Rhodesia's Racist Regime Under Heavy Pressure

SMITH: Beef up military.

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Saber Rattling Over Cuba's African Role

By David Frankel

On February 28, in an election appeal aimed at the right-wing Cuban vote in Florida, presidential candidate Ford denounced the Cuban government as "an international outlaw."

Ford, a last-ditch supporter of the imperialist intervention in Vietnam, went on to label the Castro government "a regime of aggression" because of the presence of Cuban troops in Angola.

Ford's boundless hypocrisy can be judged from the fact that Washington has repeatedly toppled Latin American governments, subsidized dictators, and even used troops in Central America and the Caribbean. Scarcely a country in the world today has escaped the malignant effects of the corruption, subversion, and brutal violence employed by American imperialism in defense of its interests.

Ford's tirade against Cuba included a threat. He said, "... I solemnly warn Fidel Castro against any temptation to armed intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Let his regime, or any like-minded government, be assured the United States would take the appropriate measures."

Attacks in the same vein were answered by Castro at the end of last year. When Ford said that the Cuban role in Angola had canceled any chance for improving relations between Washington and Havana, Castro replied in a December 22 speech:

"What is there left to cancel that they haven't already canceled in vain? What can they take away which has not already been taken away? Nothing! The situation is one of absolute impotence on their part."

Castro's reply was to the point. Over the last fifteen years, Washington has placed an embargo on the island, mounted an armed invasion, underwritten continual counterrevolutionary efforts of right-wing exile groups, and sought to assassinate Castro. Washington still bans trade with Cuba. Yet the country has survived and grown stronger.

In a six-country Latin American tour, which ended just before Ford's February 28 speech, Kissinger echoed Ford's attacks. Kissinger was obviously assigned to reinforce Ford's electioneering handouts.

To what extent Kissinger was trying to organize reprisals against Cuba remains to be seen. Apparently he had secret objectives that did not necessarily correspond with his public statements.

It was noticeable, for example, that even the government of tiny Costa Rica felt secure in announcing—only three days after Kissinger left—the country's first commercial deal with Cuba since 1964.

Likewise noticeable was the fact that the Peruvian government recognized the MPLA government the day after Kissinger left Lima.

Colombian President Alfonso López Michelsen announced his intention to recognize the MPLA with Kissinger sitting next to him. "We have our own position on Angola," he said.

Asked about the Cuban involvement in Angola, López, obviously referring to the U.S. role in Vietnam, said: "This is not the first time that one of the countries in the hemisphere has been involved in extrahemispheric affairs."

Kissinger obviously acquiesced in advance to the verbal thrusts against Washington. "Kissinger, smiling and relaxed, seemed unperturbed by the Colombian's remarks," according to a dispatch from Penny Bernoux in the February 24 Washington Post.

One of Kissinger's objectives in his tour thus seems to have been to assure the Latin Americans that Washington would not retaliate if they recognized the MPLA government in Angola. Washington. The attempt to blame the Latin Americans that Washington would not retaliate if they recognized the MPLA government in Angola. This would accord with the State Department's decision to make a turn in Angola, a course first indicated by the permission granted to Gulf Oil to resume friendly collaboration with the MPLA as in the past.

This turn dovetails with the actions of America's imperialist allies in Europe in hastily mending fences with the MPLA. Aside from Ford's bid to rightist Cuban voters, the attacks on Cuba's role in Angola fall into the familiar pattern of blaming "foreign agitators" for rises in the militancy of workers and their allies. In this case, it is the upsurge in southern Africa that worries the imperialists. For this they blame the Russians and especially the Cubans.

The March 1 column by the reactionary Rowland Evans and Robert Novak offers a good example of such propaganda:

"The chilling prospect that Fidel Castro intends further use of his 12,000 Cuban troops in Angola to 'free' South African-controlled Namibia is causing far more consternation inside President Ford's White House than Cuba's original Angola intervention."

Claiming that "the question is how to stop" Castro from carrying out his supposed African plans, Evans and Novak said: "One possible answer under tentative discussion is an outright U.S. naval blockade of Cuba itself."

But the American imperialists are well aware that the basic problem they face in southern Africa is not the presence of Cuban contingents in Angola. Instead, it is the rising determination of the African masses in many countries to rid themselves of white minority rule and throw off the yoke of imperialism.

The mobilization of the African masses is now threatening the shaky racist regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia, and putting increased pressure on the South Africans in Namibia. The new regime in Mozambique has been pushed by the pressure of the masses to take a more militant stand against white rule in Rhodesia, and the imperialists fear that this process may eventually challenge their control over all of southern Africa.

This is the real source of concern in Washington. The attempt to blame the Cubans for stirring up trouble in Africa is a cynical ploy in Ford's campaign for the right-wing vote in the United States. And it is part of the publicity designed to justify more intensive American intervention against the freedom-seeking movements in Africa.

Free Desmond Trotter!

On March 18 and 19 the Privy Council in London, the highest court in the British Commonwealth, is scheduled to hear the appeal of Desmond Trotter. If the appeal is denied, Trotter faces death by hanging.

A militant on the Caribbean island of Dominica, the twenty-one-year-old Trotter was an organizer and editor of its monthly publication, Twavay, Trotter was a marked man. During the late 1960s he had been a central leader of the Black Power movement that emerged in Dominica at that time. He was an organizer and main speaker at African Liberation Day

A series of strikes by agricultural workers led the Dominica Labour party government to intensify its repression against its left-wing opposition. Two days after the killing of the American tourist, then Deputy Prime Minister Patrick John made a radio speech charging that the shooting was "the handiwork of a few degenerate leaders, who see themselves as architects of a new society, projecting new standards and cultures unacceptable to the majority of our people...."

The "evidence" against Trotter was the testimony of a police corporal who claimed to have found Trotter sitting on an overturned bucket with a gun beneath it two months after the killing, and the account of a fifteen-year-old woman who admitted to a lawyer that her testimony was perjured.

However, the trial went on—with "Hang Desmond" signs painted above the entry to the jury room and the entrance to the lounge where the jury took its midmorning break.

The Committee in Defense of Desmond Trotter and Political Prisoners in Dominica urges that protests be sent to Prime Minister Patrick John, House of Assembly, Roseau, Dominica. Copies should be sent to the committee at P.O. Box 231, Roseau, Dominica.

Leonid Brezhnev—Creator of the 'Cloudless Sky'

During the Soviet Communist party's twenty-fifth congress, Leonid Brezhnev was variously described as "the most outstanding political figure of our epoch," "a bright and inspiring example of selfless service," "a passionate fighter for Communism," and "a son of the people."

Did this adulation signal a revival of the Stalin-style personality cult? Not at all, according to Eduard A. Shevardnadze, the leader of the Georgian CP.

Praising Brezhnev was not a matter of "personality," he said, but "purely party, businesslike, congress talk."

According to a report in the March 2 New York Times, Shevardnadze then "went on to describe Mr. Brezhnev's 'art of penetrating into the soul of a man' and said he had helped create 'a pure and cloudless sky above us.'"
Why Mozambique Closed Rhodesian Border

By Ernest Harsch

Pressure is mounting against the white supremacist regime now ruling Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).

In the wake of the setback to American and South African imperialism in Angola, the Zimbabwean freedom fighters have escalated their campaign to oust the colonial-settler regime of Ian Smith and to win Black majority rule.

At the same time, the American, British, and South African governments have stepped up efforts to engineer a negotiated settlement in Zimbabwe before the struggle escapes control and threatens imperialist interests throughout southern Africa.

Beginning in February, the Zimbabwean guerrillas increased activity. This followed a recent influx of freedom fighters, who crossed into the country from camps in neighboring Mozambique.

Reporting from Salisbury, the Rhodesian capital, Martin Meredith said in the February 22 London Sunday Times, "The moutinous border region with Mozambique, which stretches for 800 miles, is ideal guerrilla territory. About 1,000 guerrillas have now infiltrated across the frontier, and the area of operation, once confined to the north-east, now extends to the south-east."

The Shona people, who inhabit northern and eastern Zimbabwe, also live across the border in parts of Mozambique, facilitating the guerrillas' ability to carry out actions from their bases in that country.

Nicholas Ashford reported in the March 1 London Times that the Rhodesian forces appeared to be heavily engaged on two fronts, one near Mount Darwin in the northeast, where earlier guerrilla campaigns had been carried out, and the other near the town of Chibanga in the southeast. Fighting has also been reported near the tourist area around Inyanga and Vumba.

In addition to the guerrillas already fighting in Zimbabwe, another 3,000 in Mozambique are reported ready to engage in action. Between 10,000 and 20,000 recruits, according to varying reports, are undergoing training in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia, which borders Rhodesia on the north.

According to Meredith, Zimbabwean "sympathies lie overwhelmingly with the guerrillas." He added that "each week more disaffected black youths are leaving to join them."

New York Times correspondent Henry Kamm confirmed this account. He reported that the Zimbabwean population, Salisbury has reportedly been killed by Rhodesian forces in the last three weeks of February, compared with thirteen Rhodesian troops killed in action since the beginning of the year.

However, the Rhodesian figure for the number of "terrorists" killed may also include civilians. For example, after investigating a reported massacre of civilians that occurred in June 1975, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia concluded that Rhodesian military forces had fired on a group of Africans at the Karina kraal (village) near Mount Darwin, killing nine children and four women.

A former Rhodesian soldier revealed in London February 26 that he had participated in a massacre of sixty African civilians.

In addition to this use of terror against the Zimbabwean population, Salisbury has sought to isolate the guerrillas from their civilian supporters by forcibly resettling the rural population along the borders into so-called protected villages. In the Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land alone, the racist regime has begun in 1974 to herd an estimated 60,000 inhabitants into such "protected villages."

These villages, based on the "strategic hamlet" concept employed by Washington in Vietnam, are surrounded by barbed wire and kept under constant armed guard. They are placed under dusk-to-dawn curfew and all inhabitants over the age of thirteen are required to register with the authorities. Rhodesian forces have used clubs and electric prods to move unwilling Zimbabweans.

In a report in the February 26 Washington Post, Robin Wright quoted a prominent Zimbabwean political scientist, who had visited the sites, as saying, "It is no exaggeration to call them concentration camps. They are rural slums—overcrowded, without basic facilities and unhealthy."

The measures against the African population and against the guerrillas proved only partially effective, however. With the new rise of Zimbabwean resistance to white settler rule, the Smith regime has been forced to begin mobilizing the entire white population, which numbers only about 250,000, compared with more than 6 million Blacks.

Reservists are being called up for active service as often as four times a year. All white males between the ages of 25 and 38 are subject to conscription, and those up to 55 may be drafted to perform clerical and guard duties, freeing younger troops for combat. The five-year draft exemption for new white immigrants has been cut to two years, and women have been encouraged to join up for small arms, signals, and logistics duties. A second battalion of African troops has been raised to supplement the white forces.

The Rhodesian regime now has 4,500 regular troops and 1,200 air force personnel, with about forty combat aircraft. They are supported by 8,000 police, 35,000 police reservists, and 10,000 army reservists. According to Meredith, these forces are now being stretched to their limit by the escalating guerrilla campaign.

Since the Rhodesian military has been unable to halt the movement of guerrillas into the country, it has resorted to preemptive strikes across the border into Mozambique.

On February 25, Salisbury announced that it had engaged in "hot pursuit" against a group of guerrillas. The raid against a base near Pafuri, Mozambique, reportedly took twenty-four lives. Rhodesian Defense Minister Pieter K. van der Byl defended this "hot pursuit" practice, calling it "time-hallowed."

The attack against the Pafuri base sparked a sharp reaction from the Mozambique regime. Calling it an "act of war," Mozambique President Samora Machel declared March 3 that he was closing Mozambique's border to all transportation and communication links with Rhodesia. He said the country was being placed on a war footing and ordered the seizure of all Rhodesian property in Mozambique, which included commercial transportation and storage facilities. A number of Rhodesian railway employees were arrested.

In defense against possible Rhodesian air strikes, Machel called on Mozambicans...
to build air raid shelters in all major population centers and to staff antiaircraft defenses during off-duty hours.

Following the Rhodesian attack on Pafuri, the Times of Zambia, a Lusaka daily owned by President Kenneth Kaunda's ruling United National Independence party, called on Zambians to prepare for war, declaring that "an attack on Mozambique is an attack on Zambia." The newspaper of Tanzania's ruling Tanganyika African National Union expressed its solidarity with the Mozambique border closing, declaring that Tanzania "is also at war.

The blocking of the two rail lines between landlocked Rhodesia and the Mozambican ports of Beira and Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques), may be a serious blow to the Rhodesian economy. Because of the formal United Nations-sponsored economic embargo on the country, the Smith regime has kept its trade figures a secret. But it is estimated that at least 25 percent of Rhodesia's trade was transported through Mozambique at the time of the border closing.

The Smith regime had anticipated a possible embargo by Mozambique several months earlier, diverting much of its trade through South African ports. (When Mozambique gained its independence from Lisbon in June 1975, about 70 to 80 percent of Salisbury's trade passed through Mozambique.)

South African officials have raised doubts, however, about whether the already congested South African ports and rail lines can handle all of the Rhodesian trade affected by the border closing.

Although the impact of the Mozambique embargo on the Rhodesian economy may not be felt for a while, its effects on sagging white morale could be more immediate. Even before the current escalation of guerrilla actions, whites began to leave the country in greater numbers. According to official figures, 10,500 whites emigrated in 1975, the highest number since 1965.

Reporter James MacManus commented in the March 1 issue of the British daily Guardian that "many whites are having second thoughts about their role in a Rhodesian version of Custer's last stand."

One aim of the embargo was evidently to put more pressure on Smith in the negotiations he is conducting with a wing of the Zimbabwean nationalist movement.

The fact that Machel's action was backed by Kaunda and Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere—two of the key figures in the efforts to reach a negotiated settlement—added greater weight to this pressure.

Since mid-December 1975, Smith has been holding closed-door talks with a faction of the African National Council (ANC) led by Joshua Nkomo.

The present ANC was formed in December 1974 from a formal merger of the four main Zimbabwean nationalist groups: the Zimbabwe African People's Union led by Nkomo, the Zimbabwe African National Union led by Ndabaningi Sithole, the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe led by James Chikerema, and the old African National Council led by Abel Muzorewa.

In August 1975 the enlarged ANC split, with Nkomo gaining control of the ANC apparatus within Zimbabwe and with Sithole, Chikerema, and Muzorewa leading the ANC faction based outside of the country. Nkomo is the only one of the four leaders who has been allowed to function within Zimbabwe by the Rhodesian authorities.

So far, the Smith-Nkomo talks have been largely window dressing for Smith's attempts to stall for time. Although the details of the negotiations have not been revealed, Nkomo continues publicly to call for majority rule.

For the racist white settlers, however, the loss of political control would mean an end to their privileged social position, which is based on the dispossession and domination of the Zimbabwean population.

In his New Year's message, Smith proclaimed, "Unless the agreement guarantees the retention of government in civilized and responsible hands, not short-term, not medium-termed, but for all time, then it is unacceptable and I shall have no part in it." Several weeks later he declared that "there can be no question of capitulation to demands for early black rule."

Nkomo has come under pressure from the other nationalist leaders, who have denounced his participation in the talks with Smith. Elliott M. Gabelah, a representative of the ANC faction opposed to Nkomo, declared in Salisbury February 6 that the negotiations were "a waste of time that will produce negative results."

A correspondent for the London monthly Africa magazine reported in the March issue, "Joshua Nkomo, on his part, is faced with the growing militancy in his own ranks and the African population in general who have come to the conclusion that, given the regime's present frame of mind, the talks are a futile exercise."

With the negotiations deadlocked and sentimen for liberation on the rise, the British government has stepped up efforts to defuse the explosive situation.

Still officially the colonial ruler of Rhodesia (no government in the world has recognized the settlers' 1965 declaration of "independence" from Britain), London has increased pressure on Smith during the past few weeks to make concessions to the Black majority before it is "too late." British officials have stressed the danger of a war in Zimbabwe spreading into a "general race war" throughout southern Africa, in which Britain has substantial economic and political interests.

London is also concerned about the possible impact that its role in Zimbabwe could have on British investments in Black-rulled Africa—or in Zimbabwe itself after white settler rule is ended. Robert B. Semple reported in the March 8 New York Times, "Some businessmen have been telling Members of Parliament privately that Britain's long-term interests lie with the blacks, and that these interests must not be jeopardized by diplomatic efforts that—however well intentioned, and how misperceived they may be by African militants—cast Britain in an unfavorable light."

To induce Smith to compromise, British officials have declared that London will not come to the white regime's rescue. London warned Salisbury February 18 that "no British government . . . would commit British troops on the continent of Africa in a war on behalf of the minority against the majority. It would be madness to do so." The February 21 London Economist commented that British military intervention was "liable to be misinterpreted by black Africans."

London, however, has not totally ruled out the possibility of sending troops to Zimbabwe. British Foreign Secretary James Callaghan told the House of Commons February 18 that troops might be sent if the Rhodesians accepted British sovereignty.

Dana Adams Schmidt reported in the March 4 Christian Science Monitor that should Smith accede to British authority, "David Ennals, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs dealing with Africa, has told the British House of Commons that Britain might be willing to take [an] active hand in working out a new black-majority regime—and, if necessary, to defend the whites."

As a further sign of pressure on the Smith regime, London, on March 3, declared its support for the Mozambique embargo and called for international aid to Mozambique to offset economic losses resulting from the border closing. Under
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Edward Rowlands told the House of Commons that the Mozambique action made it “even more important” for Smith to accept a transition to majority rule.

The March 3 Guardian indicated that London would also be ready to take part in the negotiations under certain circumstances: “If Mr. Nkomo holds in his hands an agreement to transfer power that he finds satisfactory, then Britain may be useful in easing the transition. If Ian Smith renounces UDI [the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence], then Britain again has a role as constitutional conference convenor.”

Lord Greenhill, a leading British diplomat, was sent to Salisbury February 24 to confer with Smith and Nkomo. Bernard D. Nossiter reported in the February 25 Washington Post that if Greenhill was told by Smith that the white regime was ready to turn power over to the Black majority, “the British government will take part in talks between blacks and whites to settle the details.”

New York Times correspondent Michael T. Kaufman reported in a February 24 dispatch from Salisbury, “This morning, Joshua Nkomo . . . said that he welcomed the British intervention and asserted that it had always been his view that ‘only Britain could give independence to this country.’ At a press conference held in a suburban black township, Mr. Nkomo declared, ‘Britain must discharge her responsibility to the people of this country.’”

Other Zimbabweans had a different view of Britain’s “responsibilities.” On February 26 hundreds of Black supporters of the ANC faction opposed to Nkomo demonstrated in Salisbury against Greenhill’s visit.

The leaders of that faction refused to meet with Greenhill while he was in the area and described his trip as “irrelevant.” According to Geoffrey Godsell in the March 1 Christian Science Monitor, this implied “that they felt an early guerrilla victory over Rhodesia’s whites was led by Prime Minister Ian Smith was a certainty and might only be delayed by the British envoy’s parleying.”

Washington has thrown its diplomatic weight behind London’s efforts to avoid a “race war” in Zimbabwe. A State Department spokesman declared February 20, “We are calling on Mr. Smith and the white regime to negotiate realistically and seize what will be their last opportunity for a negotiated settlement.

“Mr. Smith and his minority regime cannot have any illusions that Britain, or any other country for that matter, could be called upon to rescue or protect them from armed conflict.”

According to State Department sources, Secretary of State Kissinger is personally keeping a close daily watch on “critical areas” in southern Africa.

While backing Britain’s diplomatic efforts, Washington has at the same time warned that it would actively oppose any attempts by Moscow or Havana to become involved in the Zimbabwe conflict as they had in the Angolan civil war. In testimony before the House Committee on International Relations March 4, Kissinger warned the Cubans to “act with great circumspection because our actions cannot be deduced from what we did in Angola.”

Two days later, Kissinger urged Smith to show flexibility in the negotiations and reminded the Rhodesian regime that “the time for settlement is now running out.” He then returned to the timeworn theme of denouncing “outside agitators,” saying, “we do not accept the proposition that Cuba has the right to intervene in this country.”

His primary concern, however, is that a massive freedom struggle could emerge in Zimbabwe, escaping control of the traditional leadership. This fear is shared by South Africa.

Although Pretoria was the most important backer of the Smith regime after the whites staged their 1965 coup, Prime Minister John Vorster has applied pressure on Smith since late 1974 to reach a settlement with the Zimbabwean freedom fighters. He is well aware of the impact a Black uprising in Zimbabwe would have on the Black population of South Africa itself.

Following the closing of the Mozambique border with Rhodesia, Vorster made a speech in the South African Parliament, which, according to New York Times correspondent Kamm, fell far short of any South African commitment to come to Smith’s aid.

Guardian correspondent Stanley Uys said in a March 3 dispatch from Cape Town, “Official circles here are expressing the fervent wish—privately—that Smith will understand the message Machel is sending him and settle quickly with Rhodesian nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo.”

The February 26 New York Times reported that “it was learned last week in Johannesburg that South Africa has conveyed to the Government here [Salisbur- y] its warning that under no circumstances would it commit its own army to the defense of Rhodesia though it might continue to supply arms.”

However, an unnamed South African general, cited by Time magazine correspondent Lee Griggs in the March 8 issue, stated that “there will certainly be some volunteers to go and fight.”

Shah’s Oil Revenues May Be Halved

According to the February 13 Middle East Economic Survey, Iran’s potential oil exports may have been overstated by the National Iranian Oil Company. Export potential, currently figured at 6 million barrels a day, appears “likely to slip to something like 3.5 million barrels a day by the early 1980s,” according to the report.

If correct, this slowdown in oil exports could seriously cut into forecasted petroleum revenues, currently projected at about $30 billion a year.

The report attributes the expected decline both to troubles in overall yield and to rapid jumps in Iran’s internal oil consumption.

Costa Rica Resumes Trade With Cuba

Costa Rica has renewed commercial ties with Cuba with the sale of 4,000 tons of beans for $2 million, according to an announcement by the Costa Rican Export Promotion Center February 27. It was the first trade deal between the two countries since 1963, when the Organization of American States imposed economic sanctions on Havana.
**New York Rally Protests Torture of Iranian Dissidents**

By José Pérez

[The following article appeared in the March 12 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

NEW YORK—Three hundred people attended a February 26 meeting at Columbia University on “Repression in Iran,” a country described by one speaker as having “the worst record on human rights in the world.”

The event was sponsored by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI). The featured speaker was Dr. Reza Baraheni, who is Iran’s most prominent modern poet and literary critic and is now living in exile after having spent 102 days in the shah’s prisons in 1973.

Baraheni was released and allowed to leave the country after protests from organizations such as Amnesty International; the International Association of Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists and Novelists (PEN); and CAIFI.

Other speakers included former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Eric Bentley, playwright and literary critic; Ivan Morris, head of the board of Amnesty International, USA; Muriel Rukeyser, president of the American Center of PEN; Prof. Aijaz Ahmad of Rutgers University; and Bahram Atai, a national field secretary of CAIFI.

Referring to the long history of U.S. support to the shah since he was installed as dictator by a CIA coup in 1953, Baraheni said, “Americans should know that support to the shah is support to an illegal government that throttles all human rights.”

He reported that there are 100,000 political prisoners in the shah’s jails, and that executions during the past three years have averaged two a week.

In January 1976 alone, eleven people were officially executed and eight others killed in “shoot-outs” with the police.

Baraheni told of his experience in prison at the hands of the SAVAK, Iran’s U.S.-trained political police.

“The torture is unavoidable,” he said. “On the second day of my imprisonment I was strapped on a bed and given seventy-five blows with a wire whip on the bottom of my feet.”

He described the other methods of torture meted out to political prisoners: electric shock; rape; enemas with boiling water; plucking of the nails and teeth; and electrically wired iron bed designed to burn the person placed on it; and pressing of the skull in a vise, sometimes until it breaks.

He described how one young girl, five or six years old, was beaten so that she would disclose the identity of other prisoners placed before her.

In another incident he saw a young man brought in, tortured for four or five hours, then dumped back in the cell totally disfigured and near death. He was dragged out the following day again to be tortured, and was never seen again.

Baraheni also spoke in detail about the plight of oppressed ethnic groups in Iran, who comprise a majority of the population. Of the 34 million people, only 14 to 16 million are Persians, yet the Persian language is the only one allowed in schools and in books and magazines.

Other speakers detailed aspects of U.S. complicity with the shah’s regime and outlined ways to protest repression in Iran.

Eric Bentley described how the shah uses annual arts festivals to give his regime a liberal image by inviting avant-garde theater groups. He urged “my colleagues in the theater and music” to publicly refuse to take part in such shows.

Ivan Morris urged that similar boycotts be carried out by tourists, labeling the shah’s despotism “monstrous.”

Ramsey Clark detailed the cases of several political prisoners. He told of a producer who was sentenced to eleven years in prison for staging a play by Maxim Gorky, and an actor who was given three years for reading lines from the same play.

Speakers at meeting: Reza Baraheni (at microphone), Nasrin Pakizegi (CAIFI), Eric Bentley, Ivan Morris, Ramsey Clark, Muriel Rukeyser, Aijaz Ahmad, and Bahram Atai.

Referring to the 1953 CIA coup that brought the shah to power, Clark said: “Americans are responsible for the conduct of their country. . . . It’s our business here and everywhere to stand up for fundamental human rights.”

Prof. Aijaz Ahmad described the militarization of Iran, explaining that the United States is supplying the regime with billions of dollars in arms each year. He urged that protests be organized against U.S. military complicity with the dictatorship.

CAIFI’s Bahram Atai explained to the audience that a group of Maoists, claiming to represent the Iranian Students Association, had attempted to disrupt several of Baraheni’s recent meetings. He read a statement signed by forty individuals and organizations supporting Baraheni’s right to free speech.

Atai noted that although the Maoists had asserted that Baraheni was a “traitor” and a SAVAK agent, they had produced no proof of the allegation, and their statements could only be considered scurrilous slander.

The meeting voted unanimously to support Baraheni’s right to free speech, and no attempt at a disruption took place.
Mao Regales Nixon With ‘Eight-Jeweled Pigeon’

By David Frankel

“Even for Richard Nixon, it was an extraordinary and dubious venture. There was the ex-President, thoroughly disgraced in his own country, being treated in Peking as if he still occupied the Oval Office and Watergate meant nothing more than a fancy apartment building.”

Time magazine’s reaction to Nixon’s visit to China was typical of the comment in the American capitalist press. The Washington Post characterized Nixon’s junket as “perverse,” “irresponsible,” and “intolerable.”

The editors said, “... the visit is a piece of pure diplomatic and political mischief-making, half ego trip and half kowtow. Its only redeeming aspect is the evidence it offers of how wise the American people were to drum this disgraced figure out of the White House 18 months ago.”

