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Pedro Martinelli/Veja

Police in armored personnel carriers patrol Lima headquarters of CGTP, Peru's major union federation, during May 22-23 general strike. The strike, which shut down most of Peru, has been described as "the most sweeping work stoppage the country has experienced in almost half a century." See page 693 for detailed report on strike and aftermath.

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# Ten Years After May 1968

## Say 'No' to U.S. Threats Against Cuba!

By Ernest Harsch

On May 30, President Carter took the occasion of the NATO conference in Washington to escalate even further the White House's campaign of threats and intimidation against Cuba and against the Cuban involvement in Africa.

Seeking to blunt domestic opposition to the White House's own participation in the imperialist aggression in Zaïre, Carter tried to cover the intervention by charging that "the activities of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Africa are preventing individual nations from determining their own course." He then added ominously that NATO "cannot be indifferent to these events—because of what they mean for Africa and because of their effect on the long-term interest of the alliance itself."

Emerging from a secret NATO session the same day, Carter declared that among the NATO officials "the general feeling is that the Cubans have exceeded any bounds of propriety in having massive placement of troops in Africa. . . ."

This new attack came just five days after Carter declared that the Angolan government bore a "heavy responsibility" for the uprising in Zaïre's Shaba province, and that "it's a burden and responsibility shared by Cuba."

It also followed a May 28 anti-Cuban barrage by Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, in which he declared in a televised interview that the antigovernment actions by rebel forces in Shaba "could not have taken place without the invading parties having been armed and trained by the Cubans and indeed perhaps also by East German."

Like Carter, Brzezinski coupled his charges with an open threat, stating that an "international response" was necessary to counter the Soviet and Cuban presence in Africa.

Picking up on the "red menace" campaign initiated by the White House, Robert C. Byrd, the Senate majority leader and an influential member of the Democratic Party, said May 30 that the Carter administration should consider strong measures, such as diplomatic and economic pressure, to oppose the Cuban and Soviet involvement in Africa. Indicating that implicit military threats might also be used, he called on Carter to immediately proceed with the construction and deployment of neutron missiles, unless Moscow offered some concession in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

In the course of their attacks against

Havana, the American imperialists have simply brushed aside the Cuban government's repeated denials. Both Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez have categorically rejected Carter's charges.

On May 20, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied to the charges by Zaïrian President Mobutu Sese Seko that Cubans were involved in the Shaba unrest:

Mr. Mobutu's regime made similar charges about a year ago when it unilaterally decided to suspend relations between Zaïre and Cuba. Then, as is the case now, there was absolutely no truth to the charges. Then, as now, the charges by Mr. Mobutu, one of the most reactionary, pro-imperialist, bloodthirsty and corrupt rulers in Africa, were destined to serve the interests of the former colonial powers and were an attempt to help the Zaïrian regime overcome the serious internal problems for which it alone is responsible.

As the Government of Cuba made clear on the previous occasion and as was confirmed by all the reports on the developments in Shaba then, Cuba reiterates that our country has no links with forces fighting in Shaba against the Mobutu regime. The Government of Cuba emphatically reiterates that there are no relations of military cooperation between Cuba and those forces nor have there ever been, that Cuba has not supplied them with military equipment nor has it trained them, nor has it in any way participated in their operations; and that there are no Cuban fighters or specialists in Zaïre.

By making these completely false and baseless charges, Mr. Mobutu is trying to confuse public opinion and divert attention from Zaïre's serious internal problems.

He is also doing this to try to justify the ongoing shameless intervention by NATO powers into the completely internal affairs of Zaïre, and it constitutes, therefore, a threat to all African peoples interested in the complete elimination of colonialism, neocolonialism and racism on that continent and in the preservation and strengthening of their national independence.

The Government of Cuba categorically rejects the Zaïrian regime's false, irresponsible accusations. On this occasion, as was the case last year, the facts will show everyone how much credit can be given Mr. Mobutu's assertions.

Rodríguez repeated these denials May 30 in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly. He termed the White House charges "absolutely false" and said that they were based on "impudently repeated lies."

He also pointed to the real aggressors in Africa. He charged Washington and its imperialist allies with abetting the "South African racists" and with thereby bearing responsibility for the South African inva-

sion of Angola in early May, in which the racist forces massacred more than 600 Namibian refugees. He referred to the French and Belgian aggression in Zaïre, which was carried out with American logistical support, as "no less an ominous sign."

Even some American officials have cast doubt on the White House's charges about the Cuban involvement in Zaïre. On May 24, a senior State Department official told reporters that he was unaware of any recent training of the Shaba rebels by Cubans.

White House Press Secretary Jody Powell repeated Carter's claims May 31, but lamely added that the CIA reports on which the claims were said to be based could not be publicly released.

*New York Times* correspondent Terence Smith reported, "Earlier in the day, another Administration source cast doubt on the evidence, which he said amounted to little more than a report from a single agent attached to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, a pro-western rebel group fighting" against the Cuban-backed Angolan regime.

John M. Goshko reported in the May 27 *Washington Post* that some State Department officials viewed the White House's insistent claims about a Cuban role in Zaïre in the context of Carter's efforts to gain a freer hand for American intervention in Africa. According to Goshko, "Some reportedly have said privately they believe Carter made his public charges as part of a White House campaign to win a loosening of congressional restraints on actions the executive branch can take to counter Soviet and Cuban influence in Africa."

Besides employing the "red peril" theme as a justification for stepped-up American aggression in Africa and for an escalation of the arms race, Carter genuinely fears the Cuban presence in Africa. It was Cuban troops who turned back the U.S.-supported South African invasion of Angola during the civil war there in 1975-76. Havana has provided assistance to national liberation struggles elsewhere as well. The White House is particularly concerned about possible Cuban involvement in southern Africa, where the racist white minority regimes are being challenged by Black freedom struggles and where imperialist stakes are high.

This is no idle fear on the part of the imperialists. While Rodríguez denied any Cuban involvement in Zaïre, he reaffirmed that Havana "reserves the right to help its friends" among the Zimbabwean liberation forces.

Nor are the threats against Cuba empty gestures. Washington seriously considered a military assault directly against Cuba during the Angolan civil war. Carter has been pressing to send military aid to the guerrilla forces in Angola opposed to both

the Angolan regime and the presence of Cuban troops there.

The charges by Carter, Brzezinski, Vance, and other government officials are designed to whip up an anti-Cuban hysteria in the United States to facilitate new moves against the Cuban revolution and Cuba's anti-imperialist commitment in Africa.

Only indications of the readiness of the American people to move quickly into action against such threatened attacks can stay Carter's hand. □

## French Foreign Legion Fighting in Chad

Emboldened by their recent aggression in Zaïre, the French imperialists have conducted a bloodbath in the central African country of Chad.

On June 2, military sources in Paris announced that hundreds of French Foreign Legionnaires and marines, along with Chadian government units, had decimated an antigovernment guerrilla force of between 800 and 1,000 troops. Throughout the battle, which was said to have lasted several days and to have ended on June 2, French jaguar jet fighters repeatedly bombed and strafed the rebels.

When the French government sent more than 1,000 reinforcements into Chad in late April, it maintained that their major purpose was to "protect" French nationals. But like the recent "humanitarian rescue mission" in Zaïre, that claim has now proven to be simply a pretext designed to justify continued French military aggression in Africa.

The intervention in Chad is directed at propping up the dictatorship of Gen. Félix Malloum, who has been challenged by large antigovernment demonstrations in the south and by stepped-up guerrilla actions in the northern and central parts of the country carried out by the Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad (Frolinat—Chad National Liberation Front).

Despite opposition within France, Paris has sent troops into Chad before and maintained a military garrison there until 1975. This was the first time that the French government has admitted that its forces had engaged in combat since the garrison was withdrawn.

According to some sources in Paris, the assault against the guerrillas was aimed at weakening Frolinat's position just before a conference scheduled to open June 6 in Libya to discuss a cease-fire. But according to Salah Tala, a Frolinat representative, that conference now "will not take place." He added that Frolinat was continuing its opposition to the "French and puppet forces" and would not participate in negotiations "as long as there are French mercenaries on Chadian soil." □

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# Carter Escalates 'Operation Zaïre'

By Ernest Harsch

In yet another step in Carter's expanding intervention in Africa, eleven U.S. air force transport planes and about a hundred American military personnel began to airlift 1,500 Moroccan troops into Zaïre June 4. A State Department representative declared the day before that the airlift "is directed at the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Zaïre and the security of Shaba, upon which the economic viability of Zaïre and the livelihood of its people depend."

In other words, the purpose of this proimperialist force is to prop up the corrupt dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko and safeguard Western economic interests in the country from continuing unrest.

This new aggression comes just two weeks after some 650 French Foreign Legionnaires and 1,700 Belgian paratroopers—with American logistical support—stormed into the rebel-held town of Kolwezi in Zaïre's Shaba province, killing hundreds of Africans. Both the Belgian and French governments have announced that they would withdraw the bulk of their troops from Zaïre, to be replaced by an African force.

Besides the 1,500 Moroccan troops (the same number that were airlifted by French planes into Shaba last year during a similar uprising against the Mobutu regime), troops from other African countries are also to be included in the new force.

Citing "knowledgeable officials" in Paris, correspondent Flora Lewis reported in the June 2 *New York Times* that the pro-American regime in Saudi Arabia was prepared to contribute American arms to the African expeditionary force for Shaba. The Iranian regime was also reported to be a possible source. Such transfers of American arms would require Carter's approval.

The establishment of an African "peacekeeping" force was originally proposed by Paris and Brussels, under the assumption that it would be accompanied by West European "advisers" and directly backed by American or European logistical support. The idea was then echoed by Gabon President Omar Bongo at a conference of former French and Belgian colonies, but met with little apparent support. Finally, King Hassan II of Morocco announced in an interview in the May 28 *Washington Post* that he would be ready to send combat troops to Zaïre "to restore order" on the understanding that a few other African countries would contribute at least a token number of troops.

The insistence of the imperialist powers

on maintaining a long-term force of surrogate troops in Zaïre flows from their deep concern over the continuing unrest in the country and the prospects for a truly massive upheaval against the Mobutu regime, one that could usher in a period of widespread struggles like those of the early 1960s, when Zaïre was known as the Congo.

Although the country is rich in many valuable minerals and has a good agricultural potential, the standard of living for the masses of workers and peasants has continued to deteriorate. A doctor who spent a year in Kasai Province described the conditions there: "There is real hunger. The bags of manioc are getting smaller and costing more. The people have been beaten into submission by soldiers who routinely extort watches, food, money. The quality of life is getting worse and worse. . . ."

It is such conditions that have spurred the opposition to Mobutu. In a little more than a year, rebels in Shaba, with considerable local support, have carried out two significant insurrections against the regime. In January, Mobutu crushed an uprising in Bandundu Province by killing hundreds of villagers.

Although the Shaba rebels have been forced out of Kolwezi by the imperialists intervention for the moment, French military sources reported May 27 that hundreds of insurgents are still active in Shaba and that heavy fighting had taken place around the key railway center of Mutshatsha.

Less than a week later, the Belgian news media carried reports that new rebellions had broken out in the provinces of Kasai, in the center of the country, and Haut-Zaïre, in the northeast. Both provinces were centers of massive unrest in the 1960s. According to sources in Brussels cited in a June 1 Associated Press dispatch, the rebels in Haut-Zaïre were thought to be followers of Antoine Gizenga, who was an associate of Patrice Lumumba and who led much of the opposition to imperialist intervention in the Congo in the early 1960s. The rebels in Kasai were believed to be supporters of Pierre Mulele, who led a large-scale peasant uprising in the mid-1960s and was subsequently executed by Mobutu.

The ferment in Zaïre is symptomatic of that in much of the rest of the continent as well. And the imperialists have viewed their intervention in Shaba not only in terms of their local interests, but as a

pretext for stepped-up aggression throughout Africa, both against the rising class and national liberation struggles and against the Cuban presence.

The fact that the major Western powers have been discussing the eventual transformation of the African "peacekeeping" force for Shaba into a "fire brigade" for possible use in other countries is just one indication of these broader imperialist aims.

Following a meeting in Washington between Carter and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing May 26, French Foreign Minister Louis de Guiringaud declared that the two presidents had agreed to assist their allies in Africa against "destabilizing external forces." Continuing, he said that "we see Cuban forces—regular forces—and large bodies of Soviet military advisers, active in Africa—in Angola, in the Horn of Africa, in Mozambique, and we see the hand of the Cubans in many of the destabilizing tensions which we have to face in Africa."

The question of establishing a surrogate military force may have been discussed at the May 30-31 conference of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Washington. Correspondent John M. Goshko reported in the May 28 *Washington Post* that one of the possible points for discussion at the conference were attempts "to find a country that will act as a western counter to the Cuban military forces on the continent.

"In respect to this last idea, the sources say, there has been vague but persistent talk about trying to induce Morocco, a former French colony that still has close ties to Paris, to use its forces as a surrogate for the West in African regional conflicts. . . ."

In view of the widespread opposition to direct imperialist military intervention, especially among the American people, the major Western powers no doubt view the establishment of such a surrogate force as a way to gain greater flexibility in protecting and advancing their interests in Africa. It could also provide an opening wedge for even more direct Western aggression.

The May 28 issue of the London *Sunday Times* pointed to some of the limitations of an African expeditionary force from the imperialist point of view, stating, "But what if Cubans invade Rhodesia; or Zaïre is torn apart with no European hostages to provide justification for intervention; or Angola, propped up by Cubans, continues to be a pestilential boil, exporting violence to Zaïre, Namibia and Zambia?"

The *Sunday Times* continued belligerently: "There is a limit to what the Western powers can do but the French success in Shaba provides the occasion and the time for thought. Each new problem has to be considered separately. The only rule is that nothing—including renewed intervention—can be ruled out." □

## Peru—Aftermath of General Strike

By Fred Murphy

Factories, shops, offices, and banks reopened in Lima and most other Peruvian cities on May 24, following ten days of protest actions in more than twenty-eight cities and a two-day general strike described as "the most sweeping work stoppage the country has experienced in almost half a century" (*Veja*, May 31).

In Arequipa, Peru's second-largest city, a general strike that began May 16 continued at least through May 27, and the city was almost totally shut down throughout that period.

A factory owner quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* June 2 gave his impression of the masses' mood: "They are normally sensible people who are convinced the government is penalizing them for no good purpose. I have never seen Peruvians so angry."

The upsurge was touched off by the May 14 announcement of an end to government price subsidies on essential commodities. The decree led to immediate price hikes of up to 120% for cooking oil, bread, pasta, milk and dairy products, gasoline, and public transportation.

Public outrage at the new austerity moves went so deep that even the Peruvian Aprista Party (PAP), which long ago gave up its radical program, felt compelled to take its distance from the regime. The Apristas have cooperated with Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez's military government. But in a statement published in the Lima daily *El Comercio* May 31 the PAP called the general strike a "just popular protest" and a "legitimate expression of the people's elementary defense of their right to exist with an adequate income."

The Aprista-controlled labor federation, the CTP,<sup>2</sup> had stood aloof from most of the strikes and demonstrations that swept Peru in the past year. But this time the CTP bureaucrats added their own call for a general strike to those issued by the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP) and the United Struggle Com-

mand (CUL), a front of independent union federations.

The government tried to head off the general strike by jailing hundreds of leftist labor and political leaders, declaring a state of emergency and a curfew, banning public meetings, and closing down all weekly publications not under the regime's control. These measures were unsuccessful.

Despite killing at least 24 persons and arresting more than 2,000, the massive deployment of troops and riot police was powerless to halt the general strike or to

prevent crowds of Peruvians from emptying stores and markets and destroying government buildings, electric-power facilities, and railway tracks.

### Military Faces Political Crisis

This demonstration of the regime's loss of authority in the country has thrown its plans for a gradual two-year transition to civilian rule into question. "It is generally believed that the military was so shaken by the general strike and the ability of the left to organize it that a major reassessment of the government's political agenda is now under way," Charles A. Krause said in the May 30 *Washington Post*.

Elections for a constituent assembly originally set for June 4 have been postponed until June 18. The assembly is to write a new constitution in preparation for the installation of a civilian regime in 1980, but will have no governmental powers. While Prime Minister Oscar Molina declared May 30 the military's "intention

## Save the Life of Hugo Blanco!

The Buenos Aires daily *La Nación* reported June 1:

"The Argentine government has granted political asylum to eleven of the thirteen Peruvian citizens deported May 25 by the authorities of that country. The other two, also lodged under the protection of the government and the Argentine army at the barracks of Infantry Regiment No. 20 in San Salvador de Jujuy, asked permission to go to Sweden and Mexico."

The paper's report of an official government communiqué said Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco had asked to go to Sweden, where he had lived in exile until returning to Peru last April 12. Miners union attorney Ricardo Díaz Chávez reportedly asked to go to Mexico.

Inquiries made to the Argentine government by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) have confirmed only that the communiqué was issued. USLA has had no word from the deportees themselves or from their families.

"Until Hugo Blanco and Ricardo Díaz Chávez—and any of the other Peruvians who may wish to—have been allowed to leave Argentina safely they are not out of danger from right-wing death squads," a USLA representative said.

USLA is asking that telegrams continue to be sent to President Jorge Videla, Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina (or to Argentine embassies),

holding the Argentine government responsible for the Peruvians' safety and asking that they be allowed safe passage to a country of their choice.

Of the thirteen deportees, nine are candidates for the constituent assembly to be elected in Peru June 18. Hugo Blanco, Genaro Ledesma, and Ricardo Napuri are candidates of the Workers, Peasants, Students, and Poor People's Front; and Ricardo Díaz Chávez, Ricardo Letts, and Javier Diez Canseco are members of the Democratic People's Union slate.

Peasant leader José Luis Alvarado and retired admirals José Arce Larco and Guillermo Faura Gaig are candidates of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

The other deportees are Valentín Pacho Quispe, president of the Arequipa Departmental Workers Federation; Justiniano Apaza Ordóñez, transport workers union leader; Humberto Damonte, editor of the weekly magazine *Marka*; and right-wing journalist Alfonso Baella Tuesta.

Amnesty International sent an "urgent action" cable to its affiliates May 30 calling for messages and telegrams on behalf of the deportees. Douglas Fraser, president of the United Automobile Workers union of the United States, telegraphed President Videla May 31 saying, "We hold your government responsible for the safety of Peruvian Hugo Blanco and others just deported from Peru."

1. "Aprista" refers to APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana—People's Revolutionary American Alliance); the two names are used interchangeably. APRA has been one of the main political forces in Peru since the 1930s, when it was a revolutionary-nationalist organization.

2. Confederación de Trabajadores Peruanos (Peruvian Workers Federation), bureaucratic remnant of what was once Peru's main union federation.

to comply with the political timetable," the emergency measures still in force remove any semblance of democracy from the elections.

Dozens of candidates of the workers parties and of the bourgeois-nationalist Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) remain in jail. Nine candidates have been deported (see box), and four more PSR candidates, including the party's top leaders Gen. Leónidas Rodríguez and Gen. Arturo Valdez, are being sought for deportation. The nongovernment press remains shut down, in particular the leftist weeklies that have provided the bulk of the coverage of the workers parties' campaigns.

The most serious repressive move since the deportations was a May 30 decree dissolving the 3-million-member National Agrarian Federation (CNA) and ordering the arrest of its president, Avelino Mar Arias.

The CNA was originally created by the Velasco Alvarado regime as a means of channeling the peasant movement into a government-controlled organization. With the military's turn away from radical nationalist policies under Morales Bermúdez, the CNA began to escape the regime's grip. In the past year it has backed the general strikes and other protests and has formed part of the United Struggle Command.

The government's decree charged the CNA with "promoting frictions and antagonisms and attacking unity and cooperation among agricultural workers" and accused Avelino Mar of "acts of subversion" during the May 22-23 general strike. It also alluded to "irregularities" in the CNA's finances, hinting that the federation's funds were being used in the PSR's election campaign. Mar is a PSR candidate.

The regime is seeking to stir up sentiment against the "saboteurs of stability" and the "agitators of all description who seek to create chaos." "Foreign extremists" have also figured in the antileftist propaganda, and an Interior Ministry official even told Krause of the *Washington Post* that "the government has proof that six Cubans were involved."

