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Hua's Bid for Popularity

A 'Thaw' in China?



MAO'S HEIR: Chairman Hua Kuo-feng

Document

Wolf Biermann:

An Open Letter to the Authors of the 'Manifesto'

A 'Thaw' in China?

By Leslie Evans

The staging of the Fifth National People's Congress (NPC) in Peking February 26-March 5 was intended by the current leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to rubber-stamp the decisions they have taken in the year and a half since the death of Mao and the arrest of his principal supporters.

Inasmuch as these decisions had already been put into effect, the "deliberations" of China's nominal supreme executive and legislative body could only be cut and dried.

In his report on the work of the government, CCP Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, who was also re-elected premier by the congress, stressed two themes. One was "the grand concept of comprehensive modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology by the end of the century." The other was giving "full play to people's democracy."

A new constitution was adopted, replacing the one drafted under Mao's auspices and approved by the previous NPC in January 1975.

In addition, the government's long-delayed economic plan was finally presented. This was to have been a five-year plan, scheduled to start at the beginning of 1975. Since it is three years late, Hua presented instead a ten-year plan, slated to "begin" in 1976 and to run through 1985.

The real story of the political preparations for the congress remains untold. Only inferences can be drawn from the series of work conferences, pronouncements, and line articles, beginning with the admission by economics minister Yu Ch'iu-li last October that there had been "grave damage to the national economy." (Hsinhua, October 25, 1977.)

From the very moment of their arrest in October 1976, the so-called gang of four, including Mao's wife Chiang Ch'ing, were vilified, and many of "their" policies—in fact, Mao's policies—were repudiated. But generally this was done in a very abstract way, leaving ambiguous the extent to which their policies had been applied and what the effects had been.

This permitted a verbal separation of the "gang of four" from the "Cultural Revolution" and "Mao Tsetung." After October 1977 even the most uncritical reader of the Chinese press could not fail to miss the point: the "gang of four" were the government of China, they were responsible for the Cultural Revolution. What the new government has been saying is that the

Cultural Revolution itself was an immense crime against the people of China.

In a speech on December 27, the head of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Fang Yi, declared that since the Cultural Revolution began in 1966, "basic scientific and theoretical research in particular has been virtually done away with" (*New York Times*, January 3, 1978). He said the previous government had "retarded the development of a whole generation of young people" in the study of science (Reuters, January 1).

Hsinhua, the government news agency, ran an article on January 7 under the provocative title, "Peking Library Lifts Ban on Chinese and Foreign Books." This said:

"During the past decade . . . the gang of four brushed aside all foreign works of literature as 'feudal, bourgeois or revisionist poisonous weeds.' They forbade publishing houses to put out such works and ordered the libraries to hold them back from circulation." The same treatment was accorded to almost all Chinese books written before 1966, with the exception of Mao's writings.

On January 4 the *Peking People's Daily* admitted that under Mao—again delicately referred to as "the gang of four"—thousands of Chinese citizens had been systematically persecuted on the sole grounds that they had relatives living in other countries. The article promised: "As to all those who have been subjected to investigation or persecution in the past several years on account of their overseas relations . . . they will be cleared of all slanders and false charges."

On February 24, Hsinhua reported that "hundreds of people" in the Shanghai branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences had been falsely accused of being agents of the Kuomintang early in the Cultural Revolution in 1967. They had been subjected to "mental torture," "bodily mistreatment," and "fascist savage acts." An investigation at the beginning of 1978 showed that not a single one of the accused was guilty.

While Hua and Teng continue to speak of the "infallible" Communist Party, it is clear that the government in fact is trying to weather an enormous crisis of confidence by completely repudiating Mao's Cultural Revolution.

Somewhat like the Khrushchev "thaw" in the late 1950s, Hua and Teng are seeking popularity by promising to rapidly

assure democratic rights, improve cultural life, and raise the standard of living of the masses. Hence the first rise in wages in twenty years, authorized last October. Hence the publication, for the first time in twelve years, of some of the works of classical Chinese literature and of foreign authors such as Shakespeare, Balzac, Hugo, Pushkin, Goethe, Cervantes, Dante, and Tolstoy, all banned from circulation in any form under Mao.

The thirst for knowledge, for the right to read something better than the dreary propaganda of the party machine, is indicated by an Agence France-Presse report February 23 that a line a hundred yards long formed at a Peking bookstore to buy the first copies of *Hamlet* to go on sale in China in more than a decade.

The mood of the masses in China is depicted in the Western press as one of watchful waiting and of hope. But the government is now beginning to feel the repercussions of the economic failures, obscurantism, and brutality suffered under Mao. In place of the cult of Chairman Mao, Hua and Teng now appear to be preparing a revival of Khrushchev-style "goulash communism."

The fact that world literature and history, including Chinese literature and history, are no longer totally unavailable is undoubtedly appreciated by China's people. But the sham of democracy of the National People's Congress is hardly calculated to inspire confidence that the vague promises of "people's democracy" will be fulfilled.

Perhaps Hua felt this sharply enough to conclude that more was required than the highly predictable response of a Maoist congress. Simultaneously, he called a session of the moribund Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), China's advisory coalition government composed of those capitalist parties that chose not to follow Chiang Kai-shek to Taiwan back in 1949.

This display case of fossils of Chinese capitalism indicates Hua's idea of the kind of "opposition" he would like to see and is prepared to tolerate. The show spoke volumes about the content of Hua's "people's democracy." Nonetheless, when the CPPCC came to elect a chairman, the honor did not fall to any of the "bourgeois" politicians but was given to none other than Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

The government announced plans for speeding up industrial development. But the grandiose promises are not likely to be fulfilled on schedule. Hsinhua, generally so sparing of statistics of any kind, on March 6 provided two of the targets announced by Hua Kuo-feng for his ten-year plan, to be realized by 1985. These call for a grain harvest in 1985 of 400 million metric tons and the production of steel in that same year of 60 million tons.

In 1957, the Chinese grain harvest was

185 million tons. The best available estimates for the 1977 harvest place it at no more than 287 million tons (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 6). It took twenty years to increase agricultural production by 100 million tons. Is it really plausible that another 113 million tons can be added in the next eight years?

The situation is similar in the steel industry. China claimed a steel output of 18.7 million tons in 1960. After a long decline as a result of the Great Leap Forward and the withdrawal of Soviet aid, it climbed back to 17.8 million tons by 1970, but has virtually stagnated over the last seven years. Estimates for the 1977 output place it at 23 million tons (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 6). If the last seven years saw an increase of only 5 million tons, what grounds are there for expecting an increase of 37 million tons in the next eight years?

In one sense the apparent irrationality of Mao's personal rule, so harshly spotlighted by the revelations now emanating from Peking, had an objective basis in the social character of the ruling group. Chinese Stalinism, resting on a privileged bureaucratic caste hostile to world revolution, must at one and the same time stave off challenges to its power from the masses and seek a *modus vivendi* with foreign capitalism.

Mao concluded long ago that the Chinese economy could not develop fast enough on the basis of its own national resources to reconcile the masses with the disparity between their standard of living and that of the bureaucrats. He and the faction now called the "gang of four" staked everything on the massive thought-control campaigns and the cultivation of blind obedience that were the hallmarks of the Cultural Revolution.

This effort failed. The maneuver of Hua and Teng to offer a few concessions combined with appeals to the Chinese masses "to go all out to eliminate losses and increase profits" (*Hsinhua*, February 23) will not be more successful.

In foreign policy, Hua is continuing Mao's line of appealing to imperialism for technical aid in exchange for Chinese opposition to making a united front with the Soviet government against the common foe.

Hua and Teng's prescription for assuaging domestic unrest is economically more rational and culturally more palatable than Mao's unbending stance. But in the wake of the discrediting of Mao's course in the past decade it can only be viewed with doubt by the masses. How long will the thaw last?

The CCP leaders are whetting appetites that are incompatible with preserving the rule of their caste. In their sweeping denunciation of the abuses that took place under Mao, they are also cutting the ground from under their own feet. □

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Growing Movement of Solidarity With Coal Miners

By Matilde Zimmermann

On March 9 a federal judge in Washington, D.C., issued an injunction under Carter's invocation of the Taft-Hartley Act ordering 160,000 coal miners to end their 94-day strike and return to work for an 80-day "cooling off period."

The court order outlaws the use of strike pickets, either at mines or at coal storage or distribution points. Those who continue to strike are subject to fines and possible imprisonment.

President Carter has warned miners that he will use force to compel them to obey the injunction. When he invoked Taft-Hartley March 6, Carter said that he had "asked the Attorney General and the Governors of the affected states to make certain that the law is obeyed, that violence is prevented and that lives and property are fully protected." Government officials have said that federal marshals, the FBI, Army troops, and agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms will be sent to the coalfields if necessary to enforce the injunction.

If the threat of violence does not force the miners back, the government hopes the pressure of hungry families will. The Department of Agriculture has announced that the food stamps (food dole) most mining families have been receiving will be stopped—despite the fact that such a cutoff is illegal.

Reports from the mining areas indicate that most miners will refuse to call off their strike. The *New York Times* of March 7 quoted a typical response: "How long can we hold out?" said miner Angelo DeRaimo. "How long can they hold out? They just want to get us back to work for 80 days so they can build up their stockpiles again. We can't let them do that."

"Thirty cents and Taft-Hartley will buy you a cup of coffee," was the way one West Virginian expressed the anger he and other miners feel over Carter's use of the "slave-labor" law.

At closed hearings the day before the injunction was issued, virtually all the unionists who testified said that the Taft-Hartley order would be ignored. Jim Nuccetelli, the head of a United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) safety committee, told reporters: "If they say we have to go back to work, they're going to see the streets of Washington, D.C., filled with coal miners—because we're coming down here. We're going to tell Mr. Carter and Congress what we think about their Taft-Hartley."

Maoists Try to Disrupt Solidarity Rally

A March 3 miners' solidarity meeting in Houston, Texas, was attacked by club-swinging thugs from the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Iranian Students Association-U.S. The two groups are Maoist-Stalinist sects.

The solidarity meetings, sponsored by the University of Houston Ad Hoc Committee to Support the Mineworkers Strike, was part of a tour by two UMWA staff members to win support and raise funds for the coal strike.

The disrupters gathered outside the meeting, preventing some persons from entering. Numbering about fifty, they attempted to forcibly enter the room to break up the rally, but monitors stopped them from doing so.

When they could not break into the meeting room, the Maoists brutally attacked the monitors. Among those injured were Tom Leonard, a local steelworker and long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party; John Sarge, another steelworker; Pat O'Reilly, a

railroad worker; and Diane Sarge, a steelworker who last year was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Mayor of Houston. These four, along with two other unionists injured defending the rally, had to be taken to the hospital for emergency medical attention.

A campaign has been launched to publicize the attack and condemn the use of violence within the movement.

At a news conference March 4, a statement was issued by Mike Burdiss and Matt Miller, the two miners who spoke at the rally.

"The attack," said Burdiss and Miller, "represented the type of tactics our union has repudiated in our own ranks. . . ."

"We call on our brothers and sisters in the labor movement to uphold our best democratic traditions. Join us in condemning this thoroughly inexcusable act." □

This is the thirty-fifth time Taft-Hartley has been invoked since the antilabor legislation was passed in 1947, partially in response to a series of coal strikes between 1943 and 1946. It has been used three times against the UMWA, twice in 1948 and once in 1950. It has never succeeded in getting miners to dig coal.

Political Response Needed

Resorting to Taft-Hartley is part of a general political campaign aimed at isolating the miners and forcing them into submission. An attempt is being made to sow divisions among the miners, with claims that a few irresponsible and violent hotheads are going to prolong the strike against the wishes of the majority to obey the law and return to the mines. Workers in other industries are encouraged to blame layoffs and cutbacks in electric power on the "lawless" miners.

America's rulers are trying to drive a wedge between the miners and workers in other industries, postulating a phony common interest on the part of business, "the

public," and other workers in ending the strike.

The only way these strikebreaking maneuvers can be fought effectively is by calling attention to the basic class interests involved—that is, by responding politically. This type of reply requires an understanding, not just that the coal operators are the enemy, but that the government and the Democratic and Republican parties as well serve the interests of the operators.

Solidarity actions and concrete aid are the best way to cut across the attempts by the bosses and their government to isolate the miners. A labor party based on the unions could center its attention on organizing such solidarity on a national scale.

There have already been some indications of what would be possible. The United Auto Workers on March 7 donated \$2 million to the UMWA strike fund, the largest single union-to-union contribution in American history. This was particularly significant because the threat of massive layoffs in the auto industry has been

used—unsuccessfully so far—to try to turn the auto workers against the miners.

On March 10 the UMWA received \$1 million from the United Steelworkers.

American farmers, waging a struggle of their own against the squeeze of rising costs and falling crop prices, have organized caravans of trucks and tractors to bring contributions of food to the miners.

The *New York Times* of March 7 describes a rally of more than 7,000 persons to greet the farmers when they arrived in Central City, Kentucky. Some of the comments of miners at the rally indicate that the gap between industrial workers and farmers in the United States is not as great as is often supposed.

"We came off the farm and went to coal mining because of this 100 percent parity that the farmers are trying to get today," said thirty-one-year-old Rondal Staples.

Another demonstrator, who has been a miner for eleven years, said, "I farm on the side too, but as far as I'm concerned I don't see how they make it."

Staples summed things up by saying, "It's all labor organizing and we need to support each other."

Miller's Betrayal

The current top officers of the United Mine Workers are incapable of leading this political battle. In fact, they proved incapable of leading the defensive economic struggle of the miners.

UMWA President Arnold Miller, insofar as he is still a factor in the strike at all, provides the operators with ammunition to use against the miners. The "ball and chain" contract that the operators tried to force upon the miners was hailed by Miller February 6 as the "best agreement negotiated in any major industry in the past two years."

Full-page newspaper advertisements by the Bituminous Coal Operators Association use this statement by Miller as a club against the miners, to try to portray them as unreasonable and greedy. The same advertisements attack the miners for their "psychology of mob action," and suggest that the government ought to seize the union rather than seize the mines.

At the moment, Miller is of little other use to the operators. Although he has tried twice, he cannot deliver what the operators are demanding—an end to the strike on their terms.

Two contracts negotiated with Miller have been resoundingly turned down, one by the UMWA bargaining council and one by rank-and-file vote. The operators demanded March 7 that Miller not be included on the new union bargaining team when contract talks resume as required by Taft-Hartley.

Taft-Hartley Plus the Flag

If Taft-Hartley fails to force "a moderate number" of miners back to work (which

Carter has said is its goal), then the next strikebreaking measure is likely to be government seizure of the mines.

The *New York Times* of March 6 quotes



CARTER: Invokes "slave labor" act.

West Virginia miner Tom Morris as saying "Government seizure is just Taft-Hartley with the flag wrapped around it."

Reports from the coalfields indicate, however, that most miners do not share this understanding. It appears that a significant number of miners and local union officials either favor government takeover or at least would return to work if the mines were seized.

There is a positive side to this sentiment. It reflects an understanding on the part of miners that the coal mines should be permanently taken away from the operators and placed under public ownership and control. It reflects the belief that the operators have no right to rake in profits from the dangerous, dirty work of miners.

However, it is not yet clearly understood by the miners that the seizure of the mines contemplated by Carter has nothing to do with nationalization—it is only a strike-breaking maneuver intended to help the coal barons.

In part the sentiment in favor of seizure comes from a misconception of what happened when the government took over the mines in the 1940s. It was during a period of government takeover that the miners gained their cherished health and pension plan. This was won not because the Truman government ever "gave" any more to miners than coal operators did, but because the miners continued their strike even after seizure.

Carter has already warned the miners

that he will not "give" them anything if forced to seize the mines, and in fact that the terms he will impose will be worse than those in the rejected contract. There is every reason to think he means what he says.

Open the Books!

Recently various miners interviewed by reporters have raised the demand that the books of the mining companies be opened. They have done this in commenting on the presumed benefits government seizure of the mines would bring.

For example, Frank Dwyer, president of a UMWA local in Pennsylvania, was quoted March 9 as saying, "I think the government would take a close look at the books of the coal operators over the past years. They would find substantial reasons why the contract proposed to us for pension benefits and hospitalization could be increased right now. . . ."

"I'm sure there would be a lot of weeping and gnashing of teeth over this," Dwyer continued. "The BCOA is not excited about anyone looking into their books."

Shortages Disputed

As the capitalists step up the drive to blame critical energy "shortages" on the miners, they are having some difficulty keeping the mood of "crisis" alive. Officials in Ohio and other affected states now say they have greater supplies of coal on hand than they estimated a few weeks ago. They attribute this to conservation and deliveries of some nonunion coal.

Indiana utilities seem to be in better shape than they have been in weeks. This has caused something of a credibility problem. "I think people sense there's something wrong," Mayor Russell G. Lloyd of Evansville, Indiana, told the *New York Times*. "When a utility goes from 40 days of coal 30 days ago to 51 days now, the public says, 'What the hell is going on?' . . ."

"People are going to say what they said after the oil shortage," he continued. "It was just a contrived ripoff to get utilities more money." □

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Japan Swept by Bankruptcies

By Jon Britton

Japan's largest plywood manufacturer and major builder of prefabricated houses declared bankruptcy February 20. Five banks and other creditors will be left holding \$1.3 billion in unpaid IOUs, making it the largest corporate failure in Japan since the end of World War II.

About 4,200 workers are directly affected. But many more may lose their jobs, since about 300 smaller companies had relied almost totally on the bankrupt firm's business to stay afloat.

The bankrupt company, Eidai Sangyo, never recovered from the world slump of 1974-75, which hit Japan especially hard. During the preceding boom, it had sold as many as 10,000 prefabricated houses annually. Last year, as consumer demand continued to stagnate, the company put up only 3,000 units and its overall rate of operation was only 40% of capacity.

Additionally, Japan's plywood sector, like many older Japanese industries, has been encountering increasingly stiff competition abroad, as well as a profit squeeze owing to the rising value of the yen in relation to the dollar (more than 20% in the last year).

In a February 20 dispatch written from Tokyo, *New York Times* correspondent Andrew H. Malcolm reported that Eidai Sangyo's bankruptcy "rocked business, financial and Government circles here. . . ."

"The Government of Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda," Malcolm continued, "immediately began a concerted drive to minimize the economic and psychological effects of the Eidai Sangyo collapse. . . ."

\$12 Billion in Bad Debts

Fukuda's concern is well founded. Just one week earlier, on February 13, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that a "chain reaction of business failures" of shipbuilding and shipping-related firms had been touched off in Japan. The article listed four companies that had failed since last December, leaving total debts of more than \$500 million.

Moreover, these failures are only part of a wave of bankruptcies that has been sweeping the Japanese economy. The number of firms wiped out has been increasing since 1973, reaching a postwar record of 1,500 a month in late 1977. A grand total of 18,000 companies, with debts of \$12 billion, went over the brink last year.

Even Tokyo's city government is in

severe financial straits and has imposed cutbacks in social services and a wage freeze (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 27, p. 233).

"The worst situation at home and abroad since World War II," Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda said last November 26.

