

# Intercontinental Press

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## Demonstrations in Paris, Brussels

# International Solidarity With African Freedom Struggle!

*Carter Escalates Threats Against Cuba*

*Peking Beats the Drums for Mobutu*

*Plutarco Hernández Freed in Costa Rica*

*Why Upsurge Failed to Dislodge Somoza*

*Hugo Blanco Behind Bars in Argentina*

*The Attempted Coup in Santo Domingo*

*9,000 in Swiss Antinuclear March*

*French Trotskyists' Festival a Success*

## Castro, Mengistu Differ on Eritrea

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Castro, Mengistu Differ on Eritrea

By Joseph Hansen

The May 24 issue of the West German daily *Die Welt* carried an article date-lined from Addis Ababa reporting a rift between the Ethiopian military junta—the Dergue—and Moscow and Havana.

At the beginning of May, according to *Die Welt*, the junta deported the Cuban ambassador and the South Yemenite chargé d'affaires.

This “unusual step” was taken because of an “attempt by the Soviets and Cubans to force the military junta led by Mengistu to withdraw and enable a civilian regime, led by a Marxist party, to take power.”

During Mengistu's April 21-27 visit to Havana, Negede Gobeze was smuggled out of Paris into Ethiopia by way of Aden. “Negede is an associate of the extreme leftist Haile Fida, who has been under house arrest in Addis Ababa since August 1977. In Paris, Negede had led the opposition to the military junta, and was sentenced to death in absentia.”

At the end of April when he arrived in Addis Ababa, Negede was sneaked by “Cubans and South Yemenites . . . into a Cuban diplomatic limousine and taken to the Cuban embassy.”

*Die Welt's* account continues: “There, together with Soviet, Cuban and South Yemenite diplomats, Negede planned the creation of a civilian Marxist regime, which was supposed to replace the junta.”

When Mengistu found out about all this upon returning from Cuba, he ordered the director of immigration and the head of the secret police arrested and tortured. “Police and troops surrounded the Cuban embassy. They had orders to shoot Negede on sight.”

The worldwide press considered *Die Welt's* report to be a sensational item. Some of them tended to be suspicious of its accuracy. Thus the Paris daily *Le Monde* suggested in its May 26 issue that the account should be taken with “great caution.” Others offered further details obtained through their own sources.

For example, in an article published in the June 4 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Victoria Brittain, reporting from Nairobi, said, “The Cubans and other Socialist allies of Ethiopia appear to have failed in attempts to put a brake on Colonel Mengistu's Eritrea offensive and to speed up the acceptance by the Dergue of a civilian party mechanism to take over the running of the revolution from the military.”

Furthermore, Mengistu is conducting a purge. The entire executive committee of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union was dis-

missed. According to Addis Ababa Radio the committee was charged with “corruption, political sabotage, and abuses of authority” and of being infiltrated by Me'isone (All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement), a grouping that claims to be Marxist.

“The official denunciation of Meison,” according to Brittain, “comes a fortnight after the abrupt departure from Addis Ababa of the two senior men in the Cuban Embassy. The two Cubans, with support from the South Yemeni Ambassador in Addis, had brought back to the Ethiopian capital from exile in Paris Dr Negede Gozeze, one of the two ideologues who formed Meison. The other, Mr Hailu Fida, was imprisoned by the Dergue and tortured almost to death, according to diplomats in Addis.”

“But the Cuban attempt to get a dialogue going between the Dergue and the Meison leader who was staying in the Cuban Embassy failed completely, and Dr Negede and the two Cuban diplomats left Addis Ababa together.”

The June 3 issue of *The Economist* also provided its own account of the rift caused by Mengistu's persistence in seeking a military showdown with Eritrea. Here are further details from this source:

Until last year Meison . . . was closely allied to the ruling military council, or dergue; its leaders, Mr Haile Fida and Mr Negede, were Colonel Mengistu's closest political advisers. But Meison became too powerful for the dergue's liking. When it began calling for a return to civilian rule its leaders were arrested or murdered. Mr Negede, however, was abroad at the time.

Neither the Russians nor the Cubans were happy at this turn of the tumbrel. The Russians had close links with Mr Haile Fida and hoped that Meison would become the nucleus of a pro-Moscow Communist party. They tried to persuade Colonel Mengistu to release Mr Haile Fida and reinstate his organisation, and in this they apparently had the backing of three important members of the dergue: Second Lieutenant Legesse Asfew, Second Lieutenant Gesesse Wolde Kidan and Sub Lieutenant Tamrat Ferede. But Colonel Mengistu and other dergue members were not to be moved. . . .

Last week the reckoning began. The 22-man executive of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union, which was accused of supporting Meison, was dismissed and some of its members arrested. The mayor of Addis Ababa, Mr Alemu Abebe, once a Meison supporter, and three dergue members are reported to be under surveillance and may have been arrested.

This is the second big test faced by the Cubans in following up their decision to support the Ethiopian revolution against

the efforts of the imperialists to smash it. The first test was the war in the Ogaden, which reached its high point between February 11 and March 9. The Cubans responded to the appeal of the Ethiopian government for help.

In a speech last March 15,\* Castro revealed that the Cubans had followed a policy of trying to bring the Siad Barre government of Somalia into a common anti-imperialist front:

Roughly a year ago . . . we organized a meeting in Aden between the leaders of Ethiopia, Yemen and Somalia and ourselves in an effort to solve the problems between Somalia and Ethiopia, precisely to avoid a war.

The effort failed, however. The right wing in the Barre regime prevailed over the left, according to Castro, and went over to the side of imperialism.

Castro has said little about the current crisis. He barely indicated his position in an interview granted to Dominique Baudis before Mengistu “launched” or was “preparing to launch” a military offensive against the Eritreans. The text of the interview has not yet appeared in the Cuban press but some extracts were published in the June 9 issue of *Paris Match*.

Baudis asked: “In Ethiopia, the army of the Addis Ababa government, which you are helping, is battling against the Eritrean Liberation Front. Now this front is deeply sympathetic with the Cuban revolution. Doesn't this bother you a little?”

Castro answered: “Listen, it's a complex, difficult problem. When the Eritrean liberation movement was formed, it was led by progressives, and there are progressives now in the Eritrean liberation movement. When they were held under the feudal tyranny of Haile Selassie, this movement played an objectively revolutionary role. When a genuine revolution exploded in Ethiopia, the very reactionary Arab countries at once displayed great interest in the Eritrean movement. To put it another way . . . Saudi Arabia and Sudan, for example, two very reactionary countries, are those who today control the leadership of the Eritrean movement, so that the progressive and revolutionary forces there are in a minority; and thus, objectively, this movement which began as a just revolutionary movement became transformed into an instrument for the reaction and imperialism to liquidate, or help to liquidate, the Ethiopian revolution. That's the way we see the problem. It is clear that the solution is not easy, because it is necessary to take into account first of all, the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination; it is necessary to take it into account. It is necessary to take into account the fact that there are progressive forces among the Eritreans, and conse-

\*See “Fidel Castro's Account of Cuba's Role in Ethiopia,” *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 17, 1978, p. 465.



quently, we believe that it is best to struggle for a correct solution of this problem, and that is, of course, on the basis of self-determination. To my knowledge the Ethiopians are disposed to find a correct solution to the problem, but what is not acceptable is the principle, the idea of the disintegration of Ethiopia.

"What would happen to the revolutionary process in Ethiopia, if as a result of all these maneuvers of the imperialists and Arab reaction it loses a third of its territory in the south and all openings to the sea? It would be blockaded. Thus it is absolutely correct for the Ethiopians to struggle against the disintegration of their country."

Havana has disclaimed seeking any economic returns from its role in Africa. What the Cubans are interested in is extending the socialist revolution and defending it from imperialist attack. This was quite clear in the case of Angola when Cuban troops proved decisive in beating back the military invasion mounted by South Africa. In the final analysis, this victory strengthened the Cuban revolution.

Similarly in the case of the military attack mounted by the Somali government in the Ogaden, the Cubans saw this as an imperialist ploy aimed at injuring the Ethiopian revolution. The Somalian offensive also constituted a rejection of the Cuban proposal to form a common united front against imperialism.

In the case of Eritrea, the latest developments show that the Cubans are dubious about a military offensive. Castro, for instance, cites the right of the Eritreans to self-determination. It can be legitimately concluded that he has at the same time been weighing what the effect would be on the Ethiopian revolution as a whole if that right were acknowledged.

At the moment it is not possible to verify *Die Welt's* account of Cuban efforts to displace Mengistu. The truth may be that the Cubans merely stepped up efforts to dissuade Mengistu from plunging ahead with the attack. Part of the effort may have been to side with oppositional elements in the Dergue itself, thus strengthening them politically.

Mengistu's reaction, which may have gone as far as arresting these figures, would demonstrate the existence of two rifts—one between Mengistu and Castro, another between Mengistu and a minority in the Dergue that may have rather broad backing.

The outcome of this complex struggle remains to be seen. Interest in it is broadening. Many voices, varied in political character, are being raised in behalf of the Eritreans. This support indicates how unpopular a major war against Eritrea would be.

The Cubans are aware of this, no doubt, and may be pressing the point in trying to get Mengistu to slow down and think it over. □

## In This Issue

Closing News Date: June 10, 1978

ARGENTINA	724	Blanco Still Jailed
USA	725	Carter Escalates Threats Against Cuba —by Ernest Harsch
	736	Can Carter's Austerity Deal Beat Inflation?—by Jon Britton
CHINA	726	Peking Beats the Drums for Mobutu —by Matilde Zimmermann
	741	Peking Releases 110,000 Political Prisoners
FRANCE	726	10,000 in Paris Protest World Cup
	734	Trotskyists' "Fête Rouge" a Big Success —by F. L. Derry
	735	Report on a CP Cell Meeting
ZAIRE	727	15,000 in Paris Condemn French Intervention—by Ernest Harsch
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	728	Why the Generals Got Cold Feet
COSTA RICA	732	Plutarco Hernández Pardoned —by Sara Santiago
	733	Why Carazo Backed Down
ICELAND	740	Why Trotskyists Are Running for Parliament
NICARAGUA	742	Why Upsurge Failed to Dislodge Somoza —by Fausto Amador
IRAN	747	Dozens Killed as Shah's Troops Storm Tehran University
BRITAIN	752	Iranian Oppositionist Stabbed in London
SPAIN	752	Protests Win Release of Political Prisoners
NEWS ANALYSIS	722	Castro, Mengistu Differ on Eritrea —by Joseph Hansen
SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT CAPITALISM	730	
FOULS THINGS UP	739	9,000 in Switzerland March Against Nuclear Power
DOCUMENTS	748	A Revolutionary Program for Peru

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Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Michael Baumann.

Editorial Staff: Jon Britton, Gerry Foley, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Susan Wald, Matilde Zimmermann.

Business Manager: Harvey McArthur.

Copy Editor: David Martin.

Technical Staff: Paul Devezze, Larry Ingram, Arthur Lobman, Kevin McGuire, James M. Morgan, Sally Rhett.

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Militant

Picket line in Chicago May 27 demanding safe passage for Blanco

## Blanco Still Jailed in Argentina

The life of Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco remains in danger in Argentina.

Blanco was deported from Peru on May 25, along with eleven other leftist political and union leaders and one right-wing journalist. The deportations followed a massive two-day general strike protesting the Morales Bermúdez regime's harsh austerity policies.

The Argentine interior ministry issued a communiqué May 31 claiming that eleven of the deportees had been granted asylum in Argentina, and that Blanco and labor attorney Ricardo Díaz Chávez were seeking to go to Sweden and Mexico respectively. The requests were being "handled at the diplomatic level" and decisions by the two countries were "being awaited," the statement said.

On June 5, an official of the Swedish embassy in Buenos Aires told the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) that the Argentine authorities had been informed several days earlier that Blanco could go immediately to Sweden. But the Argentines replied that Blanco was still being "processed" at federal police headquarters in Buenos Aires.

Added cause for concern about all the leftist exiles came in a June 7 communiqué from the Argentine interior ministry. This statement reported that only five of the deportees had accepted the "asylum" offer. Retired admirals José Arce Larco and Guillermo Faura Gaig were reportedly "free" in Buenos Aires, and right-wing journalist Alfonso Baella Tuesta was

granted permanent residency in that city.

Trade-union leaders Valentín Pachó Quispe and Justiniano Apaza Ordóñez, however, were said to have been flown by the army to an undisclosed location "in the pampas" 370 miles from Buenos Aires.

The communiqué further stated that six other deportees were requesting asylum in some other country, and that the Argentine authorities were negotiating those requests with the governments involved. The countries under consideration were said to be France, Mexico, Costa Rica, Spain, Colombia, and Cuba. The six are attorney Genaro Ledesma, Trotskyist leader Ricardo Napuri, *Marka* editors Ricardo Letts and Humberto Damonte, peasant leader José Luis Alvarado, and *Amauta* editor Javier Diez Canseco.

No further word was given on Blanco or Díaz Chávez, other than to reconfirm that Blanco was still being held by the federal police.

Blanco was reported to be in "relatively good condition" by a Swedish embassy official who met with him at the police headquarters on June 2.

The international campaign that USLA and other human-rights groups have mounted to insure the safety of the Peruvians and their right to leave Argentina is continuing.

USLA was told by officials at the Argentine embassy in Washington June 2 that they had been flooded with messages. "It's obvious they're feeling pressure," USLA Executive Secretary Mike Kelly said, "but we're going to continue our emergency campaign. . . .

"The human-rights promises of the Argentine government haven't been worth much in the past."

Earlier, Kelly said that "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."

French Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand has sent a letter to the Argentine government demanding that "the thirteen Peruvians [who] have been handed over to the authorities of the Argentine republic" be allowed "to make known in what country they want to ask the right of asylum and be permitted to go there immediately." About two dozen French trade-union and student organizations have registered similar protests.

In Canada, the Ontario Federation of Labor sent a telegram to the Argentine government May 27.

An "Appeal in Defense of Democracy in Peru" is being circulated by a number of prominent British intellectuals and has been signed by several members of Parliament and trade-union leaders. Fifty persons picketed the Peruvian embassy in London on June 3 and demanded that the British government grant asylum to the exiles.

The Swiss Socialist Party passed a resolution at its May 21 congress denouncing the arrests of Blanco and other Peruvian political and labor leaders.

In the United States, USLA has secured statements and messages to the Argentine government from U.S. Representatives Walter Fauntroy and John Conyers, Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO President Tom Turner, United Automobile Workers President Douglas Fraser, New York State Supreme Court Justice Hortense Gabel, and other prominent individuals. Picket lines have been held at Argentine consulates in a number of cities, including one of fifty persons in New York on June 8.

In Peru, a Committee of Relatives of the Political Prisoners and Deportees has been formed and is circulating petitions demanding the release or repatriation of all the victims of the regime's repression. A May 30 leaflet distributed by the committee said that "the worst thing about this situation is that [the thirteen exiles] have not been deported but have only changed prisons . . . the Argentine government, in complicity with the Peruvian government, has allowed the Peruvian dictatorship's jails to be extended all the way to Argentina."

Telegrams and messages holding the Argentine government responsible for the safety of Hugo Blanco and the other Peruvians, and demanding safe passages to a country of their choice without further delay, should be sent to President Jorge Videla, Casa Rosada, Buenos Aires, Argentina, or to Argentine embassies. □



# Carter Escalates Threats Against Cuba

By Ernest Harsch

While American officials were busy studying possible actions against the Cuban involvement in Africa, and while conservative columnists were clamoring for direct reprisals against Cuba itself, President Carter sought to keep up the tempo of his red-scare propaganda drive.

Speaking at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis June 7, Carter condemned the "persistent and increasing military involvement of the Soviet Union and Cuba in Africa. . . ."

He continued, "We are deeply concerned about the threat to regional peace and to the autonomy of countries within which these foreign troops seem permanently to be stationed."

What Carter was really concerned about, of course, were the shaky prospects for continued imperialist exploitation of Africa and the direct challenge that Cuban troops there present to American, West European, and South African interests.

Carter underlined his concern with implicit threats, referring throughout his speech to Washington's massive military might.

At the same time, the White House has let it be known that it is considering a wide range of concrete measures designed to counter the Cuban presence in Africa and to intimidate the Castro regime. The Carter administration has initiated a full-scale National Security Council review of the current situation in Africa.

According to a report in the May 30 *Christian Science Monitor*, Richard M. Moose, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, "confirmed in an interview with the Voice of America on May 26 that a multinational trade embargo against Cuba was one of the possible measures being discussed within the administration."

As a pretext for the escalating anti-Cuban tirades, Carter has charged Havana with arming and training the rebel forces who staged an insurrection in Zaïre's mineral-rich province of Shaba in mid-May. Carter has maintained his charges despite emphatic denials by Castro and other Cuban officials. At the same time, Carter has refused to release publicly the supposed "evidence" on which his charges are said to be based.

After CIA Director Stansfield Turner briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which had raised doubts about Carter's charges, committee Chairman John J. Sparkman and other members announced June 9 that they remained

unconvinced and that Carter's "evidence" was "by no means conclusive." Senator George McGovern described the CIA's sources for the information as "doubtful."

Skepticism about Carter's claims is present even among intelligence officials. Citing American, Belgian, and Israeli intelligence personnel, correspondent James Nelson Goodsell reported in the June 8 *Christian Science Monitor* that "some elements in the intelligence community simply do not accept the claims and say there is no solid evidence of such Cuban involvement."

It is quite possible that Carter may have simply manufactured the charges that Cubans were involved in the Shaba uprising as a justification for his anti-Cuban moves. In any case, getting Cuban troops out of Africa has moved to the forefront of White House goals on that continent.

Assessing the evolution of American policy toward Africa, correspondents Robert G. Kaiser and Don Oberdorfer reported in the June 4 *Washington Post*:

A senior State Department official said that after the experience in Ethiopia, the United States had to assume that—in the absence of countermeasures—the communist forces will be prepared to move on to the explosive black-white conflicts of southern Africa. That would mean Soviet-backed Cubans in Rhodesia in the near future, a prospect so ominous to the administration that its top priority now is to avoid it.

Carter's fears about Cuban involvement in southern Africa were confirmed two days later, when Joshua Nkomo, one of the major Zimbabwean nationalist leaders opposed to the racist Rhodesian regime, publicly acknowledged that his guerrilla forces were being trained by Cubans.

For propaganda purposes, the American imperialists have maintained that the Castro regime is a "surrogate" for the Kremlin and that Cuban troops in Africa are serving as "international mercenaries." However, some of the more sober bourgeois circles have also publicly acknowledged a degree of independence to the Cuban role.

A report in the June 12 *U.S. News & World Report*, a conservative newsweekly, commented that while Cuban troops in Africa were "carrying out Russia's dirty work," they were at the same time "spreading Fidel Castro's brand of revolution." It also maintained that "Castro still is not completely comfortable in dealing with the Russians."

The *U.S. News & World Report* went on to point out that "Castro does not regard

himself as a Soviet lackey who hires out his soldiers as mercenaries to do Moscow's bidding. Instead, he views himself as a true revolutionary fired by evangelical zeal to support 'wars of liberation' anywhere in the world."

As an indication of this, the article referred to the Castro regime's early support to anti-imperialist fighters in Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, and other Latin American countries.

It also noted Havana's assistance to various African liberation struggles, including the dispatch of some Cuban troops to Algeria in 1963 to help the Ben Bella regime fight an imperialist-backed Moroccan attack; Che Guevara's participation in guerrilla actions against the proimperialist regime of Moïse Tshombe in the Congo (now Zaïre) in 1964-65; training for insurgents from Zanzibar, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, and other countries; the large-scale military commitment in Angola in 1975 that halted a South African invasion; and the sending of thousands of Cuban troops to Ethiopia earlier this year to help the Ethiopian regime beat back an American-encouraged Somali invasion.

It is the increase in the Cubans' long-standing assistance to such anti-imperialist struggles in Africa that has aroused the fury of Carter and his allies in Western Europe. The American imperialists have conducted numerous attacks against the Cuban revolution in the past. The step-up in anti-Cuban broadsides from the White House, coupled with the administration's consideration of concrete reprisals, raises the immediate danger of a renewed offensive against the Castro regime.

