

# Intercontinental Press

combined with **Imprecor**

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January 16, 1978

75c



TV Spectacular

# CARTER'S WORLD TOUR

CARTER: Blunders and gaffes made biggest news on 19,000-mile headline-grabbing junket.

**Wave of Demonstrations in Chile**

**Protests Sweep U.S. Farm Belt**

**Suárez's Economic Emergency Plan**

**Laos—'A Lunar Landscape'**

**A Question for Fidel Castro**

**Palestinians Score Phony Peace Plan**

**YSA Holds National Convention**

**Why Famine Threatens the Sahel**

**OST Tells Stalinists: 'Stop Violence'**

**Platform of French CCA, LCR, OCT**

## An Editorial

# Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

By Joseph Hansen

As you will have noted from the change in our masthead, this issue marks the merger of the news-gathering facilities of *Intercontinental Press* and the English edition of *Inprecor* (International Press Correspondence), which we announced last November. (See "A Big Step Forward," *Intercontinental Press*, November 21, 1977, p. 1266.)

Our editorial policy will continue to be the same. To quote from the standing statement below the table of contents, we will specialize "in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements."

*Our central ideological commitment, as before, is to uphold the program of the Fourth International.*

Following our November editorial announcing the plans for a merger, we received letters from readers in various countries approving the proposed step. They foresaw a still better handling of world events and a resulting increase in circulation.

To facilitate converting the potential rise in circulation to an actual one, here is a list of addresses where comrades can be reached to answer questions on local rates and to issue receipts for subscriptions:

Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116,

Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

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Write the nearest of any of these addresses for information on regular, first class, or air-speeded subscriptions.

Upon reading our November announcement, a few subscribers sent donations to help give the combined publication a flying start. This could be taken as evidence of the spontaneity of the masses. More likely it is evidence of the perspicacity of these readers.

They understand that we are particularly vulnerable on the financial front because of rising publication costs, and that special help from our readers is required to take full advantage of the possibilities opened up by the merger.

Inspired by these examples, we thought it would be a good idea with this first issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* to ask our subscribers to give us the extra financial backing we need.

Also we would appreciate hearing from you. Tell us what you think about the combined publication as it gets under way, and let us know whether it is OK to publish your letter or parts of it. □

Carter and Gierek traded compliments. Published reports do not say whether they also compared notes on the problems both have been having with rebellious coal miners.

Carter used his visit to Poland to reassure the world that the United States would never start a war "except by mistake."

The American president praised Poland's commitment to human rights and ignored a demonstration by one of the major Polish dissident groups, the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights.

Perhaps he was just practicing so that he would be able to keep a straight face for his New Year's toast to the shah of Iran. "The cause of human rights," Carter told the crowned butcher, "is one that also is shared deeply by our people and by the leaders of our two nations." Meanwhile torture continued in the shah's prisons.

India offered some relief from the embarrassing tight security that had prevailed in Iran. Carter put on a display of warmth and good will toward Prime Minister Morarji Desai.

Then Carter, in an aside to Vance which was picked up by an open NBC microphone, said something less cordial about Desai: "When we get back, I think we ought to write him another letter, just cold and very blunt."

Carter knew when he was wrong, however, and came forward with a non-sense apology that same evening: "The purport of the remarks attributed to me was totally against my intention."

Nothing seemed to interfere with the new friendship of Carter and Desai. A short item in the January 3 *New York Times* gives a glimpse of their relationship, and at the same time illustrates the determination of the U.S. media to squeeze every possible column inch out of the Carter trip.

The *Times* describes how an uninvited fly was summarily dispatched at a Carter-Desai luncheon January 2, and continues: "The incident started both leaders chuckling and added to the good humor of an occasion marked by banter over such issues as the Prime Minister's diet, which, Mr. Desai said, consists only of berries and nuts."

The highlight of the visit was an enthusiastically received speech to the Indian Parliament. "Born-again" Carter waxed eloquent about "spiritual principles" and "shining new examples." Commented one American official afterward, "This is one of the very few places in the third world where Carter could say something like that and not have it be as a joke."

The Carters next paid a visit to King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, one of the most reactionary and openly pro-American of all the Arab rulers. Here they demonstrated their ability to adapt to local cus-

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Carter on Tour—A Carbon Copy of Gerald Ford

By Matilde Zimmermann

Jimmy Carter's ratings were slipping, said the pollsters and news analysts, and he badly needed some good TV footage to finish out his first year in office. Hence his seven-country, 19,000-mile, headline-grabbing New Year's tour. The most interesting things about the ceremonial trip turned out to be technical snafus and peripheral incidents.

The first stop was Warsaw, where Carter's State Department translator did little to improve international communication. The president's airport greetings turned

out quite peculiar. A reference to his departure earlier in the day became "when I abandoned the United States," Poland's hopes for the future became "your lusts for the future," and the Polish constitution became a joke. Occasionally the translator lapsed mysteriously into Russian.

Edward Gierek tried to help his guest out of this difficulty with a crass remark of his own. "No Pole would say a bad word about a lady or an interpreter even when we have to grit our teeth," the Polish leader told reporters.

tom. Rosalynn Carter was kept off the welcoming platform, forced to walk six feet behind her husband at all times in public, excluded from the official state dinner, and segregated into an all-female tour and reception.

Carter's "unscheduled" visit to Egypt surprised no one. It was his reward to Anwar el-Sadat for the Egyptian president's assistance in tightening the screws against the Palestinians. Sadat was delighted with Carter's statement that he would be in favor of allowing the Palestinians "to participate in the determination of their own future," and Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin noted smugly that neither the Egyptian nor American president had mentioned the words "Palestinian state."

Carter's visits to France and Belgium were regarded even by the bourgeois media as having little more than ceremonial and photographic significance. But they undoubtedly helped dispel the president's fears about his popularity ratings. In fact, a Harris poll carried out in France in November indicated that the French (those interviewed) like Jimmy Carter considerably better than Americans do. □

### Zimbabwean Students Fight Deportation From U.S.

Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh has expelled eight Zimbabwean students who refused to become State Department mouthpieces in exchange for a university education. The Africans now face the threat of deportation, which could mean imprisonment, torture, or even death in Ian Smith's jails.

The eight were among twenty-five students in CMU's "Rhodesia Project." They had been assured that the program was strictly educational and not political.

When they arrived in Pittsburgh, however, local newspapers reported that the Zimbabweans had contracted "to work three years with an eventual majority-rule government" in exchange for their schooling, and that they had been "hand picked" for this purpose.

The "Rhodesia Project" is cosponsored by Allegheny Ludlum Industries, a big steel producer and major user of Rhodesian chrome.

Robinson Khosah explained to a reporter why he and seven fellow students began boycotting the program: "We were not going to be part of a program designed to create people who would be a stumbling block to the people's revolution and . . . we were not going to be trained to become Western puppets."

The university moved swiftly against the protesters, expelling them even before the end of the semester. This immediately exposed them to the threat of deportation back to Zimbabwe. The American Civil Liberties Union has agreed to defend the students against deportation proceedings.

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## Palestinians Denounce Phony Peace Plan

By Peter Seidman

[The following article appeared in the January 13 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

A new round in the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations took place December 25-26. This time it was Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's turn to make an unprecedented trip: to Ismailia, Egypt.

World attention focused on what proposals Begin would bring with him to move forward the negotiations begun when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat made his headline-catching journey to Jerusalem in November.

Millions of people—encouraged by speculation in the big-business media—hoped that Begin would offer not only Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territories occupied since the 1967 Mideast war, but also some concessions on the rights of the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

These hopes were based on two assumptions: that Sadat's de facto recognition of the Zionist regime symbolized by his November journey represented a step toward peace, and that Begin—wanting to continue this momentum, or else under pressure from Washington—would make a similarly dramatic concession at Ismailia.

For the millions around the world who made these assumptions, however, the Ismailia talks and subsequent U.S. diplomatic moves were a disappointing Christmas gift.

The shiny wrapping that excited such hopes is being torn away, and the same old Middle East time bomb continues to tick away underneath.

The Ismailia talks quickly stalled. To begin with, the Zionists refused to withdraw from the occupied West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza Strip.

They also refused to give Sadat even the face-saving appearance of a concession on what is a key question for the Arab masses: some form of recognition for Palestinian rights. As a result, despite the big buildup to the Ismailia negotiations, Sadat was unable to negotiate even a separate Israeli-Egyptian accord—at least for the time being—not to speak of an overall Mideast settlement.

### Begin's 'Peace' Plan

Begin's "peace" plan proved to be a



ARAFAT: "We are demanding our rights."

scenario demanding undisguised Egyptian acceptance of ongoing Zionist rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

- Security and public order for the 1.1 million Palestinian Arabs living in these areas "will be the responsibility of the Israeli authorities," and Israeli military forces will remain there.

- Israeli military administration in the territories would be replaced by an Arab administration to govern internal affairs. Palestinians would be given a choice of Israeli or Jordanian citizenship. These nations would have veto power over the degree to which the Arab administrative council could regulate life in the territories.

- Palestinian immigration into the territories would be regulated by a committee requiring unanimous agreement between Israel, Jordan, and the administrative council. Thus, the Zionists would have veto power over the entry of politically "undesirable" Palestinians into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. At the same time, no restrictions would be put on the right of Israeli Jews to settle in the area. Jews in the territories would be subject to Israeli courts, not to the Palestinian administrative council.

In presenting this plan for approval by the Israeli parliament December 28, Prime Minister Begin underscored his insistence on the maintenance of Israeli troops lest the territories become "dominated by the

murderers' organization known as the P.L.O." He described the PLO as "the vilest organization of murderers in history with the exception of the Nazi armed organizations."

In the sometimes heated debate over Begin's proposal one deputy heckled Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, asking: "How will you prevent a Palestinian state from arising? By force of the army?"

To which Dayan shot back:

"By force of the army; this is the first time I agree with you. Any agreement can be broken and there is no court to look after our interests except ourselves. How will I prevent their refusal to sell land to Jews? How will I prevent the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Lebanon against our will? By force of the army. . . ."

### 'A Step Forward'?

This was the "peace" plan that a few hours later Jimmy Carter, at a nationally televised year-end news conference, praised as "a long step forward."

The president said that the United States opposes what he called "a fairly radical, new independent nation in the heart of the Middle East."

Egyptian President Sadat complained that Carter's praise for the Israeli plan "is making my job very difficult. This embarrasses me. What surprises me most, I mean, is ignoring the importance of the Palestinian issue—the core and crux of the whole problem."

Sadat was hoping that Washington would step in and insist that the Israeli regime draw back from its hard-line stance. As one Egyptian official told *New York Times* correspondent Henry Tanner December 30, "We half expected the Israelis to take everything we had to offer and put it in their pocket and ask blandly for more. . . . But we didn't expect the Americans to take the same attitude."

Sadat based his diplomatic maneuverings on the hope that Washington would put some real pressure on Israel in exchange for Egyptian services in reaching and policing a Middle East agreement that would favor imperialist interests.

### A Bare Bone

From time to time the State Department will throw Sadat and other Arab leaders a bone to help keep such hopes alive.

For example, on January 2, U.S. officials

leaked to the *New York Times* the statement that they "detected the outline of a possible compromise between Israel and Egypt over the Palestinian issue" despite the sharp public differences between Sadat and Begin.

Washington, according to the *Times*, believes "the essence of the projected arrangement would be to persuade Mr. Begin to modify his plan for granting Palestinians on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip internal self-rule to incorporate the possibility of eventual self-determination."

But, the officials say, "the problem is delicate . . . because self-determination may lead to an independent state dominated by radicals. . . . But since neither Israel, Egypt, Jordan nor the United States wants such a P.L.O.-dominated state, the officials said there was broad support for finding the right formula."

A formula to grant self-determination without self-determination. That is a bare bone indeed! Despite his hopes, there is nothing Sadat can do that will change the fact that Israel—not any of the Arab governments—will continue to be Washington's favored reliable military outpost and staging area for attacks on the Arab revolution.

Washington's goal is to preserve its imperialist domination of the Middle East—which explains its massive support to the Israeli garrison state, and its hostility toward the national rights of the Palestinian people.

#### **Palestinians**

Last year Carter proclaimed his support for the idea of a Palestinian national "entity" or "homeland" in the hope that at least a section of the Palestinian leadership would make the concession of recognizing the Zionist regime in exchange for his promises.

But under the pressure of the Palestinian masses, no section of the leadership—however much they may have been attracted by such bait—was able to take Carter up on his offer.

This led Washington to switch from the carrot to the stick in its drive against the Palestinians. Following Carter's announcement of support for Begin's plan, for example, Wafa, the official PLO press service, accused the United States of having a strategy aimed at "exterminating the Palestinian presence, annihilating the Palestinian national identity and consecrating the occupation of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories."

Carter's support to Begin's plan has produced a new degree of unity and militant opposition to Washington's schemes within the Palestinian movement.

At a rally uniting various Palestinian groups, including the previously divided Al Fateh and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PLO leader Yasir Arafat told a cheering crowd in Damur, Lebanon,

December 31, "My answer to Carter is that if there is no Palestinian state, there will be no stability in this area.

"No to surrender," Arafat shouted, according to the January 2 *New York Daily News*. "Yes to fighting."

"We are not warmongers," Arafat explained. "We are demanding our rights."

According to the January 1 *New York Times*, Arafat went on, "I am saying, and Carter should listen: he tried to destroy our revolution but the Palestinian revolution will go on until victory."

This new unity and stepped-up militancy represents a shift by many PLO leaders, who had hoped—as Sadat does today—that the United States might pressure the Zionists on their behalf.

## **Pinochet's Plebiscite Sparks Protests**

### **Wave of Street Demonstrations in Chile**

In an effort to whip up nationalist sentiment in support of his rule, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet called a plebiscite for January 4. Pinochet asked that Chileans repudiate a December 16 United Nations action condemning his regime's violations of human rights.

The vote was a referendum on the following text: "In the face of the international aggression unleashed against the Government of the homeland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile, and reaffirm the legitimacy of the Government of the republic to conduct, in a sovereign way, the process of institutionalization of the country."

The transparently rigged nature of this vote—the first of any kind in Chile since the September 1973 military coup—touched off public demonstrations against the dictatorship and revealed tactical rifts inside the ruling junta itself.

"The wave of street protests began early last week," the *Washington Post* reported January 3. "By the end of the week, shoppers and passersby began to join the youths in chanting 'freedom' and 'vote no.'" Young people identified as activists in the banned Christian Democratic Party handed out leaflets in downtown Santiago urging a "no" vote. According to CBS-TV news reports on January 6, street demonstrations continued in Santiago after the January 4 voting.

The boldness of the opposition that emerged led Pinochet to try to cut the size of a "no" vote by lifting a mandatory voting requirement just eighteen hours before the polls opened.

Official government figures released January 5 claimed that 75 percent of those voting had cast "yes" ballots.

"Most of the one million anti-Pinochet

Mahoud Labadi, for example, a PLO spokesman in Beirut, told *New York Times* correspondent Marvine Howe the day after Carter announced his support for Begin's plan, "The United States has lost its role as a neutral arbiter in the Middle East with its support for Israeli occupation and expansion against Palestinian self-determination."

The truth is that Washington has never been neutral in its attitude toward the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab masses against the Zionist regime. The recent negotiations prove once again that it will be this mass struggle, and not Carter's false promises, that will open the road toward a real peace in the Middle East. □

votes came from working-class areas of this capital," Juan de Onís reported in a January 5 dispatch from Santiago to the *New York Times*, "and in some areas such votes reached as much as 40 percent."

"This was heroic in view of the job insecurity that exists now in Chile," de Onís quoted an opposition labor leader as saying. "Many who voted 'yes' did so from fear of marking a ballot 'no' and risking their jobs."

There is, of course, no way of knowing how many "no" ballots were really cast, since the plebiscite was totally under the military's control. Official voting lists were destroyed in 1974.

Pinochet apparently called the plebiscite without consulting other members of the junta. Air force chief Gustavo Leigh reportedly warned Pinochet that the "prestige" of the armed forces "would be compromised" by a rigged vote. And the navy's representative on the junta, Adm. José Merino, was said to have expressed fear that the Chilean people might be encouraged to expect more elections in the future.

After the vote, Pinochet made clear that such expectations, if they had been created, were groundless: There would be "no more elections until 1986," he said.

On the day of the plebiscite, the International Commission of Jurists issued a report on Chile. "The whole structure of repression and the suspension of basic rights and fundamental freedoms remains unchanged," it said.

The commission noted some improvements "in the scale of worst excesses, such as torture of suspects, illegal arrests and the disappearance of arrested persons."

"Nevertheless," it added, "all these practices continue." □

# Why Famine Threatens the Sahel

[The following article appeared in the January 1978 issue of *Dollars & Sense*,\* a monthly publication edited and produced by a group of members of the Union for Radical Political Economics.]

\* \* \*

The United Nations estimates that 450 million people worldwide were seriously malnourished in 1976. The World Bank puts it closer to one billion.

This massive hunger has perhaps been most vividly illustrated by the drought and famine in the Sahel region of Africa. There, on the southern edge of the Sahara desert, about 100,000 people, mostly elderly and children, starved to death in the early 1970's. Now, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization says that famine threatens again, and that food aid programs will have to resume.

Why can't these countries produce enough food for their needs? The amazing fact is that they do. Frances M. Lappe and Joseph Collins, researching their valuable book, *Food First* (Houghton, Mifflin, 1977), found that every Sahel country except mineral-rich Mauritania actually was producing enough food to carry its population through the drought.

That food, however, is not for those who grow it. The Sahel is a net exporter of barley, beans, peanuts, fresh vegetables, and beef, despite protein malnutrition among its children that is about the worst in the world, even in normal years.

The problem of malnutrition in the Sahel is rooted in the class structure of the region. There are differences in class structure among the seven Sahel countries (parts of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger), but the broad outlines are depressingly similar: legacies of French colonial rule.

Before colonialism, or where colonialism had not reached, desert farmers left land fallow for up to twenty years between plantings. They used a variety of crops to maintain soil quality. Nomads drove their mixed herds over vast areas of arid grazing land. In what is now Mali, there were granaries for storing good harvests against bad years.

Then came the French. They conquered

the area gradually, against native opposition, beginning with Senegal in the 1860's and reaching Lake Chad in 1900. The French introduced export crops to the area, particularly cotton, to compete with British textiles, peanuts for the oil, and beef, a meat that Europeans preferred to camel.

### Colonialism Expands the Desert

The cheapest way to grow these exports was generally to make the peasants do it, using a method that the British pioneered in India—imposing taxes on land, buildings, and even people that had to be paid in the colonial power's currency. French trading companies, the sole buyers in their areas, could depress the prices paid. The lower the prices paid, the more the peasants had to grow to pay the taxes.

The pressure of the taxes forced peasants to abandon land-conserving farming techniques—to sell the future to pay for the present. Intensive cotton cultivation, for example, depletes the Sahelian soil, leaving it too poor for food production when cotton moves on. The much-publicized advance of the desert results. It is not a natural calamity, but one created by colonialism.

Although the colonial era has ended for the Sahel, the class structure evolved under colonialism continues. Local elites of landowners, tax collectors, food traders, and government functionaries live off the exported surplus and continue to encourage it. The taxes also continue. In 1970, in the midst of the drought, Mali's tax forced small farmers to come up with 106 pounds of cotton each. In Senegal, peanut exports alone pay one-third of the government budget, and one-half of that budget is for salaries.

The system channels the Sahel's production through local elites and then out to the world export markets, regardless of the desperate need of the Sahel people. During the drought, as relief food came in, peanuts, cotton, vegetables, meat and fish went out, sometimes on the same boats and planes. In Mali, cottonseed, peanut and rice exports actually reached new highs.