Fukuda's expressions of alarm are not likely to have much practical effect in stemming the insolvencies. Both the government and the major banks have already been aiding imperiled companies through additional loans and other means.

For example, the five banks holding most of Eidai Sangyo's debt had been nursing the lumber conglomerate along with new injections of cash for five years, until they finally had to give up because of their own financial woes. According to an article by Masayoshi Kanabayashi in the February 22 *Wall Street Journal*, the interest income of these banks from loans has dropped so low that it is now below interest payments that must be paid on deposits.

Moreover, the home builder's failure occurred despite a new program, announced by Fukuda on October 3, 1977, providing government loans for 100,000 houses, since increased to 550,000 houses.

'Traditional Remedies Are Not Working'

As Susumu Awanohara put it in the December 16, 1977, issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "a big portion of the Japanese industrial machine remains in serious trouble—suffering from what is known here as structural recession: and what is upsetting is that traditional remedies are not working."

Awanohara went on to explain that the "recession is considered structural—as opposed to cyclical—in industries where excess capacity is so great that normal economic recovery would not close the supply-demand gap."

In fact, Japan's "structural recession" is an integral part of a crisis of overproduction (relative to what people can buy, not to what they need) that is spreading to all corners of the capitalist world. Among its effects are rising unemployment, sharpening inter-imperialist competition, and a ruling-class antilabor offensive aimed at boosting corporate profit rates.

Since Japan is an extreme case, having gone from a rapid rate of growth of 10% to 12% a year in the 1960s to virtual stagnation now, its economic problems cast con-

siderable light on the world trend.

Ironically, the very industries that propelled Japan's rapid economic expansion previously are now the ones in deepest trouble. Among these are textiles, chemical fertilizers, machine tools, steel, and shipbuilding.

"Official and private studies list about 10 major industries . . . as having structural problems," according to Awanohara. "Together they account for up to 20% of all manufacturing output in Japan, and capacity utilization in some sectors of these industries is below 50%."

Shipbuilding on the Rocks

Among the hardest hit is shipbuilding. The Transport Ministry recently estimated that new orders for the current fiscal year will come to six million tons—only one-fifth that of the peak year, 1973. Worldwide, orders for new ships are down to one-third of their 1974 peak, according to the February 11 *London Economist*, leaving many other countries with idle or soon-to-be-idle facilities. Within this shrunken market, Japanese shipyards are feeling increasingly stiff competition from Taiwan, South Korea, and Brazil, where labor power is cheaper.

The steel industry, which underwent enormous expansion during the 1972-73 boom, is also saddled with excess capacity. The anemic demand for steel stems from a weak recovery in expenditures by corporations for new plant and equipment since the 1974-75 slump, also part of a worldwide trend. (See *Intercontinental Press*, October 3, 1977, p. 1080.)

In addition, exports of steel have been "voluntarily" curtailed in response to pressures from the Carter administration and the European Common Market. More recently, steel exports have been involuntarily cut by special "antidumping" duties imposed by the United States and Europe. The Japanese steel companies also have been hit by competition from a number of the more industrialized semicolonial countries.

Rising protectionism abroad and loss of markets to foreign competition has affected the textile industry and consumer-electronics manufactures as well.

Boom in Auto Exports 'Finished'

Even the auto industry has sharply lowered its expectations of future growth. "Like the rest of the economy, the motor industry went through 15 years of fantastic expansion, but now it is finished," Toyota's Managing Director Shigenobu Yamamoto told the American financial magazine *Business Week*. Yamamoto foresees only a modest growth in the auto business in the next ten years, according to an article in the January 30 issue.

It is becoming clear that many of the same factors that fed the great boom of the

1960s are now turning into their opposites and are fueling the crisis.

- A high rate of productive investment by Japanese capitalists resulted in rapid economic growth, a sharp rise in the productivity of labor, and the capability of invading and capturing major markets abroad. Sony television sets, Honda motor bikes, and a myriad of other products poured onto the world market.

Eventually, however, the export flood began to seriously threaten the profits of American and European corporations—the steel companies and television manufacturers being cases in point. The most vulnerable capitalists, echoed by flag-waving labor bureaucrats, then started up a hue and cry for “protection.”

As a result of this campaign, trade barriers have been thrown up, and the export drive of the Japanese capitalists has been blunted.

- The success of Japan's trade offensive, combined with a stagnating domestic economy, has produced enormous trade surpluses with the United States and West Europe, of \$8 billion and \$5 billion respectively. These in turn have helped push down the value of the U.S. dollar and a number of European currencies, in relation to the yen. Japanese firms have been forced repeatedly to raise the prices of exported automobiles and other products to compensate, further blunting their competitive edge.

- A growing component of Japanese exports in recent years has been capital goods, including whole factories. Much of this business has come from four Asian countries—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Industry in these semicolonial and colonial areas has been built up thanks to massive loans from U.S. and Japanese banks and direct investment by American and Japanese corporations.

This export of capital has been encouraged by the prospect of superprofits owing to the extreme cheapness of labor power. An additional motivation has been the calculation that industrialization would strengthen the native ruling classes as bulwarks against “communism” and provide alternative models of rapid economic growth.

In the long run, of course, the creation of a large urban working class will undermine capitalist rule. In the meantime, highly competitive industries have emerged in these countries, which are making serious inroads into foreign markets, including the Japanese domestic market.

Imports of textile products and toys into Japan from the four countries, for example, rose to US\$628 million and US\$80 million respectively in 1976, more than ten times their 1970 level, and their climb continued sharply in 1977 (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 24).

- All through the boom years, Japanese



FUKUDA: Can't find remedy for \$12 billion headache.

industry imported advanced technology from the United States, making possible big productivity gains relative to its foreign competitors. But now Japan has largely closed the technology gap, and future gains will come much more slowly.

'Lifetime Employment' to Get the Ax?

- Two other advantages the Japanese industrialists had during the boom years were the “lifetime employment system” and access to almost unlimited capital from the big banks.

The tradition of hiring workers for a “lifetime,” and keeping them on the payroll even during cyclical downturns, made for a stable work force. And massive borrowing from the banks was essential to achieving a high rate of economic expansion, in view of the limited amounts of equity capital that could be raised on the Japanese stock market. (According to *Business Week*, most Japanese companies have debt/equity ratios of 80/15, in contrast to an average 40/60 for U.S. corporations.)

Now, however, both these practices have become counterproductive from the point of view of maintaining profits, saddling the employers with high fixed costs and making them vulnerable to financial failure during slumps.

Under the “lifetime system,” Japanese

companies risk a much bigger response from their workers than do their American and European counterparts should they try to institute mass layoffs when business is slow. Aside from the fact that Japanese workers consider a high degree of job security a right, government unemployment insurance and social security measures are far less developed than in the United States or Europe.

And Japanese firms must pay interest on their enormous bank debt regardless of business conditions, whereas American and European corporations, with a much higher proportion of their capital in the form of stock, can slash or omit dividend payments whenever they become financially squeezed.

- Two other once-favorable factors for Japanese capitalism that have turned negative should be mentioned.

The first of these is the “surplus population” in rural areas, which provided an ample supply of cheap labor during the long boom. By 1973, this “reserve army” had largely been absorbed into industry.

The other is the price of energy, which was relatively cheap in the period before 1973 but has since become much more costly. Japanese industry is almost totally dependent on imported oil and coal for energy.

The employers in Japan have less lati-

tude in shifting the costs of their "structural crisis" onto working people, especially in regard to layoffs. Nonetheless they have followed the lead of their American and European competitors in launching an offensive to lower workers' living standards and boost profits.

This operation is being carried out in the name of "restructuring industry." The stated aim is to make Japanese industry as a whole more competitive by shedding or shrinking less profitable sectors, which tend to employ large numbers of relatively unskilled workers. At the same time, Japanese capitalists hope to expand the more technologically advanced, "knowledge-intensive" sectors employing smaller numbers of more highly skilled and educated workers. An example of the first category is textiles, and of the second the computer industry.

The "restructuring" takes various forms, the most dramatic being outright bankruptcy of companies that can no longer pay their debts. Eidai Sangyo, the plywood manufacturer and home builder, is an example.

Jobless Rolls to Hit 1.4 Million

Workers employed by companies that fail are no longer protected by the "lifetime employment system" and frequently end up on the jobless rolls. The number of jobless workers has climbed in the past year along with the rising numbers of bankruptcies. The Japanese Federation of Employers' Associations has estimated that unemployment will climb to 1.4 million this year, an all-time record.

Another form of "restructuring" is the takeover of an ailing company by a stronger firm or the merger of two weak companies to reduce competition and lower costs. Such moves usually involve a paring of the combined labor force, if not through layoffs then by means of attrition.

Thus, Japan's largest synthetic textile manufacturers, Asahi Chemical and Kanebo, decided in January to move toward a merger, with the establishment of a joint sales corporation as a first step. This is the second such merger in less than a year in an industry plagued by a worldwide glut of synthetic fiber. Other mergers are expected to follow, along with more drastic measures.

According to an article by Gene Gregory in the February 24 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the Textile Industry Council "believes that rehabilitation of the industry will remain elusive unless large-scale scrapping of excess capacity is undertaken, reducing the industry's total production capacity by some 30%."

Hammering Machinery into Scrap

And this brings us to yet another form of "restructuring": the deliberate destruction of machinery and other facilities.

The *Mainichi Daily News* of January 24

reported that "in Kashiwara, east of Osaka, the president and employees of Asada Knitwear Co. pulled 93 machines into the inner courtyard and watched workers from a salvage company hammer them to scrap one after another."

"Following the lead of silk," the paper continued, "fabric and cotton-staple fiber producers in other parts of western Japan . . . will scrap 1,805 machines this week in a concerted action to deal with growing . . . stockpiles of unsold products."

The same article predicted that in Osaka 14,000 machines, 32% of the total, will be demolished in the next two years.

State and local governments have guaranteed loans of up to 800,000 yen per machine (about US \$3,300) to finance the scrapping operation.

Meanwhile, the larger textile mills are switching over to water-jet looms, which use only half as much labor as the conventional type.

As a result of this "restructuring," the country's textile work force has dropped to 800,000 from 1.1 million in 1971, and the fall in employment is expected to accelerate in the next few years.

Three Million 'Unnecessary' Workers

Thus, despite the "lifetime employment system," Japanese companies are finding ways to slash their payrolls. According to the January 30 issue of *Business Week*,

this is being accomplished "by normal attrition, by encouraging early retirement with offers of *sayonara* (good-bye) bonuses, through temporary layoffs at reduced pay, and through transfers to subsidiaries, also usually at lower pay."

"Still," says *Business Week*, "lifetime employment remains a heavy drain on the financial statements of Japanese companies." The business magazine further points out that estimates range up to three million for the number of "unnecessary" workers being carried on corporate payrolls at a cost that Keizo Saji, chairman of Suntory Ltd., calculates at around \$20 billion a year.

Yukio Aida, vice-president of Nomura Securities Co., considers this the biggest problem in retooling the Japanese economy. He and other businessmen have suggested that it is time to get rid of the system and for the government to assume responsibility for unemployment through an expanded social security system.

Japanese capitalists recognize that a major result of their stepped-up profit drive and the current wave of bankruptcies will be the re-creation of a large reserve army of unemployed. This will help keep wages down. But they fear other consequences.

The fight for job security could well become the focal point of resistance by Japanese workers to the overall offensive their bosses have launched against them.

Aquino to Run in Philippine 'Election'

The bourgeois opposition Liberal Party announced February 16 that it would field a slate of candidates in the elections scheduled for April 7.

Heading the slate will be the party's leader, former Senator Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., who has been imprisoned since President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972. He had been sentenced to death three months ago, but Marcos set the verdict aside. Aquino has vowed to run in the elections, from prison if necessary.

The Liberal Party's announcement reversed an earlier decision to boycott the elections. The interim National Assembly that is to be chosen will be a largely powerless body, with Marcos reserving the right to override or abolish it. Martial law will remain in effect.

Marcos called the elections to help brush up his image abroad. A key Marcos adviser was quoted in the February 16 *Washington Post* as admitting, "The elections are being held at the suggestion of the U.S. State Department and to present to the U.S. Congress a martial law regime that looks more democratic."

Correspondent Jay Mathews commented in the same report that Aquino's decision

to run in the elections "would help the Philippine leader in one way by lending a measure of respectability to the April 7 election. . . ."

To further polish his image in the United States and to counteract the criticisms of his regime by Filipino exiles living there, Marcos has hired an American public relations firm. Doremus & Co. will receive \$1.8 million over a three-year period for, among other things, placing articles favorable to Marcos in various U.S. newspapers and magazines.

Widow of FSLN Leader Slain

The Managua daily *La Prensa* reported February 1 that Margarita González, widow of guerrilla leader Carlos Fonseca Amador, was among six persons shot down by Nicaraguan National Guard troops in an attack on a demonstration in the city of Matagalpa January 31.

Amador was a founder and central leader of the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front). He was killed in a confrontation with the National Guard in November 1976.

AROUND THE WORLD



Red Carpet Rolled Out for Tito

Yugoslavia's President Tito was given a royal welcome by U.S. rulers when he arrived in the United States for a three-day official visit March 7.

During a full red-carpet and honor-guard ceremony on the White House lawn, Jimmy Carter praised the eighty-five-year-old dictator as "a great world leader," "a remarkable man," "an inspiration" to his people, and an exemplification of the "earnestness for freedom, independence and liberty that exists throughout Eastern Europe and indeed throughout the world."

Carter also lauded Tito for his "advice and constructive reports" on foreign affairs contained in "frequent and personal communications" with the White House. (*New York Times*, March 8.)

Carter, no doubt, also brought to his guest's attention that day's edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, which carried a full-page ad in Tito's honor placed by sixty-four major U.S. corporations, including Dow Chemical, National City Bank, Sears Roebuck, Textron, U.S. Steel International, and Westinghouse Electric.



TITO: Popular on Wall Street.

The words "Welcome, Marshall Tito!" in bold type were emblazoned above a heavily airbrushed, life-size photograph of the Yugoslav chief of state. A caption explained that the welcome was being extended "in the spirit of friendship and economic cooperation."

'Unidad Socialista' Banned in Argentina

In a decree issued December 12, 1977, the Argentine military junta banned "the distribution, sale, and circulation" of the clandestine publication *Unidad Socialista* "throughout the whole territory of the Nation."

Unidad Socialista was a monthly newspaper that reported on the struggles of the Argentine workers under the Videla dictatorship and publicized the cases of Argentine political prisoners. In addition, as an editorial note in the November 1977 issue explained, it was "an open tribune for all the efforts to build a big socialist current" in Argentina.

The Videla regime justified its ban on the grounds that *Unidad Socialista* "clearly demonstrates the affirmation of divisive Marxist positions, injurious to the fundamental institutions of the Nation and to the system of values cited in the decree of March 24, 1976 [the date of the military coup]."

Protests against this new blow to freedom of the press should be addressed to General Jorge Videla, Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

More Arrests in Indonesia

A State Department representative said in Washington February 18 that 500 to 600 students and other critics of the Indonesian regime have been arrested since January, when the Suharto regime began to crack down against student protests. The arrests, he said, were a matter of American "concern."

To show what the Carter administration's "concern" really amounts to, the Defense Department the same day officially notified Congress that it intended to sell sixteen Northrop F-5 jet fighter planes to the Suharto regime for an estimated \$125 million.

In Indonesia itself, student protests continued against the regime. Students at

various colleges are protesting Suharto's plans to run for reelection as president in March—with no other candidates running against him.

Students in Semarang, in central Java, rallied at Diponegoro University February 16. According to student sources, army helicopters descended over the protest in an attempt to disperse it.

About forty students at the Institute of Technology in the western Java capital of Bandung were arrested the previous week after troops entered the campus in an effort to halt antigovernment protests.

Miners Protest in South Korea

On January 27, 1,500 coal miners and their wives staged a sit-in protest in Sam Cheon County to demand a 40 percent wage increase and improvement in their working conditions. Nearly 200 of the demonstrators were arrested and the mine was closed down for three days.

A little earlier, in mid-January, similar struggles by manufacturing workers in Daegu City were held to protest low wages and restrictions on trade-union rights.

According to the Finance Ministry, about 90 percent of South Korean workers earn less than \$210 a month and about three-quarters of all women workers earn \$63 to \$84 a month at the most.

French Planes Bomb Saharans

According to the Polisario Front, which is fighting for the independence of Western Sahara from Moroccan and Mauritanian rule, French planes carried out new air attacks against Polisario forces on January 27.

The front also said that French and Moroccan aircraft dropped phosphorous bombs on a civilian caravan the same day, killing twenty-five women and children.

French planes conducted three similar bombing raids against the Polisario forces and their supporters in December. Two of the attacks were acknowledged by the French government (see *Intercontinental Press*, January 9, p. 32).

Polisario has also claimed that it killed forty-three Moroccan soldiers and wounded several dozen in a clash about fifty miles northwest of El Aiun, in the northern part of Western Sahara.

Selections From the Left

Socialist Action

Published twice monthly in Wellington, New Zealand.

The February 10 issue notes that the recent crash of a nuclear-powered Soviet satellite in northern Canada was not the first such incident, and quotes a report in the February 2 *New Zealand Herald* on a 1964 accident involving a U.S. Navy device:

"[The satellite] burnt up in the atmosphere and scattered radioactive plutonium over 12 countries. New Zealand received the heaviest concentration. . . .

"The Atomic Energy Commission did not release information about the incident until eight years later, in 1972, when it announced that about two pounds of plutonium was released. Although the amount was relatively small, it was the equivalent of one-sixth of all the plutonium which fell out in the Southern Hemisphere from more than 300 nuclear weapon tests conducted in the atmosphere by the United States and Russia."

El Trabajador Socialista

"Socialist Worker," published monthly in Quito, Ecuador. Organ of the Socialist Workers Movement, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

A letter from the editor introduces the first issue, dated February 1978:

"Compañero: Perhaps you already know us. The Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores [Socialist Workers Movement] is a young political organization that includes workers, artisans, professionals, peasants, women, and students who have the goal of a new Ecuador—a socialist Ecuador where neither oppression nor poverty in any form would exist. The MST and its newspaper *El Trabajador Socialista* identify with the positions of the Fourth International, a world organization that unites socialist and workers parties of the five continents."

The lead article in the February issue calls for working-class independence in the elections that the military junta now ruling Ecuador has set for July 16:

"We have to nominate our own candidates. Our parties, the parties of the proletarian left . . . have to stop putting confidence in the bosses' candidates, however 'progressive' their disguise. The FADI (Broad Left Front, which includes most of the workers parties) has the major responsibility. FADI must nominate candidates from our class and reject those of the bourgeoisie."

The FADI includes the Communist Party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Christian Left, and other workers organizations.

In an article entitled "The FADI Must Change," the MST puts forward a class-struggle program for the FADI and criticizes the failure of the leaders of this front to fully support the struggles of the Ecuadorean masses. This article also points out the threat posed to working-class independence by the inclusion of a small bourgeois grouping, the Movement for Left Unity, in the FADI.

Other articles in the first issue of *El Trabajador Socialista* denounce the undemocratic election law decreed by the junta, explain the need for unity among the three union federations in Ecuador, and report on various struggles by students and workers. An "International" column carries news from Nicaragua, Indochina, and Argentina.



