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The Cambodian and Vietnamese 'War' Over Border Lines



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NEWS ANALYSIS

Carter Puts Italians on Notice

By Gerry Foley



CARTER: Well-known "defender" of democratic rights tells Italians theirs are limited.

On January 12, the State Department issued a communiqué declaring Washington's opposition to Communist Party participation in the Italian government. It said:

Administration leaders have repeatedly expressed our views on the issue of Communist participation in West European governments. Our position is clear: We do not favor such participation, and would like to see Communist influence in any Western European country reduced.

Washington claimed its position was motivated by a concern for democratic ideals:

The United States and Italy share profound democratic values and interests and we do not believe that the Communists share those values and interests.

The statement in effect warned Italian bourgeois politicians against being tempted to make deals with the Communist Party in return for its help in keeping the workers under control.

The State Department declaration was

issued the day after a meeting of the Christian Democratic executive, which decided to reject the CP's demand for inclusion in the government.

Undoubtedly, Washington's position was made known to the Christian Democratic leaders before being announced to the press. It must have strengthened the hand of the current most opposed to making any more concessions to the CP on the governmental level. That evidently was one of its purposes. However, it was certainly intended to have a general intimidating effect.

The last major statement by Washington on the issue of CP participation in the Italian government was made by Henry Kissinger (then still secretary of state) in April 1976, at the beginning of the campaign for the June legislative elections.

At the time of the Kissinger statement, Joseph Kraft outlined the thinking of Washington's foreign policy advisors. Kraft is a representative of the section of this milieu that favors a flexible approach; the section for example that was for a "political solution" to the problem posed by the 1974-75 upsurge in Portugal. In a column in the April 26, 1976, *New York Post*, Kraft presented the case, as he saw it, for Kissinger's statement:

When I left home my feeling was that Washington could best play the hand of declaring, as Secretary of State Kissinger has done, in a general and high-minded way its fears of the damage to NATO that Communist participation in European governments might entail. My notion was that such statements, by underlining the risks ahead, might help rally European voters to anti-Communist parties and governments.

I also believed there was no risk of alienating the European Communists. They sought the blessings of Washington to legitimize themselves in their own countries.

The immediate effect of Washington's January 12 statement seems to have been precisely as Kraft had anticipated. It bolstered the morale of the anti-Communists. At the same time, the Italian CP's response was muted. Its organ, *l'Unità*, said:

A declaration like that of yesterday issued at this time would be difficult not to evaluate as open and heavy interference tending to influence the Italian political situation. It is in contrast to the principle, often proclaimed by President Carter, of "noninterference" by his administration.

In fact, the CP never sought to get into the government without the permission of the bourgeoisie. It deliberately tried to keep its vote low enough in the June 1976

elections so that there would not be a majority for the workers parties.

For a year and a half, the CP has been content to give tacit backing to a Christian Democratic minority government. Under this arrangement, which the Italian press calls the "popular front in the corridors," the CP has sought to hold back working-class mobilizations against the regime's austerity policies without taking direct and full responsibility for them. In return, it has gained numerous posts in the state apparatus.

However, on December 8, *l'Unità* published a demand by the CP leadership for the formation of a government of national unity including representatives of their party. Similar demands had already been raised by the Socialist Party and the small bourgeois-liberal Republican Party. In the December 13 *Le Monde*, correspondent Robert Solé wrote:

A marked stiffening of the CP's position is disturbing the political equilibrium in Italy. "We are ready to go all the way," they have been saying for several days in [CP General Secretary] Berlinguer's entourage.

Solé remarked:

The Christian Democrats can hardly believe that the Communists, who are usually so patient, are going to "go all the way." Adopting a calm tone, they are saying that they understand their partners' "concerns" but warning them against ending "an understanding arrived at with difficulty and to which there is no really viable alternative."

If the CP intended to "go all the way" it would bring down the Christian Democratic government. Against the opposition of the CP and the SP, the governing party could win a vote of confidence only by accepting the support of the neofascists. Such a move would certainly precipitate a political crisis.

On the other hand, if the Christian Democrats resigned themselves to defeat on a motion of confidence, they would face new national elections, an extremely unattractive prospect in view of the powerful upsurge of mass discontent in Italy.

This rising discontent is what has produced the problem. It has disrupted the otherwise comfortable accommodation between the Christian Democrats and the CP. The working-class base of the Italian CP is getting fed up with the party's failure to achieve anything for them, and it is letting its feelings be known in an unmistakable way.

The CP's push for inclusion in the government came only a week after the demonstration of 150,000 metalworkers in Rome, who shouted: "We have had enough!"

In early January, the CP weekly magazine *Rinascita* published a symposium in which leaders from all over the country admitted that there was a serious and growing malaise in the party ranks. For example, Biaggio de Giovanni from Cam-

pania said: "Some people no longer believe that our policy and thus our party are capable of really changing things."

About the same time the CP shifted its attitude toward the government, the Stalinist-controlled union federation announced its intention of calling a general strike to protest the government's economic policies, thus ending the social truce it has maintained. Later the strike call was suspended on the pretext that it did not make any sense to strike against a government that was already in the melting pot.

However, the suspension of the strike call aroused strong opposition among the workers. The council of shop delegates at the Fiat factories in Turin approved a motion demanding that the strike go on. A similar motion was approved by the council of delegates at the Alfa Romeo factory in Milan, with CP members abstaining.

Actually, if the CP entered a bourgeois cabinet of national unity, it would risk becoming still more discredited in the eyes of the workers. However, it is under pressure to show that it is gaining a real foothold in government by its policy and not just settling down in the servants quarters behind the temples of power. Thus, it might be able to gain some time by displaying a few ministerial portfolios.

In any case, a government of national unity is obviously a more attractive alternative for the CP leaders than new elections, in which they would come under direct and concentrated pressure from the workers to offer real changes. In fact, if they wanted elections, they have the strength to force the dissolution of the present parliament. Instead they have announced a national campaign to mobilize public support for a national unity government, an obvious gimmick to look militant without really taking any decisive action.

Whatever the outcome of the present government crisis, however, the situation in Italy has obviously reached an explosive point. The political props of the capitalist system are weakening.

The dilapidated state of the Christian Democracy has been evident for years. But the bourgeoisie has been totally unable to find a substitute for it.

The bourgeois politicians were saved from defeat in the last elections only by the CP's desire to win their friendship. Even then they could only continue to govern with CP support.

Now the Communist Party leadership itself, the last force able to hold the workers back, is beginning to lose its grip on the masses and to give way to their pressure.

Washington's statement was intended to intimidate the Italian CP—an easy accomplishment. It was also intended to intimidate the Italian people and to put them on notice that, so far as Carter is concerned, there are limits to their democratic rights. □

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The Military Clash Between Hanoi and Pnompenh

By Michael Baumann

Clashes between Vietnamese and Cambodian troops were officially reported for the first time December 31, when Pnompenh cited them as its reason for temporarily breaking diplomatic relations with Hanoi.

Subsequent statements by both governments claimed that heavy fighting had taken place, mostly in the final months of last year. Each held the other responsible for the clashes.

Imperialist intelligence reports say the fighting died down in early January but that Vietnamese troops remain in Cambodia.

Hanoi has called for negotiations to resolve the conflict "in a spirit of brotherly friendship."

Pnompenh has said that it wants talks too, but that no negotiations can be held until all Vietnamese troops are out of its territory.

Despite the daily headlines in the world press during the first two weeks of January, these slim facts represent virtually all that is known with any certainty about the outbreak of fighting.

All reports come from one of three sources—communiqués from the two contending regimes and briefings from the imperialist intelligence agencies.

In this situation, a *New York Times* report from Bangkok January 6 gave the following as "the best information available":

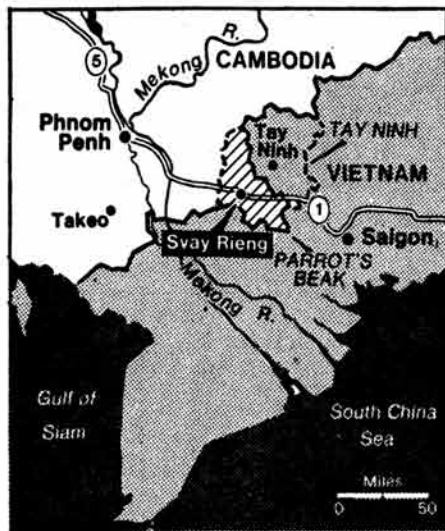
The armed conflict . . . appears to have come to a pause while . . . verbal war continues unabated.

According to the best information available—neither side allows any outsider to see for himself—the Vietnamese Army has occupied the Cambodian salient jutting into southern Vietnam but has stopped short of the provincial capital of Svay Rieng. It is said to be consolidating its hold on the tip of the so-called Parrot's Beak. Cambodia has charged that Vietnam is installing "puppet" administrations in a number of conquered administrative districts.

Caution is advised, however:

Experts in Indochinese affairs here are circumspect in their accounts of the military situation because they depend on only two sources of information. One is radio reports—from Pnom Penh and Hanoi—but the broadcasts are stronger on propaganda than facts. The other source is satellite photography, which is not the best way to distinguish one side's troops from the other.

The accounts of the military action, which cannot be authenticated from sources close to the events, suggest that Vietnam invaded the Par-



New York Times

rot's Beak early last month. The invaders are said to have advanced into Cambodia with great strength, supporting their infantry with heavy artillery, armor and captured American fighter-bombers.

The fighting was said to have been heavy but the results one-sided, owing to Vietnam's superiority in numbers, equipment, and experience. The *New York Times* report continued:

Analysts here assume that the invaders halted their advance on their own after demonstrating their ability to go as far as they wished.

Reports by Vietnamese refugees from the battle areas support the impression that the initiative until the Parrot's Beak invasion had been with the Cambodians. Their incursions into Vietnam reached a high point in November, with a sizable raid into the Vietnamese province of Tay Ninh, north of the Parrot's Beak.

The Vietnamese attack last month followed a warning to Cambodia of the potency of Vietnam's troops and its readiness to use them if Cambodian border attacks continued.

Perhaps heeding this warning, Cambodia switched to political warfare after many months of veiled attacks in which Vietnam was never named. Last Saturday [December 31] Pnom Penh broke diplomatic relations with Hanoi.

Pnompenh and Hanoi's own statements leave little doubt that substantial hostilities have occurred.

In an appeal addressed to "world public opinion" the day it broke diplomatic relations with Hanoi, Pnompenh charged that "several infantry divisions from Hanoi, and several hundred tanks and artillery

pieces supported by airplanes" had launched a "ferocious and barbaric" attack against its territory. Russian advisers were said to have been spotted among the Vietnamese troops.

Hanoi's short-term aim, Pnompenh charged, was to "plunder rice and livestock to help solve their hunger problem." Its long-range goal was said to be "swallowing up" Cambodia as a "member of a Vietnamese-dominated Federation."

Numerous atrocities were attributed to the Vietnamese troops, who were alleged to have "sabotaged Cambodia's economy, destroyed rubber plantations, burned forests, strafed the people—children and old people alike—burned houses, seized cattle, poultry and property of the people, raped and killed our women in the same or worse manner than the Thieu-Ky and South Korean mercenary troops of the past. . . ."

Hanoi replied the same day that far from being the aggressor it had acted only in self-defense. The North Vietnamese government blamed Pnompenh for two years of border clashes that caused relations between the two countries to "deteriorate seriously." Specifically, Hanoi charged:

As early as the beginning of May 1975, Kampuchea [Cambodia] employed its armed forces in attacks on Phu Quoc and Tho Chu islands, during which more than 500 civilians were carried off, and in incursions into Vietnam's territory at different places from Ha Tien [on the Gulf of Siam] to Tay Ninh [due east of Pnompenh]. In December 1975 Kampuchean armed forces again attacked and occupied Vietnamese territory in the provinces of Gia Lai, Kon Tum and Dac Lac.

Most serious has been the period since April 1977, when Kampuchea fielded a great force made up of many divisions. This force, with massive fire support provided by many cannons and mortars positioned in Kampuchea, has made many concerted attacks on almost all the border areas from Ha Tien to Tay Ninh. Kampuchean armed forces have repeatedly shelled many populous areas and new economic zones, including areas far behind the border, such as the town of Chau Doc and the townships of Ha Tien and Tinh Bien.

Pnompenh's claims of atrocities were matched by Hanoi, which accused the Cambodian troops of "inhuman crimes," including "looting and the burning and sacking of pagodas . . . raping, tearing fetuses from mothers' wombs, disembowelling adults, burning children alive."

A week later, on January 7, Pnompenh claimed a stunning series of victories in

the field, asserting that since September its troops had destroyed five Vietnamese divisions and had killed or wounded almost 30,000 Vietnamese soldiers.

The figures appear greatly exaggerated but probably indicate where some fighting took place.

Pnompenh claimed that the greatest number of Vietnamese casualties had fallen in the rubber plantation area northeast of the capital. It said the number of Vietnamese dead and wounded there totaled 18,000 and listed its own losses at 309 killed and 600 wounded. Sixty-three Vietnamese tanks were destroyed in this region, it said, and the bodies of two "Europeans" [i.e., Russians] were found with one of the tanks.

Large numbers of Vietnamese forces were also said to have fallen in the Parrot's Beak area, in Takeo and Kampot provinces in southern Cambodia, and north of the rubber plantations.

Hanoi issued a statement the same day, saying it was battling to dislodge Cambodian forces in several places on the Vietnamese side of the border.

The statement included the following warning of retaliation if Pnompenh did not withdraw its forces and begin negotiations:

If the Kampuchean side keeps distorting facts, encroaching on Vietnamese territory and committing further crimes against the Vietnamese people, the Vietnamese people and armed forces will fight back with determination in self-defense. The Kampuchean authorities must bear responsibility for all the consequences of their actions.

On January 11, the tone of Pnompenh's public statements changed sharply. Although the claim was repeated that Vietnam's vastly superior forces had been "routed . . . and dispersed," it was acknowledged that some remained and that "mopping up" actions continued.

Furthermore, Pnompenh stressed its underdog status vis-à-vis Hanoi and said that although "large chunks of Cambodian territory have been lost for generations as a result of Vietnam's aggression, expansion, and annexation, the Cambodian people have no intention of digging up old accounts."

Cambodia is a "small country with a population of nearly 8 million people," the statement said, while "Vietnam . . . has a population of more than 40 million people" and an army "more than 1 million strong."

"Never in history," the Cambodian government said, "has a small country provoked a big country and committed aggression against it. . . ."

Hanoi, for its part, continued to maintain that it had not set so much as a foot in Cambodia. Its charges against Pnompenh have been extensively quoted in Moscow, while Peking did the same for Pnompenh.

Taking advantage of this to throw gasoline on the flames, White House National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski

claimed January 8 that what was actually involved was the "first case of a proxy war between China and the Soviet Union."

"The Vietnamese are clearly supported by the Soviet Union politically and militarily and the Cambodians are supported politically and perhaps militarily by the Chinese," he said in a CBS television interview.

This nationally televised propaganda sally was obviously intended to reinforce Carter's image as an anti-Communist. On the following day—after Moscow de-

nounced the thrust as an effort to "palm off the desired as reality"—the State Department denied that Brzezinski's statement represented an official stand. The State Department's release sought to counter whatever disturbance Brzezinski's assertion might cause in diplomatic relations with Moscow and Peking. The incident showed Carter's skill at speaking with a forked tongue.

It also showed how the spectacle of armed conflict between Hanoi and Pnompenh plays into the hands of the imperialist propagandists. □

Another Election Promise Scrapped

Janata Party Introduces 'Preventive Detention' Bill

By Sharad Jhaveri

Pakistani police fired into a crowd of thousands of striking workers January 2, killing up to twelve of them.

The conflict in the industrial city of Multan began December 29, when the workers at the Colony textile mills struck in defiance of martial-law regulations banning all strikes and trade-union activities. The workers were demanding better working conditions and bonuses equivalent to four and a half months' wages.

According to the official account, 20,000 workers surrounded a police detachment at the factory January 2 and allegedly threw stones and attempted to seize rifles. The police claimed they fired into the crowd in "self-defense."

In an attempt to dampen the uproar over the killings, the martial-law administrator in the province ordered an "inquiry" and promised to pay the families of the dead workers about \$850 each.

The labor dispute in Multan and the regime's response to it were the most significant since the military seized power in July 1977. But conflict had been building up for several months.

Within a few days of imposing martial law, Gen. Zia ul-Haq banned all strikes and trade-union activities. On July 10 he reinforced this ban with Martial Law Regulation No. 12, stating that "all kinds of activity relating or pertaining to, or connected in any manner whatsoever with trade unions, labour associations or any other body of similar nature is prohibited."

This government policy encouraged employers to launch their own offensive against workers. Some companies refused to pay bonuses that had already been agreed to, some stopped giving cost-of-living allowances, and some cut back on other relief measures, such as subsidized food and rent-free housing. In industry

after industry hundreds of workers were dismissed, both for political reasons and as a result of employment cutbacks.

Within a few months of the military coup, the purchasing power of workers had been reduced by 30 to 40 percent.

Many trade-union leaders and members were arrested for raising demands or resisting the capitalist offensive on their standard of living.

Despite the Zia regime's repressive policies, some workers went out on strike. In fact, the first strike, from July 16 to July 19 in Taxila, took place less than two weeks after martial law was imposed.

Another sign of working-class opposition was a meeting of prominent trade unionists in Karachi November 14. Representatives of trade-union federations in various industries, as well as in banking, teaching, and journalism, agreed to form a Workers Coordinating Committee.

According to a report in the November 16 issue of the Karachi daily *Dawn*, the unionists "stressed the dire need of allowing the workers their universally acknowledged rights of unfettered trade union activity and collective bargaining including the right to strike and right to participate in the formulation of policies and affairs of management."

Among the specific demands raised by the unionists were: the immediate reinstatement of all dismissed workers; the reopening of two newspapers that had been shut down by the regime; the immediate release of all workers and trade-union leaders arrested under the martial-law regulations; unrestricted freedom of union activity, including the right to strike and picket; and immediate measures to halt price increases and raise wages to make up for the sharp decline in purchasing power. □

MPLA Congress Dominated by Neto

By Ernest Harsch

Meeting in Luanda December 4-10, 1977, the leadership of Angola's ruling party, the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), held its first congress since the country gained its independence from Portugal more than two years ago.

The congress was billed as an event destined to completely transform Angolan society through a deepgoing "revolution." However, the most notable outcome was a tightening of President Agostinho Neto's authoritarian rule, accompanied by a sharp escalation in demagogy.

Examples of the MPLA's rhetoric were plentiful. The organization, which has been renamed the "MPLA-Party of Labor," is now being presented as a "vanguard party." According to its program, it is "the party of the working class, uniting workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and other workers dedicated to the cause of the proletariat in a solid alliance."

During a five-hour speech on the opening day of the congress, Neto proclaimed that a key task of the MPLA was the establishment of a "revolutionary democratic dictatorship against internal and external reaction, creating the conditions for the installation of a Proletarian Dictatorship as a stage toward the construction of socialism." (Quoted in the December 13 Lisbon daily, *Jornal Novo*.)

Despite this radical-sounding verbiage, the congress marked no major shift in the MPLA's procapitalist policies. Though the Neto regime has nationalized some sectors of the Angolan economy (sugar, textiles, timber, a majority of the main diamond company, and plantations and businesses abandoned by the Portuguese), it has at the same time maintained capitalist property relations as such, although with a degree of state participation.

The MPLA, moreover, has repeatedly invited foreign companies to invest in Angola, and the most important industry, oil, remains in foreign hands. The Gulf Oil fields of Cabinda still account for the major part of Angola's export earnings, with the MPLA regime receiving \$500 million in royalties and tax payments from the American company each year.

