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75¢



Every Major Black Group Outlawed in South Africa

VORSTER: Throws police net over all dissent.

Skepticism Over German Prison 'Suicides'

France—Why Union of the Left Blew Apart

Healy's Slander Campaign Against SWP

Wide Skepticism Over German Prison 'Suicides'

By Michael Baumann

The deaths of three leading members of the Red Army Faction (the so-called Baader-Meinhof group) October 18 in a West German political prison specially constructed to isolate them from the rest of the world has touched off an international uproar.

The deaths came only one day after one of the prisoners, Gudrun Ensslin, asked to speak with two prison chaplains, telling them she was convinced she was going to be "executed" by the West German government.

The bloody outcome capped a dramatic chain of events in which the Bonn government refused to free the three prisoners and eight of their associates, as demanded in return for the release of kidnapped industrialist Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the passengers of a hijacked Lufthansa airliner.

According to authorities in Bonn, Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe died of self-inflicted gunshot wounds and Ensslin hanged herself in her cell. A fourth member of the group, Irmgard Möller, was said to have gravely injured herself in an attempt to commit suicide with a bread knife.

Skepticism with the official account was reflected in demonstrations across Europe the following day. In London, Athens, Vienna, Genoa, Rome, Milan, Como, and Naples, protesters charged the West German government with responsibility for the three deaths.

In West Berlin, seventeen lawyers active in the defense of alleged RAF members sent a telegram to the Ministry of Justice October 18, stating their belief that "the possibility of political detainees being executed in reprisal has now become a fact."

The protests would undoubtedly have been even more widespread had the Bonn government not been able to turn to account the terrorist actions carried out by supporters of the RAF.

With world attention focused on the fate of the kidnapped hostages, the West German authorities were able to play down puzzling questions about the fate of the prisoners, fobbing off the press with a series of unverified and less than plausible answers.

These questions include the following.

How did Baader and Raspe obtain pistols?

Where did they conceal them in isolation cells that are searched daily from top to bottom?

How did Möller obtain a knife and where did she conceal it?

If it is to be believed that the three killed themselves in despair after learning of the capture of the hijacked jet, how did they learn of this, since they are denied all access to visitors, radio, newspapers, and television?

How did they coordinate their suicides from isolation cells?

The official version of the three prisoners' deaths did little to answer these questions and in fact raised further doubts.

In a preliminary report issued by the Stuttgart prosecutor's office October 19, authorities said that Baader had been killed by a bullet entering his head from the "nape of his neck, shattering his skull." This is indeed an unusual way of committing suicide, as can be determined by anyone who seeks to simulate the alleged feat even with a pointed finger.

Furthermore, how can a verdict of suicide be squared with the fact that at least three shots were fired in Baader's cell? According to a dispatch in the October 20 *New York Times*, the report "said three spent bullets had been found in Mr. Baader's cell, one covered with blood, another sticking in the wall and a third in his mattress."

Although the authorities did not try to explain how the pistols had been smuggled into the top-security prison, they did claim to have found a hole in Raspe's cell "that may have been used as a hiding place" for his pistol. How this had been missed in previous daily searches was not explained.

To account for the prisoners' supposed knowledge of the outcome of the hijacking, authorities claimed to have found a "tiny radio" in Raspe's cell. How this too had been missed in the daily searches was not explained.

And to account for how the prisoners could have communicated among themselves, the government said, as summarized by the October 22 *New York Times*, that "an inspection of the cells after the death of the three inmates showed they had been able to hold conversations in Morse code through a system of batteries, a modified thermostat and wiring concealed in the cells' walls."

How this elaborate communications network had been smuggled in and assembled under the watchful eyes of their jailers was likewise not explained, the government simply asserting that an "inquiry" is under way.

In view of the number of improbable elements in the official version, Gudrun Ensslin's attorney, Otto Schily, has called for the formation of an international commission, independent of the German government, to investigate the deaths.

Two simpler explanations of the deaths deserve careful scrutiny by such a commission:

1. Were the prisoners simply executed in cold blood in their cells, to eliminate once and for all the intended beneficiaries of possible future commando actions? Was Ulrike Meinhof, the imprisoned RAF leader who allegedly died by her own hand in May 1976, a victim of the same fate?

2. If they did in fact commit "suicide," were they driven to it by the inhuman conditions of their confinement, being provided with the necessary implements at the appropriate moment?

Even if the second alternative is proven to be the case, the West German government bears full responsibility for their deaths. To gain a glimpse of the conditions the RAF prisoners have been held under for up to five years, it is sufficient to recall an appeal issued in November 1974, following the death during a hunger strike of RAF prisoner Holger Meins.

The appeal, issued by the Committee to Oppose Torture of Political Prisoners in the Federal Republic of Germany, detailed the "special treatment" the Bonn government has accorded the RAF prisoners since their arrests in 1972.

Special Treatment means social isolation over a period of years by means of:

- systematic segregation from other prisoners (RAF members have been segregated from the moment of their arrest). Any attempt to talk to other prisoners is answered with confinement to punishment-strip-cells for a period of days;
- special screens fixed outside cell windows, which distort any perceptions of the outside;
- solitary exercise with no opportunity to see or speak to other prisoners;
- handcuffing during yard exercises;
- a ban on all visits and mail except from relatives. Visits by relatives are supervised by the political police, who take down every conversation in full in order to obtain information for illegal use in court;
- censorship and confiscation of books and papers.

Even these conditions have worsened, as a law that took effect October 2 removed the RAF prisoners' right to receive any mail, visitors, or news of the outside world.

The outrage aroused by such treatment is understandable and is shared by all who support elementary human rights. But the commando squads that carried out terrorist actions in an effort to free the prisoners could hardly have been more mistaken in their belief that such methods could be effective against the West German government, one of the most powerful imperialist regimes in the world.

The attempts were doomed to political

failure from the start. Instead of increasing sympathy for the plight of the prisoners, they served in reality to make it more difficult to enlist the support of the masses of people whose backing is necessary to wage any effective campaign in behalf of the prisoners.

The counterproductive effect of the kidnappings has been brought home with force in West Germany, where the government has taken them as the pretext for a witch-hunt described as unparalleled in the country's postwar history.

A feeling for the political atmosphere was conveyed by *New York Times* correspondent Paul Hofmann, who cabled the following report from Bonn October 20:

Officials began today what they termed the greatest dragnet in West Germany's 33-year history to track down those implicated in a series of recent terrorist crimes.

The police asked the public for information on the whereabouts and activities of 16 suspects, and published special phone numbers that citizens should dial if they wanted to supply clues, even anonymously.

Detailed descriptions of the persons on the list were provided through thousands of posters in public places, a film shown repeatedly on television, and the press. In some cities, policemen walked the streets appealing to residents through bullhorns to help in the search.

In many parts of the country, the police set up roadblocks and checked thousands of vehicles, examining the identification documents and luggage of travelers.

Nor are the effects limited to West Germany. A conference of American "antiterrorist" experts, meeting in Puerto Rico September 26-27, used the Schleyer kidnapping and other recent incidents to turn the meeting into a call for restricting civil liberties to strengthen the fight against "terrorist movements."

Yonah Alexander, director of the "Institute for Studies in International Terrorism" at the State University of New York, was one of the most forthright in expressing this view.

"In the U.S.," he lamented, "congressional action has been moving to weaken, rather than strengthen, the FBI and CIA at a time when terrorism is increasing."

Instead, he said, governments should be stepping up "surveillance." In particular, he suggested increased use of wiretaps, informers, and infiltration of radical groups.

These are of course the very methods of political disruption the American government has been forced to step back from, following revelations of government spying disclosed in part by such legal challenges as the \$40 million suit filed by the Socialist Workers Party.

It is an index of the consequences of the recent kidnappings that they provided an opportunity to refurbish the image of the FBI and CIA as "protectors" against terrorism. □

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Vorster Bans Major Black Groups

By Ernest Harsch

The white supremacist regime in South Africa has attempted, with one sudden blow, to turn back the tide of massive Black political protests that has engulfed that country for more than a year.

Early on the morning of October 19, the Vorster regime outlawed more than twenty Black and other anti-apartheid organizations and banned two Black-run newspapers. Justice Minister James T. Kruger charged that the groups and newspapers had threatened to "endanger the maintenance of law and order," that is, the maintenance of white supremacy and all the racist barbarities that go with it.

The move, which was carried out under the provisions of the draconian Internal Security Act, is the most drastic action against Black political organizations since 1960. In that year, Vorster, who was then minister of justice, banned both the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress, the two major Black groups of that period.

As before, Vorster's new round of bannings has been accompanied by a series of arrests. In predawn raids October 19, police seized about fifty prominent political activists, community figures, teachers, journalists, and students. An unknown number of others were served with banning orders, which restrict them to a form of house arrest, bar them from meeting more than one person at a time, and prohibit them from writing or saying anything for publication.

The apartheid regime's sudden crackdown was met by immediate, though sporadic, protests. Primary school students streamed out of their classes in Soweto, the large Black city outside Johannesburg that has been at the center of much of the active opposition to the regime. Other Black protests were held in Sharpeville, the scene of a massacre in 1960 in which sixty-nine Blacks were gunned down by police, as well as in Graff Reinet, Queenstown, Johannesburg, and other cities.

Fifty-four African students were arrested in Sharpeville, and ninety-seven Indians were seized in Johannesburg's Lenasia Indian Township for holding an outdoor demonstration. About sixty white students from the University of the Witwatersrand were also detained for attempting a protest march.

In his justification for the bannings and arrests, Justice Minister Kruger employed the time-worn practice of characterizing political opponents of the regime as "a



JUSTICE MINISTER KRUGER: Sees threat to racist "law and order."

small group of anarchists" who had attempted to manipulate Black grievances so as to bring about a "confrontation between black and white." He also warned that "should it become necessary, new measures will be considered."

The crackdown was launched partly in response to a mounting wave of protests over the death in police custody of Steve Biko, one of the country's most influential young Black leaders and a founder of the nationalist current known as the Black Consciousness movement.

Since his death September 12, considerable evidence has surfaced indicating that Biko was beaten to death by police. Kruger, who originally claimed that Biko died after a one-week hunger strike, admitted publicly that he had suffered injuries in a "struggle" with police, although he denied that the injuries had been the cause of Biko's death.

All of the prominent groups identified with the Black Consciousness movement were among those banned, including the Black People's Convention (of which Biko had been honorary president at the time of his death), the South African Students Organisation (of which Biko had been first president), and the South African Student Movement. A number of leading figures from these groups were arrested, including

Hlaku Rachidi, the president of the Black People's Convention.

Also banned was the Soweto Students Representative Council, which had initiated many of the mass Black protests against the regime. Since its formation last year, three of its presidents have been forced into exile and one, Sechaba Montsisi, is in jail.

Among the other groups outlawed were the Black Women's Federation, the Black Parents Association, the Soweto Teachers Action Committee, the Union of Black Journalists, and the multiracial Christian Institute of Southern Africa. The Black-run newspapers that were banned were the Johannesburg *World* and the *Weekend World*, both of which had mass circulation within the Black community. Percy Qoboza, the editor of the *World*, was arrested. The Christian Institute magazine *Pro Veritate* was also banned.

However, even if Pretoria is successful in stifling overt expressions of mass opposition for a while—and that remains to be seen—it cannot stamp out Black political activism altogether. The degree of exploitation and oppression of the Black majority by the white minority is so extreme that Blacks have been compelled, time and time again, to launch concerted struggles for their most minimal human rights.

If the earlier bannings, arrests, tortures, and massacres were unable to break the resistance and determination of the country's twenty-two million Blacks, neither will the current crackdown. New organizations will be formed and new leaders will take the place of those arrested or killed.

Pretoria's heightened repression has at the same time put its imperialist allies in the United States and Europe in an embarrassing position. They have repeatedly sought to justify their ties with the apartheid regime and their opposition to the imposition of economic sanctions against it on the grounds that effective international pressure would only impel Pretoria to dig in its heels and suppress Black dissent even more strenuously. In reality, however, it has been the continued economic, political, and even military aid given to Pretoria by its allies that has encouraged it to escalate the repression.

The Carter administration has consequently been forced to publicly denounce the current crackdown, in part no doubt to divert attention from its complicity in it. The White House issued a statement October 19 declaring that it was "deeply disturbed" by the arrests and bannings. It warned Vorster, "Our relations will hardly be improved by what has happened." As a political gesture, the recall of the American ambassador from South Africa for consultations was publicly stressed, an unusual move for such a routine action.

Although Carter is under political pressure to initiate concrete actions against the apartheid regime, there have been no

indications that the White House is considering anything more than a few token measures aimed at reducing some of the more visible areas of collaboration. In particular, Carter has not even hinted at

any moves to reduce the \$3.8 billion in direct and indirect American investments in South Africa, which help prop up the apartheid economy and the entire system of racist rule. □

Charter 77 Supporters Hit with Prison Sentences

Prague Dissident Trial Stirs Protest

By Matilde Zimmermann

The trial of four leading Czechoslovak dissidents has generated a storm of international protest and made Czechoslovakia the center of attention at the Belgrade Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The trial began October 17; sentences were handed down the next day.

Three of the four defendants were early signers of Charter 77, the civil-liberties manifesto issued in Prague last January and signed by about 800 persons. (For text, see *Intercontinental Press*, February 14, 1977, p. 132.)

Jiri Lederer, a journalist who has already served one prison term for his criticism of the Prague regime, was convicted of subversion and sentenced to three years in jail for helping to send articles outside the country for publication. Vaclav Havel, an internationally known playwright, received a fourteen-month sentence for trying to smuggle the memoirs of a former minister of justice out of the country.

Dramatist Frantisek Pavlicek, once a member of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovakian CP, was convicted of attempting to slander the state by granting an interview to Lederer. His seventeen-month sentence and Havel's sentence were suspended with three years probation.

Ota Ornest, a leading theater director and the only defendant not an actual signer of Charter 77, received the longest sentence—three and a half years—for “subversive activities against social order and the socialist state.” His “crime” was helping Lederer send articles outside the country.

All the defendants pled not guilty except Ornest, who admitted having contact with foreign diplomats. Ornest, sixty-four, is in failing health and has been in prison since mid-January.

All four have announced their intention to appeal.

Only fourteen invited observers were allowed to enter the tiny courtroom where the trial took place. The reporter from the French CP daily *L'Humanité* was denied permission even to enter the country to cover the trial. *L'Humanité* issued a sharp protest against “this denial which will deprive our readers of first hand informa-

tion on a trial in which the human rights for which we are struggling are at stake.”

Czechoslovakian police have also stepped up their harassment of other Charter 77 signers. Since the document first appeared, a number of signers have been fired, evicted from their homes, or deprived of their passports. About twenty were rounded up for questioning as the trial began. These included prominent representatives of the Charter 77 group such as former foreign minister Jiri Hajek, singer Marta Kubisova and playwright Pavel Kohout.

Defendant Havel predicted after his sentencing that there would be a new wave of political trials in Czechoslovakia.

Thousands Protest Tokyo Airport

Almost 22,000 persons rallied October 9 outside the recently completed but as yet unopened Tokyo International Airport in Narita, Japan.

The action was one of the largest ever held in the twelve-year struggle by the farmers of the Sanrizuka area in Narita against the land seizures and environmental damage brought on by the airport.

As a result of this struggle, completion of the airport, originally scheduled for 1971, was long delayed. Construction was finished earlier this year, and the Fukuda government made opening the airport by November a top priority. But this date has now been set back again to March 1978.

Intercontinental Press correspondent Charlotte MacDonald reported from Sanrizuka that the October 9 action “came as the culmination of a nationwide campaign to broaden support for the Sanrizuka peasants and launch an offensive against the March opening. Rallies were held in most major cities.”