Searching for scapegoats will not solve the political crisis, however, and the generals know that. Moves are now said to be under way to put together some kind of "civilian-military" cabinet in advance of the elections. Paulo Sotero reported from Lima in the May 31 issue of *Veja*, a Brazilian newsweekly:

Already on Tuesday night [May 23] an initiative by the government itself reinforced that impression [that the military was reaching the end of its rope]. The leaders of the principal political parties were called on the telephone by Prime Minister and Army Commander Oscar Molina Palocchia and summoned to seek a solution to the crisis. One of the proposals was the formation within a few weeks of a govern-

ment of national reconciliation made up of civilians and military figures. . . .

In asking for help from the political parties, the Peruvian military admitted for the first time its incapacity to continue governing the country. . . .

For their part, the bourgeois politicians are reluctant to share responsibility for the austerity measures and thus be tarred with the same brush as the military. Nonetheless, they see the danger of the present situation. The Aprista statement quoted earlier warned that "any regime is eroded in ten years" and that, "dragged down by ideological positions and doctrinaire debates that divide them, exposed to criticism and growing popular unrest, the Armed Forces are running risks from which they need to be rescued."

This fear was echoed by publisher and entrepreneur Manuel Ulloa, a key figure in the bourgeois party Acción Popular (People's Action). He told Paulo Sotero of *Veja* that "the military institution itself is endangered."

Ulloa has been the main proponent in Peru of a "social pact" similar to the Pacto de Moncloa between the Spanish government and the Communist and Socialist parties. Regarding the military's request for aid, he told Sotero:

I think the government's call must embrace the largest possible number of parties so that the new government—and it is in fact a question of forming a new government—would be the most representative possible. At the same time, the government has to suspend the constituent assembly elections and call general elections.

Sotero asked Ulloa, "In what way would forming such a government of national reconciliation help to resolve Peru's financial problem?"

If such a government accord is reached, I think that it must include a commitment by the majority of the signers to the economic policy to be followed no matter what the result of the elec-

tions. In other words, the continuity of the economic policy must be guaranteed.

The scope of the upsurge against the most recent austerity moves shows how hard it will be to put such an arrangement across to the masses. Moreover, even if a deal should be struck among the bourgeois parties and the military, the problem will remain of finding reformist workers leaders with enough authority to impose a "social pact" on the ranks of the unions. The recent split in the Communist Party and the subsequent de facto break of many of the more militant union federations from the CGTP does not augur well for such a prospect. (See Hugo Blanco interview below.)

#### While Economic Crisis Deepens

Meanwhile, Peru's economic situation is growing still worse. The government has reportedly succeeded in getting its biggest creditors—a consortium of imperialist banks—to postpone \$250 million of its current debts. But at the same time, private capitalists in Peru have gone \$130 million in default on their own foreign commitments. "As a result, all foreign supplier credits to Peruvian companies have been cut off," Everett G. Martin reported in the June 2 *Wall Street Journal*.

The private default is in part the result of the government's preempting more than 60% of the central bank's foreign currency receipts for paying its own debts. With the successive devaluations of the Peruvian sol, foreign cash is even less accessible to domestic capitalists. Martin's report from Lima continued:

Peruvian manufacturers are dependent on imports for at least half of their raw materials. Even 60% of the materials for locally made steel must be imported.

Many analysts argue that industry's default is potentially far more serious for Peru than a government default because some companies are

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within weeks of running out of raw materials. Already 45% of the country's labor force of five million people is without full-time unemployment. Of the workers with jobs, 31% are in factories, all of which are in cities that are tinderboxes of social unrest.

The editors of the prestigious London business daily *Financial Times* were sufficiently alarmed at the situation to take the International Monetary Fund to task in a May 22 editorial. The IMF's demands on the Morales Bermúdez regime, they said, "have proved to be onerous in the extreme. . . ."

"The present Peruvian crisis . . . raises once again the question of the appropriateness of the demands the Fund makes on developing countries as the price for its assistance. Austerity measures which rich

countries such as Britain find burdensome but in the last event tolerable can have devastating effects on the political and economic fabric of poorer countries."

But despite such warnings from their own imperialist colleagues, the IMF has shown no sign of easing the pressure on Peru for tighter and tighter austerity.

Still another threat from imperialist financiers came in late May when the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York told Peru it would not extend \$54 million in loans needed to complete work on the country's largest copper-mining complex at Cuajone unless export advantages were guaranteed to the Southern Peru Copper Company, a subsidiary of the U.S. metals giant Asarco Incorporated. □

## Before Arrest and Deportation

# Interview With Hugo Blanco

[The following interview with Hugo Blanco was obtained before his arrest and deportation. It was published in the May 26 issue of *Internationales*, the weekly newspaper of the Kommunistiska Arbetarförbundet (Communist Workers League), Swedish section of the Fourth International and is preceded by *Internationales*'s introduction. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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Since his return to Peru [April 12], Hugo Blanco has begun to play an active role in politics. He has spoken before unions, at universities, and on TV. He has been interviewed in a multitude of publications. Thus, it has become clear that he is still regarded as one of the most important political leaders in Peru.

At the beginning of May, *Internationales*'s reporter Lasse Palgren interviewed Hugo Blanco in Lima. The interview deals mainly with the situation in the working class and the role played by the elections to the Constituent Assembly.

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*Question. The May Day celebrations here in Lima were rather confusing. There were two small rallies marked more by internal conflicts than by unity and a determination to fight against the government's austerity policy. But at the same time, in the past year there have been a large number of major strikes. Some of these have been for higher wages, but there have also been strikes in solidarity with the 5,000 militant workers fired after the general strike in July 1977.*

*Moreover, most of the organizations on the left outside the Communist Party have been able to unite in two fronts for the constituent assembly elections. But the combativity shown by the strikes and the experiences of unity represented by the electoral fronts were not reflected in the May Day celebrations. What is the explanation for this?*

*Answer.* It is true that the situation is a contradictory one. But there is a feeling of weariness among large sections of the working class today. This is a result of the fact that many of the strikes have been relatively isolated and have suffered from fragmentation, and at the same time have failed to lead to any real victories.

Along with this, the split in the Communist Party and the CGTP\* have had a demoralizing effect.

*Q. What lies behind these splits?*

A. The reason for them lies in the CGTP's reluctance to take the initiative and fight for the reinstatement of the 5,000 fired workers. Most of these belong to the new generation of militant working-class leaders who have come out of the struggles in recent years. Moreover, many of them were members of the CP. When the CP and the CGTP took no real initiative but even backed out of actions that had already

\*Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers). The Communist Party, which has controlled the CGTP, split in January into two factions, which take their names from their newspapers. *Unidad* (Unity) is published by the old-line Stalinist leadership and *Mayoría* (Majority) by the oppositionists.—IP/I

been decided on, arguing that these actions would provoke a fascist coup, a powerful opposition developed inside the CP and the CGTP. Gradually the oppositionists broke from the CP. So, today there are two Communist Parties—the so-called CP (*Unidad*) and the CP (*Mayoría*).

Immediately after this split, the oppositionists were expelled from the CGTP in an unbelievably bureaucratic and low way. I think that it was this feeling of weariness, combined with the confusion and demoralization created by the splits, that was reflected in the May Day celebrations.

*Q. Where does the election campaign fit into this picture?*

A. Obviously, we have to take advantage of the election campaign and the openings it gives by way of TV time and other means of reaching people. And today one of our main tasks is to fight for the unity of the CGTP. That means fighting for the reintegration of those who have been expelled. We have to fight as well to bring the unions outside the CGTP into it. It is only inside the CGTP that we can build a strong class-struggle tendency capable of challenging its bureaucratic leadership. We have also put forward a concrete proposal for how this should be done.

*Q. But if the situation in the working class is confused and at the same time the government and the bourgeoisie are on the offensive, putting through price increases and changing laws to prepare the way for new mass layoffs, isn't it possible that the election campaign can increase the confusion among the workers? Might it not divert forces away from the struggle that is necessary today?*

A. No, not the kind of campaign we propose to run. What is important for us is to take part in the day-to-day struggles and use the election campaign to show that the elections are not the solution but that it lies in the workers' own struggles. In addition, it seems that the contradictory experiences of these last years have also created an awareness of the need to seek more general solutions.

Moreover, since this election is to a constituent assembly that is to draw up a constitution, it offers all sorts of opportunities to show what sort of a society we are fighting for and how it is to be achieved. This is what I did in my constitutional proposal. It was an attempt to show what a soviet socialist republic would look like. However, the only way to make this clear is to link it to the struggle that is being waged today and to the experiences of the Peruvian masses. This is what I have done in speaking on TV. In this way, the election campaign can help to give a concrete political perspective for the struggle that is being conducted today. □

## Ten Years After May 1968

By Ernest Mandel

### I.

May 1968 had a historic impact in that it put the socialist revolution back on the agenda in Western Europe.

The general strike by ten million French workers, occupying their factories and paralyzing the entire society, including the state, swept away with one motion the whole ideology of the false prophets, who said that the working class in the imperialist countries had been integrated into the consumer society and was so deeply stratified, divided, and depoliticized that it would be incapable of standing up as a class against bourgeois order.

And yet, in the midst of a period of economic expansion, when there was neither massive unemployment nor a drop in workers' real income, workers "challenged" capitalism as never before in French history. Their strength, their unity in action, their energy, drew around them for the first time not only the majority of technical workers, but also civil servants, a section of the "middle classes becoming proletarianized," even the "liberal" professions, such as doctors, whose politically reactionary attitudes had formerly been proverbial.

May 1968 revealed, like a flash, the depth of the structural crisis that is shaking up all bourgeois social relations. The fact that the radicalized youth played a detonating role, and that many categories of workers who could not strictly be classed as "manual" workers participated in the movement, is significant in this respect. But we should not draw mistaken conclusions, as Daniel Cohn-Bendit has. It was the socially centripetal force of the Western proletariat today that was confirmed by May 1968—a force infinitely superior to that of the Russian proletariat in 1917, the German proletariat in 1918, or the Spanish proletariat in 1936.

May 1968 was not a solitary harbinger. It was followed by the "creeping May" in Italy in 1969, and then by a new social explosion in Italy in 1975-76; the Portuguese revolutionary process of 1974-75; the formidable rise of workers struggles and mass struggles in Spain, from the demonstrations against the Burgos trial to the "world record for strikes" during the first six months of 1976.

Bourgeois society in southwestern Europe has never recovered the relative equilibrium it had before May 1968. Appearances notwithstanding, it is not about to

recover it all that soon. The change in the economic climate and the tribulations of a long period of gloom into which it is sinking do not, of course, contribute to such a restabilization.

### II.

May 1968 represented the highest point of working-class spontaneity since the summer of 1936 in republican Spain. For May 1968 was not desired—much less anticipated and planned—by the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses that still control the organized workers movement. They were scared to death by the explosion, nearly as much as the bourgeoisie. They left no stone unturned to get the situation back to normal. In this way, they once again demonstrated their counterrevolutionary role during revolutionary crises.

But they could not act in such a cynical manner without paying quite a heavy price for their treachery. Prior to May 1968, the implantation of revolutionists in the plants and trade unions was weak and scattered. This, moreover, was one of the main factors that explains why the general strike made such slow progress once the factory occupations had been carried out.

Since May 1968, the layer of the French working class that half-instinctively, half-consciously is suspicious of the bureaucratization of the CP and SP has grown considerably. The number of plants and unions in which revolutionists are active accounts for the bulk of industry and the public sector. The fact that in March 1978 a million votes went to candidates who clearly stood to the left of the CP and SP, and that these votes in their great majority were to be found in working-class neighborhoods and districts, underscores the magnitude of this change in consciousness.

It is still a minority, without any doubt. But it would have been inconceivable before May 1968. There are signs that a similar phenomenon is taking place in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and even in several relatively more stable countries of capitalist Europe.

However, while May 1968 brought working-class spontaneity to heights previously unknown, it also demonstrated the limitations of such spontaneity. By itself, without previous revolutionary experience, and especially without a revolutionary

leadership that had acquired genuine authority in the eyes of broad masses, the French proletariat was not able to cross a double threshold in May 1968.

It was not able to bring forward a sufficient number of elected strike committees in the occupied plants and offices which, by federating and centralizing themselves, could have begun to challenge the tottering power of the bourgeois state with the embryo of a workers' counterforce.

Neither did it succeed in forging a plan for a political solution to the crisis that would have been acceptable or at least credible to a majority of the toiling masses.

The two major weaknesses of May 1968 were not inevitably tied together. Theoretically, it is conceivable that the masses might spontaneously establish committees as the embryo of a new state power, even in the absence of a cohesive general political project. For instance, this was the case in Catalonia in July 1936, and in other regions of republican Spain.

Conversely, it is theoretically conceivable that the project of a workers government made up of all the working-class organizations might appear without previously existing soviet-type structures or a workers majority in parliament. This was the case in Germany, in the immediate aftermath of the victorious general strike against the reactionary coup by Von Kapp in 1920.

But the fact is that in May 1968, neither one of the crucial weaknesses of the movement proved possible to overcome spontaneously. This is what explains why the revolutionary crisis did not give rise to a revolutionary situation. The bourgeois government was momentarily paralyzed, but not disintegrated to the point of being incapable of recapturing the offensive. From then on, the ebb of the mass movement became inevitable, after a slight lull. With the complicity of the French Communist Party and General Confederation of Labor leaders above all, de Gaulle was able to end the explosive protest of the entire social structure through the simple expedient of legislative elections.

For ten years, it has become commonplace to assert that May 1968 was compelled to fail for lack of a political focus. In his April report to the CP Central Committee, Georges Marchais restated this conclusion, giving it, however, an extremely narrow meaning. He identified this lack of a political focus as the absence of a "Union of the Left," the absence of this type of electoral pact, in the June 1968 elections (*L'Humanité*, April 28, 1978).

But apart from the fact that the strikers were hardly calling for elections, and that it has not been shown that they would have demanded them if the equivalent of the "Union of the Left" had existed, Marchais glossed over the CP's acceptance of parliamentary elections as an outcome, although neither a CP-SP accord, nor even



an agreement involving bourgeois formations in addition to the workers parties, existed.

In other words, this was a belated admission that the elections could not have represented any political solution whatever under such conditions. So Marchais was admitting that the principal concern of the Stalinist apparatus was to *stifle the movement*, not to enable it to triumph. This is a sizable admission.

Making a connection between the defeat of May 1968 and that of March 1978, Edmond Maire, leader of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor, stated: "The great lesson of these last ten years for the entire workers movement in our country . . . is that we have gone from the social mobilization with no political alternative in May 1968 to the other extreme—everything for political change, everything through the elections, with no social mobilization. That is March 1978." (*Le Monde*, April 25, 1978.)

The parallel is indeed striking. But doesn't Maire share some of the responsibility as one of those who deliberately put the brakes to "social mobilizations" against the Barre plan, on the pretext of not frightening the "undecided" voters? As it turns out, those much-talked-about "undecided" voters pulled the levers for the bourgeois parties anyway in March 1978, while several millions of workers still voted for those same parties. These workers could have been convinced to vote for the organized workers movement, if they had previously been brought into a huge, united movement in defense of their immediate interests.

*A purely and vulgarly electoralist political strategy has been shown not to pay off even from a strictly electoral standpoint.* Above all, however, what underlies this strategy is a conception of "politics" that is the very foundation of reformism, a strategy that Edmond Maire has anything but rejected in its entirety, even if he appears to offer moderate criticisms of it "around the edges."

Political change and a political alternative are thus glibly identified with electoral and parliamentary perspectives and activities, which Maire criticizes at best for avoiding an "autonomous convergence" with the social struggles of workers. However, if there is a lesson to be drawn from May 1968—as, moreover, from all the revolutionary crises that have unfolded in the industrialized countries in the twentieth century, including the Portuguese revolutionary crisis of 1975-76, even though Portugal is the least industrialized of the imperialist countries—it is precisely that these immense explosions and "social" mobilizations have an immediately political dimension and impact.

A general strike not only "challenges" the power of each boss taken separately, or of all the bosses taken together; it "chal-



On the barricades. Students build barricades during night of May 10-11, 1968, in Paris Latin Quarter.

lenges" the power of the bourgeoisie as a class. This elementary truth, which appears as far back as the *Communist Manifesto*, is lightly dismissed today by reformists of all varieties. The CP leaders are old hands at this, from Waldeck Rochet to Georges Marchais, Séguy included. But Edmond Maire is no exception either.

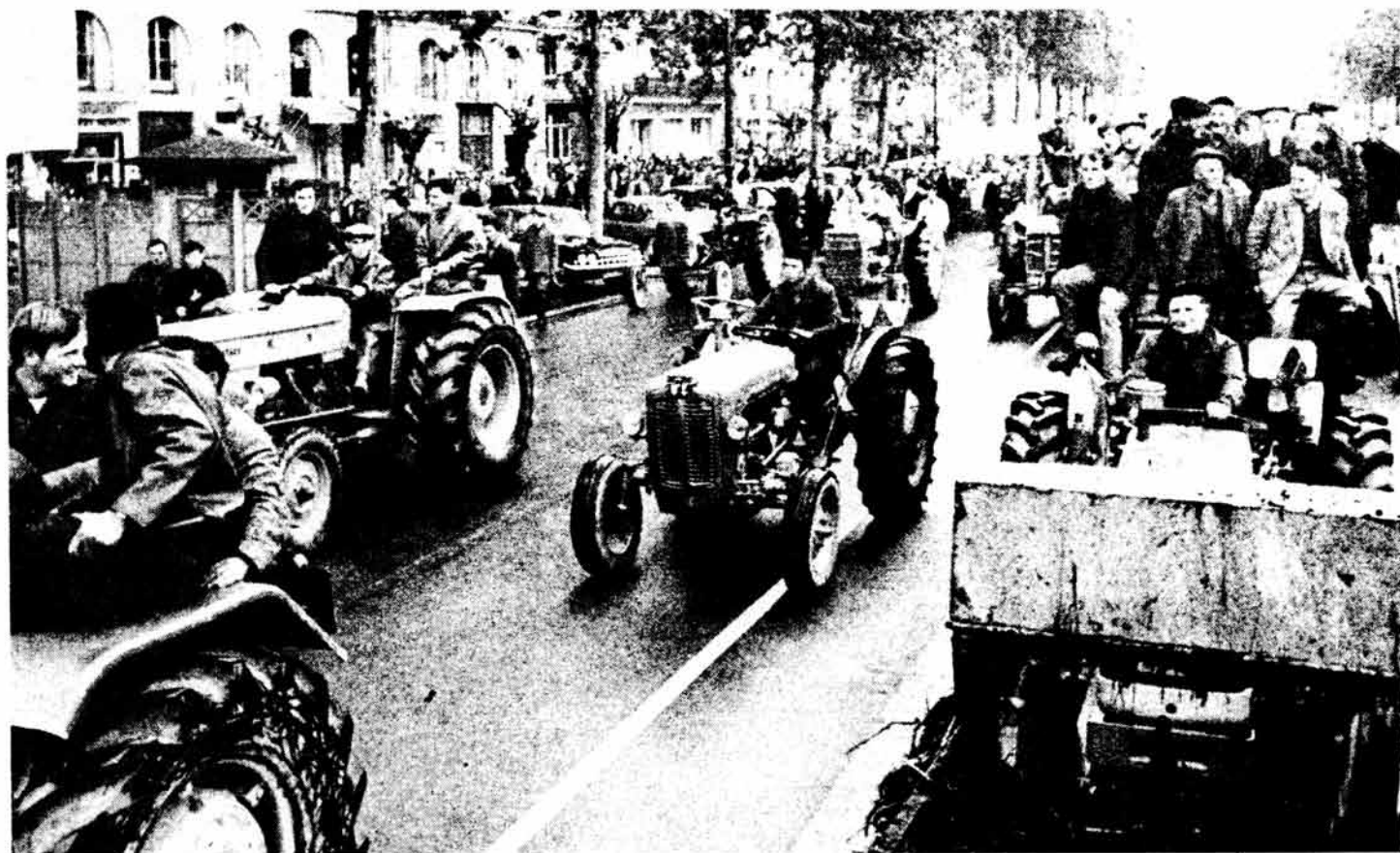
At the point at which "politics" is no longer reduced to electoral and parliamentary activity—which does not mean that such activities should be ignored or underestimated—it becomes clear that the mass of workers, through their organs of self-organization, their multiple forms of mobilization, and the proliferation of democratic activities of control at the grass-roots, can "engage in politics" and find a "political focus" much more easily and efficiently, because they do so collectively, than through electoral activity, which they generally enter into only in a fragmented, if not atomized way.

