conference? Last year after the loss of the people who recently returned to the party, we built a conference of 550 youth!

It is not simply a matter of the failure to bring numbers to the conference. This failure in turn is the result of a turn away from revolutionary perspectives in the League. The speeches at the conference, as reported in the *Bulletin*, are an abomination. They are textbook examples of abstract and hollow thinking at its worst. Comrade Sinclair has been speaking this way for years. But it is Comrade Mazelis' speech which takes the cake. He informs us that capitalism is at the end of its rope and that the productive forces and productive relations are in an absolute conflict. And he stops there! He makes no concrete assessment of the actual unfolding of the crisis nor does he put forward any policies for constructing a movement under such conditions.

The productive forces are in an absolute conflict with the productive relations in only the general sense that capitalism as an international system is no longer growing. Production, however, continues. The question is to assess *how* it continues, what will happen in the next stage of the crisis, and what politically flows from the way the capitalists seek to continue under these conditions, and how the working class seeks to resist the attacks upon it. Without such a concrete assessment, we have only the old theory of imminent collapse of capital which the Lambert group¹² borrowed from Pablo.¹³

12. "Lambert group." The French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste headed by Pierre Lambert. The OCI and the Socialist Labour League were the two main organizations in the rump "International Committee" set up by Healy in 1963. They split in 1971.

For material on the split, see "Lambertist 'Declaration' on Socialist Labour League," *Intercontinental Press*, November 1, 1971, p. 942; "The Healyite Case Against the Lambertists," *Intercontinental Press*, November 22, 1971, p. 1015; and "The Split Between Healy and Lambert" by Pierre Frank, *Intercontinental Press*, November 29, 1971, p. 1045 (corrections on p. 1058 and p. 1108). — IP

13. Michel Pablo, a former secretary of the Fourth International. He broke from the movement in 1965. See "Pablo Announces His Break with the Fourth International" in *World Outlook* (the former

The conference is dominated by such generalities. The discussion at the conference proceeds on the lowest level—much like our first conference in December 1971. The discussion centers on this or that attack on working conditions. There is clearly no *theoretical conflict* such as the one which marked the regional conference the preceding year with the dispute over racism and nationalism or the national YS conference with the sharp battle over individualism.

This conference was held one week after the Boston March and in the midst of the final stage of the miners struggle. According to the report in the *Bulletin*, the Boston March was not even mentioned. Comrade Mazelis decides that 12,000 people were marching against the working class and he does not even consider this an issue worth discussing at a youth conference. No detailed discussion of the miners struggle took place either. It is as if a youth movement can be built by avoiding a concrete conflict over the actual problems of the workers movement.

The conference begins abstractly with the universal. It then proceeds to the concrete as isolated events and facts. How else could it proceed from such a beginning? Then, it concludes back on the level of the abstract. Nothing, absolutely nothing emerges from the conference for the YS to do in the next period. Oh, pardon me, Comrade Halyard did propose a "demonstration" in February. Now, this IS pragmatism gone wild. Sensing that the youth at the meeting—those few who did come—wanted to do something about the conditions they faced, Halyard proposed "a demonstration." We are not told what the demonstration is to center on, what programmatic demands it would raise, what its purpose was, and how this fits into our tasks of building a revolutionary leadership in the working class.

What a contrast to the 1973 conference. This conference was campaigned for from the moment of the conclusion of the October 4 meeting which launched the twice-weekly. We built it at the same time that we launched trailblazers into the Midwest to build the party in new areas and expand the circulation of the twice-weekly. We held talent shows and bazaars and other events during the course of building for the conference.

The first conference began with a perspectives report on the international crisis by Adele Sinclair. Of course, there were difficulties with the report because of its highly abstract character. But the report concluded with a proposal of how the YS would act under the new stage in the crisis. It described what it would do and why it would do it. We sought at this, and at the other regional conferences, to explain the relationship between our own

name of *Intercontinental Press*), May 28, 1965, p. 33. — IP

activity and the preparation of the working class for the tasks ahead. Nothing was left in a vague and general form. Each activity planned was explained theoretically and on this basis, a struggle took place for youth to grasp Marxist philosophy, that is, to grasp the Marxist theory of knowledge, to understand how consciousness would change and in this way how the working class would become prepared for the tasks it faced.