Senator Barry Goldwater, once one of Nixon’s admirers, suggested February 25 that “if he wants to do this country a favor he might stay over there.”

New York Daily News columnist James Wieschert called the trip “a monumental insult to the citizens of the United States ... a sick practical joke on the United States ...”

“A sleazy act” was the verdict of columnist Joseph Kraft.

There was considerable speculation in the mass media as to why the Chinese government would send a private plane to transport the despised criminal across the Pacific. The Maoist regime acted as if Nixon were a famous and respected leader, a man who carries weight within American ruling circles.

Some bourgeois commentators have suggested that the show put on by Mao, featuring Nixon as No. 1 hero in the United States, was a maneuver in China’s internal politics. China is one of the few countries in the world where such a deception could be successful. The regime is able to get away with the fraud because it has never reported the details of Watergate to the Chinese people, using the pretext that the scandal was an “internal affair” of the United States.

Whatever calculations the Maoist bureaucrats may have had on this score, it was certainly ironic that Mao was entertaining Nixon, formerly the head of the world’s chief imperialist power, while Teng Hsiao-ping was being attacked as a source of the “right deviationist wind” who was “taking the capitalist road in the interests of the landlord and bourgeois classes.”

Teng, a member of the Chinese Communist party for decades, was one of its central leaders until his downfall during the Cultural Revolution.

Nixon’s trip also coincided with the opening of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the Soviet Communist party in Moscow. It served as a forceful reminder of Peking’s world role and partly overshadowed the opening of the Soviet party congress, at least in the American press.

The timing of the trip was also significant from Gerald Ford’s point of view. While the bureaucrats in Peking stuffed Nixon with “eight-jeweled pigeon” and mandarin fish and displayed him in the company of Mao and acting Premier Hua Kuo-feng, voters in New Hampshire were being reminded of Watergate and how Ford came to be president in the first place.

“I don’t think it hurt Mr. Ford,” Senator Goldwater argued. “I don’t think the average American has enough respect for Mr. Nixon anymore to really believe that what he’s doing is in anybody’s interest but Mr. Nixon’s.”

Congressman Wayne L. Hays disagreed. He claimed that Nixon’s trip did hurt Ford’s campaign, adding, “I think it’s a little ungrateful of him, in view of the fact that Mr. Ford pardoned him.”

Finally, Mao’s invitation brought Nixon to Peking on the fourth anniversary of his first China visit, when Mao achieved his lifelong goal of establishing diplomatic ties with American imperialism at the expense of the Soviet Union and a united front against the aggressive aims of world capitalism.

Perhaps Mao is only trying to show today that he is willing to deal with anybody, no matter how reactionary, if it fits in with the narrow nationalistic interests of the bureaucratic ruling caste.

However, the main implication of the invitation to Nixon certainly seemed to be that Mao regards Ford and Kissinger as not belligerent enough in their attitude toward the Kremlin.

That was how the New York Times read Mao’s main objective, “What would Chinese officialdom think,” the editors asked February 24, “if the White House engineered a journey to the United States by Teng Hsiao-ping (on the assumption he could be found) as a means of administering a public rebuke to the present regime?”

On the other hand, Mao’s message to the American ruling class was backed up by none other than the Wall Street Journal, which has reasons of its own for advocating greater military spending and a harder line toward Moscow.

In its February 20 editorial, the Journal suggested that “closer Sino-American relations have altered the world balance of power, presenting a formidable counterweight to Soviet expansion. But this accomplishment is jeopardized by the apparent inability of the United States to stand up to the Soviets at Helsinki, in Angola, in the strategic arms negotiations.
Japanese Executive Admits Receiving '100 Peanuts' From Lockheed

**America's Hottest Export Item—Watergate Scandals**

By Steve Clark

“You are exporting your Watergate,” a former Dutch official complained to *New York Times* correspondent Clyde H. Farnsworth. (*New York Times*, February 24.)

He was referring to the series of corporate bribery and payoff exposures that have been in the headlines since early February. The spectacular details of international bribery engaged in by American multinational corporations came to light in hearings of a Senate Subcommittee chaired by Senator Frank Church.

Between 1958 and 1972, it was learned, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation paid $12.6 million in bribes to various Japanese government officials to create a “climate of goodwill” toward their sales efforts. Lockheed also paid $1.1 million between 1961 and 1972 to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands—husband of Queen Juliana. The regal influence-peddler is a director of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and the Fokker Aircraft Company.

These revelations led to further admissions and accusations. Nearly forty major American corporations have now been implicated in payoffs to officials of no fewer than twenty foreign governments. The sums involved range from hundreds of thousands of dollars to hundreds of millions of dollars. (See accompanying box.)

Many businesses hope to stem inquiries by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and Internal Revenue Service into their tax reports in those years. By publicly admitting some of their misdeeds, these corporations would like to create the impression that henceforth everything will be on the “up and up.”

The latest revelations have direct links with the Watergate investigation. While looking into corporate giveaways to Nixon’s 1972 campaign, special prosecutors unearthed the existence of large, shadowy overseas payments.

Several sensational disclosures were made before the present round of scandals. Payments of $1.25 million by United Brands (“Chiquita Banana”) to government officials in Honduras were revealed early last year, leading to two notable results: the corporation’s chairman, Eli Black, escaped further investigation by leaps from a top floor of a New York skyscraper; and the government of Honduran President Oswaldo López Arellano was toppled by the military.

Following other revelations linking Gulf Oil and the Northrop Corporation to foreign payoffs, the boards of directors of both companies fired their chairmen.

The Lockheed disclosures, however, have been the most far-reaching in their ramifications.

In the United States, Lockheed’s chairman, Daniel J. Haughton, and its president, A.C. Kotchian, have both resigned. More importantly, these revelations and their spinoffs struck yet another blow at the pretenses to honesty of a ruling class already hard hit by numerous domestic scandals.

The CIA, FBI, and virtually all other American governmental institutions have suffered a considerable decline in public esteem.

Many Americans cannot help but remember Washington’s bailout of Lockheed in 1971. To save their No. 1 defense contractor from bankruptcy, Nixon and Congress guaranteed up to $250 million of taxpayers’ money to back up Lockheed’s outstanding loans. Now the American people discover that this figure is just a little more than Lockheed shelled out for its overseas bribes and “commissions.”

On top of that, the government’s General Accounting Office predicted in February that Lockheed may be unable to meet its 1978 repayment deadline, and that Washington may again come to its rescue. The corporation’s financial health was certainly not helped by the current scandal. Already it stands to lose its $1.3 billion contract with Japan for Orion antisubmarine aircraft; the government of Colombia has announced that it will purchase no more Lockheed products until the company discloses the names of officials it bribed; and other cancellations may follow.

“The implications for the stability of other countries could be extremely serious,” Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned in mid-February.

The biggest impact so far has been on Japan, where parliamentary hearings on the payoffs are now under way. According to a report in the March 8 *Newsweek*, “It was the most intense investigation in the nation’s postwar history, and it showed what the Lockheed scandal had become for Japan—as the mass-circulation newspaper Asahi Shimbun put it, ‘literally a matter of life and death for its politics and government.’”

Lockheed’s $12.6 million dealings in Japan are the largest payoffs yet disclosed. For its “efforts,” Lockheed received a government contract for 230 F-104 Starfighters in 1959 (a $300 million dollar catch); the sale of six Tristar jets in 1972 to All-Nippon Airways, a private corporation; and that same year a $1.3 billion government deal for a fleet of Orion antisubmarine planes.

Former Lockheed President A.C. Kotch-
Ten of the Biggest Spenders

Nearly 40 large American corporations have been accused of paying bribes or questionable "commissions" to win contracts overseas. Ten of the biggest admitted spenders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashland Oil, Inc.</td>
<td>Admits paying more than $300,000 to foreign officials, including $150,000 to President Albert Bernard Bongo of Gabon to retain mineral and refining rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burroughs Corp.</td>
<td>Admits that $1.5 million in corporate funds may have been used in improper payments to foreign officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exxon Corp.</td>
<td>Admits paying $740,000 to government officials and others in three countries. Admits its Italian subsidiary made $27 million in secret but legal contributions to seven Italian political parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf Oil Corp</td>
<td>Admits paying $4 million to South Korea's ruling political party. Admits giving $460,000 to Bolivian officials—including a $110,000 helicopter to the late President René Barrientos Orutú—for oil rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockheed Aircraft Corp.</td>
<td>Admits giving $200 million in commissions, payoffs and bribes to foreign agents and government officials in the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Turkey and other countries. Admits that $22 million of this sum went for outright bribes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonnell Douglas Corp.</td>
<td>Admits paying $2.5 million in commissions and consultant fees between 1970 and 1975 to foreign government officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northrop Corp.</td>
<td>Admits in part SEC charges that it paid $30 million in commissions and bribes to foreign officials and agents in Holland, Iran, France, West Germany, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Malaysia and Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.D. Searle &amp; Co.</td>
<td>Admits paying $1.3 million to foreign governmental employees from 1973 to 1975 to &quot;obtain sales of products or services.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Brands Co.</td>
<td>Admits paying a $1,250,000 bribe to Honduran officials for a reduction in the banana export tax. Admits paying $750,000 to European officials. Investigators say the payment was made to head off proposed Italian restrictions on banana imports.</td>
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Newsweek

"His money helped found one of the two LDP predecessors—whose main platform was support for the wartime emperor and many of whose members were on lists to be purged by the U.S. occupation for their wartime role.

"And he was instrumental in choosing at least two prime ministers in the 1950's, continuing as a major financier and power broker in the party."

These disclosures have placed the current Liberal Democratic government in a quandary. Two former premiers from the party—Kakuei Tanaka and Nobusuke Kishi—have been implicated in the affair, and as Yamakawa and Winnacker point out, "Now Kodama is in the spotlight, and his dual role as underworld leader and behind-the-scenes political manipulator threatens to bring the entire post-war relationship between the right-wing underworld and the LDP into the open."

Japanese Premier Takeo Miki is attempting to make a big show of his determination to get to the bottom of the scandal. He has demanded that the U.S. government turn over the names of all current and former officials implicated in the Lockheed payoffs—a demand that has not yet met with a positive response in Washington. "Grave concern has spread throughout Japan," Miki wrote President Ford in late February, "that if the issue is not solved with the names of the officials involved remaining in doubt, democracy in Japan may suffer a fatal blow."

"There is good reason to believe, however, that Miki's request may not be entirely sincere. According to the March 5 Far Eastern Economic Review, Miki's "Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa also indicated later that 'full disclosure' without all relative facts would jeopardize the basic human rights of those exposed."

The March 1 Newsweek reported that a high Japanese government official expressed concern that pursuing the identities of the bribed officials could "start a fire that might grow too big for us to control."

Meanwhile, hearings are taking place before the Japanese parliament, and—reminiscent of the Watergate hearings in the United States—they are being televised and watched by millions of viewers.

So far, however, the hearings have uncovered little more than a string of denials by secondary figures in the scandal. Neither Kodama, who recently suffered a stroke, nor Kichi, who as an American citizen is not obliged to comply with his subpoena, are likely to appear before the committee. Former Premier Tanaka will reportedly not be called to testify.

On February 24 the government staged well-publicized police raids on the Tokyo offices of Lockheed and Marubeni, and on the homes of Kodama and others implicat-
Japanese workers demonstrating to demand an investigation of Lockheed payoff scandal.

charges, what really worries the wealthy rulers throughout the capitalist world is their declining moral and ideological hold on radicalized workers and youth. Disclosures of gross government and corporate corruption make it more difficult for the capitalist governments to carry through austerity measures smoothly, and for major corporations to justify layoffs, speedups, and cuts in real wages.

Such revelations also increase the likelihood that militant workers and students will draw radical conclusions as they engage in struggles to defend their democratic rights and living standards.

An editorial in the February 12 Le Monde put it this way:

"Young people in many countries find it much harder to get used to this sort of realism. When political classes or even systems of government become discredited, the attraction of revolutionary parties, despite their dogmatism, stems to a large degree from a rather refreshing concern for moral purity..."

Wave of Arrests in Uruguay

A government crackdown on dissidents in Uruguay has led to the arrest of "hundreds, perhaps thousands," of persons and driven at least thirty to take asylum in the Mexican embassy in Montevideo, according to a March 3 Associated Press dispatch.
FNLA and UNITA to Be Expelled From Zaire

Washington Lifts Trade Embargo Against Angola

The State Department announced March 2 that it was ending the embargo on commercial U.S. shipments to Angola, where the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA—People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) has defeated its nationalist rivals.

The move came a little more than a week after the White House approved Gulf Oil’s efforts to negotiate with the MPLA for resumption of its drilling operations in Angola. Gulf is the largest foreign investor in Angola.

The Ford administration has also okayed Boeing’s delivery of two jets to the Luanda regime.

In December 1975, when Washington was funneling arms and money to the MPLA’s rivals, the State Department blocked the delivery of the two Boeings and pressured Gulf into suspending operations and placing royalty and tax payments to the MPLA in an escrow account. By that time, Gulf had already paid the MPLA $116 million.

In addition to allowing the resumption of trade, the State Department has also begun preparations to provide technical and economic assistance to Luanda, if such a course is agreed on by Ford and the Congress.

The February 25 Christian Science Monitor reported, “Daniel Parker, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), says in an interview that while no specific requests for assistance have come from the MPLA, the U.S. agency had already made a ‘computer print out’ of officials with background and language training who could serve in Angola.”

Washington has made it clear, however, that these steps do not mean that it is ready to grant diplomatic recognition to the MPLA regime at this time. State Department officials have stressed that a prerequisite for recognition would be the withdrawal of Cuban troops now in Angola.

Secretary of State Kissinger said March 4 that Washington would be “having consultations in an open-minded way” on possible diplomatic recognition of the MPLA “once it is clear they are indeed a government of African origin and not totally beholden to foreign influence.”

The regime of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, one of Washington’s main allies in Black-ruled Africa, has already come to terms with the MPLA. Mobutu signaled his intentions in this regard as early as January 24, when he said, “. . . sentimentally, we support the F.N.L.A. of Holden Roberto.” But, “things having turned out the way they have, no more sentimentality on our part.”

The official Zairean news agency Azap announced February 28 that Mobutu was “normalizing” relations with the Luanda regime. The announcement followed a meeting in Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo Republic, between Mobutu and MPLA leader Agostinho Neto. The meeting was arranged by Congolese President Marien Ngouabi, a longtime backer of the MPLA.

Only a few days earlier, the foreign ministers of Angola and Zaire had attacked each other during a meeting of the Organization of African Unity. Each charged that the other’s government had committed acts of “piracy” during the Angolan civil war.

After the meeting with Neto, however, Mobutu declared, “We have gone beyond a simple recognition. We have both reached our objective—the respect for the territorial integrity of each state.” As part of their accord, both Mobutu and Neto agreed not to allow military activity to be carried out against the other from their territories.

A communiqué signed by the two presidents stipulated that the MPLA’s main rivals, the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertaçao de Angola—Angolan National Liberation Front) and UNITA (União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), must leave Zaire immediately. The FNLA has maintained a headquarters in Zaire since the early 1960s and was backed by Mobutu throughout the Angolan civil war.

The communiqué stated that the two groups were being expelled “in order not to undermine relations between the two countries.”

The Frente de Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda (FLEC—Cabinda Liberation Front), a Cabindan separatist group based in Zaire, was also ordered to cease its activities.

In return, Neto agreed to turn 6,000 former Katangese gendarmes over to Mobutu. The Katangese in Angola had been supporters of the Belgian-backed Katanga secessionist regime in the former Belgian Congo (now Zaire) in the early 1960s and are opposed to Mobutu.

Neto and Mobutu also agreed to allow the estimated one million Angolan refugees in Zaire “freely” to return to Angola. Most of the refugees are Bakongos, the traditional base of support of the FNLA, who had been driven out of Angola in the early 1960s by the Portuguese colonialists. The Zairean regime had complained recently that the refugees were a burden on its economy, which is now in a severe slump.

One of the causes of Zaire’s economic difficulties was the closure during the civil war of Angola’s Benguela railway, which in normal times transported about 70 percent of Zaire’s copper exports. The Mobutu-Neto accord included a pledge by Luanda that it would guarantee common communications between the two countries, an apparent reference to the reopening of the Benguela railway.

The Zambian regime of Kenneth Kaunda remains the only major Black African government not to have recognized the Luanda regime. Kaunda has indicated, however, that such a recognition may be forthcoming.

Before returning to Angola, Neto declared in Brazzaville March 1 that the MPLA would aid the liberation movements in Namibia (South-West Africa) and in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). “We cannot limit ourselves to our own independence,” he said. “Our people . . . will extend their action to liberate other countries like Namibia, at present occupied by the racists, and Rhodesia, which can achieve independence only through armed struggle.”

An MPLA representative clarified Neto’s remarks the following day. While confirming that the MPLA would give assistance to other independence forces, he denied that this would involve the use of MPLA troops in those countries. “We have no intention,” he said, “of crossing our own borders . . .”
A Statement on Healy's Frame-up of Hansen and Novack

By Betty Hamilton and Pierre Lambert

[The following article, translated by Intercontinental Press, appeared in the February 27-March 4 issue (No. 740) of Informations Ouvrieres, the weekly publication of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI), whose headquarters are in Paris.

[Betty Hamilton, who has been in the revolutionary Marxist movement for fifty years, was one of the founders of the Socialist Labour League (SLL), and the Socialist Workers party in 1953 by the Socialist Workers party.

[March 15, 1976]

We have read the indescribable articles written at the order of G. Healy attempting to prove that Joseph Hansen and George Novack are agents of the CIA and the NKVD.1 We confess that we found it very difficult to force ourselves to read these “articles.” But we considered it our duty as representatives of our organizations in the International Committee of the Fourth International—which was formed in 1953 by the Socialist Workers party (SWP), the Socialist Labour League (SLL), the PCI (Parti Communiste Internationaliste, now the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste), and the Swiss and Chinese organizations—to express our solidarity and sympathy with the SWP.

We decided to draft this statement not only as founding members of the International Committee but also as representatives of the SLL and the OCI (PCI), which, in disagreement with the SWP, decided in 1963 to maintain the International Com-

1. In Workers Press, the organ of the Workers Revolutionary party (WRP) of Great Britain, three series of articles devoted to the question of “security in the Fourth International” have been published—seven, beginning with the April 1975, issue; nineteen, beginning with the August 14, 1975, issue; and finally eight, beginning on January 5, 1976.

A Very Peculiar Logic

However, the elaborate fabrication of G. Healy collapses like a house of cards the minute you begin to apply this basic criterion. When it comes to Hansen and Novack (the nominal targets of this attack), the scheme is reduced to a very peculiar brand of logic which Vyshinsky tried to make respectable but which certainly has nothing to do with the traditions of our movement.

Joseph Hansen had a meeting with the U.S. consul in Mexico. Well, an American consul has to be an FBI agent. So, Hansen, since he had a meeting with an FBI agent, is himself one, or could be.

What conclusions, then, should we draw from the fact that after the murder of L. Sedov, Leon Trotsky not only filed a complaint with the French authorities but also ordered activists to testify to the police who were conducting the investigation? If we followed the same line of reasoning that G. Healy does, we would have to conclude that since L. Trotsky made a complaint to the French imperialist authorities, since he called on comrades to testify to the police of French imperialism, L. Trotsky was an agent of imperialism and of the French police! The procedure G. Healy has resorted to is typically Stalinist.

The slanderer G. Healy does not stop there. He turns to arguments appealing to authority (because I say it is so, it is so). For example, in 1938, a GPU agent entered into contact with Hansen. Hansen explained that Trotsky told him to “maintain the contact.” How does Healy respond to this?

“We state categorically that Hansen is lying when he says that Trotsky told him to consort with the GPU agent ‘John’ Rabinowitz. It is inconceivable that the Bolshevik leader would instruct the head of his security arrangements at Coyoacan to meet a GPU agent over a period of three months.” No evidence whatever is offered to support this assertion. It is enough that Healy thinks that what Hansen says is “inconceivable.” You have to believe G. Healy because he has spoken. Has G. Healy ever thought about this: The international apparatus of the Kremlin and its national agencies are controlled by the GPU. At every step, at every moment, Trotskyists have come in contact with CP leaders who are often agents of the GPU. Hidden under Healy’s virtuous indignation is petty-bourgeois philistinism.

Some may say that we are judging the “basis” for this case in advance when we speak in a general way of the monstrousness of the accusations raised against Joseph Hansen. In fact, we do not think that Comrade J. Hansen in any way stands “in the dock,” or that he is a man “on trial” who must prove his innocence. When Trotsky had to face the abominable lie-machine of Stalinism, he offered, as the first proof of the absurdity of the accusations lodged against him, the record of his public political activity.

Joseph Hansen’s continuous activity, for more than forty years now, as a member and leader of the American Trotskyist...
organization, his role in the history and debates in the Fourth International—where, although there have been deep differences between us, he has always stood within the framework of Trotskyism—are in themselves the best answer to the allegations of those who are impugning his honor as a revolutionary.

Is this to say that because of this work Comrade Hansen enjoys a kind of immunity? By no means. But if the "trial" in which Healy wants to play the role of prosecutor were not rigged from start to finish, it is this aspect that he would have attacked first, while he does not mention it even once. And, what is more, in the long pages of Workers Press, which if they were all put together would make a book, Healy has not been able to offer a trace of evidence or a single document coming either from Hansen or from the former GPU agents who went over to the FBI (whom Healy, without any verification, seems to regard as the bearers of the truth) that can support his monstrous charge that Hansen is "an accomplice of the GPU."

So, if we spend a little more time dealing with these charges—before coming to the political conclusions—it is not in order to defend Comrade Hansen, it is to show that the method used by Gerry Healy stands in fundamental contradiction to the principles and traditions of the Fourth International and the workers movement.

An Incoherent Detective Thriller

The serial that has filled four pages in each issue of Workers Press in the last month before it ceased publication takes the form of an incoherent detective thriller in which any precise facts that can be gleaned have been long known, and where unfounded speculations, gratuitous assertions, and contradictions abound.

Let's take one example. Workers Press makes much of a visit by a visitor, Joseph Hansen, made to the American consul in Mexico, a visit he made as Trotsky's secretary eleven days after Trotsky was murdered. The fact that it took place on Saturday and not on a workday is used to justify an insinuation that there was something odd about it, that Joseph Hansen might be linked to the FBI (as if, by the way, Trotsky's murder was not an event of sufficient international importance for the American consul to give up part of his Saturday morning!).

Let us follow the curious line of "reasoning" of Workers Press. From this "proof," which is no proof at all, it concludes that Hansen could very well have maintained relations with the FBI, and then it goes on as if such a link had been established. But this curious line of "reasoning" is itself contradicted by the charges its authors make against Joseph Hansen. What did Hansen tell the consul—according to the latter's report? That the GPU was responsible for the murder and that the crime must have been engineered from the United States. He pointed out that "Mornard had made a journey to the United States between the dates of the first attempt upon Trotsky's life and the second successful one," and so he insisted that the American police check out the hotel where Mornard stayed in New York.

What conclusion was drawn by Workers Press? That Joseph Hansen was trying to deceive the Fourth International, because the murder was engineered in Paris by Zborowski and not in New York. But if it had been the case, according to the previous accusations, Hansen would have been deceiving his alleged "employers."

But, the imaginative editors of Workers Press might reply, what if Hansen was an agent of the GPU? Then one would wonder why he insisted on the guilt of the GPU. But (slanderers always have a ready explanation), his role as a Trotskyist leader obliged him to do this.

Then (if we agree to accept a trial framework briefly for the sake of clarity), in any case, this was an official conversation with the U.S. consul and precisely because it was official, it proves nothing. It is outside the framework of the debate! In fact, we will have to come back later to the reasons for using this conversation.

Let us add that Gerry Healy "forgot" that J. Hansen gave his reason for this visit—to try to establish the exact identity of the murderer, which was then unknown—and that from this standpoint the approach to the consul produced results.

Cynical Disregard of the Truth

Let's be serious. The center where Trotsky's murder was decided on and prepared was the Kremlin. As his confessions in 1956 have since shown, Zborowski acted in Paris, operating as an agent provocateur in the Fourth International, playing a central role in setting the stage for the crime. In this, however, other links in the chain were needed in the United States and in Mexico. At the stage where the investigation stood eleven days after the death of Trotsky, no one endowed with a minimum of good sense and honesty could find anything "reprehensible" or "strange" in the fact that Joseph Hansen asserted that he had a responsibility in the American police to make an investigation in the United States. He was only doing his duty as a revolutionary. In this respect, he was following the example of Trotsky, who advised Ignace Reiss to take up the question of the assassination of Stalin. He neglected to say that from the standpoint of the GPU, which, inasmuch as Trotsky did not think that the assassination was a fait accompli, "covered up for GPU agents," how would this justify advancing even as a "hypothesis" this infamous charge, which, inasmuch as Trotsky was a GPU agent, would have been an accomplice of the assassins, who later got rid of him. The SWP leadership maintains the position it took after the crime—which was held, moreover, by Trotsky. Robert Sheldon Harte remained faithful to Trotskyism and was a victim of the GPU. Once again, one might wonder what Healy is trying to prove, and what relationship this question has to the charges made against Joseph Hansen.

If it were shown (and we note that Workers Press offers no new evidence) that Trotsky and the SWP leadership were mistaken about Sheldon Harte and that he was a GPU agent, how would this prove that Hansen and other SWP leaders "covered up for GPU agents," how would this justify advancing even as a "hypothesis" this infamous charge, which, inasmuch as Trotsky did not think that the assassination was a fait accompli, "covered up for GPU agents," how would this justify advancing even as a "hypothesis" this infamous charge, which, inasmuch as Trotsky was a GPU agent, would have been an accomplice of the assassins, who later got rid of him. The SWP leadership maintains the position it took after the crime—which was held, moreover, by Trotsky. Robert Sheldon Harte remained faithful to Trotskyism and was a victim of the GPU. Once again, one might wonder what Healy is trying to prove, and what relationship this question has to the charges made against Joseph Hansen.

Criminal Irresponsibility

However, what interests us here, again, are the methods of Gerry Healy. He quotes the following passage from Julian Gorkin's book on Trotsky's assassination:

"If it were admitted that Sheldon was a spy, that would place the question of responsibility in the chief Trotskyists in New York, who had sent him to Mexico. We do no more than mention this aspect of the question. Let each one draw his own conclusions." And he describes Julian Gorkin as "an authority on the crimes of Stalin." He neglects to say that from the standpoint of the Fourth International, which has been established as a fact by historiographically verifiable facts, much new evidence has come to light since Gorkin wrote this book. He also neglects to say that Julian Gorkin was one of the leaders of the POUM (which he left while in exile) most hostile to the Fourth
International and that his book was written in collaboration with General Salazar, the chief of the Mexican police, who sought to pin as much of the blame as possible on Trotsky's entourage.

