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Socialist Challenge

Part of march of 1,200 in London January 29 commemorating the deaths of fourteen civil-rights demonstra-

tors gunned down by British troops in Northern Ireland on Bloody Sunday 1972. See page 201.

Demand Inquiry Into Britain's Role in Ireland

War Continues in Eritrea and the Ogaden

Ethiopia--Upheaval in the Horn of Africa

'Star Wars' and Strike Forces— Carter's \$126 Billion Arms Budget

By Fred Murphy

Jimmy ("I will never lie to you") Carter has broken another campaign promise. This time it was to reduce military spending. His fiscal 1979 budget includes \$126 billion for the Pentagon—up \$10 billion over fiscal 1978.

Carter cited "continued Soviet military efforts" to justify the move. He has been getting assistance from the capitalist press in citing this alleged "Russian threat."

The favorite topics in this year's crop of scare stories (an annual ritual at budget time) have been Soviet advances in "hunter-killer satellites" and a supposed danger that Western Europe could be overrun by an invasion from the east.

A dramatic "star wars" scenario was sketched by John Dillin in the *Christian Science Monitor* February 2:

Some 120 miles above Earth's surface, a spy satellite turns its unblinking eyes toward Earth. . . .

Suddenly, without warning, a large black object glides within a few feet of the electronic spy-in-the-sky. The hiss of the dark object's guidance rockets is inaudible in the near-vacuum of space. After a moment, upon a remote command from Earth, the object sprays the defenseless spy satellite with a blast of metallic foam. Blinded, the satellite spins on, reduced now to a useless piece of space junk.

This and other such accounts of the dangers supposedly faced by U.S. intelligence and communications satellites are helping to grease Carter's request for almost doubling the amount spent on military space programs.

Defense Secretary Harold Brown warned a Congressional committee February 2: "We might have to take steps to deter attacks on our satellites, to deal with attacks should they occur, and to have the capability to destroy Soviet satellites if necessary."

Brown's rhetoric was drawn up in the Pentagon's standard defensive formulations. What is really involved was put more bluntly by a Pentagon scientist in a recent issue of *Aeronautics and Astronautics* magazine: "Space is a dandy arena, actually, but you've got to attract strategic war off the planet. The notion of abhorring war in space is just plain wrong" (quoted in *The Nation*, January 14).

As for alleged Soviet superiority in space weaponry, Dillin wrote that "the U.S., though five to seven years away from producing an antisatellite weapon at the current pace, could easily speed up work to

perfect a weapon within a year if it became necessary."

One Pentagon contractor is already working on such a weapon, described in the *Washington Post* February 3:

Unlike the comparatively slow Soviet satellite killer . . . , which would have to fly on an intercept route and then blow itself up to destroy the target satellite with flying shrapnel, the U.S. satellite killer would zoom into space aboard a rocket.

The *Post* went on to say that Brown had indicated that this is "only one of many satellite killer devices to be developed."

Beyond these U.S. plans to accelerate the arms race in space, "the Air Force has planned missions that envision space stations manned by sixteen-to-twenty soldiers in as many as five different orbital planes," John Markoff reported in *The Nation* January 14.

"In the public mind war in space is still a movie-screen fantasy, whereas the reality is that space has already become a key part of American military planning."

Shortly before Carter unveiled his budget, the results of a five-month Pentagon study were conveniently leaked to the *New York Times*. The "Military Strategy and Force Posture Review" concluded that "the chance of NATO stopping an attack [on Western Europe] with minimal loss of territory . . . appears remote at the present time." NATO's ammunition and spare parts inventories are "critically low," the

report added.

This ominous news laid the basis for Carter's hiking spending for "general purpose forces" by almost 10 percent, including an 18 percent rise in army equipment procurement; scheduling the purchase of 5,000 new tanks and 18,000 additional fighter planes by 1983; and taking steps to sharply increase the numbers of troops and planes the Pentagon can deploy in Europe in a week's time.

Washington's real concern is not the alleged threat of a "Soviet blitzkrieg" in Western Europe, but the rising class struggles that threaten to topple capitalist rule there. Pentagon chief Brown has ordered a "quick-strike force" of Army and Marine units to be organized, "equipped for contingencies that could precede a major war in Europe."

While Europe and war in outer space have been the principal themes in the Pentagon's 1978 propaganda handouts, Carter's continued drive to enhance the U.S. nuclear arsenal should not be overlooked.

"Here our technological advantage over the Soviet Union is most apparent," Carter admitted in a supplement to his State of the Union message. And he intends to make sure things stay that way: \$90 million more is to be spent on the MX mobile missile in fiscal 1979. Nuclear-armed Trident submarines will continue to be built at a rate of three every two years (at a cost of almost \$1 billion each). Development of the sophisticated cruise missile will be accelerated. And the powerful Mark-12A warhead—capable of destroying Soviet missiles in their silos—will be deployed.

Any lingering hopes that Carter might eventually cut the arms budget should have been dispelled by Brown's February 2 announcement: Pentagon spending will continue to rise by about 3 percent a year (after adjustment for inflation). It will reach \$172.7 billion in fiscal 1983. □

Just Your Run-of-the-Mill Crisis

By Matilde Zimmermann

"There's no special crisis today," Mayor Ed Koch told reporters February 6, as New York City lay paralyzed under a foot and a half of snow. "It's New York's regular crisis day."

It was more than a regular crisis, however, for the tens of thousands of New Yorkers trapped in snow-bound cars or unheated apartments, or the hundreds of thousands who could not make it to work. Even food supplies ran short.

Fifty deaths were attributed to the storm in New York City and neighboring areas. On February 8 the city's Central Complaint Bureau was receiving 600 calls an hour from people with no heat in their

buildings. Fire fighters were being issued shovels and pails of salt to use when their trucks could not get through impassable streets to burning buildings.

In the best of weather, most residents of New York City feel that their quality of life is deteriorating. The biggest snow storm in thirty years brought home in dramatic fashion just how much the cutbacks of the last three years have hurt.

After three days of round-the-clock plowing, only a quarter of the side streets in the city had been touched. One reason: nearly half of the snow removal equipment had broken down. One Sanitation Department official defended this as the "average

normal" of inoperability. Even the machinery that worked was sometimes forty years old. In addition, the Sanitation Department workforce has been cut by 2,500 in the last two years, according to the Uniformed Sanitation Workers union.

Sanitation crews were forced to take up the slack by putting in twelve hour shifts in their antiquated trucks.

Their job wasn't made any easier by the fact that the city's streets and bridges are in a state of acute decay. The streets are scheduled for repaving every 200 years—down from a 120-year cycle before the cutbacks. Experts say they should be repaved every twenty-five years. About 2,000 miles of city streets have only temporary surfaces and were never meant to be permanent. More than one million potholes—some of them sizable craters—shake up motorists and cause serious damage to automobiles. Several major expressways have decayed into layers of fine dust. Where cars have broken through the powdery residue, the roadway has been covered by a patchwork of steel plates. One is so near collapse that engineers have called it a "time bomb."

Trees damaged by the heavy snowfall are not likely to get prompt attention. There is a twelve-year waiting list for pruning trees, because each climber and pruner has 17,000 trees to take care of.

Drainage is another problem, since the city pleads poverty when it comes to repairing and replacing sewers. A thousand miles of sewers are so badly decayed that they should be replaced immediately. The sewers are on a 300-year replacement cycle, however—despite the fact that their useful life is only fifty to seventy-five years.

New York saves a certain amount of money by not repairing crumbling bridges and sewers. But the favorite way of saving money is still taking it directly out of the workers' paychecks. The storm provided an opportunity to do that too. For three days commuter trains did not run regularly, buses were few and far between, and streets were clogged and blocked. Nevertheless, city workers lost a day's pay every time they could not make it to work. At least 80,000 people could not get to their city jobs the first day of the storm. That was the day Koch defended his show-up or pay-up policy by saying, "If I'm here, they have to be here."

Overworked sanitation crews have been blamed for the slowness of the cleanup effort. A *New York Times* editorial February 8 said, "Surely more maintenance could be done more quickly if city workers were better motivated. . . ."

The same editorial rapped motorists for the "self-indulgence" in taking cars out despite all warnings. The *Times* said the selfish car owners tried to drive because "they missed the vital connection between self and public." More likely they were just trying to get to work. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: February 11, 1978

BRITAIN	196	Callaghan Blunts Workers Offensive in Britain—by Rich Palser and Brian Grogan
	201	1,700 in London Commemorate Bloody Sunday—by Oscar Gregan
IRELAND	200	Republican Leader Shot in Assassination Attempt—by Gerry Foley
DENMARK	204	Should Antinuclear Forces Unite Around a Single Demand?
COLOMBIA	205	Warm Response to Socialist Election Campaign
MIDEAST	209	Sadat Leaves Washington Empty-Handed—by David Frankel
USA	212	Social Security Benefits Slashed—by Jon Britton
AUSTRALIA	213	Trotskyists Unite—by Allen Myers
ARGENTINA	214	The Long March of the Argentine Working Class—by Héctor Lucero
AFRICA	218	Upheaval in the Horn of Africa—by Ernest Harsch
TUNISIA	223	Bourguiba Arrests More Than a Thousand—by Ernest Harsch
ZAMBIA	223	Kaunda Unveils Austerity Budget
NEWS ANALYSIS	194	"Star Wars" and Strike Forces—by Fred Murphy
	194	Just Your Run-of-the-Mill Crisis—by Matilde Zimmermann
SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT	202	
DOCUMENTS	208	Election Platform of Colombian UNIOS
AROUND THE WORLD	210	Gun Boat Diplomacy Off Horn of Africa
CAPITALISM FOULS THINGS UP	224	A "Big Business"—Dumping of Poisonous Chemicals
DRAWINGS	196	James Callaghan; 198, Margaret Thatcher; 209, Anwar el-Sadat; 217, Isabel Peron; 220, Mohammed Siad Barre; 221, Mengistu Haile Merriam—by Copain

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Callaghan Blunts Workers Offensive in Britain

By Rich Palser and Brian Grogan

LONDON—A number of mass working-class struggles rocked British politics between 1968 and 1974. The Labour government—contrary to anyone's expectations—turned this offensive around, beginning with the imposition of the "Social Contract" in 1975. In face of this counteroffensive by the government—and, more centrally, in light of the abject betrayals by the trade-union bureaucracy—the working class suffered a severe setback.

Although 1977 saw the beginnings of a fight-back by the workers movement, today an impasse has been reached in the class struggle. On January 19, British fire fighters went back to work, defeated in their efforts to break through the 10% wage ceiling imposed by the Labour government. The coal miners—a battering ram against two previous pay policies under the Tories—have reversed an earlier decision of their union conference by accepting productivity-incentive schemes designed to set one pit against another. The acceptance of this scheme had been widely canvassed by the union's right wing as an alternative to a national fight for the union's £135-a-week wage claim.

In the wake of a series of other defeats—the Leyland toolroom workers, the power workers, and the Heathrow Airport engineers, among others—only the dispute at the North London colour-film-processing plant of Grunwick has received class-wide support. And even this struggle for union recognition by a predominantly female Asian work force is in a perilous state—despite the symbol of resistance it has become since the mass solidarity mobilisations of last year.

The Fire Fighters' Strike

It is ironic that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) was at the forefront of the struggle against the 10% limit. The fire fighters are by no means the most powerful and best-organised workers, and this was the first national strike in the union's history. The strike's significance lies in the fact that it was the first challenge to the 10% ceiling within the public sector.

The willingness of the Labour government to break the strike helped indicate Labour's essential role in continuing to impose an incomes policy: failure to maintain a 10% limit in the public sector would have meant certain failure in the private sector. The Labour government showed its willingness to aid the bourgeoisie by bring-



CALLAGHAN: Used troops to break strike by London fire fighters.

ing in the troops to run an emergency fire service during the strike.

The use of the troops showed Prime Minister Callaghan's determination, but they had little effect in breaking the strike. Being untrained, they could do little more than contain fires, and claims to insurance companies for fire damage rocketed during the strike. Popular opinion was overwhelmingly against the government and in support of the FBU—particularly within the organised labour movement. Shortly after the start of the strike, it became clear that if this latent support were mobilised for action, then the FBU could easily win.

The Fire Brigades Union leadership approached the Trades Union Congress General Council for support in the strike, and for a campaign against the 10% limit. By a vote of 20 to 17 the General Council refused, thereby implicitly siding with the 10% limit and ignoring the call for a return to free collective bargaining made at the last congress of the TUC.

The defeat of the strike despite the overwhelming sympathy was not only an indictment of the TUC right wing, but also of the "lefts" on the TUC General Council, the FBU leadership and the Communist Party—none of whom did anything to mobilise the latent support of the rest of the class. The reason for the defeat was the role of the trade-union bureaucracy. Without it, the Labour government—let alone

the bourgeoisie itself—could have done nothing.

Indeed, the first impact of the FBU strike took sections of the bourgeoisie by surprise. There were various proposals for capitulation from influential commentators in the bourgeois press and from leading representatives of the Tory Party. In the face of this wavering, the Labour government stood firm in the certain knowledge that the trade-union bureaucrats would isolate the strike.

This is a complete reversal from the situation under the Tories. The 1972 miners' strike, for instance, had much less initial sympathy than the FBU strike. The determined action of the miners soon changed this. But the crucial difference with the FBU is not so much this factor of militancy. In 1972 Labour was a clear governmental alternative to the Tories. Today, however, Callaghan and Co. can play on the fact that the working class has no alternative at the level of government. Hence support for ever more right-wing policies is justified to the masses in terms of "keeping out the Tories" and "maintaining Labour in office."

The defeat of the FBU strike, the turnaround in the NUM, and the faltering of the Grunwick struggle does not, however, signify a qualitative defeat or change in the overall relationship of class forces. The underlying economic and social reality will continue to assert itself. And we can expect further challenges to the Labour government's wage limits in the coming period.

However, what this impasse does signify is the end of the first wave of resistance essentially relying on tested methods of struggle and political orientation which is no longer sufficient to ensure victory as in the days of the anti-Tory struggle.

Social Contract

When the first round of incomes policy was introduced in mid-1975, it was presented as part of Labour's Social Contract. For the masses it offered a political solution to the economic crisis—a crisis which was so deep that trade-union militancy alone appeared increasingly inadequate for defending living standards and jobs. In return for short-term sacrifices, longer-term social benefits would be forthcoming.

To the union bureaucracy the Social Contract offered an end to the attacks on trade unions and the repeal of the Conservatives' Industrial Relations Act, which aimed at shackling the unions, and in its

place the Employment Protection Act, which ensured the unions their due place in "sound industrial relations." It was through a political offensive along these lines that the Labour government and the bureaucracy were able to win acceptance of the incomes policy.

Despite sizable opposition within the ranks of the unions, every major union conference endorsed a policy of wage limits—which kept wage increases to a figure well below the annual inflation rate. Furthermore, the number of working days lost in strikes fell to the lowest figure in ten years.

The success of the Labour government's offensive was made possible by the complete collapse of the left reformist leadership in the unions. Bureaucrats like Hugh Scanlon of the engineering union and Jack Jones of the Transport and General Workers Union originally stated their opposition to all forms of incomes policy under the Conservatives. Now they became the chief exponents of incomes policy.

Other "lefts" who continued to distance themselves from aspects of the government's policies could offer no perspective for a fight-back because of the limitations of their reformist politics. Faced with a Labour government in office, they were reduced to pressuring the government to "change its course," and to propagandising for a left Labour government at some time in the future.

Alan Fisher, of the public employees union (NUPE), for example, has been the chief instigator of a campaign by the public-sector unions against cuts in public spending. Since the purpose of the campaign was to "persuade the government that a change in course is needed," the campaign has been limited to lobbies of Parliament, purely localised industrial action, conferences of union leaders, and only one national demonstration.

Indeed, this one national demonstration, which took place in November 1976, was so successful—mobilising over 60,000 workers—that when considering what action to take in 1977 the union leaders decided not to hold a demonstration in London lest it "invite comparisons with 17 November 1976."

At a time when the depth of the economic crisis required a fight for policies which began to break the capitalist domination of the economy, these lefts could merely offer policies of reflation, import controls, and a return to free collective bargaining as a way out of the crisis.

The Communist Party, trapped by its strategy of "left unity" in the unions, was paralysed. Jones and Scanlon had been their chief allies, and now any mobilisation of the rank and file risked bringing the CP into direct collision with the "lefts" in the union bureaucracies. Their front organisations in the unions ceased to function—or if they did, their actions were



Socialist Worker

Demonstration by families of fire fighters in London, November 19.

quickly halted once it became clear that they would not win the endorsement of the left bureaucracy.

Towards the end of the second year of wage restraint, there was a marked shift in the mood of the mass of workers. Despite promises from the Labour and trade-union bureaucracy that short-term sacrifices on pay would result in long-term gains, including social benefits, a halt to the growth in unemployment, and a fall in the rate of inflation, these benefits seemed further away than ever. With the Labour government pressing for a further year of wage limits, though of a more "flexible" character to allow productivity dealing and restoration of skilled-workers differentials, workers again turned towards the unions to pursue a militant struggle to defend living standards.

This was reflected in the union conferences of last spring and summer, when the Transport and General Workers Union (Britain's largest union, with two million members), the engineering union, and miners union all called for an immediate return to "free collective bargaining" after a rank-and-file revolt against the union leaders. Consequently the Trades Union Congress was unable to endorse a third round of incomes policy. Despite this, the union bureaucracy has been the chief factor keeping the government's current 10% limit intact.

The chief contribution of the bureaucracy towards this policy was the imposition of a rule, by the Trades Union Congress, preventing wage settlements prior to twelve months having elapsed since the last wages settlement. Thus, settlements reached under the second round of wage restraint have to run for twelve months

before a new claim can be submitted. Since settlement dates for different industries span the entire year, any *united* wages offensive against the 10% limit is effectively blocked.

In many cases union leaders endorsed this ruling—*against the direct mandate of their union conferences*. Having prevented a generalised wages explosion, the bureaucracy set about—union by union—blocking any wages struggle which might threaten the government's 10% limit.

The most blatant example of these manoeuvres by the bureaucracy has occurred in the National Union of Mineworkers. Just over six months ago the miners conference decided to submit a wage claim for £135 a week for underground workers. They thus rejected any further wage restraint *and* the twelve-month rule. At this same union conference miners rejected a proposal to negotiate a national productivity deal. This proposal was put by the right wing, who dominate the union executive, to try to avoid a confrontation with any third round of incomes policy.

Despite this conference decision the union leadership continued to negotiate a productivity deal. It organised a pithead ballot of the union membership in November in an attempt to overturn the conference decision. When this ballot also went against the executive, it ruled that productivity deals *could* be negotiated locally, at pit and area level.

The object of this manoeuvre is to encourage miners from the more easily worked pits to increase their wages through intensifying their productivity, thereby splitting the fighting unity of the union for the £135 wage claim. This will dramatically weaken the union over time.

The previous national strikes by the miners under the Tory government were made possible by the *common* wage rate nationally in the industry.

The Grunwick Strike

The case of the Grunwick eighteen-month-long struggle is another example where the bureaucracy has been able to deal damaging blows to the working class. Indeed, in this case attempts have been made to take back trade-union rights granted by the Labour government as part of the Social Contract.

The courage of the Grunwick strikers and the blatant anti-trade-union stance of its maverick boss, George Ward, has pushed this dispute to the centre of the concerns of the whole class. By the summer of last year, mass pickets of thousands of workers were becoming commonplace. Other groups of workers—particularly the indispensable postal workers—were beginning to boycott the firm in solidarity.

Under this pressure, Labour ministers were forced to appear on the picket lines. The union was obliged to make the dispute official, and the mass pressure spurred the TUC to pass a resolution supposedly guaranteeing solidarity actions. The pressure was such that a Court of Enquiry set up by the Labour government under the auspices of a High Court judge ruled against the management and in favour of the workers. Ward was on the point of being brought to his knees.