And it also becomes clear that the whole course of developments leading from 1972 (the real "post-May 1968") to March 1978 owes nothing to chance, but follows a relentless logic. The Union of the Left was conceived as a political escape valve to prevent another May 1968. It was a *preventive maneuver* aimed at redirecting the

enormous anticapitalist potential stored up in broad layers of the French working class as a result of May 1968 into reformist channels of class collaboration, based on a program compatible with maintaining capitalism.

The bourgeoisie and the reformist bureaucracies especially fear a new May 1968 because they foresee—not without reason—that in the next upheaval, the workers' self-organization will take a tremendous leap forward, compared with both May 1968 and June 1936. The spread of the idea of elected strike committees within the trade-union movement, the presence of revolutionists in practically all the large factories, the change in the relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the broad working-class vanguard, even the aftereffects of the idea of self-management, both in the SP and the CGT and CP, make it possible to foresee such a development.

It is therefore no accident that, despite their rhetoric about self-management and elected shop committees, the bureaucracies of the SP and CP, CFDT and CGT—not to mention FO (Workers Force)—scrupulously avoided organizing the Union of the Left among the rank and file, scrupulously avoided mobilizing the bulk of their



French farmers join the struggle. On May 24, 1968, farmers drove their tractors through Nantes.

members in political activity, let alone involving them in determining the content of the Common Program.

It is no accident that the Union of the Left was never anything more than a bureaucratic coalition at the top; that no one ever made a stab at building the famous "dynamic of unity," and that one or two sordid fits of temper within this bureaucratic coalition were sufficient to halt this dynamic, throw it off kilter, and break it.

It is here, as well as in the refusal to mobilize the workers against the Barre plan, in defense of their own immediate interests, that it is necessary to seek the underlying causes of the March 1978 defeat. For, *owing to this*, the outcome of the elections rested essentially on the hope of changing the intentions of three or four hundred thousand voters. With a different conception of politics, a class conception, based on *unity in action* and united organization of the entire class, the results would have been quite different.

### III.

May 1968 was an immense hope. For many of its participants and central figures, it was a disappointment in the medium term. The very audacity of May 1968, which made it a startling revelation of the

historic possibilities that would be opened up in the industrialized countries by overturning the capitalist regime, thus became a source of frustration, political and ideological confusion, and demoralization.

There is an "existential" aspect to this phenomenon which cannot be ignored by anyone who still has a heart, which no "revolutionary computer" can replace. The young students and workers—we repeat that this phenomenon was not and is not limited to the student milieu—who played a detonating role in May 1968 wanted "all of it, right now." Such bursts of energy are what fueled all the great revolutions of the past. Those of the future will be no different.

To repudiate or disparage such impulses as "anarchic" or irrational in the name of "political realism" is to refuse to take a stand on the barricades, to line up with the everlasting Plekhanovs with their "it was wrong to take up arms." It is to refuse to follow Marx to the Paris Commune, or Lenin to the Russian soviets. It is to demonstrate that one is not a revolutionist, despite all the great written and verbal vows, and, above all, to demonstrate that one does not understand what a revolution is.

But when the downturn followed the upsurge, when it became obvious that the victory of the revolution, and even a new

May 1968, was not at hand, many of those who took part in May 1968 refused to accept the "return to normal" to which the working class in its immense majority is *condemned*, and which Parisian wit, with its brilliant gift for succinctness, summed up in the saying: "*métro, boulot, dodo*" (subway, work, sleep).

This attempt to "jump over the problem" can take very diverse forms—sinking into the subculture and a transient existence; retiring to small villages in the mountains; trying to "do your work in a way that fits in with revolutionary conditions"; or even, more commonly, "living your own life instead of being politically active."

All of these "May 1968 walking wounded" have abandoned the battle for a *collective* solution in favor of the search for *individual* solutions (knowing full well, in their heart of hearts, that the mass of proletarian wage-workers *will not* follow their example).

So what is involved is a real retrogression of consciousness, even if it is sometimes camouflaged by ultraradical political talk. What is involved, in fact, is an abandonment of militancy and anticapitalist *activity*. As far as the regime is concerned, 10,000 farmer-craftsmen-self-sufficient-consumers—let alone 10,000 far-left, unorganized teachers—are infinitely less dangerous than 10,000 members of a

revolutionary organization.

This phenomenon has always accompanied the phases of temporary setbacks in the revolutionary upsurge. We saw it after the 1905 revolution in Russia, after 1923 in Germany, not to mention after the bloody defeat of the Paris Commune. It was even more pronounced after 1968 in those countries where a strong upsurge of workers struggles did not take over the reins from a declining student movement.

In the United States and West Germany, and in Japan to some extent, the return to private life, the feeling of resignation, and even the political degeneration of the veterans of 1968 took place much more rapidly and visibly than in France, Italy, or Great Britain.

But there is a more directly political aspect of the phenomenon that deserves to be singled out. May 1968 saw the *massive outflanking* of the bureaucratic apparatuses by the masses, first the masses of youth, then the masses of workers. But given the level of experience and consciousness of the broad masses, *this could still happen only occasionally*.

Even if workers councils had emerged in May 1968, the CP and SP would have accounted for the great majority of those elected at first. (It is true that a genuine situation of dual power would have offered ideal conditions for chipping away at this majority, provided there was a revolutionary party that was already sufficiently strong and following a correct political line).

As a result, the period opened up by May 1968, not only in France, but throughout the southwest of Europe, Great Britain, and elsewhere, was dominated by two features: on the one hand, the numerical growth experienced by revolutionary organizations, which is an indication of the *beginning* of the regroupment of the workers movement; and on the other hand, the maintenance of reformist control over the organized workers movement, which indicates the relatively unshaken ability of the traditional apparatuses to "coopt" the masses' fighting potential, and redirect it into channels that fit in with maintaining capitalism. Operations like the "Union of the Left" in France, the "historic compromise" in Italy, and the "Moncloa pact" in Spain symbolize this ability.

It follows that revolutionists in the "post-May 1968" period are faced with a long-term job, one that is less exciting than the barricades, factory occupations, or elections of strike committees, but which, even if it is only partly completed, will *determine the success of future May 1968s*: the ongoing fight to win influence among the masses who are still dominated and misled by the bureaucratic apparatuses, to chip away at, push back, and finally break (which most likely will happen only in the course of a revolutionary situation) the control that these appar-

atuses still exert over the broad masses.

This gives particular importance to a stubborn, systematic policy of unity in action, of propaganda for the workers united front, for a CP-SP government. Such a policy must be linked, whenever possible, with unifying initiatives in and for action, and with agitation around immediate and unifying demands when the time is ripe and they can abruptly become credible and capable of mobilizing broad masses.

There is no contradiction between applying the Leninist policy of the united front and an effort to take qualitative leaps forward in building a revolutionary party and international. Such efforts necessarily involve successive experiences of revolutionary unity (regroupment) on the basis of a clear, correct program and general political line.

We are thoroughly convinced that the question of the *relationship of forces* between the revolutionary and reformist organizations plays an important role in maintaining the reformists' control over the workers movement. For the masses, their organizations are their weapons in the class struggle. They prefer their customary blade, even if it is dull, to no blade at all, or to one that is minuscule and can "cut" only crumbs, not a normal-sized loaf.

To create a revolutionary organization that is sufficiently powerful to serve as a pole of attraction for thousands of disgusted workers, revolted by the repeated betrayals of the reformists, but whose rebellion remains isolated and without prospects for lack of a viable alternative organization—that is an important aspect of the fight to break the hold of the bureaucratic apparatuses over the masses.

But it is not the key aspect. The key aspect is still a political one—the way in which the consciousness of the broad masses makes its own progress on the

basis of their own experience; the penetration of the revolutionary Marxist program, slogans, and objectives among these masses.

That is why, in my opinion, there is an indissoluble bond between the struggle for unity in action by the working-class organizations (culminating in the slogan of a CP-SP government), the struggle for a program that can meet the aspirations of broad masses, warning the masses that the SP and CP will not carry out this program, the fight for a united mobilization of the masses and for their self-organization, and the struggle to immediately strengthen the revolutionary Marxist organization and its political influence on the class, a struggle that also involves carrying out propaganda and education around our whole program, including the conquest of power by the proletariat.

That is how Trotskyists approach the political problems of the post-May 1968 period. But not all the participants and central figures in May 1968 were, or have become, Trotskyists—far from it. This is even truer of the whole West European far left. As a matter of fact, the understanding of the necessary interrelationship between the building of a revolutionary organization and the stubborn battle to wrest broad masses away from the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses, with a line of class independence and unity, represents one of Bolshevism's unique theoretical achievements—from Lenin's "infantile disorder" to the transitional program of the Fourth International—which the other currents to the left of the reformists have not yet, or to an insufficient degree, assimilated.

These currents, in general, drew conclusions from May 1968 about the unbroken decline of the SPs and CPs, and their inability to maneuver among the masses or win back a section of the vanguard. This premature, false judgment was often combined with mistaken theoretical analyses: The SP was said to be a bourgeois party, indistinguishable from other agents of big business; the CP had ceased to be a workers party from the moment it became an agent of "social imperialism"; one or the other (or both) had become "social-fascist" parties, and so on. This led them into extreme sectarianism toward these parties.

But when events confirmed the electoral, and indeed political, hold of the traditional apparatuses over a large section of the toiling masses, these centrist currents (including a Maoist-centrist, or ex-Maoist centrist faction) executed a series of right turns, opportunistically adapting to the maneuvers and vocabulary of the reformists. Both opportunism and sectarianism, and sometimes a combination of the two, lead to the same result: failure to provide the masses with a real, viable



L'Enragé

alternative political strategy to that of the reformists. The reformists' control is not seriously challenged.

In Italy, and especially in Portugal, where the reformists were compelled to shed their masks in the crudest fashion, these disastrous errors of the centrists heavily reduced the price that the SP and CP leaders had to pay for their betrayals. Events have thus confirmed that the task of building an alternative revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, a task whose urgency was underscored by May 1968, can only be accomplished on the basis of the program of the Fourth International.

#### IV.

May 1968 inaugurated a period of crisis for bourgeois governments in southwestern Europe, combined with a rise of mass struggles that placed the possibility of a socialist revolution on the agenda in the short run. But a rise of struggles, like the crisis of bourgeois social relations, does not develop in an uninterrupted fashion. It inevitably goes through ups and downs.

In retrospect, we can say that during 1974-76, the maturing or outbreak of pre-revolutionary crises in the four countries of southwestern Europe became more and more synchronized.

The summer and autumn of 1975 in Portugal, the first six months of 1976 in Spain, the end of 1975 and beginning of 1976 in Italy, the period leading up to the March 1977 municipal elections in France, were marked by the impetuous, and in some cases extraordinary, rise of militancy on the part of the masses, combined with disarray and pronounced defeatism among the bourgeoisie. The latter even began to "vote with its feet" in Portugal. A significant flight of capital underscored the fact that in these four countries big business did not size up the situation much differently than did revolutionary Marxists.

It is now certain that a series of reversals or pauses have taken place in these four countries. November 1975 in Portugal, the summer of 1976 in Italy, the signing of the constitutional pact between Suárez on the one hand and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party and Spanish Communist Party on the other, March 1978, not to mention the autumn of 1977 in France—probably mark the points at which these reversals occurred. They are not all of the same importance or gravity.

Without a doubt, it is in Portugal that the reversal has been most dramatic. Having established a more efficient repressive apparatus and reconsolidated the state apparatus, the bourgeoisie, with the help of the SP and also the CP, went on a systematic offensive against all the conquests of the masses in the 1974-75 period. The working class and its allies have now been forced back onto the defensive.

In Italy, the workers in the big factories

have so far been victorious in blocking the capitalists' plans for restructuring. Now, however, resistance has been made much more difficult owing to the combined effects of ten years of nearly uninterrupted mass struggles that have nonetheless not led to any political alternative; a full-scale, chronic recession, with its impact on jobs, particularly for the youth; and the campaign by the CP and trade-union leaderships in favor of the bourgeois austerity plan and the CP's participation in a government of national unity. The Moro affair has resulted for the time being in strengthening the appeals for national unity, and is making it harder for the working class to fight back.

In France, opportunities for a bourgeois offensive have been expanded by the division in the workers' ranks brought on by the SP and CP leaderships since the autumn of 1977, and by the deep disappointment caused by the failure of the Union of the Left in the March 1978 legislative elections. This is already making itself felt in the economic sphere (massive layoffs in the hardest-hit sectors, the hike in public-service rates). It will be continued with maneuvers aimed at wooing and dividing the SP. Moreover, the reformist leaderships' policy of division is continuing and is reflected in the lack of a united response by the trade unions.

In Spain, the participation of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party and Communist Party in the project of institutionalizing a bourgeois parliamentary democracy and establishing an austerity policy have dealt a blow to the mass movement and given a breathing spell to the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the workers organizations have undergone a powerful reinforcement, and the politicization of the proletariat is continuing. A renewal of mass struggles is possible at any time.

However, the *cumulative effect* of these developments in the four countries should not be underestimated. Thus, the fact that the downfall of the dictatorship in Spain was not accompanied by a revolutionary crisis has considerably increased the chances of an anti-working-class offensive in Portugal. The defeat of the Union of the Left in March 1978 in France—and the lack of a strong upsurge of struggles that would have been touched off by the Union of the Left coming to power, by way of a response to the bourgeois reaction that would have followed it—has widened the margin of maneuver, in the short run, for the Spanish, and especially the Italian, bourgeoisie. The change in the situation in the four countries of southern Europe cannot be denied. *Still, it would be a mistake to confuse this with a change in the character of the period.*

In none of these four countries has there been a qualitative change in the class relationship of forces. Nowhere has the working class been defeated in a head-on combat. Nowhere has its potential for

struggle been fundamentally tapped. And above all, nowhere has the bourgeoisie been capable of stabilizing its rule in a way that is the least bit durable. The economic depression prevents it from carrying out a policy of reforms successfully. The relationship of forces still prevents it from carrying out a policy of repression (the first important test in this regard will probably come in Portugal).

We are still, then, in a situation of extremely unstable and fragile equilibrium, in which neither of the two main classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is capable, for the time being, of imposing "its" solution on the social crisis. In this situation, an accident of whatever kind—political, social, economic, or fiscal—can set off either a revolutionary explosion, or a counterrevolutionary, much more aggressive offensive of the bourgeoisie. The immediate result of one or the other outcome would be either to once again reverse the international tendency, or to strengthen it each time through a cumulative process.

It was correct to point out in 1972-75 that such a situation of unstable equilibrium could not be prolonged indefinitely under conditions of economic depression, in which the process of capital accumulation cannot be renewed in a meaningful way except by a significant increase in the rate of surplus value.

Such an increase has not been achieved anywhere in southwestern Europe. But it was incorrect to establish too rigid a timetable for the inevitable test of strength between the classes, to underestimate the *duration* of the crisis of bourgeois rule (which can be explained, in the last analysis, by how *grave* this crisis is).

The nature of this crisis of long duration is what enables us to reassert the conclusion that the reversal that has taken place was conjunctural and not structural, that what is involved is ups and downs in the context of a period that has not changed. As long as the working class has suffered no serious defeats, and the bourgeoisie has not found the resources necessary to restabilize the situation, new "May 1968s" remain possible and even inevitable in southwestern Europe, with all their international repercussions.

Our current is the only one today—as it was prior to May 1968—that remains firmly convinced of the timeliness of the socialist revolution in capitalist Europe. Momentarily dazzled by the radiance of May 1968, the leftist intelligentsia has returned to its old demons of the past. Its skepticism with respect to the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in the imperialist countries prolongs that of the reformists and revisionists of all stripes.

A near-universal shout arises from the disillusioned third-worldists (Samir Amin—see *Monthly Review*, June 1977), Maoists (*Peking Review*, No. 45, 1977), and even from the repentant ex-terrorists (the



March of a million. Massive demonstration in Paris May 13, 1968, during twenty-four-hour general strike.

most typical example is that of Horst Mahler in West Germany), from the battle-scarred veterans of May 1968, echoing the siren song of the Eurocommunists and left Social Democrats: "Stop dreaming about an impossible proletarian revolution! And therefore, stop being proponents of an uncompromising class struggle, because it will not lead to any material prospects! Be realistic! Get involved in practical politics, in other words, carry out a policy of 'bold' reforms that adhere to a 'consensus,' to class conciliation."

If the "new philosophers" in the style of Glucksmann and the supporters of the anti-Marxist offensive add their shrill voices to this chorus, it is because by

pushing logic to extremes, and basing themselves on the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy which they denied in the past, they intone the "end of Marxism" and the "end of politics" as the inevitable outgrowth of the "end of revolution" and the end of the class struggle.

All of this gives a feeling of déjà vu—recalling the period before May 1968, when sociologists babbled about the "depoliticization" and "apathy" of youth. What was left of these sage theories after May 1968?

The impressionists and opportunists of this conjunctural lull will get their comeuppance this time too, as during the previous cycle. It is capitalism, not Marxism, that is in crisis. It is not the proletariat that has

been structurally weakened, but bourgeois domination. To deny this, in the light of May 1968 and of all that has happened since, is to deny the facts.

The great revolutionary battles are ahead of us, not behind us. The historic stake of these battles is such that the only political realism worthy of the name consists of systematically preparing for them in every area of social activity—including the theoretical level—and to prepare the broad masses, educationally and effectively. Yes, it was only a beginning. Yes, the combat continues. Yes, the chances of winning, beyond any doubt, are real and intact.

May 13, 1978

# Capitalism Fouls Things Up



## 15,000 in New York Say 'No' to Nuclear Weapons

[The following article, by Vivian Sahner, appeared in the June 9 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

NEW YORK—The largest peace demonstration in the United States since the end of the Vietnam War took place here May 27. A crowd estimated at 15,000 to 20,000 marched to the United Nations, where a session on disarmament was being held, to demand a halt to the arms race, nuclear weapons, and nuclear power plants.

The march and rally, sponsored by the Mobilization for Survival, featured colorful banners, many hand-made, and peace songs. Signs, some in the shape of bombs, demanded "Stop the Arms Race, Fund Human Needs," "No Neutron Bomb," and "No Nukes."

The majority of marchers were young. Groups participating ranged from anti-nuke organizations, to religious groups such as Catholics for Peace and the Quakers, to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the National Organization for Women.

Delegations of marchers came from Rocky Flats, Colorado, where 6,000 recently demonstrated against nuclear weapons, and from Bangor, Washington, site of a May 21 protest of 5,000 against the Trident submarine base there. Members of the Clamshell Alliance, the New England antinuke coalition, and the Palmetto Alliance in the Southeast also participated.

A delegation from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1930 marched along with members of District 65 and the National Association of Social Workers.

The largest international contingent in the march came from Japan. Other participants from West Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and Sweden were members of various peace groups and anti-nuclear power groups.

The rally here opened with Dave McKeynolds, a leader of the Mobilization for Survival, blasting the U.S. government for escalating the arms race and promoting nuclear power.

"The United States has spent \$1.7 tril-

lion on weapons since World War II and is infamous for being the only country to use atomic weapons against another country," said McReynolds. "While the U.S. is first in military strength, it is only fifteenth in literacy and eighteenth in life expectancy."

Other speakers at the rally included actor Ossie Davis; Connie Hogarth, a member of the national board of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; U.S. Representative John Conyers; and Dr. Helen Caldicott, an expert from Australia on the effects of radioactivity on children.

Reminiscent of an anti-Vietnam War rally, the protesters heard songs by Pete Seeger and speeches by Dave Dellinger and Ron Kovic. Dellinger, a pacifist and now editor of *Seven Days* magazine, was a leader of the antiwar movement. Kovic is a paraplegic and Vietnam War veteran.

Joining hands with Masuto Higaski, an eighty-three-year-old victim of the Hiroshima atomic attack, Kovic told the crowd, "My friend and I are symbols of living death, we are here to hold the leaders of this country accountable."

As he began chanting "peace, peace" the crowd joined in, linking hands and raising them above their heads.

The rally ended in a street theater event. As a siren sounded, many demonstrators, each wearing a tag stamped "Nuclear

Victim," dropped to the ground and lay motionless.

The rally was part of a week-long schedule of events organized by the Mobilization for Survival.

On May 26, 2,000 demonstrators held a pray-in at the UN.

Future activities announced by the Mobilization for Survival include a sit-in at the UN on June 12; a June 24 protest at the construction site of the nuclear power plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire, called by the Clamshell Alliance, and local anti-nuclear demonstrations around the country August 6-9, the anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Many who marched here on May 27 were on their first demonstration. They eagerly bought "No Nuke" tee-shirts and peace buttons. Sales of the *Militant* were brisk.