Some conservative columnists have begun to discuss openly the kinds of measures that Carter has so far only dared hint at.

Joseph Kraft, in a June 1 column in the *Washington Post*, called for "specific steps," such as an end to the American liaison mission in Havana and an increase in economic pressures. He arrogantly declared, "Fidel Castro needs to be taught the lesson . . . that tiny countries next to great powers should behave with circumspection."

Joseph C. Harsch, writing in the June 6 *Christian Science Monitor*, was even more forthright. He stated that "there would be no harm in beefing up the garrison in Guantanamo, and increasing the frequency of American sea and air patrols around and over Cuba, and moving some combat units towards the Florida embarkation ports, and calling off all further diplomatic and economic traffic with the Cubans."

Such threats are a clear warning to all opponents of American aggression against Cuba to be on the alert. Only signs of readiness to move rapidly into action to demand "Hands off Cuba!" can prevent new moves against the Cuban revolution.

# Peking Beats the Drums for Mobutu

"In the southern border area of Zaïre another war has been started by mercenaries directed by the Soviet Union and Cuba."

An article in Mobutu's kept press? In the U.S. Army's *Stars and Stripes*? In a proimperialist French or Belgian newspaper?

No, the quotation is from an article in the May 26 issue of *Peking Review*.

To score points against the Soviet Union, the Chinese bureaucracy has been sounding the trumpets for Mobutu and his army, praising the intervention of French and Belgian paratroopers, and reporting as fact every anticommunist and CIA allegation about Cuban involvement. Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua made a trip to Kinshasa June 4-7, where he pledged Peking's support for Zaïre's war against "Soviet imperialism."

Peking has gone out of its way to attack Cuba, using the strong language usually reserved for the Soviet Union. It thereby chimes in with Washington.

Peking offers a brazen version of the uprising in Shaba province. In a May 27 polemic with *Tass*, the Chinese news agency, Hsinhua, claims:

As is well known, these mercenaries based in Angola in the pay of the Soviet Union are armed by the Soviets and trained by Cuban instructors. And they invaded Shaba region under Soviet-Cuban instigation. How can this be called an "internal affair?"

These mercenaries ran amuck after intruding into Zaïre, looting, burning, raping and killing innocent inhabitants including babies. What sort of "popular insurrection" is this?

Two sources are used to substantiate this version of the facts: President Mobutu, whose statements are faithfully picked up by Hsinhua, and the State Department. Mobutu's atrocity stories and his claim that the "invaders" were "ex-Tshombe gendarmes" directed by "a Cuban general named José" are all accepted as the truth.

Similar credence is given Jody Powell's assertion that the Cubans "did train and equip" the rebels. Peking was delighted when the Carter administration promised to "urgently consider" any request from Mobutu for additional military aid and to study ways of getting around legislative restrictions on speeding military aid to "trouble spots" in Africa.

Hsinhua's editors apparently comb the imperialist press for attacks on the Soviet and Cuban role in Africa. Hsinhua is full of quotations and major excerpts from newspapers and magazines like the British *Daily Telegraph* ("It is still not too late for the West to act"); *Spectator* ("What is needed is action"); *U.S. News and World*

*Report*, *Rastakhr* from Iran, the Turkish *Aydinlik* ("The Russians take Cubans as hirelings"), and various proimperialist newspapers from Australia, West Germany, France, Venezuela, Greece, Belgium, Brazil, and Austria.

Peking's support for imperialist intervention in Zaïre leads it to give friendly treatment to others who share this position. Among those cited favorably in Hsinhua are Henry Kissinger, Gerald Ford (calling for "a harder line"), U.S. Congressional hawks, Conservative members of the Canadian parliament (demanding an immediate suspension of "all present and future aid to Cuba"), West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, Emperor Bokassa I of the Central African Empire, the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, and Walter Mondale ("There is an inexcusable amount of Cubans in Africa"). Zbigniew Brzezinski was cheered at a banquet in Peking when he blasted "international marauders who masquerade as non-aligned to advance big power ambitions in Africa."

Peking's analysis of events in Africa overlooks mentioning the centuries of oppression countries like Zaïre suffered at the hands of European colonialism. Also overlooked is the fact that American and European imperialists are fighting to maintain their economic and political control. Hsinhua reports the invasion of Kolwezi by French and Belgian paratroopers as a humanitarian operation "to safeguard

or rescue the foreign residents there." A commentary on the Franco-African "summit meeting" in the May 28 issue of *People's Daily* explains why Peking now thinks there can be unity between the former colonies and their masters:

France is a developed European country belonging to the second world. While all African countries are developing countries belonging to the third world. The summit emphasized the positive significance of Franco-African cooperation and Europe-Africa relations to the further strengthening of relations and economic ties between the second and the third world. Despite their different historical circumstances and levels of economic development, the second world and the third world countries have something in common in the current international environment. Mainly speaking, Europe and Africa are threatened by the superpowers in varying degrees, so they have to improve their relations and strengthen their ties to cope with superpower hegemonism.

This treacherous position has led French and Belgian supporters of Peking to beat the drums for their own governments' armed intervention in Zaïre. Immediately after the French and Belgian invasion, the Paris newspaper *L'Humanité Rouge* published a statement calling "Soviet social-imperialism" the "most dangerous and most ferocious enemy which poses the greatest menace to the countries and people of Africa."

The Political Bureau of the Belgian Marxist-Leninist Communist Party went even further. It issued a statement saying that "the action of the French and Belgian governments helps to frustrate the Hitlerite plot of Soviet social-imperialism. . . . To defend ourselves effectively, we have to fight the agents of the Soviet Fifth Column in Belgium and the Munich-type capitulationist tendency of the Belgian bourgeoisie." □

## 10,000 in Paris Protest World Cup

Ten thousand persons marched in Paris May 31 to protest the holding of the World Cup football (soccer) matches in Argentina. The games began in Buenos Aires on June 1.

Demonstrators chanted "No football among the concentration camps," "Boycott the dictatorship," and "Videla murderer, Giscard d'Estaing accomplice!" The march had been banned by the French government a week earlier, but the police did not try to break it up.

The action was sponsored by COBA,\* the group that has organized support for a boycott of the World Cup matches, and

\*Comité pour le Boycott de l'Organisation par l'Argentine de la Coupe du Monde de Football (Organizing Committee for a Boycott of Argentina in the 1978 World Cup).

had the support of most French far-left organizations. A contingent of postal workers from the union federation CFDT and many other trade unionists participated in the march.

A similar demonstration took place the same day in Dijon, where 2,000 persons marched.

COBA's boycott campaign has been organized around two main demands:

- Freedom for all political and trade-union prisoners, including those who have "disappeared" (i.e., whose detention is not officially acknowledged by the Argentine military junta).

- Restoration of all political, trade-union, and democratic rights in Argentina.

More demonstrations were planned in France for June 3 in Thionville, Montpellier, and other cities.



## 15,000 in Paris Condemn French Intervention in Zaïre

By Ernest Harsch

On June 5, the first contingent of Moroccan troops arrived in Zaïre's Shaba Province aboard American C-141 transport planes flown by American pilots. They were part of an imperialist-organized expeditionary force designed to prop up the brutal and corrupt dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko and defend Western economic interests from insurgents in Shaba.

The airlift itself was a significant escalation of American imperialist intervention in Africa. The Pentagon announced June 5 that besides the planes and pilots, 325 American military ground personnel were involved in the operation, 72 of them in Zaïre itself. (The rest were dispatched to Senegal, Gabon, Morocco, Corsica, and France.)

While the airlift was under way, representatives of the American, French, Belgian, West German, and British governments met in Paris to discuss how to further their joint aggression in Zaïre and Africa as a whole.

This imperialist intervention in Zaïre has not gone unchallenged.

In one of the biggest protests against French intervention in Africa since the Algerian war, 15,000 persons marched in Paris June 5. The demonstrators carried signs reading, "No to Giscard's intervention in Africa," "No to the colonialist plot of Giscard-Schmidt-Carter," and "Indochina, Algeria, that's enough. No to colonialism."

The Paris march was organized by the French Communist Party and by a number of far-left groups, including the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International. According to a report in the June 7 Trotskyist daily *Rouge*, the procession included a contingent of 9,000 unionists and also drew the participation of a number of African and Arab immigrant workers.

There have been other indications of the antiwar mood in France. The Paris march was preceded by a number of smaller demonstrations in various parts of the country, and by a protest statement in the June 4-5 *Le Monde* issued by a group of French political figures and intellectuals.

Signed by, among others, Simone de Beauvoir, Daniel Guérin, Charles Bettelheim, Alain Joxe, and Jean-Pierre Vigier, the statement began, "We accuse the French government of sending its paratroopers to Zaïre to defend colonial interests and to interfere in the internal affairs of the country by giving, under the pretext

of humanitarianism, crucial support to the corrupt and unpopular dictatorship of General Mobutu."

In Belgium, where the government sent some 1,700 paratroopers into Zaïre, protest demonstrations were held in various cities as well. The largest took place on May 21 in Brussels, where 1,500 persons rallied to demand "No to the Belgian and French military intervention in Zaïre."

There have also been picket lines in the United States to protest American participation in the Belgian and French intervention in Zaïre. But the most significant protest so far came on June 6 when the Congressional Black Caucus,\* under pressure from the deep opposition among American Blacks to any aggression against Africa, issued a statement condemning the Zaïre intervention as a "dangerous precedent."

Parren J. Mitchell, the chairman of the Black Caucus, said that he was opposed to the U.S. airlift of Moroccan and other African troops into Zaïre, because it "suggests very strongly . . . further steps to present us with a situation comparable to Vietnam."

The fear among the U.S. rulers of the widespread antiwar sentiment in the United States and the knowledge that any significant moves toward foreign military aggression could prompt renewed mass demonstrations like those that shook the country during the Vietnam War have been the major factors behind Washington's relative caution in Zaïre and elsewhere.

An unnamed American official at the Paris summit meeting acknowledged this, stating, "It's our general assessment that the mood of the U.S. as a whole is one of reservation about involvements, certainly military involvements overseas, and that anything that raises that possibility has to be very clearly justified and the result of an understanding and recognition of the general mood."

The American-supported French and Belgian military offensives in Zaïre, Chad, and other countries have also aroused protests in Africa itself, where a number of regimes are under considerable pressure from their own populations to publicly condemn the Western aggression.

The Angolan press agency declared,

\*A grouping of sixteen Black members of the House of Representatives.

"Intervention of military contingents from the U.S., Belgium, France and Morocco was a threat to peace on the African continent." The Ethiopian regime called the Paris summit meeting an "imperialist" plot. The Algerian government said that "the five-country conference in Paris was a neocolonial enterprise launched with the complicity of the neocolonized." Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the Libyan head of state, said, "French military intervention was part of an imperialist scheme to restore colonialism."

The government-owned *Daily News* of Tanzania stated June 6 that the "Western powers are conspiring to create banana republics to minister to neocolonial interests." Two days later Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere, who had previously spoken favorably of Carter's policy in Africa, criticized Carter because he "only cares about confrontation with the Soviet Union and defense of capitalism in Africa." Nyerere defended the Cuban military presence in Africa and stated, "Current developments show that the greater immediate danger to Africa's freedom comes from nations in the Western bloc."

It is partly to avoid further damage to their diplomatic positions in Africa and their political standings at home that the imperialist powers are now seeking to hammer together a force of Moroccan and other African troops to take the place of the French and Belgian units in Shaba. The June 5-6 meeting in Paris was held to discuss the arrangements and Western backing for this force, as well as to explore other forms of assistance to Mobutu.

The backbone of the new force is to be composed of some 1,500 combat-experienced Moroccan troops, as well as several hundred troops from Senegal, Gabon, and Togo. All four countries are former French colonies.

Nyerere commented on the establishment of this force and the Western proposals for a more permanent one capable of intervening in other African countries. "It is the height of arrogance," he said, "for anyone else [besides Africans] to talk of establishing a pan-African force to defend Africa. It is quite obvious, moreover, that those who have put forward this idea, and those who seek to initiate such a force, are not interested in the freedom of Africa. They are interested in the domination of Africa." □

### Why the Generals Got Cold Feet

[The following interview was conducted by Gus Horowitz in Santo Domingo on June 3 with two revolutionary socialists: Enrique De Leon, a former general secretary of the Dominican teachers union and author of the recently published book *Opresion y Democracia Sindical* (Oppression and Trade-Union Democracy); and Claudio Tavárez, who wrote the introduction to the book and is well known for his activity in defense of trade union and democratic rights.]

\* \* \*

*Question. What is the significance of the PRD\* victory in the recent elections in the Dominican Republic?*

*De Leon:* First of all, the May 16 elections were a big defeat for Joaquín Balaguer, the incumbent. It represented a repudiation of his twelve-year rule and of the policies he stood for.

More generally, the vote showed that the masses of working people are demanding measures to improve their living conditions and to meet their most urgent problems. In general, these demands include an agrarian reform, wage increases and a general lowering of the high cost of living, nationalization of the multinational corporations, freedom for the political prisoners, the right of the exiles to return, and other measures along these lines.

Although the electoral results were favorable to the PRD they do not mean that all those who voted for the PRD ticket consider themselves PRD supporters. The Dominican people were using the PRD as the channel to express their repudiation of the Balaguer government and to show their desire for an improvement in their conditions of life.

*Q. Do you think, then, that the PRD will carry out policies that will meet the demands that the masses are raising? Will the PRD government be able to satisfy their expectations?*

*Tavárez:* Whether the reforms that the PRD promised are carried out or not depends on several factors.

One of these is the economic crisis that the country is going through. The PRD will be inheriting a very difficult situation from the Balaguer regime, which is supposed to leave office on August 16.

Another factor will be the role of the

military-bureaucratic sectors of the bourgeoisie, those sectors that were behind the attempted coup on May 17, when they thought that their interests were threatened by the PRD election victory. Although they had to back away from the attempted coup, they will still try to preserve their interests.

Then there will be the question of the degree of mobilization that the masses can make on behalf of their interests; this would be a pressure on the PRD to fulfill their election promises.

But there is something else to keep in mind. Even if the PRD does carry out some of its promised reforms, it would not mean that the basic needs and aspirations of the masses of people would be met.

It should be stressed that although the PRD presented a program of reforms in the elections and made many promises to the masses, it is a capitalist party. In addition, it has been evolving in a rightward direction for the past several years.

*Q. What has the PRD said since the election?*

*Tavárez:* The PRD is toning down its image. It now says that it will wipe the slate clean with respect to the past. That is, they will not touch the interests of the military-bureaucratic sectors who enriched themselves through corruption; the structure of the armed forces will not be affected; those guilty of crimes during the Balaguer regime will not be brought to justice.

As for the question of a general amnesty and the return of the exiles, PRD President-elect Antonio Guzmán has said that each case will be reviewed individually, to see if any were guilty of criminal acts. But of course, most of the political prisoners and exiles have been falsely accused of criminal acts by the Balaguer regime—that is, they were accused of being terrorists, of killing policemen, of robbing banks, and so forth. So Guzmán's stance indicates a retreat on this issue.

As for the nationalization of the multinationals, the PRD has reaffirmed that it will not challenge the multinationals. At the most it will seek to renegotiate some of the contracts—which Balaguer had already been doing.

Also significant are the PRD leaders' proposals that some of the government-run enterprises—those operating at a loss—be turned over to Dominican capitalists, or to Dominican capitalists in combination with U.S. or Spanish interests. This, too, is a

step backwards from their election promises.

In international affairs, Guzmán says that his government will continue the same policies towards Cuba as the Balaguer regime, that is, to establish relations with Cuba only after the United States has done so.

Guzmán also says that he will not permit Communists to hold public posts of responsibility in his government. This is a signal to the capitalists that his government will be reliable as a procapitalist government.

The statements by Guzmán and other PRD leaders on these issues also indicate that they intend to retreat on the economic and social promises that they made in the election campaign.

*Q. Then what was the significance of the statements by the PRD's general secretary, Peña Gómez? As reported in some of the U.S. papers, he said that the new government would be socialist.*

*Tavárez:* This was immediately repudiated by Guzmán, who stated categorically that his government would in no way be of a socialist type. And, he added, only he could speak for the new government.

For his part, Peña Gómez has made it clear that his remarks had been misinterpreted, and that he too firmly holds that the new government will not be a socialist one.

*Q. How do you explain what occurred on May 17 when armed forces units stopped the counting of the ballots?*

*Tavárez:* When the early election returns showed the PRD ahead, this came as a big surprise.

It had been generally expected that Balaguer would win. For several reasons. In the period prior to the elections he had been carrying out a demagogic campaign aimed at winning sectors of the masses. He could count on the support of important sectors of the bourgeoisie. He had the support of the army and the police. He was able to use the resources of the state to further his electoral campaign. And he drew on the weight of twelve years in office. He had a very important additional base of support—U.S. imperialism. All of this was combined with repressive measures which, he calculated, would intimidate people in the elections.

So, when the initial results came in and were favorable to the PRD, the armed forces occupied the offices of the National Electoral Board and stopped the count. This occurred in the very early morning of May 17.

*De Leon:* This represented an attempted coup by a sector of the bourgeoisie that was determined to prevent the PRD from taking over the government. Who was behind the coup? Primarily the parasitic

\*Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (Dominican Revolutionary Party).



sectors of the bourgeoisie who gained their power and wealth through the posts they held in the military and governmental apparatus during the rule of Joaquín Balaguer. That is, a bourgeois stratum within the government bureaucracy and the military. They saw the impending defeat of Balaguer as signifying their own fall—their removal from the offices that were the source of their wealth.

*Q. How do you explain the collapse of the intended coup?*

*De Leon:* For one thing, the attempted coup did not represent prior planning by the bourgeoisie as a whole. It did not even have the prior backing of all of the top sectors of the armed forces. But it did put them all on the spot. The intended coup caused a terrible problem for the bourgeoisie as a whole, as well as for the imperialists. Expecting Balaguer to win, they had intended to make a demonstration of holding relatively free elections, pledging themselves to respect the popular will and uphold the results.

Faced with the decision over what to do, it turned out that the imperialists and the Dominican ruling class as a whole, including some previously pro-Balaguer sectors, decided not to go along with a coup and to accept the transfer of government to the PRD, which, after all, is also a capitalist party.

This decision was made clear on May 18, shortly before midnight, when Balaguer made a speech saying that the counting of the ballots should resume and that the electoral results would be respected. Some of the leading sectors of the bourgeoisie issued statements along the same lines that were printed in the papers the next day. In face of this, the intended coup collapsed.

The main reason why the rulers decided not to back the coup was their fear of the response by the Dominican masses. The concern and outrage of the masses was very high in face of the intended coup, as you can imagine. And not only did the ruling class as a whole fear a possible mass upsurge, but they doubted the capacity of those behind the coup to maintain economic and political stability over the long run if the coup was allowed to go through. So they decided not to back it.

*Q. What was the stance of the PRD leadership during these events?*

*De Leon:* The matter was resolved through negotiations and tacit agreements not only within the pro-Balaguer wing of the bourgeoisie, but also including the PRD and American imperialism.

The main leaders of the PRD, for example, made clear their hopes to realize an accord when they called on the masses of PRD supporters not to mobilize in face of the intended coup.



Pedro Guzmán/El Nacional

Motorized unit patrolling PRD headquarters in Santo Domingo May 18, following army's seizure of election ballots.

Then, after Balaguer made his speech promising to accept the election results, Guzmán called a press conference the very next day. Among other things, he promised to refrain from any major shakeups. He promised a "team government," a government of national unity, and he said that "the institutions of the country, including the Armed Forces, will be strengthened and respected, for the good of Dominican democracy." He also promised that there would be no persecution against those associated with the Balaguer regime. And he appealed to his supporters to remain calm and refrain from mass action.

So, you had a whole series of declarations by the PRD that were the counterpart of negotiations. These assurances by the PRD, which are still being made, are meant of course to cement the ruling-class decision to accept a PRD electoral victory. But at the same time, these statements by the PRD are contrary to the hopes and expectations of the masses.