But then, in stepped the union's bureaucracy. First, the strikers' own union called off the mass pickets just as they were on the verge of totally closing down the factory. The leader of the post office workers called off the boycott action—eventually fining its members in the local sorting office £500 for refusing to handle Grunwick mail.

Moreover, the Grunwick workers' union, APEX,¹ suspended several strikers who embarked on a hunger strike outside the TUC offices demanding the TUC implement its own congress resolution. The TUC refused to move, and failed to sanction action to cut off essential services to the factory. This sabotage has undermined the active support for the strike. The Grunwick struggle remains more or less isolated—although the strikers valiantly soldier on.

Equally real—although less dramatic—victories have been scored by the bureaucracy in other unions. The executive of the Transport and General Workers Union has endorsed and implemented the twelve-month rule, despite the conference policy for an immediate return to free collective bargaining. The engineering union's president, Hugh Scanlon, former "left-winger"

and opponent of incomes policy under the Conservatives, got the union's National Committee to endorse his vote for the twelve-month rule at the Trades Union Congress.



THATCHER: Tory Party leader advised to "change her tune" on incomes policy.

These victories for the bureaucracy have by no means reversed the now widespread mood of opposition to incomes policy among the mass of workers. Nor have they prevented an upturn in trade-union struggles now taking place, particularly on the issue of wages. This upturn is most sharply revealed in the number of working days lost in strikes in 1977, which were three times that of 1976. Nearly two-thirds of the days lost were in the second part of the year. The highest level was reached in November, when 1.6 million days lost were recorded.

In the forefront of these struggles were workers who are traditionally the most militant and best organised: over a quarter of the ten million days lost arose from strikes in the car industry. A number of extremely militant unofficial strikes have taken place, involving the Leyland tool-makers, the Heathrow engineers, and the power workers. In other cases, the bureaucracy has been forced to endorse and even lead strikes over pay and conditions which threaten the incomes policy.

Prospects

Nineteen seventy-eight is likely to be an election year in Britain. Incomes policy will be a central issue within that election. In implementing its first two years of incomes policy, the Labour government succeeded in cutting the real wages of the working class by 12.5%—the most rapid

decline in living standards for a century. During the same period unemployment doubled until it stood at a figure of over 1.5 million, and state provision of social care and services was slashed, resulting in the cancellation of school, hospital, and house-building programmes.

In order to implement a third year of incomes policy, the Labour government, with a minority of MP's in Parliament, is being kept in office by a pact with the bourgeois Liberal Party. With the economy undergoing a temporary industrial upturn on the one hand, and working-class resistance to cuts in living standards mounting rapidly on the other, 1978 is the time for Prime Minister Jim Callaghan to "go to the country."

There are three main indicators of this upturn.

First, there are the forecasts of a surplus in the balance of payments in 1978, which range from £1.5 billion to £2.25 billion. The chief factor in this is the revenue from North Sea oil.

Second, there is a fall in the rate of inflation. The government estimates it will reach single figures by April, but it is likely to return to double figures by the autumn.

Third, there is a fall in the public sector (government) borrowing requirement, which will possibly be £1.5 billion lower than the projected £8.5 billion. Only 2 out of 125 government departments have exceeded their spending limits, after the cumulative cuts amounting to £8 billion.

This limited upturn allows a certain room to manoeuvre to the Labour government. However, building on the successful imposition of incomes policy to remit limited reflationary measures including tax concessions, will not at all achieve a significant increase in the rate of profit. Industrial and commercial companies' profitability last year (1976) averaged less than 3.5%, much the same very low level recorded in 1975. This is well below half the rate for 1970, the low point in the previous cycle. (Source: *Trade and Industry*.)

Further cuts in the standard of living of the working class remain the task of the day if the increase in the rate of profits is to be achieved. Callaghan will go into an election campaign pointing to the temporary upturn as proof that sacrifices by the working class had borne fruit, but he will also be arguing that "restraint," by which he means cuts in real living standards, must continue—and therefore so must the incomes policy. In this regard the buildup to the election campaign has already begun—Callaghan has hinted that a 5% limit on wage increases must constitute a fourth round of incomes policy, and Chancellor Dennis Healey told a group of Labour MP's that wage restraint must continue "for the foreseeable future."

The major bourgeois party, the Tories,

1. Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs.

have not yet fully recovered from the internal crisis brought about by the downfall of the previous Conservative government at the hands of the miners. Then, the miners' strike shattered the incomes policy of past Tory leader Edward Heath. After the internal fight which ensued, Margaret Thatcher emerged as party leader. She is an opponent of "government interference in industry" and therefore of government-imposed incomes policy.

The split between the Thatcher and Heath wings in the party seemed to be healed at the Tories' last conference in autumn 1977, when policy was adopted for a "West German-type" incomes policy. Following Callaghan's latest hints at a further year of incomes policy, however, Thatcher publicly called for the "withdrawal of government from interference in wage bargaining" in private industry.

Already the most influential sections of the bourgeoisie are calling for Margaret Thatcher to change her tune on incomes policy. The bourgeois journal the *Economist* (January 14, 1978) commented: "The Tories would be wise to disentangle themselves from a controversy on a subject like pay policy where Labour holds the cards. Their battle should be, rather, against socialist tendencies of controlling people and their liberties. The more Mrs Thatcher says about pay policy, as this newspaper pointed out a week ago, the more Mr Callaghan will be pleased."

Mr. Callaghan "holds the trump cards" on incomes policy. It was Labour's ability to involve the trade union bureaucracy in policing an incomes policy which allowed such a dramatic cut in the living standards of the working class.

So long as the Labour government appears capable of maintaining an incomes policy, the Conservatives have little to offer. It is for this reason that the bourgeois Liberal Party continues to keep the minority Labour government in office, making the "Lib-Lab Pact" conditional on continuation of incomes policy despite Tory attempts to unseat it. A considerable danger of electoral disaster exists for the Liberals as a result of this policy. Their leader David Steel argues that the country (that is, the bourgeoisie) needs the incomes policy, and that national well-being must come before the interests of any one party.

The central question being asked about the Labour government is: How long will its incomes policy survive before a section of the working class breaks through it—as the miners did to the previous Conservative government's incomes policy?

Forces Inside the Working Class

The present impasse in the class struggle has accelerated the political debate inside the left wing of the workers movement. This new level of debate has been brought about by the change in the political situation thanks to the success of the

Labour government's offensive since mid-1975. There are two major currents. The first is made up of those who look to the Labour left and the Communist Party. For them, the setbacks of the last period are not due to the betrayals of the bureaucracy. They are rather positive proof of the weakness of the working class and the power of the capitalists. But this explanation of working-class defeats does not stand up if the real dynamic of the FBU dispute is examined.

The refusal of the TUC leadership by a narrow margin to support the FBU assault on the 10% limit opened up a tremendous opportunity for the left in the unions. The strikers had overwhelming support, and this betrayal went right against the decision of the Trades Union Congress against support for a third round of incomes policy. A call for solidarity action by the minority of the TUC leadership would have meant the victory of the strike. It would also have been a launching pad for recalling the TUC congress to reaffirm its policy, and to remove the scab leadership.

No such call came. The FBU leaders used the decision of the TUC leaders as an excuse to call off the struggle. Little wonder the rank and file of the FBU became thoroughly demoralised and—with no alternative to hand—endorsed the FBU executive decisions. But this is not at all proof of the power of the ruling class. It was not the troops and the employers that had defeated the strikers. It was the trade-union leaders.

In the FBU strike, rank-and-file action was vital. But the three Communist Party members on the TUC General Council failed to put out any call for such action. They also failed to rally their forces around the CP-dominated, unofficial national body the "Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions." Indeed, on the day after the strike was called off, the CP daily paper *Morning Star* argued that the blame was not with the FBU leadership, but simply with the right wing of the TUC.

In the face of this quiescence by the left reformists and centrists, a second current, an ultraleftist one, has emerged. Its forces see the way ahead as "going around" the bureaucrats, if not ignoring them altogether. This current has been manifest in a number of actions recently, but it was also evident among FBU strikers. For instance, at the lobby of the TUC General Council just before Christmas the main slogan shouted was "Stuff the TUC." Moreover at the FBU delegate conference which voted to end the strike, FBU lobbyists resorted to verbal and even physical abuse of the union leadership.

Politically, the Socialist Workers Party²

2. The British group, holding a state-capitalist analysis of the workers states, formerly called International Socialists.

articulates the sentiments of this layer. But when the Labour government implemented its offensive, and in every test since then, this current has proved itself incapable of providing a credible alternative to the bureaucrats and their CP hangers-on. The failure to organise a fight to force the seventeen TUC members into action—after the TUC majority refused to support the FBU—is only the latest example of the insufficiencies of this current. The main consequence of its policies is to leave the "lefts" free to disorient the class, sanctioning the most militant workers to let off steam in apolitical displays of verbal—and even more commonly, physical—abuse.

What the last period has shown, then, is the decisive need to construct a class-struggle left wing at the base of the unions. Such a left wing must be oriented to fighting for the leadership of the unions and to polarising the masses against the left reformist pseudoalternative. Linked to this is the fight to create a real socialist alternative leadership. Both the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party claim that they are the socialist alternative. But the past period has shown that this claim is simply bluff. The CP actually aids the left reformists and the SWP, by refusing to challenge them in a fight for united-front action, plays into their hands.

The relationship of class forces remains favourable for constructing such currents. Large minorities exist in the unions which oppose the Social Contract policies of the Labour government. And support is developing for qualitative demands—like the call to protect wages from inflation, now appearing in some unions, and even around major claims like that at Ford—which are vital components of a future alternative programme to that offered by bureaucrats and left reformists.

Moreover the experience of the last two years—particularly of the past couple of months—has animated a debate in the left wing of the labour movement. A deepgoing examination is under way about the strategies which have been tested and found wanting. It is clearly possible to begin the process of animating a *third* current: one which understands the need both for transitional demands and objectives for the struggle, and for the centrality of the fight for the united front in pursuit of the demands of the class.

An initial pole has already been established around Socialist Unity—a coalition of revolutionary groups formed initially as an electoral bloc—which is becoming a focus for an initial layer of class-struggle militants. The upcoming local elections in May will be an excellent opportunity for this formation to project its programme to meet the crisis, and to link up with other layers which can contribute to the construction of a class-struggle left wing in the unions. □

Republican Leader Shot in Assassination Attempt

By Gerry Foley

On February 1, two men tried to assassinate Kevin Hanaway, a leading member of the Provisional Irish republican movement. They broke into his Belfast home and succeeded in shooting him in the hand, as well as badly wounding his eighteen-month-old infant son in the face, arm, and thigh.

The republican movement denounced the attack on Hanaway as another example of the activity of British army assassination squads.

Not long before the murder attempt, the wounded man had testified against the British authorities before the European Commission on Human Rights, accusing them of torturing him when he was arrested in the August 1971 internment raids.

In mid-December, Colm McNutt, a well-known member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was gunned down as he sat in his car in a parking lot in downtown Derry City. The Provisional republican press reported that he was shot by a British soldier in plainclothes.

The December 17 and 24 issues of *Republican News*, the Belfast weekly that reflects the views of the Provisionals, were seized. This paper was one of the first to accuse the British of assassinating McNutt.

On October 5, Séamus Costello, the chairman of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was shot down as he sat in his car in Dublin. For several months before his murder, his main activity had been gathering evidence against the violations of democratic and human rights by the British authorities and their neocolonial allies in the Dublin regime.

There has been evidence of activity by British army assassination squads ever since the murder of Daniel Rooney on September 28, 1972. Rooney, an eighteen-year-old youth, was shot down from a passing car while he was walking in the Donegall Road area of Belfast. The car was later traced to the security forces.

Rooney's murder was one of the first in a wave of random assassinations of Catholics and Protestants (mainly the former) following the British army's move into the Catholic ghettos at the beginning of August 1972.

The assassination, along with the others, was evidently intended to increase the confusion and demoralization caused by the decline of the mass anti-imperialist movement. It was part of an operation

designed to create an atmosphere of senseless and savage communalist war.

Commenting on the present situation in Northern Ireland in its December 24, 1977, issue, the *London Economist*, one of the most authoritative and cynically outspoken of the publications written directly for British capitalists, said:

"Mr Mason [British secretary for Northern Ireland] can take credit for his handling of security. He has refused to parley with the Provos, has introduced 'covert' military operations throughout the province so that the terrorists must constantly be looking over their shoulders. . . ."

The "covert" military operations apparently include the actions carried out by army assassination squads and the units of the Special Air Services (SAS—an elite counterinsurgency outfit similar to the U.S. Green Berets). Moreover, why would "terrorists" have to be more on their guard against "covert" military operations than against the thousands of troops openly occupying the area? Strangers could not stand guard in the Catholic ghettos without being noticed, no matter how "covert" they might be. And centers of public life have been under constant military surveillance since 1969-70.

Apparently, the *Economist* meant that known republicans "must constantly be looking over their shoulders," because Mason's "security" forces now have "covert" units out looking to shoot them in the back.

The *Economist* was even clearer in explaining what the goals of the British occupiers are in Northern Ireland:

Propaganda is the name of the game, and it seems no accident that the Provisional Sinn Fein, the IRA's lawful mouthpiece and political wing, should now be under pressure from the police. Equally, it is probably no accident that Mr Mason should have been so upset by a recent BBC "Tonight" programme that enabled leading Provisionals to express their political beliefs. Despite seven years of exasperated official tolerance, 15 leading officials and members of Sinn Fein were arrested by the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] last week and held for several days. It begins to look as if Mr Mason, having got to grips with the IRA's fighters, is now turning his attention to the thinkers.

The arrests the *Economist* mentioned were those connected with the mid-December raid on the offices of *Republican News*. Obviously editors of the *Economist* do not expect the defeat of the Provisional guerrilla campaign to usher in a return to

"normal" democratic rights for the Catholic population of Northern Ireland. They now see the main task of the British authorities as suppressing the political ideas of the militant nationalists.

Furthermore, since "propaganda is the name of the game," might not the British authorities also be interested in suppressing any exposure of violations of the democratic and human rights of Catholics and nationalists by the "security forces"? The British government and the British capitalist press have repeatedly accused the Dublin regime, for example, of playing into the hands of the Provisionals by pressing a case against Britain for torture before the European Commission on Human Rights.

In its January 25 issue, *An Phoblacht*, the Dublin weekly that reflects the views of the Provisionals, reported:

Following closely the seizure of two editions of "Republican News" by the hated RUC, and the raids on the homes of 36 members of Sinn Fein in Belfast, the British army and RUC are now, it seems, concentrating on distributors and sellers of the paper throughout the Six Counties [of Northern Ireland].

Dawn raids were made on the homes of more than half a dozen prominent members of Sinn Fein in east Tyrone recently. . . .

In nearly every case the homes raided were of people concerned in the distribution and sale of "Republican News" in east Tyrone.

The Provisional press does devote space to reporting and hailing guerrilla actions. But that was no less true in past years when it was allowed to circulate more freely. In fact, at that time, there was more actual guerrilla activity.

Over the past period, on the other hand, the Provisional press has carried more reports and testimonies of brutality, torture, and violations of democratic rights than any other Irish publications.

In fact, the level of repression against the Catholic population has not decreased but rather escalated with the waning of the Provisional guerrilla campaign. It is more extensive, more brutal, and more arbitrary now than it has been since the beginning of the present conflict in Northern Ireland.

Among other things, political suspects now are not simply interned with the possibility of being released at any time but systemically tortured into signing con-

fessions and then sentenced to long prison terms as "dangerous criminals."

As for those republican leaders who are unlikely to break under torture, the British army apparently has decided to just "covertly" murder them, and hope that its crimes will go unidentified and thus unnoticed by world public opinion.

Such "parallel-police" terror has become an increasingly common method in suppressing national liberation struggles. It began to be used on a large scale in Guatemala in the 1950's, following the CIA-directed overthrow of the Arbenz regime. It was used extensively in the Dominican Republic, following the suppression of the April 1965 revolution by the U.S. army. Most recently in Argentina, police units operating "covertly" have brutally murdered thousands of persons.

Therefore, it is particularly important now to keep the attention of international public opinion focused on the "covert" as well as the open repressive activities of the British forces in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland itself, the mass movement against repression has begun to revive. The Anti-Repression Conference in Coalisland on January 22 drew 800-900 participants, representing the full range of political groups in the Catholic community.

Irish Trotskyists played a prominent role. Michael Farrell, a leader of the civil-rights movement and of the People's Democracy group, now fused with the Irish section of the Fourth International, laid out a perspective for rebuilding the mass movement against imperialist repression. His speech was summarized in the January 23 *Irish Times*:

Mr. Michael Farrell said that the people present at the conference might represent the skeleton for a rebuilding of a mass movement. Repression had escalated in 1977, and the authorities now felt confident they could get away with it.

A broad-based platform could attract far more people to protest about torture—people who at the moment did not wish to be associated with any single organization. He said reformist bodies should not be frightened by the prospects of cooperating with revolutionary and other groups. They could all gain by uniting on limited demands, because they might achieve those demands.

They could not achieve unity on final solutions, but there was agreement on demands such as ending torture, ending internment by remand (jailing persons for up to a year and a half on charges on which the government has no evidence and no intention to actually prosecute), and the granting of political status to the pris-

ners, as well as unity on demanding that British troops be removed.

The conference was chaired by Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, who stressed the

need for restoring the confidence of the oppressed people by mobilizing them to fight for immediate objectives they feel they can win. □

Condemn British Rule in Northern Ireland

1,700 in London Commemorate Bloody Sunday

By Oscar Gregan

[The following article appeared in the February 2 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Build the International Tribunal! That was the main message of the speeches at the rally held last Sunday [January 29] to commemorate the deaths of the 14 demonstrators killed in Derry by British troops on Bloody Sunday, 1972.

The rally in Hammersmith followed a 1,200-strong demonstration organised by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee. In another London demonstration to mark the deaths—organised by the Provisional Sinn Fein—over 500 people marched.

The International Tribunal had been publicly launched at a press conference the previous week. Its purpose is to investigate British presence in Ireland.

Appealing for support for the initiative at the press conference were: Joan Maynard MP [member of Parliament]; Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary of the Irish Local Government and Public Service Union; Lord Gifford, a lawyer and prominent champion of civil liberties; and officers from the Tribunal planning committee.

The officers explained: "Britain's exercise of military, judicial, and political control of the North of Ireland has disturbing implications." They added: "There is sufficient reliable, yet alarming information available on various aspects of Britain's involvement to necessitate an independent inquiry."

The officers went on to say that the inquiry will concentrate on:

- The role and activities of the British security forces in Northern Ireland—the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment.

- Allegations of torture at interrogation centres, and allegations of abuse and assault on Irish prisoners in British, including English, jails.

- The operation of no-jury courts in N. Ireland.

- The operation of the Northern Ireland [Emergency Provisions] Act and the Pre-

vention of Terrorism [Temporary Provisions] Act.

- Charges of discrimination in many fields, levelled at the N. Ireland authorities.

- The treatment of Irish republican prisoners in the Maze Prison [Long Kesh] and other jails.

- The question of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Is the Government's influence being used to censor the flow of information and ideas?

Already the tribunal has the sponsorship of many prominent politicians, trade unionists, legal figures, writers and artists from Ireland, Britain, the United States, and Europe. These include the national executive of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the Association of Legal Justice in Belfast, the executive of the National Union of Students in Britain and five Labour MPs

It is expected that the first session of the Tribunal will take place in London this autumn. The organisers hope that the major sessions will be held before the largest and most representative body possible of delegates elected from trade unions and other labour and student organisations.

Because of the important role that international public opinion can play in monitoring any infringements of human rights in the North of Ireland the "jury" will be joined by a panel of figures of international repute.