The size and character of the rally here shows a resurgence of sentiment against war and the arms race, similar in some respects to the ban-the-bomb movement that began in the late 1950s and was later followed by the anti-Vietnam War movement.

Today this sentiment is more and more combined with outrage at the tremendous dangers posed by nuclear power. The success of the action here shows the potential for building even larger protests both in this country and abroad.

## International Protest Over Philippines Nuclear Plant

[The following article appeared in the May 12 issue of *Philippine Liberation Courier*, a monthly magazine published in Oakland, California, by the International Association of Filipino Patriots.]

\* \* \*

The plan to install a Westinghouse nuclear reactor in the Philippines\* became

\* The Philippines' first nuclear plant is now more than 20 percent complete at a site near the villages of Bagac and Morong, forty-five miles west of Manila. The Marcos government is purchasing the plant under a \$1.1 billion con-

tract with the U.S. corporation Westinghouse. For more information, see "Opposition to Marcos's Reactor Plans," *Intercontinental Press*, November 7, 1977, p. 1224; "Payoff Scandal Hits Philippines Nuclear Plant," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 30, 1978, p. 128; and "Do Volcanoes and Nuclear Plants Make Good Neighbors?" *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 27, 1978, p. 237.—IP/I

the target of popular protests in various parts of the globe on April 27. In the Philippines, opponents of the project evaded tight martial law restrictions on popular assembly by holding special prayer services throughout the

country. The services provided an opportunity for such antinuclear groups as the Concerned Citizens of Morong, Bataan and the Philippine Movement for Environmental Protection to gather more signatures for their petition drive to end the project, which had already collected 25,000 names from all over the country.

In San Francisco, U.S.A., about eighty demonstrators protested in front of the regional headquarters of Westinghouse Corporation, while across the country, in Washington, D.C., fifty picketers chanted, "Marcos rules a bloody land, Eximbank lends a dirty hand," at the Export-Import Bank, a U.S. government agency which is financially aiding the project.

Educational activities around the reactor export were also held the same day in Japan and Australia. In Tokyo, the Stop the Pollution Export Committee (SPEC) held five forums for student, community and environmental groups in an effort to mobilize Japanese public opinion against the reactor export. In Melbourne, Australia, the local chapter of Friends of the Earth (FOE) went on radio to denounce the reactor and the Australian government's intention to provide the uranium fuel for it.

In all places, protesters read a common statement drafted by Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Filipino People, and People Against Nuclear Power. The statement read, in part, "We condemn the callousness of Westinghouse Corporation in building the reactor in the face of obvious safety hazards—beside a major earthquake fault and near five active volcanoes." It also denounced "the massive disruption of the economic existence of at least 11,000 living in the vicinity of the plant."

The April 27 demonstrations in the United States followed on the heels of a speaking tour by Peter Hayes, founder of Friends of the Earth in Australia and a leading proponent of the drive to stop uranium export from Australia to the Philippines. Hayes debated with Westinghouse representatives in Davis, California on April 25, and spoke at forums in Berkeley and Los Angeles on April 21-22. The tour was sponsored by a number of groups, including Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Filipino People, the Anti-Martial Law Coalition, and People Against Nuclear Power.

In the Davis debate with Westinghouse, which drew about 100 people, Hayes stressed the international implications of the Westinghouse deal. He said, "We in Australia see the whole thing in terms of a triangular relationship: the Philippines builds a reactor, Westinghouse profits, and Australia provides the uranium. In President Carter's nonproliferation through proliferation strategy, Australia has been assigned the role of supplying uranium to Third World countries which want to 'go nuclear.' This will disrupt the lives of aboriginal peoples in Australia . . . whose lands contain the uranium."

Hayes also attacked Westinghouse's nuclear reactor export strategy as a way of making up for the "loss of markets for an unsafe technology" in the United States and other advanced industrial countries, where antinuclear forces are registering mounting opposition.

Westinghouse nuclear engineer Ann May, on the other hand, defended the Westinghouse export on the grounds that "nuclear-generated power is a solution to the energy problems of the oil-dependent poor countries."

Opponents of the nuclear reactor have slated a number of future activities. These include a protest visit to the Philippine ambassador to Australia by a delegation of Friends of the Earth and antiuranium mining activists; an effort to open debate on the issue of uranium export to the Philippines in the Australian Parliament led by Tom Uren, a Labor Party Member of Parliament; and testimony in the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations of the U.S. House of Representatives by Nicanor Perlas, Executive Secretary of the Philippine Movement for Environmental Protection. Perlas recently arrived in the United States to help publicize Philippine opposition to the reactor. A speaking tour for Perlas in Boston, Washington, D.C. and other U.S. cities is also planned.

#### **5,000 Protest U.S. Nuclear Submarines**

Five thousand persons demonstrated May 21 outside the Trident nuclear-submarine base located at Bangor in the state of Washington. The following day 290 persons were arrested after they climbed a fence in a nonviolent civil disobedience action, while another 1,000 rallied outside the base in their support.

The Trident system is a nuclear missile and submarine combination that forms a key aspect of the Pentagon's plans for developing a "first-strike" capability. The navy currently plans to buy thirteen Trident systems at a cost of more than \$21 billion.

Speaking at the Bangor protest, Terry Provance of the American Friends Service Committee called for more and larger demonstrations until the construction of all nuclear facilities is ended. He urged that the antinuclear movement seek support from the labor movement.

#### **4,000 in Scotland March Against Nuclear Plant**

Four thousand persons participated in a six-mile march to a nuclear plant construction site in Torness, Scotland, on May 6-7.

The protesters camped overnight at the site, holding meetings and workshops and viewing films on the West German, French, and U.S. antinuclear movements. Speakers at a rally included a Scottish member of Parliament, a farmer who is a

tenant on land slated to be part of the nuclear site, and a representative of SCRAM—the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace.

The South of Scotland Electricity Board plans to construct two 660-megawatt steam-generating heavy-water reactors at the Torness site, which is located on the North Sea coast near Edinburgh.

#### **Australia—August 6 Antiuranium Protests Win Labor Party Support**

Renewed protests and demonstrations against the Fraser government's plans to step up uranium mining in Australia have been set for August 6.

At a special state conference held May 14, the Victoria branch of the Australian Labor Party voted unanimously to support these actions. One of three motions backing the antiuranium movement read in part:

"That the Australian Labor Party supports the efforts of MAUM [Movement Against Uranium Mining], FOE [Friends of the Earth], and other organisations in their drive to mobilise the people of Victoria in opposition to uranium mining and, in particular, the insidious bills presented by the Federal Government attacking the basic democratic rights and civil liberties of the Australian people. In support of that objective this Conference recommends that the Australian Labor Party throw its support behind the proposed uranium demonstrations to be held on the weekend of August 5 and 6 commemorating Hiroshima Day."

#### **'It Went Up Like an Atomic Bomb'**

Five workers were killed and at least ten others injured when a series of massive explosions shook an oil refinery at Texas City, Texas, early in the morning of May 30.

Blast after blast rocked the Texas City Refining Company's plant for thirty-five minutes beginning at 2 a.m. The explosions touched off two 55,000-gallon tanks of kerosene and other fuel oil, sending an orange fireball 500 feet into the air.

Texas City fireman C. F. Lorber said, "I counted seven explosions, then it went up like an atomic bomb. It was just a big ball of fire. . . . Even with a reflective coat, I felt like a roasted turkey." Lorber was a quarter-mile away from the plant at the time.

The cause of the initial blast was not determined, but one engineer said it could have originated in a new process unit at the refinery.

Texas City was the site of the worst industrial accident in U.S. history. In 1947 a freighter exploded in the city's harbor, fire spread in all directions, and acres of oil and chemical tanks along the shore became infernos. More than 500 persons were killed and 3,000 injured in that disaster.

### Cambodia—Empty Cities, Crowded Fields

By Matilde Zimmermann

The U.S. government and the anticommunist news media are having a field day with reports of senseless massacres and primitive living conditions in Cambodia. Gruesome stories about life in Cambodia are used to portray communism as dictatorial and barbaric, while at the same time absolving Washington of all responsibility for the damage done to the country by the imperialist war.

But any honest attempt to analyze what is happening inside Cambodia today must start with the brutality of the American invasion and the devastation caused by U.S. bombs.

The war destroyed Cambodia's economy and tore apart its society. This is conveniently forgotten in most descriptions of Cambodia today. Reporters who are shocked by pictures of men and women pulling plows never point out that several hundred thousand draft animals were killed by U.S. bombs. The primitive state of communications in Cambodia is described without mentioning the fact that the Pentagon's bombing campaign had as one of its aims the complete destruction of the Cambodian communications system.

According to the Phnompenh government, 600,000 Cambodians were killed in the war between 1970 and 1975, and another 600,000 were wounded. (The total population of Cambodia was only about seven million.)

At the end of the war, American reporters described rice fields "gouged with bomb craters the size of swimming pools," and bombed-out stands of sugar and coconut palms. A large percentage of the peasantry had to abandon their fields or else live semipermanently underground to escape the bombing.

#### A Shortage of Facts

Reconstructing what is happening in Cambodia today is not an easy task. Since April 1975, when the capitalist regime fell to the insurgent armies of the Khmer Rouge, the country has been virtually sealed off from the outside world.

There are basically four sources of information on events in Cambodia. None of them is completely reliable, at least if taken by itself.

The first are statements by representatives of the Cambodian government, either over Radio Phnompenh or in an occasional news conference such as that of Prime Minister Pol Pot in Peking in October 1977.

The second source consists of U.S. intelligence outfits such as the CIA. A report from Thailand in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of September 23, 1977, describes some of the hardware used to gather information about Cambodia:

... American SR 71, 2,200 mph spy-planes fly at 85,000 ft, satellites orbit in space, and every other device known to the military is used to listen and look.

The CIA has an obvious ideological ax to grind in its presentation of "facts" about Cambodia. Furthermore, its "listening and looking" does not seem to reveal much about social—or even military—developments in Cambodia. Its spy-planes were quite unable to distinguish between Cambodian and Vietnamese soldiers from 85,000 feet, for example.

Interviews with Cambodian refugees are the source most heavily relied upon by newspaper reporters and by the authors of several recent books on Cambodia. Most of those interviewed live in horrible conditions in camps in Thailand. Their status is precarious, and they are under considerable pressure to tell reporters what they want to hear. A glimpse of the interview process was given by *New York Times* reporter Henry Kamm when he casually remarked that "accounts of many aspects of the new way of life have to be drawn out of the refugees through questioning. . . ." (Kamm insisted that the themes of murder and hunger appeared spontaneously, however.)

Refugee stories are difficult to verify. Some of the refugees left Cambodia as much as three years ago. In spite of all this, few reporters exhibit the slightest caution with refugee testimony. Even the most extreme and unlikely accounts are reported as fact.

Reports from visitors to Cambodia are the final source of information, but independent observers have only rarely been allowed to enter in the last three years. Four Yugoslav journalists spent two weeks touring selected locations and interviewing officials in March 1978. Their writings reveal much of what is today known about life in Cambodia—not because they are so complete, but simply because so little was known before.

American Maoist Daniel Burstein made a ceremonial visit in April 1978 and reported that Cambodia was thriving. But Burstein has followed the twists and turns of the Chinese bureaucracy for so long that

it is unlikely he can any longer distinguish between up and down.

The picture of Cambodia that emerges from these various sources—taking into account the weaknesses of each of them—is of a country governed by a peasant-based regime characterized by extreme nationalism, a country with a fundamentally pre-capitalist economy, in which tremendous sacrifices are demanded of the population. It is a picture of a government that calls itself Marxist but whose first action of power was to systematically deproletarianize the country, a leadership that rejects the idea that the urban working class can be a force for change.

#### Evacuation of Phnompenh

In April 1975 the Lon Nol regime, which had been kept in power only by U.S. guns, bombs, and dollars, collapsed. The rebel armies of the Khmer Rouge met little resistance when they marched into Phnompenh on April 17.

Within a few hours of their victory Khmer Rouge soldiers began the forced evacuation of Phnompenh. In a matter of days the capital and a number of smaller Cambodian cities were emptied of their inhabitants, who were resettled in agricultural areas.\*

According to a census taken by the new administration in the course of the evacuation, Phnompenh at the time had a population of nearly three million persons, compared to a prewar population of 600,000. The capital was crowded with refugees from the countryside, whose homes and crops had been destroyed by U.S. bombs. Hunger was everywhere—except among the corrupt wealthy crust who lived a life of almost unimaginable luxury right up to the end. Much of the population of Phnompenh was slowly dying of starvation; this was particularly true of the children.

(A well-documented description of life in Phnompenh in the final days of Lon Nol's administration can be found in *Starvation and Revolution* by George C. Hildebrand and Gareth Porter. It graphically shows what the rule of the U.S. puppets meant in terms of massive human suffering, and should be required reading for everyone who now writes about the lack of value placed on human life by the Cambodian government.)

At the time of the evacuation of Phnompenh, the new government said that the extreme measure was necessary in order to prevent people from starving. The claim that rice supplies were critically low has been substantiated by other sources. Just before it surrendered, the capitalist government said there was only an eight-day supply of rice in the capital, and this figure

\*For contemporary accounts of the evacuation, see *Intercontinental Press*, May 19, 1975, p. 642; June 2, 1975, p. 726; and July 28, 1975, p. 1074.



was confirmed by State Department sources at the time.

But this does not explain the haste with which the evacuation was carried out or the fact that even the elderly and the sick were forced to go. Nor does it explain why the capital was not repopulated and rebuilt once the first harvest was over and the immediate food crisis had passed. Furthermore it was not the explanation given by Cambodian Prime Minister Pol Pot at a news conference in Peking October 4, 1977. There he said that the evacuation had been planned two or three months before the liberation of Phnompenh because of fears that the city would be a base for the "class enemy":

This was decided on before victory was won, that is, in February 1975, because we knew that before the smashing of all sorts of enemy spy organizations, our strength was not great enough to defend the revolutionary regime. Judging from the struggles waged from 1976 to 1977, the enemy's secret agent network lying low in our country was very massive and complicated. But when we crushed them, it was difficult for them to stage a comeback. Their forces were scattered in various cooperatives which are in our own grip.

In 1975 Prince Norodom Sihanouk told a reporter that Phnompenh had become a "Sodom and Gomorrah" that could only be cleaned up by emptying it out. Cambodian officials told visiting Yugoslav journalists in 1978 that they concentrated on developing agricultural areas because cities were breeding ground for parasites.

Between one-third and one-half of the entire population of Cambodia was involved in the compulsory evacuation of the cities. A second forced migration was carried out at the end of 1975, when large numbers of people were moved into the sparsely populated but fertile region of northeastern Cambodia. Tens of thousands of Cambodians fled to Thailand and to Vietnam as a result of the hardship of the forced march and of agricultural reconstruction.

The new regime in Cambodia took other severe measures besides emptying the cities. Currency was abolished and the money system replaced by barter. Schools and universities were closed, with the exception of "political reeducation" centers. All foreigners were expelled from the country.

Only occasional pieces of information trickled out through Cambodia's sealed border. A year after the new regime came to power, it removed Sihanouk from his position as figurehead president. The fact that Prime Minister Pol Pot was also head of the Cambodian Communist Party—and, in fact, the very existence of the CP—was revealed only in September 1977, during Pol Pot's visit to Peking.

#### Border War With Vietnam

In early 1978 Cambodia began to receive more foreign attention as a result of open

border warfare between Cambodia and Vietnam. Periodic clashes had apparently taken place ever since the imperialists were driven out of the two countries, and serious fighting began to occur along the border in April 1977. But the conflict was acknowledged only on December 31, 1977, when Cambodia announced it was breaking diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

Cambodia and Vietnam have each made extravagant and basically unverifiable claims about the other's responsibility for the conflict. Each has accused the other of terrible atrocities. Radio Phnompenh says that Vietnamese troops behave "in the same or even worse manner than the Thieu-Ky and South Korean mercenary troops of the past." The Vietnamese have called Cambodian atrocities "worse than the My Lai massacres." Both claim that their countries were invaded, and both claim victory after each new round of battles.

The statements broadcast by Radio Phnompenh are characterized by nationalist zeal coupled with shrill denunciations of Cambodia's stronger neighbor. Pol Pot told visiting Yugoslav journalists that the Vietnamese were trying to take over Cambodia "by sending every year many hundreds of thousands or millions of Vietnamese to come and install themselves in Kampuchea." Radio Phnompenh warns Cambodians against those who want to "commit aggression against us as their greedy, fascist, and savage hearts dictate."

Foreign observers sometimes blame the conflict on traditional hostilities from the distant precolonial past. However, when the Cambodians make specific accusations against the Vietnamese, they tend to concentrate on a more recent period, and specifically on betrayals by the Vietnamese leadership during the fight for independence.

Pol Pot has complained that all the gains of the independence struggle against the French "dissolved into thin air" at the 1954 Geneva Conference, when the Vietnamese refused to support Khmer Rouge demands. While the Vietnamese got control over the northern part of Vietnam and the Pathet Lao got two provinces of Laos, the Cambodian Communists were told to disband, disarm, and throw their support behind then-King Norodom Sihanouk. According to *Far Eastern Economic Review* reporter Nayan Chanda, writing from Hanoi in mid-1977, "The Vietnamese reasoning for the sacrifice of the Cambodian movement was that it was a necessary tactical move to consolidate the communist position in Indochina."

The Vietnamese continued to advise the Cambodians to support Sihanouk, even when Sihanouk's armies were hunting down Communists and killing them. The Vietnamese took this position because Sihanouk provided them with sanctuary and supply trails in Cambodia.

The Cambodian ambassador to Laos told Chanda in early 1978 that in the mid-1960s the Vietnamese revealed the names and hiding places of leading Khmer Communists to Sihanouk, in exchange for sanctuary and transit facilities. Chanda was told that this led to important cadres being killed. This story has not been verified, but there was nothing in the political attitude of the Vietnamese toward the independence struggle in Cambodia that would make such a betrayal impossible.

After Sihanouk was overthrown in 1970, the Vietnamese began to pressure the Cambodians to make the prince nominal head of the resistance forces. Chanda reports from Hanoi that "one of the most significant Vietnamese contributions to the success of the Cambodian struggle in Vietnamese eyes was to persuade Cambodia to accept Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the deposed head of state, as the nominal head of the resistance." Chanda describes how this was accomplished, in spite of the fact that "the Cambodian communists hated [Sihanouk] because he had killed many of their comrades."

The final betrayal came after the Vietnamese signed the Paris peace accords in January 1973 and attempted to persuade the Khmer Rouge to stop fighting and negotiate a similar settlement with the Americans. William Shawcross, writing in the *New York Review of Books* of April 6, 1978, says:

During the first half of 1973 [Kissinger] attempted to make the aid for reconstruction that Nixon had secretly promised Hanoi conditional on a ceasefire in Cambodia. The available evidence suggests that the North Vietnamese did attempt to pressure the Khmer Rouge into talks.

When the Cambodians refused, Shawcross continues, "Hanoi then began to restrict the Khmer Rouge's arms supplies."

According to the Phnompenh regime, the Vietnamese leadership is conspiring to overthrow the Cambodian government or is seeking to dominate its weaker neighbor through imposition of an Indochina federation.

Various sources indicate that an effort was made to overthrow the Pol Pot government in April 1977, and that pro-Vietnamese elements were blamed for the coup attempt. According to Western intelligence analysts and Cambodian refugees, the unsuccessful coup was followed by purges in the army and in the party, in which those suspected of sympathy with Vietnam were transferred or executed.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* of October 21, 1977, quotes two messages that indirectly confirm that a rebellion occurred and that at least some long-time party members were involved. An editorial in the Chinese *People's Daily* praised Pol Pot for having smashed "the conspiratorial activities of enemies both at home and abroad," and a message from Kim Il Sung to Pol

Pot congratulated the Cambodians for having destroyed "the counter-revolutionary groups of spies who had committed subversive activities and sabotage, worming themselves into the revolutionary ranks for a long time at the instigation of foreign imperialists."

According to Western reporters, Vietnam is conducting "political reeducation" sessions for captured Cambodian soldiers in an attempt to win them over. Some of these observers, such as *Le Monde's* R. P. Paringaux, speculate that Vietnam intends to use these "reformed" Cambodian soldiers, together with antigovernment Cambodian refugees, to form the core for a new pro-Vietnamese "war of national liberation" in Cambodia.

### "Hell on Earth"?

The Vietnamese government has denied any desire to interfere in internal Cambodian affairs or acquire Cambodian territory. The Vietnamese claim that the Cambodian government has provoked the entire conflict in order to draw attention away from its own weakness, defuse internal opposition, and provide an excuse for the "purging of revolutionaries and patriots." Radio Hanoi has described the city of Phnompenh as "hell on earth."

