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## **The Imperialist Offensive in Africa**

The real face of imperialist intervention in Zaïre. French paratroopers conduct house-to-house search and "identity checks" in Kolwezi, following airlift into Shaba

Province May 19. See p. 662 for report on military intervention to prop up dictator Mobutu, and p. 664 for overview of stepped-up American, French, British, and Belgian offensive against rising class and national struggle in Africa as a whole.

## **Edging Toward Another Vietnam?**

**Hugo Blanco Deported**

**Peru-Price Hikes Touch Off Workers Upsurge**

## Will Sadat's 'Referendum' Muzzle Rising Dissent?

By Jon Britton



SADAT: Claims 98.29% of voters favor new curbs on democratic rights.

Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat held a referendum May 21 in a move to silence critics who could become poles of attraction for the unrest that is simmering throughout the country.

But despite a claimed 98.29 percent vote in favor of his proposed curbs on dissent, Sadat's drive to restore "national unity" is not likely to succeed. Mounting frustration over inflation and shortages and at the lack of results from Sadat's "peace initiative" could produce new social explosions at any time.

The referendum ballot asked: "Do you agree to the six principles included in the referendum presented by the President of the Republic on May 14, 1978, for protecting the home front and social peace?" The six points were published in the semiofficial press and were posted in some but not all polling stations.

Included in Sadat's "six principles" were proposals to ban from politics and journalism anyone with an ideology "incompatible with religion" and anyone who had "corrupted" Egypt's political life or who had taken action to "jeopardize national unity and social peace." Such persons are also banned from "boards of trade unions

and professional associations."

Another "principle" is that the press shall be committed to democratic socialism, social peace, and national unity—as interpreted by Sadat, of course.

The immediate targets of Sadat's crackdown were said to be leaders of the right and left wings of his loyal opposition, who Sadat claims have been waging a "campaign of doubt" against his policies.

But the drive quickly widened. On May 26, the government disclosed that it had ordered thirty journalists and writers who work abroad to return home. They are to undergo investigation for writing or broadcasting reports that "cast doubts about the achievements and victories of the Egyptian people" (*New York Times*, May 27).

The fact that Sadat cannot allow even "doubt" to be publicly expressed concerning his policies underscores the fragility of his regime.

Whether Sadat has strengthened his position significantly as a result of the referendum is open to question. The anti-democratic aims and rigged character of the plebiscite will undercut any such effect.

The day before the voting, the Egyptian Bar Association denounced the referendum as "unconstitutional, illegal and a setback to democracy."

A few days earlier, the weekly paper of the Progressive Union Party, *Al Ahaly*, was suppressed when it called for a "no" vote in the referendum. The subsequent issue, which had articles questioning the referendum, was also confiscated.

And while the government claimed that 85 percent of the nearly eleven million eligible voters participated in the referendum, *New York Times* correspondent Christopher S. Wren reported May 22 that "Western reporters who visited at least a dozen electoral precincts in populous areas of Cairo today observed a relatively light turnout."

One person who planned not to vote was a twenty-four-year-old engineering student interviewed by Wren on May 20. "I will not go to vote," he said. "I agree that we should protect our national unity, but I am against shutting the people's mouth when they want to criticize."

A similar referendum held in February 1977 allegedly found that an even higher percentage of the voters, 99.4 percent to be exact, favored increased repression. Sadat called for that vote in the aftermath of protests against a sharp jump in prices brought on by the slashing of government

food subsidies at the behest of the International Monetary Fund.

So angry and massive was the response that Sadat was forced to restore the subsidies, covering his retreat with a phony show of public support for a crackdown.

In the following year, the Sadat government was able to pay eight months' arrears and then keep current on its huge foreign debt (\$12.8 billion in late 1976) only thanks to emergency wheat shipments and other aid from the United States and \$2 billion in loans from Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil-producing countries.

Now, however, the squeeze is on again. The economy continues to deteriorate, with food prices soaring despite continued subsidies, and shortages of many essential goods. Sadat's "open door" policy to foreign investment has not resulted in new industry and creation of jobs for the unemployed, but instead has filled shop windows with expensive imports that only a tiny wealthy minority can afford to buy.

The country continues to be plagued by an acute housing shortage, a transportation system on the verge of breakdown, and corruption that pervades the government.

Once again, the IMF, along with the Saudi-led aid group, is pressuring Sadat to slash or eliminate government food subsidies and take other measures to move Egypt towards greater "free enterprise."

As in the case of Peru, the imperialist bankers, led by the United States, insist on their "pound of flesh" regardless of the widespread misery, malnutrition, starvation, and death that will inevitably result.

But also as in Peru, the likely outcome is mass revolt. Fearing such a response, Sadat is dragging his feet on adopting the IMF's prescriptions. This recently led to a clash between Sadat and Abdel Moneim el-Kaissouny, deputy prime minister in charge of financial and economic affairs, who had been pushing hard for the IMF "reforms." On May 7 a cabinet shake-up was announced in which Kaissouny and two other ministers were dropped.

Sadat's problems are compounded by the rising disillusionment of the Egyptian people with his "peace initiative" of November 1977, which itself was partially a response to the economic impasse.

As long as the Sadat initiative seemed to be making progress, "the pain was balanced by the hope of peace," a member of the Egyptian parliament told a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. "But now people are feeling peace is not in reach and we feel the economic pain again" (May 25).

The frustration is likely to mount further as a result of Jimmy Carter's stance in the aftermath of the package plane deal involving sales of jets to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

Bernard Gwertzman, writing in the May 17 *New York Times*, reports that administration officials are now saying that it is "vital in coming days and weeks for the



United States to avoid creating an impression that it was going to use the vote [approving the plane sales] as an excuse to exert new pressure on Israel in the negotiations."

In face of these intractable problems, Sadat is desperately trying to restore "national unity" as a crisis of leadership, accompanied by bitter factional infighting, overtakes the Egyptian ruling class.

On the left is the Progressive Union Party, which advocates closer relations with Moscow as against Sadat's reliance on U.S. imperialism. It was declared "independent" of the Arab Socialist Union (previously the sole legal party) in November 1976 as part of a scheme by Sadat to provide a democratic facade for his regime.

And on the right is the New Wafd Party, which was reborn only three months ago. The original Wafd was a right-wing nationalist party that led the fight for Egypt's formal independence from Britain after World War I. It subsequently dominated Egyptian politics during the reign of King Farouk, despite occasional disputes over the powers of the monarchy. After Nasser came to power in 1952, the Wafd Party was banned, along with other parties, and many of its leaders were imprisoned.

Neither the Progressive Union or New Wafd party has criticized Sadat in any fundamental way, but both have raised charges of corruption and nepotism against the Sadat regime. And both parties are potential poles of attraction for forces that are growing increasingly dissatisfied with Sadat's rule.

It was a measure of Sadat's own frustration that during a news conference May 23 he suggested that the two parties take a lesson in national unity from the Israelis, who, he said, have rallied around Prime Minister Menachem Begin's policies.

But Israel's "national unity" is breaking down too. A highly visible peace movement and continuing labor unrest are challenging Begin's diplomatic and domestic course.

Perhaps Sadat can take solace in the fact that his is not the only regime that is under heavy pressure from the international bankers. The governments of Peru, Zaïre, and Jamaica, to name just a few, have all received the same message from the International Monetary Fund—impose stricter austerity no matter what the domestic political consequences. □

### Death in Pretoria's Prisons

South African Minister of Justice James Kruger told parliament on April 24 that 138 detainees had died in South African prisons in 1977. Ten of these were imprisoned for political reasons. (*Le Monde*, April 27.)

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## Peru—Starvation Decrees Touch Off Workers Upsurge

By Fred Murphy

In face of intense government repression, workers and peasants throughout Peru carried out a massive general strike May 22-23 in repudiation of the Morales Bermúdez regime's latest round of harsh austerity measures.

The general strike was called May 18 by the main Peruvian union federation, the CGTP,<sup>1</sup> and had the support of such major independent federations as the electricians, miners, printing trades, glass workers, brewery workers, bank workers, and teachers. (Most of the country's 120,000 teachers had already been on strike since May 8.) The CGTP's call was also backed by the Christian-Democratic federation, the CNT; and by the principal peasant federations, the CNA and the CCP.<sup>2</sup>

The nationwide work stoppage was the high point in a wave of strikes, street demonstrations, and mass rebellions that began soon after the government's May 14 decree abolishing price subsidies on a series of essential commodities. The decree led to immediate price hikes of 120% for cooking oil, 100% for bread and other wheat products, and 40% for milk and dairy products. In addition, the price of gasoline went up by 67% and public transportation fares by 60%.

In hope of preventing student protests, the regime ordered all colleges and universities closed for an indefinite period when the price increases were decreed. The next day the rector of Lima's National University of San Marcos, the country's main university, issued a joint statement with student and worker representatives rejecting the shutdown as "a new violation of university autonomy" and declaring that the school would remain open. A similar statement was soon issued by the San Marcos rector and the rectors of twenty other universities throughout Peru.

Street protests broke out in Lima and Huánuco on May 15. Bank workers throughout the country struck for twenty-four hours May 16, and the same day

general strikes began in Arequipa, Cuzco, and Trujillo. At least twenty-eight cities and towns experienced protests during the first week after the price decrees.

Mass arrests of trade-union leaders and leftist political figures and the declaration of martial law failed to stem the upsurge, the most massive yet in a year of discontent that began when the first austerity measures were introduced in June 1977. The May 22-23 general strike was the second such protest since one of twenty-four hours last July 19.

As the general strike began, heavily armed troops, tanks, armored personnel carriers, and helicopters were deployed in Lima and other major cities. The headquarters of the CGTP and of the bank workers federation were occupied by police. On the second day of the strike, the government sent buses with military escorts to try to transport workers to their jobs.

Nevertheless, Lima remained almost totally shut down for two days, as did major provincial cities such as Trujillo, Chimbote, Huancayo, Piura, Chiclayo, Cerro de Pasco, and Ica.

In Arequipa, the second-largest city, an indefinite general strike had begun May 16 and continued during the national strike. Workers in Cuzco had also been out for almost a week when the general strike began.

Four thousand railway workers in southern Peru stayed off their jobs, paralyzing transport between Cuzco, Arequipa, and Puno.

The upsurge was marked by angry protests involving residents of the shantytowns that ring Lima and other cities—the poorest layers of the population, many of whom are unemployed or marginally employed. In Lima and elsewhere crowds emptied food stores and markets in reaction to the price increases.

In Huancavelica on May 22, 4,000 shantytown dwellers overwhelmed a police force of 200 and sacked the public market and stores at the railway station. The town jail and a power station were dynamited. The crowd also destroyed the local headquarters of SINAMOS,<sup>3</sup> the government's defunct organ of "mass mobilization."

The rebellion in Huancavelica was finally put down when eight truckloads of soldiers arrived. The troops and police

killed six persons and wounded at least sixteen.

Throughout the country, at least twenty-four persons were killed in the course of the general strike, in addition to at least seventeen killed in the previous week's protests. The total number of arrests surpassed 2,000, including at least 800 left-wing activists and union militants.

The regime's futile attempt to head off the general strike began May 19 with the jailing of hundreds of trade unionists and leftists. Among those arrested were top leaders of the CGTP's left wing such as José Chávez Canales and Eduardo Cahahuaringa; CNA President Avelino Mar; and Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco. A number of these individuals were deported from the country May 25 (see box).

Coinciding with the initial wave of arrests was a declaration of martial law, a midnight-to-five-a.m. curfew in Lima (later extended throughout the country), the suspension of constitutional guarantees, a ban on public meetings, and the closing down of all weekly newspapers and magazines not controlled by the government.

The elections for a constituent assembly that had been scheduled for June 4 were postponed for two weeks (for "technical" reasons, the government claimed), and all newspaper advertising and radio and television broadcasts by candidates were suspended. A large number of leftist candidates were arrested in the May 19 roundup.

The May 14 price increases were part of a new package of austerity measures introduced by the Morales Bermúdez government in an effort to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund. Peru must pay about \$1 billion, or 50% of its foreign exchange earnings, in debt service this year, but the country is virtually bankrupt. The IMF has refused to extend Peru's credit or give its OK for the big imperialist banks to do so until drastic cuts in public spending, a new currency devaluation, and a series of tax increases have been put through.

In April and early May the regime made a frantic effort to stave off default. Cabinet ministers and economic officials traveled

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will give you a week by week  
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1. Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers). The CGTP has been led by the Communist Party; a battle for control of the federation is now under way between two factions of the CP, which split in January.

2. CNT—Central Nacional de Trabajadores (National Workers Federation); CNA—Confederación Nacional Agraria (National Agrarian Federation); CCP—Confederación Campesina del Perú (Peruvian Peasants Federation).

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



constantly to Washington, New York, and Europe for meetings with the banks and the IMF, seeking a "restructuring" of the Peruvian debt. Foreign Minister José de la Puente met with U.S. cabinet officials Vance and Blumenthal, securing \$20 million in emergency food aid. (He also met with Rosalynn Carter, who reportedly considered the human-rights situation in Peru "very positive.")

On May 7, the Wells Fargo Bank of San Francisco declared the Peruvian government officially in default on a \$26 million loan. The regime was temporarily bailed out by the Occidental Petroleum company, which made a quick \$25 million deposit in the Central Reserve Bank as an advance on an oil-exploration contract. But with more loans falling due, Morales apparently decided that new austerity measures could not wait for the elections.

On May 9, increases were decreed in payroll, income, vehicle, travel, and sales taxes. Duties on exports and imports were also hiked. On May 10 the sol was devalued by 13.3%.

These measures were followed by changes in the cabinet on May 12. Interior Minister Gen. Luis Cisneros, who was widely recognized as a "hard-line" opponent of Morales and had become a special target of protest in recent months, was dumped in favor of military intelligence chief Gen. Fernando Velit. Civilian industrialist Gabriel Lanatta became minister of industry. (Lanatta nine months earlier had accused the military of "nine years of stupidity" in its industrial policies.)

The regime also changed economics ministers, for the fourth time in a little more than a year. Gen. Alcibiades Sáenz was replaced by civilian Javier Silva Ruete, a Christian Democrat who served in Fernando Belaúnde's cabinet in the 1960s.

The price increases that touched off the ten-day social explosion in Peru were to have been deferred until June 6—two days after the constituent assembly elections. But Silva Ruete reportedly refused—after his appointment had been made public—to take office until the measures were put through.

A new team of Peruvian financial envoys was sent to New York May 22 to resume talks with U.S. banks, seeking deferral of between \$90 million and \$260 million worth of debts that fall due before July. Negotiations are also proceeding with the IMF for a new \$100 million loan.

Whether the imperialist financiers and their watchdogs will be sufficiently pleased with Morales Bermúdez's starvation prices and the new faces in his cabinet remains to be seen. So far, as Charles Krause put it in a dispatch from Lima to the May 24 *Washington Post*, "it has become apparent that the government traded one crisis for another, without yet being certain that it has solved the first crisis." □

## Hugo Blanco Deported



Thurston Williams  
SAN FRANCISCO: Fifty persons picketed Peruvian consulate May 23 to protest arrest of Hugo Blanco and hundreds of other Peruvian activists.

Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco and ten other opponents of the Morales Bermúdez government were deported from Peru early in the morning of May 25. They were secretly taken from jail in Lima and placed aboard a military aircraft, which transported them to the province of Jujuy in northwestern Argentina.

Blanco is a leader of the Fourth International and of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party). He is also a candidate in the constituent assembly elections now set for June 18, on the slate of the Workers, Peasants, Students, and Poor People's Front (FOCEP).

Blanco has been deported from Peru twice previously. After spending eight years in prison for his leading role in the peasant struggles of the early 1960s, he was released in December 1970 and then exiled in September 1971. He returned to Peru under an amnesty in late 1975, but was again deported in July 1976.

Exiles were amnestied once more on March 15 of this year, and Blanco returned to Peru on April 12. From then until his arrest at 4:30 a.m. on May 19 he had campaigned actively against the government's austerity policies and had appeared on television in FOCEP's behalf on a number of occasions. Hours before his arrest, he had appealed over television for support to the May 22-23 general strike.

A number of other left-wing candidates for the constituent assembly were deported along with Blanco. They are: Genaro Ledesma Izquieta of FOCEP, a well-known labor attorney; Ricardo Napurí, also of FOCEP, a central leader of the Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party); Ricardo Díaz Chávez, an attorney for the miners union and a candidate of the Democratic People's Union (UDP); Ricardo Letts Colmenares of the UDP, an editor of the weekly magazine *Marka*; and Javier Diez Canseco, UDP candidate and member of the editorial board of the weekly *Amauta*.

Also deported were Humberto Damonte, the president of *Marka's* editorial board; José Luis Alvarado; and two former naval ministers in the Velasco Alvarado regime, retired admirals José Arce Larco and Guillermo Faura Gaig. Arce and Faura are members of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), a group formed by radical nationalist military figures who were associated with Velasco.

Finally, in a feeble attempt at "evenhandedness," the regime chose to deport the editor of the right-wing weekly *El Tiempo*, Alfonso Baella Tuesta.

The lives of Blanco and the other leftist leaders are in danger so long as they remain in Argentina, a country where right-wing death squads operate with impunity and where a number of prominent Latin American exiles have been assassinated in recent years.

The U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) has launched an emergency campaign to ensure the safety of Blanco and the others. USLA is asking that telegrams be sent to President Jorge Videla, Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina, holding the Argentine government responsible for the Peruvians' safety and asking that they be allowed safe passage to a country of their choice. Copies should be sent to USLA, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, N.Y. 10003.

# French Troops Kill Hundreds of Blacks in Zaïre

By Ernest Harsch

Imperialist troops in Zaïre have killed hundreds of Africans in their bid to save the embattled dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko and protect the substantial Western economic stake in the country's mineral-rich province of Shaba.

While stories of killings of white civilians in Shaba have received prominent—and lurid—coverage in the major capitalist news media, the brutal actions by the French and Belgian troops against rebel forces and the local population have been greatly underplayed.

Col. Phillipe Erulin, a commander of the French Foreign Legion, acknowledged that some 300 Blacks were killed on May 19 alone, when the first wave of legionnaires parachuted into the rebel-held town of Kolwezi. Only two French troops were killed in the initial encounters.

Since the guerrillas were generally acknowledged to be well-trained and organized, this lopsided death toll sounds less like the results of a battle than of an outright massacre. And in light of the legionnaires' brutal reprisals against local inhabitants in other countries, it is likely that they did not make much of an attempt to distinguish between rebel troops and civilians.

The arrival of the French Foreign Legion, and a little later of Belgian paratroopers, was accompanied by bombing raids against rebel forces by Mirage jet fighters. The jets were part of the Zaïrian air force, but some of them were flown by French pilots.

After securing the key positions in Kolwezi, the French virtually took over the running of the town under what amounted to martial law. In a May 23 dispatch from Kolwezi, *New York Times* correspondent Michael T. Kaufman reported that French officers "are the only real authorities here and are commanding the Zaïrian forces as well as their own. . . ."

In an attempt to intimidate the Black population, French forces conducted house-to-house searches, especially in Manika, a nearby African township. Residents were compelled to submit to humiliating identity checks, in which they were forced to lie on the ground while showing their papers.

Not surprisingly, many Blacks fled the city to seek refuge in villages in the protected forest lands.

Operating from Kolwezi, Foreign Legion troops launched military operations into surrounding villages, killing more Africans.

Although the French and Belgian gov-

ernments claimed that the main reason for their intervention in Zaïre was to evacuate European nationals, the French forces dropped this pretext soon after their arrival and admitted that they were there to "pacify" the region. Col. Yves Gras, the commander of the French forces in Kolwezi, regretted that the French and Belgian interventions had not been properly coordinated. Otherwise, he said, "we could certainly have cut off the retreat of the rebels and destroyed them."

However, David B. Ottaway reported in the May 25 *Washington Post* that "the 650 French Foreign Legionnaires involved in securing the town are not sufficiently well equipped to carry out more than brief search and destroy operations in the immediate vicinity."

The rebels in Shaba have generally been termed "invaders" by the Mobutu regime and its international backers, since some of them have exile bases in northern Angola. However, Belgian and French officers in Kolwezi acknowledged that the Front National de Libération du Congo (FNLC—Congo National Liberation Front) had support in the town as well. The FNLC's main base is among the Lunda people, who live in Zaïre, Angola, and northwestern Zambia, as well as among the Baluba of Zaïre and Angola.