Socialist Challenge welcomes the call for the Tribunal. We agree with the views expressed by Phil Flynn at the press conference, that any such inquiry—having examined the evidence—should indict the British Government and British Security forces. We also feel that an international campaign to focus the attention of the world community on Britain's presence in Ireland would play an invaluable role in aiding the liberation struggle of the Irish people.

The words of Bernadette McAliskey, spoken at the rally on Sunday, need repeating. "The British left is catching on," she considered when stressing the need to build the Tribunal. "The British left now needs to justify those remarks and to turn the International Tribunal into the most successful initiative of the year." □

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Selections From the Left

Internationalen

"The International," central organ of the Communist Workers League (Swedish section of the Fourth International). Published weekly in Stockholm.

The February 3 issue has a special supplement devoted mainly to the crisis of Norrbotten, the old iron-mining province in the north of Sweden. The lead article begins: "The threat of massive unemployment. Norrbotten, a province fights back. Four thousand people in the streets in Kiruna, 3,000 in Malmberget, 2,000 in Lulea. The demand is to save jobs.

"Hundreds of study circles, thousands of new members in the workers parties, discussions around various programs to save the province.

"In order to come up to the national level of employment, Norrbotten needs 11,000 new jobs. Instead there have been massive layoffs. There is not going to be a new steel mill, cutbacks in the work-force at NJA, 2,500 jobs threatened at LKAB, the threat of layoffs at ASSI's factory in Piteaa, and so on.

"Capitalism's toughest attack and the working class's toughest resistance. That is the situation in Norrbotten today.

"What is the reason for all this? . . .

"The postwar period was the golden era for the iron-mining industry. The devastated West European industrial plant was hungry for raw materials. The LKAB gained an almost totally dominant position on the world market, becoming the world's biggest exporter of iron ore. In 1950, Europe imported 80 percent of its iron ore from Swedish mines.

"The LKAB's demand for labor was almost insatiable. Capitalism's inherent tendency to centralize was manifested with exceptional clarity in Norrbotten. Young productive labor power was sucked into Malmfälten and Lulea. The labor exporting areas were Tornedal and northern Finland. Agriculture in Tornedal was allowed to decline. The old people were left alone on impoverished farms. Services, trade, schools, and health facilities were concentrated in just a few areas.

"Norrbotten came to base itself more and more on the mines and the forrests. But it produced only raw materials and to a lesser extent semifinished manufacturers. No refining industry was built up. Raw materials left the province almost as they came from the mines and forests.

"At the same time, rationalization and mechanization continued to advance. The high birth rate produced new labor power. But Norrbotten's one-sided and highly mechanized industry could not absorb it. And so the flood of emigration to the south began in earnest. Tens of thousands of

Norrbottnings now live in southern Sweden 'in exile.' . . .

"The one-sided raw-materials base and centralization in Norrbotten, together with emigration, had certain effects. Social services are poorly developed and extremely concentrated. Public transport is underdeveloped.

"Agriculture is in ruins, despite the fact that Tornedal has some of Sweden's best land. Female unemployment is high. What woman can get a job in a mine, steel mill, or lumber camp?

"Now capitalism in its crisis is striking out against Norrbotten, a region weakened from the outset, suffering from a one-sided economy and depopulated over large areas.

"But in striking out against Norrbotten, the capitalists are also taking on what has historically been perhaps the country's strongest and best organized section of workers. . . .

"Norrbotten has never had big farmers or landowners, a nobility, or even big local capitalists. The state has owned almost all the industry. . . .

"It is no accident that the movement against unemployment has begun to take on a massive character precisely in Norrbotten. Nor is it any accident that the activity of the workers organizations is growing more rapidly and taking more extensive forms than anywhere else. . . .

"What is happening today in Norrbotten will happen tomorrow in other places. The capitalists are testing the methods there that they intend to use in the future. This is the first test for the working class."

The Swedish Trotskyists propose a series of demands for the workers movement in Norrbotten: a six-hour workday with no cut in pay, the establishment of a more balanced economy through the creation of new industries, workers control over industries established by the state, a steel mill for Lulea, public works projects, and an expansion of social services.

per noster

"For Our Own," bulletin of the Béarn and Gascony sections of the Institute of Occitanian Studies. Published six times a year in Bordeaux, France.

This magazine is devoted primarily to fostering the culture of the Provençal-speaking areas along the western Pyrenees, where there is a historic Basque influence, including on the language.

Per Noster has been running a series of guest articles by the various political parties explaining their positions on the demands of the smaller nationalities in the French state. The November-December

1977 issue has an article by the Béarn section of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International.

The first point of the article says:

"Since the French national state as it exists is essentially a product of bourgeois rule, the working class in power will make a radical break with the existing situation. It will recognize the right of self-determination for Corsica, the Catalan area, Alsace, the northern Basque country, and Occitania. This means accepting the possibility that the workers and the populace of these regions will decide to separate from the present 'national territory.'

"For the Catalan area and the Basque country, this would raise the question of their joining a human, social, and cultural entity, most of which is located on the territory of the Spanish state.

"Occitania represents a great whole in which many different realities coexist (Languedoc, Périgord, Béarn, etc). There is no question of our denying the real solidarity among these regions, but there is no question either of our trying to replace one centralism by another. An Occitanian assembly would be a group of delegates representing the various regional and ethnic entities that make up Occitania."

Point 3 calls for critical support for some of the proposals for regional self-government put forward by the Communist and Socialist parties:

"Thus the election of regional assemblies by direct vote with proportional representation can provide a more advanced framework for regional mobilizations. The Common Program [of the SP, CP, and a small liberal bourgeois party] calls for abolishing the tutelage of the prefects [Paris-appointed governors] and the election of the executive by the regional assemblies. It also calls for giving these assemblies powers in the cultural sphere and to a limited extent in regional planning. This should be made more precise.

"In order for such assemblies not to be a simple transmission belt for the central government, they should have the right of veto over all questions affecting the way of life of the workers in the regions. This includes a say over the building of nuclear power plants and the establishment of state-aided factories."

In Point 4, the final one, the Béarn Trotskyists stress that "all the demands for safeguarding the oppressed languages and cultures must be satisfied without delay." They conclude:

"Teaching of these languages must be integrated into the day-to-day curriculum and it must be given the same importance as the teaching of French. . . .

"The restoration of the languages of the oppressed 'minorities' must not be limited to affirmation of their right to use them. The unequal treatment accorded these languages makes it difficult today for the workers to relearn them. The use of these

languages must therefore be supported by every means and in all possible situations (education, administration, and culture)."

ekproun

"*Sosialistike Ekphrase*" (*Socialist Expression*), central organ of the youth affiliate of the Cypriot Social Democratic Party. Published fortnightly in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The January 20 issue reports:

"According to information coming out of the occupied zone, a wave of strikes has broken out among Turkish workers.

"Along with the strikes by the workers at the 'government printing office' and the post office, which are now in their third week, a few days ago the Turkish Cypriot teachers threatened to strike if their wage and other demands are not met. The attitude of Denktas's [the main Turkish Cypriot leader] Council of Ministers has given these demands the cold shoulder. On Monday [January 16], the workers of the electrical power station went on strike.

"Parallel to this, the 'civil servants' are threatening to go on strike. . . .

"The present wave of strikes represents a continuing escalation of previous mobilizations and hunger strikes such as the struggles by the workers of the International Holding trust a few months ago. . . .

"Three and a half years after the physical separation of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot workers, which was imposed by the imperialists and their local agents (the capitalist classes of both communities), the Turkish Cypriots are coming to realize more and more clearly every day that the paradise that Denktas promised to build in the north [the area occupied by Turkish troops] was a trap. . . .

"Only the struggle of the workers of the entire island, Greek and Turk, can liberate the people. And these workers have common goals—liberation from imperialist occupation and social oppression. . . .

"The present wave of strikes, with the mobilization of the Turkish workers, is a hopeful step in that direction. But we will never be able to achieve a common struggle unless there is a response from the Greek Cypriot workers."

was fun

"*What Is To Be Done*," weekly paper of the International Marxist Group. Published in Frankfurt, West Germany.

The lead story in the February 2 issue is on a national dock strike. A proposed contract had been submitted to the union membership just before this issue went to press. A box on the front page reports:

"Only 41.9 of the membership (a minority) voted for the compromise agreement

for a 7% wage increase. Some 57.8% of the organized dock workers voted against the contract settlement. Actually the settlement called only for a 6.4% raise, since it was not supposed to apply to one of the coming twelve months.

"The majority of the dock workers ordered the union leadership to resume negotiations. The leadership recognized the decision of the majority and is now demanding the full 7% for this year.

"In doing so, the leadership is only meeting the members halfway, since their expectations were on the order of 8%.

"However, 7% is the minimum that must be achieved on the docks. It would have been easier to get this if the strike had not been suspended."

Another article analyzed the strike:

"For five days, the West German harbors were paralyzed by a strike. Nothing moved. The more than 16,000 organized dock workers were able to achieve a solid strike front. The workers expressed the reasons for this struggle and the hopes bound up with it in brief but incisive comments. 'We have got to get 8% out of this; otherwise, taxes and price increases will eat up everything.' There was no fear of a long and arduous struggle. 'If we don't get 8%, then I'll strike until I'm sixty-three and collect my pension.' As for the union leadership, they said: 'They should give us our strike pay without complaining; we've been paying into the strike fund for long enough.' . . .

"Nine percent for all was the demand raised by the dock workers. But the employers organization did not want to give even 5%. . . . The 'independent' arbitrators, including the banker Fahning, recommended 5.3%. The mood on the docks became stormy. The union leadership was forced to hold a strike referendum. About 90% of the dock workers are organized. More than 16,000 of the 20,000 harbor workers voted in the referendum. The result left no room for doubt. Some 96.7% voted for a strike to win the original demand. . . ."

Socialist Challenge

Newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in London.

The February 2 issue comments on amendments to the bill for limited self-government for Scotland. The amendments, recently passed by a combination of Tories and social-chauvinist Laborites, would have the effect of rigging the referendum on self-government included in the bill. The editors note:

"It would be ironic if last week's decision to define a majority as 40 per cent of the total potential voters in the devolution bill would later apply to other elections in Britain. One of the first casualties of this

new theory of democratic rule would be George Cunningham, Labour MP for Islington and the sponsor of the 40 per cent amendment. He polled exactly 34.26 per cent of the vote at the last election. . . ."

Neil Williamson wrote:

"It is unlikely that Mr. Cunningham will be bothered very much by the devolution amendment as it was a sabotaging manoeuvre, designed to make the referendum inoperative. The nature of Mr. Cunningham's allies are instructive—especially the Tory Party Union Flag group. Having watched the Empire crumble from Salisbury to Nepal, these Tory gentlemen have joined together, determined to draw the line at Edinburgh.

"The result of this united front is a rigged ballot. Under the terms of the successful amendment, abstentions, illnesses, boredom and the normal 12 per cent of voters lost on electoral rules all get lumped together against the yes votes. On, for instance, a 60 per cent vote, if only 65 want an assembly, it is still defeated. The explicit object is to stop the Scottish electorate deciding what changes in the form of government it wants. . . .

"The Government may manage to patch up this problem as it did with the first defeat of the devolution Bill. However, last week's revelling by Parliament is by no means its last. As we said in *Socialist Challenge* two weeks ago: 'It is this inability to act and react to the changing needs of bourgeois democracy in Scotland which guarantees that devolution will be a running sore in British politics.'

"One side result of last week is that the policy of abstaining in the referendum (as many comrades of the Socialist Workers' Party [a British centrist group] favor) looks less and less credible. Such a position could only be justified if there was a serious argument that the issue is irrelevant. In 1978 when the vast majority of working class youth vote nationalist, such a position is absurd.

"Alternatively, those supporting abstention have argued that there is nothing to choose between the two options of for and against an assembly. But last week's events proved, not for the first time, that much more is at stake than another tier of local government. . . .

"Behind the sugar coating of the distinguished bourgeoisie on both sides, there are serious social forces at work, and last week made it easier to see them. On one side are jingoistic parliamentarians whose main project is to preserve their own ancient rights and privileges. On the other side lie the political aspirations (no matter how confused) of the Scottish people: the commuter with brief case in hand, as much as the Clydebank engineer.

"Support for the devolution Bill, support for a yes vote in the referendum, and total opposition to the sabotage of Parliament is the only way to make sure that we are on the right side of that division."

Should Antinuclear Forces Unite Around a Single Demand?

[In its January 31 issue, *Klassekampen*, the fortnightly newspaper of the Danish Revolutionary Socialist League, published a supplement called "Fourth International," most of which is devoted to the question of nuclear power.

[One article analyzes the interest of Danish companies in building nuclear power plants. Another takes up the attitudes of the various workers parties to the issue of nuclear power. The lead article, which discusses the role of socialists in the antinuclear movement, is excerpted below. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

The Revolutionary Socialist League opposes nuclear power because it is dangerous. Tens of thousands of persons could die as a result of a reactor meltdown. Large regions could be made uninhabitable for decades. . . . There are many possibilities for a breakdown in the cooling systems. . . . There is still no safe method of disposing of nuclear waste. . . . Nuclear power threatens the entire population. Therefore, it must be stopped.

But the fight against nuclear power is more than a struggle against a dangerous technology. It is a struggle against the capitalists and the state that want to develop this energy source despite the dangers, simply because there is money in it. . . .

Just to make money, the industrialists fail to protect the environment and thereby

threaten humanity with a collapse of nature's ecological systems, with unforeseeable consequences.

The fight against nuclear power is part of the struggle against this destruction of the environment. Thus, it is also part of the struggle against capitalist industry's profit economy.

That is the Revolutionary Socialist League's conception of what the fight against nuclear power involves. A section of the activists in the Organisation til Oplysning om Atomkraft [OOA—Organization for Information on Nuclear Power, the group that has mobilized the mass demonstrations in Scandinavia against nuclear power] would be of the same opinion. But by no means all. Many consider nuclear power and destruction of the environment to be "dangerous mistakes" that can be corrected. . . .

But what does this difference of opinion mean for the OOA? What does it mean that there are big differences among socialists—from the Left Socialists to the Socialist People's Party, the Communist Workers Party [Maoists] and the Revolutionary Socialist League—as regards energy policy and what strategy opponents of nuclear power should follow? Is there a danger of a split in the OOA?

There is little danger of a split today, because the OOA is united around a very simple minimum demand—Down with nuclear power! Thus, the OOA can assemble the broadest possible support. . . .

Despite the political differences, the

OOA can thus carry forward its work. It can do this only if it sticks consistently to the problem of how we can best fight together against nuclear power. . . .

So, there is a clear distinction between political organizations such as the Revolutionary Socialist League and others, and a mass movement such as the OOA. You can join the Revolutionary Socialist League only if you are willing to work on the basis of its entire program. But in the OOA we are agreed on only one thing: Down with nuclear power!

If in their work in the OOA the members of a political organization go outside the framework of the concrete struggle and try to get their political ideas accepted by the organization, there is a danger of a split. Furthermore, the OOA would not get support from other political organizations any longer, and thus would be further weakened.

In the discussions on the concrete problems facing the OOA, there should be full freedom for members of political parties to express their views in an organized way. It is natural that OOA members with the same basic political views as the members of the Revolutionary Socialist League should discuss together and develop common, well-worked-out positions. . . .

The OOA should not take general political positions. But there should be full freedom to discuss anything and present any position. In the fight against nuclear power, all members of the OOA are getting involved in many political questions,



Klassekampen

Part of 8-kilometer-long march against Barsebäck nuclear plant in Sweden September 10, 1977.

which the activists want to discuss and find answers to.

The right of discussion is meaningless if it does not include the right to distribute leaflets and newspapers, which, of course, should be clearly identified as representing the political organizations that have produced them.

This right should also hold during demonstrations. Here the need for political discussion is particularly great. However, the position of the OOA with regard to this right has been extremely inconsistent. On the Barsebäck march,* there was full free-

*The largest antinuclear demonstration so far in Scandinavia. See "15,000 in Sweden Protest Barsebäck Nuclear Power Plant," in *Intercontinental Press*, September 26, 1977, p. 1051.

dom. At the December 5, 1977, torchlight parade, the right to distribute political material was severely curtailed at the Copenhagen assembly points. . . .

Shortly before the torchlight march on Barsebäck December 5, a decision was made that only leaflets and papers dealing exclusively with nuclear power could be distributed. . . .

The motive could only have been to ban the sale of the newspapers of political organizations (which means socialist newspapers). This ban denied not only the right of the members of the political organizations to express their views but also the right of other OOA members to acquaint themselves with other views and discuss them.

This position flowed from fears that bourgeois supporters of nuclear power would label the OOA as "red." This fear was shown by the organization's national secretariat shortly after the Barsebäck march. It sent out an editorial from the *Kristeligt Dagblad* [Christian Daily] of September 14 to the local groups. The editorial said that the opposition to nuclear power in Sweden and Denmark was being taken over by leftists. . . .

This bourgeois attack must be rejected. The OOA is not "a red operation," since it includes many supporters of the Venstre [liberal] Party. What is important is the OOA's slogans and statements. They stand up well. Anyone can support them. The fact that not many bourgeois forces do is not the fault of the OOA. □

Interview With Socorro Ramírez

Warm Response to Socialist Election Campaign in Colombia

[The following interview and accompanying introductory note appeared in the January 14, 1978 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, weekly newspaper of the Mexican Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party).

[The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Socorro Ramírez, a young teacher, trade-union leader, and vice-president of the Colombian Federation of Educators, a dedicated fighter for the interests of working people, a leader of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party) and a militant internationalist, was nominated last December 7 as the presidential candidate of the Unidad Obrera y Socialista (UNIOS—Workers and Socialist Unity). The UNIOS consists of the PST and the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League), organizations of the Fourth International in Colombia; the Organización Comunista Ruptura (OCR—Breakaway Communist Organization), and the Unión Revolucionaria Socialista (URS—Revolutionary Socialist Union). On the occasion of her visit to Mexico, we obtained the following interview with Comrade Socorro.

* * *

Question. After the national strike of the populace September 14 and the national mobilization November 18, 1977, what do

you think the prospects are for the struggle of the workers and popular masses in 1978?

Answer. The national strike of the populace and the unification of the four workers federations in the Consejo Nacional Sindical [CNS—National Trade-union Council] open up the possibility of a renewed upsurge in the struggle that has begun in Colombia. We are reaching the end of the stage of negotiating grievances, collective bargaining agreements are running out, and so preparations are under way for a number of strikes.

In view of the stubbornness of the bosses and the government, these demands of the workers—both their economic demands and their rejection of the labor policy of the government—will certainly result in important strikes during the first part of the year. At the same time the slogan of another national strike of the populace is starting to be raised in Colombia, since the government has not met the demands put forward by the four workers federations, the CNS, and the whole independent trade-union movement in their "special statement of grievances." On the contrary, the workers' demand for job security was answered with massive layoffs. The demand for salary increases was answered with a wage freeze and a rise in the prices of basic necessities. The demand for democratic rights was answered with a state of siege, militarization, and the spread of repression.

For all these reasons, the national strike of the populace, which marked the high

point of the workers' struggle in Colombia, will show its effects in 1978. It was on a similar basis that we were able to predict the mobilization by the unions and workers parties that occurred on November 18 in Bogotá and the other main cities of Colombia.

Q. Do you think that the unity that has been achieved among the four trade-union federations can be maintained? Will it develop further?

A. Yes, in actuality, the unification of the federations is not simply on the level of the superstructure. It is a response to the pressure and the radicalization of rank-and-file workers. We have warned that there are all sorts of pressures that work against the unification of the federations and the unity of the workers, particularly during an election period. Some of the workers federations have given support to bourgeois candidates, which goes directly against the interests of the workers. We think that this is a big obstacle to the unification being maintained and advancing to the point of posing an alternative to the parties, programs and candidates of the bosses. In addition, we think the unification statement of the four federations ought to include a plan of struggle, which could insure that the workers' struggles that develop in 1978 would be centralized and at the same time be supported by the broadest solidarity actions, organized directly by the workers federations.