Cambodia may not be "hell on earth," but it has little in common with the type of society that socialists around the world are striving for, or with the type of freedom for which Cambodian rebels fought the French, Japanese, and Americans for decades. Even if all the reports of purges and massacres are discounted, the picture that emerges of life in Cambodia is still one of extreme hardship and a complete lack of social freedom or political democracy.

The first thing that strikes foreign visitors to Cambodia is the almost total absence of the technological and social institutions of twentieth-century urban life. The second is the overriding emphasis on agricultural production and the quasi-military organization of society to carry out this single task.

### A Dead City

The city where perhaps as much as one-third of the population of Cambodia once lived is now almost empty. Five months after the evacuation of Phnompenh, in September 1975, aides to Prince Sihanouk visited the Cambodian capital and described it as a "dead city." They estimated its population at 50,000. In the beginning of 1978 several Scandinavian ambassadors described Phnompenh as a "ghost city." They were told that the population of the city was 20,000 but said that it actually appeared to be much less. Cambodian authorities told them there were no plans to rebuild the city.

These diplomats, as well as the Yugoslav journalists who visited shortly afterwards, noted that the residents of Phnompenh

today are not former town dwellers but rather soldiers and peasants fresh from the country. The only place the Yugoslavs met people raised in the city was on the work brigades in the countryside. According to Dragoslav Rancic, a reporter for *Politika*:

Among these work brigades we had the opportunity to meet former students from the former schools in the capital who, impelled by working enthusiasm, have meanwhile forgotten French but achieved other useful working experiences.

The streets of Phnompenh are empty, according to the Yugoslav reporters. In some of the streets, cabbages are being grown. All the street signs have been painted white. None of the traffic lights work. Marjoje Mihovilovic of *Vjesnik* writes of the capital:

In the courtyards of many houses, one sees ruined furniture and the shells of cars. The outskirts of the city are like automobile graveyards.

Cambodia has no post office and no telephone service. The only means of communication within the country is hand carrying of messages between villages. No television programs have been broadcast for three years. There is no postal or telegraph communication with other countries. After inspection by Cambodian officials, messages are hand carried out of the country in diplomatic pouches on the twice-monthly flight to Peking.

There is one newspaper in Cambodia, whose circulation has not been reported in the Western press. Called *Révolution*, it contains four pages and comes out three times a month. There is one magazine, which is published even less frequently. There is one radio station, the Voice of Democratic Kampuchea or Radio Phnompenh.

### Children at Work

The Yugoslavs were told that elementary schools were beginning to be reopened in the villages, although only a few subjects were being taught. Cambodia still has no high schools, trade schools or universities.

The journalists were taken to one elementary school, at the Leay-Bo agricultural cooperative. Its teacher told them that she had never taught before and that the reason she was doing it now was simply that the Communist Party had assigned her to be a teacher.

Many children apparently do not attend school at all. As Dragoslav Rancic describes it:

On many of these building sites, as well as in rice fields, we have seen very small children in full working élan, and while we walked through villages in the morning we would meet boys and girls with agricultural tools more often than with schoolbags.

A film made in Cambodia by the Yugoslavs has been shown on French television. Olivier Belin, writing in the French

Trotskyist weekly *Lutte Ouvrière*, describes scenes of children working:

There are twelve-year-old children working in factories—one of them has to stand on a box to reach his work. And there are children of the same age who make up the crews of fishing boats. "During the war, children this age carried guns and drove trucks," a Cambodian official explains—as if this were some kind of justification.

At his news conference in Peking, Pol Pot defended the fact that Cambodian children spend most of their time working. He said that the most important education was acquired in the cooperatives and factories.

If Cambodian children work instead of going to school, they also apparently work instead of playing. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* of October 21, 1977, quotes Cambodian President Khieu Samphan:

Our children do not play with toy cars, toy boats, and toy guns, which were formerly imported at considerable cost. Our children are happy with driving sparrows away from the crops, tending cattle and buffalo, collecting natural fertilizer and helping to build dams and embankments and dig reservoirs and ditches.

Cambodia is reportedly the only country in the world without a currency. Each individual receives a regular allotment of rice and salt, plus one set of work clothes a year. Individuals can engage in small-scale barter to acquire other goods, but apparently only within their own cooperative. Prices are theoretically established by the government, using the old Cambodian monetary unit, the riel, in order to regulate this exchange. According to the *Politika* reporter, however, "We had the impression that the members of the cooperative were not up to date on the fixed prices, since there is no money in use."

There is only one store in the city of Phnompenh, catering exclusively to the small diplomatic corps. It is open two days a week and accepts only U.S. dollars.

When Pol Pot spoke in Peking, he claimed that the elimination of wages and their replacement by a "communal support system" had solved the differences between city and countryside, between workers and peasants, and between manual and intellectual labor. But the truth is that Cambodia's moneyless economy has little to do with any kind of communist equality. It is an economy based on the most primitive kind of face-to-face barter. The lack of currency only reflects the lack of trade and lack of commodity production. Insofar as living standards have been equalized (which Pol Pot probably exaggerates), they all seem to have been reduced to a fairly miserable level.

Almost the entire population of Cambodia appears to be engaged in agricultural production. Special emphasis is placed on building or rebuilding the irrigation system, much of which was demolished by U.S. bombs. The light industry that exists is largely related to agricultural production

or to dam construction. Pol Pot told the Yugoslav journalists that as industries were rebuilt they employed new workers—that is, people who were not workers under the old regime.

The population of Cambodia is organized into agricultural cooperatives and mobile work brigades. The cooperative is the basic economic and social unit through which food allotments are made and work is organized. The Yugoslav visitors concluded that it would be almost impossible to survive outside a cooperative in Cambodia. The work brigades are groups of as many as 20,000 young people who go from one construction project to another.

The single overriding task the government seems to have set is simply to feed the population. There are conflicting reports as to how well this has been accomplished. Refugees from Cambodia all tell of widespread hunger and starvation. But visitors to Cambodia have seen no evidence of starvation and generally report that food supplies are adequate if not plentiful.

Gareth Porter, who has studied the available information on food production in Indochina, thinks that Cambodia is in a better position than either Laos or Vietnam. (Porter tends, however, to accept uncritically Phnompenh's statements on agricultural achievements.) A State Department official told the *Washington Post*, "Last year's harvest [in Cambodia] was pretty good, and people are probably eating better. There have even been reports of some rice exports."

#### No Political Freedom

It is not necessary to accept the more extreme refugee stories about forced mass marriages and political terror to conclude that there is little social freedom in Cambodia and even less political democracy. Travel around the country is restricted, and people appear to have little say in determining where and with whom they will live and work.

The Communist Party, which according to Pol Pot rules the country, remains a remote and mysterious body to most of the population. According to the reporter Mihovilovic:

Today the party has a name, a secretary (Pol Pot), a small circle of leaders—no more than 10 of them. But ordinary party cadres still operate in total secrecy. At the grassroots, even who belongs to the party is kept a secret. . . .

No sources of information on Cambodia have indicated that there is any way for ordinary people to make their sentiments known or to influence policy decisions. Although "political education" classes are held, the regime has not published or made available Marxist books.

In addition, reports have begun to appear about special privileges enjoyed by the ruling elite. These are based on the testimony of refugees and have not been

confirmed by other sources.

One refugee interviewed in Thailand said that officials and soldiers get special treatment: They live separately, eat sepa-



Christian Science Monitor

rately, and receive the best food, including chicken and pork. Another refugee, a former soldier, said that soldiers receive clothing regularly and, unlike civilians, are also given shoes.

*Far Eastern Economic Review* reporter Donald Wise describes the distribution of rice in Cambodia according to U.S. intelligence sources (probably based on refugee testimony): "VIPs get the highest ration, regular forces come next, with local troops on a lower scale and the general population last."

The most questionable body of information on Cambodia concerns massacres and the use of terror to control the population. Yet this is what has been given the most sensational coverage in the Western press.

Some of the evidence has been shown to be fraudulent. The widely circulated figure of one million executions by the Phnompenh regime is based on a contrived interpretation of an alleged statement by the president of Cambodia, in an interview that some knowledgeable sources believe could never have taken place.

Atrocity photographs "smuggled" out of Cambodia have been published in the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Paris Match*, and elsewhere. But, according to the *Washington Post* of February 19, 1978, "Several U.S. and other experts believe that these pictures were posed in Thailand."

In a review by Jean Lacouture of Francois Ponchaud's book *Cambodge, Année Zero*, Cambodia was accused of staging "the bloodiest revolution in history." This and similar characterizations were picked up and given wide circulation in the U.S. news media. Lacouture subsequently confessed that he had misrepresented and exaggerated some of Ponchaud's conclusions.

Refugees interviewed in Thailand have told stories of brutal massacres of entire villages. According to some of them, virtu-

ally all educated Cambodians and soldiers under the Lon Nol administrations were executed, followed in many cases by their wives and children.

Taken by itself, however, refugee testimony is an unreliable source of information. The situation refugees generally face is quite desperate, and it is always to their advantage to paint the darkest possible picture of the country they have fled. A Khmer-speaking interviewer who recently toured the camps in Thailand was told by the refugees that camp directors hand-picked the individuals to meet with journalists who did not speak Khmer, "and singled out only those with horror stories to tell."

One of Pol Pot's statements in Peking can perhaps be interpreted as an attempt to justify purges and executions. He admitted that "contradictions do exist within the ranks of our people," and condemned the continued existence of various "spy rings working for imperialism and international reactionaries." He said there was also "another handful of reactionary elements who continue to carry out activities against, and attempt to subvert, our revolution," some of whom "are using the guise of ordinary people." Pol Pot estimated that between 1 percent and 2 percent of the population, or as many as 160,000 persons, were included in this "handful."

As far as one can tell, the refugees who fled—and continue to flee—from Cambodia are not Pol Pot's "reactionary elements" or collaborators with the old colonial and neocolonial regimes. The vast majority seem to be poor peasants—the very social grouping on which the regime is based. *New York Times* reporter Henry Kamm recently visited camps in Thailand housing 5,000 refugees. He said he found less than ten refugees who spoke basic French, none fluently. Reporter Nayan Chanda spoke with refugees in Vietnam: Some were rubber workers, and a number were former members of the Cambodian Communist Party and long-time liberation fighters.

The Cambodian leadership has always looked to the peasantry for support. Its rule is based on the peasantry. It rejects the idea that a revolutionary movement can be built based on the working class, at least in a country like Cambodia. Its actions are designed to disperse and weaken the working class, rather than to strengthen it.

This peasant orientation is central to understanding important aspects of the Cambodian regime: its narrow nationalism, antiurban bias, cultural backwardness on questions like education, emphasis on self-sufficiency under the most primitive conditions, even its harshness. Such a regime cannot lead Cambodia toward recovery from the terrible economic and social destruction brought about by the U.S. warmakers, much less toward the building of a socialist society. □

# The 'German Model' Loses Its Attractiveness

By Werner Hülsberg

For more than three weeks in March and April, Baden-Württemberg metalworkers struck for a new contract. This struggle was preceded by a dockworkers' strike of several days in January, and by a confrontation marked by mobilizations, strikes in selected plants, and a general lockout, in which the printers' union sought a contract that would provide protection against layoffs.

Workers demonstrations, strikes, and lockouts characterized public life in the West German "island of stability" in the early part of this year. It was an especially unsettling picture for those who hoped, or had convinced themselves, that the downturn in workers struggles—the "social peace"—brought on by the panic atmosphere and demagogy of the SPD-FDP<sup>7</sup> government would be permanent.

However, this development was not necessarily foreordained. The yearly round of contract talks, led off by the negotiations in the metal industry, seemed at first to be stuck in the same rut as in previous years—mainly on account of the union leadership's willingness to compromise, which was demonstrated early in the talks. The leadership had already come out in favor of economic restraint and against seeking a "confrontational solution" (in the words of the metalworkers' president, E. Loderer).

From the beginning, this readiness to compromise stood in sharp contrast to the calculated preparations of the metal industry bosses—centralizing the negotiations through their association, conducting a costly propaganda campaign (including the distribution of millions of leaflets against the union's demands), and intensifying their public relations efforts.

The bourgeoisie backed up these efforts with an antistrike campaign in the mass media, by raising the old lies about trade-union responsibility for economic development, by invoking the approval of 3.5 percent wage increases by the government specialists (a formally independent body of economic experts whose task is to publish annual wage guidelines, since the government formally supports autonomous contract negotiations, and finally, with a unanimous vote of the cabinet

setting the upper limit on wage increases at 4.5 percent.

The lemming-like behavior of the trade-union bureaucracy in allowing these broadside attacks to pass unanswered had the inevitable result that the contract talks in their initial phase met with scant interest in the plants and offices, nor did they come up for discussion in the trade-union bodies within the plants. This lack of interest was especially reinforced at first by two experiences that the leaders of the workers movement had gone through in the past.

On the one hand, the fact that mobilizations were at a standstill in a time of crisis led to a change in the relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the ranks, which made it impossible in practice to "push the bureaucracy farther" by means of isolated mobilizations at the plant level.

On the other hand, many had simply had a "bellyful" where negotiations were concerned—organizing warning strikes and so forth, arousing expectations, and then later having to sell a rotten compromise to the membership. On the basis of these experiences with the policies of the bureaucracy, the possibility of a general test of strength, of a strike, was hardly taken into consideration.

However, this attitude was not an indication of the degree of militancy, but only of the growing skepticism with respect to the basic policy decisions of the trade-union bureaucracy. This "wait-and-see" attitude stood in blatant contradiction to the fact that in various plant-level conflicts, the possibility of resistance and struggle was being newly discovered, and furthermore, had long since crystallized in trade-union discussions. (For example, at the congress in the autumn of 1977, the trade-union leadership had to absorb stinging defeats on votes such as the thirty-five-hour week, "concerted action," and suspension of the arbitration procedure for grievances.)

Thus, the militancy that was just below the surface needed a few focal points that could redirect the pent-up energies toward the contract talks, and thereby throw them off the charted course of "peaceful and responsible" settlement.

#### Four Reasons for the 'Turn'

Four developments led to opening up the possibility of a strike in the metal industry.

The first factor was the bosses' hard bargaining position, which this time was not mere bluster but was meant seriously. Their aim was to impose a wage increase that corresponded exactly to the recommendation of the experts, so as to set a precedent that would amount to a genuine wage guideline (up to now the government's wage guidelines have been only recommendations). Hence, none of the customary negotiations and compromises, just "take it or leave it" offers. This tough stance steadily cut the ground out from under the union activists' expectations of the annual peaceful solution.

A further element in the turn was the dockworkers strike. To a certain extent, this strike of just under 20,000 dockworkers was an "industrial accident" for which the local trade-union bureaucracy and the dock owners shared equal responsibility. Here, too, no particular interest prevailed among the worker crews. Had an agreement been reached through "normal" negotiations, no conflict would have arisen. It was only when the negotiations stalled at an impasse, and the bureaucracy resorted to calling and carrying through a poll of the membership as an additional means of pressure, that the situation changed drastically. The poll was taken as a sign that the leadership was serious this time; the mobilizations began. They reached such a peak that they prevented a last-minute compromise, on the one hand, and on the other hand drove wage expectations significantly higher, to at least a 7 percent increase. When the bureaucracy did not win this during the strike, it got a resounding slap in the face in the second membership poll; a majority refused to compromise. The dock owners gave in and granted the 7 percent. The results of this confrontation made themselves felt on three planes:

First, the strike showed that by fighting, more could be gained. This was an important confirmation of an old truth in face of the antistrike campaign in the mass media.

Second, with the 7 percent increase, a level was set for wage agreements that was 100 percent higher than the "concessions" offered by the metal industry bosses, and that raised the sights of the metalworkers even higher. Moreover, the defeat of the bureaucracy in the second membership poll showed many conscious trade unionists a way once again to undermine the uncontested role of the bureau-

\*SPD—Socialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany); FDP—Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party).

cracy, and have an influence on mobilizations and a settlement. (Thus, later, at the time of the second membership poll, in the metal industry the slogan: "The dockworkers have shown the way. Whoever wants more must say NO!" spread quickly.)

The third element was the extremely hard fought struggle of the printers and typesetters against the introduction of new technology that would cost them their jobs, strengthening the tendencies established in the dockworkers confrontation:

a. The militancy of the printers strengthened the overall readiness to struggle.

b. The brutal attitude of the press barons (selective strikes by the printers union were answered with a general lockout) crystallized the understanding of large sections of the working class that now was the time to fight back.

c. The printers followed the example of the dockworkers, in that they rebelled against their leaders and forced them to withdraw their signatures from an initial contract proposal.

The importance of this struggle, including its impact on the consciousness of the working class as a whole, lay above all in the fact that for the first time in the German Federal Republic, a trade union had seized the offensive on the problem of unemployment and loss of wages owing to automation.

Furthermore, for the time being, the beleaguered Schmidt government is not prepared for a political campaign against the trade unions. Conditions have steadily worsened, and in a year of important elections on the state level, the SPD rightly fears a confrontation with the trade unions that would bring with it a loss of votes.

Above all, the activated elements and beginnings of working-class independence, as well as the attitude of increased expectations with respect to the bureaucracy's negotiating stance, led inevitably to a sharpening of the differences inside the bureaucracy that had long been present in the metalworkers union. The majority of the central bureaucracy still relies upon subordinating trade-union policy to the interests of the SPD-led government, and tries to nip every struggle and mobilization in the bud.

In opposition to this, the Baden-Württemberg district leadership around Franz Steinkühler has been trying for quite some time now to earn the confidence of the ranks by means of limited openings for mobilizations and by adopting "qualitative" demands, attempting to force this style upon the whole organization, or at least to win elbow room for such a policy. This sudden turn in the situation thus presented the left wing of the bureaucracy with an opportunity, which it exploited still further by giving an impulse to mobilizations.

Despite the sudden change in circum-

stances, the road to the strike did not proceed in a straight line, but more closely resembled an obstacle course, a zig-zag that mainly represented a race by the Baden-Württemberg trade-union leadership against the executive board's intentions to compromise.

Contract negotiations in the metal industry are conducted according to regional districts, which "independently" put forward their own demands. However, this independence is substantially reduced by the fact that before the demands are raised, the executive board fixes the upper limit, which for this round of talks was set at 8 percent. Thus, only differences over secondary demands and the form of the wage increase are possible (i.e., percentage increases or an across-the-board increase, although the executive board made it clear long ago that the form of the wage demands would not be made into a strike issue).

Nevertheless, this time the Baden-Württemberg leadership tossed a bombshell into their secondary demands. *In addition to wage demands, they sought a contract that would protect against demotions (job transfers to lower pay grades owing to automation).*

As a rule, the central bureaucracy envisions the course of the wage talks as follows: in an important district under their control (usually the Nordrhein-Westfalen district, which has the largest membership and is the *most* bureaucratically ossified), a compromise is reached quickly, without a struggle, which is then used as a yardstick and simply carried over to the other regions. This is how it was supposed to happen this time too, mainly as a way of dropping the troublesome demand for protection from demotions, which contained too much social dynamite, and could be achieved only through a strike.

Right from the beginning, the central bureaucracy's marching plan encountered a difficulty. The bosses did not meet them halfway. They interpreted the bureaucracy's readiness to compromise as a sign of weakness, and wanted to bring it to its knees. The expected quick settlement did not occur. On the other hand, the Baden-Württemberg district bureaucracy could win the race only by going on the offensive. So the district leader's followers spurred on the mobilizations from above. In face of skepticism, they had to set to work with a vengeance and drive expectations higher, by promising that it was for real this time and not just contract acrobatics. The result was a wave of warning strikes and mobilizations, in which tens of thousands participated, and which surpassed expectations by far.

This enabled the bureaucracy in the short run to explain that the negotiations had failed. In this way, a slight "head start" with respect to the Nordrhein-

Westfalen negotiations was gained. During the binding arbitration (the attempt to settle the contract talks by means of a neutral arbitrator who puts forward proposals on an agreement to prevent a strike), the mobilizations continued. An agreement was not reached, since the metal bosses were not prepared to settle for more than a 5 percent wage increase, and would agree only to totally ineffective job protection measures. The time between the breakdown of arbitration and the holding of the membership poll was characterized by a third wave of mobilizations that overshadowed everything that had happened up to then. In particular, besides warning strikes, there were mass demonstrations, in several cities, held during work hours in every case. In Ludwigsburg and Ulm (both cities with close to 100,000 inhabitants), 12,000 persons took part in these demonstrations! In Heidelberg, there was a joint demonstration of printers and metalworkers with more than 8,000 participants. Thus, under pressure, the trade-union officials had to state publicly that they would not agree to any new negotiations before a membership poll was held.

