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International Protests Free Hugo Blanco

A campaign of international protests, such as this picket line in San José, Costa Rica, has won the release of Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco from jail in

Argentina. Blanco arrived in Sweden June 9. Most of the other political and union leaders deported from Peru May 25 have also been allowed to leave Argentina. For details, see page 756. An interview with Blanco upon arrival in Sweden is on page 757.

SPARKS FLY IN FRENCH CP

U.S.—Revolt of Taxpayers

Joseph Hansen:

Why Carter Is Shouting at Castro

Will SWP Suit Put Attorney General Behind Bars?

By Matilde Zimmermann

U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell is in a tight spot as a result of the latest development in the Socialist Workers Party's \$40 million lawsuit against government spying.

Over a year ago, federal judge Thomas Griesa ordered the government to turn over its voluminous secret files on eighteen FBI informers to attorneys for the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

The Carter administration stalled as long as it could by appealing and reappealing the order. It exhausted these possibilities when the United States Supreme Court on June 12 voted 6-to-3 not to consider the government's request that Griesa's order be overturned.

The Supreme Court rebuff sharply reduced the administration's margin for maneuver. Bell's alternatives now are to turn over the files or to place himself outside the law. Even before the nation's highest court upheld his order, Griesa had warned government representatives that they were risking contempt citations and possible jail sentences by refusing to obey his directive.

The Justice Department has repeatedly stated it will not produce the informer files. One of the Attorney General's arguments in pleading for reversal of Griesa's order was that it would be "unseemly"—his euphemism for illegal—for the nation's top law enforcement officer to refuse to obey a federal judge. In a sworn affidavit presented in court June 13, Bell repeated his unseemly—and illegal—refusal to turn over the files.

Griesa called Bell's stance "a naked exercise of power beyond the rule of law." Leonard Boudin, attorney for the SWP and YSA, said that it was unprecedented. "I have never seen an attorney general—the chief law enforcement officer of the United States—defy a federal judge," Boudin said.

The judge told government attorneys "there is simply no doubt that you have had, the government has had, all the appellate review that one is entitled to." He then reminded them that "the Court has in its possession now the names and addresses of those 18 informants, and if there was an unexcused defiance of a court order it is possible that those names and addresses could be released so that the plaintiffs would have the opportunity to take depositions and pursue their discovery in an alternative way."

Attorneys for the SWP and YSA are

asking Griesa to cite Bell for contempt of court and put him in jail, as well as requiring the government to pay damages for withholding evidence. As Boudin explained on NBC-TV news following the June 13 court hearing: "I think the imprisonment aspect will present to the public and to the rest of the executive branch the clear issue of disobedience to law by the man who is sworn to enforce the law."

Why is Bell risking the embarrassment of a jail sentence for himself or one of his hirelings to keep these informers' activities secret? After all, only eighteen of the more than 1,300 informers used against the SWP and YSA are involved.

Bell is afraid that if these files are uncovered other informers will be reluctant to commit illegal acts for the government. They will no longer believe the FBI when it assures them their crimes will be covered up and their identities kept secret.

The reason informers are so concerned with "confidentiality" flows from the peculiar nature of their work: disrupting legal political organizations, attempting to

stir up conflict and violence, burglarizing homes and offices, prying into people's personal lives and reading their mail, installing illegal electronic "bugs," sending "poison pen" letters, and releasing false stories to the media.

Spies like the eighteen whose files are contested have done the FBI's bidding throughout a forty-year campaign of surveillance and harassment of the SWP. That is why the SWP and YSA are so determined to get at the truth about these informers' actions.

When asked to provide information on informers short of turning over the complete files, the government has lied and deliberately omitted the most damning facts. At one point Judge Griesa exploded at government attorneys, calling their false statements on informers "absolutely inexcusable." He voiced the fear that there might be "widespread misrepresentations" in the FBI's sworn statements on informer activity and acknowledged "the distinct possibility that the full information is not going to be known until the documents themselves are produced." (Quoted in the *New York Post*, August 5, 1976.)

Although it was filed almost five years ago, the SWP and YSA suit is still in the stage of pretrial discovery. The Supreme Court decision to let Griesa's order stand puts a limit on the government's ability to prevent the case from coming to trial by continuing to stall for time on producing required information. □

Castro Condemns Carter's 'Absolute Lie'

By Ernest Harsch

At a June 16 news conference in Havana, Cuban Premier Fidel Castro emphatically denied, once again, any Cuban involvement in the recent uprising in Zaïre. "We have not supplied any weapons . . ." he declared. "We did not transport a single Katangan and not a single Cuban was with the Katangans at the border."

Castro termed Carter's charges of a Cuban role in the uprising an "absolute lie." He also maintained that the CIA had reestablished ties with antigovernment forces in Angola and was preparing for renewed American intervention in Angola.

The question of who is telling the truth about Zaïre—Carter or Castro—dominated Carter's June 14 news conference in Washington as well. Amid mounting disbelief in the White House's charges, Carter again tried to convince the American public that his claims are accurate.

He insisted that the White House had "firm proof" that "Cuba has been involved in the training of Katangan people who did invade" Zaïre from bases in Angola. So far, Carter has refused to release his "proof" for public examination. All he

cited specifically during the news conference was the "heavy influence" of Cuban troops in Angola, and, by association, with the Shaba rebels.

Carter did backtrack to an extent from his earlier allegations. While he initially said that Cuban forces had armed and trained the rebels and had actually instigated the uprising in Zaïre's Shaba Province, he has now shifted to accusing Castro of not doing enough to stop the rebels.

Somewhat implausibly, considering Angola's large size, the remoteness and isolation of much of the country, and the question of taking action independently of the Angolan government, Carter maintained that "Castro could have done much more had he genuinely wanted to stop the invasion. He could have interceded with the Katangans themselves; he could certainly have imposed Cuban troops near the border. . . ."

Carter then got to the real point of his whole anti-Cuban propaganda campaign. "And, of course," he said, "we would also relish the withdrawal of Cuban troops in

the future, both there [Angola] and Ethiopia. . . ." He later took the occasion to repeat himself, stating, "I think it's time for the Cuban troops to withdraw from Ethiopia."

Carter's news conference came just a day after Castro gave a detailed account of the Cuban role in the entire affair to American reporters and congressmen in Havana.