The actions marked the end of a month-long, 500-mile march from Osaka to the airport. In the course of this march activists publicized the Sanrizuka struggle and sought to forge links between the

Socialists and civil libertarians inside and outside Czechoslovakia have protested the dissident trials. An appeal to European Socialist and Communist parties was signed by thirty-three intellectuals including two former ministers, Jiri Hajek and Vladimir Kadlec, and the widow and son of Czech CP secretary Slansky, who was executed by Stalin in 1952.

Polish dissident group KOR (Committee to Defend the Workers) issued a protest and an appeal to the Belgrade conference.

A statement signed by leading French socialists and intellectuals was published in the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge* October 17. It concludes:

... we want to register a vigorous protest against this caricature of a trial; we demand the immediate release of the accused and a halt to all repression against the signers of Charter 77. We consider these infringements of democratic freedoms to be incompatible with socialist ideals.

The Czech trials gave Carter's chief representative at the Belgrade conference, Arthur Goldberg, an opportunity to pose as a defender of human rights. Even the delegates from other Eastern European countries were embarrassed by the fact that Czechoslovakia was staging the trials at exactly the same time as the Belgrade conference.

In their final statements to the court, Lederer, Pavlicek, Havel and Ornest all stressed their continued belief in socialism.

farmers and the labor movement and other groups and communities fighting pollution, land-grabs, and nuclear power plants.

“Speakers at the rally,” MacDonald reported, “emphasized the unsafe nature of the airport and the ecological dangers. The government plans to build a fuel pipeline to the airport, but there is strong opposition from the residents of the heavily populated areas through which the pipeline must pass.”

Indonesia a Prisonhouse

Indonesia is holding 100,000 political prisoners, many of whom have been jailed without trial for twelve years, Amnesty International reported October 18.

“In no other country of the world,” the human rights organization said, “are so many political prisoners held without trial for so many years as in the Republic of Indonesia.”

Most of Indonesia's political prisoners were seized during the bloody suppression of the country's Maoist-leaning Communist Party in 1965. During the purge more than 500,000 government opponents were killed and tens of thousands arrested.

Canal Treaties Approved in Panama

By Fred Murphy

In a plebiscite held October 23, Panamanian voters were reportedly approving by almost a 2-to-1 margin the set of Panama Canal treaties recently negotiated with Washington by the Torrijos government. The *New York Times* reported October 25 that of 697,000 votes counted, more than 468,000, or about 67 percent, were in favor of the treaties. The accords must still be ratified by a two-thirds vote in the U.S. Senate before going into effect.

The plebiscite in Panama was preceded by a forty-day period during which the Torrijos regime mounted an extensive propaganda campaign in favor of the accords, presenting them as a victory against U.S. imperialism. The results nevertheless fell short of early predictions by Torrijos that at least 90 percent of the 800,000 registered voters would approve the treaties.

The accords are to replace the 1903 treaty forced on Panama, which granted the United States "in perpetuity the use, occupation and control" of the canal and the Canal Zone, a ten-mile swath cut through the middle of the country. The new treaties do not secure Panamanian sovereignty. Rather, they provide a facelift for continued U.S. domination of Panama. Their basic features were summed up in an official White House document issued August 12:

- The U.S. will have the permanent right to defend the neutrality of the canal from any threat, for an indefinite period.
- U.S. warships will have the permanent right to transit the canal expeditiously and without conditions, for an indefinite period.
- For the rest of the century U.S. military forces will have the primary responsibility to protect and defend the canal.
- The Government of Panama guarantees the U.S. the right to station troops in Panama and to use all lands and waters necessary for the canal's defense.

Torrijos's hopes of ramming this lop-sided agreement through with a minimum of public discussion were partially thwarted as protests broke out among students and others shortly after the terms of the treaties became known. To give the appearance of a democratic debate, the government was forced to grant some access to newspaper advertising, radio, and television to opponents of the treaties. In addition, public meetings and rallies by opposition political parties—which had been declared "extinct" in 1969—were allowed to take place.

Much attention was paid in the U.S. news media to a group called the Independent Lawyers Movement. According to the October 21 *New York Times*, this organization was "given two hours on national television Tuesday night [October 18] during which they challenged the controversial treaty that the Carter Administration maintains gives the United States the right to send military forces to prevent any violation of the canal's 'neutrality' after Panama regains full sovereignty in the zone in the year 2000."

The *Wall Street Journal* quoted a leader of the lawyers, Diogenes Arosemena, who said, "If the canal is good for the Pentagon, it is very, very difficult to see how it is a good deal for Panama."

Marlise Simons reported from Panama to the *Washington Post* October 13 that the Christian Democratic and Social Democratic parties were calling for a "no" vote on the treaties, "pointing out that in 1926 and again in 1947, Panama had rejected drafts attempting to legalize the U.S. military bases here."

Three thousand persons rallied against the treaties in Panama City on October 19. Speakers denounced the accords as "treason."

The Independent Lawyers Movement charged at an October 21 news conference that the government had set rules for the plebiscite that would allow electoral fraud, and that opposition groups had not been given adequate opportunity to present their case.

But Torrijos refused to allow more time for the debate. "Officials say that Panamanians know enough about the treaties and only troublemakers want more time," Simons reported. The main reason for the regime's desire to cut off the discussion was no doubt that noted by Juan de Onís in an October 20 dispatch to the *New York Times*:

"The opportunity for public assemblies opened by the government's decision to permit a national debate on the treaties is being used by people to complain about the cost of living, unemployment, supposed corruption by Government officials and heavy-handed repression by the National Guard."

An October 14 meeting with Carter in Washington gave Torrijos more motivation to get the plebiscite over with. The two heads of state issued an unsigned state-

ment "clarifying" vague provisions in the treaties that have been the object of a right-wing campaign in the United States against the supposed "giveaway" of the canal. The statement read in part:

... each of the two countries shall . . . defend the Canal against any threat to the regime of neutrality, and consequently shall have the right to act against any aggression or threat directed against the Canal. . . .

This does not mean, nor shall it be interpreted as a right of intervention of the United States in the internal affairs of Panama. Any United States action will be directed at insuring that the Canal will remain open, secure and accessible, and it shall never be directed against the territorial integrity or political independence of Panama.

The reality beneath the diplomatic formulations was quickly brought to light. James Wiegart reported in the October 15 *New York Daily News*:

"Some senators . . . raised questions about the phrase 'territorial integrity' in the statement, asking if whether this did not mean that the U.S. could not land troops in Panama to protect the canal. U.S. officials conferred with their Panamanian counterparts and reported back that in the view of Panama *the U.S. could indeed land troops in Panama to protect the canal*" (emphasis added).

The jingoists are still not satisfied, however. Senator Robert Dole is now pressing for amendments to the accords that would incorporate the text of the October 14 statement. "There is no longer any justification for leaving the treaty language ambiguous," Dole told the Senate October 17. "In fact, it is essential that the treaty itself be modified to reflect the agreement."

Such unilateral action by the Senate would require renegotiation of the treaty, and Torrijos would be pressed to submit the changes to a new vote in Panama. Opposition to the treaties was growing before the October 23 plebiscite as the Panamanian people were becoming aware of their true meaning. There would be no guarantee that the regime could put through its concessions to U.S. imperialism a second time. □

Textile Workers Strike in Ghana

About 10,000 textile workers in Ghana walked off their jobs in early September to press their demands for a better pay structure. The strike affected three factories, those of Ghana Textiles Printing, Ghana Textiles Manufacturing Company, and Tema Textiles Limited. The strike ended September 15 after the workers and the managements reached a settlement.

However, a representative of the textile group of the Ghana Employers Association stated that all the workers had been compelled to sign a statement that they would not "embark on an illegal strike."

AROUND THE WORLD



60,000 Cambodian Refugees in Vietnam

Some 60,000 persons who fled Cambodia since April 1975 have received the right to asylum in Vietnam, according to a diplomatic source in Hanoi.

The source, cited in an Associated Press dispatch published in the October 18 *Le Monde*, said that the refugees are at present living in poverty-stricken conditions in the suburbs of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) and in provinces bordering Cambodia.

"The Vietnamese government," he added, "is taking care of the refugees despite the shortage of food and the economic difficulties it itself faces."

Students Demonstrate in Seoul

One thousand students at Seoul National University demonstrated against the South Korean regime of Park Chung Hee October 7.

The protests began during a symposium on South Korea's lack of democracy. As the official part of the program ended, students began making spontaneous speeches demanding that posts in the university student association be made elective. The school administration now appoints association officers.

After several hours riot police moved in with tear gas to break up the gathering. About 500 students then staged sit-ins around the campus, demanding political prisoners be freed and repressive legislation be abolished. Police again dispersed the demonstrators with tear gas. As many as 200 students were reported taken into custody.

Ukrainian Jews Slandered

In its October 13 issue, *Tass* reprints from a Kiev newspaper an attack on Jewish dissidents that smacks of anti-Semitism.

The article is based on the story of Saul Raslin, a dissident who "recanted." Raslin attacks the group of Jewish dissidents to which he formerly belonged for "anti-Soviet activities" and "links with the CIA." He says the group wrote slanderous articles about the condition of Jews in the Soviet Union on orders from Israel and the U.S.

Raslin tries to portray his former comrades as a greedy and immoral gang, who played cards during a hunger strike, staged drunken orgies on the sabbath, and

received expensive bribes from visiting Zionists masquerading as tourists.

The anti-Semitic charges were also picked up by *Izvestia* in its October 15 issue.

89 Political Prisoners to be Freed in Spain

A new amnesty law, adopted October 14, will free 89 of the reported 120 political prisoners held in Spain's jails.

It will also prevent any future prosecution of the torturers from Franco's police—the law specifically covers "wrongs committed by the forces of public order."

The law grants general amnesty for political "crimes" before December 15, 1976, the date of Spain's referendum on political reform.

For the period December 15, 1976, to June 15, 1977, it covers only acts committed "for the purpose of reestablishing public freedoms or in defense of the autonomy of the Spanish peoples."

It is further qualified after June 15, 1977, to exclude acts involving personal violence. There is no amnesty for acts after October 6, 1977.

Most legislators—including Communist Party leader Marcelino Camacho, who himself spent twenty years in prison—hailed the limited amnesty law as the final stage of national reconciliation.

One exception was Francisco Letamendia of the Euskal Iraulzarako Alberdia (Party of the Basque Revolution). Letamendia called for total amnesty, legalization of all revolutionary parties, and removal of the armed forces, who make the Basque people feel like they live in an "occupied zone."

Insurgents Executed in Bangladesh

The military regime of Gen. Ziaur Rahman announced October 19 that it had executed thirty-seven members of the army and air force for their alleged participation in an attempted insurrection in Dacca October 2. Twenty others have been sentenced to life in prison. Martial law tribunals had tried 460 persons by the time of Zia's announcement, acquitting only thirty-three of them.

The most recent wave of unrest within the Bangladesh military began September 30, when rebellious troops tried to seize the base at Bogra. On October 2, other troops staged a revolt in Dacca, the capital of the

country, seizing the Dacca radio station for a short time. Troops loyal to General Zia quickly crushed the insurrection.

Government officials acknowledged that scores of persons were killed. Unofficial sources put the figure at more than 200. Enamul Huq, a government representative, admitted that the rebellious troops came from the lower ranks of the military.

General Zia did not immediately try to pin the insurrection on any political group, but on October 14 he banned three parties, accusing them of trying to infiltrate the armed forces. The parties were the bourgeois Democratic League, led by former President Khandakar Mushtaq Ahmed, the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Bangladesh, and the underground socialist Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD—Socialist National Party).

Many top leaders of the JSD were already in prison for their alleged involvement in a massive insurrection within the military in November 1975. One JSD leader, Abu Taher, was executed last year.

'Eurocommunism' on Italian TV

Leaders of the Spanish, French and Italian Communist parties discussed the Soviet Union on Italian television the evening of October 14.

Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the Spanish CP, said that the Soviet Union's record on human rights was "unsatisfactory" and pointed to a "lack of democracy in the productive processes."

Asked whether the USSR was a socialist country, Paolo Bufalini, an official of the Italian CP, said that it was—but with authoritarian traits that the PCI disapproves of.

French CP historian Jean Elleinstein admitted that the Soviet Union has failed to live up to the "ideas that inspired the popular uprising of October 1917." He insisted, however, that the era of Stalinism was over once and for all.

Suicides Take a Jump in Japan

Suicides are on the rise in Japan, according to statistics reported August 26 by Reuters correspondent Muneaki Morita.

There were 20,000 self-inflicted deaths in 1976, an increase of nearly a third from 1975. In addition, more than 500 families averaging four members killed themselves in 1976 compared with only 336 in 1971.

Why Union of the Left Blew Apart

By Daniel Bensaid

[The following article appeared in the October 13 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly news bulletin published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

When the workers began returning from their summer vacations, the economic, political, and social situation in France was dominated by the application of the austerity policy that had been defined by the government of Prime Minister Raymond Barre in September 1976. (See *Inprecor*, No. 60, 21 October 1976.)

In most respects, this austerity plan has failed. In spite of the initial claim that the annual inflation rate would be brought down to 6%, it is probable that this year's price increases will exceed 10%. In spite of the gaudy campaigns and widely publicized measures around jobs for youth, the number of unemployed, even according to official statistics, will rise by several dozen thousand this year. By the end of the year, more than a million and a half will be unemployed. Finally, the government has been unable to reduce the foreign trade deficit significantly.

There is, then, only one point on which this plan has been scrupulously implemented: the wage freeze. The overall buying power of the workers has dropped by 2.5-3%. But if one looks behind this overall figure, taking account of the disparities in industrial branches, regions, and categories, it becomes clear that entire layers of the working class are now beset by poverty, even misery. Concurrently, the capitalists have managed to reestablish profit margins, although they have not achieved an upturn in industrial investment. Probably their political uneasiness has something to do with this. But more fundamentally, the structural crisis of the accumulation of capital persists. And the prospect of a new international recession is already in sight.

It may be asked to what extent the application of the austerity plan has eroded the combativity of the working class, since this past year has brought hardly any important victories on the wage or job fronts. Entire regions (like Lorraine) and dozens of occupied factories have been offered but one perspective by the trade-union leaderships: hold out until the "democratic change" of 1978. (The legislative elections are scheduled for March 1978.) In fact, ever since the sweeping Union of the Left victory in the municipal

elections last March, which heralded the Left's almost certain victory in the upcoming legislative elections, the reformist leaderships have been staking everything on the 1978 elections. Far from taking advantage of the favorable relationship of forces created by the municipal elections to launch an offensive against austerity, which could have brought down the Giscard-Barre government, they have squandered workers combativity in dispersed days of action by region or category. These culminated in a belated general strike (last May 24), which was never followed up, since it was viewed more as a preelectoral show of force than as a real mobilization around a united platform of struggle with concrete objectives.

After the municipal elections, the Communist Party (PCF) asked that the Common Program of the Union of the Left be brought up to date. (The program had been drafted in 1972 and signed by the PCF, the Socialist Party, and the Left Radicals.) The SP, initially reticent, finally agreed, hoping to make some quick changes and wind the matter up before the summer vacations if possible.

But a polemic broke out in early August, after SP leader François Mitterrand announced that if the Left won the elections a referendum on the French nuclear striking force could be held. The PCF immediately denounced this proposal as a disavowal of the work done by the tripartite commission to update the program. In fact, the PCF has recently made a turn on the military question and has now adopted the Gaullist policy in support of the nuclear striking force. In the discussions on updating the Common Program, the PCF had gotten its partners to agree to amend the passage promising that the nuclear arsenal would be maintained "in its present state" (*en l'état*), altering it to read "maintenance in working order" (*en état*), which implies not only the maintenance, but also the development of the nuclear arsenal. The PCF thus seized upon Mitterrand's referendum proposal as an opportunity to accuse the SP of "selling out national independence" by renouncing the defense system.