For example, when the PRD says that it will wipe the slate clean on the past, this goes against the masses' desire to do away with corruption in government. Similarly, the qualifications now placed by the PRD on freeing political prisoners or allowing the return of the exiles are a retreat from the masses' desire for a general amnesty.

*Q. What do you think are the prospects ahead for the Dominican working class and the mass movement as a whole?*

*Tavárez:* The masses were against the

Balaguer regime and they expect things to change now. They consider it to be a new situation. They think there will be significant changes in their living conditions and in political life. They expect the right to political organization, trade-union rights, improvement in housing, education, and health conditions. And they will be willing to struggle to obtain these demands, which they expected to gain through a PRD victory in the elections.

This poses the possibility for revolutionary socialists to participate in these struggles alongside the masses, to demand not only that the government fulfill the promises that it made to the masses during the election campaign, but to raise demands that go beyond them. We can fight for nationalization of the multinational corporations, wage increases, a sliding scale of wages that would be enforced by committees of the workers—not leaving it in the hands of the government. There is a need to insist on trade-union democracy and on unity of the working class to struggle for its demands.

The aim is to mobilize the workers, the peasants, the urban and rural poor independently of the bourgeoisie, independently of the PRD, independently of the government. In this sense there is a political opening that we hope to take advantage of in helping to build an independent mass movement and an alternate leadership that will really represent the interests of the working peoples and the masses of this country. □

# Selections From the Left

## Socialist Challenge

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

The May 25 issue reports that the United Troops Out Movement (UTOM) is holding a conference June 10 on the role of the British Army in past colonial wars and in Ireland today.

One of the events at the conference is to be a discussion among former soldiers who served in the north of Ireland. In this issue, *Socialist Challenge* offers excerpts from an article by one such soldier, Ian Phillips, which appeared in the UTOM newspaper *Troops Out*:

"I was sent to the North the day after my 18th birthday. We were stationed in North Belfast. At this time the Protestant paramilitaries were at the peak of their sectarian assassination and bombing campaign.

"Nevertheless all our activity was directed against the Republicans.

"I was stationed in Tactical HQ as an orderly for a period. Anyone arrested and all suspects were brought in there for screening.

"My room where I slept was right next door to the interrogation room and every night you'd hear people coming and getting roughed up, their heads banged against the walls, screaming and everything. . . .

"On one occasion I was told to guard three prisoners. They were told to lean up against the wall, fingers on the wall, feet apart. I was told to keep watch on them. One had a gunshot wound in his leg from a few days earlier and couldn't stand up properly.

"I let him sit. The corporal came in, screamed at and threatened me and made the bloke get up. Then he took me off the job. Two hours later I saw that they were still stood there in really bad pain.

"I saw lots of blokes who had been given a real hammering. One of the first things I saw when I arrived there was a little room called 'The Box.' It was about 10ft. by 10ft. with a table and a chair in it—and it was covered in blood.

"Other blokes said: 'It's just from blokes who get a working over.' There were pictures in the Intelligence Room of blokes propped up between two marines really smashed to pulp.

"There wasn't a day went by when you didn't witness some incident of brutality, whether it was someone getting dragged through the corridor by his hair or some woman who was smashed in the gob [mouth] by the biggest guy in our unit

once, just for screaming.

"The worst incidents of brutality that I witnessed were in the Crumlin Rd. Prison during searches we did there. When we searched the Republican wing, the blokes from my unit went round to certain cells looking for certain individuals who had been convicted of shooting marines.

"There was one guy in particular: everyone made a bee-line for his cell. He was stripped and given a hiding. You could hear the bloody screams all over the prison.

"Under the Blue and Yellow card system strict regulations are laid down about giving warnings before firing on someone you suspect has a weapon. But while I worked in the office I was able to read the sniper file. In 1972, 17 people had been shot by snipers in our unit.

"Snipers are in hidden positions and using telescopic sight. So they can't give warnings and they can just shoot someone walking down the road on suspicion; you have to take his word for it."

## klasse-kampen

*"Class Struggle." Reflects the views of the International Communist League, Dutch section of the Fourth International. Published fortnightly in Amsterdam.*

In the May 13 issue, Ton van Gijssel reports on demonstrations held throughout Holland against the building of nuclear power plants:

"The national day of actions against nuclear energy on April 29 demonstrated what extensive roots the movement has. In about fifteen places, activities of various types were held. They had a rather local character. As was to be expected, these mobilizations fell far short of the one on March 4 [when 40,000 persons demonstrated in Almelo]. The preparatory work and publicity were too limited.

"As regards national publicity, the results were quite poor. This reflects to some extent the still weak national organization of the antinuclear movement. The national papers paid little or no attention to the actions. On the other hand, the regional press gave extensive coverage.

"The political character of the demonstrations was also determined locally. In some places, they limited themselves to repeating the slogan: 'No spread of the nuclear power plants.' In other places, the question of nuclear power plants was linked up with that of nuclear energy as a whole and the alternatives to it. Often immediate problems were taken up such as the threat that nuclear waste may be

deposited in Groningen, or the problem of 'nuclear installations' in the border area of central Holland, and the problem of the nuclear power plant in Dodeward.

"On April 22, a march was organized in North Brabant to go to Mol in Belgium, where there is a major concentration of 'nuclear industry.' . . .

"There is a threat that in the near future new 'nuclear installations' will be built in and around the Netherlands. However, the latest demonstrations have shown once again the growing opposition to this."

## was fun

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

The May 25 issue carries a statement by three persons attacked by monitors at a rally organized by the West German Communist Party. It is signed by Ulrich Heyden, Bernd Schultz, and Jutta Wrage:

"'A festival of political debate where no subject is taboo,' that was the title on the program of the Youth Festival organized by the German Socialist Worker Youth [the CP youth organization] in Dortmund on Whitmonday [May 15].

"It looked a lot different than that to those of us who were brutally attacked by the monitors.

"On Whitsun Eve, Ulrich was selling the papers of the Communist League [a Maoist group that supports the Gang of the Four] . . . in front of the Westfalen Hall. Without any warning, he was jumped by ten monitors and dragged fifty meters away by his hair. Every time he called for help, he was punched in the face. When he was taken to the hospital, it turned out that he had a concussion of the brain.

"On Whitsunday, we distributed a leaflet explaining that such attacks by the monitors were an improper way of dealing with political differences. This obviously was not to the liking of the festival organizers. They did not want to see such questions put before their public. . . .

"Eight hefty monitors came over to us, tore our leaflets out of our hands, and launched into us furiously. Bernd was knocked into the street, where a car just managed to stop before hitting him. As he was lying on the ground, a monitor stamped his glasses into his face. He was lucky that he suffered nothing more than lacerations and a brain concussion.

"Jutta, who photographed this attack, was struck brutally in the face. He suffered bruises and a bloody nose. As he lay on the



ground, the monitors tried to grab his camera. Jutta and Bernd also had to be taken to the hospital for treatment.

"This is not the first time that German Socialist Worker Youth or German Communist Party monitors have used brutal force against people on the left who think differently from them. So, we think that it is necessary to take legal steps against such thug methods. We have made three complaints of aggravated assault. On Whitsunday, the police were able to establish the identities of seven of the monitors who attacked us. . . .

"We think that the use of such thug methods by the German Socialist Worker Youth and the German Communist Party Youth should be widely publicized. Such dictatorial and undemocratic kinds of behavior help only the reactionaries, and they should be immediately stopped."

The West German CP is one of the few Communist Parties in the advanced countries that still supports Moscow unconditionally, along with the American CP. Its attitude toward political opponents on the left apparently has not been mellowed by any "Eurocommunist" concern for acquiring a more democratic image.

## Rahva H'A'AL

"People's Voice," organ of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party, the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Council of Ministers of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic. Published daily in Tallinn.

The Estonian CP paper is one of the best edited and produced of the bureaucratic organs in the USSR, in accordance with the high cultural level of the Estonian people. However, apparently at times the demands of servility overwhelm even its workmanlike editors. One example is the May 6 issue.

The front page is taken up with the speeches made by Brezhnev and West German President Walter Scheel on the occasion of the Kremlin chief's visit to the Federal Republic. The inside page is devoted to a speech by Estonian CP First Secretary J. Käbin to a meeting of Estonian ideological workers dedicated to hailing two books by Brezhnev.

Käbin begins:

"Respected comrades!

"Today's meeting of the [Estonian] republic's corps of ideological workers, in which the political workers of the army and navy are participating, is devoted to Comrade Brezhnev's books *Small Country* and *Resurrection*.

"The first is the story of the heroic deeds of the Soviet people in the Great Fatherland War. The second deals with the period after the victory won by the heroic deeds of

our people in the Great Fatherland War in which the people's economy was rebuilt. . . .

"First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Council of People's Ministers Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev has given the party and the people two magnificent books [*suurepärased raamatud*].

"He participated personally in the Great Fatherland War and in the rebuilding of the people's economy, at two intense crossroads in the life and struggle of the Soviet people. He writes his memories of this with the greatest sincerity and simplicity. These two books are less than fifty pages each, but what scope and what depth! How much factual material, living portraits, simplicity, fortitude, and fearlessness! With extraordinary truthfulness, he portrays the heroic deeds of the popular masses led by the party of Lenin and their work in the war and in reconstructing the people's economy.

"Many other writers of memoirs have taken up whole volumes, hundreds of pages, without achieving such power and impact."

Käbin's speech continues in this vein for something over a page and half of the four-page paper. In the entire issue, there is less than half a page that does not directly celebrate Brezhnev's deeds and utterances, and part of that is devoted to the obituary of an Estonian CP veteran, Eduard Zopp.

Brezhnev's pamphlet *Resurrection* began to be serialized in the April 29 issue, filling half the paper.

## REPUBLICAN NEWS

Reflects the views of the Provisional republican movement. Published weekly in Belfast.

The May 27 issue reports on a mounting campaign of torture against suspected militant nationalists in Derry City, the second largest city in the British-ruled enclave of Northern Ireland:

"Despite very short notice—several hundred people came out on the night of Thursday the 18th May to show their disgust at continuing RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary, the local force made up of proimperialist Protestants] torture campaign against young Derrymen.

"On Monday, Gerry Meehan of Bluebell-hill Gardens, Brandywell, was lifted [arrested] at 4.40 a.m. from his house. His family tried to get a doctor in to him, and Dr. McCabe, the family doctor tried to get in to examine Gerry. But the RUC refused to allow this and it wasn't until Gerry was rushed from Strand Road RUC to Altnagelvin Hospital that Dr. McCabe saw him. What he saw sickened him. . . .

"Dr. McCabe spent one and a half hours examining 21 year old Gerry, and found that his stomach, kidneys, and privates all bore signs of bad beating. He found Gerry to have a perforated eardrum, and this, from what Gerry tells us, was caused by the Branch continuously slapping him hard on the ear. The side of his face was all swollen, and he had three cuts on his ear as well. His wrists were swollen badly. The reason for his swollen wrists is that the RUC put tourniquets on his wrists, and tightened them until the blood stopped. They bent his fingers back until they nearly touched his arm. He was spread-eagled and kicked about the kidneys, stomach and privates, and was forced to do press-ups until he collapsed. When he could no longer continue the exercises, he was kicked viciously.

"On Wednesday, Gerry was brought to Altnagelvin Hospital where his own doctor saw him. The RUC made sure he got a necessary injection, and then hauled him right back to Gestapo HQ for further interrogation. Meehan's solicitor W. Hasson, requested a photographer to photograph Gerry's injuries while they were still fresh. The RUC refused point-blank to allow him in to the barracks.

"His sister got a visit with him on Wednesday, and she was shocked to see an RUC man on either side of Gerry help him into and out of the visiting room. She was warned by the Special Branch: 'Don't ask him why he is here or how he is, or your visit will be immediately terminated.' She happened to ask if he had seen a doctor, and the RUC shouted 'Shut your mouth,' and stopped the visit.

"The day before, young Bernard Curran of Lecky Road was charged with murder and attempted murder. His mother still hasn't been allowed a private visit with him, but she found out he had been interrogated for 17 hours without a break on the first day; from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. the next morning; 11 hours on Tuesday [the next day] and 5 hours on Wednesday. The RUC detectives worked in relays to keep up the constant pressure but Bernard got no break the entire 17 hours, not even to use the toilet. His mother says, 'No man could hold out against that type of continuous interrogation. It was Monday's 17 hour interrogation that made my Bernard sign his life away.'

"After learning about this torture, Sinn Féin set about immediately to organise a protest. Within a few hours people were on the streets in angry protest, showing the RUC their disgust at such low and cowardly tactics.

"Two RUC came out to the crowd but ran back in after the crowd closed in on them. These RUC men who are so aggressive when handing out beatings to young men run like rabbits when the women of Derry douse them with milk from a baby's bottle—which is precisely what happened."



OST contingent in San José May Day demonstration. Banners read, "We demand that the government release

Plutarco Hernández, political prisoner!" and "Holding Plutarco in prison is an attack against our rights!"

## Total Victory in Campaign to Free FSLN Leader

# Plutarco Hernández Pardoned by Costa Rican Government

By Sara Santiago

[Plutarco Hernández, a central leader of the Nicaraguan FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front), was released from jail in Costa Rica on May 31. He had been granted a pardon after a special meeting of the council of ministers. The decision came after three consecutive days of demonstrations in San José demanding Hernández's release.]

[The following article describes Hernández's case and the campaign waged in Costa Rica on his behalf.]

\* \* \*

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica—Plutarco Elías Hernández Sancho, one of the most important leaders of the Nicaraguan Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), was arrested in the San José suburb of Desamparados on April 11 (a symbolic date, since it marks the commemoration of the Costa Rican anti-imperialist hero Juan Santamaría).

Plutarco Hernández, a Costa Rican by birth, had been sentenced in absentia by a Costa Rican court for his role in the rescue of Carlos Fonseca Amador, the historic leader of the FSLN, from a Costa Rican jail on December 23, 1969. In the course of

that operation a civil guard lost his life.

Immediately after Plutarco was arrested, the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST)<sup>1</sup> initiated a campaign to free the Sandinista fighter and called on other left parties and organizations, trade-union federations, and the workers parties' deputies in the Legislative Assembly to join in the effort.

The class struggle in Costa Rica is unfolding under the profound impact of the great mass upsurge against the Somoza dictatorship in neighboring Nicaragua. The Costa Rican people, linked to the Nicaraguans in a multitude of ways, are fervently anti-Somoza. In imprisoning Plutarco Hernández, the Costa Rican government appears as a collaborator with the butcher of Nicaragua.

The arrest also represents a test of strength. Plutarco is the only political prisoner in Costa Rica. Securing his release would mean a victory for the mass movement and would greatly increase the government's difficulties in carrying out its policy of restricting democratic rights.

1. Socialist Workers Organization, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.—IP/I

The OST found itself virtually alone in the campaign for Plutarco's release. The arrest came at a time when the chronically strained relations between the Partido Vanguardia Popular (PVP—People's Vanguard Party, the Costa Rican CP) and the FSLN had grown particularly tense. The Costa Rican Socialist Party (PSC) and the Revolutionary People's Movement (MRP), groups supposedly to the left of the PVP, kept a shamed silence. (This again revealed the situation of weakness in which the PSC and the MRP have placed themselves by participating in Pueblo Unido.<sup>2</sup> This keeps them shackled politically, tailing behind the policies adopted by the Stalinists.)

Outgoing President Daniel Oduber washed his hands of the "Plutarco case" and dumped it in the lap of the new president, Rodrigo Carazo. Divisions undoubtedly exist among the Costa Rican bourgeoisie about how to handle the affair. Imprisoning Plutarco too obviously associates the Costa Rican government with the unpopular Somoza regime.

2. People United, an electoral bloc between the PVP, PSC, and MRP.—IP/I



A few days before Plutarco Hernández was arrested, his family had presented an official petition for pardon. The outgoing Legislative Assembly had then approved a motion recommending the pardon be granted. The judicial authorities, for their part, came down against the pardon, refusing to recognize the legal irregularities in Plutarco's sentence.

The irregularities are obvious. Plutarco played only a secondary role in the operation to free Carlos Fonseca Amador, and it can be proved that he did not participate in the incident that led to the death of the civil guard. During their trial, Plutarco Hernández and the other accused were declared fugitives from justice. This was considered a compounding of the crime and partial proof of guilt when the judgment in absentia was handed down.

In declaring Plutarco Hernández a fugitive, the judges cited a prison escape that had in reality never occurred. Plutarco Hernández and other Sandinista prisoners left jail in October 1970 on direct orders from the president of the republic. They were all deported to Mexico City under heavy police escort. This cannot be considered an escape, nor can anyone be declared a fugitive on such grounds.

The matter at present is in the hands of the executive branch. Before adopting a final decision, President Carazo has to consult with the principal sectors of the bourgeoisie that support him—among whom can be found the most conservative and reactionary in the country. At the same time he is feeling pressure from Somoza.

The OST saw the need to participate in building a broad and energetic defense campaign, one that could unite a large number of prominent defenders of democratic rights. The Comité Pro-Libertad de Plutarco Hernández [Committee to Free Plutarco Hernández] was officially constituted May 17.

Its initial appeal was signed by Carlos Monge Alfaro, ex-rector of the University of Costa Rica and an intellectual of great prestige; Javier Solís, editor of the independent left newspaper *Pueblo*; representatives of the left organization Frente Popular; well-known trade unionists; and leaders of the OST. The president of the committee is Graciela Sancho de Hernández, the mother of the imprisoned Sandinista leader.

The most notable absence from the campaign has been that of the Pueblo Unido parties. They have refused to participate. Another particularly unfortunate absence from the defense committee has been that of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party], a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. Despite repeated invitations from the OST, the PRT has reiterated that participating alongside the OST in acts of solidarity with the Nicaraguan people goes against its principles.

## Why Carazo Backed Down

For three consecutive days beginning May 29, the Committee to Free Plutarco Hernández mounted protest demonstrations of 500 persons in front of the main post office in San José, demanding the release of the Sandinista leader.

On May 30, 200 persons picketed the presidential palace during a torrential rain.

President Carazo's press officer responded to the mobilization by announcing that the council of ministers was not going to deal with the case at its May 30 meeting, that its May 31 meeting had been canceled, and that the question was not on the agenda for a June 1 meeting either.

Under pressure of the mounting protests, however, a special meeting was held and the pardon was granted. Plutarco Hernández was released in time to

head off a march planned by the defense committee for June 1.

Upon his release, Plutarco Hernández took out a full-page advertisement in the major San José daily *La Nación* thanking those who had come to his defense. One paragraph read:

"I want to express my special recognition to the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores, whose members from the very day of my arrest were unstintingly in the front ranks of the fight for my release. In this case, however, I think that [OST leader] Alejandra Calderón and the compañeros of the OST were only carrying out their most elementary duty as revolutionists. In any country where you find a revolutionist in jail for his ideas, it is the most elementary duty of anyone who calls himself a revolutionist to defend the prisoner unconditionally. . . ."

An intense campaign by the defense committee began May 17. The campaign has involved picket lines and fund collections on the streets; public statements through the press, radio, and television; public meetings at the university aimed at publicizing the committee's goals; and circulation of public letters supporting the committee, signed by prominent intellectuals, trade unions, community organizations, and so on.

As the campaign to free Plutarco has gained momentum, details about the role being played in the case by Somoza are little by little being brought to light. These "leaks" emanate from sources close to the government that are opposed to the pressure of the Nicaraguan dictator. The revelations concern threats of economic reprisals made by Somoza against the Costa

Rican government. Besides its political position, the Somoza family has enormous holdings in Costa Rica—land, businesses, and factories.

The "leaks" do not redound to the credit of Carazo's government; they are helping to convert the case into a political scandal. They are also opening the eyes of the Costa Rican people to the fact that tyranny in Nicaragua is a constant threat to their own democratic rights. The Costa Rican government's collaboration with Somoza in jailing anti-Somoza fighters in Costa Rica is appearing more and more obvious and repugnant, and the false image of "democracy" that the Costa Rican ruling class has so carefully cultivated during thirty years of "social peace" is beginning to come apart.