Summing up the accounts of a number of whites who fled Kolwezi about the conduct of the FNLC forces, Ottaway reported May 24, "The rebels spent a lot of time trying to convince the local black population of the evils of the Mobutu government and the benefits of supporting" the insurgents. Ottaway continued, "Some of the attempted indoctrination was more ideological—denunciations of colonialism and imperialism."

The rebels were thought to have their greatest support in the poorer African quarters of Kolwezi. Correspondents in Zambia reported that the retreating FNLC forces, who were passing through northwestern Zambia on the way back to their bases in Angola, were greeted by cheering crowds of Lunda villagers.

Given the FNLC's support among the local population of Shaba, there is a grave danger of massive reprisal actions by the Mobutu regime and its imperialist allies. Following a similar uprising last year, Zaïrian troops were reported to have burned entire villages in Shaba, killing an estimated 500 persons and forcing tens of thousands to flee into northern Angola for their lives.

Ottaway commented that in Kolwezi, "it is the blacks, 30,000 of them, who live today in the shadow of death and torture—now from the conquering and revenge seeking Zaïrian Army and its foreign supporters."

Confirming this threat, Mobutu announced May 25 that he had ordered the evacuation of all civilians from a sixty-five-mile zone along a main route in Shaba used by the rebels. He said that his troops had been ordered to "shoot anything that moves."

The main justification used for the imperialist aggression in Zaïre was the claim that it was necessary to rescue a few thousand whites from the clutches of the rebels, who were portrayed by government officials and the capitalist press as crazed "savages" M. Bazin, a French embassy counselor in Kinshasa, declared, for instance, that the rebels "are hordes, men of the lowest type, who are acting toward the expatriates with great hate and savagery."

As part of the efforts to whip up a racist hysteria, the Western powers issued extremely exaggerated reports of the numbers of whites killed and the alleged brutalities against them. The French Defense Ministry claimed that 177 whites had been killed, while other officials put the figure at 200 or more. It was pictured in the press as "the worst massacre of Europeans in modern African history."

Following the evacuation of the whites, however, it was revealed that the reports of the killings had been greatly exaggerated. A number of bodies had been counted more than once in the official tallies, and by May 26 a Belgian team searching Kolwezi reported that it had found only seventy-three white bodies, considerably lower than the initial claims.

While all the white deaths have been generally attributed to the rebels, there is evidence that a number of them died in crossfire between the insurgents and Zaïrian, Belgian, and French troops. According to the FNLC, some were killed during Zaïrian bombing raids over the city.

Moreover, Ottaway reported in the May 23 *Washington Post*, one incident in which a number of whites were killed "was committed by the Zaïrian Army and not the invading rebels, according to accounts by two survivors." Belgian troops have also accused members of the French Foreign Legion itself of killing six whites on May 19, the day they stormed into Kolwezi.

Of those whites killed by the rebels, it



appears that most died *after* the French and Belgian intervention was announced, and that the imperialist aggression itself set it off. The FNLC, which acknowledged that its followers may have carried out some killings of white civilians, attributed this to anger and fear after they learned of the French and Belgian plans to send troops into Shaba.

In a May 23 dispatch from Brussels, *New York Times* correspondent Paul Lewis reported, "Several European refugees returning here from Kolwezi confirmed this picture of events, saying that the killing started only when word of French and Belgian intervention reached the mining center last Wednesday [May 17], and asserting that the Zairian troops also committed atrocities."

The racist manner in which the "massacre" reports were presented was evident not only by the scant attention given to the hundreds of Blacks who died in conflict, which some estimates placed as high as 800. It also contrasts sharply to the reaction of Washington, its imperialist allies, and the capitalist news media to the recent massacre of more than 600 Namibian refugees in southern Angola by white South African troops who invaded that country. Nor did the slaughter of nearly 100 Black villages by Rhodesian troops May 14 cause much of a stir among the Western powers.

Another justification used for the intervention in Zaïre was the charge that the Shaba insurgents were either directly aided by Cuban troops or that they had Cuban training and support.

Both Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez have categorically denied any Cuban involvement in the Shaba conflict. Although maintaining that the rebels had been trained by Cubans, even the French Defense Ministry was forced to concede that there was "absolutely no evidence" of Cuban involvement in Zaïre itself.

Despite this lack of evidence, Carter has escalated his attacks on Havana even further. During a May 25 news conference in Chicago, he charged the Angolan government with bearing a "heavy responsibility" for the uprising and added, "it's a burden and a responsibility shared by Cuba."

*New York Times* correspondent Bernard Gwertzman reported May 27 that even some officials within the Carter administration contended "that it is impossible to prove that the Cubans did anything more than train some Katangans [Shabans] some time ago, in connection with their aid to Angolan forces, and give them Soviet arms." This is a reference to the fact that many of the Shaban insurgents had fought with the Cuban-assisted People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) during the Angolan civil war of 1975-76.

Gwertzman also reported that one "highly placed official" said "that there was no evidence that the Cubans had instigated the attack."

Carter has won some support in his



MOBUTU: "Shoot anything that moves."

tirade against Havana, however. On May 15, the Chinese news agency Hsinhua declared that the "invasion" of Shaba was a result of "Soviet and Cuban instigation." Four days later, Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing told a group of editors and publishers that Moscow was using Havana and that Washington had not been forceful enough in its response.

The major imperialist powers were in basic agreement over the central aims of their intervention in Zaïre: to prop up Mobutu, to safeguard the Shaba mines, and to use the example of Zaïre to shore up their political position on the continent as a whole. However, the intervention itself revealed some notable frictions between the two main participants, Paris and Brussels.

There was a minor dispute between the two powers over the manner of the intervention. Some Belgian officials had attempted to open negotiations with the FNLC in an effort to arrange the evacuation of the Europeans in Kolwezi (the FNLC indicated it was not opposed to evacuation). But this bid fell through when French Foreign Legionnaires stormed into the city, prompting the Belgians to send in paratroopers close behind.

The French, for their part, criticized the Belgian decision to evacuate all of its nationals from Kolwezi. Colonel Gras

called it a "fundamental error," apparently since the full evacuation would make it more difficult to get the Belgian technicians to return to resume the operation of the mines.

More seriously, the Belgian imperialists, the former colonial masters of Zaïre when it was known as the Congo, accused their French competitors of trying to expand their economic interests in Zaïre to the detriment of the Belgians. This rivalry was evident last year, when Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans warned Paris not to interfere with Belgium's "privileged links" with Zaïre.

The Belgians have about \$1 billion invested in Zaïre, compared to about \$20 million for the French. The head of a major Belgian mining company declared, "The French want to change that. They would love to get some of their companies in there. . . ."

This squabbling is just one more indication that the imperialists' real concern in Shaba was not a few white lives, but the province's fabulous mineral wealth.

Having "pacified" Shaba for the time being, the French announced May 25 that the Foreign Legion troops would begin a phased withdrawal from the province (the Belgians had already begun to pull back a few days earlier).

The withdrawal came amid a series of proposals by the French, Belgian, Zaïrian, and other governments for the establishment of an international military force to guard Shaba against further unrest. The imperialists are particularly concerned that the ferment in Shaba could become prolonged, given the FNLC's support among the local population.

The French government has proposed the setting up of an African "peacekeeping" force, with the collaboration of a number of Black neocolonial regimes, to help Mobutu maintain control over Shaba. This idea was raised by Gabon President Omar Bongo at a conference of former French and Belgian colonies, but met with little response. So far, only the Moroccan regime, which sent troops to aid Mobutu last year, has dispatched some military forces to Zaïre.

If this proposed "all-African" force is actually set up, it too will mean continued imperialist intervention, since behind the African force will stand the major imperialist powers, with their own "advisers" in the field.

Belgian Prime Minister Tindemans has himself suggested a West European military force, backed up by U.S. logistical support, to maintain "security" in Zaïre.

According to a report in the May 25 *Washington Post*, the question of Western policy in Zaïre will be one of the topics expected to be discussed by Carter and French President Giscard d'Estaing during a meeting scheduled for the end of May. □

# The Imperialist Offensive in Africa

By Ernest Harsch

The African continent, ravaged for centuries by colonial plunder, white domination, and mass slaughter, is today the victim of continued imperialist aggression.

Despite the fact that most African countries attained formal independence a number of years ago, they are still subjected to imperialist intrigue and political pressure. At the same time their economies are kept shackled to the needs of the world capitalist market and their natural wealth is drained by rapacious foreign companies.

And now, as the African workers and peasants press forward their struggles for national rights and class emancipation, they face stepped-up West European, South African, and American military intervention. From one end of the continent to the other, the oppressed masses have had to confront foreign troops and planes. Less than three years ago the target was Angola. Today it is Zaïre, Chad, Western Sahara, and Namibia. Tomorrow it could be Ethiopia or anywhere else that imperialist interests and profits may be endangered.

So far, it has been primarily French, Belgian, and South African forces that have been in the front lines of the recent wave of military interventions. But they have gone into action in close collaboration with Washington.

The role of American imperialism is becoming increasingly evident in the orchestration of this broad imperialist offensive against the African freedom struggle.

It was the White House that encouraged South African troops to invade Angola during the civil war of 1975-76. American officials have taken a leading part in the ongoing negotiations designed to dampen the Zimbabwean and Namibian struggles. The Carter administration has given its approval, if not actual encouragement, to the French military interventions in Western Sahara and Chad, and is currently engaged in delicate maneuvering in the Horn of Africa.

The White House is becoming more deeply involved on a direct military level as well, as shown by the increase in American arms aid to Washington's African allies and Carter's participation in the recent American-French-Belgian-British intervention in Zaïre. As the Zaïre operation was under way, Carter also began to press for an even freer hand in sending arms assistance to African states and in launching covert military operations.

These most recent moves raise the threat of yet greater American intervention against the peoples of Africa.

### A Prize Worth Fighting For

The stakes for imperialism in Africa are great.

Not only does the continent serve as a pool of underpaid and superexploited labor for the big imperialist firms, but it has tremendous natural wealth. Zaïre and Zambia are among the world's top copper exporters, and Zaïre supplies 75 percent of the cobalt used in the United States. Nigeria, Libya, and Angola have valuable oil deposits. Guinea has about two-thirds of the world's known bauxite reserves. Morocco and Western Sahara are rich in phosphates.

Southern Africa in particular is a prize for the international bourgeoisie. Zimbabwe has some of the biggest chrome reserves in the world and Namibia, a South African colony, is the world's second largest producer of gem diamonds and has important deposits of copper, uranium, lead, zinc, and other minerals.

South Africa itself has the most varied mineral resources of any country except the United States and the Soviet Union. It produces around three-fourths of the capitalist world's gold output, and has three-fourths of the world's chrome ore reserves, one-third of the known uranium reserves, and the largest known reserves of platinum, vanadium, and coal. It also has important deposits of diamonds, nickel, asbestos, titanium, and numerous other minerals.

Even more than the rest of the continent, South Africa provides foreign investors with a superexploited Black work force. Because of the South African ruling class's system of white supremacy, in which Blacks are denied their most basic democratic rights and are prevented, to a great extent, from struggling for improved incomes and living conditions, Black wages are extremely low and capitalist profit levels are exceptionally high. Although the rate of return for direct American investments worldwide during the 1960s averaged about 11 percent, they earned 18.6 percent in South Africa itself.

These lucrative profits have attracted swarms of foreign capitalists. The book value of all direct foreign investments in South Africa totaled well over \$10 billion in 1976. British imperialism led the pack,

holding nearly half of the foreign investments, while the American industrialists and financiers followed second with some \$1.7 billion in direct investments and \$2.2 billion in loans and outstanding credits.

The South African ruling class, moreover, is a most valuable ally for the American, European, and Japanese imperialists. It is itself imperialist, with significant South African investments in such countries as Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, Angola, and other countries, and has the economic and military might to act as a local gendarme for the protection of imperialist interests as a whole throughout southern Africa.

### The Masses Rise

The imperialist position in Africa has been seriously challenged before, most notably by the Algerian independence struggle, the so-called "Mau Mau" rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s, the massive unrest in the former Belgian-ruled Congo in the early 1960s, and the big Black protests in South Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In each case the imperialists and their local allies were able either to crush the struggles or divert them in a neocolonial direction.

The year 1974 marked the beginning of a new rise in the African freedom struggle.

The feudal regime of Emperor Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, a staunch and longtime ally of American imperialism, was overthrown during an unprecedented upsurge by the urban and rural masses. The military junta that took power has thus far been unable to bring the mass ferment under control, and the various national liberation struggles, especially that of the Eritreans, have sharpened considerably.

Also in 1974, the Portuguese colonial empire, the oldest in Africa, began to collapse following a coup in Lisbon, leading to the formal independence of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola. This big victory, and the failure of the American and South African intervention in the Angolan civil war, was a direct inspiration to those Blacks still living under white colonial rule in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

Since 1976, the Zimbabwean struggle for Black majority rule has made significant strides forward, and the various national liberation organizations have won increasing support from the Zimbabwean popula-



tion. The pressures in favor of Black rule are so great that even the white minority regime of Ian Smith has been forced to bring some prominent Zimbabwean figures into the government for cover and to stall for time by declaring itself, at least on paper, in favor of the establishment of a Black regime by the end of the year—although with whites continuing to hold substantial powers and privileges.

The struggle in Namibia for independence from South African rule has not yet reached the scope of that in Zimbabwe, but it too has increased sharply over the past few years, with those forces claiming to favor full independence gaining backing from large sections of Namibia's Black population. Despite its brutal counterinsurgency campaign against the Namibian freedom fighters, the Vorster regime in South Africa has also been forced to declare itself in favor of Namibian "independence" by the end of the year, that is, on terms as favorable to its own interests as possible.

The most dramatic and significant indication of the rise in the class and national liberation struggles in southern Africa was the massive Black upsurge in South Africa itself. Beginning in June 1976 in the Black township of Soweto near Johannesburg, thousands upon thousands of Black youths poured into the streets of the major urban centers to protest against the hated apartheid regime. The ferment involved all the sectors of the Black population—African, Coloured, and Indian. The powerful Black working class also participated, carrying out two general strikes during the upsurge.

The racist regime responded to this challenge with ferocious repression, butchering more than 600 Black protesters in 1976 and outlawing every major Black political group the following year.

To an extent, the ferment in Africa is becoming generalized, spreading to many different countries. This is partly a result of the world economic crisis, which has hit Africa the hardest of all continents. It is also a reflection of the profound inability of the Black neocolonial regimes to provide even the most basic needs of their populations.

In Zaïre, the proimperialist regime of Mobutu Sese Seko has been shaken by a series of antigovernment uprisings in 1977 and 1978, twice in the mineral-rich province of Shaba and once in Bandundu. During the past two years, significant student demonstrations or labor actions have erupted in Mali, Senegal, Swaziland, Liberia, Kenya, Egypt, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana, and Nigeria, with about a dozen student protesters being gunned down in Nigeria as recently as April.

Sierra Leone was placed under a state of emergency last year following large antigovernment demonstrations, and Guinea was rocked by women's protests. A general strike in Tunisia initiated a massive popu-

## Protests Demand French Troops Out of Africa

Emergency rallies and demonstrations took place in several cities across France May 22-25 to demand the withdrawal of French troops from Africa.

• **Bourges:** A demonstration organized on the evening of May 22 by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and Workers Struggle (LO) drew eighty persons who marched through the downtown area.

• **Grenoble:** On May 23, the United Socialist Party (PSU), LCR, Communist Workers Organization (OCT), and LO organized a rally in the downtown area to distribute leaflets to workers coming off afternoon shifts. Police ordered the leafletters to disperse, and then attacked violently, while cops on motorcycles pursued demonstrators down side streets. Three persons were injured, including a bystander, and seven were arrested.

• **Nanterre:** A rally on the university campus was held on May 23, spon-

sored by a wide spectrum of organizations, including the Communist and Socialist parties, several trade unions, and other political groups including the LCR.

• **Rouen:** Three hundred persons gathered in the downtown area on May 23 to demand "French troops out of Africa and Lebanon," although the demonstration had been banned by city officials earlier that day. Fourteen persons were arrested, but all were subsequently released after protests from the SP, CP, and several trade-union federations.

• **Caen:** Police broke up a banned demonstration attended by 400 persons, arresting 15 persons. A General Confederation of Labor body, and CP and SP officeholders, demanded the release of those detained.

Further actions were planned for Angers, Amiens, and Montpellier.

lar upsurge in January that dwarfed anything seen since the country gained its independence in 1956. The Saharan freedom fighters who are struggling for the independence of Western Sahara from Moroccan and Mauritanian rule, have managed to keep up their resistance in face of French bombing raids. Since last year, antigovernment guerrillas in Chad have forced the French-backed regime there onto the defensive.

Another sign of instability has been a series of successful or attempted coups that have recently taken place in Angola, Uganda, Burundi, Congo (Brazzaville), the Comoro Islands, and Somalia.

The widespread unrest in Africa poses a deadly threat to the imperialists. Not only does it jeopardize important economic interests, which are particularly crucial for some of the European powers, but a social revolution in Africa, as anywhere else, could have far-reaching repercussions. This is especially worrisome to Washington, which has a large oppressed Black population within the borders of the United States itself.

### Imperialist Setback in Angola

The overall reaction of Washington, London, Paris, Pretoria, and the other imperialist powers to this massive ferment has been to try to strengthen their position on the continent, employing a combination of direct and indirect intervention.

In many countries this has meant shor-

ing up endangered regimes against the threat of mass upheaval. In some, like Angola and Zimbabwe, it has involved a policy of divide and rule, in which rival factions are pitted against each other in an effort to weaken the national liberation forces and provide greater openings for imperialist pressure and penetration. In a few cases, most recently in Uganda, the imperialists have sought to replace ineffective regimes with ones better able to protect and advance capitalist interests.

The first significant imperialist aggression during the recent rise in the African freedom struggle was in Angola, the most important of the former Portuguese colonies. The intervention was carried out under American direction. It revealed both the extent to which the American imperialists were willing to go and the restraints under which they had to operate, given the widespread antiwar sentiment that had arisen in the United States during the Vietnam War.

Taking advantage of a factional struggle for power among the three main Angolan nationalist groups, the MPLA, FNLA, and UNITA,<sup>1</sup> President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger sought to heighten the rivalries to Washington's advantage.

1. Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (Angolan National Liberation Front), and União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

Former CIA official John Stockwell, who headed the CIA's Angola task force, has recently confirmed that Washington initially intervened in Angola, not to install the FNLA and UNITA in power and militarily defeat the MPLA, but to "balance" off the three groups and prevent a "cheap" MPLA victory.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the antiwar mood among most Americans, however, the White House and CIA had to hide the direct American role as much as possible. Arms and funds were secretly funneled to the FNLA and UNITA forces through the Mobutu regime in Zaïre. Foreign mercenaries were recruited and CIA advisers went into Angola to help train the troops of the two organizations. Finally, when the FNLA and UNITA proved unable to hold their ground against the MPLA (which was by then receiving large Soviet arms shipments), Washington urged Zaïrian and South African troops to move directly into Angola, opening a new phase of the imperialist aggression.

In response to the South African invasion, the MPLA appealed for Cuban assistance and received it. Thousands of Cuban troops moved rapidly to halt and turn back the South African intervention, thereby directly challenging Washington itself.

This infuriated the American war makers, who then opted for a more massive intervention. They considered sending in American troops, placing American warships off Luanda, directly supplying the South Africans, and even attacking Cuba itself.

But antiwar sentiment in the United States stayed the White House's hand. Without further American backing the South Africans were forced to pull back, allowing the MPLA to assert its formal authority over most of the country. (The UNITA has retained some of its base among the Ovimbundu people of central and southern Angola, however, and has kept up a guerrilla campaign against the MPLA regime.)

Although the MPLA set up a procapitalist regime, the Angolan debacle was nevertheless a political setback for American imperialism and for the most reactionary forces in southern Africa.

### Shifting Gears

In its efforts to head off further setbacks in Africa, Washington was forced to adopt a more cautious and indirect approach for the time being, using economic inducements and political pressure where possible.

To mask its true role as an enemy of the

African peoples and to gain some political leverage with the various national liberation groups and African regimes, the White House tried to present itself as a "champion" of African freedom. This campaign reached its high point during the first months of the Carter administration, when Andrew Young made a series of demagogic condemnations of the Vorster and Smith regimes, met with a host of African figures, and played down the White House's real concern over the Cuban involvement in Africa.

This process also involved trying to improve American ties and influence with a number of Black neocolonial regimes, especially the "frontline" states of southern Africa, most significantly Zambia and Mozambique. Through them, Washington and the other imperialists have sought to establish links to the various national liberation organizations in southern Africa, so as to be in a better position to hinder or sidetrack their struggles.