IRLANDE LIBRE

"Free Ireland," published monthly in Paris.

The January 1978 issue reports: "From November 21 to December 5, coinciding with the launching of this paper, we organized an informational tour on the theme 'Ireland, the British Gulag' with two Irish republican speakers. They were Jim Gibney from Belfast, just out of Long Kesh prison camp, a representative of Provisional Sinn Féin; and Niall Lenagh, a representative of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

"This is the first time the two main organizations in the resistance have spoken together in France," Niall said at the beginning of the tour.

"After a press conference in Paris, the two Irishmen participated in a meeting in Lyon organized by the local Collectif Irlannde Libre, then in Grenoble in a public meeting in the 'tourist center,' and in the afternoon in a festival organized by the United Socialist Party. They were to meet with a representative of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), while in the afternoon they were received by the Socialist Party-controlled city government.

"After a meeting in Paris with the leadership of the United Socialist Party, the two went to Brittany, where the tour was organized with the cooperation of the Breton federation of the United Socialist Party. They received a warm welcome.

"After an early rally in Douarnenez, in St. Brieuc, Yves Dollo, the deputy mayor

and Socialist Party candidate in the coming legislative elections, received the Irish delegation and did not hesitate to compare the situation in Ireland to the war in Algeria.

"After a press conference in Rennes, all the Breton press reported the tour. Niall and Jim visited the deputy mayor of Renne, Monsieur Hervé, who stressed his ties with the Welsh members of the Labour Party [the Celtic people of Brittany are related to the Welsh]. He offered to raise the Irish question with them.

"The biggest meeting was probably the one in Rennes, where almost 500 Bretons discussed such questions with the Irish speakers as the problem of the political prisoners, the Protestants, and their socialist perspectives. There was a meeting with the cultural associations, such as Skol an Emsav, and sometimes heated debates with members of the Breton Democratic Union, whose leaders basically support the "Official" republicans in Ireland.

"On the road to Quimper, they stopped in Concarneau and met the strikers, mostly women, at the Sopromer packing house, who have been occupying their plant since February 1977. A delegate from the strike committee and the secretary of the District Council of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) drew up a joint statement of support for the Irish people. . . .

"[In Paris] . . . they met with the SP municipal government in Créteil; members of the judges union; members of the Movement for Judicial Action; . . . Alain Krivine of the Revolutionary Communist League; a representative of the American Indian Movement; and the Québec singer Pauline Julien. . . .

"It was a very full tour for the two Irish, which, as the daily *Ouest-France* wrote, enabled them 'to break through the veil of silence around the Irish situation.' It also gave us a chance to make our paper known and to begin to build a distribution network."

la gauche

"The Left," French-language paper of the Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in Brussels.

The February 22 issue contains a statement by the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Workers League (LRT), expressing support for a bill before the Belgian parliament that would remove criminal penalties for abortion.

The bill, submitted by three Socialist

Party deputies, states that abortion is a medical procedure and that all references to it in the criminal code should be deleted.

The Belgian Trotskyists state:

"What was traditionally considered an extremist demand of marginal groups is now being expressed through 'official' political channels. Thus the struggle to remove abortion from the criminal code has finally taken a concrete form, making it possible to unite much larger forces than has been the case up to now.

"The LRT has therefore decided to support the bill put forward by Detiège, Adriaensens, and Brenez. We call on the March 4 Committee, which is organizing the demonstration in Gent, to include in each action around the slogan "Decriminalize abortion, let women decide" the demand for adoption and complete, uncompromising implementation of [this] bill. . . .

"Removal of all the articles on abortion from the criminal code is the precondition for winning the other demands raised by the abortion committees—let women decide; reimburse costs out of public health insurance; set up the largest number of centers in each region, as fast as possible, where abortions can be performed with proper medical procedures and psychological support.

"Only a mass movement can create the relationship of forces needed to establish such a radical change in the law. But this is a political question, and that aspect stands to be overlooked.

"Under pressure from the abortion committees, the number of clinics and centers in Belgium where abortions are performed is growing. But the law remains unchanged. This leads to a situation that is increasingly tenuous and confusing.

"Not only are these centers continually threatened, but public interest in the political aspect of abortion is diminishing. This clears the way for some kind of compromise by the legislature, which can only be to the satisfaction of the political parties represented in parliament.

"As long as references to abortion have not been deleted from the criminal code, tens of thousands of women will be forced to have illegal abortions or go abroad. The greatest victims will still be women of the working class and young women."

nacla

Published six times a year in New York by the North American Congress on Latin America, an independent research organization.

A report in the January-February issue explains why farm workers south of the Río Bravo suffer even more from the use of pesticides than farm workers in the United States:

"Since U.S. restrictions on pesticide use

do not apply to the export or production of pesticides abroad, U.S. firms like Dow Chemical, Eli Lilly, Dupont, Monsanto and Chevron sometimes sell pesticides in other countries that have been banned in the United States. DDT, for example, is sold in Latin America today, even though it has been banned in the United States since 1972.

"The most flagrant abuses in Latin America occur on cotton plantations where production relies on the intensive use of pesticides. In an effort to raise yields, cotton producers now apply pesticides 30, 40, and even 50 times a year, compared to 7 applications in the past. Crop dusting planes apply the pesticides, indiscriminately spreading the toxic chemicals over the dwellings and villages of workers and others who live near the plantations."

was fun

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

The March 2 issue reports:

"On Saturday, February 18, there was a special congress of the Social Democratic Party organization in the Aachen subdistrict. What evoked most interest and was most reported in the local press was the decision to support the Russell Tribunal [on political blacklisting in West Germany].

"The resolution calling for such support was initiated by the SP local group in the northern part of the subdistrict, which rejected attempts to red-bait the Russell Tribunal and portray it as some kind of criminal conspiracy. This resolution recommended participation by Social Democrats in the work of building the tribunal. It was adopted. This was a decisive step forward in involving the ranks of the Social Democratic Party in the work of building the Russell Tribunal.

"Before the adoption of this resolution, three Social Democratic members of the Aachen city council had come out in support of the Russell Tribunal, and a successful rally had been held. . . .

"This rally showed, more than any before, a widespread feeling of the need for uniting in struggle against the cutbacks in democratic rights. . . .

"More than fifty of the eighty delegates at this subdistrict congress voted for the resolution. This was not only a major step forward in local support work for the tribunal. . . .

"It also provided an example of effective and broad support work that should be instructive for the entire movement and thus help to overcome the chaos and divisions that exist within it, and to give it genuine breadth and credibility."

bandiera rossa

"Red Flag," newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Groups, Italian section of the Fourth International. Published fortnightly in Milan.

The March 1 issue comments on the assassination of a judge by an urban guerrilla organization:

"Today, February 14, 1978, at 9:00 a.m., an armed nucleus of our organization executed Judge Riccardo Palma.' Thus began the communiqué of the Red Brigades on the liquidation of the judge heading the Office for Prison Buildings.

"Palma was shot down while starting his car. The weapon used was an automatic pistol equipped with a silencer. According to the witnesses, there were three assailants. One was allegedly a robust man between forty and fifty years old. The other two were younger men, between twenty-five and thirty. . . .

"The FIAT 128 in which the three assailants fled was said to be the same as that used in the attack on the chairman of the Italian oil association, Giovanni Theodoli.

"The communiqué issued by the Red Brigades denounces Palma as an 'agent of imperialist counterrevolution,' whose specialty was 'scientifically planning the total destruction of the imprisoned Communists and proletarians by such modern techniques as sensory deprivation cells. . . .'

"Thus, the Italian militarists are continuing their private war. It is more and more private, since it centers on the conditions in which members of these groups are being held in Italian prisons.

"A fight to assure decent conditions for prisoners must, of course, be waged, regardless of the charges on which such prisoners have been jailed.

"But . . . this struggle is being waged in quite a different way today by the Prisoners' Relatives Association (we published a document by this group in the last issue of *Bandiera Rossa*). We cannot help thinking in this context, moreover, of the positive and concrete results achieved by the long hunger strike and mobilization led by the political prisoners in Morocco.

"The fight for democratic rights and military actions conflict so sharply as to permit a particularly severe judgment not only about the negative effect and general harmfulness of the practice and strategy of the militarist groups (which we have taken up in this paper too often for us to have to go back over it again), but also about the new level of theoretical confusion, of desperate self-isolation . . . represented by the new phase of armed actions.

"The bourgeoisie is only waiting for new alibis to step up the repression, and the reformists for excuses to go along with this. The Red Brigades are giving both what they want."

Is FBI Ready to Forfeit \$40 Million to SWP?

By Diane Wang

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

* * *

President Carter's Justice Department made front-page headlines in the March 3 *New York Times* when government lawyers threatened to defy a Supreme Court order rather than produce evidence about informers for the lawsuit by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against the government's political spying and disruption.

The threat to defy the Supreme Court was made public on March 1 when federal Judge Thomas Griesa unsealed previously secret court transcripts for the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. The committee's current hearings on Benjamin Civiletti, Carter's nominee for deputy attorney general, give it a chance to review and challenge the Justice Department's policy.

Leonard Boudin, the socialists' attorney, sent the Senate committee the court records with a letter explaining the constitutional issue raised.

"Not even President Nixon, at the height of the Watergate crisis, took the position that an executive privilege stood entirely above the Courts of this land," Boudin said.

"A key element in the FBI's disruptive operations was the use of paid infiltrators to try to disrupt the party from within," Boudin explained. "The federal judge before whom this case is being tried believes this is a serious question and deserves a trial. But a trial cannot be held without facts.

"... By defying a Court order, the FBI and the Justice Department would deny citizens the right to a fair court test of government activities which... violated constitutional rights."

At the previously secret court hearing on February 10, Assistant U.S. Attorney Frank Wohl said, "At the present time the FBI and the Department of Justice are leaning strongly in the direction of declining to turn over identities of any informants."

Wohl declared that even if the government lost all legal appeals and were ordered to produce the informers' files by the Supreme Court there was a "strong possibility" that the FBI would refuse. The government might prefer to forfeit the case or accept legal sanctions, he said, rather than produce the evidence.

The SWP Suit Against Government Spying

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance filed a lawsuit against the FBI, CIA, and other government spy agencies in July 1973. The suit asks for \$40 million damages, as well as injunctions against government surveillance and harassment.

The lawsuit has not yet come to trial, but in almost five years of pretrial "discovery," it has forced the government to release more than 100,000 pages of previously secret FBI files.

Much of what is today known about illegal government operations against socialists, Blacks, women, and student activists was first revealed by the SWP lawsuit.

One of the facts the FBI was forced to admit was that 1,300 informers had been used against the SWP and YSA from 1960 to 1976, and that about 300 of these agents were members of the SWP or YSA.

The FBI has been ordered to show the socialists' attorneys the uncensored files of eighteen informers, but has been stalling for more than six months.

Further information about the lawsuit can be obtained from the Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 649, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.

Griesa answered, "I appreciate your warning, and I will state to you and to the FBI that as far as I can see now it is not tolerable or acceptable to this court to be told that the FBI will defy the order of the court and accept what you call sanctions.

"The purpose of discovery* is not to lead to sanctions, it is to lead to discovery. . . .

"As long as you have suggested it, I want to give you advance notice that I will seriously consider contempt or imprisonment of defiant officials . . . I will not hesitate to use that power if there is a willful defiance of a final order of this court."

It would be ironic if the newly appointed FBI Director William Webster ends up going to jail for withholding evidence. As a federal judge, Webster was part of a three-judge panel that upheld the very order by Judge Griesa that the FBI is now preparing to defy.

The Justice Department's threat to defy the Supreme Court comes after more than a year of legal battles over the informer evidence. At stake are the complete files of eighteen FBI informers, twenty-five file drawers of information.

The socialists demanded the files on the eighteen as a sample, a first step in documenting how the FBI uses political spies.

The government lawyers have contended

that the informers' secrecy privilege comes above citizens' right to know. If the informers are publicly brought to account in court, argues the government, all FBI informers will be afraid to continue operations.

Last May Griesa ordered the government to show the files to the socialists' attorneys. That order was upheld by the Court of Appeals. The files still have not been made available, however, since the government again appealed the judge's decision.

In a recent attempt to find a new solution to the problem, Judge Griesa reviewed the eighteen files case by case.

Griesa compared the files with sworn answers that the government previously submitted to the socialists' questions about informers. In one case after another Griesa found the government's answers were "misleading," "incomplete," and at least once "untrue."

In one case, for example, the government claimed that the informer only turned in material "routinely distributed by SWP and YSA to all members and/or public." Judge Griesa said the files showed "a situation where there could well be an overt robbery" involved.

Griesa said that his review of the informer files showed that "what they provided the FBI with was a consistent recital of peaceful, lawful political activities, peaceful, lawful personal activities, and a total absence of any criminal activities or plans of any nature whatever."

*A technical term for the legal procedure under which contesting sides in a civil lawsuit are required to provide information to each other for the preparation of their cases.—IP/I

All Demonstrations Banned in London

By Jon Britton

On Saturday, February 25, a demonstration was to take place in Ilford, outer London, protesting a march through that community the same day by the virulent racists of the National Front.

The counterdemonstration had been called by the local Redbridge Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (RCARF) and endorsed by the Anti Nazi League (ANL). The latter group is led by the Socialist Workers Party (formerly the International Socialists).

According to a report in the February 24 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, a Trotskyist weekly, additional support had come from trade unions and from the Black and Jewish communities (Ilford has a large Jewish population). A hundred taxicab drivers had planned a "cabcade" through Ilford against the racists on the same day.

Meanwhile, the RCARF, ANL, local Labour MPs and the Communist Party were calling on the police to ban the National Front march, *Socialist Challenge* reported.

Just three days before the two marches were to take place, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir David MacNee announced a two-month ban on *all* public processions in the London area. This action set off a chain of events somewhat different from what had been projected, and elicited a storm of protest and controversy.

Both marches were canceled to comply with the ban, as was the "cabcade."

National Front organizer Martin Webster announced February 22 that between 1,000 and 1,500 of his members would still be in Ilford Saturday for a "mass canvass" and by-election meeting.

The same day, Labour, Liberal, and Tory candidates in the Ilford by-election (scheduled for March 2) all welcomed the ban.

Subsequently, Peter Hain, press officer of the Anti Nazi League, announced that his organization's 2,000-plus supporters "will first be dispersed in small groups to leaflet local streets and will then converge on the Front's meeting for a peaceful picket" (*Socialist Challenge*, March 2).

Support from broader forces that had endorsed the original counterdemonstration largely evaporated in the face of the ban, according to *Socialist Challenge*.

On Saturday, when the 2,500 or so antiracist activists arrived in Ilford they found that 5,000 cops were on hand "to maintain order."

As the activists began streaming out of the Seven Kings Station shortly before noon, they received two leaflets expressing

sharply differing assessments of the Labour government's ban.

The ANL's leaflet said, in part:

The decision to ban the march of the National Front is an important victory for all who are concerned at the growth of a Nazi organisation in Britain. We do however reject the assumption that Nazi marches and anti-racist marches should be regarded in the same light, and feel it would have been more appropriate to have a ban specifically directed against Nazi organisations alone.

The leaflet added that "the decision of the National Front to flout the spirit if not the letter of the law . . . must not go unanswered."

The other leaflet, signed by the International Marxist Group (British section of the Fourth International), contained a quite different message:

The decision of the Metropolitan Police Chief to ban the National Front march is *not* a victory for the antifascist movement.

It will *not* stop the Nazis peddling their filth through "mass canvassing" and other means. It will give them the appearance of being a "persecuted minority" while, in reality, the ban is a massive attack on the democratic rights of the labour and anti-fascist movement. . . .

Despite an agreement to allow peaceful picketing of the National Front meeting, continual harassment by police prevented a unified picket taking place. At one point the cops broke in to arrest a group of Maoists. Both the ANL and IMG held impromptu street meetings at which the government ban on demonstrations was the main topic of discussion and debate.

Finally, at about 4:30 pm, after many antiracist activists had already left, the cops dispersed those remaining.

Meanwhile, the 1,000 National Fronters continued their rally inside a local high school behind a heavy cordon of cops. Webster reportedly told his followers that the reason they were banned in Ilford and not in Lewisham (where a violent clash between the National Front and antiracists took place last August) was because Jewish money was behind the Labour Party in this constituency.

He was also quoted as saying: "Of course we are opposed to the ban, but we have still scored a victory. We are meeting and the red hooligans have been kept away from us."

The debate within the British left over the events of February 25 and the government ban continues.

The March 2 *Socialist Challenge* quoted

Griesa suggested, "It raises a serious question as to why the FBI surveillance of these people and these organizations and these chapters was not discontinued, at least a decade or two decades or three decades ago, if it ever had any justification whatever."

One informer sent in reports about the SWP and YSA lawsuit against the FBI. His reports about the case and about the Political Rights Defense Fund, the group organizing support for the case, continued for at least ten months after the lawsuit was filed.

After the threatened defiance became public, Attorney General Griffin Bell tried to explain it away. "It is the policy of this Department of Justice to obey court orders," he said. But then Bell added, "Any proposal to deviate from the policy of obeying court orders should have my personal attention."

The next day the attorney general added his opinion that "it wouldn't help law enforcement at all if it became law to reveal their sources."

Syd Stapleton, national secretary of the Political Rights Defense Fund, told the *Militant*, "The Carter administration finally has just come right out and said that 'law enforcement' comes before democratic rights. That's why they won't give us those informer files."

"I don't even think their main worry is what's in the files—even though the files make the FBI look pretty bad. What they are really worried about is the *principle* of the thing; the right of police spies to operate in total, unbreachable secrecy."

"Justice Department lawyers have obviously gotten their orders: 'Stop at nothing, even jail, to protect the rights of the informers, the secret police.'"

Stapleton added, "We're going to fight them every inch of the way. We don't intend to let the FBI cover up their crimes without a battle. We have a right to a full public trial of the issues in our case. This is a principle for us too—no cops or finks are more important than basic democratic rights."

West German 'Antiterrorist' Law

By a vote of 245 to 244, the West German parliament approved a series of "antiterrorist" measures on February 16 that further restrict civil liberties.

The new law enables police looking for "suspects" to search an entire housing complex with a single search warrant, and to hold citizens for up to twelve hours for "identity checks" during a "terrorist" hunt.

In addition, the law makes it possible to prevent lawyers suspected of "aiding" persons accused of "terrorist activities" from appearing in court, and will make it more difficult for lawyers to confer privately with prisoners.

Paul Holborrow, a leader of the Anti Nazi League, as saying that the Ilford action was "extremely successful," and that the ban "is unquestionably a victory for anti-fascists."

Brian Grogan of the IMG, on the other hand, told *Socialist Challenge* that the ban was "clearly aimed" at the left, and that it had undermined the antiracist mobilization.

He called for a campaign against the ban, "linked with the fight to mobilise the

labour movement to impose 'No Platform'" for the National Front.

The same issue of *Socialist Challenge* carried a front-page statement signed by a number of Labour Party MPs and other Labour figures, trade unionists, and leaders of the ANL, SWP, CP, and IMG, denouncing the ban as "an unprecedented attack on civil liberties."