Q. Now that the period of the two-party

Liberal/Conservative national front is ending in Colombia, what new policies and pacts are bourgeois forces cooking up to answer the upsurge of the people and the workers?

A. President Alfonso López Michelsen has laid out the Colombian bourgeoisie's scheme to slow down the struggle and prepare the institutional framework for confronting the workers' upsurge: the "little constituent assembly." This is an attempt to perpetuate the two-party monopoly of the Liberals and Conservatives in the political life of the country. In order to be elected to this assembly you have to meet a whole series of requirements that only the big Colombian bourgeoisie can meet. The plan excludes the opposition parties and the workers parties. This constituent assembly proposal is an attempt to maintain the emergency measures of the state of siege, the curtailing of democratic rights, and the militarization of everyday life. It will do this in two basic ways: changing common law to incorporate the procedures of military law; and changing the administrative rules pertaining to departmental and municipal government. The latter involves classifying state workers as public employees, thereby taking away their right to strike, their right to belong to trade unions, their right to free speech, and their right to participate in political life.

The workers have rejected this reactionary scheme by raising the demand for a democratic National Constituent Assembly, with the participation of all the basic sections of the working class affected by the crisis existing not only in the judiciary but in the whole capitalist order. The idea of the little constituent assembly has been approved by the Congress of the Republic, although in a fraudulent way. Some sectors of the bourgeoisie registered differences with the proposal, but they were of a purely formal nature. The constituent assembly and the Congress are supposed to meet at the same time. This alone would signify a new blow to the Congress, demonstrating once more the bonapartist features of the Colombian political regime.

So we think that this is the game of the bourgeoisie. This is their way of trying to close the way to the workers parties, at the same time slowing down the mobilization of the workers and popular masses and placing the government permanently in position to respond to every demand of the workers as it did on September 14: with killings, jailings, and firings.

Q. Can you tell us what kind of response the worker and socialist candidates put forward by the PST have gotten to their electoral program?

A. Our party, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, has presented an alternative in the elections with the candidacies of workers and socialists. This repres-



El Socialista

Socorro Ramírez addressing campaign rally in Bogotá.

ents a continuation of the national strike inasmuch as it enables workers to rely solely on their own forces, the way they did September 14. That is to say, it gives Colombian workers the opportunity to advance their political independence from the bosses and their parties, programs and candidates. For this reason it has gotten a very positive response from the workers on a national scale.

More than 60,000 workers have attended the meetings and rallies we have held during the course of the election campaign. In public squares, at factory gates, at strike centers, and in schools and universities, we have put forward the alternative of workers' political independence with candidates of the working class itself tested in struggle. We are fielding more than a thousand worker and socialist candidates in the country as a whole.

In addition we have achieved significant unity among the socialist groups, which also shows the positive effect of the PST's proposal for the election campaign. Those who have declared themselves in favor of our proposal are the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria and two other socialist organizations—the Organización Comunista Ruptura and the Unión Revolucionaria Socialista. They all agree with running worker and socialist candidates, and are supporting the presidential candidate put forward by the PST

The National Convention that took place December 7 in Bogotá demonstrated how the socialist election campaign has made it possible to organize a strong socialist current at the national level. The campaign represents a continuation of the national strike of the populace in two ways: it puts forward the demands of the strike, and it represents a break with the Liberal and Conservative parties by impor-

tant sectors of the workers.

Q. We understand, however, that there are also other candidates, put forward by opposition parties and parties of the left. What is the meaning of these candidacies, and what position have the united socialists taken in relation to them?

A. In actual fact, there are two other opposition candidates, one put forward by the Communist Party and the other by a Maoist group. Their candidates are long-time parliamentary figures who came out of the bourgeois parties. We socialists have warned that these candidates do not represent a way in which workers can break with the political and ideological rule that the bourgeois parties have exercised for many years. They don't help workers achieve political independence. Despite the effort we have put into the fight to help the workers continue the unity achieved September 14, these opposition forces still prefer bourgeois candidates to workers candidates.

Nevertheless, we do not deny that this demand for candidates from the working class itself and for the unity of all the workers parties can be concretized in this electoral campaign. We have announced that we are ready to withdraw our presidential candidate and urge the other opposition candidates to do the same, so that a candidate could be chosen in a big national convention of all the workers organizations—a worker candidate with proven experience in the union movement and in political struggle, a candidate who could unify the workers movement.

We continue to put forward this demand. But we believe that faced with the bourgeois candidates of the Liberal and Conservative parties, the workers must have some alternative that defends the unity we

achieved for the first time in Colombian political history on September 14, the day of the national strike of the populace.

Q. What program did the Unidad Obrero y Socialista, representing the four socialist organizations, put forward at its recent convention?

A. At the forty-eight rallies we have held in sixteen regions of the country, we put forward an election program which is nothing like a rosary of promises to the workers. Our program is instead a banner we want to unfurl before the workers to win them to the struggle for socialism. For this reason it takes up and supports the demands in the unity statement of the four workers federations: for a freeze in prices of basic necessities and public services; for a 50 percent increase in workers' salaries; for lifting the state of siege.

It also takes up the fight against the constituent assembly scheme and against the two-party Liberal/Conservative regime, which represent ongoing attacks on the trade-union and political rights of workers. At the same time our program spells out the issues around which socialists call on workers to mobilize—not just to defend their present living conditions, but to win better conditions, better housing, education and health care.

Our program puts forward demands designed to mobilize oppressed sectors of the population in defense of their rights. It takes up the problems of the indigenous minorities, and the oppression of women and of Blacks. In the same way, the election platform addresses the problem of imperialist domination, of the colonial status in which our country has been kept for many years. It is the program for a revolutionary mobilization of the workers to achieve a socialist, internationalist Colombia, free from exploitation by the capitalists and domination by the imperialists.

The platform also spells out the type of government the workers need: a government of the workers and poor peasants, based on the mass workers organizations, peasant committees, factory committees, and neighborhood committees. We emphasize that the demands raised by this program cannot be won simply through an election campaign; neither parts of the program nor the whole of it will be realized until the Colombian workers and poor peasants decide to mobilize in a revolutionary way to displace the political and economic power of the capitalists and establish the power of the workers. This is what we have been saying on a national scale, and it is the reason for our participation in the elections.

Q. You mentioned that the platform takes up the question of fighting against women's oppression. Can you tell us what demands you put forward for this struggle and what kind of response you have received?

A. We socialists not only have an analysis of the reasons for the oppression of women; we also put forward demands around which women can mobilize right now in defense of their rights. These are demands which lead to a struggle against the oppression of women as a sex. One set of demands concerns the double work day women endure, one in their own homes as domestic servants, and the other as wage workers. To deal with this situation, we demand child-care centers financed by the state and controlled by those who use them, and the socialization of domestic work by setting up restaurants and public laundries to free women from such responsibilities and enable them to participate on an equal basis in the economic, cultural and political activities of society.

We socialists are struggling alongside women for the legalization of abortion. In Colombia there is one abortion for every three live births, and 60 percent of all pregnancy-related deaths are caused by the unsanitary conditions under which clandestine abortions are performed. Every woman who wants an abortion has a right to completely free medical care to safeguard her health and life. This is an important immediate demand which nobody in our country has put forward except the socialists.

In the same way, we are against the plans for large-scale forced sterilization which have been carried out against peasants and Indians and in many of the cities of Colombia, because forced sterilization does not allow a woman to decide how many children she wants to have. We think that this is a woman's choice, not that of the government or the church.

The government has tolerated divorce for 5 percent of the Colombian population; but 95 percent of the population is married in the Catholic church, and for them there is no divorce. The absolute right to divorce is another important demand which has great significance for women.

For working women, socialists also put forward demands which could immediately lead to a sizable mobilization. Women in Colombia have been forced to accept less pay for the same work; for this reason we put forward the demand of equal pay for equal work. Colombian law has treated women like demented creatures with no capacity for judgment; our answer is to demand the abolition of all statutes that establish an inferior status and discriminate against women in Colombia. On this we have gotten a very good response from Colombian women.

Q. How is the workers and socialists election campaign relating to the upswing in workers' struggles?

A. We socialists have made our election campaign a rallying cry for workers' struggles, a rallying cry for the mobilization of working people. Our candidates have been

in the front line of the struggles of Colombian workers. During the national strike of the populace all the candidates of the workers and socialist slate were in the neighborhoods and in the factories, working with the strikers. And the same holds true for every important strike that has happened during the past year. In our rallies and meetings we have championed the demands in the unification statement of the workers federations. We have converted our election rallies into rallies of solidarity with workers struggles and at the same time into calls for mobilizations in support of the eight-hour day demanded by the workers federations.

We can say that our election campaign has become the most important form through which workers can express themselves on labor struggles; it gives them a chance for political independence. The workers come out of every mass rally eager to support those who are struggling, to help spread the socialist alternative, to support the demands in the unification statement of the workers federations, and, at the same time, to break with the Liberal and Conservative parties and give their support to the socialists instead. The campaign has been the most effective way of relating our program to the workers and their struggles, and at the same time it helps give continuity to the upswing in the struggle of Colombian workers and popular masses.

Q. Is there anything else you want to add for the readers of our paper and the members of our party?

A. In our election platform—as in the program of the PST—we put forward an internationalist point of view. Not only do we support the struggles of workers in every part of the world, but we also talk about the necessity of building a workers party in Colombia and a world party that can unify workers and fighters in every part of the world.

Finally, I want to tell Mexican workers and socialist militants how important your campaign for registration of the PRT is. Despite the restrictions of an undemocratic

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law designed to prevent the emergence of a unified fighting alternative in national politics, your campaign, by fighting these restrictions, can become one in which the Mexican workers will see a revolutionary and socialist alternative that will begin to be an active part of the national political life. At the same time, in its continuous activity not only in labor conflicts but in

offering a way out in every situation facing the Mexican workers, and in confronting the plans of the bourgeoisie, the PRT¹ will be able to succeed in opening the way for a mass current which would begin to place the party in the leadership of the workers, not only in defending their immediate interests but in helping to achieve socialism in Mexico. □

rights for soldiers, for the right of the soldiers to elect and remove their own officers.

IV. For the peasants' right to their land; for a workers and peasants alliance

The great majority of peasants are miserably poor and dispossessed from the best land, which remains monopolized by a handful of landlords who have not even hesitated to call on bands of thugs to remove peasants forcibly from the land. We stand for a workers and peasants alliance that would resolutely support the aspirations of the poverty-stricken peasants. We struggle for return of the land to the poor peasants, for elimination of rents, debts and other burdens that bear down on peasants. For the expropriation of the big land holdings. For strengthening the peasants organizations; for the peasants' right to defend themselves against the violence of the army and the landlords. For united action by the poor peasantry and the independent organizations of the agricultural workers.

V. For women's liberation and for the right of the indigenous population and the Black population

We are against all discrimination and oppression of women; for equal opportunities, against job and wage discrimination; for child-care centers controlled by the workers. For breaking the concordat on divorce; divorce should be legal and granted automatically upon the request of either spouse. Adequate and free medical attention for women seeking abortions.

We support the indigenous minorities in their struggle for self-government; for respect for their institutions and customs, and for return to them of the *Resguardos* [land which they work but do not own]. We support the Black and mixed population in their struggle against social and racial discrimination and for the right to organize themselves independently, breaking with the Liberal and Conservative parties.

VI. We struggle for a Colombia free from imperialist domination

Long years of economic and political colonization have forged many chains binding us to North American imperialism. We worker and socialist candidates are struggling to put an end to this oppression and exploitation and make Colombia a fully independent and free state. To accomplish this we demand that all military, economic, political and cultural pacts with imperialism be broken at once, and that all its military, espionage, and cultural "missions" and agencies be expelled. We are against the plundering of our natural resources; we are for nonrecognition of the foreign debt, and for nationalizing all the imperialist enterprises.

Election Platform of Colombian UNIOS

[The election campaign brochure of the Colombian Workers and Socialist Unity (UNIOS) is reprinted below. Socorro Ramírez is the UNIOS candidate in the June 1978 presidential elections. UNIOS is also presenting candidates in the February elections for Senate, Chamber of Representatives, Departmental Assemblies, and Municipal Councils.

[The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

I. Support for the united slogans of the four workers federations

We worker and socialist candidates call for a united struggle by the workers and the populace as a whole in defense of the unification statement drawn up by the four trade-union federations. This statement puts forward key demands such as the following: a 50 percent across-the-board wage increase; the freezing of prices and taxes and the establishment of workers control over them; an eight-hour day for all workers without exception; the lifting of the state of siege and restoration of full political and trade-union rights; full recognition of the right to belong to a trade union and to engage in collective bargaining; and abolition of all restrictions on the right to strike. For active solidarity with workers in struggle.

In addition to these demands, we put forward the following: for a sliding scale of wages; for a stronger Consejo Nacional Sindical (CNS—National Trade-Union Council), fully independent from the state and from the Liberal and Conservative parties, which could fight for the united demands, organize support for various struggles, and take steps to link up with the independent trade-union movement in a United Federation of Workers.

II. For better conditions in employment, housing, health, and education

The capitalist system, which devotes all its energies to exploiting the workers, cares nothing about the miserable living conditions of the immense majority of Colombians. We support the struggle for jobs for all

and for payment of a minimum wage to the unemployed. For a massive public housing plan, with rents less than 10 percent of family income. For the elimination of the monopoly on urban property in land and buildings. In the area of health care, we call for the elimination of private enterprise at the cost of public health, for the nationalization of all drug companies, and for refusal to pay the huge royalties demanded by the imperialist firms. All Colombians should be covered by the ICSS (Instituto Colombiano del Seguro Social—Colombian Social Security System), which should be placed under control of the workers. We stand for the type of educational reform that recognizes the right of teachers, students, and university workers to decide democratically how the university will be run. For the nationalization of education, the eradication of illiteracy, and free public education for all children and youth.

III. Against the government of the bourgeoisie, their Liberal and Conservative Parties, and the reactionary constituent assembly.

Although the Liberal-Conservative regime tries to pass itself off as the highest expression of democracy, the truth is that its repressive, undemocratic, and elitist character is becoming more and more obvious. We struggle against each and every one of the repressive, proimperialist measures taken by the López government and all the governments of the bourgeoisie and its parties. We are against the militarization of the countryside and the cities, against the attempts to perpetuate the two-party monopoly with measures like the electoral reform and the statutes on political parties, and against the hoax of the "little constituent assembly." We call for a truly democratic National Assembly at the service of working people. For the repeal of all repressive legislation so as to do away with every single restriction on the rights of organization, assembly and free speech; for the dissolution of the repressive apparatuses, the elimination of military courts, and for full political and organizational

VII. For nationalization of the key enterprises and reorganization of the economy under a workers and peoples plan

In Colombia imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation are two things irrevocably linked together. A minority of employers live off the labor of millions of workers, which causes all sorts of suffering. In order to begin to turn this around, we call for the nationalization under workers control of the ten big financial groups of Colombia (Santodomingo, Gran-colombiano, Banco de Bogotá, Suramericana, Ardila Lulle, Cafetero, Gran burguesía del Valle, City Bank, Rockefeller, and Morgan), which control industry, banking and the export business. For the nationalization of all key enterprises, the unification of banking under state control, and elaboration of a workers and peoples economic plan to be applied by a workers government.

VIII. For an internationalist policy

We put forward an internationalist policy to serve the interests of the anti-imperialist struggle and the Latin American and world revolution. We stand for the unification of Latin America into a Federation of Socialist Republics, which could start with a federation with socialist Cuba. We campaign for Colombia's withdrawal from the OAS and for the dissolution of that body. We support the struggles for national liberation and socialism that have broken out in various parts of the world. We unconditionally support Cuba, the USSR, China, and the other workers states against any imperialist attack. We stand for proletarian struggle in the workers states to establish true socialist democracy. We defend the right of nations to sovereignty and full self-determination. We call for active solidarity with the people of Panama in their struggle for the immediate return of the Canal under conditions of full sovereignty, with no military intervention and no Yankee bases.

IX. We are fighting for a socialist Colombia

The only way society can be fundamentally transformed so that it benefits the twenty-five million oppressed and exploited wage earners of Colombia is through the revolutionary mobilization of the masses to overturn the political power of the exploiters and institute a workers government that could make Colombia a socialist republic. We call for a government of the workers and poor peasants that would be based on factory committees, on assemblies and councils of the workers and poor masses, on the trade unions, on the organizations of the peasants, oppressed communities, and soldiers. This is the only kind of government that can enact this program in its entirety. □

'Protracted' Negotiations Predicted

Sadat Leaves Washington Empty-Handed

By David Frankel



SADAT

[The following article appeared in the February 17 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

Faced with continuing Israeli intransigence, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat is once again pleading for help from Washington. Sadat made his latest futile appeal upon his arrival in the United States February 3 and was quickly turned down by the Carter administration.

A top-ranking administration official explained to reporters in Washington that Carter has no intention of pushing for Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab land seized by the Zionist state during the 1967 war. In addition, the official restated the refusal of the U.S. government to support any formula on Palestinian rights that could leave open the possibility of an independent Palestinian state.

At the same time, Washington tried to maintain its stance as a supposedly impartial mediator. The Carter administration stressed that it did not favor the retention of Zionist settlements in the Sinai Peninsula after the return of that area to Egyptian sovereignty.

New York Times columnist James Res-

ton summed up the situation February 5 as follows: "Sadat is not going to get Carter to withdraw military aid from Israel or give new weapons to Egypt to establish some new military balance of power in the Middle East. And [Israeli Prime Minister Menahem] Begin is not going to get the support of Carter for his new settlements on the West Bank and military establishment on Egyptian territory."

But this has been Washington's policy ever since the 1967 war—official disapproval of Israeli settlements on Arab land, while providing the military and economic aid that makes the policy of de facto annexation feasible.

Reston spelled out Carter's intentions with considerable frankness. As he put it, "the whole point of Carter's invitation to Sadat to come to Camp David is to keep the dialogue going on philosophical and future questions rather than on mathematical boundaries, military enclaves, and shipment of F-15 fighter planes to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt."

The policy, in other words, is simply to stall on any real changes in the status quo. As Reston notes, if Carter waits "for the Israelis and the Egyptians to agree on a philosophical basis for compromise in the future, without decisive interference by the United States . . . he will wait for a very long time."

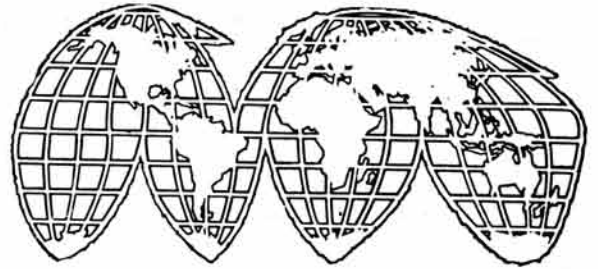
A similar point was made by Sen. Jacob Javits, a strong supporter of the Israeli state. "This whole [negotiating] process can work, but it's going to be protracted," Javits commented.

Meanwhile, the Zionist regime is taking advantage of the situation to tighten its grip on the occupied territories. On January 31—the same day that negotiations on military issues between the Israelis and Egyptians resumed—the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* announced the establishment of three new settlements in the occupied West Bank. *Ma'ariv* reported that the Begin regime is planning a total of thirty-nine new colonies in the West Bank alone. □

Even Better Than Nixon

" . . . big business has the ear of Jimmy Carter, Democrat, to a greater degree than was true of Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford, Republicans, and some of the business establishment leaders say they are getting along better with Mr. Carter than they did with his predecessors"—Louis M. Kohlmeier, in the February 5 *New York Times*.

AROUND THE WORLD



Gunboat Diplomacy Off Horn of Africa

In a little publicized move, the Pentagon has strengthened its naval presence in the Red Sea, off the coast of Eritrea.