As herdsmen sold off cattle they could not feed or water, cattle exports rose 41% from 1968 to 1971, and local elites grew richer. Traders and moneylenders prospered in the bad years as peasants borrowed and then sold their harvests cheap, all to avoid losing their land. Towns now feature "chateaux de la secheresse," or

mansions of the drought—homes of the local elite that for the first time rival in splendor the homes of the wealthy Europeans there.

### Agribusiness Profits During Drought

There are glimmers of peasant organization in the Sahel. A National Liberation Front operates in Chad, and there have been sporadic peasant revolts in Senegal. In response to these, the Senegal government, which calls itself "socialist," has hired agricultural experts from capitalist countries to help introduce labor saving technology, so that peasant resistance cannot affect exports. An example is Bud Antle, Inc., a California-based vegetable grower and marketer.

Back in 1972, around the time Bud Antle was suing to have Cesar Chavez jailed for the United Farm Workers' lettuce boycott, it formed a joint enterprise with the Senegalese government, called Bud Senegal. Bud Senegal grows vegetables using a virtually labor-free drip irrigation system whose plastic tubes individually water each plant continuously.

The Senegalese government paid for the system. The World Bank provided a loan, one of only three the bank made to private business in 1974. It's supposed to be a show-case development project.

All production is for Europe. It's flown there by jet. Senegalese don't have the money to buy what Bud makes, and few peasants were helped by getting jobs. Many were hurt when Bud, in laying out its plantation, uprooted the baobab trees that villages had been treating as common property. The trees had provided rope, building materials, fuel, and wind erosion protection. In 1974, as Senegalese starved, European governments reacted to a vegetable "glut" at home by buying up and destroying \$53 million worth of produce. In July 1977, the Senegalese government took over Bud Senegal. But beyond providing new high-level jobs for the country's elite, Bud Senegal's policies have not changed. Bud Antle still controls the export end of the business. And domestically, Bud Senegal is taking over the sale of small farmers' crops; half of all produce sold in the capital city is sold at Bud stands.

Meanwhile, the American parent firm has moved into Gambia, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and Mali and intends to expand into the rest of West Africa as well. It has announced plans to merge with the giant Cooke and Castle company (owner of the Dole pineapple business) to create a truly world-wide empire. West German, Italian, and Belgian agribusinesses are also showing interest in West Africa.

The interest of companies like Bud gives a glimpse of the potential for food production in the Sahel. Lappe and Collins estimate that the region could increase its agricultural production sixfold to become a "bread-basket of Africa," thanks to exten-

\*Subscriptions cost \$5 a year in the United States, \$6 in Canada and Mexico, \$8 elsewhere, and may be ordered from Dollars & Sense, 324 Somerville Avenue, Somerville, Massachusetts 02143.

sive underground lakes and an excellent sunny growing season.

Technology and weather do have some influence on the Sahel's food problems. It is an area of periodic drought, and the drought of the early 1970's was the most severe since 1910. The farmers do lack methods to conserve water, and do engage in over-grazing and over-cultivation that make matters worse.

But it is essentially the class structure of the Sahel countries, together with eager multinationals like Bud Antle, that breed

short-sighted farming practices for wind-fall profits. Under these conditions, even such valuable inventions as drip irrigation can benefit the people very little. The most advanced agricultural technique can co-exist with the most miserable poverty. □

Sources: *Food First*; Susan George, *How the Other Half Dies*; Kobe Shoji, "Drip Irrigation," *Scientific American*, November 1977; National Academy of Sciences, *World Food and Nutrition Study*, 1977; *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 10/77.

## 'Hell No, We Won't Grow!'

# Protests Sweep U.S. Farm Belt

By Matilde Zimmermann

Several thousand tractors chugging along a Georgia highway may not look like a typical protest march. Except when the tractors carry signs like "Hell no, we won't grow!" "Crime doesn't pay, neither does farming," "100% parity or strike," and "If the good Lord had intended for farmers to be broke, he wouldn't have made overalls with pockets."

"Tractorcades" and farmers' rallies occurred across the United States in December as part of a nationwide protest against low prices for farm produce. The largest actions were coordinated demonstrations in thirty state capitals and Washington, D.C. on December 10. Between 8,000 and 10,000 tractors rolled into Atlanta, the capital of Jimmy Carter's home state.

The rallies launched a nationwide farmers' strike that began December 14. Participating farmers have said they will sell no produce, buy nothing except necessities, and plant no new crops until their demands are met.

The central demand of the strike is for "100 percent of parity," or government price support sufficient to give farm produce the buying power it had in the years 1910 to 1914.

Working farmers have been hit hard by the combination of high prices for what they must buy and low prices for what they sell. Corn and wheat today generally cost more to produce than their market price. The average bushel of corn, for example, costs \$3.00 to produce and sells for \$2.20—down from \$4.50 just a few years ago.

This price drop has not been passed on to the consumer, of course. Nor has the tremendous increase in U.S. agricultural productivity (a fivefold increase in output per worker hour over the last thirty years)

been put to use feeding the world's hungry. Rather, the food processing and marketing giants have reaped huge profits while working farmers pay the price for overproduction in lower returns for their crops.

Many farmers must make high interest payments on loans and mortgages, at a time when they are losing money on every bushel of corn or wheat they sell. They have to choose between selling out to the huge agribusiness combines or going further and further into debt. Total farmer indebtedness has almost doubled in just five years and is higher today than at any time in history. In terms of what their earned dollars can buy, farmers' income is lower now than at any point since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Many farmers thought that things would get better with "one of their own" in the White House. Before his election, Carter promised that under his administration every farmer would at least recover the cost of production. Instead he intervened as president to reduce the level of price supports in the original draft of the 1977 Farm bill, and signed into law a bill that came far short of meeting farmers' needs.

Angry at this betrayal, farmer protesters carry signs like, "If elections were held today would Jimmy win? Hell no!" Two actions have been held in Carter's tiny home town of Plains, Georgia—nearly 3,000 farmers rallied December 23, and a larger demonstration took place November 24.

Leaders of the farm strike and protest actions come from the American Agricultural Movement, a loosely organized group formed only a few months ago.

The strike has been strongest in Georgia, Kansas, and Texas, where some small towns were virtually shut down by farmers and sympathetic merchants December 14.

Tractor pickets have closed some food distribution centers, warehouses, and stockyards. On January 3, striking farmers encircled the city of Lubbock, Texas, with a twenty-seven-mile chain of tractors.

Strike organizers claim a million supporters, although some regions of the country have been affected very little. There are approximately 2.8 million farmers in the United States. Less than 4 percent of the total population lives on farms, down from 25 percent in 1940.

Carter and his Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland have pretended sympathy with the farmers' plight while warning the protesters not to halt production or disrupt food distribution. The government attempts to pit consumers against the farmers by saying that parity prices would mean a sudden 20 to 25 percent jump in supermarket prices.

U.S. farmers have traditionally avoided any identification with the organized labor movement and been proud of their conservative reputation. The last big farmers' protest, which swept the country in the 1930s, was deliberately called a Farm Holiday rather than a strike. This is beginning to change.

One farmer, leafletting steelworkers outside a Colorado plant, was quoted as saying, "I've cussed strikers all my life. I'll never do it again. I thought they were lower class. Now look where they are and look at the farmer." A Virginia farmer told a reporter why he was attending a protest rally: "We can't shut down like the coal miners. This is the only way the farmer has to express his feelings."

The trade-union bureaucracy has responded with something less than solidarity. Truckers are a crucial ally for the farmers, and individual members of the Teamsters union have supported the strike. But Teamsters boss Frank Fitzsimons has made it clear that the powerful union will not honor the farmers' picket lines.

As a political protest movement, the farmers' mobilization has already had a nationwide impact, winning relatively broad support and exerting considerable pressure for government action. □

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## Young Socialist Alliance Holds National Convention

By Susan Wald

DETROIT—"One of the most important tasks of the YSA this spring, one which will command all our attention and resources . . . is the campaign to win political asylum for our comrade, to save the life of Héctor Marroquín," Chuck Petrin, national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance, told the 540 delegates and observers gathered here for the opening session of the YSA's seventeenth national convention.

Marroquín is a member of the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party. A union organizer and former student leader in Mexico, he fled to the United States in 1974 to avoid being framed up on phony murder charges.

Now the U.S. government is trying to deport him back to Mexico, where he faces certain imprisonment and torture, and possibly death. A deportation hearing has been set for January 17.

The urgency of this campaign was at the center of the discussions at the convention, held December 28-January 1. The proceedings opened with special presentations on the Marroquín case. Linda Jenness, representing the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, introduced Marroquín, stressing the need to mobilize the energies of the entire Trotskyist movement to save his life.

"In defending Héctor we are defending one of *our own*, and by defending one of our own, we are defending our movement, our organization, defending each and every one of us in this room," she said.

Marroquín was elected honorary chairperson of the convention. A special rally sponsored by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, which is coordinating defense efforts for Marroquín, was held on the evening of December 29. Among the speakers was exiled Peruvian revolutionist Hugo Blanco. An international defense campaign saved Blanco from death at the hands of the Peruvian government in 1970. Blanco spoke of the lessons his own case provided for carrying out the Marroquín defense effort.

Throughout the convention, the 140 delegates, representing YSA chapters in forty-four cities across the United States, discussed how the YSA could most effectively mobilize college and high school students to fight back against cutbacks in education, defend the gains won by women and oppressed nationalities, oppose the racist campaign against undocumented workers, organize support to labor struggles, and

win new members to the Trotskyist movement. The delegates also elected a new national leadership to replace the outgoing National Committee, to implement the decisions of the convention and guide the YSA's work in the year ahead.

In his report, "The U.S. Capitalist Offensive and the Tasks of the YSA," Petrin showed how the rights and expectations of youth have been among the first casualties of the U.S. rulers' drive to increase their competitive edge over their capitalist rivals abroad. Young people, along with women and oppressed nationalities, are the hardest hit by unemployment. "Officially, the unemployment rate in the United States today stands at about 7 percent, or about seven million out of work," Petrin said. "Of these, about one out of every five is a young person sixteen to nineteen years old."

Petrin explained that the threat to affirmative-action programs posed by the *Bakke* case\* represents the cutting edge of the current capitalist offensive.

"This case will not be decided on legal or constitutional grounds," Petrin explained. "All that is secondary. It will be decided from the standpoint of what is in the best interests of the ruling class, based on a cold-blooded assessment of politics. What can the ruling class get away with? How much can it steal back in one fell swoop? What will the repercussions be? What kind of protest movement is visible and vocal? That's what the nine judges will be mulling over."

Petrin also described how Carter's first year in office had been unable to stem the growing feelings of alienation and disenchantment among working people. He challenged the claim, played up by the bourgeois news media, that there is a "shift to the right" in U.S. public opinion.

"What is taking place in the United States today is not a clash between 'rightists' on the rise and 'leftists' in retreat, but a class polarization," Petrin said. He

pointed to the campaign of Ed Sadlowski for president of the United Steelworkers Union, the Mesabi Iron Range strike, and the recent strikes by coal miners in Stearns, Kentucky, and nationwide as evidence of the growing radicalization among working people.

"Because students cannot by themselves change society, the fate of young people in the schools today is bound up with the gains and setbacks of the working class in all its struggles," Petrin said.

"Our job—the job of the YSA—is to win students to the side of the oppressed and exploited, and to make students conscious in every way we can—through all of our activities—of the independent power of the working class."

In his report, "The *Bakke* Case and the Fight Against Racism," Osborne Hart, the YSA's national antiracist work director, emphasized the high stakes involved in the fight to defend affirmative action.

"Affirmative action is under attack because the American ruling class cannot bring true equality for women and Blacks," Hart said. "By abolishing the limited protection women and oppressed nationalities have won through affirmative action, the ruling class hopes to compel more and more of us to accept the worst jobs and the lowest wages."

The delegates voted overwhelmingly to make building of the April 15 National March on Washington, called by the National Committee to Overturn the *Bakke* Decision, a top priority for the YSA.

"A national movement to reverse *Bakke*—that's our goal," Hart stated.

Both Miguel Zárate, who reported on "Chicano Liberation and the YSA," and Cathy Sedwick, who reported on "The YSA and the Fight to Defend Women's Rights," stressed the importance of the outcome of the *Bakke* case to Chicanos and women.

Sedwick, the national chairperson of the YSA, said that the attacks on affirmative action, along with passage of the Hyde Amendment cutting off Medicaid funds for abortion, and cutbacks in child-care funds, were part of "a sweeping series of attacks on women's rights starting with the most oppressed women." These are aimed at "turning back the clock and erasing the new consciousness of and support for women's rights which exists today," she said.

Sedwick stressed the importance of YSA members continuing to work with and build the National Organization for Women, pointing to the need to counter the

\*Allan Bakke, a thirty-seven-year-old white engineer, filed a suit against the University of California at Davis medical school, claiming that he had been kept out while "less qualified" students from oppressed nationalities had been admitted under the school's special-admissions program. The California Supreme Court ruled that Bakke had been unconstitutionally discriminated against, and the case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. For more information, see *Intercontinental Press*, October 3, 1977, p. 1074.



pro-Democratic Party policies of its leadership and their refusal to mobilize women to champion the demands of the most oppressed.

Zárate spoke on the need for the YSA to continue its involvement in the fight against deportation of undocumented workers.

"Despite all of the Carter administration's rhetoric about 'human rights' . . . over the last year more than 1,017,000 immigrants were deported. This was a 20 percent increase over last year.

"The Carter plan is the same antilabor, anti-human-rights solution to the so-called immigration problem put forward by the capitalists for decades, not only in this country, but in Europe, Canada, and Australia as well. . . . The racism and chauvinism the capitalists promote are used to make immigrant workers become the scapegoats for the built-in contradictions of the capitalist economy. . . .

"In the United States, as in all of these countries, economic exploitation and political repression are the root causes of the increased immigration. I can think of no better example of this than the case of our own comrade, Héctor Marroquín."

International solidarity in the fight to defend Marroquín was pledged by several speakers representing sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International as well as other Trotskyist currents. A total of forty-seven international guests from fourteen countries attended the convention. Greetings were read from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; the Socialist Workers Party; the Revolutionary Communist Youth and Revolutionary Communist Party of China; and the Liga Internacionalista de los Trabajadores of Puerto Rico.

Also, from the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire of France; the Liga de la Juventud Comunista and Federación de Juventudes Comunistas Revolucionarias of Spain; the Young Socialists and Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire-Revolutionary Workers League of Canada; the Alliance des Jeunes Pour le Socialisme of France; the Young Socialists of New Zealand; the Socialist Youth Alliance of Australia; the Rassemblement des Jeunes Pour le Socialisme of Québec; and the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs du Québec.

In her report, "Building the Young Socialist Alliance," YSA National Organizational Secretary Betsy Farley emphasized the need for the YSA to redouble its efforts in the year ahead to expand into new geographical areas, educate members about the Trotskyist program, and win new members to the YSA.

Farley said that in the past two years, both the SWP and the YSA, in response to the changing political situation, had experimented with new organizational forms. She described the impact of these organizational changes on the YSA. While on the one hand these changes had helped the

YSA to achieve its goal of becoming more firmly rooted on the college campuses and in the high schools, and recruiting more Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian-American, and Native American students, they also had some negative effects, leading to a breakdown in collaboration between the YSA and the SWP. Farley stressed the need for both organizations to work together to overcome this situation.

"We in the YSA have a tremendous advantage over every other radical youth

organization in the country in that we are in political solidarity with the SWP and with the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution," Farley said. "Although the YSA is an independent youth organization, we can proudly say that we follow the political lead of the SWP. And we can use the experience, and the lessons learned through the party's nearly forty years of existence to our benefit in our work in the student movement." □

## Héctor Marroquín's Greetings to YSA Convention

[The following are the remarks Héctor Marroquín made at the Young Socialist Alliance convention December 28. We have taken the text from the January 13 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

On January 17, 1972, my old friend, classmate and roommate, Jesús Rivera, was brutally assassinated by the Mexican police. He was falsely accused of conspiracy and guerrilla warfare—a pretext to justify the assassination.

Two years later, on the same date, January 17, 1974, I was accused of the same type of crimes: conspiracy and guerrilla warfare. Fearing the same fate as my friend, I decided to seek political refuge in the United States.

A little more than three months ago, in September, I was arrested by officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), better known as "la migra," and jailed for more than three months on the charge of attempting to enter the country illegally.

But thanks to the immediate legal answer of my attorney Margaret Winter, and the work that was begun by USLA, the YSA, and the SWP to obtain the broadest possible support for my case, the hearing was canceled and I am now threatened with deportation.

So I have won the "right" to be deported, which really means the right to fight this case all the way to the Supreme Court.

Although we are fighting to get the date postponed, my first appearance before the INS judge will be January 17, exactly six years after the assassination of my compañero Jesús, and four years after the Mexican government leveled the same false charges against me.

A serious danger exists that I may be ordered deported. That means that what happened to my roommate can happen to me if my request for political asylum is rejected.

The Mexican regime tried to brand Jesús and me and other political activists as

conspirators and terrorists. Nothing is further from the truth.

We have always been opposed to individual armed actions by small groups. We have been opposed to political terrorism and guerrilla warfare as a strategy. Our ideas and concepts were moving toward an understanding of the necessity for organizing the masses to defend their rights and the necessity for building revolutionary socialist organizations like the YSA and SWP.

I want to thank the YSA for the work you have been carrying out to defend me. You are setting a great example in the best spirit of internationalism. You have contributed to saving the life of a comrade struggling against deportation, struggling to obtain the elementary right of political asylum.

I am sure that we will come out of this convention with positive results. I am sure that the discussion and approval of the political resolutions and their organizational aspects for the next period will permit us to form a stronger and bigger YSA.

Viva el YSA!

Viva el SWP!

Hasta la victoria siempre!

Venceremos!

## 20,000 Steelworkers Face Layoffs in Britain

The state-owned British Steel Corporation is planning to cut its work force of 210,000 by nearly 10 percent to offset losses it claims are running about £8 million a week (US\$14.4 million), according to a report in the November 20 issue of the *Manchester Guardian* weekly.

But even such drastic measures as these might not be adequate, according to Sir Charles Villiers, chairman of British Steel. An article in the November 16 issue of *Le Monde* reported that the steel bosses are contemplating eliminating 60,000 jobs.

"Demand is poor, prices low, markets tight, and the customers more and more demanding. Production capacity is excessive by one-third in Europe and by 20 percent in Japan," Villiers said.

## Immigrant Workers in France Reply to Government Attacks

By F. L. Derry

PARIS—The first protest activities by immigrant workers and foreign students have been organized in response to a mounting wave of racist attacks openly encouraged by the French government. On November 19, a demonstration of several thousand immigrant workers and their supporters took place in Paris.

At the same time, protests by foreign students have been held. The student protests, centered at the University of Vincennes in Paris, are being led by the Committee for the Defense of Foreign Students.

The protests come in the wake of a series of anti-immigrant actions by the French government, which has intensified its efforts to pin the blame for record levels of unemployment on immigrant workers.

In June the Giscard regime offered to pay immigrants 10,000 francs (about US\$2,000) if they would promise to leave France and never return. Since then, many companies have added their own offers to any of their employees who would agree to leave France and be replaced by "French" workers.

While very few immigrants accepted the offer to return to their country of origin, the government used the ploy as a means of convincing French workers that their real enemies are the "foreigners" who are "taking their jobs."

This effort has unfortunately met with some success, largely because of the lack of response of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT); France's largest trade-union federation.

The initial anti-immigrant campaign was only preparation for more substantial government actions later in the year. On September 27, Lionel Stoléru, secretary of state for immigrant workers, issued orders banning the issuance of new work permits to foreigners, prohibiting immigrant workers from bringing their families to live with them during the next three years, and extending the monetary offer to immigrants willing to return home permanently. (See "Crackdown on Immigrant Workers in France," *Intercontinental Press*, October 24, 1977, p. 1167.)