May 29, 1978

## Famine in Ethiopia

The Ethiopian government announced June 3 that between 600,000 and 1 million Ethiopians were starving in the drought-stricken province of Wallo. A few days later officials of the United Nations World Food Program in Rome announced that up to 1.5 million persons faced starvation in the country. They said that Ethiopia was facing a famine "far, far worse" than the one that killed some 200,000 Ethiopians in 1973-74.

The drought-affected area stretches north to south along the eastern escarpment of the Danakil mountains and in-

cludes Wallo Province, which was one of the worst hit by the previous famine. The Ethiopian regime charges that guerrilla activities by the rightist Ethiopian Democratic Union have aggravated the situation by disrupting services.

According to Ethiopian officials, the country will need about 400,000 tons of food over the next year to avert a serious famine. They announced that forty-seven persons are known to have already died, mostly after eating poisonous herbs and fungus-infected grain.

## French Trotskyists' 'Fête Rouge' A Big Success

By F. L. Derry

PARIS—A festival organized here May 27-28 in support of the Trotskyist daily *Rouge* became a front-page political event as a result of a debate held at the festival between representatives of the LCR,<sup>1</sup> and leaders of the French and Spanish Communist parties.

The general theme of the event was "May '68—May '78." It received front-page coverage in *Le Matin*, a large-circulation daily associated with the Socialist Party, as well as extensive coverage in *Le Monde*. The event also received attention in the pages of the French CP daily *l'Humanité*, where it was denounced by members of the Political Bureau. *Le Monde* estimated the total weekend attendance at 10,000.

Part of the "Fête Rouge" was a cultural event. A rock concert was organized for Saturday night. Concerts of African and Haitian music as well as a jazz concert were also organized. One tent featured continuous showings of movies including films of antinuclear demonstrations, the American movie *Harlan County, USA*, and a recently produced film on the life and assassination of Leon Sedov, the son of Leon Trotsky.

A second tent provided tables and stands from many different groups. The International Marxist Group (British section of the Fourth International) sold buttons against racism. The Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Communist League, Spanish section of the Fourth International) sold its new magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*.

A table of French LCR members from the Alsace region sold their journal *Cahiers Alsace-Rouge*. Another stand distributed *Barricades*, a new Trotskyist youth journal. Other French organizations also set up stands, including Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion (Communist Committees for Self-Management), and the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs (Communist Workers Organization).

The heart of the festival was the political debate that took place in a variety of forums on such topics as women, youth, the army, Eastern Europe, French imperialism, the struggles of homosexuals, ecology, revolutionary struggles in southern Europe, and, above all, the French

Communist Party and Eurocommunism. Many different groups were invited to take part in each of these forums.

The forum on women, for example, had representatives from sections of the Fourth International in Spain, France, and Italy, as well as Nadi Camado, a leader of the Workers Commissions in Spain and a member of the Spanish Communist Party, and Alicia de Diego, secretary for women's issues of the Workers Commissions in Spain. Many members of the French CP took the floor to explain the struggles they are waging inside the CP concerning the women's movement.

A forum on the press in the workers movement included Jacques Fremontier as a participant. Fremontier is one of the dissidents in the French CP who have recently begun to publicly express themselves. He is a former editor of *Action*, a CP journal distributed in workplaces. He recently quit his post at *Action* because of his growing disagreements with the CP leadership's course.

The forum on the opposition movement in Eastern Europe brought together a number of well-known representatives of the movement for democratic rights including Victor Fainberg and Leonid Plyushch from the Soviet Union; Jan Kavan, a leader of the student movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and a signer of the Charter 77 document; A. Smolar, a leader of the 1968 Polish student movement; and Catherine Verla, representing the French LCR.

Of particular interest were those forums that offered a direct confrontation of views with the Eurocommunist representatives. L. Malo de Molina, director of foreign affairs for the Spanish Communist Party, spoke as an official representative of his party, for example.

Several members of the French CP also spoke, such as Jean Elleinstein, one of the best-known intellectual representatives of Eurocommunism in France. Jean Rony, an editor of the CP magazine *France-Nouvelle*, also took part.

Many former members and leaders of the CP also took part, including P. Robrieux, the former national secretary of the Union of Communist Students, and Roger Garaudy, a former member of the Political Bureau who was expelled from the CP after 1968.

Several leaders of the SP also took part in the debates, including SP National Secretary Gilles Martinet and Didier Motchane, an editor of the journal *Repères*, the

theoretical journal of the SP minority tendency, the CERES.<sup>2</sup> Representing the LCR were Alain Krivine, editor of *Rouge*, and Daniel Bensaïd, a member of the Political Bureau.

The participants from the CP are all outspoken dissidents. They devoted most of their remarks to criticisms of the CP and of the Soviet Union. The CP responded by condemning both the festival itself and the participation of Elleinstein, Rony, and other CP members. A front-page article in the May 29 *l'Humanité* by Political Bureau member Roland Leroy used the "fête" as one example of a "factional undertaking directed at the Communist Party, its policies, principles, and leadership."

So far, pressure from the CP Political Bureau has not succeeded in silencing the public dissent. For example, when Ukrainian Marxist and fighter for democratic rights Leonid Plyushch joined those on the stage about halfway through the debate on Eurocommunism, Elleinstein was one of the first to shake his hand, declaring, "Today, it is in the Soviet Union that there are thousands of Dreyfuses who must be saved from repression."

*Rouge* and the LCR have been working hard to open the broadest possible dialogue with the developing dissident currents inside the CP. They have been trying to break down the long-standing barriers and prejudices the Stalinist bureaucrats have relied on for years to isolate the ranks of the CP from the arguments and ideas of the French Trotskyists. The results of the festival show that this activity was an important step forward toward destroying these prejudices and laying the basis for a real debate with the CP ranks on the program of Trotskyism.

Not everyone has seen the debate with the Eurocommunists in this light, however. In a letter to the LCR, the Political Bureau of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (Internationalist Communist Organization) refused the invitation that had been extended to it to take part in the activities and debates. Owing to a misunderstanding, *Rouge* had already reported that the OCI had "agreed in principle to attend." In its May 19 letter, the OCI replied:

"How could you assume, to top it off, that the OCI could—as you put it—'agree

1. Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International.

2. Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes (Center for Socialist Studies, Research, and Education), a wing of the SP.



in principle' to a debate commemorating May '68 organized with the participation of Elleinstein and representatives of the Spanish CP, among others?

"Debate with Elleinstein, the historian of Stalinism?"

"Elleinstein, who at a meeting held for him February 24 at the Panthéon campus called the OCI and LCR activists, and the students there, 'fascists'?"

"Debate with representatives of the Spanish CP?"

"The Spanish CP, which, in the name of the Moncloa pact it has signed with the government, fights to maintain the decayed monarchist-Francoist regime in power, fights for austerity against the working class! . . ."

"In our view, such a policy has nothing in common with that of the workers united front, which makes it possible to achieve unity around precise goals irrespective of political differences."

On this basis, the OCI declined to have a

speaker on the platform to present its political ideas to those present.

The problem facing French Trotskyists today is how to reach the tens of thousands of members and supporters of the French CP who are now beginning to raise the first questions about their party's role in the recent legislative elections, and what course to follow in the future. How can Trotskyist ideas be presented in such a way that they will be taken seriously by rank-and-file CP members who are considering an alternative to the line of the party bureaucrats? A willingness to debate openly—in fact, to aggressively seek out all possibilities for such a debate—is essential if Trotskyist ideas are to begin to penetrate the CP ranks.

The degree to which these sectarian barriers are being challenged was demonstrated in one of the remarks made by SP national leader Gilles Martinet, when he said that "anti-Trotskyism is the anti-Semitism of the working-class movement."

you want him to be able to express himself in the party press?"

Next, a fifty-year-old house painter: "It's true that in 1974 we said unity, unity. Later, that changed, and we lost. . . ." Then, answering the reporter, who has said that the struggle continues: "It's true that the struggle continues, but before March 12, we never saw the boss. On March 19 he uncorked the champagne, now he's more arrogant than ever."

Finally, a forty-five-year-old teacher, a CP sympathizer, speaks of the difficulty of putting democracy into practice, and especially of the CP's lack of a clear definition of the working class, and of its policy toward intellectuals.

In short, all three non-executive committee members who contribute to this discussion are critical, with the exception of one activist who takes the floor to say that those who publish in the bourgeois press should not be allowed to attend their cell meeting.

The executive committee turns speaking in defense of orthodoxy:

"I am satisfied with the party line." "The CP is the most democratic party." "We should see the opposition to the party line as the bourgeoisie's desire to influence the party."

Their responses make the activist from Gard say, "You are not answering my questions." And even, "If this continues, I'm going to end up with Krivine."

The LCR member, on the other hand, is allowed to speak as many times and as long as he wishes (his remarks were recorded in the cell's minutes).

First, using the organization of the LCR as an example, he explains the meaning of democratic centralism. Next, he upholds the working-class character of the SP. Finally, he draws a balance sheet of the CP's policies from 1968 to the March 13 agreement and the results of the March 19 elections. An unyielding, but calm debate then ensues.

That is, up to the impassioned moment when the names of Marty and Tillon\* are invoked, and the overexcited president of the Veterans Association declares: "They are cops, they are robbers."

In any event, the debate is a departure from the relationship that has existed up to now between the CP and LCR in the area. At the final campaign rally at Montpellier, Roux, the CP candidate, told an LCR speaker: "Sir, do not call me comrade, we have nothing in common!" □

\*Charles Tillon, former head of the French partisans, was expelled from the Communist Party in 1970. He remains one of the most prominent and popular of the leaders of the veterans of the Résistance. André Marty was the leader of the revolt in the French Black Sea fleet, in opposition to intervention against the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war. A CP leader for many years, he was also expelled. Both Tillon and Marty spoke out against aspects of the Stalinist policy of the French CP.—IP/I

## By a Trotskyist Invited as a Guest

# Report on a French CP Cell Meeting

[The following article appeared in the May 26 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The translation is by Lynn Silver.]

Palavas-les-Flots is a town ten kilometers from Montpellier. In winter it is a fishing port; in summer it becomes a tourist beach. We are at a meeting of the local Communist Party cell.

This cell is not the only one that has met to discuss [CP leader] Georges Marchais's April 27 report, but it is surely the only one that has invited a member of the LCR [Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International] to this discussion.

This is probably because the LCR member is active in a union (SNES—National Union of Secondary-School Teachers) that a member of the executive committee of the cell also belongs to. Another possible reason was given by a CP activist at the end of the meeting. He said that a "democratic approach" is needed toward the far-left organizations.

The cell has twenty-six members, eighteen of whom are present at the meeting: eight women and ten men, seven less than thirty years old, and seven older than fifty—blue-collar workers, and some teachers as well.

The president of the Veterans Association of the Republic, emboldened by his eighty years of age, makes ill-timed remarks throughout the meeting, and boasts

of having a giant portrait of Stalin in his bedroom: "After all, comrades, who made the victory against the Germans possible?"

On one side of the table sits the executive committee—four men—and the LCR activist; the rest of the cell sits on the other side. The secretary of the cell starts the meeting with a report on the Marchais report.

It turns out to be a painstaking running commentary on the speech, lasting half an hour: a defense against "those comrades who attack the party," a justification of the party's line since 1921, and an attack on the SP aimed at creating tighter unity inside the "fortress."

The cell secretary does not speak again for the rest of the meeting, leaving the chore of defending the line to the members of the executive committee, who are united in their fury against any opposition.

For opposition there is. It begins with a fifty-year-old comrade from the département of Gard, as soon as the report has ended. After stating her agreement with the content of the report, she challenges the way in which the party functions:

"The policy comes down from the top but never goes the other way." "The change on disarmament—who discussed it and where?"

She is interrupted several times by the executive committee:

"You're not being logical, comrade. If you don't agree with Elleinstein, why do

## Can Carter's Austerity Deal Beat Inflation?

By Jon Britton

In response to a severe decline of the dollar in world money markets and an acceleration of inflation at home, Jimmy Carter has launched an "anti-inflation program."

Price rises can be "decelerated," he said April 11, if all Americans "sacrifice for the common good."

Carter's real aim, however, is to tighten the squeeze on the living standards of working people in order to shore up government finances and the deteriorating competitive position of U.S. imperialism.

His most acute immediate problem is to prop up the dollar. Otherwise he risks a drastic disruption of world commerce.

Carter announced his "anti-inflation" drive at a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Judging from this speech and subsequent actions, Carter's plan includes the following:

- Strong backing by the federal government to efforts of the employers to drive down the real wages of American workers. In face of accelerating inflation, which has now reached the double-digit level, according to the government statistics for April, Carter "proposed" that wage increases be held "substantially below the average wage increases for the last two years" (emphasis added).

Carter said he would set the example by limiting pay increases for federal government workers this year to 5.5%, far below the rate of inflation. He urged state and local governments to do the same.

This antilabor position was sugarcoated with an appeal to big business to do its bit by decelerating price increases. Shortly after his speech, Carter met with a delegation of top business executives, who voiced their approval. General Motors Chairman Thomas Murphy pledged "maximum discipline" on prices. A few days later GM announced a \$100 average increase in car prices—its third price hike in six months.

Such pledges from monopoly corporations are worthless. A rise in prices induced by depreciating currency cannot be suppressed even by the most draconian government controls. One way or another prices of goods and services will rise—if not openly, then in disguised forms such as a further lowering of quality; or black markets will emerge.

"Escalator clauses" that automatically adjust wages, pension benefits, and welfare payments to compensate fully for price increases offer the only effective insurance against inflation obtainable by

the working class. Carter, naturally, had not one word to say about such protection.

- Support to the employers' campaign to roll back environmental protection guidelines and safety standards on the job. "We must cut the inflationary costs which private industry bears as a result of government regulations," Carter said in his speech.

Robert Strauss, the wealthy corporate lawyer named by Carter as his "special counsel on inflation," has announced that environmental regulations will be one of the central initial targets of Carter's drive.

The capitalists want to be free to pollute the water, air, and soil and to impose unsafe working conditions whenever it suits their profit needs. They seek to overturn the modest regulations won by the environmental and union movements because these regulations cut into profits and in some cases require large "unproductive" investments.

- A cutback of government action to provide jobs for the unemployed. Without saying so openly, Carter has embraced the view widely expressed in the capitalist media that today's official jobless rate of 6% (with much higher rates for Blacks, youths, and women) represents "full employment."

New initiatives to deal with unemployment, Carter said in his speech, will be limited to "very carefully targeted incentives to encourage private business to hire the hard-core unemployed."

- A hefty tax hike combined with cuts in projected federal spending. In December of last year Carter signed into law a Social Security tax bill that will result in steep increases in the regressive payroll tax beginning in 1979. *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker called it "the most onerous tax bill ever passed in this country."

(A substantial rise in the tax that went into effect in January was mandated by earlier legislation.)

At the same time as he gave his final approval to this legislation, Carter promised to cut personal income taxes sufficiently to prevent most workers' overall federal tax bill in 1979 from rising.

On May 12, however, the *Wall Street Journal* broke the news that Carter had decided to cut back the overall \$25 billion tax-reduction package, which he had proposed, to less than \$20 billion; and to defer its taking effect from October 1, 1978 to January 1, 1979.

Carter's aim is to pare the government's

deficit for fiscal 1979 (which begins October 1, 1978) from the \$60 billion level that had been projected to something less than \$53 billion. That is still an enormous flood of red ink for the boom phase of a business cycle, when corporate borrowing and other inflationary pressures are at a peak.

Thus, it is likely that Carter's much ballyhooed "tax cut" will be reduced further or scuttled altogether.

Carter also plans to hold down federal spending. He told reporters at a news conference May 25 that "the 1980 fiscal year budget . . . will be very tight with severe cutbacks in what we anticipated recommending to the Congress next January."

And the *Wall Street Journal* reported June 7 that "Mr. Carter has given his economic advisers the go-ahead to try to find ways to trim another \$3 billion to \$5 billion from federal expenditure in fiscal 1979."

There will be no cutbacks in military spending, however. Carter has agreed—as part of a NATO military buildup—to boost armaments outlays by 3% yearly in real terms. Thus, the main burden of the cuts will fall on social-welfare spending.

- Gold sales to symbolize determination to prop up the dollar. Carter had the Treasury Department announce on April 19 that it would begin a series of monthly gold auctions May 23. A total of 1.8 million ounces of the yellow metal, worth about \$300 million at current prices, is to be sold over a six-month period.

The sale of this amount of gold in and of itself couldn't be expected to turn the dollar around. West Europe and Japan bought up tens of *billions* worth of dollars (with their own currencies) without accomplishing that. But the action signaled a move by the Carter administration away from a relative neglect of the falling dollar.

### Wall Street Celebrates

Wall Street's response to Carter's stepped-up antilabor drive in defense of the dollar was immediate and dramatic. Beginning April 14, the stock market took off like a skyrocket, with the Dow Jones industrial average gaining eighty points in thirteen trading days. On April 17, a total of 65 million shares were traded, an all-time record for a single day.

Financial capitals around the world got the message too. In fact, much of the



demand for American stocks was said to be coming from foreign investors. At the same time, the dollar rallied on the international money markets. By May 12, the U.S. currency was at its highest level against the Swiss franc since January 20. The dollar also strengthened against gold.

While Carter's "anti-inflation program" pleases the rich, his standing with working people is bound to sag further as the real character of his policies becomes clear. In early April, even before his "anti-inflation" measures were announced, the ABC News/Louis Harris poll showed that only 24% of the American public approved of his handling of the economy.

Thus, "populist" Jimmy Carter was undoubtedly reluctant to embark on this course, especially in an election year.<sup>1</sup> But the rulers were insistent; like it or not, as a defender of capitalism and servant of big business, Carter had no choice but to carry out orders.

### The Dollar's Long Decline

The dollar has suffered a decline in relation to fifteen other major currencies of nearly 15% since 1970.<sup>2</sup> All paper currencies have depreciated against gold in the same period, with the dollar losing 80% of its value by this general measure.<sup>3</sup>

This relative and absolute decline of the dollar has been brought about by the interrelated effects of (1) slower growth of labor productivity in U.S. industry compared with Europe (especially West Germany) and Japan; (2) the much greater burden of armaments expenditures assumed by American imperialism in order to carry out its role of world cop; and (3) a long-term slowdown in the rate of world capitalist growth, beginning in the early 1970s, which has undermined the government's ability to finance its expenditures through taxation and borrowing.

Part of the U.S. productivity lag was an inevitable outcome of the Second World War, in which much of the industrial plant of the losers was destroyed, while that of the big winner, the United States, was unscathed. Thus when West Germany and Japan began to rebuild, they did so on the basis of the most up-to-date technology (usually imported from the United States). Later, their productivity growth was spurred by sustained rapid economic expansion (the Japanese and West German "miracles").

The American capitalists, meanwhile, introduced new technology at a much slower pace owing to the fact that they started out, after the war, with their factories intact. In general, they scrapped obsolete facilities only when they were worn out.

U.S. productivity growth was further slowed by huge government outlays for armaments and for such costly military operations as the Korean and Vietnam wars. This is because such spending came out of surplus value produced by the workers, which otherwise could have gone into productive investment.

The net result was a decline in competitiveness that in 1971 produced the first U.S. trade deficit (excess of imports over exports) in this century and put increasing pressure on the dollar, especially from 1968 on.

Economic stagnation has eroded government tax revenues in the 1970s. In this context, a continued high level of armaments expenditures and the need to fund social-welfare programs conceded under massive pressure during the 1960s have placed severe strains on government finances. So much so that a significant portion of the resultant deficits has had to be met by, in effect, printing new money. This has directly depreciated the dollar, both in relation to gold and to other major currencies.

During the 1950s and 1960s the dollar was transformed from primarily a national currency, although the most important one, into a truly international means of exchange and payment. As a result, its long-term decline poses a direct threat to the entire world capitalist economy. The collapse of the dollar would inevitably and quickly bring a collapse of world trade.<sup>4</sup>

In an effort to reverse its declining competitive edge internationally and stabilize the dollar, the capitalists decided to launch an offensive against the main obstacle to definitively achieving these ends—the American working class.

From the beginning, the offensive has had the two-fold aim of (1) boosting profits by driving down real wages and other costs of production such as pollution controls; and (2) slashing social-welfare spending by the government (with accompanying attacks on public workers) in order to alleviate its ongoing fiscal crisis.