Castro said that as early as February the Cuban government had learned of "rumors" that the Shaba rebels were planning another military action in Zaïre. Summarizing an account by Congressmen Stephen J. Solarz and Anthony C. Beilenson, who met with Castro, correspondent Bernard Gwertzman said in the June 14 *New York Times*:

Mr. Castro said . . . that Cuban officials in Angola met with Angolan officials to discuss the situation. They decided, the Cuban leader said, that an attack on Zaïre would be against Angola's interests for two reasons.

The first was that such an attack would create new tensions on the Angolan-Zaïre border when Angola, whose forces are engaged in a major guerrilla war in the southern part of the country, needed a tranquil border on the north.

The second reason was that the Cubans and Angolans were deeply concerned that the invasion would provide a pretext for Western intervention in Zaïre, raising the possibility of additional Western support for the forces opposed to President Neto in Angola.

Castro said that the efforts to head off the rebel activities failed because Angolan troops were unable to control the Shabans based in northern Angola and because President Neto was ill at the time and could not exert his own personal authority.

Castro noted that the initial statements from the White House acknowledged that there was no evidence of Cuban involvement. He also reiterated that he had told the White House May 17, through a U.S. diplomat in Havana, that Havana was not involved and that the Cubans had actually tried to stop the rebel attacks. Two days later, a State Department representative claimed that "new information" had been uncovered proving Cuban training of the rebels. Castro's account of how the Cubans tried to prevent the conflict was conveniently buried, and was not publicly acknowledged until nearly a month later.

Both Solarz and Beilenson, who were briefed by CIA Director Stansfield Turner on Carter's alleged evidence of Cuban involvement in Zaïre, termed the evidence "not conclusive," "circumstantial," and "hearsay." On the other hand, Solarz declared that "President Castro makes a very compelling case that there was no Cuban involvement in the Zaïre invasion."

On June 13, Castro pointed out the reasons for the White House lies. He said that they were intended to "provide a pretext of justifying the U.S. intervention and the intervention of the NATO powers in Zaïre." □

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International Protests Free Hugo Blanco

By Fred Murphy



Thorbjörn Zadig/Daghens Nyheter

Hugo Blanco with his daughter Carmen at Stockholm airport.

Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco has been released by the Argentine dictatorship. He arrived in Sweden June 9, and will live in exile there until he can return to Peru.

Ten of the twelve other political figures, trade-union leaders, and journalists deported from Peru along with Blanco on May 25 have also gained asylum in countries of their choice; the cases of two others are still pending.

Achieving safe passage out of Argentina for Hugo Blanco and the other Peruvians who asked for it represents a major victory—the result of an intensive three-week campaign by human-rights supporters in many countries. Enough pressure was generated through petitions, telegrams, letters, resolutions of protest, and picket lines at Argentine consulates and embassies to force General Videla's government to release Blanco and the other deportees and to guarantee their safety.

The thirteen Peruvians had been arrested during the ten-day mass upsurge in Peru that began May 15 against drastic food price increases decreed by the Morales Bermúdez government. Early in the morning of May 25, shortly after a forty-eight-hour general strike that paralyzed the entire country, the thirteen were placed aboard a military plane and flown to a remote army base in Argentina.

They were held in a barracks for about a week and then transferred to federal police headquarters in Buenos Aires.

On May 31, the Argentine interior ministry claimed that eleven of the deportees had been granted asylum in Argentina and that Blanco and miners union attorney Ricardo Díaz Chávez were seeking to go to Sweden and Mexico respectively. Blanco was held for twelve more days, despite the fact that the Swedish embassy had quickly notified the Argentine authorities that he could go immediately to Sweden.

A June 7 communiqué from the interior ministry said only five of the Peruvians were accepting the asylum offer. Six others were seeking asylum elsewhere, along with Blanco and Díaz Chávez, who was also still being held. Finally, on June 12, word came from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees that all eight were being allowed to leave Argentina.

Three of the exiles have gone to Mexico: Ricardo Díaz Chávez, peasant leader José Luis Alvarado, and Humberto Damonte, editor of the leftist weekly *Marka*. (The Peruvian government ordered publication of *Marka* suspended May 19 and it has not yet resumed.)

Four others were granted asylum in France and have gone there: labor attorney Genaro Ledesma, Trotskyist leader Ricardo Napuri, leftist leader and journalist Javier Díez Canseco, and Ricardo Letts, a member of *Marka*'s editorial staff and a leader of the Democratic People's Union (UDP).

Initially accepting Argentine asylum were trade-union leaders Valentín Pacheco Quispe and Justiniano Apaza Ordóñez. But after being taken under military escort to a remote location in the *pampas*, where they apparently would be required to live, they requested asylum in Mexico. The U.N. High Commission is now making efforts to see that that request is granted and that they too are allowed to leave Argentina.

Three exiles have chosen to remain in Argentina and are being allowed to live in Buenos Aires: retired admirals José Arce Larco and Guillermo Faura Gaig, members of the bourgeois-nationalist Revolutionary Socialist Party; and Alfonso Baella Tuesta, editor of the conservative weekly *El Tiempo*. Baella has been given permanent residency status by the Argentine government.

Protests against the Videla dictatorship's arbitrary detention of the Peruvian exiles came primarily from the international labor movement and working-class parties.

In Portugal, a protest message to the Argentine government was signed by sixty-eight parliamentary deputies: fifty-four from the Socialist Party, ten from the Social Democratic Party, two from the Communist Party, and two independent socialists.

Felipe González, general secretary of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party; and François Mitterrand, first secretary of the French Socialist Party, both sent messages to Buenos Aires expressing concern about the Peruvians.

In Britain, an "Appeal in Defense of Democracy in Peru" was signed by a number of Labour members of Parliament and by prominent intellectuals.

Dozens of French trade unions passed resolutions and sent messages protesting the deportation and detention of the Peruvians. These included the national congress of the National Union of Secondary-School Teachers (SNES); the congress of CGT metalworkers of the Lorraine region; other local and département congresses of the CGT and of Force Ouvrière; journalists' unions at the Central Press Agency and at the business magazine *Expansion*; and numerous others.

Among student organizations in Europe, protests came from the French UNEF, the West German VDS, the Union of Danish Students, and students at law, fine arts, and economic faculties in Lisbon.

A number of Swiss unions and workers parties united to hold a news conference in Geneva May 31 to protest the Peruvian and Argentine governments' actions. Among those represented were the Federation of Metalworkers and Watchmakers, the public employees union VPOD, the Socialist Party and the Party of Labor (the Swiss CP), and the Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Marxist League. They also called on the Swiss government to offer

asylum to the exiled Peruvians.