Within this framework, a struggle took place among the youth over nationalism and racism with youth themselves fighting for our Marxist perspectives. At the end of the conference, a highly successful dance was held with a well-known band.

We will quote from my speech given in the middle of the conference to illustrate the approach taken:

"The Young Socialists will be built by bringing together two things: one: the millions of workers who will begin to change their thinking because of what they personally experience as the capitalist crisis affects everybody. A change in the material world, that is, a crisis in the system drives people down, changes people's thinking.

"Two: while it will change people's thinking, it will not automatically reveal to the masses the cause of the problem or the solution. This understanding must be brought in from the outside. The outside is the worker who is a socialist, the YS member, and the party person.

"These people are part of the working class but different from the working class. They conflict with the thinking of the working class.

"That is why we are launching a regional, and soon a national campaign for jobs. It will be a fight of the youth that can change the thinking of older workers and build a conscious movement in the unions to replace the present union bureaucrats.

"Ask yourself a question: has or has not your thinking changed in the last six months? Would you have come to this conference a year ago?

"Or did you experience things that helped to make you change your thinking? But you did not think of socialism yourself. That came from the fight of the YS to reach you.

"Well, if we can reach you, then you can reach others. That's what our campaign is about.

"It is the initial fight of youth that will lead workers. We turn not to Nixon, not to the Democrats, but to the 20 million workers in the unions."

E. The Struggle for Marxist Theory in the WL

It is important to clarify several related questions of philosophy and Marxist

theory. The philosophical expression of centrism is the attempt to deny contradiction as the heart of all development and change. The centrist is a formal thinker. He refuses to bring the opposites together in his thinking so that his thinking will reflect the actual struggle of opposing forces in the material world. In this way, he seeks to avoid the conflicts existent in the world. Instead, he wishes to proceed in a gradual non-contradictory way. He is wrapped up in "transitions" which for him represents in-between states of compromise.

This came out clearly in the philosophical conflict with George Novack.¹⁴ Novack saw the moments of dialectics in a fashion which wiped out any real contradiction or struggle. He saw the negation of the negation as a process of *retaining* in the new being elements of the old being which survive unscathed from the original or first negation. However, a study of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* and Hegel's *Logic* reveals that both Lenin and Hegel held that the old finds its expression in the new *through* negation not in spite of it. The struggle of opposites is *absolute* and the unity of opposites only relative. In fact, this unity is achieved *only* through the struggle of opposition.

The importance of this struggle of opposites to the development of the Workers League should be clear. The opposites within the League have a long history to them. However, it was in the struggle to turn the party outward during the past year—to break up the old circle propagandism of the past—that the opposites

were most sharply revealed. As we noted in the resolution *Perspectives For The American Revolution*:

"This circle approach is expressed in two complementary ways. First is abstract propagandism. The propagandist starts from abstractions which are fixed, formal and dead. He deals with what is new only for the purpose of adjusting and readjusting his abstractions. Practice is for the self-development of the idea, of the abstraction. With this method he is continuously blind to what is new, unable to develop anyone around him, subjective and hostile to the actual development of a party of workers.

"Second is the activist. He rejects theory altogether operating only at the level of the current thinking of the workers around him. His practice is without contradiction, without conflict with previously developed theory.

"The turn into the working class is a theoretical task. It is actually a turn into the conflict of classes in the material world. But knowledge does not develop as a simple reflection of the working class. If this were true then a party would not be necessary. It is developed only consciously through a process of conflict of the new experiences with previously developed theory as we fight as part of the working class to construct a conscious leadership."

We have been accused in the recent period of seeking to choose opposites arbitrarily and refusing to hold the opposites fast. There have, of course, been times when we have been guilty of both practices. But there is nothing arbitrary about the choice of opposites which emerged over the past year in the WL. While occasionally an individual can and did make a change—which was true for a brief period with Comrade St. John—the opposites remained and have been determined by a considerable history.

The turn back to abstract propagandism and centrism, brought about by Comrade Healy's arbitrary intervention to remove an opposite from the WL, is a confirmation that the opposites described in this statement existed historically within the League. They were in *no sense* arbitrarily determined by me.