The new orders have been accompanied by massive roundups of immigrants in the metros, as police search for "illegals"—foreigners without residency permits or work papers. The racist character of these raids has become apparent to everyone as police selectively stop anyone who looks Portuguese, Arab, or Black.

The government actions have given the

green light to racist groups who have begun to attack immigrants with impunity. A rash of fires has broken out in recent months in hotels known to house immigrant workers. These fires have been caused by arson, as the French police have recently admitted.

As the number of deaths from such mysterious fires has mounted, the early suspicions that this was part of a racist campaign to terrorize immigrant workers has been confirmed. No one has yet been arrested for setting the fires.

The government campaign against immigrant workers has been paralleled by a campaign against foreign students. This has consisted of efforts to enforce the "Soisson measures," named for the government minister who had them approved in July 1974.

The Soisson measures are based on the claim that there are "too many" foreign students in France, that they use educational facilities provided by French taxpayers, and that they are politically volatile.

Under the Soisson plan, all new foreign students must preregister in their native countries. This was supposed to prevent students from coming into the country "illegally," getting unregistered jobs, and then getting residency papers after registering at a university.

The measures also provide restrictions on what countries foreign students are allowed to come from. Students who come from "developing countries" in Africa and Latin America are allowed to enter France only to take advanced postgraduate courses. Those from "advanced industrialized countries," such as Britain and Germany, are allowed to take a regular university course of study.

Finally, the measures establish a "seuil de tolerance," a "tolerance level" or quota system, to prevent "too many" foreign students from attending any one university.

Under this provision, no university is allowed to have foreign students make up more than 10 percent of its total enrollment. For medical schools, this figure was reduced to 5 percent.

In addition, some areas, such as the Paris region, were declared to be "oversaturated" with foreign students and steps were taken to "distribute" them to other parts of the country.

The openly racist character of this legislation has run into heavy opposition. Many universities have refused to fully

implement the ruling. One school, the University of Vincennes, has until this year totally refused to abide by the restrictions.

Each year since the Soisson measures were passed, the Vincennes administration has attempted to implement all or part of the restrictions, only to be met with protests on the part of the students.

The mass potential of such protests is evident to everyone. Of the 32,000 students at Vincennes, 16,000 are foreigners. Each year the Vincennes administration has been forced to retreat.

This year, however, the Vincennes University officials had some outside assistance. The French government refused to recognize the registration of foreign students at Vincennes as valid. Such students have been denied residency papers.

The French police have held surprise raids at the bus stop going to the campus, hauling away foreign students and deporting them to their "home" country. The university administration has cooperated with the campaign, refusing to register thousands of foreign students.

The only organization that has fought against these actions is the Committee for the Defense of Foreign Students, which was formed at Vincennes three years ago, when the Soisson measures were first made public.

This year, assemblies organized by the committee have regularly attracted more than 500 foreign students and at times more than 1,000. Students have come from other campuses in the Paris area to coordinate their efforts to form similar committees at their universities.

The Committee to Defend Foreign Students has fought for two things. First, for the registration without any restrictions of all foreign students who wish to attend Vincennes. Second, against the deportations of foreign students who have been denied residency papers by the government.

The struggle against deportations has led the students to support the struggle of immigrant workers against the Stoléru restrictions.

The first demonstration of several thousand immigrant workers took place on November 19. The demonstration was initiated by the Sonacotra\* rent-strike coordinating committee.

\*Société Nationale de Construction de Loge-

Sonacotra is a government-run company that provides housing for immigrant workers. For several years a network of local committees of immigrant workers has organized a rent boycott of Sonacotra to protest the conditions in its housing. Now the committees that have been organizing the rent strike have turned to protesting the Stoléru restrictions on immigration.

Behind the lead banner in the November 19 demonstration, each of the different Sonacotra committees organized separate contingents with chants and slogans in French and Arabic. The great majority of the demonstrators were Arabs or Black Africans.

A delegation of workers from the Comoros, a series of islands between Madagascar and the African coast was present, as were Portuguese workers, Moroccans, Algerians, and Tunisians. Separate contingents were present from a number of French political groups, including the Revolutionary Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International.

As the demonstration marched through the immigrant sections of Paris, crowds lined the streets giving encouragement to the protesters. A passing subway train halted on the elevated tracks, the driver leaning out the window and tooting his whistle in time with the chants in the street below.

Yet, in spite of the obvious expressions of popular support for the demonstration, it was slightly smaller than a rent-strike demonstration held a year and a half ago by the Sonacotra committees.

The reason lies in the opposition to the demonstration advanced by the large French workers organizations, in particular the Communist Party and the CGT. Several important groups of immigrant workers, such as the Association of Moroccans in France, also refused to give their support to the action.

The Communist Party, in a statement published in the November 19 *Le Monde*, declared it would not encourage an action that would "isolate the immigrant workers" at a time when "to the contrary what is needed is to broaden the protest movement not only among the Sonacotra residents but also among all French and immigrant workers. . . ."

The CGT, following the lead of the Communist Party, also refused to join the demonstration. The French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the country's second-largest union federation, declared itself unwilling to take part in the action if the CGT refused.

The isolation of the action encouraged the police to take measures against the

organizers. A few days before the action was scheduled to take place, the police informed the organizing committee that the march would be banned.

Many workers decided not to take part in the demonstration, believing that it would be attacked by the police. However, at the last minute the police permitted the protest to take place, apparently recognizing that it still had substantial support.

The warning by the Communist Party that immigrant workers should not let themselves become isolated does not stem from a desire to build a united response to the Stoléru measures. On the contrary, they are simply telling the immigrant workers not to struggle until "we the French workers" are ready to struggle with you.

In their hands the slogan "Français, immigrés, une seule classe ouvrière" (French, immigrants, one single working class) has become a club to be used *against* the immigrant workers, telling them they do not have the right to struggle independently of whether or not the bureaucratic leaderships of the mass French working-class organizations are willing to support them.

Nevertheless, the growing pressure has forced the CGT and the CFDT to take some action. On November 7, official representatives from fifteen trade-union federations in nine different countries met to discuss the Stoléru measures. The following list of union federations was published in the CP daily *l'Humanité* the next day as having participated in the conference:

From France, the CGT, CFDT, and National Education Federation; the Moroccan Labor Union; the General Union of Algerian Workers; the General Union of Tunisian Workers; from Spain, the Workers Commissions, the General Federation of Labor (UGT), and the General Workers Union (USO); the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers; the General Confederation of Italian Labor, Italian Labor Union, and Italian Confederation of

Free Trade Unions; the Confederation of Yugoslav Unions; and the United Organization of African Trade Unions (associated with the Organisation of African Unity).

An unsigned article in the November 8 *l'Humanité* claimed that "the participants in the meeting sought to make clear that they are not opposed to immigrant workers returning to their country of origin. But any return must be individual and voluntary, negotiated in the framework of discussions with the country of origin."

The actual text released after the international trade-union "summit" meeting advanced a position somewhat different from that of *l'Humanité* however. It said that "the representatives of the trade-union federations strongly reaffirm that immigration policy must also take into account the right to free choice as to whether to stay in the country of work or return to the country of origin."

Apparently, the trade-union summit was not able to agree on the proposal put forward by the CGT that the "free choice" of the immigrant worker should be restricted by negotiations between France and the country of origin.

Unfortunately, the summit was not able to agree on concrete action either. Outside of agreeing to protest the Stoléru measures in the United Nations and similar international bodies, the trade-union delegates issued a formal statement, held a news conference, and then went home. No call was issued for mass demonstrations or for strike action to block the application of the Stoléru measures.

In spite of the lack of such a call, the meeting did demonstrate the potential for an international movement in response to the French government's attacks on immigrant workers. It also demonstrated that the trade-union leaderships as well as the governments of the home countries are very much aware that the French government is now preparing for even sharper attacks against immigrants. □

## Filipina Nurses Win New Trial

Two Filipina nurses convicted last July of poisoning patients at an Ann Arbor, Michigan, hospital have been granted a new trial. The nurses, Filipina B. Narciso and Leonora M. Perez, had won broad support from the Filipino community and from feminist groups.

Judge Philip Pratt said that a new trial was necessary because of "persistent misconduct" by the prosecution in the original thirteen-week trial. Pratt's move was quite unusual, since he had himself presided over the original trial.

In his December 19 ruling, Pratt admitted that the government case was "en-

tirely circumstantial" and characterized it as "not strong," suggesting to the prosecutors that they might be wise to decide not to retry the women.

Among the prosecution misdeeds pointed to by Pratt were withholding information from the defense, doctoring documentary evidence, and presenting "improper suggestions of fact and law to the jury."

The charges arose from a series of mysterious breathing failures at the hospital in mid-1975. Defenders of the two nurses believed they were singled out for a frame-up because they were Asian, women, and not American citizens.

ments pour Travailleurs (National Corporation for Construction of Workers Housing). See "The Sonacotra Rent Strike," *Intercontinental Press*, July 5, 1976, p. 1039.

# 'Bangladesh—The Unfinished Revolution'

By Ernest Harsch

On November 7, 1975, barely four years after Bangladesh won its independence, the country was shaken by a popular uprising within the military. The regime of Brig. Khaled Musharraf, which had seized power just four days earlier, was toppled amid jubilant street demonstrations. However, a new military regime headed by Gen. Ziaur Rahman quickly took its place.

The events of that day marked more than just another coup, according to a detailed account of the army mutiny by Lawrence Lifschultz entitled, "Abu Taher's Last Testament—Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution." It appeared in the August 1977 issue of the *Economic and Political Weekly* published in Bombay, India.

Lifschultz, who reported from Bangladesh for several years as a correspondent for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, terms the rebellion "a soldiers' uprising that had not been seen in the [Indian] subcontinent since 1857, when the colonial army of India rebelled against the British."

In his examination of the rebellion and the events that surrounded it, Lifschultz brings to bear a wide range of documentation, including leaflets distributed by the rebellious troops and previously unpublished letters and documents by Abu Taher, a central figure behind the army mutiny and a leader of the underground socialist party, the Jatyo Samajtantrik Dal (JSD—Socialist National Party).

During the uprising and the days that followed, the troops demanded the creation of a "revolutionary army," the "release of all political prisoners," the selection of officers from among the ranks, and the setting up of "revolutionary army organizations," to be linked with committees of "revolutionary students, peasants, workers, and the common masses of the country."

To prevent the rebellious troops and their civilian supporters from realizing their objectives, General Zia, who had come to power as a result of the uprising, quickly cracked down. Political activists, including Abu Taher, were arrested, some military units were disbanded or disarmed, and a general witch-hunt was launched against the JSD. The following year, a number of JSD leaders were brought to trial before a secret military tribunal. Several were sentenced to long prison terms and Taher was executed.

Lifschultz notes that the political con-

flict between the forces represented by Taher on one hand and Zia on the other was "over an issue which in essence could be said to divide the entire underdeveloped world. What would it be—revolutionary socialism in one of the poorest of the world's nations, or a path of capitalist development based on the largesse of the Americans and the plans of the World Bank?"

### National Liberation and Socialism

In an effort to analyze the dynamics of that conflict in Bangladesh, Lifschultz goes back to the origins of the modern Bengali nationalist and socialist movements.

Before independence in 1971, Bangladesh was known as East Pakistan (or East Bengal). It was dominated, economically and politically, by the rulers in West Pakistan, more than 1,000 miles away. The Bengalis strongly resisted this national oppression, one of the earliest expressions of which was the 1952 language movement aimed at defending Bengali against the forcible imposition of Urdu, Pakistan's official language.

The largest Bengali nationalist organization was the Awami League. Lifschultz characterizes it as "a bourgeois nationalist party whose principal objective in the struggle first for autonomy and later for independence was to establish the Bengali bourgeoisie as a class in its own right and not subordinate to West Pakistan's capitalist interests."

Despite these aims, it was successful in winning mass support from the Bengali population in so far as it fought against West Pakistani domination.

During the 1960s a number of leftist organizations appeared in East Bengal. Among the Maoist groups, some, such as Mohammed Toaha's East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), identified the nationalist struggle with the Awami League leadership, arguing that it reflected no more than a conflict between different wings of the Pakistani bourgeoisie. They consequently took a sectarian approach toward the Bengali nationalist struggle, counterposing to it a nonexistent unity between the workers of East and West Pakistan against their common class enemy.

Some Maoist groups later participated in the Bangladesh war for independence, but most were thrown into disarray, both by

their failure to recognize the centrality of the national question in the class struggle in East Bengal and by Peking's open support for the Yahya Khan regime in West Pakistan.

On the other hand, the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Bangladesh and the National Awami Party (Muzzafar), which also looked to Moscow, actively supported the Awami League campaigns. Lifschultz states that "the pro-Moscow left advanced the thesis that socialism could be achieved peacefully through the parliamentary path." After independence, these two parties were among the staunchest supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League regime.

Besides the pro-Peking and pro-Moscow groups, there was a third current that also considered itself socialist. After independence this current surfaced as the JSD. Lifschultz writes:

The history of the JSD, according to recent party documents and statements by its leadership, began in 1962 when "a group of conscious young men" formed a "nucleus" at Dacca University. Their position differed from other radical groups in several important, particularly strategic, respects. Not unlike many others, they held the view that socialism was the only solution to East Bengal's vast poverty, severe backwardness, and increasing underdevelopment. They argued, however, that the independence of East Bengal, or Bangladesh, was a necessary element and condition in the struggle for a socialist society. They organized themselves into what they termed a "nucleus" which centered around a number of personalities including Sirajul Alam Khan, the former General Secretary of the East Pakistan Student's League. The principal thesis of the group was that the "national question" had to be approached as *the major political contradiction of Bengali society at that stage of history*. The exploitation of East Pakistan by capital based on the western wing had taken on the form of "national" oppression. And the economic bias of West Pakistani based capitalism provided in their view the pivot for a mass political movement. . . .

The experience of an intense nationalist movement in East Bengal which at the same time would struggle for democratic rights against an autocratic military regime would draw millions into the experience of mass politics and agitation. Pakistan's history of anti-democratic military regimes made it certain that state violence would be used to crush such a movement, and thus the final achievement of democratic rights for the people of East Bengal would ultimately have to take the form of armed struggle. Once such a stage had been reached the JSD nucleus believed it would be possible to transform an armed nationalist movement into a revolutionary one.

Despite their position in favor of an independent, socialist Bangladesh, these young Bengali socialists did not see the importance of maintaining their class independence from the bourgeois Awami League, going so far as to join it. "But from the very moment of their association," Lifschultz reports, "they took the view that in reality there existed 'two parties in one.' And when the appropriate

moment came, they expected one to emerge from the other."

Although Lifschultz does not characterize it as such, this was a major political error, allowing the Awami League's leadership of the nationalist movement to escape serious challenge at a crucial period in the struggle's development.

As it was, this socialist "nucleus" appeared to the masses as the most militant layer of the Awami League's younger members. Where the Awami League leadership wavered at decisive moments, the socialists put considerable pressure on it not to betray the nationalist struggle. This was most evident during the political crisis immediately preceding the outbreak of war.

### The War of Independence

In December 1970, the Awami League, campaigning on the demand for regional autonomy, won a landslide victory in the elections to Pakistan's National Assembly, taking an absolute majority of the seats. The Pakistani rulers, however, could not countenance an Awami League regime and refused to convene the National Assembly. While Mujibur Rahman sought to negotiate a compromise with Yahya Khan, the Pakistani dictator began putting his troops into position. Finally, on March 25, 1971, he launched a massive military assault against the Bengali people.

Even before the elections, however, the "nucleus" within the Awami League was pressing for abandonment of the autonomy demand and adoption of the call for full political independence. One of them introduced a motion before the East Pakistan Students League in August 1970 demanding an Independent Socialist Bangladesh. Two months earlier they had drafted a declaration of independence and designed a new Bangladesh flag.

After the elections and the indefinite postponement of the convening of the National Assembly, Lifschultz writes, Sheikh Mujib was uncertain and wavering:

He was unable to decide whether to push beyond his existing position in favour of federated autonomy or to make an unequivocal demand for independence. On March 2, at a mammoth rally which Mujib attended, A S M Abdur Rab, who would later become General Secretary of the JSD, ceremonially burned the Pakistani flag and hoisted the new national banner. The following day, March 3, at another mass meeting on the Paltan Maidan, Shahjahan Siraj, who later emerged to become a leading figure in the JSD, read out the "Manifesto of an Independent Bangladesh." Finally, on March 7, the student leadership of what was now called the Bangladesh (no longer East Pakistan) Students League presented Mujib with an ultimatum: he must declare independence or they would abandon him and take an independent course.

Rather than have that happen, Mujib relented. At a rally of more than one million persons March 7, he declared that

the struggle was now one for complete "emancipation and independence."

During the subsequent war, in which nearly a million Bengalis died, the Awami League leadership tried to maintain its grip on the independence struggle from its headquarters in India. But the Pakistani extermination campaign spurred massive resistance from the Bengali population and various guerrilla groups arose, some more or less independent of the Awami League's direct control.

One of these was led by Abu Taher, a former officer in the Pakistani army who fled from West Pakistan to Bangladesh to join the struggle. Together with another guerrilla leader, Mohammed Ziauddin, he opposed the emphasis of the Awami League and its Indian allies on waging a conventional war against the Pakistani forces. Instead, he favored the organization of a mass guerrilla army. The Awami League resisted this, fearing that a mass mobilization could escape control. Nevertheless, Taher's forces went on to win some of the most important battles of the war.

Taher and other guerrilla leaders also opposed direct Indian military intervention on the side of the Awami League, arguing that it was necessary for the Bengalis to win the struggle themselves, however long it might take.

The Awami League and the Gandhi regime in India rejected this. "Their objective," Lifschultz writes, "was to bring an Awami League government to power in Bangladesh as soon as possible." Lifschultz cites two of the factors behind the Indian military intervention: New Delhi's traditional rivalry with Pakistan and its desire to install a regime in Bangladesh that would be dependent on Indian aid.

There was another, more important, factor, however. New Delhi feared that if the struggle continued much longer, the prosocialist elements among the independence forces could gain dominance.

A statement issued by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in April 1971 noted that the struggle for national liberation and socialism in Bangladesh "can only be impeded by any intervention of the Indian bourgeoisie, which is only interested in preserving the status quo and preventing the struggle in Bangla Desh from overflowing into West Bengal," a Bengali-populated state in India.

To forestall such a possibility, Indian forces moved into Bangladesh in massive numbers on December 3, 1971. Within less than two weeks the Pakistani army surrendered and Bangladesh gained its formal independence. As planned, Mujibur Rahman's Awami League was installed in power.

### Emergence of the JSD

The new regime was almost immediately confronted with political challenges from the socialist "nucleus" within the Awami

League. As early as January 1972, they began to present a public face by launching the daily newspaper *Gonokontho* (People's Voice). Over the next two years the paper attained the second largest circulation of any daily in the country.

Lifschultz continues:

Mujib returned to mass acclaim in Dacca [on January 10]. But on arrival he was immediately approached by the same leaders of the Students' League who a year earlier had pressed him into declaring an independent Bangladesh. They outlined their proposals on a vigorous programme of nationalisation, co-operatives, agrarian reform, and post-war reconstruction. They called upon the Awami League to adopt a specific programme for the transition to socialism. They also proposed the formation of a "government of national unity" including all parties—not just the Awami League—which had fought against Pakistan.

After Mujib refused, the socialists openly broke with the Awami League. They split the Students League in half, forming a rival organization. They did the same with the mass peasants and workers federations. Although it did not officially establish itself as a party, the JSD was formed in October 1972. One of its secret members was Col. Abu Taher.

About the same time, the Mujib regime's initial popularity quickly declined. The Awami League leaders were engaged in massive corruption and blackmarketeering. While about 100,000 persons died during the famine of 1973-74, government officials enriched themselves from the shipments of international relief aid.