In Australia a Peruvian Exiles Defence Committee was established and gained the support of several leading Labor Party members of Parliament. Labor Senator Tony Mulvihill twice brought the Peruvians' case before the Senate and asked the Fraser government to grant asylum to the exiles. Telegrams were sent to Videla by Labor shadow cabinet members Tom Uren and Ted Innes. The president of the Australian Railways Union also sent a message, and petitions circulated by the defense committee were signed by a number

of state Labor Party MPs and state and local trade-union officials.

The U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) organized efforts on the Peruvians' behalf in the United States. USLA secured statements and messages from the United Automobile Workers union, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, Detroit AFL-CIO President Tom Turner, Judge José Angel Gutierrez of the Texas Raza Unida Party, Prof. Herbert Marcuse, U.S. Representatives Walter Fauntroy and

John Conyers, and other prominent individuals.

In Canada, the Ontario Federation of Labor and the Provincial Executive of the Ontario New Democratic Party lent support to efforts on the Peruvians' behalf.

Picket lines in a number of countries put added pressure on Buenos Aires. Such protests were held at Argentine or Peruvian diplomatic offices in New York City, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, and San Diego in the United States; in London; in Sydney, Australia; and in San José, Costa Rica. □

'I Have Never Felt So Optimistic About the Future'

[The following interview with the Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco was obtained by Mats Holmberg on Blanco's return to Sweden. Holmberg is one of the Latin American correspondents for *Dagens Nyheter*, the most prestigious of the Swedish dailies, and is known particularly for his reports from the junta's Chile. This interview was published in the June 10 issue of *Dagens Nyheter*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

He was not at all downcast.

Hugo Blanco gave the victory sign at Arlanda airport [outside Stockholm]. This was the third time he had come to Sweden as a refugee. But it was no dreary returning.

"I have never felt so optimistic before about the future," he said. "I have never seen the kind of fighting spirit that prevails in Peru now. I think that the government has underestimated the people."

Just two months ago, the Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco left Sweden to take part in the elections in his country.

He was skeptical about the elections when he left. His misgivings were confirmed in a dramatic way. A few weeks after his return to his homeland, Hugo Blanco was arrested and twelve other opposition political leaders were held in prison for a while and then sent off to Argentina.

"I think we would all have been murdered, if they had managed to keep the news about our deportation quiet," he said on Friday [June 9]. "We were taken to a military base just on the other side of the Argentine border with Bolivia. But we put up a fight in the airport in Lima. As a result of the scandal that was raised, the news got out."

Now Hugo Blanco was sitting among friends and journalists at Arlanda. He laughed bitingly about the Peruvian government's announcement on Thursday [June 8] that the state of emergency would

be lifted before the June 18 elections.

"You can't hold democratic elections if you jail and deport the opposition," he said. "Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of supporters of the left have been arrested. The elections are a farce."

He said that he was worried about the eight Peruvians from the deported group who are still in the hands of the Argentine police.

"There is a danger that they will disappear if the spotlight of international public opinion is not kept on them," he said.

"They all want to get out of Argentina, but so far no country has granted them an entry permit."

As for himself, Hugo Blanco wants to return to Peru as soon as possible.

"I am glad I got a chance to experience the sort of mood that prevails in Peru," he said. "And I think that I am going to get the opportunity to go back—not because the government wants it but because the people will make it possible."

"I have never been more certain of victory." □

Appeal to Argentine Football Team

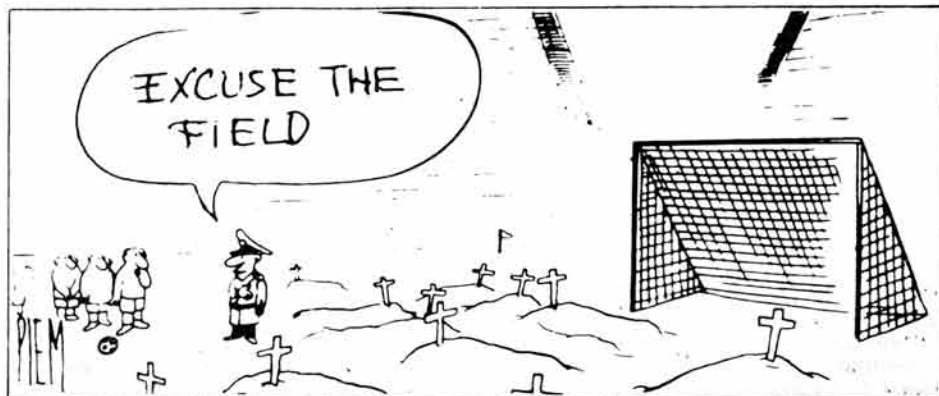
A group of eighty women whose sons or husbands have "disappeared" after being arrested have appealed to members of the Argentine football team in the World Cup competition to support their search for information on their relatives.

Copies of a letter mailed to players on the Argentine team were made public shortly before the games began. It read, in part:

"Thousands of young persons like your-

selves have disappeared in the hands of armed civilians who sometimes say they are police and other times don't say, but ransack homes and take away their victims."

The women signing the letter said the only reason there was a boycott campaign against the holding of the World Cup in Argentina was that the military government "remains silent and does not give a sensible and realistic explanation of what has happened to our relatives."



Piem/Le Quotidien de Paris

The Tax Revolt in the United States

By Jon Britton

Fed up with skyrocketing taxes, California voters rebelled at the polls June 6, approving by a nearly 2-to-1 margin a proposal to slash property-tax levies by 57%.

The ballot initiative, known as Proposition 13, limits the annual tax on property to 1% of the assessed valuation in effect in 1976, and limits any increase in that valuation to 2% a year, unless the property changes hands. It also restricts the ability of the state legislature and local bodies to increase other taxes to compensate for the lost revenue.

The sponsors claimed, and most voters believed, that passage of the referendum would result not in big cuts in needed government services but only the elimination of "bureaucratic fat" and "unnecessary frills." Even before the votes were counted, however, state and local officials were moving to impose on the country's most populous state a New York City-style austerity. How extensive the cuts will be remains to be seen. That will depend on the response of the unions and especially the Black and Chicano communities, which will bear the brunt of the attacks.

The main initiator and leading campaigner for Proposition 13 was Howard Jarvis, a retired industrialist and right-wing demagogue. He promised "control of the government again" by "the people of California." The drive to win support for the ballot initiative was strongly backed by the Reaganite wing of the Republican Party and other far-right forces.