It was this aim of the book that Workers Press, to use a term it is fond of, "covered sky's, Harold Robins, who accuses Hansen confused—of a former bodyguard of Trot international leadership, recognized by purposes, statements—which were rather presenting in another article, for his presenting in another article, for his presenting in another article, for his purposes, statements—which were rather confused—of a former bodyguard of Trotsky, Harold Robins, who accuses Hansen of covering up the slanders of the Mexican police!

One final example: Workers Press plays up the fact that it was the SWP leadership that helped Zborowski return to the United States. Do we have to point out how absurd it is to blame the SWP comrades for the fact that Zborowski was among certain cadres of the Trotskyist movement who were brought to the USA through the work of members and leaders of the SWP at the time of the Hitlerite victories in Europe? As Workers Press notes, moreover (as an "argument" against Joseph Hansen), Zborowski's area of activity was Europe. It was by integrating himself among the cadres of the Trotskyist movement in Europe that he became a member of the international leadership, recognized by Leon Trotsky as a close collaborator of Leon Sedov. As the leader of the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky entrusted Zborowski with organizing the founding conference of the Fourth International in September 1938.

The absurdity of this slander is striking. In 1940, Zborowski had not been unmasked as the GPU agent he was. If he blames the SWP leadership and Hansen for organizing his trip to the USA, G. Healy should naturally put the blame for this on L. Trotsky and draw the conclusion that the latter, like Hansen, was an agent of the GPU. Let us note again that it is hard for revolutionists to force themselves to dig through all the mud thrown by G. Healy, who in his irresponsibility pays no attention to the damaging blows he is dealing to the Fourth International, to which he still claims to adhere.

We repeat: What particular guilt can be attributed to the SWP cadres? And even if it were maintained that they should have been more "vigilant"—which, we stress, would be a gratuitous remark—how would this justify calling them "accomplices"? Unless the mere fact of associating with Zborowski, as L. Sedov and L. Trotsky himself did, without immediately identifying him as an agent provocateur constitutes guilt within the "Healyite theory of evidence." But, then, we repeat, Healy's search of "accomplices" would take him far beyond Joseph Hansen and George Novack, and even the leadership of the SWP.

Let us repeat again, in the voluminous inquiry of Workers Press, there is not the slightest document or fact that would justify raising—even as a possibility that would still have to be proved—the infamous accusations lodged against Comrades Joseph Hansen and George Novack.

What is infamous—and degrading for the authors—is having raised such charges. The method they used, their cynical contempt for the truth, disqualifies them politically. This is criminal irresponsibility contrary not only to the principles of the Fourth International but also to the most basic traditions of the workers movement.

We should, however, take up G. Healy's strange brief from another standpoint.

At the beginning of this statement we referred to the way that G. Healy and his "investigators" used the visit Joseph Hansen made to Consul McGregor. In this case, Joseph Hansen quite correctly said that G. Healy stirred up a "geyser of mud." But the mud has only washed over G. Healy himself.

In the first place, the way this episode was exploited illustrates G. Healy's political perfidiousness. He, as much as any comrade holding responsibilities of leadership in the revolutionary workers movement, knows that the contact Joseph Hansen had to maintain with the American consulate was only a particular expression of a much more general reality. Political activity must involve all aspects of the struggle, that is, also the need for diplomacy, for "contact" with the enemy camp. It is this that for Gerry Healy constitutes the proof of Joseph Hansen's "guilt." But can anyone fail to see that such "guilt" would have to be assigned first of all to Leon Trotsky? As the official reports indicate, other members of Trotsky's guard, Charles Cornell and Walter O'Rourke, were in touch with the consul, as well as Leon Trotsky (and, in the case of the founder of the Fourth International, the consul visited him in his home). There were, thus, to divulge a "dreadful secret," regular contacts between the U.S. consulate and Trotsky and his entourage. It is not so difficult to understand what could be grasped by the representatives of American imperialism, who banned Trotsky from their territory with ferocious determination. In view of what Trotsky represented, relations with this isolated exile took on a certain government-to-government nature. And, from the standpoint of his security, Trotsky had a stake in such relations.

As Comrade Hansen correctly notes, G. Healy and his investigators are on a path that tends to converge with that of Trotsky's murderers.

The Old Method of the Amalgam

There is yet another aspect, which may appear minor but which we think is significant, since it shows how rotten something is in the little kingdom of Clapham High Street (the national headquarters of the WRP in London).

This is the practice of the "classical" type Stalinist amalgam. The articles in Workers Press talk about a Stalinist agent planted in the SWP, Floyd Miller, who was later unmasked. Since this agent functioned in the maritime fraction of the SWP, Workers Press says that his work enabled him to point out to the GPU who the Trotskyist sailors were that were on their way to the USSR. On this question Hansen says simply, in passing, that this Miller never occupied a leadership position, even at the level of the maritime fraction, and that in any case no Trotskyist...
ist sailor ever disappeared. And he adds: “Several Trotskyist seamen, whose ships were sunk by the Germans, managed along with other members of the crew, to launch lifeboats and eventually make their way to Murmansk. Because of exposure in open boats in those waters, several of them had to spend months in the hospital. They were given first-rate treatment, and the staffs were very friendly.”

This is the comment these lines inspired from Workers Press:


“It is a putrid piece of public relations for the Stalinist bureaucracy concerning a visit to Murmansk by one Ian Highet, a radio officer on board a British ship. “Of Murmansk I have happy memories despite the bitter cold of January and the indescribable devastation. The cold was more than matched by the warmth of the Soviet people who extended to us a most tremendous welcome with typical Soviet hospitality that had to be seen to be believed.”

“The only thing to match this gushing description of wartime Murmansk comes from the pen of . . . Joseph Hansen . . . . The similarity between these two excerpts shows an affinity which should not pass the attention of any conscious worker or youth.”

This sort of thing requires no commentary, or rather only one. There is scarcely any need to call the attention of any conscious workers and youth to the similarity between this kind of proof and those of the Stalinist apparatus.

Who Is the Target?

One of the rare pieces reported by Workers Press is that the Sylvia Callen who was cited in 1969 as a codefendant in the trial of the Stalinist agent Robert Soblen was none other than Sylvia Franklin who was the secretary of James P. Cannon, the leader of the SWP. She had been accused by Louis Budenz, an ex-Stalinist leader in the United States who went over to work for the FBI. An SWP Control Commission was, after investigation, to reject these charges. Moreover, James P. Cannon denounced Budenz, assuring that Sylvia Franklin was “an honest comrade who gave years of valued service to the cause.”

We do not know if the Sylvia Callen Workers Press talks about is really Sylvia Franklin, but we are convinced that if new facts require it, the SWP will review the conclusions of its Control Commission. However, supposing that Workers Press were right and that Sylvia Franklin, James P. Cannon’s secretary, was a GPU agent, how would this justify writing: “Joseph Hansen and George Novack have protected and covered up for SYLVIA FRANKLIN, the GPU agent in the Socialist Workers Party . . . ?”

It was James P. Cannon who denounced Budenz’s statements as lies. An SWP Control Commission confirmed this position. Why doesn’t Workers Press follow its argument to the logical conclusion? Why didn’t it say that James P. Cannon “covered up for a GPU agent?” There is more so-called “evidence” against him than against Hansen and Novack. Why doesn’t it accuse the SWP leadership and J.P. Cannon for “covering up” for a GPU agent?

It is true that the fact that Cannon is remembered as the founder and builder of Trotskyism in the United States and as a major figure in the international workers movement makes this a difficult job. It is more expedient to make insinuations than to take the risk of making such a statement.

Nonetheless, this is where the logic leads. Naturally, this would also mean that Lenin covered up for Malinovsky, and was therefore the latter’s accomplice, and that Trotsky and Sedov covered up for Zborowski and were his accomplices. Behind Hansen and Novack, other targets can be seen. The first that comes to view is the SWP. The introduction to the last series of articles published in Workers Press said:

“WE ACCUSE Joseph Hansen and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (USA) of deliberately covering up GPU murder and penetration of the Trotskyist movement . . . .”

This vague article by unknown authors is one more outrage, but the target of the slander is clearly indicated. It is the SWP, which they try to represent as a hotbed of GPU agents, an organization with a number of leaders who were “deliberate” accomplices of the GPU. Clearly, they try to represent the SWP as an organization “kept” by the Stalinist apparatus.

But the SWP has played a considerable role in the history of the Fourth International. It was not only one of the strongest sections but the one whose leadership had the most direct ties with Leon Trotsky. The SWP was the battleground of a struggle decisive for the future of the Fourth International, the one over the question of the defense of the Soviet Union. If we had to accept Gerry Healy’s standards for determining the truth, we would have to conclude that this struggle was conducted by a group, a majority of whom were “accomplices” of the GPU.

An Attack Against the Fourth International

Behind the SWP, the real target is the Fourth International itself, Leon Trotsky and his work. The Fourth International appears to be an organization “manipulated” by the GPU, in fact a creation of the GPU.

It would be unfair to compare Vereecken’s book with the articles in Workers Press. But it is interesting to note that Workers Press often quotes this work without reservation or comment. While it is undeniable that provocateurs such as Zborowski poisoned relationships inside the international movement, they could not conjure away the real political questions. It was on these questions that the break occurred between Vereecken and Trotsky. And what makes Vereecken’s book a false and biased brief is that he wants to prove that it was the maneuvers of these agents that explain his break with Trotsky.

Referring to Vereecken, Workers Press writes:

“‘Today the International Committee of the Fourth International is getting the same slanderous treatment that others in the pre-war years in Europe endured.’

Should we conclude that the decision to found the Fourth International was inspired by the GPU?”

The abominable campaign conducted against the leaders of the SWP can only serve the enemies of the Fourth International and facilitate the work of those who in the interests of imperialism or Stalinism are trying to undermine and disrupt our movement.

An index of the profound political degeneration of the WRP leadership, this campaign is dealing a grave blow to Trotskyism in England. It is more than a coincidence that the publication of Workers Press ended almost immediately after the appearance of this series of slanderous articles.

Rejection of such methods, and the kind of politics that allows them to develop, is indispensable for moving forward to the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

As Trotskyists who have been in the fight since the prewar years when the program of the Fourth International was elaborated under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, we considered it necessary to make this public statement. We think that all the militants, whatever differences may exist between their organizations, who claim to adhere to Trotskyism, who have participated in the fight for the Fourth International, must take a position on this question. We think that all organizations that claim to be Trotskyist must also condemn the methods of G. Healy, methods that serve only the enemies of the Fourth International. This is the same struggle that was taken up in 1923 against Stalinism, which L. Trotsky denounced as a dreadful sickness afflicting the world workers movement.
Frame-up Concocted in Stalinist Tradition

'Socialist Action' Denounces WRP Smear Campaign

[The following statement appeared in the February-March issue of Socialist Action, the newspaper of the League for Socialist Action, a group based in London.]

* * *

The Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) is hardly known for its savoury polemics with other left tendencies. Its latest offering is, in most respects, even less savoury than previous ones. In a recent series of articles, entitled "Security and the Fourth International," the Healyites open an investigation into the death of Leon Trotsky.

Such an investigation is not inspired, as in the case of an honest biographer like Isaac Deutscher, by a real desire to discover the facts behind so many sinister motives. Its aim is to "indict" former Trotskyist secretary, Joseph Hansen, of "criminal negligence" in Trotsky's death, if not of being an "accomplice of the GPU."

It may seem strange that the Healyites should devote more space in their fast-failing "daily" to witch-hunting a leading Trotskyist militant than to covering key issues such as the national struggle in Ireland. The answer is not so strange, however, as it may at first appear.

Set-backs

Since its split with the OCI, its sister organization in France a few years ago, the WRP has suffered some severe set-backs. It recently lost several leading members of the Workers' League, a sympathy section in the USA, and, closer home, launched a witch-hunt against over 200 trade union members in its own ranks who had the audacity to oppose the leadership's sectarian political line.

The cause of these set-backs—which have left the WRP more isolated than ever before—was analysed by Joseph Hansen in a hard-hitting article in Intercontinental Press (Vol 13 No 12). In particular, Hansen singled out the politically sectarian course followed by the WRP and its well-known organisational "bigness"—which denies its own members elementary rights—like thinking for themselves.

Unable to reply politically to such an argument, the Healyites have reverted to the level of politics where they feel most at home: personal slander. Healy has no doubt hopes, by concocting frame-ups in the Stalinist tradition against his critics, to cloud the issue and divert the members of the WRP from probing the real reasons for these set-backs and the lack of rights they possess in his monolithic set-up.

New Victim?

The slanders directed against Joseph Hansen, a leading member of the world Trotskyist movement for over 30 years, need not be refuted. They are based on rumours culled from self-confessed GPU and CIA agents. A clear, factual reply to them can be found in the pages of Intercontinental Press (Vol 13 No 42).

What is worth refuting is the method used by Healy in dealing with political tendencies he has differences with. It can serve as an object lesson for young radicals as to the ultimate logic of sectarian politics.

Hansen himself, in his reply, notes how, for the Healyites, "All other political tendencies... are regarded as agencies of the bourgeoisie to be dealt with accordingly." This attitude on the part of the WRP is, of course, merely a substitute for taking up and arguing against the political ideas advanced by rival tendencies. There is no point, after all, discussing with one's political opponents if they are "agencies of the bourgeoisie." On the contrary, the task is to "expose" them, even if this means juggling with the facts.

Such a premise leads, quite inevitably, to the wildest slanders and frame-ups (in the Stalinist tradition) to prove the:"case." The accusations against Joseph Hansen are not new, in this respect, but merely the spiciest dish yet to be seen from the Healyite kitchen.

The April 23rd issue of Workers' Press tried to "smear" Bala Tampoe (leading Trotskyist and head of the Ceylon Mercantile Union) as "associated with the CIA." Tim Wohlforth, last year expelled from the Workers' League, was accused of "harbouring and covering for a CIA agent" and, most recently, Alan Thornett, who was expelled from the WRP for exercising the right to think for himself, was described by the General Secretary as a "police agent."

'Big Lie'

The fact that Healy should be reduced to labelling every political opponent—inside and outside the WRP—as some form of police agent is not just a simple question of paranoia. It is an attempt to "shield" the dwindling membership of the WRP from the political arguments of rival tendencies by the use of what can only be called Stalinist methods.

It is an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the leaders of the WRP have turned a once-promising group into a barren sect unable to relate to the real issues facing working people and unable to tolerate any real criticism of this course.

We can assure the WRP however that the time when it could pass such false coin as "Trotskyism" is long past. The WRP broke with Trotskyism, politically and in its organisational practice, long ago. The technique of the "big lie" will not hide this fact.

Students, Miners Go Out on Strike in Bolivia

The upsurge of the Bolivian working class touched off by the strike of the Manaco shoe workers in January has continued to pick up steam.

The latest chapter in the unfolding events was initiated by the students at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz. These students had been in the forefront of those organizing support for the Manaco strikers. As a result, their campus was attacked by the police on February 5, and many of their leaders were arrested or exiled.

On February 18, in the wake of the triumph of the Manaco workers in Cochabamba, the students called for "a dialogue" with the government-appointed education officials. When this was refused, they detailed their demands for the release of political prisoners, the return of those exiled in the last few months, and an end to persecution on the campus. The students threatened to go on strike if their demands were not met within forty-eight hours.

President Hugo Banzer responded by closing down the school and ordering police to ring the campus. The following day, the police invaded the campus once again, arresting more than 300 students.

According to the February 27 issue of the London weekly Latin America, the strike was soon joined by students at the universities in Potosi, Oruro, and Cochabamba. On February 21 the 30,000 members of the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Trade-union Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers) also joined in the strike, and they were followed by the Manaco shoe workers. In Huanuni, the tin miners met to demand the legalization of the Confederación Obrera de Bolivia (Federation of Bolivian Workers), which was banned in 1971.

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March 15, 1976
Interview With José Martínez Vargas

Dominican Dock Workers Fight for Democratic Rights

By José Pérez

[The following article appeared in the February 27 issue of the Militant, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

Despite the release last December of three labor leaders who had been in jail since last summer, trade-union rights remain in a precarious state in the Dominican Republic.

Nothing illustrates this better than the case of the Sindicato Portuario de Arrimo (POASI—longshoremen’s union). The union's headquarters has been occupied by police since October 1973.

In January the Militant interviewed José Martínez Vargas, the legitimate general secretary of POASI. The union leader was visiting the United States to publicize the case of POASI. He met with several trade unionists and civil libertarians here to seek their support for the democratic rights of union members in the Dominican Republic.

Martínez Vargas explained that government attacks against POASI go back a decade. Before the imposition of the Joaquín Balaguer regime following the occupation of the Dominican Republic by 20,000 U.S. Marines, POASI had been the sole longshore union in Santo Domingo, capital of the Caribbean country.

However, in 1966 the government passed a law establishing itself as a middleman between the companies and the longshore workers. Wages were cut through the abolition of a per-hour wage scale and establishment of a per-ton wage scale. The government brought in a “yellow union” and decreed that out of every five ships that come in, three would be handled by POASI and two by the government's union.

These measures were decreed by the government without warning. “They didn’t even notify us in advance. We found out by reading the newspapers,” Martínez Vargas said. Nevertheless, a struggle was waged against this abrogation of the contract, although the POASI leadership at the time was composed of Balaguer supporters.

In 1971, a new leadership defeated the pro-Balaguer officeholders in the union. This group, which called itself the Blue Slate, included supporters of various political parties.

The Balaguer government, according to Martínez Vargas, intervened in the election, backing the old leadership, which was called the Red Slate.

But the Blue Slate won the election, receiving 750 votes from a total membership of 1,300. In the following year's election, the Blue Slate won once again, increasing its total vote to 890.

Elections were to have been held again in 1973, but they coincided with the declaration of a state of emergency by the Balaguer government. The pretext for the declaration was the landing of a band of guerrillas in the country.

The leadership of the union decided to call off the scheduled elections. “Under the state of emergency,” Martínez Vargas said, “the members couldn’t campaign because you couldn’t put up posters or you might get shot by the police thinking that you are a subversive.”

Nevertheless, the pro-Balaguer minority in the union went to the secretary of the interior and obtained a promise from him that the election could be held.

“Seeing this,” Martínez Vargas continued, “we thought that a whole maneuver was being planned against us and we decided to hold elections.”

A mass membership meeting was held to pick the commission that would conduct the election. However, before the commission elected by the union ranks had a chance to be certified by the government and schedule the balloting, a rumo commission—handpicked by the progovernment union minority—registered itself and scheduled an immediate election.

“We refused to accept that,” Martínez Vargas said, “and the members paid no attention to the rumo commission.”

The progovernment commission had its election. They declared that their Red Slate had won, but most of the union members just ignored them.

“A few days later,” Martínez Vargas continued, “ten busloads of police and guards showed up. They broke the lock on the union headquarters and went inside.”

“A number of the officials had been arrested that morning at 3:00 a.m.,” he said, “so the police were able to break into the headquarters without a struggle because there was no leadership.”

Every attempt at a protest was met with government repression. The old leadership of the union was blacklisted from the docks for a year. At one point, forty-five members were in jail. Martínez Vargas himself has been arrested seventeen times since police seized the union headquarters in October 1973. Two other POASI leaders have been forced to leave the country because of the repression and harassment.

To this day the imposed leadership has made no attempt to legitimize its rule by trying to function as a leadership that defends the economic interests of the workers. No membership meetings or elections have been held. The headquarters of the union is still occupied by the police.

What steps were taken to protest this undemocratic situation? For a long time the membership was demoralized and afraid of the repression, Martínez Vargas said. But in the past year an effective campaign has been mounted.

Fifty-two trade-union organizations in the Dominican Republic—including the Central General de Trabajadores, one of the two trade-union federations in the country, have protested the police occupation of POASI’s headquarters. Last October, 1,200 of POASI’s 1,300 members published an advertisement in a Dominican
daily demanding immediate withdrawal of the police from the union headquarters and the holding of free elections.

POASI leaders have now extended this campaign to the international arena, obtaining statements of support from unions in various Latin American and European countries.

In the United States, the defense effort is being coordinated by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLAP) as a continuation of the work that group carried out on behalf of the three union officials who had been jailed.

Rank-and-File Steelworkers Strike in Protest

British Steel Bosses Slash Jobs, Wages

By Tony Hodges

LONDON—Late last year, Bob Scholey, chief executive of the state-owned British Steel Corporation (BSC), gave an ultimatum to the corporation's 220,000 workers: He wanted 44,000 jobs axed within two years and £170 (£1=US$2.01) million knocked off the annual wages bill.

Steelworkers were astounded at the scale of Scholey's proposed assault on wages and jobs, to be carried out in violation of a nineteen-month agreement with the steel unions signed only nine months earlier.

The 44,000 jobs on the firing line, Scholey warned, were "just for starters." Up to sixteen open-hearth steel plants would be run down and eventually closed. In addition, BSC announced that from January 4 it would end all weekend shift working (which threatened many workers with a 15% or 33 percent, weekly wage cut), and that from January 11 it would suspend the industry's guaranteed work week agreement (which guarantees workers 80 percent of their weekly wages). This would allow the corporation to put thousands of workers on short-time.

Steelworkers, particularly in Wales, immediately took action to express their rejection of the BSC's ultimatum. In defiance of the corporation's suspension of weekend shift working, 5,000 workers turned up to work January 4. Thousands of workers at Port Talbot, Ebbw Vale, Trestre, Velindre, and other plants began unofficial strikes.

But, the Economist noted January 24, "union leaders in the steel industry are largely a moderate bunch and most accept the need for cuts." The 110,000-member Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) and the eighteenth other unions in the Trade Union Congress (TUC) Steel Committee refused to call a nationwide strike. They urged those steelworkers already on strike to go back to work.

"Mr William Sirs, general secretary of the Iron and Steel Confederation," the London Times reported January 5, "has gone on record as being opposed to official stoppages, but he has also acknowledged that the executive is under strong pressure from a number of branches to call a strike."

After receiving a "back to work" appeal from the ISTC bureaucrats, the Port Talbot strikers voted by 400 to 7 on January 11 to keep the strike going.

On January 23, having failed to mobilize the unions' full strength to defeat the BSC's offensive, the TUC Steel Committee signed an agreement with the corporation, conceding most of BSC's job-cutting, wage-slashing measures. The few gains made were due solely to the action of the rank and file and were achieved in spite of the craven collaborationism of the union leaders.

The BSC agreed to uphold the guaranteed week; to "stabilize" open-hearth plants rather than close them down; to restore weekend shift working for two weeks in order to seek local plant agreement on reducing it and to discuss the job reductions at a plant level.

But the union leaders agreed in principle that weekend shift working should be cut back, and they accepted the need for a massive reduction of employment levels in the industry. The agreement provided for immediate redundancies within three months on account of the recession and a two-year programme of further redundancies to reduce long-term employment levels.

The BSC, the Financial Times commented January 24, "has obtained a greater degree of union commitment at national level to a reduction of manning levels and cuts in workers' earnings than ever before." In addition, the paper pointed out, "the unions have agreed to bring their full weight to bear on members at individual plants who are refusing to cooperate with the agreement."

But, the Financial Times warned, "the success of the package will now largely depend on the unions' determination and ability to make it work in the plants. If they fail, and many steel workers are in a highly militant mood, the next confrontation seems inevitable."

Though the unofficial strikes petered out January 25 after the agreement had been signed, it is too early to forecast steelworkers' response when the BSC tries to implement its terms.

The immediate cause of the confrontation was the BSC's massive financial losses and the corporation's wish to bail itself out at the expense of steelworkers. It was given the go-ahead by the Labour government. The BSC's losses in the present financial year (which ends in March) are estimated at £340 million. Weekly losses in 1975 ran at £5 million and have recently risen to about £8.4 million.

The British steel industry has been hit by the worldwide recession in steel. The government announced January 15 that steel demand slumped 14 percent in 1975. Output is now at about 17 million tons a year, far below the industry's capacity of 26 million tons. According to figures published by the International Iron and Steel Institute January 21, British steel output dropped 11.5 percent last year.

Steel production was down throughout the capitalist world (by 19.5 percent in the nine countries of the European Economic Community and by 19.7 percent in the United States), prompting protectionist trade-war measures by the imperialists.

By contrast, the superiority of the planned economies of the workers states (despite their bureaucratic deformations) was strikingly illustrated last year by steel output increases of 4.3 percent in the Soviet Union, 9.6 percent in the other Comecon* countries, and 11.1 percent in China.

While the rival capitalist steel producers scramble for a shrinking market, the BSC is at a terrible disadvantage. According to the January 4 London Sunday Times, BSC's annual output per worker is now around 77 tons. If the BSC produces at full capacity, this still rises to only 118 tons. Meanwhile, Nippon Steel in Japan can turn out 520 tons of steel per year for each worker, Thyssen in West Germany can achieve 370 tons per man-year, and National Steel can produce 280 tons per man-year. This is why Bob Scholey wants to axe 44,000 jobs "just for starters"; reduce jobs levels; and raise BSC's productivity to levels already achieved by the corporation's main competitors.

But as the big imperialist steel monopolies fight for their share of the world market, it is the steelworkers who lose out. A socialist planned economy would guarantee jobs for all.

*Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic confederation linking Moscow with its satellite governments in Eastern Europe.—IP
South Africa: NATO's Secret Partner

By Ernest Harsch

In early 1974, said that the contingency planning was designed to make it possible "to go to the aid of our potential allies in southern Africa if the need should arise." The NATO press secretary who revealed the SACLANT authorization stated that the planners were considering not only NATO options for wartime, but also for "crisis situations."

NATO's moves toward broadening its area of operations to include southern Africa was formalized at the annual meeting of the NATO Ministerial Council held in June 1974 in Ottawa. Although the NATO region was defined in 1940 as including Europe, North America, the North Sea, and the North Atlantic (above the Tropic of Cancer), the Ottawa Declaration of June 19, 1974, pointed out that NATO "interests can be affected by events in other areas of the world."

In an article on the Kissing "Tar Baby" policy, Tad Szulc commented in the October 1974 issue of Esquire magazine:

This, of course, is a carte blanche for N.A.T.O. to become involved wherever it wishes. It may mean the Middle East, or the Indian Ocean—or southern Africa. The uncertainty is whether the United States and some of its allies, encouraged by the license issued in Ottawa, may choose to regard South Africa's internal security in the face of black pressures as a justification for direct air or naval support, using SACLANT's contingency planning.

By the end of 1974, the initial planning stage appears to have been completed. Significantly, South African newspapers were among the first to note that fact. Correspondent Tim Patten reported in a dispatch from Brussels published in the December 14, 1974, issue of the South African Star Weekly:

NATO Defence Ministers are maintaining an agreed chock of secrecy but it has been made clear privately that the defence of the Cape sea route is "well covered" in a contingency plan, and that South Africa would receive naval assistance if the oil route was threatened.