Later, at the beginning of September, when the "summit meeting" to sign the updated Common Program was being prepared, disputes broke out on other issues. In addition to the problems of arms and nationalizations, differences arose on what the minimum wage should be and on the

breadth of wage differentials.

On the first point the PCF adopted the position of the two major union federations, calling for a 2,200 franc (about US \$440) monthly minimum wage as of April 1977, which would imply a 2,400 franc minimum by April 1978. The SP leaders were even more moderate; Michel Rocard thought it more reasonable to promise a 2,000 franc minimum.

Finally, on wage differentials, the PCF proposed reducing the wage spread to one-to-five. But this proposal, which amounted to a major PCF turn on the question, remained quite vague and sufficiently far off in time ("at the end of the legislative term") to remain negotiable.

In sum, the PCF opened an offensive on issues that were of immediate concern to the workers and popular layers (except that of the bomb) and were simultaneously open to compromise. Thus, at the time of the break, the discussion of the minimum wage was about to be concluded through agreement on a 2,200 franc minimum at the time of the formation of a Left government followed by sweeping wage negotiations between the government and the unions during subsequent weeks.

On the other hand, none of the parties signing the Common Program had taken it upon themselves (and they still haven't) to begin discussing more thorny and explosive issues, such as jobs or government institutions (the role of the president, the preservation of the Gaullist constitution, etc.). Thus, the PCF was able to polish up its image in the working class as the party of the toilers and even to catch the CFDT [French Democratic Confederation of Labor] leadership off guard: For the first time, the latter was compelled to publicly take some distance from the SP, which CFDT Secretary Edmund Maire accused of being presidentialist rather than an advocate of self-management.

Finally, during a third period, in the course of the Left summit itself, the polemic crystallized almost exclusively around the question of nationalizations, while the other contentious issues seemed resolved. The break then occurred in two stages.

First the Left Radicals walked out. Their president, Robert Fabre, lent the break a spectacular character, seizing on a highly symbolic pretext. At issue was the "little phrase" in the Common Program stating that the workers of a factory will be able to ask parliament to nationalize their factory. The Socialist leaders had repeatedly stressed the "inoffensive" character of this phrase, remarking that in any case the decision would rest with parliament, that additional nationalizations would mean additional compensation and therefore new taxes, and that the deputies would reject such a dynamic. But the Radicals nonetheless made opposition to the phrase their battle cry. This allowed them to play

their role within the Union of the Left: defenders of private property and guarantors of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

This was the role they wanted to highlight by this break and this blackmail, in a way both the bourgeoisie and the workers could understand. When the Left Radicals returned to the summit, a compromise was arrived at: the "little phrase" would be preceded by the words "in conformity with the constitution." Of course, none of the signers of the Common Program had challenged the constitution to begin with, but when it comes to the interests of the bourgeoisie two precautions are better than one.

During the second summit, in September, a break occurred between the Communists and Socialists, and it has lasted to this day. The official cause was a dispute over whether the subsidiaries of nationalized capitalist groups should also be nationalized. The Common Program calls for the nationalization of nine industrial groups. In the PCF's view, this should include holding companies and subsidiaries, lock, stock, and barrel. The SP claims it means nationalizing 98% of the holding companies and subsidiaries and turning the stock owned by the holding companies into state participation. Each claims to be defending the 1972 program.

It is amusing to note that neither side lacks arguments. The PCF correctly observes that the SP has proposed several bills to nationalize groups including subsidiaries, that one SP leader has said that nationalizations of groups but not their subsidiaries would be "empty shells," and that the idea of nationalizing only the holding companies but not the subsidiaries on grounds of legal complexity appeared rather belatedly and cautiously in the Socialist press (after the municipal elections).

As for the Socialist Party, it stresses that the calculations of the cost of compensation published by the PCF last May did not include all the subsidiaries.

In addition, each party, although claiming that its position was a matter of principle, tried to compromise. The PCF reduced the number of nationalizations it demands from 1,450 to 1,008 and then to 729. The SP upped its ante from around 60 to 250, on the basis of utterly fantastic criteria. In the end, the difference boils down to about 400 companies, representing only 0.77% of French corporations and employing less than 150,000 workers all told. In the meantime, the PCF suddenly renounced nationalization of Peugeot-Citroën (180,000 workers); the nineteen largest trusts which are *not* on the nationalization list (among them Michelin, Hachette, and the cement companies) alone employ nearly 700,000 workers.

These figures suffice to demonstrate that the real differences between the PCF and the SP do not reflect two *qualitatively*

different versions of the Common Program, one anticapitalist and one reformist. The question of nationalizations is a pretext, but a revealing one which conceals other stakes. To understand this, one must go back to the deeper reasons for the polemic.

Some people have said that the SP wanted to cut the PCF loose and govern alone. There is no doubt that this is the long-term plan of at least a portion of the SP leadership. But not immediately. It is through the alliance with the PCF that Mitterrand rehabilitated an excessively compromised Social Democracy. And it was through broadening the SP's ideological gamut, from professions of faith in self-management to promises to loyally administer an austerity policy, that he made it the biggest vote-getting party in France. Abandoning these conditions would risk losses, including among a very heterogeneous and unstable electorate.

But more important, if the Union of the Left wins the elections and the SP is called upon to administer an austerity policy, it will have to involve the PCF in government responsibility. Mitterrand knows full well that a homogeneous Socialist government would be worse for him, at least initially. He understood this as early as 1968, when he opposed the stubborn anti-Communism of some Socialists by explaining that a Communist presence in the government (provided the posts were modest) would be an additional guarantee for the bourgeoisie and that Georges Séguy, the head of the PCF-dominated CGT (General Confederation of Labor), was the best guarantor of order, for the moment.

Thus, although Mitterrand, like Soares, Schmidt, and Callaghan, is willing to take responsibility for an austerity policy, he knows that his chances of success as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned depend on his ability to make the PCF take coresponsibility for it—but without making any concessions to the PCF. Too much flexibility toward the PCF would endanger the SP's electoral hopes. That is why the margin for negotiations is so narrow.

As for the PCF, there has been no lack of explanations for its behavior, up to and including the famous "hand of Moscow." Everyone in France knows that the Soviet bureaucracy does not regard the Giscard regime unfavorably. This became quite clear when the Soviet ambassador paid an official visit to Giscard right in the middle of the 1974 presidential campaign, and it was confirmed by the warm welcome extended Barre during his visit to Moscow in early October.

But one month of polemics between the Communist and Socialist parties does not wipe out a several-years-long evolution during which the PCF has increasingly and explicitly taken its distance from Moscow. And this is not a momentary flip-flop or whim of the leadership group. It is

related to the crisis of decomposition of the Stalinist bloc and cannot be reversed without a deep modification of the international relationship of class forces.

Some comrades (such as the OCI, Internationalist Communist Organization, for example), while not going so far as to endorse the theory of remote control from Moscow, have tended to offer a Stalinophobic explanation which is really not an explanation at all. The Stalinists, they say, were and remain splitters, and they are seeking to preserve the status quo by breaking up the Union of the Left. Must one then conclude that the Union of the Left and its electoral victory would threaten the status quo? Or else that there are two ways of preserving the status quo: a Union of the Left government or the division of the Union of the Left? Maybe the PCF apparatus is divided over which way is more effective?

In reality, the fundamental contradiction for the PCF lies in its continuing close links with the working class and the deeper integration into the state apparatus its participation in the government would entail. This contradiction could become particularly acute should a Union of the Left victory occur in a context of capitalist crisis requiring an austerity policy. The PCF apparatus knows full well that if this happened, the party would have the dirty job of keeping the working class in check, and for the first time since the Popular Front there would be a risk of entire sectors of the working class contesting the party's bureaucratic control. In addition, every time the PCF has retreated a bit, every time it has further effaced its own identity and doctrine (discarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, for example) in order to look more like a respectable "government party," the united electoral efforts have been of benefit mainly to the Social Democracy.

This twofold danger for the PCF was illustrated by the municipal elections. On the one hand, the SP became the leading party; on the other, a current of defiance took shape around the far left. One section of the PCF apparatus, apparently grouped around Roland Leroy, reacted defensively. In the view of this grouping, the party's specific character as *the* party of the working class has to be reasserted. And it might be better to remain in opposition rather than risk entering the government under such bad conditions.

If Georges Marchais is to overcome this reluctance in his own apparatus, he has to offer solid guarantees. The prize has to be worth the risk; the Communist ministers must not be tossed out like in 1947; the party must conquer lasting positions in the state apparatus.

Hence the test value of the polemic around nationalizations. What lies behind the question of the number of subsidiaries to be nationalized is the problem of man-

agement. The CGT holds the majority in most of the companies concerned. The PCF asks that the managing director of the company be elected by the employees. The PCF would thus control the leadership of many key companies. In addition, it must not be forgotten that during the updating of the Common Program the PCF rather crudely raised the delicate problem of the division of ministerial portfolios.

The PCF bureaucracy thus stands at a turning point in its history. The turn cannot be made without a violent battle in the apparatus, the initial signs of which could be seen at the twenty-first party congress.

That said, neither the PCF nor the SP have any alternative policy right now. The former has recruited and educated the majority of its members around the prospects of the Union of the Left. The latter was reconstructed through this alliance after hitting bottom in 1969, when its candidate, Gaston Defferre, got less than 10% of the vote in the presidential elections. But the PCF is even more devoid of any short-term alternative strategy. Turning inward on its own apparatus would be a short-sighted policy offering no perspective to party members.

Beyond the polemical reactions of the bourgeoisie, which is denouncing the irresponsibility of the Union of the Left, drawing dire pictures of the chaos that would result if such a break took place after an electoral victory instead of right now, the bourgeois parties are not doing any excessive breast-beating. The Giscardians, who have always counted on a breakup of the Union of the Left and the recomposition of a "real Social Democracy" whose members would be temporarily dispersed among the government majority and the opposition, are coming in ahead of the Gaullists in polls for the first time. The Gaullists, speaking through Jacques Chirac, leader of the Rally for the Republic, are saying that the government parties should not be diverted, that the PCF and SP will wind up reconciling, and that the SP remains the main enemy.

In fact, if the bourgeoisie is not evincing more optimism, it is because the initial polls taken after the PCF-SP break do not indicate any electoral decline of the Union of the Left and because in the final analysis the inflation and unemployment figures will weigh heavier in the upcoming elections. It is not unlikely that the PCF and SP would win a majority even if they ran separate campaigns, each upholding their own version of the Common Program, and agreed to support each other's candidates in the second round vote. In that event, as far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, it would be easier to keep things in hand if they have a government program. It is for this reason that a compromise remains probable in our opinion, despite everything.

The effect of the polemic in the working class is contradictory. On the one hand, it is generating uneasy skepticism among most workers, along with an elementary electoralist reaction in favor of unity. This business about subsidiaries, the workers say, isn't worth a break; it's secondary, let's win the elections and then we'll see. On the other hand, among a more conscious sector of the working class the



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polemic is bolstering the PCF's image as the hardest and most vigilant party. Finally, it is stimulating a critical politicization around the two reformist leaderships. Those who thought the Common Program had an answer to everything have now discovered that there is not *one* but *several* common programs and that there is something to argue about.

Nothing, then, is settled. The question is what will happen after the elections if the Union of the Left wins or loses. If it loses that would be a relative success for the bourgeoisie, which would have managed to implement the Barre plan and retain the majority. The blows the working class has suffered this past year could then cause a genuine demoralization among some sectors. But more probably there will be significant social explosions whose scope and effectiveness may be limited by the divisions in the working class itself. That would become the major problem.

If the Left wins, the contradictory aspects of the present polemic will be extended. On the one hand, it has placed a huge number of problems on the agenda for discussion and has touched off a politicization. On the other hand, it has demonstrated the fragility of the PCF-SP ac-

cord and strengthened the PCF's control over its own ranks.

The PCF-SP division has highlighted both the hopes and illusions of the great majority of workers in their mass parties and the importance of not subordinating their interests (the necessity for a struggle against austerity) to chancy electoral objectives. This is why we of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League) are emphasizing the workers unity that is needed.

In reality, the aspiration for unity corresponds both to an opportunist and electoralist reflex (channeled into class collaboration by the Union of the Left) and to a profound need for a united class front. We base ourselves on this second element in lending a class content to the desire for unity. This axis will remain important even if the PCF and SP finally reach a compromise. But since such a compromise remains the most likely variant, it is important to anchor the fight for unity in lasting tasks; we must not be advocates of unity for its own sake (which in practice would lead to acting as a marriage counsellor for the PCF and SP), but must stress demands that lend this unity its class content. We are therefore intervening around the following axis: Putting an end to austerity and the Giscard-Barre government requires the unity of the workers and their organizations; the workers themselves must make decisions independently; there must be a break with the bourgeoisie (Left Radicals, the constitution, Giscard).

We insist above all on the fact that it is not true that there are two versions of the Common Program, one collaborationist the other anticapitalist, divided by 500 nationalizations more or less. The Common Program as such is a program of class collaboration. It is important to firmly maintain this characterization in order to resist any temptation among the far left to give critical support to the PCF.

That said, we are not indifferent to the minimum wage, the wage differential, the number of nationalizations, or the possibilities of workers control. This is what we explained in a four-page supplement to our daily newspaper, *Rouge*, and in an open letter on nationalizations to the members of the PCF and SP:

- For a 2,400 franc minimum wage? Of course, but with a sliding scale, workers control of the price index, etc.

- A one-to-five wage spread? Yes, if it is to be achieved through an offensive against fortunes and capital, the opening of the account books, nationalizations, a single bank, monopoly of foreign trade, etc.

- Is the number of nationalizations important? Yes, but then let's nationalize without compensation the nineteen groups which alone employ four times as many workers as the 500 subsidiaries the PCF

and SP are arguing about.

Moreover, we must add the questions not being dealt with in the PCF-SP polemic, mainly jobs, around which we have traditional demands.

Finally, we take the proposals advanced in the discussion, particularly by the PCF, at their word:

- The PCF repeats the CFDT proposal for the formation of delegates' councils in the workshops and service departments of the nationalized enterprises. These would be united structures well rooted in the ranks. But why limit them to nationalized enterprises? And more important, as long as the idea has been raised, why wait for an election victory before acting on it?

- The CGT has announced that the functions of the factory committees will have to be expanded, not limited to the right to examine the accounts, but extended to the right to full information about all wage scales, plans for hiring or for layoffs, or transfers of factories. Very good. But if this is to be real workers control, if the workers are really to be able to have their say, then secrecy must be abolished, and, most important, the information given the factory committees must be verified and examined by all the workers in the shops and service departments. The workers delegates to the factory committees must have real veto power.

The PCF-SP division broke out over the heads of the workers, even though it relates to questions that concern them most of all, that affect their daily lives and their ability to resist austerity. Thus, the workers themselves must now have their say and make the decisions. A great debate must unfold.

Marchais and Mitterrand are both appealing to the workers, but only to ask for their confidence, to invite them to join their respective parties, without providing them the means by which to speak out and make decisions. The workers must meet in general assemblies in the shops to work out a platform with precisely delineated demands which are neither mere amendments to the Common Program nor negotiable objectives that can be revised downward, but vital demands that the workers will be prepared to defend and fight for against any government. The leaderships of the CGT and CFDT have met together, but without deciding anything, simply keeping up appearances and maintaining an image of unity that will enable them to function under the best possible conditions no matter what happens. But at the same time, strong pressure is being put on rank-and-file unionists to support one of the two parties in the polemic.