A deliberate policy of promoting high levels of unemployment, partially a by-product of the second aim of the offensive, has directly aided the first. Positive legislation in hiring and promoting Blacks and women has become a major target along

with other gains achieved by the working population.

An initial "probing action" by the ruling class was Nixon's attempt to hold down government spending in 1969, which made it possible to balance the budget that year, temporarily stabilizing the dollar. The first major attack came in August 1971 with Nixon's New Economic Policy, which an administration official later candidly described as an attempt to "zap labor." This decision was precipitated by a severe crisis of the international monetary system, beginning in May of that year, caused by a panicky flight from the dollar.

Along with his antilabor offensive, Nixon recognized reality in the monetary sphere and formally devalued the dollar by about 9%.

Thanks to Nixon's attack on wages, and the enhanced competitiveness of American corporations that resulted, the decline of the dollar was slowed. During the 1974-75 depression, when labor was further weakened by massive unemployment, the dollar's plunge was halted and a recovery began.

Around this time, financially hard-pressed state and local governments joined the antilabor offensive, with New York City leading the way.

The dollar's recovery extended through most of 1977. But then, beginning last October, after two years of holding its own against most other currencies, if not against gold,<sup>5</sup> the dollar went into another steep decline. This was set off by a rapid worsening of the United States trade deficit, owing partially to continued economic stagnation in Europe and Japan, which limited U.S. exports, and by Carter's extraordinary budget deficit.

In the short space of three months, the dollar plummeted nearly 6% in relation to other major currencies as banks and industrial corporations throughout the capitalist world once again began shifting to other currencies. Gold speculation reached a high pitch, demonstrating a growing lack of confidence in the stability of any paper money.

The Federal Reserve quickly responded by taking some initial steps away from the "easy money" policy that had prevailed since 1975.

### The Burns-Carter 'Rift'

This precipitated the famous "rift" between Arthur Burns, then head of the Federal Reserve, and Carter, which reflected a real tactical division in the American ruling class. Burns represented those whose first concern was the stability of the dollar. Carter voiced the worry of those

1. Congressional, as well as state and local, elections will be held in November.

2. Percentage changes in the market value of the dollar, weighted for volume of trade with the fifteen countries, is calculated each business day by Morgan Guaranty Trust Co.

3. For an explanation of the relationship between gold (the money commodity) and paper currencies, see "Behind Carter's Tax Flimflam," *Intercontinental Press*, December 12, 1977, p. 1364.

4. For a fuller explanation of why a serious weakening of the main international currency causes big potential problems for world imperialism, see "The Headlong Plunge of the American Dollar," by Ernest Mandel, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 24, 1978, p. 476.

5. The dollar strengthened dramatically in relation to gold beginning early in 1975. But by October 1977, it had been falling against gold for more than a year.

who feared that rising interest rates would choke off the economic expansion prematurely—and also worsen the Democrats' election chances in 1978 and 1980.

Thus arose the charge by European and Japanese officials that the Carter administration was guilty of "malign neglect" of the U.S. dollar. "Malign" because U.S. goods became cheaper in Europe and Japan as the dollar fell, while exports from these countries became more expensive.

The policy rift between Carter and Burns was sufficiently serious that Carter removed Burns as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board in January and replaced him with former Textron chief William Miller, who was reputed to be more favorably disposed to Carter's expansionist policies.

### Ruling-Class Consensus

But the continued steep decline of the dollar into March of this year apparently erased these differences. The ruling class appears to have reached a consensus that slowing the depreciation of the dollar domestically and internationally must have first priority in the period ahead.

Growing inflation is "the most serious threat," Carter said in his speech April 11. And Miller has outdone Burns in tightening credit and campaigning for "fiscal responsibility."

While the dollar has remained relatively stable these past few weeks, though with some recent signs of renewed weakness, and the stock market has extended its "Miller rally" into early June, it remains to be seen what the longer-term effect of Carter's "anti-inflation" moves will be. This depends on many factors, not least the pace of the response of U.S. workers.

First of all, it is dubious that the lag in U.S. productivity gains, relative to its main rivals, has been overcome. It is true that, thanks to the antilabor offensive at home, real wages of American workers have been held down, giving U.S. corporations a competitive edge in some markets. But the European and Japanese employers are holding down wages too, cancelling out the advantage. And Carter continues to boost military spending to new records.

The economic cycle also has to be taken into account. And here there are storm clouds on the horizon. The U.S. economy is in the late phase of a cyclical expansion. Credit demands are soaring as business firms step up borrowing to finance larger inventories and to expand production facilities. The result is higher interest rates and strong upward pressures on prices. Add to this the enormous amount of borrowing by the federal government, and the resulting mixture is potentially explosive.

The Federal Reserve finds itself caught in a dilemma: It can try to meet the zooming credit demands by expanding the money supply, thereby slowing the rise of interest rates in the short run but risking

runaway inflation in the longer run. Or it can refuse to meet these demands, thereby allowing interest rates to soar and bringing on a "credit crunch" that could force major corporations, not to speak of thousands of small capitalists, into bankruptcy; bring about a collapse of housing construction owing to a lack of mortgage money; and precipitate a general slump.

In practice, the central bank generally follows a middle course in this situation, expanding the money supply to avoid a credit crunch while at the same time allowing interest rates to rise in order to "cool down" the "overheated" economy.

The Federal Reserve followed just such a policy in 1973-74, when the business cycle hit its previous peak. What ensued was double-digit inflation combined with the deepest downturn of the post-World War II period.

This time around, the world economy is even more sluggish, the international credit structure shakier, and the projected government deficit for fiscal 1979 more than *ten times* the \$4.7 billion deficit recorded four years ago.

It is not surprising then that some mouthpieces of the ruling class have labeled Carter's "anti-inflation program" as woefully inadequate in light of the looming crisis. The editors of the influential financial magazine *Business Week*, for example, assess the situation as follows:

Federal officials and congressmen are fond of lecturing New York City for its profligate management and its overstretched finances. But the hard truth is that the financial situation of the federal government today is painfully similar to that of New York City in 1975. The total federal debt has grown by more than \$300 billion in the past seven years. The only reason that the U.S. does not face bankruptcy—as New York did—is simply that it owns a printing press in the form of the Federal Reserve System. By creating money, it has forced the economy to absorb its deficits and distribute them as part of a general inflation. [*Business Week*, May 22.]

If Carter doesn't drastically alter course, the editors warn, "he will risk not just a painful inflation and a subsequent depression but a breakdown in the whole economic and political structure of the country."

They point to New York City as an example of what has to be done nationally:

New York is still in trouble. But it did respond to its crisis by radically toning down the political promises its leaders would make. The city has cut spending, held a lid on payrolls, and stopped promising benefits to its citizens when it cannot pay for them.

The Carter Administration could stop inflation by following a similar discipline.

*Business Week's* description of the harsh austerity measures imposed on order of the banks by Democratic mayors Abraham Beame and Edward Koch understates the truth. But the point of view of the editors is clear: Similar measures must be adopted by the Carter administration.

Here are some of *Business Week's* initial recommendations:

- Make massive cuts in federal spending and a broad reduction in federal staff. A cut of 10% in government employment by the end of fiscal 1979 is a realistic target. . . .

- Abandon the idea of a massive tax cut for consumers. Concentrate cutting on the business taxes sector, especially on investment. . . .

- Review the complicated structure of environmental and safety rules to see which ones are causing unreasonable increases in costs. Postpone requirements that cost more than the nation can afford immediately. . . .

- Put a moratorium on social programs designed to redistribute income and level U.S. society."

*Business Week* even calls for a review of the military budget "to see that it meets security needs and nothing more," and suggests that conscription might be a cheaper alternative to the present volunteer army.

It is, of course, absurd to imply that the U.S. government, whether under the Democrats or the Republicans, ever had programs that were designed to "level the U.S. society." But again the point is clear: There must be a moratorium on all programs designed to meet, even in a minimal way, demands to mitigate the crushing effects of the social inequities created by the capitalist system.

It is also clear that Carter has already adopted some of the planks of *Business Week's* "anti-inflation program." But the editors, reflecting the views of the ruling class as a whole, are pushing him to take much more drastic measures to prop up the dollar and definitively turn the tide for American imperialism in international competition.

Carter will no doubt prove responsive to these new demands. But he and his masters may not get their way. The coal miners gave the employers—and Carter—a small taste of the militant resistance American workers can put up when their wages, working conditions, and social benefits are under serious attack.

If the employers press their offensive, as they give every indication of doing, even bigger confrontations lie ahead.

June 7, 1978

### Holy Mackerel!

The state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation has banned an advertisement for a Walt Disney cartoon film because it has a mouse saying "Holy Mackerel!"

Apparently the censors did not like the religious reference. According to a June 5 AP dispatch from Johannesburg, officials reportedly said: "Where possible, the phrase 'Holy Mackerel' should be avoided in commercials as its repetition could create a negative reaction."



# Capitalism Fouls Things Up

## 9,000 in Switzerland March Against Nuclear Power

[The following article was published in the May 27 issue of *La Brèche*, a Trotskyist fortnightly published in Lausanne, Switzerland. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

The Whitsuntide\* antinuclear march ended with a demonstration by 9,000 persons in front of the unused Lucens nuclear plant, which the electricity trusts want to convert into a repository for used nuclear fuel.

Earlier, 3,000 to 4,000 demonstrators had covered the twenty-two kilometers from Corserey to Lucens, where two days of discussions and festivities were held, bringing together opponents of nuclear power from all over Switzerland and nearby areas.

It was the first demonstration of this kind and scope in French-speaking Switzerland. It represents the first step toward developing a mass antinuclear movement here, modeled after the one that has existed in German-speaking Switzerland since the occupation of the Kaiseraugst plant in early 1975 and the Gösigen demonstrations in June 1977. Furthermore, German-speaking Swiss opponents of nuclear power participated massively at Corserey and Lucens, making for a linkup and fruitful exchange of experience between the two areas.

The Whitsuntide march showed that the movement is determined to continue the struggle, giving the lie to the phony "improvements" in the revised version of the law on atomic energy, which were noisily touted by the media.

The Whitsuntide gathering was organized by an ad hoc committee made up of delegates from the anti-nuclear-waste committees in Lucens and Moudon (CADAL and CADAM), CASAK from Lausanne, and the National Antinuclear Coordinating Committee.

Extensive facilities were provided for the participants: a giant tent village in Corserey, food and lodging for about 2,000

persons from Saturday to Monday morning, child care, refreshment stands, first-aid stations, and child-care centers spread out along the march route.

This came about through the work done by several dozen inhabitants of the Lucens-Moudon area, and thanks to the goodwill of the citizens of Corserey. One grower, an official of the Union of Swiss Growers, generously donated a large field. The village firefighters decided to devote a practice drill to piping in water to the tents! Special trains brought the demonstrators from all over Switzerland and took them back afterwards.

On Saturday [May 13], several region-wide demonstrations were held in Zürich and Baden. Several hundred persons assembled in front of the headquarters of BBC, Motor-Columbus, and NOK, before joining the Corserey demonstration.

On Sunday, nearly a thousand demonstrators spent the whole day in discussions in the four workshops—energy policy and the antinuclear struggle; direct actions against nuclear facility projects; the antinuclear movement and the workers movement; the antinuclear movement and the farmers movement.

Reports on these workshop discussions were given to a large plenary session in the early evening, attended by about 2,500 persons, before the start of the festival in which various performers participated.

In Lucens on Monday, the demonstrators adopted, by voice vote, the resolution passed by the plenary session the night before. It condemned the campaign begun by the state and the nuclear lobby to isolate the antinuclear mobilizations and called for the planning of new actions by the antinuclear movement, around the slogans: no storing of radioactive wastes in Lucens, Airolo, Bex, Lenk, Giswil, Wabrig, or elsewhere; for an immediate moratorium on all construction of nuclear installations, particularly those plants under construction at Gösigen and Leibstadt; the decision to build nuclear installations should be up to the people; no repression against opponents of nuclear power; no to the Federal Security Police.

A report on Sunday's discussions would require going into greater detail. These

discussions were characterized, in part, by frequent participation from the Maoist comrades in the OCDR-KB-KOAP, who represent one of the currents in the movement whose proposals have majority support in the Lausanne CASAK, and who are also active in other committees.

They spoke against giving critical support to the ballot initiative on nuclear power that will be voted on December 3 (this position was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the National Coordinating Committee, and is supported by us). These comrades favor a campaign centered solely around a moratorium and for initiating a referendum against the law.

They also opposed the proposal by a coalition of progressive antinuclear activists (set up by GAGAK, with the participation of Revolutionary Marxist League members) to establish regular meetings of trade unionists wishing to organize to spur on discussion in the unions prior to the USS [Swiss Union Federation] congress next October, which will discuss the USS position on energy, and to fight to get the unions to support the ballot initiative and moratorium. We will publish further reports on this important debate.

At Corserey, the proposals of the Maoist comrades were rejected by clear majorities. Their proposal to initiate a referendum was not voted on but is still under discussion and will be on the agenda of the upcoming National Coordinating Committee meeting in June.

The workshop on linking the antinuclear movement with the workers movement passed a motion in favor of a trade-union coalition, and an initial sign-up sheet was signed by about forty interested unionists. In our opinion, this was one of the major gains of the Whitsuntide gathering: the first stone in the building of a bridge between the antinuclear movement and the workers movement. □

### Of Course

Rather than attempt to clean up the now barren acid-polluted lakes in New York State's Adirondack Mountains, the state government announced June 10 a \$40,000 program to develop an acid-resistant strain of trout.

\*The first three days of the week beginning with Pentecost Sunday, May 14.—IP/I



## Why Icelandic Trotskyists Are Running for Parliament

[The elections to the Icelandic national parliament, the Althing, are on June 11. The recent municipal elections in the country have indicated a swing to the left. The Icelandic Trotskyists of the Fylking Byltingarsinnadhra Kommúnista (FBK—Revolutionary Communist League) are running twenty-four candidates for the Althing. The following interview with Ragnar Stefánsson, who heads the FBK slate, was published in the May issue of the FBK monthly *Neisti* (Spark). The translation from the Icelandic is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

The editors of *Neisti* asked Ragnar Stefánsson to answer some of the questions generally asked by people on the left about the Fylking's campaign in the elections to the Althing.

*Question. Why is the Fylking running?*

*Answer.* That question is never put to the candidates of the Althydhubandalag [People's Alliance, a centrist group of Stalinist origin] or the Althydhuflokkur [People's Party, the Icelandic Social Democrats]. This may be because it seems to people that the existence of these working-class parties depends on their having seats in the Althing and now and again in the government.

The Fylking is running simply because it wants to take part in the political debate, in the political ferment focused around the election campaign. The most effective way to do this is to run candidates, not just for the sake of running and scurrying around to try to get the most possible votes.

Every vote that the Fylking gets on the basis of its program is support for the struggle of the Icelandic working class, a declaration of intent to struggle against the Icelandic bourgeoisie. Every vote we get helps to undermine the rightward trend in the Althydhubandalag and the Althydhuflokkur.

People think that because the Fylking is a revolutionary organization, it is not interested in getting people into the Althing. But that is quite a different matter. A Fylking member in the Althing would obviously upset the peace and quiet of this assembly and throw a monkey wrench into the class collaboration and splitting operations of the bourgeois and workers parties, which now mark the functioning of parliament.

A Fylking member in the Althing would utilize his or her position to the utmost to upset the collaboration between the bour-

geois and workers parties by exposing it and by supporting the interests of the people. Any *thingmenn* [members of parliament] that the Fylking had would inform the workers about every secret deal they ran across. They would utilize the position that *thingmenn* obviously have to get people to support workers' struggles.

The outcome of workers struggles is not decided in the Althing. On the other hand, the working-class forces in the Althing can use their position to bolster the struggles waged by the workers for the benefit of society as a whole. This is not being done by the *thingmenn* of the workers parties.

To the contrary, experience has shown that they try to direct discontented workers away from independent action. Directly or indirectly they try to channel their struggles into a blind alley. The only solution is supposed to be to elect them. And then they use the votes they get to make class-collaborationist deals with the capitalists.

*Q. Some people who have supported the program of the Fylking in the workers movement, the Samtök Herstöðhvaandstaedhinga [League against the Military Bases], the Raudhsokkahreyfing [Red Stockings Movement, the main feminist organization], and so on say that it means nothing to vote for the Fylking because it is not likely to get anyone into the Althing. Therefore, they say, voting for it would be wasting a vote. What is your answer to them?*

A. I call on all those who support the program of the Fylking to vote for it where they have the opportunity. Such a vote is never wasted, as I explained before. It is of course true that people have a tendency to vote for those who have the most votes sewed up from previous elections, regardless of their views. This is obviously a vicious circle.

Four years ago, it came to the point that our supporters gave us money for the campaign but at the same time said that they did not see how they could do anything but vote for the Althydhubandalag. We respect the honesty and sincerity of these people. But they make a mistake in not voting for us.

A victory for the Althydhubandalag here in Reykjavik at the expense of the Fylking is a victory for the right-wing forces that dominate the "Alliance" in this city and will simply be utilized to speed the course of this organization to the right. A vote for the Fylking is a victory for those who want to strengthen the class struggle rather than class collaboration. Our vote should

correspond to a large extent to the support for our program that we are able to win in the election campaign.

I appeal to all those who support the program and the work of the Fylking not to fail to support us on election day. A real increase in the support for the Fylking, for example, would make it difficult for the Althydhubandalag to use its position in the Althing and in the workers movement to get itself into the government with any bourgeois parties.

Many people think that the reason that the Fylking is not running in districts outside Reykjavik is a fear that this might result in the Althydhubandalag losing some seats. That is not true. We would run in every district if we had the money to do this and as long as we could do it without neglecting the other political tasks that we have to continue to carry out.

The *thingmenn* of the Althydhubandalag and the Althydhuflokkur are not doing the working class any good in the Althing as matters stand now. On the other hand, a big vote for the workers parties as a whole would be a declaration of opposition to the government and its attacks on the living standards of the workers. The most effective declaration of opposition would be to vote for the Fylking. But where the Fylking is not on the ballot, opposition can be voiced most strongly by voting for the Althydhubandalag. That is why we call on people to vote for it in the districts outside Reykjavik, and that is the only reason. What is most important, obviously, is that no worker vote for the bourgeois parties.

The Fylking's estimate of the political situation has been proved correct time after time in recent years. The working class would be in a better position if the Fylking's program of tasks for the workers movement had gotten stronger support.

For example, I would point out ever since the last contract was negotiated by the ASI [Althydhusamband Islands—Iceland Confederation of Labor], the Fylking said that the government would violate it and carry out wage cuts, and that is what happened. [There was a general strike of Icelandic public workers earlier this year.]

We also put forward a series of concrete proposals for preparing the labor movement to beat back these attempts to violate provisions of the contract. The working class would be in a better position today if the sort of demands we raised had gotten more support.

So, no one can claim that the Fylking is just a group of inexperienced youth, who, of course, have nice ideas. I have been



preparing to stand in these elections since I joined the Aeskulydhsfylking [Youth League] when I was fifteen years old. I was in the Sósíalístaflokkur where work could be done in it, and in the Althydhubandalag until I was expelled. After twenty-four years' work in the labor movement, you could hardly say that I am inexperienced.

Asgeir Danielsson, another candidate on our slate, has earned respect in the left movement for his writing in recent years and his indictment of the economic conditions and the perspectives of the Icelandic bourgeoisie. He has gained respect in particular among the left opposition group in the labor movement with which he has worked energetically.

The third candidate on our slate is Gudmundur Hallvarðsson. He has been a respected fighter in the labor movement for a decade. Some of the Althydhubandalag people have said that Gudmundur would be the next chairman if he would only make a "little" adjustment and give up his views and quit the Fylking. Compare that with the assorted inexperienced hacks offered by the other workers parties. Some of these types come in contact with the Fylking but get tired of swimming against the stream and choose instead to fall into the lap of any power clique in the Althydhubandalag.

The Fylking's slate in the elections is a fighters' slate through and through.