The question of holding opposites fast deserves some explanation for this term has become the philosophical cover in the Workers League for compromise with centrists. Comrade Mazelis has developed the art of holding opposites fast to the point where he is able to keep them in perfect balance, thus creating a state of motionlessness. Certainly a state of motionlessness is the best way to characterize the "activity" of the League since Labor Day. But the material world is made up of matter in motion. The inability of the leadership of the League to reflect this in their thinking and on this basis develop a practice first creates the condi-

tions for the isolation of the League. Never before has the League stood so isolated. Secondly, it creates the conditions where in the next period, the League itself will be torn apart by the contradictory forces it does not grasp consciously.

Opposites are held fast precisely through bringing them together. That is why opposites are held fast only through struggle and in no other way. Any attempt to avoid struggle creates the conditions for the breaking up of the opposites. This is because the struggle of opposites proceeds in any event. If it is not approached consciously and fought out by comrades who fight as an opposite against another opposite then the opposites fall away and no knowledge is learned from their conflict.

What this means is that precisely the struggle we waged with the Lucy St. John's and the Dennis O'Casey's provided the knowledge necessary for the development of the League. We held these comrades through our struggle with them. We were able to carry out a change in the League in the building of the youth movement through what we learned in the process of this struggle.

Where we erred, and we did err, in relation to this strata was when we let up on this internal struggle while persisting in the work in the working class which they resisted. The record showed that little struggle took place with Lucy St. John for several months prior to her leaving the League. Furthermore, she left one day after one of our greatest successes, the December 15 Eastern Regional YS Conference. We also erred by not waging a more persistent struggle against the active layer of the party, the Perry Iversons, Esther Galens, Lucia Riveras, Helen Hal-yards. Our weakness was not any tendency toward arbitrary struggle, driving out well-meaning comrades. Rather, it was at times to avoid the internal struggle, thus making it difficult to educate the new layers brought into the party as well as the critical activist layer of the party.

However, another philosophical position has now emerged within the Workers League. It begins with Comrade Healy's lectures at the Summer Camp. He sought to break down the moments of the dialectic in the most minute way showing the opposites within each opposite at each moment in the dialectic process. This kind of lecture has, in my opinion, very little use, because it abstracts out of an actual study of matter in motion a discussion of logic in such a manner as to encourage a very pedantic and formal approach.

His main emphasis was on transitions. But a transition cannot be understood when abstracted from what happened before (the affirmative or first moment of the dialectic) and what will come after it (the negation of the negation which, in turn, is a first moment in the next dialectical

14. George Novack is the foremost figure in the world Trotskyist movement specializing in the field of philosophy. A consistent defender of dialectical materialism since 1934, he has made many substantial contributions in elucidating its history and in polemicizing with its opponents and distorters. Nonetheless he is regarded by the Healyites as an "idealist."

For Novack's consideration of the issues in the dispute mentioned by Wohlforth, see "A Malignant Case of Sectarianism in Philosophy," *Intercontinental Press*, July 3, 1972, p. 771; "Healyite Revisionism in the Field of Philosophy," *Intercontinental Press*, September 25, 1972, p. 1020; "A Travesty of Marxist Method," *Intercontinental Press*, January 15, 1973, p. 14; and "Facts Are Stubborn Things," *Intercontinental Press*, July 23, 1973, p. 909.

All four articles are included in the compilation *Marxism Vs. Ultraleftism: The Record of Healy's Break With Trotskyism*. (National Education Department, Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014. \$2.50. Also available from Pathfinder Press, 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL, England. £1.07.)—IP

change). It is as absurd to do this as it is to assess the miners strike isolated from the Miller-Boyle fight which preceded it. The interpenetration of opposites is precisely that and it cannot be understood abstracted from the whole process.

This emphasis on transitions can become a concession to centrist metaphysics which envisions fixed entities which survive the process of contradiction and provide transition and continuity to the processes of matter and life. But as we have discussed no such survivors exist. Transition is this process of oppositional struggle itself. The past shapes the future through the present precisely in this negative way. The future is not the negation of any past but of a particular past. It is none-the-less a break, an irreversible break with that past.