The statement, entitled "Fight the Ban," listed five planned demonstrations that were affected: a National Union of Stu-

dents demonstration, an International Women's Day march, an Anti-Apartheid demonstration, a Friends of the Earth action, and an antiracist march called by the Haringey Labour Movement.

Furthermore, the statement pointed out, "if the precedent is set such a ban may well be used again in the future."

The signers called for the "broadest possible campaign . . . against this attack on civil liberties." □

CPI Chairman Offers Resignation

Indian Stalinists Admit 'Mistake' in Backing Emergency

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—The pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) is planning to hold its eleventh congress in the first week of April. It will consider a review report prepared by the National Council of the CPI, which met December 24-28, 1977, in New Delhi.

The National Council also adopted a report on party organization. According to C. Rajeswara Rao, the general secretary of the CPI, both reports were almost unanimously adopted.

In its review report, the CPI openly admits that it was a "mistake" to unconditionally support the Indira Gandhi regime and her imposition of a state of emergency.

The CPI leadership came to this decision only after the emergency had already been lifted for a year, after an avalanche of revelations of the crimes and tortures committed by Gandhi and her coterie, and under heavy pressure from the rank and file of the party itself.

Even now, the CPI leadership makes a feeble attempt to explain away its "lapse" of supporting Gandhi's emergency. According to the CPI, the situation at that time was "extremely turbulent and complicated" and "the aims of Indira Gandhi in imposing the emergency were not fully clear. But soon, when the negative features began to come to the fore, it was clear that meeting the extreme rightist threat was not the sole aim."

It should be recalled that since 1969, when Gandhi split the old Congress Party, the CPI has called her a "progressive" and has backed all her actions, including the imposition of dictatorial rule, as "progressive." She was portrayed as a crusader against what the CPI called "right reaction," the label it applied to the opposition movement led by Jaya Prakash Narayan.

Only now does the CPI say that Gandhi was also aiming to solve the capitalist crisis. But the CPI leadership is still silent

on the nature of that crisis and on how the emergency rule related to it. Seeking shelter behind the claim that it was a "complicated" situation, the CPI now concludes that it would have been more prudent to have waited before coming out in support of the emergency, so as to have been able to grasp its full implications.

The CPI leadership's whole thinking on this question shows that it is completely out of touch with Indian reality. Gandhi's authoritarian methods had assumed menacing proportions well before the imposition of the state of emergency, especially since the beginning of 1974 when the economic crisis was reaching an explosive level. The brutal suppression of the May 1974 railway strike was but a portent of things to come.

Moreover, does the CPI think that the Indian working class should have remained tied to Gandhi's "progressive" bandwagon while it was trying to make up its mind about the emergency?

The National Council's review report does not provide any deep analysis of the emergency or its aftermath. It offers no perspective for preventing the reoccurrence of similar dictatorial measures in the future.

The CPI's perspective still remains that of a "national democratic front," involving class collaboration with the so-called anti-monopoly wing of the Indian bourgeoisie. It, of course, does not offer the alternative of independent working-class mobilizations, which alone can provide effective resistance to the ruling class's repressive moves.

Behind the CPI's admission of its "mistake," lies serious rank-and-file discontent over its previous position. This discontent has been brewing for some time and has begun to reach a boiling point. There has been a substantial erosion of the CPI's base over the past year, including a re-

ported mass exodus of party members in Gujarat.

In light of this situation, a reporter asked C. Rajeswara Rao at a news conference whether the present leadership, which was responsible for the "mistake," deserved to continue leading the party. Rao retorted, "It is not for you to decide. It is for five and a half lakh members of the party to decide."

S.A. Dange, the chairman of the CPI and one of the founders of the Indian Communist movement, was absent from the National Council meeting. He had sent in his resignation on grounds of "health" after the CPI Central Executive virtually censured him for a speech he recently made indirectly justifying Gandhi's imposition of the emergency.

Addressing a meeting in New Delhi along with Gandhi herself, Dange is reported to have said that he was prepared to forgive Gandhi for all the "excesses" during the emergency period in light of the "courageous steps" she had undertaken to nationalize commercial banks. Dange's statements were regarded as a violation of the CPI's new line, and his speech was not published in *New Age*, the central organ of the CPI.

Dange's resignation has not yet been accepted, although it will be referred to the forthcoming congress. Dange has come under heavy criticism from several state leaders of the CPI, who claim that the party's support for the emergency was extended at his insistence, without any formal approval of the highest decision-making bodies of the CPI. Because of his prolonged association with the Nehru family,² Dange has come to symbolise the

1. One lakh is equivalent to 100,000.—IP/I

2. Gandhi is the daughter of the late prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.—IP/I

party's policies of collaboration with the Congress Party and its support to Gandhi's emergency regime.

Press reports indicate that Dange's resignation could pave the way for new moves toward unity between the CPI and the other main Stalinist party in India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

The CPI(M) is now also preparing to hold a party congress. It has published a draft political resolution for its tenth congress, providing a somewhat more detailed analysis than does the CPI and laying out a programme for party work in the next immediate period.

The CPI(M) does not, however, analyse Gandhi's emergency in class terms, nor does it give a precise class characterization of Gandhi's Congress Party. It claims that Gandhi's defeat in the March 1977 elections was a "victory of India's democratic forces over the forces of authoritarian rule." It considers Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Janata Party a "democratic" party.

Though it now discerns some authoritarian elements in the Janata Party, the CPI(M) still describes Gandhi as the main threat to democratic rights. It thus attacks her, but not the capitalist system itself.

Accordingly, the CPI(M)'s approach is to join hands with all forces opposed to Gandhi. It proposes the formation of a class-collaborationist "left and democratic front." It holds up the CPI(M)'s popular-front government in West Bengal as a model for all of India.

The proposed partners in the CPI(M)'s projected front include the CPI(M); its trade-union wing, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions; allies of the "left" forces; the CPI; "left and democratic forces" in the Janata Party, "radicals" from the Congress Party, and members of the Socialist Party; the Akali Dal in Punjab and the AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu;³ and some individuals from the Congress Party of K. Brahmananda Reddy.

The front is to be billed as antifederal, anti-imperialist, and antimonopolist.

The CPI(M)'s "left and democratic front" is a multiclass bloc that includes bourgeois parties. It offers a new guise for the time-worn practise of class collaboration to preserve and consolidate bourgeois rule in India.

The CPI(M)'s overall perspective does not include working-class action independent of the bourgeois parties. Its draft resolution thus continues the old Stalinist tradition of class collaboration, which has gravely handicapped the Indian working-class movement. □

3. The Akali Dal is a rightist religious party with a regional base in Punjab and a few other northern states. The All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam are bourgeois nationalist parties based mainly in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.—*IP/I*

Moscow and Havana Placed Under Fresh Pressure

Siad Barre Bows to Carter in Ogaden Pullback

By Ernest Harsch

In a shift in the armed conflict in the Horn of Africa, the Somalian regime has indicated it will withdraw its regular forces from the Ogaden desert region of Ethiopia.

At a news conference in Washington March 9, President Carter relayed the Somalian decision. "Last night," he said, "I was informed by President Siad Barre of Somalia that he was agreeing to withdraw his forces from the Ogaden area. . . ."

Carter expressed his satisfaction with the move and urged Siad Barre to pledge publicly "not to dishonor the international boundaries of either Ethiopia or Kenya."

An unnamed White House official was quoted March 10 as describing the Somalian announcement as "one of the few pieces of good news for us."

The editors of the *New York Times*, one of the most influential bourgeois dailies in the United States, likewise hailed the development. In an editorial March 10 entitled "Somalia Retreats, Everyone Gains," they called the pledge to withdraw "wise."

Siad Barre's announced pullback was the result of both military setbacks and international pressure.

Since late January, the Ethiopian military junta has carried out a counteroffensive, with the help of Moscow and Havana. The aim has been to regain control of the Ogaden, where regular Somalian troops and local Somali guerrillas had made gains last year. By March 5, the Ethiopians had recaptured Jijiga, the only sizable town in the Ogaden that had been in Somali hands.

At the same time, Washington and some of its local allies, especially the Saudi Arabian and Iranian regimes, put pressure on Siad Barre. Although they provided him with some military assistance and offered the prospect of much more in the future, they made it clear that the Somalian forces had to first withdraw from the Ogaden.

According to unnamed administration officials cited by reporter Graham Hovey in the March 10 *New York Times*, Carter sent a personal letter to Siad Barre just a few days before the withdrawal announcement. "The President's letter," Hovey explained, "was coordinated with other efforts by interested countries to persuade Somalia to withdraw, the officials said. They cited Saudi Arabia and Iran in particular as governments that had tried to press the American argument for withdrawal."

The American imperialists have been concerned not so much with the Somalian intervention in the Ogaden as with the threat that the Somali struggle for self-determination could pose to American interests in the region. A successful struggle by the Somalis in the Ogaden for freedom from Ethiopian rule and unification with Somalia could have inspired oppressed peoples in other countries.

Another reason for the U.S. pressure on Siad Barre is that a Somalian withdrawal strengthens Washington's diplomatic hand in its efforts to urge a reduction of Soviet and Cuban involvement in the Horn.

Carter said, "As soon as Somali forces have withdrawn completely, and as soon as Ethiopian forces have re-established control over their own territory, withdrawal of the Soviet and Cuban presence should begin."

Moscow has expressed some skepticism over Siad Barre's pledge, but an unnamed U.S. State Department official told reporters March 10 that Moscow had informed Washington that it would use its influence to reduce the number of Cuban forces in Ethiopia once Somalian troops have left.

An Ethiopian representative declared the same day, however, that the Soviet and Cuban assistance was a "strictly internal matter" that could not be negotiated in the context of the Ogaden conflict.

The Ethiopian official also sought to press for even greater concessions from Siad Barre, demanding Somalian recognition of the existing border and a "public renunciation" of its claims to the Somali-populated areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. He likewise demanded a public commitment "to no longer interfere in Ethiopian affairs," an obvious warning to Siad Barre to end all aid to the local Somali insurgents.

Even if the Ethiopian junta is able to reestablish control over the Ogaden, it still faces bitter political opposition in other parts of the country, particularly from the independence fighters in the northern territory of Eritrea. □

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Robert Sobukwe, 1924-1978

By Ernest Harsch

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, one of the most prominent and influential opponents of white supremacy in South Africa, died in Kimberley February 26 of lung cancer. He was fifty-three years old.

As the leader of the now-banned Pan-Africanist Congress and the organizer of mass antigovernment demonstrations in March 1960, Sobukwe was looked up to by large sections of the Black population as a symbol of resistance to the hated white minority regime.

He was one of the most widely respected Black leaders of the past two decades, comparable in stature to only a few others, such as Nelson Mandela, who is serving a life sentence, and Steve Biko, who was murdered in prison in September 1977.

As in the case of both Mandela and Biko, Sobukwe's role as an active leader of the Black freedom struggle exposed him to the full repressive might of the apartheid regime.

He was forced to spend the last eighteen years of his life either in prison or under partial house arrest. Aware of the inspiration that his speeches and writings could continue to have on young Black militants, the white authorities tried to silence him by declaring him a "banned" person, someone who cannot be legally quoted within the country.

However, even some of the white supremacists themselves have recognized the ultimate futility of trying to stifle his ideas. An editorial in the February 28 Johannesburg *Star* pointed out that "clearly Mr. Sobukwe's philosophy—the precursor of Black Consciousness—is still alive and influential among a new generation of black youth. Though the movement he founded is banned, and the leader silenced and restricted these many years, ideas are less easy to ban. The inspiration is still there."

Sobukwe was born in 1924 in Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Province. In 1949, at the age of twenty-five, he became the first elected president of the Students Representative Council at the University College of Fort Hare, an educational institution through which many prominent Black nationalists passed.

Around that time, Sobukwe joined the African National Congress (ANC), the major Black nationalist group in the country. He became a leading member of the ANC Youth League, a grouping of young militants who were dedicated to transforming the traditionally conservative ANC into a more active organization capable of



Robert Sobukwe

fighting the racist regime through demonstrations, strikes, and other protest actions. He was a signer of the Youth League's "Programme of Action," which was officially adopted by the ANC in December 1949.

In 1952, Sobukwe took part in the ANC's Defiance Campaign, a campaign of civil disobedience called to protest the regime's segregationist policies.

By the mid-1950s, Sobukwe began to develop differences with the main leadership of the ANC. Along with other militantly nationalist members, who called themselves Africanists, he criticized the ANC's continual efforts to reassure the privileged white minority that their basic interests were not threatened.

In particular, he and the other Africanists opposed the ANC's adoption of the 1955 "Freedom Charter," which stated that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." He saw this as a concession to the whites and maintained that South Africa rightfully belonged to its original inhabitants, the Blacks.

Sobukwe also condemned the Communist Party's efforts to dampen the national liberation struggle and sidetrack the ANC. Because of this, he was later slandered as an anticommunist. But Sobukwe responded that there were no real communists in South Africa, just "quacks."

In 1957, Sobukwe became the editor of *The Africanist*, the publication of the Africanist group. Confronted with a series of expulsions and other undemocratic measures against dissidents within the ANC, the Africanists split from it in 1958.

The following year, in April, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) was formally established and Sobukwe was elected its national president. In his opening address at the inaugural convention, Sobukwe declared, "We aim, politically, at government of the Africans, by the Africans, for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Africa and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African."

Reflecting the pan-Africanist sentiments that were sweeping the continent at the time, Sobukwe also called for the formation of a "United States of Africa."

Sobukwe was first and foremost a nationalist fighter. Although he said that he favored an "Africanist Socialist Democracy" in South Africa, he had little conception of the social revolution that would be required to bring it about, nor of the close interconnection between the class and national liberation struggles in South Africa. Nevertheless, he was emphatic about what he saw as the necessary precondition for freedom in his country—Black majority rule.

With that goal in mind, the young PAC moved into action in early 1960, seeking to mobilize the African population in a mass struggle against the apartheid regime. The focus of its protest campaign was the hated passes that all Africans must carry and that severely restrict their movements and residency rights.

Though the PAC itself was ill-prepared for the campaign and had no clear plans for how to fit it into an overall strategy for liberation, its call for protests found a ready response. On March 21, tens of thousands of protesters in Cape Town and in the southern Transvaal gathered at police stations without their passes, in defiance of the pass laws. Sobukwe himself participated in the demonstrations in Orlando (now part of Soweto) and was arrested with other activists.

Although the demonstrations were organized as peaceful protests, police in Sharpeville fired into a crowd of several thousand Blacks, killing sixty-seven of them, most of whom were shot in the back.

As the unrest continued to mount (including a strike by 70,000 Black workers in Cape Town that lasted for several weeks), the regime cracked down hard. It outlawed both the PAC and the ANC and arrested tens of thousands of activists.

Sobukwe himself was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of "incitement." After he had served his sentence, however, the regime passed a special law—widely known as the "Sobukwe clause"—that allowed the continued detention of anyone whose release was deemed to further "the aim of Communism." Under it, he was held for another six years on Robben Island, isolated from all other prisoners.

In May 1969 Sobukwe was finally released from prison, but was immediately deported to Kimberley, a town that was unfamiliar to him. He was also banned, a legal procedure that prohibited him from meeting more than one other person at a time, from leaving his home at night, or from leaving Kimberley without special permission. He also could not write anything for publication or be quoted within South Africa.

In 1970 he received an invitation to lecture at the University of Wisconsin. In

an obvious attempt to demoralize him, the regime granted him an exit permit but refused to allow him to travel to the Johannesburg airport so that he could leave.

Despite the daily harassment, a journalist who visited him in 1972 reported that he was in high spirits and that he walked "with his head up."

Sobukwe's optimism in face of tremendous hardships and obstacles stemmed from his faith in the ultimate victory of the Black freedom struggle. As he said in 1960,

just before the beginning of the mass protests:

"We are fighting for the noblest cause on earth, the liberation of mankind. They [the white supremacists] are fighting to re-trench an outworn, anachronistic vile system of oppression. We represent progress. They represent decadence. We represent the fresh fragrance of flowers in bloom; they represent the rancid smell of decaying vegetation. We have the whole continent on our side. We have history on our side. *We will win!*" □

Morales Bermúdez Walking a Tightrope

Peru—2,500 Arrested During General Strike

By Fred Murphy

Workers throughout Peru struck for forty-eight hours February 27-28, the latest in a series of mass mobilizations against the military government's policies of repression and economic austerity.

The general strike was the first nationally coordinated action since a twenty-four-hour work stoppage last July 19. During the intervening eight months, there were local or province-wide general strikes in Cuzco and Chimbote; strikes by copper miners, steelworkers, hospital workers, and others; mass trade-union rallies in Lima; and a hunger strike by more than 100 union militants that began January 28 and was still continuing on March 1.

Austerity policies urged on the Morales Bermúdez government by the International Monetary Fund are at the root of the rising discontent in Peru.¹ The general strike demanded an across-the-board wage increase, a price freeze on basic necessities, and observance of collective-bargaining agreements.

Demands to counter the regime's repression were also raised. These included the rehiring of the 5,000 union militants the government ordered fired after the July 19 strike, the release of trade-union and political prisoners, and the return of union and political leaders now in forced exile.

To intimidate the strikers, the government mobilized 25,000 troops of the Civil Guard, army, navy, and air force in the streets of Lima February 27.

Confrontations between strikers and the repressive forces occurred in working-class and industrial areas of Lima throughout both days of the strike. Workers and residents of the shantytowns on the southern edge of the city built barricades from tree

trunks and rocks, and marched by the thousands up and down the main highways of the capital.

Government troops fired tear gas and grapeshot to disperse the crowds. Hundreds of persons were reported wounded, but only one was reported killed (in the northern suburb of Comas). The death toll was thus not as high as in the July work stoppage, when troops killed as many as twenty strikers in Lima.

According to a February 28 statement by the Comando Unitario de Lucha (CUL—United Struggle Command), the strike was 80% successful in Lima. Elsewhere, the CUL reported, a 100% shutdown was achieved in Cuzco, Puno, Juliaca, and Huancavelica, and in the northern coastal steel center, Chimbote. Sixty percent of workers in Trujillo, Chiclayo, and Pucallpa joined the strike, and major plants elsewhere in the country were also shut down.

Ninety percent of bank workers throughout the country went out, as did 70% of bus drivers in Lima (these drivers did not participate in the July 1977 strike).

Minister of the Interior Luis Cisneros announced February 28 that 185 persons had been arrested, but the CUL said the number detained was at least 2,500, including 1,550 in Chimbote and 848 in Lima. The Chimbote arrests were for curfew violations—the city remains under the state of emergency declared during a fifty-two-day steelworkers strike in December and January.

A national delegates' assembly of the CGTP,² the main union federation, had called for the nationwide work stoppage

February 10. A similar strike had been set in December for January 23-24, but that action was unilaterally suspended by a few top CGTP bureaucrats. They cited a "request from the president of the republic" and the danger of "war with Ecuador."³

After the suspension of the January strike, demands rose inside the CGTP for the replacement of the officials responsible. To head these off, the bureaucrats used fraudulent credentials and armed thugs—backed up by police—to prevent dissident delegates from attending the February 10 assembly.