The White House is likewise trying to improve its relations with the Nigerian regime of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. As a result of Nigeria's large population (the biggest in Africa) and its oil wealth, the Nigerian regime can have substantial influence throughout Black Africa.

At the same time, the White House moved to strengthen collaboration with its imperialist allies, especially London and Paris. These powers have their own interests at stake and share Washington's overall aims in Africa: to maintain capitalist property relations and imperialist domination.

Two other factors that have influenced imperialist policy toward Africa are the involvement of the Soviet Union and Cuba. Despite the Western charges of "red colonialism," and unlike the imperialists themselves, neither Moscow nor Havana have intervened in Africa to secure any form of economic domination. They have become involved for political reasons.

Within the framework of the détente, the Kremlin is constantly jostling for a better diplomatic position. It tries to curry favor with various capitalist regimes, such as those in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Libya, and so on, to give it a stronger hand in its dealings with Washington and the other imperialist powers. It uses its influence in Africa and elsewhere as a bargaining chip that it can trade off at some future date for economic and political favors from the West. This policy has nothing to do with proletarian internationalism and involves betrayal of the class struggles in the countries in question.

The imperialists have already had considerable experience with Moscow, and understand the counterrevolutionary nature of its foreign policy. But in general they prefer to see the Kremlin's influence kept to a minimum.

On the other hand, Washington and its

allies are greatly concerned about the Cuban presence in Africa. Despite the frequent imperialist denunciations of the Cubans as Soviet "pawns," there is a certain independence to Havana's policy. The CIA itself recognized this, noting that the Cubans went into Angola against the South African forces largely on their own initiative.<sup>3</sup>

Castro has extended political support to several capitalist regimes in Africa, most notably those in Angola and Ethiopia, and has provided them with significant military assistance. This negative side of Cuban foreign policy is nothing new, and dates back to the early days of the Cuban revolution, when Havana, for example, showed a favorable attitude to the Brazilian regime of João Goulart, a bourgeois populist.

At the same time, however, there has been an anticapitalist and anti-imperialist side to Cuban foreign policy, as shown by Havana's early efforts to extend the socialist revolution into the rest of Latin America and its long-time support to various national liberation struggles in Africa, reaching a high point during the Cuban military commitment against the South African invasion of Angola.

It is this latter aspect of Havana's policy that the imperialists fear, and the reason that they want to get the Cubans out of Africa. As they see it, the Cuban presence further complicates the maneuvers by Washington and its allies and could present a direct obstacle to new imperialist interventions, as it did in Angola. In this context, the danger of renewed American aggression against Cuba itself cannot be brushed aside.

### Alarm Over Southern Africa

Following the Angolan civil war, Washington set in motion a broad diplomatic venture aimed at heading off mass explosions in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

In close collaboration with the British government, Kissinger, Young, Vance, and other American officials made a series of visits to southern Africa in an attempt to get Smith to make enough concessions to the Black majority to defuse or at least dampen the Zimbabwean freedom struggle. Their ultimate goal is to install a Black neocolonial regime better able to keep the population in check and to protect imperialist interests in the long run.

The Western powers, with the cooperation of the South African regime, have attempted to do this through a process of

3. For example, in his book *In Search of Enemies*, former CIA official John Stockwell says: "After the [Angolan] war we learned that Cuba had not been ordered into action by the Soviet Union. To the contrary, the Cuban leaders felt compelled to intervene for their own ideological reasons." (p. 172.)

2. See John Stockwell, *In Search of Enemies: A CIA Story* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978) and "The CIA's Secret War in Angola," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 22, 1978, p. 598.



negotiation with the various forces involved. By steering the conflict toward the negotiating table, they hope that it will be easier to control. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland commented in December 1976, for instance, that "if the issue were settled on the battlefield it would seriously lessen the chance of bringing about a moderate African regime in Rhodesia and would open the way for more radical solutions. . . ."

In an effort to weaken the Zimbabwean struggle, the imperialists, as well as Smith, have sought to play on the rivalries among the main nationalist figures, Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe, Abel Muzorewa, and Ndabaningi Sithole. The fact that some of these leaders are dependent to an extent on the backing of neighboring neocolonial regimes or have received financial assistance directly from imperialist firms (such as the Lonrho corporation) has facilitated this divide-and-rule policy.

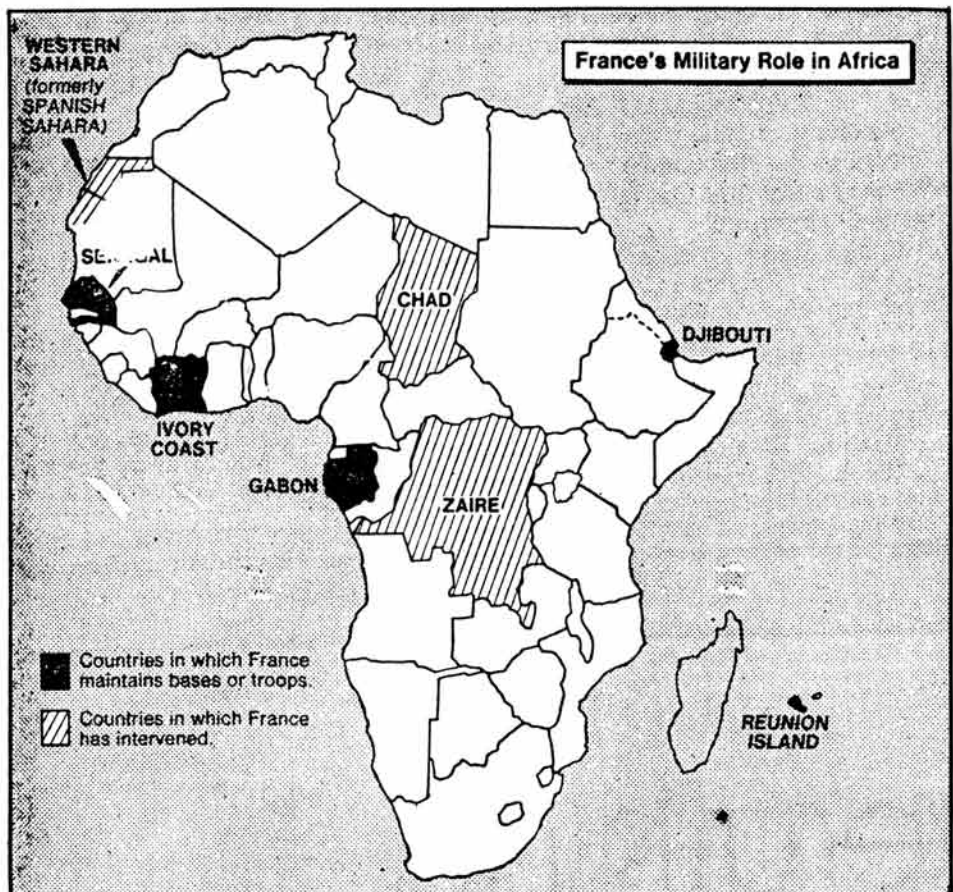
One result of the factionalism was the willingness of Muzorewa and Sithole to join in a coalition government with Smith, making substantial compromises under an agreement that will supposedly lead to the formation of a Black regime. In fact, it aims to safeguard white privileges and political power for many years to come.

The imperialists are not opposed to Smith's "internal settlement" as such, but are concerned that it will be unsuccessful in derailing the struggle for real Black majority rule. For that reason, they have been attempting to broaden it out and give it greater credibility by drawing in Nkomo and Mugabe, who are allied within the Patriotic Front.

Similarly in Namibia, a coordinated Western diplomatic campaign involving the American, British, French, West German, and Canadian governments has been directed at pressing the South African regime to grant some form of "independence" to the territory.

The South Africans have recognized the danger that prolonged intransigence could pose to their own interests, and have also declared themselves in favor of Namibian "independence." They have been attempting, however, to impose a subservient "multiracial" regime, while continuing their attacks against the South West Africa People's Organisation, the main Namibian nationalist group.

Despite the seemingly endless rounds of talks, fighting has continued to escalate in both Zimbabwe and Namibia. This was shown most strikingly by the numerous Rhodesian raids against Zimbabwean refugee and guerrilla camps in both Mozambique and Zambia, the massacre of nearly a hundred Zimbabwean villagers by Smith's forces in mid-May, and the South African assault into southern Angola in early May, in which more than 600 Namibian refugees were systematically massacred.



New York Times

Washington, London, and other Western powers are worried that these large-scale assaults by the white minority regimes could "complicate" their negotiation efforts. But the Western criticisms of the massacres have been relatively mild, to say the least. Referring to the South African massacre in southern Angola, for instance, Carter declared, "We do not feel that the raid was justified under the circumstances." In a bid to detract attention from this racist bloodbath, the White House has at the same time stepped up its condemnation of the Cuban involvement in Africa.

The imperialists are likewise concerned that the conflicts in Zimbabwe and Namibia could escalate into a wider war, or that Cuban forces could become involved. President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, hardly a radical, has already warned that he might have to call on Cuban assistance to help stave off repeated Rhodesian attacks on his country.

Although it is usually left unspoken, one of the key considerations behind Western policy in both Zimbabwe and Namibia is to help defend and buy time for the South African ruling class. They would prefer to see some modifications in the apartheid system, but so far they see no alternative but to back white supremacy itself.

Given the close interconnection between capitalism and national oppression in

South Africa, and the existence of a large Black working class, there is very little, if any, room for a neocolonial "solution" there. The downfall of the white regime could very easily lead to a socialist revolution, with profound implications for the continent as a whole.

It is for this reason that the Western powers, despite considerable pressure, have taken only symbolic actions against the apartheid regime, such as the token United Nations arms embargo, while continuing substantial economic assistance. As Carter himself commented in April 1977, Pretoria, from the viewpoint of the imperialists, "is a stabilizing influence in the southern part of that continent."

#### Maneuvering in the Horn

For more than two years after the downfall of Haile Selassie in Ethiopia, Washington continued to support the central regime in Addis Ababa. It even increased military aid to the military junta, known as the Dergue, under the hope that it would be able to contain the massive unrest throughout Ethiopia and hold the country in one piece.

The American rulers fear a successful outcome to the struggles for national self-determination in the Horn of Africa, both because it could further undermine stability in the region itself and because it could

possibly have a chain-reaction effect through the continent as a whole, which is a patchwork of national conflicts and antagonisms.

Despite the substantial American military aid to the Dergue, the Eritreans continued to make advances. As Washington saw it, this presented a danger. If it backed the Dergue to the end, and the Eritreans won independence anyway, it would then make it that much more difficult to influence the course of the new Eritrean state.

So in early 1977 the White House announced a reduction of aid and ties to the Ethiopian junta, to give itself greater room to maneuver among the Dergue's adversaries.

While maintaining some links with the Dergue, both directly and through Israel, the White House made overtures to the Somali regime. Somali President Siad Barre took this as a go-ahead for his own territorial aims, and sent Somali troops into the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, ostensibly to assist local Somali nationalist forces.

Following a successful counteroffensive by Cuban-assisted Ethiopian forces, Siad Barre finally withdrew his troops from the Ogaden in March 1978. Carter, too, had urged the Somali withdrawal, having earlier pulled back from his initial overtures to Siad Barre as a result of his concern that identification with the formal aggressor in the conflict could damage American influence with other African regimes (the Organization of African Unity officially backed the Ethiopian position).

Though there have been no overt American overtures to the Eritrean fighters, it is likely that Washington is trying to gain some influence with them through such intermediaries as the Saudi Arabian regime, which provides the Eritreans with some aid.

This imperialist maneuvering in the Horn of Africa carries with it a danger of direct military intervention as well, should the conflicts there get out of hand. Some 4,500 French troops are stationed in Djibouti, and Carter himself engaged in gunboat diplomacy earlier this year when he sent two warships off the coast of Eritrea in an American show of force.

#### The French Gendarmes

French imperialism has been particularly aggressive in Africa. It has some 10,000 troops in Senegal, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Chad, Djibouti, and the Indian Ocean island of Réunion. It has military advisers in a number of other African countries, most of them former French colonies.

Since December 1977, French planes have carried out a series of bombing raids against guerrilla forces of the Polisario

Front,<sup>4</sup> which is fighting for the independence of Western Sahara. A former Spanish colony, Western Sahara was partitioned between Morocco and Mauritania in 1975.

In late April, more than a thousand French troops were sent into Chad to prop up the military dictatorship of Gen. Félix Malloum. This was in response to increasing military gains by the antigovernment guerrillas of the Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (Chad National Liberation Front) in the northern and central parts of the country, in which Malloum lost half his regular army. He has also been confronted with a series of antigovernment demonstrations in the south, the regime's traditional area of support.

The French undoubtedly intervened in these two cases in their own interests. Both Chad and Mauritania are former French colonies, in which Paris retains important economic and political stakes. But the French troops went in with Carter's blessing.

Carter revealed where his administration stood on the question of Western Sahara in late January, when he informed Congress that he intended to provide King Hassan of Morocco with \$100 million worth of military aircraft and that Hassan would be allowed to use the aircraft in counterinsurgency operations outside Morocco's borders. Carter has not yet acted on this, but the announcement itself amounts to a de facto recognition of Morocco's claims to part of Western Sahara and flies against the right to self-determination of the Saharan people.

The U.S. State Department has also explicitly backed the French military operations in Chad. And although the White House has stated that it is not yet ready to supply arms directly to the Chadian regime, it is urging other regimes that receive American military aid to transfer some to Chad.

The direct collaboration between Washington, Paris, and other West European powers has reached a new level in the case of Zaïre. The imperialists have intervened there twice in a period of a little more than a year to rescue the Mobutu dictatorship and safeguard their substantial holdings in that country.

In April 1977, after a string of advances by rebels in the mineral-rich province of Shaba, French planes flew in some 1,500 Moroccan troops to help Mobutu's forces regain control. The Belgian imperialists, the former colonial masters of Zaïre when it was known as the Congo, sent arms. Washington supplied about \$15 million worth of "nonlethal" military equipment.

French President Giscard d'Estaing denied that the White House had been in-

involved in the French decision to intervene in Zaïre, but he admitted that it had been under consideration when he met with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to discuss the situation in Africa shortly before.

There was less reticence about the American role during the most recent aggression in Zaïre. Carter set up a "Shaba task force" and designated Gen. Alexander Haig, the commander of NATO troops in Europe, to coordinate operations with the French, Belgians, and British. After a series of meetings among representatives of the four imperialist powers, the French sent in about 1,000 troops and the Belgians 1,750. London supplied logistical support, as did Washington. Carter also provided \$20 million worth of military assistance and put the 82nd Airborne Division on alert for possible intervention in Zaïre.

The imperialists went in under the guise of rescuing white "hostages." For additional cover, they accused Havana of being involved in the rebel operations, despite the admitted lack of evidence and Castro's categorical denials. Their real aim, as the French forces finally admitted, was to crush the rebellion and "pacify" Shaba.

Both the Belgian and French governments have proposed the establishment of a so-called all-African "peacekeeping" force to take over much of their military functions in Shaba and to defend the copper mines over a long-term period. Since this force, if it is actually set up, would depend on West European, and perhaps American, logistical support, it would not mark a real lessening of the imperialist intervention in Zaïre, but would just give it an "African" cover. Its troops would be assigned the role of local policemen for imperialist interests.

#### Escalating the War Threat

The importance of the imperialist intervention in Zaïre goes beyond the situation

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1973	46 issues (1,520 pages)	\$25
1974	47 issues (1,888 pages)	\$25
1975	47 issues (1,888 pages)	\$35
1976	49 issues (1,888 pages)	\$35
1977	48 issues (1,456 pages)	\$35

P.O. Box 116  
Varick Street Station  
New York, N.Y. 10014

4. Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (People's Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Río de Oro).



in that country itself and has implications for all of Africa. The Western powers clearly saw it as a test case that would demonstrate determination to defend their interests and establish a precedent for similar interventions in other countries.

This is especially true for the Carter administration. Assessing U.S. policy in Africa in the light of the Zaïre intervention, correspondent Bernard Gwertzman commented in the May 23 *New York Times* that the American involvement accomplished three things: it signaled U.S. support for Mobutu, it showed a willingness to back up West European intervention more quickly than last year, "and it demonstrated willingness to commit forces overseas."

Carter has kept a close eye on the possible reaction within the United States. He has carefully escalated the American involvement in Africa step by step, while seeking to hide the White House's real aims and throw up an anti-Cuban smoke-screen.

The big capitalist press in the United States has noted Carter's cautious escalation and has declared its backing.

Referring to the American intervention in Zaïre, the editors of the *New York Times* stated May 22, "The techniques of crisis management were being born again in Washington, plainly to test the nation's tolerance for involvements that it has bitterly opposed since the final escape from Southeast Asia." They then said that "we confess to a certain sympathy for his desire over the weekend to demonstrate with something more than rhetoric that American restraint in Africa these days is a matter of choice and not of political paralysis."

An editorial in the May 16 *Washington Post* declared hopefully, "Just as the administration seems more primed to counter another communist-backed advance in Africa, however, so the public would also probably be readier to go along."

An unnamed top White House official has also been quoted as expressing a belief that antiwar sentiment was on a decline. "We are coming out of the trough," he said. "Vietnam is behind us. The country appreciates that supporting our friends and balancing the Soviet Union are important."

While a marked decline in antiwar feeling among the American population is dubious, it is certainly clear that the ruling circles themselves have rallied around Carter's intervention in Zaïre and in Africa in general. This support has cut across party lines, and even among those bourgeois figures who express some hesitations or criticisms of the manner in which Carter is intervening in Africa, there is general agreement over the broader American aims.

Carter has already indicated that he wants to go even further in the direction of

## Not One Soldier, Not One Weapon for Mobutu!

[The following statement was issued May 19 by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International; Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), French section of the Fourth International; Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs/Revolutionaire Arbeiders Liga (Revolutionary Workers League), Belgian section of the Fourth International; and Socialist Workers Party, United States.]

\* \* \*

On Thursday, May 18, Belgian and French troops, supported by the United States and Great Britain, launched a new imperialist war against the peoples of Africa. The so-called "protection of the evacuation of Europeans" is nothing but a pretext—utilized by the

imperialists many times in the past—to cover up for a colonialist intervention. The aim of the international bourgeoisie is to prop up the Mobutu regime, in a country that occupies a strategic place in Africa and contains fabulous natural riches.

The undersigned organizations appeal to the working class, the youth, and all anti-imperialists to actively oppose this intervention by mobilizing immediately in the factories, in the schools, and in the streets to demand the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Zaïre and a halt to the sending of all war materiel and to military support operations. They will try to initiate appropriate united protest actions in the coming days in their respective countries.

Not one soldier, not one weapon, not one penny for Mobutu! □

direct military aggression and in acquiring greater flexibility in conducting his administration's foreign policy. While the Zaïre intervention was under way, he began to complain about congressional "restraints" on the White House's ability to intervene in Africa. One congressional representative was quoted as saying that Carter feels "a lot of frustration at having his hands tied" in supplying military assistance to local allies.

The "restraints" that Carter was referring to do not reflect any real congressional opposition to a more openly aggressive foreign policy, but rather the massive antiwar sentiment in the country that had forced Congress to enact these few symbolic measures. Carter's complaints about them are thus directed primarily at the population as a whole and are part of his efforts to test the ground for further American advances abroad.

Among the legal provisions Carter would like to see scrapped is one that prohibits outright grants of military aid without a specific act of Congress.

More ominously, the White House has spoken out against the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, which prohibits aid of any kind that would promote military or paramilitary operations in Angola, and another law that requires the president to vouch for and report to Congress any covert military operations abroad.

Reporter Murrey Marder described some of the thinking behind these recent moves in the May 19 *Washington Post*. "White House strategists for at least two months," he reported, "have attempted to develop a plan to permit the United States to funnel sophisticated arms and funds clandestinely to African guerrilla forces

fighting Soviet-backed Cuban troops in Angola and Ethiopia."

Citing "authoritative sources," Marder stated that National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski wanted greater leeway in providing funds for clandestine operations in Africa "to pin down the Cubans" and limit their ability to move into other countries—notably Zimbabwe.

On May 23, Carter himself stated that he would like to send assistance to the UNITA guerrillas in Angola, presumably to counter the "unwarranted intrusion" of Cuban forces that he referred to three days earlier.

According to some reports, UNITA has already begun to receive more covert assistance from abroad, particularly from France.