Jarvis had been campaigning for years on the issue of high taxes without getting anywhere. But this year was different. In the weeks leading up to the June 6 vote, a groundswell of support developed for Proposition 13 that was variously described in the media as a "tax-quake," "Pacific tidal wave," and "second Boston Tea Party."

Advocates of Proposition 13 utilized popular radio talk shows in both northern and southern California to whip up grassroots support. "In fifteen years, I know of no issue that has grabbed people like this one," a talk-show host told *Los Angeles Times* reporter Bill Boyarsky. "As far as any other political issue or any political candidate, this has certainly overwhelmed them. This is dollars and cents in your pocket. It hits you where you live."

Boyarsky visited the headquarters of Californians for Proposition 13 in the San Fernando Valley, which he said was typical of the many small, independent groups

that sprang up during the campaign.

Jane Nerpel and her group had gone beyond the talk-show stage, Boyarsky reported. "She said 4,000 to 6,000 pieces of literature are being sent from the headquarters each week. No computers are used for the mailings. 'We have a lot of ladies who do it by hand,' she said."

Boyarsky talked to a salesman who had walked into the headquarters after finding out that the assessment on his house had gone up 105%. "Never in my life have I been involved in politics. I got drafted, went over to 'Nam, fought their war for them. I wasn't even too upset about Nixon." But the property tax increase, he said, "is like the movie 'Network' where everyone shouted they were mad as hell and didn't have to take it anymore."

A popular slogan of the tax-cut forces was "Show the Politicians Who's Boss! Vote Yes on Prop. 13."

An Antigovernment Tax Revolt

Pollsters, the media, and capitalist politicians speaking off the record are virtually unanimous in concluding that a massive tax revolt with strong antigovernment overtones has been touched off and is likely to sweep the country.

The *Washington Post* quoted "traditionally cautious" pollster Mervin Field in its June 2 issue: "A heavy tide is running in favor of Proposition 13, fueled by an incredible anti-government feeling. We're looking at a political earthquake that's going to have national implications."

Reporter Godfrey Sperling Jr. summed up the assessment given him by "political leaders" around the country in the June 12 *Christian Science Monitor*. Here are some key conclusions:

A new wave of discontent is sweeping the U.S. . . . this unrest pervades all voting groups except the poor and those of the academic community. . . . the California vote (as assessed by these political observers) is, largely, an extension of the same public unhappiness that has been in evidence since Vietnam and Watergate.

It is simply more of the same public attitude—reflected in poll after poll through the last several years—that people just do not trust their government or their government leaders.

The mood is substantially compounded by public displeasure with what many people believe is misuse of their tax money. . . .

Newsweek in its June 19 issue called the tax revolt "the new gut issue in American politics."

It is not hard to understand why a massive tax revolt is under way. Working-class families and large sections of the middle class have been squeezed by "stagflation" for nearly a decade. Employer pressure has held real wages almost level during this period.

But the worldwide economic slowdown has also undercut government finances at all levels. The rulers have responded with wide-ranging cutbacks in spending on health, education, and other services; layoffs and wage freezes for public workers; and an ongoing effort to place more of the burden of taxation on workers and the middle class.

In 1949 corporate and business taxes represented 47.5% of the total federal tax revenue. By 1976 only 31% of federal tax revenue came from such taxes, a decline of one-third. The growth of state and local sales and income taxes and property taxes on residential real estate makes this regressive shift even more dramatic.

Much of it has taken place automatically, without new legislation being necessary. Inflation bumps taxpayers into higher tax brackets, even when their real wages have not risen and may in fact have dropped. Soaring market prices for houses have the same effect on property taxes owed by homeowners.

Meanwhile investment tax credits and other giveaways have significantly reduced the tax burden of big corporations and the wealthy.

Last January, Congressman Charles Vanik reported that 17 large U.S. corporations paid no federal income taxes whatever in 1976, and 150 such firms got away with paying at an effective tax rate of about 13%. That rate, he pointed out, is approximately what a family of four with earnings of \$20,000 a year pays.

The June 1 *Christian Science Monitor* reported that many interstate and multinational firms "avoid billions of dollars in local taxes through lax enforcement at the state level."

And there is no end to the tax squeeze in sight. Last December Carter signed a bill that hikes the regressive Social Security tax by huge amounts over the next ten years, while at the same time slashing benefits.

It is also understandable that the revolt was sparked off in California. Seventy percent of the state's residents live in their own homes—the highest percentage in the country—and their property taxes have been soaring because of a speculative real-estate boom.

Over the past four years, California homeowners have seen inflation drive up the assessed value of their homes by rates as high as 3% a month. "It was not unusual," *Newsweek* reported, "for a \$20,000-a-year breadwinner to find that his \$50,000 home was suddenly an \$80,000 home, with taxes of \$2,400 this year and a rise to \$4,000 or more in prospect."

It had reached the point where some homeowners were paying more in property taxes than mortgage payments. Many were faced with the specter of losing their homes.

To add insult to injury, while the assessed values of owner-occupied houses were soaring, driving taxes through the roof, the assessments on commercial property, which changes hands infrequently, were rising much more slowly.

It is not surprising then that large numbers of California voters were swayed by Jarvis's radio commercials, one of which warned that they had "one last chance to protect the American dream of home ownership" by voting for Proposition 13.

An added spur to taxpayer anger in California was a \$5 billion surplus in the state budget, produced by economic recovery and inflation-fueled jumps in property and income tax rates.

There have been rumblings of a tax revolt around the country for some time. Capitalist politicians have been aware of the danger and have sought to head it off by passing or proposing phony "tax relief" legislation. These measures generally only slow the rise in taxes caused by inflation or other tax legislation (Carter's proposed "tax cut" being a case in point), or affect a relatively small section of the population such as the impoverished elderly.

More frequently the Democrats and Republicans have initiated legislation or ballot referendums that would limit government spending in various ways. For example, twenty-three state legislatures have called for a convention to draft an amendment to the U.S. constitution that would ban federal deficits. Colorado has passed a law limiting the annual growth of government expenditures to 7%.

Such measures do not provide tax relief for working people, but only give a democratic facade to attacks on public workers and stepped-up cutting of government services.

A measure of the desperation people feel was the outcome of a nationwide poll conducted by NBC News and reported on a special hour-long news broadcast June 16. Thirty-seven percent of those polled said they were considering refusing to pay their property taxes. One industrial worker interviewed by NBC was doing just that.