This question of transition, combined with the question of holding opposites fast, became a philosophical rationale for maintaining unprincipled blocs with centrist elements who had left the party. These elements, as we have proven, were returned to the party on the basis of a political compromise with their centrist position, not on a clear basis in which the whole movement could learn from a continuing struggle against their centrism.

At the same time, another philosophical "innovation" was introduced into the Workers League. It was in fact nothing more than an old rationale for propaganda. It seems we must begin with the universal which after all is contained in the first moment of dialectics. As I pointed out in a philosophy class before my resignation the universal is contained within the first moment of the process as an *opposite* of the particular (of course, when I raised this point, I was denounced and accused of factionalism).

We begin at every point from a concrete, from a particular. The dialectical process can never begin from a universal. That is the way our thinking is trained to operate in the universities. It is not the way change takes place in matter nor even in our everyday thinking if we think consciously about it. To begin with the universal is an idealist mental imposition upon the actual process of the material world.

The importance of this should be clear. For some years now we have battled with comrades to understand that they must begin at each point in their thinking with what is *new*, with concrete experiences in the workers movement. They must seek to bring these experiences into conflict with their already developed thought (the universal, Marxist theory and strategy as we know it to that point in time). Out of this conflict will come a new development in thinking. But it is not a matter of colliding an experience observed with a thought held. It is more than a mental process—more exactly it is a con-

scious mental process—because it involves our struggle, our action, in the material world—our struggle to construct a party within the working class.

The effect of this propagandist practice of beginning with the universal is expressed in the party press. Issue after issue of the *Bulletin* begins with some very generalized statement on the crisis or the most abstract of calls for a labor party. There is no strategy which will lead to agitation on concrete issues which affect the life of the working class. No campaigns against unemployment, over inflation. Just abstract discussions of capitalism in "absolute" decline. Everything is the universal. Everything is therefore millions of light years away from the working class.

The methods described in this section have been the methods of Comrade Mazelis for years. For years we fought Comrade Mazelis on these questions. Comrade Healy has intervened into the internal life of the Workers League to cut off this process. By placing Comrade Mazelis at the head of the movement and giving him the backing of the IC,¹⁵ Comrade Healy has removed any possibility of a struggle against this. Thus the idealist tendency which always existed within the League now reigns unchallenged.

The effects of this on the theoretical life of the Workers League can no longer be denied. In August we were accused by Comrade Healy of neglecting theory in our quest to build the Workers League. I do not believe this was the case because I am convinced that theory could not develop in the League outside of the turn we took in 1973 to drive the movement into the youth. But I certainly agree that as that drive proceeded we needed to con-

15. "IC." The original International Committee was a faction in the Fourth International formed in November 1953 in opposition to political positions and organizational practices represented chiefly by Michel Pablo, who headed the International Secretariat. The struggle ended in a split that lasted almost ten years.

Eventually the differences lost their immediacy or were superseded by new events on which common conclusions were reached. In 1963 the two sides held a reunification congress on the basis of a joint declaration of principles, and formed the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

On both sides small minorities refused to accept the majority decisions. The minority of the International Committee, consisting in the main of the two groups led by Healy and Lambert, set up a rump "International Committee," which split in 1971. (See footnote No. 12.) Wohlforth's reference is to the splinter of the rump "IC" remaining after the departure of the OCI. —IP

tinuously develop the movement theoretically.

The removal of our leadership in the League by Comrade Healy has led to a tremendous *decline* in the theoretical level of the party. This cannot be denied. There is simply no theoretical work going on. The two page spreads have been almost completely abandoned except for reprints from the *Workers Press* and an occasional journalistic piece. Few classes are held. No educational conferences have taken place. Comrade Mazelis himself has written only three articles in the *Bulletin* over this period—less than one a month. But theory cannot develop in a vacuum. Without a struggle in the party and in the working class, there can be no theoretical life. The Mazelis leadership does everything to avoid both.

Not only has theory declined under the Mazelis leadership, but this leadership, in league with the British, is suppressing the previous theoretical development of the party. Over the past year, we wrote an important book on the history of the American working class. We felt then, and do even more so now, that with the development of the crisis creating new conditions for working class struggle, we can only equip ourselves to lead the struggle if we assess and understand the past of the American working class.