This conclusion was given to me in the lobby halls of NATO headquarters this week while the Defence Ministers of the 15 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation member countries met in restricted session of the Defence Planning Committee.

...it is the first hint that the report and contingency plan have been given a nod of approval.

Details of the contingency plan, as well as SACLANT's obvious dealing with the South African Defence Force through "a member country," will certainly never be given.

The assurance, from a well-placed NATO source, has however, unveiled that contact was made with South Africa during the study, and that the conclusions have almost certainly been relayed to Mr Vorster's Government.

High-Level Contacts

One indicator of the greater coordination between Pretoria and its NATO allies has been the increase in high-level contacts between South African military and government officials and their counterparts in Europe and the United States.

In January 1974, Cornelius P. Mulder, South African minister of information and of the interior (who is considered a possible successor to Prime Minister John Vorster), spent five days in Washington. He met with then Vice-president Ford, various congressional leaders, and Vice Adm. Ray Peet, a top Pentagon planner in charge of International Security Affairs and the Indian Ocean. Mulder made another trip to the United States in June 1975.

A month after the coup in Portugal, Adm. Hugo H. Biermann, commander in chief of the South African military, also visited Washington after Kissinger overruled a recommendation of the Africa Bureau of the State Department that Biermann be denied a visa. Biermann then met with J. William Middendorf, acting secretary of the navy, and Gen. Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to Szulc, Biermann dined with seventeen admirals at the home of a Republican congressman.

In January 1975, a group of six U.S. congressmen visited South Africa. According to Congressman Bob Wilson, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, the sanctions against South Africa, "such as the arms embargo, were the central theme of our discussions." Wilson added, "Radicals broadcast a lot of misinformation about South Africa, but from what we have seen we would all choose South Africa as our second country."

This trip was followed up two months later by Congressman John Dent, who was accompanied to South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) by Harold Runnels of the House Armed Services Committee and by Richard Ichord, also a member of the House Armed Services Committee, as well as chairman of the witch-hunting relic, the House Internal Security Committee, until it was dissolved in January 1975.

"Obviously South Africa has developed..."
NATO Looks Toward Simonstown

While the details of SACLANT's contingency plans for southern Africa have not been publicly disclosed, Pretoria has already begun preparations to take on a greater role in "protecting" the Cape Sea route, apparently under NATO's encouragement.

On September 1, 1974, it was revealed that the NATO Military Committee had decided to negotiate with Pretoria for the possible use of Simonstown as a NATO base. Although the results of those negotiations are not yet known, Pretoria has launched a program to expand its port facilities far beyond the present needs of the South African navy.

On November 7, 1974, Prime Minister Vorster announced that work to expand the Simonstown base to accommodate forty to fifty warships would begin immediately. The Simonstown dockyards are to be tripled in size at a cost of $45 million.

VORSTER

An additional $17 million worth of equipment is to be installed over the next five years. The South African naval base at Durban is also being enlarged.

Vorster pledged that South African port facilities would be "open to all other friendly nations." Pretoria even launched a publicity campaign stressing that theme. For instance, an advertisement placed in the May 20, 1975, Christian Science Monitor asked: "Could an organisation like NATO have a base in Simonstown, South Africa?"

Noting that Washington had already begun expanding its naval facilities on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, Anthony Harrigan, an American military specialist and coauthor of The Indian Ocean and the Threat to the West, pointed to the next logical step Washington should take. Writing in the September 1975 South African Scope, he said:

The immediate United States need is to proceed rapidly with the Diego Garcia installation and then begin right away to negotiate with South Africa for those facilities which Diego Garcia cannot provide, namely missile-loading facilities, major repair facilities, landing rights for naval reconnaissance aircraft covering the Cape area, and well-protected intelligence data collection and analysis facilities.

Adm. John McCain, the director of the United States Strategic Institute and a former navy commander in chief in the Pacific Ocean, expressed a similar opinion nearly a year earlier. He was quoted in the October 25, 1974, South African Comment and Opinion as saying, "What has happened in Mozambique and Angola, makes our possession of Diego Garcia more important than ever. But it also means that we absolutely need access to Simonstown and Durban."

It would be politically difficult, however, for Washington openly to use the Simonstown base at this time. As a result of opposition among the American people to the apartheid regime, particularly among Blacks, U.S. ships have not used any South African ports since 1967, except in emergencies.

Consequently, one of the goals of American policy in southern Africa is to find a political "solution"—such as a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia and closer ties between Pretoria and some of the Black African states—that would enable U.S. ships to use Simonstown and other bases without jeopardizing American interests in the rest of Africa or provoking protests by Blacks in the United States.

'Project Advocaat'

Closely related to the construction of additional South African naval facilities is Project Advocaat, a highly sophisticated and far-ranging communications and surveillance center located at Silvermine in the mountains about twenty miles north of Simonstown.

The surveillance radius of Silvermine is some 5,000 miles, covering much of the Indian Ocean, almost all of the South Atlantic, and the entire African continent. Using aerial reconnaissance, radio monitoring, and other sources of information, the computerized center can plot the course, size, armament, number of personnel, and other statistics of virtually any ship or plane within that radius. According to Cmdt. Georg Brits, who heads the Silvermine center, the system also has facilities to organize convoys in war situations.

The surveillance system, according to a lieutenant commander at Silvermine cited in the July 31, 1975, Wall Street Journal, is linked via the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius to Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, and Australia, and by way of the British Admiralty in London to the U.S. naval communications station in Derry, Northern Ireland, and from there to the United States. Also by way of the British Admiralty, the system is tied into NATO headquarters in Brussels.

As with Simonstown, the capabilities of Silvermine are far greater than Pretoria can use for its own purposes. Moreover, South Africa does not have the necessary surveillance equipment to provide all the information that goes into Silvermine.

Hermannus Brink, Silvermine's operations officer, has said that the surveillance...
center received "inputs from other navies," which he did not name. The July 1975 Africa reported, "Some military digests have said that Project Advocat is directly linked to Washington and London, and informed sources believe that from these capitals come vital satellite photographs to make Vorster's picture complete."

The construction of Silvermine was directly related to NATO's "tilt" toward Pretoria. A report presented to the NATO Assembly session in November 1972 (where the recommendation that SAC-LANT begin its southern Africa planning was first made) stated that "there is a high priority requirement to develop a submarine and surface ship surveillance capability under NATO throughout the area."

The May 24, 1975, Star Weekly of South Africa reported that at a NATO Defense Planning Committee meeting in Brussels, U.S. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger was thought to have made a proposal to "establish a major monitoring installation in South Africa for NATO intelligence purposes."

"It can only be assumed at this stage that America put forward the plan," reporter Tim Patten said, "although in the corridors of NATO headquarters it was firmly believed this was the case." Patten reported that it was also assumed that the British and French representatives had supported the proposal.

The UN Special Committee on Apartheid acquired a set of documents from the Anti-Apartheid Movement detailing part of NATO's involvement in Project Advocat. Africa magazine reported in its July 1975 issue that according to the documents, South African officials used NATO computers to calculate the types and quantities of spare parts that would be needed for Silvermine.

They also used NATO's purchasing codes to buy equipment from such countries as Denmark and the Netherlands, which have publicly refused to sell arms to Pretoria in the past. French, British, and American parts are also known to have been ordered for Project Advocat. The orders were made with NATO forms and were thought to have been delivered to Pretoria in September 1973.

Africa reported:

South Africa also received active assistance from the West German Defence Ministry—and although the exact scope of this is not yet known, it is believed that the Germans acted as middlemen, buying equipment from some unfriendly NATO countries and re-routing them to South Africa. However, from the photograph of a letter from AEG-Telefunken [a German company that has a contract with South Africa] to the German army supply department, it is clear that in 1970, a meeting was held at which the Defence Ministry agreed to "process" spare parts ordered for Project Advocat.

This purchasing arrangement between Pretoria and NATO was not a recent development. A NATO representative admitted June 18, 1975, that South Africa had been using NATO codes since the early 1960s. He said that at the request of the French government NATO had given South Africa the special identification code number 18, which it continues to use.

Parallel with Pretoria's military preparations, South African officials have called on Washington and the other NATO powers to extend their alliance with the South African regime even further. For instance, speaking before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on June 6, 1975, Mulder said:

"We are not asking the United States to police our water. Despite embargoes we have managed to keep abreast in the military field. Our navy has expanded to an extent where it satisfies our medium power needs.

No, we do not need others to do our work, but we do require friends in the Western world to shoulder their own responsibilities in the oceans around us. In the process South Africa is able to supply them with harbor, drydock, and other support facilities instead of having to go to considerable expense in creating our own bases in the area."

In mid-1972, Admiral Biermann stressed another "responsibility" that he thought the Western powers should shoulder in South Africa. Biermann said that "it is imperative that a superpower should be involved in the strategy for the southern hemisphere and that as a final defence the strategy of deterrence with the threat of nuclear destruction and escalation has to be applied in this region as well."

A Member of the Nuclear Club?

Pretoria may soon not need to call on its Western allies to provide such a "deterrent." During the past decade and a half its scientists—with help from Europe and the United States—have been feverishly developing South Africa's own nuclear capability.

South Africa and the occupied territory of Namibia have some of the richest uranium fields in the world. But nuclear weapons technology requires much more than simple access to the raw materials. To be of use either as fuel for nuclear reactors or in atomic warheads, natural uranium must first be enriched, a process in which the lighter U-235 is separated from the heavier U-238.

This enrichment process is extremely complex and expensive. The enrichment technology, moreover, is usually kept a closely guarded secret by the nuclear powers—both to cut down competition in the field of nuclear fuel production and to slow down the proliferation of nuclear weapons in other countries.

These obstacles notwithstanding, Prime Minister Vorster declared in 1970 that Pretoria had developed its own nuclear enrichment process. Two years later Minister of Mines P.J. Koornhof claimed that the process could produce the "cheapest enriched uranium in the world," costing approximately 30 percent less than other methods. In April 1975, the first South African pilot enrichment plant went into operation at Valindaba, near Pretoria. The government also plans to build a large-scale commercial plant, at a projected cost of more than $1 billion, by the early 1980s.

While Pretoria's desire to compete on the growing world market for nuclear fuel was probably an important consideration in its decision to launch the enrichment project, it was far from the only factor.

In fact, the military potential of the country's nuclear industry was so central to Pretoria's plans that in August 1965 Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd had to remind South African officials that it also had an economic value. Speaking at the inauguration of the country's first nuclear reactor, he said, "It is the duty of South Africa not only to consider the military uses of the material, but also to direct its uses to peaceful purposes."

Reporting in the November 1975 Africa, Peter Enahoro said, "Various South African spokesmen have from time to time publicly envisaged the day when their country will have its own atom bomb. Ten years ago, Andries Visser, a member of the South African Atomic Energy Board, suggested that the Republic should establish a nuclear arsenal not only for prestige purposes, but also because 'we should have such a bomb to prevent aggression from loud mouthed Afro-Asian states . . . ."

Although Pretoria has muted such bellicose pronouncements during the past several years, and Vorster now claims that the country's nuclear research program is aimed entirely toward "peaceful" purposes, the development of a nuclear weapons capability is still very much on the minds of government and military officials.

In 1971, A.J.A. Roux, the president of the South African Atomic Energy Board, wrote that "if a country wishes to make nuclear weapons, an enrichment plant will provide the concentrated fission material if the country possesses the necessary natural uranium to process in the plant."

Shortly after India exploded its first nuclear device on May 18, 1974, Louw Alberts, the vice-chairman of the Atomic Energy Board, remarked that "our nuclear programme is more advanced than that of India."

Correspondent James Baxter said in the March 22, 1975, Star Weekly, "Indeed, some [American, British, and Soviet] authorities would not in any way be surprised if the South Africans already have reached the threshold of nuclear arms production, possessing, as they do, uranium in considerable quantities . . . ."

"Technically, too, South Africa's knowledge in the field is considered to be sufficiently developed to produce this sort
of weapon if and when a political decision to do so is taken.”

In addition to the aid given to the South African regime for its conventional military force, the major imperialist powers, Washington and Bonn in particular, have helped establish its nuclear industry.

Shortly after the South African Atomic Energy Board was set up in 1949, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission opened its facilities to South African engineers and nuclear scientists. In 1957, Washington and Pretoria signed a fifty-year bilateral nuclear energy cooperation agreement.

In a 1967 article, Africa scholar John Marcum reported:

[Despite] widespread African fears and international speculation that uranium-rich South Africa may try to develop both nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, the American Atomic Energy Commission [has] trained South African technicians at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and loaned the South African Atomic Energy Board a reactor consultant (Thomas Cole of Oak Ridge National Laboratory) to whom the South Africans consider themselves “largely indebted for the successful commission of Safari 1,” their first nuclear reactor which was dedicated in August 1965 in the presence of Dr. Alvin Weinberg, director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Pretoria received help in developing its nuclear enrichment process from West Germany. Although the South African government has not yet revealed its enrichment technique, it is believed that it is based on the nozzle separation method developed by the West German Steinkohlen Elektrizität AG (STEAG), a state-controlled company, and the West German Nuclear Research Society (GRK—Gesellschaft für Kernforschung) at Karlsruhe.

South African scientists were allowed to visit the Karlsruhe center. And according to Tony Hodges in the November 1975 Africa, Thomas Cole of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, who had been working at the nozzle technique at Karlsruhe for 15 years, is now working in South Africa.

In August 1973, it was revealed that STEAG and the South African Atomic Energy Board were negotiating an agreement to collaborate on nuclear enrichment. In April 1974, the Uranium Enrichment Corporation of South Africa and STEAG signed a contract “to carry out a joint feasibility study of two uranium enrichment processes.”

“The mastermind behind the South African success in the nuclear field in West Germany is Donald Sole, who arrived as Ambassador to Bonn in 1968,” Enahoro reported. “A past member of South Africa’s Atomic Energy Board, he served as chairman of the International Atomic Energy Organization in Vienna in 1959 and 1960 and continued to be a member of the Organisation’s Council of Governors until the end of 1972. With such qualifications his appointment to West Germany was obviously not an accident.”

In addition to the contacts Sole established with STEAG and GRK, he managed to enlist the collaboration of high military officials.

In October 1974 Sole organized a visit to South Africa by Lt. Gen. Günther Ball, at that time West Germany’s top air force officer and its representative on NATO’s military committee. Traveling under the pseudonym of “Mr. Ball,” Rail inspected South African military installations, as well as the nuclear facilities at Palindaba.

Within two days after the secret trip was revealed in September 1975 by a German magazine, Rail was forced to resign. Although the trip had been approved by Defense Minister Georg Leber, he later claimed that he had not known of the “special circumstances” of the visit.

A statement by the African National Congress of South Africa, quoted by Hodges, pointed out that nuclear weapons would allow Pretoria to “use its nuclear muscle to weaken boycotts, embargoes and sanctions; it could blackmail Africa and the international community into acquiescence in its apartheid policies at home and the expansion of its economic stranglehold over the continent.”

South Africa’s nuclear potential could be a serious future threat to Black-ruled Africa. But as shown by its intervention in Angola, Pretoria’s powerful conventional military might is an immediate danger.

International Campaign to Free Hernán Cuestas

An international campaign is being waged to free Peruvian miners union leaders Hernán Cuestas and Víctor Cuadros, and four labor attorneys—Ricardo Díaz Chávez, José Oña Meona, Arturo Salas Rodríguez, and Genaro Ledesma Izquieta. The six were arrested in December 1975 but have yet to be charged with any crime.

The February 19-26 issue of the Paris weekly newspaper Informations Ouvrières devoted an entire page to reporting protests from France. Messages have been sent from scores of trade unionists and locals of the major trade-union federations—the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail—General Confederation of Labor), Force Ouvrière (Labor Force), and CFDT (Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail—French Democratic Confederation of Labor).

Protests have also been sent by members and leaders of the Communist party, Socialist party, League for the Rights of Man, Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI—Internationalist Communist Organization), Alliance des Jeunesses pour le Socialisme (AJS—Alliance of Youth for Socialism), and Union Nationale des Étudiants de France (UNEF—National Union of Students of France).

The French section of Amnesty International, groups of university professors and other professionals, and a number of student organizations have voiced protests as well.

In Peru, according to a report in the February 18 issue of the Buenos Aires weekly Política Obrera, a rally of 30,000 persons was held in Lima to protest the arrests. This was followed by work stoppages by miners and a twenty-four-hour strike on Limay Callao called by the Communist party-led Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (CGTP— General Confederation of Peruvian Workers).

Cuestas, a leader of the Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (POMR—Revolutionary Marxist Workers party), had returned from forced exile only three months before his arrest. Upon his return, he became part of the leadership of the Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos del Perú (National Federation of Miners and Metalworkers of Peru). He served as a leader of miners at Cuajone, an important mining site in the south of Peru.

Along with Cuadros, Cuestas is being held in Lurin, a city near Lima. The four labor lawyers face harsher conditions—they are imprisoned in the Amazonian penal colony, El Sepa.

In an open letter published in the February 12 issue of the Peruvian news magazine Marka, Cuestas and Cuadros pointed out that the attorneys face “a grave risk to their own lives.” They cited in particular the case of Arturo Salas, who is elderly and suffers from a spinal condition that requires constant medical attention.

Cuestas and Cuadros also explained what lay behind the arrests:

“No one doubts that what is behind the attack against us is the fear the imperialists and reactionary bourgeoisie have of the miners and metalworkers organized in the Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos del Perú. Nor does anyone doubt that this attack is the same kind as that being experienced by the compañeros de Plásticos El Pacífico; the printers in the El Virrey, Simac, and Sider case; the fishermen; and so many other assaults the reactionary forces use to try to behead and demobilize the Peruvian proletariat so that later they can try to defeat it, forcing it to bear the entire brunt of the crisis of the capitalist system.”

Problems of the Cuban Workers State

By Livio Maitan

[The last world congress of the Fourth International, held in February 1974, opened a public discussion on the internal situation in Cuba and the foreign policy of the Cuban government. The following article, translated by Intercontinental Press, is a contribution to that discussion.]

Recent developments—in internal as well as international politics—have again posed the problem of an analysis of the overall situation in Cuba. Militants are questioning the nature of the Cuban state at the present stage. Is the characterization advanced by revolutionary Marxists since 1960 still valid or must it be rectified? Before offering an answer let's cast a look back.

The Formation of the Workers State

“The Cuban revolution,” says the text of the Sixth World Congress of the Fourth International (January 1961), “has roughly speaking gone through three phases up to now: the first, in which, after having limited its goals and its methods to a gram of struggle against the system itself, the agrarian reform; and the third, marked by armed action carried out by a small group that tried to win over a sector of the army, the Fidelista movement developed a program of struggle against the system itself, centering mainly on bourgeois-democratic demands and on more and more advanced peasant demands; the second, marked by the first revolutionary gains and especially the agrarian reform; and the third, whose culminating points were the mortal blows against imperialist property in the summer of 1960, and the decisive wave of nationalizations, including those of native capitalist properties, in October of the same year.

On the specifically political level, in the first phase the people’s revolutionary forces signed (July 1953) a pact with the representatives of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democracy; the second phase was marked by the formation (January 1959) of a government including liberal-conservative elements, with Urrutia as president. Finally, the inevitable break with the latter occurred—a break caused above all by the promulgation of the agrarian reform.

“In its first two phases, therefore, the Cuban revolution developed as a radical anti-imperialist democratic revolution, whereas in the third it completed the process of ‘growing over’ into a socialist revolution, eliminating not only the economic bases of imperialism but also of native capitalist property. On the level of political leadership, this evolution was more in form than substance, for the real power was in the hands of the Ejercito Rebelde [Rebel Army] and the Fidelista team, even during the period of dual power sui generis that ran from the taking of power to the fall of Urrutia.” (See “On the Nature of the Cuban Revolution,” Fourth International, Winter, 1960-61, No. 12.)

The specific forms of the armed struggle for power and the character of the Fidelista leadership—as analyzed in the resolution cited above—contributed to making a fundamental difference between the Cuban revolution and the Russian revolution of 1917. In spite of the active participation of broad layers of the peasantry and in the later stages of the urban proletarian masses, the destruction of the bourgeois state did not go hand in hand with the emergence of soviet-type proletarian democratic structures. That is why, in the context of cultural and economic backwardness and the impossibility Cuba faced of integrating itself into a homogeneous supranational economic system, tendencies toward bureaucratic degeneration existed from the beginning. However, unlike Yugoslavia and China—and even more unlike the countries of Eastern Europe occupied by the Red Army, which were quickly brought into a process of structural assimilation with the USSR—the revolution in Cuba did not develop under a leadership historically linked to Stalinism, trained in this school and deeply scarred by bureaucratism even before the conquest of power. In the period of the revolutionary war and right after the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship, the Castroist leadership suffered the limitations and contradictions stemming from its petty-bourgeois origins and its Jacobin ideology. But it was inspired by a determination to maintain its ties with the driving forces of the revolution, by an understanding that such a link was needed in order to counteract bourgeois restorationist tendencies and to counter the attacks of American imperialism. Another obstacle to adopting the Stalinist model and a factor promoting an awareness of the problems of the degeneration of the revolution were the distrust of the Stalinists of the PSP [People’s Socialist party], who after collaborating with Batista on several occasions opposed the guerrilla struggle for a whole period, and the thinking that certain leaders of the July 26 Movement were able to undertake on the negative evolution of the USSR and the bureaucratized Communist parties.

For his part, Fidel said several months earlier: “The second phase could never have been carried out with the peasants alone; this revolution would have been absolutely impossible without the working class! Since, for topographical reasons, there were no industries or concentration of workers in the regions where the war had begun, since a vast area was inhabited by dispersed groups of peasants, it was logical for the peasants to play the main role at the moment. But the agricultural workers on the big plantations in the Sierra Maestra soon began to join the rebel forces; cane cutters, rice harvesters, and agricultural workers of other kinds began to turn up.

“However, Cuba was not made up of only mountains and countryside; there was the capital and other big cities where there were no peasants, just workers.

“Later the revolution would have to confront its foreign enemies; and in that decisive struggle, that life-or-death struggle, in which the nation had to confront its foreign enemies, the working class necessarily played a decisive role.” In the common struggle, in the alliance with the peasantry, the working class “brought its own ideology, the ideology of the working class: Marxism-Leninism, the struggle for socialism, the struggle for communism.” (Granma, May 26, 1974.)

“On the other hand, we have had a real and sincere friend who has always shown us great generosity, unselfishness and fraternity. Thus, we have said that the Cuban revolution came forth at the very moment—and not a minute sooner—when the international balance of power and the big changes taking place in the world could make possible this reality.” (Granma, January 14, 1973.)
Thus the Cuban workers state was born without the deformations that from the beginning marked countries like Yugoslavia and China where the taking of power was the outcome of prolonged revolutionary mobilizations. As a result of the decisions made at several points by its leading group, the Cuban revolution for a long time after its victory did not experience a substantial process of bureaucratization and degeneration. That is why the Fourth International adopted an attitude toward the Cuban leadership qualitatively different from its attitude toward the leaderships of other workers states, not including in our program either the struggle for an antibureaucratic political revolution or the building of an alternative leadership.

Three Crucial Episodes

All these aspects did not prevent the Fourth International from highlighting the objective factors likely to stimulate forms of bureaucratization or from taking note over a long period of fifteen years of contradictory tendencies and crucial moments in the struggles against these phenomena.

On the whole we can distinguish three important episodes between 1960 and 1970. The first came in 1962 when the pro-Stalinist faction around Aníbal Escalante was defeated. At that time some fairly well defined tendencies had set out to introduce administrative methods and to impose forms of bureaucratization involving a growing weight of the apparatus, the emergence of relatively privileged conditions, and the imposition of Stalinist-like cultural practices. This resulted in the creation of a dangerous gap between the leaders and the masses. A speech by Guevara in 1961 and Castro’s speeches against falsification of history and above all against Escalante were the most important testimony to the fact that at least a small part of the leading group was perfectly aware of the dangers and had decided to fight resolutely against them.

In fact the most representative elements of the bureaucratic current were placed in a position where they could do no harm, and a difficult phase was overcome.

The second episode occurred in 1967. In this year the Cuban polemic against the international line of the bureaucracy of the CP’s and of the Soviet bureaucracy itself came to its fullest development. One of the culminating points of this polemic was Fidel Castro’s March 13 speech, in which, among other things, he explicitly criticized the visit of a Soviet commercial delegation to the Colombian government then engaged in repression the guerrillas, and in which he made an extremely clear and vehement attack on the opportunistic line of the Venezuelan CP. Guevara’s message, coming from an unknown field of battle, which was published in April, was along the same lines. The OLAS conference in July gave additional sanction to a line in opposition to the reformist conceptions of the Communist parties, and rejected any subordination to the politico-diplomatic needs of the bureaucracies of the degenerated workers states.

But 1967 was also the year of a new attack by the leading Castroist group against the bureaucratic positions and against the tendencies and men from the former PSP who had not ceased to represent a brake on, and a danger to, the revolutionary process. Already, the year before, an attack had been launched on a stronghold of some bureaucrats of the old school, that is, the national union federation. The apparatus headed by Lazaro Peña, whose responsibility cannot be wiped out by apologetic postmortem commemorations, was largely replaced. In the same period, a campaign was launched around the need for actively mobilizing the masses as a condition for achieving economic objectives. Likewise another campaign was started up against the overgrown administrative apparatus and against bureaucratic methods of management and leadership. These campaigns prompted a broad theoretical debate in which even economists from other countries, including revolutionary Marxists, were able to express their views. The criteria used in other workers states were explicitly criticized, and a general conception was outlined, which differed both from the Soviet theories based on the absolute primacy of material incentives as well as from certain Chinese formulations as well as from certain Chinese formulations which, in a context such as the one in Cuba, is inherent in the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Among the causes of the economic failures and dangerous social developments, the absence of a revolutionary-democratic organization of the state must, then, be assigned first place.” (“A Crucial Stage for the Cuban Revolution,” Intercontinental Press, November 30, 1970, p. 1043).

In a general way two alternative solutions to the problem posed by the failure of the zafra were counterposed within the leadership itself: a solution of a bureaucratic and authoritarian kind, based on domination by technicians and specialists and on much stricter discipline, possibly accompanied by repressive measures; and a solution based primarily on the mobilization and active participation of the masses in economic and political development.

The stakes in this confrontation, which is shaping up to be very sharp, is, in the last analysis, fundamental for the future of the Cuban revolution. Will Cuba be condemned to growing bureaucratization, or will it prove possible to open up a new chapter in the history of the struggle the masses have waged against the bureaucracy? The answer depends in very large
measure on the results of the present confrontation.” (Quarta Internazionale, No. 1, 1971.)