A brief thirteen-line news item in the February 7 *New York Times* reported that according to a Defense Department representative, a destroyer of the Sixth Fleet normally assigned to the Red Sea area was sent to waters off Eritrea to join another destroyer and a smaller warship already there. The reason he cited was the general "tension" in the region (see article on page 218).

Such gunboat diplomacy confirms the danger of direct imperialist intervention in the Horn of Africa.

For nearly a year, the Carter administration has been preparing a justification for possible intervention, making repeated denunciations of alleged massive Soviet and Cuban "interference" in the area, largely on the side of the Ethiopian regime. Similar charges, it should be recalled, were levelled during the Angolan civil war of 1975-76 as an attempted cover for the joint American and South African intervention in that country.

At the same time that U.S. naval strength in the Red Sea was being beefed up, White House officials escalated their efforts to manufacture a smokescreen. In a typical item, *New York Times* correspondent Graham Hovey reported from Washington February 4, "Carter Administration officials said today that recent intelligence reports strongly suggest that Cuban pilots based in Ethiopia were carrying out air strikes in Soviet-built planes against targets inside Somalia in an expansion of the war in the Horn of Africa."

On February 9, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance claimed that 2,000 Cuban troops were fighting in the Ogaden region against Somali forces and said that more Cuban soldiers were "probably on the way."

The Castro government has acknowledged sending diplomats and medical personnel to Ethiopia, but has repeatedly denied providing troops or military advisers.

Founders of Independent Trade Union Arrested by Soviet Political Police

Five Soviet workers who had announced the formation of an independent trade union in the USSR were arrested February

7 in Moscow.

They had made public the formation of the Trade Union in Defense of Workers at a press conference with foreign correspondents in Moscow January 26, stating that the new union already had 200 members.

This was the third press conference dissenting workers have held since December 1, 1977, to protest persecution of workers who expose corruption and unsafe working conditions.

Among those arrested was Vladimir Klebanov, a coal miner who had been confined for four-and-a-half years in a psychiatric hospital-prison for protesting the unsafe working conditions in his mine.

At the January 26 press conference, Klebanov said he hoped George Meany, president of the American trade-union federation, the AFL-CIO, would extend moral support to the new union. He said that the new union would apply to the International Labor Organization in Geneva for recognition.

One spokesman for the new union, Nikolai Ivanov, said he believed the five who were arrested would be sent back to their home cities.

The workers who organized the press conference came from a number of different cities throughout the USSR. They met when they came to Moscow to seek redress of their grievances from the highest party and government bodies.

Jayewardene Completes 'Constitutional Coup'

Under the provisions of a constitutional amendment adopted in October 1977, Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka has had himself proclaimed president, with sweeping executive powers.

The inaugural ceremonies were held February 4, to coincide with the celebrations of the thirtieth anniversary of the country's independence from Britain. Jayewardene was sworn in precisely at 8:58 a.m., a time deemed to be astrologically auspicious.

As president, Jayewardene will have considerably greater powers than before. If the National State Assembly is dissolved and new elections are held, he will still remain in office for the full six-year term before facing direct election himself, even if his United National Party is defeated (it

now holds a majority in parliament).

He has direct control over the armed forces and has the power to declare a state of emergency whenever he sees fit, without consulting the National State Assembly. He also has the power to invite foreign troops into the so-called Free Trade Zones.

Jayewardene has repeatedly dismissed charges that his sweeping powers are dictatorial. However, in a statement issued on October 5, 1977, the Revolutionary Marxist Party, Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International, pointed out that with the adoption of the constitutional amendment making him president, "Mr. J.R. Jayewardene is thus about to assume the powers of a dictator, without the consent of the people, on the basis of a constitutional fiction."

All They Left Out Was the Ball and Chain

The United Mine Workers bargaining council voted overwhelmingly February 10 to reject proposed settlement terms for the nine-week coal strike. The 33 to 3 vote came in the form of a straw poll rather than a formal tally, since UMW president Arnold Miller was apparently afraid to show up to present the contract terms officially.

The exact text of the settlement reached by Miller and the coal operators February 6 has not yet been made public. Newspaper accounts have revealed some of the terms: wage increases totaling \$2.35 an hour over three years; loss of the cost-of-living clause; the right of the coal companies to institute Sunday work—something they have not been able to do for eighty-eight years; harsh measures against strikers, including \$20-a-day fines for miners who honor "wildcat" picket lines and summary firing of strike leaders; dismantling of the model "womb-to-tomb" medical care plan and the substitution of commercial health insurance.

One member of the bargaining council said that it would not take long to vote down the settlement, "because all we really have left to put in there is the ball and chain."

On February 7 the bargaining council refused to vote on the contract summary and demanded its full text.

Meanwhile there was an angry response in the coal fields, as the contract terms

became known. Several hundred miners in Ohio and West Virginia boarded buses to demonstrate outside the UMW headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Miller complained that he could not get into the UMW offices to present the contract as scheduled February 10 because of "intimidation and threats of violence by a small and irresponsible group of miners." Members of the bargaining council rejected this, pointing out that they had no difficulty passing through the demonstrating miners to enter the building.

Even after the bargaining council approves a settlement, it must be ratified by the 188,000 UMW members in a secret ballot.

Opposition Boycotts Philippine 'Elections'

The bourgeois opposition Liberal Party announced February 3 that it would not field candidates in the projected April 2 elections to an interim parliament.

Spokesmen for the party said that it would be useless to enter the elections unless freedom of speech and assembly were guaranteed and supporters of President Ferdinand E. Marcos were barred from supervising the ballot count.

Marcos, who has ruled the Philippines under martial law since 1972, announced the legislative elections to give his authoritarian regime a parliamentary facade. He established a progovernment party, called the New Society Movement, especially for the elections.

Even if the elections are held, the repressive provisions of martial law will remain in effect. Beyond that, Marcos will retain the power to override or abolish the legislature.

Wafd Party Legalized in Egypt

The Wafd, Egypt's dominant capitalist political party for nearly thirty years before it was banned by the military government in 1953, was restored recognition as a legal political organization by the Sadat regime February 3.

The leaders of the Wafd have endorsed Sadat's negotiations with Israel.

Elections in Costa Rica

Rodrigo Carazo of the bourgeois opposition coalition Alianza de Unidad (Unity Alliance) was elected president of Costa Rica in elections held February 5. Carazo received 52 percent of the vote, as against 43 percent for Luis Alberto Monge, candidate of the Partido de Liberación Nacional (PLN—National Liberation Party), which has been in power for the past eight years.

The candidate of a coalition of three reformist workers parties called Pueblo Unido (People's Unity) received about 2 percent of the vote.

No report is yet available on the number of votes received by Carlos Coronado, the presidential candidate of the Trotskyist

Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST—Socialist Workers Organization). The OST ran a vigorous campaign in face of repression and police harassment directed against its candidates. Coronado was jailed twice in November and December as a result of the OST's support for the struggles of the Black community in the city of Limón.

Both Carazo and Monge have been described as "liberals." Carazo's victory can probably be attributed in part to a scandal that broke last May after former president and PLN founder José Figueres told the New York magazine *New Republic* about the CIA's role in Costa Rica in the 1950s:

"I was closer to the CIA than most, I suppose, and with their help, we financed . . . a social democratic magazine, which was edited by Luis Alberto Monge.

"During my first presidency the top representative of the CIA in Costa Rica enjoyed all the confidence of my government—so much so that sometimes he was even present at cabinet meetings."

Figueres also said that fugitive U.S. financier Robert Vesco had secretly funded the election campaigns of many members of the Costa Rican Legislative Assembly and of outgoing President Daniel Oduber.

Carazo said after the election that he would ask Vesco, who fled to Costa Rica with Figueres's help in 1973, to leave the country "as quickly as possible."

Protests Greet Shah in New Delhi

Iranian and Indian students demonstrated in New Delhi February 2, as the shah of Iran arrived for a four-day visit. The protest was attacked by baton-wielding police, who made several arrests.

First Things First

"WASHINGTON, Jan. 31—Pentagon officials are strongly objecting to a new Arms Control and Disarmament Agency report that concludes that American deployment of the neutron bomb could increase chances of a nuclear war.

"The officials fear that the study, which examines the potential impact of the controversial weapon on East-West military stability and arms-control talks with the Soviet Union, could jeopardize Congressional approval of funds for the neutron bomb." (*New York Times*, February 1, 1978.)

GIs Protest Neutron Bomb

Two American soldiers stationed in West Germany are being discharged, following their circulation of a petition against the neutron bomb in Mannheim, Heidelberg, Augsburg, and Karlsruhe.

Col. Perry G. Stevens, chief spokesman for the U.S. Army in Europe, acknowl-



Conrad/Los Angeles Times

edged that the two men—Private John Vitu and Private Kenneth Ulrich—"are being discharged" but denied that the petition had anything to do with the army's decision.

Police Club Students in Ghana

On January 13, the sixth anniversary of the Ghanaian military junta's seizure of power, about 1,000 students demonstrated at the University of Ghana campus at Legon, just outside Accra. They burned an effigy of Gen. Kutu Acheampong, the head of the junta.

Backed up by six armored cars, a large number of club-wielding police moved onto the campus twice to try to break up the antigovernment demonstration. According to a dispatch from Accra by David B. Ottaway in the January 17 *Washington Post*, "Scores of male and female students were arrested or hospitalized, many with severe head or body injuries, as the police forced them out of their rooms with tear gas and clubbed others, as well as university workers and lecturers."

In Accra itself, groups of progovernment thugs attacked anyone voicing opposition to the junta's plans to set up a "union government," that is, a regime with some civilian members that would still be dominated by the military. A referendum on the question of "union government" has been set for March 30. During the anniversary celebrations, Acheampong announced that the military and police had been put on alert to deal "swiftly and effectively" with anyone attempting to disrupt the referendum campaign.

Students were also reported to have demonstrated in Kumasi, 170 miles northwest of Accra. They were said to have blocked the main road into the city and destroyed a van filled with copies of the progovernment *Ghanaian Times*.

Social Security Benefits Slashed

By Jon Britton

Wide publicity has been given to the fact that Social Security taxes in the United States are being drastically increased as a result of legislation passed by Congress and signed by Jimmy Carter in December. (See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 23, p. 78.)

Receiving hardly any notice, however, is the fact that the same legislation sharply reduces the pension payments workers could expect to receive under the old law.

For example, the benefits for twenty-five-year-old workers who now earn \$10,000 a year and will not reach retirement age until 2018 will be slashed in half, according to Kwasha Lipton, a New Jersey actuarial consulting firm.

In 1972, shortly before the presidential and congressional elections of that year, legislation was passed increasing Social Security benefits from their previous abysmal level and providing automatic adjustments for inflation.

Benefits actually being paid to retired workers were to be increased once a year whenever the cost of living, based on the government's index, rose more than 3%.

In addition, initial pensions upon retirement were to go up, with the increases tied to inflation.

Thus, under the 1972 legislation initial Social Security checks had reached 46% of the average worker's wages (about \$10,000) last year, or about \$380 a month for a new retiree. Kwasha Lipton calculated that the payments would have gone to 58% in 1983, 66% in 1998, and 83% in 2018, assuming 4% a year inflation and 5% annual increase in wages.

According to Deborah Rankin, writing in the January 28 *New York Times*, "Studies have shown that the average worker needs retirement benefits equal to . . . about 75 percent of his preretirement earnings. . . ." The assumption behind these studies, Rankin says, is that a retired worker needs less because Social Security payments are tax free and he or she no longer has to pay such job-related costs as travel and clothes.

This accords with the scrap-heap concept of workers' retirement held by the capitalists and their academic apologists: bare subsistence, if that; inadequate health care; no travel for pleasure; and little entertainment or other activity that costs money.

Thus, under the old law, while workers reaching retirement age between now and the end of the century would not even come close to the modest level recommended by



Herblock/Washington Post

these studies, some younger workers could look forward to actually slightly exceeding it in their "golden years."

It turns out, however, that the capitalist politicians never meant to be so "generous," even in an election year. According to Rankin it was all due to "a mistake in designing the benefit formula."

Congress in 1972 had actually aimed for pensions averaging 40% of the preretirement earnings. But the faulty formula, combined with unexpectedly high inflation, had by 1977 boosted them substantially higher. This year, initial pensions for the average newly retired worker will be an extravagant 52% of final earnings!

The increased benefits, together with lower than expected tax revenues owing to the 1974-75 depression, prompted Carter to press Congress for new legislation to put the Social Security System in a "sound condition."

The result is the new law, to take effect in fiscal 1979, which could more than triple payroll taxes for some workers in the next ten years and will gradually cut retirement benefits for the average workers to 47% of final pay, regardless of inflation.

But perhaps the outlook for U.S. workers when they retire is really not so gloomy. After all, private pension plans, savings, and help from relatives supplement Social Security income for the elderly.

According to the 1972 *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, however, of the entire population sixty-five years of age or older fewer than one-fifth have private-pension income. (Some 10% receive income from other public pension plans.)

Many workers are told by their bosses or union officials that they are covered by a private pension plan, but they frequently end up losing their benefits if they are laid off permanently or decide to change jobs. In the case of the coal miners, the pension fund is financed out of coal production, and when production drops because of a slump or strike, pensions are jeopardized or cut off.

As for other sources of income, only 2% of those sixty-five or older receive financial help from relatives. And savings for a retired worker who had been making \$10,000 a year can't amount to much either.

Because the retirement income from Social Security and other sources is often not enough to live on, many elderly persons are forced to work to make ends meet. According to the *Statistical Abstract*, 46% of married couples, 19% of unmarried men, and 14% of unmarried women aged sixty-five or older supplemented their pensions in this way.

But such earnings are strictly limited under the Social Security law. Currently, a pensioner under age seventy-two loses one dollar for every two dollars earned above \$3,000 a year. (The limit will be raised somewhat under the new law.)

This limit, along with desperate economic straits, make many elderly persons vulnerable to superexploitation by profit-hungry employers.

Those who are unable to find employment, or are too sick to work, sometimes resort to begging to avoid outright starvation.

Meanwhile, it was reported January 28 that seventeen large U.S. corporations paid no federal income taxes in 1976, by taking advantage of various loopholes. These included U.S. Steel and other major steel producers, General Dynamics, Singer, Phelps Dodge, American Airlines, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the Chase Manhattan Corp.

And for about 150 such firms, the average effective tax rate was some 13%, according to Representative Charles Vanik, Democrat from Ohio. That rate, he pointed out, is about what a family of four with earnings of \$20,000 a year pays.

"The trend toward diminishing corporate taxes indicates a phaseout of a substantial part of corporate taxation," Vanik said.

He might have added that payroll and other regressive taxes are more and more being "phased in."

If Carter has his way, this trend will continue. He proposes further cuts for big business of \$6-7 billion as part of his "tax cut and reform" package submitted to

Congress last month.

As Carter once said in response to a reporter's question about the cutoff of

government funds for poor women's abortions, "Life is unfair." We would add, "under capitalism." □

Trotskyists Unite in Australia

By Allen Myers

[The following article appeared in the January 26 issue of *Direct Action*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in Sydney, Australia.]

* * *

Nearly 200 delegates and observers attended the fusion conference of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist League, held near Sydney from January 8 to 14.

The week-long conference healed a five-year split in the Australian Trotskyist movement, creating a united revolutionary party with a far greater ability to intervene in the class struggle and win support for its revolutionary program.

Delegates voted to name the united party Socialist Workers Party (Australian section of the Fourth International).

The gathering culminated a six-month fusion process of increased discussion and common work between CL and SWP members.

The conference was preceded by three months of oral and written discussion in the branches of both organisations. A joint discussion bulletin was published during this period, to which all members were free to contribute. Twelve numbers of the bulletin, totalling 400 pages, were printed in the course of the discussion.

In the Fourth International, of which the united party is the Australian section, delegates to the conference are elected on the basis of their support for or opposition to the major resolutions presented for consideration. Any grouping with a position opposed to that of the outgoing leadership elects its own delegates in proportion to its numbers in the party.

The broad measure of political agreement achieved during the fusion process is indicated by the fact that no such tendency was formed in opposition to any of the resolutions. The only division in the election of delegates occurred in the CL, where a group that favoured postponing the fusion for six months won 20 percent of the delegates.

After separate conferences of the two organisations had voted for fusion, the united conference adopted all the major reports and resolutions without a dissenting vote.

Despite the virtual unanimity of political line, the conference discussion was perhaps the richest in the history of Australian Trotskyism.

This reflected the different experiences of the CL and SWP and also the experiences gained in other movements. Delegates included former members of the Communist Party of Australia and of the Socialist Labour League, a sectarian group that claims to be Trotskyist.

Even more, the rich discussion resulted from the new openings available to the united party and the increasingly obvious need for a class-struggle program in the fight back against Fraser's offensive.

This was indicated, among other things, by the range of areas considered by the conference. The delegates adopted reports or resolutions on the international situation; "The Crisis of Australian Capitalism," an outline of capitalist political economy in this country; the current political situation in Australia; building a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement; the movement against uranium mining; the party's organizational tasks in the coming year; the work of the Socialist Youth Alliance; and the situation in the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organisation.

In addition, there was a special panel and discussion on the women's liberation movement, as well as workshops on trade unions, gay liberation, the ALP, the Black movement, Palestine, and Latin America.

Evening sessions heard special educational talks: an analysis of the workers' upsurge in Spain; a comparison of the movements against the Vietnam War and against uranium mining; a description of the contributions to party-building made by James P. Cannon, the American revolutionary; and an analysis of why the politics of the CPA still deserve to be characterised as Stalinist.

The overriding theme of the conference was the need for a class-struggle program and methods if the bosses' offensive is to be defeated. This was summarised in the slogan "For a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement."

Reporters and delegates repeatedly emphasised that the timidity of ALP and ACTU leaders in the face of Fraser's attacks had produced nothing but setbacks for the workers and other oppressed people, while encouraging the reactionaries to step up their offensive. It was this failure to fight back by the ALP leadership which produced the debacle of the December 10 elections.

The three Stalinist parties—Maoists, CPA, and Socialist Party of Australia—had all failed to provide an alternative to the reformism of the ALP. All have followed a more or less open policy of collaboration with one or another section of the bosses. The CPA, for example, with its support for protectionism and the People's Economic Program, has sought to ally the workers movement with "small and medium" manufacturing capitalists.

The various small sects on the left had also failed to provide a real alternative. This is due less to their small size than to their sectarianism: their inability to recognise movements such as that against uranium mining or for women's liberation as a part of the class struggle and to intervene in them with a correct program.

Only the forces of the Fourth International in Australia—the SWP and the CL—have been able to put forward a class-struggle program of fighting back against Fraser and the bosses. As delegates stressed, the creation of a united party will greatly enhance the ability to win a hearing for revolutionary politics and increase the party's ability to intervene in struggles.

The perspective of a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement is not confined to "bread and butter" trade union struggles. Rather, it focuses on encouraging the entire labor movement to become the champion of all progressive causes: women's liberation, self-determination for Aborigines, gay liberation, opposition to uranium mining, etc.

As part of this perspective, the delegates decided on a "propaganda offensive" to spread the ideas of socialism. This will include expansion of the circulation of *Direct Action* and *Socialist Worker*, the party's theoretical journal.

Also projected was the publication of four new books in 1978, and possibly a second printing of *Towards a Socialist Australia*, which was published last year.

In order to finance these and other plans for expansion, the delegates voted to launch a three-month fund drive for \$15,000. This will be combined with a campaign to raise substantially the income of party branches and national office.

Flowing from the greater size of the united party, its participation in the struggle, and the propaganda offensive will be the opportunity to win more and more militants to the party of revolutionary socialism. The conference therefore planned a year-long campaign to recruit new members and educate them in the ideas of Marxism and the methods of building the revolutionary party.

This conference was already the largest in the history of Australian Trotskyism. As it concluded with the singing of the "Internationale," delegates were confident that next year's conference will be significantly larger still.