Most importantly, the MPLA has expressed its real attitude toward the toiling masses by stifling any independent initiatives on their part. Workers are tied directly to the state apparatus through the MPLA-controlled trade-union federation.



NETO: Awarded medal, reelected president.

When strikes do break out, as they did in Luanda in early 1976, they are broken and the strike leaders are arrested as "saboteurs" or "traitors."

Though it now chooses to call itself a "Party of Labor," the MPLA certainly does not represent the interests of the Angolan working class.

This was reflected also in the composition of the delegates at the congress. According to a correspondent reporting in the January 2 issue of the London weekly *West Africa*, "... the absence of working class members is compensated for by the presence of a large contingent of military members."

In the context of the MPLA's general antilabor orientation, the two-year plan announced at the congress to raise production to the levels attained just before independence will most likely presage more "discipline," "sacrifice," and speed-up.

Nor has the MPLA abandoned its repressive policies. No other parties are permitted to legally exist. And in the weeks preceding the congress Neto threatened an even greater crackdown against dissidents. During the November 11 independence day ceremonies, for instance, he

warned that the MPLA would brook no "deviations" and that it would "act firmly against those who persist in trying to destroy our unity or our regime."

Although the MPLA and its related organizations had already been extensively purged following the abortive coup attempt in May 1977 by MPLA dissidents, the state of emergency that was imposed at the time was extended for another three months on September 17—long enough to cover the congress.

The congress itself, and the new organizational measures adopted at it, marked a major effort by the Neto leadership to tighten its control over the MPLA and the Angolan people.

The congress was carefully controlled. The documents that were discussed at it had been made public only shortly before. One-third of the delegates were directly appointed by the MPLA Central Committee and another third were chosen by the military and police. The rest were said to have been elected from among local MPLA bodies.

About half of the members of the new Central Committee chosen by the congress are from the military. One qualification for appointment to the Central Committee was membership in the MPLA for eight years. This favored the older guerrilla leaders involved in the MPLA's rural campaigns against the Portuguese, but greatly limited urban members who had joined during the more recent activities in the cities.

In a thinly veiled warning against any remaining dissidents, the congress passed a motion condemning "fractionalism"—a euphemism for criticism of the leadership.

Neto bolstered his own position. A large portrait of him adorned the stage, the congress awarded him a medal as a "national hero," and he was reelected president. He holds a decisive vote in the MPLA Political Bureau and has the power to dismiss the government.

The greetings delivered at the congress by foreign guests were likewise designed to help enhance the Neto leadership's prestige and its "socialist" pretenses.

Andrei Kirilenko, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, spoke on the second day of the congress. He approved of the MPLA's decision to christen itself a "vanguard party," calling it an important link "with the country's development in a socialist direction."

Raúl Castro, the second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, praised Neto as "the supreme guide of the Angolan revolution." Today, he said, "Luanda has become a symbol of the new Angola, the free, sovereign and independent country that, under the leadership of its vanguard, the MPLA-Party of Labor, resolutely, bravely and courageously marches toward socialism."

Spain—LCR Trade-Union Congress a Big Success

More than 2,000 trade-union militants from across Spain gathered in Madrid December 11 to discuss a class-struggle response to the Moncloa Pact, an austerity plan put forward by the Suárez government and agreed to by the leaders of the two main workers parties—the Communist Party and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE).*

The conference was organized by the Trotskyists of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League).

The LCR publicized the conference for seven weeks. Its newspaper, *Combate*, carried weekly articles explaining the importance of the gathering and outlining the various topics to be taken up. LCR activists distributed thousands of copies of a twenty-five-page pamphlet, the resolutions drawn up for discussion at the conference.

The theme of the gathering was summed up on the back cover of this pamphlet:

“Workers—if you are:

• against the Social Pact, for the demands of the working class;

• for trade-union unity, for a unification congress of the union federations;

• for councils and committees based on rank-and-file assemblies—

“Participate in the First Trade-Union Conference of the LCR.”

LCR trade-unionists organized meetings in their workplaces to prepare reports for the conference and to discuss the resolutions. In addition to the government's austerity plan and the need for trade-union unity and democracy, the special problems of women workers, young workers, and immigrant Spanish workers elsewhere in Europe were taken up at the conference.

The conference lasted only one day, since many workers in Spain must work a six-day week. Nevertheless, there were three major reports and almost sixty contributions from the floor.

Michel Rovere reported in the December 16 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*: “. . . working-class leaders followed one another to the platform, most of them young, but recognized as leaders in all the main centers, in the key plants that have captured the headlines in recent years or recent months: SEAT, Hispano-Olivetti, Numax in Barcelona, Ford and the hospitals in Valencia, the shipyards in Cadiz, Robert-Bosch in Madrid, Motor Ibérica, the Euskalduna shipyards, General Electric

*See “Spain—Why CP and SP Caved In on Wage Freeze,” *Intercontinental Press*, November 14, 1977, page 1234.

10,000 Trotskyists in Spain

Members of the Liga Comunista (LC—Communist League) also participated in the LCR trade-union conference. The LC and the LCR are in the process of reunifying their organizations, which both grew out of a 1972 split in the Spanish section of the Fourth International.

The fusion of the Spanish Trotskyists took another step forward December 17-18 at a joint meeting of the Central Committees of the LC and the LCR. The gathering approved political and organizational resolutions on the reunification, and elected a Unified Central Committee. All the organizational structures of the two groups have now been fused. The process is scheduled to

be completed at a unification congress to be held in March.

The December 21 *Combate* reported: “The unified party has about 10,000 members, including militants and sympathizers. Seventy-five percent came from the LCR, and 25 percent from the LC. . . . Activists from the unified party are playing an outstanding role, for example, in the state coordinating committee of Astilleros Españoles . . . , in the representative commission of Babcock-Wilcox for negotiations with the government, and in the strike committee at Motor Ibérica.

“About one-third of the members of the party are women, and the average age is twenty-three.”

and Babcock-Wilcox in Bilbao, Imanesa in Pamplona, and the list could go on.

“Also present were workers leaders who have led a number of general strikes in Euzkadi, those who helped initiate coordinating committees in Vizcaya and Barcelona, the leaders of the March 1976 general strike in Vitoria and of the most recent general strike in Vizcaya, among others.”

Of the 2,300 persons attending the conference, 32 percent were metalworkers, 8.3 percent construction workers, 9 percent teachers, and 5 percent each worked in the textile, chemical, health, and graphic arts industries.

More than 500 of the participants held positions in their trade unions, and more than 400 were members of workers councils or factory committees at their workplaces.

The LCR's growing influence in the unions was also indicated by the fact that the big reformist workers parties felt compelled to take notice of the conference. The PSOE sent a message “wishing success in the work of the conference,” and the CP-led Workers Commissions sent a representative of their State Secretariat to give greetings “in the name of Marcelino Camacho and the leadership of the Workers Commissions.” (Camacho is the best-known CP trade unionist.)

The December 21 issue of *Combate* summed up the results of the gathering: “The conference has shown that there is

an alternative to the Moncloa Pact. On the social and economic level, the workers can oppose the crisis with a different logic from that of capitalist profit—defending their demands and advancing at the same time radical social and economic measures for the total transformation of society. . . . On the political level, collaboration and unity among the union federations and the workers parties. . . .

“But the conference demonstrated something more: Although the reformist union leaderships have taken the road of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, a growing opposition to this attitude is slowly making headway inside the union federations and in the factory assemblies and the councils and committees elected by them. The proposals and initiatives of revolutionary trade-union militants, of the hundreds of union cadres with more and more experience who attended the conference, are winning a larger and larger audience. . . .” □

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Desai Backtracks on Election Promises

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—The ruling Janata Party unseated the Congress Party in the March 1977 elections by riding a mounting wave of political anger at Indira Gandhi's imposition of a state of emergency and her attacks on democratic and trade-union rights.

In its election manifesto, the Janata Party had promised that it would unconditionally release all political prisoners, repeal the draconian Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, amend the constitution to prohibit future regimes from declaring such an emergency, restore the right of workers to receive bonus payments as a form of deferred wage, and make other concessions.

The defeat of the Congress Party did result in the restoration of some bourgeois-democratic rights. But most of the tendencies in the Indian working-class movement failed to project an independent working-class alternative to the abstract slogan of democracy versus dictatorship that was raised in the elections.

The only exceptions were the Trotskyists of the Communist League, Indian section of the Fourth International, whose candidate won 3,000 votes on such a programme, and a splinter group from the Revolutionary Socialist Party in Uttar Pradesh.

The two major Stalinist tendencies in the workers movement—the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M))—projected class-collaborationist programmes. While the CPI supported Gandhi's Congress Party to the hilt, the CPI(M) considered (and still regards) the bourgeois Janata Party as a bastion of antiauthoritarianism.

The CPI(M) claims that all antidemocratic measures flowed from Gandhi and her party and thus justifies its support to the Janata Party on those grounds. It thereby fails to expose the roots of authoritarianism in the capitalist system itself. In practice, it failed to demand the scrapping of the constitutional provisions that make the imposition of a state of emergency possible.

The CPI(M) now finds itself in a difficult position, at a time when the Janata Party regime has begun to retreat on some of its election promises. The only alternative left to it is to goad, cajole, and remind the Janata Party of its pledges and plead with it to keep them.

On the question of the release of political

prisoners, the Janata rulers had already begun to prevaricate as early as May 1977. At that time, Home Minister Charan Singh, in direct contradiction with his party's promises, sought to lay down conditions for the release of prisoners. In August he claimed that all detainees under MISA had been released, after the Delhi unit of the Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights group handed him a list of 700 names of political prisoners still behind bars. The committee, however, noted that the list was only preliminary.

Moreover, Singh's claim ignored the cases of the still larger number of non-MISA political prisoners who were either being held under pretrial detention or who had already been convicted. There are also many political prisoners who have been released on bail, but still have charges pending against them. They have to present themselves at police stations and before the courts at frequent intervals.

Charan Singh claims helplessness on the grounds that decisions can only be made by state governments. But most of the state governments are run by his own party. And some laws, like Section 434 of the amended Criminal Procedure Code, allow the federal government to intervene in cases where death sentences have been imposed. Yet a death sentence still hangs over Molina Dhak, a young woman imprisoned in West Bengal, who is alleged to be a member of the Maoist Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Ashim Chatterjee, another CPI(ML) leader, is still facing charges in Bihar.

Nor does anything seem to have been done in regard to Naga and Mizo prisoners* or to Indian prisoners jailed abroad.

The CPI(M) itself has a sorry record on the release of political prisoners. It dominates the popular-front government in West Bengal. Its leader in the state, Jyoti Basu, is both chief minister and home minister. Yet it has refused to withdraw the cases against several political activists, using the flimsiest of legal pretexts. The case of Ananta Singh is one such instance. However, in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh (where it is not in the government), the CPI(M) has participated in struggles for the release of political prison-

*Prisoners taken during the Indian regime's repression in Nagaland and Mizoram, two states in the northeast whose inhabitants are fighting for their right to self-determination.—IP

ers. Its policy on this issue is thus opportunist.

In regard to MISA, the Janata Party regime has only now promised to introduce a bill into Parliament for its repeal. But on December 7 Charan Singh refused to spell out the details of the bill before the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament).

Meanwhile, the government of Madhya Pradesh, run by the Janata Party, and that of Jammu and Kashmir, run by Sheikh Abdullah, have enacted MISA-type laws vesting them with arbitrary powers to curtail democratic rights in those states. This caused a considerable uproar both inside and outside of Parliament. But the Janata regime has refused to do anything to persuade them to withdraw the measures.

Not only that, but Prime Minister Morarji Desai has lately reminded the country that some sort of preventive detention measure will still be around after MISA disappears.

Preventive detention is a legacy of British imperialism and in general it empowers the executive to detain any person without trial. The powers of the courts are very limited and generally confined to seeing that proper legal procedure is followed during arrests. The Congress Party had fought against these measures during the independence struggle. But in 1950 preventive detention was given a prominent place in the constitution itself, and in the very chapter on Fundamental Rights.

The Gandhi regime passed the notorious 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1976 to legitimise her dictatorial rule, at a time when major opposition leaders and members of Parliament, as well as thousands of political prisoners, were rotting in her jails and when complete censorship muzzled all expressions of thought and dissent.

This amendment gave blanket powers to the regime to declare any group, political party, or person as "anti-national," defining the word very broadly. It barred the courts from assisting any such groups or individuals. It trampled under foot the autonomy of state governments, empowering the federal government to send its armed forces in against a state's wishes. It likewise provided for an indefinite continuance of the emergency.

In its election manifesto, the Janata Party promised that it would immediately scrap this law. Now it is stalling. It says that the Congress Party has a majority in the Rajya Sabha (upper house of Parliament) and that any bill to repeal it is likely to be defeated there. Hence it does not want to propose its wholesale scrapping. At the same time, it has found some "good" provisions in the law that it says it would retain.

After its crushing defeat in the general elections, the Congress Party was initially inclined to favorably consider the repeal of the amendment as a whole. But in light of

the Janata Party's hesitations, it has shifted and told the regime that it would now consider specific proposals and decide whether to veto them in the Rajya Sabha or not.

The Janata Party, instead of introducing a bill for the amendment's repeal and challenging the Congress Party to veto it, thus further exposing the Congress Party before the people, has chosen instead to enter a dialogue with it as to which provisions should be retained and which scrapped.

So a process of bipartisan accommodation on this vital question has begun. Two such meetings have already taken place between ministers of the Janata regime and leaders of the Congress opposition.

According to December 7 press reports, the regime will be introducing only a minor Constitutional Amendment Bill during the current session of Parliament, rather than an omnibus bill aimed at reforming the undemocratic changes made in the constitution by Gandhi. The omnibus bill has been deferred to the next session.

The present bill seeks to delete the clause regarding "anti-national" activities. It further seeks to expand the powers of the courts regarding civil liberties—powers that had earlier been taken away. And the center will now be able to send armed forces into a state only with the consent of the state government concerned. But the clause regarding "fundamental duties," including the duty to render service in the armed forces, will be retained.

A commission appointed by the Desai regime to inquire into the "excesses" and atrocities committed by Gandhi and her coterie during the emergency is daily bringing out horrible tales of torture and other brutalities against the poor masses. Whole villages were bulldozed simply on the verbal orders of Gandhi's son, Sanjay. When slum dwellers protested against their forcible evictions, they were fired on.

Still, the Janata regime adamantly refuses to arraign Gandhi for these acts. Instead it chose to arrest her on a very trivial charge, allowing her to get off on an easy acquittal. It did not try to make an example of her to deter future tyrants. The *Bombay Economic and Political Weekly*, in a lead article on October 1, 1977, commented that the Janata regime wanted to disgrace Gandhi, but not what she stood for—authoritarianism.

There is considerable truth in this observation. Confronted by rising struggles of the toiling masses, a capitalist state in a backward country like India, whether it is headed by a Gandhi or a Desai, cannot help but be authoritarian.

It is true that repeal of the state-of-emergency amendments to the constitution would not remove the socioeconomic roots of repression, and that danger to the rights of the masses can only be removed with a

socialist revolution. But agitation around such demands could greatly help revolutionary socialists show the masses how the bourgeoisie can plan to stage a constitutional coup, impose dictatorship, or deprive



DESAI: Still keeping hundreds of political prisoners behind bars.

the masses of their fundamental rights.

During the initial period of elation over the restoration of some democratic rights, the Janata Party was reported to have seriously considered the removal of these provisions. At the time, the CPI(M) was disoriented, since it had never projected such a demand, either in its election manifesto or its propaganda work. On the contrary, it had proposed that the emergency provisions be retained on the grounds of "external dangers." Even now, the CPI(M) simply urges the Janata Party regime to prosecute Gandhi as the main culprit.

There is not an element of Marxist analysis in the CPI(M)'s subjective assessment of the period of the emergency. Consequently the CPI(M) is not in a position to offer an independent class perspective or policy on the question of democratic and trade-union rights in India. Its perspective is that of class collaboration with the Janata regime. Its struggles and demands, whether on the political or trade-union plane, are subordinated to this overall approach.

As for the CPI, little needs to be said. Its abject servility to Gandhi and the Congress Party even today has prevented it from adopting an independent stance.

In this context, the Janata regime is actively considering a major attack on one of the most fundamental rights of the trade unions, namely their right to act as

their own bargaining agents on behalf of their members.

The regime has already prepared a comprehensive industrial relations bill. It proposes to provide for the election, through secret ballot by the workers, of a "bargaining agent" in a plant or industry. This agent will be recognised by the employers and will be empowered to undertake collective bargaining on behalf of the workers, without reference to and outside the jurisdiction of the trade unions in those enterprises.

The bosses will have the power to deduct the dues of the workers from their paychecks and hand these over to the bargaining agent, who, in turn, is to share part of this collection with the trade unions falling in his sphere of authority or jurisdiction. This arrangement is supposed to cut across and resolve the problem of recognition of bargaining agents in conditions of trade-union rivalry.

If enacted and applied, this measure will cut the heart out of the trade-union movement in India.

The legal framework for industrial relations was originally laid down during the British period. Its basis is the Trade Unions Act of 1926 and the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947. These laws assign an important role to the capitalist state in resolving industrial disputes. The entire apparatus is weighted against the right of the workers to strike.

In their struggles against the bosses for a greater share of the surplus value produced by themselves, the workers are forced to participate in time-consuming and expensive bargaining procedures. The whole system is designed to fragment the labor movement's organised strength and to sap its energies in the lobbies of arbitration courts.

In such a setup the unions become dependent on the government. Obviously, unions aligned with the ruling party have a decisive edge over their rivals. For three decades the unions that looked to the Congress Party enjoyed such patronage. Now it is the turn of the unions linked to the Janata Party.

If despite this prohibitive framework the workers go on strike, the state uses violent measures to resolve the dispute in favor of the bourgeoisie, as in the case of the brutal suppression of the May 1974 railway strike.

Unfortunately, none of the major tendencies in the Indian working-class movement has a perspective that can challenge the threats now being raised by the Janata regime.

Working-class struggles and strikes are increasing in India. So are student struggles at several campuses in the country. In view of these developments, it will not be long before the Janata regime adopts strong-arm methods to quell the rising ferment.

December 18, 1977

French Austerity Plan Keeps Corporate Coffers Bulging

By Pierre Julien

PARIS—Raymond Barre, the French premier, recently made a statement to the economic and financial publications in which he said: "We have been able to put a stop to the troubling tendencies in the French economy, and it is slowly beginning an uphill climb." Fifteen months after the launching of an austerity plan in France, this self-satisfied assessment is not shared by all the bourgeois economists.

On one point, however, they are in agreement. For the first time in twenty years, the government has succeeded in driving down the workers' buying power without running into a wave of struggles that would threaten it politically. That is the main lesson that can be drawn from fifteen months of austerity and from an incomes policy, begun in 1977, that was basically aimed at restoring a balance—which up until then had been to the disadvantage of big business—in the distribution of new value.

In general, the largest corporations experienced around a 50% growth in profits. *Economie et Politique*, the monthly economic journal of the French Communist Party, estimated that the average growth in profits for the monopolies was 40%. Moreover, this general tendency was clearly strengthened in 1977. During the first six months, profits were very good. Most of the big companies' boards of directors announced that 1977 would be a "vintage year" for profits.

The counterpart to this was that wage workers experienced a sharp drop in their buying power. While according to the "official" price index, buying power had risen by around 5% on the average between 1971 and 1976, it stagnated and even fell for some categories of workers in 1977.

The lowest-paid workers did see a perceptible rise in their buying power. The minimum wage rose from 8.94 francs an hour on December 1, 1976, to 10.06 francs an hour on December 1, 1977—a net gain of 12.4%. Even accounting for the shortening of the work day, those workers making the minimum wage were able to maintain their buying power this year.