The choices outlined by the Cuban leadership did not include an overall solution to the problems that had been present since the day following the victory of the revolution. For example, the conception that called for achieving active participation by the masses through the existing mass organizations did not resolve the problem of building and coordinating structures of real proletarian democracy, nor did it resolve, by itself, the problem of assuring the effective democratic functioning of these mass organizations. As for the party, no concrete step was taken with a view to eliminating in the near future decisive obstacles to internal democracy (lack of any room for freely expressing different or opposing positions, failure to call a congress, etc.).

But, in spite of all that, Fidel Castro's self-criticism and certain decisions outlined by the leading group revealed a clear potential for fighting bureaucraticism and showed, in any case, that the group around Fidel was conscious of what was at stake and wanted at any price to avoid becoming the instrument of forces and interests different from those it has represented since the period of the armed struggle against the dictatorship.

Five years afterward, is it premature to ask ourselves, Did the battle announced in 1970 really take place? In what forms was it conducted and with what results? What tendencies are now operating and what are the perspectives?

At the moment, we do not possess all the analytical elements required to give a complete answer (for example, at least in the official publications we have been able to consult, we have not found any overall statistics that would permit a thorough evaluation of the economic situation). Nevertheless, certain general lines of analysis can be established, from which some definite conclusions can legitimately be drawn.

If our interpretation in 1970 correctly recognized the general trends, in practice the situation has evolved in a much less clear fashion. The results to date indicate that neither of the two solutions mentioned got the upper hand. Instead, we have to record a partial implementation of certain features of the first alternative, in combination with features of the first. Let us look at this in more detail.

**Economic Problems and Tendencies**

Throughout the first ten years of its life, the Cuban workers state was rudely compelled to periodically take account of how much the economic development of a small country dependent on one crop is conditioned by the world market. The political factors, i.e., the blockade and sabotage, made the economic effects of this pressure still more negative.

After the initial illusions about the possibility of a fairly rapid diversification, the leading group had to conclude that for an indeterminate period sugar cultivation would remain the backbone of the country's economy, the primary source of accumulation, and the principal means of acquiring currency for foreign trade (as Castro noted, for example, in a January 1973 speech, the products assuring foreign exchange are nickel, tobacco, fish, and sugar, but sugar overshadows the others).

In a context where Cuba remained isolated in Latin America, and could not pin its hopes on integration into an effectively unified economic system of the workers states (even leaving aside the specific difficulties of incorporating Cuba, since the Comecon does not constitute a fully developed system of economic integration), maintaining sugar cultivation as the principal economic lever was an unavoidable choice. Only utopians or irresponsible people could question the necessity of such a decision. In the last analysis, the bulk of the ten million ton campaign is to be located in this reality. Regardless of propagandistic distortions or conjunctural rhetoric, this goal was not regarded as an end in itself but as a means to acquire resources needed for other sectors and to lessen a number of dangerous tensions. We cannot go back here over the causes of the failure.

In retrospect it can be said that in his self-criticism Castro put too much emphasis on the socio-political causes (which were certainly a factor), compared to the more specifically economic ones, especially the largely voluntarist nature of the option taken: That is, the fact that, in view of the available labor force, technical know-how, and general organization, such a large-scale, concentrated effort could not be made without creating grave bottlenecks in other sectors as well as a series of highly negative effects.

The failure was dramatic in any event, insofar as it seemed to compromise possibilities for rapid growth, or relatively rapid growth, and seemed destined to increase dependence on foreign countries.

However, the results obtained in the years following 1970 were better than could have been expected at the time. By 1972 there was already a modest but real improvement. And the agreements with the USSR, which, among other things, involved long-term payments and credits without interest, guaranteed the essential margin for maneuver.

It should be noted, moreover, that what has historically been an economic tragedy for Cuba—that is, its dependence on the world market price of sugar—in the recent period has turned into an unexpected opportunity. This is the result of a rise, particularly noticeable in certain phases of the economic conjuncture, in the price of raw materials. Of course, world inflation also exerts pressure on Cuba, and what is still more important, the rise in sugar prices could experience a brusque change, likely to reduce seriously if not wipe out the gains made. This does not alter the fact that the rise in sugar prices would correspond in terms of 1971 prices not to a ten million ton, but to a twenty million ton, zafra.

This means that Cuba already has, and will likely have in the next stage, a much larger margin of economic maneuver than could legitimately be expected after the failure in 1970. This makes it possible for the Cuban leadership to tackle a number of problems without having to contend with such serious tensions.

During the traditional balance sheet speech at the last July 26 anniversary, in giving some indicative facts, Castro pointed out that between 1970 and 1973 the overall economic growth had been on the order of 26 percent, that agriculture had scored considerable advances, and that industry had maintained a particularly steady growth (in particular, the construction industry had had an "extraordinary" dynamism). According to certain estimates, obviously from an official source, that have appeared in the international press, the rate of growth after 1973 reached 10 percent, with an increase in exports from 788 million pesos to 2,193 million pesos (Le Monde, January 14, 1975). In a speech in February of this year, Castro calculated that production in the construction sector had tripled since 1970. As for

2. At the beginning of 1974 the Cuban debt to the USSR was estimated, according to the Documentation Frantais (No. 231-32, 1974) at $4 billion to $5 billion. Repayment is due within twenty-five years, beginning in 1986. (For the agreement, see Granma, January 14, 1973.)

4. This in spite of two years (1973 and 1974) of drought.


3. Eleven cents is also the new price accepted by the USSR, although with a reduction of the volume at the same time. (Le Monde, January 14, 1975.)
the perspectives, 1976 will mark the beginning of the first five-year plan. Its general lines will be established definitively after a discussion among the masses. But, in theory, it is to involve an annual rate of growth of 6 percent. This figure, already put forward in 1973 by Castro as attainable in the following decade, was confirmed in the balance sheet of last year mentioned above. If the favorable prices for sugar last, the percentage of growth could be increased. The investments foreseen by the plan are on the order of $12 to 15 billion, that is, $2.5 to 3 billion per year (cf. statement by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, in Paris, January 15, 1975).

The elements of the balance sheet and the summary forecasts should not make us forget, in the first place, that the 6 percent average rate of growth is a relatively low one for a still largely underdeveloped country (all the more if you consider the rate of population growth). In the second place, the results of the plan will themselves be largely shaped by the evolution of the world market (evolution of raw materials prices, of the terms of trade in industrial products and of agricultural products, and the results of the inflationary process at the international level, etc.). It is necessary, in the third place, to take into account the choking bottlenecks that exist and serious contradictions that we can summarize as follows:

1. Problems created by the shortage of manpower, which results primarily from the seasonal character of the harvest and limited progress in mechanizing the cultivation of the main crop. (The special experiment of the microbrigades, employed to stimulate housing construction, had a bad side to it, in that it, at least partially, drew off manpower from the production sector. This forced other workers to do unpaid overtime work.)

6. Population growth would be 200,000 a year. (Granma, May 26, 1974.) In 1975 total population reached 9 million; it was 7,256,267 in 1964 (1.5 million more than in 1950).

7. At the Twelfth Trade Union Congress, Castro cited significant facts about the goods imported by Cuba.

8. Some facts to indicate the nature of the problems: In 1974 there were 280,000 construction workers. For 1980 a doubling of production is foreseen with an increase of 140,000 workers. In the same year there would have to be fewer workers engaged in the zafra than in construction. (Granma, December 5, 1974.) The tensions flow from the development of sectors whose growth incontestably represents a gain scored by the revolution: At the end of 1975 workers in education will number 250,000 and those in public health 150,000 (the two together numbering around 400,000, that is, one worker in six. (Granma, February 15, 1974.) In other cases the tensions are produced by a relative abundance of money—caused by wage increases in a situation of relative scarcity of means of consumption—

9. Cases of a lowering of productivity of labor below the level of the capitalist epoch have been denounced, for example, in many repair shops in the sugar sector. (Granma, November 25, 1973.) A form of absenteeism, which may be termed deepgoing, was the relatively frequent trend not to look for or accept work. It was in order to fight against this trend that the law against vagrancy was adopted in 1971. Its adoption rapidly resulted in the integration of about 100,000 persons into production.

2. Insufficient training in regular work habits, resulting in relatively low productivity, especially in certain sectors, and the persisting absenteeism (even though, according to official statements, the trend has definitely been toward a drop in this). It

3. Shortages of certain essential materials (for example, cement for building) that have repercussions on production as a whole (the bottlenecks that exist in construction in spite of increases noted also involve industrial construction). Shortages of consumer goods (including restrictions on sugar, in view of the need to save as much as possible for export).

Finally, the radical shift in the norms for organizing work and stimulating productivity has not, by itself, made it possible to overcome the difficulties, the tensions, and the contradictions that prompted the leaders to make this turn. This came out very clearly, for example, in the national union congress debates.

As we have already mentioned, these problems have been discussed on several occasions since the revolution. Different conceptions have been countered, and there was a succession of various methods. But 1970 marked a turning point on this ground. The leading group started to adopt a more realistic conception of the problems of the transitional stage and their solution. In the first place, they made much clearer the necessary distinction between the socialist phase and the communist phase and stated flatly that there was no possibility for a socialist revolution "jumping over stages." (Granma, February 16, 1975.)

While not completely renouncing politically-ideological incentives and assigning a major importance to the level of consciousness attained by the working class and the toilers in general, the Cuban leadership stroked more and more—in practice still more than in explicit theorization—on material incentives. That leads women to leave their jobs. Castro denounced this trend at the November 1974 union congress, attributing it also to machismo and "supermamismo."

10. The Congress of Cuban Women approved the proposal to reduce the sugar ration to a pound per month in order to get an additional surplus of 50,000 tons, which, according to Castro's estimate, would permit the purchase of a textile factory. (Granma, December 8, 1975.)

11. "Tying pay to fulfillment of norms and adopting forms of payment that make it possible to step up production and productivity is a decisive task for our economy," stated Roberto Veiga, general secretary of the CTC last May 1. He added: "The material incentive represented by linking norms and wages does not deny but on the contrary reaffirms the need to strenuously exalt the high moral values that exist among our working people." These same ideas were expressed in the thesis of the Thirteenth National Union Congress: "Each must be renumerated according to the quantity and quality of his work. Whoever works more and better must be compensated. Those who through regular work give more to society must be compensated for it, in proportion to their contribution."

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norm. Or productivity could remain very low if the workers, fearing that it were noticed how undemanding these norms were, were laid off or were kept under the established threshold. Besides, a system of material incentives and norms tends in general to produce marked wage differentiations in the working class itself, from sector to sector and even among different shops in the same plant. In the case of bonuses and promotions, the danger of arbitrariness, inequalities, and injustice is still greater, and in fact there have been some exposures of this. (At one time, the idea was raised of exempting the most active and disciplined workers, whose family income did not exceed a certain ceiling, from the rent payments required by the urban reform law, as well as of giving priority in the distribution of electrical appliances to the most meritorious workers.)

The Social Context

Owing to the thoroughness of a series of revolutionary measures and some shrewd tactical decisions by the leading group, the problem of domestic conflict with layers of the former ruling class and restorationist tendencies was posed from the beginning years in a notably milder form in Cuba than in other workers states.

In fact, the representatives of the exploiting classes and their supporters have, for the most part, left the country for exile in the United States. The leading group did not face any obstacles in the way of a massive emigration; it even encouraged this in a certain way. The result was that, while there was a broad base for reactionary maneuvers outside the country, inside Cuba the representatives and the surviving layers of the old system found themselves rapidly isolated.

In the second place, following the two waves of agrarian reform in 1959 and 1963, the Cuban countryside underwent structural changes sharply reducing the chances for capitalist accumulation and for dangerous political counterattacks from well-to-do peasants, the potential dynamism a force hostile to the regime. On the other hand, the ANAP decided to sell its members' produce only to the state.

Pequenos—National Association of Small Farmers), represented about 200,000 families of small peasant proprietors in the year 1967. The ANAP had been created in 1962 as a continuation of the Pequenos (National Association of Small Peasants), which was liquidated by the Castro government.

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As for petty-bourgeois urban layers—linked to the trading sectors—they were hard hit by the March 1968 expropriation measures. These steps had unquestionably negative effects on the distribution of certain products and provoked a certain discontent. At the time, they were criticized as “ultra-left.” Nonetheless, they prevented the reinforcement and consolidation of a business layer capable of becoming a political threat.

We already mentioned the problems that most directly concern the working class when we spoke of work organization, incentives, wages, etc. It is enough to add here that the working class is growing in industry proper as well as in construction, and that there is a tendency for manpower engaged in the zafra to decline (thanks to more efficient mechanization). We already pointed out the considerable expansion in the educational and public health sectors. As for the differentiations within the working class that we have also mentioned, they arise—to put it in the most pointed out the considerable expansion in the educational and public health sectors. As for the differentiations within the working class that we have also mentioned, they arise—to put it in the most

The Political Structures

In view of the nature and the limits of the forms of bureaucracy that had crystalized at the end of the 1960s, the struggle against tendencies toward bureaucratic degeneration was bound up almost entirely with the struggle for creating political structures that could assure the masses real exercise of their sovereignty.

As we have seen, at the time of his self-criticism over the campaign for ten million tons, Fidel Castro showed that he was to a large extent aware of this and that he was ready, however empirically, to set out on this path. What kind of a balance sheet can be drawn up now?

On the theoretical level, starting from the recognition of the need to renovate the mass organizations such as the unions, the CDRs (Committees in Defense of the Revolution), the women’s organizations, and others, and to increase the weight exercised by these bodies, the Cuban leadership came to realize the need for building organs of people’s power and reached a better understanding of the dialectical interrelationship of the various organs and instruments of a transitional society.

In a particularly important article in the October 20, 1974, issue of Granma we read: “In a socialist revolution, the working people, headed by the working class, are sovereign. And this sovereignty, this right, this function of governing, must be explicitly delegated by the working people, it must be expressed and not simply be supported by them. The people must have the possibility of deciding whom to delegate their power to, and moreover, the channels should be established through which every member of society may, to the greatest possible extent, participate directly in the governing of that society... In our country we still lack the primary institutions through which the people govern directly, the institutions that emanate directly from the people, that are elected by the people.”

“All secondary institutions must be based on these primary institutions.”

On the practical level, the leading group worked on a systematic solution of the following: reorganization of the government and its branches in 1972; restructuring of the party apparatus, from the Central Committee to the municipal committees; reorganization of the judicial system and holding of a trade-union congress in 1973; creation of organs of local power at the provincial level in Matanzas Province in 1974; conduction of a party congress in 1975. Until now, this calendar has been observed. The result has been, however, that the adoption of an at least questionable order of priorities and of careful gradualism has put off the solution of the No. 1 problem. (According to official plans, the Matanzas experiment is to be extended to the national level next year, following adoption of a new constitution.)

All the same, the present picture can be summarized as follows:

The first experiment with organs of people’s power unquestionably represented a kind of participation by the masses in the exercise of power on a local scale. The methods by which they were prepared and carried out clearly distinguished the Matanzas Province elections from the purely formal operations that occur periodically as a stereotyped ritual in the USSR or in other workers states. It was, however, a
limited experiment that could not have a
decisive effect in running the government
even leaving aside how they func-
tion, cannot compensate—it is worth
previous situation. Other mass organiza-
the case of production assemblies, sanc-
mark a qualitative change from the
essentially consultative functions. This is
absence of these "primary institutions" of
congress. Over and above consultation at
any case, the role assigned to it is purely
coming, the same deficiencies and distortions
and general conceptions of management
party politically orients and leads the
administrative or coercive methods but by
advancing toward the communist future.
By comparison with Soviet and even
Chinese documents, one might note a
better feel for the overall dynamic of the
new society. The important article already
mentioned in fact explains that the party
must not play its leading role by means of
administrative or coercive methods but by
virtue of its "enormous political author-
It says that "the party is not expressly
delegated with the powers of governing
people's power. " (Raul Castro, Granma,
the state must be administered by the
masses through their organs of people's
power. " (Granma, August 4, 1974.)
But these specifications and others of
the same tenor are counterbalanced by
repeated statements about the party as
"unquestionably the maximum agency of
leadership within our society," which
"directs not only other party organizations
and their members, but also the state
organs and mass organizations, and,
therefore, must also direct the organs of
people's power." (Raul Castro, Granma,
September 8, 1974.) The statements that
the party plays a role in society compar-
able to the heart and brain in the human
organism are in the same vein. (Armando
Hart, Granma, December 22, 1974.)
In practice, the dominant role and real
leadership belonged originally to the
political-military organization, the Ejército
Rebelde, and was then transferred to the
party. And for the moment, there is no
reason to suppose that in the future actual
practice will resolve in a different way the
ambiguities of certain formulations that
are subject to various interpretations. To
judge from the statements by Fidel quoted
above, forming organs of people's power
would not bring about any substantial
differences as regards the actual center of
political power.
The "ante proyecto" [preliminary draft]
text of the constitution, recently published
for discussion in and outside the party,
does not in itself offer any clarifications or
any of the necessary particulars. Article 4
states that "all power belongs to the
working people, who exercise it through
the intermediary of the People's Power
Assemblies and other organs of the state
derive from them, or else directly." The
following article says that "the CPC, the
organized Marxist-Leninist vanguard
of the working class, is the main leading
force of society and the state. It organizes
and guides the common efforts toward the
lofty end of building socialism and of
advancing toward the communist future.
Thus, not only is the primacy of the
party written into the constitution but also
the one-party concept. This is a decision
that is at least highly debatable. In fact, it
cannot be excluded absolutely that the
working class might organize itself in a
single party, and in certain conditions
revolutionary, as regards the actual center of
political power.
Regarding the organs of people's
power, the powers of the people's assemblies
at the local level have been established for
the most part by the terms of the Matan-
zas Province pilot project (with mandates
lasting two and a half years). The Nation-
21. The task of organs of proletarian democracy
cannot be accomplished— as some have
claimed—by the CDRs. The limitations of these
bodies emerge clearly from the official docu-
ments themselves that define them. (For exam-
ple, a document by the national leadership of the
CDRs and a speech by Fidel in Granma, October
8, 1972)
22. "The union organization is not part of the
state apparatus, it is not a state organization. It
does not depend on any ministry or other body of
the state apparatus. The union must serve as the
counterpart of the administration." (Granma,
September 2, 1973)
23. Hart stresses at the same time that nonparty
members enjoy all the rights guaranteed to the
workers, but they do not have "the honor and the
social prestige that the people accord members
of the party."
recognize that the dynamic of building a new society must bring radical changes in relations between the sexes and in bearing and raising children, changes that lead ultimately to the destruction of the “family nucleus” as traditionally conceived. In the name of a rigorous revolutionary spirit, attitudes have been adopted toward homosexuals and the sexual behavior of the younger generation that in fact are permeated with conservative philistinism.

International Policies

The ideological-cultural guidelines, as we have already mentioned, are in large measure the reflection of international pressures— that is, the relationship the Cuban leadership established with the Kremlin bureaucracy in 1969-70.

When American imperialism launched its attacks in 1959-60, Fidel Castro quickly realized the need for economic and military collaboration with the Soviet Union. However, leaving aside a few temporary oscillations, up until 1968 this need and the conclusion of a series of important agreements did not prevent the Cuban leaders from adopting clearly independent attitudes, from denouncing Moscow’s policies in Latin America, and from polemizing openly against the most orthodox pro-Sovietism, at the same time he did not hesitate to point out the responsibility borne by the bureaucracy.

In the subsequent period, however, following a series of developments in Latin America—defeats of guerrilla movements, emergence of military reformist governmentsthe Castro leadership made a rather profound shift in international policy. The first change was summed up as follows by Fidel Castro in July 1972:

“We must integrate ourselves with the workers, farmers, and revolutionaries when the inevitable hour of the revolution arrives in Latin America.

“But that will take time. We can’t make plans based on an integration that could take 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years—this last for the most pessimistic.”

26. Certain articles in the code have a markedly paternalistic character. Article 25, for example, reaffirms in fairly traditional terms paternal power, and it indicates the duty to educate children to have respect “for the authorities, their teachers, and other persons.”

27. In the draft constitution the idea of the primacy of the USSR is expressed in the formula “the USSR and the other socialist countries.” After his last trip, Castro made some highly laudatory speeches about the USSR, going so far as to say that Marxism-Leninism prevails there in the spirit of the October revolution. On several occasions unconditional support has also been given to the super bureaucratically bureaucratic regime in Czechoslovakia. Castro recently said: “When the revolutionary processes become institutionalized and consolidated through institutions that fully respond to their needs—as happened with the Bolshevik revolution, which is now more than fifty years old and is and will continue to be steadily moving forward—we see the great stability this gives these peoples, the great stability these nations and groups of nations and groups of people have when they are well organized, when they are well institutionalized, when they have the organizations they need for moving forward!” (Granma, June 8, 1975.)

28. There is no need to repeat that diplomatic accords with countries like Peru are not as such commendable. What is inadmissible, from the point of view of the workers interest of the workers movement, is to present as “revolutionary” a reformist bourgeois leadership. As for the attitude to the Chilean Unidad Popular, the political resolution of the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International specified: “. . . at a stage where there were real possibilities for revolutionary development—the Cuban leadership gave practically unconditional support to the reformist Popular Unity leadership. The critical remarks Castro made on several occasions were not of a sort to help the maturing of the vanguard and clarification among the masses.” (Intercontinental Press, December 23, 1974, p. 1744.)
More generally, Cuba followed a policy of friendly relations with the so-called nonaligned countries (on occasion they used the expression “Third World” that had been formerly criticized for good reason). According to statements made by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Cuba now favors a Latin American economic integration and does not regard a “similarity of economic and social regimes” as a necessary precondition for this. The first example of this orientation is the collaboration between Mexican state enterprises and Cuban enterprises involving the machine industry. (Le Monde, January 16, 1975.)

3. Cuba continued to express its solidarity with the movements that are struggling in Latin American countries oppressed by dictatorships (besides Chile, particularly those in Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil). However, the Cubans have given up making specific political analyses and, all the more, offering any tactical or strategic advice. Insofar as it lays out any guidelines, these do not differ from those of the Latin American Communist parties, with which relations have been normalized. All trace of polemics of the 1965-67 kind has disappeared.

In recent months, finally, Cuba has made considerable efforts to reestablish relations with the United States. The crisis in the OAS, where Washington’s line meets with greater and greater hostility, and the difficulties that imperialism is faced with globally, offers some margin of maneuver on a world scale that the Cuban government is correctly exploiting. A normalization between Havana and Washington would rather probably result, on the other hand, in further accentuation of certain tendencies that developed after 1968-69.

The general conclusion to be drawn from the analysis I have outlined (unfortunately, I repeat, on the basis of incomplete information) is that there has been no degeneration. I repeat, on the basis of incomplete information! This is the result not of relative stagnation or immobility but of the operation of different and partly contradictory trends.

More concretely, on the one hand certain political initiatives and measures have been taken that have impeded the crystallization of the apparatus in a conservative direction and prevented a further increase in the privileges of the bureaucrats. These steps have also maintained the mobilization of the masses, which have even been encouraged, within certain limits, to show a critical spirit. On the other hand, the prolonged lack of organs of proletarian democracy at the national level, the accentuation of certain forms of work organization, the growing influence of the USSR (which among other things trains a considerable number of technicians and military cadres), have worked in favor of forces that could lead to a bureaucratic degeneration.

More generally, the Cuban experience of these years seems to highlight the fact once again that, aside from some differences stemming from specific factors (socioeconomic context before the revolution, the formation and evolution of leading groups), largely analogous conceptions and methods have tended to prevail in the transitional societies that have emerged to date. We refer not only to the obvious structural similarities (nationalization of industry, the survival of an uncollectivized sector in the country, etc.) but also to more specific features. Economic planning is done from above in certain restricted circles. Norms, material incentives, and “socialist emulation” are the basis of work organization. The party exercises leadership and control over all institutions and organizations, from organs of “people’s power” to the unions, while other working-class political organizations respecting revolutionary legality are banned as are tendencies and groupings within the leading party.

Establishing genuinely collectivist relations throughout the countryside is put on an indefinite period. A high degree of ideological and cultural monolithism is made into a theoretical principle and imposed in practice. Building a collectivist economy is conceived of the framework of special relations with other workers states (this is less true at this stage for China), but not on the basis of a genuine supra-national economic integration. To sum it up, the interests of the world workers movement and the masses of other countries are subordinated to the self-interests of a single state and its governing layer.

If all of these elements, which are present in the degenerated workers states, also take a hardened form in Cuba, if Cuba remains isolated in the American hemisphere for a long period, subject to the same time to strong influence from the bureaucratized USSR, the Cuban workers state in its turn will inevitably undergo a process of degeneration similar to that of other countries where capitalism has been overthrown.

For the reasons indicated in our analysis, which were also pointed out in previous analyses, such a degeneration did not occur before 1970 and it has not reached that point at present. I have sought to show in what way Cuba is different from the other workers states. Let’s recall here briefly that in no other country has the necessary role of the organs of “people’s power” been reaffirmed so clearly, both in theory as well as in political agitation. Moreover, no other country has undergone an experience so significant, limited as it was, as the one in Matanzas Province (with the obvious exception of the USSR in the time of the October revolution and in the years immediately following). Even the concept of the primacy of the party is expressed with nuances and with an understanding of the overall dynamic of a transitional society quite different from that of the Soviet and Chinese leaders.

Similar observations can be made in the case of the unions, both as regards the theoretical definition of their role, as well as the active participation of the masses.

More generally, in spite of paternalism and of bureaucratic-authoritarian tendencies, the leading group has succeeded in maintaining fairly close relations with the masses. It still has their confidence, and in important moments, can count on the readiness of the masses to mobilize actively and consciously. The privileges that the leaders and cadres of the apparatus enjoy remain much more limited than those of the bureaucrats in other workers states.

Even Cuba’s international political line, despite the retreat, still has some positive features that set it off from that of the USSR and the other workers states. The critical way the Cubans presented the Nixon visit to Peking comes to mind, along with the following examples: the interpretation, quite different from that given by the Kremlin, of the accords between the USSR and the United States; their correct interpretation of the Paris Accords on Vietnam as being an “initial victory”; their reflections on the Chilean defeat that involved explicit reaffirmation of the need for a revolutionary leap forward through armed struggle and “people’s dictatorship”; the adoption of an unambiguous position on oil, opposing other “non-aligned” countries in defense of the underdeveloped countries, which were the hardest hit by the decisions of the producer countries and the international trusts; Castro’s expressions of solidarity with the Eritrean liberation movement; and the Cuban rejection of any tendency toward “national messianism.”

All this shows that a difference exists between Cuba and the other workers states. Moreover, the whole picture we have sketched justifies rejecting the idea that bureaucratic degeneration is an accomplished fact in Cuba, bureaucratic degeneration that would make it necessary to struggle for the overthrow of a leadership representing the interests of a privileged caste, for an antibureaucratic political revolution.