The danger of these recent White House moves is obvious. Together with the coordinated aggression in Zaïre and the French operations in Chad and Western Sahara, they represent a clear threat to escalate imperialist intervention in Africa even further. Given the extreme instability throughout the continent, and the high stakes involved, the next intervention could be virtually anywhere, in Ethiopia, in Angola, in Zimbabwe, or in some country that today seems relatively "tranquil."

Carter and his allies clearly hope that the antiwar and anti-imperialist forces in their countries will be sufficiently disoriented by the phony justifications and pretexts to allow them to get away with their aggression. That must not be allowed to happen. It is urgent that all opponents of imperialist intervention in Africa mobilize to stay their hand and to force the withdrawal of all imperialist troops and advisers now on the continent. □

# Selections From the Left

## klasse-kampen

"Class Struggle," published fortnightly in Copenhagen by the Revolutionary Socialist League, Danish section of the Fourth International.

The editorial in the May 16-30 issue deals with the crisis in the Danish fishing industry, calling for nationalization of the fishing fleet:

"It is the petty bourgeoisie that is raising the ruckus. That remark has been made again in the commentary on the fishermen's blockade protesting catch quotas. But the fishermen are a heterogeneous group. Some are ordinary wage workers. Some work on a share system. They get a percentage of the catch. The boat captains get a higher percentage. There are fishing boat captains who own their craft and have a few helpers, who may be paid wages or given part of the catch. Finally, there are fishing industry capitalists, who own big trawlers.

"Behind this heterogeneous group stand the banks, who, with a big boost from the state's policy, make juicy profits off fishing. For many years, successive governments have encouraged heavy investment in the industry by establishing minimum prices and tax write-offs. The result was that very desirable fish with red-colored meat had to be thrown overboard to hold up the price. Suddenly there were 'too many fish.' But today there are too few.

"Another consequence of previous fishing policy is that the fishing fleets of various countries are now fighting over the catch. In heated discussions, some people in the fishing industry claim that there are masses of fish. But the marine biologists say they can prove that the oceans are being fished out.

"There is every reason to doubt that the fishing quotas set by the Common Market are acceptable from the standpoint of maintaining the ecological balance. So, the stupidest proposal for solving these problems was the call by Glistrup [a right-wing petty-bourgeois demagogue] for removing all restrictions and giving up the attempt to regulate the fishing industry.

"As long as the various countries fight over fishing quotas and as Danish fishermen fight among themselves to take as much of the quota as possible, the problem of maintaining the fish stocks will remain unsolved. There is only one possible solution, if the fishing workers are to be assured a minimum wage. Only nationalization of the fishing fleet can assure fishermen a fixed monthly wage, regardless of whether the quota is caught.

"Such a nationalization must be carried out by taking over the capitalists' trawlers

and the banks' interests in both small and large boats, without compensation. On the other hand, it may be correct to give compensation to the owners of small fishing boats.

"Up until now, the most reactionary bourgeois politicians are the ones who have gotten the support of the majority of the fishermen. If this heterogeneous group is not to develop as a bloc into a reactionary social force, the working-class parties and organizations must offer a program for solving the problems of the workers in the fishing industries and those of the small-boat owners. Capitalist interests must be eliminated from the industry. It does no good to label the fishermen en bloc as reactionary or to pander to the present level of consciousness of most of them. Likewise, there is no perspective of the problems being solved if Denmark simply leaves the Common Market."

## southeast asia CHRONICLE

Information bulletin on current developments in Southeast Asia. Published six times a year in Berkeley, California.

"As the C-123 dropped low over north-eastern Laos, we saw thousands of gaping bomb craters pockmarking the green savannahs of the Plain of Jars," Linda and Murray Hiebert report in the March-April issue.

"Charred tree skeletons, empty bomb casings and a few rusting truck frames lined the roads over which our sturdy Chinese jeep lurched and bumped through ruts and potholes. Not one bridge had survived. Our vehicle had to ford scores of fast-flowing rivers and streams. In the old provincial capital, the shells of a few two-story buildings overgrown with brush and weeds stood along the main street. . . ."

These scenes emerged from a four-day visit by the Hieberts to Xieng Khouang province last November. The province, formerly one of the richest regions in Laos, with a population of 150,000, was one of the areas most severely bombed by Washington during the Indochina war. Particularly hard hit was the province's central plateau, the Plain of Jars.

"The U.S. Air Force began secretly bombing the area in 1964," the Hieberts note. "Before the destruction was exposed to the world five and a half years later, organized village life had become impossible. According to a Senate subcommittee report, the purpose of the air war was 'to destroy the social and economic infrastructure of the Pathet Lao held areas.'

"Some U.S. sources estimate 75,000 tons of bombs were dropped on the province

before 1970. By the time of the cease-fire three years later, local Lao officials put the figure at two tons of bombs for each inhabitant of Xieng Khouang province, or about 300,000 tons total.

"Yong Yia, the Lao Suong (Meo) vice-chairman of the province, told us 8,083 civilians were killed, 3,764 people maimed, 11,345 children orphaned and 2,567 women widowed. Fifty thousand people fled the area. Three hundred fifty-three villages were razed, and 24 hospitals, 179 schools, 1,761 Buddhist pagodas, and 172 Christian churches destroyed during the onslaught."

Reconstruction is slowly under way, in face of great economic hardships. These are not the only roadblocks, however.

"The most serious obstacle to reconstruction is the deadly threat of unexploded ordnance in the soil of Xieng Khouang. Since 1973, 267 civilians have died and 343 have been seriously injured by explosives while they were reclaiming fields and preparing construction sites. Last year alone, 17 people were killed and 25 maimed. . . ."

"Other direct consequences of the bombing add to the difficulty of rebuilding the destroyed land. Provincial officials estimate the bombing destroyed nearly 3.75 million acres of forest, 375,000 acres of industrial crops and 3,250 acres of rice paddy. Most of the livestock and 50,000 of the province's water buffalo died. In some areas, groups of eight peasants harness themselves to buffalo plows to till their fields. More than 230 irrigation systems were also destroyed, leaving large parts of the province to face chronic drought."

## Internationalen

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

The May 5 issue reports an incident involving a faction of superloyal followers of the Kremlin that split away from the "Eurocommunist" Swedish CP in February 1977. This grouping has been given various kinds of recognition and support by the Soviet bureaucracy, as well as by those of other East European countries. But it has not yet been recognized to the exclusion of the "Eurocommunist" CP, which is far larger.

"Another member of the Group on East Europe has been roughed up by monitors at a public meeting organized by the Swedish Communist Youth, the youth organization of the Communist Workers Party.

"Representatives from East Germany spoke at the meeting, which was held on



April 22. The Group on East Europe is conducting a campaign on behalf of Rudolf Bahro, who is in prison in East Germany charged with 'violating the security of the state.' Bahro's real 'crime' is that he let a book of his be published in West Germany sharply criticizing the East European societies from a socialist standpoint.

"When a member of the group went to the meeting to distribute a leaflet entitled 'Free Rudolf Bahro,' he was immediately attacked by some monitors who punched him and kicked him. The monitors took his papers and leaflets, shouting that he was a 'provocateur' and a 'Maoist.' They called Bahro a 'spy' and 'provocateur.' Finally, they threw the leafleter down the stairs. . . .

"Now people in the Group on East Europe are asking the question: Is the Communist Workers Party in favor of 'concentration camp socialism' here in Sweden as well?

"The Group on East Europe is an association based on the program of fighting and exposing repression in East Europe, defense of democratic rights, defense of the national minorities, and freedom for the political prisoners.

"It says that it supports no particular opposition group but defends the right of oppositionists to make themselves heard in East Europe. It sees its tasks as disseminating information so that people can judge for themselves. . . ."

## rouge

*"Red," revolutionary communist daily, published in Paris.*

In the May 19 issue, Georges Vingot reports on the first public debate between the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and the Internationalist Communist Organization (OCI), held at the University of Grenoble on May 18.

"The debate focused on three main points: the crisis of Stalinism, oppositionists in the CP, and a comparative analysis of Social Democracy and Stalinism.

"More than ever before, the CPs are subordinated to Moscow in order to carry out their counterrevolutionary policies,' the OCI speaker [Jean-Claude Joubert] explained. . . .

"Joubert attacked Comrade Ernest Mandel's analysis of the tendency to Social Democratization on the part of the CPs. 'To you, "Social Democratization" means transformation of the CPs into Social Democratic parties of the Second International, indeed, into centrist parties (vacillating between reform and revolution). And, comrades, before 1914, Lenin, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg were in the Second International! Won't the LCR be inside these Social Democratized CPs in the future?' Joubert asked.

"François Ollivier reassured his opponent on this point: such a transformation of the CPs is out of the question. Their whole policy of class collaboration, particularly in Europe, proves this.

"The process of Social Democratization of the CPs will not proceed in a linear fashion. The need to maintain an identity as a party, as a bureaucratic apparatus in the working class, will get in the way. But what is decisive, as Trotsky pointed out in 1938, is that 'from now on, the Communochauvinists will have to tend to their own affairs, whose interests are absolutely not identical with those of the USSR.'

"It is this process that will unleash a number of centrifugal forces and lead to ruptures that will be part of the regroupment of the workers movement as a whole.

"In the OCI's view, the current discussions in the CP are nothing but a red herring, a 'national-consensus maneuver by the leadership,' as *Informations Ouvrières* puts it, and the oppositionists are 'very cooperative oppositionists.'

"In fact, the real question is this: Whatever our political disagreements with Ellenstein or Althusser—and they are many—how can we influence the current debates, how can the consciousness of CP activists be raised further?

"From this standpoint, the OCI's policy can have only one effect at a time when rifts are appearing inside the CP—to drive the activists back into the arms of the leadership through extreme sectarianism.

"The OCI speaker harshly criticized the remarks made by our comrades in the Spanish LCR at the Ninth Congress of the Spanish CP. 'How do you dare ask Santiago Carrillo to rehabilitate Andres Nin and all the members of the left opposition?' This is a sign of blindness. At a time when the 'Eurocommunists' are criticizing Stalinism in words, they should be caught in their own trap. If they denounce Stalin's crimes, we should insist that they take it one step further and rehabilitate all the communist opponents of Stalinism! It is not a matter of persuading Carrillo, but of understanding what an encouragement such a rehabilitation would be for East European dissidents fighting the Stalinist bureaucracy under very harsh conditions. . . .

"After having admitted that the CPs, like the SPs, were against revolution in general, the OCI speaker declared: 'The CPs are Stalinist, the SPs are reformist.'

"This distinction was not limited to indicating different historical origins and areas of implantation. It meant that the SPs are 'parliamentary workers parties' that desire reforms and want to win elections, unlike the Stalinists who support Giscard! Hence OCI's somewhat unique theoretical analysis whereby the CPs are the spearhead of the counterrevolution, while the SPs show some ineptitude for this dirty work. But then, what role did Soares play in Portugal?"

## HAYTH

*"Auge" (Dawn), the morning paper of the left. Published daily in Athens. Reflects the views of the Greek Communist Party ("interior").*

The April 19 issue published Spanish Communist Party representative Luis Lara's greetings to the congress of the Greek Communist Party ("interior"), a "Eurocommunist" grouping that has been virtually excommunicated by the Kremlin and is now fighting for survival.

Moscow has given strong backing to the Greek Communist Party ("exterior"), the faction that advocates total subservience to the Soviet bureaucracy.

Among other things, Lara said:

"Your congress and ours are going on at about the same time. Both are taking place at a time of great changes, marked most strongly by the growing attraction of socialist ideas for broader and broader masses, especially in the European countries.

"However, for the masses to be able to achieve the promise of socialism, the Communist parties have to carry out some fundamental renovations. Patient and consistent ideological work is needed to free them from the sectarianism and dogmatism that has caused and continues to cause so much harm in the international Communist movement.

"It is necessary to definitely put an end to compulsory unanimous votes and monolithism that have done nothing but close the doors to the search for concrete solutions to concrete problems in every country.

"And it is necessary to end once and for all the interventions of certain countries and certain parties in the internal affairs of all other parties.

"The Communist Party of the Soviet Union must renounce the role of guide-party and respect the independence and rights of each and every party to carry out its line."

Lara summarized the position of the Spanish CP leaders on the question of removing the definition of their party as "Leninist" from its statutes. He concluded, saying:

"We expect that our Ninth Congress (our first legal congress in forty-two years) will endorse these Eurocommunist positions. At last, the policy of independence will triumph despite the pressures brought to bear against it from both inside and outside the country.

"We are moving toward a new kind of society in Europe, the kind proposed by the Eurocommunist parties—socialism in freedom, democratic socialism.

"On the basis of our experience, we would encourage you to continue the road that you have chosen. On this road, you can count on the friendship and solidarity of the Communist Party of Spain."

## How to Defeat Nazi Threat in the United States

By Steve Clark

[The following article appeared in the May 26 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

A coalition of Chicago-area Jewish organizations has called for a mass counter-demonstration on the same day and site of a planned Nazi march through suburban Skokie. Frank Collin's National Socialist [Nazi] Party of America has applied for a permit to march in Skokie June 25.

Skokie has 40,000 Jewish residents, including an estimated 7,000 survivors of Hitler's death camps.

The anti-Nazi counterdemonstration was initiated by the public affairs committee of the Jewish United Fund. A spokesperson for the group told the *Militant* that march organizers recognize that the fight against the Nazis "is not just a Jewish issue." He said that others will be welcome to participate.

In a letter to the Jewish United Fund, Malik Miah, Chicago city organizer of the Socialist Workers Party, expressed "enthusiastic support for this idea."

A statement by the SWP accompanying Miah's letter pointed out that "the self-styled Nazis are a small and deservedly hated outfit in the United States today, with little prospect of becoming a major force. Nonetheless, they pose a real threat to the rights of many Americans.

"In the Marquette Park section of Chicago," the statement pointed out, "they have inspired racist mobs to attack Blacks and fire bomb homes. In Los Angeles a Nazi organization bombed the Socialist Workers Party headquarters and offices of other organizations."

The SWP statement explained that "the purpose of the Nazi march in Skokie is not to express 'opinions' but to terrorize Jews and others, and convince the Nazi followers that they can get away with more racist terrorism including acts of violence against the Jewish residents of Skokie.

"The survivors of Hitler's holocaust who live in Skokie know from bitter experience the real goals of Nazi 'demonstrations.'"

The Nazis first announced plans to march through Skokie a little more than a year ago. The Skokie city government responded by getting a court injunction to prevent the march. It also passed new legislation restricting the right to demonstrate in Skokie.

Among other things, these ordinances

require thirty days notice of any demonstration, as well as the posting of a \$350,000 insurance bond for any protest of fifty or more. (Insurance companies usually won't write such policies.)

The ordinances also ban the distribution in Skokie of literature engaging in "group libel," or the display of "offensive symbols."

The American Civil Liberties Union has come to the aid of the Nazis and is challenging these ordinances on their behalf. The legal fight around this suit and various injunctions sought by Skokie has proceeded through state and federal courts over the past year.

In January a U.S. District Court ruled most of the Skokie ordinances unconstitutional, and the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals is expected to rule soon on Skokie's appeal. After that, the case will go to the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the Nazis are continuing with plans for their June 25 march.

The increased visibility of the Nazis does not reflect any qualitative growth on their part. Given their identification with Hitlerism and German nationalism, Nazi outfits such as Collin's are unlikely to be the nucleus of a major fascist movement in this country. American fascists will combine white chauvinism with red, white and blue superpatriotism.

Despite the small size of this particular outfit, however, it is important for opponents of fascism to respond effectively to events such as those in Skokie. A failure to respond adequately today will leave working people ill-prepared to meet the more serious fascist threat to our rights that is down the road.

In addition, these small Nazi groups have committed serious acts of violence against Blacks, socialists and others. Opponents of the Nazis must mobilize to fight these terrorist attacks and demand that the criminals responsible for them be arrested, prosecuted, and locked away.

The source of the increased leeway for operations that groups such as the Nazis have cashed in on is the escalating government offensive against national minorities, women, and working people.

Determined to solve capitalism's economic problems at working people's expense, the employers and their Democratic and Republican party servants are attempting to reverse the past gains of the trade unions, the civil rights struggle, and the women's movement.

Although America's rulers are not today

actively financing and promoting fascist groups, right-wingers from the antibusing ROAR to the Nazis are emboldened by the rightward shift of the capitalist politicians. The government, on the other hand, has no interest in countering the activities of these reactionaries.

In fact, revelations from secret government files prove that federal, state, and local police agencies are in close contact with far-right groups, protecting their illegal, terrorist activities, drawing informers from them, and cooperating in other ways. The ranks of the police are also a prime spawning ground for such groups.

In 1975, for example, a member of the right-wing Legion of Justice testified under oath that the Chicago police and U.S. Army Intelligence organized, financed, and provided cover for terrorist attacks on socialists, Black groups, and antiwar activists.

A police squad car, for instance, served as a lookout for Legion thugs in 1970 when they burglarized the Socialist Workers Party headquarters; the stolen papers later turned up in Army Intelligence files.

How can opponents of the Nazis most effectively counter these racist scum?

Many place primary reliance on efforts such as those by Skokie officials to ban the Nazi march. They counterpose this strategy to one of relying on the power of the labor movement and communities of the oppressed, mobilized in action to stop the Nazis.

This, for example, is the stance of the Jewish United Fund, whose spokesperson told the *Militant* that he hopes the counterdemonstration will be made unnecessary by court injunctions against the Nazi march.

But government restrictions on the right to demonstrate will not be used mainly against groups such as the Nazis.

The Skokie ordinance, for example, has already been used to bar a march by the anti-Nazi Jewish War Veterans.

Almost any other anti-Nazi group that wants to march in Skokie to express the majority's hatred for these terrorists will have a hard time coming up with the required \$350,000 insurance bond.

And what about the ban on "offensive symbols" or the distribution of literature involving "group libel"? Couldn't Zionists use this as a pretext to falsely label supporters of Palestinian rights "anti-Semitic" and thereby bar them from demonstrating or holding meetings?

The capitalist government today is al-



ready trying to pare down democratic rights. Working people have nothing whatsoever to gain from allowing the government to add to its arsenal of repressive laws.

The rulers will use these new weapons primarily to step up their attack on the oppressed, while continuing to encourage right-wing forces and turning a blind eye to their violent crimes.

Even if the government occasionally enforces these laws against the right to keep up appearances, it will use them many times more against the left.

Anyway, a restriction on the right to protest will in no way interfere with the Nazis' real tactics—that is, committing terrorist attacks, fire bombings, and raids against the oppressed.

And the fascists will find plenty of ways to skirt laws and preserve their ability to meet and function—with the police and other government officials winking at these maneuvers.

In addition, the fight to mobilize a massive, powerful anti-Nazi movement is hindered by allowing these scum to demagogically portray themselves as a persecuted minority fighting for the right to free speech.

"Skokie dramatizes that our First Amendment rights have been denied," says Frank Collin.

Unfortunately, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is lending credence to this claim by providing legal representation to the likes of Collin.

While acknowledging that Collin is a "racist and a fascist, a bigoted totalitarian," David Hamlin, executive director of the Illinois ACLU, also asserts that Collin "has a good sense of the First Amendment" and "has secured a ringing victory for democracy."

This is an outrageous distortion.

The threat to democratic rights today comes from the government, big business, and the Nazis and other right-wing forces—not from opponents of the Nazis.

The democratic rights that exist in this country were won by the oppressed and exploited in struggle, relying on their own power. Today, those rights must be defended in that same way, not by relying on the capitalist government.

Although using different methods, the government, big business, and groups such as the Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, ROAR, STOP ERA, and Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" are all enemies of working people and our rights.

The ACLU claims to champion civil liberties. It should devote its energies and resources not to defending the Nazis but to the battle to defend democratic rights against the enemies of those rights.

Nothing that aids those enemies advances the defense of democratic liberties even a little bit.

By investing its time and money in providing legal assistance to Collin's Nazi



Anti-Nazi rally in Skokie, Illinois, home of 7,000 survivors of Hitler's death camps. Nazis plan to march here June 25.

thugs, the ACLU has actually crippled its ability to do things that it could be doing—and that desperately need to be done—to help defend civil liberties.

- Workers' right to strike and unionize is under attack.

- Women's right to abortion is threatened.

- Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans are still denied the right to equal education, housing, and employment.

- Cops are staging murderous attacks on communities of the oppressed national minorities.

- Undemocratic election laws make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for parties other than the Democrats and Republicans to get on the ballot and receive a fair hearing.