But they did have to renew the call for a general strike. Besides the pressure from the CGTP ranks, an important factor was a rally of 35,000 held in Lima February 9 by the Comando Unitario de Lucha.

The CUL is a coalition of independent unions whose leaderships identify either with forces to the left of the Communist Party or with the PSR,⁴ a party led by radical ex-military officers. Among the forces in the CUL are unions of copper miners; glass, textile, brewery, graphic arts, and light and power workers; and teachers in metropolitan Lima.

The CUL rally was described by the Lima weekly *Caretas* as "the largest held by the left up until now." It was considerably bigger than a CGTP rally held in Lima last November, despite the fact that the regime allowed only twenty-four hours of publicity.

The rally condemned the actions of the CGTP leadership, and called a general strike for March 2-3. Fear that the CUL was becoming a pole of attraction for their

1. See following article by Eduardo Medrano.

2. Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers). Controlled by the right-wing faction of the Communist Party.

3. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 27, page 230.

4. Partido Socialista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Socialist Party).

own ranks no doubt led the CGTP bureaucrats to propose the February 27-28 strike.

The CUL then canceled its March 2-3 strike call and gave full support to the work stoppage set by the CGTP.

Morales Bermúdez has made no moves to grant any of the strike's demands. However, the repression meted out was not on the scale of last July.

Peru's Military Junta at the Crossroads

By Eduardo Medrano

[The following article appeared in the February 27 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language newsmagazine published fortnightly in New York. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

General Francisco Morales Bermúdez, chief of the military junta that governs Peru, held a news conference on December 30, 1977. This was only nine days after the CGTP,¹ the country's largest union federation, voted at a national delegates' assembly to call a national general strike for January 23-24, as a protest against excessive increases in the cost of living and against government repression.

The president had not appeared in public for some time. Thus the populace was waiting expectantly to find out what he had cooked up.

A number of things are of great concern to the Peruvian people: price increases beyond all reason; unemployment and the massive firings that resulted from the July 19, 1977, general strike; the foreign debt; and the election process for a constituent assembly that is under way.

But Morales Bermúdez emphasized only two points: the elections and the foreign debt.

Regarding the economy, the January 5 issue of the Lima weekly *Marka* reported what Morales said:

Speaking of the difficulties Peru faces in paying the massive foreign debt, he said the private U.S. banks, rather than adopting a favorable attitude to Peru after the country reached agreement on a loan from the IMF [International Monetary Fund], have instead presented new demands. Nothing more nor less than a special agreement, unprecedented for our country, with the U.S. Treasury Department. In other words, direct interference—not even through the IMF—by the U.S. government in the economic affairs of Peru.

1. Confederación General de Trabajadores Peruanos (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers). Controlled by the Communist Party.

The government is walking a tightrope. To meet the demands of the IMF and the big imperialist banks, harsh economic measures must remain in force. But to keep the lid on the mass mobilizations these policies have evoked, more repression may be required. And that could further complicate the military's plans for a gradual transfer of power to a civilian regime. □

Marka added laconically that the president had "rejected the Yankee pressure and announced his intention to defend the sovereignty of the country."

How was he to do it? A clue was reported a week later in the January 12 issue of *Marka*. After quoting the figures on the foreign debt, it said Morales Bermúdez was insisting that signing an agreement with the IMF "was the key" to altering the attitude of the international bankers.

This was a rather odd way to "reject the Yankee pressure" and "defend the sovereignty of the country." Later we will see how Morales Bermúdez carried out his word.

The Dance of the Millions

First let us look at some figures, which are not a little alarming.

According to the January 12 *Marka*, the Peruvian government has contracted a debt with U.S. lending agencies amounting to more than \$4 billion. Peru must pay about one-quarter of this total in 1978, equal to almost one-half its export income for the year. Of this \$1 billion, \$370 million must be paid during the first half of the year. In January alone \$120 million was to be paid. And in 1978, according to Jorge Flores Lamas, writing in the January 19 *Marka*, debts totalling \$976.2 million will fall due.

In addition, Peru has European creditors, and it even owes the Soviet Union about \$900 million for arms purchases. Sixty million of this was to have been paid in January.

How could such a situation come about? Who pushed Peru so far into debt?

Some answers to these questions can be found in the U.S. bourgeois press. For example, Everett G. Martin, staff reporter of the *Wall Street Journal*, presented some pertinent facts in the September 1, 1977, issue of this financial newspaper.

Between 1975 and 1977, the Peruvians had no difficulty in getting funds. Experts from the IMF, the World Bank, and the industrial countries told the Peruvians

that between 1975 and 1977 they could easily handle \$2.8 billion in new debt to spur economic development.

Recalling the situation in Lima around that time, a local banker said, according to Martin: "Foreign bankers wanted to give us money before we asked for it. The Italians had lira for a dam. The French had francs for our steel mill."

Peru did not seem to be in a bad situation. Vast petroleum deposits were believed to be in the Amazon forests, and it was only a question of discovering them. "We expect Peru to be exporting a billion dollars worth of oil by 1980," a U.S. banker told one of his friends in Lima. In addition, new copper mines were beginning to produce, and exports of sugar, cotton, and anchovies looked promising.

Thus, with the blessing of the IMF, the military believed that a period of prosperity was about to arrive. As Martin reported:

Observers here say they have never seen the lethargic Peruvian bureaucrats so efficient. They came up with 84 projects that they figured could absorb some \$6 billion in loans, and they succeeded in getting enough loans—\$3 billion worth—to finance 68 of those projects. . . .

Peru took on some 400 foreign creditors, and its international debt expanded fivefold, to more than \$5 billion, at least half of it owed to private banks. U.S. bankers alone lent a billion dollars to the junta. The Japanese lent half a billion.

But Peru's luck ran out.

What happened was explained in the September 5, 1977, issue of *Business Week*:

. . . an IMF-World Bank consultative group in 1975 recommended heavier bank lending to Peru based on projections of exports that never materialized. Instead, copper prices have fallen far below estimates, the anchovies have stopped running, and the oil in the jungle across the Andes never materialized. Exports were projected at \$2.8 billion in 1977, but will actually come to only \$1.85 billion.

So the friendly tone of the imperialist press changed, and was replaced by veiled threats. The purchase of arms from Moscow began to be discussed.

Almost all the commentators in the Yankee news media talked about thirty-six Sukhoi aircraft and 300 Soviet tanks. Suddenly this was pointed to as the main cause of Peru's payments crisis, although the Soviet credits amount to only \$900 million.

H. J. Maidenberger wrote in the December 18, 1977, *New York Times*:

Peru has a grave cash problem, which many bankers believe could lead to the first major default on foreign loans by a third-world nation. After borrowing almost \$1 billion from American banks to buy Soviet arms, Peru's military rulers find their nation skidding toward insolvency.

The cash squeeze has been aggravated by another \$1 billion Peru borrowed from European leaders to finance a pipeline to carry still undiscovered oil from the Amazon. Last week Peru asked Washington for a loan of \$100 million to

pay pressing needs. The request was turned down because \$60 million of the amount requested would have been earmarked for payment of arms bought from Moscow. The payment is due next month, and the Russians want their money then.

The allusion to a possible default in payments or a moratorium was not without a basis in reality. Even in the U.S. Senate there has been speculation about this risk.² In fact, Pinochet of Chile and Sadat of Egypt have handled debts owed to the Soviet Union in this fashion, declaring them null and void.

Concerning export-import relations, Norman Sklarewitz said in a dispatch from Lima to the December 13, 1977, *Christian Science Monitor* that Peruvian exports in 1977 would reach \$1.76 billion, but that this would be offset by imports of more than \$2 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$327 million.

But it is not easy to cut imports. "When there is no money for the industrial raw materials we must import, then the factories will have to close or cut back and each worker you have to fire is a potential guerrilla." This was the conclusion of a textile executive quoted by Juan de Onís in the July 27, 1977, issue of the *New York Times*. De Onís noted:

With about \$500 million in foreign debts to be paid by the end of this year, Peru has no foreign-exchange reserves and the prospect of a trade deficit. The national budget has an unfinanced deficit of at least \$400 million. United States and European banks that lent Peru \$360 million last year to pay off debts are unwilling to do so again.

De Onís quoted a threat made by a U.S. banker: "If they are not ready to adopt the austerity measures necessary to achieve stability, we will not be doing them any good by lending them more money."

Martin of the *Wall Street Journal* added some graphic facts without going into their underlying cause:

There is no doubt that the situation is messy. Half the work force is underemployed. Prices rose 34% last year and may rise more than 50% this year. The country's international-payments balance showed a deficit last year of about \$500 million.

The Fall of the Sol

What did the International Monetary Fund propose should be done in the face of such figures? As reported by Martin in the *Wall Street Journal*, before approving standby credits of about \$100 million at the beginning of 1977—an amount "that would be less important for its size than for its constituting an IMF seal of approval in the eyes of other bankers"—an IMF

2. See "Bankers Fear Defaults by Semicolonial Countries," by Jon Britton, in *Intercontinental Press*, October 10, 1977, p. 1114.

team demanded two things: first, that the 1977 budget deficit be held down as an anti-inflationary measure; second, "a series of mini-devaluations" of Peru's currency, the sol.

It was this policy that the military junta



MORALES BERMUDEZ: In hock to U.S. banks for \$4 billion, plus interest.

began implementing at the beginning of 1977. Its effects were not long in coming. The "mini-devaluations" ended in a drastic fall in the value of the sol: from 80 soles to the dollar at the beginning of October the exchange rate dropped to 120 soles to the dollar at the beginning of December, and by January 23 it stood at 130 soles to the dollar.

This has had a grave effect on the cost of living. In its December 17, 1977, declaration, FOCEP³ said that prices of food products in 1977 had risen 393 times faster than in 1976. The number of unemployed and underemployed had risen by 154,500—an increase of 36.5 percent over 1976.

The Workers Resist

So it was not strange that a national general strike broke out last July 19, a strike that left more than six dead, hundreds of persons arrested, and thousands of workers fired from their jobs. Nor was it strange that by November 24, the workers were demanding that their union federations unite and organize a new general strike, to put a stop to the "brutal offensive unleashed by the government

3. Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil y Popular (Workers, Peasants, Students, and Popular Front).

against the workers five months ago," as *La Verdad*, the monthly organ of the Peruvian Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party) said December 1.

But the government, seemingly indifferent to the rising social storm, has again opted for austerity measures.

On January 13 Economy Minister General Alcibiades Sáenz presented the main aspects of the economic-financial program for 1978 in an address to the nation. According to the January 19 *Marka*, Sáenz outlined nothing less than a "new avalanche of price increases affecting basic foodstuffs and electricity and transportation rates, as well as new rises in industrial costs because of fuel prices."

Along with this the government offered a general wage increase, averaging 1,458 soles (US\$10.80) in the private sector in Lima. But unmarried workers in the public sector are to receive an increase of only 1,000 soles (\$7.40), according to the January 15 issue of the Colombian daily *El Espectador*.

Prices will increase an average of 35 percent, according to *Marka*. So the net result is a new loss in buying power as wages will only rise 27 percent at most.

Peru's international debts remain, as does the growing hunger of the masses. The U.S. banks—realizing fabulous profits—pressed those debts upon Peru in the first place, without concerning themselves about what it would cost the workers to produce the wealth needed to repay them. The banks counted on support from their junior partners in the Peruvian bourgeoisie and its military junta.

So the workers should not have to pay those debts. Despite a leadership that serves as a brake and that still controls the workers and popular movement, a mobilization has begun. In respecting the dictates of the IMF, and using repressive measures to impose them, the military junta has seated itself on a powder keg.

It is evident that the masses are becoming more willing to struggle. To pacify them, the junta is combining minimal wage concessions with proposals for a gradual restoration of political democracy. But there can be no political liberties with any meaning as long as the economic disorder remains.

Morales Bermúdez is not ignorant of this. Facing the possibility of another strike, he is striving in his demagoguery to make hay on the issue of foreign debts, "defending the sovereignty of the country." Perhaps this has had some fleeting impact. It may have temporarily strengthened the bureaucratic sectors of the workers movement who say that in view of the inability of the government to declare a moratorium on the foreign debt, the workers must sacrifice to give the regime some breathing space. But the pressure evident among the workers today will sooner or later put a stop to that way out.

'Very Slowly, the Barrier of Fear Is Lifting'

[The following interview and the accompanying introduction appeared in the March 2 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, a weekly newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Petr Uhl is one of the most prominent advocates of the Charter 77 human rights manifesto in Czechoslovakia—for which he has lost his job and been subject to continual persecution.¹

This interview was carried out over the telephone by an Austrian journalist sympathetic to the Austrian Socialist Party. Petr Uhl gives his views on the state of the Charter, police repression and his own political convictions.

* * *

Question. What is your own situation at the moment?

Answer. The Charter has described my situation in its letter of 12 December to Mr. Strougal (President of the National Assembly). That is that my flat is under round the clock surveillance by the police, VB (uniformed police) agents are watching me and look at the identity papers of those who come to visit me and often prevent people from coming in, especially if they are from outside Prague.

This is what happened last Sunday to my father-in-law (Jan Sabata, a party official in 1968, sacked and imprisoned after the Prague Spring) who had come to visit my wife, his daughter. They also prevent people who are on the list from entering, and do not allow any more people in once there are three people here.

Q. Who is on the list?

A. Some friends of mine such as Julius Tomin, Vaclav Benda, Vavrinec Korcis, the Ruml brothers, Karel Frauwind, Zdenek Fiser, etc.

Q. But from what milieu?

A. Various. Mainly people who have been my acquaintances for a long time, in situations which the police regard as suspicious. For example, "five o'clock teas" at which 10 to 15 people were present. At two of these "teas" there have been as many as

25 people present, in the first case for a lecture and the other time at my birthday.

In the first month—I started keeping count on 27 September after the first search—70 people of all kinds came to see us; altogether perhaps 120 to 140 people have come.

It annoys them that so many people have come in, so they invent all kinds of limitations which are illegal and contrary to the penal code, but I am not in a position to complain against these practices.

Q. Have you taken action against what the authorities have been doing to you?

A. Of course. I have written to the procurator, General Fejes, whose only reply has been a form letter telling me that the matter will be looked into.

Q. When did you send the letter?

A. A week later I wrote another letter and I have just complained to Zbynek Kieswetto, the chief military procurator, because one of his VB agents had committed a theft which is punishable by law.

In the corridor outside our flat this guy jostled the son of my friend Julius Tomin, a boy of 14, and tore pages out of his hands including some of his father's personal correspondence. The police gave it back two hours later.

Apart from this I have not done anything. I do not think that there has been sufficient reason.

At the moment Dr. Kriegel and the Charter are taking up my defence. Perhaps this will bring results—I don't know. I've been subjected to many repressive methods since January 1977 (the launching of Charter 77), and they have continued to get worse.

I have lost my driving license, my rank in the army has been withdrawn, the telephone has been cut off, I have had problems at work, and recently I got a letter sacking me, which you must have.²

Q. I have got it.

A. So you know already.

Q. Have you asked your guards why they are keeping you under surveillance?

A. Yes, often. They just invoke some

order stating that it is necessary to take my protest to the commissariat in Peace Square.

Fellow citizens and friends have tried it and have been told that this is a simple administrative measure from their point of view, and that they have received an order from the Ministry of the Interior and it's all in the hands of some unknown "operative" (security agent) whom no-one knows and no-one can contact . . .

Q. Leaving aside your personal situation, what is the situation now with regard to the Charter?

A. Taken as a whole, good. The Charter has become more active again, there are three spokespeople again, new people are signing and even giving their names publicly, there is a multitude of activities, and, very slowly, the barrier of fear is lifting.

For me, as a revolutionary Marxist, the Charter shows clear analogies with the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. It contains demands which, in the context of the present system, are partly realisable and partly unrealisable. They are demands which get people moving.

It is true that there are few demands concerning the workers, the working class strictly defined, but there are very few 'workers' in the narrow meaning of the word.

Nevertheless the Charter refers to two international pacts which our country has signed, and also contains prescriptions which concern the workers, and which have to be publicised.

Q. Although you say that the activity of the Charter has expanded, we are receiving less news than we did at the beginning.

A. That's possible; fewer numbered documents are being issued; there have only been two recently, numbers 13 and 14. Have you heard about number 13?

Q. Yes, it's about pop music.

A. That's right. This is very important for us because young people are interested in this. There is a pressing, and often elementary need for cultural life.

Also, as far as I know, another document has been published containing about 80 new signatures. That doesn't seem very many, but one has to bear in mind the repression which comes down on each signatory.

It is also important that most of the

1. See, for example, "My Interrogation by the Czech Security Police," by Petr Uhl, in the January 9, 1978, *Intercontinental Press*, p. 18.

2. For an English translation of the text of this letter see *Intercontinental Press*, January 9, 1978, p. 18.

signatories are young and are often manual workers. This I find very positive.

Also there is intense activity around holding meetings. At the start this was called the "anti-university." Now we use a more modest name; it's simply a question of lecture courses in philosophy or other spheres which take place in Prague and Brno.

The Charter has also been successful in taking up the case of P. Landovsky who has been released from prison, and also that of Jarda Hutka, who still suffers persecution, but, it seems to me, of a less severe character than previously.

All this activity has been concretely expressed around the Ornest trial. The manner in which it was carried out, the fact that the verdict was fairly moderate, perhaps has something to do with the activity of the Charter.

Q. Do you think that the authorities are showing signs of a certain tolerance towards the Charter, or perhaps one should say are showing more intelligence in their choice of methods in combatting it?

A. I am, of course, very critical of the way the authorities have been behaving, but I must say with satisfaction that the Charter has, all in all, become legal.

Both when I and other people have been interrogated we have been told, "good, the Charter is okay, no-one can take legal action against you for that, that's quite legal, but there's something else. . . ." And they try to establish the existence of certain political contacts, of political activity so-called, outside the Charter.

Naturally, it annoys them having to proceed in this roundabout way. Except for certain situations where it presents certain temporary problems, it is not possible to take legal action against someone who supports the Charter, who types out its documents and distributes them.

There is still a reluctance to do these things openly because cases of persecution, such as mine, are known; they took two typewriters from me, and nothing further has come of that, nor, I am convinced, will they attack me on that basis.

It wasn't so clear at the beginning. Before Vaclav Havel (one of the first Charter spokespeople) was released we thought that he was under attack explicitly for his Charter activity. But we found out afterwards that this was not the case.

Q. Sometimes there have been rumours going around that there was a group within the Charter which was planning terrorist actions. Evidently this is an attempt to discredit the Charter . . .

A. That is quite possible. The police have dreamed up this group and these people. I don't have information about this.

Q. But there have been interrogations about it.

A. Yes, but it hasn't been stated during the interrogations. According to the records, two questions on this subject have been put to six people during interrogations. Have they heard anything about



Internationalen

PETR UHL

kidnapping or other outrages, and should they answer yes, are they aware that they must denounce such acts?

Outside of the records, verbally, my name has been mentioned. But when I asked my "friend" Jarda Basta (a policeman) if he and his mates were trying to establish a connection between me and this business, he said no, it had been badly expressed and so on.