Government employees, on the other hand, won a raise of only 8.6% between January 1 and December 1, 1977, while at the same time, according to the official index, inflation rose by more than 9%. In general, wage workers in the public sector seem to have suffered more than those in the private sector from the wage controls imposed by the premier, because of the



BARRE: Adds 600 more workers to the ranks of the unemployed every day.

strict orders given by the government during wage negotiations.

However, two important qualifications must be added to this observation. The first is that the official price index is greatly disputed in France, especially by the trade-union organizations. The CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail—General Confederation of Labor] regularly publishes its own index, which gives figures that are very different from the government's. In a given year (November 1976 to November 1977), the difference was as much as 2%, with the CGT index showing a rate of inflation of around 11.5% for that period, as compared with 9.5% for the government. Since most of the wage negotiations are based only on the government index, the resulting loss to the workers can be easily imagined.

Secondly—and perhaps more importantly—even though the overall drop in workers' buying power in 1977 is estimated by the unions at only 2% (based on the union price indexes), this does not reflect the overall decline in workers' standard of living, inasmuch as the statistics on buying power do not include those who have lost their jobs.

If the growth in total wages plus unem-

ployment compensation were measured against the number of job holders plus the number of unemployed, we would then find—taking inflation into account—that the drop in average buying power was even sharper.

No Lasting Recovery in Sight

This seeming victory over the workers does not, however, appear to allow for a long-lasting, noninflationary resumption of capital accumulation, given the current situation. The predictions concerning the gross investment in fixed capital in 1977 were frequently revised downward by the government's economic advisers.

According to the most recent information on hand, it would appear that productive investment in 1977 grew by only 2%, compared with an earlier prediction of 4%. Overall, the index of machinery orders actually filled has still not gone beyond the highest level reached in 1974, despite a brief spurt at the end of 1975.

This stagnation of investment, combined with shrinking consumption owing to the draconian incomes policy, explains the feeble growth of the French economy. Industrial production (except for construction) was indexed at 123 at the end of October 1977, as compared with 127 at the end of October 1976 and 129 in July-August 1974. As for the gross national product, it grew by around 3% in 1977, or several percentage points less than in the major industrialized countries, except for Italy and Great Britain.

Finally, fifteen months of an "austerity policy" have not led to a noticeable recovery in accumulation. For reasons that have mainly to do with the class relationship of forces, which has not deteriorated at the expense of the proletariat, the French capitalists have not been able to simultaneously reinflate their profits, significantly step up the rate of exploitation, and carry out the "restructuring necessary for the redeployment of industry" in face of the new situation of interimperialist rivalry.

One paradoxical aspect of the present turn of events is that the pressure on buying power limits the prospects for creating new jobs, and means that the companies have to shoulder somewhat heavier costs, since they continue to "maintain" underutilized workers and machinery.

Accordingly, growth and investment are reduced, and the rate of profit is not high

enough. In addition, the prospect of a victory of the left in the next elections is causing some capitalists to delay their investment plans and put their capital into more immediately profitable investment havens.

Weaknesses of French Capitalism

Why has the shrinking of the domestic market not been offset by a growth in foreign outlets? French capitalists—for lack of adequate “restructuring,” no doubt—seem to be missing valuable opportunities compared to their main rivals. The French trade balance, which had recovered its equilibrium in 1975, was extremely unfavorable again in 1976 and 1977.

The trade deficit was lowered from twenty-three billion francs in 1976 to around fifteen billion francs in 1977, no lower. It should be explained that even this moderate improvement was due to the slowing of imports caused by the lessening of domestic demand. More generally, the volume of exports grew by only 15% since mid-1974.

To be sure, the French economy has a favorable trade balance, apart from energy (by a margin of nearly twenty billion francs), and the volume of trade is much larger than it was before the crisis. But this slight breakthrough in exports is hardly enough to compensate for the “oil bill” (sixty billion francs in 1976).

France’s industrial exchanges continue to decline with respect to the major industrialized countries. In 1976, the exchange deficit with respect to the OECD countries* was nearly thirty billion francs. This situation, and the growing foreign indebtedness that it entails, explains the gradual decline of French currency. In eighteen months (May 1976 to November 1977), the franc lost 17.4% of its value compared to the German mark, and 17.5% compared to the Swiss franc.

Unemployment Up 23.5%

Unable to find the markets abroad that it has deliberately restricted at home, French capitalism has settled into a classic long-term period of stagnation, characterized by the growth of both inflation and unemployment. In these two areas, even most of the “economic observers” admit that the Barre austerity plan has been an outright failure.

In spite of this, Barre recently boasted of a slight drop in the number of job-seekers. It’s true that in November 1977, the number of jobless registered with the National Employment Agency fell by 2.2%. This does not alter the fact that in the last fifteen months of austerity, unemployment has increased dramatically: up by 23.5%, or 600 additional unemployed per day.

Meanwhile, job offers fell by 7% from November 1976 to November 1977.

The fact is that the “statistical” allevia-

tion of unemployment in France is the result of two factors. The first is that in July 1977, the government initiated a broad program for youth employment that provided businesses with an incentive—by exempting them from Social Security costs for a year—for hiring young workers under twenty-five years of age. However, there is no security in these jobs. They shrink the labor market temporarily.

The second reason is that the administrative offices of the National Employment Agency were ordered to stop registering certain types of unemployed persons as job-seekers. Previously, these persons had been included in the figures.

As a matter of fact, the trade unions have published a much larger figure on unemployment than the one officially put forward by the National Employment Agency. The CGT puts the number of unemployed at 1.6 million, adding to the official figures all those (men and women) who are looking for jobs without having registered with the National Employment Agency.

It should also be mentioned that in addition to total unemployment, partial unemployment has been on the increase. From May to October 1976, 64,000 persons were unemployed part of the time. From January to April 1977, there were 185,000.

Finally, because of a law aimed at stepping up the return of immigrants to their countries of origin, 60,000 departures of immigrant workers were recorded in 1976. The figures for 1977 are not expected to be any lower.

This steep decline in employment is accompanied by persistent inflationary tensions that are sharper than in most other major capitalist countries. At the time the austerity plan was announced, the French government said that its goal for 1977 was a maximum 6.5% increase in prices. Although the figures for December have not yet been made public, the increase will probably be close to 9.5%, according to the “official” index, with food prices alone having gone up by 14%. But as everyone knows, food accounts for the largest part of the budget in working-class families.

In spite of this, the bosses cannot use the argument this year that the price of raw materials has gone up—just the opposite. Since the beginning of March 1977, the cost of raw materials, both industrial and agricultural, fell dramatically by nearly 25%. Accordingly, the current inflation can be blamed neither on pressure in the domestic market—there is actually lack of sufficient outlets for industry—nor on an increase in production costs—for wages are controlled and the price of raw materials has dropped.

What is in fact involved here is a type of inflation that is characteristic of the current crisis of French capitalism. Since for the time being they cannot impose a serious enough defeat on the working class to substantially restore their rate of profit—by a qualitative rise in the rate of exploitation—the bosses are tending to counter the falling tendency of the rate of profit through price increases. □

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The Struggle to Defend Abortion Rights in France

By Claire Bataille and Danielle Volia

[The following article appeared in issue no. 1, dated November 1977, of *Cahiers du Féminisme*, a journal published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

On September 25, 1977, a majority of Swiss voters rejected a referendum that would have legalized abortion.

Around the same time, the World Federation of Physicians for the Respect of Human Life held its convention in Bern. Representatives were present from twenty-four countries. Among them was Father Soutoul, a physician and well-known spokesman for the French organization *Laissez-Les Vivre* [Let Them Live]. This convention offered him a platform once again to condemn the "criminal" Veil [abortion] law.

It would be an error to treat this "international" of reactionary doctors as a bunch of harmless old fools. Through campaigns that in some countries have taken on a mass character (as in Great Britain), they have been able to challenge some of the gains that have been won in the area of abortion rights (as in the United States). They have taken advantage of such factors as austerity and the falling birth rate to gain a hearing from the government.

Despite the opening of the election campaign in France, we will be forced to confront currents of this type. For proof, we need only look at the hospitals' blatant sabotage of the abortion law under the pretext of the "conscience clause"—the right of doctors, for reasons of conscience, to refuse to perform abortions. Department heads also have the right to refuse to allow abortions to be performed in their departments by doctors who volunteer for them.

The *Laissez-Les Vivre* convention held in Montrouge on October 30 and 31 reaffirmed the determination of this fascist-like grouping to throw itself into the electoral fight, with the declared aim of challenging the gains of the 1975 Veil law, minimal as they were.

Finally—as if by chance—the episcopal commission on the family has just issued a memorandum against abortion entitled, "Opening Our Eyes," in which they hypocritically raise the question of whether giving women the right to abortion is equivalent to sanctioning a "death sentence."

"Doesn't a shadow of death now hang

over some of the places where children are born? Isn't the joy of those who work there dimmed by this?" they ask.

"At the risk of being misunderstood, Christians must refuse to allow the voluntary termination of a life to become a commonplace, insignificant act, indeed, a method of contraception." They want us to believe that women are now gaily going off to the hospitals by the hundreds of thousands to have abortions! Such a statement can hardly be made when the National Institute for Demographic Studies has just announced that there were 136,000 reported abortions in 1976, performed either in hospitals or in private clinics.

What about the other 500,000? Where and how were they performed? The study does not say—with good reason.*

We are well aware that the small number of reported abortions is not the result of a rapid increase in the use of contraception. Just recently it was learned that only 25 percent of all women were on the pill.

The restrictions in the law itself have sent thousands of women back to racketeering private clinics, to trips to England for those who are better off, or simply to illegal abortion.

It is mere luck if women manage to fulfill all the conditions that are laid down: an initial doctor visit, "thinking it over" for a week, renewing the request in writing after having consulted with the approved counselors, who will deliver the certificate only if you are not a minor, if, for a foreigner, you can prove that you have lived here for at least six months, and if you have not exceeded the fateful ten-week period.

Then you still have to see whether there is room for you at the hospital.

The waiting lists are so long for the hospitals that perform abortions that most women "voluntarily choose" to go to the nearest private clinic. The abortion may cost 2,000 francs [about US\$420], compared with around 800 francs in the hospital when general anesthesia is used; but, as some women say, "at least there they don't make a fuss."

According to a Family Planning survey, only 43.4% of abortions are performed in hospitals, compared with 45% in private clinics; 6.5% are performed abroad, and 4% are still performed illegally.

*Before the law liberalizing abortion was passed, the number of illegal abortions was estimated at around 800,000 per year.

Since this survey was done, the situation has only worsened.

The fact is that public services, particularly hospitals, are feeling the lash of the austerity policy. Staff reductions and budget cuts stand in the way of implementing the law, even in its present form. At a news conference on women's issues, Madeleine Vincent, a member of the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party, said that the funds allocated for implementing the Veil law had decreased by 50% in this year's budget. Last year, because of staff shortages at the Saint Denis hospital in the working-class suburbs, the doctors had to resign themselves to not performing any more abortions by the Karman method for a month, even though they were in favor of abortion. In Nantes, establishment of an abortion center was recently turned down. We know that even in those places that perform abortions, they are performed under terrible conditions.

Jean Nicolas, in his book *Questions de Femmes*, says it very well: "If the ordinary surgeon and the average obstetrician-gynecologist condescend to give you an abortion, be grateful, but whatever you do, don't open your mouth, be quiet. You're not there to ask questions, to try and get a few explanations. In their hands you are a slightly repulsive object that must be taken care of because the law is on your side, but they often think, deep down inside, that you are nothing but a slut, someone who is incorrigibly careless. They make you pay for the abortion that is your right—regardless of the circumstances that impelled you to it—by making you feel guilty, just like those lords who, not so long ago, had women scraped alive as a punishment for sex."

Under these conditions, what hope is there for bringing about what the government calls "sex education"? Manipulated, guilt-ridden, "counseled" (usually very poorly), those women who do return to Family Planning are few. Even fewer are those who dare and know how to ask questions, who demand to be treated as something other than mentally retarded children. However, as Jean Nicolas points out:

"Owing to the conscience clause, we are among those doctors, a tiny minority of obstetrician-gynecologists, who are willing to include voluntary pregnancy terminations as part of their general practice. In other words, people who were once educa-

tors, who were needed to prevent abortions, have willy-nilly become full-time abortionists because of the incompetence of the law, something they never wanted. . . ."

Women, doctors, and medical personnel face a constant dilemma. They must either agree to administer the cutbacks and meet the demand for abortions under the worst conditions, or else send women back to the private clinics, knowing that they will be exploited and mistreated there. Aside from this frightening alternative, there is no other choice but to fight. This, by the way, has brought some gains—at Saint Vincent de Paul Hospital in Paris, for example, and at Saint Denis in the suburbs of Paris. At Saint Vincent de Paul, an abortion center was due to open. The facilities had been built, the medical and technical staff had been provided, and the funds had been released. Then doubts arose as to whether the center would open.

The CFDT [French Democratic Confederation of Labor] called for setting up a collective to see to it that a family planning center was opened.

The struggle really got off the ground in March 1977, but it wasn't until the end of September that the Departmental health agency agreed to license the family planning center! In the meantime, it took a number of rallies at the hospital and in the neighborhood, large delegations, and a petition to win this demand. Along with the CFDT, other groups that took part in the coalition were Family Planning, the women's group in the fourteenth arrondissement, the Revolutionary Communist League, Communist Workers Organization, United Socialist Party, and the Socialist Party.

But nothing has yet been guaranteed. Once the family planning center really opens, say the women in the neighborhood, we will have to fight to make sure that contraception is not treated just like any other "medical problem." There should be discussion groups for women on sexuality. Women should really be made to feel welcome. "We're fighting to get rid of the typical doctor/patient relationship."

At Saint Denis the situation was similar in many ways to that at Saint Vincent de Paul. For two years official approval for opening a family planning center was on record, but nothing was happening.

When abortions by the Karman method were temporarily suspended in early 1977 owing to staff shortages, the women's groups and the CFDT mobilized. A coalition including the CFDT, the women's groups, Family Planning, the Union of General Medicine, and the Socialist Party women's group was formed. From April to July, there were constant meetings. A petition was circulated widely.

But the decisive factor was the hospital staff's decision to incorporate the demand for a family planning center into their list of demands during some major strikes.

These strikes were aimed, among other things, at winning the hiring of additional staff—despite the hostility of the CGT [General Confederation of Labor] and the CP-dominated city council.

It was because of this that the administration recently undertook to install a family planning center on the unused fourth floor of the hospital. But what additional staff will be provided to run it? So far, nobody knows. How will women start to be admitted? That remains to be seen.

The women's groups in Saint Denis, Family Planning, the CFDT, and the doctors are determined to supervise the way in which everything is set up. In the meantime, what must be established is the family planning center itself. This has not yet been won.

The CP and CGT remain generally very sectarian toward concrete grass-roots struggles in which they come into contact with members of groups claiming to stand to their left. This is often an obstacle to winning demands.

The fact is that these organizations influence and represent a large part of the staff. In the struggles at Saint Vincent de Paul or Saint Denis, everyone deplored their absence, but was unable to compel them to join in the united mobilization. Nevertheless, to impel the members of these organizations to action, it is necessary to take literally the steps proposed in the trade-union platforms. The national health commission of the French CP has just issued a small book called "Taking Care of Health." Among the steps proposed are:

1. The establishment of 1,000 family-planning centers, particularly in big companies employing a large number of women, in the working-class neighborhoods and suburbs, and in smaller towns, as well as setting up these services in existing health facilities.

2. An ongoing national educational campaign.

3. Steps should be taken by the government to see to it that the departments of gynecology and obstetrics in each public hospital facility can meet all requests for abortion within the time period specified by law. This may have to be done by hiring additional staff where necessary. Abortions should be covered by Social Security at 100 percent of cost. (This is the first time that the CP has raised this demand.)

Additional funds for setting up facilities should be allocated to public hospitals, in order to provide them with the means for implementing the laws on birth control and abortion.

Today it is both possible and necessary to open a national debate on the abortion issue, based on all of the changes proposed by the working-class organizations (unions, family planning organizations, and political parties) in the Veil law,

which was adopted for a period of only five years. This should include the demand that women themselves be able to make their own proposals, including changes in the law, and to have a say in all of the proposals.

There is no reason why it should not be possible in local areas to propose united action to win these demands, starting from the record of implementation of the law by each hospital and district.

Such experiences will be the basis for building a united national movement.

* * *

The organization Choisir demands:

1. Full reimbursement of the cost of abortion.

2. No restrictions on abortion up to the fifteenth week of pregnancy. Elimination of all restrictions within this period, elimination of parental consent for minors, elimination of the three-month residency requirement for foreigners. Step up education through television programs and so on.

3. Arranging the conscience clause so that doctors who refuse to perform abortions must have their names on a list filed with the Departmental health agency.

In their platforms, the CGT and CFDT demand 100 percent reimbursement for abortion, establishment of centers for family planning and specialized services.

The CFDT further explains that its demand is for "the establishment of health and family planning centers in the neighborhoods and districts, where the relationships between those who give care and those who receive it will enable the latter to gain control, individually and collectively, over the state of their health."

In its proposal for women, the CP suggests "improving" the 1975 law: "The procedures for obtaining an abortion must be simplified . . . it would be advisable to extend the length of time in which abortions may be performed to twelve weeks."

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'The Most Onerous Tax Bill Ever Passed in This Country'

By Jon Britton

On December 20 Jimmy Carter signed into law a Social Security tax bill that almost guarantees that American workers' paychecks will buy less as time goes on.

Tom Wicker, the *New York Times* columnist, called it "perhaps the most onerous tax bill ever passed in this country."

The new legislation will supposedly save the Social Security "insurance" system, which Democratic and Republican politicians have been warning is about to go broke.

The financial magazine *Business Week* says the capitalist politicians have only themselves to blame for the problem:

Ironically, Congress itself is at least partly to blame for Social Security's present predicament. Only five years ago, on the eve of the 1972 Presidential election, Democrats and Republicans enthusiastically handed voters a handsome gift package in the form of vastly expanded benefits. Not only were Social Security benefits boosted by 20% across the board, but an automatic mechanism was adopted to raise benefits (and taxes) in perpetuity in line with future inflation and wage gains. Ignored in the rush to passage were warnings from business groups and outside experts that the huge jump in benefits—and particularly the provisions of the automatic benefits escalator—entailed large financial risks.

Those warnings were borne out even faster than the critics had anticipated. Within a few short years, the combined effects of a faulty benefits formula, double-digit inflation, and the deepest postwar recession had pushed the system close to the edge of insolvency. [*Business Week*, January 9, 1978.]

Actually, the increased benefits legislated in 1972 were anything but huge and were long overdue:

According to a Brookings Institution study of the Social Security system, published in 1968, 30% of all persons over the age of sixty-five could be classed as poor.

Old-age benefits as a percentage of average weekly manufacturing wages had fallen from 17% in 1960 to 15.3% in 1967.

In 1967, the median annual income, from all sources, of Social Security beneficiaries over age sixty-five was a miserable \$3,199 for a married couple and only \$1,279 for a single woman.

The accelerating inflation of the late 1960s, owing to the Vietnam War, further eroded the woefully inadequate payouts.

To add insult to injury, in the years prior to 1972 a growing surplus in Social Security revenues had been used to finance the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Back in 1965, at President Johnson's urging Con-



MacNelly/New York Daily News

gress passed a whopping increase in Social Security taxes, ostensibly to finance increased old-age benefits (remember the Great Society?) but large enough to produce a big surplus in revenues. The surplus was then "invested" in U.S. government securities.

As a result of this underhanded maneuver, the "assets" of the Social Security trust funds nearly doubled, from \$18.2 billion in 1965 to \$35.3 billion in 1972, and the government had an extra \$17.1 billion to pour down the rathole of its Vietnam adventure.