Finally, the Barre plan, which has already done heavy damage to jobs and purchasing power, is still being applied. No balance-sheet of the trade-union tactic of dispersed days of action, which has

enabled the plan to be applied, has been drawn. The workers must meet in general assemblies of the various federations to draw this balance-sheet and to put forward perspectives of struggle against austerity. In common, they must assert their own demands against the PCF-SP polemic; they must define their platform and the means of achieving it without handing their demands over to hypothetical negotiations with a Union of the Left government; they must forge rank-and-file trade-union unity on this basis and pose the problem of the unification of the unions, with tendency rights for all.

The PCF has often criticized the Popular Front, saying that it was a mistake not to establish rank-and-file committees. In 1973 the CERES (a leftist tendency in the SP) raised the idea of such committees, although not very insistently. Now that the polemic is reaching its peak, now that the question of what program the workers stand for and on what basis they want their parties to govern has been raised, nobody is talking about such united, non-exclusive committees to discuss and act to impose a government that meets their demands.

In the municipal elections last spring the workers gave the majority to the parties they see as their own, the PCF and the SP. They thus indicated their desire for these parties to form a government. But not a government to work with Giscard and give in to the blackmail of a Fabre. Not a government to continue an austerity policy and respect the reactionary constitution of

1958. We, along with them, struggle for a PCF-SP government that breaks with the bourgeoisie and satisfies their demands.

As for practical initiatives, we have launched a public propaganda campaign, with a massive distribution (200,000 copies) of an appeal from the Political Bureau, distribution of an open letter to the PCF and SP on nationalization, and the organization of meetings and public discussions in the cities and sectors where we are active.

It also appears important to us to make sure that this political event gives rise to a confrontation—and if possible, a common public response—among the revolutionary organizations. We see this as a test of the possibility of running a united campaign in the legislative elections on the basis of a solid agreement. Elsewhere in this issue of *Inprecor* there is a brief rundown of the positions of the various organizations. Up to now we have reached agreement on a common appeal with the OCT (Communist Workers Organization) and the CCA (Communist Committees for Self-Management), which will lead to public meetings (already held in some cities) allowing for broad discussion of where we agree and what our differences are. We would have liked other organizations, especially *Lutte Ouvrière*, to have joined in this appeal. But for the moment, this organization has refused even to participate in united meetings and seems to have begun its preelection campaign alone.

October 6, 1977

What Other Groups Said About Split

[The following excerpts from the positions taken by other organizations appeared in the October 13 issue of *Inprecor*. The introductory note is by the editors of *Inprecor*.]

* * *

The crisis of the Union of the Left has been politically revealing of the evolution of the far-left organizations, which have been compelled to detail their analyses of the Union of the Left and the nature of the parties that make it up. The discussion around the updating of the Common Program has also provided an occasion for defining the axes of an action program for the coming period.

Below we are publishing excerpts from the declared positions of four organizations: *Lutte Ouvrière* (Workers Struggle), the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* (Internationalist Communist Organization), the *Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs* (Communist Workers Organization), and the *Comités Commu-*

nistes pour l'Autogestion (Communist Committees for Self-Management).

Lutte Ouvrière (LO) is an organization which directs its activity almost exclusively toward the factories. Their militants are active in the CGT (General Confederation of Labor), and sometimes in *Force Ouvrière* (FO—furthest right of the three national union confederations). *Lutte Ouvrière* publishes a weekly of the same name and a monthly journal, in English and French, entitled *Lutte de Classe* and subtitled "For the Reconstruction of the Fourth International." LO is the present expression of a current which never joined the Fourth International. For the past several months it has been conducting discussions with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and the LCR.

The *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* (OCI) is active primarily in the CGT and FO. It claims that the CFDT (the second-largest union confederation) has in no way broken with its past as a union linked to the Catholic hierarchy. It is also active among teachers (especially in pri-

mary schools). Within the National Education Federation (FEN) the militants of the OCI play a leading role in the "workers united front" tendency. The OCI's youth organization, the Young Socialist Alliance (AJS) is mainly active in a very small student union, the "UNEF-Unité." The OCI publishes a weekly, *Informations Ouvrières*, and a monthly, *La Verité*. It is a member of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI), of which Pierre Lambert is one of the major leaders. This current refused to participate in the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963. Discussions have recently opened between the OCRFI and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; these are aimed at organizing a public discussion, the first exchanges of which, on the question of Stalinism, will be published soon.

The Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (OCT) came out of a split in the Ligue Communiste in 1971. The group then took the name Révolution and evolved toward Maoist positions. In 1976 it fused with the Gauche Ouvrière et Populaire, a Maoist current which had split from the United Socialist Party (PSU). The OCT is now active in the CGT and, more heavily, in the CFDT. A substantial part of its forces are active in the student milieu. Internationally, the OCT maintains contacts with Avanguardia Operaia in Italy and the Left Socialist Movement (MES) in Portugal. The OCT publishes a weekly, *L'Étincelle*, and a magazine, *Premier Mai*. The OCT, along with LO and LCR, participated in forming the united slates "For socialism, for workers power" during the municipal elections of March 1976.

The Comités Communistes pour l'Auto-gestion (CCA) came out of a recent split from the PSU; it is led by former militants of the Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire (AMR—Revolutionary Marxist Alliance). The latter is affiliated to the International

Revolutionary Marxist Tendency, of which Michel Pablo is one of the best-known leaders. The CCA represents a limited political force which is now in the midst of a debate preparatory to its coming founding conference. Several dozen members of the LCR and OCT have joined this organization. For the moment, it has no press

Lutte Ouvrière

It is with the word "unity" on their lips that Marchais and Mitterrand are once again attacking each other, Marchais accusing the Socialist Party of challenging the essence of the Common Program, Mitterrand openly envisioning governing the way the Socialist Party did in 1936, relying on the support of the PCF but not bringing it into the government. . . .

The PCF has long been aware that its only chance of entering the government and staying in is to have the maximum number of Parliament members, so that Mitterrand is unable to dispense with them in maintaining a majority in Parliament.

But neither the Communist Party nor the Socialist Party has any interest in a break. Whether the Common Program is amended or not, the CP and the SP need at least a mutual agreement to support each other's candidates in the second round of the elections. Each will insist on reconstituting the Union of the Left between now and the elections, at least in the form of an electoral accord equivalent to what has existed up to now.

Nor does the fact that both sides are raising the tone change much from the standpoint of defending the interests of the workers.

The polemic is increasingly focussing solely on the question of nationalizations. But who can possibly believe that the confused, obscure, and derisory quarrel over whether or not to nationalize the

organ.

The excerpts below are taken from editorials or articles that have appeared in the newspapers of the various groups, with the exception of the CCA statement, which appeared as a column published in the "free tribune" section of *Rouge*, the daily newspaper of the LCR.

subsidiaries of the large groups is of that much concern to the workers?

No, this whole discussion about the number of companies to nationalize is only a crude pretext for electoral demagoguery, on both sides. The SP and the Left Radicals are demanding a little less because some of their voters tremble at the very mention of the word collectivism. The PCF is demanding a little more in an attempt to make the workers believe that they can have confidence in the party, that it is more exacting, and that it advocates more profound transformations than its allies and rivals.

Even if the PCF's view prevails in this bargaining, it would result in no advantage or additional guarantee for the workers; it would be no response to their uneasiness about unemployment and would not mean any real proletarian control over an economy which vitally and indispensably requires planning if catastrophe is to be avoided. But the PCF will not even make its point of view prevail, for it has no means of compelling the SP and the Left Radicals to line up behind PCF positions. On the contrary, the SP and Left Radicals have much greater means by which to force the PCF to back down.

So, workers, we must not have confidence in all these people. We can act to put them into the government tomorrow. But we cannot hope that once in power they will try to change our lives. Whether they are in the government or not, we will have to fight to win what we need.

Organisation Communiste Internationaliste

"To accuse us of wanting collectivism is a slander," retorted the secretary-general of the PCF to Robert Fabre, leader of the bourgeois party of Left Radicals. A slander, no more, no less. And, to be more precise, the PCF repeats again and again that the Common Program is a program of defense of the capitalist system; it is neither socialism nor communism. Very good.

Indeed, neither socialism nor communism. The Common Program is a program of defense of the capitalist system, more precisely of the Fifth Republic. . . .

The Stalinists and Social Democrats, "twins of the counterrevolution," as Trotsky wrote, must erect a counterrevolutionary barrier to try to preserve the system of private property, the Fifth Republic.

The leaders of the PCF and SP have no differences on this point. . . .

The Union of the Left is a popular front, neither more nor less. It follows that the PCF and the SP are afraid to break up the Union of the Left and will have great difficulty doing so at a time when the revolutionary crisis has not yet broken out, for then they would be unable to deal with the revolutionary mobilization of the masses.

It is in the light of this analysis that we can assess the breadth and import of the crisis now shaking the Union of the Left popular front.

The Stalinist leaders have a precise objective: to protect the Fifth Republic; that is, to prolong the reign of Giscard-

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Barre as much as possible.

Unlike the SP, the French agency of the international apparatus of the Kremlin is not motivated by the search for an "electoral victory." Is that a slander?

No. The policy of the PCF is fundamentally determined in accordance with the defense of the Moscow Stalinist bureaucracy, which struggles against the world revolution with all its might. Obviously this does not mean that the links between Moscow and the PCF are comparable to what they were at the height of Stalinism. But that is another story.

The "updating" of the Common Program the PCF has demanded, as well as its calls for the entry of a fourth, Gaullist component, represent efforts by the PCF to implement this policy of division, the objective of which is to prop up the Barre government and the Fifth Republic in its death agony.

It is clear that the leaders of the PCF are taking many initiatives in an attempt to demoralize workers and militants; in the concrete this means directly supporting Giscard-Barre.

To struggle for the formation of a PCF and SP government without Gaullists or Left Radicals and for the resignation of Giscard, as is proposed in the appeal of the Central Committee of the OCI (for the reconstruction of the Fourth International), means to concretely counterpose the workers united front to the Union of the Left.

There is not and there will never be a "good common program" for the working class.

That is why the OCI fights unconditionally for the unity of the PCF and SP, for

the victory of the candidates of the PCF and SP in the elections, and for the resignation of Giscard. This means working in practice to open the road that will enable the masses to realize their aspirations, to sweep away the Fifth Republic and the constitution, to open the road to a workers and peasants government. That is the policy of the Fourth International.



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There has been great surprise. What we thought was a mere rift in the relations between the parties of the Left has become a real crisis, a crisis which no one predicted, beginning with the OCT itself. (See *L'Étincelle*, No. 30.) Underestimating the intensity of the test of strength the CP and SP had plunged into, we concluded that they would not endanger their alliance before the elections. But nothing is going well on the Left today. Those who marched in all the demonstrations drowning out the slogans of struggle with their sonorous, insistent chant, "Union, action, Common Program," are now trumpeting their own division. The CP and SP are vying with each other to convince the workers to come over to their side against yesterday's partner. . . .

The workers must of course intervene in this debate, *but on their own basis*. Neither the Common Program of 1972, nor the CP version, nor the SP version can respond to

today's demands of the workers as they are expressed in struggle.

Unity is necessary. But what does genuine unity of the workers mean today? Unity is the determined struggle against unemployment (which divides employed and unemployed workers so deeply), against the discrimination against immigrant workers, against the superexploitation and oppression of working women. The answers of the Common Program, whether in the CP or SP version, are more than weak on these points.

And in the nationalized enterprises, what will enable the workers to become something other than machines of production, what will enable them to control the work pace, to know why, how, and for whom they are producing?

Common Program, SP program, or CP program, what will happen to the overwhelming majority of the workers, those

employed not in the nationalized companies but in companies over which "the employers will retain power," as Marchais himself has put it?

These are the questions the workers are asking every day. Today more than ever we must find ways of talking about this in the factories and offices; we must find ways of organizing discussions and general assemblies with the unions to find out what the workers think and what they want. . . .

The debate over what kind of society we want is not between the CP and SP, but between the various projects of class collaboration and the revolutionary project for socialism and workers power.

Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion

One lesson must be drawn from all this. The search for agreements with the bourgeois forces inevitably leads the workers parties (even the reformists) to retreat from their own positions, even if they hold the majority in the coalition. The workers must count on their own forces and their own strength, their unity around their own needs and demands. To achieve success they must build this unity, beginning right now, around the thirty-five-hour week, the sliding scale of wages and hours, and the massive nationalization without compensation and under workers management of the great enterprises that are closing down or laying workers off. Their strength is their unity with their organizations: what is needed is a PCF and SP government, without Gaullists or Radicals. This government must throw Giscard out. It must satisfy the workers demands; the workers and the Communist and Socialist militants must have their say; they must be able to really intervene. The Communist, Socialist, and revolutionary workers must unite in support of such measures, to make the workers parties break with the bourgeoisie, break with the logic of profit and the capitalist system, and take the road of socialism. . . .

These are the stakes of the upcoming election campaign, in which a united current of revolutionaries must come forward fighting around clear positions capable of bringing about the uncompromising unity of the workers against the bourgeoisie. . . . Thus, there must be no delay:

- Build discussion committees wherever the revolutionary forces are present;
- Let us act together in the nationalized or nationalizable enterprises so that the central question of who decides and who will decide is posed during coming months;
- Let us start a common discussion and initiate common action, from the ranks to the leadership, among forces and militants who uphold revolutionary perspectives. □

From Lin Piao to Confucius and Chou En-lai

Interview With Peng Shu-tse

[Continued from last week]

Q. What happened at the Ninth Congress?

A. The congress, held in April 1969, was attended by 1,512 delegates, appointed, not elected, by the local Revolutionary Committees. From the outset, the congress was dominated by those who had newly come to prominence in the Cultural Revolution.

Lin Piao made a political report speaking for the Central Committee, most of whose members had been purged. Lin praised Mao for launching the Cultural Revolution, and praised the army for carrying it through. He never mentioned any of the resultant problems nor did he offer proposals for rebuilding the economy and the people's morale. His report was a stream of abstract slogans:

Grasp revolution, promote production. . . .
. . . to develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and co-operation with socialist countries on the principle of proletarian internationalism; to support and assist the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed people and nations; to strive for peaceful coexistence with countries having different social systems on the basis of the Five Principals. . . .

Bury U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionism and their lackeys. . . .³⁴

Lin did propose that all cadres who made mistakes in the past be rehabilitated for party or government work if they would admit their errors. This proposal was designed to rebuild the ranks of the Mao-Lin faction, but cadres did not flock back to the party under these terms.

The most important victory for Mao and Lin at the congress was the adoption of a new party constitution, which restored the references to "Mao Tsetung thought" that had been omitted by the Eighth Party Congress:

Mao Tsetung Thought is Marxism-Leninism of the era in which imperialism is heading for total collapse and socialism is advancing to worldwide victory.

For half a century now . . . Comrade Mao Tsetung has integrated the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of revolution, inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism and has brought it to a higher and completely new stage.

Comrade Lin Piao has consistently held high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought and has most loyally and resolutely carried out

and defended Comrade Mao Tsetung's proletarian revolutionary line. Comrade Lin Piao is Comrade Mao Tsetung's close comrade-in-arms and successor.³⁵

The congress elected a new Central Committee of 170 members, with military men taking 30 percent of the seats. Nine military men were elected to the twenty-one-member Politburo. Military people held a majority of the posts in the new government, with the offices of defense minister, army chief of staff, commander of the air force, and head of the Political Commission of the navy, all under the influence of Lin Piao. Lin also controlled the military men who headed the Revolutionary Committees.