The Long March of the Argentine Working Class—1

By Héctor Lucero

[The following article appeared in the October-December 1977 issue of *Coyoacán*, a quarterly magazine published in Mexico City. We are publishing it in two installments. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

I

The “novel” character of the March 1976 military coup in Argentina and the ferocity of the repression unleashed there cannot be understood unless they are viewed in the context of a world strategy, centered in the United States, for reorganizing the forces of capitalism on a world scale. The origins of this strategy can be found in the 1973-75 “disengagement” from Vietnam.

The United States is necessarily the focal point of this reorganization. This role derives from the evident solidity and strength still enjoyed by the American economic apparatus, as well as from the U.S.’s indisputable predominance within the bloc of advanced capitalist countries. The security of the Latin American home front clearly occupies a primary position in the global design.

This course is aggravating the crisis of the nationalist movements in Latin America. The sharpness of this crisis and the fierceness of the repression in each particular country are in direct proportion to the level of organization and the social weight attained by the workers movement. Thus in Argentina the repression reveals aspects of unprecedented cruelty, not only in the individual cases of murder, torture, and imprisonment, but above all in the systematic, planned, “industrial” way that the repression is carried out.

Argentina is not a remote, marginal country. In its productive structure, communications network, and urbanization; in the absolute predominance of capitalist relations in agriculture and industry; and in its culture, Argentina resembles a European country. Consequently, the repressive methods employed are not those of a classical “South American dictatorship,” or those of an Asiatic or African despotism—regimes which confront societies that are basically agrarian and traditional. The methods are rather those of the Nazi version of European fascism; that is to say, the ones employed in a struggle against a highly urbanized population, a struggle to destroy the basic organizations of a highly organized working class.

Nevertheless, Argentine repression is not fascism in the classical German or

Italian sense. There is a similarity in that the primary victims are the proletariat and its ally, the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The proletariat is suffering attacks on its organizations and living conditions (on unions, wages, social legislation, etc.). At the same time, the repression is being focused in such a way as to try to avoid affecting other sectors of the populace that have no organized weight. The aim is to keep these layers indifferent to the massacre that is being carried out.

The principal difference between classical fascism and what is happening in Argentina is that the offensive against the workers organizations is not based on the reactionary mobilization of the petty-bourgeois masses. Instead it relies on the military-state apparatus and on the apathy or paralysis of the political organs of the bourgeoisie and the petty proprietors and functionaries. These layers have been neutralized by the terror all around them, which they hope they can escape by remaining motionless.

The other basic difference is that the present situation in the world differs fundamentally from the reactionary international trend in the years between the two world wars when European fascism was on the rise.

The “Vietnamization” of Argentina now under way is not merely the result of some chance disaster in the national class struggle, although the local class struggle has undoubtedly determined many of its characteristics and rhythms. It is an integral part of a global design, one which coincides with the interests of the local ruling classes, who faced a situation that was getting out of control. As in Vietnam—but, we repeat, in the conditions of an urbanized society with a powerful urban proletariat—the methods to be applied in other societies of this type are being tried out and perfected.

Let no one respond, as so many did after Chile, “It can’t happen here.” Urban and industrialized, Argentina is a warning for Europe as clear or clearer than Chile or Uruguay: Just as they did in Spain in 1936, the rulers are testing out the most modern methods of antiworking-class dictatorship. If they are not stopped, they will attempt to put these methods to use elsewhere.

II

In Argentina—with the nationalist wing of the army on which Perón based himself now disorganized and reduced to

impotence—the military is out to achieve a kind of “final solution” of what has been a unique, and heretofore insoluble problem for it: the organization of the masses of the Argentine proletariat—the trade unions and the Peronist movement.

The army is carrying through to the end a plan that at other times it halted halfway, as it was overwhelmed by the extent of the mass resistance and divided by its own internal contradictions. It is trying to break up, destroy, and root out the organizations of the working class, by using repression, terror, unemployment, wiping out workers’ social gains, and isolating them politically.¹

The tragedy of the Argentine proletariat is that it has to confront this massacre without a party of its own. Moreover, it finds itself politically isolated on a world scale because its form of organization has up to now been politically “incomprehensible” for the big international working-class currents. As a result, the struggle often appears to European eyes not as a war against the working class, but only against “extremists” and guerrillas, or as a fight between bourgeois ideological factions—the army on one side, the Peronists on the other.

This peculiarity of the Argentine workers movement helps to explain why,

1. The repression has many facets besides the dissolution of the political parties and the unions, the abrogation of the social laws, and the body count of the dead that appear in the streets each morning. For example, inflation and the drop in wages. At the beginning of November [1976], *Corriere della Sera* published these striking statistics (from a report of the Union on Swiss banks in Zurich) on the number of working hours necessary for purchasing a “basket” of various goods and services in some of the larger cities of the world: Amsterdam, 91; Zurich, 92; Dusseldorf, 100; Stockholm, 104; London, 124; Milan, 138; Paris, 149; Madrid, 158; Tokyo, 162; Buenos Aires, 492! The figures are for May 1976.

With industry functioning at 35 percent of capacity, the Buenos Aires daily *La Nación* reports: “With the December [1975] level defined as 100, the evolution of real wages has been as follows: April [1976], 55.7; May, 49.2; August, 50.4; September, 53.7.” It is hardly necessary to say what this means for the workers: overtime work, take-home work, and second jobs; violations of safety rules to get higher pay and thus an increase in industrial accidents; increase in work-related illnesses and illness due to malnutrition—in short, a precipitous drop in the level of subsistence of the labor force.

unlike what occurred in the case of Chile—where the presence of big Socialist and Communist workers parties made it possible to draw the class line more distinctly and to make it absolutely clear on which side democratic legitimacy lay—we have not seen such a vast movement of solidarity by the European and world left in support of the resistance of the Argentine proletariat.

An additional problem is the ambiguous attitude of the Argentine Communist Party [PCA] toward the military government. In order to avert “a Pinochet in the presidency,” the Communist Party is objectively supporting Videla. Meanwhile, dozens of Pinochets commanding troops throughout the provinces of Argentina are applying themselves to killing off the advanced cadres of the best-organized proletariat in Latin America.

Whatever the justification its supporters care to give it, this policy inevitably raises two barriers: one between the Communist Party itself and the great mass of Peronist workers and unemployed; and another between the world Communist movement, whose local representative is the PCA, and the Argentine proletariat.

The PCA claims that it sets its own policies and takes the consequences (which will be disastrous). Likewise, other Communist parties—especially those in Western Europe—should be able to establish their own relations themselves with the national movement of the Peronist masses as well as with the organizations of the Argentine working class. The Argentine workers are not Communists, but Peronists; to help them it is necessary to understand them as they are.

In order to explain this conclusion, we have to go into the specificity of the way the Argentine proletariat is organized as a class and of the general political crisis in the country.

III

The crisis that has exploded in Argentina is the culmination of a thirty-year cycle of Peronism (1945-75), the specific form taken in Argentina by the mass nationalist movement that developed in so many countries in the immediate postwar period.

In the present situation, one crisis is superimposed on another. First, there is a crisis of the national economy, brought on by the need to adjust to the reorganization of the world economy now under way. In carrying out this adjustment, Argentina has to start from a relative technological backwardness, which is growing, and this makes the crisis particularly acute. Secondly, there is a crisis of the nationalist movement as a front of different classes—the national bourgeoisie, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat—which has resulted essentially from the exhaustion of the economic premises that made it possible for this front to exist. In

simple terms, the economy does not have enough resources to offer everyone enough to keep them united.

The two crises, of course, are related to and interlock with each other. In other



JUAN PERON

countries, where the economic conditions are better or where the working class is not so well organized, such a restructuring of the productive apparatus encounters fewer obstacles. In Argentina, every attempt to carry it out runs up against the resistance of the trade unions.

Since each successive Peronist government (Cámpora, Perón, Isabel Perón) was in one way or another dependent on the support of the organized working class—which they controlled through the union bureaucracy—these regimes did not have the material means to destroy the unions that stood in the way of the capitalist reorganization of the economy. In each test of strength the reorganization was postponed. And a few months later, they would try again when the conditions had gotten still worse because of the growing deterioration of the economy. And then the economic reorganization would be put off again, as the inflationary spiral spun on and economics ministers and their austerity plans fell one after another.

This conflict divided Peronism along class lines. It culminated in the ten-day

general strike in June-July 1975, organized through the factory committees, which finally dragged along the entire national union leadership. Through the strike, the working class broke *socially* with the bourgeois leadership of Peronism, which was embodied in the Isabel Perón-López Rega government. But it did not go to the point of a political break, because it did not have a party of its own and could not counterpose its own programmatic and political alternatives to those of the government. Its “party” was the trade unions. The union leaders did not propose a working-class policy, but only reiterated the classical nationalist policy of the early years of the Peronist movement. The economic resources and the world situation on which Perón based his first government had, however, long since ceased to exist.

The death agony of Isabel Perón’s regime reflected the conflict between these “two souls” of Peronism. For applying the bourgeois-nationalist line of the unions, the *economic* conditions no longer existed. And for applying the conservative line of the bourgeoisie allied with imperialism, the *social* conditions did not yet exist. This required first breaking the resistance of the union organizations by means of a dictatorship.

The way in which the conflict would be resolved depended on who was in a position to offer a *political* way out. The 1975 general strike was the supreme demonstration of the incomparable social power of the working class, and at the same time of its political impotence. Even when trade unions are forced to step onto the political stage, they cannot rise to the level of a party. The most the unions have been able to do is support the left faction of the party of the national bourgeoisie, in this case the Peronists. If the unions are to back a working-class political line, such a line must already exist, and it can only be formulated by a workers party solidly rooted in the class. Building a workers party does not start in the trade unions. A workers party brings a working-class policy to the unions. While each process conditions the other, one must never forget which comes first.

The working class was able to draw the entire toiling population behind it in the most impressive general strike in years. The proletariat demonstrated that it had the strength and the social power of attraction to contend for the leadership of the nation, but that it lacked a political line for actually taking the lead. While not offering a political solution, the strike set off all the alarm bells in the opposing camp.

The petty bourgeoisie—the functionaries, professionals, small shopkeepers and artisans—supported the general strike. Then, seeing the political impotence of the proletariat and the growing decomposition of the moribund regime of Isabel Perón, it swung in a few months toward the opposite extreme. This is a classic phenomenon

in such processes, and is well known to those who have analyzed the 1920 factory occupations in Italy and dozens of similar examples.

The armed forces were not waiting for the support of the petty bourgeoisie, only for it to become neutralized or fall into apathy. The corruption of the late Peronist regime and the repression carried out by the regime's armed bands did the rest. When the military overthrew the government, no one fired even a single shot, or uttered even a single sentence in its defense.

Nevertheless, the support for the military came not from a sense of "national honor" that had been offended by the corruption and the repression (in which cadres of the army were already clandestinely participating) but rather from the conservative wing of the Argentine bourgeoisie, linked to the multinational corporations; and the agrarian oligarchy, linked to the exporters. Forces in Argentina, not the United States, organized the coup, but they undoubtedly enjoyed Washington's prior consent.

The other sector of the industrial bourgeoisie, which is dependent on the internal market and was the traditional base of support for Peronist governments, had been demoralized by inflation, administrative corruption, economic chaos, and the gradual disintegration of the productive apparatus. It yielded, or resigned itself, to the coup that marked the transfer of power to the other section of the ruling class.

The army was the interpreter of the option represented by the coup, and its officers had prepared for years in such a perspective. The nationalist military faction, terrified by the magnitude of the general strike, fearful of being outflanked by their old proletarian ally, and totally incapable of offering a solution of their own to deal with the uncontrollable disorder of the economy, chose silence and let themselves be broken up. Those who took command were the previously silent representatives of the bloc of the agrarian oligarchy, the multinationals, and the financial bourgeoisie linked to these sectors.

The blow-up of the Peronist national front left the working class without leadership, even bourgeois leadership. Forced to choose between accepting the coup and organizing resistance, the union leaders connected with the Peronist state opted in their majority for a "third solution"—flight. This was an entire leading layer. It had been educated in a spirit of dependence on the state, its ministers, its parliamentary benches, and its pension and Social Security funds. The state had generously supported the good life of a bureaucracy that was always ready to negotiate with the state and try to put pressure on it, but never to confront the state and break with it in the name of the legitimate interests of the working class. The whole

conception of a trade unionism dependent on the state—Perón's "national revolutionary" state—crumbled away under the first blows of a military coup that was aimed squarely not at establishing a bargaining position with the unions but at destroying them by utilizing that same state machine—and its army—which before had sheltered the unions under its wing.

The way was opened for the army to initiate a kind of prolonged and widened "Tell Zaatar"² throughout the country. For now, and for a period of still unknown duration, this is the political line that has won out as an answer to a crisis of the nationalist movement that none of the antagonistic class components of this movement were capable of resolving. And as recently as 1973, it should not be forgotten, the Perón-Isabel Perón government was swept into office with 80 percent of the vote.

Given the absence of a workers party, or the disastrous policy of what workers party there was, the enormous organized social power of the working class was not enough to put it in a position to impose its own solution. Nor was this social power sufficient to prevent the imposition of the class enemies' solution. To the contrary, the way was opened to the worst possibility of all, a solution that corresponded to the fear inspired in the bourgeoisie by the power of the workers movement. This is one more lesson of the Argentine events, certainly not a new one, for those who think the victory of the "people united" is automatically assured.

IV

The official enemy in the undeclared civil war that the army is waging in Argentina is the Montoneros and the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo [ERP—People's Revolutionary Army]. (The latter organization has been paralyzed by the blows it has suffered, including the death of Mario Roberto Santucho.)

There certainly is a civil war, but the real enemy is not the guerrilla organizations. It is to be found at a much deeper level: the national organization of the Argentine working class.

What is this organization?

In the first place, it has not been finished off by the outlawing of the unions, the flight or imprisonment of their top leaders, the murder of the most radical among them (such as, for example, Atilio López, one of the leaders of the "Cordobazo"), or the banning of all trade-union activity.

The real union, not the official one, has its life at a deeper level. (By "real union," we mean that entire fabric of organization

that starts at the shop and plant level, passes through the delegates and the internal commissions, and runs all the way up to the regional and national leaderships in each industry. All this fits together in a pattern of interrelations that is full of contradictions and conflicts but nevertheless forms an indivisible social reality.)

What we see here is one of the most organized proletariats in the world. Its organization was formed tested, and tempered by thirty years of uninterrupted operation. This organization is rooted in the tradition of the old unions whose formation was initiated back at the turn of the century by the Italian and Spanish socialists and anarchist immigrants.

Beginning in 1944-45, the plant committees appeared in Argentina. They were made up of shop delegates elected in general assemblies. These delegate bodies functioned as veritable parliaments in the factories. Even with their unavoidable bureaucratic deformations, these bodies formed the basis for organizing the big general and local strikes, the factory occupations, the trade-union life of the proletariat. At the same time, this activity was the elementary form of the political life of the working class. It took place within the Peronist national (not class) movement. The great social and national gains—from vacations, wages, retirement benefits, and Social Security, to the government policy on nationalizations—are all linked in the proletariat's historical memory to its experience in these organizations and those struggles, and not simply to the legislation adopted under the Peronist governments.

But above all, this organization—the delegates, internal commissions, delegate bodies, general assemblies, union elections, democratic rights in the factories and workplaces—is linked in the consciousness of the Argentine workers to an advance inseparable from these organizational forms but which in a certain sense sums them up and goes beyond them—the achievement of personal dignity, of respect in the workplace, of a kind of democracy infinitely more real to the workers than periodic political elections. This democracy consists of the right to organize trade unions, to have an opinion and express it at work, to discuss collectively, to influence social decisions not as an isolated individual but as a collective force—in the same way and with the same collective methods that are decisive in production and in creating the material bases of society.

The forces of the so-called "liberators' revolution" that overthrew Perón in 1955 made the error of believing their own propaganda. They thought the workers' gains were demagogic concessions granted by a "populist" government, and not the products of a tenacious struggle of a class for its own social identity. They believed that deposing Perón would put an end to Peronism, and that designating some "democratic" trade-union leaders from above

2. Tell Zaatar: Palestinian refugee camp near Beirut at which thousands of persons were massacred by Lebanese rightist forces in August 1976.—*IP/I*

would spell the end of the "vertical" leaders [that is, those subordinated to the discipline of the Peronist movement] whom they thought Perón had imposed on the workers.

"The Liberators" understood nothing. In the same way, the forces of the European left understood nothing when for years they made the lamentable error of considering the Argentine unions "fascist"—simply because they had a Peronist, not Communist or Socialist, workers leadership. That error helped to isolate the Argentine workers movement from the big international working-class currents. Paradoxically, it helped to prolong the dominance of the Peronists.

Thus, there began a long resistance lasting eighteen years. In the face of it successive civilian and military governments entered into crisis and fell. In this crucible, a whole generation of workers who had not experienced the first years of Peronism was forged. During this period, the unions adopted anti-imperialist programs (programs of the Huerta Grande and La Falda), organized general strikes and local insurrectional strikes as in Córdoba in 1969, defended their conquests and living standards, and, above all, maintained the social cohesion and level of organization achieved during the years when Perón was in power.

It is quite easy today to understand why, having failed to put an end to this resistance through "normal" dictatorial methods (suppression of democratic rights, jailings, and sporadic murders, either in executions or by firing on demonstrations), the army and the bourgeoisie decided to play the last card of Peronism: bring Perón himself back to control the mass movement. Although this meant a defeat for the right wing of the bourgeoisie, it was a solution acceptable even to them, since it remained within the capitalist class framework. The last Peronist government suffered the inglorious demise we have seen.

What is not so clear yet, for those who have observed the Argentine working class from afar and not from the inside is the long and continuous learning process this class has undergone. First in legality, then in illegality, and then again in another period of precarious legality during the rule of late Peronism, the working class has had an exceptional experience of organization at all levels.

The Argentine working class has experienced both open and underground forms of assemblies and elections. It has had shop delegates who sometimes were granted recognition and at others hounded by the authorities. It has had leaders who might be in or out of jail. It has had organs and leading bodies that have functioned without any legal headquarters and which have sprung up and then gone out of existence, following the fluctuations of the struggle and the repression. All this orga-

nizational experience has been meshed and woven more and more tightly into the very fabric of the collective life of the working class in their families, in the factories, and in the neighborhoods.



CRAPANZANO

ISABEL PERON

There is no substitute for this living experience of hundreds of thousands and millions of men and women workers, electing their own representatives, placing their confidence in these representatives or criticizing them, discussing their conduct, protecting them against police and military persecution, struggling to get them out of jail, supporting them through collections when they are in prison or fired from their jobs. Peronism is *this also*, not simply the bourgeois speeches of Perón, the grotesque eclipse of his widow, the corrupt lives of the top trade-union officials and politicians.

Anyone who fails to understand the Peronism of the masses and the reason they hang on to a bourgeois ideology that comes into constant conflict with their material struggles, will never be able to help them to surmount this ideology with a socialist program in the actual experience of the class struggle. Because it is out of this *living experience* that the masses will become convinced of the necessity to adopt such a program.

A molecular organization at the plant and neighborhood level has developed in the long struggle, in the truly long march of the Argentine proletariat. The struggle has been continuous for thirty years. And before that, for fifty years, until 1943, the upper layers of the proletariat were orga-

nized in the Socialist Party, which won an electoral majority in Buenos Aires. This deeply rooted organization is difficult to destroy. It is everywhere and nowhere. It has learned to function without headquarters or telephones, to communicate without technical means. It is identified with the very existence of the class as such.

This organization must not be idealized. Repression undoubtedly disrupts it, paralyzes it temporarily, even partially destroys it. But it tends to be reborn periodically, each time a sharp drop in living standards forces the working class to fight for its material survival. It is an elementary form of organization. It has a low political level, which is both a weakness and a protection. It has a high degree of *social cohesion*, which is the essence of its power.