All in all this particular police action was very half-hearted, only affected six people and only lasted a month. Just before it started Dejmál and myself were held for between 25 and 30 hours, my flat was searched at the end of September, and after the search there was some confusion among the Charter concerning these rumours of terrorism.

It was put about that the police suspected us. It wasn't the case, and I don't think it had any basis, but people were seized with a sort of panic.

It is false that the police had said to anyone that they had my flat bugged, that they had a recording saying that I was in contact with West German terrorists and was trying to get hold of arms. All this is untrue.

Unfortunately people living in an atmosphere of fear sometimes begin to imagine things and start rumours, some of which even get as far as Vienna . . .

Q. You have expressed support for the Fourth International. Recently you sent a protest letter against the Berufsverbot in West Germany. Do you see any difference between your situation and that of a state really menaced by terrorism, where the Berufsverbot might have quite a different character?

A. I signed a collective letter with six people.³ I don't want to get into an argument, but I do not think that the Berufsverbot is directed against terrorists.

Q. Of course not. But there are certainly people who work in the police or the civil and public services who defend principles which are opposed to those on which the state is based. To be more concrete: it is difficult to employ people in the police force who are in favour of the destruction of the system.

A. I'm sure it is. In any case I am not a supporter of the West Germany police. But I agree with you. However, according to what I have heard one has to raise certain objections to the Berufsverbot. Especially with regard to teaching. My friends who have been affected by this measure are essentially teachers. In this sense I have protested.

Q. Don't you think that in stressing so strongly the principles of the Fourth International and its influence, you have reduced the effectiveness of the Charter in the eyes of Western public opinion?

A. When I refer to the Fourth International—as an ideological current, but not on the organisational level—this is not for tactical reasons.

It's a matter of conviction, and as a communist I think that in all circumstances one must say what one thinks, and defend publicly one's principles if only so that no-one can be deceived in the future.

My activity and the public defence of my opinions simply demonstrate that the principles of the Charter and those on which the Fourth International are based are in agreement. □

3. For an English translation of the text of this letter, see *Intercontinental Press*, November 14, 1977, p. 1239.

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Banzer Regime Faces Growing Isolation

By Fred Murphy

"A series of events is taking place here which would have been unthinkable a couple of months ago," *Le Monde* correspondent Thierry Maliniak reported from the capital of Bolivia February 23.

"It is 'springtime' in La Paz. Workers are meeting in factories to elect their leaders for the first time in three years. Union officials, who until quite recently had stayed out of sight, are now back in circulation, giving news conferences and seeking meetings with ministers.

"Politicians, once hounded, are putting the final touches to plans for forming political fronts. Journalists besiege the airport waiting to buttonhole returning exiles. Retired military figures are standing up to be counted, and persons who formerly insisted on anonymity when being interviewed are today asking to be named and identified."

The Banzer dictatorship was forced into this liberalization by a hunger-strike movement that spread throughout the country during the first two weeks of January. The strike ultimately involved more than 1,300 persons in ten cities.

President Hugo Banzer Suárez ordered the arrest of the hunger strikers on January 16. Forty-eight hours later, facing growing student protests and the threat of a nationwide strike by tin miners—the key sector of the Bolivian proletariat—Banzer went on television to announce a general amnesty.

Specifically, the regime had reached an agreement with the leaders of the hunger strike, through the mediation of Catholic Cardinal José Clemente Maurer, on the following points:

- A general amnesty for all Bolivians imprisoned, exiled, put under house arrest, or being sought by the authorities for their political or trade-union activities.

- Reinstatement of all fired tin miners, supervised by a commission made up of union, management, and government representatives. Miners thus rehired were to be placed in their old jobs with no loss of seniority.

- Amnesty for all hunger strikers and their supporters, with the immediate release of the strikers arrested January 16-17.

The hunger strike and the mass support it received thus greatly complicated the military's plans to turn the government over to a civilian regime under armed forces tutelage on August 6 of this year, following general elections on July 9.

The armed forces had hoped to install their official candidate for president, air force chief Juan Pereda Asbún, with a minimum of difficulty. Only a very limited amnesty was planned.

But now General Pereda will have to face several well-known political figures, including at least one former president. In addition, the lifting of government control over the trade unions, announced January 25, could mean an upsurge of workers struggles in the midst of the electoral period.

The two main bourgeois parties that had been supporting Banzer are now taking their distance from the regime. The Bolivian Socialist Falange nominated ex-Foreign Minister Mario Gutiérrez Gutiérrez as its presidential candidate on February 24.

The main faction of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), led by former President Víctor Paz Estenssoro, has not yet announced a candidate, but it is unlikely that it will support Pereda. Paz Estenssoro has not yet returned from exile in the United States.

A popular front is forming around the probable candidacy of ex-President Hernán Siles Suazo, who heads the Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNRI). This coalition includes the MNRI, the Communist and Socialist parties, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), the Christian Democrats, and ex-Vice Presi-

dent Juan Lechín's Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left (PRIN).

The main base of support for Lechín and the PRIN is the trade-union movement. Lechín holds the top posts in both the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) and the tin-miners union, the FSTMB (Trade-Union Federation of Mine Workers of Bolivia). Lechín returned to the country on February 4.

The Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Workers Party (POR) issued a statement in La Paz January 22 calling on the COB to convene a congress that could put forward independent working-class candidates (see below).

Recent statements by the Catholic Church and by a former top military leader have highlighted the Banzer regime's growing isolation.

General Remberto Iriarte, who was commander of the armed forces after the 1971 coup, called for Banzer's resignation February 8. Iriarte said this was the only thing that could guarantee a fair election, and accused the regime of "encouraging and financing the formation of new groups" to support the "candidate of continuity" General Pereda. Formation of a "Nationalist People's Union" to back Pereda's candidacy was announced February 20. It includes the progovernment "official" wing of the MNR and the Social Christian Party.

The Permanent Episcopal Committee, composed of all Bolivian Catholic bishops, issued a document January 29 calling for "truly democratic, free, and proper elections." The bishops urged support for political formations that stand for "human rights, the right to justice, and an ongoing effort to remedy social inequalities and poverty," while attacking those who "consider profits the essential motor of economic progress and private property in the means of production an absolute right." □

Bolivian Trotskyists Hail Victory of Hunger Strike

[The following statement was issued in La Paz January 22 by the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party),¹ the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

1. The Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Combate) hails the victory of the hunger

strike.² Unifying and mobilizing a large majority of Bolivian citizens, the strike forced the Banzer dictatorship to declare a general and unrestricted political and trade-union amnesty.

The heroism of the miners' wives, of the children, students, and workers who supported this struggle, is comparable in significance (taking into account differen-

Reconstruction of the Fourth International. *Combate* is the newspaper reflecting the views of the Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

2. See "Bolivia—the Hunger Strike for Political Prisoners," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 6, p. 140.

ces in time and place) to the nineteenth-century struggle by the women and children of Cochabamba who confronted the invader Goyeneche.³ That also was a fight to defend freedom and the right to self-determination.

Faced with the pressure of the Bolivian masses, repudiation by national and worldwide public opinion, and the erosion of his pillars of support in private enterprise and the armed forces, the Goyeneche of today—equally an oppressor in the service of foreign imperialist interests—had no other choice than to grant concessions and retreat before the failure of his repressive maneuvers. The paltry liberalization that the dictatorship was trying to carry out has thus been broadened and extended by the people mobilized in the strike. This demonstrates that the liberties and rights of the masses are not achieved by begging but rather by fighting and winning.

However, knowing the deceitfulness and the unrestrained thirst for power exposed in this conflict, it is necessary to remain on guard and be alert in order to defeat possible counterblows.

2. The victory of the hunger strike has opened up a new period; the political and social struggles of the Bolivian masses have reached a higher level. The situation is now one of fully exercising the democracy and rights that have been regained. In this regard the POR(C) proposes:

a. Immediate reorganization of all the unions and federations, through democratic elections and with a spirit of unity, restoring the former leaders who were persecuted because they did not capitulate, and integrating the new cadres formed in the resistance.

Rapid organization of the masses will be the best guarantee and defense against the reactionary right, which is awaiting an opportunity to launch a counterattack against the workers movement.

b. The unions immediately and without delay should demand and supervise the rehiring at their old jobs of all workers fired during the six years of military dictatorship.

c. Recovery of the headquarters and material goods of the unions. At the same time we must demand restitution or repayment for all housing, furniture, and domestic goods appropriated by the DOP⁴ during search-and-seizure operations. These raids on workers' pitifully few household goods must not remain unpunished. Their authors must be brought to justice and exposed before public opinion.

d. The return of the exiles should be

organized. The POR demands that the United Nations plan, finance, and guarantee the repatriation of the Bolivians. The Committees of Exiles and human-rights organizations must be alert beforehand to counter detentions and attacks on exiles returning to the country.

3. Along with exercising the liberties and democratic rights regained by the masses through the hunger strike, a need also arises to recover the buying power of wages, gravely diminished since 1971. The unions should place discussion of this problem on the agenda. A united joint demand should be put forward for an increase in all wages eroded by government measures and inflation.

4. The elections called for July 9 must be viewed in the context of this mobilization and struggle for the full exercise of democratic rights and liberties and for defending the economic standard of living of the Bolivian masses. Consequently, the elections must not be a diversion from this struggle, nor should they lessen the masses' momentum or replace it with electoral illusions. Going to the polls will not in itself resolve the economic, political, and social problems of the country and the workers. Nor should the masses compromise their class independence before the ruling bourgeoisie and its government.

In the present situation, the POR takes a positive attitude toward the elections, and is opposed to abstention or boycott. This is not because we put confidence in bourgeois elections, but rather because we think the victorious mass struggle for amnesty, democracy, and liberties must be extended through intervention in the electoral process, uniting the workers movement and advancing it further. However, for the workers movement and its revolutionary vanguard, such an electoral intervention only has meaning if it is carried out by uniting and mobilizing the masses, by developing their combative power.

On this basis, the POR proposes holding a great *National Congress of the Workers and Popular Masses*, to be convoked by the *Central Obrera Boliviana* [COB—Bolivian Workers Federation]. This congress should discuss the question of the elections and decide on a united intervention with lists of workers and peoples candidates. To further such an outcome, the POR calls on left and revolutionary political currents to form a united front among the workers. From this must emerge the platform of opposition to the official candidate and the candidates of other sectors of the bourgeoisie. No front that claims to speak in the name of the masses and the revolutionary left can turn its back to the masses. And no bourgeois *caudillo*, either new or compromised by the past, has the right to claim to be the representative of the masses.

To the united congress should be invited soldiers, noncommissioned personnel, and officers of the armed forces who feel them-

selves a part of the workers' and people's struggles, and who in the recent conflicts assumed a critical attitude and differentiated themselves from the Banzer dictatorship.

On the other hand, this congress would be useful not only for taking a position on the elections, but also for reuniting the workers and peasants movement, the students and intellectuals, and the revolutionary militants persecuted and dispersed during the six years of dictatorship. Right there before the masses, with the participation of their delegates, a working-class economic and social plan—a transitional program—can be prepared. This will provide an alternative to the bankrupt plans of the ruling generals and of private enterprise, and will guide the coming revolutionary struggles.

This National Workers Congress should be the culmination of the mobilization begun by the heroic hunger strike, and an advance in the struggle for national and social liberation in Bolivia, on the march toward socialism.

With regard to securing the elections themselves, the POR calls on all the workers organizations, the working-class and left parties, to discuss the following problems together:

- Assuring the best safeguards for the elections, since the government and the official candidate are the same thing.

- Changing the composition of the Electoral Court, through inclusion of direct representatives of the political parties and mass organizations.

- Preventing any conditions or obstacles to full participation by the parties, such as a quota of signatures, or the public disclosure of adherents, which could lead to attacks on their security.

The POR will defend its legality as a party, which was recognized by previous electoral courts. We also demand recognition of the right of youth eighteen years of age and older to vote in the elections.

6. Because of continual insinuations and attacks by the repressive bodies about past forms of struggle, which are used to justify new arrests, the POR believes it is necessary to make the following very clear:

The forms of the class struggle, its tactics and methods, correspond to each historic situation. Armed struggle, while called for in the past, does not correspond to the present tasks of rebuilding the workers movement and regaining basic democratic rights. Armed struggle is one ingredient in the fight for political power, and becomes necessary in revolutionary or prerevolutionary situations—in no way what Bolivia is now experiencing. Armed struggle is brought on by a revolutionary crisis of society. Therefore the POR reaffirms that today it is not in any way calling for any form of armed struggle, and that above all it does not participate in acts of terrorism. □

3. José Manuel Goyeneche was a leader of Spain's counterrevolutionary army in South America in the early 1800s.

4. Departamento de Orden Público (Department of Public Order), the regime's police agency.

Women Begin to Break Their Chains

By Jacqueline Heinen

In our last article we examined the underlying causes of female unemployment and discrimination against working women.¹ This article will review the highlights of the international struggle of female workers and show the completely new ramifications of some struggles taking place in the economically developed countries.

The Fight for Equal Pay

In most cases, as everyone knows, women earn less than men because they have lower-ranking, unskilled jobs. But in industries with a predominantly female work force, women are often paid less for doing exactly the same work men do. The explanation is almost always the same, without the bosses even having to spell it out: "It is normal, because they are women."

And when they are brought up short by women refusing to take any more and going on strike against this injustice, certain employers have the audacity to "justify" paying women 20% less than men for the same work by saying that women work 20% less!

At least this is what was recently said by the director of Yardleys in Britain, the cosmetic company controlled by the British-American Tobacco trust, third-largest of the giants that dominate the British economy. The women who work at Yardleys lost their strike because they did not get the support of the trade unions.

On the other hand, the successful strike at Trico, which lasted more than five months in 1976, played a decisive role in the struggle of women workers in Britain for implementation of the equal-pay law.

It is no accident that Britain is the place where most of the struggles around equal pay have taken place in recent years. Faced with the spreading radicalization of women and with the growing power of the women's liberation movement—which originated in Britain at the time of the first strikes for equal pay—the British capitalists had to make certain formal concessions.

So, on the occasion of "International Women's Year," they instituted the "Equal Pay Act," which gives female workers the right to take the matter to administrative tribunals if they are denied equal pay.

The outcomes of the innumerable court actions brought by female workers are an example of how capitalist justice works—an incredible number of women have seen their claims turned down by the "special commissions" set up to hear equal-pay cases. Every sort of pretext is used to "prove" that the work in question is not exactly the same as that done by men in the same industry.

Many women have won their cases—at least on paper—in spite of this. In reality, however, women have been forced in a number of cases to go out on strike to compel their bosses to abide by court rulings.

The struggle at Trico is one of the best known, because it generated large-scale solidarity actions on the part of the workers movement and the independent women's movement.

It was above all because they refused to place any confidence in the employers' courts, counting on nothing but their own forces and boycotting the tribunal when their cases came up for a hearing, that female workers at the Trico auto-parts factory were able to do away with the lower wage scale and other forms of discrimination they suffered.

Nonetheless, the very existence of a law stipulating equal pay has played an important role in raising the consciousness of female workers and instilling in them a will to fight for implementation of this right. This was seen at Electrolux, at the Magnetovox electronics factory, at the Laird Portch textile factory in Scotland, and in the struggle by Irish telephone operators.

In each case, the extent to which women won their demands depended largely on the breadth of support they received from the workers movement. In many cases the unions gave only lip-service support to strikes.

What is involved here is not a secondary question, because it exposes all the factors that lie behind unequal pay. These include the lack of background and training; the double workday that causes women's higher absenteeism rate ("they work 20% less . . ."), since they are always the ones who have to stay home with a sick child; the social and cultural discrimination that "explains" why women almost never advance to positions of responsibility.

Nor is it a secondary question in terms of the challenge it poses to the bosses' interests. Everyone knows what resulted from the long successful fight of telephone

workers in the United States in 1973—the courts decided in favor of the female employees and forced the company to pay out \$38 million in back wages.

Jobs for All!

It is in the fight against layoffs that the efforts of women workers in different countries have the most in common. In sectors with a mostly female work force, such as textiles, electronics, and watchmaking, there have been countless factory closings in the interest of rationalizing production from the boss's point of view . . . and also countless factory occupations. The struggle at the Lip factory² (which, although it is rarely acknowledged, was above all a struggle of women) inspired many female workers, who took up the slogan: "Here we work, we produce, we sell."

From the strike at the Sogantal garment factory in Portugal, to the numerous strikes involving factory occupations in the textile and garment industries in France (Cerisay, Cip, St. Joseph, Rhône Poulenc, etc.), thousands of female workers have been tested in struggle. In these battles women workers both confronted problems of organization that were new for them, and—even more important—had to carry out a political debate to break down the resistance of the workers organizations and win their support.

If some women came out of these confrontations very skeptical about the usefulness of the trade unions, others became more determined to participate in the fight to transform their unions into instruments that could defend the interests of all workers, above all the most exploited and oppressed layers.

One important aspect of the fight for jobs for all is the struggle against the cutbacks that capitalists in every country are using to shift the burden for social services onto the shoulders of working people and those who use hospitals, child-care centers, and schools. Those hit hardest, both as workers and as users of the services, are usually women.

The recent struggle of female workers in Britain against a rash of hospital closings is an example for the working class as a whole. Not only did the patients and staffs of hospitals like Elisabeth Garrett Anderson, Hounslow, Weir, and Plaistow decide to take over their hospitals to block the "rationalization" drive of the Labour government; more often than not, they also carried this out against the advice of their trade-union leadership.

The strikers used this struggle to initiate a deepgoing discussion on capitalist medi-

1. See Intercontinental Press/Inprecor, March 6, 1978, p. 262.

2. A nine-month strike by watchmakers in Besançon, France, concluded in January 1974. One of the longest strikes in French history, it included a two-and-a-half month occupation of the factory in which the workers operated the plant themselves.



James Adamson/Sygm

Workers assembly at Lip watch factory in Besançon, France, during 1973 strike and occupation of plant.

cine, on the absence of preventive medicine, on the link between the fight for free, legal abortion and the capitalists' general attacks on the rights of working people; on the objective needs of the working class, which can be resolved only in the framework of a socialist society.

The struggle for jobs for all also has to take into account the needs of those who are mothers of families. This means opening child-care centers at workplaces because they usually do not exist in the community. It means making the employers provide good cheap cafeterias for those—and they are the vast majority—who are forced by the anarchic development of the cities to travel too far to go home for lunch.

This is what led, in 1976, to the first strike by the workers at Induyco, a textile factory in Madrid. This is what led them eventually to a realization of the specific oppression they suffered, and of the way the boss was taking advantage of the fact they were women to manipulate them.

Six months later they went back out on strike for basically political reasons, demanding the rehiring of two women who had been laid off for playing too active a role in the first struggle. Jobs for all, in other words, means struggling against the terrible forms of superexploitation that prevent women from exercising their right to work.

The proof of this lies in the common themes that emerge from the struggles of female workers in the big department

stores. Whether it is at Simago or the Cort'Ingles in Madrid, at Sainsbury's in Britain, or, a few years ago, at the Nouvelles Galeries in France, women put forward the same demands in fighting against the monsters that these big chains are. The demands include improvement of working conditions, an end to obligatory overtime, wage increases, an end to harassment by managers, the right to sit down, and so forth.