In a similar vein, a poll conducted by *Time* magazine and reported in its June 19 issue showed that 48% of those questioned were seriously concerned about keeping their houses, while only 29% expressed comparable apprehension about keeping their jobs.

The California legislature had for a year been considering various proposals for property-tax "reform," including a \$1 billion "tax relief" measure pushed by Governor Jerry Brown. But the squabbling politicians in Sacramento were unable to agree

on a bill, leaving the way open for the Proposition 13 drive.

Default of Labor Leadership

Of course, the labor movement could have taken the leadership of the mounting sentiment against high taxes by launching an independent campaign for genuine tax relief with no cuts in government services. But the officialdom, tied to Governor Brown and the Democratic Party, completely defaulted, and Jarvis and his right-wing backers stepped into the political vacuum.

When it became evident that Proposition 13 was gaining massive support, Governor Brown, other Democratic and Republican politicians, the big corporations, and top union bureaucrats united in support of an alternative, which was listed on the ballot as Proposition 8. If passed, the proposition would have amended the state constitution to permit taxation of owner-occupied property at a lower rate than business or commercial property, reducing taxes on private homes by 30%. However, it specifically barred raising corporate taxes to cover the loss of revenue from reduced homeowner taxes.

The Bank of America beat the drums for Proposition 8 as "a rational, orderly first step to achieve greater efficiency in the use of public funds."

A big media blitz was launched to convince voters that they should vote for this "more rational" and "more responsible" alternative to the "meat-axe radicalism" of Proposition 13. A scare campaign was conducted by local city officials and by the unions, warning of giant cuts in government services and layoffs of vast numbers of teachers and other public employees if Proposition 13 were passed.

This fell on deaf ears, however. Brown's proposition did not hold out the promise of nearly as much tax relief as Proposition 13 did. Moreover, the scare propaganda was simply not believed by most voters, including many public employees. A CBS poll of voters who were public workers, or who had at least one family member who was a public worker, showed that 41% had pulled the lever for Proposition 13.

Socialist Alternative

The American Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party were heard in the tax-relief controversy through their California election campaign. SWP gubernatorial candidate Fred Halstead called for a "no" vote on both propositions 8 and 13. He explained in speeches and printed literature that both measures would pit over-taxed working-class homeowners against other working people who are badly in need of social services.

Instead of these phony "reforms," the SWP campaign proposed a socialist alter-

native to the current inequitable tax structure: Eliminate all property taxes on small owners; tax the big corporations. No tax on incomes below \$30,000 and a 100% tax on those above \$50,000. Abolish all sales taxes. Stop the billions of dollars in non-taxable interest giveaways to the rich on state, city, and federal bonds. Place a 100% tax on the profits of polluting corporations and war profiteers. Abolish the war budget and use the money to meet human needs instead.

The leadership of the unions could have put a proposition on the ballot that reflected this class-struggle approach. But blind to both the opportunity and danger, they failed to act.

Thus, the voters saw no real alternative and concluded out of desperation that they had to vote for the Jarvis measure if they were to get any real tax relief. And it was not only the middle class that came to this conclusion. In the heavily working-class city of Monrovia, with a 10% Black population, 72% voted for Proposition 13. Significant numbers of Blacks and Chicanos voted for it also, though not a majority. According to the CBS poll, 37% of Black voters approved the Jarvis initiative.

Proposition 13 a Swindle

But the people of California have been swindled. Even before the votes were counted, some city governments had passed tax increases in anticipation of lost revenue. Immediately after the vote, cut-backs of all kinds were announced by Governor Brown and by city governments.

Brown's first move was to freeze hiring of new state employees (12,000 a year) except in emergencies and to announce a \$300 million cut in the state budget for 1978-79, to help make up for the \$7 billion loss in revenue. Later, he raised that figure to \$570 million and announced a freeze on salaries for all state employees.

In San Francisco, Mayor George Moscone proclaimed a state of emergency, suspending the city charter, which mandates various services and pay scales. Among other "emergency" measures taken, transit fares were sharply raised.

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley announced that 8,300 municipal workers would be fired. The city's transit fares were also sharply hiked.

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles recommended that summer school sessions be eliminated. On June 13, the Los Angeles unified school district canceled summer programs that had been expected to attract 260,000 young people and 80,000 adults.

In the city of Monrovia (population 30,000), layoff notices have already gone out to 19 of the city's 185 employees, according to *Time* magazine. The library staff, currently six persons, will be cut by four. The municipal swimming pool, used almost entirely by the Black population,

has been closed. And up to \$200 will now be charged senior citizens and other groups to use the community center for meetings.

Monrovia's school district faces a loss of 44 of its 250 certified teachers. Some academic programs, including remedial classes, and most of the athletics and music programs will probably be reduced or eliminated, *Time* reported.

The massive layoffs slated to take place across the state will hit Blacks, Chicanos, and women the hardest, since they generally have the least seniority, most having been hired in recent years under various "affirmative-action" programs. One analysis of possible layoffs in Los Angeles indicates that more than 60% of the affected workers are members of minority groups (*New York Times*, June 11). Likewise, the cutbacks in social services will fall most heavily on the disadvantaged.

Thus, it is not "bureaucratic fat"—which in any case is a standard feature of capitalist government—that is being cut, but programs and services needed by millions of Californians.

The swindle is compounded by the fact that two-thirds of the tax savings resulting from passage of Proposition 13 will go to the corporations and landlords. The state's ten largest utilities and railroads alone will enjoy a first-year windfall of \$400 million.

It is not yet clear to what extent the cutbacks and layoffs already announced, and those yet to be announced, will be carried through, and how much other taxes will be raised. Brown has pledged that there will be no new state taxes, a promise he might actually be held to, given the anger of California taxpayers. Instead he has proposed allocating the state's budget surplus to local governments and school districts to make up for part of the first year's loss of property-tax revenue.

The passage of Proposition 13 was hailed by its right-wing supporters. The June 8 *Washington Post* quoted Jarvis as saying that the California vote signaled "a new revolution" that would sweep the country. He announced that he was forming the American Tax Reduction Movement to carry his antitax message to other states.

Ronald Reagan predicted an economic boom for the state he governed for eight years.

And the New York Conservative Party announced the opening of a drive to bring some version of the Jarvis amendment to that state.

Meanwhile, the Democrats and mainstream Republicans are scrambling to take the leadership of the tax revolt away from Jarvis and his Reaganite allies.