As discontent and unrest spread, some of the guerrilla forces involved in the independence war took up arms once more, initiating small-scale insurgencies in the countryside. The JSD itself rapidly grew into a mass party in the cities. By December 1973 it was able to hold mass demonstrations of up to 100,000 persons. In January and February 1974 it led two

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countrywide general strikes against the Mujib regime.

Mujib turned increasingly toward repression. The offices of the JSD newspaper, *Gonokontho*, were sacked and burned, a number of JSD supporters were gunned down in the streets, and several prominent leaders of the party were arrested. In December 1974, Mujib placed Bangladesh under a state of emergency.

In response, the JSD went underground and turned toward preparations for armed action against the regime. In July 1974 it officially formed an armed wing, the Biplobi Gono Bahini (BGB—People's Revolutionary Army), commanded by Taher. Later it established the Biplobi Shainik Sangstha (BSS—Revolutionary Soldiers Organization), a clandestine formation within the regular Bangladesh army.

The JSD had already been planning an insurrection against the Mujib regime when he was overthrown by a coup on August 15, 1975. Mujib was killed and Khondakar Mustaque Ahmed came to power. He was in turn overthrown November 3 by Brig. Khaled Musharraf. According to Lifschultz, Gen. Ziaur Rahman, an old friend of Taher's from the independence struggle, was arrested and forced to resign his position as army chief of staff. But just before his detention he called Taher and pleaded for help.

#### The 'Sepoy Revolution'

The Khaled coup was extremely unpopular. The Indian press hailed it, however, reinforcing widespread rumors that the Indian regime had had a hand in the coup (by that time there were already strong Bengali resentments over the growing Indian influence in Bangladesh).

The JSD leaders viewed the situation after the Khaled coup as an opportune moment to strike. But their overall aims in launching a mass insurrection appear to have been vague and confused. Lifschultz quotes from the February 23, 1976, issue of *Samyabad* (Communism), the JSD theoretical organ. According to the JSD, the decision to act was taken:

First: to shatter the unity of the most active, organised, and oppressive armed group of the bourgeois state machinery. Second: to minimise the organising capacities of the bourgeoisie.

Third: to weaken the imperialist, revisionist, and hegemonist forces which are the patrons of the national bourgeoisie. Fourth: to force the new rule to bring back a democratic situation as far as possible with a view to ultimately eliminating the elements of bourgeois democracy.

Fifth: to prepare the ground for an introduction and growth of proletarian state power and political forces parallel to the bourgeois system of state power.

In addition, Lifschultz notes, one of the JSD's immediate concerns was to win the release of the country's 62,000 political prisoners, about 10,000 of whom were members of the JSD, including a number of National Committee members.

The JSD, and Taher in particular, organized a series of clandestine meetings of junior officers and sepoy (soldiers) under the auspices of the JSD's secret organization within the army, the BSS. On No-



MUJIB: Toppled in coup.

ember 5, thousands of leaflets were distributed to troops and urban workers. On November 7, the BSS supporters at the Dacca Cantonment, together with forces of the JSD's other military wing, the BGB, led the revolt against Khaled, quickly toppling his regime. Khaled himself was killed during the uprising.

Demonstrations and marches had been planned to coincide with the insurrection and thousands of civilians filled the streets in response to the JSD's call. Lifschultz reports that on "the day of the mutiny crowds poured into the streets to cheer the soldiers. Sepoy joyously shooting their weapons into the air and shouting slogans—"The Soldiers and People Have United"—rolled through the capital's streets. The mood was exuberant."

Besides Dacca, troops revolted in Rangpur, Chittagong, Comilla, and Jessore. In Dacca and Rangpur alone, about forty officers were believed to have been killed by their troops. By November 9, a senior officer claimed that less than 35 percent of the officer corps remained in control of their commands.

On the day of the uprising, according to Lifschultz, the JSD proposed:

... the establishment of an interim government, which would include all parties which had suffered repression during Mujib's regime, and which had supported the independence struggle of the country. . . . The JSD called for such a government to hold fresh elections, restore press freedom, and allow open political meetings. Within the army, the urban work force, and in the rural areas they called for the setting up of new organs of authority in the form of soldiers' committees, thus by-passing the state bureaucracy as the source of authority.

The JSD did not have much time in

which to try to implement its demands. Its leaders committed a major error in allowing General Zia, who had been freed during the insurrection, to come to power. In fact, Taher admits in his court testimony that it was he who proposed that Zia be appointed martial law administrator.

Based on their past experience with him, Taher and the other JSD leaders apparently believed that Zia would at least be willing to comply with some of their democratic demands, such as the release of political prisoners. Zia did order the release of JSD President M. A. Jalil and General Secretary A.S.M. Abdur Rab. He also signed the list of twelve demands put forward by the rebellious troops.

However, Zia had other aims. Lifschultz writes:

Forces fundamentally antagonistic to the radical dimensions of the upsurge rapidly tried to re-establish their position. Mabubul Alam Chashi, an important behind-the-scenes figure in the coup which toppled Mujib, reportedly was able to persuade Zia onto a new course. Basing its strength in the institutions of the American-trained national police, particularly the Special Combat paramilitary police units, and the National Security Intelligence (NSI) agency of the country, the right formed up its ranks.

Commenting on the JSD's initial confidence in Zia, Lifschultz states, "It was a serious miscalculation comparable to the trust the Chinese communists had put in their alliance with Chiang Kai-shek prior to the 1927 massacres."

By November 15, however, the JSD had publicly dissociated itself from Zia. Jalil and Rab called for the immediate formation of "revolutionary councils" among the troops, industrial workers, peasants, and intellectuals to prepare for a socialist revolution.

But Zia struck first. On November 23 he had Jalil, Rab, and other JSD leaders arrested. The next day Taher was also seized. A general crackdown was launched against the JSD throughout the country.

Since much of the regular army was no longer reliable, Zia was forced to use the police and special paramilitary units to carry out the repression. Two dissident units in Dacca were reportedly disarmed with some difficulty and reports filtered into the capital of hundreds of arrests of soldiers in other cities. In December, the Dacca press reported the capture of 1,000 "miscreants," the military regime's term for JSD members. The same month a new mutiny broke out at the Chittagong naval base and in March there were reports of unrest among army units stationed with the Chittagong Brigade.

#### Military 'Justice' Behind Closed Doors

Zia's repression against the JSD encouraged some of the more openly reactionary elements in the military and the government administration to reassert their direct influence. Among these were a layer of

Bengali officers who had remained in West Pakistan until 1973 and had not participated in the independence struggle. These rightist figures clamored for a trial of the imprisoned JSD leaders.

Lifschultz reports:

Other pressures built up from the top officials of the National Security Intelligence (NSI) and the Home Ministry for a trial which would settle the matter. . . . These two organisations, the first directed by A M S Safdar, and the second by Salauddin Ahmed, were headed now by men who were the senior-most intelligence and internal security officials during the era of [Pakistani dictator] Ayub Khan. These men moved into their positions immediately following Mujib's assassination. A number of these suddenly rehabilitated technocrats had during 1971 been accused of active collaboration with the Pakistani Army.

At the same time, General Zia won the open support of the Maoist East Bengal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), led by Mohammed Toaha. Toaha publicly denounced the JSD's political activities, accusing it of "trying to sow seeds of discontent and dissension among the *jawans* [soldiers] of the armed forces by raising the bogey of class differences in the different strata of the armed forces. Using this cunning tactic they have been trying to disrupt the defence forces and to pave the way for the easy walkover of the Indian Army into the soil of Bangladesh."

In June 1976, a Special Military Tribunal was set up to try Taher and other leading political prisoners in secret. It was later announced that they had been accused of mutiny, treason, and the "propagation of political ideology and disaffection among the officers and other members of the Defense Services, the Bangladesh Rifles, the Police Forces, and the Ansars."

Besides Taher, Jalil, and Rab, the accused included Hasanul Huq Inu, the general secretary of the Krishak (Peasants) League; Mohammed Shajahan, president of the Shramik (Workers) League; and M.R. Manna, general secretary of the Chattra (Students) League. Sirajul Alam Khan, a founder and central figure in the JSD who had gone underground, was tried *in absentia*.

In the transcript of his court testimony, which is now banned in Bangladesh, Taher denied the charges of conspiracy and refused to recognize the authority of the tribunal to try him. He told of the solitary confinement, torture, and threats he had been subjected to. He recounted his role in the independence struggle and the November 7 uprising. He concluded his testimony by saying, "I warn this tribunal as I warn the corrupt gentry of the country, do not dare my life. If you do, you will burn the soul of this nation."

On July 17 the military tribunal announced its verdicts. Taher was sentenced to death, Jalil and another JSD leader to life imprisonment, and other defendants to

varying jail sentences. Thirteen defendants were acquitted.

Although Lifschultz did not note it, the August 15, 1976, *Washington Post* reported that the same day the verdicts were handed down there "was a mutiny at the military camp at Bogra, 100 miles northwest of the capital. About 100 men were arrested during the day-long rebellion. . . ."

(On September 30, 1977, there was yet another mutiny at Bogra, followed two

days later by a military uprising in Dacca. After it was put down, the JSD and two other parties were banned and nearly 100 soldiers were condemned to death.)

Just four days after the sentences were handed down, on July 21, 1976, Abu Taher was hanged. His was the first official execution for political reasons in Bengal since 1934. According to a letter from a close acquaintance of his, Taher shouted just before his execution, "Long Live Bangladesh! Long Live Revolution!" □

## 'A Lunar Landscape'—The Plain of Jars Four Years After the American Bombing

Several years after the end of the massive American bombing of Laos, the countryside continues to display the scars of devastation.

*Far Eastern Economic Review* correspondent Nayan Chanda, who was in the first group of foreign journalists allowed to visit the Plain of Jars since the Pathet Lao gained control of the country, described what he saw in the December 23, 1977, issue:

From the window of the low-flying C-123 transport, Laos' Plain of Jars resembles a lunar landscape, pock-marked as it is with bomb craters that are a stark testimony to the years of war that denuded the area of people and buildings. . . .

A few miles north of Long Cheng the rolling valleys and green savannahs of the plain unfold, still scarred by the ravages of war. At ground level, the signs of death and destruction are even more ubiquitous. Bomb craters are to be found everywhere; empty casings of anti-personnel mines litter the landscape. Not a single brick building remains standing, and every bridge on

the pot-holed road that runs through the area is destroyed.

Chanda reported that, contrary to popular belief, the Plain of Jars had not been totally depopulated during the bombing. Several thousand peasants continued to cling to their land, hiding by day and tilling their fields by night. They refer to 1973, when most of the fighting ended, as "the year we came out of the *khum* [hole]."

Even now, the debris of war continues to take its toll. Since the end of the fighting, undetonated bombs embedded throughout the countryside have exploded, killing 267 persons and wounding 343 more in the province of Xeing Khouang alone.

Despite the massive devastation and the loss of most of the livestock during the war, the region has begun to make a modest recovery. Homes and villages are being slowly rebuilt and food production is increasing, although it still supplies only half of the area's annual needs. Vietnamese soldiers and workers are assisting in the reconstruction of the road network. □

## Deutscher Prize Awarded to S. S. Prawer

The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for 1977 has been awarded to Professor S.S. Prawer for his book *Karl Marx and World Literature*. The prize, first presented in 1969 to Martin Nicolaus, confers a monetary award of £100.

Prawer is Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Oxford. His previously published works include *German Lyric Poetry* and *Heine, the Tragic Satirist*.

The next Deutscher Memorial Prize will be awarded in the fall of 1978. Works, whether published or in typescript, should be submitted by May 1, 1978, to: The Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, c/o Lloyds Bank, 68 Warwick Square, London, SW1, England.

This year's jury consisted of Perry Anderson, E.H. Carr, Tamara Deutscher, Eric Hobsbawm, Monty Johnstone, Ralph Miliband, and István Mészáros.

### Correction

An error appeared in the review written by Sam Gordon of the play *State of Revolution*, which was published in the September 19 issue of *Intercontinental Press* (p. 1032). The play *Lion in Winter*, referred to in the review as one of Robert Bolt's works, was in reality written by James Goldman.

Gordon writes that the play he had in mind was Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*. □

# Where is the ETA Headed?

By G. Bengochea

[The following article appeared as a two-part series in the December 7 and 8 issues of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The radical nationalist movement Euzkadi ta Askatasuna (ETA—Basque Nation and Freedom) has claimed responsibility for an assassination attempt carried out November 27 in Pamplona against a chief of the armed police, Imaz Martínez.

This is only the latest in a long series of armed actions undertaken by the organization since the June legislative elections.

On October 10, ETA-Military claimed responsibility for an attack on the head of the provincial government in Guernica, Augusto Unceta, and the two Civil Guards protecting him. The next day there were ETA attacks on the Civil Guard motor pool in Pamplona.

On October 13, a truck driver known as a "stool pigeon" was the target of an attack carried out in broad daylight in Villabona, in which six persons were seriously injured. That same day, bombs went off in a Markina factory where police weapons were manufactured.

On October 31, the armed police barracks in Vitoria were bombed. On November 2, Jose Diaz, a municipal police sergeant in Irun, was "executed."

And the list goes on. It will get longer in the coming months, according to ETA, which says it will not put a stop to its activities until it has "won freedom for Euzkadi and the fascist gangs have vanished."

The question on everyone's mind is, "Where is ETA headed?" All the Basque political organizations, including ETA—Political-Military, have condemned these actions for various reasons. The majority of the Basque people, who until recently were fervent supporters of ETA's actions, are now displaying rejection or lack of understanding of them.

The ETA-Military communiqué claiming responsibility for the Guernica attack was quite clear:

ETA believes that its action cannot destabilize democracy, for the simple reason that there is no democracy whatsoever in the Spanish state. We live under the same military dictatorship as before, but one with a smiling face. . . . Before, mass demonstrations were illegal. Today they are tolerated, as long as they are limited to nothing more than a column of sheep obeying

the shepherd and his dogs,<sup>1</sup> but the result is the same: zero.

This communiqué is an insult to the tens of thousands of workers and youth who have demonstrated in Euzkadi in the last few months.

Have these demonstrations really had "zero" results? Then who was it that freed the prisoners, won the legalization of political parties and the first few rights—ETA, with the help of its commando actions, or the workers through their mobilizations?

### ETA's Contempt for Mass Struggles

This contempt for mass struggles is the most dangerous aspect of ETA's current evolution.

ETA—Political-Military condemned the Guernica attack, saying that it "in no way contributes to our people's defense, and only discredits what was the image and reality of ETA during its struggle against the dictatorship."

To understand the meaning of this criticism from ETA—Political-Military, which only a few weeks ago still advocated individual armed struggle, it is useful to review ETA's turbulent career.

### The Record of the ETA

ETA arose in the 1960s as an outgrowth of the growing political radicalization among Basque youth and as a reaction to the quiescence of the traditional nationalist movement embodied by the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

ETA arose at a time when world attention was focused on national liberation struggles in the third world (first Algeria, then Cuba). In the decade of the 1960s, ETA played an increasingly important role in Euzkadi politics, partially filling the vacuum that resulted from the weakness of the mass movement.

The early stages of reorganization of the workers movement had an immediate impact on ETA. On the one hand, it declared its determination to defend the interests of the working class, and defined itself as a "socialist and revolutionary organization." On the other hand, the first major split was carried out by the *Komunistak* grouping, which was later to form the Communist Movement and which pushed mass struggles to the forefront.

1. A play on words insulting to workers, since "dogs" (*txakura* in Basque) also means "cops."

In 1970, at ETA's Sixth Assembly, the majority of its members broke ideologically with nationalism and military activity. Two organizations came out of this assembly: ETA-V, which remained faithful to the precepts of the Fifth Assembly; and ETA-VI, which formed the LKI [*Liga Komunista Iraultzaile*] after fusing with the Spanish LCR [*Liga Comunista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Communist League*].

In that same year, the military trial of Izko and his comrades took place in Burgos. It set off the first overall political struggle against the Francoist dictatorship, and signaled the beginning of a new phase in the class struggle. From then on, it was the working class, both inside and outside Euzkadi, that took center stage.

ETA-V did not grasp this change in the situation. It continued to function in four areas: armed actions, workers struggles, cultural and political movements. But the central axis remained that of armed actions. The heavy repression suffered by the organization as a result prevented it from regularizing the work it wanted to carry out in the mass movement.

It therefore underwent a new split with the Worker Front, which gave rise to the LAIA grouping. The endless debate over combining armed struggle with mass work led to ETA-V once again dividing into two currents in 1974: ETA-Military, a group devoted to armed actions, and ETA—Political-Military, which sought to combine the two.

A part of ETA gave rise to an organization called EIA (Party of the Basque Revolution), while the minority continued as ETA—Political-Military.

The most recent turn for the worse came this year, when a section of the members of ETA—Political-Military broke with the leadership and formed the Berezis Commandos under the leadership of Miguel Angel Apalategui. This group recently fused with ETA-Military.

At the same time, what was left of ETA—Political-Military announced that it was giving up the policy of imposing a "revolutionary tax" on Basque industrialists, and relegating armed struggle to a minor role in order to concentrate on mass work.

The initial conclusion that can be drawn from this review of the history of ETA and its splits is that a central aspect of its development has been this contradictory evolution toward overcoming minority armed actions in favor of political activity linked to the mass movement. All of the splits had this common denominator in one way or another. Each time a split occurred, it reopened the controversy over the objectively substitutionist policy of armed actions.

ETA-Military as it currently exists can therefore be characterized as the sector of the revolutionary nationalist movement



that has proved incapable of analyzing and grasping the evolution of the class struggle and consequently of adapting its political activity to the new situation.

ETA's contributions to the class struggle have been distinct and contradictory. On the one hand, it has played a large role in the politicalization of the Basque people.

Euzkadi has experienced a much greater degree of repression in the last few years than the rest of Spain. The Basque people were quick to understand that behind the Civil Guard's submachine guns, behind the states of emergency and the banning of all manifestations of their culture, lay the Francoist dictatorship. The result was that the struggles of the workers and the popular masses were aimed squarely at the governmental authorities.

In terms of national oppression, ETA's influence has been an important factor in the awakening of consciousness. Its political and ideological break with bourgeois nationalism (represented by the PNV) in favor of revolutionary nationalism represented another progressive factor.

The radical methods of struggle used by ETA in its fight against the Francoist dictatorship broadly influenced large sectors of the working class, which in turn adopted equally radical methods of struggle—in particular, the use of general strikes and massive confrontations with the police.

The outcome of these three factors was the reduced capacity of the reformists to control the workers and mass movements, to the benefit of the organizations to the left of the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) and the Communist Party. These organizations acquired real political significance. It cannot be denied that this played a positive role; otherwise, the mobilizations of the Basque people and their characteristics would be impossible to explain (a comparison with Catalonia or Madrid helps to clarify this).

The negative factors remain to be discussed.

The policy of armed actions was and still is a means of substituting for the mass movement. This situation is now endangering ETA's very existence. But even during periods of dictatorship, revolutionary activity can never be "outside" the day-to-day struggles and level of consciousness of the workers or of the most advanced sectors of the working class.

Minority armed actions—when they are carried out by an organization that enjoys considerable mass support, as was the case with ETA—always have the negative effect of sowing illusions among the workers that forces exist outside their ranks capable of solving their own problems.

The reprisals carried out by ETA against the bosses of businesses where struggles were going on—including "executions"—are the most typical example of this danger. The highly paternalist role of "guard-

ian angels" that ETA played on these occasions in no way helped strengthen the fighting ability and class consciousness of those workers in struggle.

Most of the time, the effect on the workers was actually retrogressive and divisive. After the execution in Guernica of Unceta, chairman of the Vizcaya provincial government and also boss of the Jypsa and Trebol firms, the workers in those plants, who had been involved in a struggle for many months, unanimously declared that this "outside" action had not helped them in any way.