In several cases—as at Cort'Ingles, for example—the workers understood the importance of solidarity between the women who fabricate garments and the women who sell them. In fact, the boss of the saleswomen of Cort'Ingles was also the boss of the workers at Induyco. During the second Induyco strike, many saleswomen stopped work in solidarity with the picket line put up at the store entrance to urge people not to shop there.

This type of struggle brings together themes discussed above. The women fighters are in the traditionally female sections of the proletariat, but they have assimilated some of the most advanced experiences of the working class in recent years.

The struggles are of a new type that express the growth of the radicalization and show the influence of an independent movement on female workers. They affect sectors never before active, explicitly raising problems related to the role of women in capitalist society. These include the double workday, the question of women's

economic and social independence, and the division of labor.

In the hotel business, for example, women have begun to rebel. Here the work force turns over rapidly because of the low wages and the way employees are treated (often nearly 75% of the personnel is new every year), and women make up more than two-thirds of the workers.

In Portugal a series of hotel occupations were organized in 1975. These occurred, however, in the context of a very particular political situation.

Today in Britain it is the wardrobe keepers, cleaning women, and cooks of the Trust House Forte (THF) chain, who are on strike. Last year they fought for a wage increase by organizing picket lines in front of the Hotel Randolph in Oxford, telling people that they earned less than £20 a week, barely half the salary of a laborer and a third the salary of an industrial worker. And they never see those "princely tips" you hear so much about.

The combined pressure of the two trade unions of hotel workers (which were divided among themselves but united against the strike) prevented the strikers from winning their demands. But this did not stop the employees of the Metropole Hotel in London—belonging to the same chain—from striking several months later for a minimum wage of £50, with the support of almost 100% of the workers involved (the great majority of whom are women).

Women who clean office buildings at

night and domestic workers have also begun to organize. This is particularly difficult for them because of their isolation. Since the famous strike of the nighttime cleaning women in Britain in 1971 and that of household workers in Sweden a few years later (two strikes which at the time seemed like exceptions), most European countries have seen struggles by these women, whose work is hardly considered a job but rather a "natural" extension of normal "women's work."

Two years ago in Portugal, cleaning women organized to form a trade union and to open centers for domestic workers in several cities. Women in Spain followed their example.

In early February 1978, the *limpiezas* (office cleaners) began to struggle in Euzkadi, putting forward their demands in a general assembly and organizing strike pickets. A group of *chachas* (domestic servants) occupied a church to publicize their campaign and win their demands.

In each case, the struggle revolved around winning a contract with the employers, including a forty-hour workweek, the right to Social Security, a month's vacation, the minimum wage, and so forth.

It is very difficult to form a stable organization of women who are so atomized, both those who work in empty offices and those who work in someone's home where they are subjected to a paternalism matched only by the superexploitation and psychological pressure they suffer.

Cleaning women and domestic servants in Canada—most of them immigrants—have been able to meet regularly, and this helps break down their isolation.

Another example is the women workers at Balai Libéré in Belgium. They decided to dispense with their boss after a three-week strike in 1975, which taught them a few things about capitalist tactics. They got together with the boss and informed him that he had been laid off and that they were now running the show. It was hard at the beginning, but they succeeded in winning pay increases; their wages doubled in three years.

Their action helped encourage other women to organize. One group of independent domestic workers produced a film that was shown on television. In it they explained their working conditions and ended up with demands similar to those put forward by their Portuguese, Spanish, and Canadian sisters.

Many other examples could be cited of new sectors of the female work force who have begun to struggle. These range from the fight of airline stewardesses in Germany for job stability and an end to being treated as sex objects, to the struggle of the wives of merchants and artisans in the north of France. The latter organized simply to be recognized as workers. At present they have no right to any wage or

social benefits, under the pretext that their work as bookkeepers, secretaries, or storekeepers was just something they did while keeping an eye on the soup kettle and the children.

In spite of the petty-bourgeois aspects of struggles like these, they say a lot about the consciousness of women in general, their determination no longer to be considered minors in a state of perpetual dependence on their husbands or their fathers.

Those Whose Work Is Invisible

It is worth emphasizing the importance of the first stirrings among women working in cottage industries. These women, who often work a fifteen- to eighteen-hour day—and sometimes more—with time out for looking after the children, never until recently considered themselves workers like other wage earners.

This stems from the interweaving of their work with their domestic responsibilities; their isolation; the absence of a flesh-and-blood boss to confront (they never see anyone but a go-between who stops by their houses to drop off the pieces of cloth or leather they sew together); the attitudes of their husbands, who are often violently opposed to the idea of their wives working in a factory but can accept their doing exactly the same work at home for one-half or one-third the pay.

The result is that these workers tend to view their take-home work as part of their domestic chores. Nonetheless, in 1976, for the first time in history, workers in the cottage industries who lost their jobs as a result of the recession in the textile industry joined the committees of unemployed workers in Naples; and they were followed by housewives who had never had jobs.

This was possible because of a general understanding that their different problems were caused by deliberate capitalist policies and by their own total lack of skills. As part of these committees, they participated in the occupation of a hospital in Naples where the workers were on strike to force the management to hire more staff in order to lighten their hours and amount of work.

At the same time, women in the cottage industries in the north of France fought for the right to partial unemployment compensation. After a month of demonstrations, including occupation of the regional office of the textile and leather trade, they finally won their demand.

All over Britain there are action committees of women who do piecework at home. These came together in Birmingham last year to discuss their organizing efforts. Their main goal was a pay increase, since in general their wages are even lower than those of hotel workers or cleaning women; they also demanded legislation protecting their jobs. They discussed setting up their

own cooperatives to get out from under the thumb of their exploiters.

In each of these cases, the support of trade unions or of groups from the independent women's movement was decisive in enabling the women workers to overcome their isolation and engage in collective action.

Immigrant women play a key role in all the struggles we are discussing here; they are among the most exploited and oppressed in every country. Often without relatives and handicapped by language problems, nevertheless they can frequently be found on the front lines of these battles because they have the most at stake.

Challenge to Traditional Division of Labor

Another important aspect of the massive entry of women workers into struggle is that new concepts are put forward in their strikes, such as rejection of part-time work, the need for women to get into traditionally "male" occupations, or the fight against working conditions that endanger the health and safety of workers in general and pregnant workers in particular.

The question of part-time work is a complicated one, because there are many mothers of families, burdened with the double workday, who consider part-time employment the only way they can reconcile wage work with their family responsibilities.

Nevertheless, part-time work generally means instability and the absence of job security (the bosses just hire on workers for the time they need them). It means jobs involving little responsibility, a rise in individual output, and not getting paid for overtime work because everything is considered "normal" under forty hours a week—all of which contribute to the organizational weakness of part-time workers.

While it is a bad deal for the workers, it is a very good deal for the employers. The Belgian employers association understood this very well when it launched a campaign in the commercial sector especially—under the pretense of "dividing up the available work in an equitable manner."

To whom was this campaign really directed? To women, obviously. This is just another way of taking advantage of the fact that women are part of the reserve army of labor, and keeping open the possibility of sending them back into their homes as soon as unemployment becomes a problem.

But the delegates of the office workers union responded with an overwhelming "no" to this false solution to the problem. They were supported by the women's movement, which organized a day of action on unemployment last November 11, focusing on the demand for shorter workdays for everyone. This is the only way of countering the social division of labor and

the allocation of tasks according to sex, both in the home and in society as a whole.

The women workers at the Mondadori factory in Italy came to the same conclusions. As part of a general struggle by Italian workers to defend their jobs, these women insisted that the idea of "typically female" jobs and the "turnover" characteristic of jobs with a predominantly female work force were both directly tied to women's lack of skills, and that part-time work did nothing but reinforce this aspect of the oppression of female workers.

Faced with a drive by the employers to impose part-time work on them, these women proposed setting up a commission to inform women of the consequences of such a choice. Secondly—and more important—they launched a struggle to insure that part-time work would not be just another form of discrimination as outlined above but rather would be equally available to men and women.

The struggle at Mondadori developed in the context of a general campaign to control the "turnover" that was especially serious in that factory, and of the existence of quotas limiting the ratio of women workers.

The extremely advanced document on these issues published jointly by the women's group involved and the women's commission of the union representing Mondadori workers, represented a new stage in the discussion on the relation between the public and the private, on the traditional role of women, their isolation, and the type of struggle that has to be waged to change this situation.

The Right to the Same Jobs as Men

For several years female workers in the United States have been fighting for affirmative-action quotas and preferential treatment to break into certain traditionally male occupations.

In the context of a broader struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment (a constitutional amendment assuring complete legal equality between men and women), American women have won court rulings that 20% of the apprenticeships in the construction industry have to go to females.

In the mining industry, seven women won an important victory last year against the Island Creek mining company in Kentucky. The company, which employed around 200 women, refused to hire these seven for the simple reason that they were females.

The women then turned to the court, which not only ruled that the company had to pay \$41,000 back wages to the workers who had been discriminated against, but that in half the future job openings priority had to be given to the applications of the 276 women who had been refused work. Further, the company had to continue to hire women in a ratio of



Ginny Hildebrand/Militant

March of 8,000 for Equal Rights Amendment in Springfield, Illinois, May 1976. Union support contributed to success of action.

1 to 4 until they formed 20% of the work force.

U.S. courts have made other similar rulings against employers who thought women ought to be excluded from certain types of work. It is true that these victories were won largely through legal actions, and that implementation of each ruling depends on the relationship of forces between the trade union and the employer, and therefore on the success of women workers in getting their trade unions to fight for them.

Nonetheless, these are steps forward in the battle women are waging against all forms of oppression and particularly against discrimination in job training and job access. Women workers at the Chrysler plant in Britain have also won court rulings that they cannot be excluded from

certain job classifications within the industry.

Finally it is worth noting the scope of the struggle taking place in Italy against dangerous working conditions. An important component is the campaign against conditions that have caused countless assembly-line workers to suffer miscarriages or to develop breast cancer or cancer of the reproductive organs. The unprotected handling of poisonous materials and the inhuman pace of work are the principal reasons for these problems, which are only rarely recognized as work-related.

The discussion that is taking place in Italian trade unions has exposed the huge gap that exists between the traditional image of women as presented in the mass media, schoolbooks, and society in general, and the reality of their situation as workers, employed in the most difficult and worst-paying jobs, bullied, oppressed, and intimidated into silence.

This discussion poses the question of how women can be organized and how they can more actively participate in trade unions. It brings us back to the dichotomy between private life and public life, which has been completely ignored by the workers organizations up to now.

In a document on abortion released last spring, women delegates of the Intercategorical of Turin (a trade-union body that also includes unorganized and unemployed women) denounced the fact that Italian trade unions have so far refused to include the question of abortion rights in their platforms, on the pretext that it is not a trade-union demand. This is the kind of thinking that reinforces the dichotomy between economics and politics, between personal questions and trade-union questions.

The Intercategorical document, like that of the female workers at Mondadori, pointed to the importance of the battle to be waged within the trade unions. This battle tends to bring to the fore all the social questions around which women are radicalizing, including education, child-care, and abortion.

Wherever this does not happen, masses of female workers will continue to think that discussions in the workers movement have nothing to do with them. Wherever they do not win significant victories on this score, female workers will remain, for objective reasons, unable to participate in trade-union activities.

And above all, wherever the trade-union bureaucracy continues to neglect the interests of the especially oppressed layers these women represent, ignoring their strikes around such elementary rights as equal pay and protection against layoffs, there is no reason to think that women will lose the profound suspicion they feel today toward organizations that historically have tended to defend only the interests of male workers. □

Open Letter to the Authors of the 'Manifesto'

By Wolf Biermann

[In its January 2 and January 9, 1978 issues, *Der Spiegel*, a mass-circulation weekly magazine in West Germany, published a "Manifesto" attributed to a group of oppositionists in East Germany. This group was supposed to be in the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED—Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the CP) led by Erich Honecker.

[Publication of this document caused a stir both in West Germany and East Germany. There was a flurry of supposition about the real authors of this long statement. Some attributed it to the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND—Federal Intelligence Service), the West German secret service; others attributed it to the Staatssicherheitsdienst (Stasi—State Security Service), the political police of the East German regime.

[Wolf Biermann, the famous Communist poet and singer who was expelled from East Germany because of his antibureaucratic views, has spoken out on this question in the open letter printed below. Biermann is convinced of the authenticity of this document, which *Der Spiegel* called a "Manifesto" but which he thinks is but one example of the development of thinking and debate in opposition circles in East Germany.

[Speaking out as a Communist in a magnificent language of anger and revolt against the "barren socialism of the German Democratic Republic" but also against the "bloated capitalism of the German Federal Republic," Biermann offers his contribution to this intense debate, which is of vital interest to all those fighting for socialism East and West.

[This open letter was published on January 27, 1978, in the West German daily *Die Zeit*. Biermann read excerpts from it at the Conference in Solidarity with the East European "Dissidents," which was held in Brussels on January 21, 1978. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Dear Comrades,

Now the German public knows about you. Your thirty-page manuscript was published by *Der Spiegel* as a "Manifesto." In general, I am quite happy about it. But I would like to raise some criticisms regarding some important secondary questions.

Most of what you write accords with my experiences and with my opinions. Some of

it is new and instructive for me. The description of conditions in the German Democratic Republic [GDR] hit the nail on the head. Your critique has a healthy radical spirit, and your clear GDR German would be easily understandable to the West German workers also—if they read it! If only it were published in *Bild* [a tabloid newspaper]!

Finally, we have the beginnings of an association of the left opposition in the GDR as well! I think that is something more fruitful than all of Havemann's articles, all my poems and songs, and Comrade Bahro's book as well.¹

It will not surprise you that here in West Germany only a few individuals are seriously thinking about the contents of your document. The established social forces are not doing this. The SPD [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—Social Democratic Party of Germany] does not want to know about it. The CDU [Christlich-Demokratische Union—Christian Democratic Union] cannot understand it. The FDP [Freie Demokratische Partei—Free Democratic Party, the liberal bourgeois party in coalition with the SPD] would prefer not to understand it. And the German CP dares not.

So, instead of discussing your document, a flurry of speculation has developed in the mass media which is reflected in the living rooms of the citizens. The whole question is whether it was falsified or not, whether the document was an operation by the Western secret services against the Eastern ones, or vice versa, or by both against each other. In the GDR, no doubt, it will be harder for your document to get into the hands of people, but easier to get into their heads.

A cloak-and-dagger story is going around the left groups in Hamburg. Supposedly your discussion document was fabricated by the Stasi. It was passed off on *Der Spiegel*, according to this version, only because the GDR leadership expected a genuine opposition manifesto to appear

soon. The East German leaders supposedly hoped that the "pseudodebate" (as Wehner [one of the SPD leaders] put it!) that has been touched off now would so overload the media market that there would be no more interest when the genuine manifesto appeared.

All this is the sort of stupidity that comes from trying to be too clever. The same holds for the version cooked up by Nollau, former head of the Verfassungsschutz [Bureau to Defend the Constitution, the West German political police], who is a superficial thinker of a particularly ambitious type. Following its usual practice, *UZ*, the CP paper, shamelessly based its argument on his theories.

All these theories are wrong. Anyone who knows the GDR from the inside knows that there are thousands of small groups of Communists who have gotten to be friends and think the same way and have the same hopes as we. And there will probably be a number of such discussion documents, which in the future the bourgeois press may well not publish with so much fanfare.

Reporters from newspapers, as well as radio and TV stations, have descended on me, asking with frenetic disinterest what my version is in this crazy game of speculation. It is hard to hold back from writing a satire of this.

I might say that the Chinese wrote the document and gave it to their friend, the forceful politician who wears a Bavarian green, feathered hat [i.e., Franz-Josef Strauss]. He then, while on a pilgrimage to Chile, gave it to another forceful politician, Pinochet, who then gave it to the CIA. The CIA, then, naturally, palmed it off on the BND.

The BND palmed it off on the Stasi, and the Stasi stuck you with it; so that you would sell it to *Der Spiegel* in order to disrupt the SPD's policy toward East Europe; so that Honecker [the East German head] could seal off the border still more firmly; and then when a CDU government took office it would retaliate by denying him any Common Market benefits in inter-German trade.

Thus, Honecker could not pass on such Common Market trade benefits to his big brother. And by means of this slightly indirect route, the Chinese would have cut off their fascist archenemy's pipeline from the West. As the Russian said to the American, the Poles are worse Jews even than the Czechs; and that means the Chinese are coming! The secret agent craze

1. Rudolf Bahro was arrested in East Germany on August 23, 1977, after the publication of his book in the West. (*Die Alternative—Zur Kritik des realexistierenden Sozialismus* [The Alternative—Critique of Existing Socialism], Frankfurt: Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1977). He was a member of the East German CP and a leading technical expert specializing in industrial rationalization and scientific organization of labor.—IP/I

is getting to be a parlor game in both German states.

So, I will not get involved in any of the sterile crystal-ball gazing about your document. I would rather talk to you. And since I could not write to you directly, even if I got to know you, I am publishing it here in *Die Zeit*. This way, my letter will soon reach you.

The various parts of your document indicate to me that you come from very different kinds of experience. I think that is quite good. For this reason, however, your manuscript is something of a patchwork. It is a shame that *Der Spiegel* threw what you yourselves call your "mimeographed material" on the market as a "manifesto." The result of this is that many hard-to-please observers expected to find a work of the century, solidly grounded in theory, realistic, philosophically profound, politically well thought out in all points, and stylistically polished.

And now such observers have had their false hopes dashed. Marx and Engels also did not produce the *Communist Manifesto* at one stroke, without a chance for broader discussions and making corrections (see Engels' precursor work to the *Manifesto*, *Grundsätze des Kommunismus* ["Foundations of Communism"]). And what we epigones lack in genius, we have to make up through democratic discussion. But they expect some feat from you, in a country in a deep freeze, isolated as you are and persecuted by the political police.

Therefore, I think that it is right and proper that you devote so much space in your document to the parasitic lives of the princes of German democratic feudal socialism. Almost more than by their everyday cares, the workers are embittered by the gigantic hunting reservations of the party high priests, the bulletproof automobiles of the self-proclaimed workers leaders, and the posh private palaces they have behind the barbed wire of the luxurious concentration camp represented by Wandlitz.

It is possible that the anger against this hypocrisy, so offensively obvious in the upper echelons, will turn into a rage that can drive people to actions. Many of those who secretly read your document in the GDR will have a shock of recognition. In the many ringing passages in your recital of wrongs and of accusations, they will hear the same refrain as in the following lines of Heinrich Heine:

*Ich weis, sie tranken heimlich Wein
Und predigten öffentlich Wasser.*

[I know that on the sly you drank wine
While to the people you preached water.]

However, there is a problem with your philippic against the guzzling, gluttony, and whoring of the rulers. Adolf Hitler was abstemious, a great water-drinker and salad-eater. If only he and his kind had guzzled wine from morning till night, maybe so much blood would not have flowed! Instead, with good German so-

briety, this vegetarian organized the grinding up of a vast amount of human flesh.