Jerry Brown, one of the more nimble capitalist politicians, moved quickly when it became apparent that Proposition 13 was going to win. *Time* magazine reported that "by election night, as 13 rolled up its

huge majority and 8 lost, 53% to 47%, the Governor was almost sounding as if the Jarvis-Gann proposal had been his own idea."

Following the vote, Brown boasted that it was he who "began the effort at government frugality, and what I hear out of this vote is that people want more of it."

Carter also quickly got into the act. The June 11 *New York Times* reported that Carter and many members of Congress "were quick to sympathize with the spirit of the California vote. A Presidential spokesman said the concerns expressed by the voters . . . were the same concerns on which Mr. Carter 'campaign[ed] and on which he bases his Presidency.'"

The June 8 *New York Times* quoted Republican National Chairman William Brock as saying, "[the vote in California] portends well for the Republican Party because the Democrats in Congress have been the big spenders."

Ruling Class Nervous

Underneath all this cheering, however, there are indications that the ruling class is nervous. The editors of the *New York Times* warned on June 6, for example, that the California tax rebellion "will surely deepen resentment against taxes elsewhere and give encouragement to wrong-headed and deceptively simple prescriptions."

An editorial in the June 8 *Wall Street Journal* criticized the Jarvis initiative as "clearly extreme. We would prefer a more gradual approach. . . ." And "we would caution politicians in California and elsewhere against going to war with the voters. Americans don't want to destroy government. They want it to serve them better."

In their June 8 issue, the *New York Times* editors predicted that "when the cutting edge of this revolt passes through a thin layer of fat, other movements will arise to protest the pain."

But the rulers have even more to worry about. As time goes on and capitalist politicians hold out as the only alternatives raising taxes or slashing social services, large numbers of Americans will begin to seriously question huge armaments expenditures. That could lead to deeper questioning of U.S. imperialism's foreign policy such as occurred during the Vietnam War, but on a much bigger scale. According to the nationwide NBC poll, this process is already underway. Among those asked where they would cut federal expenditures first, 19% pointed to the arms budget.

Thus, the American labor movement is faced with both a grave threat and a big opportunity. In the absence of a credible alternative put forward by the workers movement as a whole, the continued tightening of the economic squeeze will provide a fertile breeding ground for ultraright

demagogues. But the same pressures will radicalize wide layers of the population, opening the way for a powerful anticapitalist offensive.

The conservative officialdom of the U.S. union movement will have to be replaced by a fighting, class-struggle leadership if the latter perspective is to be realized and a social catastrophe headed off.

In California the union misleaders have been acting true to form. Their main response since June 6 has been to challenge the constitutionality of Proposition 13 in the courts, in hope of rolling back property taxes to their former levels and canceling the layoffs.

In New Jersey, Al Wurf, leader of the 40,000-member state chapter of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is trying to put together a coalition to "guard against campaigns for wholesale tax cuts" (*New York Daily News*, June 12).

On the same day this was announced, AFSCME's national president, Jerry Wurf, gave his opinion of the voters by proclaiming the California vote on Proposition 13 to be "an aberration" (*New York Times*, June 12).

AFL-CIO President George Meany, on the other hand, has come out for a tax cut—but for the rich. He recently endorsed the proposal that is gaining ground in Congress to slash taxes on capital gains. Even the Carter administration has refused to back this giveaway, pointing out that 80% of the benefits would go to people with incomes of \$100,000 a year or more.

Leaders of the Black and Chicano communities have as yet not projected an effective course of action either. One proposal, seemingly aimed at heading off mass protests, is to hold lotteries to determine whose job would be eliminated, rather than deciding this on the basis of seniority.

There are some positive signs, however. The organized public employees in California are reportedly considering putting a proposition on the ballot for November that would roll back the reductions in property taxes for the corporations and landlords while retaining the reductions for homeowners.

The executive secretary of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, William Robertson, and several other labor leaders have warned that a major strike by government workers could occur "if we don't get a fair shake."

One Black student who used to swim in the Monrovia municipal pool told the *Time* reporter: "White folks have their pools or can afford the drive to the beach. If this pool doesn't open up, we're going to fight it."

Such fights on the local level are bound to spring up in the weeks and months ahead as Californians begin to feel the effects of Jarvis's "revolution." □

Tells Masses Not to Go Against Parliament

Italian CP Switches on Reactionary Law

By Gerry Foley

On June 11-12, referendums to repeal the Reale Public Order Law and the law on public financing of political parties were defeated in Italy.

The Reale Law, passed by parliament in 1975, greatly expanded the powers of the police and reduced the rights of defendants.

Under the Reale Law, police have the right to use firearms without restrictions. They can hold suspects in prison beyond the maximum time for which sentences could be imposed if they were found guilty. The authorities also have the power to restrict bail and hold suspects even if they cannot be linked to the offense being investigated.

Originally, the Communist Party opposed passage of this reactionary legislation. Now in a 180-degree switch the party opposed repeal. In fact, the June 13 issue of the party paper, *l'Unità*, hailed the defeat of the referendums as a victory:

"The Country Has Rejected Insidious Attack on Democratic System . . . A Massive Victory for Public Order." The June 14 issue announced "Anti-Communist and Anti-Democratic Maneuver Thwarted."

The reason the Communist Party leaders gave for their scandalous change in line was that submitting such a question to popular vote undermined the prerogatives of parliament.

In the May 28 issue of *l'Unità*, for example, CP Secretary for Governmental Questions Ugo Pecchioli said that the referendum was an extension of attempts by fascists and Radicals to sabotage passage of an improved version of the Reale Law.

"Everyone who believes in parliamentary democracy must take a stand against this kind of subversion, and bury under an avalanche of 'no's' the attempt to sabotage the parliament from within. . . .

"Ours is a representative democracy in which the people's will is exercised through parliament. Referendums, in the limits foreseen by the constitution, are supposed to be a means of correcting the errors and slowness of parliament. They cannot substitute for parliament."

Furthermore, he said, the referendum was aimed at the Communist Party, since it sought to undermine the authority of governmental institutions at the very moment the Communist Party was being allowed into them for the first time since the immediate postwar period:

"It is no accident that this is taking

place when the parliamentary majority includes the Communists. It is clear that the hope of these oppositionists is to put a strain on the new political relationships. . . .

"The majority was formed to deal with the emergency. A central aspect of the emergency is the subversive and terrorist assault on democracy. Everything else depends on solving this problem."