Now the "excessive generosity" of Congress has been corrected. As Carter put it at a December 15 news conference, "The American people will pay more taxes into the Social Security system, but in return they will know that it will be there, permanently and in a sound condition."

In fact, the claim that Social Security is a system of insurance and has to be financed accordingly is a myth. Social Security revenues and outlays are part and parcel of the federal budget, and are treated as such by all economists and statisticians, and by the president himself in budget messages.

The real goals of the new legislation are quite different.

One aim is to shore up the overall national budget, which has been sinking deeper into the red because of a faltering economy and stepped-up massive expendi-

tures on armaments. (The projected surplus of Social Security revenues over the next ten years is \$13 billion.)

Another key aim is to shift more of the tax burden onto the shoulders of working people by increasing the proportion of total federal revenue coming from the regressive payroll tax.

For a clearer idea of how regressive this tax is, consider: The tax is levied at a flat rate without regard to the number of dependents, exempts wages over the maximum amount, and doesn't touch dividends, interest, and other forms of non-wage income. Thus, the heaviest burden falls on those least able to pay.

Even before Carter signed the new bill, Democratic and Republican politicians had succeeded in raising the proportion of federal revenue coming from payroll taxes from under 10% in 1957 to nearly 20% in 1967 and to over 25% in 1977.

They had also succeeded in reducing the ratio of corporate to payroll taxes from 1.5 to 1 in 1960 to 0.5 to 1 in 1973.

The new Social Security tax hikes will deal a double blow to workers' wages, professionals' salaries, and incomes of the self-employed in coming years. Not only is the basic tax rate going up—from 5.85% in 1977 to 7.15% in 1987, but the amount of wages on which the tax is levied will be greatly enlarged. The wage base will jump from \$17,700 in the current year (up from \$16,500 last year) to \$29,700 in 1981. There-

after it will automatically increase with inflation.

This government "escalator clause" provides the ruling class with a powerful means of driving down the real "take-home" pay of higher-paid workers even as nominal wages go up. On the conservative assumption of an inflation rate of 4.75%, the wage base will leap to \$42,600 in 1987. Should double-digit inflation return, the jump in Social Security taxes for these workers could be astronomical.

In reality, the payroll tax hikes will be even more of a burden for workers than these figures indicate. The employer's "contribution" is equal to that of the worker under the new law, as it has been in the past. But since the employer is indifferent as to whether this amount is paid as a payroll tax or a wage (either way it is a "labor cost"), this portion of the Social Security tax ultimately comes out of wages, just as the worker's "share" does.

Thus the total increase in Social Security taxes that will have to be paid out of future wage raises could for some workers amount to more than \$4,000 a year by 1987, assuming the 4.75% inflation rate. It will be much greater if prices rise at a double-digit rate.

As an added twist of the knife, the employer's payment is tax deductible. The wage earner not only cannot take a deduction, but has to pay income tax on that part of his or her income that goes for Social Security.

Lower-paid workers will continue to be hit hard by payroll taxes. (The July 15, 1972, issue of *Business Week* pointed out that in 1971 20 million workers deemed too poor to pay income tax paid \$1.5 billion in Social Security taxes.) But more well-off working-class and even middle-class families will also feel the squeeze. Carter's new Christmas tax package can thus be seen as a significant broadening of the ruling-class offensive against the living standards of the American people.

The rulers expect an angry response. *Wall Street Journal* reporter John Pierson writes in the December 29, 1977, issue that "some [politicians] predict that workers will rebel against the new law's sharply higher taxes."

The January 9 *Business Week* reports that "legislators are bracing themselves for a political backlash when the newly legislated tax boosts—judiciously postponed until after this year's congressional elections—begin to bite into incomes."

The same day Carter signed the new Social Security bill, he tried to soften the blow by leaking to the press the latest version of a "tax cut and reform" package that he is planning to submit to Congress later this month. Although the projected \$25 billion cut is somewhat larger than figures leaked earlier, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* accurately referred to the package as "proposals which purport

to 'cut' taxes even though the tax burden on the American citizen is going up" (January 4).

The part of the package the *Journal* editors like best, of course, is the \$6 billion to \$7 billion in new tax breaks for big business.

Carter is also said to be considering a \$17 billion cut in personal income taxes (to be achieved by lowering the present 14%-70% range of tax rates to 12%-68%) and a \$2 billion reduction of federal excise and unemployment fund taxes.

The relief for individual wage earners is paltry in view of the fact that taxpayers year after year have been surreptitiously bumped into higher tax brackets by inflation, even while their real wages stagnated.

The projected cuts are supposed to go into effect beginning October 1. The really big increases in Social Security taxes, on the other hand, have been delayed until 1981. The reason for this timing is that Carter hopes to inject some stimulus into the economy in fiscal 1979 and 1980, while still making possible the achievement of

his goal of balancing the federal budget in 1981, after the presidential elections.

However, it is quite possible that heavy international pressures on the U.S. dollar and growing signs of a renewed upsurge in inflation will torpedo this scheme. Major portions of Carter's "tax cuts," not to speak of the window-dressing "reforms," may well go the way of last year's \$50 rebate—in other words be quietly dropped.

At least one Wall Street analyst predicts this outcome. According to the January 9 *Business Week*, Lawrence Kudlow, vice-president and money-market economist for Paine, Webber, Jackson & Curtis "differs from other economists in not factoring an early tax cut into his forecasts. . . . He reasons that even congressmen can sometimes see the consequences of a higher deficit."

However Carter and Congress respond to the dollar crisis, American workers are going to be shouldering a bigger tax burden in coming years and the capitalists less. The new Social Security bill just passed and signed into law assures that. □

What's Behind Decline of Dollar?

By William Gottlieb

[The following article appeared in the January 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

On January 4 the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board announced that they would support the value of the dollar on the international money market.

That is, they would buy dollars—billions of which are being dumped by the giant corporations that deal in the world money market—in an attempt to halt the U.S. currency's sharp decline relative to other major currencies (see graph).

The Federal Reserve said it was prepared to use the so-called "swap" lines of credit, amounting to more than \$20 billion, in its support operations. Under this arrangement, other imperialist powers will loan the Federal Reserve some of their own currencies, which will then be used to buy up dollars.

These credits have to be paid back, though, usually within three to six months. As a result, unless there is some fundamental change in the underlying situation, Washington may soon have to run down its own reserves of foreign currency and gold in order to repay these loans.

The market responded to these announcements with a one-day upswing in the dollar's value. But then the dollar

resumed its downward course, illustrating the worldwide lack of confidence that the support measures will be able to halt the U.S. currency's plunge for very long.

Move to 'tight money'

Perhaps in response to this renewed weakness, the Federal Reserve Board announced on January 6 that it was raising its discount rate—the interest rate it charges member banks for loans—from 6 to 6.5 percent.

This action indicates that a move toward "tight money" policies to protect the dollar is underway.

The concern in capitalist circles over the condition of the dollar was reflected in the decline of stock prices on Wall Street. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped thirty-seven points in four days, closing below the 800 mark for the first time since 1975.

In contrast, the price of gold soared to over \$170 an ounce.

This new wave of gold hoarding is especially important since it underlines the fact that the "strength" of currencies like the Japanese yen and the West German mark is purely relative. In reality there is a growing distrust of all paper currencies; they are all losing value in terms of gold.

Behind the currency crisis is the faltering and uneven character of the current business cycle upswing, and the growing

dependence of U.S. imperialism on the world market both for energy and for outlets to sell its prodigious production.

While the recovery from the 1974-75 depression in the U.S. has been less than robust, it has nevertheless been rapid compared to upturns abroad. *Business Week* in its December 26, 1977, issue, described the world situation as follows: "Foreign economies will have anemic growth in 1978, and only major new government pump-priming can prevent Europe, Japan, and Canada from slipping to the brink of recession by the end of the year. Even without any increase in the price of oil, real European economic growth will average 3% next year, about the same as this year's disappointing performance. Even worse, the runaway inflation that choked off the recovery this year is barely under control, and any stimulation efforts are sure to push price increases back toward the double-digit line in the economies not already so plagued."

World overproduction

The real problem is that Europe and Japan, having built up a vast industry with the most modern equipment during the post-World War II boom, now find that their ability to produce exceeds the markets that are available. They are obliged to export to the one that is still expanding—the U.S. home market.

The United States, on the other hand, cannot expand its exports because of the stagnation abroad. It is faced with the rise in imports from Europe and Japan as well as the need to purchase growing amounts of costly oil from the Middle East and other oil-producing regions abroad.

The result is a massive deficit in the U.S. balance of trade and payments and a consequent flood of dollars into a stagnant world economy.

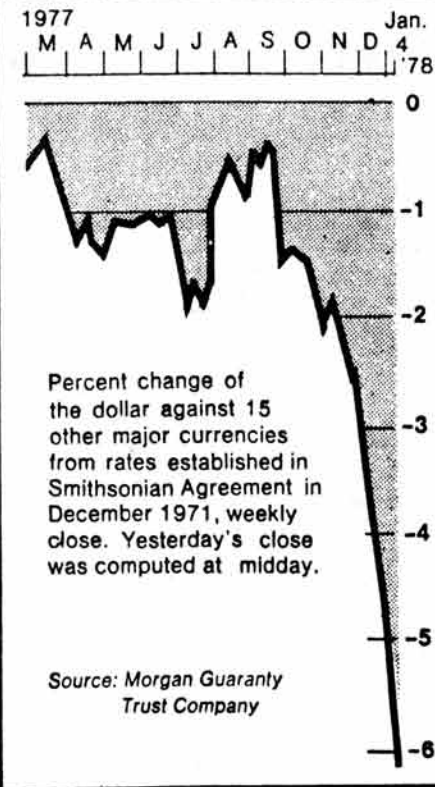
At the same time, the U.S. recovery has been dependent on deficit spending by the federal government to an unusually large degree. The inevitable result of Washington printing dollars, in effect, to cover this deficit is the depreciation of the dollar against the stronger foreign currencies and gold.

This fall in the value of the dollar threatens a sharp increase in the rate of inflation within the U.S. Such a rise in prices would lower real wages of American workers and also reduce overall domestic purchasing power.

Thus, the U.S. recovery threatens to peter out, owing to the overproduction of commodities on a global scale.

The Carter administration has been hoping that an accelerated upswing abroad would boost American exports and strengthen the dollar. In addition, the administration hopes to improve the U.S. trade balance by a combination of protectionist moves in industries such as steel

The Dollar's Long Decline



New York Times/January 5, 1978

and pressure put on Japan to buy more U.S. goods.

Over a longer period, the administration hopes that its program of multi-billion-dollar tax giveaways to the energy monopolies will lead to a rise in domestic energy production and less dependence on foreign supplies.

The recent upheavals in the financial markets, however, indicate that the capi-

talist class is losing patience. It is coming to the conclusion that a slowdown in the American economy is unavoidable in light of the moribund state of the world economy.

Thus, the currency crisis—and the fear of an economic slowdown that lies behind it—indicates that the Carter administration is going to be under pressure to stiffen its stance further against working people.

By dumping the dollar (U.S. corporations are the chief dollar dumpers), the capitalists are in effect saying to Carter that his conservative policies are not enough, that the offensive against the working class and its allies must be stepped up.

Attacks on social services

The dollar crisis, for example, makes federal aid for New York City even less likely. It increases the chances that the New York City fiscal crisis will be repeated around the nation.

Schools, hospitals, social welfare—all these will be fair game in the battle to strengthen the dollar by raising the profits of U.S. corporations. There is even the possibility that major parts of Carter's projected "tax cut" will be scrapped in order to "fight inflation."

In the background is the threat that a slowdown in the U.S. domestic economy could trigger a worldwide slump, such as happened in 1974. This would mean a considerable acceleration of attacks on the working class through massive new layoffs in both the private and public sectors.

The dollar crisis therefore signals that the class struggle is going to sharpen—whether the class-collaborationist bureaucrats who head the American labor movement like it or not.

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Peru—Velasco's Funeral Becomes Mass Protest

By Fred Murphy

General Juan Velasco Alvarado, who ruled Peru for seven years following a 1968 military coup, died December 24. Two days later, his burial occasioned a huge protest against the present regime of Francisco Morales Bermúdez.

"The funeral of ex-President Juan Velasco Alvarado was converted today into a gigantic popular demonstration, which demanded the continuation of the process of revolutionary transformations initiated by the military leader in 1968," a December 26 dispatch from Lima in the Mexico City daily *Excelsior* reported.

"Breaking all protocol and shoving aside the official program, thousands of workers and peasants carried the coffin in their arms to the cemetery, shouting revolutionary slogans that gave the event a political content.

"The people united will never be defeated,' 'Velasco did not sell out,' and 'Cuba with Fidel, Peru with Velasco' were among the slogans insistently chanted by the multitude, which virtually tore the coffin out of the hands of the official pallbearers. . . ."

Another popular chant, according to the Peruvian leftist weekly *Marka*, was "Velasco a la historia, Morales a la m[ierda]" (Velasco into history, Morales into the sewer).

Marka reported that between 100,000 and 400,000 persons participated in the forty-block-long procession. Armed military police prevented the crowd from entering the cemetery, but political speeches denouncing the government were made outside the gates after the burial.

Velasco came to power when the military overthrew the right-wing civilian regime of Fernando Belaúnde Terry in October 1968. The new junta carried out economic policies aimed at improving the position of the national bourgeoisie vis-à-vis imperialism and the old oligarchy, as well as at defusing a rising mass movement.

The Velasco government nationalized a number of big enterprises owned by foreign capitalists and instituted a limited agrarian reform with the goal of creating a new class of landed proprietors.

These measures were accompanied by much populist rhetoric. Velasco claimed his regime was "a revolutionary government that is neither capitalist nor communist but authentically Peruvian—humanist, freedom loving, socialist and Christian."

This radical demagoguery, along with the

friendly relations he established with the Soviet government, won Velasco the support of the Peruvian Communist Party and its union federation, the CGTP.¹ Many former radicals took posts offered by the regime in its "transmission belt" labor and peasant organizations, or in SINAMOS,² a body set up to "mobilize energy" behind the government's policies.

At the same time, the military under Velasco repressed independent strikes and struggles. Working-class and peasant leaders who refused to collaborate, such as Hugo Blanco, were jailed or expelled from the country. The military also created a special body called the "Revolutionary Labor Movement" to mount physical attacks on unions whose leaderships maintained class-struggle policies.

By 1975, the "progressive" veneer of Velasco's government was wearing thin. His economic policies had failed to substantially improve the standard of living of the masses, whose growing impatience was expressed in a popular explosion in Lima in February 1975. In August of the same year, the military dumped Velasco and put Morales Bermúdez in his place.

Morales tried to put on a more "democratic" image, while at the same time seeking the collaboration of right-wing forces. He also moved quickly to improve relations with imperialism. Some nationalizations were reversed, and compensation payments were instituted for others.

These economic moves, combined with the failure of some ambitious industrial development projects and a crisis in the fishing industry, led to a rapid rise in Peru's foreign debt (which now stands at \$4 billion).

Austerity measures, including a drastic currency devaluation and a series of price increases—all forced through by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the big imperialist banks—have made the Morales regime extremely unpopular. Thus the masses now look back to the Velasco period as a time when they were relatively better off.

These sentiments—expressed dramatically at Velasco's funeral—are helped along by the CP and by a new political

formation, the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR—Revolutionary Socialist Party). The PSR was formed in November by a number of present and former military officers and other figures associated with the Velasco government. These forces hope to take advantage of the nostalgia for Velasco's early years in power in order to gain mass support in the June elections for a constituent assembly—called by the Morales government as a step toward restoration of civilian rule in 1980.

Meanwhile, an upsurge in workers' struggles is taking place throughout the country. Strikes in December involved 35,000 health and hospital workers; more than 10,000 copper miners and metal workers, including 5,000 workers at Sider-Peru, the state-owned steel complex in Chimbote; shoe and leather workers; and others.

The main issues in all these strikes are the regime's refusal to allow the rehiring of thousands of workers dismissed after the July 19, 1977, general strike; and demands for cost-of-living wage increases to offset inflation that reached an annual rate of 45 percent in December.

At the same time, the IMF is demanding further stringent measures of the Morales government. According to the December 24 issue of the *Economist*, the imperialist lending agency "wants Peruvian consumers' last defences—subsidies on petrol and foodstuffs—to be lifted; and is demanding that an already vicious liquidity squeeze be tightened still further, in a bid to stop the wage increases the government is still conceding to many industrial workers. . . ."

A December 21 national delegates' assembly of the CGTP, Peru's main trade-union federation, gave in to rank-and-file pressure and called a national general strike of forty-eight hours for January 23-24. The strike's main demands, according to a report in the January 5 issue of *Marka*, will be:

"... the rehiring of all those dismissed [after July 19], the suspension of the trials of union leaders who signed the call for the united general strike of July 19, the return of those exiled and the exercise of other democratic rights; along with the struggle for a general wage increase."

The CGTP's National Council was charged with reconstituting the National Struggle Command that drew non-CGTP unions and other workers' and peasants' organizations into the leadership of the July 19 general strike. □

1. Confederación General de Trabajadores Peruanos (General Federation of Peruvian Workers).

2. Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social (National Network for Supporting Social Mobilization).

The Carter-Begin-Sadat 'Peace Plan'

By Michel Warshawsky

JERUSALEM—A major evolution is taking shape in the Mideast, at a pace that often prevents a correct evaluation of the various speeches and acts of the leading figures in the drama, to which the whole world is witness because of the special attention given to the mass media. Nevertheless, the stakes involved in what is now going on in the Mideast are high enough for us to attempt a general political analysis.

Toward A Second Imperialist Settlement

After the 1948 war between Israel and the Arab states, American imperialism managed to lay the basis for an imperialist settlement in the Mideast, founded on a change in the relationship of forces between British and American imperialism, and with the help of the active support of the Soviet Union. The state of Israel rapidly became the centerpiece of imperialist domination in this part of the Arab world and the watchdog for imperialist interests, as the 1956 war showed.

Very soon, however, a mass anti-imperialist movement developed throughout the Arab East, particularly in Egypt and Iraq. This movement challenged imperialist domination, the Zionist stronghold, and the artificial division of the region by the Western powers. Nasserism was the fullest expression of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership of this mass movement.

The Arab Nationalist Movement, the Baath Party, and later the left wing of the Baath Party in Syria, were some of the manifestations of the upsurge of the Arab masses, as well as of the limitations of this upsurge. At certain points, this movement seemed to be on the verge of challenging the very underpinnings of imperialist domination in the Arab East—capitalist relations of production and the bourgeois state.

Although in point of fact the conquest of power by the working masses was never an imminent possibility—except in Iraq in 1958—the imperialists sensed the need to launch a wide-ranging counteroffensive aimed at restoring imperialist order throughout the Arab East. Israel was the prime means for carrying out this reactionary counteroffensive, and the June 1967 war marked a turning point in the confrontation between the classes in the region as a whole.

The petty-bourgeois regimes that had

been thrown up by the popular upsurge were crushed by the Zionist state, and this defeat marked the end of their potential. But bourgeois restoration and political and social stabilization in the countries of the Mideast were held back by a factor that no one could have foreseen on the eve of the 1967 war—the emergence of the Palestinian resistance.

The importance of the Palestinian resistance lies not only in the effectiveness of the struggle it has been able to wage against Zionist occupation and the Zionist regime, but also in the objective political role it has played throughout the Arab East, in terms of a mobilizing force that partially offset the negative effects of the Zionist victory in June 1967.

It was precisely because of the development of the Palestinian nationalist movement that the imperialist offensive ended in a partial victory—occupation of the Arab territories conquered in 1967. The emergence of a Palestinian national problem, which the Arab ruling classes had managed to stamp out at the time of the first imperialist settlement, put an obstacle in the way of imperialist restabilization of the Arab East.