Q. What caused the conflict between Mao and Lin?

A. After the Ninth Congress, Mao, feeling greatly threatened that the country's military apparatus was under Lin's control, proclaimed a new slogan: "the party must command the gun, not the gun command the party." Lin responded to this indication of Mao's change of attitude toward him by organizing his own faction.

Mao began the elimination of his new opponents with the purge of Ch'en Po-ta in August 1970 from his post as chairman of the CRG and member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau. It was not clear at the time why Ch'en had disappeared from public life, but later, at the Tenth Party Congress, Chou En-lai labeled Ch'en as a principal member of Lin Piao's "antiparty" group.

After Ch'en was purged, Lin was forced to reveal his plans. In a document called "Outline of Project 571," he stated:

. . . he [Mao] abused the trust and post given [him] by the Chinese people. . . . In reality he became a current Ch'in Shih-huang. . . .³⁶ He is not a real Marxist-Leninist and uses the name Marxism-Leninism to carry out his doctrine of Confucianism-Menciusism, adopting the method of Ch'in Shih-huang. He is the greatest tyrant in the history of China.³⁷

35. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

36. Ch'in Shih-huang was the first emperor of China. He unified the country in 221 B.C., defeating the many warring kingdoms and establishing a centralized absolute monarchy. In traditional Chinese history he was regarded as a tyrant.

37. *October Review*, August 1974 (published by

These charges against Mao made it clear that Lin was preparing a coup d'état. However, he was betrayed by his own daughter before he could act. Mao's government later claimed that Lin and his main followers attempted to escape to the Soviet Union, but their plane was shot down over Outer Mongolia. All passengers were killed.

Mao was left in a desperately isolated position, having eliminated by one means or another so many of the party's leaders. It was impossible for him to publicly explain his conflict with Lin; therefore Mao needed the assistance of Chou En-lai.

The Mao-Chou combination attempted to clear the air at the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973. Chou gave a political report in the name of the Central Committee in which he labeled Lin as a "bourgeois careerist" and a "conspirator" who "launched [a] coup in a wild attempt to assassinate our great leader Chairman Mao." Lin was accused of trying to turn the CCP into a "revisionist, fascist party," reinstating the landlords and the bourgeois classes.

Internationally, they wanted to capitulate to Soviet revisionist social-imperialism and ally themselves with imperialism, revisionism and reaction to oppose China, communism and revolution.

Lin Piao, this bourgeois careerist, conspirator and double-dealer, engaged in machinations within our Party not just for one decade but for several decades.³⁸

Most of Chou's report was pure slander, but it served to establish reasons why Lin had betrayed Mao. All references to Lin were removed from the party statutes.

A number of old leaders such as Teng Hsiao-p'ing, T'an Chen-lin, and Ulanfu were rehabilitated. Some military commanders such as Hsu Shih-yu, Ch'en Hsi-lien, and Han Hsien-ch'u were also rehabilitated. Wang Hung-wen was promoted to vice-chairman of the party.

A nationwide campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius was launched from autumn 1973 to the end of 1974, during which the remnants of Lin's faction were attacked and purged and military commanders were transferred from their bases of support. Hsu Shih-yu was transferred from Nanking to Canton, Ch'en Hsi-lien from Manchuria to Peking, and Han Hsien-ch'u from Fukien to Lanchow.

Trotskyists in Hong Kong). Quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, January 12, 1976, p. 17.

38. *Peking Review*, September 7, 1973, p. 20.

34. *Peking Review*, April 30, 1969, p. 33.

Mao assumed all these changes would secure his personal dictatorship once again, but a new powerful figure stood in his way—Chou En-lai.

Q. Did Chou have his own faction?

A. Since the demise of the Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao factions, Chou had become a magnet for dissatisfied leaders and cadres. Chou's rising power was evidenced at the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975, which unanimously adopted his proposal for the Four Modernizations—in industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology. Most of the newly elected members of the Standing Committee were Chou's people, including its chairman Chu Te, one of Mao's arch foes.

Chou En-lai was reelected premier, Teng Hsiao-p'ing became first vice-premier and army chief of staff. Yeh Chien-ying became defense minister. The only post taken by a member of Mao's faction was third vice-premier and head of the Army Political Commission, to which Chang Ch'un-ch'iao was elected. In short, Chou En-lai became the real leader of the Peoples Republic of China and Mao was now merely a figurehead.

After the congress, Mao launched a new campaign aimed at Chou's faction. An editorial in the March 1975 *Red Flag* stated:

Millions of millions of people must learn and grasp Marxism concerning the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the most important thing in consolidating and strengthening the proletarian dictatorship. All members of party committees must learn and grasp the theory of the proletarian dictatorship in order to carry out consciously the basic line and all policies and advance to carry out the anti-Lin, anti-Confucius [i.e., anti-Chou—P.S.] campaign.

Mao used the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a smokescreen for the dictatorship of Mao Tse-tung, and justified all past purges as necessary for the defense of Marxist principles. Mao was also warning "all members of the party committees" that they will be severely punished or purged if they do not "grasp" Mao's personal dictatorship and carry out Mao's "basic line and all policies."³⁹

The Maoists wrote a series of articles indirectly charging Chou with being a traitor. They compared him to the famous character Sung Chiang in the novel *Water Margin*, who had turned traitor.

In addition to the public slanders, the Maoists caused great physical discomfort to Chou En-lai in his final illness, hoping to hasten his death. They had his personal physician transferred out of Peking so he could not care for Chou. Wang Hung-wen forced Chou to accept a telephone call from

Mao while he was undergoing medical treatment in the hospital. Chou's close supporter, Education Minister Chou Jung-hsin, was driven to suicide under an onslaught of public criticism. And these are only a few of the harassments perpetrated against Chou on his deathbed.

Q. Did Mao ever attack Chou openly?

A. No. After Chou's death on January 8, 1976, Mao focused the campaign on Chou's legal successor, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who was called a "rehabilitated rightist" and a "capitalist-roader." Chou's Four Modernizations were also attacked.

Mao's response to Chou's death led directly to the huge demonstration in Peking's Tien An Men Square, April 5, 1976⁴⁰. The demonstrators' violent actions, including burning police cars and a military barracks, were a direct challenge to the CCP regime headed by Mao. For the first time, Mao's "thought" was publicly denounced as "castrating Marxism-Leninism." The action foreshadowed the revolutionary movement needed to overthrow the bureaucracy when the participants declared, "We fear not shedding our blood and laying down our lives."

After the Hungarian revolution, Mao had remarked that certain people "hoped that something similar would happen in China." In April 1976, thousands upon thousands of Chinese people did precisely what Mao feared—demonstrated against the government.

Despite the fact that Mao mercilessly suppressed the demonstrators, their defiant and determined spirit will remain as a specter haunting China, just as the *Communist Manifesto* welcomed the "specter haunting Europe." In fact, after Mao witnessed this specter, he died and went to the kind of "hell" history reserves for dictators and tyrants.

Q. Did Mao's death spell the death of his faction?

A. Mao's personal dictatorship ended in a fitting manner, with the purge of his most faithful followers, Chiang Ch'ing, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, Wang Hung-wen, and Yao Wen-yuan—all purged by Mao's hand-picked successor, Hua Kuo-feng. The scenario parallels the purges of Malenkov and Beria by Khrushchev after Stalin's death.

In reviewing Mao's political career, it is indisputable that his ideas were inherited directly from Stalin—class collaboration, revolution-by-stages, socialism in one country, and peaceful coexistence between capitalism and socialism. Mao loyally and systematically propagated Stalin's ideol-

ogy throughout his life, from the opportunist KMT-CCP collaboration to the adventurist armed struggle for power after the 1927 defeat. Mao closely followed Stalin's example of purging the entire generation of Bolsheviks and young revolutionists of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s as he established his own personal cult and bureaucratic dictatorship in China.

Mao strove to be the greatest Stalinist in the world. He became a true Stalin in China, his character and methods almost identical to those of his Soviet hero. Mao attempted politically, if not physically, to destroy anyone who questioned his policies or who had authority with the masses in their own right—Liu Shao-ch'i, Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Lin Piao, and Chou En-lai, to name a few.

It is true that Mao was a modern-day Ch'in Shih-huang, a Chinese Nero, to whom Trotsky's words so aptly apply:

Nero, too, was a product of his epoch. Yet after he perished his statues were smashed and his name was scraped off everything. The vengeance of history is more terrible than the vengeance of the most powerful General Secretary [or Chairman—P.S.]. I venture to think that this is consoling.⁴¹

Q. Why did Mao receive so much praise after his death, by bourgeois politicians and radicals alike?

A. Bourgeois politicians like Gerald Ford and UN Secretary General Waldheim praised Mao because he had completely abandoned the world revolution in favor of peaceful coexistence with capitalism. He denounced the Soviet Union as social-imperialist and called on the capitalist world to overturn the gains of the October revolution. Needless to say, the bourgeois politicians were delighted at Mao's betrayal of socialism and found no difficulty calling him a "great leader" and "peacemaker."

Some Trotskyists misread Mao's political history and claimed he was not a Stalinist. They considered him to be a "bureaucratic centrist" because he zig-zagged between a revolutionary and anti-revolutionary course, finally going so far as to nationalize capitalist property and institute an agrarian reform. Yet Stalin carried out similar measures in Eastern Europe, and certainly Stalin remained a Stalinist.

Trotskyists have always maintained that Stalin was a counterrevolutionary despite the fact that he overturned capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe; since he established totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorships in these countries in conflict with the socialist economic base. This served as a brake on the development of the East European and the world revolution.

Leon Trotsky could have been talking

39. See *Intercontinental Press*, January 12, 1976, p. 22.

40. See interview with Peng in the September 13, 1976, issue of *Intercontinental Press* (p. 1291) for a thorough examination of this event.

41. *Stalin*, by Leon Trotsky (London: Panther Books, 1969), vol. 2, p. 202.

about Mao in China when he predicted the overturn of private property in Soviet-occupied Poland at the beginning of World War II:

The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this

or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only, decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a

whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to world revolution.⁴² □

42. *In Defense of Marxism*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), p. 19.

Revolution in Zimbabwe—8

Imperialism: In Search of a Neocolonial 'Settlement'

By Jim Atkinson

[*Eighth of a series*]

Since the British conquest of Zimbabwe in the 1890s, the fundamental objective of the imperialists there has remained unaltered. As elsewhere in southern Africa, their aim has been, and still is, to plunder the country's wealth by exploiting the African masses. Their tactics in pursuing this goal, however, have changed in accordance with the shifts in the alignment of class forces in the southern African region and on a world scale.

Before the settler regime in Salisbury unilaterally declared independence (UDI) on November 11, 1965, the imperialist government in London sought to engineer a transition to neocolonial forms of rule in Southern Rhodesia, as it did in Northern Rhodesia, which became the independent Republic of Zambia in October 1964, and in Nyasaland, which achieved independence as the Republic of Malawi in July 1964. In 1963, the London government dismantled the Central African Federation, under which all three territories had been administered by a colonial federal government based in Salisbury. The aim was to pave the way for a hand-over to procapitalist nationalist parties, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in Northern Rhodesia and the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in Nyasaland, under neocolonial arrangements in which imperialist economic interests would remain secure.

The British Tory government calculated that continued confrontation with the rising tide of nationalist militancy in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland might lead to further radicalization of the masses in these countries and the eventual evolution of the nationalist struggle in a revolutionary direction. A transition to neocolonial forms of rule was a surer bet from the imperialist point of view since the nationalist leaders who enjoyed the confidence of the broad mass of the African population were prepared to collaborate with and safeguard the interests of the imperialists.

The Tory government took a similar approach in the case of Zimbabwe. It attempted to channel the rising nationalist struggle by persuading the white settler regime to collaborate with the African petty-bourgeois leaders to prepare for a long drawn-out evolution to neocolonial rule.

Unlike in the other two territories of the Central African Federation, however, the white Rhodesian settlers had their own government apparatus, army, and air force; and they were prepared to use this state machinery to block the imperialists' drive for a neocolonial transition because it threatened to undermine a host of white settler privileges. In 1962, the far-right Rhodesian Front won a majority of parliamentary seats in an election that it fought in the settler community on a program of maintaining white rule for all time. In May 1965, the Rhodesian Front went on to win all fifty white seats in an election contested primarily on the "independence" issue—the Rhodesian Front arguing that Salisbury's independence from Britain was required to block the British government's moves to bring about a transi-

tion to Black rule and to guarantee continued white supremacy. On November 11, the Rhodesian Front government, headed by Prime Minister Ian Smith, declared UDI.

Though the imperialists in London had favored an evolution toward formal African rule and opposed the settler regime's intrasigent defense of indefinite white supremacy, the Labour government of Prime Minister Harold Wilson, which succeeded the Tories in October 1964 as the guardian of British imperialist interests, took no decisive action to stop UDI. Despite its preelection pledge of "No Independence Before Majority Rule" (NIBMAR), the Wilson government ruled out sending British troops to stop the settler regime from seizing independence.

Just before UDI, on November 1, 1965, Wilson said "If there are those who are thinking in terms of a thunderbolt hurtling from the sky and destroying their enemy, a thunderbolt in the shape of the Royal Air Force, let me say that the thunderbolt will not be forthcoming, and to continue in this illusion wastes valuable time and misdirects valuable energies."⁸⁶

Wilson repeated the point in the Commons the day the settlers declared UDI. Troops would not be sent, he said, "unless, of course, our troops are asked for to preserve law and order and to avert tragic action, subversion, murder, and so on."⁸⁷ What Wilson meant was that the British imperialists were prepared to waive their previous tactical opposition to the settlers' course, let UDI go unchallenged, and intervene only if the path pursued by the Smith regime radicalized the Zimbabwean masses to the point of "tragic action" and "subversion" that could threaten imperialism's fundamental interests.

The British Labour government's only response to UDI was a limited sanctions program that it knew could be easily punctured by the settler regime, but which it hoped would placate African opinion and left-wingers in the ranks of the Labour Party. On November 16, the Southern Rhodesian Act outlawed most British trade with the settler regime, but the government did not impose an oil embargo until December 17.

Wilson did not seek mandatory sanctions—and selective ones at that—from the United Nations Security Council until December 1966; and, throughout, the British government knew full well that the settler regime would have no problems getting round the sanctions by trading through South Africa and the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. To this day, Labour and Tory governments alike have refused to impose economic sanctions against South Africa.⁸⁸ The fact is that sanctions were such an insignifi-

86. Quoted in Loney, *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response*, p. 135.

87. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 143.

88. Speaking to a meeting organized by the Young Fabians on October 2,

cant pin-prick for the settler regime that the Rhodesian economy's gross domestic product grew in real terms by an average of 3.9 percent a year between 1965 and 1974.⁸⁹

Symptomatic of the phoniness of the sanctions policy has been the fact that for the past twelve years of UDI, British Petroleum, in which the British government actually has a majority shareholding, has been allowed, through its subsidiary in South Africa, to continue delivering oil supplies to the settler "rebels."