The vote in Baden-Württemberg brought the best results in decades. Of all organized metalworkers, 90.3 percent voted for a strike. On the following weekend, the executive board still hoped to block this development. It agreed to the offer of a top level discussion, which would have circumvented the regional negotiations. But the very next day, under pressure from the Baden-Württemberg union officials, the negotiations had to be turned into regional discussions, which did not fit the employers' plans. The negotiations collapsed. The strike could no longer be prevented.

#### 80,000 on Strike—150,000 Locked Out

The strike began with selective strikes of all metal factories in Stuttgart. Prior to this, there was an initial conflict between the left-leaning district bureaucracy and sections of the ranks. In order to avoid totally disavowing the executive board, a tactic was supposed to be applied that involved striking a few plants at a time. Only small, but vital supply plants for the automobile industry, which is concentrated principally in this region, were to be struck. This would have meant that the overwhelming majority would have had to wait passively for a lockout or a temporary shutdown of their plant. Mobilizations would thus have suffered a setback.

The selective strikes in Stuttgart (the headquarters for automobile companies such as Daimler-Benz, Bosch, and Porsche), with nearly 80,000 striking workers, were consequently a concession to the militancy that had been demonstrated.

Three days later, the employers imposed a lockout on all categories of workers in

plants with more than 1,000 employees. This amounted to 150,000 metalworkers. Scarcely a quarter million metalworkers were actively engaged in struggle. Although the left wing tried to put up a fight and eventually carried it through, in its style and method of organizing the strike, it did not go beyond the traditional, bureaucratic understanding of labor struggles. Initiatives toward self-organization, mass participation, and complete information were still foreign concepts in this strike.

It was a strike of trade-union officials. Strike pickets were designated from above by the plant leaderships, just as the strike leadership on the plant level was appointed by the local leadership. In the course of the strike, rallies took place, at best, but no strike assemblies. The majority were sent "on vacation." Even strike headquarters, in many cases, first came about on the initiative of left groups. Although possibilities existed for a full explanation of the struggle and its goals (every day a four-page information bulletin was published), the opportunity was scarcely used.

Despite this bureaucratic conception, there were encouraging developments.

In several cases (like Bosch-Reutlingen, or SEL-Esslingen, to name only the largest plants), the employees went on strike on their own initiative, even before the lock-out.

In a few cities—such as Ludwigsburg—a central strike headquarters was set up, where every day discussions were held and reports were given. Regular rallies and parties for the strikers and their families were also held.

However, this remained limited to a few cases. In general, the confidence of the ranks in their bureaucracy with its left image was not yet shaken. The carrying out of the strike strengthened this even more at the beginning. Criticism of the bureaucratic organization of the strike fell on deaf ears at first. Only when the expectations of the strike activists were disappointed could a turn come about.

#### Negotiations and A Rotten Compromise

The style and methods, as well as the outcome of the negotiations during the strike showed the central weakness of the "left" bureaucracy with full clarity. Even Franz Steinkühler's supporters did not count on a mobilization of all metalworkers, on an open confrontation with the executive board, but on backstage maneuvers. To be sure, Steinkühler was at the mercy of the executive board. On the basis of an arrangement between IG-Metall [the metalworkers union] and the capitalists' association, so-called "special arbitration" could be arranged in case of a strike. In meant that even in a regional strike, new top-level discussions with both associations would take place. This would

have meant bypassing the district bureaucracy, strike or no strike. They would have had to sell the settlement later on, without having had a hand in reaching it.

The capitalists, for their part, were counting on this type of solution, which even the central bureaucracy did not find unpleasant. For the capitalists, this was especially bound up with the hope of seeing the unpredictable "grumbler" Steinkühler brought into line by the executive board and eliminated once and for all.

Steinkühler himself did not seek to counter this pressure by making it public and extending the strike. Only within the negotiating committee was there any mobilization against the executive board (a speaker: "I think what we are dealing with here is a concerted action by the federal government and the executive board against our district!"), and a few compromises were forced out of Loderer. But all this was done behind the backs of the membership.

For this reason, Steinkühler seemed to the employers to be ripe for blackmail. In order to forestall the "special arbitration," he had to seek negotiations and display a willingness to compromise. During the weeklong negotiations, many important demands were abandoned so that the negotiations would not blow up and provide an excuse for discussions at the top. Since, for the time being, no "special arbitration" was involved, pressure for a settlement increased from the other districts. For, as a consequence of the strike, production began to come to a halt in nearly all sections of the automobile industry throughout West Germany. The executive board had abruptly broken off the prospect of mobilizations in the other districts, since it had already been forced to swallow the bitter pill of a strike in Baden-Württemberg. The compromise that was then negotiated under this unfavorable relationship of forces contained major reductions from the original demands.

An important element in the demands was dropped with the guarantees against job transfers; the wage increase turned out to be 5 percent, less than expected. The lump payment of 137 deutschmarks for each of the three months without a contract was not much of a help either. Everything taken together boiled down to an average increase of only 5.4 percent.

The goal of eliminating the two lowest wage categories, I and II, was only half-realized. Only Category I was done away with. But this was a drop in the bucket, because the scope of the contract included only 3,000 in Category I, but 40,000 in Category II.

#### First Reactions—Trouble with the Ranks

After the announcement of the results, what occurred was both a novelty for this district as well as a continuation of the recent tradition of the dockworkers and

printers. The ranks rebelled against the leadership. The protest acquired a mass character. In Stuttgart, after the announcement, the feeling was unanimous: "We didn't stand in the rain for three weeks for a settlement like this." The strike pickets sent protest petitions to the negotiating committee. In Stuttgart, a march on union headquarters by the enraged strike pickets in every plant was prevented only by calling an assembly of all active strike supporters.

At this meeting, however, the ranks' growing distrust burst into the open. Despite solemn appeals, forty of the forty-two persons who took the floor spoke against accepting the settlement. Before the session started, the district leadership—for the first time in memory—was forced into a discussion by angry metalworkers. In many plants, meetings of shop stewards were called, all of which opposed the settlement by an overwhelming majority and called on the negotiating committee to reject it. Salaried officials were forced to attend all kinds of discussions with the strike pickets that were conducted in a tumultuous atmosphere. Even at the meeting, Steinkühler required several hours to knock the little circle of "select individuals" into line. Nevertheless, a minority of 10 percent voted against acceptance.

A defeat of the "left" bureaucracy in the second poll is, of course, very unlikely. The decisive majority has only observed the confrontation passively. Opinion is divided; in many large plants, the owners voluntarily granted further improvements in order to deepen the split. And above all, according to the union regulations, the strike could only be continued if more than 75 percent reject the settlement.

Nevertheless, it would be a victory if a large minority or a small majority rejected the settlement. This would be a visible symptom of a growing rift between the bureaucracy and the ranks in this most progressive, combative, and experienced IG-Metall district, a development whose repercussions would also have effects on the entire union and on class confrontations.

Even though the second poll had not yet been held at the time this article was written, nevertheless, we can draw some important conclusions and generalizations from the class confrontations of the last three months.

*First:* In the interest of its long-term rule, the West German bourgeoisie is less and less inclined to even minimal concessions. However, up to now such concessions laid the basis for class collaboration between the bosses and the trade-union bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is compelled to show its colors—for one side or the other. This furthers a process of differentiation.

*Second:* The militancy of the West German working class has indeed suffered during the years of crisis, but it is not

crippled. The illusions about the need for "belt-tightening" in a crisis, and confidence in the government, have been smashed in face of practical results. While the bosses are tightening the screws, making more and more obvious use of the fact that from now on there will be one million unemployed, the climate in the plants is growing worse, and a consensus is likewise forming that the government is not unable but rather unwilling to do something about unemployment. The readiness to seek an answer in struggle is growing. However, the confidence—or indifference—with respect to the existing leadership has not yet been shaken deeply enough to prompt the workers to take the offensive on their own. But if the impression that the leadership is serious is consolidated, the opportunity for struggle will be sought out on a massive scale.

*Third:* However, in contrast to the past, a critical awareness of the activities of the leadership has grown. The criticism of bureaucratic conduct is no longer only the fetish of a few socialist and revolutionary forces, but will become a mass phenomenon, as soon as the bureaucracy can no longer fulfill expectations.

*Fourth:* In this situation, it is becoming increasingly clear that a crisis of leadership is about to break out in many unions, unleashed by the changed relationship of the ranks to the leadership. This has developed the furthest in the printers' union, where strikes were even consciously organized against the will of the leadership and its compromise in Hamburg, for example. In IG-Metall, this was partly overlapped by the intrabureaucratic conflicts and rifts.

*Fifth:* Increasingly, the rationalizations brought on by the crisis are a driving force of the workers' radicalization, with their accompanying massive loss of income, degradation of labor power, and intensified speedup. This constitutes a key to the understanding of the militancy on the docks, in the printing industry, and in the metal industry.

*Sixth:* The bureaucracy must seize upon this development by formulating goals of struggle against the effects of rationalization. However, this puts it into an even tighter spot. Although even the most modest demand in this direction increasingly calls the capitalists' control over the means of production into question, and brings the prospect of a different society into play, the bureaucracy nevertheless is counting on its ideology of reconciliation with capitalism. It is getting more and more deeply entangled in difficulties, since the struggle to achieve such demands fosters a general politization, and strengthens a distrust of the bureaucracy that promotes an interest in political solutions.

*Seventh:* Nevertheless, this latest development as yet represents no general turning point in the development of the class struggle. The growth of militancy, and

even strikes do not automatically mean that a broad, politically conscious layer within the working class will be built up overnight. A workers vanguard represents the only guarantee that economic struggles will develop further into political struggles and a wholesale posing of political questions, thereby giving direction to class confrontations.

After decades of heavy defeats involving a "new" working class that has grown up

in the depoliticized climate of the 1950s and 1960s, such a vanguard exists only embryonically.

But the fact that there were three important struggles in three months, the character of the confrontations, and the growing criticism of the bureaucratic leadership are creating favorable conditions for the development of a broad new workers vanguard on an anticapitalist basis.

March 4, 1978

## Class Collaboration Not at Issue

### Indian Stalinists Seek to 'Narrow Differences'

By Sharad Jhaveri

Soon after the conclusion of their party congresses, the two major Stalinist parties of India agreed to have a "frequent exchange of views in order that while unity in action is developed, the two parties get a better understanding of each other's positions and, if possible, narrow down their differences."

The representatives of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India, Marxist (CPI(M)), met in New Delhi April 12 and issued a joint communiqué. It stated:

The two sides exchanged information on the political positions of their respective parties as they emerged out of the Bhatinda and Jullundar congresses. . . . It was found that, while there were undoubtedly differences on several issues, there was a large area of agreement on how the two parties can, along with other left and democratic parties, organisations and groups, take up the burning issues affecting the people at large.

It also stated that the two parties will work for bringing together in common campaigns trade unions, kisan sabhas (peasant assemblies), and other mass organisations.

The statement did not spell out the issues on which such unity in action will be forged, nor the differences which divide the two parties. But E.M.S. Namboodiripad, in an editorial in the April 13 issue of the CPI(M)'s paper *People's Democracy*, assessed this new move as a "modest beginning," although a wide gulf still separates the two parties on ideological and political questions.

According to Namboodiripad, the differences include: (1) the assessment and approach to the world Communist movement and the socialist camp; (2) the role played by the two leading contingents of the world Communist movement (the So-

viet and Chinese Communist parties); (3) the assessment of the "third world" countries and their ruling classes; (4) the assessment of the internal economic and political situation in India; (5) the role played by the ruling classes and the parties representing them; and (6) the tactics pursued by the various left and democratic parties, including the two Communist parties.

This was the first such meeting in almost a decade. In May 1969, representatives of the two parties met in Calcutta to thrash out problems relating to popular-front governments in which they were participating in Kerala and West Bengal. Soon thereafter, both coalitions were dismissed by the central government.

Although the agreement surely reflects the desire of the rank-and-file workers of both parties for unity, it was reached behind their backs. Moreover, it will not unify the proletarian vanguard on the basis of an intransigent Marxist policy.

The agreement cannot be regarded as even a modest experiment or a beginning in developing a united front of working-class parties. Neither the CPI nor the CPI(M) has the perspective of forging a fighting front of the working class under their influence to resist the offensive of the bourgeoisie.

Being allied with the ruling Janata Party, the CPI(M) obviously will not have anything to do with actions that would undercut the bourgeois Janata regime.

As for the CPI, its supposed move toward unity in action is no less guided by an opportunist perspective. It is out to oppose the Janata Party at any cost. In its view, the class enemy is the Janata Party and not the bosses.

April 30, 1978

### Appeal by Thirty-two Political Prisoners in Tabriz

[The following appeal was issued April 23 by thirty-two political prisoners in Tabriz, Iran. The translation has been provided by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran,\* which is circulating the appeal internationally.]

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To the Honorable Head of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights:

We, a group of political prisoners in Tabriz, respectfully request to inform you that we have been arrested by agents of SAVAK [the Iranian secret police] because of reading a leaflet, a book, or participating in university demonstrations.

We have been interrogated under physical and psychological torture. Based on dossiers prepared under these conditions, we were sentenced to long prison terms in secret military tribunals held in Tabriz and Tehran.

In violation of Article 131 of the Iranian General Penal Code, which explicitly condemns all acts of torture and violence against a defendant and considers as invalid all self-incriminating confessions, as well as those incriminating others, extracted under torture;

In violation of Article 72 of the Supplement to the Constitutional Law of Iran, which states that "all political disputes must be referred to civilian courts, unless otherwise indicated by law";

In violation of Article 76 of the Supplement to the Constitutional Law of Iran, which states that all trials must be public, unless their proceedings are considered to be disruptive or contrary to public morality;

\*853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003.

And in violation of Article 39 of the Supplement to the Constitutional Law of Iran, which maintains that "in relation to political offenses, members of the press and jury must be present at a trial," our trials were held before secret military tribunals and in the absence of a jury.

In view of the recent statements by governmental authorities to the press and official international organizations, denying any knowledge of the use of torture in the past in Iran, we political prisoners of Tabriz request to be put on trial again, in open civilian courts and in the presence of a jury.

We have repeatedly conveyed to the authorities—both verbally and in written form—our demands for civil rights. They have responded that the fulfillment of our demands exceeds the limits of the authority vested in them. We therefore appeal to you to take prompt action to ensure the fulfillment of the following:

1. Delivery to us of all legal Iranian and foreign books and newspapers brought to us by our families.
2. Provision for us of personal shortwave radios and cassette players.
3. Permission to visit our families and relatives.
4. Increase in our food rations.
5. Reduction of the high prices at the prison commissary and management of the commissary as a cooperative.
6. Access to the prison doctor and the right to send patients to city hospitals whenever necessary.
7. Provision of adequate space for the prisoners.
8. Establishment of trade workshops for prisoners.

9. Improvement of the prison dental clinic and repair of its equipment.

Because there has been no response to the above requests, which were brought to the attention of all responsible authorities on April 15, 1978, we are declaring a strike on receiving visits, beginning April 23, 1978.

1. Behrooz Haghi Mani'e, life imprisonment
2. Ebrahim Dinkhah, life imprisonment
3. Mohammad Azadghar, life imprisonment
4. Sa'eed Kardan Haivaie, 15 years
5. Mashallah Saleemi, 7 years
6. Hematali Norouzpour, 10 years
7. Massoud Kamali, 5 years
8. Firooz Zalzadeh Milani, 10 years
9. Ebrahim Mazhabi, 5 years
10. Jafar Nadjafi, 10 years
11. Seyed Sadegh Seyed Nourani, 5 years
12. Majid Jamil Azar, 5 years
13. Gholam-Reza Partovi Nedjad, 5 years
14. Jebreal Zamani, 5 years
15. Akbar Sadeghi, 4 years
16. Ghafour Bahari, 5 years
17. Rahmat-Allah Elhami, 5 years
18. Hojat-Allah Elhami, 4 years
19. Ali Athari, 5 years
20. Bagher Zinali, 3 years
21. Rahim Saraj Rezaie, 3 years
22. Ahmad Lotfi-Nejad, 2 years
23. Majid Irvani, 4 years
24. Ahad Sorkhi, 7 years
25. Majid Jafari, 4 years
26. Ali Azadfar, 6 years
27. Mostafa Rezaie, 6 years
28. Mohamad-Taher Adami, 11 years
29. Ata Alizadeh, 4 years
30. Habib Kazemzadeh Mehdi, 4 years
31. Mohamad Bagher Farhadian, 2 years
32. Reza Piltan, 4 years

### Seven Years Behind Bars in the Shah's Political Prisons

[The following appeal was issued in April by Behrooz Haghi Mani'e, a political prisoner in Tabriz, Iran. The translation has been provided by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran, which is circulating the appeal internationally.]

\* \* \*

To the Honorable Head of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights:

Seven years have gone by since I, Behrooz Haghi Mani'e, born in Tabriz and a

former school teacher in several Azerbaijani villages, was arrested and imprisoned following an attack by armed SAVAK [Iranian secret police] agents, solely because my political ideas are disliked by the government's center of thought control.

Ever since my arrest, I have undergone the most abominable physical and psychological torture, the nature and diversity of which is known to all freedom-loving and progressive international organizations and individuals. The elaborate phony dossiers on my case compiled by the government during all these years of inhuman

torture contain not a single confession that would confirm the charges leveled against me in the military courts.

According to Article 5 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, to which the Iranian government is a signatory, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment."

According to Article 131 of the Iranian general penal code, "torture is illegal and all statements made by the defendant under torture, incriminating himself/herself or incriminating others, are invalid for



judicial or administrative purposes."

According to Article 79 of the Supplement to the Constitutional Law of Iran, "In relation to political offenses, members of the press and jury must be present at the trial." And, according to Article 72 of the same Supplement to the Constitutional Law of Iran, "all political disputes must be referred to civilian courts."

In spite of all this, I, like thousands of other political prisoners, was handed to Tehran military tribunals and there, contrary to the above-mentioned laws, was tried secretly in the absence of a jury and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

From the moment of my arrest, when I was transferred from my home to the capital, I was declared forbidden to receive visits or have correspondence. This caused a great deal of anxiety and psychological hardship for my family because for months they had no information on my whereabouts.

After being convicted, I was exiled to another prison. The regime's intention in exiling political prisoners to faraway regions of the country cannot be anything but:

1. To exert financial pressure on the prisoner's relatives and create extreme hardship for the prisoner's entire family.
2. To cause mental stagnation and, therefore, brainwashing of the prisoner.
3. To stifle the prisoner's revolutionary character.
4. To impose the government's policy of repression by cutting off the prisoner's contact with his or her family and birthplace.
5. And finally, to deny the prisoner the moral and material support he or she may receive from conscious people.

While being held in a solitary cell in Sanandaj prison, every moment of my imprisonment meant getting closer to conscious, gradual death and tolerating all kinds of insults and round-the-clock barbaric tortures. The aim of spreading fear is to create a police-dominated atmosphere of repression in the prisons, where any and all outcries of the prisoner are stifled so that no one will dare to say a word against the violations of prisoners' rights.

For months, I struggled with death in a cell infested with fleas and bedbugs, saturated with the putrid odor of the toilet, and deprived of all sunlight. Prison guards refused to pass to the prisoners the books brought by visitors as gifts. But plentiful were the uninterrupted screams and cries of helpless prisoners being tortured in the dungeons. The clinking sound of chains on prisoners' feet would be mixed with their screams and cries.

My resistance and support of the just demands of prisoners made the guards furious. They revealed their reactionary nature when they dragged into my cell a dying inmate with all kinds of contagious diseases. By the admission of the prison doctor, this patient would have seriously

jeopardized the health of nonpolitical prisoners had he been taken to their section. I ask, in which medical school has the immunity of political prisoners to contagious diseases been proved?

After two or three days, the poor prisoner, who had received absolutely no medical attention, died in my cell. After his death, the guards, disregarding all human rights, denied all my legal requests to disinfect my permanent residence (the dungeon of gradual death), hoping to intensify my psychological torture. But the persistence of torture could not sow the seeds of subservience in my mind. What it did was to make me further aware of the barbaric nature of the regime.