A few general considerations should be noted here. In a process of bureaucratic degeneration, the qualitative leap cannot be pinpointed as clearly as it can in the case of the transition from a bourgeois state to a workers state. The fundamental reason for this is that, according to the Trotskyist conception, bureaucratic degenera-

29. In a September 1974 speech, Castro concluded an appeal for solidarity with Venezuela by saying: “Perhaps fate is again reserving for the people of the illustrious liberator a significant and decisive role in the definitive independence of the nations of Latin America.” (Granma, October 6, 1974.)
eration occurs within the framework of the new society, of a transitional society in which collective relations of production exist that are not put in question immediately by the bureaucratization. (In certain conditions, bureaucratic degeneration can involve a dynamic of capitalist restoration, but that, of course, is another problem.)

The experience of the USSR, and making allowance for different circumstances, of the other transitional societies, for over half a century, enables us to distinguish three types, or three phases, of bureaucratization. There are, in the first place, the almost inevitable bureaucratic deformations in the period immediately following the overthrow of capitalism. These deformations flow, in the last analysis, from the fact that immediately after the conquest of power it is impossible to achieve full mass participation in managing the economy and the state, from the fact that unavoidably those in the key positions in the government can be only partially controlled, from the fact that it is impossible to rapidly assure egalitarian living conditions and thus to cut off at the root any growth of even relative privileges.

Obviously, this rule holds all the more for economically and culturally backward countries, where the conquest of power takes place in particularly difficult conditions (prolonged civil war, the consequences of the devastation of a war, serious economic crises, etc.). We remember that this concept of a workers state with bureaucratic deformations was already used by Lenin to describe the USSR at the beginning of the 1920s.

There is also a type, or phase, of bureaucratization that already represents, so to speak, a pathological problem. In this case, the organs of the workers state, the party, the union organizations, etc., function less and less democratically, and the apparatus and the leading groups at different levels exercise their power by more and more eliminating mass participation. A leading layer enjoying material privileges begins to take form and to harden. At the same time the defense of acquired positions becomes the main spring of international policy to the detriment of the necessity of expanding revolutionary struggles on a world scale.

However, the separation between the bureaucracy in formation and the masses is not yet so clear, the political structures are not yet so petrified, the privileges not so vast or consolidated that it is necessary to exclude all possibility of a renewal through corrections and reforms, of an internal struggle to establish proletarian democracy and real leadership by the working class. It was such a phase of bureaucratization that the USSR went through roughly between the death of Lenin and the end of the 1920s.

Finally, there is the phase where the bureaucracy becomes an actual ruling caste, has politically expropriated the working class and the toiling masses, has transformed the party and the organizations into instruments of its domination by destroying all internal democracy, has acquired relatively secure economic and social privileges. In such conditions—which correspond to those that came into being in the USSR beginning with the 1930s and which were analyzed by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*—the working class and the peasantry have no other way out but to struggle for an antibureaucratic political revolution that will overthrow the ruling caste and rebuild proletarian democracy. Likewise, they must create the political and organizational instrument needed to give effective leadership to this struggle. What is decisive for the strategy of revolutionists is to determine when a transitional society has reached the stage of bureaucratic degeneration that requires a radical change in the objectives and methods of struggle.

In order to define the social nature of a state, you have to view all factors together and in their dynamism. If you single out this or that factor, you risk making arbitrary extrapolations, or at least jumping to premature conclusions. This is why in his analysis, Trotsky tried to grasp the direction of the overall development of the state that emerged from the October revolution. He polemicized with opposition groups that wanted to change their basic policies. In fact, after a certain point in the mid-1920s, the process in the USSR proceeded more or less in a straight line, encompassing all areas.

The bureaucrats began by cutting back internal democracy in the party and reducing the soviets to an empty form. Then they crushed every opposition group and expelled from the party all those who most consistently resisted its usurpation. They grabbed bigger and bigger privileges, detached themselves economically and politically from the working class and the peasants. Not only did they abandon the revolutionary strategy of the Communist International and the Bolshevik party of Lenin’s time, but by their neo-Menshevik or adventurist policies they directly shared in the responsibility for terrible defeats of the world workers and Communist movement, as in China and Germany.

It was at the culmination of this combined process that Trotsky came to the conclusion that a bureaucratic caste was in power and that a struggle had to be waged for a new international and a political revolution. Significantly, he was prompted most directly by the defeat of the German proletariat at the hands of Hitler, for which the German CP and the Stalinist International bore a very heavy responsibility.

It is not possible here to go back over the process that unfolded in the workers states of Eastern Europe and Asia. It is enough to note that in the Eastern European case, the decisive role was played in general by Soviet politico-military control and a tendency to structural assimilation with the bureaucratized USSR. In China, the fact that the old state apparatus was only partially dismantled, that bureaucratic methods and conceptions had already been imposed in the areas of the country wrested from Chiang Kai-shek, and that the leading group and key cadres were educated in the school of Stalinism all weighed heavily.

In both these cases, the evolution was, thus, different from that in the Soviet Union, with much less discontinuity between the starting point and the stage at which the bureaucracy hardened into a ruling caste (since a period of proletarian democracy comparable to that of the revolutionary period in the USSR never existed). The various stages or forms of bureaucratization tended to merge without clear distinctions.

On the basis of the analysis outlined, we estimate that the Cuban workers state has not yet gone through the stages traversed by the Soviet Union and has not undergone a process similar to those in the East European countries or China. It is debatable whether the existing situation might correspond to the first or second stage. But in any case, it does not correspond to the third. It cannot in fact be said that a hardened bureaucratic caste enjoying substantial privileges has imposed its domination over the masses by authoritarian and repressive measures, or that this caste has played a role on a world scale resulting in major defeats for the workers movement or systematically conflicting with the interests of the workers movement.

That is why revolutionary Marxists are not obliged to change their position. They need not orient toward a struggle in Cuba for the overthrow of the leading group and for the formation of a new party. Rather they must support trends and initiatives that can promote revolutionary democracy and the fight against bureaucratic meth-

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30 In “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartist,” Trotsky wrote: “Thus, the present-day domination of Stalin in no way resembles the Soviet rule during the initial years of the revolution. The substitution of one regime for the other occurred not at a single stroke but through a series of measures, by means of a number of minor civil wars waged by the bureaucracy against the proletarian vanguard. In the last historical analysis, Soviet democracy was blown up by the pressure of social contradictions. Exploiting the latter, the bureaucracy wrested the power from the hands of mass organizations.” (Trotsky, *1879–55*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1974, p. 172)
Spanish Workers Debate Union Orientation

...The Spanish workers are debating a key issue: Is it possible to convert the state-run Central Nacional Sindicalista (CNS—National Federation of Syndicates) into a genuine tool of struggle for the working class or is it better to place reliance on the illegal Comisiones Obreras (COs—Workers Commissions)?

The debate got under way in July 1975, when 83 to 88 percent of the eligible voters participated in elections to the CNS, sweeping several leaders of the Comisiones Obreras into office as delegates in the Francoist federation. Many of these delegates were members of the Communist party, which for the first time adopted a position favoring participation in CNS elections.

Most other tendencies in the workers movement, including the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Spain, the Liga Comunista (LC—Communist League) and the Liga Comunista de Solidaridad Azkuna-Vi (LCR/ETA-VI), also backed COs participation in the CNS elections. The LC and the LCR/ETA-VI say that in the months since the CNS elections, the CP has virtually abandoned the Comisiones Obreras, which the Trotskyists view as class-struggle organizations.

Recently in Barcelona the debate centered on a book entitled Conversaciones Sindicales con Dirigentes Obreros. The book went on sale in November 1975. Its authors are two members of the PSUC (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya—United Socialist party of Catalonia, the Communist party's branch in Catalonia), Isidor Boix and Manuel Pujadas.

The book includes an article signed by Boix and Pujadas, in which they say: "It is not a question of settling accounts with the organizations of the workers movement that have been active the last fifteen years. We are simply confronting certain claims that have historical legitimacy but that must reestablish their legitimacy for the present period and, above all, for the trade-union future of our country."

Since this article was written, an important joint document signed by the Latin American Communist parties was released in Havana. The general line of this document confirms the estimate made in the section "International Policies."
The Derwent—Australia's Lethal River

By John Tully

In 1971 the mining industry capitalists, worried by the growing public anger at their arrogant pollution of the environment, organized a seminar in Melbourne. This seminar, entitled Progress—Mining and Environment, was a cynical attempt to cover up the responsibility of the industry for much of the air and water pollution in this country.

Among the "experts" on the panel was N.C. Ashdown, superintendent of the zinc department at the Risdon Works of the Electrolytic Zinc Company of Australasia Ltd. Ashdown explained that zinc concentrates containing "chiefly zinc and sulphur" had been roasted at the plant for fifty-three years, "recently at rates of 1,100 tons per day." The zinc content of the ores is converted to zinc calcine, "a dusty material," which is then leached with acid to make zinc sulphate, which is then electrolyzed to make zinc. Ashdown went on to say that part of the sulphur derived from the roasted calcine was converted into estuarine water and discharged into the Derwent Estuary.

During his talk Ashdown waxed lyrical about the beneficent aspects of the plant. According to the report, "Slides showed the unaffected green flora of the nearby hills, of clear exit stacks, of green lawns, and a well-kept nine hole golf course within the works boundary."

He went on to explain "... how a careful, logical approach and continual improvement over many years can produce a mining industry adjacent to a population of 5,000 people per square mile near a plant... ."

Later it was the task of Sir Henry Somerset to sum up. (Somerset is a director of Associated Pulp and Paper Mills, EZ Industries, Goliath Cement, Humes Ltd., Tioxide Australia, a member of the board of the CSIRO and chancellor of the University of Tasmania.)

Somerset had the job of doing the biggest whitewash of the whole proceedings. His technique was to boldly and shamelessly tell the biggest lies, to introduce red herrings, and to belittle his critics.

"The mining industry is aware of the problems involved and can handle the situation. It has, however, become the target of ill-informed critics who give little credit for what has been done already."

"It is time that emotion was removed from the scene and some sanity was brought to bear upon the problems." Some people were making political capital out of the situation, he said. "It is a pity that little has been said about beer cans on the roadside and broken bottles on the beaches: and bullet holes in the road signs. This is an intolerable situation... ." etc., etc., ad nauseam.

Finally, with truly breathtaking gall, Somerset said: "This seminar will certainly have been successful if the man-in-the-street has become better informed by the publicity which the proceedings have engendered." (All quotations are from the pamphlet Progress—Mining and Environment, published by the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.)

What this double-talk means is "We know what we are doing, but we don't want you to know. This seminar will have been successful if we have whitewashed places like the EZ Works."

And what is the real truth behind Somerset's wafflings and Ashdown's glowing descriptions? Sure, the vegetation is intact: EZ hasn't done for Hobart what the Mt. Lyell smelters did for Queenstown on the West Coast—that is, completely denude the surrounding mountains. The reason for that is simple—the people of Hobart wouldn't have allowed it. The silvertails of Lower Sandy Bay wouldn't like Albion Heights stripped of foliage!

Four Great Stains in the River

But if you fly over the Risdon area, you will see four great stains in the water. The Prince of Wales Bay treatment works is first, with a murky cloud of sewage (only 35 percent of all sewage poured into the Derwent is treated even to this standard). Next is the bloodstream from the nearby abattoirs, followed by the two plumes of liquid matter which gust out twenty-four hours a day from the zinc works.

What the EZ Company has been doing for the years since World War I is less readily apparent—and therefore more insidious than what happened at Queens-town. For years the EZ Company has been able to deny that anything bad was happening.

But in late 1975, Professor Harry Bloom of the University of Tasmania chemistry department published a report which fingered the EZ Works for turning the Derwent into one of the most heavily polluted rivers in the world, particularly in respect of toxic metals. (Heavy Metals in the Derwent Estuary, September 1975.)

The accompanying table, reproduced from Professor Bloom's report, gives an indication of the seriousness of the situation.

In his conclusion, Bloom states, "The study indicates that the main mechanism of heavy metal pollution in the Derwent River estuary is very likely a cause also for contamination of Hobart and its environs by the same toxic metals. Stockpiled concentrates and residues at the zinc refining company are being swept into the atmosphere by wind action. Leaching of metals into the river takes place by rain action. Other mechanisms such as liquid effluent discharge must add also to the contamination of the estuary." (Heavy Metals in the Derwent Estuary, p. 21.)

In the late 1950s at Minamata Bay, in Kyushu, Japan, there was an outbreak of what has become known as "Minamata Disease" among the fishing people. The cause was traced to a factory producing polyvinyl chloride.

The inhabitants of the area began to display the classical symptoms of chronic mercury poisoning (familiar in the nineteenth century in the hat-making trade, hence the expression "mad as a hatter"). They had such symptoms as tunnel vision,
nervousness, headaches, weakness, insomnia or drowsiness, loss of memory, intellectual deterioration, slurring of words, trembling, ulceration of the gums, chronic diarrhea, and loosening of teeth. The cats went mad. Children were born with congenital mercury poisoning even though the mothers involved showed no signs of being affected (alkyl mercury can pass through the placental barrier in mammals).

Professor Bloom has said that “although the highest mercury concentration in Derwent muds is second to the highest in Minamata Bay, the many times larger area of the Derwent Estuary . . . together with their relative concentrations data, can be shown to indicate that the Derwent muds contain many times more total mercury than is present in Minamata Bay.” (p. 21)

Mercury is therefore present in the Derwent estuary in alarming proportions. It is readily absorbed into the human body through the mucous membranes, and even through the unbroken skin. In 1967 it was discovered that mercury can be converted into a far more toxic form, methyl mercury, by anaerobic bacteria. This is to say it is produced in conditions where there is an absence of oxygen—a state of affairs to be found in the silt and decaying vegetable and animal matter in the Derwent estuary, particularly with the high discharge rates of raw sewage.

And the damage is permanent. As Margaret Merlini, in an article entitled Heavy Metal Contamination (contained in Impingement of Man on the Oceans edited by Professor Donald Hood), says: “Heavy metals are insidious due to the fact that they are practically indestructible in an aqueous environment. Even if precipitated or absorbed, the process can be reversible and the metals return to ionic form. If not, the precipitate or particles settle on the bottom to be ingested by benthic organisms. Dilution and dispersion helps minimise the danger to some of the biota, but filter feeding organisms [such as Derwent oysters and mussels—J.T.] are notorious for their ability to concentrate many polyvalent ions—in particular copper, zinc, iron and manganese—from very dilute solutions . . .” (p. 467.)

Ten Percent Zinc in Oysters

Mercury is not the only heavy metal present in large quantities in the River Derwent. Others include arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, zinc, chromium, cobalt, iron, manganese, and nickel. As we have seen from Professor Bloom’s table, the Derwent leads the world in the amounts of some of these metals. A few years ago the Ralphs Bay oyster farms were forced to close when it was found that 10 percent of the dry weight of the oysters was zinc—the highest ever recorded anywhere.

Perhaps even more sinister than the mercury is the presence of the highly toxic cadmium in quantities never before recorded. This was present in the Ralphs Bay oysters along with the zinc. Attention should also be drawn to the phenomenon of synergism. Briefly this means that the toxic effects of one trace metal are intensified by the presence of another toxic substance; they make each other worse. It is believed that there is a synergic reaction between zinc and cadmium.

In his report, Bloom draws attention to the outbreak of itai-itai disease among nutritionally deficient people in Japan. This was traced to cadmium fallout from the atmosphere poisoning rice fields. The cadmium fallout on the Hobart suburbs of Lutana and Lindisfarne is the highest ever recorded—and the fallout over Hobart generally is greater than that in the itai-itai disease area of Japan. Bloom expresses concern at the possibility of a cadmium buildup in Hobart soils. Cadmium is probably more lethal than any other toxic metal—more than lead and mercury, which are also found in phenomenally large quantities in the Derwent area. The most immediate effects of chronic cadmium poisoning are damage to the kidneys and the central nervous system, hypertension (high blood pressure), and cancer (on inhalation). Other effects are complete sterility and impotence. It is a particularly nasty substance because it may lie dormant for a long period before overt ill effects are felt on the body. It also causes dental caries, destruction of the sense of smell, and a perpetual watery discharge from the nose.

Work by doctors V.H. Fern and S.J. Carpenter on hamsters has shown that cadmium is a teratogenic substance, that is, it induces monstrous deformations of the fetus. (Teratogenic Effect of Cadmium and Its Inhibition by Zinc, Nature 1967.)

Another practice of the EZ Company is the dumping of “jarosite” (waste material from the plant) in Storm Bay. The company would doubtless justify this vandalism by reference to the great size of the oceans. And there are any number of hack “experts” who will be selling souls to the highest bidder and testify to the fact that heavy metals are already present naturally in the environment. But as Margaret Merlini writes: “The vastness of the ocean is often used as an argument for its use in the disposal of man’s waste products. It is because of its vastness that care must be taken not to damage the biota since small and often large derangements are not as perceptible as in restricted environments such as lakes and streams.” (Hood, p. 467, emphasis in the original.)

EZ Industries is registered in Melbourne. It lists on its board of directors such familiar names as M.L. Baillieu and Sir Henry Somersell. The health and welfare of 150,000 people in southern Tasmania is directly menaced by the activities of this small number of capitalists. They are answerable to no one for their activities. As we have seen earlier in this article, their response to criticism is to lie and to attempt to belittle anyone who dares question their right to despoil the environment.

It is obvious that strong measures are necessary to attempt to clean up the mess and to prevent its recurrence. The chief secretary in the Tasmanian state Labor government is Doug Lowe. Following the release of Professor Bloom’s report, Lowe acknowledged that it was a “true, accurate and significant document.” He was quoted in the Mercury of October 21, 1975, as saying that enforcement of the act covering waste discharge would be stepped up, and that strengthening of the act could follow. He also announced the setting up of what he called a Heavy Metal Pollution Ad Hoc Committee, with Professor Bloom on it in an advisory capacity.

Lowe is well known for his committees. To many local workers he is known as “the
mirrored man” (whenever a problem arises he is forever “going to look into it”). Other inventions of this former EZ electrician include the “Redundancy Monitoring Committee,” set up following a massive rash of sackings by the EZ Company in early 1975.

There are many rumors circulating in Hobart at present which whisper that the EZ Company will close down its operations and move to another country if there is any serious attempt made to force it to clean up its mess. Because of this, and because of the state Labor government’s well-known reverence for the “rights” of capitalist private property, it is quite likely that the government will adopt the approach of burying its head in the sand and hoping the problem will go away. In 1975 it revealed how thoroughly servile it was when it made a halfhearted attempt to impose mining royalties on the big mining companies.

In clear contrast to the timid cover-ups of Lowe and Co., Direct Action puts forward a real program to attack the problem of Derwent pollution.

Firstly we demand that the proceedings of the Heavy Metal Ad Hoc Committee be made public.

Secondly we demand that the trade unions be made a party to the proceedings.

Thirdly we demand that all of the EZ Company’s material on Derwent pollution be made public.

Fourthly we demand that the company be forced to immediately take steps to rectify the damage it has already done and that it be forced to institute a crash program to curb its pollution.

Fifthly we demand that if the EZ Company does not do as it is told, that it be nationalized without compensation under workers control. The confiscated profits could then be used to finance a massive cleanup to rectify the mess created by this antisocial monopoly.

Somerset and his ilk have demonstrated that they are concerned purely with private profit at the expense of the health and well-being of the EZ workers and the people of Hobart as a whole. He stands condemned by his own words. “The mining industry is aware of the problems and can handle the situation...” The plant must be taken away from them before they do still further damage.

In 1804 the first convict ships sailed into the River Derwent. They arrived into what the Tolpuddle martyr George Loveless, transported for organizing a union branch, described as a “verdant prison.” Below the snowy summit of Mt. Wellington stretched the clear waters of one of the most beautiful harbors in the world.

Now, only 170 odd years later, untrammeled capitalism has managed to transform the water into poison and showered the foothills of the mountain with deadly dust. The once crystal-clear waters of the estuary used to be inhabited by marine life which ran the whole gamut from plankton to whales. Now, in Professor Bloom’s words: “Inside the estuary, at Taroona and in Ralphs Bay, shellfish were less numerous, with mussels predominating. Further upstream, on the western shore, shellfish became impossible to find, until Elwick Bay and further north where mussels could be found. On the eastern shore there was a similar but less dramatic depletion of all species. Along the western shore between Macquarie Point and Dowsing Point, no sign of aquatic life could be found.” (Bloom, p. 9.)

References

H. Bloom, Heavy Metals in the Derwent Estuary, University of Tasmania, 1975.


More on India’s Tarapur Reactor

T.N. Kaul, India’s ambassador to the United States, claims that charges of serious health and safety violations against his country’s Tarapur nuclear reactor are baseless.

In a letter to U.S. Senator Alan Cranston, dated February 5, Kaul attempts to rebut accusations against the atomic power plant leveled by Paul Jacobs in the February-March issue of a new magazine, Mother Jones. (See Intercontinental Press, March 1, p. 306.)

Contra to Jacobs’s account, Kaul contends that Jacobs has been “no instances of death or illness attributable to radiation exposure either of workers at Tarapur or of any member of the general population in the villages surrounding the station.” According to Jacobs’s sources in India, the deaths of at least two workers from such causes have been documented in a suppressed government report.

Kaul continues, “In the near shore region up to 30 kilometers, the concentration of radioactivity in sea water beyond the station is not significantly different from normal background,” that is, from the radiation exposure caused by natural sources such as rocks in the earth’s surface, rays from outer space, and others.

“No individual exposure from all routes (that is water, land and air) amongst the most exposed groups in the public domain, has been found to exceed even half that due to natural background level which, before we started operating the reactor, was 60 millirem per annum in that area.”

The above paragraph deserves careful rereading. What Kaul has actually admitted is that some individuals living in the area surrounding the reactor are exposed to as much as 50 percent more radiation than normal for the area, thus increasing their likelihood of suffering from cancer or producing malformed children.

A line of reasoning similar to Kaul’s was commented on by Gordon Rattray Taylor in The Doomsday Book: Can the World Survive?

“If any public authority proposed to double, say, the number of road accidents he would be condemned as a monster or a madman, yet radiation authorities make such statements all the time.”

What Could Be Worse Than an Earthquake?

The almost completed Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant near San Luis Obispo, California, stands only 2.5 miles from a geological fault that has in the past been responsible for earthquakes.

A powerful earthquake could potentially rupture the protective container around the radioactive reactor core, releasing deadly particles into the atmosphere.

The $1 billion California reactor was constructed by Pacific Gas & Electric Company, the nation’s second largest privately owned electric utility. When the plant was begun, only its twenty-mile proximity to the Rinconada fault and forty-five-mile proximity to the San Andreas fault were known.

Now, however, the Hosgri fault has been discovered, and studies by the U.S. Geological Survey have revealed that it was probably responsible for a 1927 earthquake that registered 7.25 on the Richter scale.

The core container at the Diablo Canyon plant was built to withstand a quake registering at most 6.75.

Watch Those City-Grown Vegetables

Excessive quantities of lead, apparently from automobile exhausts, showed up in fruits and vegetables grown in garden plots in a number of American cities last year, according to a report in the February 22 New York Times.

“In St. Louis,” said ecologist Gil Friend, “produce from one community garden showed levels of lead so high that eating large amounts of it would be of questionable safety and a clear danger to children.”
Spanish Police Kill Five

Five persons have been killed by Spanish police since February 25. One demonstrator was shot to death near Alicante on February 25, and on March 6 a worker died in the Catalan city of Tarragona as a result of injuries received when he fell from a balcony trying to escape a police attack on a demonstration.

In the Basque city of Vitoria, two workers and a seventeen-year-old student were shot to death by police March 3. About 100 persons were estimated to have received gunshot wounds as a result of the police attack on striking workers.

The killings have given rise to bitter protest demonstrations, and a general strike was called in the Basque region for March 8. In a March 5 statement, the cabinet of King Juan Carlos I defended the cabinet of King Juan Carlos I defended the government for the Labor party campaign because his government agreed with "their Australian comrades that there had been a grave coup d'etat in Canberra." (The Labor cabinet was brought down in November by the governor general, exercising the power that still legally belongs to the British Crown in the dominions.)

The Labor party sought Iraqi contributions, Sweeney said, "despite the fact that money from the left-wing dictatorship in Iraq was politically far more explosive than money from Britain or the United States." Such comments suggest that this affair is being used in the "anti-red" campaign against the Labor party, and that a wave of enthusiasm for honest politics is not sweeping the capitalist parties.

Whitlam Denies Seeking Iraqi Funds

The Australian capitalist press has been raising a hue and cry over allegations that former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam tried to get a contribution of A$600,000 (A$1=US$1.27) from the Iraqi government for the Labor party campaign fund.

Although Whitlam has denied the charge, stating that he "never discussed with any Arabs or with any foreigners contributions to party funds," the furor in the press continues.

The affair was described as "perhaps the single biggest scandal in Australia since the war" by correspondent Christopher Sweeney in the March 1 issue of the British daily the Guardian.

Sweeney said:

"Even before today's allegations [in the February 29 Sydney Sunday Telegraph], Mr. Whitlam's position had been hopelessly undermined by the disclosures last week that he had met two armed Iraqi representatives concerning the campaign contributions. In private he has conceded that his political career has been destroyed by the incredible affair.

The Sunday Telegraph reported that Whitlam had met with persons who admitted trying to negotiate campaign contributions from the Iraqi government.

Most of the information reportedly came from the alleged main go-between, Henri Fischer.

According to Sweeney, a former Whitlam aide explained that the approach to the Iraqis was necessary because it was the only hope the Labor party had of matching the money they believed the U.S. and British mining companies were pouring into the coffers of the capitalist Liberal party.

Fischer reportedly said that Iraqi President Hassan al-Bakr was willing to aid the Labor campaign because his government agreed with "their Australian comrades that there had been a grave coup d'etat in Canberra." (The Labor cabinet was brought down in November by the governor general, exercising the power that still legally belongs to the British Crown in the dominions.)

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MadridWithdraws From Sahara

Spain withdrew its last official from its former colony of Sahara on February 26, two days ahead of schedule. In November 1975 Madrid signed an agreement with the Moroccan and Mauritanian governments pledging to leave the country by February 28 and turn over administration of the phosphate-rich territory to them.

In an effort to give their occupation and division of Sahara the appearance of legitimacy, the Moroccan and Mauritanian regimes staged a vote by an assembly of Saharan tribal chiefs February 26 approving the annexation of the territory.

Only 65 of the 102 members of the assembly took part in the voting, however. The rest had fled the Saharan capital of El Aaiun and were thought to be supporters of the Frente Polisario (Frente Popular para la Liberacion del Sahara y Rio de Oro—People’s Front for the Liberation of Sahara and Rio de Oro).