*Q. Would you summarize the issues on which the Fylking is putting the most stress in the elections.*

A. The Fylking will carry out a propaganda campaign for our program as a whole. We will present our program not just as it has been presented in written form in *Neisti* in recent years but as it has been put forward in the labor movement, the anti-imperialist movement, the women's movement, as it has been put forward in social struggles in general. We are not trying to put forward some special electoral image but rather we are advancing the program that we have been fighting for and will continue to fight for.

The Fylking is the only party that in the day-to-day struggle takes into consideration the overall interests of the working class and seeks to strengthen the working class so that it can go on the offensive and win a complete victory through the socialist transformation of society. The Fylking is the only workers party that does not pose itself as the liberator of workers instead of the workers movement.

Quite to the contrary, the Fylking is concentrating in this campaign on increasing workers' understanding that their self-organization is the solution to their problems and the road to full victory. No one is going to accomplish these tasks for the working class, either in the Althing or anywhere else.

The Fylking will fight with all its strength against the workers parties continuing to hold back the workers from going on the offensive with class-collaborationist deals and coalitions with bourgeois parties, whether this is in the



RAGNAR STEFANSSON

## Peking Releases 110,000 Political Prisoners

Peking has reportedly released and is "rehabilitating" some 110,000 political prisoners, many of whom had been held in jail for twenty years.

Most of those being brought back into Chinese society were victims of the crack-down that followed on the heels of the liberalizing Hundred Flowers campaign of 1956. It has been estimated that nearly two million persons were investigated as "rightists" in the late 1950s.

There is no way of knowing whether any of the Trotskyists held in Chinese jails have been released—or even whether any of them are still alive. Some 200 Trotskyists, many of them long-time liberation fighters, were arrested and imprisoned in the early 1950s.

One reason for the massive rehabilitation campaign, according to a report in the *New York Times* of June 6, is that China needs the scientific and technical skills that many of these former prisoners possess. During the "antirightist" campaign and the Cultural Revolution intellectuals and skilled workers were deliberately forced into unskilled labor.

The *Times* quotes the Peking newspaper *People's Daily* as saying: "Some specializing in rocketry were assigned as doorkeepers. Remote-control specialists were turned into butchers. Mathematicians and foreign-language teachers became fuel sellers or bakers."

Peking is also beginning to release some of the details on the large-scale purges and

government or in the labor movement.

The Fylking is the only party in this election campaign that has given adequate attention to the social situation, which in fact has pointed a way forward in accordance with the short-term and long-term interests of the working class. This is because the Fylking is the only party that does not seek to reconcile the opposing interests of the working class and capital, but to overthrow the capitalist system.

For this reason, the Fylking has no feeling of responsibility to the capitalists. For this reason, it is trying to draw on the fighting experience of the working class all around the world. For this reason it has pointed out a real road forward based on the interests of the working class in the fight for higher wages, in building the labor movement, on the tax question, and on other issues.

We will try to make our program known in the coming weeks. We are ready to go to meetings in workplaces or in schools. We are ready to debate with any other party. We call on people to initiate such meetings where the possibility exists. We call on people to demand that we not be excluded from debates among the other parties, as happened in the last elections. □

frame-ups that swelled the prison population during the "Cultural Revolution." Like all other injustices, these are blamed on the "gang of four"—that is, on the Maoist clique in power at the time.

An article in the May 12 *Peking Review* describes a typical incident in the late 1960s. At one optical institute, 166 persons were charged with being "enemy agents" and thrown into solitary confinement. "Most of the victims," says *Peking Review*, "were scientists and researchers and some were Party cadres, workers, and child caretakers. . . . Third-degree tortures were used to extort 'confessions'; some people were beaten to death and some were forced to commit suicide." Another 100 persons at the institute were persecuted for protesting against the frame-ups.

According to the Chinese news agency Hsinhua, more than 1,000 workers at the Ministry of Culture in Peking were purged, imprisoned, or tortured. "Some comrades became disabled, went insane or died as a result. Some comrades' families were totally ruined, family members were found to be missing or trouble was made for relatives and friends."

Some of the crimes of the Mao regime are becoming known in the course of the rehabilitation campaign. But not a word has been said about one of the most flagrant crimes—the fact that for their revolutionary activity alone, Chinese Trotskyists have spent a quarter century in prison cells. □

## Why Upsurge in Nicaragua Failed to Dislodge Somoza

By Fausto Amador

### I.

It has been clear since mid-1977 that an upsurge in the mass movement is taking place in Nicaragua. Before this, it had been difficult to assess the process that was going on under the surface because of the press censorship and state-of-siege conditions (martial law and a state of siege remained in effect officially from December 28, 1974, to September 19, 1977). Open political activity was banned.

The activity of the masses took place under the cover of religious forms. Hundreds of seemingly purely Christian neighborhood associations and workers and peasants groups appeared. Inevitably, every one of these associations came to center all its activity around concrete economic demands. Clashes between the Guardia Nacional (National Guard, the Nicaraguan army) and groups organized around the parish churches became frequent occurrences.

At the end of 1977, the unions began to find themselves compelled to launch an extensive mobilization for a general increase in wages. At the same time, in the city of Managua, where the majority of the working class is concentrated, an explosive mass mobilization developed around the problem of transportation.

When Managua was rebuilt after the earthquake [in 1972], a consequence was the development of big working-class neighborhoods many kilometers away from the industrial area. Conditions in these slums are subhuman.

The transportation companies became the special monopoly of the military chiefs and the regime's retainers. The cost of transportation is the highest in Central America. A skilled worker, living, say, in the OPEN neighborhood, where more than 40 percent of the workforce in Managua is clustered, has to lay out 15 percent of his income for transportation.

Moreover, 1978 began with a vast campaign denouncing the crimes of the regime. Members of more than 300 peasant families had disappeared after being arrested by the National Guard. These families began to demand that the government answer the question: "Where are our brothers and sisters?"

At the same time, the student movement and broad sections of workers were waging a strong campaign for better conditions for the political prisoners.

Against this whole panorama of struggles by students, workers, peasants, and

the people in the neighborhoods, a spiraling series of scandals was touched off by the robbery, abuses, and crimes of the regime.

The murders of peasants continued. On December 26, a school teacher was murdered on a public bus by a National Guard patrol without the slightest pretext in front of hundreds of witnesses. This was no isolated incident. Such events are common.

Cases came to light of paper companies being set up by backers of the regime and collecting millions of Córdobas [7 Córdobas equal US\$1] in government loans. But the partners in these companies have not been prosecuted. In this climate of unbridled corruption, even one of Somoza's banks was swindled out of several million Córdobas.

### II.

By the start of 1978, the conditions had been assembled for a powerful mass upsurge. The regime and the bourgeoisie understood this clearly and sought to defuse the coming explosion by promoting a kind of "dialogue" between the bourgeois opposition and the dictatorship. All this was seen as a long-term process that would pave the way for restructuring the state apparatus and eventually replacing Somoza.

The objective of the bourgeois opposition in any case was to eliminate both Somoza and the mass movement. More precisely they wanted to get rid of Somoza in order to be able to contain the rise of mass struggles, since the bloody dictatorship had become the most immediate and sharpest stimulus for these struggles.

However, in early 1978 the opposition sectors of the bourgeoisie did not aspire to anything more than a long-term process. They were disarmed in face of the dictatorship.

Some sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, had reached this position by a roundabout route. In October 1977, not all the bourgeois figures were so inclined to wait. When Somoza suddenly fell gravely ill, illusions were aroused that rapid changes were possible.

A group of personalities including bankers, landowners, university rectors, members of the clergy, and the intellectual "elite" opposed to Somoza—later known as the "Group of the Twelve"—formed the Movimiento Democrático Nacional (MDN—National Democratic Movement).

From its birth, this movement was closely linked to the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN—the Sandinista National Liberation Front). Its avowed political objective was to topple the dictatorship in a short period of time. Its strategy was to create a climate of chaos and political instability that would make it possible to bring together a coalition of bourgeois, military, and imperialist forces broad enough to force Somoza to withdraw from power.

The weapon this movement proposed to use to achieve its objectives was the FSLN. The guerrillas were to unleash a major offensive, attacking the barracks in the main cities and carrying out armed actions all across the country. The FSLN's small armed groups carried out operations in San Carlos, Masaya, and Granada. The result was one failure after another.

Despite the heroism displayed by the Sandinista fighters and the loss of many lives, they were unable to achieve their objectives. They stood alone facing the power of the state. Only the masses have the capacity to win in a confrontation with the regime's exceptionally powerful military forces.

The Sandinistas counted on a mass uprising being sparked by their actions. Nothing like that happened. The masses are hardly likely to take the initiative as a result of actions occurring outside the framework of the processes going on among the people, of their immediate problems and their own organizations.

As 1978 began, the failure of the FSLN offensive had become clear. The "Group of the Twelve" switched over to the propaganda level, denouncing the dialogue with Somoza, from which they found themselves excluded, as a "fraud." But they had little hope of changing the course of events.

### III.

At the same time, the mass movement was continuing its silent course, attracting little attention but inexorably preparing to come to the front of the political stage. The murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro on January 10 served as a catalyst to release all the pent-up fury of the working masses. It touched off a spectacular mobilization, which began in a spontaneous way and without any revolutionary leadership.

While there was a powerful upsurge of economic struggles, in the more specially



political arena, that is, as regards the question of who rules society, the masses were unable to find any organizational expression for their aspirations. No well-defined political mass movement against Somoza was able to develop and push aside the false solutions represented by the bourgeois opposition's proposal for a "dialogue" and the Group of Twelve's illusions about the possibility of achieving a putschist "short cut."

When Pedro Joaquín Chamorro was killed, the political association, the Unión Democrática de Liberación (UDEL—Democratic Union for Liberation) was in the midst of a campaign to put pressure on Somoza to accept a certain type of "dialogue" with the bourgeois opposition. (The UDEL includes the two public factions of the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense, the Nicaraguan CP.)

Chamorro's murder totally wiped out any credibility for a perspective of dialogue with the regime. The display of revolutionary spontaneity by the masses came at a time when they had no political perspectives of their own and when there were no recognized working-class leaderships independent of the bourgeoisie. The result was tragic. The masses unleashed an irresistible wave of fury without having freed themselves politically from illusions in one or another sector of the bourgeoisie.

Suddenly outbursts of violence became an everyday occurrence. Fires were set in hundreds of factories. Supermarkets were emptied. Clashes took place with the police, who were trying to keep to their barracks and let the storm of popular fury pass, since as irresistible and audacious as this wave of mass actions was, it was totally without political leadership.

The bourgeoisie found itself obliged to "break" with Somoza. At certain moments, even those political forces that collaborate most closely with the regime, such as the Conservative Party, the "official" opposition in the Legislative Assembly created by the regime itself, came to the "breaking point."

A few days after Chamorro's murder, on January 23, a "general strike" was called by the employers associations. The workers, who were paid in advance, were urged to stay at home. A general shutdown spread across the country. Terence Todman, U.S. undersecretary of state for Latin American affairs, had to cancel a trip to Nicaragua scheduled for January 25.

The bosses' lockout was aimed both against Somoza and the mass movement. The U.S. embassy became the center for exchanging ideas for meetings among the various groups of employers. The objective was to create the conditions for a peaceful transition to a new government. At the same time, they sought to give a bourgeois answer to the mass movement—by paralyzing it.

All possible formulas were examined and reexamined in those days when the

people were waiting for something to happen and an ominous silence prevailed throughout the country. The groupings and cliques within the army were "sounded out," and various combinations were proposed. But no solution was found.

In the meantime, the mass movement was beginning to become uncontrollable. The lockout had to be ended because the lack of visible results spurred the combativity of the masses rather than keeping it in check. The streets began to fill in Managua, in Diriamba, in Matagalpa, León, Granada, and Masaya. Spontaneous demonstrations erupted everywhere.

The lockout had to be called off after two weeks without any result being achieved. However, at no point did the bourgeoisie lose the initiative. In one way or another, the most important leading groups in the workers movement had managed to completely cover up the class character of the crisis. Some collaborated with one sector of the bourgeoisie, others with other sectors of it. Both the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense and the FSLN left the political leadership and the program of the movement in bourgeois hands.

With the end of the lockout, a slight ebb set in, but it could only be temporary. None of the political problems had been solved. Even on the economic level, no solutions had been forthcoming; the immediate demands of the masses had not even partially been met.

Despite their bourgeois leadership, the masses emerged from the lockout with their combativity intact. They had not suffered a single major defeat. No decisive confrontation had taken place. In only a few weeks time, the army had to fight its way with fire and sword into the Indian quarter of Monimbó in Masaya and into Diriamba, where forms of independent mass organization had begun to appear for the first time. The Monimbó massacre<sup>1</sup> did not constitute a decisive defeat for the movement of the workers, peasants, and students.

The upsurge of the people's movement has not come to an end because it has not been defeated. Nor has there been any change on the official political level. But the movement has not found the way forward either. The situation is heavy with the portent of more decisive confrontations, and the need for a revolutionary leadership becomes increasingly urgent.

#### IV.

The FSLN is a guerrilla organization founded in 1962 under the impact of the Cuban revolution and under the inspiration of the strategy of the guerrilla focus. In the years since its formation, the origi-

1. In late February, as many as 200 residents of the Monimbó quarter were gunned down by the National Guard during an anti-Somoza uprising.—*IP/I*

nal leaders have been steadily lost. In November 1976, the regime murdered Carlos Fonseca Amador, the main leader and founder of the group, a national figure of great popularity and prestige.

Amador's death, after he had become isolated as a consequence of internal factional struggles, was the harshest blow for the FSLN. With his passing, the FSLN lost the figure with the greatest national reputation on the left. The only survivor of the generation that founded the FSLN is Tomás Borges, who is now in prison and in the greatest jeopardy.

By the end of 1975, the internal divisions in the front had culminated in the formation of two factions. Rank-and-file Sandinistas had begun to develop differences with the orientation of the leadership. These differences arose essentially among the exiled members. Once these views filtered back into Nicaragua and began to gain some ground among the ranks, a split occurred.

The Tendencia Proletaria (Proletarian Tendency) arose and finally broke off all relations and collaboration with the rest of the front. Although it had a different line and represented only a small minority of the FSLN, which supposedly opposed the organization's "foquista," adventurist trajectory and tradition, the Tendencia Proletaria insisted on keeping the old name. It did this probably because it wanted to hang on to the prestige represented by these initials. But this did not help it clarify its own line.

Although it calls itself Marxist-Leninist and proletarian, as an organization the Tendencia Proletaria is very far from being a Leninist party. It holds no congresses and grants no right to organize tendencies within it, but it seems to have adopted the conscious aim of building a revolutionary party and carrying out a reorientation to mass work. Two key political positions divide it from the other section of the FSLN—the need for mass work and for class independence.

From the standpoint of the need for mass work, it criticizes the other section of the FSLN, which it calls the "Terceristas" (Thirdists). It derives this name from the analysis made by the national leadership of the front that the FSLN constitutes a third political force in the country, alongside the Somoza machine and the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie.

For the Marxist tendency in the FSLN, it flows from the capitalist character of Nicaraguan society that the fundamental conflict in the country is the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and its political system. The struggle of other classes has only a complementary and secondary importance. From this standpoint, the struggle put up by small groups of conspirators is not only outside the class struggle but generally conflicts with it. Under capitalism, class struggle is primarily the class struggle of the proletariat; it is not a struggle of isolated elements, a putsch, or a conspiracy. However, for the "Tercerista" circle that has

emerged out of the political sorting out process that has been going on in the FSLN over the past year, the class struggle is the fight that it itself is carrying on behind the backs of the masses and independently of them. A millimeter of political deviation has stretched out into light years. For the "Terceristas," the national situation is dominated by isolated actions carried out by isolated individuals.<sup>2</sup>

The Tendencia Proletaria also criticizes the other faction's relations with the bourgeoisie:

In tailoring the bourgeois democratic movement, the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense has in fact surrendered its political independence and turned over the leadership of its work to the bourgeoisie. It has dissolved itself into the movement led by the bourgeoisie, thereby losing any capacity to push the struggle beyond the narrow limits imposed by the interests of the exploiting classes. The adventurist actions carried out by the Tercerista faction of the FSLN in isolation from the masses do not help to strengthen the revolutionary movement; it is the bourgeoisie that profits from them, using them as a means of pressuring the dictatorship to grant concessions. The policy of the Terceristas, like that of the Partido Socialista, favors only the bourgeoisie and weakens the revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the Tendencia Proletaria advocates broad working-class unity against the dictatorship:

We must work tirelessly for the unity of all democratic and revolutionary organizations in a single people's front that will marshal all the energies of the people and direct them against our hated enemy. Such a front must also offer a concrete organizational alternative to the bourgeois front, enabling the people to wage their struggle independently of the bourgeoisie. This unity must be achieved around the revolutionary program of the proletariat.<sup>4</sup>

The programmatic axis of the Tendencia Proletaria's struggle seems to be correct.

Basically, what needs to be done is to strive resolutely to give impetus to the people's movement for democratic rights and to direct it along a course independent from the bourgeoisie toward an armed mass insurrection to overthrow the Somoza military dictatorship. The mass movement must be directed toward establishing a people's democratic regime that will make it possible for us to move forward toward socialism without stopping at bourgeois democracy.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the Tendencia Proletaria touches on the foundation stones on which a revolutionary leadership can be built. However, their proposals for translating their orientation into concrete work are not free from confusion.

With respect to mass work, the line of

the Tendencia Proletaria seems rather contradictory. Before the bosses' lockout, it presented its task in the mass movement as follows:

- a. To mobilize the masses resolutely to de-



NICARAGUAN DICTATOR SOMOZA

mand freedom of political and trade-union organization, to repel any attack by the dictatorship against any section of the people, to give effective support to any democratic demand directed against the dictatorship, and to strive to transform every specific conflict into a struggle by the entire people against the dictatorship. To utilize every means to give impetus to mass action in order to reinforce and radicalize the people's movement for democratic freedoms.

- b. To form all sorts of democratic organizations uniting the workers and their allies in a concerted struggle against the dictatorship. We must promote the formation of unions; peasant leagues; professional associations; democratic organizations of workers, women, and youth; every kind of legal or illegal, open or clandestine organization. Without mass organizations, the revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship has no effective underpinning.<sup>6</sup>

However, the conditions during and after the lockout put the Tendencia Proletaria to a severe test. In these circumstances, when it sought concrete forms to express its organizational perspectives, its limitations were starkly revealed.

Only the organized violence of the masses can shatter the whole apparatus of oppression and murder that sustains the military dictatorship.

The masses themselves have fully understood the need for this, and in various places in the country Revolutionary People's Commandos have sprung up, which have immediately begun to combat the dictatorship with all the means at their disposal. These commandos have placed bombs in the homes of notorious watchdogs of the regime. They have set fire to small military installations and sabotaged transportation.

They defend demonstrations and other activities of the masses. They have destroyed various headquarters of the Somoza party, and so on. As the working masses organize in commando groups and give vent to their creative initiative, the level and scale of these actions is mounting day by day.<sup>7</sup>

The concrete form that has been chosen for mass organizations, then, is Revolutionary Commando Groups.

Every group of two, three, or four citizens ready to fight the dictatorship can form a commando group. Their age or sex is not important. All that matters is that they have an ardent desire to see our homeland free of Somoza's oppression so that we can build a democratic country in which the workers will be assured of a decent life. These commando groups must arm themselves with anything at hand or that they can get their hands on. Machetes, pistols, molotov cocktails—anything can be used to fight the enemy. Bombs can be made. A knife can serve as a means for getting a pistol, which in turn can serve as the means for getting a rifle.<sup>8</sup>

Obviously, these positions do not differ much from those of the group they dubbed "Terceristas," which they at first subjected to criticism. In a certain way, however, the Tendencia Proletaria is conscious of carrying out a line not very different from the one they criticize. This is why they feel obligated to justify themselves ideologically, trying to present their slogans as a form of mass work and at the same time differentiating them from the line of the national leadership of the "Tercerista" FSLN:

We are not calling for small armed groups carrying out spectacular actions. We are calling for the entire working people, in accordance with the opportunities that exist, joining the revolutionary armed struggle. We are calling for unleashing an irresistible wave of people's violence everywhere and in every possible form, from throwing stones at armored vehicles to destroying military installations.<sup>9</sup>

\* \* \*

One day not far off these small commando groups that have begun to form and take up the fight will become a real people's army, an indestructible instrument of struggle to smash our hated enemy once and for all and guarantee the system of people's democracy that we must build on the ruins of the present regime.<sup>10</sup>

Such confusion about the forms of mass work and organizing the people is not a new or isolated phenomenon in the Tendencia Proletaria. Ultraleftism was always present in its approach to mass work. When it criticized the spectacular actions of the "Terceristas," it did not attack the

2. "Nuestro programa, una discusión necesaria," in issue No. 3, 1977, of *Unidad Revolucionaria*, p. 47.