In fact, after the settlers' successful declaration of independence, the British Labour government looked for ways to legalize UDI. Loney explains the shift in the British government's tactical approach:

As the Smith régime survived sanctions and showed every sign of maintaining control, the pressure for a settlement with the rebel régime increased. If international capital was to be denied its preferred solution of a gradual transition to an inter-racial bourgeois government, then it must deal with Smith. The continued conflict with Southern Rhodesia was, in any case, a destabilizing element in Southern Africa and consequently jeopardized other trade and investment interests.⁹⁰

The problem then facing the Labour government was the following:

What kind of concessions would the Smith régime make to provide an adequate window-display for the legal hand-over of power to a white minority government? How could sanctions be removed and normal economic relations be restored? The last question was of particular importance to British industry, which before the imposition of sanctions had possessed a major share of the trade with, and investment in, Rhodesia.⁹¹

The imperialists in both Britain and the United States now began to view the settler regime, like the Portuguese colonies in Angola and Mozambique, as a white buffer state for South Africa, where the imperialist powers have vast investments and trading interests.⁹² The Wilson government dropped the NIBMAR policy and openly declared its opposition to immediate African majority rule. It stated in a policy paper released in 1966 that "the pace of the political advancement of the Africans should continue to be governed by achievements and merit, i.e. through the acquisition of the economic and educational qualifications prescribed under the 1961 constitution."⁹³

That is, the British government accepted the retention of a limited franchise based on property, income, and educational criteria which at the time was acknowledged to mean that Africans could not win a majority of seats in the Rhodesian parliament for at least fifteen years. Wilson was blunt about this;

British Foreign Minister David Owen reiterated the Labour government's opposition to sanctions against South Africa—despite repeated Labour Party conference resolutions demanding such a course of action against the Pretoria regime. "Our economic links with South Africa could not disappear overnight without causing dislocation to the domestic economy," Owen said. "We are living in the real world, and this is a harsh fact which we have to take more into account than any other Western European country." (*Guardian*, [London] October 3, 1977.)

89. Clarke, *Distribution of Income and Wealth in Rhodesia*, pp. 13-14.

90. Loney, *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response*, p. 163.

91. *Ibid.*

92. In 1976, the South African Reserve Bank put total foreign investment in South Africa and Namibia at £6,425 million (*Financial Times* [London], April 9, 1976). Martin Legassik and David Hemson have estimated in their study *Foreign Investment and the Reproduction of Racial Capitalism in South Africa* (Anti-Apartheid Movement, London, 1976) that "the South African connection counts for at least ten per cent of Britain's total foreign investment." According to figures published in 1975, there are a total of 630 British companies operating in South Africa, plus 494 from the United States, 132 from West Germany, and 85 from France. (*South Africa and the British Trade Union and Labour Movement*, Anti-Apartheid Movement, London, 1976).

93. Quoted in Loney, *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response*, p. 138.

"in his view, Rhodesia was not yet ready for majority rule," stated another government policy paper.⁹⁴

On two occasions, Wilson met Smith to try to legalize UDI—first aboard the *H.M.S. Tiger* in December 1966, and then aboard the *H.M.S. Fearless* in October 1968. The proposals for a constitutional settlement put forward by Wilson on both occasions would have entrenched white rule. "The proposals envisaged," writes Loney, "did not imply majority rule before independence, or even, indeed, in the foreseeable future. Claire Palley, the foremost constitutional authority on Rhodesia, estimated that the earliest possible date at which majority rule could result would be thirty years later—in 1999."⁹⁵ Forty-nine Labour MPs voted against the Labour government to voice their opposition to Wilson's *Fearless* proposals during a debate on Zimbabwe in the House of Commons on October 23, 1968.

The stumbling block to a deal between London and Salisbury on both occasions was the window-dressing needed by the Labour government to sell its racist policy to the British labor movement, the Africans, and world public opinion. The Labour government thought that it could pull the deal off if the Salisbury regime was prepared to guarantee that there would be no "constitutional retrogression." But, even though it would have taken Africans until 1999 to achieve a majority in the Rhodesian parliament under the *Tiger* and *Fearless* constitutional proposals, the Smith regime insisted on the right to stave off a Black parliamentary majority until even later through constitutional amendments. On this point, both sets of talks collapsed.

The Conservative government, which replaced the Labour administration in 1970, *did* strike a deal with the Smith regime. Loney notes that "the proposals which Sir Alec Douglas Home [the Tory foreign minister] presented in 1971, on behalf of the new Conservative government, were not qualitatively different from the earlier proposals. Like the proposals presented at the *Fearless* talks, they offered no possibility of majority rule in the foreseeable future. Claire Palley suggested 2035 as the earliest date, compared to 1999 for the *Fearless* proposals."⁹⁶

The Tory and settler governments reached agreement on these constitutional proposals; and the British government, in line with a long-standing pledge, dispatched a commission, under the direction of Lord Pearce, to Zimbabwe to investigate whether the settlement proposals were acceptable to both settlers and Africans. Home banked on the settler regime's repressive apparatus keeping the African masses quiet during the commission's visit, so that the commission could return with a positive verdict.

But the plan backfired. The African National Council (ANC) was set up under the leadership of Bishop Abel Muzorewa in December 1971, one month before the Pearce Commission's arrival, to mobilize Africans against the London-Salisbury deal. Massive street demonstrations swept across the country in opposition to the "settlement" and the settler regime arrested a total of 1,736 African protesters during the commission's stay in the country. In the eastern city of Umtali, police broke up a protest meeting with machine guns, killing eleven Blacks.

The Pearce Commission had no option but to report that the overwhelming majority of Africans rejected the "settlement" plan. Home was furious. "I would ask them [the Africans] to look again very carefully at what they have rejected," he pleaded. "The proposals are still available, because Mr Smith has not withdrawn or modified them."⁹⁷ The Tory government went on to use its veto three times in September 1972 in the UN Security Council to block resolutions barring independence except on the basis of majority rule.

Like the British government, the U.S. imperialists now also saw

94. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 165.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.

97. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 182.

the white Rhodesian regime as a valuable buffer for South Africa. In 1970, the Nixon government adopted Option Two of five policy options drawn up by Henry Kissinger, then national security adviser in National Security Study Memorandum 39. Option Two of NSSM 39, code-named "Tar Baby," was hinged on the assumption that the "whites are here to stay." It projected increasing material support for all the white-ruled regimes in southern Africa, while maintaining a public facade of moral opposition to apartheid and racism.⁹⁸

Under the policy, the United States granted a loan of \$436.5 million to Portugal in 1971, providing much-needed assistance to the Salazarist dictatorship at a time when it was beginning to feel severely the economic strains of maintaining up to 150,000 troops in Africa to fight three simultaneous wars against the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Tar Baby also meant stepped-up U.S. aid for the Smith regime. In 1971, the so-called Byrd Amendment was passed by the U.S. Congress, opening up the way for the resumption of shipments of Rhodesian chrome to the United States in violation of UN sanctions. The passage of the Byrd Amendment followed lobbying by two multinationals, Foote Mineral and Union Carbide. The South African subsidiaries of U.S. oil companies, notably Mobile, played an important role, like their British counterparts, in ensuring the settler regime's survival by continuing oil supplies.

At the same time, the settler regime won vital assistance from South Africa and Portugal. Portuguese-ruled Mozambique and South Africa were the white colony's key sanctions-busting lifelines; and the Portuguese, South African, and Rhodesian governments entered a military alliance to coordinate their counterinsurgency operations against Black freedom fighters throughout the southern African region. Pretoria provided Rhodesia with valuable military equipment, including the Eland armored car, a version of the French Panhard, built under license in South Africa. In mid-1967, the South African regime dispatched a company of paramilitary police to the Zambezi valley; and, by the end of 1974, it was estimated that there were between 2,000 and 3,000 South African paramilitary police and about two squadrons of South African helicopters, complete with crews, in Zimbabwe.⁹⁹

Close collaboration developed between the Rhodesian and Portuguese armed forces too. In October 1972, during a visit to Lisbon, Smith discussed the problems posed to both the Portuguese and Rhodesian regimes by the spreading nationalist insurgency in Mozambique's Tete Province adjoining northeastern Zimbabwe. And, in April 1973, the commander of the Portuguese armed forces in Mozambique, General Kaulza de Arriaga, disclosed that there was a "gentlemen's agreement" between Rhodesian and Portuguese security forces that either side could stage "hot pursuit" raids into each other's territory to strike at freedom fighters.¹⁰⁰

The successful pattern of collaboration and cooperation achieved by the Smith regime with the United States, Britain, South Africa, Portugal, and other imperialist powers was undermined in 1974-76 by the dramatic shift in the relations of class forces in southern Africa brought by the collapse of Portugal's African empire and the failure of the U.S.-South African intervention in Angola's civil war. The achievement of independence by Mozambique in June 1975 after a ten-year war against the Portuguese, and the Vorster regime's humiliating withdrawal from Angola in March 1976, inspired Blacks throughout southern Africa. Their heightened confidence and combativity was soon to be expressed in the massive township rebellions that swept through South Africa from June 1976 and by the flood of eager recruits who streamed across the Mozambique and Bots-

wana borders from Zimbabwe to enroll in the nationalist armies. Many thousands of would-be freedom fighters crossed into Mozambique from the end of 1975, and by March 1977 teen-age Zimbabweans were entering Botswana at the rate of about 800 a week.

The imperialist powers rapidly gauged that continued support for the Rhodesian settler regime would be suicidal for their long-term interests in southern Africa. They noted that the regime was embroiled in a war that it could not win and that the longer the struggle continued, the more likely it was that the Zimbabwean masses would move to the left and seek revolutionary solutions to their decades-old oppression at the hands of the whites. This in turn, the imperialist policy-makers judged, could reinforce the mobilizations of the oppressed masses in South Africa itself, where imperialist interests loom far larger than they do in Zimbabwe. In short, the mounting crisis in Zimbabwe was starting to threaten imperialist interests throughout southern Africa.

The other side of the equation, these policy-makers noted, was that the established leaders of the Zimbabwean nationalist movements were prepared to collaborate with imperialism. They seek formal Black rule but do not plan to overturn capitalist property relations and end imperialist domination of Zimbabwe's economy. They are, in short, suitable partners for establishing neocolonial forms of rule similar to the pattern established in the African countries north of Zimbabwe's borders. These nationalist leaders, moreover, are among the only people who hold the confidence of the masses and can contain their mobilizations.

The imperialists concurred that the Smith regime had to go and a Black neocolonial regime take over as soon as possible.

The major Western powers declared that they would give no more support to the settler government. "We are not going to give any moral support or anything else to people who have been running a repressive regime, contrary to anything we believe in, and in some ways a semi-fascist regime," Prime Minister Wilson said February 19, 1976.¹⁰¹ The foreign ministers of the European Economic Community (EEC) declared at a meeting in Luxembourg on February 23, 1976, that the EEC supported the "right of the Rhodesian and Namibian peoples to self-determination and independence."¹⁰² And U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger declared on March 16, 1976, that Washington "will do nothing to help the white minority to exercise authority in Rhodesia."¹⁰³

The imperialists' diplomatic offensive against the Smith regime took on clear shape with the unveiling of a new policy package by James Callaghan, then British foreign secretary, on March 22, 1976. Speaking in Parliament, he laid out four preconditions for talks with the settler regime, Smith, he said, would have to agree to the principle of majority rule, accept that independence would not be recognized except under majority rule, agree not to stretch out negotiations over a long period, and accept an eighteen-month to two-year transition period to elections establishing majority rule. If agreement was reached, Callaghan promised, the British government would urge an end to the guerrilla war, ask the UN to halt sanctions, and provide funds to encourage whites to stay in Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁴

A month later, Kissinger started a famous "diplomatic safari" in Africa. Speaking in Lusaka, Zambia, on April 27, he spelled out Washington's new Africa policy. He expressed "support in the strongest terms" for the Callaghan proposals and reiterated that the Rhodesian regime could not expect any help from the U.S. government in its war against the nationalists. "On the contrary," he said, "it will face our unrelenting opposition until a negotiated settlement is achieved." He promised that the Ford

98. *The Kissinger Study on Southern Africa* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1975), pp. 66-70.

99. Wilkinson, "From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," in Davidson, Slovo, Wilkinson, *Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution*, pp. 310, 329.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 273.

101. *The Times* (London), February 20, 1976.

102. *The Times* (London), February 24, 1976.

103. *New York Times*, March 17, 1976.

104. *The Times* (London), March 23, 1976.

administration would urge Congress to repeal the Byrd Amendment, said that Washington would aid Zimbabwean refugees, and offered a \$12.5 million aid program to compensate Mozambique for losses suffered following the closure of its border with Rhodesia the previous March. He urged whites to stay in Zimbabwe under a Black government and proposed a post-settlement program of U.S. economic and technical assistance.¹⁰⁵

Kissinger went on to court support for the new Anglo-American policy from South Africa. He met the apartheid regime's prime minister, John Vorster, three times between June and September 1976, in West Germany, Switzerland, and finally South Africa. During his visit to South Africa, on September 17-19, Kissinger laid out the imperialists' viewpoint directly to Smith—and succeeded in convincing him to appear on Rhodesian television September 24 to make a vague commitment to the idea of a two-year transition to majority rule. The imperialists then pushed on with their diplomatic offensive, with the British government summoning a constitutional conference in Geneva attended by delegations from the settler regime and four Zimbabwean nationalist parties. The conference opened on October 28 but broke up in failure on December 15 following refusals by the settler delegation to translate Smith's September 24 verbal pledge into active support for the imperialists' option of a neocolonial settlement.

The Anglo-American initiative did not end there, however. The incoming Carter administration said in Washington that it would continue along the path charted by Ford and Kissinger. On February 10, 1977, the new U.S. secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, said that the White House wanted a speedy resumption of the talks and promised quick legislation to repeal the Byrd Amendment.¹⁰⁶ On March 14, the House of Representatives voted 250-146 to repeal the Byrd Amendment, and the Senate followed suit the next day.¹⁰⁷

On September 1, 1977, yet another Anglo-American "settlement plan" was published—during a visit to Salisbury by Andrew Young, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and British Foreign Secretary David Owen. The Owen-Young Plan projected a six-month transition to majority rule.

The purpose of all this diplomatic activity had earlier been made crystal clear by the authors of the new Anglo-American policy. On September 11, 1976, Kissinger said that his shuttle diplomacy through Africa was designed to stop "the radicalization of the whole continent."¹⁰⁸ David Scott, the British ambassador to South Africa, put the same point even more bluntly in a speech on May 11, 1977. "The whole aim of this exercise in Rhodesia," he said, referring to the Anglo-American initiative, "is to provide a peaceful transition to a state that is not Marxist."¹⁰⁹

Shortly after Carter's election victory, in a press conference in Chicago, Andrew Young was remarkably frank about imperialist calculations in southern Africa. He said:

I don't think the United States has but one option and that's neocolonialism.

As bad as that has been made to sound, neo-colonialism means that the multinational corporations will continue to have major influence in the development and productive capacities of the third world. And they are, whether we like it or not. I don't think any American administration—and I don't think any African administration—has yet been able to escape from that.

... the problems of Africa directly relate to the fact that their wealth is mineral wealth and nobody has the technology to extract that wealth other than the multinational corporations. And even a so-called leftist government like Angola has from the very beginning, including in its revolutionary days, been closer to Gulf Oil Company than they have been able to get to the State Department.¹¹⁰

The imperialist policy-makers have been forthright about expressing their fears of what could happen to their interests in southern Africa if the Salisbury regime persists in refusing to fall into line behind the neocolonial option. Ted Rowlands, the British minister of state for African affairs, asked after the collapse of the Geneva conference whether Smith wanted to "play Samson and bring the whole temple down."¹¹¹ William Schauffe, a U.S. State Department official who played a prominent part in the settlement drive, expressed a fear on April 29, 1977, that "without rapid progress toward settlement we face the prospect of chaos in southern Africa."¹¹²

A key feature of the imperialists' "settlement" proposals has been the notion of a "transitional" or "interim" period before majority rule. Callaghan, in his March 22, 1976, speech, suggested eighteen months to two years. At the Geneva conference, the British government held out for fifteen months.¹¹³ Since then, with events gathering pace in Zimbabwe, the imperialist powers have had to telescope this transitional period—down to six months in the September 1977 Owen-Young Plan.