Over that whole year the book was published, a section at a time, in the *Bulletin*. Not one person in our movement or internationally expressed any difference with it. Now with the book already printed and ready for distribution, Comrade Mazelis has decided to suppress the book by refusing to advertise it or distribute it publicly. When asked about this, all he would say was that Comrade Banda had some criticisms of it, that there had been no discussion of these criticisms within the party, but in the interim the book was being withdrawn from circulation.

Also written during the past year was an important pamphlet called "What Is To Be Done Today." This originally appeared in the *Young Socialist*. It details Lenin's struggle against the Mensheviks in 1903 and brings out its importance for our struggle to construct the revolutionary party today. That pamphlet was in its last stages of its production just before I resigned. It has not appeared.

Nothing, of course, is being written to take the place of this material. Over the past period, because we had a vision of the kind of movement we could build in this period, we fought to accumulate the equipment which made it possible not only to print our own paper and eventually produce a daily paper (a project no longer mentioned in the Workers League) but to publish books. More than equipment is needed to produce books. Most important is a perspective which

sees the need for such material and a struggle of opposites which creates the conditions for theoretical development to

take place. Mazelis now has the equipment. He lacks the theory.

[Next week: Healy Intervenes]

Liga Socialista Stand on Take-over of Venezuela's Iron-ore Industry

[The following is a statement by the executive committee of the Liga Socialista (Socialist League, the Venezuelan section of the Fourth International). It was published in the January 15 issue of the League's newspaper, *Voz Socialista*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The iron-ore industry, which for years was operated by and for the imperialist firms Iron and Orinoco Mining, was nationalized by Presidential Decree No. 580. The first article of this decree states:

"In the national interest, the state reserves to itself the industrial exploitation of iron ore."

During the years of plunder, both companies regained two and a half times their total capital investment. Those enormous profits were extracted from our country by brutally exploiting the mine workers.

But in the case of this nationalization, [President] Carlos Andrés Pérez has also shown that he cannot and does not want to break his ties with the imperialists. Days after Decree 580 was promulgated, the government presented Congress with the concrete provisions of the agreement with Iron and Orinoco so that they could be debated there. This agreement has been called the *Actas-Convenio*.¹ Its terms involve far-ranging concessions that run counter to the interests of the workers and masses.

To show this, let us examine the terms of the *Actas-Convenio*, keeping in mind that they were reached without the 3,500 ironworkers even having been consulted. They stipulate that:

1. The state agrees to pay Iron and Orinoco an indemnity totaling some 500 million bolivars [about US\$117 million], the exact sum the companies demanded from the national govern-

ment. Haven't the companies robbed the country enough without our giving them an additional 500 million? Couldn't this sum of money be invested to start an unemployment insurance fund?

2. Both Orinoco and Iron will continue to operate in Venezuela for one year, working for the state through the *Corporación Venezolana de Guayana* [Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana]. In 1975 they will get extremely high commissions by working for the state. This is not a necessary expense.

3. The companies will remain here, providing technical aid until 1977. This is another unnecessary part of the agreement that benefits the companies, since the overwhelming majority of the technical personnel of Orinoco and Iron are Venezuelan.

4. The state agrees to provide U. S. Steel—the U. S.-based parent company of Orinoco—eleven million tons of iron ore a year until 1981, with the option to reduce the tonnage by 50 percent after that date. This is one of the most far-reaching provisions of the *Actas-Convenio*, because it forces Venezuela to sell off a large portion of the iron ore instead of processing it here. And, if that were not enough, the Andrés Pérez government is planning to have that ore processed by capitalist firms, that is, by private capital, by the bourgeoisie.

5. According to the *Actas-Convenio*, conflicts arising during negotiations between the state and the imperialist firms will be resolved by a "Council of Arbitrators" composed of three persons. No one will have the right to protest their decisions. Who appoints this "council"? We don't know. We think that any conflict between the state and the companies should be decided by a committee of ironworkers, democratically elected in the mines and unions.

When the secretly negotiated *Actas-Convenio* was presented to the parliament, it set off a heated discussion, which ended in a surprising vote.