3. "Situación actual y nuestras tareas," in issue No. 2, 1978, of *Causa Sandinista*, p. 3.

4. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 4.

5. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 4.

6. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 4.

7. "La organización de combate de las masas," in *Las enseñanzas de enero*, April 1978, p. 14.

8. *Las enseñanzas de enero*, pp. 15-16.

9. *Las enseñanzas de enero*, p. 16.

10. *Las enseñanzas de enero*, p. 15.



political line as such but the method and timing:

When the December 27, 1974, action was carried out, the crisis was not terribly deep, and neither the masses nor the vanguard were sufficiently prepared to undertake a resolute assault on the "enemy stronghold."<sup>11</sup>

And more recently, it wrote:

The great error of these compañeros, and what led them rapidly to political bankruptcy, is their deepgoing lack of confidence in the revolutionary potential of the toiling classes in this country. They appear to be exalting the fighting capacity of our people when they say that the masses are anxious to hurl themselves into an insurrection. But in fact they are not. If that were so, they would have taken the trouble to organize the population in advance of the battles so that the masses would participate in them.<sup>12</sup>

The Tendencia Proletaria shows an obvious lack of confidence in the capacity of the working class to fight by means of its traditional methods of struggle. They try to substitute for this by introducing new elements:

So, we see how what in former times was the Nicaraguan workers' most potent form of struggle has today come to have a very limited and always dubious effect. There seems definitely to be a need for combining with strikes other forms of struggle that can hit the bourgeoisie hard.

Other forms of applying pressure are needed that, combined with determined mass mobilizations and leaving a secondary role for legal struggles, can be focused precisely on the capitalists. We need effective means of pressure that will force the capitalists to make concessions to the workers movement. These methods will necessarily have to be more violent and tougher than the strikes themselves. They can go from preventing production by preventing the functioning of the machines to direct, special actions by the struggling masses against the forces of the bosses. . . .<sup>13</sup>

On the question of class independence as well, we find that while the Tendencia Proletaria correctly criticizes the existing alliances with the bourgeoisie, its own proposals are not free from confusion. Let us look at its governmental formula, for example:

A people's government, including representatives of the workers, peasants, students, and progressive intellectuals, in which every democratic stratum of the population would have a right to representation.<sup>14</sup>

On January 27, 1978, the Tendencia Proletaria made the following appeal for unity against the dictatorship:

The Sandinista Front FSLN (Proletarian) calls on the workers and the entire people to organize

People's Struggle Committees in the centers of production and everywhere that there are workers and Nicaraguan patriots. These committees must mobilize the masses in a struggle for democratic and revolutionary objectives and impel this movement forward to overthrow the dictatorship. These committees must be instruments of the exploited and oppressed masses in their struggle for people's democracy. All must join together and work together to give impetus to the struggle and to assure its independence from the bourgeoisie. *Uniting and organizing* the workers are the axes of achieving a revolutionary victory.

The FSLN (Proletarian), realizing that the unity of the democratic and progressive forces is the essential precondition now for carrying through this struggle to victory for the exploited masses, calls on the revolutionary and democratic organizations to join forces around the objectives we have laid out.<sup>15</sup>

This appeal includes a confused governmental formula:

. . . a democratic and revolutionary people's government in which every section of the working people would be assured representation corresponding to their weight in society.<sup>16</sup>

Here the Tendencia Proletaria poses the tasks much less clearly than when it talks about a socialist revolution without any capitalist stages. It is significant that this happens precisely when the general strike/lockout was beginning to raise the question of power for the masses:

This government must be an instrument the workers can use to open up the channels of social progress and carry out social and economic transformations that will put us on the road to a society free from exploitation and oppression.<sup>17</sup>

In any case, it is clear that the set of problems that the Tendencia Proletaria has taken up offers us a basis for common discussion and political clarification that revolutionary Marxists cannot fail to take advantage of.

The Tendencia Proletaria did not have a very great impact on the ranks of the FSLN itself. Although it tends to predominate in exile circles, it does not have much strength in Nicaragua. What forces it has are concentrated in circles of university and high-school students and in community work carried out jointly with a Christian organization, the MCR. It tends to exaggerate its own role in the events, and does so essentially for an audience outside Nicaragua:

. . . thousands and thousands of persons gathered along the Carretera Norte. The total reached 10,000 persons. *In reality, it was a small people's uprising* [My emphasis—F.A.]. If we had had more organization, we could have extended it throughout the city and throughout the country. If we had had arms, we could easily have taken the National Guard barracks and the city.

To do this, we need to improve in two respects—*organization and arms*.

The response of the National Guard was totally incapable of obscuring our *gigantic victory* [my emphasis—F.A.].<sup>18</sup>

It is also possible that the Tendencia Proletaria's confusion reflects a lack of homogeneity in its ranks. In all probability there are some cadres in it who are quite close to revolutionary Marxist positions. Discussion with this tendency is all the more necessary to help firm up the progressive aspects of a line that comes close to the axes of a revolutionary policy, although in a confused way.

On the other hand, the faction of the FSLN that the Tendencia Proletaria calls the Terceristas is sticking strictly to a struggle to topple the dictatorship now. In proclaiming this objective, it joins with sectors of the bourgeoisie and calls for a Frente Amplio Antisomocista [Broad Front Against Somoza]:

In the present political conjuncture, a tendency is arising in the private-enterprise groups, embracing entrepreneurs, professionals, and executives. They are not trying to form a political party, but call themselves center-left supporters of civilian government. On a basis of trying to achieve *political unity of all Nicaraguans*, they are trying to provide a democratic way out of the present situation. We are referring to the recently constituted Movimiento Democrático Nacional. There is the group known as "The Twelve." Made up of professionals, intellectuals, businessmen, and clergy, it patriotically backs the people's struggle headed by the Sandinista Front. . . .

The strategies of the people's forces headed by the Sandinista Front and of those other political forces converge on one immediate objective—overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship. . . .

Let us note a factor that is quite new in the political history of Nicaragua—political forces representing strata other than the poor masses are rallying around the Sandinista Front. . . .

It is at such a time that the FSLN's *Minimum Program of Demands* assumes vital importance. It is the only guide for uniting the revolutionary people's forces and the democratic bourgeois forces and directing them toward a revolutionary overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship. It is the only guide for directing these forces along the road that will lead to a democratic people's government, which will open the way for the development of the *Sandinista People's Revolution*. . . .

Hence, to bring about the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in the immediate period ahead, involving in the fight all those forces concerned, what is needed is an alliance of these forces in a Broad Front Against Somoza based on these programmatic convergences and unity in action.<sup>19</sup>

There is another tendency in the FSLN, which is called the Prolonged People's War group. Its main difference with the Terceristas is over their decision to escalate

11. *Unidad Revolucionaria*, No. 1, January 1977, p. 27.

12. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 7.

13. *Unidad Revolucionaria*, No. 3, p. 30.

14. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 6.

15. Communiqué No. 6, published in *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 22.

16. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 22.

17. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 22.

18. *Causa Sandinista*, No. 2, 1978, p. 13.

19. "Sobre el Frente Amplio Antisomocista," in *Lucha Sandinista*, April 1978, p. 9.

military activity in the immediate period ahead. It is now in a process of reconciliation with them. The development of the events in Nicaragua and the weakness of this tendency have led it to regard its differences as secondary and to work together with the others in a single centralized organization.

The FSLN is recognized and esteemed by the masses as the organization with the most prestige. There is no demonstration by the people in which the FSLN is not talked about. Despite its weak ties with the mass organizations, and in contrast to both factions of the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense, the FSLN is the focus of the people's affections and the very symbol of the struggle against the dictatorship. It is for this reason that the political errors, wrong conceptions, and confusion present in the FSLN threaten to have disastrous effects for the mass movement itself.

In very short order, in the development of the events in the biggest mass upsurge in the history of the country, the FSLN and all its tendencies proved simply incapable of taking the leadership of the movement. The problem of revolutionary leadership is still to be resolved in Nicaragua.

#### V.

Somoza did not fall from power after a two-week lockout. Nor did any faction of the bourgeoisie get sufficient imperialist support to try to put over a new governmental formula. The upsurge of the mass movement itself made it extremely risky to try any new bourgeois alternative. The best guarantor of bourgeois interests for the immediate future continued to be the Somoza state apparatus. At the same time, Somozaism continues to be the factor creating the greatest social and political instability.

This contradiction is bringing about a clearer and clearer definition of the political camps. The crisis continues to develop without any major changes being made and without the most elementary political problems being solved. This in turn tends to both sharpen the crisis and to wear out the bourgeois alternatives, creating a situation in which the masses are more and more ready to assimilate class-struggle political lines and reject the alternatives involving collaboration with sections of the bourgeoisie.

At this point, the masses are spontaneously taking up the demands most directly linked to their own class interests. This is showing up in the day-to-day struggles. The essential problem is to build a party that can wage an effective struggle for the unity and class independence of the exploited sections of the population and focus all their demands around a formula for a workers government.

The economic crisis, which is widened by the bourgeoisie's natural fear of new downturns, is a factor stimulating the combativ-

ity of the masses. The aspirations of the workers and peasants center around the problems of land, housing, and political rights. They focus in an immediate and special way on the problems represented by the army, repression, and the political prisoners. At this time of relative ebb, people can still be mobilized in the fight for amnesty for the political prisoners.

With regard to the problem of Somoza's army, the left organizations have not always understood what kind of political line should be taken to further the internal breakdown of the National Guard. One thing should be clear—the workers movement needs a complete dismantling of the army. The parasitic apparatus of the National Guard largely intertwines with that of the state, and its destruction would mean that at the same time the bourgeois state would be stripped of its defenses and torn apart.

The National Guard must be smashed and disarmed. The central slogan for the sections of the army on which the mass movement has had an impact must be for them to take off their uniforms. The central slogan for the masses must be to disarm, immobilize, and dismantle the army.

Any confusion on this question could have disastrous consequences. This is true especially when in the near future the mass movement might be able, at least partially, to achieve these objectives leading to the destruction of the army.

In Nicaragua, the army is made up of volunteers, mostly peasants. Low pay is part of the system that "trains" the soldiers in extortion and crime as the means for richly supplementing their monthly salaries. After they leave the fulltime army, former soldiers remain in the civilian reserve and continue to enjoy numerous privileges and engage in extortion.

Revolutionists do not consider the police to be workers; the Nicaraguan army is a gigantic police and gangster apparatus. They are not workers. Their repressive activities do not represent a use of "labor power." For us, repression is not a job.

The Nicaraguan left has not been clear on this question. Often it has regarded the army as a section of oppressed toilers like other sectors of the working class and peasantry.

On December 27, 1974, the Sandinistas took a number of hostages. Among the demands for their release was an immediate increase in the pay of privates and noncommissioned officers in the National Guard.

In recent weeks, in the midst of an extraordinary mass upsurge, there were still sections of the left that thought that a fight for unionizing the National Guard would help to develop links between it and the people's movement.

This question offers the possibility for an instructive political debate. The Nicara-

guan revolutionary Marxists will not fail to take advantage of it.

#### VI.

For some time, sections of the left in exile have been raising the slogan: "All Power to the Sandinista Front." The mass movement in Nicaragua has not yet reached the point of undertaking to build a power of its own. This failure is bound up with the illusions that exist among the masses, which have led them to place their confidence in sections of the bourgeoisie. But this has direct consequences for the movement. If the masses put their confidence in sections of the bourgeoisie, they disarm themselves politically and organizationally. The development of organs of power by the people's movement is linked to a political break with the bourgeoisie.

Revolutionists must propagandize for a workers and peasants government at every stage in the struggle. At the specific moments when organs of power appear, it is necessary to focus the attention of the masses on such concrete expressions of their independent power. Sometimes, organs of power do not appear but the masses identify their aspiration to take power with their political mass organizations. In this latter case, revolutionary propaganda and agitation must focus on the call for some kind of government by these working-class political organizations, independent of all sections of the bourgeoisie.

In the present circumstances, does the call for all power to the FSLN advance the revolutionary education of the masses? Despite all the popular sympathy the FSLN enjoys, it is far from being a mass organization. Moreover, owing to the political line of the Sandinistas themselves, the masses do not see the front as a working-class organization. It is not the focus of their class aspirations for leadership in struggling against the bourgeoisie.

The Sandinista Front itself has a rather slight political weight, if we compare it for example with that wielded by the July 26 Movement in Cuba in 1959.

A general call for power to the front is a politically confused formula because it disregards the alliances that this organization has with sections of the bourgeoisie. If this aspect is ignored, the class character of the call for power to the front remains obscure.

One fact is clear: The bulk of the radicalized and politically committed vanguard in Nicaragua is either in the ranks of the front or sympathizes actively with it. In building the revolutionary party in Nicaragua, we cannot bypass this obvious fact. Dialogue and debate with the front are a necessary task in building the revolutionary party. But this task is not facilitated by fuzzing over our differences with the front or adapting opportunistically to it.

Another stumbling block for the pro-



gress of revolutionary Marxism would be adoption of a line that involved giving some political credit to the Tendencia Proletaria as opposed to the others. Unquestionably, the Tendencia Proletaria has a certain progressive aspect to it in its approach to the political problem of mass work. And revolutionary Marxists must strive to use this as a lever to bring them toward our positions.

However, the Tendencia Proletaria has its own kind of logical consistency, one that is not new to us. Its line is very similar to that of the ERP<sup>20</sup> in Argentina. Experience has made abundantly clear the fatal limitations of such a policy and the dangers involved in making any concessions to the program, methods, and conceptions it implies.

The "Tercerista" faction of the Sandinista Front has the overwhelming majority of the fighters in Nicaragua. Its leadership is the one that has the greatest social

prestige, and is the one that the masses have in mind when they shout "Long live the FSLN." There is no political justification for our giving more political credit to one faction than to the other.

Following the sort of general lines indicated will enable us to open up possibilities for dialogue, cooperation, and debate with both tendencies, as well as to help achieve political clarity in the discussion.

## VII.

A new specter threatening the movement of the oppressed is the terror of the ultra-right. In recent weeks, several paramilitary groups have been organized. The best known of these is called the Mano Blanca (White Hand). Murders of political leaders have begun.

The Guatemalan experience shows that the terrorism of the right can take the lives of tens of thousands of persons. The inability of the state apparatus itself to carry out such a mass slaughter openly, in the urban areas at least, has led it to build up this "secret" arm, which is simply the military disguised in civilian clothes.

Nicaragua faces a long process of class

struggle and confrontations, of insoluble political crises, palace intrigues, and internecine warfare among the military cliques and bourgeois factions. The aspirations of the masses can be achieved only through their own independent action.

Although the advance of the masses may be slowed by their political leaderships entering into coalitions and deals with sections of the bourgeoisie, the struggle for land, for decent housing, for democratic rights, and for breaking up the organized-crime network disguised in military uniforms will be with us until these problems are resolved.

Despite the smallness of their forces today, this long process of mass people's struggles looming up will give the Nicaraguan revolutionary Marxists of the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Marxist League) the chance to demonstrate to the masses their capacity to build a revolutionary leadership. The programmatic and political clarity of revolutionary Marxism gives the Nicaraguan Trotskyists an incomparable tool for responding effectively to the aspirations of the masses and to the crisis of revolutionary leadership from which the country suffers.

May 15, 1978

20. Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army), a guerrilla group claiming to have a revolutionary-Marxist program. It called for combining terrorism and mass struggle.—IP/I

## International Protests Urged

# Dozens Killed as Shah's Troops Storm Tehran University

[The following is excerpted from a statement issued June 2 by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran.\*]

\* \* \*

On Thursday, June 1, a peaceful student demonstration at Tehran University was brutally crushed by troops using tear gas, machine guns, and other automatic weapons. The demonstrators, predominantly women, were demanding the removal of armed commandos from their dormitories.

According to eyewitness reports, dozens of students were shot and killed in cold blood. The bodies of slain students were wrapped in sheets and blankets and removed from the dormitories following the bloodshed, one report indicated.

The struggle of the students at Tehran University and other colleges throughout the country for the removal of the commando units from their campuses is taking place at a time when all sectors of the

Iranian population are striving to regain the democratic freedoms that have been denied the people under the one-party rule of monarchy. The presence of troops on university campuses is a constant source of violence and danger, threatening the lives of students and faculty opposed to the Shah's dictatorship. Hundreds of university professors have joined the students in demanding the removal of this source of violence from Iranian campuses. A significant example of this protest occurred on May 8 at the University of Azarabadegan, when the administrative body and the faculty issued a resolution, making, among others, the following demands:

1. We condemn all acts of violence at the university. Based on past experience, we know that the presence of guards and military troops on the campus has always led to provocations and resulted in violence. Therefore, intervention of troops must be ended and they must leave the university grounds.
2. All students injured and arrested during recent incidents must be freed.
3. All government personnel responsible for the recent events must be identified and brought to trial.

Considering the outright brutality of the Iranian regime, the efforts of students in Iran to regain their basic freedoms is a brave and noble act deserving the support and solidarity of all supporters of democratic rights throughout the world.

The Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran appeals to all people and organizations concerned with the protection of human rights to protest the June 1 cold-blooded murder of students at Tehran University. Such messages should be sent to: Ambassador of Iran, 3005 Massachusetts Ave., Washington, D.C. 20008.

Please send a copy of your message to CAIFI. □

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

## A Revolutionary Program for Peru

Elections for a constituent assembly are to be held in Peru on June 18. They were originally scheduled for June 4, but the military government postponed them soon after massive protests broke out May 15 against drastic price increases for basic necessities (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, June 5, p. 660).

Attempting unsuccessfully to head off the huge general strike that took place May 22 and 23, the military suspended all constitutional guarantees, declared a state of emergency and a curfew, closed down all independent weekly periodicals (the daily press is government-owned), suspended television and radio broadcasts and free newspaper space for all constituent assembly candidates, and jailed hundreds of political and trade-union leaders, including many candidates. These measures remain in effect.

The day after the general strike was over, thirteen opponents of the regime, including nine candidates, were deported to Argentina. Among them was the Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco.

Despite his deportation, Blanco remains a candidate of the Workers, Peasants, Students, and Poor People's Front (FOCEP).

FOCEP is an electoral front based on three Peruvian Trotskyist organizations. Blanco's party, the PST; the FIR-POC; and the POMR.\* It also includes a number of trade-union, peasant, student, and shantytown dwellers' organizations, as well as independent socialists such as civil libertarian Laura Caller, writer Manuel Scorza, and labor attorney Genaro Ledesma. (Ledesma was also among those deported May 25.)

We are reprinting the text of a campaign brochure published in April and distributed by the PST. It includes Hugo Blanco's proposed draft of a new Peruvian constitution. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

\*PST—Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party); FIR-POC—Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Partido de Obreros y Campesinos (Front of the Revolutionary Left—Party of Workers and Peasants); POMR—Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party). The PST and FIR-POC are sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. The POMR is the Peruvian affiliate of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

## Revolutionists and the Elections

### The Electoral Farce

We revolutionists understand that nowhere in the world will the workers be able to take power through elections. As we see all the time, the exploiting classes use violence against the masses whenever they need to, in order to preserve the conditions of exploitation.

Elections in Peru have always been full of fraud, even among the exploiters themselves. And besides that, whenever the exploiters have been dissatisfied with a government they have brought it down with a coup.

Since we see the bourgeoisie violating its own laws every day, and since we see that even among themselves they overturn election results by means of coups, we can easily understand that the workers will never come to power through elections. The bourgeoisie, acting antidemocratically and with brute force, will keep us from doing so.