What costs the people dear is not the wine the rulers guzzle, it is not the petty-bourgeois life-style of these onetime aspiring revolutionists, but rather the policy they follow. And if your manuscript is to lead to a kind of manifesto, then you have to clean the all-too-private vulgarities of Messrs. Lambertz, Honecker, and Nauman out of your text. Otherwise, we would fall into a negative personality cult around such miserable, replaceable figures.

You describe the economic chaos in the GDR so aptly. Why are you nostalgic for Ulbricht's "New Economic System of Planning and Direction"? I do not think that Stalinist mismanagement of the economy can be cured by any capitalist enemas. A more rapid introduction of capitalist norms in the process of production and exchange in the GDR, even if it is accompanied by revolutionary phrases, will only result first in arousing false hopes in the people and then in giving them a bad headache.

To the extent that the GDR becomes a copy of the West German welfare society, most people in the end will prefer the attractive original to the miserable copy. The neo-Stalinist bureaucracy wants to use both Western sugar and the Eastern knout to keep the people content and off their back. But they are only arousing counter-revolutionary dreams. Isn't it crazy but logical that it is the Stalinist old fogies who are supplying their subjects with a liberal mess of pottage, with blue jeans, Intershop chocolate, and tariff-free coffee from the West in order to get them to sell their revolutionary birthright?

On this question, it seems to me that your position is neither fish nor fowl, neither capitalism or socialism. I agree with Comrade Havemann that we could win the competition with capitalism if we finally stopped running toward it. But I think it is good that you raised the question of the law of value again, the problem of prices and real costs.

The answers could not be provided, however, by small persecuted and outlawed opposition groups. Genuine scientific discoveries are not made in back rooms. Fruitful answers can be found only by the entire people through its living, self-directed historical process. You are familiar with this thought of Rosa Luxemburg.

It is pharisaical and stupid for some wiseacres without any sensitivity or practical experience to reproach you because your manuscript is so eclectic, jumbled, and contradictory. It is a bold beginning, nonetheless, for a wider-ranging discussion. The harsh words many use about you are only an expression of the sort of passion that comes from self-inflicted suffering. Here in the West, all too many newly converted leftists get high on identifying with the sufferings of those far away

and adorn themselves with other people's wounds.

No, precisely the parts in which you shout out ill-considered words will be better understood by ordinary people than those of the left-skewed half-educated illuminati. Such persons are obviously not familiar with Georg Büchner's *Hessische Landbote*. He not only argued and polemized against the gang of princes, he denounced them in the rough language of the people. And what about Luther? How he flayed the pope and his clique for their loose and luxurious lives!

But let's get back to the content of the document. You complain about the destruction of the GDR's own aerospace industry. However, was it not fortunate that after billions of marks were poured down the drain, this ambitious and irrational prestige project in Dresden was discontinued? But how can I be sure about this and how can you, since this point could only be clarified by public discussion in the GDR?

In any case, in real political debates, what is important is not just which arguments are better but what interests are at stake. And where big material interests are involved, disputes are conducted not by means of arguments alone. Try to explain to a capitalist the nature of capitalist exploitation! Try to explain to a GDR high priest the nature of Stalinism in terms that could be fed into a computer! Try to tell a class or caste whose life depends on two and two equaling five about your own addition! You will be erased, along with your arithmetic.

And so I do not agree with you that if Marx were living today that he would "reject the theory of class struggle as outmoded." To the contrary, because of this fundamental truth, our high priests would not just put a bullet in any computer print-out Marx might make; they would put a bullet in the back of his neck.

The almost Chinese anti-Sovietism in many of your passages, you would be interested to know, very much offended my Spanish comrades. You cannot base yourselves on Carrillo, because his attacks on the USSR are more discriminating. To be sure, Carrillo does not live in a country occupied by the Soviet army.

If you get a chance, please read the section in my *Wintermärchen* [a long satirical poem] about the two Red Army soldiers on the border running through Germany. After twelve years of keeping my mouth shut, as you have to in the GDR, that is still my position today in the West.

I do not think that we should let anyone force us into taking hysterical attitudes toward our own cause, toward the Soviet Union, the GDR, or the party. We have to bear the contradiction both in love and in hatred. We cannot try to conjure it away either, as many high functionaries in the East German CP do. When they are among

themselves and have had a few drinks, they tell the most disgusting anti-Soviet jokes. The phrases about friendship that these people have to swallow during the day, come out at night as anti-Russian shit.

"Stalinism and fascism are twins," you write. Honecker and company are portrayed as "Nazis painted red." Aren't you letting your justified hatred lead you into mixing up concepts? Equating fascism and Stalinism suits many former Nazis just fine, because it puts their crimes in a more favorable light. This obvious error also plays into the hands of cynical Stalinists.

Yes, under Hitler, 163,000 Communists were liquidated. Yes, under Stalin, two million Soviet comrades were liquidated. Of the eleven members on the Politburo [of the German CP] headed by Thälmann, six were liquidated by Stalin's henchmen and five by Hitler's. Yes, alongside the six million Jews who fell victim to Nazism you have to put the twenty million (the lowest estimate I know of) Soviet citizens who were murdered by Stalin (excluding those killed in the Second World War). But what do these figures mean?

No, fascism was and is a bourgeois dictatorship whose purpose is to defend the capitalist mode of production against the people. Stalinism was and remains a socialist revolution dying of bureaucratic syphilis. This illness can be fatal, but only if it is treated like a common cold! No, equating fascism and Stalinism obscures the more important fundamental distinctions.

From the moral standpoint, Stalinism is not just as bad as fascism; it is far worse. In this case, all the barbarism is carried out in the name of ideas on which the peoples justly pin their hopes. So, don't write that fascism and Stalinism are twins. They are children of quite different parents, even though they may appear the same to eyes blinded with tears. Fascism is the bloody sunset of bourgeois society. Despite everything, Stalinism has not been able to drown the hopes and real possibilities for socialism in blood. Look at Prague in 1968! You yourselves should look at it, and the hundreds of thousands in the GDR who think and feel the same way we do!

Your proposals for establishing a demilitarized and neutral united German state in the near future remind me of plans Stalin had, although he had no serious intention of carrying them out! I do not understand how you could fall for this now. How can you conceive of a marriage between the crippled socialism in the GDR and the bloated capitalism of the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG]? I would not care to see any of the children of such a union. Such monsters would also be a terrifying sight for the neighboring peoples.

But, who knows, it looks like I'm so stuck in the rut of my own way of thinking

that your proposals for establishing a "Berlin-Mark" [i.e., a Berlin currency acceptable in both German states] seems infantile to me. Perhaps it is a good thing if by raising childish questions we keep



Der Spiegel

WOLF BIERMANN

bringing things that are apparently excluded before the public as possibilities. Brecht wrote:

*Keinen Gedanken verschwende
Auf das Unabänderbare!*

[Waste no thought

On what cannot be changed!]

If we reexamine this maxim from the standpoint of Brecht's own method of thinking, then we have the dialectical counterpoint to this half-true truth. What in unchangeable becomes unchangeable because we waste no thought on it! But, to go further in the text, I can't conceive of the sort of "all-German free general elections for a national assembly and . . . a gradual harmonizing of laws in all spheres of society in both states" that you demand.

Even if, as the precondition for this, the high priests in the GDR had been expropriated and removed from power, the big and small bourgeoisie would still hold all their well-developed positions of power in West Germany. And the workers movement would still suffer from its great weakness. How could there be free elections under these conditions?

And to go back to the GDR. Where did you get the idea that a population that has suffered bitterly for long years under the party high priests would opt in such free elections for complete freedom as we understand it and not for the lesser freedom offered by the exploiters? It can't be done that way.

First, there has to be a kind of Prague Spring in the GDR, one that succeeds and lasts and is not defeated by the argument of tanks! First, a socialist party has to develop in West Germany that is very different from the present Social Democratic Party. First, a Communist movement has to grow up independent of the

GDR. First, the citizens initiative groups [broad activist movements around various questions such as nuclear power] have to develop fully. Only then can we seriously take up the question of the reunification of Germany. Otherwise, all German dreams will be dreams of the past.

Here in the FRG, I see what the left is. It has no influence on the decision-making process in this society. Many of the squabbling sects talk like people who have gotten used to the fact that practically nobody listens to them. It is as the poem says:

*Und die Linken hassen einander
Mehr als den Klassenfeind
Eh wir uns nicht selber einen
Wird Deutschland auch nicht geeint.*
[And the left groups hate each other
More than the class enemy,
Until we ourselves unite,
Germany will not be united.]

And, dear comrades, things can last a long time the way they are before such changes come; they may last longer than we. But I think it is good in our day-to-day political activity not to maintain a shameful silence about the question of reunification, as is done by all those who have a say now both East and West.

Over the years in my poems and songs, I have never avoided the question of reunification. But there is a difference between not letting questions that are important for the future be forgotten and arousing exaggerated hopes that can all too quickly turn into exaggerated disappointment.

"All struggles for power in the GDR," you write, "have been tied up with the national question. . . ." Right, but for this reason every one of these revolts ended with a triumph of Stalinist reaction.

"We insist on the right to follow our own German national road to socialism." As I read this sentence in your work, I thought of Martin Andersen Nexö [a Danish "proletarian" novelist]. During the period of the friendship pact between Hitler and Stalin, he returned to Denmark from a revolutionary tourist's visit to the Soviet Union and innocently explained to the outraged exile Brecht the idea the Soviet comrades had put in his head—Hitler was the German road to socialism! And the comrades of the German CP just had to reeducate themselves!

And you know about the way Teddy Thälmann, remote-controlled by the Comintern, tried to go Hitler one better and be more nationalistic than the "National Socialists." You know what a still-born thing Thälmann's "national Communism" was. You base yourselves here on Eurocommunism. But if the French comrades insist that socialism in France has to be red, white, and blue [the colors of the French flag] or there won't be any socialism, this does not represent nationalism. This is a rather reflex reaction to the heavy-handed tutelage of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which has

reduced its sister parties to being appendages of Soviet foreign policy. This reflex plays a still greater role in the GDR, as is also shown by your document. But we cannot drive out the Stalinist devil with the nationalist Beelzebub.

You call yourselves the BDKD [Bund Demokratischer Kommunisten Deutschlands—League of Democratic Communists of Germany]. How do you conceive of the form of organizing such an illegal association? I would eat my hat if there are more than twenty of you. As a general rule in the GDR, when more than ten persons interested in politics come together, there is almost certainly a spy among them. There is scarcely any other country in the world that politically needs such a gigantic and technically highly developed network of informers, or can economically support it.

As soon as your organization is taken seriously, the race begins between the hare and the hedgehog.² And in our small and well-ordered GDR, where every radish has a number and place assigned to it, Mielke's firm [the secret police] will always be able to say, like the hedgehog in the fable, "I be here already."

So, why do you adopt such an anachronistic organizational form as an association of comrades working conspiratorially? You reject Leninism with a wave of the hand, and then you go ahead and imitate its idea of the party, one that might have been fine against the tsars but is not much use against modern bugging devices. And even if by some miracle you avoid informers, won't a conspiratorial cadre party automatically become trapped in the same dogmatic vicious circle that we want to escape from?

I think that the comrades in Poland have found better ways. The Committee for Social Self-Defense works openly; and precisely because it does not take any special precautions to protect itself, it is the better protected by public opinion in its own country. Why for so many years were they held back from putting me and Havemann in jail? If we had formed an illegal organization, which the Stasi tried by means of agents provocateurs to get us to do, we could have made it much easier for them.

In Czechoslovakia, they have the Charter 77 movement. Of course, the Husák club is defending itself with desperation and brutality, but you can see with how little success!

I have discussed these questions with my comrades in the Spanish Communist Party. They explained to me that during the Franco period, when the CP was out-

lawed, the famous Workers Commissions worked half openly. This organizational form slipped through the fingers of the police apparatus, and was able to carry on political activities that hastened the fall of fascism more than the older forms of struggle, which the state apparatus had been trained to deal with.

Here in the West, citizens initiatives are becoming more and more important. In America, who forced the Americans to end the Vietnam war? I think that all forms of rank-and-file democratic organization are taking on greater importance. Such forms have more vitality and are capable of more rapid self-correction. They are open to persons of differing views, and they are like a bag of fleas that no thought-control policeman would care to watch over. But who knows? Perhaps wide-ranging discussion of your bold action will lead to discovery of forms of political action in the GDR that will not be so easy for Uncle Erich [Honecker] to deal with.

Your description of "existing socialism" also warmed the heart of the CDU. The GDR has exactly the kind of socialism that bourgeois reactionaries like to see—a repellent, frightening police state, which sells its unfortunate subjects to the enemy for hard currency and locks up or locks out its Communist critics, a state whose symbol is not the hammer and sickle but the club and the gag.

But what too few people in the West see is that part of the reality of this "existing socialism" is also that it not only constantly tramples on socialist hopes but to a still greater extent inspires them. The lesson of the Prague experience was not the tanks! It was shown in this case how much easier it is under this kind of half-socialism to make a revolutionary leap than it is in a well-established capitalist state.

Many of the reactions to your manuscript here were thought-provoking; most of them were outrageous or lamentable. But one was ridiculous. Perhaps you heard about it over the BBC. By means of astute textual analysis and ideological meditation, Wolfgang Harich, as a lone genius, figured out who cooked up the whole damned thing. It was Biermann.

Harich apparently thought that no one believed the crude official BND version; but he noted that our chiefs would be happy to find the author in the FRG, so that they would not have to search in vain in the GDR. And so he came on an idea that could have come from the servile brain of Peter Hacks. Who knows, maybe H. plagiarized H. Regardless of how it came about, it irritates me that you put Harich alongside Bloch, Bahro, and Havemann [in a list of critical socialists].

It was a good thing Bloch did not have to see this. But Havemann knows only too well what apparently is unknown to you and to most people in the GDR. We know Comrade Walter Janka, a veteran Commu-

nist who fought in Spain. He was imprisoned twice in Bautzen, once under Hitler, once under Ulbricht. He informed us that Harich did not even come up to the level of a petty crook.

To gain a few minor privileges, Harich informed on people to the police, and thus saw to it that Walter Janka was sent to Bautzen again, and for years. Harich not only violated Communist morality but even the code of thieves. No self-respecting safecracker, pimp, or matricide would have anything to do with him. Harich suffered, but others went through more and did not turn into swine.

It is a shame that Harich's book *Kommunismus ohne Wachstum* ["Communism Without Growth"] is not available in the GDR. In this work, he states openly what the most reactionary bureaucratic high priests think only in private. He tries throughout the book to prove that only total worldwide Stalinism can save humanity from the catastrophe toward which the Club of Rome thinks it is going.

When Harich once told me that he was grateful to the party leadership that they unmasked him in time and locked him up, thereby saving him from worse crimes, I thought of one of Brecht's last poems on Ulbricht, the "man of steel," and the prostituted muses:

*Wenn der Eiserne sie prügelt,
Singen die Musen lauter.
Aus gebleuten Augen
Himmeln sie ihn hündisch an.
Der Hintern zuckt vor Schmerz
Die Scham vor Begierde."*

[When the man of steel beats them,
The muses sing louder.
They look on him with doglike devotion,
out of blackened eyes.
Their backsides twitch with pain
Their private parts with a mercenary
lust.]

In conclusion, dear comrades, there is something worrying me that I would like to get off my chest. Do not let all the speculation about the genuineness of your "Manifesto" tempt you into proving it! I appeal to you to remain anonymous. Who would gain anything if you were first locked up and then locked out? Your document is circulating, and in the GDR as well. It will encourage many people and inspire them to further thought. Too many people are already being broken in our jails, and too many in the West as well. We want to think over what organizational forms are best suited to the conditions in the GDR.

Dear comrades, I think that the policy of détente between East and West will continue. And with it, the tensions in both East and West will increase. The coming class struggles will be on a bigger scale and more bitter in nature. But, as the master says, contradictions represent hopes. □

2. In this fable, the hedgehog challenges the hare to a race across a field. But the hedgehog does not even try to run. His mate is already on the other side of the field, and the hare cannot tell the difference between the two.—IP/1

Capitalism Fouls Things Up



Californians Vote Down Nuclear Plant 2 to 1

"Shall a nuclear power plant be located near Wasco?"

The question was put to voters in a March 7 referendum in Kern County, California, which includes the town of Wasco. The answer was a resounding "No." The San Joaquin Valley Nuclear Project was rejected by a vote of 47,282 to 20,591—a margin of more than 2 to 1.

Although not legally binding, the vote was likely to result either in outright cancellation of the project or in its transfer to a site outside Kern County.

Plans had originally called for construction of four 1,300-megawatt reactors at the Wasco site. It would have been one of the world's largest nuclear power installations.

Kern County is a rich agricultural area at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley. Farm production in the valley is dependent on an irrigation system that brings water 400 miles from the north through the California Aqueduct.

The massive amounts of cooling water needed by the nuclear plant would also have come from the aqueduct. Proponents

claimed that only surplus water and irrigation runoff would be required, but many farmers feared that the plant could preempt vital irrigation water in the future. These concerns were substantiated during a recent drought, when farmers were rationed as little as half their normal water supply.

Tennessee Track-Jumping Goes On

A railroad tank car containing propane derailed in Bruceton, Tennessee, on March 4. The car remained upright, and no injuries were reported.

A similar tank car exploded February 24 after derailling in Waverly, Tennessee, killing twelve persons and leveling much of the town's business district.

The Bruceton derailment was the seventh in eleven days in Tennessee.

U.S. Warns on Pot Peril

"Irreversible lung damage" could result from heavy smoking of marijuana contam-

inated by the herbicide paraquat, the U.S. government warned March 10.

Paraquat is sprayed on marijuana fields in Mexico under a program supported by U.S. government funds. It has no known antidote.

About 60 percent of marijuana imported to the United States comes from Mexico, according to a report in the March 11 *New York Times*. There are an estimated thirteen million U.S. consumers of marijuana.

U.S. Smog is Killing Norwegian Fish

About one-quarter of airborne sulfur pollution in Norway is believed to originate in North America.

Sulfur dioxide generated by coal- and oil-fired power plants in the eastern United States is carried across the Atlantic by high winds, and then is deposited in the lakes and forests of Scandinavia in the form of acid rain.

Massive fish kills caused by acid accumulation in Scandinavian lakes and rivers are estimated to result in economic losses of about \$1.2 million a year. Some scientists also argue that acid rain may reduce forest productivity through soil erosion.

As an alternative to dealing with sulfur pollution at its source, some scientists have suggested "genetic engineering" of fish species to make them more acid-resistant. (*Christian Science Monitor*, March 8.)

A Hundred Million Potholes

Joseph Ewing, research director of the Transportation Road Information Program in Washington, D.C., estimates that roads in the United States contain a grand total of 116.4 million potholes.

The March 13 issue of *Time* magazine reported Ewing's method for arriving at this figure: "... he adds up the tons of asphalt mix purchased by public works departments around the country: 6.4 million. Then he divides by the amount of fill required for the average pothole: 110 lbs. ... By similar magic, Ewing has figured out the cost of the extra gas U.S. drivers will consume in swerving around the potholes: \$626 million."



Gamble/Nashville Banner