And the list goes on.

But while the ACLU still turns down some requests for aid in fights such as these—where democratic rights are actually in danger—it nonetheless finds the time and money to defend a group that is a deadly enemy of all human rights.

David Goldberger, the ACLU lawyer handling the Nazi case, admits in a recent

fund appeal that this stance has even lost it the support of many former ACLU supporters. The case "has gravely injured the ACLU financially," Goldberger says.

"What do we say to the woman who has been cut off from Medicaid payments for abortion?" asks Goldberger.

"Or to the parents and teachers in a high school that has just banned Kurt Vonnegut or Bernard Malamud from its shelves?"

"Right now we may have to say no," Goldberger acknowledges. "We can't help."

That's where the ACLU ends up by following its current policy.

David Duke, grand wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, chalks this up as a victory for groups such as the KKK and the Nazis.

In a fund-raising letter to Klan supporters, Duke notes the impact on the ACLU of its defense of Klansmen in the U.S. Marines who had staged violent attacks on Blacks at Camp Pendleton in California. "By our pressing of the suit for the White Klan servicemen at Camp Pendleton and elsewhere," Duke boasts, "we have caused the basically anti-White ACLU to lose

forty percent of their support.”

An effective strategy to defend democratic rights, then, depends on a clear understanding from the outset of where the threat comes from and who its victims are. Or, to put it another way, who are our enemies and who are our potential allies?

When the right of Black students in Boston to a desegregated education came under attack several years ago, opponents of the racist antibusing mobs mobilized two large counterdemonstrations in that city in less than six months.

When the coal miners' right to a decent contract came under attack by the government and the coal operators this year, other working people joined with students and working farmers to build solidarity rallies and send support caravans into the coalfields.

That's the kind of response that is needed today to the Nazis' provocation against Skokie's Jewish population.

Opponents of racism and anti-Semitism must educate and mobilize the broadest possible show of force in Skokie to intimidate and demoralize the Nazis—to show them in action that they are not welcome on the streets of Skokie or anywhere else.

In its statement on the Skokie march, the Chicago Socialist Workers Party wrote, “The working people of this city have a big stake in helping the residents of Skokie reply appropriately and definitively to this gang.

“We think that trade unions, civil rights organizations, churches, students, and civil liberties groups have a responsibility to make this action as large and successful as possible.”

One recent example that points toward some of the things that can be accomplished by that kind of unity-in-action was shown by the Labor-Community-Interfaith Council Against the Nazis in Detroit.

That group was initiated by United Auto Workers Local 600 to oppose Nazi activities in Detroit. The coalition involved other UAW locals; locals of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the United Steelworkers of America; Jewish War Veterans; Student Coalition Against Racism; Detroit Jewish Workshop; local religious leaders of all faiths; the NAACP; Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development; Socialist Workers Party; Communist Party; and area college and high school students.

After holding several demonstrations and rallies involving hundreds of people, the coalition forced the Nazis to abandon the storefront headquarters they had opened in Detroit as an organizing center for their violent racist activities.

A coalition on an even bigger scale is possible in the Chicago area, where the Skokie events have already received extensive nationwide publicity.

Black community groups there have good reason to get involved because of the role the Nazis have played in whipping up

anti-Black violence in Chicago's Marquette Park area.

And the example of the UAW in Detroit points to the crucial, leading role that Chicago-area unions can play in the anti-Nazi counterdemonstration.

As the Chicago SWP put it, “This is the way to let the Nazis know that the people don't want them and won't let them carry out their anti-Semitic and anti-Black violence—not in Skokie, not in Marquette Park, and not anywhere else.” □



Socialist Worker

## London—8,000 Protest Murder of Bengali Worker

In wake of a series of violent attacks by the virulently racist National Front, 8,000 Bengali workers from London's East End marched to Hyde Park May 14 to protest murder of Altab Ali, a young Bengali machinist who was stabbed to death May 4. The march, organized by the Action Committee Against Racist Attacks and the Anti Nazi League, was one of the biggest demonstrations in which Bengalis in Britain have ever taken part.



## The Debate Over 'Leninism' in Spanish CP

By Michel Rovere

The "Leninist" opposition to the Carrillo leadership of the Spanish CP has been a rallying ground for heterogeneous elements that are totally diverse in their origins and ambitions.

The debates over dropping the definition of the party as Leninist did not parallel the polemics the Soviet leadership have started up against Eurocommunism and the Spanish CP general secretary, Santiago Carrillo. In 1977, there were two high points in these attacks. The first was the publication in June of articles criticizing Carrillo's book *Eurocommunism and the State*. The second was the censorship of the speech the Spanish leader was to give in Moscow on the anniversary of the October Revolution [but was not allowed to deliver].

In the discussion prior to the Ninth Congress of the Spanish CP there were some incongruities at the local level (such as a group in Madrid voting for an amendment proposing that Spain join the Warsaw Pact). But that was as far as it went.

It should not be forgotten that in the Spanish CP the big faction fight with the unconditional supporters of Moscow took place almost ten years ago now, following the intervention in Czechoslovakia and the condemnation of it by the Spanish party leadership. This battle concluded with splits led by Enrique Lister and Eduardo García, whose small groups subsequently foundered.

The apparent renewal of these polemics in recent weeks (e.g., the Soviet CP message to the Ninth Congress and the articles that appeared in the Soviet press reaffirming the relevance of Leninism today) serves mainly to prepare the ground for any future moves Moscow may decide to make and to warn other CPs that might be tempted to take the same road as the Spanish.

The fight in defense of Leninism was not the work either of left "anti-Eurocommunist" currents close to revolutionary Marxism. To be sure, discussion articles appeared in the CP organ *Mundo Obrero* explaining that what was at stake in the question of Leninism was the dilemma of reform or revolution, the need for destroying the bourgeois state. But such criticisms played a very small role in the discussion.

The situation facing the Spanish CP now is quite different than that facing the French and Italian CPs at the end of the 1960s. In contrast to that time there already exist revolutionary organizations

rooted in the working class that are capable of offering a practical alternative to the Communist or Social Democratic leaderships, even if only in a limited way. And this is particularly true in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, we cannot expect to see the appearance in the Spanish CP of mass "left" currents close to revolutionary Marxism unless there is a change in the political and social situation (i.e., a revolutionary crisis), or a clear and undeniable failure of the Spanish CP's electoral strategy (which cannot be entirely excluded, as we will see later on).

In fact, the bulk, if not the virtual entirety, of the "Leninist" oppositionists at the Ninth Congress, reflected two points of view.

A small minority could be described as "left Eurocommunists." This tendency is said to be close to the magazine *Materiales*, edited by the Catalan theoreticians Manuel Sacristan and Antoni Domenech. It appears especially close to the positions of Fernando Claudín, a CP leader expelled in 1965.

The other point of view, by far the majority of the "Leninists," is less worried about the CP's strategic revisions than it is about the party's "loss of identity," when it has to face the electoral competition of a powerful Socialist Party that gets three times its vote.

### The "Left Eurocommunists"

It is tempting to draw a parallel between the current described as "left Eurocommunist" and the "Althusserian" current that appeared following the Twenty-Second Congress of the French CP [in February 1976].<sup>2</sup> This is true even though the "Eurocommunist" tendency in the Spanish CP has looked more to the debates in the

1. The Partido del Trabajo (Labor Party, a Maoist group), the Organización Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores (ORT—Revolutionary Workers Organization, a Maoist group), the Movimiento Comunista (Communist Movement, a centrist group), and the LCR (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, Revolutionary Communist League, Spanish section of the Fourth International) have more than 40,000 members and organized sympathizers.

2. This analogy refers to the debate over dropping the dictatorship of the proletariat from the party program at the Twenty-Second Congress, and cannot be extended to the criticisms raised by Louis Althusser in his articles in *Le Monde* following the electoral setback of the Union of the Left.

Italian left<sup>3</sup> than to the works of the French Communist philosopher.

The first similarity with the Althusserians is that the left Eurocommunist current is confined to the intellectuals and students. This remains true even though in Spain some party cadres have been attracted to this point of view. In many cases, these are persons in their thirties, who have been in the party for ten years and worked in the CP's clandestine apparatus since the end of the 1960s. (This phenomenon is particularly notable in Madrid and the Asturias.)

However, it became clear at the tumultuous congress of the PSUC,<sup>4</sup> where Carrillo's theses were finally voted down, that the Sacristan current or point of view [since there are not supposed to be tendencies in the Spanish CP] was unable to influence or draw in the working-class leaders of the Catalan party and Workers Commissions that were opposed to dropping the definition of the party as Leninist.

Nonetheless, Manuel Sacristan has gone further in his criticism of Eurocommunism than the Althusserians have in their polemics against dropping the dictatorship of the proletariat from the party program. In an article published in the December 1977 issue of *Materiales*, he pointed out plainly:

The Eurocommunist analysis does not fit into a revolutionary dialectic. Eurocommunism is not a strategy for advancing to socialism. As a strategy for moving toward socialism, it is simply an empty utopian notion that the ruling classes will be ready to abdicate their role voluntarily and that a rising class will be able to change the relationships of production, beginning with the relationships of ownership, without exercising any coercion.

Moreover, Sacristan pointed out explicitly that the position of the mass Western CPs directly parallels that of the "revisionists" in the German Social Democracy at the beginning of the century.

In general, the position of the CPs in the capitalist countries where they have some importance is similar to that of Bernstein. These parties limit or reduce their activity to promoting the movement of the working class around everyday issues, without ever raising the question of the final goal of the movement.

Sacristan also had the following to say about the bureaucratic degeneration of the CPs:

Bernstein's revisionism and the practice of the contemporary European CPs have certain features in common. . . . In particular there is the

3. For example, the Ingrao-Bobbio-Salvadori debates on "parliamentary democracy or grassroots democracy," or the debates on the question of class alliances.

4. Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (United Socialist Party of Catalonia, the Catalan branch of the Spanish CP, which is formally an independent party).—IP/I

domination of the party achieved by teams of petty-bourgeois intellectuals at the expense of the working-class forces in the political leaderships. This development is as clear in the Eurocommunist parties as it was in the Social Democracy at the turn of the century.

However, this current also suffers from a fundamental weakness that prevents it from making significant progress among the mass of critical activists. That is, it has difficulty in going from the ideological frame of reference to take up the problems of the day-to-day political practice and political strategy of the Spanish CP. This incapacity (is it only temporary?) of the current we will continue to call "left Eurocommunist" to bridge the gap between the maximum and minimum program is no coincidence. It is rooted in a fundamentally passive and pessimistic view of the historical situation and the revolutionary potential of the working class.

Manuel Sacristan writes:

It has to be admitted that the [Eurocommunist] analysis of society is rather skillful, and in particular the relationship of political and military forces, against the backdrop of the economic crisis, seems more favorable to the bourgeoisie resorting again to fascism than to the development of revolutionary possibilities.

Sacristan considers that "Eurocommunism is the final position the real Communist movement has arrived at in its retreat since the defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1917-20." (*Materiales*, December 1977.)

#### The Fear of a Loss of Identity

On the other hand, the majority of the "Leninists" in the Spanish CP reflect mainly the uneasiness aroused in the membership by the leap into the unknown and the loss of identity represented by an accelerated "Social Democratization" of the party.

It was no coincidence that the thesis most discussed in the pre-congress debates, besides Thesis Fifteen on Leninism, was the one that dealt with the balance sheet of the CP's activity since the formation of the Democratic Junta in 1975 through the death of Franco and up to the legalization of the party and the June 15, 1977, elections.<sup>5</sup>

For many CP members, this transition period was a political trauma. Since 1939, the CP had been the only force in Spain that maintained a continuous resistance to Francoism. It played a decisive role in the early 1960s in the rise of workers struggles and in building the new workers movement, especially the Workers Commissions. When Franco died on November 20, 1975, the CP with its 20,000 members was

5. The Carrillo leadership finally amended this thesis to make it less triumphalist. Notably, it put in a statement that Suárez's reformism had nothing to do with the "democratic break from the past" proposed by the Spanish CP.

the dominant force in the democratic opposition. It far outweighed the other elements—a few Christian Democratic and Carlist<sup>6</sup> personalities and a PSOE<sup>7</sup> led by Felipe González, which had barely emerged from its retreat into anti-Communism and exile.

Seventeen months later, the situation had completely changed. In the June 15, 1977, elections, the CP got 9 percent of the vote, only one-third that of the PSOE. And it only got one-sixth as many deputies.

In two years time, the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT—General Workers Union), the union federation close to the PSOE, gained a membership roughly equal to that of the Workers Commissions (about 2,000,000), and in the union elections got 22 percent of the delegates as against 35 percent for the Workers Commissions.

Now the PSOE has just unified with the PSP<sup>8</sup> and is the choice of 40 percent in the polls. At the same time, the polls show the CP stagnating at about 10 percent. So, the Communist Party fears that it will be pushed to the sidelines in the electoral arena. And it is raising a constant clamor against the dangers represented by an institutionalization of a two-party system between Premier Suárez's Democratic Center Union and the PSOE.

#### Carrillo's Gamble

In this precarious electoral situation for the CP, the fusion of the PSP<sup>8</sup> with the PSOE has left Carrillo's party in "splendid isolation" facing the two approaching elections—the municipal elections later this year and a new general election that will probably be called in 1979. A secret study by the CP has predicted that the party will not be able to win in more than six municipalities, all in the suburbs of Madrid and Barcelona.

The CP leadership has chosen the opposite course to the one adopted by the French CP in the recent period; it has decided to widen its opening to the right.

Santiago Carrillo explained:

Our party has gained freedom more than thirty years after the other West European CPs. This is what has led the party leadership to try

6. Supporters of a branch of the Spanish royal family associated with medieval traditionalism—a combination of personal rule by a strong monarch, theocracy, and local autonomy and particularism. In recent times, there have been attempts to give an anticapitalist and vaguely socialist interpretation to this tradition. Some Carlists have identified themselves as supporters of "self-management."—*IP/I*

7. Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party, the main Social Democratic formation).—*IP/I*

8. Partido Socialista Popular (People's Socialist Party, the formation led by Tierno Galván).—*IP/I*

to make up for lost time. What does this mean? It means simply that we cannot wait now for thirty years, as the other CPs did, to get a large enough vote to make us a decisive force in our country. We have to achieve this in a much shorter time, and in order to do that bold steps are necessary.

I think that we made progress in building our image. But we still haven't gone far enough. Getting rid of the term "Marxism-Leninism" is crucial to show that the policy that we have been following for twenty years was not a mere tactic or a mere maneuver.<sup>9</sup>

The CP has carried its modernization quite far. It voted to drop the definition of the party as Leninist. And in the wake of this, the congress rejected an amendment to the statutes specifying that the CP is governed by "democratic centralism." Now the only thing the statutes say is that the party is governed by "democratic rules."

In Eurocommunist modernization, the Spanish CP is still well out in front of the French or Italian CPs or even some of the theoreticians that have gone ahead to test the ground, such as the historian Jean Elleinstein. The Spanish CP is the only CP that has included in its political theses a proposal for overcoming the 1921 split between Social Democrats and Communists. This proposal even talks about the formation some day of a big labor party including Communists, Socialists, and the unions.<sup>10</sup>

This idea is not new; Carrillo developed it in 1975.<sup>11</sup> Since then, some advance-guard theoreticians devoted to "overcoming" the split have tried to build an ideological foundation for this. One example is Jordi Borgia, the leader of the so-called Social Democrat wing of the PSUC, who says that "Lenin and the Bolsheviks were Blanquists in spite of themselves."

In the Catalan magazine *Taula de Canvi*, on which both Socialists and Communists work, Borgia wrote that in the 1920s Austro-Marxists such as Max Adler and Otto Bauer opened up "much more productive avenues in analyzing the state" than Lenin.<sup>12</sup>

9. Interview published in the April 11 issue of *La Calle*.

10. "While maintaining its criticisms of Social Democracy, the Spanish CP hails the progress by some Socialist or Social Democratic parties, or sections of these parties, toward the positions of Marxism. The Spanish CP is engaged in a struggle to rebuild the unity of the world workers movement on Marxist foundations. In Spain, the CP is working to create what its 1975 manifesto-program called a New Political Formation, which would include the parties that call for socialism, the unions, and the cooperative movements."—*Thesis Fifteen*.

11. In *Demain l'Espagne*, published by Editions du Seuil.

12. In this reference to the left Austro-Marxists, Jordi Borgia is guilty of hypocrisy, forgetfulness, and falsification. The hypocrisy is referring to Otto Bauer and Max Adler in order not to cite the



While such reunions between Socialists and Communists are obviously not for the immediate future, many Communists fear that the CP cannot hold its own in trying to compete electorally with the PSOE on the latter's home ground, with a PSOE that the polls show is supported by 40 percent of the voters.

In the pre-congress discussion, an Asturian CP leader, Carlos Dago Martínez, wrote:

I think that eliminating the Leninist character is going to make us lose one of our most important marks of identity.

He continued:

If we fail to distinguish ourselves from the PSOE, the logic is that the voters will tend more to cast their ballots for it, since it has a better established image.<sup>13</sup>

This concern about not losing the party's identity was still more visible at the time of the crisis in the PSUC. In the Catalan conference prior to the all-Spain CP congress, a majority turned against Carrillo's theses on Leninism. And, in a spectacular development, the Workers Commissions leaders came out against the majority of the PSUC leadership.

One of the main complaints of this working-class sector against the "Social Democrat" wing that supported Carrillo was that it wanted to unite the Workers Commissions and the UGT "at any cost."

#### An Unprecedented Shakeup

Even though this trade-unionist section has remained somewhat on the sidelines in the discussions (except in Catalonia), the debate has penetrated into all the living organizations of the CP and provoked a shakeup that is unprecedented in the history of the Western Communist movement.

The "opposition" to dropping the definition of the party as Leninist won more than half the delegates at the regional

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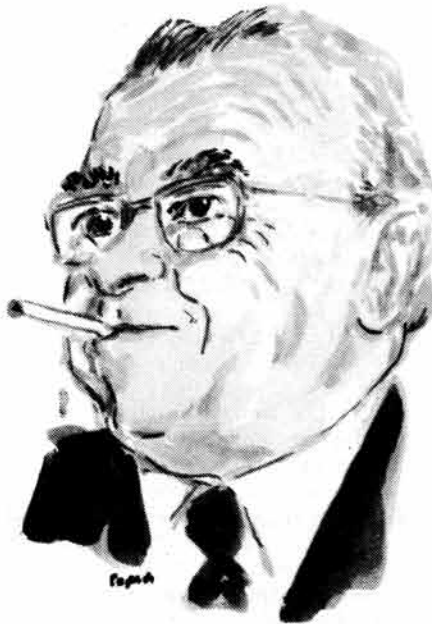
spiritual father of Eurocommunism Karl Kautsky and his "strategy of attrition." The falsification is his identification with the Austro-Marxist "left." On the question of workers councils, arming the workers, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the analysis of the revolutionary potential of the working class, or even the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, Jordi Borgia stands in fact in a direct line with Karl Renner, the leader of the most Social Democratic wing of the Austrian CP in the interwar period.

Borgia's forgetfulness is about the tragic end of the Austrian SP, which despite its 40 percent of the vote, its 150,000 armed militia fighters in the Schutzbund, and its unprecedented penetration of all the "ideological and repressive apparatuses" of the Austrian state, collapsed in a few days when it failed to defend itself against the provocations and encroachments of the bourgeoisie that preceded Dollfuss's coup in 1934.

13. Discussion article in the March 15, 1978 issue of *La Verdad*.

conference in Catalonia, 30 percent in Madrid and the Asturias, 20 percent in Alicante, and won significant percentages in Saragosa, Galicia, and Andalusia.

Although the bureaucratic cushioning



SPANISH CP CHIEF CARRILLO

mechanisms cut down the representation of this "opposition" to 19 percent at the congress, a dissident minority of such size is unprecedented in the history of any Western CP since Stalinization.

Such a confrontation in the debate was owing both to the "liberalization" accepted by the Carrillo leadership and to the CP's internal fragility.

Prior to the conference, Carrillo claimed that "the opposition comes essentially from sections of new members with some exceptions in Catalonia."<sup>14</sup> Although this was a somewhat peremptory assessment, it is true that the growth of the party in a year and a half from 20,000 to 200,000 members (according to the official figures) goes a long way in explaining the leadership's difficulties in getting through the substantial changes it has proposed.

The problems caused by the newness of most of the membership are compounded by a certain staleness of the "historic leadership," as Carrillo himself has recognized.<sup>15</sup> This was reflected by the criticisms made by many delegations at the congress of paternalism or of an excessive "personalization" in the political report given the first day by Carrillo.