To enable the social forces tied directly to imperialism to consolidate their political power, the imperialists first had to end the armed conflict that continued after 1967 in the form of a "war of attrition." This came about in the summer of 1970, when Israel agreed to a cease-fire with Egypt.

The imperialists' second objective was muzzling the Palestinian resistance, a precondition for any negotiated settlement between Israel and the Arab states. This objective has still not been fully attained, even if the revolutionary and destabilizing character of the Palestinian nationalist movement has been substantially held in check.

Finally, it was necessary to end the state of hostility. From the Rogers plan in 1970 to the American-Soviet working document in September 1977, the imperialists tried out a series of formulas that had as their common goal ending the Israeli-Arab conflict, an indispensable condition for stabilizing imperialist domination in the Mideast.

Eleven years after the June 1967 war, and four years after the October 1973 war, American imperialism and the Arab ruling classes that are under its thumb are still in search of an agreement for ending the state of war between Israel and the Arab

states, at least for the time being.

To be sure, it is important not to have a "formalist" conception of a political settlement in the Mideast. Stabilization of the Mideast is a process, not just a formal act concretized by a treaty. In terms of this process, it cannot be denied that the imperialists have been able to score a number of points irrespective of whether a peace agreement is signed between Israel and some of the Arab states.

The Soviet Union has been gradually shut out, not only from certain Arab countries where it once had real influence, but also from the negotiating process, in which it was an active participant from the start. The regimes most closely tied to American imperialism, especially Saudi Arabia, now hold an influential position, unlike in the 1960s.

The Arab ruling classes have been considerably strengthened politically, whether in Egypt or in Syria, and have been able to step up the reentry of imperialist interests into the economies of some of the major Arab countries. The military might of the Zionist state has been greatly strengthened, despite the October 1973 crisis.

The Palestinian resistance movement has been partially incorporated into the strategy of overtures to imperialism on the part of the Arab states, thereby losing much of its subversive potential with respect to the Arab masses.

To a certain extent, therefore, it can be said that an American peace has been imposed on the Mideast, based on the retreat of the mass anti-imperialist movement and the strengthening of reactionary forces within the Arab states, and that the essential thing, for American imperialism at least, is to see to it that this dynamic continues.

But there is more to be said. To end there would be to *overestimate the retreat of the mass movement*, and *overstate the capacities and stability of the bourgeois Arab regimes*. Long-term stabilization of the political situation in the Mideast requires more than merely propping up the military might of the Zionist state and the existence of the Arab regimes bankrolled by American imperialism. In spite of the setbacks suffered by the Arab anti-imperialist movement, the situation remains highly explosive, for three basic reasons.

First, the state of war with Israel forces the Arab regimes to allow some degree of mass mobilizations. Second, the lack of peace has economic consequences that can lead to powerful mass upsurges. Third, the existence of an unsolved Palestinian problem—except for the fictional "solutions" that have been put forward—remains a continual source of anti-imperialist mobilizations for the Arab masses as a whole.

Therefore, the imperialists and the bourgeois Arab regimes are faced with the need

to go beyond what they have already achieved in the direction of an imperialist stabilization of the Mideast.

The Imperialist Dilemma and Sadat's Move

The alliance between imperialism and the Zionist state is not a conjunctural phenomenon. In terms of American strategy, Israel is the key element in all policies aimed at holding back the Arab anti-imperialist movement and defending imperialism's economic and military interests in the Mideast.

Confronted by an upsurge of the Arab revolutionary movement, Israel's role is to take the offensive, as was the case in 1956 and 1967. In a period of relative stability, characterized by the existence of Arab regimes beholden to imperialism, Israel's role is to act as a watchdog for imperialism and guardian of imperialist order, whose very existence is a threat to all efforts to upset the status quo.

Even after the October War, when it was becoming clear that the major Arab regimes were openly lining up with the United States, it never entered into Washington's considerations to abandon Israel. On the contrary, Washington did all it could to enable Israel to refurbish its army and economy, so as to be able to continue playing its role of watchdog in the Mideast.

Israel is indispensable to imperialism. It has the social stability that no Arab regime has ever had and probably ever will have. Furthermore, support to Israel is much less costly, politically and economically, than sending in several divisions of U.S. Marines.

This close dependency between American imperialism and the Zionist state does not necessarily mean that their interests are always identical—just the opposite.

It has frequently happened that the Zionist state's specific interests have come into conflict with those of its imperialist sponsor. Furthermore, a substantial setback for the Arab revolution or a heavy defeat for the Soviet Union in the Mideast, which are obviously in the imperialists' interest, would create a problem for the Zionist state, in that its role would become less central, and American economic and military support might consequently be reduced.

This is the situation today with respect to the occupied territories captured in 1967. For Israel, annexation of these territories is an economic and above all political necessity. Zionism is expansionist by its very nature, and any withdrawal from the occupied territories would be a political defeat for the Jewish state. For American imperialism, on the other hand, Israel's occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan has no value in itself, and may even be counterproductive.

It may therefore be in Washington's

interest to force Israel to retreat more or less to its borders as of June 1967, if such a retreat would guarantee greater social and political stability throughout the Arab East. This is what is reflected in the



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numerous speculations about possible American pressure on Israel.

However, despite Kissinger's promises to the Arab heads of state, particularly to Saudi Arabia, no real pressure has been brought to bear on Israel since October 1973, and Washington has confined itself to vague statements which, while contradictory with Israeli plans, have had no practical consequences whatsoever on its relations with the Jewish state.

The lack of American pressure on Israel is explained by the fact that Washington is aware of the importance of the occupied territories for Israel, and consequently that only very strong pressure could make Tel Aviv surrender. But such pressure would result in a real weakening of Israel, something that imperialism cannot allow.

Sadat's dramatic initiative is the direct outcome of the dilemma that the Carter administration is facing. Sadat understood that he could not count very much on the possibility of American pressure on Israel. If he wanted to end the state of war and recover the occupied territories, he had to take the initiative and force Israel to sit down at the negotiating table.

The price he paid was enormous—unilateral recognition of the state of Israel. This was certainly the most important concession made by the Egyptian head of state even before the negotiations began.

But as *Inprecor** explained just after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, an agreement with Israel is a vital necessity for the Egyptian bourgeoisie today.

Does Sadat have means for making Israel surrender that Washington does not possess? Of course not, except for the possibility of forcing the Zionist state to stop its war-mongering, by leaving it no alternative but peace. Can he at least obtain a rapid withdrawal from Sinai and an end to the state of hostility with Israel? Yes, providing that he is willing to "let go" of the other Arab participants.

But the Sadat regime is far from being stable enough to afford to isolate itself completely from the other Arab regimes and sign a separate peace with the Zionist state. That is indeed the reason why Sadat has constantly asserted for more than a month that Israel should not have expected Egypt to agree to a separate peace, even if Israel should declare its readiness to withdraw immediately from all of Sinai. The question that remains to be answered is: What is Sadat's plan?

Today the answer appears quite clear. Sadat's plan can be summed up as follows: How to separate the Egyptian car from the Arab train while pretending to remain attached to it.

Here is where the logic of the Cairo conference becomes apparent. Its official purpose is to prepare for the Geneva conference; that is, to lay the basis for a general agreement between Israel and the Arab states. Without such an agreement, Sadat knows that he cannot continue his negotiations with the Zionist state.

Putting the various sections of the agreement into effect is another matter entirely. It will be up to each of the parties involved to pursue negotiations with Israel and to obtain results.

What Sadat expects from Begin are *statements of intention* as to issues not directly affecting Egypt, as well as concrete actions affecting Egypt itself. This is not easy. No Israeli head of state—especially Begin, who for years made speeches about the inalienable rights of the Jewish people to all of Palestine—can agree to formulations that suggest that Israel is willing to withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to allow a Palestinian political entity to be established.

In spite of this, it appears that a compromise acceptable to both Sadat and Begin is taking shape, and that an agreement on the broad outlines of a Mideast peace agreement is about to be reached, even if, as might be expected, such an agreement might be subject to several interpretations. It appears that Begin has understood what Sadat expects of him and

*See "Sadat: Jerusalem and After," in *Inprecor*, December 8, 1977, p. 26.

is ready to play the game. Once such a plan has been worked out, Egypt can open negotiations on Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. That is exactly what Israel was hoping for.

A Big Victory For Israel

The Israeli leaders must be satisfied. In spite of—or rather because of—their stubbornness and refusal to grant any real concessions whatever to the Arab regimes, they have obtained from Sadat what Israel has been hoping for for thirty years now: recognition of its legitimacy. And Israel was able to obtain this without giving anything in return.

Now Begin can show Giscard d'Estaing and Kreisky a thing or two. For years these governments have been urging the Jewish state to be more flexible toward the Arab bourgeoisies. Firmness and an uncompromising attitude have brought their reward, the Israeli premier can say.

No one can deny that the present course of events in the Mideast represents a stunning victory for the Zionist state—the sanctioning of its policy of aggression and territorial expansion by the most important Arab regime. Egypt has already pledged not to take up arms again against Israel, and to give firm guarantees of Israel's security if Israel agrees to begin withdrawing from some of the territories it has occupied since 1967.

The Arab front which proved its strength in 1973 is divided, with Syria—considered the most belligerent of Israel's neighbors—isolated and incapable of launching a solitary armed offensive. The PLO has been virtually cast out of the political arena where it was attempting to root itself at the price of greater and greater concessions, and the Palestinian Arab people find themselves once more tragically alone in their struggle against Israel.

Begin's most recent proposals were announced during his journey to Washington. They include a total withdrawal in several stages from Sinai, in exchange for the "normalization" of relations between Egypt and Israel and a plan for self-government by the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in all so-called civilian matters.

This formula is nothing new, even if Begin is trying to give it an aura of originality by means of noisy declarations.

This is the same old plan put forward by the Meir administration, under the name of a "civilian administration plan" for the occupied territories, before the October War. It implies continuing the Israeli occupation, building settlements in the occupied territories, and setting up a local civilian administration composed of collaborators elected under the benevolent gaze of the Israeli troops.

This plan had been rejected by a large majority of inhabitants of the West Bank

during the 1976 municipal elections. It is very unlikely that the Egyptians will accept Begin's proposals at face value; they will probably demand that the idea of withdrawal of Israeli forces be included in the general agreement.

Nevertheless, even though Begin has not made any substantial concessions, he faces a relatively strong opposition both within his own party and in the Labor opposition.

The Labor Party claims that the self-government concept opens the way to the creation of a Palestinian state, to which all the major Zionist formations are opposed. According to the Labor leaders, the concessions made by Begin are too extravagant!

This position is also taken by supporters of the Begin government, such as the Bloc of the Faithful, or even some Likud deputies who have just announced the formation of a "rejection front" in opposition to Begin's attempt to "sell out our homeland."

If we add to this picture the fact that today it is the Zionist left that is the most fervent supporter of Begin's proposals, we can easily imagine how unthinkable a real withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip is from the standpoint of the Israeli government, and what type of pressure would be needed to make Israel surrender on this point. We can also see that the idea of an "honorable peace"—pushed by the Soviet Union, the Communist parties, the PLO, and Syria—is hardly the task of the moment.

The Contradictions of the 'Rejection Front'

Sadat's initiative has forced the other Arab countries to take a stance. Except for Morocco and the Sudan, not a single Arab state has openly supported the Egyptian president's move—which does not necessarily mean that they are opposed to it.

Saudi Arabia—even if, for the time being, it is keeping its distances from Cairo, and would prefer, as Washington would, to see Syria and Jordan included in the negotiations—is far from hostile to Sadat's plan.

Jordan, meanwhile, is biding its time. Insofar as King Hussein thinks there is something to be gained from the current negotiations, he will not hesitate to break the alliance that now binds him to the Syrian regime. After the Rabat conference, the Hashemite regime has nothing left to lose, and perhaps something to gain, through Sadat's maneuvers.

The rejection front that assembled a few weeks ago in Tripoli cannot in any case be considered an alternative leadership to Sadat. It is a heterogeneous formation, whose components have not one but several opposing strategies.

On the one hand, there are countries like Libya and Iraq, which can afford to take a very radical position on the concept of a

peaceful solution, rejecting out of hand the Cairo conference, Geneva negotiations, and all other attempts to reach a negotiated settlement with Israel. These regimes, never having been directly affected by the Israeli-Arab war, can afford to take cheap shots at the capitulation by the other bourgeois Arab regimes.

Then there are Syria and the PLO. Neither one has ever said no to a negotiated settlement with Israel, at least since 1973. On the contrary, neither in their words nor in their actions have they ever hidden the fact that they are willing to take part in peace negotiations and in the Geneva conference; on condition, of course, that they lead to an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, as well as the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in these areas.

However, it is exactly on those points that Israel is least prepared to surrender; these territories have long since been annexed in practice and heavily settled. Without Egypt, the military option is virtually excluded for Syria, while Cairo's maneuvers are shutting Assad out of the negotiating process. This explains why the Syrian regime is at a dead end, and also explains why Saudi Arabia and the United States hope to make Syria give in and incorporate it at minimal expense into the process begun by Sadat.

While Syria always has the option of taking part in the Cairo negotiations, this is hardly the case with the PLO. Neither the United States nor Egypt have made any effort whatsoever to include the leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement in the latest peace maneuvers, for two reasons.

First, because of Israel. For the Zionist state, it would be unthinkable to deal with an organization whose goals and very existence challenge its colonial identity. When the Israeli government representatives declare, "We will never meet with that criminal outfit that calls itself the PLO except on the battlefield," this is not just rhetoric; it is a clear expression of their policy toward the Palestinian leadership. Sadat lacks the power to pressure Israel on this point, and Carter is not interested in doing so.

The second reason concerns not only Israel; despite the numerous concessions already made by the PLO in the hope of being included in the negotiations, it remains a destabilizing element in the Mideast, and all the reactionary forces (American imperialism, Israel, and most of the Arab ruling classes), think that the PLO still has to be weakened, if not destroyed, in order for a stable peace to be established in the Mideast.

It appears, therefore, that Egypt has come round to the opinion that the West Bank should not become a Palestinian state led by the PLO. What is now under discussion between Sadat and Begin is the

choice between a federation dominated by the Hashemite monarchy and a fictitious plan for autonomy, under which the West Bank would be governed by prominent individuals with close ties to Israel. Israel would continue to occupy the West Bank militarily and to establish new Jewish settlements there. For Israel, the second alternative is obviously preferable, since it does not require an Israeli withdrawal and maintains Zionist domination over all of Palestine.

Whatever the case, the idea of a "Palestinian ministate," which the majority of the PLO has been fighting for in the diplomatic arena for several years, is not being considered. This creates a serious problem for the PLO leadership.

Lining up with the positions of the Palestinian rejection front would mean cutting itself off, in the short run, from the major financial supporters of the Palestinian organization, and coming into conflict with all of the Arab regimes. It is very unlikely that the Arafat leadership will accept such an alternative, for which the bureaucratic apparatus of the PLO would have to pay a heavy price—it would be forced to begin a new round of armed struggle.

But the other alternative—Geneva—is at an impasse. To keep it going requires new concessions from the Palestinian nationalist movement, which it is very unlikely the leadership will be willing to make, even if some of the right-wing elements within it do not exclude the possibility.

As for the rejection front—particularly the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Habash—it can now boast of having foreseen the negative consequences of the line adopted by the Fatah leadership, but it remains incapable of offering an alternative to the bankrupt strategy of the latter. In a recent interview published in *Time*, Dr. Habash, leader of the rejection front, talked about a "guerrilla war against Israel, carried out from the cease-fire lines of Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan"; but he neglected to answer the question of how such a guerrilla war could be fought without a head-on confrontation with those states.

In this sense, the most recent setbacks suffered by the Palestinian nationalist movement fully confirm what revolutionary Marxists in the Mideast have said over and over again. The problem is not to defend, as the Soviet Union, the Communist parties, and the leadership of the PLO do, a "good peaceful solution" in which the Soviet Union would have a role to play and the Palestinians would be protected, as against an "imperialist solution" that must be fought.

The peaceful solution that has been on the agenda since October 1973 can only be a reactionary one, made possible by a change in the relationship of forces to the benefit of imperialism, and whose goal is

precisely to consolidate this new relationship of forces. That is why nothing good can come out of it for the Palestinian nationalist movement, with or without the Soviet Union.

It is because the "peaceful solution" is directed against the revolutionary potential of the Palestinian struggle that the Palestinian people, by trying to be included in it, have reached a dead end that may well paralyze the Palestinian movement for an indeterminate period.

The alternative to the Cairo conference

is not some hypothetical Geneva conference, but on the contrary, the struggle against an imperialist peace in any form, and against all the political and social forces whose interests lie in imposing such a peace treaty. The Zionist state and imperialism, of course, as well as all the Arab regimes—even if some of them have now been forced into a temporary show of unity with the Palestinian movement—have proved in the past, and will prove again in the future, that for them too the Palestinian movement represents a threat that must sooner or later be eliminated. □

Prominent Opponent of Somoza Gunned Down

30,000 in Nicaragua Protest Editor's Murder

Mass protests erupted in Nicaragua following the January 10 murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal. Chamorro was the editor of the Managua daily *La Prensa*, the country's only legal opposition newspaper. He was also the leading political figure among bourgeois forces opposed to the Somoza dictatorship.

Thirty thousand persons attended Chamorro's funeral on January 12. Following the burial, antigovernment demonstrations began near the East Cemetery in Managua.

National Guardsmen firing tear gas and machine guns attacked the crowds. News reports said that between one and five persons were killed, at least twenty injured, and more than 130 arrested.

Large crowds had also gathered the night before outside the offices of *La Prensa*, while a wake for Chamorro was being held inside. About one hundred persons were arrested then in clashes with the National Guard. Several banks and businesses were burned in downtown Managua.

One of the buildings destroyed by fire housed Plasmaferesis, a blood plasma enterprise partially owned by the Somoza family. According to an Associated Press dispatch, the company had been "accused by Chamorro's newspaper of making a profit in Western Europe and the United States on blood it bought from poor Nicaraguans."

Chamorro, fifty-three, was gunned down in Managua while driving to the *La Prensa* offices on January 10. Several men in another vehicle forced Chamorro's car to the curb and fired more than twenty shots. The editor died in an ambulance on the way to a hospital.

President Anastasio Somoza Debayle told a radio interviewer after the murder,

"I've had Chamorro under custody in many cases when he could have lost his life, it has come as a complete surprise to me and all of Nicaragua." Somoza's National Guard announced January 11 that four men had been arrested and charged with the slaying.

"Chamorro was generally considered the most likely man to succeed Somoza, 51, as president if the strongman were forced to step down," Marlise Simons said in a January 10 dispatch to the *Washington Post*.

Simons quoted an associate of the editor as saying, "Chamorro knew he was risking his life. The situation was becoming more and more dangerous because military officers were approaching him and expressing their discontent. Chamorro was obviously becoming more and more important as the end of Somoza seems to be coming near."

Chamorro headed the Unión Democrática de Liberación (Democratic Union for Liberation), a coalition of bourgeois parties and the Nicaraguan CP that is seeking to replace the forty-four-year-old Somoza family dictatorship with a more liberal regime. He had been imprisoned on a number of occasions, the first in 1954, for his opposition to the Somozas. His civil rights were suspended for most of 1976 and 1977, during which time he was forbidden to leave the country and *La Prensa* was censored.

The protests sparked by Chamorro's murder reflect the rising pressure of the Nicaraguan masses for an end to the Somoza dynasty. The loss of the figure who would have been most able to maintain stability in the event of the dictatorship's downfall can only add to the difficulties of the Nicaraguan ruling class. □

The Invasion of Cambodia and May 1970

By Fred Halstead

In light of the success of the November 13-15, 1969, demonstrations, it seemed obvious to me that we should prepare for more of the same and at least call another national antiwar conference, which would plan and set a date for mass actions in the spring of 1970. But this view was by no means shared by all the leaders of the antiwar movement.