ETA's nationalist ideology, aside from its positive contributions, also had negative effects. It is false to believe that national liberation of the Basque people, and the socialist revolution that will go hand in hand with it, can be brought about wholly within the boundaries of Euzkadi, independently of the class struggle in the rest of the country. Euzkadi, says ETA (with shades of HASI,<sup>2</sup> LAIA, and even EIA), is an independent framework for the class struggle.

However, it is clear that the victory of the socialist revolution is unimaginable outside the context of the Spanish state as a whole. It is not the government in Bilbao that must be destroyed, but the one in Madrid. It is utopian to think that the bourgeois state can be destroyed simply within the boundaries of Euzkadi, and this can have tragic consequences later on (remember Asturias in 1934).

As a matter of fact, the reason why ETA and the other revolutionary nationalist organizations have not drawn any serious practical conclusions from their strategic

2. HASI—Herriko Alderdi Sozialista Iraultzailea (People's Revolutionary Socialist Party), founded in July through the fusion of various Basque nationalist-socialist currents.

goal of socialist revolution is that doing so would call their own existence into question as parties organized only within Euzkadi and not in the rest of the Spanish state.

This is the question that the revolutionary nationalist movement will have to answer in the next period.

The June 15 elections opened up a new political situation. What kind of election campaign did ETA carry out at that time? A campaign of thirty-four armed actions (against television broadcasting antennas, railroad tracks, and police cars). At the same time, the Basque people were participating in the elections in large numbers and voting for the PNV and the PSOE.

The gulf between the ETA and the Basque people was gapingly apparent. It has continued to widen since then, especially after the recent elections. The fact that tens of thousands of persons—mostly very young and new to politics—shout at demonstrations, "ETA, the people are with you," does not mean that ETA has kept its reputation intact.

Nowadays, the great majority of the Basque people openly reject those armed actions, especially the "executions." ETA continues to characterize the Spanish regime as a "military dictatorship with a smiling face," at a time when the workers movement is nearly completely legal, when trade-union rights have been regained, when nearly fifty percent of the deputies in the Cortes belong to the anti-Franco opposition. This is irresponsible.

Right now, to the question "Where is ETA headed?" we are compelled to reply: If ETA continues its present political line, it will end its political career as an organization far removed from the reality of the class struggle, insensitive to political changes, peripheral to the workers and mass movements, and rejected by its own people. □

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## Costa Rican OST Demands Stalinists Stop Physical Violence

By Fred Murphy

All eight of the activists arrested November 23 when police attacked a demonstration in Limón, Costa Rica, have been released on bail. They still face trial on charges of "riot, aggravated assault, instigation of a riot, and intimidation."

The November 23 demonstration involved about 500 persons—mostly women and children—from the Limoncito community. Their demands were for clean drinking water, electric power, and sewage lines—basic necessities that have been the focus of a twelve-year-long struggle in Limoncito. Since the arrests and the police attack, street marches and rallies have continued in Limón, involving up to 1,000 persons.

Four candidates for office in the 1978 Costa Rican elections are among those facing charges. Two of them—Sherman León and José Angulo—are leaders of the Limoncito community and candidates for Limón city council [*regidor*] of the Partido Auténtico Limonense (PAL—Limon Authentic Party; see accompanying article).

Also arrested were Carlos Coronado Vargas, presidential candidate of the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST),<sup>1</sup> and Alejandra Calderón Fournier, OST chairperson and candidate for national assembly. Since being released on bail December 1, Coronado has faced continual harassment by the police in Limón and San José and has been rearrested several times on trumped-up charges.

While the struggle of the Limoncito community and the defense of the eight activists has gained much support from mass organizations, trade unions, and student groups, some organizations in the Costa Rican workers movement have displayed a scandalously sectarian attitude.

In particular, the leadership of the CGT, a trade-union federation controlled by the Stalinist PVP,<sup>2</sup> has declared publicly that they will not support the Limoncito struggle.

The PVP heads an electoral coalition called Pueblo Unido (United People), which includes the Socialist Party and a centrist group called the Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary People's Movement). The Pueblo Unido parties have not only failed to speak out against



Better sidewalks are one improvement residents of Limón are demanding.

the government's repression in Limoncito and the harassment of the OST; Pueblo Unido supporters have even been involved in physical assaults on activists campaigning for the PAL and the OST.

The seriousness of these attacks led Alejandra Calderón, the founder and main leader of the OST, to issue an open letter to the Pueblo Unido and to the PVP in particular, calling for an end to physical violence inside the workers movement.

The open letter was published on the front page of *Excelsior*, a major Costa Rican daily, on December 9. In it, Calderón said:

On December 7, in Siquirres [a town in Limón Province] several members of our organization were savagely attacked by a Pueblo Unido squad while distributing campaign material.

Marvin Wright Lindo (candidate for deputy from the Partido Auténtico Limonense) was hit with a rock and is now in a Limón hospital, in danger of losing his hearing in the right ear.

A few weeks earlier, Marvin Wright Lindo was threatened with a revolver by a member of the Partido Vanguardia Popular in the middle of a Limón street while a large number of people watched. . . .

There have been many anonymous telephone calls—from persons identifying themselves only as "indignant" members of Pueblo Unido—threatening our candidates with attacks.

Calderón noted the "strange coincidence of a combined attack by the repressive state apparatus and by squads of the Partido Vanguardia Popular." She said this could not help but "create uneasiness among the most honest sympathizers of Pueblo Unido."

The OST, Calderón said, "respects the right of all parties to express their opinion and debate politically" and "rejects violence as a method of political struggle among workers parties." She called on the PVP and Pueblo Unido to do the same.

The OST's open letter was answered the day after it was published in *Excelsior*. The paper provided space to Manuel Mora Valverde, chairman of the Pueblo Unido executive committee and a long-time leader of the PVP. Referring often to Calderón with the diminutive—and in this case quite offensive—nickname "Alejandrita," Mora said:

I do not have to hide the fact that as a *tico* [slang for Costa Rican] of the older generation I am a little sentimental. Perhaps for that reason it is difficult for me to confront Alejandra, the daughter of Dr. Calderón Guardia<sup>3</sup> and Doña

1. Socialist Workers Organization, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

2. Partido Vanguardia Popular (Popular Vanguard Party), the Costa Rican Communist Party.

3. Rafael Calderón Guardia, Alejandra Calderón's father, was president of Costa Rica from

Rosarita, for whom I have always expressed much sympathy. . . .

Above all I want to say that, without casting doubt on Alejandrita's intellectual capacities, I think [the OST's] publications—and particularly the most recent one [the open letter]—have some foreign inspiration. A certain political malice that exudes from these publications reveals the existence of a mind accustomed to this type of agitation. And it does not seem to me that this mind is Alejandrita's. She is hooked up with a group of foreign Trotskyists . . . and from that fountain Alejandrita has drunk some of her inspiration. . . .

Mora crudely echoed the violence-baiting that the government has directed against the OST and the PAL:

Alejandrita says . . . that her party wants peace in Costa Rica, but that Vanguardia Popular is carrying out a campaign in which blood could be spilled. . . . Who does not know of the violent career of Marvin Wright . . . ? Who is unaware that his violent tendencies brought him to the penitentiary . . . ? Do Alejandrita's advisers have the idea of helping the present election campaign to end in a civil war or something similar, and have they thus begun to prepare the climate?

Mora claimed that Marvin Wright had disrupted a Pueblo Unido campaign meeting in Limoncito, and had been carrying out an attack on PU activists in front of the PVP's Siquirres headquarters when he was hit by a rock. Mora concluded: "We are not afraid of a fight, and we will never let ourselves be intimidated by anyone. Alejandrita—and the country—can be sure that we haven't the slightest intention of breaking the law. But anyone who wants to attack us or keep us from exercising our rights will have our immediate response."

The debate in the pages of *Excelsior* continued as Calderón responded on December 11:

Despite calling me a "useful idiot," Don Manuelito does not debate me openly because of the sympathy he says he professes for my father. That is about the most grotesque thing I have ever heard from the mouth of someone who claims to represent the working class. All the betrayals of the past forty years are summed up in that sentence.

The old sentimentalist Don Manuelito still recalls sympathetically the ruling-class politician he made deals with, and to whom he offered the young workers movement on a silver platter. . . . It is strange, however, that when the daughter of his supposed good friend was being beaten in jail and suffering kidney injuries, the nostalgic Don Manuelito kept silent.

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1940 to 1944. . . . Calderón had a reputation as a reformer and was responsible for enacting the country's most important labor and social legislation," Robert J. Alexander writes in *Latin American Political Parties*, but "his administration was also widely regarded as being corrupt to a degree unusual for Costa Rica." The PVP supported Calderón Guardia's government and has allied itself electorally with his National Republican Party on a number of occasions in the past twenty years.

Calderón refuted Mora's lies about Marvin Wright and the OST and then said:

But I will not stoop to answering every one of Sr. Mora's slanders. All the worker parties of Costa Rica have at one time or another been victims of the PVP's physical attacks, even those that today are in the Pueblo Unido coalition. If they are honest they will have to admit who the aggressors are.

Your letter, Sr. Mora, has one positive central aspect: You have committed yourselves publicly not to attack us. Our party accepts this pledge before all the Costa Rican people and assures you that if new incidents occur we will not be the ones to have taken the initiative in resorting to physical violence.

Calderón's charges against the PVP were lent further weight in a letter *Excelsior* published December 12. Rodolfo Cerdas Cruz, general secretary of the Frente Popular (FP—Popular Front), a radical nationalist group with Maoist leanings, described a series of physical attacks on FP members, trade unionists, and other activists by the PVP. He also praised Alejandra Calderón's "undeniable courage and determination."

The slanders and attacks leveled against the Trotskyists of the OST by the PVP are, of course, in line with its Stalinist character. Unfortunately, however, the OST has had to call attention to the role of another organization on the Costa Rican left. An article in the December issue of the OST's newspaper, *Qué Hacer?*, said:

Perhaps the reader has heard of a small group

called the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party]. The PRT says it sympathizes with the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization with which our party maintains fraternal relations.

Solidarity with any sector of workers attacked by the bourgeois power is a fundamental principle of Trotskyism. Nevertheless, the PRT has actually done nothing to defend the OST. When it has spoken of Limoncito it has avoided mentioning that our comrades were among those detained. In such an approach the PRT echoes the Pueblo Unido, whose election campaign it is supporting.

While the Limoncito community leaders and the OST candidates are now out of jail, they could face prison sentences of up to eight years on the "riot" charges. International solidarity is important to their defense.

In the United States, the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) organized picket lines at Costa Rican consulates in Los Angeles and San Francisco in early December.

Telegrams and messages demanding that the charges against the eight activists be dropped should be sent to Costa Rican embassies or consulates or to President Daniel Oduber Quirós, San José, Costa Rica. Copies of such messages, along with expressions of solidarity, should be sent to the Comité de Defensa de los Presos de Limón, c/o Marta Trejos, P.O. Box 949, San José, Costa Rica; or to USLA, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, N.Y. 10003. □

## Platform of the Limón Authentic Party

[The following is the text of a campaign brochure distributed by the Partido Auténtico Limonense (PAL—Limón Authentic Party), which is based among the Black workers of Limón province in Costa Rica. Its main leader and candidate for deputy in the National Assembly is Marvin Wright Lindo ("Calalú"). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The time has come for the Limón Authentic Party.

The most combative and most conscious workers, the students, the women, the Indians, the Blacks of Limón have had enough of oppression. That is why we are building the Limón Authentic Party—the party of the struggle, of the demands, of the rights of the Limón working class.

The PAL's candidates are neither bosses, nor bureaucrats, nor demagogues, nor traitors. The candidates of the PAL have been authentic fighters for many years. On their backs they have borne the weight of the rulers' repression and years of hunger and poverty, without selling out

or faltering. More than twenty years of struggle is the PAL's guarantee.

The elections are the first step in a long battle. Our victory will come when our struggles in the city and the countryside have triumphed. No one will be able to keep our candidates from winning, because the workers of Limón can no longer be fooled.

We have had enough—the hour of Limón has arrived.

The Limón Authentic Party is fighting for the rights of the workers of Limón:

- The right to have the bulk of the wealth that Limón workers produce remain in Limón.

- The right of every Limón worker to a secure job, with wages adequate to the cost of living.

- The right of every family to have an income sufficient to cover all its needs.

- The right not to have to live as animals, paying incredibly high rent—often without water, without light, without sanitation—in unhealthy barrios.

- The right to free, efficient, and prompt medical care, with clinics in every community. *We have had enough of Social*

### *Security treating us like dogs!*

- The right of everyone to cultural opportunities equal to those enjoyed by the rich. Adequate centers for pre-school, primary, secondary, and university education, open day and night, with all the sports, music, and teaching materials necessary for the full development of their human potential.

- The right of youth to centers for meetings, recreation, and wholesome amusements, administered by the youth themselves and provided throughout the province.

- The right of those who work the land to own it.

- The right of women in Limón to have equal job opportunities with men. For the right of women to have enough child-care centers and nurseries to care for their children. Automatic laundry centers in each community.

Women should be able to decide how many children they want to bear, with free access to whatever contraceptives they may choose, according to their own criteria.

- The right of Blacks to every opportunity to develop their own culture. The right to education in their own language; to their own cultural organizations; to the material means for developing their own music and styles of dress. The right to equal opportunities in jobs, wages, housing, health, and sports throughout the national territory.

A PAL deputy, a PAL municipal official, any representative of the PAL will be an unconditional supporter of all the struggles of the workers of Limón. That is the party's reason for existence, and that is the only thing that our candidates will seek to carry out in the bodies to which they are elected. Our candidates are fighters; they will continue to be fighters, elected or not, just as they always have been.

If they can be elected today, it is because we have had enough—the hour of Limón has arrived! □

### **Mobutu's French Prop**

In late 1977, the French government took another step in its growing military involvement in Africa. The cabinet adopted a draft law authorizing approval of a technical and military agreement between Paris and the Zaïre regime of Mobutu Sese Seko. The agreement was first signed May 22, 1977, after French pilots flew 1,500 Moroccan troops into Zaïre to help Mobutu put down a rebellion in the mineral-rich province of Shaba.

The agreement covered the appointment and employment of French technical personnel in Zaïre, visits to Zaïre by French experts, and the training in France of Zaïrean officers. There are already some sixty French military instructors stationed in Zaïre and sixty-five Zaïrean trainees in French military academies.

## **A Question for Fidel Castro**

By Livio Maitan

[The following article appeared in the December 27 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

Anyone who thinks that there is no one left to take up the polemic against Trotskyism in classic Stalinist fashion is in error—Stalin has heirs who remain loyal to him. Unfortunately, we are not talking about a few hacks on Brezhnev's payroll, but of one Jesús Orta Ruiz, writing in the November 12 issue of *Granma*, newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party.

We should pick out a few choice items: "Trotsky felt that revolutionary changes were the work of certain select groups that could 'store' the will of the proletariat for a revolutionary transformation of society. He tried to make people believe that social change came about in an absolutely voluntarist manner. He overlooked the laws of the revolution."

"Trotsky denied the revolutionary potential of many millions of peasants. . . ."

"Trotsky had predicted that the peasants would wage war against the working class and thus threaten to deal the achievements of the revolution a death blow."

"Trotsky held the view that the revolution should be 'extended' all over the world, using the armed forces of Soviet Russia."

"However, there are petty bourgeois pseudo-revolutionary minorities who,

given the upsurge of socialism and the overwhelming reality of the Soviet Union, have tried to revive Trotsky, building up idols with clay feet."

We will not insult our readers by showing them that *Granma's* contributor is an avowed falsifier. On the contrary, we ask: Why does the newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party resort to such methods?

Would it be jumping to conclusions to assume that there are militants in Cuba who have questions about the present policy of the workers state and of its leadership? Who are raising questions about the international character of the revolution and about the possibility—or impossibility—of successfully building socialism in Cuba while the rest of Latin America remains under the heel of American imperialism and the ruling classes in each country? Who are interested in the history of the Russian revolution and in the ups and downs that culminated in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state?

Fidel Castro declared recently on French television that the Cuban state was battling against its enemies, but that those who wished to make criticisms for the good of the revolution could do so without fear. We would like to ask him a specific question: Would it be possible for a reply to the assertions of Jesús Orta Ruiz—even purely on the level of historical fact—to be published in *Granma*?

The answer—should one be forthcoming—would be of major interest to us and to the entire revolutionary movement. □

## **Gandhi Splits Congress Party**

The factional crisis that has been simmering within the Congress Party for several months finally erupted to the surface January 1 when supporters of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi opened a congress in New Delhi in defiance of the party's official leadership. The next day they formalized the split, claiming that they represented the "real" Congress Party and electing Gandhi its president.

The official leadership of the Congress Party responded after the fact by expelling Gandhi and her supporters. She in turn "expelled" Congress Party President K. Brahmaananda Reddy.

The crisis was precipitated by Gandhi's efforts to make a political comeback and regain control of the party following her massive defeat in the March 1977 general elections, in which the Congress's thirty-

year hold on power over India was broken.

However, most of the main leaders of the party, who have been trying to rid themselves of the taint of Gandhi's dictatorial reign in office, resisted these moves and blocked her bid to become Congress Party president.

In December, Gandhi and seven of her supporters on the twenty-one-member Congress Working Committee resigned and called the New Delhi convention. Although Gandhi's group claims to have the backing of most of the party, only a few prominent Congress leaders showed up in New Delhi.

The public split in the party could have serious repercussions in the six states where it still rules. All six are due to elect new Legislative Assemblies early this year.

## Suárez's Economic Emergency Plan—Big Cut in Real Wages

By J. Albarracín and P. Montes

[The following article appeared in the December 22 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly news bulletin published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

As in other capitalist countries hit by open crisis, the Spanish government is trying to impose an austerity policy on the workers. It justifies this in the same way as its counterparts elsewhere ("the national economy is in an untenable position"), but it also refers to the exceptional gravity of the crisis in Spain. Spanish capitalism is indeed passing through very difficult times—as may be seen from the constantly rising rate of inflation, the unmanageable balance of payments deficit, the inordinate level of unemployment, and the sharp decline in capital accumulation.

There are further similarities with the crisis in other capitalist countries. The analysis of the bourgeoisie designates the *general cause* of the situation as the rise in the price of raw materials, above all oil, which is supposed to have given rise to "a transfer of resources" and an "as yet unabsorbed impoverishment of the country." And as its *immediate cause* the intolerable impact of wage increases is cited (although here the bourgeoisie speaks in rather milder terms so as "not to offend the workers' sensitivity"). Its analysis touches on the special circumstances of the Spanish political situation, but it does not go beyond these vague formulas.

In particular, it neglects to insert the Spanish crisis in the context of the generalized crisis of the imperialist economy; or when it does so, it remains at the level of symptoms rather than underlying causes. It forgets the special structural characteristics of Spanish capitalism inherited from its entire past development. Finally, it overlooks the present rise of class struggle, objectively determined by the superexploitation of the working class in the years of the dictatorship. Of course, it suits the bourgeoisie not to mention the class struggle, since the government is seeking everyone's cooperation in "saving the national economy in these difficult hours," laying stress on "the sense of responsibility of all members of the community." In this, however, a veiled threat is always present: "the consolidation of democracy depends on the outcome."