The period of clandestinity created an unusual situation in the Spanish CP.

14. Interview in *La Calle* of April 11, 1978.

15. Interview in *La Calle*.

While the leaderships of the French and Italian CPs were largely renewed in the 1960s and at the time these parties first began to take their distance from Moscow,<sup>16</sup> the central leadership of the Spanish CP is the same that held the reins of the clandestine party in the 1950s. The entry into the Executive Committee of three "young" leaders of the Workers Commissions—Sartorius, Ariza, and Saborido—and of the lawyers Enrique Curiel and Jordi Sole Tura, has not substantially shifted the balance within the leadership.

#### Crisis of the System of Organization

This generation gap between the intermediary leaderships and the central nucleus has no doubt been widened by the drastic changes in the party's system of organization. At the August 1976 Central Committee plenum in Rome, the Spanish CP decided to give up the cell and sector structure in favor of a territorial system of "groups" (*agrupaciones*), as is traditional in Socialist parties.

This "organizational Social Democratization" led to sharp falloffs in the level of party activism. For example, of the 1,200 party cards given out by the *agrupación* at the University of Madrid in 1976, only 400 were renewed.

When the CP's industrial sector was dissolved, there was a "retreat into trade-union work" by activists in the Workers Commissions. At the same time, a lot of lawyers, doctors, and engineers settled back into inactivity.

In fact, the reorganization has promoted a fracturing among the groups involved in different areas of work. The regional conference in Barcelona followed by the one in Madrid revealed the development of distrust and actual tensions among the various fractions (in the trade unions, professions, neighborhood work, and so forth). This came out in particular in the election of the regional leaderships. In fact, "blacklists" were circulated in which some fractions opposed nominees associated with others.

The sharpness of this crisis is owing to the fact that the party got involved earlier than the French and Italian CPs in the whole range of movements (consider only the movement on urban problems). This work could be politically unified without difficulty under the dictatorship, when it was a matter only of struggling for "democratic rights."

However, now the evolution of the politi-

16. Of the seven members of the Secretariat of the Political Bureau of the French CP, two came onto the Political Bureau after 1970 (Colpin and Fitermann), three in 1964 (Piquet, Plissonnier, and Leroy), one in 1961 (Paul Laurent), and one in 1959 (Marchais). All of these, except for Plissonnier, joined the party after 1945.

cal situation itself, the differences in the rates of development of the various sectors, as well as the CP's reformist strategy and the logic of its program of going for "a little bit at a time" by pushing the special interests of each section of the "antimonopoly coalition," has tended to bring into the party itself the contradictions generated by the division of labor and the capitalist organization of society.

### Limited Integration in the State Apparatus

Finally, the internal instability of the Spanish CP is owing to its still limited integration into the apparatus of the bourgeois state. The Spanish CP may have gone further than the Italian CP in making compromises with bourgeois institutions, for example by accepting the monarchy. But of all the big Western CPs, it has the least organic ties to the apparatus of the bourgeois state. This can be seen readily if you compare the Spanish party with the French and Italian CPs in this respect.

The Italian CP has 40,000<sup>17</sup> elected officials. The French CP controls an immense network of municipal governments and general councils of départements that form the basis of the leadership's policy. Obviously, the Spanish CP has no such thing yet, and its electoral prospects are slight. So, in Spain, there is not the heavy dead weight represented by such a body of administrators, managers, and "city government workers" to tip the scales in favor of the leadership. Another factor is the weakness of the Spanish CP's central political apparatus, which has not grown as fast as the party.

If you add these factors together, you can understand the objective conditions that make the Spanish CP—quite apart from any intention on the part of the leadership to liberalize or its willingness to accept a loosening up—the least monolithic, or the most "sponge-like" of the European CPs.

### Regional Dispersion

Among such objective conditions should be included the centrifugal effect of the national and regional question in Spain. The congress decided finally not to take up the question of the relationship between the CP and the party organizations representing the various nationalities and regions in the Spanish state. The matter was deferred to a future congress.

This question, however, poses a new problem for Carrillo. Its acuteness comes from the power of the national movements and of the support for demands for re-

gional autonomy. Nowhere else in Europe, with the exception of Ireland, does the national question have such force. It has already provoked a crisis in the leadership of the Basque CP, which has split into two wings.

One wing, which is being called "nationalist," proposes taking a flexible line toward Basque nationalism, the radical nationalists, and the far left. The other wing, called the "Stalinist bunker," is given that name because it remains completely insensitive, or nearly so, to national demands.

In Catalonia, the "Leninists" were able to take advantage of the exasperation of the membership at the intervention of the party central leadership in the affairs of the PSUC (which in theory has been independent of the CP since its founding in 1936) to win a majority at the regional conference.

The advance toward autonomy in the various regions and nations within the Spanish state has accentuated this "national and regional dispersion" still more.

The Italian regional reform of 1972 had no repercussions for the CP's policy of the "historic compromise." This is because from the central government down through the regional authorities to the local governments, the Italian CP works with the same partner, the Christian Democrats. But the situation in Spain is quite different.

In the two main minority nationalities, the Basques and Catalans, Suárez's Democratic Center Union is not the dominant party of the local bourgeoisie. This role is played by indigenous formations. In the Basque country, it is the Basque Nationalist Party. In Catalonia, it is the Catalan Democratic Convergence party led by the banker Jordi Pujol.

However, today the main organs of "national concentration" through which the Spanish CP has been able to integrate itself into the bourgeois state are the executive bodies and councils that are supposed to represent the first stage in the development of autonomous governments in Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia. So it is understandable why each national or regional Communist organization wants to cultivate its own particular form of the "historic compromise" and why the demand is arising for tempering the CP's democratic centralism with a large dose of federalism, including in the composition of the central leadership bodies.<sup>18</sup>

### Strength of Workers Commissions

The only stable apparatus now in the hands of the CP leadership is that of the Workers Commissions, three leaders of which have now been taken onto the party executive. A playing up of the role of the

Workers Commissions, covered with glory by their victory over the UGT in the trade-union elections, was one of the main features of the congress. After all, isn't this the only electoral success the CP leadership can boast of in two years?

However, right up to the congress, the Workers Commissions leaders seemed to hang back from getting involved personally in the discussion. The main reason for this was to keep the debate from being reflected in the Workers Commissions themselves and causing a crisis, as has occurred in the cases of the Asturias and Catalonia at least.

This points up one of the most explosive contradictions in Eurocommunism in the long term. The Eurocommunist CPs have come around to recognizing the existence of internal differences, and the CP has legitimized a certain kind of open political debate. But the fact that these parties have accepted austerity and face a far left that is "nibbling away" at their positions in the trade-union movement has led them to restrict debate as much as they can in the labor movement, especially any public airing of differences by minorities.

In the preparations for the Ninth Congress and in the founding congress of the steelworkers union affiliated to the Workers Commissions, and in the discussion at the Ninth Congress itself, we could already see the existence of two points of view.

On the one hand, the Catalans, and no doubt also Sartorius—eager to maintain the strength of the Workers Commissions vis-à-vis the UGT—are willing to some extent to accept pluralism and stress the need for unity in action with the PSOE-dominated union federation.

On the other hand, Julian Ariza crudely declared on the public floor of the congress:

By voting for the Workers Commissions, the workers have shown their sympathy for the Communist Party, and we must take advantage of that to strengthen our party. Strengthening the Workers Commissions involves above all strengthening the CP.

### The Limits of the Liberalization

Referring to the freedom of tone and criticism that prevailed at the Ninth Congress, I have talked about a "liberalization" and not a real "democratization." This is because the preparation for this congress was carried out in such a bureaucratic paternalist way.

Since the right of tendencies is still denied in the Spanish CP, the leadership was able to use the capacity of the central political apparatus for initiative and coordination to shore up its position against an opposition scattered in the various regions.

For example, the leadership came up with a neat system of "synthesis" between the regional conferences and the congress.

17. See the last chapter of Anna Libera's book, *Les Fruits Amers du Compromis Historique* [The Bitter Fruits of the Historic Compromise], Paris: Editions La Brèche.

18. See Gil Guerreiro's discussion article in *La Verdad*, March 15, 1978.



In this way, Thesis One was deftly doctored up with a little self-criticism about the triumphalism and self-congratulation in the balance sheet initially submitted by the leadership, and this made it possible for it to be approved by an almost unanimous vote at the congress.

The system of election whereby delegates are chosen on the basis of their personal merits and not the political positions they espouse made it possible to cut down the numbers of the oppositionists through the nominating commissions.

While the Spanish CP leadership, unlike the French CP leadership, let minorities get into the congress, it has systematically eliminated them from the regional leaderships elected in the preparatory conferences. The crisis in the leadership of the PSUC, which was the only one in which there were "different points of view," no doubt did not fail to influence this tightening up, which was sharpest in the Central Committee elections. With a few exceptions, the new Central Committee is exactly the same as the old.

No doubt after the Ninth Congress only a small minority will continue to criticize the methods of the leadership. We will probably not see much of this except on the part of the "left Eurocommunists," some of whom are already denouncing the "Stalinism" of the Carrillo leadership's methods.

Today, almost the entire membership of the Spanish CP, including most of those who supported the majority positions, are still overawed by the liberalization of the discussion within the party.

#### The Taste for Democratic Debate

The polemic over Leninism has created some tensions. There were debates, at times sharp ones, at the regional conferences and at the congress, on feminism, nuclear power, the peasant question, and on the question of U.S. bases. But not one voice was raised to challenge the axis of the CP's strategy—its policy of "national reconciliation" and "democratic concentration" [i.e., union of all "democratic forces"], in short, its class collaboration with the Spanish bourgeoisie.

To the contrary, both the "Leninists" and those who favored dropping this term strove to outdo each other in their justification of the austerity policy laid down in the Moncloa Pact signed by the CP. There were only a few differences of nuance. Some might see this as a shell game and be tempted to belittle the importance of the Ninth Congress. But the essential thing was not the positions debated. It was that over a period of several months tens of thousands of Communists tasted what was forbidden fruit for a half-century of Stalinism—open debate and the right to express differences.

It has to be understood what promising

possibilities for the future are offered by this upheaval. In the coming period, the results of the austerity policy, a probable upsurge in workers struggles, and perhaps

the appearance of electoral blind alleys will bring the Spanish CP's class collaborationist policy under the spotlight of debate. □

## Two May Day Events in Israel

By Jan Vogt

HAIFA—This first May Day under the rule of the Likud was truly different from its predecessors. Simultaneous with the Likud's antilabor policy—raising prices and lowering workers' living standards—the Histadrut organized a demonstration of 6,000 persons in Tel Aviv.

The parade was officially designated "Israeli Labor's Salute to the State of Israel on Its Thirtieth Birthday." The main theme was the important role the Histadrut and the Peres-Rabin Labor Party had played in building the Zionist state. The organizers took care to keep the political temperature down by banning placards attacking Prime Minister Menahem Begin or Finance Minister Simha Ehrlich.

This was certainly not a militant demonstration in defense of workers' rights. The workers were not even present.

The character of the event was determined by the fact that the Histadrut, which claims to be a trade union, is in reality a gigantic capitalist concern and the largest exploiter of labor power in Israel. As such, it is an integral part of the capitalist "setup" in Israel.

As part of the overall Zionist bureaucracy, the leadership of the Histadrut also receives capital (both as grants and as loans) from the imperialist governments—more in fact than the private bourgeoisie receives. Its function is to be one of the effective arms of the colonial-settler state, furthering the economic and social uprooting of the Palestinians from their homeland.

The Likud faction in the Histadrut did not participate in the May Day parade, because it opposes this "Soviet festivity" on principle: "Our flag is the blue and white flag, and our day is Independence Day."

The Communist Party (Rakah) did participate. This was a continuation of its opportunistic policy—to try to be on good terms with the Zionists even though the Zionists spurn them, and to overlook the reactionary role of the Histadrut.

For Rakah, the important thing is to fight against the Likud, which it considers the "greatest evil"; and the fact that the Labor Party is in opposition makes it a good partner with whom it is necessary to

stand in order to fight the "greatest evil."

By participating in this celebration, Rakah in effect celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Zionist state. At the same time, they demanded immediate peace and emphasized that "what is good for the worker is good for Israel."

Rakah's opportunism caused a gathering having a quite different character to be held at the Arab village of Kabul in the Galilee. The meeting was organized by the "Sons of the Village," an independent movement and a symbol of the radicalization of the Palestinian population in Israel. (For example, it is not prepared to accept the imperialist plan for a Mideast settlement—namely the establishment of a Palestinian ministate and a coming to terms with Zionism.)

This gathering was called as a reaction to Rakah's intention to parade together with the Histadrut apparat.

It was also an expression of the potential for struggle independent of Rakah. The gathering had a unified character, since not only the "Sons of the Village" participated, but also Arab student committees from Haifa and Jerusalem and revolutionary anti-Zionist organizations.

The main slogans protested against the Judaization of the Galilee; called for the release of all political prisoners; and, above all, stressed the indivisible unity of the Palestinian Arab people, emphasizing the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization is its sole legitimate representative.

Lea Tsemel, a well-known lawyer who specializes in the defense of political prisoners, spoke in the name of the Revolutionary Communist League (Matzpen-Marxist). She pointed to the radicalization of the Palestinian population in Israel, and its mobilization in the first Arab general strike since the establishment of the Zionist state, which occurred on the Day of the Land, March 30, 1976.

Tsemel called for actions on June 5, the anniversary of the start of the June 1967 war, in protest against the new occupation of Arab land that resulted from that war. Such struggles, she said, could lay the basis for a broader fight against the entire Zionist occupation of Palestine. □

## Recent Working-Class Struggles in India

By Sharad Jhaveri

Working-class struggles in India around such economic demands as wage increases and dearness allowances are normally waged within the restrictive framework established by the bourgeois state.

Strikes are often prohibited. If the workers go on strike anyway, the bourgeois state arms itself with draconian measures and violently resolves such "illegal" strikes in favor of the bosses.

Another obstacle is the fact that all the major tendencies and political parties in the working-class movement have their central trade-union organisations. Even bourgeois parties have their own unions, all of which contributes to the continued fragmentation of the organised trade-union movement in India.

The majority of the cadres of the working-class parties derive their reason for existence and sustenance from operating the trade unions within the legal framework permitted by the bosses. These cadres by and large were never trained to act as a class struggle tendency in the trade-union movement. Even those who begin as militants tend to become totally absorbed in the mass of details and trivialities of routine functioning, leading them to neglect overall political perspectives.

In addition, almost all the left tendencies in the Indian working-class movement have a political perspective of subordinating the working class to one or the other wing, to one or the other political formation, of the bosses. Such a class-collaborationist political orientation inevitably cripples the independent, militant class initiatives of the trade-union cadres.

These are some of the historical reasons why in India, despite militant strike actions, the elementary trade-union consciousness of the working class has not grown into political or revolutionary class consciousness. To use Hegelian terminology, the working class, as a whole, has not advanced from being a class in itself to being a class for itself.

One immediate result is that despite their tremendous hold over a vast organised segment of the working class, these tendencies have not been able to draw working-class cadres into their parties. They have been unable to change the class composition of the leadership and the party. They remain predominantly petty bourgeois.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), for example, now the biggest such tendency, bemoans this failure to attract leading militants to the party.

With this as a background, let us review some recent strikes in India, as well as several instances of brutal repression of the workers movement, including outright massacres.

There was a big spurt in working-class strikes and struggles after the March 1977 general elections, when Indira Gandhi and her Emergency were overthrown.

These actions were mainly economic and defensive in character. Politically they were relatively harmless. Moreover they were sporadic.

The Janata regime initially took a benevolent, paternalistic attitude toward this upsurge, quite reasonably thinking that it served as a safety valve for the pent-up feelings of the workers after nineteen months of Emergency.

Before coming to power, the Janata Party, with a view to garnering working-class votes, adroitly played upon the anti-working-class measures of the Gandhi regime, such as the scrapping of bonus payments, and the freezing of dearness allowances. It tried to establish a populist image by pledging to restore bonuses as a deferred wage, to restore trade-union rights, to allow dearness allowance payments to rise, and so on.

But after assuming power, the Janata regime began to vacillate. Only the workers' increasing militancy forced the new government to carry out its promises, and then only in a partial way.

But even these concessions do not cover all industries. Railways, the major public-sector industry, is an example. Here the bourgeois state itself is the boss, and railway workers are still denied bonus payments.

The major working-class actions have centered around economic demands. These have included demands for parity in wages, as in the case of the fifty-four-day Maharashtra state employees strike, and for payment of back wages, as in the case of the Kanpur Swadeshi Mills workers. Some demands were also directed at undoing the Emergency regime, such as reinstatement of victimised workers and the restoration of trade-union rights.

The Maharashtra strike was the longest and most publicised such action during the March 1977 to March 1978 period. This strike, which was universally characterised as a "social upheaval," did not settle any of the issues around which it was so stubbornly waged. Neither party won. But it did not result in the defeat of the strikers either.

A noteworthy feature was the degree to which divisions amongst strikers on the basis of caste, religion, and sex were overcome. Also, women participated in a vanguard role.

The strike threw up a new, young leadership, but it also revealed the inadequacies of that leadership:

The leaders were not democratically elected by rank-and-file strikers. While reflecting the pressure and militancy of the ranks, it also withdrew the strike call unilaterally, behind the backs of the membership. It then hastily withdrew its withdrawal when it was confronted at a rally in Bombay by angry rank-and-file strikers.

The leadership's attempt to underplay the strike's political overtones and implications played into the hands of the state. The strike did not cut into the profits of the bosses. So they and their state ignored it. At that point it was necessary to extend it and politicise it.

Even though in this struggle, as in others, workers challenged their leadership, this is not yet widespread. Nor have workers formed factory committees as they did during the last phase of the Emergency. A left-wing class-struggle tendency has not emerged on a significant scale on an all-India level.

The attitude of the bosses and their state has begun to harden. Many bosses have adopted a "no negotiations" stand, declaring lockouts and attempting to break strikes through new recruitment. As a result, strike actions become prolonged, with no tangible gains in sight.

An analysis of strike statistics in the April 8 issue of *Economic and Political Weekly* confirms this strategy of "starving them out."

A total of 21.12 million man-days were lost in 1977 through strikes and lockouts. With the exception of 1976—a year of Emergency—the loss of man-days due to strikes alone was the lowest in 1977 for any year in this decade. The number of man-days lost on account of employer lockouts more than doubled from 5.20 million in 1976 to 10.67 million, in 1977, the highest figure for any year in this decade.

During the period April to December 1977, there were 323 lockouts in the private sector and nearly four times as many strikes, 1,298. And yet during this period, the number of man-days lost due to strikes in the private sector was 5.58 million, while that lost due to lockouts was no less than 8.87 million. In other words, the



average loss of man-days due to strikes in the private sector during this period was 4,299 per strike, while that due to lockouts was 27,461 per lockout.

This analyst comments that the overall industrial situation, marked by sluggish demand for the products of a large number of industries, is specially favorable to the use of long drawn-out lockouts by the bosses.

Another sign that the bosses are on the offensive is the Janata regime's appointment of a panel to draw up an incomes and wages policy. Major trade unions have boycotted it on the ground that its purpose is to freeze wages.

The proceedings at a conference on "industrial relations" held in New Delhi on February 13-14 are indicative of the thinking of the bosses on the question of a wage freeze. More than 300 industrialists and top executives from all over India met with Desai's labor minister.

A background paper presented at this conclave called for replacement of dearness allowances and bonuses by an "incentive payment scheme." To counter alleged pressure from the trade unions, the bosses are also demanding that every government and semigovernment employee be made to sign a declaration that he "voluntarily surrenders the right to strike."

In India, the right to strike is not recognised by the constitution. It has only been through mass struggles that the working class has won de facto recognition of its right to strike.

But it has always been the policy of the bourgeois state to cripple this right to the maximum extent possible. Even in normal times, there have been severe legal and administrative restrictions on strikes.

The Janata regime seems to be moving even further in this direction. The labor ministry's memorandum on the proposed comprehensive industrial relations law says: "While the law would recognise the right to strike and of lockout, the provision of effective machinery would make the exercise of such right redundant and unnecessary."

In reality, the aim is to ban strikes outright. In regard to hospitals and any other "essential service," either party, or the regime, will have the right to refer the dispute to arbitration for adjudication. "Any strike in such establishments," the regime's memorandum states, "will be treated as illegal since it jeopardises services that are essential to the community."