The mood at the time was characterized by frustration. The inside facts about the impact of the demonstrations on the administration were not then public knowledge and Nixon's charade about ignoring the antiwar movement had its effect. So did the announced U.S. troop cutbacks in connection with the "Vietnamization" ploy. In truth, the pace of withdrawals was much slower than the highly publicized announcements. By the end of 1969 there were still 472,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam, and the tonnage of U.S. bombs being dropped, as well as the number of people being killed—including U.S. GIs—was higher than in 1967. But hopes were raised that the war would soon be over. Though the antiwar sentiment was deeper than ever, a lull in visible antiwar activity occurred after the November demonstrations.

In addition, there was an increase in government repression against radicals, including not just prosecutions but secret police provocations and assorted dirty tricks. In northern Illinois, to cite only one of many examples, a protofascist group called the Legion of Justice made a series of violent raids on various radical and antiwar groups, including the SWP and the YSA. It was later revealed that this was done in collusion with Chicago police and the army intelligence apparatus in the region.¹ This connection was not known at the time, though it was ominously clear to the victims that this group operated with some sort of official assistance or immunity.

The Chicago "conspiracy" trial was then in progress, as well as a series of prosecutions against Black militants, especially the Black Panther Party, which by the end of 1969 had suffered some two dozen members killed in police raids. It was during this period

1. Details of the Legion of Justice attacks were described at the time in "A Further Alarm Signal from Chicago—An Open Letter from Fred Halstead," December 15, 1969. (Copy in author's files.) Also in a report by the Commission on Civil Liberties and Law Enforcement of the Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI) summarized in the *Chicago Sun Times*, April 9, 1970.

For subsequent revelations of official collusion see: a series of articles by reporters Larry Green and Rob Warden in the *Chicago Daily News* in March 1975, in particular March 24; the *Militant* of September 26 and December 5, 1975; and a report by a Cook County grand jury released November 10, 1975.

The grand jury declared: "There is no question that some members of the Security Section [of the Chicago Police Department] maintained a close working relationship with the Legion of Justice" and that the police "either condoned or directed" the attacks. The grand jury indicted no police or government officials, however, on the grounds that crucial physical evidence had been destroyed, that the statute of limitations had expired on some of the crimes, and that the guilt of high ranking officials would be "obscured by a criminal trial of a few patrolmen." The *Chicago Sun Times* of November 12, 1975, commented editorially: "The grand jury said it did not indict because that would draw attention away from the systematic seriousness of the problem. That was well meaning. It was also nonsense."

that Chicago Black Panther leader Fred Hampton was shot to death in bed during an unannounced predawn attack December 4 by officers of the Cook County Attorney's office.

Draft resistance was increasing, but this was not very clear at the time, since the most publicized draft resistance organizations, including The Resistance and CADRE, were in a state of disarray, or became transformed into prisoner aid groups with their leading younger activists in jail.

GI opposition to the war was also increasing and had already become an important factor in the military situation in Vietnam.

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But this development too was not all that obvious at the time to people not on the scene. By its very nature, antiwar organizing by active-duty GIs was transitory even as it proliferated. The sentiment was there but its organized expressions tended to be short-lived because of the usual troop movements and expired tours of duty, as well as punitive transfers and more severe forms of repression.

These factors contributed to the widespread frustration which in some radical and radical-liberal circles led to a certain desperation.

The problem of the apparent inability of the movement to materially inhibit the war once again came to the fore and a wide variety of schemes were suggested in an attempt to overcome this. Sid Peck and Stewart Meacham circulated a proposal that the antiwar movement itself prepare to call a general strike in the spring, but withdrew it as unrealistic.

Much time was spent discussing various ideas for confrontation, civil disobedience, encouraging desertion, and so on. Many of those who advocated this supposed "higher level of commitment" also, in apparent contradiction, raised the idea that the war itself was not a major issue for "radical organizing," or at least that there was no longer room for a coalition focused centrally on the war.

In a repeat of the old arguments within SDS, this view was rationalized in two opposite ways, sometimes by the same person: There is nothing we can do to stop the war anyway, so we should concentrate on building a radical movement on other issues; or, the war is practically over and the attention of the antiwar forces should be turned elsewhere.

The latter variant was most starkly expressed by Weatherman, which in an article criticizing the November 15 demonstrations declared:

THE VIETNAM WAR ISN'T THE ISSUE ANY MORE. Mainly because the war is over. The Vietnamese people have won a military victory over the most powerful empire in the history of the world. They have regained control of the entire countryside and most of the cities, while the American troops have retreated to a few of their most defensible bases (40 per cent of

the U.S. troops are now stationed in Saigon). The only thing left is for Nixon to find the American ruling class a diplomatic way of admitting defeat.²

While the Weatherman tactical approach had no support within either the New Mobe or the Moratorium, similar, though less ridiculously exaggerated, views of the state of the war were reflected there.

The Moratorium Committee was not interested in "radical organizing." Its forces were pointed toward the Democratic Party and the congressional elections in the fall of 1970. It abandoned its original idea of adding a day of moratorium each month. "What could we do for eight days in May?" commented Marge Sklenkar, one of the Moratorium's coordinators.³ Instead, it decided to call decentralized activities for April 15, the income tax deadline, as a way to emphasize that the war was costing people a lot of money.

The Moratorium Committee's climactic point had been October 15, 1969. After the administration's counterattack, many Moratorium activists were disoriented because the mass media did not give them the publicity they had before, and most of the Democratic and Republican dove politicians who had previously been friendly ran for cover. Except for New York and Boston, where the local Democratic Party machines hoped to recruit some activists for the fall elections, the Moratorium did very little to build the spring antiwar actions.

* * *

On December 13-14, 1969, a meeting of the New Mobe steering committee took place at Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland, in the same hall where the first of the Mobes had been founded back in 1966. This meeting was dominated by a caucus led by radical liberals such as Art Waskow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington and a number of people from the former SDS milieu who were new to the coalition. (RYM II had decided in late November to enter both New Mobe and the Student Mobilization Committee.)

Their caucus was not formally announced but referred to itself in the corridors as the "radical caucus" or the "new left caucus." It was supported by Dave Dellinger and Rennie Davis and other advocates of confrontation of the Chicago 1968 variety, by people around the *Guardian*, and by a number of pacifists who advocated the more traditional forms of nonviolent civil disobedience.

This bloc was not very clear—and certainly not unified—on what it wanted the New Mobe to do, but it was united in opposition to having the Mobe focus centrally on another set of mass demonstrations against the war. This, it was felt, would dominate the Mobe's activities. Other concerns—such as organizing civil disobedience or building a radical constituency around a multi-issue program or "community work," and so on—would tend to be shunted aside.

A motion supported by the "radical caucus" proposed a variety of scattered activities with no central focus and no mention of demanding immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam.

We had been through this argument so many times in the past—and more than once in this same room—that I took the floor shouting: "Haven't you learned anything?" I made the point that while all of us in this small meeting considered most of the proposals worthy causes, the motion left out exactly what this particular coalition had proven it could do effectively—provide a central focus for mass mobilization against the war. I was exasperated, and the ranting speech was not well received.

2. *Fire*, November 21, 1969. Reproduced in *Weatherman*, edited by Harold Jacobs (Palo Alto, California: Ramparts Press, 1970), p. 276.

3. *New York Times*, December 10, 1969. Sklenkar, who ran the Moratorium's Washington office with efficiency and a kind of refreshing bluntness, seemed to have a penchant for guessing wrong, in light of what actually developed in May 1970.

"Radical caucus" spokespersons put amendments to include a day of decentralized demonstrations on April 15, and to consider all the activities as "functionally carrying out our demand for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam and withdrawal of support for the Thieu-Ky regime."⁴ But these items were put in as afterthoughts, in an attempt to blunt the opposition, and it was made clear that mass antiwar demonstrations were not to be the focus of New Mobe activity.

An amendment by Harry Ring that "these activities build toward and culminate in a series of coordinated anti-war demonstrations on a selected day in the spring" was supported by Sid Peck but nevertheless defeated. The vote was 29 to 25.⁵ Another amendment that the New Mobe call a conference for the end of January, inviting representatives from each antiwar group in the country, was defeated by a greater margin. Some of the "radical caucus" spokespersons candidly explained that such a conference might overturn the decisions of the steering committee.

The "radical caucus" perspective was adopted. Subsequently, Jerry Gordon, chairman of the Cleveland Area Peace Action Coalition, resigned from the steering committee on the grounds that the new perspective included civil disobedience as New Mobe policy, and he didn't wish to be committed to that.

Some fairly effective literature was put out by the New Mobe office in support of a variety of actions, mainly organized by other groups, but the New Mobe itself became increasingly narrow. Its steering committee was effectively replaced by a smaller coordinating committee dominated by the "radical caucus." Except in Philadelphia, the New Mobe—like the Moratorium—did little to build the spring antiwar actions.

* * *

Once again, as in the spring of 1969, it was the Student Mobilization Committee that carried the weight of the organizing for the April activities. On its own the SMC held a youth antiwar conference in Cleveland February 14-15. The turnout was 3,308 registered participants plus a few hundred more, less than 10 percent of whom had participated in a previous SMC conference. It was the largest working conference in the history of the antiwar movement, and a major indication that the campuses were going to be far from quiet that semester on the war issue. It was also a powerful objective rebuke to the "radical caucus" policy.

The conference discussed perspectives similar to those that had been counterposed at the New Mobe steering committee meeting in December. A formation not unlike the "radical caucus" also appeared at the SMC gathering. This time it was called the Independent Radical Caucus. It opposed the "Mass Action Focus for Spring" proposal introduced by SMC Executive Secretary Carol Lipman. In his book on SDS, Kirkpatrick Sale describes it this way:

The critical point in SMC's development came at a conference it called in Cleveland in February 1970, when some 3500 people showed up, many of them independent radicals hoping to broaden SMC's politics, inject an anti-imperialist analysis into its antiwar policies, and turn it into a multi-issue organization that could succeed SDS. But the YSA and SWP vigorously resisted any changes in what had been a very successful front group for them and by maintaining rigid control over the proceedings were able to beat back the challenge and keep the SMC to the narrow antiwar path.⁶

The strategy pressed by the YSA prevailed at the conference not because of any "rigid control" but because it won a majority after full discussion in a wide-open debate. The SMC was never a front for the YSA, though during ebb periods it was mainly the YSA that kept it alive. Throughout, the YSA worked to build the SMC as a broad, nonexclusionary antiwar formation, striving to bring

4. New Mobilization steering committee minutes, December 13-14, 1969. (Copy in author's files.)

5. *Ibid.* The vote count is not in the minutes but comes from the December 26, 1969, *Militant*.

6. Sale, *SDS*, p. 622.

in all antiwar tendencies and leaving the basic decisions up to votes at open conferences after full debate. This conference was simply the most successful example of this democratic procedure.

I was present at the conference—as were Sid Peck and Jerry Gordon, both of whom gave speeches of greeting—and I estimated some two-thirds of the participants were uncommitted at the outset and were neither former SDSers nor members of any other organized radical tendency. Most of the radical youth groups were represented, however, and the debate over perspectives generally found the YSA caucus on one side and most of the other organized tendencies—including RYM (by this time no longer called RYM II), the Independent Socialists, Youth Against War and Fascism, and the recently organized Young Workers Liberation League (which succeeded the Du Bois Clubs), on the other.

No caucus exercised mechanical control. Carol Lipman and Don Gurewitz—two of the chairpersons—were members of the YSA, but the conference parliamentarian was C. Clark Kissinger, a spokesperson for RYM, and one of the chairpersons was U.C. Berkeley Student Body President Dan Siegel, a supporter of the Independent Radical Caucus.

There was much baiting of the YSA in attempts to rally opposition to the Lipman perspective on grounds it was “a YSA proposal.”

Robin Maisel took the floor to explain the contribution the policy of nonexclusion had made to overcoming the cold war, witch-hunt atmosphere, and that nonexclusion meant judging ideas and individuals on their merits, not on their political associations. Even C. Clark Kissinger, speaking for the RYM-backed motion, commented.

We don't want anyone voting for our proposal out of opposition to the Young Socialist Alliance. We are firmly opposed to anticommunism and it's been manifested greatly at this conference.⁷

Some participants tried to disrupt the proceedings in the fashion that had been common at SDS gatherings during that organization's death throes. An account by Jim Gwin in the *Great Speckled Bird*, one of the important alternate newspapers of the time, caught the scene accurately:

“Free John Sinclair” and “bullshit” rang out many times during the conference, summing up the sentiment of a number of hip anarchists who despite their numbers were never able to generate a program other than organizing against the *organization* of the SMC.⁸

Withal, it was a full and democratic debate. “. . . despite the emotional fervor with which most of the students embraced their ideas,” the February 16 *Cleveland Press* reported, “an almost overwhelming democracy prevailed. Nearly everyone who wished got a chance to speak.”

The opponents of the Lipman proposal were at a distinct disadvantage as the debate proceeded. They tended to agree on the idea of some kind of multi-issue approach but once again couldn't agree among themselves on what such issues should be. Shortly before the vote, the Independent Radical Caucus, RYM, YAWF, and a group calling itself the Grass Roots Community Coalition announced they were combining their various proposals in an attempt to defeat Lipman's. They had difficulty agreeing on what to include in their joint proposal, however, and were unable to present it coherently to the gathering. The Lipman proposal passed overwhelmingly.

The Lipman proposal did not ignore other issues and tactics, and left local chapters free to engage in civil disobedience if they chose to do so. The crucial dispute was not over whether other issues than the war would be acted upon or whether other tactics in addition to mass demonstrations would be utilized, but whether

the task of organizing the broadest possible mass actions against the war would remain the SMC's central orientation. The conference took positions on many other issues—against racism; for women's equality; against the oppression of homosexuals; in defense of the Black Panther Party, the “Conspiracy Eight,” and other cases involving government oppression; and so on.

The SMC had already been involved with other issues. During the fall and winter of 1969-70, for example, both the national office and certain local chapters spent considerable energy in support of the 147,000 striking employees of the General Electric Corporation. In the narrow sense, the strike was for new union contracts with wage provisions to counteract inflation. But GE was the second largest military contractor in the U.S. and the eleven unions involved went on strike despite pleas that this would interfere with war production. The SMC viewed this class action as an opportunity for the antiwar movement to relate more concretely to labor. The unions had called for a boycott of GE products so the SMC organized along this line on campuses, as well as engaging in other activity against university complicity with GE. Officials of both the International Union of Electrical Workers and the United Electrical Workers publicly welcomed the SMC support.

One of the notable features of the SMC conference was the heavy turnout of high school students and their participation in leading capacities. The conference adopted a “High School Bill of Rights,” which had been developed out of experiences in Cleveland and elsewhere. Though the SMC thrust was to extend the rights of high school students to organize against the war, the High School Bill of Rights dealt with student rights in general, from dress codes to student control of school newspapers. It was effectively used in many places in the struggle to extend high school student rights.

For example, in New York the SMC joined with the General Organization City Council (the city-wide high school student government body), the Afro-American Student Association, ASPIRA (a Puerto Rican student group), and others to form the High School Student Rights Coalition. This coalition adopted a similar bill of rights which became an important demand in the April 15 student strike in New York.

* * *

The SMC went forth from its conference keyed up to build the spring actions on the scale of the previous fall events. The lack of unified national antiwar leadership, however, was reflected on a local level, where most of the coalitions suffered divisions, hesitations, and abstentions. Even in Boston, where the Moratorium Committee did make an effort, it was half-hearted.

Boston staffer Ken Hurwitz caught the mood in the local Moratorium office as April 15 approached:

I sat on the phone, making calls, trying to help piece things together, but all the time knowing it was a useless, irreparable mess. Literally no one was signing up to do community canvassing, no major antiwar politicians would be speaking, SDS [the PL wing, which opposed any liberal speakers at the rally] was laying plans to take the stage by force, and the November Action Coalition [composed of groups that had demonstrated at the Justice Department November 15] was allegedly organizing for the burning of Harvard Square. And on top of this it was clear that the great numbers involved in October all over the country simply weren't going to duplicate their efforts on this fifteenth of April. This time around, the Moratorium was going to be smaller, lacking cohesion, and perhaps even violent. . . .

Not that I particularly cared, but April 15 was a sun-filled day in Boston. We all knew that the weather's only significance was that it would determine the exact degree to which this day would fall short of October 15. No matter what, the evidence would show that over the last six months our movement [the Moratorium] had not expanded or even maintained its position, but had contracted—fatally. In Washington, [Sam] Brown and his friends were already preparing for a press conference to announce the disbanding of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee. Excepting a sudden change in events, the day would determine only how graciously the Moratorium would take its leave.⁹

Nevertheless, the April 15 demonstrations proved to be massive

7. *Militant*, February 27, 1970.

8. Atlanta *Great Speckled Bird*, March 2, 1970. John Sinclair was the leader of a small, somewhat bizarre countercultural group in Ann Arbor called the White Panthers. He had been railroaded to prison for a long term on a marijuana charge.

and widespread, actually more so than any previous decentralized demonstrations except for the preceding October 15. In Boston the major demonstration on the Common was variously estimated at 65,000 to 100,000. New York had a rally of 35,000 run by the Moratorium to which marches organized by the Parade Committee and the SMC fed. Chicago had 25,000; San Francisco, 20,000; Houston, 6,000; Seattle, 8,000; Orlando, Florida, 2,500; Detroit, 12,000; San Diego, 5,000; and so on.

There were some disruptions, however, which further soured the Moratorium. PL-SDS did not succeed in taking over the stage by force in Boston, but it did in New York and the Moratorium rally there had to be cut short. Ultralefts led a march from the Boston rally to Cambridge which ended with a few hundred "plate glass revolutionaries" breaking a lot of windows in Harvard Square.

The April 15 student strike was more on the scale of November 14 than October 15. It shut down few schools, though half the New York City high school students went out. Actions took place on hundreds of campuses and in every region of the country, and while few schools were struck solid, the idea of a student strike became much more current.

In many places the actions focused against the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) through which civilian colleges provided well over half the army's levy of new officers. The campaign against this institution—in which many radical and pacifist groups as well as the SMC had been participating—was already giving the military trouble. At a number of campuses, building takeovers were involved, with mixed results.

At the University of Colorado in Boulder, for example, the local SMC led 500 students in occupying the administrative offices April 15, demanding that ROTC get off campus. The sit-in swelled to 2,000 in a few hours while university officials rounded up several hundred police from nearby areas.

Joanie Quinn, then an SMC activist at Boulder, later recalled: "They [the police] formed up outside the building and sent a representative inside. 'You have two choices, you can line up quietly and take your summons' or, they added, brandishing their clubs with expectation, 'we will come serve the summons on you.'" Jim Lauderdale, one of the leaders of the SMC, grabbed for the mike and explained that the demonstrators had another choice, "We can walk right out of here, and be free to struggle tomorrow."¹⁰ With the authorities looking on perplexed, the demonstrators filed out of the building, between two massive phalanxes of cops, and marched through the dorms to arouse other students and spread the demand for an end to ROTC on campus. The groundwork was laid for winning the demand during the next upsurge, which would come sooner than anyone expected.

At Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, matters took a different turn. There, following an SMC rally April 15, students broke into the ROTC building for a sit-in, which, since a band also entered, became more like a dance. Cathy Hinds, then the local SMC chairperson, recalls:

Everyone was having a good time, with a few speeches thrown in, until the administration got tough. . . . they called in all the surrounding police forces in Butler County and the State Police; 176 students were arrested that night, and tear gas was over the entire campus. . . . they tear-gassed the Fiji Fraternity House and let loose a police dog in there which bit one of their members. The result: the frats were our biggest supporters in the strike that began the next day.¹¹

The strike was about 80 percent solid and included demands of the Afro-American Students Association for increased Black enrollment (of 12,000 students, only 200 were Black) as well as protests against ROTC and other university complicity with the war. Some serious errors were made out of inexperience, peculiar

to that particular campus but not so unusual in their unintended self-defeating character.