Before analyzing the economic projects of the Suárez government, we should describe at least in outline the last cycle of Spanish capitalism as well as the precise situation facing it today.

a. There was first a *period of growth* stretching from spring 1971 to spring 1973. Basing itself on the expansion of the entire international imperialist economy, Spanish capitalism experienced a sharp rise in production and capital accumulation. Gross National Product (GNP) grew in 1972 and 1973 at a rate above 8%, while gross accumulation increased by over 15%.

b. This was followed by a *period of overproduction and artificially sustained expansion*, running from spring 1973 to spring 1974. Economic activity continued to develop at an acceptable rhythm, even though the crisis of overproduction was already apparent. This artificial maintenance of growth resulted above all from the inertia of the system and the economic policy of the government, which sought to delay the impact of the international crisis lest it exacerbate the class struggle. In 1974, GNP was still growing at a rate of 5%.

c. The period between spring 1974 and early 1976 was one of *recession and stagnation*. Industrial production fell by 10% between April 1974 and April 1975.

d. The whole of 1976 and the first months of 1977 were marked by *faltering upturn and absence of accumulation*. Economic activity was stimulated above all by the upturn in a number of imperialist countries. But the process of capital accumulation did not pick up. Thus, although the index of industrial production rose by 16.5% between March 1976 and March 1977, the rate of growth of fixed capital investment was *negative* in both 1975 (-2.4%) and 1976 (-1.5%), and is expected to remain so in 1977. Moreover, activity has slowed down since the spring, and the 1977 totals for industrial production and GNP will be much lower than those optimistically forecast at the beginning of the year.

The most serious problems confronting Spanish capitalism are the following:

- *Inflation*. Throughout the cycle we have just described, whether in the phase of expansion or that of contraction, the rate of price increases continually worsened. The cost of living index shows the following progression:

1972 ..... 7.3%

1973 ..... 14.3%  
 1974 ..... 17.9%  
 1975 ..... 14.1%  
 1976 ..... 19.8%  
 1977 (first quarter) ..... 13.2%

It is feared that the situation will deteriorate still further in the coming months, since the impact of the last devaluation of the peseta is beginning to make itself felt.

- *Unemployment*. It is estimated that the number of unemployed has passed the million mark for an active population of more than 13.4 million. In other words, the current level is 7.5%. During the phase of expansion, the industrial reserve army practically disappeared, emigration to the European capitalist countries functioning as a kind of safety-valve. But unemployment has rocketed since the onset of the crisis, fueled above all by the return of those working abroad, the entry of students leaving school onto the labor market, and the fact that petty-bourgeois layers have been compelled to work for others in the present economic situation. Without doubt unemployment is still rising as a result of layoffs in crisis-stricken enterprises.

- *The balance of payments deficit*. The current account balance has been in the red since 1974, despite the internal crisis and devaluation of the peseta. This deficit passed from \$3.2 billion in 1974 to \$3.5 billion in 1975 and \$4.3 billion in 1976. This latter figure represents 4.2% of GNP, a level unsurpassed in any other imperialist country. In order to cover this deficit, it has been necessary to reduce foreign currency reserves and run up such enormous debts with international imperialism that further credits become more and more difficult to obtain. (The foreign currency debts of the Bank of Spain exceed the total exchange reserves.) This has resulted in a radical change in the structure of the capital balance: direct foreign investment in Spain has declined, while credits now make up the greater part of foreign capital inflow.

- *The extremely precarious situation of capitalist enterprises*. The fall in the rate of profit provoked by the crisis of overproduction is combined with the combativity of the workers movement, which has succeeded in defending itself against the effects of inflation despite the massive unemployment and the protracted character of the crisis. The slight upturn that occurred was not enough to engender an

appreciable improvement in the situation of the capitalist firms. This explains the low level of accumulation. It must be taken into account that the crisis has affected capitalists as a whole in a very uneven manner, and that the large firms emerge more solvent than small and medium-sized ones.

### Economic Policy of the Bourgeoisie

We must now bring out the characteristics of the economic policy pursued by the Spanish bourgeoisie over the last few years as well as the results that it has obtained. This will enable us to look at the most recent bourgeois plan to meet the crisis, one which is the most theoretically developed and which has been born in the more favorable political circumstances of a more "democratic" government.

One point of major importance emerges from the experience of the last three years: *the bourgeoisie has not been able to impose a policy on the working class that would serve to overcome the crisis on a capitalist basis.* This conclusion is fully confirmed by the fact that since November 1974 (when the bourgeoisie openly recognized the existence of a crisis) no fewer than seven unsuccessful economic programs have followed one after the other. The basic reason for this failure was the combativity of the working class, although other factors have played a certain role. It was not possible to secure the complete support of the reformist workers parties, which relied on a measure of working-class mobilization in order to gain a foothold in the political arena; the successive governments had a "transitional character"—which prevented the elaboration of a long-term policy; the closeness of elections hardly favored the adoption of tough measures against the workers, etc. Moreover, the very succession of bourgeois plans to meet the crisis confirms its seriousness and complexity.

All the measures adopted in this series of plans may be grouped under three headings: those intended to promote capitalist profits; those supposed to partially compensate the workers for the serious effects of the crisis; and those designed to improve the position of Spanish capitalism in inter-imperialist competition.

In the first category may be placed wage-freezes and the lifting of restrictions on layoffs and on the prices of a whole range of products: in other words, measures that attempted to soften the blow of the oil price rises by reducing mass consumption. However, the available data suggest that, on the whole, the workers successfully protected the purchasing power of their wages, even if the results vary a great deal according to region, sector, and enterprise. By contrast, the authorization of layoffs caused a marked rise in unemployment.

As to the second category (measures that

were to compensate the workers), not a single one went further than the paper on which it was written. Public investment projects intended to absorb some of the unemployed were never realized; price controls were always exceeded; and there were never any social improvements.

The third category we mentioned included the devaluation of the peseta and the rise in customs duties.

"The government is seeking to place the Spanish economy on the road of stable and lasting growth, and it is convinced that the achievement of this goal requires a process of costly and continuous adjustment allowing the two basic disequilibria to be overcome: namely, inflation and the balance of payments deficit. Unless these are corrected, it will be impossible to clear the way for the economic future."

The government's statement of intention contains the most important characteristics of its project to lift Spanish capitalism out of the crisis in which it is currently mired. These were subsequently confirmed by the government's emergency plan presented to the new Cortes and by the various measures that it has taken. First, the government claims the right to solve the problems of the bourgeoisie (inflation and the external deficit) while completely forgetting those that affect the workers, such as the high level of unemployment raised still further as a result of the government's measures. Second, the regime claims to achieve these goals through an austerity policy hidden behind the euphemism: "a costly and continuous process of adjustment." Finally, the government hasn't the slightest intention of attacking such everyday workers' problems as health, education, and so on; it simply postpones their solution to better times (when the economy will again be on the road of "stable and lasting growth"?). In short, the government intends to solve the economic crisis of Spanish capitalism at the expense of the workers. All indications are that it will not succeed.

The government's analysis of the situation may be summed up as follows. The crisis has exacerbated three problems: the balance of payments deficit, inflation, and unemployment. The external deficit is rooted in the oil price increases, which impoverished the country by forcing it to export more in order to import an unchanged quantity of oil (In a recent statement on television, Professor Fuentes Quintana even spoke of "brutal impoverishment," giving the analogy of a family which has to pay 25% more for its purchases without obtaining more for its sales on the market.) In turn, inflation affects the external deficit by making foreign sales more expensive and difficult.

Inflation is supposed to have fairly complex origins, although they are in the last analysis the responsibility of the workers. The rise of consumption at a faster rate than production ever since the

start of the crisis indicates that "we are living beyond our means"—a situation that maintains excessive spending and brings about a rise in prices. Next, "inordinate wage increases," supposedly expressed in the growth of the share of wages in national income from 51% to 57% between 1973 and 1976, has provoked a fall in "the operational surplus" and a rise in prices. The fall in "the operational surplus" has in turn caused a fall in investment and consequently a growth in unemployment. As can be seen, it is the workers who are held responsible for all manner of evils because they have fought for excessive wages and consumption levels. The priority task must therefore be to combat inflation through an austerity plan capable of restoring profits to the level necessary for growth.

In reality, things are not so simple. Let us start with the balance of payments. The government reduces the impact of the crisis of the international capitalist economy to the oil price rise, forgetting all about the intensification of inter-imperialist rivalry, the structural factors involved in the lack of competitiveness of Spanish capitalism, and so on. It would have us believe that national income fell overnight by 25% and that this is the reason for the inevitability of an austerity stage requiring the cooperation of the workers.

However, the "25% loss of income" is a pure myth: between 1973 and 1974 (that is, before and after the oil price rise) the balance of payments deficit rose by only 4% of GNP. And the workers have already paid for some of this loss in national income. Whereas the rate of growth of their consumption averaged 6% per annum between 1965 and 1974, it fell to 3% in subsequent years (i.e. to a rhythm less than that of GNP). In other words, the share of workers' consumption in GNP has *already declined rather than grown.* The official explanation for inflation rests on similar fallacies. In national statistics, the heading "operational surplus" covers not only company profits but also the income of non-wage-earning classes such as small peasants and traders, the liberal professions, etc. Much of this income, then, is derived from non-wage-earning labor which, as every indicator confirms, has been hit hardest by the crisis.

There can be no doubt that capitalist profits have also been hit by the economic crisis, although not to the extent suggested by the rising share of wages in the national income. Moreover, the fundamental cause of this fall in capitalist revenue is the capitalist economic crisis itself. If GNP had grown since 1974 at an annual average of 6% (which is still less than the rate of previous years), then the share of wages would have remained 51%. (We should add that the slight rise in the share of wages in national income also reflects the growth of the share of *wage earners* in the active

population.) Talk of "inordinate wages" is rather strange when the workers have done no more than defend themselves against inflation. Nor can it be said that "we are living beyond our means" when the rate of growth of consumption is less than half the rate of the past.

The centerpiece of the government's plan is the freezing of wages. In return, it offers a minimal tax reform of no use whatsoever to the workers. Like all plans of this type, it also contains measures to correct the balance of payments deficit: above all, a further devaluation of the peseta and considerable credit restrictions which add up to a veritable stabilization plan.

#### Austerity Policy Based on a Drastic Reduction in Real Wages

The government's struggle against inflation is based on the reduction in real wages that it intends to negotiate with the trade-union federations, using the mediation of the reformist workers parties (the Moncloa Pact). This is at once the most delicate and the most important component of the plan. An immediate rise in capitalist profits depends on its achievement. The two blades of the scissors are the cost of living and nominal wages.

Let us begin with the *cost of living*. The government has set in motion a policy which tends to accelerate the rate of inflation. According to its analysis, the level of mass consumption must be brought into harmony with the impoverishment of the Spanish economy that followed the oil price rises. The devaluation of the peseta will have an inflationary impact of at least 5%: it will release a wave of price rises that the recent decree on price controls cannot and is not intended to halt. Furthermore, the need to reduce imports of energy and other products provokes a sharp rise in the prices of many goods such as gasoline and petroleum derivatives (especially plastics), coffee, soybean oil, etc., which all have an important place in the consumption of the working masses. These price rises, which are often directly produced, as in the case of gasoline, by government indirect taxation, brought about a rapid acceleration of the inflationary process during summer 1977.

The other blade of the scissors is "moderation in the growth of earned income." In its negotiations with the trade-union federations, the ministry of labor floated an idea that was sharply contested by them, because it would have left no room for maneuver. What was being offered was "linear," across-the-board wage increases of 50,000 pesetas a year (\$600), corresponding in the ministry's estimates to a 17% increase in the wage total. The government's plans restrict this rise in the wage total to the *forecast* rate of inflation, which is much lower than the *actual* rate.

In the last three months of 1976, the average monthly industrial wage was 28,

#### Wage Earners Grouped According to Level of Pay (4th quarter of 1976)

Monthly Earnings (in pesetas)	Percentage of Total Employed	
	By Category	Cumulative
below 8,000	2.6%	2.6%
8,000-10,000	2.1%	4.7%
10,001-15,000	13.3%	18.0%
15,001-20,000	17.5%	35.5%
20,001-25,000	15.9%	51.4%
25,001-30,000	14.0%	65.4%
30,001-40,000	18.1%	83.5%
40,001-60,000	12.5%	96.0%
over 60,000	4.0%	100.0%

(Source: National Statistics Institute: Wages Survey. Monthly income comprises actual monthly pay received by the workers, excluding family benefits and payment in kind. Employers' social security contributions are not included. The figures refer to wages in industry, construction, commerce, banks, and insurance companies.)

158 pesetas (\$240). This was the *gross wage*, before the deduction of tax and the workers' contributions to social security. If we assume that wages have not increased since December 1976, then the government's proposal would involve a rise in gross nominal wages for industrial workers of 14.8% and not 17%. This is completely unacceptable, given that the cost of living will undoubtedly prove to have risen by 30% between December 1976 and December 1977. An annual rise of 50,000 pesetas (that is, 14 gross monthly increases of 3,571 pesetas) would preserve the purchasing power only of the 4.7% of wage earners receiving the lowest pay (less than 11,900 pesetas).

If implemented, such a reduction in real wages would undoubtedly involve a sharp rise in capitalist profits. In 1976, the workers earned a total of 3,865 billion pesetas, or 56.2% of GNP. If the "linear" rise of 50,000 pesetas were applied to the 8.9 million wage earners employed, the wage total would reach 4,309 billion pesetas in 1977. If the rate of inflation is fixed at 30% and real growth in GNP at 3%, then the share of wages in GNP would fall at a stroke from 56.2% to 47.1% (that is, an annual drop of 10%). For the share of wages in GNP to remain the same, still assuming 30% inflation and 3% real growth, the "linear" rise would have to be 142,000 pesetas per annum. We can see clearly that the sum proposed by the government is well below this figure, and that it is striving to encourage a rise in profits at the expense of the workers.

#### The Mini Tax Reform

The really new element of the government plan lies in the tax reform offered to the unions in exchange for a wage-freeze.

This reform is completely inadequate and cannot be treated as a genuine bargaining point by the workers. The government's aim is to obtain the state resources needed to finance increased benefits and partial absorption of unemployment, and to gain some room for maneuver in negotiations with the unions by showing that "social justice comes through taxation and not wage rises." The practical effect of the reform would be to acquire the major part of additional tax revenue from the middle classes rather than big capital. Moreover, in the concrete form it is taking, the new policy leads to increases in the price of consumer goods. The actual increase in revenue would amount to the derisory sum of 20 billion pesetas, or scarcely 2% of total public expenditure.

It should be stressed that public spending constitutes 25% of GNP—an insignificant figure compared to 40% in France and 50% in the Netherlands, for example. A 2% rise in state revenue is thus a mere 0.5% of GNP. But the paltry character of the increase is highlighted still more by the *very regressive nature* of the Spanish tax system. To a growing extent, tax revenue is collected by tapping the income of the working masses through both income tax (which has passed from 23% of total state revenue in 1969 to an estimated 40% in 1976!) and taxation of workers' consumer goods in the form of indirect taxes, including a "luxury tax" that affects many widely consumed products.

The backward character of the Spanish fiscal system is also manifested in state expenditure. According to official statistics, 19% of state expenditure in 1975 took the form of subsidies to capitalist firms (155 billion pesetas). The figure for this year could well reach 236 billion—much

more than total company taxation! If the government really wanted to find the resources for an unemployment fund worthy of the name, all it would have to do would be to eliminate these subsidies. There would be no need for a mini tax reform of the kind envisaged by the government.

This pseudo-reform includes a series of measures that threaten to prove inoperative, as well as others that are claimed to increase, however modestly, the tax burden on medium-size and large incomes. We can safely pass over the introduction of the concept of *tax offense* and the right of tax authorities to examine bank accounts. These measures are surrounded by so many safeguards for the capitalists that they have no reason to be concerned, even if they have raised a public hue and cry. The moratorium on new private and company tax returns for 1976 will also prove inoperative.

The increased tax rate on the highest private incomes will be of only marginal significance: it is precisely the incomes of company directors that are generally either concealed or falsified in returns to the ministry of finance. Finally, the tax on (capital) inheritances will be less than 1% and will increase total tax revenue by an insignificant amount. At the same time, however, the government has broken all its solemn promises by increasing indirect taxes: in the case of gasoline, the tax rise is of the same order as the increase in the price of crude oil. Coffee, soybean oil, and other products have also been subjected to higher taxes. In the confusion resulting from, or accompanying, devaluation of the peseta, even the totally unrelated price of flour has gone up.

As can be seen, the government has nothing to offer the workers in exchange for the wage-freeze and growing unemployment.

#### **Devaluation: the Workers Pay for Capitalist Profits**

The government promises to eliminate the balance of payments deficit by means of a reduction in the rate of inflation and a devaluation of the peseta. But there seem to be no grounds for either the size or the timing of the recent devaluation. A 25% rise in the dollar value of the peseta is rather substantial, when the difference between domestic and international price rises since the Villar Mar devaluation of 1976 justifies only a 14% alteration in the exchange rate, and when the total volume of exports and tourism is already improving.

Although the peseta was overvalued given the rising deficit in the current account balance, the reduction of economic activity in Spain and the slight growth of world trade in 1976 had already brought about certain adjustments that could not be significantly extended by devaluation.

(This was confirmed by the result of the last two devaluations in 1967 and 1976.) Nor should it be forgotten that in late 1973, on the eve of the oil price rises, the peseta



SPANISH PREMIER SUAREZ

was quoted at 57 to the dollar as against 84 today: in other words, there has been a 47% devaluation, which bears no relation to the real difference between the domestic and international rates of inflation.

Why then has the bourgeoisie opted for such a high rate of devaluation? First, it still hopes for a strong upturn in economic activity linked to an export boom that would soak up the balance of payments deficit. A major devaluation resulting in a marked fall in export prices is supposed to make possible rapid growth of foreign sales. It should be remembered that the economic crisis brought with it an international mushrooming of devaluations; Spain could hardly fall behind in this respect.

But how can we explain the size and timing of the July 1977 devaluation? After all, it coincided with the arrival of a large number of tourists, who did not buy much more even though their peseta holdings went up 25%. The immediate cause was the speculation unleashed against the peseta since the beginning of the election campaign, resulting in officially estimated foreign currency losses of a billion dollars within the space of six weeks. Now, the Spanish bourgeoisie does not like to lose its exchange reserves. A little more than six weeks after the devaluation, it had recovered all its previous losses, thus allowing capitalist speculators to reap huge profits from the affair. The bill was footed

by the workers in the form of a rise in the cost of living.

The classical measure of all austerity plans, *credit restrictions*, could not fail to find a place in the present one.

The government talks of "a gradual reduction in monetary expansion without provoking tensions." But this euphemism conceals a *sharp contraction of the money supply*. Such measures normally have a swift impact on economic activity, although they bring consequences that are more costly and more difficult to neutralize. However, the Spanish bourgeoisie is convinced that it is impossible to reduce inflation without monetary restrictions, and a reduction in price rises is still one of its main objectives.

Credit restrictions have two immediate effects. First, the absolute reduction in bank credits as well as their discriminatory allocation to big capital throw the petty and medium-size bourgeoisie into a very tight corner, while its situation has already deteriorated as a result of the economic crisis. Many small traders and artisans will certainly not be able to resist the consequences, particularly since factory layoffs will considerably increase unemployment. Second, a stabilization plan is of crucial importance because it places companies in a difficult situation during negotiations for the renewal of collective wage agreements: the employers find it very hard to grant substantial increases in nominal wages. Rising unemployment and more problematic wage-bargaining are thus the two most significant repercussions of credit restrictions.

In the present situation of the Spanish economy, marked by a very low level of activity, the stabilization plan cannot but accentuate the factors tending toward depression and create further obstacles to an upturn in investment. We may confidently conclude that the basic feature of the Spanish economy in the coming months will be depression.

#### **Rising Unemployment**

According to an inquiry by the National Statistics Bureau, 850,000 people were registered as unemployed at the end of 1976, and 300,000 of these were receiving the totally inadequate unemployment benefits. In fact, the level of activity of the working-age population has been falling ever since 1973. But even if it had remained the same *there would now be more than 1.1 million unemployed*. For part of the working-age population (young people, mothers, etc.) has not appeared on the "labor market" precisely because of the economic crisis.