This will in effect be a far more sweeping ban on strikes than what the present law provides.

Further, the proposed legislation would require all strikes to be preceded by sixty days for negotiation, sixty days for conciliation, a strike ballot at which as many as 60 percent of the workers must support the strike proposal, and a strike notice of fourteen days. Except for the required fourteen-day notice, none of these provi-

sions are to be found in the present law. A more ominous provision would bar a leader from holding union office for up to two years if he is found to have incited an illegal strike.

Meanwhile, the bosses and their state have launched a murderous repression against working-class struggles. This is shown by the brutal massacre of textile workers of Kanpur's Swadeshi Cotton Mills on December 6. Hundreds of workers were shot by the police, reminding us of the tragedy perpetrated by British imperialism at Jallianwalla Bagh.\*

Till today the Janata regime has not appointed any judicial inquiry into the bloody affair.

At the government-owned BHEL factory in Hardwar in Uttar Pradesh, on March 23, a cop of the Central Industrial Security Force got enraged at a sweeper and along with other cops ran amok and started shooting assembled workers. This happened even though the management tried to dissuade them from shooting unarmed innocent workers.

This incident throws new light on the role of CISF cops as gendarmes of the

\*A massacre of unarmed civilians on April 13, 1919, carried out by troops under British command. For more details on the December 6 events, see article on p. 683.—IP/I

bourgeois state in government-run factories. In this incident, no question of workers demands was even involved. The sweeper concerned told the cop on being asked to show his entry pass that he had forgotten it at home and was prepared to go and bring it.

In another case, workers were protesting the sacking of 10,000 iron-ore miners at Kirandul on April 5. The brutality of the cops knew no limits; they roasted alive 500 hutment dwellers. When children attempted to escape, they were caught and thrown into the fire. Women were raped. Forty-one rounds were fired. Cops themselves say they saw twenty-six workers drop dead. Figures on the total number of casualties are not available.

In the Faridabad industrial complex, near New Delhi, the bosses hired convicted thugs from other states as a private security guard. These goons have picked out militant or potentially militant workers or trade unionists, isolated them, and killed them. This is how the work force at Faridabad complex is kept under control. While this goes on, official cops simply look the other way.

The trade-union movement and the left political parties in India need to devise ways and means to combat the violent offensive of the bosses.

April 25, 1978

## 'Tanod'—a Journal in Defense of Filipino Prisoners

"Since President Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines in 1972, over 60,000 persons have been arrested for political reasons. Brutal torture has been applied to these political prisoners systematically. Many have died in detention. Others have simply 'disappeared'—later to be found dead."

Exposing these repressive measures of the Marcos dictatorship is the stated objective of *Tanod*, the monthly publication of the National Resource Center on Political Prisoners in the Philippines, located in Oakland, California. In its first issue, dated April 1978, the organization states that "it has become crucial to widely publicize the patterns and victims of repression in the Philippines and to initiate campaigns aimed at preventing further human rights violations."

Among the several cases highlighted in this issue are those of Jessica Sales and Adora Faye de Vera.

In August 1977, Jessica Sales, an instructor at the University of the Philippines, "disappeared" along with six of her students. The following month, the body of one of the students was found buried in a common grave with three other bodies.

Nearby was a grave with yet three more bodies. None of them has been identified as Jessica Sales, and she is still considered missing.

The Sales case is not unusual. According to *Tanod*, "... since the declaration of martial law, an estimated 120 persons have disappeared or were killed while under military custody. Of this figure, 58 deaths and disappearances have occurred in 1977 alone, including the disappearance of some 40 persons in troubled Agusan del Sur."

The military tries to justify these killings by saying that the victims had been killed during armed encounters.

One of those who survived imprisonment and torture was Adora Faye de Vera, although two friends who were arrested with her have also "disappeared." In her testimony, Faye de Vera described in detail how she was beaten, burned with cigarettes, and sexually assaulted by her captors. Despite the dangers involved in revealing the truth about her treatment, she named fourteen persons who participated in her torture and that of her two companions. □

## Trudeau's Offensive Against Québec

By Christian Corbière

A major ruling-class campaign is under way, for "national unity" against Québec. Its objectives are simple: to harden English-Canadian public opinion against the Québécois and to counter the rise of nationalist influence in Québec itself.

The most consistent and visible aspect of this federalist offensive has been the Task Force on National Unity. But its most telling moments—the ones that reveal its direction most clearly—are initial discussions about the use of force against Québec.

Allan Blakeney, New Democratic Party premier of Saskatchewan, got the honor of being the first to express clearly the possibility of using force to keep Québec in Confederation. But it was Pierre Trudeau who, in his New Year's "sword" speech, explained most dramatically what the ruling class is considering: military occupation and imposition of the War Measures Act, "the kind of action we took in 1970."

But the debate on military intervention against the Québécois hasn't broken out in full force yet. The main function of such talk is to prepare English Canadians for this eventuality should it ever become necessary. In addition, such threats are designed to intimidate the Québécois masses.

At the same time as it intensifies profederalist propaganda, Ottawa is also applying other forms of pressure. Trudeau has strongly suggested he won't recognize the results of Québec's referendum. The possibility of organizing a referendum under federal auspices and threats that Ottawa will refuse to negotiate "sovereignty-association" have also been put forward. And of course, this year's federal elections will be posed by the ruling class as a pan-Canadian referendum on "national unity."

The entire ruling class has adopted a systematic policy of pressuring the Parti Québécois government of René Lévesque. The Sun Life insurance company's decision to move its head office from Montréal to Toronto because of Law 101\* is the most striking example of this strategy to date. The Québec Superior Court ruling invalidating key sections of Law 101 is another example of this pressure.

\*Legislation adopted by the Québec parliament (which has a PQ majority) making French the official language of Québec.



TRUDEAU: Military occupation not ruled out if other forms of pressure fail.

For the moment, there has been no real attempt to destabilize Québec economically or politically. But big business and the federal government are clearly laying the groundwork for such a policy. Moving out company headquarters serves as a warning that it would be very easy to pressure the fragile Québec economy. The number of private police, security agents, and company security services operating in Québec has grown.

Among the most sensational developments were rumors about a "Toronto plot." Several representatives of U.S. corporations are said to have met, with CIA participation, to discuss certain "working hypotheses" such as the assassination of Lévesque. The Québec government has confirmed that such a meeting took place, but has been unwilling to reveal the content of the discussions.

In Québec itself, agitation against Bill 101 by the anglophone, immigrant, and Native communities has served as a spearhead for the federalist offensive. Rallying these communities, particularly the privileged anglophones, to the federalist cause on a militant basis is an essential part of the strategy of pressuring the Québec government. And it helps prepare for fu-

ture attempts at economic and political destabilization.

These communities provide the federal government with a mass striking force inside Québec itself. They can also provide the pretext, in the eyes of the English-Canadian masses, for federal intervention in Québec. That is why federalist propaganda depicts these communities as "oppressed minorities."

### A Credible Alternative to the PQ

The federalist campaign has been dragging its feet in finding a credible governmental alternative to the Parti Québécois inside Québec. The Québec Liberal Party (PLQ) was hit very hard by its November 15, 1976, defeat, and hasn't yet totally recovered. Rebuilding it is the main task of the federalist forces inside Québec.

The Union Nationale cannot become an effective instrument of the federalist offensive—a real alternative to the PQ. It has not had a stable position on the national question, and it doesn't have leaders who could run Québec in such difficult circumstances. Most importantly, the Union Nationale does not have the links outside Québec that the PLQ does with the federal Liberals, nor does it have ties with the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie.

In Québec, the PQ still faces the hostility of the entire ruling class. Its attempts to establish a stable base among bourgeois forces in Québec have failed totally. The PQ's inability to solve the economic crisis and its language legislation account for the hostility of small- and middle-sized businesses toward it.

But more fundamentally, no sector of the bourgeoisie is prepared to accept the political and economic upheaval associated with the PQ's "sovereignty-association." The layers of the bourgeoisie the PQ has been orienting toward are terrified at the idea of any modification of Canada-Québec relations. No matter what concessions the Lévesque government may make to the reactionary demands of this sector, it will never gain their support as long as it maintains the "sovereignty-association" goal.

### Results of the Offensive

The federalist offensive for "national unity" has succeeded in strengthening the Trudeau government's political authority and electoral support. The reason is quite simple: The federal Liberal government appears to be the only force capable of maintaining "Canadian unity." Only the Liberals have both the necessary base in Québec itself and a coherent policy of opposition to the PQ on the national question. These factors have allowed the Trudeau government to survive the deterioration of the economy and several scandals.



Neither the Conservatives nor the NDP have been able to present themselves as a realistic alternative to the Liberals. The Tories lack both a base in Québec and a coherent set of policies differentiating them from Trudeau. As for the NDP, its line on the national question is the same as the Liberals' and it has even less support in Québec than the Conservatives.

The federal "national solidarity" offensive has rallied the whole ruling class, the Social-Democratic leadership of the NDP, and many important sectors of the trade-union bureaucracy including the central leaders of the Canadian Labor Congress.

But this offensive has not met with total success. Several unions have adopted resolutions supporting Québec's right to self-determination. The Steelworkers and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the two largest unions in Canada, came out very strongly in this direction. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labor also adopted such a resolution, explicitly rejecting an amendment expressing the hope that Canada remain united.

#### Factors Working Against the Offensive

There are three major factors working to undermine the federalist offensive against Québec. First, the deepening economic crisis tends to undermine propaganda about how "beautiful and strong" Canada is. Grandiloquent speeches about unity aren't quite so convincing from a government unable to do anything to stop the jobless rate from rising.

In addition, the "separation" of Québec is not yet posed as an immediate event. The federalist offensive has a number of stages through which it will have to pass. The aim of the federal elections will be to create a real counter-November 15. The Québec referendum, scheduled for early 1979, will also represent a new stage in the campaign of whipping up chauvinist anti-Québécois sentiments in English Canada.

The newest element undermining the federal government's offensive is revelations about illegal activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other police agencies. Federal government attempts to quash the parliamentary commission inquiry into these activities show how seriously the federalist forces take this question.

These revelations work to undermine the image of a democratic Canada. And the fact that a good part of these illegal activities occurred in Québec highlights the national oppression of the Québécois within Confederation. In this sense, these revelations help to undermine the federalist offensive in English Canada as well as strengthening nationalist sentiment in Québec.

Secondly, by placing the RCMP on the defensive, these revelations weaken the forces of federal oppression that are most

active on a day-to-day level in Québec.

Thirdly, the revelations indicate a profound malaise within the federal state apparatus. Even the opposition parties, after trying at first to turn the scandals to their advantage, pulled back when they saw they might be abusing a pillar of the Canadian state.

The RCMP revelations show the beginning of a very serious crisis of confidence in the federal state at a time when it confronts the worst economic situation

since the 1930s and the most serious political crisis since Confederation itself was established.

The offensive against Québec will continue to be the central political question in Canada. The English-Canadian workers movement has the responsibility of countering the government's propaganda and defending Québec against moves by big business and the federal government which undermine Québec's right to self-determination. □

## 'They Started Firing Indiscriminately'

### Report on Police Slaying of Indian Textile Workers

By Conrad Strauss

On December 6, 1977, an undetermined number of textile workers were killed by police during a labor dispute in Kanpur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The government admitted that eleven workers were killed, but strikers said that the real number was certainly higher.

The Janata Party regime of Prime Minister Morarji Desai refused to order a judicial inquiry into the massacre. In response, the Citizens' Committee for Enquiry into the Kanpur Massacre set up its own three-person investigative group, which was composed of Nikhil Chakravarty, editor of the New Delhi weekly *Mainstream* and a member of the Communist Party of India; Satish Saberwal, a professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University; and A.K. Roy, a member of Parliament.

The three investigators visited Kanpur in February and met with the district magistrate, other government officials, management personnel of the Swadeshi Cotton Mills, and many workers. The text of their report was published in the March 4 issue of the Bombay *Economic and Political Weekly*.

According to the investigators, the labor dispute at the Swadeshi Cotton Mills stemmed from the recurrent practice of the management of withholding wages from the workers. This led to a series of demonstrations, strikes, and gheraos, a form of labor action in India in which the workers surround employers and prevent them from leaving until the workers' demands are met.

On December 6, two management officials were gheraoed by the workers. Although police were not called on previous occasions, a large force turned up on December 6. The government claims that the police began to fire into the protesting workers after the two company officials

were killed. But the report reveals that the shooting began before, when the superintendent of police was struck by a flying object.

The report explained, "The firing, according to the police, went on for twenty to twenty-five minutes. All other evidences however indicate that the firing lasted for nearly two hours. The police force not only went on charging while shooting but they climbed on the roof of one of the buildings from where they started firing indiscriminately on the workers. Rifles and muskets were both used liberally in this operation."

Other workers, who did not participate in the gherao, were forced to run a gauntlet of armed police and many of them were injured.

"The Police," the report continued, "rounded up nearly a thousand workers, those they could lay their hands on. Some of these were forced to load the wounded and the dead on the police trucks. After that the police left out the aged and put as many as 231 workers under arrest and sent them to the police lockup in different police stations in the city where in some cases they were beaten up and sent to prison the next day."

By the time the report was written in late February, most of the arrested workers had been released on bail, but some were still in jail.

Contesting the regime's claim that only eleven workers were killed, the investigators cited reports by workers that many more bodies had been loaded onto trucks. They also named two workers, who they knew of, who were missing and presumed dead.

The investigators concluded their report by stating, "Public opinion all over the country must not permit the guilty to go scot free." □

## Mauritius—Political Shakeup on the Horizon

By Claude Gabriel

The December 1976 elections<sup>1</sup> saw the emergence of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM—Mauritian Militant Movement) as the main party in Mauritius, on the one hand, and the formation of a right-wing coalition between the Parti Travailleiste (PT—Labour Party) and the Parti Mauricien Social-Démocrate (PMSD—Mauritian Social Democratic Party), to hold onto a governmental majority, on the other.

Following the 1976 elections, the left opposition, represented by the MMM, held thirty-four seats. The right held a total of thirty-six seats, divided between the PT and the PMSD. Having barely escaped electoral defeat, the bourgeoisie set up a coalition government of the PT and PMSD, based on this narrow majority in the legislature. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, leader of the PT and waning star of the past independence struggle, continued as premier.<sup>2</sup>

In the postelection period, the balance of forces seemed sufficiently unstable for rumors to begin circulating inside the MMM and PT about the possibility of a new coalition between them. But the ranks of the MMM and part of its parliamentary bloc immediately objected to such a compromise. Since this threatened the unity of the MMM, those elements favoring a policy of this kind were forced to backpedal.

Now, a year and a half after the elections, political life in Mauritius is again going through a grave crisis. There is general agreement that the upcoming elections will give the MMM a large majority. The PT is being shaken by a major crisis. Ramgoolam has been shown to be a worn-out politician, incapable of governing.

The economic crisis has been exacerbated. The government, whose resources are quite meager in a country ruled by the "ideal of private enterprise," has just decided to raise taxes, particularly on gasoline, where the tax jumped from 70 percent to 100 percent. The minister of planning recently said: "In order for Mauritius to get out of its rut, people have to work hard. Production must increase. At the same time, the number of paid holidays must be drastically cut. We also need a wage

freeze."<sup>3</sup> These are the words of a bourgeois politician on an island in the Indian Ocean, who was well trained by his imperialist masters.

The sugar industry is still permanently threatened by the fluctuations of the world market. The Lomé accords between the Common Market countries and some countries of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific<sup>4</sup> do not rule out an even more discriminatory policy in the future with respect to European beet growers and countries that grow sugar cane.

The Free Industrial Zone has proved to be a giant hoax. Supported by tax loopholes and bargains on imports and energy supplies, the French, German, and Japanese capitalists have a field day. Then, after two years or so of relentless exploitation of the work force, they simply move on to better opportunities.

This situation is compounded by the breakdown of administration, the crisis in public transportation, and unemployment. According to government figures, the best estimate of the unemployment rate in the next period is 17%, which does not count 75% of the women who are "housewives."

Keeping up with the times, Mauritius has recently had its own Watergate. Someone named Hossen told *Le Militant*, newspaper of the MMM, that he was an agent of the Special Branch (the political police), and that the police had put him on the editorial staff of the newspaper *Le Cernéen*. These revelations show how the media have been infiltrated by informers and indicate the extent of police surveillance of Mauritian politics. This scandal was a frontal blow to a government that was already floundering.

### A Workers Majority

The Mauritian ruling class can be divided into two groups, which have a kind of gentlemen's agreement on a division of labor. One section of the bourgeoisie, in its majority Hindu, derives its wealth from administering the state apparatus and is organized according to family cliques. The other section consists of the white, Franco-Mauritian bourgeoisie that controls most

of the sugar industry, the shipping, and banking.

These two sectors do not always agree on everything. The Hindu bourgeoisie that looks to the PT has not relinquished hopes of broadening its social base through measures that favor the petty-bourgeois layers, such as a regressive tax structure and improvements in the commercial licensing system. Moreover, this sector is very much attached to the British political system and continually tries to follow London's lead.

The sugar-growing bourgeoisie supports the PMSD, led by the infamous Gaétan Duval, a corporation lawyer with close ties to French and South African interests and an advocate of a tough stance toward the workers movement.

At the other end of the scale, Mauritius has a surprisingly large working class. Nearly 60 percent of the population are workers, including a large share of proletarians in the strict sense of the word. What caused this situation?

Mauritius was first exploited by groups of Franco-Mauritians who relied on the forced labor of thousands of Indian and African slaves. As the system of exploitation developed further, these workers became proletarians.

The development of petty capitalism among the sugar growers, and the emergence of a well-to-do petty bourgeoisie took place through an inverse process: it was proletarians—mainly Hindus—who, through kickbacks, family connections, and maneuvers by the Hindu community were able to rise to a petty-bourgeois status. Moreover, the PT has a policy of aiding small capitalists. But the objective workings of the system, the hostility of the PMSD, and the constriction of the market, clearly limit such ambitions.<sup>5</sup>

The mass of workers fall into four categories:

1. *Agricultural laborers.* On the sugar plantations, these workers are almost exclusively Hindu. They work under the most abominable conditions. The fact that they are paid on a piecework basis, that they must work under the watchful eye of *sirdars*,<sup>6</sup> and that they always face the

1. See *Inprecor*, January 13, 1977.

2. As a result of one expulsion and one defection to the PT, the MMM's parliamentary bloc was reduced to thirty-two deputies.

3. *Le Mauricien*, April 4, 1978.

4. Forty-four countries were included in the Lomé accords.

5. The recent abolition of government fertilizer subsidies mainly cuts into the incomes of small and medium-sized owners, undermining the PT's efforts to build its social base among them.

6. A type of foreman.



threat of unemployment—these have all contributed to the search for individual solutions, which is exactly what the bosses want. These workers try to accumulate enough to get their own small herds of livestock or grow a few food crops.

They may be agricultural workers, but they are also the electoral base of the Hindu community and the PT.

2. *Skilled workers.* These are the “mill” (sugar factory) workers. There are twenty-one mills in the country that divide up the largest cane-growing areas. Laborers and skilled workers have the same bosses; they are two interdependent links in the sugar chain. But the skilled workers are mainly Creole, a factor that does not lend itself to unity in action between them and the Hindu laborers.

Sugar workers as a whole—both field laborers and skilled workers—are the real workhorses of the Mauritian economy. From 1890 to 1976, they have remained at the same number—60,000—although the area under cultivation and productivity have increased steadily. The bourgeoisie now plans to reduce the number of mills by four, thereby contributing to the concentration of capital. In 1976 the boss of the Médine mill laid off 1,200 workers at one stroke. The development of a measure of automation in the fields will lead to further unemployment, while making the piece-work payment system even more complicated and unfair.<sup>7</sup>

3. *Seaport and Dockworkers.* They have always been under the thumb of a boss class tied to the sugar interests—a boss class interested in reducing expenses as much as possible and keeping investments down to what is absolutely necessary to keep the port open. These dockworkers were in the vanguard of the big strikes of 1971.

4. *Workers of the Free Industrial Zone.* The overwhelming majority of these 22,000 workers are underpaid female workers, completely at the mercy of the foreign capitalists who have come to “make a rupee.”

To these four major categories of workers, other, smaller groups could be added, like tea plantation workers, whose fate is in the hands of South African buyers, and transportation workers.

Between these two hostile classes, Mauritian society has left a little room for the petty bourgeoisie. But the latter, more than any other class, is divided in accordance with racial communities and their objective social situation.