In the present elections we can already see many injustices:

- Illiterates cannot vote.
- Soldiers cannot vote.
- The time limit for placing slates of candidates on the ballot was very short.
- The number of signatures required was very high.
- The entire process has taken place under repressive conditions, with political and trade-union leaders in prison or in exile.
- The JNE [National Elections Court] has refused to allow the inscription of the CNA.<sup>1</sup>
- Persons collecting signatures have been detained and their petitions seized.

1. The Confederación Nacional Agraria (National Agrarian Federation), Peru's largest peasant organization, was denied the right to run candidates for the constituent assembly on grounds that it is a government agency. The CNA was originally created as a government-controlled organization but later broke with the military regime. On May 30 it was ordered dissolved.

- Of the 47,000 signatures FOCEP presented, only 19,000 were accepted as valid. FOCEP had only ten days to gather the number it lacked.

- There are restrictions on electoral campaigning through television, radio, and the newspapers.

- The right wing has millions for financing its campaigns.

And so on.

We are obliged to point all these things out to the people, so they will not believe that their situation is to be changed through elections.

### The Struggles of the Masses

We must remind the workers that they have been able to get their rights respected only by means of their own struggles and not because those rights were written down in the constitution or in the laws.

To cite some outstanding recent examples, we can point out that the suspension of guarantees and curfew were lifted because of the struggle of the masses.<sup>2</sup> What little press freedom there is was achieved through struggle. The return of the deportees [in March and April of this year] was another great victory of popular struggle.

It is especially important during this election campaign to remind the masses that it is only through their struggles that they can achieve improvements in their situation.

### Why Participate?

If we are participating in the elections despite knowing that they are a farce, it is precisely in order to use them in the service of the mass struggle and the building of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores [Socialist Workers Party].

In electoral periods the masses have their attention focused not only on their particular sectoral interests, but also on general political problems, on the overall interests of Peru. Thus now is the best time to talk about our political program, to talk to the masses about socialism in general and the need for the workers to form their own party in order to struggle for socialism.

On the other hand, in election periods—just so that the people should have illusions in elections—bourgeois governments grant more liberties than is normally the case.

As we see in the present situation, we can open headquarters, hold meetings, publish newspapers, and even make use of free radio and television time, if only for a few minutes.

The Constituent Assembly elections offer us a special advantage, since it is a question of discussing the constitution—the very basis of the social, economic,

2. These measures were in effect for fourteen months from July 1976 to August 1977.



political, and juridical organization of the country. This means that even according to bourgeois norms it is legal to raise proposals for changing the nature of society, for organizing society in a socialist way.

### The Crisis in Peru

This is an epoch of great scientific achievements, a time when advanced machines are available to make the labor of individuals more productive, in the countryside as well as in the city.

But in Peru we are moving backwards and we are becoming worse and worse off.

Every day more persons are unemployed, although every day there are more things that need to be done:

- Every day we need more hospital beds.
- Every day we need more schools.
- Every day agricultural production falls and there is less land cultivation—even though there are more people.
- Every day less attention is paid to the roads and highways.
- Every day more housing becomes dilapidated.
- Every day there are more people who want to study but are unable to do so.
- Every day our foreign debt mounts, and we now have to pay out almost half of what we produce as interest on our debt.

These are some of the ways in which we are becoming worse off than before—despite the fact that every day there are more technological advances, despite the fact that we have land to cultivate, mines and so many other natural riches, besides people who are willing to work.

This contradiction—being so bad off in an epoch of so many advances—is the *crisis of capitalism*.

In other words, all this is owing to the fact that the bosses own the companies and everything is arranged so that they grow richer every day. And it doesn't matter to them how much the people suffer; the future of Peru doesn't matter to them.

Therefore we must no longer have bosses. Everything must belong to the people. The workers themselves must govern, so that the product of their labor can be for their own use and for the future of Peru—and not so that the capitalists can increase their wealth. That is known as socialism, and that is why we say *Workers to Power!*

### The Political Parties

In these elections we see many parties that say they are going to change the situation. Among them are parties of the left and parties of the right.

*The parties of the right.* These are the parties of the bosses, who want the companies to remain in the hands of the rich. Some of them want the government to



Pedro Martinelli/Veja

Troops patrol streets of Lima following May 20 decree of martial law.

leave the bosses with total freedom to do whatever they want—for example, the Christian People's Party, People's Action, the Peruvian Democratic Movement, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Others want the state to control the capitalists a little and to make some changes in capitalism. These are the Christian Democrats, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, APRA,<sup>4</sup> and Revolutionary Socialist Action.

We know that with any of them in power Peru will be worse off, since all of them have either governed already or have helped to govern.

Some people consider the Revolutionary Socialist Party [PSR] a left party, but that is not the case. It is the party of the generals who governed during Velasco's time. When they were in power exploitation continued, with some reforms. They took the land away from the *gamonales* [big landlords], but they did not give the land to the peasants. They took some companies away from the *gringos*, the imperialists, but they committed themselves to pay more for them than they were worth, which is why we owe so much now. Repression of the workers continued during their government.

APRA has been keeping the masses down for many years, and it has supported governments that have repressed the masses.

*The parties of the left.* These are the parties of the workers who want the companies to pass into the hands of the workers.

The Communist Party, despite being a workers party, supports the government and holds back the struggles of the masses. It says that now is not yet the time to think about socialism, but instead supports this military government in order to gain some reforms.

In the UDP<sup>5</sup> there are many left parties. The UDP proposes that only the big foreign capitalist enterprises and some other big companies be nationalized. They say there are national capitalists that are going to help us to do this, that their companies should not be taken away, and that the workers must form a government together with these capitalists. They say that socialism will come afterwards.

In FOCEP there are left parties and independent socialists.

FOCEP is the front of all who support the idea that the workers should not form slates with the bosses. Each party in FOCEP has the right to put forward its own positions.

We of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores and the other Trotskyist compañeros are of the opinion that *all the capitalist enterprises* must be nationalized and must be administered by their own workers. We hold that the workers of the city and the countryside are the ones who

3. For more information on Peruvian political parties, see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 13, page 315.

4. People's Revolutionary American Alliance; also known as the Peruvian Aprista Party.

5. Democratic People's Union, an electoral front that includes a number of Maoist and centrist workers parties, the dissident faction of the Communist Party, and the main Peruvian miners union the FNTMMP.

must govern, without the capitalists.

FOCEP and the UDP are trying to work together for the immediate struggles. We also call on all workers, from whatever party, to unite. For example, we know that within the PSR, a bourgeois party, there are combative working-class ranks. We join with them in the present struggles and concrete battles, and we can even act together with their bourgeois leadership—when it is a question of the fight for democratic rights, for example. But we never propose that the workers should govern together with this bourgeois party.

#### **Why Is It Necessary to Strengthen the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores?**

On many occasions the workers could have achieved governmental power through their struggles. But, lacking a party to orient them in that direction, they have not done so.

*Peru in 1962.* In the department of Cuzco and in other areas the peasant movement was very strong. In many places the peasants had taken the land and, faced with the armed attack of the bosses and police, had begun to defend themselves with arms. Many popular sectors throughout the country, in the cities as well as in the countryside, sympathized with the peasant movement and wanted to do something to support it. There were some strikes and other forms of struggle, but they were all disorganized. A party to coordinate all those struggles and bring the workers to power was lacking.

*Chile in 1972-73.* Workers took over factories and organized production to serve the needs of the people. Peasants took over lands and made them produce. Residents of shantytowns organized distribution of goods.

Confronted with armed attacks by bands in the service of the bosses and by the police, the workers began to arm themselves.

Unfortunately, the workers supported the government, which was of the type the UDP is calling for—a government of workers parties together with bosses' parties, a government that wanted to nationalize only the big enterprises and leave the others in the hands of the capitalists.

The workers parties that were in the government and held views like those of the UDP held the masses back, telling them: "No, compañeros, don't do that, it is not yet the time for socialism. We must stick together with the Chilean bosses, we must not take away their factories. Do not arm to defend yourselves; the leftist military officers will defend us."

There was no party to tell the workers that they should go ahead and take all the factories and the land, and that they must not rely on the generals to defend them. Thus the workers parties that were governing along with the bosses were able to hold back the masses. Thus the coup d'état by

Pinochet's officers was able to triumph, and many thousands of workers were killed. Thousands were taken prisoner, the unions were smashed, and today the Chilean people are dying of hunger, trampled under by the bosses.

*Bolivia in 1952.* The workers and other popular sectors elected a bourgeois gentleman who wanted to make some reforms, more or less like the PSR. The imperialists did not want him to enter the government, so they attempted a coup d'état. The masses answered with a revolution, destroying the army and taking away its arms. Many soldiers helped the people, of course. All this happened in three days.

Unfortunately there was no workers party to explain to the workers and peasants that they had to take over the government themselves, so that there would be no more abuses and bloodshed.

So the workers handed power over to the gentleman who had been elected. After he had reorganized the army, the officers carried out a coup and smashed the workers again in a bloody way.

We can see from these experiences that it is necessary to organize a workers party, one that clearly understands that it is the workers themselves who must become the government without placing any confidence in the bosses. It must also clearly understand that all the companies must pass into the hands of the people and be administered by their own workers; it must be a party that tells the workers to rely only on their own struggles.

That is what the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores wants to do. If you agree with our ideas, help us build it.

Hugo Blanco  
April 1978

## **Draft of a New Peruvian Constitution**

*The Constituent Assembly, considering:*

- That the historical and cultural roots of Peru demonstrate that socialism is the source of general well-being;

- That the importation of feudal methods and various capitalist models has brought hunger, unemployment, and poverty to our people, and has meant the subordination of our country to imperialism;

- That the present crisis of capitalism is becoming catastrophic for our country; and

- That radical emergency measures must be taken to save ourselves from disaster—

*Resolves to adopt the following bases for the social and economic organization of Peru:*

### **Government**

- Local governments shall be made up of delegates democratically elected by the organizations of workers, peasants, employees, *pueblos jóvenes* [shantytown dwellers], soldiers, students, and other popular sectors.

- The national government shall be made up of delegates of those organizations at the national level.

- Any member of government at any level whatever may be removed by the ranks at any time.

- The wages of government functionaries shall be no more than those of workers.

This is the only form of government that can orient the economy and all aspects of national life to serve the majority and not to serve the exploiters in increasing their

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wealth. Only this can liberate us from imperialism.

### The Judicial Power

Shall be exercised by popular tribunals elected by the masses.

### The Armed Forces

Shall be made up of armed defense committees of the workers, peasants, employees, *pueblos jóvenes*, students, and so on.

### The Foreign Debt

The Peruvian people renounce the debts contracted by their oppressors. We will not repay to the imperialists the loans that were used to suppress us.

### Banking

Shall pass in its totality into the hands of the state.

### Foreign Trade

Shall pass in its totality into the hands of the state.

### Domestic Commerce and Transportation

- Commercial enterprises and public transport shall pass into the hands of the state.

- Small shops tended by their proprietors and public service vehicles owned by their drivers shall remain in the hands of their owners.

### Industry

- Manufacturing, fishing, agricultural, and other industries shall pass into the hands of the state.

- This sector of the economy, along with other nationalized sectors, shall be administered by the workers involved in it.

- Workshops owned by the artisans who work in them shall remain in the hands of their owners.

### Agriculture

The land not dealt with under the previous point shall pass into the hands of the peasants without compensation. The peasants shall determine collectively the private or communal forms in which production is to take place on such land.

### Against Unemployment: Development

- No compensation shall be paid for the nationalized sectors. We cannot reward those who have sucked our blood for centuries and who would use such compensation to continue keeping us down.

That money shall be used to put an end to unemployment and proceed with development. Peru needs many dwellings equipped with electricity, water, and sewer

services; roads and highways; irrigation systems; hospitals; schools; and so on. We have the arms and the brains to build these things. If they are idle today, the capitalist organization of the country is to blame; it is not because our people do not want to work.

- To put an end to unemployment and proceed with development, public works shall be initiated on a massive scale.

These public works shall not be planned according to what some functionaries determine, but rather according to what the people themselves say they need. The organs of workers, peasants, employees, *pueblos jóvenes*, students, and so on, shall make known what works are needed and which of them are the most urgent.

- Clinics, colleges, and all other public services now in the hands of the capitalists shall also be nationalized.

### Education

The workers in power shall determine the objectives and forms of education. This shall be done with the participation of the students and teachers.

### Women

Capitalist society maintains women as house servants; relegates them to the lowest-paying jobs; forces them to bear, or else prevents them from bearing, children; casts them into prostitution; and discriminates against them in all sorts of ways, portraying them and treating them as inferior to men and granting them fewer rights than men.

Society in the hands of the workers shall take measures to put an end to these abuses and give impetus to the organization of women. Child-care centers and communal kitchens and laundries shall be created. Women shall be enabled to study and work in any field whatever. Free clinics for women shall be created.

### Culturally Oppressed Sectors

Peruvian cultures oppressed at present

shall be respected and promoted in every way:

- Education of these sectors in the Peruvian languages spoken by them shall be furthered. Use of these languages shall be obligatory in the tribunals and all other areas where it is necessary.

- Literacy shall be promoted, but in no way shall those who do not speak Spanish or some other European language be discriminated against.

- The peoples of the jungle, and other peoples such as the Uros, shall remain free to determine their own future.

### Democratic Liberties

All democratic liberties shall be fully respected: the right of organization, freedom of speech, the right to strike, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and so on.

This is to guarantee that the great majority are not again oppressed by minorities that might monopolize the expression of ideas as a means of monopolizing wealth and power.

### International Solidarity

The well-being and development of Peru, once it is in the hands of its own people, will not be durable so long as Peru remains in a world of exploitation and poverty.

Should Peru remain isolated it will again fall into the clutches of international capitalism, or else suffer bureaucratic degeneration.

- Building the Socialist United States of Latin America with Cuba and any other countries that are liberated from imperialism is thus an urgent necessity.

- Solidarity with other countries subjected to colonialism, such as those of Africa and Asia, is also important.

- Finally, it is also necessary for us to devote all possible effort to the extension of well-being and development, so that all peoples may be the masters of their own destinies in a socialist world.

Presented to the Peruvian people.

April 1978

## What the Workers Should Do With This Draft Constitution

We should form groups of *compañeros* to discuss this draft constitution in every factory, peasant community, and *pueblo joven*.

Through such a discussion additions and changes can be made to the draft. Then we should hold conventions and meetings of delegates from the various sectors in order to discuss the draft and the additions and changes.

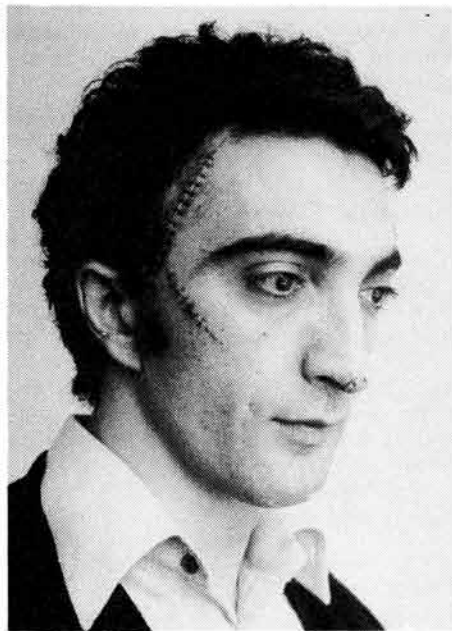
We must struggle so that after that there can be departmental conventions and fi-

nally a National Delegates' Convention of the workers, peasants, *pueblos jóvenes*, students, and other popular sectors to discuss the draft and the additions and changes.

Such a National Delegates' Convention of all sectors of the toilers should be where the final draft of the Peruvian Constitution is agreed upon.

That draft should then be presented by the workers candidates elected to the Constituent Assembly. □

### Iranian Oppositionist Stabbed in London



HORMOZ RAHIMIAN

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

\* \* \*

A prominent Iranian oppositionist was stabbed last Thursday, May 25, just after leaving the Other Bookshop, which is in the same building as the *Socialist Challenge* offices in Islington.

Hormoz Rahimian believes he was followed from the bookshop by his two assailants, whom he describes as British and about 22 years old.

On Islington Green, one of them grabbed him from behind and both attacked him with knives. Rahimian was stabbed a number of times in the face, head, back, and leg.

They also tried to stab him in the chest, but only succeeded in bruising him. The wounds in his head alone needed more than 20 stitches. As the attackers were about to leave one of them shouted: "Let's go. I've already done it twice." Rahimian says that as they ran away down Upper Street one of them was covered in blood.

Two people have since been detained by police for questioning.

Rahimian has lived in London for several years and is well known as a member

of the Committee Against Repression in Iran (CARI).

It seems that the most common motives for the attack can be discounted. There was no attempt to steal anything nor did the attackers shout any racist abuse. In any case Rahimian is not of obvious Asian appearance.

Two other explanations are more likely. First, it is possible this was a fascist attack directed against someone who had just left a left-wing bookshop. The Other Bookshop was the target of a fascist firebomb two months ago.

The alternative is that the assailants were hired by the Iranian secret police, SAVAK. The motive was clearly to seriously injure or even kill Rahimian.

This is the sort of method used by the Iranian regime at home: bomb attacks on the homes of known oppositionists, physi-

cal attacks on them and their families, kidnappings and so on.

SAVAK abroad is also known to carry out such activities. US television recently carried an interview with a person who said he had been hired by SAVAK to assassinate Iranian oppositionists abroad.

This theory is confirmed by another incident the previous night. Another CARI activist found her car covered in petrol. Police said the only interpretation was a deliberate attempt to burn the car.

All this was happening as the Labour Government was continuing negotiations for its largest ever arms deal with the shah's dictatorship. Iran is already Britain's largest arms customer.

This makes the Labour Government a conscious accomplice in the massacre of Iranian oppositionists which has taken place in recent weeks.

But more than that, the Government's refusal to expel known SAVAK agents operating from the Iranian embassy implicates it in these attacks now taking place in Britain.

It must act now: kick out SAVAK and break all trade and diplomatic links with Iran! □

### Protests Win Release of Spanish Trotskyists

Meeting in Pamplona May 14, the Navarra Province Committee of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League, Spanish section of the Fourth International) expressed its gratitude to all the individuals and organizations that helped to win the release of forty-eight LCR members jailed on May 10.

The arrests occurred in the course of a police raid on the LCR headquarters in Pamplona. The headquarters had been besieged by an ultrarightist terrorist organization, the Guerrillas of Christ the King, who went on a rampage throughout the city following the funeral of two policemen assassinated by the Basque nationalist organization, Euzkadi ta Askatasuna (ETA—Basque Nation and Freedom). More than twenty shots were fired into the LCR headquarters by the ultrarightists.

The police were called to defend the rights of the LCR. When they arrived two hours later, however, they did not go after the rightists but launched a tear-gas assault on the Trotskyists' headquarters, claiming that they were "searching for weapons." Forty-eight Trotskyists in all were then arrested, provoking a storm of protest throughout the Basque country.

The statement of the LCR Provincial Committee said:

"We express our profound thanks to our members, supporters and friends, to the workers parties and the parties of the oppressed nationalities, to the trade

unions, to the people's organizations, and to the many workers who have offered us their solidarity in these difficult days. We thank all those persons who condemned the attack against our party and have spontaneously offered their aid, including financial help. We express our gratitude as well to the many in the press, radio, and television who by their dedication to the principles of their profession helped to counter the deliberate falsehoods disseminated in the first statements from official sources.

"We call for forming a commission to investigate the activities of the fascists and any possible ties between them and the state authorities. . . .

"We will begin taking the necessary legal steps to lodge a complaint in the courts against the Ministry of the Interior, the civil governor's office, and the chief of police for the assault by their forces on a headquarters of our party and for whatever false statements they issued.

"Independently of our court case, we will back a campaign for the immediate resignation of the civil governor because of the repeated attacks on the democratic rights of our people that have been made since May 1. . . .

"We are launching a campaign for funds to repair the serious damage done to our headquarters and to finance the other activities we are starting up in response to this assault. □