On a midnight in the summer of 1972, the prison authorities, who had provoked me into protest, took me to the prison yard, tied my hands behind my back, and whipped me. Then they forced me to lay down in an area covered with sand and small pieces of broken glass. At that point, while my right arm was bleeding, and while my hands were still tied behind my back, I was forced to lay down naked on a slab of concrete, where they tortured me for hours.

Using the same frame-up charges that are routinely leveled against every political prisoner—communist propaganda, insulting his majesty, inciting prisoners to riot, and so forth—they again put me on trial, sentencing me to three years of imprisonment.

Following this show trial, I was exiled to Bandar-Abbas prison, a prison that brings painful memories of the past to the minds of the oppressed people, a prison in which hundreds of people have lost their lives either because of the unbearable heat or as a result of torture. Hundreds of prisoners have never come out of this dungeon, and thousands of families have waited in vain for the return of their loved ones.

In this distant prison, 3,000 kilometers from my family and under unbearably hot weather, the police were able to enforce the government's repressive policy to the fullest possible extent. One of my friends, Sa'eed Kalantari, who as a result of torture during interrogation suffered from a hernia and asthma, was separated from the rest of us after seventeen days of a collective strike. He was transferred to Ghezal-Ghaleh prison under the pretext of medical treatment. But after months of further torture he and eight other political prisoners were executed under the false pretext of "attempting to escape."

In this prison also, the police resorted to all sorts of barbaric treatment to subdue the political prisoners. For example, with the cooperation of undesirable elements, the police would arrange to place broken glass or garbage in the prisoners' meals. They would spread false rumors about individual prisoners so as to subject them to character assassination.

In the smothering climate of Bandar-Abbas, the guards would deliberately cut off the electricity and water supplies and, in an attempt to further degrade us, would speak with joy of the pleasantness of their own air-conditioned offices. This they hoped would provoke the inmates. In the month of Mordad [July] with its murderous weather, the prison authorities, in collaboration with city police officials, threw me into an unbearably hot and stinking cell.

No criminal is even subjected to such a punishment at that time of the year. My entire body began to blister and swell due to the intense humidity and the lack of oxygen. The pain in my heart made every moment of this gradual death less tolerable. But sudden death did not come.

Some time later the prison guards and the city officers subjected me and the rest of the political prisoners to the worst kinds of torture because we would not give in. Everyone began to throw up, and one of my friends, Hossein Khoshnevis, remained unconscious and bleeding for more than twenty-four hours.

The unbearable prison conditions prompted us (Mohammad Ali Partovi, my martyred friend Behrooz Sanei, Hossein Khoshnevis, and Behrooz Haghei) to go on a hunger strike in the hot and humid prison cell. We in fact preferred to die in this way rather than suffer gradual death under torture and humiliation. For thirty-three days we remained on hunger strike with our feet and hands tied.

The guards, continuing their harassment, did not pay any attention to our strike and our demands. On the twelfth day of the strike SAVAK agents and prison guards began to destroy the prison walls with hammers, throwing wall plaster all over us. Up to the last day, the police would say: Your death certificates have already been issued and you will be buried as soon as you die; hundreds of others have met the same fate.

After thirty-three days of struggling with death we were again transferred to the inside of the prison compound. All our money and belongings had been stolen from us. The indifference of the authorities toward investigating our complaints and demands, and the distance from our families, which had cut off our contact with the outside world, gave the police a free hand to make whatever inroads they chose into our basic rights and made us welcome approaching death.

Months later, in September 1975, we (Hossein Khoshnevis, Mohammad Ali Partovi, Behrooz Haghei) were arrested while trying to escape. This was the best excuse for the police to murder us. After being arrested we were beaten so severely that after a few minutes nothing was left of our clothes, eyeglasses, and watches. After several days of constant torture and phony interrogations, our hair and must-

aches were shaved in a ridiculous fashion.

Falsely charging one of our cellmates, Behrooz Sanie, a student at the Agricultural College of Karaj, with "attempt to escape," they put all of us under torture at the same time. Then with total shamelessness and complete disregard for our basic human rights, the guards inserted their batons into our rectums while nonpolitical inmates watched. After one week of being subjected to physical and psychological torture in that hot and stinking prison cell, Behrooz Sanie died at last and was saved from the agony of gradual death.

During these four months of uninterrupted torture, we were not given enough bread to eat and not once allowed to use sufficient water. We were not permitted to go to the toilet even once without the chains on our feet. Under these conditions we were compelled to use our cells instead of the toilet. The chains had remained on our feet for such a long time that not only were our feet injured but the chains, having become rusted, broke off.

After a while we were each taken to separate cells. For twenty-four hours the police constantly banged on our cell roof, creating a frightening echo inside the cell. The contaminated climate of our cells and the resulting skin blisters led to an infection of our blood. The long duration of torture periods, the lack of sufficient oxygen, the unbearable heat and putrid odor, the extreme pain caused by the pressure of the chains, and the deprivation of sufficient food and water inflicted us with various diseases and general weakness.

After I was transferred to Mashhad prison in January 1976, I underwent a checkup for various illnesses in the surgery department of Shahnaz hospital. The doctors recommended intestinal surgery and blood and urine tests to determine whether I had tuberculosis. My lungs were diagnosed to be malfunctioning. I have spent thousands of toman of my personal money on various medicines. And now, twenty-six months since the doctor's recommendation, the prison authorities have made no arrangement for the operation or for the cure of my lung trouble.

Later on, when I was transferred to Tabriz prison, I underwent another checkup in February 1977 and again was referred to the local police department hospital for an operation and cure of my illness. The authorities, however, have refused to lift a finger. Such indifference toward my health by the prison authorities has caused even more serious health problems for me. This negligence is a routine practice and threatens the lives of hundreds of political prisoners.

1. I appeal to all authorized organizations, in particular to the Honorable Head of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, the Committee to Defend Iranian Political Prisoners, the International Red Cross, the Committee to Defend and Advance Human Rights in Iran, and

the esteemed and progressive newspaper *Le Monde* to use their power and initiative to organize an international tribunal to prosecute all Iranian torturers, especially those who are responsible for the death of my cellmate Behrooz Sanie, a student at the Agricultural College of Karaj.

2. I request that you save the lives of

thousands of political prisoners by advancing the cause of human rights and demanding the enforcement of international norms in relation to such recognized rights.

With due respect,  
*Behrooz Haghi Mani'e*, a political prisoner in Tabriz, Iran.

## Under Impact of Economic Crisis

### Parti Québécois Government Tightens the Screws

By Christian Corbière

The economic situation in Québec is distinctly worse than in Canada as a whole. The economic growth rate is less than half that of English Canada; the official unemployment rate is 11.5%, compared to 8.5% in the country as a whole. Thus, the difference between the rate of unemployment in Québec and the Canadian average, normally between 1.7% and 1.8%, has climbed to 3%. Québec did not benefit in the least from the very weak economic recovery in Canada.

Faced with the economic crisis, the Parti Québécois government's room for maneuver is extremely limited. Lacking its own program to stop the deteriorating economic situation, the PQ must work within the frame-work of Ottawa's austerity plan. It cannot even complete its own modest reform projects, let alone meet the demands of labor. The PQ thus finds it increasingly difficult to avoid clashes with the working class.

Social service cutbacks inaugurated by the Bourassa government are being pursued zealously by the PQ. Finance Minister Parizeau has clearly rejected large public works programs, a traditional means of reducing unemployment in Québec, for lack of funds.

In fact, up to now, the PQ has had a very strict policy of reducing both borrowing and the Québec government's debt. Its "sovereignty-association" goal requires "healthy public finances" to demonstrate that it is a responsible capitalist government and to maintain the borrowing capacity of a "sovereign" Québec.

The Levesque government's investment policy concentrates on consolidating the Québec economy. Together with the most important pulp and paper companies, the natural resources minister is planning a huge project of modernizing factories to restore the industry's ability to compete in international markets. Among other things, this plan will eliminate all uncompetitive and unprofitable factories. The

closing of the Wayagamack mill in Cap de la Madeleine gives a taste of what is to come.

Other traditional sectors of Québec industry now face possible extinction—textiles, footwear, and furniture. The factories in these sectors are small, often archaic enterprises. Last year 55,000 of the 100,000 workers in these industries lost their jobs. The elimination of these industries has resulted in official unemployment rates of over 20% in some regions.

The PQ response has been to attack Ottawa, calling on the federal government to apply protectionist measures.

The PQ began to move right even before it came to power—retreating on both its economic program and independence. Nevertheless, the PQ program contained enough social reforms to make it attractive to the working class and other layers of the population. On coming to power, the government granted some concessions to the working class: cost of living adjustments in the minimum wage; an end to all legal suits initiated by the Liberal government against the Common Front public sector unions; and pulling Québec out of Trudeau's "anti-inflation" program.

But in only a few months, the government adopted a blatantly anti-working-class course, under the impact of the economic crisis and imperialist pressure.

For months the PQ has been putting together the elements of a huge offensive against the working class. In the health sector, PQ efforts to "rationalize" public expenditure have already resulted in more than 1,000 jobs being cut. And by allowing local hospital administrations to determine the necessary cuts, the government has succeeded in preventing the health-sector workers from carrying out any centralized mobilization.

The Levesque government aims to turn back the clock to the dark ages of Québec education. In primary and secondary schools, the Ministry of Education green

paper sanctions a return to reactionary teaching methods. In the universities, a series of partial reforms aim to give greater powers to the administration and to establish more strict control over course content. All this tightening up of the education system will lead to cuts in the size of the teaching staff.

But the central element in the PQ's antiunion offensive is the Martin commission, which was set up to reevaluate bargaining in the public sector. Public sector contracts expire in June 1979. Negotiations for new contracts will probably overlap with the PQ's referendum campaign. As a result, the Levesque government is obsessed with the need to avoid repeating the experience of the Common Front struggles of 1972 and 1976.

The economic crisis confronts the PQ with a difficult task. It must continue to make social services more profitable while avoiding a major confrontation with the trade-union movement. As a result, the PQ's main aim now is to decentralize public sector contract negotiations as much as possible—to isolate the unions and defeat them one by one. It is determined to break the power of the most militant sectors once and for all: Hospital workers will come under particularly heavy fire.

This strategy of divide and rule will be coupled with an ideological campaign around the referendum, stressing the need to unite the nation behind the PQ government against Ottawa.

In addition to its attempt to isolate the public sector unions, the PQ government is working actively to divide the labor movement. It is now wooing the Québec Federation of Labor (FTQ), while adopting a much more aggressive policy toward the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and the Québec Teachers Federation (CEQ).

The reasons are easy to understand. The CSN and CEQ have been much more hesitant than the FTQ to give political support to the PQ. As well, the CSN and CEQ are the dominant federations in the public sector where the government plans to launch its biggest attacks.

At last May's economic summit at la Malbaie the FTQ adopted a much more collaborationist stance toward the PQ than did the other two federations. The FTQ has also supported Law 45, the so-called antiscab bill. It refused to participate on the December 16 Québec City demonstration against Law 45.

In the guise of offering some concessions to the unions—making unionization easier, "prohibiting" scabs—Law 45 contains provisions directly attacking the independence of the unions from the state. It determines the methods of strike votes, allows the state to intervene in these votes, and reaffirms the law against strikes in "essential services."

And that's not all. In the face of the employers' enraged reaction, the PQ softened the "antiscab" sections of the bill by adding two new clauses: the prohibition against hiring scabs will not apply in services designated as "essential"; and the bosses will be allowed to take measures they judge adequate to protect themselves against attacks on their private property.

In essence, Law 45 will not apply to the government, which can declare its employees to be performing "essential services." And the bosses have an open door to use any pretext to hire "supplementary personnel." Finally, the "antiscab" provisions apply only during legal strikes.

The FTQ has two reasons for supporting the law. First, it supports clauses that facilitate the unionization campaigns it is planning. Second, because the international unions which constitute the back-

bone of the FTQ have their constitutions outside Québec, they are not subject to clauses relating to government interference in strike votes and elections of union officials.

Because they are more directly under attack, notably by the "essential services" clause, the CSN and CEQ have denounced the amendments.

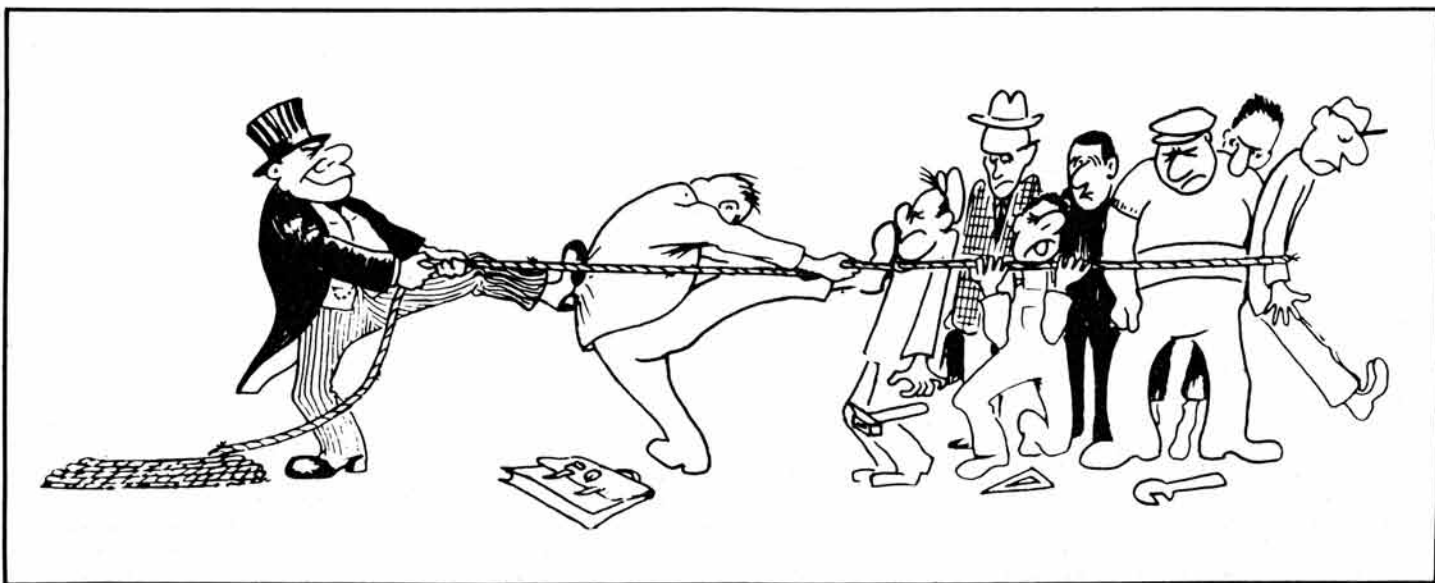
Despite its moves to increase state control of internal union life and to increase the obstacles to the right to strike, the PQ is not interested in a massive confrontation with the labor movement. This fact lies behind PQ government attempts to divide the trade-union federations.

The PQ is still able to exert tremendous political pressure on the labor movement because of the national question. Despite more militant rhetoric (and a few more militant actions) than the FTQ, the CEQ and CSN leaderships have no proposals to oppose the PQ government. They have made no moves to form a workers' party based on the trade unions in clear opposition to the PQ.

The PQ's strategy is determined by two constraints: It must manage the economic crisis as well as possible and take advantage of the crisis to begin to restructure the economy of a future "sovereign" Québec. And it must prove itself a loyal capitalist manager in the eyes of imperialism.

Winning the struggle for the referendum is the PQ's trump card in its negotiations with imperialism. The realization of a "national consensus" in Québec and the establishment of "social peace" are the fundamental elements for a referendum victory and cool-handed negotiations with imperialism.

From these imperatives flow the PQ's constant drive to check, by every possible means, the independence of the trade-union movement. □



Socialist Voice

# The Frame-up of the IRSP Four

By Patrick Farrelly

DUBLIN—The trial continues in the Special Criminal Court in Dublin of four members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party charged with robbing a mail train two years ago, in March 1976. The four defendants—Michael Plunkett, general secretary of the IRSP, Osgur Breatnach, editor of the IRSP paper *The Starry Plough*, Nicky Kelly, and Brian McNally—have been on trial since January 19, making this the longest trial in the history of the southern Irish state.

However, the uniqueness of this case lies not in its longevity but in the background to it. If the four defendants are found guilty in front of this juryless court, they face long sentences from a tribunal that is renowned for its high conviction rate and flexible rules of evidence. Three of the four defendants have no evidence whatsoever against them except their own signed confessions, which they claim were beaten out of them.

It was mainly a result of the very well substantiated allegations that the IRSP made against the southern police that Amnesty International sent a team of investigators to look into claims of police brutality and torture.

The "Great Train Robbery" the defendants are being charged with carrying out took place during the term of the previous coalition government. It was during this period that the infamous "Heavy Gang" was operating in the southern police force. Specially organised to torture confessions from Republican militants, the Heavy Gang's activities, and indeed the whole anti-civil-liberties attitude of the Government, was a strong contributory factor in its downfall in last June's elections.

Although the more "nationalist" Fianna Fáil was able to cash in on this sentiment and promise reforms, its proimperialist politics set very well defined limits to any such reforms of repressive legislation. Indeed, the fact that the Fianna Fáil government has chosen to proceed with the trial of the IRSP Four is an indication of its future intentions.

A lot is at stake in this trial. The reputation of the southern police has taken a hammering in the last year or so. The allegations of police brutality and more recently charges that the police have forged fingerprint evidence have shaken popular confidence in them.

The "law and order" chief of police, Edmund Garvey, was fired from his position by the new Fianna Fáil government.

Among the revelations in the press that followed his removal were that Garvey had a network of spies watching members of the new government and earlier had demanded from the director of public prosecutions that the police representative body be brought before the Special Criminal Court (which deals only with political offences). When this demand was refused, the director of public prosecutions was promptly put under police surveillance.

In the trial of the IRSP Four there is a clear conflict of evidence.

The police contend that the defendants, having signed confessions without duress, then proceeded to beat each other up in an attempt to blacken the "good name" of the police.

The defense claims that the four are the victims of a massive police frame-up and conspiracy. If the four are found not guilty and the police version of the events is rejected, not only would it represent a defeat for repressive policies, but the resulting charges against the police would produce a virtual Watergate that would severely curtail the maneuvering ability of any southern government.

However, republicans and socialists in the south are not entitled in such cases to the normal jury court system. The Special Criminal Court has no jury. It is presided over by three judges, usually chosen for their right-wing sentiments, who can be removed immediately if, for example, they tend to show a "soft" attitude to defendants.

Only in the most unusual circumstances is appeal granted, and even if it is the defendants are held in prison for the year or so it takes for such appeals to come through.

In the Special Criminal Court, moreover, the rules of evidence also are "special." For example, a person can be jailed for membership in an illegal organization purely on the word of a police officer, who is under no obligation to explain the source of his "evidence." This court is only too ready to accept police allegations against defendants and has already convicted numerous republicans and socialists purely on the basis of "signed confessions."

In the case of the Provisional republican Martin Taylor, who was charged with assassinating British ambassador Ewart-Biggs in Dublin two years ago, police have recently admitted that the only evidence they had against this man, fingerprints,

were in fact forged. There is little doubt that if Taylor had come to trial he would have been convicted by the Special Criminal Court and sentenced to death on the fingerprint evidence alone.

The trial so far has shown to what lengths a southern government will go in its proimperialist policies. At the time of the robbery, dozens of members and sympathisers of the IRSP were arrested under a law which allows police to detain suspects for up to forty-eight hours without charging them with any specific offence. Of these, over a dozen were singled out for the Heavy Gang treatment.

Finally, four were charged, although Police Chief Garvey had to be dissuaded from putting much larger numbers in the dock. Subsequently, the defendants and a number of those interrogated have taken out civil suits against the government for police assault.

Six doctors, both defense and prosecution witnesses, have testified to the physical condition of the defendants, one of whom, Osgur Breatnach, was removed to a hospital during his "interrogation" by police. Not only were the four kept in custody for the forty-eight hours, when this time limit was up, they were dragged outside police stations, "released" momentarily, and rearrested for a further forty-eight hour period.

Brian McNally has given evidence of being beaten on the genitals with a blackjack, a favored instrument among hoodlums of all kinds. This charge has been corroborated by medical evidence. The same person suffered from treble vision for up to two weeks after his interrogation. Another defendant, Nicky Kelly, could give only vague accounts of his detention in police custody, so blurred was his memory by the beating he received.