Obviously, in the long run this organizational fabric is not indestructible. There are examples in history that show that it can be destroyed. Its fate depends on the evolution of the relationship of forces, not only on the national level but also internationally. The present dictatorship is well aware of this. That is why it is using the methods not of Somoza in Nicaragua but of Van Thieu in Vietnam. It is the survival of working-class organization that is at stake. If the military dictatorship succeeds in rooting out this organization in Argentina, the United States will be left with a freer hand not only to step up its pressure on Mexico and Cuba, but also to back other operations against the working class in Western Europe and beyond.

[To be continued]

Argentina—World's Highest Inflation

Prices in Argentina have risen an astronomical 20,812% since 1970, placing it at the top of a list of a sample of twenty-four countries cited by the *New York Times* February 5.

Other countries where workers have been particularly hard-hit by inflation in the same eight-year period include the following:

Ghana	593%
Israel	466%
Brazil	277%
Indonesia	233%
Portugal	213%
Nigeria	191%
Mexico	174%
Britain	155%

By contrast, prices in Poland have risen by only 18% in the same period, while in the Soviet Union they have fallen 2.3%.

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2. The War in Eritrea and the Ogaden

By Ernest Harsch

[Second of two parts]

The limitations of the Ethiopian junta's "revolution" are most evident in its policy on the national question. One of its earliest slogans was "Ethiopia tikkem"—Ethiopia first. Its aim is to centralize and "modernize" Selassie's multinational empire on capitalist lines, pledging to uphold Ethiopia's "sacred unity," by force of arms if necessary.

In a country that has traditionally been dominated by an oppressor nationality, the Amharas, this stance is extremely reactionary. It flies in the face of the demands for independence in Eritrea, which has been a colony of Ethiopia since the early 1950s. It runs counter to the demands of the Somalis living under Ethiopian rule to unite politically with their fellow Somalis in Somalia. And it denies the right to self-determination to a number of other oppressed nationalities, including the Oromos (Gallas), Afars, and others.

The Dergue's policies are in marked contrast to those that would be followed by revolutionary socialists. A real workers state would immediately move to end all forms of discrimination against the various nationalities, grant them equal rights, and recognize their right to self-determination, up to and including their right to secede and form independent states should they decide to do so. Only by protecting and guaranteeing the national rights of the oppressed can socialists begin to convince the various peoples in the region of the need for a broader, *voluntary* union.

Anything short of such a policy, and especially the Dergue's drive to retain Ethiopia's present borders by force, will only breed deeper bitterness and animosity on the part of the Eritreans, Somalis, Oromos, Afars, and others.

The explosiveness of the national question in Ethiopia is understandable considering that the country, as it now exists, was created through a process of military conquest. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the dynasty in Addis Ababa expanded its feudal empire southward and eastward, conquering the Oromos and Somalis.

In fact, the Amharic ruler at that time, Menelik, cooperated with the British and Italian colonialists in carving up the Somali-populated territories, resulting in their present division by a number of arbitrarily-drawn state borders. Between 1900 and 1904, Ethiopian troops actually



Christian Science Monitor

joined with British colonial forces to fight against a rebellion in the Ogaden desert region led by Mohamed ibn Abdullah Hassan, one of the founders of modern Somali nationalism.

The Dergue's continuation of this tradition is evident in its present portrayal of Menelik as an Ethiopian "hero."

In the areas that were subjugated by Menelik and later emperors, the land was taken away from the original inhabitants and given to Amhara lords. The peasants were then forced to work the land for the foreign conquerors. The fact that the landlords were usually Amharic injected a nationalist element into the peasant uprisings in the southern provinces that began in 1974.

Somali Nationalism

Well before the Amharic conquests and the European colonization, the Somalis began to develop a sense of national unity based on their common language and the influence of Islam. They naturally resisted the foreign aggressors, both Amharic and European, and fought to prevent the partition of their homeland. The rebellion led by Mohamed ibn Abdullah Hassan, which lasted for more than twenty years, was just one aspect of this.

Cpt. Keseteberhan Ghebrehiwet, a former member of the Dergue and chief desk officer of military intelligence against the Somalis, has admitted that the Somalis "do not believe themselves Ethiopians—in fact, the hatred they have

for the Amharas is monumental. During the many operations that Ethiopia conducted to oppress popular revolts in the Ogaden there was such inhuman treatment of the population that children grow up with a deeply inbedded hatred of the Amharas."⁵

The imposition of a border through the Somali territories was unsuccessful in physically dividing them. Somalis in the Ogaden often go to Somalia for higher education or jobs and frequently observe the laws of the Somalian state. Some take on high government posts in Somalia. This interchange flows the other way also. About half the population of northern Somalia migrates annually into the Haud region of the Ogaden to graze their cattle.

The defeat of the Italian colonialists during World War II and the later "decolonization" of the British empire led to a reshuffling of the borders in the Horn of Africa. While the Ogaden remained under Ethiopian rule, and the Somalis living in Djibouti and Kenya stayed under French and British control respectively, the two colonies of British and Italian Somaliland won their formal independence and merged to form the present state of Somalia in 1960. (Both Djibouti and Kenya have since become independent states as well.)

The impact of World War II and the rising national liberation struggles in the colonial world as a whole gave a tremendous spur to the Somali struggle for unity. As early as 1948, the unit of the Somali Youth League (one of the major Somali nationalist groups) in the former Italian Somaliland declared, "We wish our country to be amalgamated with the other Somalilands and to form one political, administrative and economic unit with them. We Somalis are one in every way. We are the same racially and geographically, we have the same culture, we have the same language and the same religion. There is no future for us except as part of a Greater Somalia."⁶

These aspirations were also reflected in a meeting in Mogadishu, now the capital of Somalia, in August 1959, at which Somali delegates from Somalia, Djibouti, the Northeastern District of Kenya, and the Ogaden and Haud regions of Ethiopia organized a pan-Somali movement aimed at unifying all Somalis within one state.

In fact, this goal was written into the first Somalian constitution. The Somalian flag includes a five-pointed star, representing the former British and Italian colonies now incorporated into Somalia, as well as the three "lost territories."

In the early 1960s, the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was formed, orig-

5. Richard Greenfield, "The Fate of Harar and the Ogaden," in *West Africa* (London), December 5, 1977, p. 2447.

6. Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 95.

inating from a Somali peasant resistance movement in the Ethiopian province of Bale. Under the leadership of Wako Gutu and with the backing of the Somali regime, it carried out extensive actions in Bale and the Ogaden. These clashes escalated in 1963-64, resulting in a war between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa. The defeat suffered by the Somalis impelled Mogadishu to halt its aid to the WSLF, and in 1970 Wako was forced to surrender to the Ethiopian forces.

The downfall of Selassie in 1974 and the significant advances made by the Eritrean freedom fighters inspired the Somalis to once again press forward with their struggle. The WSLF was reorganized. In an interview in the August 1977 *New African Development*, WSLF leader Abdullahi Hassan Mahmoud explained, "The dethroning of Haile Selassie has opened the way before all oppressed nationalities in Ethiopia to move."

War in the Ogaden

The WSLF renewed its guerrilla actions against the Ethiopian occupation forces and in June 1977 blew up a number of railway bridges, cutting the only railway line between Addis Ababa and Djibouti, which handles 60 percent of Ethiopia's foreign trade.

The next month, the WSLF launched its major offensive, in short order capturing dozens of towns and villages, including the key city of Jijiga, which had been the major tank base of the Ethiopian army. Reporters visiting the Somali-held areas described seeing arms caches and heavy equipment, such as tanks and artillery, that had been left behind during the Ethiopians' hasty retreats. By September, the Dergue's forces had been driven back to the immediate areas around Harar and Dire Dawa, the two major cities in the region. Toward the end of the year, Harar came under heavy Somali attack.

Western correspondents who toured the Ogaden also reported massive support for the WSLF troops from the Somali population. One journalist said in an August 24, 1977, Agence France-Presse dispatch, "The visitors were often greeted by noisy but disciplined crowds shouting hatred for the Ethiopian Government and its leader, Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam." And Graham Hancock reported in the September 18, 1977, London *Sunday Times*, "I did not see one village, nor one nomadic Somali group, that was not armed and angry, ready and willing to fight again at any time. The entire population seemed intoxicated with victory, in total support of the guerrillas and very able to defend itself."

There have been reports that two other nationalist groups, the Oromo Liberation Front and the Afar Liberation Front, have begun to coordinate their own struggles with that of the WSLF.

The Somali regime of Gen. Moham-

mad Siad Barre officially denies that its armed forces are directly involved in the Ogaden, but the Dergue has been able to display captured Somali tanks, trucks, and heavy artillery, as well as the wreckage of jets with Somali air force markings on them. The Siad Barre regime, moreover, openly backs the WSLF's aims, has given it military and financial support, and even admits that regular Somali troops have been given "leave" to fight with the WSLF.

Siad Barre, in fact, has little option but to support the Somali struggle in the Ogaden and elsewhere. He pointed out in an interview in the June 13, 1977, issue of the Paris fortnightly *Afrique-Asie* that "no government, no regime, no Somali leader could survive in this country if he moved to abandon the policy of recovering the territories that are still colonized by foreign occupiers."

Although the Somali junta's policy is a reflection of the Somali aspirations for independence and unity, its own narrower interests are also at stake. Somalia is an impoverished country with few resources. But the Ogaden is thought to contain deposits of oil and gas. Moreover, Siad Barre may be using the campaign to regain the Ogaden at least partially to divert popular grievances away from his own regime, which is repressive and has established a powerful and extensive secret police apparatus to control the population. Like its counterpart in Ethiopia, the Somali regime tries to cover its procapitalist policies with a "socialist" mask.

While aiding the WSLF and the efforts toward Somali unity, the junta at the same time fears the potential power of the Somali struggle and has carefully sought to keep it under control. As a capitalist regime, it stands as an obstacle to the full realization of the aspirations of the Somali masses for complete independence and social progress.

Colonization of Eritrea

The other major threat to the Dergue's cherished "sacred unity" is the independence struggle in Eritrea. The Eritrean groups are no longer small guerrilla forces, but full-scale armies, with overwhelming support from the Eritrean population. Despite the presence of 25,000 Ethiopian troops—half the regular army—the Eritreans control almost the entire territory, except for a few cities.

The Dergue tries to justify its opposition to what it calls a "secessionist" struggle on the grounds that Eritrea was historically and socially part of Ethiopia, except during the period of Italian colonization. But there is considerable historical evidence to prove that much of Eritrea has had a separate existence for hundreds of years.

A large part of modern Eritrea, as well as parts of the Ethiopian province of Tigre, made up the ancient Axumite Kingdom,

which lasted from the fourth century B.C. to the eighth century A.D. After its disintegration, the territory that is now Eritrea maintained a more or less independent existence until the middle of the sixteenth century, when it came under the domination of the Ottoman Turks and later the Egyptians.

In 1869, the same year that the Suez Canal was opened, the Italian colonialists began to move into the area, acquiring the port of Assab. In the mid-1880s they seized Massawa. After negotiating a treaty with Emperor Menelik, the Italians proclaimed it a colony in 1890.

Like Ethiopia itself, Eritrea is a patchwork of various peoples. The two major spoken languages are Tigrinya and Tigre, but there are at least six others as well. The population as a whole is about half Muslim and half Christian.

For their own economic and military reasons, the Italian colonialists introduced some industrialization. The rise of a significant Eritrean working class and the common experience of being subjected to colonial rule brought the various Eritrean peoples together and helped give them a common sense of national identity.

After the Italian defeat during World War II, the various imperialist powers, as well as Haile Selassie, maneuvered to gain control of Eritrea. Finally, in 1950, Washington pushed a resolution through the United Nations calling for Eritrea's federation with Ethiopia. Selassie had proven himself a valuable American ally and Washington was concerned about the direction an independent Eritrea might take, especially since it is strategically located on the Red Sea. The best solution, as the American imperialists saw it, was to let Selassie bring the Eritreans under his control.

The actual federation came into effect in 1952, but Selassie quickly moved to abolish even the fiction of Eritrean "autonomy." All political parties, except for one that favored outright merger with Ethiopia, were banned. Trade unions were outlawed, newspapers shut down, and Amharic was imposed as the sole official language. Books in the Eritrean languages were burned. In 1958, Ethiopian troops responded to a general strike by machine-gunning scores of Eritrean workers.

The Ethiopians also systematically set out to cripple and plunder the Eritrean economy. Companies operating in Eritrea were forced to move into Ethiopia. Some factories and other installations were even dismantled.

In 1962, Selassie dropped all pretenses of maintaining the federation and formally annexed Eritrea as Ethiopia's fourteenth "province." It is in fact a colony.

The last major organized resistance to the Ethiopian occupation in the urban areas was carried out by the Eritrean Liberation Movement, which was formed

in 1959. It was soon crushed by Ethiopian troops and police.

Two years later the Eritrean Liberation Front was formed. The ELF was a rural-based nationalist group, with a guerrilla-warfare orientation. It was initially composed mostly of Muslim peasants and nomads and carried out only minor military actions. But in 1964-65 there was an important upswing in the independence struggle, accompanied by a big influx of recruits from the high plateau region, which is populated mostly by Christians.

However, this advance was blocked by factional struggles within the ELF, in which hundreds of dissidents were said to have been killed. Finally, in 1970, a group of guerrillas led by Issaias Afewerki that had split from the ELF formed the Eritrean People's Liberation Forces, later renamed the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. The ELF was unwilling to recognize the existence of a rival group and declared war on the new EPLF in 1972. This factional war lasted for more than two years, greatly hampering the struggle for independence.

During the mass upsurge against Selassie in 1974, there was a new rise in the Eritrean struggle, with strikes and demonstrations taking place in various Ethiopian cities. One correspondent who visited Asmara, the largest city in Eritrea, reported in the February 3, 1975, *New York Times* that he "could not find one Eritrean who favored anything short of full independence."

This upsurge forced an end to the factional war between the ELF and EPLF, at least for the time being, and in January 1975 they launched a coordinated attack on the Ethiopian forces in Asmara itself. Although they were ultimately repelled, both groups won thousands of new recruits and in early 1977 began to take control of a series of important towns and cities, including Nacfa, Karora, Keren, Agordat, Tessenei, and Decamere. Decamere and Keren are the second and third largest cities in Eritrea. In December, the ELF announced the capture of the Ethiopian garrison at Adi Caieh, as well.

According to Gérard Chaliand, an expert on guerrilla struggles who reported on his visit to Eritrea in the May 7 and May 8-9, 1977, issues of *Le Monde*, both the ELF and EPLF now have a similar number of troops, between 10,000 and 12,000 each (other estimates range even higher). The EPLF controls all of the northernmost district of Sahel and the ELF most of the two western districts of Barka and Gash. Both have units in most of the rest of the country, with the EPLF reportedly dominating in the high plateau area around Asmara and Keren. Together, they control roughly 85 percent of the territory, which includes all but 300,000 of Eritrea's 3.5 million people.

A third Eritrean group, which has no real base within Eritrea, was formed in

March 1976. It is a splinter from the EPLF, led by Osman Saleh Sabbe, and is called the Eritrean Liberation Front-People's Liberation Forces. Although the ELF-PLF has



SIAD BARRE: A "progressive"—until he expelled Soviet advisers.

only a small force within Eritrea, both of the other two groups acknowledge that Sabbe has greater financial resources because of his contacts with various Arab regimes.

The two major groups have such tremendous support from the Eritrean population as a whole that so far every one of Mengistu's "final offensives" has failed miserably. Twice, in March 1976 and again in late 1977, the Dergue sent into Eritrea large numbers of conscripted peasants, in what were termed "red marches," to help bolster the regular forces. Both times it was unable to regain any significant initiative.

The Ethiopian military failures have begun to breed widespread demoralization among the troops stationed in Eritrea, leading to even further setbacks. During the EPLF assault on Keren, for instance, the occupation forces put up only moderate resistance, and many of them surrendered to the Eritrean freedom fighters. The Ethiopian army is also plagued by desertions.

This has led to growing desperation among the military command. An Ethiopian deserter, Lt. Gebremichail Tsadik, was cited in a December 15 Reuters dispatch from Eritrea as saying that about 150 Ethiopian officers and troops had been executed by their own superiors in late November. They were blamed for the fail-

ures of three successive attempts to break through the Eritrean siege.

Despite the clear decline in Ethiopian morale, the Eritrean commanders expect more bitter fighting ahead, especially if the Dergue is able to make some gains in the Ogaden and free up some of its forces there. But overall, the Eritrean liberation movements now appear confident that victory is within sight.

The Character of the Eritrean Groups

With the prospects for Eritrean independence closer than ever, the policies and practice of the two main organizations take on a particular importance.

The EPLF is often described in the Western bourgeois press as a "Marxist" group, but its leaders reject this characterization. The ELF also denies that it is Marxist. Nevertheless, there are Eritreans in both groups who do profess to be Marxists.

Though their rhetoric differs to a slight extent, both groups are basically nationalist organizations, whose main goals are to win Eritrea's independence from Ethiopian rule.

Tesfai Woldemichael, the general secretary of the ELF, told a reporter, "Our struggle is first and foremost a nationalist struggle. We want to see a new democratic Eritrea, which represents all the Eritrean people, is the fruit of their struggle and is opposed to all kinds of oppression."

Both groups, at least on paper, say they favor sweeping nationalizations after Eritrean independence. But like similar nationalist organizations elsewhere, the nationalization programs appear directed mainly at *foreign* economic interests, and not at indigenous capitalists (however few they are).

The EPLF program, adopted at its first congress in January 1977, calls for the nationalization of "all industries in the hands of the imperialists, zionists, Ethiopian colonialists and their Eritrean lackeys as well as resident aliens opposed to Eritrean independence." At the same time, it specifically states that the EPLF would allow "nationals who were not opposed to the independence of Eritrea to participate in national construction by owning small factories and workshops compatible with national development. . . ."⁷

In a similar vein, the ELF program states, "All industrial, commercial, and banking enterprises which are in the hands of foreign capitalists shall be confiscated without compensation"⁸ Although it does not specifically provide a role for Eritrean capitalists as does the EPLF,

7. *National Democratic Programme of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front*, undated, p. 25.

8. *The First Eritrean National Congress of the E.L.F.—The Programme of the Eritrean Revolution*, undated, p. 15.

neither does it talk about nationalizing their interests.

The objectives of the two groups to attain a formally independent Eritrea, apparently within a capitalist framework, is reflected to an extent in their approach toward the liberation struggle. Both rely almost exclusively on guerrilla or conventional military actions, with much of their active support being based on the Eritrean peasantry. Their perspective has been to first liberate sections of the countryside, and then take the cities *from the outside*, which they began doing in early 1977.

Despite the overwhelming support in the cities for independence, neither group has sought to mobilize the urban masses in strikes, uprisings, or other actions.

The basic strategy of both the ELF and EPLF has been to first consolidate their positions in the areas already under their military control, before moving on to push the Ethiopians further back. As Ahmed Nasser, a leader of the ELF stated, "Our main preoccupation today is the administrative and political organization in the liberated territories and towns." He added, "We find this . . . to be a prerequisite for final and total liberation and independence."

Despite the similarities between the ELF and EPLF, they remain rivals. However, in yet another attempt to join forces against the Ethiopian occupiers, the ELF and EPLF leaderships signed an agreement in Khartoum on October 20, 1977, pledging to "unify" their military and administrative bodies. According to the accord, members of Osman Saleh Sabbe's ELF-PLF are to join either of the two main groups.

Whether the Khartoum agreement holds remains to be seen. The tensions between the ELF and EPLF remain high and physical clashes between their forces still occur. Reporting from Eritrea, Dan Connell stated in the November 17, 1977, *Washington Post*, that "shoot-outs between rival forces in the field have left at least six dead in the past two months."