The Frente Polisario proclaimed Sahara an independent republic February 27. The announcement, made from the front’s exile headquarters in Algiers, said the country had been named the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. The Algerian government, which has given some backing to the Frente Polisario, called on the Organization of African Unity to recognize the front as the legitimate government of Sahara.

IsraeliDoctors Group Takes
Reactionary Stance on Abortion

The Israel Obstetric and Gynecology Society, which represents 400 doctors, has declared its opposition to a proposed law that would permit abortions during the first three months of pregnancy. The society announced that its members would not perform abortions under the terms of the law if it was passed.

"We don’t think a woman has the right to interrupt her pregnancy without her husband’s agreement,” one gynecologist said.

British Students Protest Cutbacks

Thousands of students marched to a rally in London’s Hyde Park February 27 to protest planned cutbacks in educational spending. The National Union of Students, which organized the demonstration, estimated the attendance at 25,000. Police estimated between 8,000 and 15,000.

The cutbacks were projected in a government white paper released the previous week. In addition to the London march, large student protests took place in Swindon, England; Cardiff, Wales; and Glasgow, Scotland.

Obedience Is Freedom

Lt. Gen. James F. Hollingsworth, known in Vietnam as the “Zap-Zap General” because of his favorite subject, the killing of “communists,” handed over his command February 12 after serving in Korea for the last two and a half years.

Hollingsworth was the commander of the 185,000-strong South Korean I Corps, plus one U.S. division. He explained his “nine day scenario” to put the North Koreans “through the meat grinder” in an article by Russell Spurr in the February 27
Far Eastern Economic Review.

The way Hollingsworth sees it, “This isn’t just a contest for territory. We are fighting for popular support in the Republic of Korea.”

What about the repression carried out by the Park Chung Hee dictatorship?

“For Christ’s sake,” the general said, “all you got to do here is obey the rules. Then nothing happens to you. I call that complete freedom.”

Soviet Political Prisoners Demand Right to Be Heard at Party Congress

More than eighty Soviet political prisoners staged a hunger strike in late February and said they would continue for the duration of the twenty-fifth congress of the Soviet Communist party.

According to a February 28 United Press International dispatch from Moscow, dissident sources “said the prisoners had been denied the right to present their demands directly to the congress. They complained of harassment, undernourishment and threats of ‘psychiatric repression.’”

The hunger strike involved thirty prisoners at Vladimir jail, near Moscow, and about fifty inmates of prison camps in the Urals and Siberia.

Unemployment in Puerto Rico Hits Record High of 21.9%

The official rate of unemployment in the American colony of Puerto Rico was 21.9% in January—the highest level recorded by the Puerto Rican government’s Labor Department since it started keeping jobless statistics. In January 1975, unemployment stood at 17.1%.

Figures reported in the February 28 issue of Claridad, daily newspaper of the Puerto Rican Socialist party, showed that unemployment among those classified as “heads of families” was climbing faster than the overall rate. In January it stood at 18.4%, up from 12.5% a year earlier.

Puerto Rican government unemployment figures do not include so-called discouraged workers, who are not counted as unemployed because they have stopped looking for work. The government estimates that if these workers were included, the rate would be 5% higher.

Hunger as a Weapon

One of the dangers of chronic malnutrition is that it “leaves people so physically and intellectually stunted as to be easily exploited by better-fed individuals.” That, according to George Alexander in the February 20 Los Angeles Times, was one of the points brought out in the discussion at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston during February.

An anthropologist, Dr. Lawrence Greene of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, gave an example. He had studied a village in Ecuador where 78 percent of the population suffered neurological deficiencies, stemming from lack of iodine and proper protein and calories in the diet, that went from hyperactivity to deafness-muteness and severe mental retardation.

The fact that such a large proportion of the inhabitants in the village were neurologically handicapped had profound social effects.

“The concept of normality,” Dr. Greene said, “is greatly lowered, and all individuals who can hear or speak are considered normal.”

Alexander summarized:

“Still, many of the neurologically handicapped have been taught to perform simple agricultural tasks and they constituted a large pool of cheap and easily manipulated labor for the three large haciendas, which own more than 50% of the cultivated land in the area, to exploit.”

Prices in Argentina Shoot Upward

On March 5 the Argentine government announced an emergency program to curb inflation. The next day, it announced price increases that included an 82% rise in the price of gasoline, a 155% rise in the price of tractor fuel, and a doubling of electricity rates.

Postal rates went up 100%, telephone rates increased by 70%, milk went up 50%, and wine rose 90%. In addition, a 70% devaluation of the peso will increase the cost of all imported goods.

In a further attempt to squeeze the working class, Minister of Economy Emilio Mondelli offered workers a mere 12% wage increase while demanding a 180-day “truce” from any more wage demands.

The Argentine regime has bills of $1.1 billion due to foreign creditors by May, but less than $300 million in reserves.

17 South Korean Dissidents Jailed

Seventeen opponents of the Park dictatorship in South Korea were reported under arrest March 4, following the circulation of a statement demanding Park’s resignation, the release of all political prisoners, restoration of full democratic rights, and changes in economic policies.

Among those being held are the wife of former South Korean President Yun Po Sun; Ham Sok Hoa, a writer and critic of the regime; and Rev. Yun Ban Ung, a Protestant minister active in Amnesty International.

The statement was read to an audience of 500 persons attending a mass in Seoul March 1. It was signed by twelve of the most prominent political dissidents of the country, including Yun Po Sun and Kim Dae Jung, who ran against Park in the 1971 presidential election.

Under a state of emergency declared in May 1975, making such demands on the government is punishable by a minimum of a one-year jail sentence.
Hungry for Profits

Reviewed by Steve Clark

The topic of Robert J. Ledogar's *Hungry for Profits* is stated in its subtitle: "U.S. Food & Drug Multinationals in Latin America." Its aim is summarized with equal clarity in the author's preface: "to illustrate some of the human consequences of a distinctly modern phenomenon called multinational enterprise."

That is the kind of book that Ledogar has written: brief, straightforward, and informative.

The larger part of the book consists of eight, self-contained case studies researched by the author and five co-workers. "The overall impression left by these case studies," Ledogar says, "both in food and drugs, is that the benefits of multinational activity in Latin America have accrued to a minority, while the majority—those who most need the food and drugs that the multinationals produce—gets little of either."

The remainder of the book contains a short introduction and conclusion; a chapter on the "U.S. Government's Helping Hand" to the multinationals; and a brief introduction by consumer-advocate Ralph Nader. Nader's contribution adds very little to this useful collection, but it may help boost the book's sales, which is a good enough justification for its inclusion.

Ledogar himself is a former Roman Catholic priest who has served as a consultant to Consumers Union and now works for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Before zeroing in on the food and drug multinationals, *Hungry for Profits* provides a rundown of the overall impact of foreign investment on the economies of Central and South America.

"A recent list of the 422 largest corporations in Latin America revealed that Latin Americans had controlling interest in only 182," Ledogar says. "The rest were under foreign control. One third were wholly or substantially owned by U.S. investors. In 1968, U.S. multinationals were responsible for 40% of all manufacturing exports from Latin America. By 1971, multinational corporations accounted for 70% of total net profits in five major sectors of the Brazilian economy: rubber, motor vehicle, machinery, household appliance, and mining."

He says, "There are those in Latin America who believe that even many of their so-called 'national' corporations, whose major stockholders bear the most respectfully indigenous names, are really controlled by foreign capital."

American and European domination of the Latin American pharmaceutical market—the topic of the first three case studies—is similarly startling. "U.S. and European firms control over 84% of private-sector drug sales in Brazil and reportedly an even larger share in Venezuela," Ledogar reports. "In Colombia, it was found in 1970 that foreign firms controlled 70% of antibiotic sales, 65% of analgesics, 80% of vitamins, 45% of hormones, and 70% of antacids."

The bulk of Ledogar's account, however, centers not on the extent of imperialist control, but on the human cost of that control. Ledogar shows that the huge drug multinationals push overmedication among the wealthier classes in Latin America, while their pricing policies deny adequate medication to the working people and peasants of those countries.

In Brazil—as in many other Latin American nations—most drugs can be obtained without a doctor's prescription. This has provided fertile ground in which the market for drugs has flourished—backed up by an ongoing promotional effort that extends all the way down to the aggressive sales pitch of the pharmacist behind the counter.

Meanwhile, disease flourishes just as widely among Brazil's masses as does drug consumption among the affluent. "Of every 1,000 Brazilians born, 720 (compared to only 200 in the United States) die before the age of 50, 105 of them before their first birthday," Ledogar tells us.

"The majority of these premature deaths are caused by communicable diseases, aggravated by malnutrition," he reports. "Many of the killing diseases... can be prevented by vaccines or treated by various drugs. But there is no money to buy medicine."

The callous attitude of the multinationals was summed up by one top corporation executive. Roberto Schneider, president of the Brazil division of Pfizer Incorporated, explained why, in his opinion, most Brazilians have so little access to medication:

"Well, it is because they are not economically active. Only 20 million Brazilians, in a population of over 100 million, are economically active; all the rest of them do not lead an active life; they just vegetate; they suffer from diseases induced by the environment, by lack of basic consumption; they do not buy clothes, shoes, and least of all medicines."

According to Ledogar, the pharmaceutical industries have profited handsomely from the inequitable situation in Brazil. The fifty-six largest drug firms—of which the top twenty are controlled by foreign capital—averaged a 16 percent profit rate in 1972.

*Hungry for Profits* also documents quite painstakingly the ways in which the multinationals exploit lax drug regulations in Latin America to market dangerous products that are restricted or banned altogether in the United States and Europe. Among the practices of these profit-guzzlers are the following:

- Recommending risky drugs for a far wider range of ailments than is allowed in the United States. Ledogar cites several examples, including the drug dipyrone.

  Because of the drug's danger, the Sterling Drug company—for example—does not sell it in the United States. But the company does actively push dipyrone in Latin America and Puerto Rico. In Brazil the drug is sold across the counter, almost like aspirin, with package instructions recommending its use for "migraine headaches, neuralgia, muscular or articular rheumatism, hepatic and renal colic... Toothaches and pain after dental extractions."

- Failure to explain situations in which a drug should not be used. Ledogar cites the example of the antibiotic tetracycline, which can harm the fetus of a pregnant woman and is dangerous for children under eight years old. Warnings to this effect are required in the United States, but the product is sold by drug companies...
The concealment of adverse side effects of drugs packaged for sale in Latin America, especially birth-control pills and certain pain-killers.

The prescription of larger than advisable dosages in order to sell larger quantities of a drug. Bristol-Myers, for example, markets an antibiotic called Kanamyycin under the brand name KANTREX. KANTREX can cause serious side effects, leading to deafness and kidney damage.

In the United States and Britain, laws have established a maximum daily dosage that must be included on the drug's package. In Venezuela and Colombia, however, Bristol-Myers advises up to twice this daily dosage.

Hungry for Profits also explains how the multinationals keep drug prices in Latin America outrageously inflated. It exposes how these giants use patents, royalties, and licensing agreements—as well as their monopoly of technique and raw materials—to preserve their stranglehold over the drug market.

Ledogar reports, for example, that a study in the late 1960s found that “Merck Sharp & Dohme of the United States had been selling dexamethasone to its Colombian subsidiary for $31,900 per kilogram, while the drug cost $7,500 per kilogram on the European market. In another case, eight European laboratories quoted a price of $45 or less per kilogram of diazepam; Roche [its Colombian subsidiary] was paying its parent company $2,500 for the same quantity.”

The impact of foreign food corporations on Latin American economies is the subject of five of the book’s eight case studies. As Ledogar points out, the problems created by these multinationals “are just as serious as those associated with pharmaceuticals but much more complex: diversions of agricultural production from subsistence crops to more lucrative cash crops, resulting in poorer diets instead of better ones for the hungriest people; failure to reach the poor with commercial high-protein food ventures, contrasted with extraordinary success in selling proteinless beverages [Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Fanta, etc.] to people who do not need and cannot afford them; persistent efforts to sell inappropriate milk products to mothers who can neither afford nor use them properly.”

Hungry for Profits explores the case of two countries in which agricultural modernization has taken place at the expense of the masses of peasants and working people.

In the Dominican Republic, Gulf + Western Industries, Inc., an American multinational conglomerate, has vastly expanded acreage devoted to sugar production during the past two decades. About 90 percent of the resulting sugar crop is exported, mostly to the United States. “The problem for most of the Dominican people, however,” Ledogar explains, “is that those foreign earnings have not been transformed into more food on their plates.”

To the contrary, Greater wealth for G+W and for the Dominican comprador bourgeoisie has not meant better times for the masses of Dominicans. For them, the expansion of sugar production has simply diminished the land available for subsistence farming, cutting into their daily diet. A nutritional survey in 1969 revealed that the average calorie intake was only 79 percent (450 calories short) of the amount recommended by the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama. The average protein intake was 62 percent of the recommended level, and only 34 percent in some particularly poor communities.

Hungry for Profits condemns the role of Washington’s 1916 and 1965 invasions of the Dominican republic in maintaining this exploitative situation. “Officials of the United States, President Gerald R. Ford among them, have insisted on the need to encourage the poor countries of the world to become self-sufficient in food,” Ledogar concludes. “But while the President laments the failure of countries like the Dominican Republic to feed themselves, the major share of the food produced in that country goes not to the people who live there but into the export market to increase foreign earnings—and profits for Gulf + Western.”

Ledogar outlines a similar situation in Colombia. There, the shift in land usage toward animal feed for the country’s developing poultry industry has led to a decline in the intake of protein-rich vegetable crops such as peas, beans, lentils, chickpeas, and broad beans. “In other circumstances this breakthrough in poultry and egg production might have meant a significant improvement in the national diet,” Ledogar says. “Most non-vegetarian peoples would add eggs and meat to their diets if they could afford it. But the poorest and most malnourished sector of the Colombian population still cannot afford to eat chicken and eggs very often, despite their great availability. For Colombia has one of the worst income distributions in the world.”

He points out, for instance, that for at least a quarter of the population a dozen eggs and one kilogram of chicken cost the equivalent of one week’s earnings. The bitter irony of capitalist agricultural production in Colombia has meant that the expansion of the poultry and egg output has gone hand in hand with a decline in the protein intake of the majority of the population.

Ledogar concludes, “The experience of the last 20 years has taught nutritionists that dramatic production increases do not automatically result in more food for the really hungry people of this earth. Very much depends upon the kind of food produced, the social and economic conditions under which it is produced, and the ultimate consumer for whom it is produced.”

Hungry for Profits convincingly demonstrates that the problems facing peoples of the semicolonial world cannot be solved within a capitalist framework, although the book does not explicitly draw this conclusion.

Ledogar points out that the regimes throughout Latin America are hopelessly dependent on Wall Street and Washington, which use their enormous economic and political power to keep their client states in line.

As the experience of the Allende government in Chile proved, imperialism has enormous resources to bring to bear against even limited challenges to its prerogatives: investment “strikes,” denial of loans and development funds, and outright subversion.

Latin American regimes that may initially reflect nationalist aspirations of certain native capitalists soon find that in order to survive they must develop a “favorable climate for foreign investment.” And as Ledogar aptly reminds us: “An ‘investment climate’ attractive to multinational enterprise has far-reaching ramifications. It not only dictates a minimum of government interference in matters like product safety and quality, it also means guaranteeing large pools of cheap labor—preferably not unionized or at least not militant; it means tax incentives, freedom to compete with (and/or buy out) local industries, and a limit to price controls; and, above all, it means giving the corporations the freedom to produce and export what is most needed in the country, but what is most economically efficient from the standpoint of profits.”

Ledogar argues that the abuses of the multinationals cannot be corrected “if developing countries do not get together to eliminate or control the competition among themselves for foreign capital investment.”

It is certainly no accident, however, that the only country in the Western Hemisphere that has been able to tackle any of these problems is Cuba, where a mass-based socialist revolution expelled imperialism altogether and nationalized the means of production as the basis for sound economic planning.

This path—the path of socialist development—is the only escape from the vicious circle described in Hungry for Profits. For as Ledogar concludes in the chapter entitled “Ambivalent Hosts,” Governments which appear to have the people’s interests at heart when they initiate some effort to control corporate activity somehow lose their will along the way.”
The Right to Hear Hugo Blanco—An Exchange of Correspondence With the State Department

[An Immigration department ruling last November denied the American people the right to hear the views of Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco. Blanco, who had been scheduled to conduct a speaking tour of a number of major American universities, was refused permission to enter the United States.

As part of the campaign to overturn this undemocratic exclusion, well-known backers of civil liberties have asked individual members of Congress to press for action against the decision. One result of this effort is the following exchange of correspondence between New York Congressman Edward Koch, Dr. Benjamin Spock, and State Department spokesman Robert J. McClosey, which was entered into the March 1 Congressional Record.

In reprinting the correspondence we do not, of course, take responsibility for assertions contained in it. A case in point is the claim by the State Department that Blanco "assumed responsibility for the murder of three policemen" while leading the peasant struggle in Peru.

The charge of murder, originally made by the Peruvian dictatorship in its frame-up trial against Blanco in 1966, has been answered by Blanco in his book, Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru. The book, published by Pathfinder Press, is widely available in bookstores and libraries across the United States.

In his book Blanco explains that during police operations initiated by the government to suppress the peasant movement, the forces under his leadership did everything in their power to prevent bloodshed.

[During his trial, Blanco said, "...I explained that in all senses and at all times, we had acted only in self-defense; that not only had the origin and activity of the guerrilla band been defensive acts in the face of the repression, but also that in our encounters with the police we had saved our lives by firing. This was indisputable. Nor could anyone deny that we never intended to kill anyone, as we proved by our treatment of the policeman who had fired at us in Pujura—after we had disarmed him, we set him free. Nor could our concern in helping the wounded be denied, as was shown by the fact that we forced the town doctor (after getting him out from under his bed, where he had been hiding) to treat the wounded policeman, and that we offered our own scanty medical supplies for first aid; all this was done at grave risk to our safety and lives.

"CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING HUGO BLANCO"

(Mr. KOCH asked and was given permission to extend his remarks at this point in the Record and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. KOCH. Mr. Speaker, during the course of a year many Members of Congress receive requests from constituents and organizations seeking their aid in bringing individuals, who have been barred by the State Department, into the United States to speak and engage in other organizational activities.

It is my practice to pursue these matters so as to ascertain whether the Department of State has proceeded in a reasonable manner. One such matter came to my attention in September 1975 concerning Hugo Blanco. I think the correspondence on this matter will be of interest to our colleagues:

U.S. COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE TO LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS
New York, N.Y., September 27, 1975.
Mr. KOCH.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. KOCH: Plans for the important tour of Hugo Blanco, author, internationally known Peruvian peasant-union leader and refugee of the Chile coup have been threatened by the U.S. State Department. For two months the State Department has stalled issuing a visa to Mr. Blanco. Many prominent individuals (see Enclosures) have sent messages to the State Department urging that a visa be granted with no further delay.

In spite of these protests and the growing number of invitations for Mr. Blanco to speak at universities across the nation, the visa still has not been granted. Recently, we have been told that Secretary of State Kissinger has the visa application for review.

Your message protesting this anti-democratic harassment and calling on Mr. Kissinger to immediately issue the visa can be of substantial aid in securing Mr. Blanco's right to enter and speak in this country. Yours,

STEVE SCHMIDT,
NYC USA.

[Newsletter of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, September 1975]

STATE DEPARTMENT DELAYS BLANCO TOUR

The long-awaited tour of Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco, due to begin Sept. 26th, is being held up by the State Department.

The facts indicate that the U.S. State Department has been delaying Blanco's application for a visa. The facts are that Blanco has been invited to speak at many universities across the United States, including some in the West Coast.

Blanco's visa application was filed on May 24th, 1975, and the State Department has not yet acted on it. Blanco has been told that his visa application is under review by the Department, but he has not been notified of the outcome.

The delay has caused considerable concern among Blanco supporters, who feel that the Department is acting capriciously and is not following established procedures.

"WELCOME BLANCO TO THE UNITED STATES"

(Newspaper headlines across the United States.

"WELCOME BLANCO TO THE UNITED STATES"

This shocking delay can probably be traced to the fact that Blanco's eyewitness accounts of the Chile coup with its brutal repression and the U.S. role in it would prove embarrassing to the government.

By delaying Blanco's visa application, the State Department is preventing Blanco from speaking at universities and other venues across the United States.

The government must not be allowed to stifle speech and思想 freedom by depriving Blanco of this opportunity to share his experiences and insights.

"HOW TO WIN THE VIS A FIGHT"

The government must not be allowed to trample on the democratic right of Blanco to speak, or the right of those who invited
him to hear him. We can and must defeat this anti-democratic harassment. USLA supporters and other defenders of civil liberties will want to increase the effort to mount pressure on the State Department to grant Blanco's visa. Here are some of the actions that can be undertaken:

Send a telegram or letter of protest to: Leonard P. Wallenstynowicz, Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520

Get other prominent individuals and organizations to do the same. Be sure to send a copy to USLA!

Send a financial contribution to meet the ballooning costs of the defense effort. Thousands of dollars are needed to mount this effort. In addition to the cost of actually touring Blanco, when the visa is approved.

Ask other supporters of civil liberties for contributions.

Help organize and build the meetings for Blanco in your area. Continue to build large meetings with broad co-sponsorship. This will do two things. First, it will generate more pressure on the State Department since the more people are coming together on this issue, the more individuals and groups will be angered by the State Department harassment. Second, it will assure that we will not be caught unprepared when the visa is approved.

Media work is quite important. A special effort to place stories into the local press, including the campus and Spanish press, will generate much public support for the effort.

WHO SHOULD BE APPROACHED FOR THIS DEFENSE?

There are people from many walks of life who will want to know what Blanes's tour is here to America and who will protect efforts to delay granting him a visa. Latin American Studies professors, Church groups, student leaders, and international student groups (especially those of Latin American students), student government and youth student groups will have a natural interest. Farm Worker and other unions will be interested after learning of Blanco's extensive work in organizing peasant unions in the Peruvian highlands, or of his history as a trade union organizer in Argentina. Church groups, which often have affiliates in Latin America will prove receptive. Organizations of Native Americans should be approached since Blanco is well known for his work among the Quechua Indians of Peru. There are many who will simply be concerned about any violation of civil liberties who should be approached.

Visit your local congressperson or their aides and seek their support. A number have already endorsed the campaign. They will often call the State Department right on the spot and register a protest.

With a quick response to the State Department's harassment and stalling by a broad range of individuals and groups we can assure Blanco's right to enter the country and speak.


Steve Schmuger,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Koch: Thank you for your letter of September 24 on behalf of the U.S. Commission for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners regarding the non-immigrant visa case of Mr. Hugo Blanco.

Mr. Blanco, a Peruvian citizen, presently residing in Sweden, is ineligible for a visa under Section 212(a) (3) (A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act which is quoted in the enclosed information sheet. A decision as to whether to withdraw a waiver of his inadmissibility under Section 212(d) (3) (A) of the Act. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, with which ultimate authority rests, has concluded it would not be in the public interest to authorize his temporary admission into the United States without further delay. This decision will be reached.

Robert J. McCloskey,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.


Dr. Benjamin Sock,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Schmuger: I have your letter of September 23 and regard you as an authority in this matter. I have written to the Secretary of State on this matter and as soon as I have any further information, I will be in touch with you again.

Sincerely,
Edward J. Koch.


Dear Mr. Secretary: I received the enclosed letter from the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners regarding Hugo Blanco.

I have no knowledge concerning the facts in this case and would appreciate your supplying me with whatever background material is available so that I can become more familiar with this subject.

Sincerely,
Edward J. Koch.


ロBERT J. MCCLOSKEY,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.


Hon. Edward I. Koch,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Koch: Thank you for your letter of September 24 on behalf of the U.S. Commission for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners regarding the non-immigrant visa case of Mr. Hugo Blanco.

Mr. Blanco, a Peruvian citizen, presently residing in Sweden, is ineligible for a visa under Section 212(a) (3) (A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act which is quoted in the enclosed information sheet. A decision as to whether to withdraw a waiver of his inadmissibility under Section 212(d) (3) (A) of the Act. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, with which ultimate authority rests, has concluded it would not be in the public interest to authorize his temporary admission into the United States without further delay. This decision will be reached.

Sincerely,
Robert J. McCloskey,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.


Hon. Edward I. Koch,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Koch: Thank you for your inquiry of October 21 about the visa application for Mr. Hugo Segura.

Mr. Blanco applied for a non-immigrant visa in order to visit the United States to conduct a lecture tour. He was found to be ineligible for a visa under Section 212(a) (3) (A) (3) (B) (8) of the Immigration and Nationality Act because of his previous terrorist activities and affiliation with certain communist organizations. Consideration was given as to whether the circumstances of his case would justify the approval of a waiver of his inadmissibility under Section 212(d) (3) (A) of the Act. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, with which ultimate authority rests, has concluded it would not be in the public interest to authorize his temporary admission into the United States without further delay. This decision will be reached.

Sincerely,
Robert J. McCloskey,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.


Representative Edward Koch,
U.S. House of Representatives, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Koch: On October 19 Hugo Blanco was scheduled to address students at the University of Minnesota in the first stop of a tour arranged by the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA). Instead, the audience listened to a taped message from the Peruvian peasant leader, author and revolutionist.

On the day before the tour was scheduled to begin, a U.S. government announcement that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had personally decided to bar Blanco from the United States. Shortly after the decision the State Department made a similar pronouncement on the visa of Sergio Serega, Italian Communist Party leader. As shown on the same page the same State Department gave VIP treatment to Giorgio Almirante, a leader of the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (M52).
There is an obvious question: how could one person, Hugo Blanco, so threaten the security of the United States that he is denied entrance? Blanco has just finished a tour of Canada and Chile where no endangering of the public welfare of those countries was reported. The threat, instead, is from Blanco himself to flee the repressive regime of Chile following the coup there—a coup aided by the CIA as revealed, despite Kissinger and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The subject of Blanco's tour is "Latin America, a Continent without Justice." Clearly he would have taken up the issue of CIA involvement not only in Chile, but in Argentina, Brazil and Peru.

Blanco's case has received front-page coverage in the Atlanta Journal, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press, Atlanta Journal, Library Journal, San Antonio Light and numerous campus papers. Protests from prominent civil libertarians and organizations were directed at Kissinger's office. These protests include messages from Senator Hubert Humphrey; John Ervin, Jr., publisher of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "The First Wind"; Julius Peller, Congresswoman Bella Abzug and Dr. Benjamin Spock.

On November 11, we received word that we had won a victory. Kissinger was forced to reverse himself and recommend to the Justice Department that Blanco's visa be granted. Now it's the Attorney General, Edward Levi, who stands between the American people and our right to hear Hugo Blanco. What is needed now is a large meeting to focus attention on the issue—that the American people have a "right to know" the full story of "Latin America, a Continent without Justice."