Even in the face of this overwhelming evidence, the attitude of the court was predictable. In the case of Osgur Breatnach, it was ruled that his detention for continuous periods of forty-eight hours, which had since been deemed unconstitutional, while amounting to an infringement of his rights was not done deliberately by the police. (That is, they supposedly did not know that they had already arrested him previously on the same charge.) And therefore any confessions extracted from him in this extended period were admissible. Such contorted reasoning is an example of the court's "impartiality."

Counselors Séamus Sorahan and Patrick McEntee, renowned for their defense of anti-imperialist prisoners, have so far run up against a solid brick wall in their attempts to get a better hearing for the IRSP Four. To make matters worse, one of the three judges presiding has taken to sleeping during the proceedings, a fact which was commented on by the national weekly *Hibernia*. When this fact was pointed out in court by the defence counse-

lors, it was of course dismissed as an unfounded allegation.

While the trial proceeds, the defense campaign for the IRSP Four continues. The implications of a defeat for the state in this case are being increasingly recognized. While the Fianna Fáil government makes demagogic overtures to republicanism, its interests are tied up with those of British imperialism.

Fianna Fáil has its traditional roots in the anti-imperialist movement of the 1920s, but it has since developed into the main ruling class political party, with a record of interning republicans and socialists without trial and building the basic framework of the heavy repressive apparatus that is the southern Irish state today.

The present government represents the more nationalist section of the southern bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. While it immediately removed an extremely repressive piece of legislation instituted by the previous coalition government, Fianna

Fáil has no intention of dismantling the repressive apparatus upon which the southern state depends for its stability and survival.

Therefore, Fianna Fáil has tried to shore up the reputation of the police by instituting its own inquiry into allegations of police torture and by sacking Gravey, as well as introducing some changes in the top personnel of the police force.

Failure to convict the IRSP Four would open up wounds in the state that would take some time to heal because this conspiracy goes deep into the higher echelons of the police force.

The defence campaign on behalf of the IRSP Four has, however, been weakened by the failure of the main civil liberties organisation, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, to support it. Organisations such as Official Sinn Féin and the Communist Party have likewise refused support.

Among the most prominent supporters of the defence campaign has been Ber-

nadette Devlin McAliskey, who at a recent public meeting described "recent cases in the north of Ireland where illiterates have written statements of confession." She has called for the broadest unity behind the IRSP Four. At the same meeting both Joe Cahill of the Provisional republican movement and Matt Merrigan, trade-union leader and prominent member of the Socialist Labour Party, spoke out against the frame-up of the IRSP Four.

Due to the very strict sub-judice laws in Ireland, which ban comment on cases before the courts, it has been virtually impossible to obtain press coverage for the campaign. It is here that international support for the IRSP Four can play a major role.

Previously in the case of two anarchists, Marie and Noel Murray, who were sentenced to death, international support was crucial in preventing their execution. Protests in countries where there are large numbers of people of Irish origin and identification can be especially effective. □

## Interview With Two Irish Trotskyists

# Encouraging Prospects for Anti-Imperialist Struggle

[The following interview with Brendan Kelly and Anne Speed, two leaders of the Movement for a Socialist Republic [MSR], Irish section of the Fourth International, was obtained by Gerry Foley in Dublin in mid-April.]

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*Question. What stage is the anti-imperialist movement at today in the formally independent part of Ireland?*

*Brendan Kelly.* For about the last year and a half, there have been the beginnings of a tentative upturn in the south. This has been shown by a number of developments. One was the crisis over the emergency powers law [in late 1976] during which the head of state, Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, resigned. Then there were press exposures of police brutality, beginning in particular in early 1977. And this culminated more recently in the dismissal of the police chief. On a more general level, this turn can be seen in the overwhelming victory of Fianna Fáil [traditionally viewed as the more anti-imperialist of the big parties].

We have also seen resistance to the repression develop in trade unions and various cultural and sporting organizations, such as Conradh na Gaeilge [the Gaelic League] and the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association]

*Anne Speed.* You can also see this turn in the new cultural trends, in the kinds of

books that are being published, and so on. This reflects clearly a rising nationalist sentiment. It gives rise to an atmosphere in which it is easier for us raise the question of fighting imperialism. For a long time the ideological campaign against nationalism by the coalition government and figures such as Conor Cruise O'Brien<sup>1</sup> made people afraid to discuss the implications of the British presence in Ireland.

There was harassment and intimidation, not only of people directly involved in political struggle but of anyone who expressed sentiments that people like Conor Cruise O'Brien didn't approve of. This created a feeling that it was dangerous to express nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments.

So, now when people are beginning to talk openly like Irish men and women again, this is a big change. It is an important indicator of the shift in mood. It is a very palpable thing. You can feel it when you're discussing with people.

1. Minister of posts and telegraphs in the coalition regime, a well known intellectual figure who was the most outspoken and consistent defender of liquidating historic Irish nationalism and carrying out a reconciliation with imperialism. Despite his international reputation as a liberal, he was also one of the most strident advocates of repression. After his defeat in the June 1977 elections, he was given the job of editing the London weekly *Observer*.—IP/I

*Q. What is the attitude of the new generation of youth coming up toward the anti-imperialist struggle and social issues, of those who would have still been children at the time of the mass civil-rights demonstrations in the north?*

*Speed.* One of the factors in the Fianna Fáil victory was the overwhelming support they got from young people. They also had a youth conference that was a huge success. Many of the resolutions passed at it were fairly radical in a populist sense. I think this reflects a continuance and strengthening of anti-imperialist sentiments among the youth.

*Kelly.* The revisionist interpretation of Irish history<sup>2</sup>, Conor Cruise O'Brien's interpretation, has received a major setback. I think that there is a general revulsion against it. Even in academic circles, it appears that a lot of historians have come to see that it is mainly apologetics. And some of Conor Cruise O'Brien's former cohorts in the academic sphere have actually abandoned him and returned to a

2. The argument that Ireland's problems were not caused by British rule and that the fight against the British government was either excessive or unnecessary. This school tends to present Irish problems as the result of objective and immutable economic laws and the invasions from Britain as more or less natural population movements.—IP/I

more traditional nationalist interpretation of Irish history.

In the colleges there has been a revival of interest by students in Irish culture and the Irish language. This is reflected by the growth of such organizations as Conradh na Gaeilge.

*Q. Before the rise of the civil-rights movement in the north, most radicalizing young people went to the Irish Labour Party. What is the attitude of the youth to the Labour Party today after it played a junior partner's role for several years in an openly pro-imperialist government?*

*Kelly.* The attitude is one of contempt. In University College Dublin [UCD], which is the biggest college in the country, the Labour Party has ceased to function. The Labour Party held a youth conference recently. It was kept more or less secret. The main reason for this was that the so-called youth were in their thirties. And in many constituencies, they could not even find delegates to attend the conference.

*Speed.* Young people who would normally be attracted to the Labour Party, that is, to a Social Democratic party, are now being attracted either toward Fianna Fáil or toward the Socialist Labour Party, which is a formation to the left of the Labour Party. Smaller numbers have gone to the CP or the far left.

*Q. How much support does the Irish Labour Party have left in general?*

*Kelly.* In the last election the electoral base of the Labour Party changed fairly drastically. Previously most of the Labour Party representatives in the Dáil [parliament] came from urban constituencies. Now, it's half and half between urban and rural constituencies. That shows that its base among the working class has diminished. However, it still has important links with the trade-union bureaucracy.

*Q. Is the Socialist Labour Party just the old left wing of the Labour Party, that is people who are somewhat left on immediate economic questions but not interested in the fight against imperialism?*

*Kelly.* The leadership of the SLP is left Social Democratic. However, it would be wrong to say that the SLP is simply a split from the Labour Party, because the vast majority of the rank and file of the SLP are becoming involved in politics for the first time.

*Q. How popular are the republican [militant nationalist] organizations among the youth? Are they still recruiting in this area?*

*Speed.* I think that there has been a downturn in recruitment by the republican movement generally. There is still a broad

feeling of support for it. But I think that the actual involvement in the structures of the republican movement has decreased.

This trend is likely to continue for some time because of the terrible repression and harassment that the republican movement has experienced over the last two years. Despite Fianna Fáil's verbal anti-imperialism, this intimidation still continues and it scares a lot of young people off. Many would buy the newspaper and sympathize with republicanism but feel nervous about joining republican organizations.

*Q. Is the so-called Official Republican movement attracting youth?*

*Speed.* I don't think so. The "Officials" are moving more and more to the right in Irish politics. They are adopting very conservative positions not only on the national question but on a whole series of social and economic questions. Sometimes this opens up contradictions in their own ranks.

I have been in trade-union meetings where members of Sinn Féin—The Workers Party [the "Officials"] have adopted positions more or less in favor of National Wage Agreements. They have refused to become actively involved in campaigns on such questions as the right to contraception.

They have set up a youth movement. But this, like many other organizations they have set up in the past, seems to be more or less a front with no real base among youth.

*Kelly.* The kind of orientation toward youth that the "Officials" have is indicated by the type of youth organization they have set up. It is called the Irish Democratic Youth Movement. It aims to become a section of the Stalinist youth movement, the World Federation of Democratic Youth [WFDY]. The whole tone and tenor of it are marked by the same stodginess that the WFDY has.

In the colleges and universities, the "Officials" control the actual apparatus of the student movement. But they don't control any of the major colleges. For example, in Dublin, at UCD and Trinity, which probably account for half the student population in the country, there is total hostility toward the leadership of the Irish Union of Students and toward the policy of the "Officials" in the student movement.

As for the Provisionals, it is clear that they have a tremendous amount of support among young workers, especially the most oppressed layers of young workers, the unemployed. We see that when we sell our paper in the pubs. There are a great many young people who are interested in the Provos and ask if we support them.

However, the Provos run no campaigns specifically directed at these youth. Since they see their organization in the south

essentially as a support group for the military campaign in the north, they have no way of attracting these people into their organization.

*Q. What about the Communist Party?*

*Kelly.* The Communist Party is not attracting many youth. Their youth organization has become more or less defunct. At one time, this group, the Connolly Youth, did have a certain attraction. But now it's just an adjunct to the CP and does not attract young people on the basis of youth work as such. Obviously some youth join, but not because the CP has a fighting policy on issues that affect youth.

*Speed.* There seems to be a small increase in the numbers of youth being attracted to the CP. This is a result of the break between the CP and the "Officials" on the national question. Some youth are going to the CP instead of the "Officials" because the CP is taking a better position on the national question than the "Officials," who tend more and more to deny its relevance altogether. This is an indication of the importance of the national question for young people.

*Q. What is the relationship of forces between revolutionists and reformists in the student movement?*

*Kelly.* I think that on the ground in the bigger universities, revolutionists are in a much stronger position now than they have been. For example, in University College Dublin, the "Officials," as well as the Labour Party, have ceased functioning as an organized group. In contrast to this, the MSR is fairly well implanted there and has a number of representatives on the Student Union Council.

The control of the upper layers of the Union of Students of Ireland has more to do with the undemocratic structure of this body than with any support they have. One of the ways the "Officials" manage to maintain their control is through a clause in the constitution that gives equal representation to all colleges. So, UCD, which has 10,000 students, has one vote on the National Council, whereas a college with thirty or forty students also has one vote.

*Q. A mass student movement has been slow in developing in Ireland, perhaps because the expansion in higher education came later than other places. What are the prospects for one developing now?*

*Kelly.* There has been a growth in the number of students but they are trying to restrict entrance into higher education now, in particular since there is mass unemployment of graduates.

*Speed.* The fact that the major political parties, especially Fianna Fáil, have been paying a lot of attention to youth shows that they see it becoming a more impor-

tant potential factor in this country and are concerned about it. There have been a lot of articles in the papers about the danger of a big pool of youth building up with no perspectives, since jobs are not being created fast enough here and the traditional outlet of emigration has narrowed considerably because of the international economic crisis.

The masses of youth are seeking solutions to their immediate problems, which are related to education and employment. But they show an understanding that solving these problems requires solving the general national problems. This process indicates that there is an interest in politics among youth and a general radicalization. It is too early to say that this is definitely moving in the direction of socialist consciousness.

But there is clearly a seeking for general political solutions. And this gives socialists a chance to present their answers to the national problems to a broad audience. It gives them a chance to address themselves to youth not just on their own special problems but on the overall questions. And at the same time, in the changing climate I described, we have a chance to raise the question of fighting imperialism.

*Kelly.* There has been a very broad depoliticalization in UCD in the recent period. The last two presidential elections have been won by candidates who wanted to advance this process, to get students to withdraw from politics. On the other hand, in both of these elections, candidates putting forward a revolutionary socialist position have gotten about a quarter of the vote.

While at the moment, there is a general apathy in the colleges, there is also a major left current that could play a big role if a crisis developed in the country. □

### 3,000 Strikers Jailed in Tunisia

Three thousand persons have been sentenced to prison terms of up to six years for having taken part in the national general strike called by the General Union of Tunisian Workers in January, and more than 3,000 have been fired from their jobs, according to French attorney Thierry Fagard. Fagard recently completed a fact-finding mission to Tunisia on behalf of the Paris-based January 26 Tunisian Collective.

Fagard told an April 28 news conference that of the 130 trade-union leaders currently imprisoned, 38—including the former secretary general of the union federation, Habib Achour—have been indicted for “conspiracy against state security.”

Several union leaders are said to have been severely tortured.



Starry Plough

Demonstration in Belfast demanding political status for prisoners.

## Plight of Political Prisoners in Northern Ireland

[The following statement was issued in Dublin May 17 by People's Democracy and the Movement for a Socialist Republic.]

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The two-year-old policy of the British Government to end political status in the North of Ireland must rate pretty high marks for hypocrisy. They assert blandly that offences committed by anti-imperialists before 1st of March 1976 were political, and at the same time assert equally blandly that all offences committed since then are criminal.

It rates pretty high marks for brutality as well. Eighteen months ago Kieran Nugent, the first republican to be tried under the new rules, refused to wear prison clothes or do prison work. Since then he, and to date over 300 of his comrades, have been held “on the blanket”—locked naked in a cell 24 hours a day.

Life under these conditions was always hellish. It is now indescribable. The prison administration and the British Government have continuously increased the pressures, punishments, and petty humiliations meted out to the protesting prisoners. They have now pushed the prisoners beyond the limit of endurance and as a result the latter have withdrawn all cooperation and are refusing to wash or slop out urine and excrement. It's difficult to find words to describe the resulting conditions. To the psychological effects of living and sleeping in this state has to be added the serious danger of disease and death from minor cuts or from eating in the cells. One glance at the results of Britain's

policy on political status should silence forever her claims to be carrying out a humanitarian policy of reconciliation in the North.

The media in both Britain and Ireland have played an ignoble role in all this. The British Government has lied continuously about conditions in H-Block and the media has never questioned their statements or tried to carry out an independent investigation. Now, by reporting the prisoners' sufferings as self-inflicted, they ignore the history of brutality and degradation that has driven them to this protest and thus effectively back the British Government's policy.

In order to counter this propaganda, we call on the supporters of the prisoners to take every opportunity and use every platform in order to publicize the plight of the prisoners. In the North it is up to the anti-imperialist organizations to unite and bring the mass of the anti-Unionist population out onto the streets in protest. The task of publicity is especially important in the 26 Counties [the formally independent part of Ireland]. We believe that there is a widespread sympathy for the prisoners and that united action there could bring overwhelming pressure to bear on the British Government.

The People's Democracy and Movement for a Socialist Republic extend our solidarity to the Republican and Socialist prisoners in H-Block, Long Kesh; in B-Wing, Crumlin Rd., and in Armagh Jail. We will work with anyone prepared to fight against this oppression and we appeal for the maximum unity in the fight for political status. □

### 50,000 Industrial Workers Strike in Brazil

By Fred Murphy

The biggest labor actions in Brazil since 1968 took place in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo from May 12 to May 23. About 50,000 workers in more than twenty automobile, rubber, and electrical-equipment plants were involved in a series of work stoppages centering around the demand for a 20% wage increase.

The strike by 10,000 workers that began May 15 at Ford Motor Company's assembly plant was typical. It was described in the May 24 issue of the São Paulo weekly magazine *Veja*:

Last week, as happens every day at Ford's Rudge Ramos installation in São Bernardo do Campo, the workers continued to get off the buses chartered by the company. Walking rapidly, they headed for the time clocks to punch in. Already in their work clothes, they took their places beside the machines in their respective sections. However, even after the sirens had sounded to announce the beginning of the work day, the workers continued to talk about the Brazilian football team's last game or about the rain that fell during the night. At the lunch hour, disciplined lines were formed in front of the serving counters of the kitchen—the only section where normal activity could be observed. After a rest, . . . everyone went back to their work places until the sirens sounded to mark the end of the shift. The workers then reboarded the buses as quickly as they had arrived and returned to their homes.

The strikes began May 12 when 2,500 workers at the Saab-Scania assembly plant in São Bernardo refused to work. On May 17, the 14,500 workers at the Mercedes-Benz plant joined the movement, and they were quickly followed by workers at Chrysler, Kharmann-Ghia, General Electric, Perkins Motors, Otis Elevators, Firestone, Pirelli, and other factories in São Bernardo and Santo André.

Some of these stoppages lasted only fifteen minutes, while others went on for a number of days. At Volkswagen, the workers carried out a one-hour warning strike on May 17 and began a general stoppage May 20.

With the exception of a few locally owned plants, all the strikes took place at factories run by big multinational corporations.

The strikes were well organized and disciplined. *Veja* reported:

. . . in none of the plants was it possible to detect signs of the movement from outside. There were no pickets, placards, or agitated voices emerging from the gatherings. No debates, speeches, or demonstrations. Nor was any obvious leadership to be seen. Even within the production units, the atmosphere hardly revealed



GEISEL: Responds cautiously.

quickly what was going on. The order to strike, for example, was transmitted from one to another by word of mouth.

The last time strikes occurred in Brazil on such a scale was in April 1968, when 15,000 workers in more than twenty plants in Belo Horizonte left their jobs to demand a 50% wage increase. The government granted 33% but then crushed the strikes with troop mobilizations and the threat of arrest and court-martial of strikers.

This time, the Geisel regime responded much more cautiously. For several days Labor Minister Arnaldo Prieto did not even acknowledge that the strikes were taking place. The work stoppages were declared illegal May 19 by the Regional Labor Tribunal, but no action was taken against the workers.

Brazilian unions are under government control. Under the military regime's Law 4.330, the unions can call strikes only after tortuous legal proceedings, and are totally prohibited from demanding wage increases higher than the yearly *dissídios* sanctioned by the government. Nevertheless, the regime acquiesced when Saab-Scania agreed May 16 to consider the

workers' demands and opened talks with the Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos (Metalworkers Union). It was only then that the union began playing a formal role in the strikes.

The immediate issue in the strikes was the auto industry's plan to grant only a 24% wage increase instead of the government-authorized *dissídio* of 39%. (A 15% raise had already been advanced during the previous year to offset inflation.) The 1977 inflation rate was 38%, and it is likely that that figure will be surpassed in 1978.

The average monthly wage for three-quarters of the workers at Saab-Scandia is the equivalent of US\$375, and Saab workers have the highest wages in the Brazilian auto industry.

In addition to wage demands, the workers at Ford also called for reduced transportation fares, better medical assistance, and lower cafeteria prices. At Saab-Scania, the workers demanded that the management recognize their elected workers commission.

By May 23, most workers had returned to their jobs under tentative agreements similar to that reached at Ford. Ford restored the 15% hike to all those earnings up to eight times the minimum wage, and granted a 10% restoration to those earning between eight and ten times the minimum.

Added pressure on Ford had come from top officials of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) in the United States. UAW President Douglas Fraser and two other union officers telegraphed Ford's Brazil management, "vehemently" protesting an initial refusal to negotiate and saying that "we guarantee our fraternal support to the workers on strike and we will devote all our efforts to interceding with the Ford management in Detroit."

In reaction to the strikes, commentators in Brazil's capitalist press expressed concern that the government's harsh labor laws may be counterproductive. The work stoppages were the result of the "rigidity of the wage policy in force in this country," the business newspaper *Gazeta Mercantil* said.

The editors of the Rio de Janeiro daily *Jornal do Brasil* pointed out: "Strikes exist in all capitalist countries with strong institutions and solid enterprises. If we boast of having in São Paulo a state of European caliber, and if the country has the eighth largest economy in the West, that not only means the advantage of making money. It also signifies the responsibility of living together with free institutions—including trade unions."

The government's preoccupation was somewhat different, however. An official in Brasília explained to *Veja* that "the problem with strikes is that the manipulators always appear, the ones who carry on political exploitation. Today a strike, tomorrow agitation, and after that, something worse." □