Given the age structure of the Spanish population, the situation is bound to worsen. Between now and 1980, it would be necessary to create 300,000 new jobs every year simply to maintain the present level of activity of the working-age population,



not to speak of an absorption of existing unemployment. In the coming months, then, the ranks of the unemployed will swell both with young people reaching working age and with victims of the latest government measures. At any event, even government sources foresee a rise in unemployment of 300,000 persons in the course of 1978.

The government plan does not seriously take this whole problem into consideration. When Minister Camuñas read out the government Declaration of Intent, it seemed that he had skipped the passage on the struggle against unemployment. But it later became clear that there had been no mistake. The Spanish government did not lag behind other bourgeois regimes in simply deleting full employment from its economic program. Of course, that does not mean that the government is doing nothing in the field of employment: it gives generous tax-exemptions to capitalists who create new jobs; it is drawing up a public spending plan to increase the number of jobs; and it is planning a modest rise in unemployment benefits. But none of that will make a really substantial difference.

Tax exemption is just an additional benefit for the capitalists, while the so-called tax reform will not create sufficient resources to implement the other two measures. The government expects to acquire a considerable portion of the finances for this expenditure out of the public debt (20 billion pesetas). But that will come up against difficulties on the money market, for at the same time the government is seeking to liberalize that market and introduce credit restrictions. In the last analysis, new job creation through public spending would conflict with the entire

underlying philosophy of the government austerity plan. It will therefore not take place.

#### Austerity . . . Even From the Left

To conclude, the government plan seeks to restore capitalist profit levels through a brutal rise in unemployment and a drastic reduction in real wages. In return, it is proposing a gimcrack tax reform which will not even generate the resources necessary for the success of this plan. At the same time, it is offering some concessions on the trade-union plane (restitution to the workers of the resources of the Francoist unions and legalization of factory committees), in order to help the union leaders "demonstrate their sense of responsibility" and "save the ship in which we are all sailing and which is in danger of sinking." What can we expect from implementation of this plan? Above all, the economic crisis will worsen in a by no means favorable context of the international imperialist economy. Consequently, unemployment and the crisis facing capitalist firms will sharpen to an alarming degree. Nor does the situation allow the total wage-freeze envisaged by the government: it will simply inspire the trade-union leaderships to greater "flexibility" in sector and workplace bargaining. The bourgeoisie hopes for nothing more at present. Finally, inflation will accelerate in the short term, and the workers risk seeing their nominal wages rise at a slower rate than the cost of living.

The political situation will deteriorate for the government, insofar as it fails to pull the bourgeoisie out of the crisis and

even sharpens it in the short term. This is clearly revealed by the crisis of the government and the ruling party that is well publicized in the mass circulation press. The president of congress, a prominent member of the UCD (Unión del Centro Democrática—Democratic Center Union—the ruling party) calls for a government of consolidation that would help to resolve the difficult problems; and the bourgeoisie is beginning to consider PSOE participation in government.

Like its European counterparts, the Spanish bourgeoisie can envisage no other fundamental resolution of the crisis or mode of applying austerity. If bourgeois austerity proves unworkable, then a "left-wing austerity" will be applied, whereby the crisis will be managed by the parties now hegemonic within the working class. But even this "left" variant would remain "austerity"—that is to say, a blow against the immediate interests of the workers and, if successful, a source of demoralization, demobilization, and division of the working class. It would be an instrument for changing the relationship of forces to the advantage of the bourgeoisie.

Spanish capitalism is currently giving a crude demonstration of its irrational and exploitative character. "Left austerity" is not the only "alternative" to "Suárez austerity." At a time when the effects of the crisis are spreading to all companies, the alternative that corresponds to the workers' interests is to take up workers control demands, call for the nationalization of bankrupt firms, and organize the struggle for transitional demands and a SP-CP government. □

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## London Health Workers Battle to Save Hounslow Hospital

By Kathleen Beurivage

The Hounslow Hospital in southwest London is under occupation by the rank-and-file labor movement. The struggle to save the hospital, scheduled to close August 31, 1977, has gone far beyond issues of jobs and pay, becoming a fight for the living standards of the working class.

The economic policy of the Labour government, supported by trade-union leaders, involves drastic cutbacks in social services. The National Health Service (NHS) in particular has been badly hit.

In the name of "resource reallocation," social-service planners have slashed £110 million (in 1976 pounds) from the NHS budget for the London area.

The cuts increase the burden on remaining health services and workers, and lengthen the waiting lists. By 1986, 120 hospitals are scheduled to close, a loss of 20,000 beds and 24,000 jobs.

According to a report by the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), the cuts will leave Inner London a deprived area and open the way for private medicine.

An openly racist policy is used by the government to eliminate "surplus" workers. After providing the NHS with cheap labor for two years, overseas student nurses are sent back to their countries, before they attain full nursing status. This policy has been condemned throughout the various hospital defence campaigns.

The NHS also relies heavily upon part-time agency nurses, mainly married women. These women are not rehired, and are sent back to the home.

Generally inexperienced in industrial action, health workers are at the crunch point of the cuts. Faith in administrative expertise was shattered when Hounslow employees learned that the Area Health Authority (AHA) had *underspent* its budget by £500,000, and still planned to save money by closing the hospital.

Back in March, the staff voted unanimously for a work-in, which continued through early October with support from the major public-sector unions, NUPE and NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers). Joint action with area health workers and local trade unionists maintained a picket and thwarted management plans to transfer patients and disassemble the hospital. Local doctors cooperated, keeping beds in use well beyond the closing date.

On October 6, administrators, nursing officers, and police staged a night raid on the work-in, forcing elderly patients into



London march in support of Hounslow workers.

private ambulances and wrecking the wards. David Ennals, the social services secretary, endorsed the raid, indicating how far the Labour government will go to enforce its policies.

Area-wide health workers moved into action. The Hounslow Defence Committee formed into an Occupation Committee and set up twenty-four-hour pickets.

In solidarity, ten big London hospitals, including the prestigious teaching hospitals, went out on October 12 in unofficial strike action. Two thousand health workers crowded into Hammersmith Town Hall to demand a public enquiry into the raid and the reopening of Hounslow as a community hospital.

Workers from Hounslow went on speaking tours of the country, meeting strong support everywhere.

Despite public outcry, official support has been minimal. After the Regional Health Authority decided not to investigate the raid, Carl Brecker, chair of the district shop stewards committee, denounced the decision as "an inept attempt at a whitewash."

Neither the health-service cutbacks nor the raid on Hounslow Hospital, planned by NALGO members, were discussed at the Labour Party conference in early October.

The national executive of NALGO is applying pressure on the local branch to

rescind its decision to expel management members who broke the union picket. The executive maintain that management were acting in course of their duty to carry out government policy.

After the November 9 meeting of the Area Health Authority, at which the AHA promised to study the feasibility of reopening the Hounslow, the union leadership declared official strike action ended. Workers were instructed to report to alternative jobs in the district.

The growing disparity between the needs of the rank and file and the intentions of the union leadership was revealed in the Week of Action, held at the end of November. Sponsored by eleven unions, the action was restricted to mass lobbying of Westminster Town Hall, with no direct actions where the cuts occur.

But lobbying officials no longer satisfies the workers. In October, Cath Cooney, nursing steward on the Hounslow Occupation Committee, expressed workers' readiness to act on their own behalf: "We weren't really militant. We just wanted to keep the hospital open, and since they wouldn't listen to us, we decided to work in."

Other work-ins, at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Plaistow hospitals, were also undertaken. The participants in the occupation at Hounslow say they will stand firm until it reopens. □

## Joint Electoral Platform of the OCT-LCR-CCA

[The OCT (Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs—Communist Workers Organization), the CCA (Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion—Communist Committees for Self-Management), and the LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International) are calling for a vote for each other's candidates on the first round of the French legislative elections

scheduled for March.

[A joint platform has been drawn up by the three organizations. In addition, each organization is also running on its own platform. (For the LCR's election platform, see *Intercontinental Press*, December 19, 1977, p. 1403.)

[The joint platform is reprinted below. We have taken the text from the December 16, 1977, issue of *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

*Giscard and Barre have brought us repression!*

Along with austerity, repression has become the other watchword of the Giscard regime. Minister Beullac, like his crony Durafour, has not shrunk from allowing supervisors and bosses to fire hundreds of shop stewards because they were too militant to please the management.

Police attacks on occupied plants have become commonplace. And when the regular police are not enough, the government shelters the armed gangs and private police who are beginning to be used openly against workers' struggles. They are not afraid to kill, as they proved with the murder of Pierre Maitre in Reims.

### 1. Do Away With the Regime of Giscard, Barre, Chirac

*They want us to foot the bill.*

The society of "advanced liberalism" means hardship and unemployment. It means the exploitation of the great majority of workers by a minority of profiteers.

Giscard, the "brilliant graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique," and Barre, the "best economist in France," have sworn that the end of the economic crisis is within reach.

The fact is that at every turn the bourgeoisie has surrounded Giscard with hard-nosed administrations, assigned to make the workers foot the bill for the crisis.

Citing the "inevitability" of austerity, Chirac created more than a million unemployed.

Now, with Barre, we are up to more than one-and-a-half million, while his administration feverishly freezes our wages and attacks our living standards for "good measure."

However, neither one has succeeded in reducing inflation or in overcoming the crisis.

On the other hand, what the bosses are now clamoring for is stepping up the anti-working-class offensive. This is the goal to which Giscard and Barre are deeply committed.

*The cost is heavy for all workers.*

What working-class family does not live with the fear of layoffs and the impossibility of finding a job, and with a crimped budget for a brief taste of a vacation under sunnier skies?

What large family, what older worker today does not figure budgets on a day-to-day basis in order to make it through to the next payday or the next pension installment?

*Giscard and Barre have brought us hardship!*

The government is trying to divert attention by controlling the price of a cup of coffee at the counter or by pretending to

freeze the price of a croissant, but what's going up are the things that are a thousand times more important to workers—meat, vegetables, basic consumer goods, transportation, rents. Price increases are at record levels: since the Barre plan was introduced, prices have gone up by more than 10%, while our wages have lagged behind. This year our buying power went down by an average of 3%. The government set the tone for the future by refusing all negotiation in the public and nationalized sector; wages in this sector will fall by 5% over a year's time.

"The French are living beyond their means," according to Barre. Which of the French? No doubt those who belong to the same class as the premier. There is nothing new in that. Implementation of the Barre plan has indeed meant austerity for the workers, but it has had its counterpart in a spectacular rise in profits for the bosses: Thomson-Brandt, up 29%; Shell-France, up 120% (a hefty two billion francs); Peugeot, up 105%; Citroën, up 85%, and so on.

*Giscard and Barre have brought us unemployment!*

The government allows the bosses to lay off workers as they see fit—12,000 layoffs in steel and tens of thousands in other branches of industry. Barre holds the championship for profits, inflation, and unemployment. For each day since his plan was launched there have been an additional 1,200 young people out of work. Women and young people are the hardest hit. The government is playing up the divisions in the working class to the hilt. It aims to "send women back to the kitchen" and confine them to housework, and send immigrant workers back to their countries where imperialism has created unemployment.

The government lets racist murderers go scot-free. The regime is not afraid to kill either, whether at Montredon—during the grape growers' demonstration—or at the antinuclear march in Creys-Malville.

Repression is the government's answer to demands and struggles by soldiers. It persecutes immigrant workers by stepping up deportations—whether legal or illegal—and by banning their organizations.

Police raids and beatings are on the increase. Police squads are permanently stationed in the working-class neighborhoods of big cities, getting the residents used to living under surveillance in the name of "security."

The Stolérú measures against immigrant workers are threatening the most elementary human rights.

Giscard is in cahoots with the Social Democrat Schmidt to extend to France the emergency measures already in force in West Germany. He has handed over Klaus Croissant. And when judges and lawyers dare to condemn the use of the courts to serve the ends of the state, the government does not shrink from repression to shut them up.

In the barracks, "military security" is being used to suppress soldiers organizing to defend their democratic rights (as was shown in April 1977 by the arbitrary arrest of fifty soldiers and their imprisonment for two months).

The news media are buckling under the weight of the press barons and profiteers, who, with Hersant in the lead, monopolize the means of communication and use their billions to squeeze out the journals of opinion. Workers in the publishing industry were forced to give ground in the final settlement of the *Parisien Libéré* strike,

and other blows are being aimed at publishing workers which will also be attacks on freedom of the press.

In private medicine and in hospitals, implementation of the laws on abortion and the right of women to control their bodies is being challenged. Health care has become a heavier burden for workers now that Social Security has come under attack.

Haby, Giscard's counterpart in the Education Department, is gradually transforming public education into a huge training ground for private enterprise, while the Guermeur law has reinstated subsidies to private schools. Young people are particularly oppressed, subject to unemployment, regimentation, repression, and racism directed against youth, as shown by the murder of young Mélyon by a thug outside a rock concert.

The rhetoric of the series of Giscard-appointed officials "in charge of the status of women" has made no fundamental changes in women's destiny, either in the legal (equal rights) or in the economic sphere (equal pay for equal work).

To extend its military bases, the government drives farmers off their land. To boost capitalist profits, it is building one nuclear plant after another without a shred of concern for the deadly risks incurred by the neighboring population.

*This discredited regime must go!*

We can expect nothing else from this unemployment- and poverty-mongering crew. We've had enough of austerity and

repression! This policy is especially intolerable inasmuch as it has long been rejected by the overwhelming majority of workers, in fact by the majority of the country.

The 1976 cantonal elections and the 1977 municipal elections provided ample confirmation of this. But there must be no illusions about the dissension that has settled in the ranks of the right. Giscard and Chirac may differ in their methods and rhetoric, but they agree on the basic issue: the workers must foot the bill for the crisis. They are patching things up as the 1978 deadline draws near. They need a new mandate to freeze wages, lay off workers, and repress dissent.

Instead of organizing a movement, the union leaderships and the leaderships of the Communist Party and Socialist Party urged patience. The workers were told to bide their time until the electoral victory promised for 1978. The big days of action by the trade unions, on October 7, 1976, and May 24, 1977, siphoned off militancy in a parade of forces that the working-class leaderships in no way wanted to engage in battle against the Barre plan and the Giscard regime.

Yet it is nearly ten years since we demonstrated—on May 13, 1968—shouting "Ten years is enough!" Twenty years is definitely much too much.

Those who exploit us, fire us, club us, and machine-gun us must go. We must put an end to rule by Giscard, Barre, Chirac, and their ilk. This is what is at stake for us in the 1978 elections.

it goes along with Giscard and the constitution, because it is for incorporation into a Europe run by and for big business, we say that it is a class-collaborationist program that will not enable us to overcome the crisis, much less proceed toward socialism.

The government that would be set up to implement this program would not be a government of the workers, and the parties that have signed it, once in power, would carry out an austerity policy because they would have no alternative, having pledged to respect capitalist private ownership and the bourgeois state.

Such a government of the left, because of its wide-open alliance with bourgeois parties, its submission to the institutions of capitalism, its maintenance of a market economy, can be nothing other than a bourgeois government.

Furthermore, despite a few initial steps in favor of the workers (raising the minimum wage, extending trade-union rights, and so on), it would be compelled—because of not breaking with the capitalist system—to submit to its logic by carrying out an austerity policy "of the left," as the British Labour Party, the Portuguese Socialist Party, and the Italian Communist Party are doing.

Nevertheless, it would not be just another bourgeois government, for the CP and SP, once in power, would both be compelled (though in different ways) to take the demands of their "proletarian constituency" into account. For if they lost their entire following among the working class, they would thereby no longer be of any interest to the capitalists. Therefore, to stay in power, the reformist leaderships have to carry out the capitalists' program while retaining the confidence of the workers as best they can.

*The CP and SP disarm the workers.*

For months, the reformist leaderships of the CP and SP asked the millions of workers who trust them to patiently go along with austerity while waiting for a possible victory at the polls in 1978. After having suffered the blows of the Barre plan—for lack of a united, long-lasting, and massive fight against it—and after the breakup of the CP and SP, the workers have doubts about the electoral victory for the sake of which their struggles were sold out!

The failure of the December 1 general strike—which had no central demands or political perspectives—showed the extent of this confusion.

The CP and SP accuse each other of swinging to the right. And yet neither one is willing to consider genuine revolutionary solutions to the crisis. Neither one is about to lead a fight for the thirty-five-hour week, for women's right to jobs, for support to the soldiers' committees. Neither party holds any portfolios yet, but they competed to see who could be the most moderate and passive when the

## 2. Workers Unity, Not Class Collaboration

To counter the crisis, we revolutionists want to be the best defenders of what can unite the workers.

The kind of unity we are seeking is rooted in the workers' basic needs. It is based on demands that resist all attempts at diversion, all attempts to divide men and women, French citizens and immigrants, young and old, skilled and unskilled, workers and unemployed.

That is why we are putting forward demands that unify us.

To safeguard buying power, we are fighting for across-the-board wage increases, increasing buying power, and equal pay for equal work.

We demand the right to work for all, not only for those on the unemployment rolls, but for all women and young people seeking their first job. To do this, work hours must be drastically shortened, a thirty-five-hour workweek established, and the available work must be spread to all who want to work.

We demand the same social, trade-union, and political rights for immigrants as for other workers. For soldiers—workers in uniform—we also demand freedom of expression and the right to organize.

Taken together, these demands run counter to any kind of austerity and sacrifice policy, both now and in the future. Whatever the excuses, whatever the present government, going along with austerity means pitting workers against one another, sowing divisions—in short, carrying out the capitalists' program, against the interests of the working class.

*The Common Program means class collaboration!*

We revolutionists are fighting against all policies that tie the exploited to their exploiters. That is why the kind of unity we aim for is solidly opposed to all forms of class collaboration, selling out on demands, and pacts with the capitalists.

For years the Union of the Left parties presented the Common Program as the only way to put an end to this system of unemployment and hardship. They claimed that this program not only could overcome the crisis but could initiate fundamental political change. Instead of taking that route, they have turned their backs on our demands. That is the only possible conclusion. Because the Common Program backtracks on demands, because

French courts handed over Croissant. They argue over nationalization of a handful of subsidiaries, but both agree that the market economy—that is, capitalism and exploitation—should remain in place. In the same way, they still agree on keeping Giscard, obeying the 1958 constitution, refusing to grant self-determination to the overseas territories and departments, maintaining nuclear weapons, and remaining in NATO.

By foisting divisions on the workers that are not in their real interests, the CP and SP are continuing to deprive them of the means to discuss and decide for themselves about what directly affects them.

Since the failure of the postal strike in 1974, the CP and SP have kept us dangling on the excuse that everything would be settled in the elections. Now they are still telling us to wait for better times. That shows clearly where a reformist line leads—letting the capitalists take the offensive, while the workers take a beating.

We revolutionary militants do not agree on everything—if we did, we would form a single organization—but we do agree on the following:

We say no to austerity, whether of the right or of the left.

We say no to class collaboration.

We say yes to workers unity to get rid of Giscard.

We say yes to workers unity to defend our demands, for workers power based on mass mobilizations.

### 3. A United Campaign

We have common objectives, then, that have already brought us together in working-class struggles, support to the soldiers' committees and the struggles of immigrant workers, the women's movement, the antinuclear and international solidarity movements (Vietnam, Chile, and more recently, Croissant).

In the campaign for the legislative elections, it seemed crucial to us to state in programmatic form the slogans and perspectives that unite us, the better to advance them jointly. The organizations taking part in this agreement wish to avoid competing candidacies. We will divide up the election districts and call for a vote for each other's candidates.

Each of our organizations will defend its own program, under its own emblem, with its own candidates; but at the same time, as we did in the municipal elections, we will run on a common slate ("For socialism, the workers to power"), and will campaign around the objectives of the joint platform.

Our organizations will work out the practical applications of a joint campaign, with united support committees set up on the basis of the nationwide appeal, supporting the candidates run by the organizations signing the appeal. These committees will launch a genuine mobilizing

campaign, and will be open to all currents and activists in agreement with the platform.