While AD² members Arturo Hernández Grisanti and David Morales Bello spoke grandiloquently in defense of the government, the *Actas-Convenio*, and the AD's whole record of managing the national economy, COPEI³ members—headed by Godofredo González and Eduardo Fernández—launched a holy crusade in which they went so far as to say that "the iron-ore nationalization is a fraud."

Of course, none of this was surprising. COPEI and *Acción Democrática* were trying to salvage or maintain their prestige with the voters.

What was really surprising was the attitude of the left.

At least the MIR⁴ voted against this capitulationist deal, given the suggestive name *Actas-Convenio*.

But Américo Martín did not raise any class alternative to *Acción Democrática*'s proposals. He did not use his parliamentary position to help the workers and people's movement advance their understanding of what this nationalization means and what the workers can do to make the benefits flowing from it profit the people.

While government propaganda was bombarding everyone with slogans and posters—like "the iron is ours" and "Bolívar's children are taking back their mountains"—what were the MAS⁵ compañeros saying besides casting an abstaining vote in Congress?

In a resolution signed by the MAS leadership, they made an assessment that strikes us as accurate.

They said:

"It is no more than a rhetorical question to ask what way of life will be furthered by the exploitation of iron. It is obvious that, for now, it will be part of an economic mechanism characterized by the rule of powerful private interests (national and international) that find in this

2. *Acción Democrática*—Democratic Action.

3. *Comite Organizada por Elecciones Independientes*—Committee Organized for Independent Political Action.

4. *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria*—Movement of the Revolutionary Left.

5. *Movimiento al Socialismo*—Movement Toward Socialism.

1. Memorandum of Agreement.

iron ore an important point of support for expanding their business and earnings. This kind of society is well known to Venezuelans, and we know how much suffering it means for the great majority of the people."

If we added to this MAS resolution the fact that the government is the administrator of these "private interests" (a slight oversight!), the MAS would still be a step away from turning its complaint into a revolutionary-socialist, class-struggle policy.

That step is taking up the line of calling for independence of the working-class movement from the lukewarm "nationalist" policy of Carlos Andrés Pérez and all the bosses in this country.

The MAS compañeros did not vote against or raise a hue and cry against the amount of compensation that Carlos Andrés Pérez will pay to the imperialist companies. Along with the other abstainer—the Communist party, which claims to represent the working class and socialism—the MAS did nothing more than give indirect, shamefaced support to the anti-labor, antisocialist deal between the president and the companies.

Among activists in some factories we have heard the following remark: "It's okay, but does it really benefit us?"

This question expresses a legitimate suspicion.

The socialists' answer to this activist, and to all the workers, students, and people is very simple:

First, we socialists support the nationalization of the iron-ore industry. It is an act of national self-defense—although a paltry one, negotiated behind the backs of the workers, and deceptive in that it has been carried out by a bourgeois government like that of Carlos Andrés Pérez. But it does strike at our main enemy—the same one that invaded Vietnam and Santo Domingo and imposed the unjust ten-year blockade against Cuba. It is a measure striking at one sector of the Yankee imperialists—U. S. Steel.

Second, we socialists reject the Actas-Convénio signed by the government and Orinoco and Iron because it ties Venezuela for several more years to the very firms that have just been nationalized.

Third, we socialists propose that all industry related to iron-ore processing be placed in the hands of the

state, and not—as the president has agreed—in the hands of the employers through joint (state and private) stock companies.

Fourth, we socialists propose that the MAS, MIR, CTV,⁶ the student organizations, and the political parties that claim to represent the workers and people, join together to launch a united campaign for workers control of the iron-ore industry.

Our position is that the socialists had no vote of their own in this debate, either in Congress, the factories, or on the streets. We are of the opinion that scores of thousands of young people and workers have been—as we have—totally let down because the MAS limited itself to lamenting some aspects of the Actas-Convénio and

6. Confederación General de Trabajadores de Venezuela—General Confederation of Workers of Venezuela.

then abstained in the parliamentary vote.