In agriculture, the backward development of capitalism has produced a class of

small individual landholders. They number around 30,000, but 70 percent of them are obliged to sell their labor power on a temporary basis or to find other means of subsistence. The PT, which has



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consistently favored this social stratum, has in some places taken on the character of a real kulak party. The shopkeepers consist mainly of Chinese, generally tied to the PMSD, and Muslims, generally tied to the PT. The two live in a state of bitter rivalry.

The huge size of the state apparatus, and an educational system largely based on private schools, have also led to the development of an urban petty bourgeoisie, made up of civil servants, members of the liberal professions, cops, schoolteachers, and so forth.

In this social context, class conflicts very quickly become open confrontations. But the proletarian masses have not yet gotten the upper hand because of their isolation on this Indian Ocean island, and because of the deep racial divisions that exist.

#### Divide and Rule

The colonial masters made good use of the fact that members of different racial groups live side by side. Today the ruling classes and imperialists continue to rule through what has come to be known as “communalism.” The various racial communities are cleverly manipulated by notables and bourgeois politicians. The reactionary press never misses a chance to highlight the “disparities”: Creole administrators versus Hindu administrators, Chinese shopkeepers versus Muslim shopkeepers, Hindu laborers versus Creole factory workers, and so forth—not to mention the community soccer teams.

Nevertheless, this divide-and-rule strat-

egy is slowly starting to lose its effectiveness. Many young people have given up speaking exclusively in their maternal tongue (Hindi, Chinese, etc.) and speak only in Creole, which is considered the “Mauritian language” and part of its cultural heritage.

The bourgeoisie is therefore strengthening its safety devices by multiplying the causes of division within the working class.

One of these is the check-off system, that is, the worker’s right to ask the employer to withhold trade-union dues automatically from his or her wages. This commonplace institution actually conceals a powerful weapon in the hands of the bosses. Labor laws generally dictate that only one trade union per plant can be recognized. A new trade union can be recognized only after a referendum among the workers in that plant, in which the new union gets a clear majority.

But in the meantime, the established trade union derives a huge advantage from the dues checkoff, which automatically guarantees it financial stability without having to give proof of much activity in the workplace. Thus, in a significant number of industries, legal trade unions have been able to withstand challenges from other, nonrecognized unions which in order to win recognition would have to fight an uphill battle, weakened by their lack of resources.

The Development Work Corporation organizes temporary public service jobs for some of the unemployed, who do odd jobs like maintenance and road repair. They are poorly paid, but the workers who benefit from this program are nevertheless resented, both by full-time waged workers and by the unemployed who are left to rot, since there is no unemployment compensation in Mauritius. Although they are exploited, the “unemployed” of the DWC paradoxically seem privileged to their comrades in the working class.

The Industrial Relations Act and the Public Order Act are vicious laws that in effect make it impossible to exercise the right to strike. In order to satisfy a demand, workers are required to go through a maze of consultations, judicial hearings, and other intricacies of the bourgeois state before they are allowed to strike. This in fact makes any work stoppage illegal. The prospect of a general strike can only be visualized as an immediate and prolonged test of strength with the government, because planning it “legally” would mean that the administrative clampdown “allowed” by the government would be applied to all negotiations, industry by industry, at the same time.

Women are an immense reserve army of labor who have begun to be integrated into the labor market owing to the development of the Free Industrial Zone. The majority of workers in the Free Industrial Zone are women who are repeatedly

7. The cutters have to cut 2.5 tons of cane a day. The machines now in use lose a lot of cane while loading it into the trucks. The laborers wind up being penalized for this; the loss is subtracted from their output when production is tallied up at the end of the day.

thrown onto the unemployment rolls by the foreign bosses. Mauritian women are also totally oppressed by the communal system and its ideology of the family. The caste system among the Hindus, arranged marriages, and constant pressure to marry within one's own community make them into domestic slaves.

Knowing that the working class learns through struggle, we are compelled to recognize that it will take a special effort to enable the different sectors of Mauritian society to put forward their demands in a united way and join together in common struggle. For this, it is not enough simply to put forward demands that affect all workers; in addition it is necessary to put forward a strategy of workers unity that can also bring in the trade-union organizations that are still controlled by those in power. A broad working-class front organized against the government and the employers will also have to fight for repeal of the constitution; abolition of the anti-worker Industrial Relations Act and Public Order Act; unemployment benefits and social security protection for all workers; and equality for women on the job and at home.

#### The Left at the Crossroads

By far the largest organization in the trade-union movement is the General Workers Federation, controlled by the MMM. This obviously gives the MMM itself characteristics of a workers party, in which the leadership and the parliamentary delegation are in part made up of rank-and-file workers. This explains why the bourgeoisie is very cautious in its dealings with the MMM.

In fact, Paul Béranger's party has a unique history. Born out of the Militant Student Movement in 1969, the MMM within a few years became the dominant organization within the workers movement by capturing a large part of the popular base of the PT.

But the MMM is a heterogeneous party where all sorts of political tendencies coexist. The leadership started out with anti-capitalist phraseology but has tended to slip into "anti-imperialist" rhetoric. The demand for nationalizing only four sugar factories out of the twenty-one that exist; the obscure discussions about "self-management," factory committees, and the "role of the private sector"; the concessions to communalism that some members have criticized; the desire to project the appearance of a governmental party—all of these now make the MMM a reformist party.

In Mauritius the port stays in operation only because of a tacit agreement between the General Workers Federation leadership and the bosses to honor—in the name of national interest—Mauritius's commitments concerning sugar shipments to the Common Market countries.

Béranger recently made the following statement to a journalist who asked him about the danger of confrontations: "I think I detect in your question your fear that instead of being resolved in the elections, the deterioration of the situation will lead to confrontations and social explosions. This is a serious concern, which every Mauritian who loves his country must share. This gives me an opportunity to expand upon an idea I have raised before.

"I said that we wished to see general elections, as scheduled, but that we weren't going to bring any pressure to bear for this. Some people have misinterpreted what I was trying to say. What I meant was that the MMM is not going to use job actions, strikes, or social tensions to force elections. We aren't going to force the government's hand. We are playing strictly according to the rules."<sup>8</sup> He could not have said it more clearly.

The MMM now controls three of the five municipal governments, including the capital. Its orderly administration makes the headlines only when spiteful politicians attack it in print. In fact, a section of the bourgeoisie can find nothing to complain about, especially since all the plans for "neighborhood committees" were left in the file drawer. And yet, is the MMM the kind of government party the bourgeoisie is prepared to call on?

The fact is that the MMM does not have a stable leadership. The minor bureaucrats and petty-bourgeois elements on the Central Committee and in the parliamentary delegation do not yet constitute an entrenched bureaucracy with control over the GWF and over the party. At the drop of a hat, the ranks protest, fume, and make threats. MMM leaders to the left of the general line refuse to make compromises with those they denounce as the right wing.

Béranger knows that going into the government would leave him little room for maneuver, and that the slightest mistake would mean the rapid loss of part of his social base. He knows, as does the bourgeoisie, that he would be incapable of preventing social explosions.

Having apparently given up the idea of a coalition with the PT, the MMM has finally proposed to the bourgeoisie an all-MMM government.<sup>9</sup> But the ruling class and imperialists, who have no objections to flirting with Béranger, will think twice

8. *Week-end*, April 2, 1978.

9. The MMM is going through a crisis. Béranger has not written an editorial for two months. The leadership is navigating without a compass. The organization appears to be drifting aimlessly, torn between its refusal of a test of strength and blind ambitions for administrative posts. Its newspaper is concentrating more and more on factual reporting without offering a critical analysis, demands, or a political perspective.

before taking the big step of putting the MMM in power.

Besides the MMM, a 1973 split under the leadership of Dev Virahswmy led to the formation of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien Socialiste Progressiste (MMMSP—Progressive Socialist Mauritian Militant Movement). In the beginning this little group experimented with different ideologies, but eventually found its political identity in Maoism. The MMMSP now shamelessly puts forward the most grotesque positions of the Chinese leadership. In the name of "the national liberation struggle" it is trying to build a Democratic Popular Front that would include bourgeois and petty-bourgeois grouplets like the Democratic Union of Mauritius (led by a former PMSD deputy), and the Independence Forward Bloc.

Convinced that the best way of getting recognized as "the party of the proletariat" is by having its own trade union, the MMMSP has organized a special federation of the trade unions under its influence, refusing to join the General Workers Federation. A strategy based on division and class collaboration has made the MMMSP a crisis-ridden sect. This of course does not prevent its "well-informed leadership" from periodically ranting against Trotskyism, which simply means against everyone who does not think that the "theory of three worlds" is going to provide the solution to Mauritius's problems.

Two years ago an independent Marxist review called *Lalit de Klas* (Class Struggle) began to be published. This publication has unquestionably contributed to an analysis of Mauritian society, and its editors have often been in the vanguard of militant struggles like the Women's Liberation Movement, the demonstrations against apartheid, and the campaign for the use of Creole. Some of these small organizations like the Women's Liberation Movement and the Dikasion Pu Travayer are beginning to attract people in the periphery of the MMM and the MMMSP.<sup>10</sup>

The discussions in the Mauritian left are taking on a new urgency because of the governmental crisis. What strategy should be followed, and what is the alternative to the MMM?

A recent struggle showed what this discussion can mean in real life. When the owners of the transport companies threatened to raise fares by 100 percent, people mobilized in protest. Workers from the GWF, the MMM, the MMMSP, and from the women's liberation and Creole movements, came together to form the *Fro*

10. The MMM's daily *Le Militant* has a circulation of 5,000. The MMMSP's daily *Soley Ruz* sells 1,000 copies. *Lalit de Klas* comes out every two months and 500 copies of each issue are sold. *Le Mauricien*, the newspaper of the "enlightened" liberal bourgeoisie, has a circulation of 24,000.



*Kome Transpor* (Transportation Common Front). This organization built a mass protest around radical demands. The central slogans of the campaign were nationalization, civil disobedience to combat fare increases, and solidarity between transport workers and passengers.

The campaign was a big success, in spite of a rather shady maneuver by the MMMSP, which tried to put its Democratic Front forward as the central organization. Now discussions are beginning about organizing a similar campaign to deal with the problem of housing.

### The Elections

Building an alternative to the MMM is not an easy task in a country where even the most conscious workers have not had much experience with its reformist line.

The development of campaigns around winning important common demands will undoubtedly show in practice what different sides have to offer. Within the MMM and the MMMSP there are certainly good activists who lack any real organizational alternative.

In a country like Mauritius, imperialist domination, the complexity of relations between classes and communities, and the contrast between strong class consciousness and the absence of any tradition of struggle mean that there is no way of getting around the need for the greatest programmatic clarity. It is necessary to create a vanguard organization of a different stripe than the MMM, which is a hodgepodge.

The best way for revolutionists to raise their ideas and win over a large number of workers is by working within the GWF while at the same time orienting to the MMM and MMMSP.

By struggling against divide-and-rule tactics and for a united-front strategy, trade-union unity, demanding the return of the island of Diego Garcia to Mauritius, helping to build the women's movement, and insisting on the total independence of the working class and its allies from the bourgeois parties, revolutionists will be working to permanently change the balance of social forces. They will also be taking the first step in the construction of a genuine revolutionary workers party.

Rather than going ahead with the scheduled elections, the bourgeoisie may again opt for a show of force. In either case, the MMM will be put to a severe test and will openly expose its inadequacies.

The governmental crisis has taken a new turn with the development of an opposition tendency called the Boodhoo group within the PT, reducing Ramgoolam's chances of retiring gracefully from politics.

The PMSD is using the weapon of confusion. Its leader, Duval, is spreading false reports and criticisms of the government. The PMSD ministers are gradually taking

their distance from the premier.

After the electoral defeat of 1976, the workers recovered and again put forward their demands. Under present conditions, Mauritius might well explode. This would provide an opportunity to challenge imperialist power in the southern Indian Ocean—where Madagascar has turned to traditional military reformism, while

Réunion is more than ever under the heel of French colonialism. This is why the Mauritian vanguard must seek links with other revolutionists in the region in order to be able to struggle together against imperialism. It is also why the international workers movement should follow closely what happens in this area between Sri Lanka and South Africa. □

## More Involved Than Reaction to Moro Killing

# Disaster at the Polls for Italian CP

By Anna Libera

[The following article appeared in the May 17 issue of *Rouge*, the Trotskyist daily published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

ROME—A decline in the CP vote was expected, but the results were a disaster. You have to go back thirty years, to 1948, to see the Christian Democrat vote go over 40%. Likewise, you have to go back to 1956, a terrible year for the Communist parties, to see such a drop in the CP vote in any one election.

After the events of recent weeks [the kidnapping and murder of Moro], it was assumed that the Christian Democrats would gain. But it would be wrong to see this advance simply as the result of an emotional reaction.

In these scattered local elections, the Christian Democrats consolidated their position more than ever before as the party of social conservatism in the country. This is indicated by the sharp drop in the vote of the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI—Italian Social Movement, the neofascists) and the very poor showing of the Liberal Party, the furthest right of the constitutionalist parties.

However, the main development and the one that requires explaining is the drop in the vote of the workers parties, in particular that of the CP, which was the most marked. Obviously we should not give an excessive importance to the results of elections held only in some local areas. But we have to try to understand the tendencies whose existence they confirm and those whose emergence they indicate. This is all the more important since the campaigns were dominated by national issues and all the parties considered the elections to be politically significant.

The CP vote showed a nationwide downward trend, that went from a decline of about 5% in the working-class municipalities in the north to virtual collapse—a

drop of between 10% and 20%—in the south. Here are some examples by way of illustration.

In Campania, the compartimento in which Naples is located, the CP got 24% of the vote as opposed to 42% in the 1976 legislative elections. In Appulia, the CP got 17.5% as against 26.1% in June 1976. In Sicily, the CP average was 15.01% as against 32.4% in the legislative elections. In the north, in Pavia, the CP vote went from 41.1% in 1976 to 36.9%, and in Novara from 35.6% (1976) to 30.6% in May 1978.

There was no exception to this trend, which reflects the loss of the support of petty-bourgeois layers that backed the CP in the June 1975 regional elections and voted for it in still larger numbers in the June 1976 legislative elections. But for the first time we can also see the CP losing votes in the working-class cities.

Another element that should be noted is the redistribution of the working-class vote within the left. The Socialist Party was the main loser in the 1976 elections, getting only 9% of the vote. This time it recovered its former share of the vote, 13.5%. Moreover, everywhere that it ran candidates the far left got much better results than in June 1976, despite the fact that this time there were two separate slates.

In the municipalities where the DP [Democrazia Proletaria—Proletarian Democracy] and the PdUP [Partito d'Unità Proletaria—Party of Proletarian Unity] were on the ballot, they got an average of 3%. In Novara, the PdUP got 2.3% and the DP 1.7%. In Viterbo, the PdUP got 1.6% and the DP the same percentage. In Ro-

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vereto, a working-class center, the DP slate got 5%, and in Cinisi, a Sicilian area where the DP candidate was murdered last Tuesday, this formation got 5% of the votes.

A look at such results should lead the CP leadership to draw a few balance sheets. But this is not what appears in the first comments coming from CP national headquarters on the Via delle Botteghe Oscure.

According to the Communist Party, the Christian Democrats clearly gained from a wave of solidarity inspired by the martyrdom of its chairman. The CP had taken this for granted and considered it positive:

For a section of the voters, casting their ballot for the Christian Democrats was a way of showing their profound aversion for terrorism and their human solidarity with Aldo Moro. What is more, it is clear that such a vote constituted approval of the firm attitude of the Christian Democrat leadership and thus an encouragement to them to continue on the road of democratic solidarity.

The Christian Democrats also gained as a result of an exceptional situation of solidarity among the democratic forces. This was completely correct from the standpoint of the higher interests of the republic, which could not and should not be affected by electoral considerations. . . .

Naturally, it may legitimately be asked if this vote did not also reflect something less connected with the events of recent weeks and more negative in character—that is, a certain advance for the moderates.

The CP answered the question it raised in the negative. It claimed that the strengthening of the Christian Democrats at the expense of the MSI and the Liberal Party represented a reinforcement of democracy and of confidence in its institutions.

But it is doubtful that the CP members and activists will be satisfied with such an explanation or be happy about suffering such a defeat, even for the sake of “the higher interests of the republic.”

The reasons for the CP setback must be sought elsewhere. By singing the praises of “order,” it consolidated the conservative aspirations of the middle layers, which in part identify the present situation in Italy with the advance of the CP. These strata are turning back toward the Christian Democrats, who seem to them to be better guarantors of order. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that the CP’s entry into political leadership of the country has not been marked by any perceptible change for the better, especially in the economic situation and in fact the changes seem to be for the worse.

Parallel to this, the CP’s campaign on behalf of “order” and its commitment to the goal of giving a new boost to profits and to the capitalist economy has caused it to lose the most radicalized sections of the workers, who have turned toward the far left and also, to some extent, toward the SP. □

workers. These attacks are intended to test the ground for an onslaught against the workers if they fight back against the wage freeze and growing unemployment, against the youth who are fighting for a future and steady employment, against the women demanding the right of abortion, and against all those who do not want to pay the price of austerity in order to get capitalist profits going up again.

It is quite clear today what are the most urgent tasks of the proletariat. The only way to give an effective political answer to the lunatic line of terrorism is to demonstrate the power of the workers movement. Those who falsely claim to act on behalf of the workers and their struggles cannot be defeated unless we advance the demands of the exploited and oppressed, unless we take the side of the hundreds of thousands of youth driven to desperation by the lack of perspectives, unless we defend all those who have been forced to accept the humiliation and extortion of substandard jobs, unless we advance the rights of women.

A key phase in this political struggle today is preparing for the upcoming new-contract negotiations. There must be full and free discussion on goals and on a program. The objectives set must correspond to the demands and needs of millions of working people and unemployed.

Such methods and such actions are the essential weapons by which the working masses can defeat the terrorists’ schemes and prevent them from gaining a following or extending their influence.

The working people must not allow the “destabilization” campaign of the Red Brigades to be used by the original and the real “destabilizers,” the bourgeoisie, which was responsible for the 1922 fascist takeover in Italy, the 1973 coup in Chile, the massacre in the Piazza Fontana, and the whole strategy of tension that has been applied in recent years.

Any general strike or whatever other strikes are necessary at this stage must serve the interests of the workers movement and its allies. They must not have a demobilizing effect, but must reinforce the capacity of the workers movement for independent and united action.

At a time when a violent attack has been unleashed against democratic rights, there is a still stronger need for unity on the part of the workers and their political and trade-union organizations.

*Against “National Unity,” unity of all working people and their parties and organizations!*

*Against the class-collaborationist line, a line of class independence to fight the policy of the Christian Democratic government!*

*Fight for a CP-SP government based on mass mobilization to meet the needs of the workers, the exploited, and the oppressed!*

*Down with terrorism! Unity of the workers, the exploited, and the oppressed!*

## GCR Statement on the Killing of Aldo Moro

[The following statement was issued on May 9, the day on which the body of Aldo Moro was found, by the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups, Italian section of the Fourth International). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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The Red Brigades have concluded the Moro kidnapping affair in accordance with the same methods and principles they followed when they began it with the massacre on the Via Fani. Such methods and principles are totally contrary to the practices and conceptions of the workers movement.

This murder has nothing to do with the objectives of the workers, the exploited layers of the population, or those sections of society condemned to a precarious existence. To the contrary, it creates more favorable conditions for a new bourgeois offensive against the workers and poor masses.

The outlines of the bourgeois operation are already clear. They emerged during the almost two months that the Christian Democratic Party chairman was held pris-

oner. What is intended is to reinforce the atmosphere of “national unity at any cost.” This is to prepare the way for restoring bourgeois “order” based on the compliance of the reformist leaderships of the Communist and Socialist parties and the unions.

They want to put a martyr’s halo around the Christian Democracy, when this party has been and continues to be the main organizer of attacks on the working class in this country, a party buttressed by crooks and grafters. They want to launch an attack on the rights of the trade unions. This may be done in the form of imposing limitations on the right to strike, or through a witch-hunt in the unions against so-called fellow travelers of the terrorists. They want to cut back democratic rights, by openly trying to move toward what would amount to a full-scale *berufsverbot* in Italy (that is, the elimination from public employment of anyone with opposition views).

Today the far left is coming under attack, and this is already being extended to trade-union activists, even though those involved have resolutely condemned the private war waged by the Red Brigades and pointed out its harmful results for the