Along with this, we will conduct a public, fraternal discussion on all of our differences, and especially on our approach to the reformist parties, the issue of nationalizations, and positions on international questions, particularly China.

The LCR and CCA, in the fight for working-class unity, demand that the workers parties and trade unions work for unity based on an anticapitalist program.

The LCR and CCA advocate that the parties supported by a majority of the working class—that is, the CP and SP—form a government based on such an anticapitalist program and responsible to the workers.

Only a struggle of this type, for a united front of the working-class organizations on a class basis, can enable the majority of workers who follow these organizations to be won to a revolutionary program.

The LCR and CCA are fighting for unification of the trade unions in the context of a single workers federation that adheres to trade-union and workers democracy.

The second point concerns the judgment of the LCR and CCA on the way in which revolutionists should seize the issue of nationalizations in order to propagandize around the idea of expropriation, control, and management by the workers of society as a whole.

We who support a class vote on the second round call on the workers to give their votes to the candidates of the workers parties, the CP and SP, and not to the candidates of bourgeois grouplets—the left Gaullists and Radicals. These bourgeois grouplets, which have no support in the plants, have no need to account to the workers for anything. They only give the CP and SP leaderships an alibi for refusing to meet the demands of the workers.

The CCA and LCR stand for the fullest freedom of expression and artistic freedom,

### 4. For an End to a Bankrupt Regime, Crisis-Ridden System

To avoid footing the bill for the crisis, we must begin right now to launch an uncompromising struggle against rising unemployment and the drop in buying power, against all forms of oppression and repression.

The objectives we are putting forward are not tailored—as in the Common Program—to the loyal management of bourgeois society.

They were arrived at by our organizations in the heat of struggles carried out by the workers and mass movements.

These objectives reflect the aspirations and just demands of the workers and their struggles.

and are opposed to all restrictions on freedom of expression, both now and under socialism.

The OCT thinks that the reformist parties are trying to lead the workers onto the path of class collaboration. Thus, these parties maintain and sometimes deepen the divisions among the workers and the people, cannot satisfy their real aspirations, and do not fight the capitalists. Consequently, the OCT, which is fighting for unity and class independence of the proletariat, calls on the workers to place no trust whatsoever in the reformist parties and to have no illusions about these parties and the policies they might carry out if they come to power, but to the contrary calls on the workers to begin right now to build a revolutionary alternative.

The OCT is against all reformist plans for nationalizations, whether that of the Common Program (in any version), the CP, or the SP, because they adhere to the framework of capitalism, and cannot radically change the lot of the masses. If one or another of these plans is implemented, the OCT will call on the workers to use it in the best defense of their interests (wages, working conditions).

The OCT thinks that the prospect of a single, anticollaborationist trade union with a class basis can in no way amount simply to a unification dominated by the reformists and under the control of the trade-union bureaucracies.

The OCT and CCA think that the united support committees must launch a broad mobilizing campaign and initiate actions, in agreement with all the participating organizations, aimed at and together with the mass of workers, in order to anchor the proposals of revolutionists in the reality of the class struggle.

The LCR proposes that the support committees for the candidates run by the organizations carry out their activities on the basis of the united agreement and in the context of the organizations' own campaigns.

*1. To defend the jobs and living standards of urban and rural workers, we demand:*

- A 2400-franc minimum wage; a 300-franc across-the-board increase; retirement wages, pensions, and unemployment compensation at least equal to the minimum wage; equal pay for equal work for women, young people, and immigrants; maintaining and increasing buying power, according not to a government price index, but to one drawn up by the workers and trade-union organizations; guaranteed wages and income for agricultural workers and small farmers at least equal to industrial wages.

- Guaranteed jobs for all. Not a single

layoff, not a single plant shutdown; full employment in the same location.

When private capitalists prove incapable of guaranteeing jobs for workers, we must demand that the company be nationalized by the state, without compensation or payment to the bosses, under conditions established by the workers and under their supervision and through their mobilizations, and based on a relationship of forces brought about through struggle.

A drastic shortening of work hours. A thirty-five-hour maximum workweek and a fifth team for shift work.

Spreading the available work to all who need jobs with no loss in wages.

- Repeal of the Stoléru measures, abolition of residency and work permits, equality of trade-union and political rights (including the right to vote), the right of immigrants to live with their families. An end to racist harassment. Close the underground prison in Arenc.

- The right to live and work in one's native region.

- Free, quality health care. Repeal of the 1967 Social Security decrees and the Giscard-Veil measures. Reimbursement of medical costs at 100%. Kick the bosses off the Social Security administrative boards. The right to free health care as well as the fundamental right to health, by aiming directly at the causes of accidents and diseases.

- The right to low-cost, quality housing. Freeze rents and housing fees.

- Employers should bear transportation costs.

Wherever possible, we must immediately undertake direct action against the austerity measures and the bosses' maneuvers. We are fighting to get the trade-union organizations to work together to give an impulse to working-class resistance to the Barre plan, to give an impulse to self-organization, sovereign general assemblies, and strike committees elected by the workers and recallable by them, enabling the workers to take their struggles into their own hands.

We must organize in the plants to refuse speed-up, and stand firm against constant changes of work shifts.

We should establish veto power over speedups on the assembly line and the organization of our work by the bosses, by refusing to work when safety measures are not applied. No safety, no work. In this way, we will be in a stronger position to obtain a say over firings, and to begin to spread the work among all of us.

Together with the trade unions and consumer organizations, we should mobilize to exercise control over increases in prices, rents, and public service rates.

The shop and department committees that the leaderships of the CP, SP, and CFDT are talking about must not be bodies set up to participate in managing the crisis, but should bring all of the workers together in a democratic way in

order to create effective instruments of struggle, in both the private and public sector.

## 2. *Against the oppression of women.*

- Against all forms of sex discrimination. The right to a job and to professional training for women. Equal work, equal pay. Unemployment compensation equal to the minimum wage for women seeking their first jobs.

- Abortion on demand, paid for by Social Security, for all women including minors and immigrants. Repeal of all the restrictive clauses in the contraception and abortion laws, including the "conscience clause"; establishment of centers for elective abortions and family planning, in a hospital setting, linking together questions of sexuality, contraception, and abortion, and providing for effective control by women.

- Against sexist violence and rape. Establishment of centers for women who have been beaten. While the struggle against sexism and for equality between men and women is the business of the entire working class, women are directly affected and must therefore lead their own struggle.

Revolutionists fight for an independent, united women's movement, because we consider the building of this movement to have decisive weight in the struggle for socialism. Ultimately, we are fighting to get the workers movement as a whole, the working class, to take up the demands and struggle of women against their oppression and for their emancipation.

## 3. *Against the oppression and regimentation of youth.*

Young people reject a crisis-ridden society, where the facade of "liberty, equality, fraternity" scarcely conceals a wholly different reality. We should struggle with them against all signs of antiyouth sentiment.

- Against the Haby reform and the bosses' stranglehold over education. A single course of study up to eighteen years of age.

Open the universities to all workers.

- Guaranteed jobs upon graduation for all young people who have completed their education. A minimum wage for young people in the process of finding their first job.

- Freedom of expression and organization for soldiers. We should support the struggles of soldiers' committees for free transportation, an increase in pay to the minimum wage, and shortening the length of service to the time necessary to acquire genuine skill in handling weapons, to be conducted in the areas where they live. Oppose all forms of repression against soldiers, conscientious objectors, and those absent without leave.

## 4. *Against the nuclear danger and capitalist destruction of the environment.*

- No to the government's nuclear power program—meaning a halt to all nuclear

plants under construction and in operation, and retraining of all construction and plant workers affected, with no cut in their pay. This is essential in order to give all the workers and residents of areas affected the means to know and decide for themselves, and to mobilize with knowledge of the dangers and consequences of developing the nuclear industry.

- Control by workers and their trade-union organizations over industrial establishments and their ramifications for the workers' way of life.

## 5. *Against repression, for defense of democratic rights.*

Extend trade-union and political rights in the plants. Fight attacks on our rights by guaranteeing the rehiring of activists fired for trade-union or political activity. Abolish data-bank surveillance of workers and medical checkups required by the bosses. Abolish records kept by the bosses to trace down workers seeking new jobs. We should demand the scheduling of trade-union reports during working hours, and office space for the trade unions, political parties, and women's groups.

- Extend trade-union and political rights in the plants, schools, and barracks.

Immediate rehiring of workers fired for participating in militant actions, by demanding that they be guaranteed jobs in the plants starting right now.

- Abolish emergency-power courts and laws. Abolish repressive legislation (the antiwrecker and antiterrorist laws.) Recognize the unrestricted right to political asylum.

- Immediate abolition of all plans to set up data files on the masses of people under guise of so-called preventive health and welfare services under the jurisdiction of the minister of the interior (such as the Gamin, Audass, and Safari files).

- For the right of everyone to control one's own body. Sexual freedom for minors. Repeal the laws against homosexuals. We call for a struggle against sexist violence and rape.

- We are for the elimination of all forms of censorship imposed by the capitalists, and for genuine freedom of the press, together with the material means for implementing it. While the government encourages violations of the state monopoly on radio and television when this suits its interests (as in the case of radio stations located just outside the national boundary lines), it suppresses the local free radio stations that try to provide on-the-spot news by workers. We demand an end to the repression against these radio stations.

## 6. *For the dismantling of the imperialist, colonialist strong state.*

- Oppose French imperialism's aggression in Africa (Chad, Zaïre, the Western Sahara). Withdraw French troops from these countries. Halt arms sales to racist and reactionary regimes.

- Total solidarity with the struggle of peoples in the overseas territories and

departments. For the right to independence.

- The right to self-determination for oppressed nationalities that demand it.
- Repeal the reactionary 1958 constitution.
- Withdraw from NATO and abolish the nuclear strike force.

## 5. For Socialism, for Power to the Workers

To overcome the crisis and put an end to austerity, there is no alternative but to struggle for socialism. Starting now, we must launch an uncompromising struggle against rising unemployment and the decline in buying power. Democratic self-organization of the workers must be developed, as well as defense of struggles against operations of the repressive forces (through strike committees and pickets).

Revolutionists fight for workers unity; therefore, we fight for the prospect of a single trade union on a class basis, rejecting all forms of collaboration with the ruling class and the bosses, adhering to workers and trade-union democracy.

The struggles of women, immigrants, and young people must fully take their place in the struggle of the working class.

Such a struggle inevitably leads to a confrontation with the bourgeois state apparatus, and the need to fight for a *government of the workers*, based on the mobilization and self-organization of the masses, in order to:

- Expropriate the major means of production and the banks, establish a state monopoly on foreign trade, and drastically shorten work hours. These steps will allow for control and direct management by the masses in the context of democratic planning of the economy.
- Purge the state apparatus, dismantle the military hierarchy, and arm the workers.
- Develop international workers' solidarity, and counterpose a Europe of the workers to a Europe of the police and big business.

The fact is that none of our most elementary demands can be met in a long-lasting way without destroying the system of profits and exploitation that constitutes the capitalist system.

The reason we are running in these elections is that we think the CP and SP are raising fraudulent perspectives. How can our lives be changed while 85% of the economy remains in the bosses' hands? How can our lives be changed if the bosses are able to go on resorting to the police and the courts to repress workers' struggles? Isn't it unthinkable that when the bosses feel their vital interests are threatened, they won't call out the army against the workers, as they did in Chile? How can

there be any real hope of meeting workers' needs while keeping Giscard as president, with the extravagant powers he possesses, already prepared to defend the bosses' interests?

So, then, a confrontation with the capitalists, with their army and police, is inevitable, for they will never give up their profits and privileges.

But many working men and women also say, is it worth it? Won't the type of socialism that can be won in France resemble the caricature of socialism that exists in Eastern Europe, where there is no freedom at all?

We reply: In countries like the Soviet Union and those in Eastern Europe, there are regimes in power that have nothing to do with socialism. Under these systems, all freedom of expression by the masses is crushed, with millions of people in camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals.

They are still plagued by the terror of the

## 6. Vote Revolutionary on Round 1, Beat the Right Round 2

We revolutionists have always held that a majority of votes (in a system in which the electoral process itself is rigged!) is not enough to smash the bourgeois state and put an end to exploitation.

To defeat the right on the second round—despite your disagreement or distrust of the Common Program's perspectives, we urge you to vote for the candidate of the reformist parties who has the best chance of winning. (The LCR and CCA are not calling for a vote for the bourgeois "left" Radical or Gaullist candidates.)

By helping to give them a wide margin of votes, we will leave them with no excuse for backtracking and refusing to meet the workers' demands. But voting for the reformists does not in the least imply placing trust in them; still less does it constitute approval of their program. The point is to deal a heavy blow to the ruling class and to its state by kicking out the right-wing majority, to change the relationship of forces in the workers' favor, and to create better conditions for the development of their struggles and self-organization.

*Working men and women, by your vote on the first round* you can state clearly both what you want and what you reject. By voting, as you did during the recent municipal elections, for the candidates of the revolutionary slate—"For socialism, the workers to power"—you will be voting for your demands and for working-class solutions to the crisis; against austerity; for what unites you, against what divides you.

For soldiers' rights, against the nuclear strike force and NATO! Against the European parliament, against a Europe of the bosses and police, for a workers' Europe!

*Women, with your vote* you will be demanding the right to work and the right

to control your own body, and against all forms of oppression and discrimination.

Stalin era (when tens of millions of people were murdered), all in the name of socialism and the liberation of the oppressed. We, on the other hand, believe that workers' self-organization in their struggles today is closely linked to the self-organization that will be necessary to lead the society of the future.

Workers power—the dictatorship of the proletariat—means that the masses of people, organized where they work and live, take direct control of the affairs of state and of society as a whole.

Workers power means the fullest, most genuine democracy for the great masses of workers. This is the only way to put an end to capitalism, to its barbaric exploitation and the forms of oppression it creates; the only way to enable the workers to control their own lives, to establish a new way of life and a new mode of production, to build up new social relations, to create a liberated society.

*Young people, with your vote* you will be demanding the right to be heard, the right to work, to develop yourselves, against tracking and regimentation at home, at school, and in the army.

*Soldiers, you will be voting* for your right to remain workers while in uniform.

*Workers of the oppressed regions and nationalities, with your vote* you will be defending your language, cultural, and political rights, the right to live and work in your native region, against occupation, military bases, and speculation by the tourism industry.

*Immigrant workers, who are denied* the right to vote, by participating in the revolutionists' campaign, you will be opposing all forms of racist discrimination, and demanding equal rights with other workers.

*Working men and women, by voting* for the revolutionary slate on the first round, you will be saying no to Giscard, Chirac, and their ilk, but you will also be saying no to any kind of "austerity of the left," the kind implemented by the so-called Socialists in power (Schmidt, Callaghan, Soares), or the kind vouched for by the so-called Communists even before coming to power (Berlinguer, Carrillo). You will be telling Mitterrand and Marchais that you reject class collaboration, adherence to the 1958 constitution, and Giscard's tutelage. You will be telling them that you won't hear of going along with class collaboration, which divides the ranks of the working class to the benefit of the right. You will be showing the reformist parties that, if they triumph, they will have to reckon with your demands, your vigilance, and your readiness to mobilize. □

# Capitalism Fouls Things Up

## High Profits and Poisoned Peasants

The most intense pesticide spraying in the world is carried out in the Pacific coast lowlands of Guatemala.

Although agricultural experts say that six or seven sprayings during a ninety-day period would be sufficient to control the insects that infest the cotton plantations there, the growers insist on spraying thirty to fifty times over three months.

"It's very simple," a planter told Alan Riding of the *New York Times*. "More insecticide means more cotton, fewer pesticides mean higher profits."

The measures taken to keep cotton profits at high levels take a deadly toll on the peasants who must live and work on the plantations.

"According to the Government, there were no fatalities among the 1,039 cases of pesticide poisoning recorded last year in Guatemala," Riding reported November 9. "But doctors, priests and peasant leaders in the cotton areas believe that numerous unreported deaths take place each year and that many more people are poisoned than the Government maintains."

A government-run clinic in Tiquisate may treat up to thirty or forty persons a day for pesticide poisoning, Riding said. "The farmers often tell the peasants to give another reason for their sickness," a nurse told him, "but you can smell the pesticide in their clothes."

The pesticides cause dizziness, vomiting, chronic malfunction of vital organs, and sometimes death. Poisonous residues accumulate in mothers' milk, cows' milk, beef, fish, chickens, ducks, and pigs in the area. Rivers also carry the poison to the sea, where it pollutes seafood.

Overuse of DDT several years ago caused a resurgence of malaria, as the disease-carrying mosquitos developed immunity to the poison. DDT has been replaced with phosphate pesticides. These are five times more lethal to humans.

### The Breeder Carter Didn't Veto

Ceremonies to mark the start of commercial operation for the first U.S. light-water breeder reactor were conducted at Shippingport, Pennsylvania, on December 2.

President Carter participated from the White House via a remote-controlled "electronic blackboard," on which he wrote:

"Increase light water breeder reactor power to 100 percent. Jimmy Carter."

The sixty-megawatt plant will breed new nuclear fuel by converting thorium-232 to uranium-233. This is a highly fissionable isotope similar to uranium-235, which is the active component of fuel elements for conventional reactors now in use.

Carter hopes that the Shippingport plant will demonstrate the feasibility of thorium-based breeder technology and thus aid him in convincing other governments to forgo fast breeder reactors that produce plutonium.

Because bombs can be made from plutonium with relative ease, the American ruling class is concerned that its wide-scale use will eliminate their ability to pick and choose which of their clients obtain nuclear weapons. Uranium-233 from thorium-based breeders is thought to be much more difficult to fabricate into weapons.

### Mass Eviction in Utah

All 591 residents of Lark, Utah, must move out of the town by March 1, 1979. Some will have to leave as early as May 1 of this year.

Lark is located in the foothills of the Oquirrh Mountains near Salt Lake City.

Kennecott Copper Company, one of the biggest mining corporations in the United States, recently bought the town from UV Industries for \$2 million worth of copper. UV Industries had operated lead and zinc mines in the Lark area until it shut them down six years ago, throwing many Lark residents onto public welfare.

The people of Lark were told of Kennecott's decision to evacuate the town in mid-December. They were also informed that the company would not purchase homes from those who had built them on land leased from UV Industries. Kennecott official Bob Pratt said the December announcement was made "to benefit the people" by "halting false rumors that we are going to evict everyone Jan. 1."

Kennecott's reasons for wanting the town? Pratt gave several to *Los Angeles Times* reporter David Johnston: "to expand its waste dumps, which now challenge the Oquirrh Mountains in height; for an access road; for a railroad line; for a

tunnel, and because of water problems."  
"It was one hell of a Christmas present," one Lark resident said.

### Jurors Convinced of Nuclear Danger

All of the ninety-six persons arrested in an August 8 sit-in at the Trojan nuclear power plant in Rainier, Oregon, were acquitted December 16.

The protesters presented fifteen expert witnesses in the week-long trial, seeking to show that the Trojan plant represents an "imminent danger." An Oregon "choice of evils" law allows certain illegal acts when they are committed for the purpose of preventing a danger to the public.

The trial judge refused to allow the jury to consider the expert testimony, however. The defendants were acquitted anyway, on grounds that the Portland General Electric Company (PGE) had no authority to order the demonstrators away from the power plant site.

One juror told a reporter for the *Militant* newspaper that the jury unanimously believed the nuclear plant posed an "imminent danger" and would have voted for acquittal on those grounds.

A PGE official said the verdict was likely to "create some enthusiasm" among opponents of the Trojan plant. An additional 123 persons face trespassing charges pressed by PGE after a two-hour sit-in at the plant gates on November 25.



"As a compromise, we've installed a buzzer that warns you not to breathe the air."