The aim of this insistence on a transitional period, during which colonial rule would be maintained, is to help groom a team of procapitalist Black leaders to take over the reins of government. To this end, the British imperialists have repeatedly indicated their interest in playing an active role in the grooming process. "For their part," announced Anthony Crosland, then foreign secretary, on December 2, 1976, "Her Majesty's Government are ready to play a direct role in the transitional government if it is the general view that this would be helpful. The nature of this British presence would, of course, depend on the structure agreed for the interim government."¹¹⁴

This idea was spelled out in detail in the Owen-Young Plan, which proposes a six-month transition period of direct British rule under a constitution enacted by the British Parliament.¹¹⁵ During this period, the plan stipulates, Zimbabwe would be governed by a British-appointed "resident commissioner" who in effect would have the powers of a dictator. He would be the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and have full executive and legislative powers. There would be no parliament.

Under the provisions of the Owen-Young Plan the transitional constitution will "specifically give him power to give binding directions to all public officers and authorities." As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the resident commissioner may require "any member of such a force to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown and an oath to uphold the constitution and obey the laws of Southern Rhodesia."

The whole purpose of this six-month period of strict British tutelage is to ensure that imperialist interests are safeguarded when a Black regime is finally set up. In fact, the Owen-Young Plan explicitly states that "protection from the deprivation of property" is to be a "right" guaranteed by the constitution under the post-transition Black government. This, explained the September 2 *Financial Times*, "will confer protection from expropriation of property except on specified grounds and even then only on condition that there is prompt payment of adequate compensation . . . and that compensation may be remitted abroad within a reasonable period."

During the transition period, the plan states, the resident commissioner will be able to make use of the existing machinery of the settler state to police the population and guarantee an orderly transition to neocolonial rule. "The judges of the High Court and the Subordinate Courts," the plan lays down, "will be

105. *New York Times*, April 28, 1976.

106. *Washington Post*, February 11, 1977.

107. *New York Times*, March 15 and March 16, 1977.

108. *Washington Post*, September 13, 1976.

109. *Rhodesia Herald* (Salisbury), May 12, 1977.

110. *Southern Africa* (New York), March 1977, p. 8.

111. *The Guardian* (London), January 28, 1976.

112. *Rhodesia Herald* (Salisbury), April 30, 1977.

113. *The Guardian* (London), November 10, 1976.

114. *The Times* (London), December 3, 1976.

115. For details of the Owen-Young Plan, see *Financial Times* (London), September 2, 1977.

the persons who are serving in those respective capacities immediately before it comes into operation." And: "All persons holding or acting in public offices immediately before the coming into operation of the [transitional] Constitution will continue to hold or act in the like offices."

In addition, the plan proposes, there will be a state of emergency during the transitional period. "As a precautionary measure," it says, "a number of emergency powers now operating in Southern Rhodesia will need to be available to the Resident Commissioner immediately upon the commencement of the Transitional Constitution, which will therefore deem a proclamation of emergency to be in force as from that date."

These emergency powers could be used to crack down on Zimbabwean activists who oppose the neocolonial plans of London and Washington.

Furthermore, since early 1976, imperialist policy-makers have recognized that troops would have to be sent to Zimbabwe to underwrite their plans for a transition to neocolonial rule. On February 19, 1976, David Ennals, a minister of state at the British Foreign Office, said that Britain could become involved "in policing operations after a return to legality and while an agreed settlement was being put into effect."¹¹⁶ And Callaghan, after announcing his March 22, 1976, proposals, suggested that "if there is an agreement acceptable to all shades of opinion, we must be ready, at some sacrifice to ourselves, to assist in ensuring that the settlement is translated into reality."¹¹⁷

Eight months later, on November 17, Crosland told the House of Commons that a "Commonwealth peace-keeping force" was being considered.¹¹⁸ And, during the Commonwealth summit in London in June 1977, soundings were made among Commonwealth heads of state about the contributions that Commonwealth countries might be prepared to make to such a force.¹¹⁹

But, by the time that the Owen-Young Plan had been published in September, the focus had shifted to the United Nations. According to the plan, the British resident commissioner would administer Zimbabwe during the transition period in liaison with a UN special representative for Zimbabwe appointed by the UN secretary-general, Kurt Waldheim. After a cease-fire had been agreed on by the settler regime and the Zimbabwe freedom fighters, the plan stipulates, the resident commissioner and the UN special representative would arrive in Salisbury, backed by a "UN Zimbabwe force whose role may include:

- "1. The supervision of the ceasefire;
- "2. Support for the Civil Power;
- "3. Liaison with the existing Rhodesian Armed Forces and with the forces of the liberation armies."

The purpose of such a force is self-evident. It is to integrate the thousands of armed Black guerrillas into a hierarchical, disciplined, bourgeois army—in conjunction with at least some of the present Rhodesian army—in order to buttress and consolidate the neocolonial "settlement" desired by the imperialists. Thus, the plan states that one of the UN force's jobs would be to help form "a new Zimbabwe National Army which will in due course replace all existing armed forces in Rhodesia and will be the army of the future independent state of Zimbabwe." The UN force could be used to disarm any insurgents who showed opposition to the establishment of a neocolonial regime or refused to be absorbed into a bourgeois army.

Under the plan, the British resident commissioner would not only have a UN military force at his disposal. The plan states that "the primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order during the transition period will lie with the police forces." This refers to the *overwhelmingly paramilitary* police of the

present settler regime. The British South Africa Police (BSAP), so named because the force was once the private police arm of Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company, has played a key military role alongside the Rhodesian army in combating the Black freedom fighters.

Like the UN force, the BSAP could be used by the resident commissioner to suppress African opposition to the actions of the British administration and to guarantee the "orderly" and "stable" character of the transition to neocolonial rule.

The resident commissioner and the UN special representative were both named shortly after the publication of the Owen-Young Plan. On September 1, the British government designated Field Marshal Lord Carver as future resident commissioner; and, following a 13-0 vote in the UN Security Council on September 29 approving a British resolution for the appointment of the UN special representative, Waldheim named Lt. Gen. Prem Chand, a retired Indian army officer, as the UN's man in Zimbabwe.

Both Carver and Chand are well-experienced in colonial policing operations. Carver, British Chief of Defence Staff from 1973 to 1976, was Chief of Staff of the British colonial forces that suppressed the Mau Mau nationalist insurgency in Kenya in the 1950s. Chand, as UN general officer commanding the Katanga region of the Congo (now Zaïre) in 1962-63, played a key role in defending imperialist interests during the Congo crisis.

Supporters of the right of Zimbabweans to self-determination have a responsibility to oppose the moves being made by the imperialist powers to send UN troops to Zimbabwe. Equally, they should speak out against the Anglo-American bid to set up a "transitional" British dictatorship in the country. Not only would such moves be intended to forestall real national liberation by forging a neocolonial regime to defend imperialist economic domination, but they would fly in the face of the principle of the Zimbabwean right to self-determination.

Zimbabweans have the right to determine their own affairs without another day of settler or imperialist interference in their country. In short, they have the right to immediate, unconditional majority rule.

Another notable feature of the Anglo-American diplomatic offensive is the proposal for a "Zimbabwe Development Fund" (ZDF). On April 22, 1977, the U.S. government announced plans for an internationally-subscribed \$1.5 billion fund, as a kind of "Marshall Plan for Zimbabwe" to give the economic shot-in-the-arm required to set a pro-Western Black regime on the right road.¹²⁰ The proposal for a ZDF was incorporated in the Owen-Young Plan, which says that it "should be at a minimum approaching \$US1,000m and at a maximum rather less than \$US1,500m." Washington would provide 40 percent of the fund's capital, London 15 percent. The fund would be managed by the World Bank and have a life of five years.

One of the objectives of the ZDF proposal is to provide the financial underpinning for the consolidation of a Black bourgeoisie—a class whose development has been stunted by the settler regime's racist laws and which the imperialists know they must strengthen if it is to perform adequately in its role of controlling the masses under a neocolonial arrangement.

Thus the Owen-Young Plan states that the ZDF will help to "effect a smooth transition to a more balanced pattern of access to ownership of farms, houses and businesses."

The plan states also that "its efforts should encourage commercial capital flows." Indeed, the imperialists hope that with an "orderly" transition to neocolonial rule there will be an influx of private foreign capital to underwrite the stability of the new regime. It is being suggested in government and business circles in the Western world that, with the dismantling of sanctions, firms with interests in Zimbabwe, especially in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, will be able to break into lucrative export markets in the more underdeveloped African countries to the north.

120. *Washington Post*, April 23, 1977.

116. *Financial Times* (London), February 20, 1976.

117. *Financial Times* (London), March 23, 1976.

118. *The Guardian* (London), November 18, 1976.

119. *Bulawayo Chronicle*, June 21, 1977.

Throughout their diplomatic offensive, the imperialist powers have sought the cooperation of South African Prime Minister John Vorster in bringing Smith to heel. Like the British and U.S. governments, the apartheid regime in Pretoria shifted its tactics in the wake of the collapse of Portugal's rule in Mozambique and Angola and its own disastrous intervention in the Angolan civil war in late 1975. The "white buffer state" policy was brushed aside in favor of angling for a transfer to neocolonial rule in Zimbabwe, as in the ex-Portuguese colonies.

Pretoria, like Washington and London, recognizes now that the settler regime cannot hope to inflict a military defeat on the Black guerrillas in Zimbabwe and fears that a continued, spiraling conflict could add to the growing instability in South Africa itself. The Pretoria regime also recognizes the willingness of the Zimbabwean nationalist leaders to maintain the capitalist system in Zimbabwe and calculates that South Africa will be able to use its colossal economic leverage over Zimbabwe to ensure that the country's future Black rulers will not strike at white South Africa's interests. Pretoria's new bid for a neocolonial "settlement" in Zimbabwe is now part of its broader drive for "détente" and collaboration with the African neocolonial regimes.

The London *Times* pointed to some of the considerations that underlie Vorster's policy in an editorial published in September 1976. "Mr Vorster," the editors noted, "can see as well as anyone else that the whole map of Africa is changing and that he would be better off with a reasonably friendly black government in Rhodesia than a beleaguered white one, especially since armed help for white Rhodesians would earn him even more obloquy than sending a column into Angola. He needs time to patch up his wobbly detente with his neighbours and to find some way of coming to terms with internal unrest. His time may be running out, and helping a white Rhodesian regime would make it run out even faster."¹²¹

Vorster's diplomatic moves to try to engineer a neocolonial "settlement" started in 1974, shortly after the downfall of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal. In October of that year, South African and Zambian government officials started hammering out plans in a series of top-level meetings to bring Smith to the negotiating table with the African nationalist leaders. The negotiations culminated on August 9 in the Pretoria Agreement, signed by Smith, Vorster, and Mark Chona, a special envoy of Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda. The agreement was that Smith would sit down with the nationalist leaders to discuss a constitutional "settlement."

The conference, which was held on August 25 aboard a train on the Victoria Falls bridge straddling the Zambezi on the Zambian-Rhodesian border, went off like a damp firecracker—with Smith, as he proved repeatedly on later occasions, unwilling to countenance the neocolonial policy advocated by Vorster.

A year later, the South African government voiced its support for the Kissinger initiative. In an important speech to the Natal congress of the ruling National Party on August 13, 1976, South African Minister of Foreign Affairs Hilgard Muller declared that "I wish to say outright that I am very concerned about the escalation of violence in Rhodesia because the direction into which the terrorist war is developing is exactly what the Russians and Cuban are waiting for—the excuse."¹²²

Muller applauded the Kissinger initiative as "most encouraging" and, in Washington, South African embassy officials clipped a preamble to the text of Muller's speech that made the foreign minister's meaning even clearer. "A solution to the Rhodesian issue on the basis of majority rule with adequate protection for minority rights is acceptable to South Africa."¹²³

But, despite this preference for a transition to neocolonial rule in Zimbabwe, the South African regime has not been prepared to

do more than advise Smith on the wisdom of this "solution" to the crisis—or, at most, apply very minor pressure. Pretoria has held back from cutting off Salisbury's arms supplies and imposing economic sanctions—two actions which, if taken, would probably bring the settler regime in Salisbury to heel in short order.

"We can point out alternatives, we can point out realities, we can advise. That is as far as I went in the past, and that is as far as I am prepared to go in the future," Vorster explained September 5, 1976.¹²⁴ Again, on September 13, 1976, he said: "The Rhodesians are a proud people. I will not prescribe to Rhodesians. They will not take orders from me or anyone else."¹²⁵ On January 28, 1977, he was even more explicit: "Demands to shut our borders and impose boycotts cannot be acceded to because they are contrary to the policy of this government."¹²⁶ On September 18, Vorster said that he would not force Smith to accept the Owen-Young Plan.¹²⁷

The main reason why the Vorster regime is unwilling at present to place any economic muscle behind its policy of pushing for a neocolonial "solution" in Zimbabwe is that a successful imposition of sanctions in this instance could stimulate greater support throughout the world for proposals to impose similar sanctions against the Pretoria regime itself.

Owen, however, argues that in the final analysis the mounting crisis in Zimbabwe as well as sustained diplomatic lobbying by the Western powers will finally prompt the Pretoria regime to throw its weight decisively behind the Anglo-American "solution" to the Zimbabwe crisis. "In such a situation," he said on October 2, 1977, "I am convinced that the South Africans will see it as in their own national interest to support an internationally accepted solution."¹²⁸

But, so long as its lifelines though South Africa have remained open, the Rhodesian settler regime has not shown much enthusiasm for the neocolonial option, which the settlers fear would jeopardize their vast social privileges.

And, at times, Rhodesian ministers have suggested that the whites would be prepared to fight, guns blazing, to the last drop of blood in defense of white supremacy. "We will contest every hill and every river, every village and every town, every crossroad and every bridge," Foreign Minister P.K. Van der Byl warned in a saber-rattling speech to white troops on June 26, 1977. "Inevitably and unavoidably, the land will suffer, indescribable chaos and irreparable destruction will follow, but come what may we will uphold the ideals for which these men fought. We cannot let them down." Hinting at a scorched-earth policy, Van der Byl then said: "If the battle should wax fiercer and if the forces arrayed against us should become immeasurably stronger, there can be no question of surrender, every inch of ground will be fought for."¹²⁹

Every time that the settler regime has agreed to enter negotiations, it has done so mainly to play for time. On every occasion, it has remained inflexible when the crucial issue of *political power* has come up for discussion. This is why the August 1975 Victoria Falls conference collapsed. It is why a similar fate met drawn-out talks between Joshua Nkomo's African National Council (Zimbabwe) and the settler regime between December 1975 and March 1976. And it is why the Geneva conference broke down in December 1976. At Geneva, the settler government would not budge from its insistence that, during the transitional period, the key security ministries of law and order and of defense should remain in white hands. It was equally insistent that the "majority rule" constitution should be decided basically by whites: It stuck

124. *The Times* (London), September 6, 1976.

125. *The Times* (London), September 14, 1976.

126. *The Guardian* (London), January 29, 1976.

127. *The Guardian* (London), September 22, 1977.

128. *The Guardian* (London), October 3, 1977.

129. *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), June 27, 1977.

121. *The Times* (London), September 25, 1976.

122. *The Times* (London), August 14, 1976.

123. *The Times* (London), August 18, 1976.

rigidly throughout the conference to a proposal that the constitution should be drafted by a two-thirds-white Council of State, which, it said, should also have the right to appoint the government during the transition period.