We would like to propose that this meeting take place the evening of Thursday, February 19, at Columbia University and that you and your organization co-sponsor this meeting. Initial sponsors include Americans for Democratic Action; Father Kennedy of the Catholic Council of Churches; Michael Harrington, National Chairman, Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee; Ruth Gage-Colby and Kate Mulledy.

Clearly what's at stake here is not just one visa case. What's at stake is our right as Americans to hear and consider all views. What's at stake is our right to know—without government interference—the facts about Latin America. Watergate has shown that we have a "right to know" about what is going on in the Soviet Union. But if we do not learn the truth about Latin America, it will enhance those terrorist activities. I can not in good conscience say to those writing about Latin America that they do not have a "right to know" what is going on.

Sincerely,

JAN GANSEL,
USIA Staff

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROBERT J. MCCLOSKEY,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations,
Department of State,

HON. EDWARD I. KOCH,
New York, N.Y.

DEAR MR. KOCH: Thank you for your letter of December 1st. I must say your response was unsatisfactory and leaves me in a position where I am not able to respond responsibly to those who have written to me concerning Hugo Blanco. While I would oppose allowing an individual who has engaged in terrorist activities to come to the United States, I agree that if, in fact, he admitted responsibility for the murder of three policemen and advocates the use of violence that there are grounds for rejection.

I urge you to reconsider this matter and provide me with the information bearing upon Mr. Blanco's alleged terrorist activities so that I, at least, can be better informed on the matter.

Sincerely,

EDWARD I. KOCH

DEAR MR. KOCH: Thank you for your letter of December 22nd about your desire to have more information in connection with the refusal of a visa to Mr. Hugo Blanco.

Many of the information available to the Department of State is classified for reasons of security and therefore cannot be divulged under the provisions of Executive Order 11652 dated March 8, 1978, a copy of which is enclosed.

A part of the public record, however, is that Mr. Blanco was convicted of three murders in Argentine, Brazil and Peru during 1969. The Congressional Record of December 16, 1975, contains further information about his affiliation with the Fourth International and other groups, as well as quotations from his writings in which he has advocated the use of violence.

I can assure you that Mr. Blanco's case was carefully reviewed. The finding of ineligibility under Section 212(a) (28) (C) and (P) of the Immigration and Nationality Act is mandatory, Mr. Blanco is not Ineligible under Section 212(a) (9) of the Act, which is quoted in the enclosure, because of his conviction for murder.

I hope that the additional information will be helpful.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. MCCLOSKEY,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

ROBERT J. MCCLOSKEY,
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

HON. EDWARD I. KOCH,
New York, N.Y.

DEAR MR. KOCH: Enclosed is the response I received from the State Department which, if accurate, would put in my judgement grounds for not allowing Hugo Blanco entry into the United States. I do not agree that if, in fact, he admitted responsibility for the murder of three policemen and advocates the use of violence that there are grounds for rejection.

In your original letter to me you refer to Mr. Kissinger as having "washed all the (institutes of a thug, coated over with professionalism.)" My question is how would you now characterize Hugo Blanco? If I do not hear from you within two weeks, then I shall assume that the information provided is correct.

All the best.

Sincerely,

EDWARD I. KOCH

NEW YORK, N.Y.,
February 18, 1976.

CONGRESSMAN EDWARD I. KOCH,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR ED: Thank you for looking into the Hugo Blanco issue. I have no idea where the truth lies. Most of the information came from a responsible organization.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN Spock, M.D.

Two Political Prisoners Executed by Iranian Regime

The shah of Iran's secret military tribunals have imposed two more death sentences, Iranian officials announced March 7. Hamid Riza Fatemi and Mohammad Ali Movahedi, executed by firing squad on that day, were the latest victims. The two were charged with "subversive activities" and alleged terrorist acts, although not even the dates of the supposed actions were made public.

Eight other prisoners were sentenced to life imprisonment. According to Iranian officials, five of these were originally sentenced to death but were saved by the shah's "clemency."
PC Francés Empieza a Descartar Máscara Marxista

Por Rebecca Finch

[La siguiente es una traducción del artículo “The French CP Begins Discarding Its Marxist Mask” que apareció en el número del 8 de marzo de Intercontinental Press. La traducción es de Intercontinental Press.]

* * *

PARIS—El Vigesimosegundo Congreso del Partido Comunista Francés, llevado a cabo los días 4 al 8 de febrero en el suburbio obrero parisino de St. Ouen, atrajo una atención poco usual este año. Calificado por los dirigentes del partido como un acontecimiento “histórico,” el congreso ratificó algunos cambios en la postura del partido, mismos que hacen resaltar más claramente la política colaboracionista de clase de la dirección. También reafirmó un curso que fue comenzado en 1968, consistente en echar por la borda la retórica marxista que venía usando para encubrir sus traiciones a la clase trabajadora.

Estas medidas incluyen la decisión de abandonar la frase “dictadura del proletariado.” Se aprobó una campaña en contra de “la inmoralidad, la pornografía, la perversidad, la violencia y la criminalidad.” Esto fue con la intención de complementar los esfuerzos tendientes a ganar hacia la “Unión del Pueblo Francés”—a un sector de la jerarquía de la burguesía francesa que venía usando para encubrir sus traiciones a la clase trabajadora.

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Los delegados también reafirmaron el reforzar una campaña de propaganda, lanzada en mayo de 1975, para presentar al PC como el “mejor luchador” por los derechos democráticos en Francia. Todo esto dentro del marco de la continuación de la “Unión de la Izquierda” como alianza electoral con el Partido Socialista y la reiteración del “Programa Común” con este.

En los meses que precedieron al congreso el Secretario General del Partido Comunista Georges Marchais afirmó una declaración común con Enrico Berlinguer, del Partido Comunista Italiano, trazando la vía “democrática” al socialismo y los dirigentes del PC francés emitió dos declaraciones en las que se distanciaban de algunas de las represiones más escandalosas de Moscú contra los disidentes.

Las raíces de estos cambios pueden ser trazadas a ciertos desarrollos sorprendentes que tuvieron lugar en años recientes. El PC francés, que con mucho es todavía el partido de los trabajadores más fuerte en este país, ha experimentado cierto crecimiento desde el ascenso de mayo a junio de 1968 aunque con el recambio en su membresía no ha gozado de un avance considerable. En 1966 el partido afirmaba tener 425,000 miembros. Hoy dice tener 491,000 y todavía está lejos de su apogeo de 900,000 alcanzado después de la Segunda Guerra. A nivel electoral ha sufrido cierta baja, decayendo del 22,46 porciento de los votos en las elecciones de 1967 a cerca del 20 porciento el día de hoy.

Por otra parte, los socialdemócratas franceses han experimentado un crecimiento hasta cierto punto impresionante después de reorganizar la estancada Sección Francesa de la Internacional Ouvrière (Sección Francesa de la Internacional Obrera, la Segunda Internacional) bajo la forma de Partido Socialista Francés en 1969. El principal dirigente del PS, François Mitterrand, hoy clama que su partido es el más grande de la izquierda, ya que representa a un 30 porciento del electorado.


El PS trata de presentar una imagen de animada actividad y de ser más democrático e internamente que el PC. Por ejemplo, dentro del PS hay una creciente ala disidente llamada el CERES,* que publica su propio periódico.

Todo esto representa una amenaza potencial a la posición dirigente del PC en la clase obrera y ha conducido a una creciente polémica entre estos dos partidos. En una entrevista por televisión el día 7 de enero, por ejemplo, Georges Marchais atacó las secciones del PS en los lugares de trabajo, afirmando que “no ayudan ni un centímetro al progreso del movimiento obrero. Lo que la clase trabajadora necesita es un partido revolucionario. . . . Si no hay una sección del PS en una empresa, no importa. Pero cuando carecen de un organismo del PC, a los obreros les falta una pierna para poder caminar.”

El PS, por su parte, ha dado los más fuertes golpes al PC cuando denuncia la represión a los derechos democráticos en la Unión Soviética y cuando asocia al PC francés con los “termidorianos de octubre,” que es el adjetivo que usa para designar a la burocracia soviética. El PS prestó su nombre al gran mitin del 23 de octubre en París que fue llamado para pedir la libertad de Leonid Plyushch, el matemático soviético que fue internado durante tres años en un hospital psiquiátrico. Dice que este fue uno de los factores que condujeron a la publicación de un editorial en la edición del 25 de octubre de 1975 de l’Humanité que llamaba a liberar a Plyushch.

Mitterrand también dice que el crecimiento del PS es responsable por muchos de los cambios que está llevando a cabo el PC. El 18 de enero apareció en televisión diciendo: “. . . el actual ascenso del Partido Socialista ha sido un factor determinante en la evolución del Partido Comunista, que debe tomar en cuenta nuestra presencia y nuestro crecimiento.”

La competencia con el PS en la obtención de apoyo entre los obreros es uno de los problemas que actualmente afectan al PC. Pero también cuenta con otros. Por ejemplo, la burguesía francesa se inclina cada vez más a ver al PS como si se estuviera moviendo hacia la posición que le permitirá jugar el papel clave en mantener bajo control el descontento de las masas francesas. Volver a ganar la posición que mantenía antes los ojos de la clase dominante en Francia fue una de las razones del último giro del PC.

Para los gobernantes capitalistas franceses estos desarrollos son importantes. Si la tendencia combativa entre las masas continúa, se va a requerir algún tipo de gobierno de colaboración de clases para contener y desviar las cada vez más profundas aspiraciones de éstas.

La clase en el poder se resiste todavía a realizar un cambio hacia un gobierno de frente popular pero reconoce que esto puede llegar a ser necesario. En este contexto, la burguesía francesa acoge con beneplácito el giro del PC hacia una mayor “moderación,” dado que esto puede achatar la combatividad de los trabajadores que siguen al PC. Y la dirección del PC, sin duda, está previendo con el objetivo de preparar a sus partidarios para que acepten concesiones económicas y sociales menores que sus aspiraciones.

 Sectores importantes de la burguesía internacional, particularmente el imperialismo alemán, el británico y el norteamericano, sostienen una posición contraria a la

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que favorece el cambio hacia gobiernos de frente popular. Tienen que tales gobiernos darán un renovado respeto a las expectativas de los trabajadores franceses, italianos y españoles, lo que a su vez se extendería entre los trabajadores de otros países.

Hasta han producido desacuerdos en el seno de la socialdemocracia. La división se desarrolla de acuerdo a las líneas del “norte” y las del “sur” del continente. El Canciller de Alemania Occidental Helmut Schmidt y el Primer Ministro Harold Wilson repiten como peritos las palabras de Henry Kissinger cuando éste enfatiza que el Mercosur y la OTAN peligrarían en caso de una participación comunista en los gobiernos de Europa Occidental. Su preocupación estriba en que los PC se van a subordinar a la Unión Soviética y no a las burguesías nacionales en lo que respecta a la política exterior y militar.

En el otro lado de esta disputa se encuentran los partidos socialistas del Sur de Europa—especialmente los de Francia, España e Italia—, los cuales argumentan que los partidos comunistas de Europa Occidental están llegando a ser más independientes de Moscú y que, en cualquier caso, van a ser los partidos socialistas los que decidan las alianzas o conflictos de los partidos comunistas que van a jugar papeles decisivos en las coaliciones gubernamentales, siendo relegados los partidos comunistas a ministerios de menor importancia tales como salud pública, agricultura y del trabajo, más que a los de relaciones exteriores o de defensa. Argumentan que en sus países la participación de los partidos comunistas en tales gobiernos es necesaria para mantener la “estabilidad” social.

Aun en Portugal, ahora que recuperó el “juego que le correspondía,” el PS ha acercado de tal modo que es su bloque con el PC. Por ejemplo, Mario Soares, que visitó recientemente los Estados Unidos, declaró a los reporteros de la revista Time que el mantenimiento al PC en el gobierno portugués no sólo había ocasionado a ese partido, sino que había servido para que compartiera la responsabilidad de las impopulares medidas de austeridad.

Este es el trasfondo de los cambios ratificados en el Vigésimo Segundo Congreso del PC francés, que tanto se propagándizara. Lo que está involucrado aquí no es un giro para distanciarse de una política que previamente haya sido revolucionaria, sino que más bien se trata de un mero cambio de postura e imagen.

El cambio empezó el pasado noviembre con la declaración conjunta de los partidos comunistas italiano y francés, firmada por Emilio Berlinguer y Georges Marchais. El PC italiano ha tratado de recuperar su puesto en el gobierno, del que fue excluido en mayo de 1947. Berlinguer ha tratado de ganar este objetivo por medio de la tracción sistemática a las luchas de masas y proclamando la capacidad de su partido para apuntalar la estabilidad social en Italia. Esto es el significado de las promesas del PC italiano en torno a garantizar la economía “mixta,” el sistema pluripartidario y la sucesión de poderes a través de elecciones, en caso de que llegara a ganar el gobierno.

La declaración conjunta tenía como intención mostrar que el PC francés había adoptado la fórmula de Berlinguer. Marchais también deseara deslindarse de la postura pseudorevolucionaria del PC portugués.

“Un dirigente del Partido Comunista en París dijo ayer que el documento no sólo subrayaba las diferencias entre los partidos del este y los del oeste, sino que también estaba dirigido a ciertos partidos occidentales, tales como el de Portugal...” informó el International Herald Tribune en su edición del 19 de noviembre.

Cualesquiera que no bastara con una declaración conjunta con el PC italiano que prometiera el respeto a la democracia burguesa. En vista de la reputación del PC francés como uno de los más arrastraos entre los agentes del Kremlin, Marchais también tenía que declarar su independencia de Moscú. Esto es en el contexto en el que se dio la decisión del PC para pedir la libertad de Pleyarch, que ya ha sido resuelta, y el traspaso de los campos de concentración soviéticos.

El llamado por la libertad de Plyushch fue emitido el día 25 de octubre, sólo dos días después del mitin en la Mutualidad en París, un gran acto que atrae a 4,000 personas, que constituyó la culminación de una campaña auspiciada por la izquierda francesa para lograr su libertad. Un editorial en L'Humanité declaró: “Si es cierto... que este matemático está internado en un hospital psychoítrico sólo por haber adoptado una posición en contra de ciertos aspectos de la política soviética, o en contra del mismo régimen, nosotros sólo podemos expresar nuestro repudio y pedir que sea liberado tan pronto como sea posible.”

La declaración del Buró Político el 12 de diciembre sobre los campos de concentración soviéticos apareció después que salió en la televisión francesa una película de la BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] que el PC francés a la lucha de los conscriptos por comités y sindicatos, a través de los cuales los soldados esperan ganar los derechos de expresión y de asociación en los cuarteles. Ayudar tales luchas cortaría las promesas del PC en torno a que su entrada en el gobierno no pondría en peligro la política exterior y militar burguesa.

Así que el PC francés ha condenado la lucha de soldados por sus derechos democráticos como si se tratara de una provocación “ultrizquierdista,” “ultrizquierdista,” añade con razón a la disciplina. Como concesión a la creciente presión de masas, el PC ha sido dado en las fuerzas y los militantes que han sido encarcelados en los cuarteles. Aprobar los derechos democráticos de estos grupos, después de todo, entraña en contradicción con la prohibición del mismo PC francés para la formación de tendencias dentro del PCUS, o su derecho a organizar sus propios partidos o a imprimir y distribuir su literatura dentro de la Unión Soviética.

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De reveladora es la reciente condena del PC francés a la lucha de los conscriptos por comités y sindicatos, a través de los cuales los soldados esperan ganar los derechos de expresión y de asociación en los cuarteles. Ayudar tales luchas cortaría las promesas del PC en torno a que su entrada en el gobierno no pondría en peligro la política exterior y militar burguesa.

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Esta no es la primera ocasión en que el PC francés ha tomado su distancia con respecto a la política soviética de represión de los disidentes. En 1988, el partido se deslindó abiertamente de la invasión soviética de Checoslovaquia; en 1971 pidió la liberación de Leonid Plyushch y condenó su postura pseudorevolucionaria del PC por romper abiertamente con el marxismo, esto no significa que ya tuvo lugar su ruptura fundamental con Moscú.

Todo lo contrario, aunque del PC de la Unión Soviética se pueden esperar denuncias de las críticas hechas por el PC francés, la postura “crítica” adoptada por este último facilita el enfoque colaboracionista de clases hacia el imperialismo occidental, que ha sido promovido por la burocracia soviética desde que Stalin usurpó el poder. Confirma—como si esto fuera necesario—la adaptación de los partidos estalinistas al parlamentarismo burgués.

La península hace notar que el compromiso oral del PC francés con los derechos democráticos está muy lejos de ser profundo. No tiene nada que decirnos acerca del rechazo a los derechos de los grupos de oposición a formar tendencias dentro del PC francés, o su derecho a organizar sus propios partidos para la posibilidad que puede defendar la “independencia nacional” de la Francia imperialista.

Este tema chovinista figura prominentemente en el discurso de Marchais al Vigésimo Segundo Congreso del partido. Denunciando el “Atlantismo” del Presidente Giscard d'Estaing, declaró: “Una cuarta parte de la industria francesa está ahora en manos de capitalistas extranjeros. Su deuda exterior va en aumento...” Están destrozando su soberanía pedazo
por pedazo; el destino de nuestros campesi-
nos hoy en día es decidido en Bruselas y el
de nuestra moneda en Washington; y
mañana, si nuestro pueblo no se cuida, el
destino de nuestro país será decidido en
Luxemburgo, o aun en Bonn, por el estado
mayor de las fuerzas reaccionarias y trusts
multinacionales de la Europa Atlánti-
ca. . . .

Para contrarrestar esta amenaza apeló
tal patriotsiisimo. "Fiel a su tradición, el
Partido Comunista Francés lucha y lucha-
rá con todas sus energías para salvaguar-
dar la independencia y la soberanía de
Francia. . . Lejos de ser una idea pasada
de moda, la independencia nacional es una
gran aspiración de nuestro tiempo. Ganar-
la, defenderla, consolidarla: he aquí tareas
que están en la orden del día del mundo
contemporáneo. No hay nada más inme-
diato, o más moderno, que la lucha por
la independencia, la soberanía y el floreci-
miento completo de Francia."

Estos temas, por supuesto, fueron di-
señados para llamar la atención particu-
larmente del ala gaulista de la burguesía
francesa. No debe sorprendernos el que
esta línea coincida también con los intere-
ses de Moscú, que quiere ver una mayor
independencia de Francia con respecto a
los Estados Unidos.

Esta posición del PC francés ha sido
bien recibida en los círculos a los cuales
estaba dirigida. Como dijo un escritor
gaulista en Le Monde el 3 de febrero: " . . .
los comunistas proporcionan los batallo-
nes pesados entre aquellos que rechazan
cualquier intento de hacer virar a Francia
hacia donde perdiera su independen-
cia. . . .

Las cautelosas reprimendas a Moscú por
parte del PC, en lo que respecta a la
represión de disidentes políticos, no despe-
tó tanto interés como la discusión precon-
gresado en torno a la proposición de eliminar
la frase "dictadura del proletariado" de los
estatutos del partido. En una "columna de
discusión" se publicaban las polémicas
diariamente en I'Humanité y semanalmen-
te en France Nouvelle, una revista noticio-
osa semanal del PC. Sin embargo, ésta fue
una caricatura de lo que debería ser una
genuina discusión democrática.

Los editores de estas publicaciones
tenían el derecho de seleccionar y editar lo
que se publicaba. Y aunque individualmen-
te se podían escribir contribuciones, el
derecho a formar tendencias estaba estrict-
temente prohibido. Al mismo tiempo que
esto dificulta evaluar la verdadera exten-
sión de la oposición en el partido, la
discusión es interesante porque revela
algunos problemas que encara la dirección
en cuanto a mantener la unidad del
partido en torno a los cambios.

El proyecto de resolución publicado por
el Comité Central, titulado "¿Qué Quieren
los Comunistas para Francia," no mencio-
naba la "dictadura del proletariado."
Durante su mitin público en Epinay-sous-
Senart el 27 de noviembre, Pierre Juquin,

miembro del Comité Central, dijo que la
frase estaba "pasada" [pasada de moda].

Dos miembros protestaron en contra de
esto el 5 de enero en l'Humanité, pidiendo
que al menos una referencia a la "dictadu-
ra del proletariado" apareciera en el
proyecto de resolución. El 7 de enero,
Georges Haddad, secretario de una célula
en Epinay-sous-Senart, propuso que
aunque la cuestión de los estatutos del
partido no estaba en la orden del día del
congreso, éstos deberían ser modificados
para quitar la frase. Pero otros miembros
del partido se quejaron en el sentido de que
el lenguaje del proyecto no era lo sufi-
cientemente marxista.

El 9 de enero Marchais apareció en un
programa de televisión donde le pidieron
su opinión acerca de la idea de Haddad. El
secretario general dijo: "Estoy de acuerdo
con la idea de este secretario de célula. . . .
Estamos en 1976 . . . el Partido Comunista
no es rígido. No es dogmático. Sabe como
adaptarse a las condiciones de su tie-
pnos. El día de hoy la palabra 'dictadura' no
corresponde con lo que deseamos. Tiene un
significado inaceptable, contrario a nues-
tras aspiraciones, a nuestras tesis.

"Aun la palabra proletariado ya no es
apropiada. . . ."

El 16 de enero Marchais y el Buró
Político llevaron a cabo una conferencia de
prensa en la cual anunciaron que había una
"casi total unanimidad" en el partido
para abandonar la frase.

La maniobra de Marchais no quedó sin
ser cuestionada dentro del partido, pero el

resultado final era inevitable. M. Guerpil-
on de París se quejó sobre esto de la
siguiente manera, en la edición del 24 de
enero de France Nouvelle: "De acuerdo al
buen método periodístico, las protestas de
los comunistas que protestaban contra la
desaparición de la [frase] dictadura del
proletariado de los estatutos eran primero
impresas en las 'columnas de discusión.'

Luego el secretario general habló públicam-
te en televisión y prometió al
partido, haciendo la concesión de que [el
cambio] todavía podría ser discutido. ¿Pero
quién va a soñar con discutirlo ahora?
Quién lo hiciera sería masacrado."

La identificación del término científico
marxista "dictadura del proletariado" con
los crímenes del régimen de Stalin facilitó
to a los dirigentes del PC llevar a cabo la
desaparición de la frase sin discutir
realmente su significado. Para los marxis-
tas, la frase significa el gobierno de la
clase obrera y de sus aliados; esto es, el
gobierno de una mayoría en vez del actual
regimen de unos cuantos. El significado
que Marx y Engels le dieron fue el de la
democracia más amplia y efectiva que se
haya conocido jamás.

Aunque la intención de la dirección del
PC al quitar la frase era la de subrayar su
oposición al cambio revolucionario, entre
las filas del PC puede haber quienes no
hayan tenido los mismos motivos. Debido
do a la estrangulación de la democracia
obra y de todos los derechos democráti-
cos elementales en la Unión Soviética, la
frase se ha desacreditado entre las masas
de obreros, y aun entre los miembros del
partido comunista. Entonces, en l'Humani-
té aparecieron contribuciones confusas en
las columnas de discusión, que acusaban a
aquellos que se oponían a abandonar la
frase de estar "en contra de la forma y el
contenido de la democracia socialista,
especialmente la libertad de expresión
para las diversas corrientes ideológicas
y políticas, la existencia de una prensa de
oposición, etc."

Pero aparentemente fue otra parte del
proyecto de resolución, la que llamaba a
luchar contra la "inmoralidad," la que
esperó el máximo de oposición activa
entre las filas del partido.

La sección del proyecto titulada "Quere-
mos Fraternidad" dice en una de sus
partes: "Nosotros los comunistas estamos
luchando por un nuevo mundo.
Luchamos en contra de la violencia, los
odios, el racismo, la inmoralidad.

"La sociedad que queremos reconocería
el derecho de cada quien a vivir plenamen-
te su vida. Esto no tiene que ver con
ensalzar la brutalidad o exhibir la perversi-
ón."

En una conferencia de prensa que fue
relatada en l'Humanité el 15 de enero, le
preguntaron a Marchais: "Hay un debate
sobre la sexualidad. ¿Tiene su partido una
posición sobre la moral en este campo?"

Marchais contestó: "La sexualidad es un
gran problema; pero es un problema que no

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puede tener primacía sobre las cuestiones económicas y sociales. Es necesario hacer más por la educación social. Las parejas deben tener el derecho a decidir, y decidir ellas mismas si es que quieren o no tener hijos. El aborto debe ser gratuito. Todas estas cuestiones deben ser juzgadas y puestas en su lugar, su verdadero lugar.

"También existe el problema de la pornografía. Yo digo que eso es inmoral.

Estas declaraciones son cínicas en vista de que vienen del principal dirigente del partido que fue uno de los principales obstáculos a la lucha por la libertad de aborto en Francia y que denunció vigorosamente la decreciente tasa de natalidad en Francia durante su discurso principal en el Vigeninosegundo Congreso. Mientras que Marchais se ha manifestado por el "aborto gratuito," no ha dicho nada acerca de la necesidad de derogar la ley francesa que permite el aborto bajo solicitud solo hasta la séptima semana de embarazo y que todavía forzó a miles de mujeres a abortar en Francia y que denunció vigorosamente la necesidad de derogar la ley francesa.

En repuesta, de acuerdo a Le Monde, los "intelectuales" dijeron que el partido había cometido errores serios en el campo de la moral en el pasado y que tenía que reconsiderar su posición. En el debate de la federación de Moselle, la conferencia decidió, con una votación de 101 a favor y 79 en contra, recomendar que toda referencia a la "inmoralidad" fuera quitada. El autor de la enmienda pedía que la resolución se apoyara en "la explotación de la miseria sexual" y que "estaba basada en un grano de polvo sobre el就很al precio a la mujer."

La oposición a esta cuestión fue tan fuerte que 4 de cada 34 federaciones que habían llevado a cabo sus reuniones para el 24 de enero adoptaron enmiendas con el objetivo de modificar la resolución. Aunque la columna de discusión se cerró el 24 de enero, el Baró Político sintió que era necesario continuar la discusión durante dos días más debido a la reacción crítica que esta proposición había encendido en casi todas las federaciones. Debido a que las polémicas fueron muy aclaradas, la dirección tuvo que cerrar algunas reuniones a la prensa, siendo que antes habían sido abiertas.

Si hubo otros temas que fueron cuestionados abiertamente, tales como la posición del partido en contra de los derechos democráticos de los soldados y a favor de un fuerte ejército burgués, éstas no pudieron traspasar el control de la censura, antes de llegar a las "columnas de discusión." Pero en este momento, los partidarios de la mencionada polémica habían sido molestados por las polémicas que se produjeron en las federaciones. Debido a que las polémicas hubieron sido muy aclaradas, la dirección tuvo que cerrar algunas reuniones a la prensa, siendo que antes habían sido abiertas.

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