The campaign we propose would focus on calling immediate general assemblies of the six unions in the industry so that the workers could democratically elect a delegation from labor with the following tasks:

1. To replace the "Council of Arbitrators" in making decisions on problems arising between Orinoco/Iron and the state in the discussions. For this purpose, it would have access to the books of those companies.

2. To draw up a plan for using the 1,150-million-bolivar income [about US\$269 million] from iron ore in 1975 to come to grips with some of the extreme hardships our people suffer from.

Then we would be in a position to honestly say "the iron is ours" and not the bourgeoisie's. □

The NATO Maneuvers in Portugal

[In its February 17 issue, the *New York Times* published an editorial claiming that the Communist party had been steadily occupying key positions in Portugal since the April 25 coup. It also said there was an acute danger that the Portuguese CP would try to block the elections scheduled for April 12 and stage a take-over.

[This editorial, which is dealt with elsewhere in this issue, stated quite clearly that the attempted right-wing coup in September 1974 was justified to halt the creeping Communist take-over. It indicated that any violent mass mobilizations between now and the elections would be interpreted as an attack on "democracy" and the security of the Western alliance. And finally it warned the Soviet Union that it "would not be in the interest" of the Russian people if the Soviet embassy was found supporting CP attempts to gain influence.

[Such an editorial in a paper known to reflect the opinion of the section of the American ruling class most concerned with foreign policy clearly represented an attempt to intimidate the Portuguese government and workers movement. It threatened U.S. intervention in an unmistakable way if, from Washington's point of view, the mass upsurge in Portugal goes too far. Furthermore, the editorial came shortly after NATO forces landed in Portugal in early February for maneuvers that also had a threatening character.

[The following article from the February 12 issue of the Portuguese revolutionary-socialist fortnightly *Combate Socialista* deals with the threat represented by the

NATO maneuvers. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

Portugal was forced to withdraw from the last meeting of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group. Nevertheless, air and naval forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are holding maneuvers in our country involving more than 10,000 men in American, German, English, Dutch, and Portuguese units.

According to the communiqué from the armed forces information office, these exercises are part of "a program of training in low-flying maneuvers and strafing" for some airplanes in the center of the country "in accordance with permission granted by the Portuguese authorities." The communiqué went on to explain that "the objective of this operation is to train and perfect the reactions and test the speed with which NATO forces commands can act to maintain and assure effective defense measures in a theater of operations that has vital importance for all of Western Europe."

These maneuvers come, moreover, at about the same time as the statement at a meeting of the International Conference on Defense Problems (in which NATO member countries participate) that "any deliberate attempt to attack the stability of the international system on which the security of the Free World depends will be interpreted as aggression and will be answered in the appropriate manner."

What does the bourgeoisie mean by "Free World"?

The capitalist countries are "free" be-

cause in these countries the bourgeoisie has the freedom to live off the sweat and toil of millions upon millions of exploited human beings. It has the freedom at any time it wants to shut down the factories if profits do not meet expectations, to raise prices, and to use the police and the army against strikes and mass movements.

This is the "freedom" NATO is training in Portugal to protect. It was to defend this kind of "freedom" that the alliance was formed after World War II.

At that time, the results of the war—crisis and impoverishment, the armed resistance against fascism and Nazi occupation, and the prestige of communism throughout Europe—provided the conditions for a mass upsurge the capitalists were not prepared to face. For this reason, on April 4, 1949, NATO was formed as a military and political alliance linking the United States and Canada with a group of European countries.

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is quite explicit. Member countries declare that an attack on one of them will be considered an attack on all, and that in the event of an armed conflict all will come to the aid of the country attacked with "such action as may be deemed necessary." All the signatories pledge to "safeguard freedom, the common heritage and civilization of the respective peoples, based on the principles of democracy, individual freedom, and respect for law." These words too much resemble those invoked by Nixon to justify the mass murder in Vietnam or by the Salazarist regime to justify the massacre of "terrorists" for us to mistake what they mean or represent.

During Portugal's colonial wars, the same counterrevolutionary objective was served by NATO's aid to the fascist regime, which was supplied with weapons to enable it to try to crush the struggle of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.

Today, this anti-working-class Holy Alliance has the same objective in coming to the support of capitalist reaction and trying to force the mass movement to put a damper on its struggle.