For one thing, the strike leadership put a twenty-four hour picket line at the commissary and asked the union truck drivers to honor it. They did and the cafeterias, where most of the students ate, received no fresh food. For another, the strike leadership—which had been careful to head off such tactics as fire bombings—allowed one strange suggestion to go unopposed. On April 21, at the daily strike rally of some 5,000 students, somebody got the mike and called for everyone to flush their toilets at the same time to empty the water tower and back up the drains. The leadership forgot about this project but a sound truck later appeared announcing the time for the "flush-in," and it caught on.

Recalls Hinds:

It was so successful that the entire town was without water for as long as 24 hours. . . . We got national news coverage of this event. Unfortunately, this great "success" also broke the back of the strike. . . . That night I called my roommate from another rally we had, and she was hysterically demanding her water back. I tried to explain that I couldn't do anything to get her water back, and offered that I hadn't even flushed a toilet. That didn't help, but she did warn me that the women in my dorm were awfully angry, and that I better not come in alone. . . . Instead of opening up the university for strike activities and support, we attempted to close it down, a mistake made unconsciously by many activists across the country.¹²

Campus protests of this size and strength, though scattered on April 15, were portents of things to come a short while later.

In the meantime, of the three major national antiwar organizations, only the SMC viewed the results of April 15 as indicating both the possibility and the need for organizing more mass demonstrations against the war in the near future.

[To be continued]

12. Ibid.

Filipino 'Trainees' Used as Cheap Labor

Filipino workers who came to the United States as part of an official agricultural training program have complained that they are being exploited as cheap labor, housed in shacks, and robbed of their pay. The program, which places Filipinos with American farmers, is jointly sponsored by the Philippine government and the National 4-H Council of the U.S.

In a protest statement delivered to the 4-H Council in December, seventy of the seventy-three Filipinos assigned to the Southeast complain that they have not received any of the promised instruction and that the program is "actually a labor program."

"There are some trainees," the statement says, "who work seven days a week 12 to 14 hours per day. Some of us have not had a day off for three months. We shovel manure, load posts, count eggs, clear farmland, construct farm buildings, mow lawns, pick grapes, and we do this all day long throughout our stay."

After eighteen to twenty-one months of such backbreaking labor, a trainee returns to the Philippines with a few hundred dollars in his pocket. The program withholds pay until the worker is ready to leave and then deducts "administrative costs."

The 4-H Council cannot plead ignorance about the conditions under which the trainees work. Last June the Oakland *Tribune* published the accounts of several trainees on their way back to the Philippines. One had received a check for \$135.80 for eighteen months of work; another had been housed in a converted chicken coop with no hot water or toilet facilities.

Some of the signers of the recent statement say they suffered in silence for a year or more because of fear of reprisals from Marcos's martial law regime. Then they won the support of members of the North Carolina Civil Liberties Union, religious organizations, and others, who formed a group called the Support Committee for the 4-H Trainees. The committee spent five months investigating host farms and has joined in the protest statement to the 4-H Council. □

9. Ken Hurwitz, *Marching Nowhere* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 187-88.

10. Letter from Joanie Quinn to the author, June 1, 1976.

11. Letter from Cathy Hinds to the author, April 3, 1976.

'Do Not Be Fooled by Carter's Statements on Human Rights'

[The following appeal appeared in the letters column of the January 26 issue of the *New York Review of Books*. It was accompanied by an introductory statement by Marilyn Vogt (see box).]

* * *

The Belgrade meetings are supposed to assess progress in the implementation of the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. As first-hand witnesses of and participants in the struggles for human and democratic rights in the United States, we can tell you that Washington and its allied governments have made no meaningful progress. Therefore, we salute your challenge to the United States government's claim, as well as the claims of the other governments at Belgrade, that they defend human rights.

We hope you will convey our message to all those struggling for human and democratic rights in Europe—in the east as well as in the west: "Do not be fooled by Carter's statements on human rights."

The Wilmington Ten are not fooled, ten civil rights activists who were framed up and jailed. The three people who testified against them have now admitted they did so under police pressure and that their testimony was lies. Yet the government attorney of North Carolina, after meeting with Carter's Attorney General Bell, refuses to reopen the case. Nine of the Wilmington Ten are now serving a combined total of 282 years in prison simply because they were active in the movement against the national oppression of Black people in the United States.

The Four Puerto Rican Nationalists are not fooled. They are today the longest-held political prisoners in the Western hemisphere. The Carter government refuses to amnesty them.

Paul Skyhorse and Richard Mohawk, presently fighting a government frame-up murder charge, and Leonard Peltier, recently sentenced to a life term of imprisonment as a result of another US government frame-up charge, are but three of the hundreds of American Indian activists who have been systematically persecuted by the Washington government in recent years—or killed under mysterious circumstances. *They are not fooled by Carter's statements of concern over violations of human rights.*

Neither are the thousands of anti-war activists, Black freedom fighters, feminists, socialists, and others who fight for social change and who know that Presi-

Paris Human Rights Conference

To the Editors:

I have attached a statement I hope you can print in the *NYR*. It is a message to the Human Rights Conference in Paris, December 17 and 18. It comes from a number of prominent left activists in human rights struggles who have worked in the United States.

The Paris conference was called by left and libertarian organizations and individuals, including the International Committee Against Repression, the International Federation For Human Rights, the National Education Federation (F.E.N.—the teachers' union), and the C.F.D.T. (the second largest labor federation in France).

The organizers are seeking participa-

tion from similar forces throughout Europe for an independent body that will review compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords by the thirty-five signatory governments.

This Paris conference was intended to parallel the official meetings in Belgrade where the thirty-five signatory governments' representatives are supposed to discuss progress in the implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

I hope you will be able to help us publicize this expression of solidarity with human rights struggles in the east and in the west.

Marilyn Vogt
Brooklyn, New York

dent Jimmy Carter and the US government continue to cover up illegal CIA and FBI surveillance and harassment of their activities and murderous attacks on their organizations and leaders.

The government's own documents have proven its systematic efforts to disrupt, destroy, and introduce violence into movements for civil rights and social change in the US. These documents became known as a result of the Watergate and subsequent revelations. Yet the Carter administration resists attempts by groups like the Political Rights Defense Fund and the National Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case for a full disclosure of the US government's illegal acts.

Thousands of foreign-born workers, driven to seek jobs in the United States illegally because US corporations perpetuate poverty in these workers' home countries, live in subhuman conditions in the United States, subject to deportation by the US government if they dare to stand up for their human and democratic rights. *These foreign-born workers hear hypocrisy in Carter's human rights statements.*

There are 40 million poor Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian-American people. They are not fooled either. They are without employment opportunities, decent housing, or proper medical care, and have no way of emerging from poverty. They are suffering still more as the government continues to attack their hard-won rights to affirmative action

in employment, education, and housing. Carter asks them to "tighten their belts" for the sake of higher corporate profits.

Women, struggling to defend their reproductive freedom (to defend their right to abortion, which is presently under attack, and to defend themselves from government-forced sterilization programs at home and abroad), to win ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and to win funding for expansion of child-care facilities are not fooled.

And millions of workers, peasants, and intellectuals around the world know the truth about the priority of human rights in United States foreign policy because they live under brutally repressive regimes the United States government props up in Iran, Chile, Brazil, South Korea, Argentina, South Africa, the Philippines, Indonesia, and elsewhere.

We have called your attention to the US government's hypocrisy in claiming to uphold human rights. We also denounce the violations of the principles of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

We condemn:

The imprisonment of Helsinki Watch Group members and of the thousands of others who are now confined in labor camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals in the USSR because they oppose that government's repression and raise their voice in defense of democratic rights.

The arrest and imprisonment of those

who fight against national oppression in the USSR, like Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev and the Jewish rights activist Anatoly Shcharansky.

The firing and imprisonment of Polish workers for protesting bureaucratically-imposed price increases in June 1976 and demanding democratic rights.

The persecution and even murder of those in Poland, like the student Slanislav Pyjas, who defended the victimized Polish workers.

The arrest, harassment, and expulsion of the signers of the Czechoslovak human rights manifesto Charter 77 and of its sympathizers in Rumania, Yugoslavia, and other East European countries.

The expulsion of Wolf Biermann from East Germany because of his outspoken support for socialism and democracy.

The real allies of those fighting for democracy in the east and in the west are those—progressive forces in the ranks of organized labor, the socialist movement, among women, and among oppressed nationalities—who challenge violations of human rights around the world.

Your initiative is proof of our growing numbers.

We wish you success and extend our solidarity.

Emile de Antonio, film director; **Dore Ashton**,* art critic; **Reza Baraheni**, poet and former Iranian political prisoner; **Norma Becker**, chairperson of War Resisters League;** **Eric Bentley**,* author and playwright; **Philip Berrigan**, antiwar activist; **Alvah Bessie**, writer and one of the Hollywood Ten; **Noam Chomsky**, linguist, professor at MIT; **Martin Duberman**,* historian and playwright; **Richard Falk**, professor of International Law at Princeton University; **Luis Fuentes**, professor at University of Massachusetts; **Allen Ginsberg**,* poet; **Armando Gutierrez**, Texas La Raza Unida Party; **Jim Haughton**, leader of Fight Back in Harlem; **Julius Jacobson**, editor, *New Politics* magazine; **Paul Jarrico**, Hollywood screenwriter blacklisted in 1950s; **Patrick Lacefield**, staff member of *WIN Magazine*; **David McReynolds**, Socialist Party—USA; **Albert Maltz**,* writer and one of the Hollywood Ten; **Paul Mayer**, theologian, New York Theological Seminary; **Joan Mellen**, film critic; **Gaudencio Thiago de Mello**, Brazilian composer; **Kate Millett**, feminist author; **George Novack**, Marxist scholar; **Grace Paley**, author, War Resisters League; **Juan Jose Peña**,* New Mexico La Raza Unida Party; **Willie Mae Reid**, Socialist Workers Party; **Ralph Schoenman**, organizer of the Bertrand Russell War Crimes Tribunal; **Afeni Shakur**, National Task Force for COINTELPRO Litigation; **Lumumba Shakur**, one of the Black Panther 21 defendants; **David Thorstad**, gay activist, writer; **Gary Tyler/Eusi Kuumba**, Black youth framed up for murder, now imprisoned in Louisiana; **George Wald**, biologist, Nobel Prize Winner. **Howard Zinn**, professor of history, Boston University.

* Signed with reservations as to style.

** Organizations listed for identification purposes only.

Statement by Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores

FBI, CIA Hands Off Mexico!

[The following statement appeared in the December 3 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, the weekly newspaper reflecting the views of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party), Mexican section of the Fourth International. The translation is by the *Militant*, which has scheduled the statement for a future issue.]

The Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International, protests to the Mexican government that it has permitted—and continues to permit—spying and sabotage by the United States government's CIA and FBI in our country.

The documents the press made public November 23 speak for themselves and reveal the activities carried out with impunity in our country for decades by the American imperialists' agencies of espionage and provocation. We know that the Mexican people have directly experienced the exploitative and repressive character of American imperialism. It doesn't surprise us that Washington systematically continues its sabotage and espionage against revolutionary and democratic Mexican organizations, especially against the PCM (Partido Comunista Mexicano—Mexican Communist Party) and against our revolutionary-Marxist current.

Despite constant warnings by the revolutionary and democratic movement in Mexico and around the world, the Mexican government has not denounced but rather tolerated American espionage (not to mention the clear complicity of many functionaries in this meddling).

Here, we will only recall how in 1969, the Cuban government, through Foreign Affairs Minister Raúl Roa, who personally met with then-President Díaz Ordaz, showed the provocative role played by Carrillo Colón, a functionary attached to the Mexican embassy on the island, as a spy for the CIA. Díaz Ordaz did not do anything, and then-presidential candidate Echeverría seconded this stance with his cooperative silence.

Today, certain forms of repression against members of guerrilla groups, such as their being kidnapped and held in clandestine jails or their pure and simple disappearance, suggest that the CIA or FBI are "advising" the Mexican political and military police.

The Mexican government has known for years that the CIA and FBI work in our country with impunity. Moreover, some of their activities have the explicit or tacit support of official bodies. Former CIA agent Philip Agee, author of *Inside the*

Company, a book about the maneuvers of that espionage agency in Latin America, asserts that in the 1960s CIA contacts included the then minister of the interior: Luis Echeverría Alvarez.

The Mexican government has waited for these very American imperialist authorities to be the first to make public the illegal activities of the CIA and FBI in our country.

It doesn't surprise us that the Mexican government—very busy repressing electrical workers, university trade unionists, revolutionary students, and peasants who fight against the big landowners—does not lift a finger against Mexico's imperialist enemies, but on the contrary protects all their interests.

Nevertheless, we energetically protest the complicity of the Mexican government with Washington for permitting Washington to continue its provocation and espionage within democratic and revolutionary organizations.

The supposed "Third Worldism" and "anti-imperialism" of the Mexican government has once again been exposed as a farce.

The PRT calls on all mass organizations and revolutionary groups to join in an energetic protest to the Mexican government demanding:

An end to government tolerance of the activities of the CIA and FBI in Mexico!

An end to the kidnappings and disappearances of workers, farmers, and students!

Imperialist hands off our country!

Donald Woods Escapes From South Africa

Donald Woods, an editor who had been banned by the Vorster regime in October 1977, escaped from South Africa December 31. A friend of Steve Biko, the prominent young Black leader who was slain in prison in September, Woods was a vocal critic of the white minority regime's apartheid policies.

Woods made his escape by evading the close police surveillance of his home in East London, hitchhiking 185 miles in disguise, and swimming across a river into the Black-ruled country of Lesotho, which is surrounded by South Africa on all sides.

A few days later Woods flew with his family out of Lesotho on his way to London. He pledged not to return to South Africa until the apartheid regime had been "overthrown or removed." He is planning to campaign in defense of South African political prisoners and is completing a book on Steve Biko.

Mexican PRT Launches Campaign to Win Legal Status

By Anibal Vargas

[The following article is scheduled for publication in the January 30 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language newsweekly published fortnightly in New York.]

* * *

The campaign for registration of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party) opened on Saturday, November 16, 1977, when PRT members in Mexico City took to the streets to explain the party's views and ask for financial support from factory workers, students, and office workers.

Almost 400 activists distributed more than 60,000 leaflets and collected more than 30,000 pesos (about US\$1,200), according to a report in the November 26 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, the PRT's newspaper.

The day's activities were kicked off with a short rally held in the center of Mexico City, attended by about 400 activists and several passersby who stopped to listen.

During the rally, Manuel Aguilar Mora, a leader of the PRT, explained that the government's "political reform" was merely a reform of the electoral process that it was trying to implement as an escape valve for the organized opposition. Aguilar Mora emphasized that "clandestinity is not the PRT's political vocation," and that therefore the party had decided to set a priority on becoming a registered party at this time.

After the rally, teams of activists were dispatched to shopping areas, malls, neighborhoods, and buses in the working-class neighborhoods of the city. They finished late in the afternoon, coming back with sore throats, tired feet, and 31,569 pesos and 20 centavos.

The PRT initiated its fight for registration by launching a fund drive, with the goal of obtaining half a million pesos (about US\$20,000). This money will be used to increase the press run of *Bandera Socialista*, to put full-time party workers on staff to take charge of the registration campaign, and to get out the ideas and program of the PRT more widely.

Last year, the government of President José López Portillo announced, with much fanfare, a reform of Mexico's political system. One of the most important aspects of this political reform is that it will apparently be somewhat easier for opposi-

tion political parties to become registered. This will enable them, at least theoretically, to take part legally in elections. Of course, even with this supposed reform, there are still many obstacles to the registration of new parties. Complying with the Federal Election Law requires a great deal of money and energy. And in the end, if the government does not want to grant registration, it can always withhold it.

Since its founding in 1929 the government party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), has completely dominated the country's political life, preventing legal participation in politics by all opposition parties that don't play its game. Accordingly, the various legal "opposition" parties, such as the National Action Party, the People's Socialist Party, and the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution are nothing but window dressing for a basically one-party regime.

However, in recent years, the government has seen the need to try and breathe new life into Mexico's doddering caricature of a parliamentary system. On the one hand, the militant movements of workers, peasants, and students—especially after 1968—have been a warning to the PRI that the Mexican people would like to get rid of government tyranny once and for all. On the other hand, at least a section of the ruling class understands that it must either get discontent out of the streets and into parliamentary channels, or resign itself to the prospect of turning the government over to a military dictatorship, as in so many other Latin American countries.

For the revolutionary movement in Mexico, the new situation that has opened up with the political reform announced by the government presents an important challenge. Several left parties, such as the Mexican Communist Party, the Mexican Workers Party, and others, have launched campaigns to obtain registration. Among these parties, the young PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International, has responded in an exemplary fashion.

Edgar Sánchez, a leader of the PRT, pointed out in an interview published in the December 3 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, that unlike other parties that have failed to involve themselves in the most important workers' struggles because they are trying to sign up new members, the PRT has not subordinated its positions

and its participation in social struggles to the fight for registration.

"For example, we are carrying out the petitioning campaign as part of the struggle we are building against the government's austerity plans," Sánchez said. "The party we are building does not have any interests separate from those of the workers; we do not want registration for an apparatus, but for an instrument of working-class struggle."

In the busy marketplace of La Merced, in the center of Mexico City, the comrades of the PRT carried out a series of activities at the end of November. In two days, they sold 40 pamphlets and magazines, 200 copies of *Bandera Socialista*, and handed out 15,000 leaflets.

They also held street rallies attended by housewives, delivery men and stevedores, passersby, and small shopkeepers. PRT activists spoke to the crowds about how austerity and unemployment are the official policy of the PRI government and outlined the central points of the PRT's program.

One day the police showed up in La Merced, but the people listening to the young revolutionists would not let the police do anything to stop them, and demanded that they be allowed to continue speaking.

A week later, the police showed up again, better prepared this time. They made off not only with the sound equipment, but with a PRT activist as well, and they told the crowd to "clear out."

But the comrades did not stop talking, and their angry audience got bigger and sales of *Bandera Socialista* went up. Later, a committee was formed to go to the police and demand release of the detained activist and return of the sound equipment. He was immediately freed, together with the sound equipment, and the rally resumed.

The PRT is at the beginning of its campaign. However, as part of this initial stage, through the fund drive and the registration campaign, many new workers have come in contact with the PRT's revolutionary-socialist ideas. The next step, in the words of Edgar Sánchez, will be "to organize a central rally to discuss our results so far and kick off the second stage, which has already begun: massive petitioning."

Sánchez added: "If we have to get 65,000 signatures to be registered, we will get them. If we have to get more, we'll get more." □

Selections From the Left

La Verdad

Joint organ of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party) and the Partido Socialista Internacionalista (Internationalist Socialist Party). Published twice a month in Lima, Peru.

An editorial in the first issue, which is dated November 1, 1977, explains:

"La Verdad incorporates the experiences of two previous periodicals: *Palabra Socialista* of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores [PST] and *Obrero Internacionalista* of the Partido Socialista Internacionalista [PSI]. Both organizations are combining their forces as part of the process of unification of Peruvian organizations linked to the Fourth International. The PST and the PSI are taking an initial step in this process, with the goal of building a big revolutionary organization. As a part of this, we have constituted a single leadership body and have established *La Verdad* as the press organ that will carry forward the unification, which we hope can soon include all the organizations in our country that claim to be part of the Fourth International."