The Communist Party switched its policy not to defend bourgeois democracy against a fascist threat, but to defend the bourgeois *parliament* as such. The only result of this line can be to strengthen repression and thus the new fascist currents. In an economic crisis, where capitalist profitability is increasingly threatened, the fundamental weight of repression will be directed against workers fighting to maintain their jobs and standard of living.

To be noted is the fact that in its attempts to prove its loyalty to the bourgeois parliamentary system, the Italian Communist Party is increasingly peddling bourgeois propaganda.

The claim, for instance, that the greatest danger to the Italian people is constituted by the tiny gangs of terrorists is the crudest kind of scare propaganda. In its attempts to hold on to this working-class support while increasingly collaborating with the bourgeois rulers, the CP has been compelled to turn more and more to the technique of the big lie.

Thus, the CP not only says that austerity is necessary, as a Social Democratic party would, but that cutbacks are a means of reorganizing society in accordance with socialist ideals. It does not simply say that those who challenge the established order are extremists or impractical, but that they are plotting against democracy in league with the fascists.

The neofascists favored repealing the laws granting public financing of parties. This corresponds to their antiparliamentary orientation and the antipolitical attitude of their supporters. However, the effect of the workers parties backing the diversion of tax money to the big parties that do nothing for the working people can lead only to a wider rejection of politics among the poor masses.

In a bourgeois system, moreover, public financing of parties is not going to eliminate the material advantage of capitalist parties. The result would be, rather, to make the parties more a part of the state and make the bureaucratized workers parties more independent of their class base.

The groups to the left of the Communist parties proposed freer access to the media for all parties as a democratic alternative to public financing.

Although the CP managed to hold the bulk of its supporters behind its policy on the referendum votes, it suffered significant defections.

The proposition calling for repeal of the Reale Law was defeated by a vote of 76.9%. However, in the circumstances, the 23.1% "yes" vote was a significant total. The election was held just over a month after the Moro killing. The Christian Democrats and the CP conducted a hysteria campaign, claiming that a "yes" vote would mean release of the jailed terrorists and delivering the country to chaos.

All the big parties called for a "no" vote, although the Socialists let it be known that they were not too enthusiastic about it. The SP attitude obviously represents a continuation of the tactics they have followed before, trying to look a little open to the left in order to attract those alienated by the CP's heavy-handed class collaboration.

In the Emilia-Romagna region, where the CP has its strongest base in local government, the "yes" vote was only 13.5%. In the impoverished south, on the other hand, the "yes" vote ran at about a third. Furthermore, in Turin, one of the most militant working-class centers, the "yes" vote was 3% higher than the national average.

On the public financing law, where the hysteria over terrorism did not weigh so strongly, the "no" vote was only 56%, and there were large "yes" votes not only in the south but in Rome, Milan, and Turin. This vote probably more clearly reflected the mass distrust of the established parties.

Moreover, the support for a "yes" vote in the referendum against the Reale Law was concentrated among the new generation of voters. In its editorial on the results, the Rome daily *Repubblica* said:

"The left as a whole will have to take account of the 'yes' vote . . . because it is the political expression of the vital forces in the youngest section of voters. This indicates the tragic situation of Italian youth, a generation without any prospects, ideals, or practical experience, which is desperately seeking reasons to hope and live." □

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The Dispute Over Cuba's Role in Africa

By Joseph Hansen

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Because of its rising prominence in African political affairs, Cuba is again very much in the news. Not since the downfall of Batista and the overturn of capitalist property relations in Cuba has there been such controversy over the actions of the Castro regime.

The most ominous reaction to Cuba's role in providing material aid to Angola, and later to Ethiopia, has come from the White House. Before he lost office, President Ford branded the Castro government as an "international outlaw." Carter promised to take a different course, and for a time he intimated that a dialogue might be opened with the Cubans. This proved to be little more than a demagogic interlude in the general policy followed by Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford. Carter now insists that Castro withdraw Cuban forces from Angola and Ethiopia or suffer the consequences. The State Department has increased pressures on the diplomatic level, and threats have been made to resort to military measures.

Washington's reaction emanates from fear that the Cuban presence in Africa means further weakening of the imperialist grip in that area, strengthening of Soviet influence, and fresh encouragement to revolutionary forces capable of moving in the direction of socialism.

The resumption of the imperialist campaign against the Cuban revolution is of top concern to everyone opposed to war and in favor of the right of self-determination. It means rallying in a vigorous way on an international scale in defense of the Cuban revolution against the renewed threat of American imperialism to crush it.

One of the byproducts of Cuba's fresh leap into world prominence has been a renewal of interest in the nature of the Cuban revolution, in the political character of its leadership, and in the relationship between Moscow and Havana. Questions such as the following are being discussed: Does the presence of Cuban advisers and troops in Angola, Ethiopia, and elsewhere in Africa prove—as Washington's propaganda machine alleges—that Castro is serving as a puppet of Moscow? Or is the Cuban government seeking to advance a policy of its own that happens, for the time being, to be congruent with Moscow's aims? What does Havana's rising influence in African affairs show about the present status of the Cuban revolution? Has a parasitic caste become entrenched in Cuba? Has the revolution degenerated to such a point that it must now be said that a Stalinist regime has usurped power? With the wisdom of hindsight must it now be acknowledged that the Cuban revolution was Stalinist-led from the beginning? Or do the new developments speak otherwise, indicating continuation of a policy to extend the revolution internationally, thus cutting across the Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist powers and their capitalist system?

Questions running along these lines are not new. They were raised and debated during the first years of the Cuban revolution. The initiatives taken by the Cubans on the African continent place them on the agenda for rediscussion.

It takes something more than careful study of the current

developments to find correct answers to these questions, particularly in view of the absence of information on some essential points such as the calculations of Havana on the one hand and Moscow on the other. At present these can only be surmised or deduced.

An obvious requisite is accurate knowledge of the background. Articles featuring "in depth" analysis of Cuba's rising role in Africa are strikingly inadequate if they fail to refer to the patterns followed by the Cuban leaders in carrying through the revolutionary struggle in Cuba.

For dialectical materialists it is imperative to go back to the origin of the Cuban revolution. There is no other way to establish the continuity (or discontinuity) of the processes that have, among other results, now received spectacular expression in Africa. Moreover, there is no other way to determine the meaning of the Cuban revolution as it has evolved. Here it is not necessary to begin from zero—the problem presented to Marxist theory by the uniqueness of the events was solved at the time. The conclusions reached then have proved of immense service in analyzing subsequent developments.