The same kind of considerations proved a stumbling block to acceptance of the Owen-Young Plan by the Smith regime. Afraid of the neocolonial intentions of the imperialist powers, Smith rejected the idea of handing over power to a British resident commissioner: "It seems to me to be almost a crazy suggestion," he said on September 2, "to ask a government and people to dissolve themselves, to surrender, without even knowing what their replacement is going to be." He was equally against letting UN troops into the country: "If it is a question of surrendering our power to some such organisation, that would be chaotic," he said. "It seems to be an almost insane suggestion."¹³⁰

Above all, the settler regime could not countenance the idea that its own security forces would be replaced under the Owen-Young

Plan by a new Zimbabwe National Army, incorporating Black guerrillas in addition to (as the plan puts it) "acceptable elements of the Rhodesian defence forces." Mark Partridge, the Rhodesian defense minister, protested on September 8: "Included in these proposals is the suggestion that our army be disbanded and incorporated with the terrorist forces. Let me assure you once again that I will not be a party to any such suggestion and neither will your government."¹³¹

But despite this consistent record of intransigence on the part of the settler regime, the imperialist powers are determined to finally force through a neocolonial settlement—with South African assistance.

As Young put it in London after returning from Salisbury on September 2: "There is no question that we are committed to see this process through to the end."¹³²

[Next: The Role of the 'Frontline' States]

131. *The Guardian* (London), September 9, 1977.

132. *The Times* (London), September 3, 1977.

130. *The Times* (London), September 3, 1977.

A Former Leader of the International Committee Speaks Out

Meaning of Healy's Slander Campaign Against SWP

By Luís Graça

[As national secretary of the Liga para a Construção do Partido Revolucionário (League for the Construction of the Revolutionary Party), the Portuguese section of the International Committee, Luís Graça had full confidence in the wisdom of Gerry Healy. However, he developed some bothersome political differences that he felt ought to be discussed within the organization. This was blocked by Healy, whose regime is anything but democratic.

[Eventually Graça joined the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League), Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. There he gained a clear understanding of the nature of the program and practices of the Healyite leadership.

[One of the results was the statement published below, which he wrote last May and which has been translated from the Portuguese by *Intercontinental Press*.

[Graça makes the fourth prominent leader of the International Committee to break with Healy in the past couple of years because of his sectarian positions and antidemocratic methods.

[The three besides Graça are Tim Wohlforth, formerly the national secretary of the Workers League, the American group that supports the views of the International Committee; L. Sklavos, who was general secretary of the Workers Internationalist League, the Greek section of the International Committee; and Alan Thornett, formerly a member of the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Healy's British organization.]

* * *

Since April 1975 the International Committee has been waging, largely out of its London headquarters, a "political" campaign to "unmask" two veteran, internationally known Trotskyist leaders, Joseph Hansen and George Novack. This has culminated in the accusation that the entire central leadership of the Fourth International is complicit with Hansen and Novack's "crimes."

The campaign began with the publication in *Workers Press* (the organ of the Workers Revolutionary Party) of twenty-six articles in two series, beginning April 19, 1975, concerning the assassination of Trotsky, the attack on his residence in Mexico in May 1940,

and the role of various persons who participated in the GPU's infiltration of the revolutionary Marxist movement and assassination of its leaders.

Until August or September 1976, as a member of the International Committee, a member of the Central Committee and of the Political Committee and as national secretary of its section in Portugal, the Liga para a Construção do Partido Revolucionário, I took part in the formulation and implementation of this campaign, thereby assuming, as is obvious, corresponding responsibility.

From the beginning, even before it entered its public phase, this struggle was presented to us as flowing from certain doubts that existed around these events and from the necessity of investigating them. For this purpose a Parity Commission of Inquiry was to be formed, made up equally of the International Committee and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International as the international centers into which the Trotskyists were organized.

This situation changed when, because of the "lack of response on the part of the United Secretariat" (according to the IC), the doubts were transformed into certainties, the defendants into convicted criminals, and the accusations into proven facts.

Upon reexamining this transformation, we must admit that these opinions did not meet with any resistance on the part of the majority of sections, and particularly in Portugal, first of all because of respect for the opinions of the leadership of the WRP and above all Gerry Healy; secondly, because of the relative political immaturity of the national leaderships; and thirdly because of lack of knowledge of the documents which already existed "in other places" on this question. (At least this was the case here in Portugal.) Finally, because of the extremely rapid developments in the political situation in various countries and internationally which demanded almost our entire energy in order to respond with the necessary mass actions. These facts do not excuse or provide any justification for my position at that time or my changing to my present position, but they are factors which, in my opinion, are important for analyzing the campaign and the current crisis in the International Committee.

It is from this point of view and because of questions on the meaning of the present campaign that I felt it necessary to write this document, after I had already broken with the IC for totally different reasons. (My reasons basically consisted of political differences with the IC positions on Vietnam, Cuba, and Portugal, and especially on the methods of intervening and building the party in Portugal, compounded by the impossibility of debate and discussion in the IC center or in its sections.)

Once I had complete access to the documents published by various Trotskyist tendencies and individuals, I finally understood the aims that Healy and his followers were trying to attain in this campaign and the nature of the actions, totally alien to Bolshevik methods, through which they pursued them.

It is no coincidence that just when there is an unprecedented possibility and necessity for a broad discussion and unification of forces of all those who base their work on the Transitional Program, the IC has undertaken as its central axis of struggle this vile campaign, which is nothing but a desperate attempt to make this discussion and unification more difficult. And for this reason the slander campaign must be faced up to by all comrades who seriously want to devote themselves to the historic task of the Fourth International moving ahead in the next revolutionary upsurges as the political leadership of the international workers movement.

The IC's argument that the SWP is hiding "essential facts" of the history of the movement and thereby serving the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy and imperialism is completely false; the only purpose of the argument is to throw dust in the eyes of Healy's followers, blinding them. In addition to not corresponding to reality, it distorts things to present the situation that way. In the various positions and documents available up to now, there has been no evidence that essential facts were hidden. On the contrary, what has been consistently revealed is the position that

the Fourth International has always held, whenever doubts have arisen on matters as central as the security of the revolutionary movement, of having the relevant bodies dig into the question until all such doubts are resolved.

It was basically the crisis and the isolation of the IC resulting from its sectarianism that led to the present campaign and determined its form. This campaign and the resulting denunciations of it by the Trotskyist movement all over the world show clearly the difficulties that forces outside the Fourth International have in countering the desire of various sectors to carry through the movement for the reunification of the Trotskyist movement to its final conclusion. This fact ought itself to be an incentive for closing ranks in the difficult struggle to construct a mass Fourth International.

Finally, we want to appeal to all those forces and comrades who still find themselves tied in any way to the organizations and perspectives of the IC, to think seriously about these and other questions that arise from the IC's activity and policies, and join the struggle for reunification, so that the next world congress can take another decisive step in this direction.

And the last thing, which cannot be overstressed, is that we think it is extremely important for all Trotskyist comrades and sympathizers to take a position on the slander campaign, which is completely foreign to the methods and principles of the movement. It is important to come to the defense of these two comrades, who, even if we might have political differences with them, are undoubtedly two distinguished fighters for the cause of revolutionary Marxism in the United States.

In doing so we are not just defending these two comrades but even more defending our own movement against such acts, and therefore defending ourselves against all those forces which have as their objective breaking up and destroying the Fourth International. □

50,000 Attend Conference in Bologna

Italian Students Protest Tightening Repression

By Matilde Zimmermann

Fifty thousand young people gathered in Bologna the weekend of September 23-25 for a "Congress Against Repression." The congress organizers chose Bologna, which has had a Communist Party city government for thirty years, because they consider the Italian Communist Party (PCI) as responsible as the capitalist parties for the repression of the far left.

At first the PCI took a hard line toward the demonstrators. Party leader Enrico Berlinguer called the student protesters "fascists" and "little plague-carriers" and tried to frighten people away with predictions of violence and street warfare. (The only people frightened away were apparently the shopkeepers of Bologna, who departed en masse for the weekend.)

The PCI shifted to a more conciliatory posture just before the congress. Facilities were made available to the student demonstrators, the police kept a low profile, and thousands of CP members were sent into the streets to debate with the students.

The initial call for the Bologna congress was issued by Lotta Continua (the Struggle Continues, an ultraleft organization), but the vast majority of those who attended did not belong to any organized left group.

Insofar as the demonstrators shared any political positions, these consisted of the theory of the "Germanization" or increasingly repressive character of Italian society; alienation, or what the students call "the slavery of work"; and criticism of the PCI's integration into the capitalist state apparatus.

The major division at the congress was between the members of *Autonomia Operaia* (Workers Autonomy—an openly confrontationist current) and the rest of the movement. The Autonomists, whose symbol is a .38 caliber pistol, wanted the congress to vote to constitute an armed party. They were outnumbered by about three-to-one.

In the September 26 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*, Anna Libera described how the Autonomists split the congress:

The split took place during the course of the general assembly Friday [September 23]. More than 12,000 people were gathered in the Sports Palace which was crammed full. One can imagine the difficulty of carrying on a "debate" under such conditions. Nevertheless, that is what was attempted.

But suddenly the Autonomists attacked.

They didn't want to talk about democratic discussion. "There is no democracy in the country. There can't be any in the movement," they explained.

They put their words into action. Whoever tried to speak against the use of arms or in favor of carrying out a discussion with the PCI was cut off after a couple of sentences by whistling and heckling from the Autonomists.

For the remainder of the weekend, the Autonomists occupied the Sports Palace while the other students held workshops (often attended by thousands of people),

street discussions, and a massive march through the city. There were large contingents of feminists and gays at the march.

Rouge reporter Libera said that many of the young people who came to Bologna felt that it was a mistake for students to isolate themselves from working people and their struggles. But there was no one to propose a solution to this social isolation. The left groups which were present in sizable numbers, such as Lotta Continua and Avanguardia Operaia (Workers Vanguard) did not attempt to give political direction to the congress but simply adapted to the sentiments of the "movement" and even of the Autonomists.

The week following the congress, the Italian neofascists, apparently disappointed that the Stalinists and ultraleftists had not shot at each other in Bologna, staged a series of provocative incidents.

Squads of goons from the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano—Italian Social Movement, the neofascist party) began to attack young leftists in the streets of Rome. The evening of Friday, September 30, Walter Rossi, a member of Lotta Continua, was shot and killed by members of the MSI.

Rossi, twenty years old, was leafletting outside an MSI headquarters when armed men came out and began shooting. He was

shot in the back of the neck as he tried to run away.

Massive protests greeted the news of Rossi's murder. A student strike was immediately called for Saturday morning. Demonstrations occurred Saturday afternoon in all the major cities in Italy, including a march of 20,000 in Rome. Some of these demonstrations met with police violence. A young worker, Roberto Crecenio, was killed in a clash in Turin.

On October 3, Walter Rossi was buried in Rome. The three major Italian trade-union federations called a one-hour general strike. Fifty thousand persons attended the youth's funeral. □

French CP Cheers as SST Lands in New York

On October 17 the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the last legal obstacle to Concorde operations at Kennedy airport in New York City. Two days later the supersonic jetliner landed at Kennedy for the first time.

In France the government, Air France, and Aérospatiale (manufacturer of the Concorde) were joined in their jubilation by the French Communist Party. After the Supreme Court decision, the CP daily *l'Humanité* said:

"The Concorde can land in New York. The workers owe this victory only to themselves. They had to do battle against the American authorities, and against the silence and complicity of the French government." The Stalinists told the workers: "You have lost against the Barre [austerity] plan; nevertheless, with the Concorde, you have won."

After a brief series of test flights in and out of Kennedy, commercial Concorde service will begin November 22. One-way fares will be \$793 to London and \$821 to Paris—about 600 percent higher than the lowest subsonic rates.

The Concorde generates up to eight times more noise on takeoff than subsonic commercial jets. Thus it has been the focus of opposition to aircraft noise pollution among residents of communities surrounding Kennedy. Opponents of the plane have held a number of protest motorcades on roadways at the airport, involving as many as 1,000 cars.

Such active, vocal opposition put enough pressure on the New York Port Authority and other government officials to thwart approval of Concorde flights at Kennedy for twenty months. The Port Authority consistently failed, however, to enact the kind of noise regulations that would have definitively excluded the Concorde. The authority only postponed any decision over and over again, inviting the federal courts to take it off the hook.

In fact, the entire Concorde controversy has been characterized from the outset by

the passing of responsibility back and forth among the courts, federal officials, and the Port Authority.

The Concorde's initial operations at Kennedy were deceptively quiet. Although its average noise level on takeoff was 119.4 decibels* during a year of tests at Dulles airport in Washington, the first two takeoffs from Kennedy failed even to activate Port Authority noise meters, which are sensitive to sounds above 105 decibels. Federal Aviation Administration monitors reported levels no greater than those of the noisiest conventional aircraft.

The unexpectedly low readings were attributed to favorable weather conditions, which enabled the plane to climb more rapidly than would often be the case. Special maneuvers by the pilot avoided flying directly over the communities where the noise meters were set up. Residents remained skeptical, however. Richard Witkin reported in the October 22 *New York*

*Ninety decibels is sufficient to drown out normal conversation. The decibel scale is logarithmic—for each increase of ten decibels, the perceived level of sound doubles.

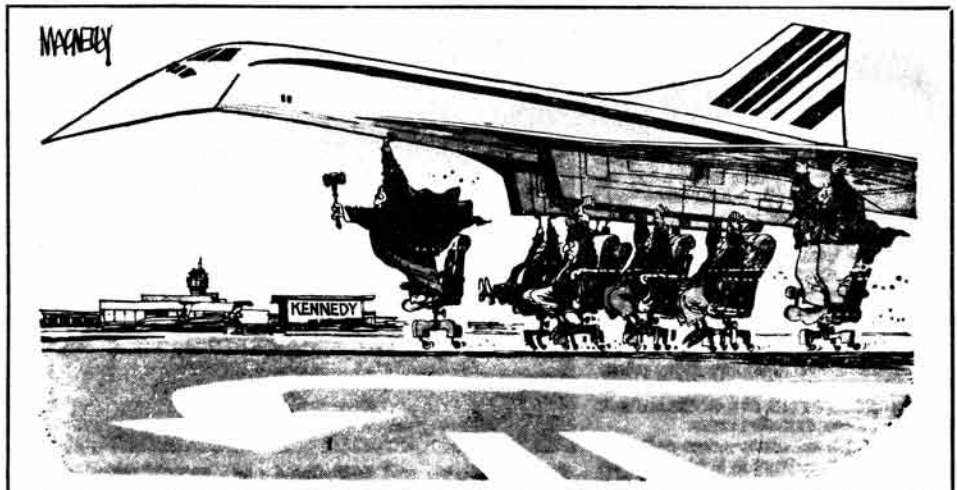
Times:

"Subsonic jets that took off yesterday before and after the Concorde also invariably turned left over the bay so as to avoid flying over any residential areas. Numerous homeowners from Howard Beach and adjoining Hamilton Beach stepped up their charges that the airlines were playing some sort of trick on them. . . .

"They contended that takeoffs had routinely come right over their roofs before the highly publicized Concorde test flights. They predicted the Concorde also would do that once regular SST operations began and the public spotlight was turned off."

Such a strategy was implicit in the comment of British Airways attorney William Clarke, who said: "We've got our foot in the door now. It's up to somebody else to get it out."

Opponents of the Concorde are planning another motorcade protest at Kennedy for October 30 or November 6. In addition, a lawsuit will be filed against the U.S. Department of Transportation and the FAA, charging that a 1969 law requiring airport noise standards has been disregarded. □



MacNelly/New York Daily News

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