The issue includes a proposal addressed to the workers of Peru regarding the constituent assembly elections the military government has said will be held in June of this year:

"The united national general strike of July 19 [1977] brought an important advance toward the unity of the workers movement . . . ; this strike showed that unity is possible and that only with such unity can we confront the plans for starvation and exploitation, and compel the government to grant important political concessions to the masses. Now we are calling for the crystallization of this unity in the political process that is opening up, so that the workers can have a class alternative to the various bourgeois and popular-frontist perspectives that are arising. Against the electoral front of the bourgeoisie! Unity of all the workers and peasants organizations, and of the socialist parties, to present united workers' candidates and win the majority in the constituent assembly, forcing the government to resign!"

The statement calls on the leaders of the CGTP, the main trade-union federation in Peru, to convene a workers and peasants congress that would decide on a policy of class independence in the elections.

Another article explains the need for the Confederación Campesina del Peru (CCP—Peruvian Peasant Federation) to launch a campaign for the repatriation of Hugo Blanco, the Trotskyist peasant leader exiled by the Morales Bermúdez regime in

July 1976. Blanco is a member of the CCP's executive committee.

Other topics taken up in the first issue of *La Verdad* include the difficulties the military regime has had in its effort to achieve a "great national agreement" among the bourgeois political parties; the role of the Communist Party in the July 19 general strike and its aftermath; university elections and the student movement; and the sixtieth anniversary of the Russian revolution.

The PST and PSI launched a fund drive in November for 100,000 soles (US\$800) to improve and expand *La Verdad*.

rouge

"Red," revolutionary communist daily, published in Paris

The January 5 issue reprints major excerpts from a message of solidarity with Wolf Biermann, issued by a dissident grouping within the East German Communist Party to mark the first anniversary of Biermann's forced exile. The letter, which was published in a West Berlin newspaper, says in part:

"As communists and members of the SED [the East German CP], we vigorously condemn your banishment, which does the greatest harm to the cause of communism and to the interests of our socialist country, the German Democratic Republic. . . .

"You have always clearly stated that your hatred for all forms of bureaucratic ossification, of all of the undemocratic relationships that form the reality of our socialist country, was inspired by your love for the country, by your commitment to socialist democracy. . . .

"We are fighting against the substitution of police methods of compulsion for political discussion, for our commitment to socialist democracy . . . is also a commitment to the right of all to express political views as long as their declared aim is not the overthrow of socialism."

marka

ACTUALIDAD Y ANALISIS

A weekly magazine of news and analysis. Published in Lima, Peru.

After two general strikes that shut down Cuzco for three days in mid-November, the Peruvian junta sent General Luis Cisneros Vizquerria, minister of the interior, to the city to conduct a "dialogue."

"What really happened that stormy night when the generals . . . confronted the demands of the people of Cuzco?" *Marka* asked in its December 22 issue. "Little is known, since in a cunning ma-

neuver the main points were left to the end, when sleep and fatigue had overtaken the radio audience. But the dailies gave an account of how General Cisneros, in a way anticipating Papá Noel [Santa Claus], pulled some little presents out of his sack."

Marka filled in some details about what happened after Cisneros had finished distributing his promises about expanded electric power and telephone service for Cuzco:

When there were no more gifts to hand out it was three in the morning. The dialogue was broadcast by radio, and it is probable that many *cusqueños* [residents of Cuzco] were by then so bored as to have fallen asleep. That was the moment.

"We are not the agitators! The true agitators are the ones that repress us!" shouted Alex Bustamante, president of the Cuzco University Federation. Recently released from jail, Bustamante refuted the accusations of subversion.

The political points of the list of twenty-one demands presented by the Coordinating Committee of People's Organizations of Cuzco and the Southeast Region were finally discussed—that is, the demands for restoring the jobs of the fired workers, freedom for the political prisoners, and full observance of human rights.

Trade-union and student leaders took the floor to describe their struggles and denounce police attacks and government repression. They were met with loud applause.

And General Cisneros?

Now he was on his own terrain, that of repression. Now he lost the appearance of Papá Noel—he had brought nothing in his sack about social questions and had nothing to offer. . . .

Nevertheless, he made an effort: "As minister of the interior I do not persecute anyone for their ideas—to ban activities is something different from persecuting ideas, and those I arrest are those who carry out subversive activities.

"The people perhaps believe that to be minister of the interior I have to have a repressive spirit. But I am not a repressive man; I am only a man who has a responsibility. . . ."

For a moment, the general had converted himself into a boy scout, but the hard-nosed *cusqueños* were not mollified. One of them quickly responded: "It is absurd to think that to persecute activities is not to persecute ideas; everyone acts according to their ideas, trying to convince others, in order to realize them. That is a human right."

Thus General Cisneros's night in Cuzco failed to produce the results desired by the junta—to defuse the mass movement developing in the city.

One leader explained: "The organizing committee has decided to continue mobilizing the rank and file so that all the significant demands may be heard—for example, the rehiring of the fired workers. The struggle in Cuzco will continue, to improve on the people's limited gains and to lead to a more complete victory."

American Coal Strike Enters Sixth Week

If coal miners are still walking the picket lines on February 2, their strike will be the longest coal strike in U.S. history. As of the second week in January, a federal mediator was admitting that things looked "pretty grim" for an early settlement. And the coal operators are becoming less cocky about their ability to force the militant miners to their knees.

This is a different tune than the one mine owners were singing when the United Mine Workers strike began December 6. Then they derided the miners' claims to be prepared to strike as long as it took to restore their health and safety benefits.

"They'll tell you they can stay out," said one arrogant representative of the operators. "But let the strike roll around until the first of the year, and you'll hear a different story."

The pressure of a bleak holiday season, cutoff in medical benefits, and threatened reduction in pension payments was supposed to bring the miners crawling to the settlement table in short order.

Important issues are at stake for both sides. The miners are determined to win back the full medical coverage they had enjoyed from 1946 until July of 1977. They are also demanding the right to strike when local grievance procedures fail to correct a dangerous situation at a mine. The mine owners want to outlaw strikes and win the ability to penalize miners who engage in unauthorized walkouts. Ultimately they seek to tame or crush the union.

Less than two weeks after the strike began, the bourgeois media hit miners with reports that union and industry negotiators were near agreement on a "labor stability package" that compromised on fundamental strike demands. The cornerstone of the package was reportedly agreement on summary dismissal of miners who engage in "wildcat" picketing.

And the companies' solution to the financial collapse of the miners' health and pension fund? Make striking miners pay into the fund whatever is lost through a halt in production!

As of mid-January, the strike of 188,000 miners in twenty-two states remained solid, and UMW pickets had succeeded in closing some nonunion mines and stopping some deliveries of nonunion coal. (Only half of the nation's coal is produced by UMW miners, and the struggle to shut off nonunion coal is crucial to winning strike demands.)

Representatives of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association broke off contract negotiations with the union on December

30. The breakdown was generally attributed to the angry response of striking miners to the published accounts of compromises by the union negotiators.

As a report in the *New York Times* put it January 9, "there was legitimate doubt that the U.M.W. leadership could win membership ratification of the antiwildcat-strike contract terms that have been an industry 'must' from the start."

Striking miners have been slapped with court injunctions, and their picket lines have been broken up by police, sheriffs, and armed company thugs. On January 6 a company guard shot and killed UMW activist Mack Lewis. The sixty-five-year-old retired miner was leaving a picket line at a nonunion mine in Kentucky, after

Poverty Deepens in Bangladesh

Since Bangladesh won its independence from Pakistan in 1971, the Bengali masses have been faced with a steady deterioration in their already low standards of living.

According to figures recently released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the real wages of workers in general has fallen by roughly 35 percent during the post-independence period. (Wages increased by more than one-and-a-half times but were outstripped by an even more rapid rise in inflation.)

The number of Bengalis living below the official poverty level increased from about

bringing hot coffee and sandwiches to the strikers.

However, the bosses are now beginning to wonder whether the severe hardship they are imposing on the miners might be backfiring on them. According to a *New York Times* report January 9, "One official here predicted that a strike running into February would begin to sustain itself by its changed perception as a 'social cause,' rather than a purely economic struggle. The coal industry would like to avoid that."

There are also indications that some sections of American capitalism are beginning to feel the bite of the strike. In early December the press claimed that huge stockpiles of coal meant the strike would have no impact for four months.

Now it appears that, while major users do have sufficient supplies, small and medium-sized companies are starting to run out of coal. The railroads that haul coal have already been badly hurt by the strike. And of course the shut-down mining companies themselves are earning nothing. □

65 percent in 1961 to around 75 percent in 1974.

In a report in the December 4 issue of the *Dacca weekly Holiday*, Hossain Khasru commented, "The industrial workers, the rural poor, the landless and the small farmers have taken relative income cuts and are now in the grip of poverty, inequality, famine and death."

Noting that the decline in living standards was accompanied by some moderate economic growth, he concluded, "Therefore, the fall in real wage earnings of the industrial workers suggests that real gains in the industrial sector have been usurped by a privileged social class."

Fikile Bam Arrested in South Africa

Fikile Bam, a longtime political activist against the apartheid regime, has been arrested in the Transkei, one of South Africa's ten impoverished Bantustans (which was proclaimed "independent" in October 1976 against the wishes of its inhabitants).

According to a report in the December 22, 1977, issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*, news of his detention reached the outside world through information provided by villagers in the Transkei.

A former member of the Society of Young Africa and of the African People's Democratic Union of South Africa, Bam was arrested in 1963 along with ten other Black activists (including Neville Alex-

ander). Under provisions of the "Sabotage" Act, he was charged with having studied books on Marxism and guerrilla warfare. He was imprisoned for five years on Robben Island.

After his release in 1968, he returned to the Transkei, where he was immediately "banned," a form of restriction that limits a person's movements and contacts and hampers most forms of political activity.

His recent arrest followed the Vorster regime's banning of most major Black groups in the country, especially those identified with the Black Consciousness movement, one of whose founders, Steve Biko, was killed in jail in September. Fikile Bam had been a speaker at Biko's funeral in Kingwilliamstown September 25.

AROUND THE WORLD



Soviet Film-maker Wins Release

Soviet film-maker Sergei Paradzhanov has been released from prison, according to a report in the January 3 issue of the French Communist Party daily *l'Humanité*. Paradzhanov was arrested in January 1974 and originally accused of trafficking in icons. When this charge failed to stick, he was convicted of homosexuality and sentenced to five years at hard labor.

An international defense campaign helped keep the case of the award-winning film-maker in the public eye; a large meeting was held in Paris last December. Paradzhanov is of Armenian origin, and various Armenian groups participated in the campaign to free him.

Before his arrest Paradzhanov lived in Kiev and was outspoken in his defense of imprisoned Ukrainian intellectuals. It is not known whether he will be permitted to return to his home.

In announcing Paradzhanov's release, the French CP noted that it had "intervened several times in his behalf." Most recently, "in November, during a trip to Moscow, Louis Aragon [a well-known novelist and member of the French CP] urged Soviet authorities to release the film-maker."

Mass Executions in Addis Ababa

The killing of antigovernment activists in Ethiopia reached massive proportions at least twice in October and December. The major target of the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam has been the underground Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), which is opposed to military rule.

In October, according to a report in the December 24 *Economist*, 400 alleged supporters of the EPRP were shot in Addis Ababa's central prison after they had gone on a hunger strike.

On the night of December 15-16, at least 100 more were gunned down in the streets. Many bodies were left lying in the streets bearing placards that read, "We are tired of burying them."

Charter 77 Challenges Czech CP to Dialogue

Charter 77, the Czechoslovakian human rights organization, celebrated its first anniversary January 1 with an appeal to the National Assembly. The document challenged the Communist Party government to begin a dialogue with representatives of the civil rights movement, "in

appropriate places—not in prison cells."

In the year since the rights manifesto was first published, nearly a thousand Czechoslovakians have gone on record in support of Charter 77. This in spite of the fact that Charter supporters have been fired from jobs, evicted from apartments, and subjected to police interrogation and harassment.

The January 1 appeal was signed by Charter 77 leaders Jiri Hajek, Ladislav Hejdanek, and Marta Kubisova.

PLO Representative Assassinated

Said Hammami, the chief representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Britain, was shot and killed in his office January 4. A few days earlier an official of the Syrian Embassy in London and his chauffeur were killed when a bomb exploded in their car.

The PLO issued a statement January 5 saying it held the United States government indirectly responsible for Hammami's murder. "Those who assassinated Hammami are in fact marching along the treadmill set up by Brzezinski and U.S. policy," said the PLO press statement.

Hammami had been criticized by other Palestinian leaders for advocating acceptance of the existence of the state of Israel. He was sympathetic to the recent efforts of Egyptian president Sadat to make a deal with Israel.

NAACP Officials Support Oil Barons' Demands

The largest civil rights organization in the United States has issued a leadership report backing the oil industry's demands for deregulation of oil and gas prices and an expansion of nuclear power plants.

The report, issued in early January by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, talks about the crisis of Black unemployment. But it fails to show how nuclear power or increased profits for the oil barons will provide many—or any—new jobs for Blacks.

Energy policy has never been discussed by the ranks of the NAACP. The position paper was drafted by a leadership committee that included one retired Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company employee and one vice-president of the Southern California Gas Company.

The *Wall Street Journal* hailed the energy report as "a symptom of a new

stage in the NAACP's fight for racial equality." The January 12 *Journal* reprinted major sections of the report for its big-business readers and rejoiced in a lead editorial that "for the first time in memory the NAACP has sided emphatically with the free-marketeers. . . ."

Iron Workers in U.S. End Strike

The four-month strike of iron ore workers organized into the United Steelworkers of America has been settled, ending the longest major strike in the history of the USWA. Iron range locals in northern Minnesota settled one by one during late November and December. Workers won some partial victories, in spite of the crippling policies of the national union leadership.

The basic demand of the strikers was for incentive pay bonuses to bring their pay up to the level of USWA workers in steel mills. The new contract will provide for incentive pay for three-quarters of the work force—excluding the newest and lowest-paid workers—and contains some concessions by the companies on health and safety issues.

The USWA's Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) outlaws national steel strikes, and the iron range workers were forced to conduct their strike over local issues. As the iron workers went back to work, strike leader Joe Samargia explained how the ENA had prevented them from accomplishing more: "We have to eliminate the ENA in order to take on the steel companies like they should be taken on. The only power of the unions is to withhold our work."

The right to strike was a major issue in Ed Sadlowski's unsuccessful campaign for president of the USWA earlier in 1977.

Ban on Death Penalty Urged

A call to ban the death penalty worldwide was issued December 11 by Amnesty International, at the close of a two-day international conference on human rights held in Stockholm.

The organization condemned the increasing use of executions without benefit of trial as a method of intimidating political opponents.

Amnesty International is planning to launch a campaign to oppose the death penalty in any form in the 100 countries where capital punishment is in force.

Capitalism Fouls Things Up

Pollution Perils Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal, India's most famous architectural monument, is in danger of being "slowly but surely destroyed" by acid fumes from a large oil refinery being built nearby.

Environmental Engineering Professor T. Shivaji Rao of Andhra University called attention to the problem in a letter published in the *New York Times* January 2:

"This region of Mathura-Agra, located along the valley of the Jamuna River, experiences atmospheric inversions for most of the winter. Under the existing conditions of industrial growth and environmental pollution control in India, it is very difficult to insure proper water and air quality standards. As many acidic fumes, gases and dusts from this refinery travel to Agra, get converted to acids and attack the marble, there is bound to be discoloration and disfigurement of the Taj Mahal within a short time after the refinery starts working."

Rao called on all "ecologically literate citizens of the world" to appeal to the Indian government to relocate the refinery.

Refinery Threatens Marine Life

Governor Mills Godwin of Virginia gave his approval December 28 for construction of the largest oil refinery on the East Coast of the United States. The \$550 million plant is to be built on the banks of the Elizabeth River. It will refine 175,000 barrels of crude oil a day.

Opponents of the refinery point out that "even with the most advanced pollution controls with which it would be required to operate, it would overload both the already smoggy air over Hampton Roads and the ecologically endangered waterways of the region" (*Washington Post*, December 29).

The refinery would also "geometrically increase the threat of catastrophic oil spill in an area crucial to the welfare of both the James River oyster and the Chesapeake Bay blue crab," the *Post* reported.

Godwin said "nobody can guarantee absolutely that there will be no accidents . . . whether the refinery is built or not."

The project must now be granted permits by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. According to the *Post*, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, and the Marine Fisheries Service are all opposed to the refinery.

Paris-Peking Nuclear Deal?

"Among the industrialists who will accompany [Premier Raymond] Barre to China January 18-25," Bruno Dethomas wrote in the January 5 *Le Monde*, "at least two, the presidents of Framatome (a Creusot-Loire subsidiary) and Alsthom-Atlantique . . . will be particularly attentive. In fact, it would appear that nuclear power has been under discussion in Peking for some time. . . ."

"In recent months, a number of visitors to the People's Republic have reported to Paris that, under its new economic policy, China plans to launch a nuclear program. The aim is to conserve its coal and oil for export purposes and thus obtain the necessary foreign exchange for trade with the West. 'For political reasons' (in regard to nuclear weapons, Paris and Peking share a similar attitude of independence from the two 'superpowers') France has been asked to provide the foreign assistance indispensable to putting such a program under way. (Although the West German concern KWU, a Siemens subsidiary, has also been approached.)"

Dethomas said arrangements are still at the stage of preliminary contacts, and little is known of the importance or rate of development of the Chinese nuclear power program. But he also noted that Framatome and the rest of the French nuclear industry are paying attention to the opportunities a Chinese market could present.

Another Coal Complication

"The increased use of coal to generate electric power may soon be plagued by the same sort of cancer specter that is inhibiting the spread of nuclear power," the *Wall Street Journal* reported January 4.

Researchers have learned that fly ash emitted by coal-fired power plants contains substances capable of causing mutations in bacteria. Similar laboratory tests are used to spot potential carcinogens in foods, cosmetics, and industrial environments.

Fly ash is composed mainly of silicon and aluminum, but is also coated with

traces of more than a dozen other elements, including cadmium, cobalt, and nickel. Millions of tons of fly ash are released into the atmosphere each year by coal-burning plants. Such emissions will increase in the United States if President Carter's efforts to step up the use of coal are successful.

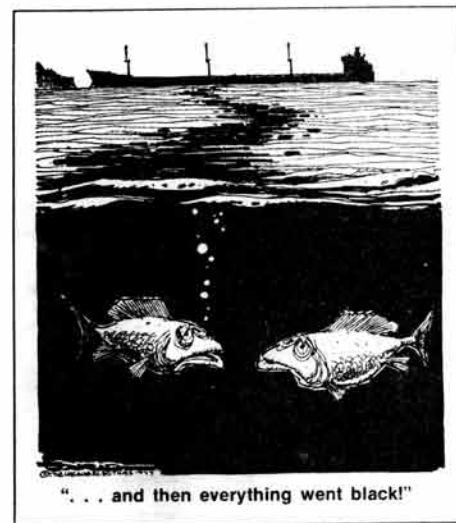
1978 Oil-Spill Season Begins

Thousands of gallons of heating oil and gasoline were leaking from a grounded barge and drifting into Huntington Bay off Long Island, the U.S. Coast Guard reported January 10.

At least one of the seven tanks of the barge *Bouchard* had ruptured. The barge carried about one million gallons of the two fuels.

Two other incidents involving tankers were reported January 11. The 918-foot *Tulsa Getty*, loaded with 922,000 barrels of heavy crude oil, ran aground in Delaware Bay near the southern New Jersey coast. A Coast Guard spokesman said the situation was "not too serious."

In Mount Hope Bay, near Tiverton, Rhode Island, the 712-foot tanker *Achilles* got stuck for twenty-four hours but was freed without damage.



Conrad/Los Angeles Times