Besides hampering the independence struggle itself, such factional warfare raises the possibility of a bitter struggle for power after independence is attained. Should that happen, the danger exists that the Ethiopians and the imperialist powers will try to take advantage of it to weaken the new state and advance their own interests.

All Eyes on the Horn

If the Eritreans gain independence or the Somalis are successful in throwing off Ethiopian domination and uniting with their fellow Somalis in Somalia, oppressed peoples in other African countries will be inspired to advance their own struggles for national self-determination. This could lead to instability and unrest throughout the continent, for the present states are

based on borders artificially drawn by the old colonial powers.

The Black neocolonial regimes throughout the continent fear such a development, and the Organisation of African Unity is



MENGISTU: Fighting on two fronts to preserve Selassie's crumbling empire.

officially opposed to any change in the present borders. (The Somalian regime, for obvious reasons, is the only OAU member that does not subscribe to this view.)

The conflict in the Ogaden, moreover, can have severe repercussions in Djibouti. Slightly more than half of its inhabitants are Issas, a Somali people, and the Afars in Djibouti have close ties with the Afars in Ethiopia. Besides being one of Somalia's "lost territories," Djibouti is strategically located between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and serves as Ethiopia's main port.

Likewise, the ferment in the Horn of Africa can have an impact on the national liberation struggles in the Middle East, particularly that of the Palestinian people against the Israeli colonial-settler state. It is no accident that the Palestine Liberation Organization has friendly ties with both the Eritrean and Somali freedom fighters and has given them some aid.

It was precisely out of fear of the consequences of Eritrean independence or Somali unification that Washington backed the central regime in Addis Ababa for years.

Beginning in 1952, the same year as the Ethiopian-Eritrean "federation," Ameri-

regime with hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid, reaching \$275 million in military assistance alone by the time of Selassie's overthrow. The Ethiopian army was armed, clothed, and trained almost entirely by the U.S. government.

Washington established an important communications and spy center at Kagnew, in Eritrea, which monitored radio communications and military movements throughout the Middle East and East Africa. In 1964, the Pentagon sent a number of American counterinsurgency experts to Ethiopia to help train Selassie's army against the Eritreans.

Israel also had close relations with Selassie, acquiring military bases on two Eritrean islands in the Red Sea and providing some counterinsurgency instructors as well. Because of these Israeli ties, various Arab regimes gave a small amount of aid to the Eritreans, largely in an attempt to put some pressure on Selassie, and later on the Dergue.

Despite the extremely backward nature of the Selassie regime, the Stalinists in Moscow and Peking also cultivated ties with the emperor. Selassie visited both Moscow and Peking, receiving some financial assistance from both. The Eritreans have revealed that they have received no Chinese military assistance since 1968, when Mao first established diplomatic relations with Selassie.

For more than two decades, American policy toward Ethiopia was to maintain the Selassie regime as a "stabilizing influence" in the area. But the mass upsurge and the emperor's downfall reduced the usefulness of the Ethiopian regime for the American imperialists. As the *New York Times* pointed out in an editorial at the time:

For an entire generation under Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was an oasis of stability in black Africa while most of the rest of the continent was convulsed by political and social change. Now it can be seen that the price of yesterday's stability was the bottling up of powerful tensions whose explosions make post-Haile Selassie Ethiopia a source of dangerous instability not only for its own peoples but for many of its neighbors, and even for the two great powers. [February 10, 1975.]

Washington's problem was how to contain this new unrest. After the Dergue seized power, Washington hesitated for a while, but then continued sending military aid, apparently with the hope that the new regime would be able to bring things under control. In 1976, it allocated \$22 million in military aid to Addis Ababa, up from \$12.5 million the previous year. Since September 1974, the American imperialists also sold the junta more than \$150 million worth of arms, although not all of it has been delivered.

After the Eritreans continued to make gains, however, Washington reassessed the situation and decided that the Dergue

might not be able to hold the empire together after all, even with considerable American backing. So the White House concluded that the most practical thing to do was to cut their losses before it was too late and they suffered a severe political setback. Moreover, if the Eritreans won their independence in the face of overt American backing to the Dergue, it would make it much more difficult for Washington to exercise any influence over the new Eritrean state.

So in April 1977, Washington reduced its aid program to the Dergue. The Mengistu regime responded by shutting down a number of American offices and installations in the country and turning to Moscow for political and material aid.

The Kremlin was more than willing to oblige. In May, Mengistu visited Moscow, receiving a red-carpet welcome and later some significant arms shipments. When the Dergue's new "People's Militia" was paraded through Addis Ababa in June 1977, they were armed with Soviet weapons. The Ethiopian dictatorship, moreover, has been hailed as "progressive" in the Soviet press.

Moscow is trying to cultivate political influence in the Horn of Africa in order to gain a better bargaining position in its class-collaborationist dealings with Washington. It does the same thing in many other parts of the neocolonial world. This approach serves only the narrow diplomatic interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. By helping the Dergue maintain a left cover and aiding its war against the Eritreans, Somalis, and other peoples, it is completely counterrevolutionary as well.

At the same time, the Kremlin's policy is extremely shortsighted, even from its own perspective. This can be clearly seen in the case of the Somalian regime of Siad Barre. For a number of years, Moscow armed the Somalian junta and maintained many advisers there. It termed the regime "progressive." But on November 13, 1977, Siad Barre ordered all Soviet advisers out of the country, charging Moscow with aiding the Dergue.

This break led the Kremlin to change its characterization of the Mogadishu regime from "progressive" to "the cat's-paw of the neo-colonialists and their accomplices."⁹

Unfortunately, the Cuban leadership has also extended political support to the Dergue. Although there is no proof that there are Cuban military advisers aiding the junta, as the State Department claims, Castro has made no secret of his attitude toward the Mengistu regime. In an interview published in the May 22, 1977, issue of the English-language weekly edition of *Granma*, Castro was quoted as saying that there were "certain similarities between

the Ethiopian Revolution and the French and Bolshevik Revolutions, because the leaders have made an antifeudal revolution while working at the same time for socialism." He called Mengistu a "true revolutionary."

Such statements only help the Dergue maintain its "socialist" pretenses. They also sow confusion among Ethiopian revolutionists.

About the same time, Washington moved to increase its influence with a number of pro-American regimes in the region, particularly those in Egypt, the Sudan, and Kenya, by providing greater arms sales to them.

In July it also said that it was willing, "in principle," to sell arms to the Somalian junta, but later withdrew the offer, apparently fearing, in part, the impact a successful Somali struggle in the Ogaden could have on the Somalis living in Kenya. Even after Siad Barre expelled the Soviet advisers, the State Department stated that it would not yet sell arms to him.

The editors of the *New York Times* gave an indication November 18, 1977, of one of the factors that may be influencing the White House's policy toward Mogadishu. "The time may be right, therefore," they said, "for an American diplomatic approach to persuade Somalia to pull back from its dangerous adventure in exchange for defensive arms and needed development assistance."

There are some indications that the White House may also be trying to use the pro-American Arab regimes to influence the course of the Eritrean independence struggle. The military aid those regimes give to the Eritreans may provide a lever.

These moves have at the same time been coupled with continued ties to the Dergue, although in a much less overt fashion. There are a number of Defense Department officials still stationed in Ethiopia. Washington recently agreed to provide the Dergue with \$200,000 in economic assistance and is discussing an additional \$10 million aid package. Mengistu, moreover, has requested that Washington follow through on deliveries for those American arms that had already been purchased by the Dergue.

In the December 1977 issue of *New African Development*, Robert Manning reported, "In September, the [Carter] administration began to respond to Ethiopian feelers, and at the end of that month, two US officials visited Addis Ababa and noted a visible decline in anti-American rhetoric. Shortly thereafter Ethiopia declared it wished to be 'the Yugoslavia of Africa' and avoid any dependence on the USSR."

The Israeli regime also continues to back the Dergue. The August 12, 1977, *Washington Post* reported, "According to numerous sources, including Ethiopian air force personnel, Israel is regularly flying in spares and ammunition for Ethiopia's U.S. equip-

ment. Israeli ammunition for U.S. Phantom jets was specifically mentioned." Israeli advisers are likewise reported to have helped train the Dergue's new People's Militia.

The *New York Times* reported August 1, 1977, "The United States is aware of the Israeli involvement and has not opposed it. . . ."

In the present situation of uncertainty in the Horn of Africa, Washington is clearly seeking to keep its options open. It has also embarked on a concerted effort to strengthen the American position in the region, so as to be better able to influence or sidetrack the various struggles as they develop. Should the Eritreans win their independence or the Somalis their unification, Washington will certainly try to contain those struggles within a capitalist framework and prevent them from threatening imperialist interests in the area.

This American goal at the same time carries the danger of U.S. military involvement—either directly or through Washington's local allies—should the conflicts in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia spiral out of control. Through its involvement in the imperialist intervention in Zaïre in early 1977, the Sadat regime has already indicated its readiness to participate in such a project, as did the French imperialists, who still have 5,000 troops stationed in Djibouti. □

Flavio Tavares Freed in Uruguay

Brazilian journalist Flavio Tavares was released from jail in Uruguay January 6 and expelled from the country shortly thereafter.

Tavares, a correspondent for *O Estado de São Paulo* and the Mexico City daily *Excelsior*, was arrested by the Uruguayan police in July of last year on charges of "espionage" and possessing documents that "endangered public security."

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9. A Novosti Press Agency dispatch by Vladimir Yermakov, reprinted in the December 14, 1977, *Daily World*, newspaper of the Communist Party USA.

Bourguiba Arrests More Than a Thousand

By Ernest Harsch

In the aftermath of the January 26 general strike, in which scores of persons were killed by the police and army, the Tunisian regime has launched a witch-hunt against union militants and other dissidents.

The regime of President Habib Bourguiba admits that it had arrested 400 persons, including Habib Achour, the general secretary of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT—General Union of Tunisian Workers) at the time of the strike. But according to several news reports, the real number of arrests is much higher.

The February 3 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde* reported that about 800 persons were seized in Tunis alone, including 720 industrial workers, sixty unemployed persons, and twenty teachers.

The following day *Le Monde* correspondent Jean-Pierre Langellier reported that 132 UGTT members, including the local leaders of the union, were arrested in the city of Sousse following the January 26 strike and protests. In Kairouan, about thirty miles southwest of Sousse, another 150 demonstrators were detained, most of them young workers between fifteen and eighteen years old. According to Langellier, one twenty-five-year-old protester in Kairouan later died in a hospital from injuries he received when police attacked a march.

The Executive Bureau of the UGTT has been purged of eleven of its members, all of whom are under arrest. Habib Achour was deposed from his position and a new general secretary, Tijani Abid, was appointed. A special "normalization" congress of the UGTT has been called for February 25 to confirm Abid as the new general secretary and to intensify the purge of union activists who are opposed to Bourguiba's ruling Parti Socialiste Destourien (PSD—Destour Socialist Party) or who played significant roles in the recent strike wave.

The efforts of the regime to whip up a witch-hunt atmosphere against the UGTT activists was evident during the January 31 session of the National Assembly. Members of parliament, all from the PSD the only legal party in the country, condemned the UGTT leaders for four hours, calling them "mercenaries," "renegades," and instigators of an "abject plot" against the country.

Prime Minister Hedi Nouira, who has been designated Bourguiba's successor, accused the union leaders of having carried out a "preconceived plot." He said:

"This plan was executed after the acquisition of subversive means—arms and tear gas grenades—and a psychological preparation consisting of rallies and demonstrations. . . . Groups of agitators responded to synchronized instructions. . . . It amounted to an obviously premeditated attack against the state. Those responsible will have to answer to the courts."

Nouira affirmed that the UGTT would be returned to "authentic union principles," that is, subservience to the regime and the ruling class.

Some members of the assembly were particularly vitriolic in their denunciations. Referring to the UGTT leadership, one declared, "The time for a wait-and-see policy has passed. It is necessary to cut up the body of this viper."

The National Assembly voted to lift parliamentary immunity from four arrested members of the assembly, clearing the way for the filing of formal charges against them. Besides Achour, they include Kheirreddine Salhi, Hassen Ham-

modia, and Abdelaziz Bouraoui.

The repression has not been confined to the UGTT leadership or its activists. The police have been systematically picking up "on suspicion" readers of the few opposition newspapers, such as *Es Chaab*, the organ of the UGTT, and *Errai*, the daily newspaper of the Mouvement des Socialistes Démocrates (Movement of Social Democrats), led by Ahmed Mestiri. At least one edition of *Errai* has been seized and a reader of *Es Chaab* was hospitalized after he was assaulted by PSD thugs.

Two members of the Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights, Sadok Allouch and Midani Ben Salah, have been arrested. Allouch was an assistant general secretary of the UGTT as well.

On February 1, the league called for the lifting of the state of emergency, which it said "represented a considerable danger to public and individual liberties."

The same day in Paris, the French Socialist Party demanded the immediate release of Achour and the other arrested unionists. And in Stockholm, a meeting of the leaders of the major trade union federations of five Scandinavian countries protested the "antiunion repression in Tunisia." In a resolution, they said that they condemn "the violent methods employed by the Tunisian authorities against the unionists and demand that the prisoners be immediately released." □

Kaunda Unveils Austerity Budget in Zambia

Buffeted by a low copper price and a worsening balance-of-payments deficit, the Zambian regime of Kenneth Kaunda has tightened the screws even further on the Zambian masses.

Finance Minister John Mwanakatwe introduced a new budget in January that will stiffen import controls, freeze government hiring, increase indirect taxes, and reduce subsidies.

The elimination of one such subsidy, on maize meal, the staple food of most of the country, will mean a 20 percent increase in its retail price. The end of fertilizer subsidies will lead to higher prices for other agricultural products.

Although a parliamentary select committee had recommended in December that the regime introduce fees for such social services as education and health care, the new budget has stopped short of imposing them. Instead, Mwanakatwe hinted that they would be cut back, stating that they would continue to be provided "within the limits of available resources."

Combined with an already high rate of inflation and rapidly increasing unemployment, these measures will cut deeply into the standard of living.

The main factor behind the decline in the Zambian economy has been the continued low price that copper exports fetch on the world market. From 1973 to 1974 it plummeted by more than half, and has recovered little since then. Ninety percent of Zambia's foreign exchange and half of its government revenue depend on copper exports.

Kaunda has for years talked about reducing the country's dependence on copper by strengthening commercial agriculture. But while \$180 million has been invested in farming since 1972, Zambia's 300 white landowners still produce about 60 percent of all commercial farm products.

On the other hand, industrial production has been severely hit. The shortage of foreign exchange has cut imports so sharply that many factories have shut down or reduced their work week, further exacerbating the unemployment situation.

Signs of social discontent have been on the rise since early last year, when the country was hit by the most widespread student demonstrations and strikes since the country gained its independence in 1964. □

Capitalism Fouls Things Up



A 'Big Business'—Dumping Chemical Poisons

The state of New Jersey has one of the biggest concentrations of chemical manufacturing plants in the world. It also faces a growing problem with chemical wastes generated at these plants.

Environmental protection laws have forced the closing of landfill sites in the state where toxic chemicals had previously been dumped. But evidence has recently begun coming to light that manufacturers are turning to illegal methods to get rid of their wastes.

The last legal dumping ground was closed in 1976. It had handled about one million gallons of chemicals a week. "We checked the major legal disposal sites along the East Coast and none of them has expanded to handle that stuff," said a federal official quoted in the *Washington Post* January 6. "We don't know where it went but we do know it hasn't disappeared into thin air."

Where some of these wastes went is clear from incidents such as these:

- Newark, New Jersey, police came upon an 8,000-gallon tank-truck pouring its contents down a city sewer late one night. When some of the liquid slopped onto a cop's shoes, they began to disintegrate.

- State investigators checking an unauthorized dump uncovered a huge ditch where an entire tank-truck and its chemical contents had been buried.

- A southern New Jersey township lost its entire water supply when containers of toxic wastes rotted and the contents seeped into the water table.

- Newark Fire Department officials were baffled by frequent fires in a park on the outskirts of the city that seemed to be fed by mysterious underground sources. Investigators eventually turned up steel drums of chemicals buried there.

"New Jersey's high cancer rate is almost certainly related to this kind of dumping," said a state environmental official quoted in the *New York Times* January 30. The state has the highest death rate from cancer in the United States—14 percent above the national average.

The chemical companies that resort to illegal dumping do so because it is so much cheaper than proper disposal. Carting wastes to landfills costs between five and

ten cents a gallon, whereas charges for specialized services such as incineration or chemical neutralization can run as high as a dollar or more a gallon.

Illegal dumping is "big business," a New Jersey police official told the *New York Times*. "The profit margin is very high. They charge the generator of the waste for disposing of it, then simply dump it. It's all profit but the cost of the truck, driver and gas."

Snow Warning

"Ever felt tempted on a snowy day to throw back your head and drink in some of those pure white flakes? Try to resist the impulse. After testing samples of snow from several Kansas City areas, Research Chemist David Roberts, a specialist in heavy-metal poisoning, discovered amounts of lead that measured six times the level specified in the Environmental Protection Agency's clean-water standards. Even water from the polluted Kansas River proved less leaden than the snow. According to Roberts, car exhausts and factories are spewing into the environment 1,000 times the natural level of lead, and snow acts as a 'scrubber' that washes it away. The cliché can now be modernized to read 'dirty as the driven snow.'"—*Time*, February 13.

Nuclear Slump Continues

Almost twenty-five years after the U.S. "Atoms for Peace" program was unveiled, the share of world electricity supplied by nuclear plants remains at less than 10 percent.

New orders for reactors have been dropping steadily for three years. Only ten were sold in capitalist countries in 1977, as against forty-three in 1974 (the year of the biggest sales).

"Champions of the atom claim this merely reflects the overall slump in orders for all kinds of power plants," Anthony Parisi wrote in the *New York Times* "International Economic Survey" February 5.

But opponents of nuclear power cite other reasons: "safety, economics and proliferation—the fear that atoms for peace will be used to make atoms for war."

The slump in reactor orders has caused earlier forecasts of nuclear growth to be revised downward. "In 1970 the International Atomic Energy Agency predicted that by 1985 a total of 610 billion watts—'gigawatts' to the trade—would be on line in the non-Communist countries alone. But by 1975 the agency was forecasting a range of only 469 to 526. And last year the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development concluded that 310 gigawatts to 415 gigawatts was a more realistic estimate."

According to the Atomic Industrial Forum, completion of all reactors now under construction or planned would give a total world capacity of 570 gigawatts. "While substantial, that is not nearly enough to reach the current goal of 40 percent nuclear power by the end of the century."

Nuclear Power— How Much, How Soon?

Country	1977		1980 Estimate	
	No of Reactors	% of Electricity Output	No of Reactors	% of Electricity Output
Argentina	1	8.7	1	n.a.
Austria	0	--	1	6.0
Belgium	4	13.7	5	30.0
Brazil	0	--	1	2.0
Britain	33	10.0	39	12.0
Bulgaria	2	n.a.	4	n.a.
Canada	9	5.6	13	7.9
Cuba	0	--	n.a.	n.a.
Czechoslovakia	1	3.5	2	9.4
E. Germany	4	n.a.	5	n.a.
Finland	1	n.a.	4	18.0
France	14	10.5	25	29.8
Hungary	0	--	2	n.a.
India	4	n.a.	6	n.a.
Italy	4	3.8	4	3.1
Japan	15	8.7	22	12.1
Netherlands	1	3.4	n.a.	n.a.
Pakistan	1	5.0	1	2.0
S. Korea	1	9.3	1	6.7
Soviet Union	27	n.a.	36	6.0
Spain	3	4.0	10	20.0
Sweden	8	14.5	10	22.5
Switzerland	3	9.0	5	16.0
Taiwan	1	9.1	3	26.2
United States	68	8.9	93	12.1
W. Germany	16	11.0	24	15.0
Yugoslavia	0	--	1	n.a.

*Cuba has four nuclear plants ordered
n.a.—not available

Source: Atomic Industrial Forum

New York Times