Moreover, NATO is not the only alliance the capitalists can rely on for self-preservation. There is another agreement, the Iberian Pact, which our country maintains with the Spanish fascist regime. According to this, when the bourgeoisie feels the need, "our brothers" can intervene militarily against the workers. For the time being, however, there has been no sign of "exercises" undertaken by Franco.

It doesn't surprise us that the government is permitting this "simulated attack on Portugal" while it is trying by every means possible to block the struggles of the workers and people's movement, claiming that they "endanger the democratic process," or that the Portuguese army is

participating in these exercises and authorizing the imperialist military machine to carry out training operations in our country.

The Communist party warns against demonstrations that might assume a provocative character. At the same time, the CP says: "While Portugal is part of NATO, there are going to be such maneuvers with Portuguese participation. Nonetheless, in the present political situation, we must regard holding NATO exercises here completely inopportune."

However, since the majority of the working class puts its trust in the Communist and Socialist parties and Intersindical [the CP-dominated union federation], it is these organizations precisely that have a responsibility to mobilize the masses in a solid united front to struggle for the abrogation of all aggressive imperialist pacts.

In a situation where the bourgeoisie is counting on the elections to reinforce its domination of society, the presence of foreign imperialism is an additional threat to the working masses and an additional

boost to the exploiters to enable them to get the result they want from the elections.

If the layoffs, rising prices, speculation, and all the reactionary maneuvers of the Portuguese capitalists are not sufficient to show what a swindle these elections represent, then the anti-working-class maneuvers of the imperialists ought to be. While Portugal is bound by imperialist pacts and subject to the obligations these pacts impose, there cannot be any really democratic elections. The CP and the SP should be the first to understand this and fight for a workers and people's government that would expropriate the capitalists and abrogate all of Portugal's pacts with imperialism. That is the only way genuinely democratic elections could be guaranteed.

All the strength of the working class must be mobilized to force the immediate abrogation of the aggressive imperialist treaties—NATO and the Iberian Pact!

A united front in action must be built to expel NATO from Portugal!

Portugal out of NATO; NATO out of Portugal! □

Tomás 'Pancho' Carricaburu

Argentine Police Kill LCR Member

Tomás Horacio Francisco "Pancho" Carricaburu, a member of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Argentina), was murdered by the federal police in Buenos Aires December 20, 1974. He was thirty years old.

The police's story, according to the January issue of the LCR's newspaper *Combate*, was that the unarmed victim had robbed and beaten an old woman on Calle Florida (a generally crowded short street noted for its exclusive shops), and had "resisted" arrest.

Carricaburu was the third LCR member to be gunned down by the police in 1974. (See *Intercontinental Press*, January 27, p. 94, for an account of the deaths of Mario Rodríguez and Adriana Drangosch.)

Carricaburu became active in the student movement when he was sixteen years old. As student-body president of the engineering school at the National University of the South in Bahía Blanca, he attended many congresses of the Argentine University Students Federation. Inspired by the Cuban revolution, he helped found the anti-Stalinist student group, Agrupación Reformista Independiente (Independent Reform Group).

In 1967 he joined *Política Obrera* (Labor Politics) and got involved in strike struggles for the first time. As a railroad worker, he

participated in the 1967 rail strike against the military dictatorship. When the strike was defeated, Carricaburu was fired along with many other participants.

In 1969 he engaged actively in the worker-student mobilizations in support of the semi-insurrection in Córdoba. Shortly afterward, he was arrested and tortured for three months, accused of being part of a guerrilla group.

Carricaburu became an exponent of armed struggle and broke with *Política Obrera* in early 1970.

He then got involved in the teachers' struggle. Because of his participation in campus actions against the dictatorship, he was arrested a second time.

In October 1970, Carricaburu joined a group of sympathizers of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers party). This group became the Bahía Blanca unit of the PRT. As one of the local leaders, Carricaburu participated in armed actions of the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP—Revolutionary People's Army), which was sponsored by the PRT.

Toward the end of 1972, Carricaburu joined the Fracción Roja (Red Faction) of the PRT, which later split and formed the LCR. He played a leading role in the LCR as a revolutionary intellectual until the time of his death. □