One of the purposes of this compilation is to present those theoretical conclusions. They are included in documents that were part of a free internal discussion held in the Socialist Workers Party in 1960-61 while the party at the same time carried out energetic defense work in support of the Cuban revolution and against the American imperialist effort to smash it.

Other documents in the book include polemics against protagonists of State Department positions, exposures of Cuban Stalinist hacks who sought to besmirch the record of the Trotskyists, and articles representative of hundreds by many different writers that were published in the *Militant* and other Trotskyist journals in defense of the Cuban revolution when it was the target of the heaviest blows. These documents indicate where the Trotskyists stood on other fronts as they sought, through use of the dialectical method, to ascertain the place of the Cuban revolution in the chain of socialist revolutions that began in Russia in 1917.

* * *

At present Washington is pushing the line that Cuba has become completely dependent on the Soviet Union, abjectly obeys orders from the Kremlin, and has sent its troops to Africa to serve as surrogates for Soviet troops. These allegations conform to the pattern of the State Department's well-aged propaganda picturing the Soviet Union as an aggressive power intent on conquering the world. The truth is that the main objective of foreign policy as pursued by the Soviet ruling caste is maintenance of the status quo; that is, "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist powers and the capitalist system.

If it were true that Brezhnev had shifted from this policy to one of extending Soviet power and influence through the use of armed force, the turn would represent a new element of transcendent importance in world affairs. A reassessment of the nature of the Soviet government would be called for, along with a possible redetermination of the revolutionary Marxist attitude toward the ruling caste. The analysis might place the Cubans in a favorable light as the spearhead chosen to open the offensive decided on by Brezhnev.

However, the State Department is not acting on the assumption

that Brezhnev has adopted a class-struggle policy. The State Department distinguishes Castro from Brezhnev. Friendly relations are maintained with the Russian leader even while new weapons of the most fiendish kind are developed by the Pentagon for use in a projected war against the Soviet Union. Castro, on the other hand, is kept at the top of the State Department's list of enemies, and the CIA has attempted on a number of occasions to apply the order issued against him, "Terminate with extreme prejudice."

Washington's attitude is hardly surprising—it is simply an imperialistic reaction to the efforts made by the Cuban leadership to defend their revolution by extending it.

The course of the Cubans can be conveniently divided into three phases:

1. In the great wave of enthusiasm over the Cuban revolution following its victory, many attempts were made in Latin America to emulate the July 26 Movement. These attempts were supported by Havana both politically and materially. Extension of the Cuban revolution appeared to hinge on extension of the methods used by the July 26 Movement—mainly the initiation and pursuit of guerrilla warfare. This period reached its high point at the OLAS conference held in Havana in August 1967. There Castro subjected the reformist Latin American Communist parties to scorching criticism for their sabotage of guerrilla war. At that moment, Che Guevara was in Bolivia conducting the experiment that was to end in his death.

Ill-conceived though it was, Guevara's attempt to set off a revolution in Bolivia testified to the international outlook of the Castro team. One of Guevara's aims was to create a new front that would help the Vietnamese in their struggle against the American invasion in Indochina.

It is worth recalling that on March 10, 1965, Castro publicly offered to send arms and men to aid the Vietnamese. On March 16, in a widely publicized speech appealing to Peking and Moscow to close ranks against the common foe, Castro said: ". . . we think Vietnam should be given all the necessary aid . . . we are in favor of aid in arms and men . . . we are for the socialist camp risking everything required for Vietnam."

Cuba's offer to send "arms and men" was turned down by the National Liberation Front. As it was, Cuba was the first workers' state to make this kind of public offer. The initiative may have been decisive in compelling Moscow and Peking to follow with similar statements.

2. The crushing of Guevara's ambitious project capped a series of defeats for the groups that took the road of guerrilla war. Castro now made a turn. Since this occurred only months after the OLAS conference in 1967, and since no critical appraisal of the previous course was presented publicly, a good deal of confusion was created among supporters of the Cuban revolution. While still giving some aid—principally training—to the protagonists of guerrilla war in Latin America, the Cubans ceased fostering it as the royal road to success.

The economic situation in Cuba also worried them; the American blockade was inducing strains. The Cuban leaders stepped up the goals on the economic front, hoping by extraordinary exertion to overcome the effects of the American stranglehold. Unrealistic goals, notably in the 1970 campaign to produce ten million tons of sugar, resulted in dislocations of economic planning and exhaustion among the workers.

In view of such consequences, the Cuban leaders had to reassess priorities and set more modest goals. The pause for reflection over the meaning of the failures of guerrilla war and consideration of possible alternatives lasted until 1975.

Washington evidently interpreted the downturn in guerrilla war in Latin America as evidence of the domestication of the Cuban revolution; and the State Department—whose blockade had failed to isolate Cuba—began probing ways to bring Castro under the general framework of "peaceful coexistence."

3. The breakup of the Portuguese empire, with climactic liberation struggles in the colonies and the toppling of the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship in Lisbon, presented new openings for the

Cubans. They had already established ties with various guerrilla forces in Africa, Guevara himself having participated in this work. In Angola, the Cubans granted aid—most noticeably in the form of combat troops—to counter the imperialist efforts of Washington and Pretoria to block the liberation struggle. Cuban belief in the preeminent role of armed force in and of itself—a belief that discounts the power of a correct political program—is being tested in an even clearer way than in Latin America.

A new aspect of this involvement is its legality. The Cubans were invited by the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which received international recognition as the legitimate government of Angola, to send material aid, including troops, to boost the country's defense against the efforts of South Africa and the United States to reimpose imperialist rule. In responding to the appeal, the Cubans acted in accordance with international law. The pattern was repeated in the case of Ethiopia. Today Cuban consultants and advisers are to be found in a number of countries in Africa.

* * *

Moscow has supplied material aid, armaments in the first place, to both Angola and Ethiopia. This represents nothing new. Similar aid has been extended by the Kremlin in the past to other African countries and to countries elsewhere in the world—Cuba itself is an outstanding example. The Soviet ruling caste is compelled to do this, in part to meet Peking's challenge, in part to give some substance to its pretense of standing for socialism, and mostly to gain leadership of forces heading in an anticapitalist direction, the better to use them in bartering with the American imperialists. Moscow's objectives fall within the general context of the détente. All that is sought is more elbowroom for maneuver.

* * *

The American Trotskyists have criticized Havana's foreign policy on several counts:

1. The extrapolation on a continental scale of the efficacy of guerrilla war seemed to us to be based on a misjudgment of both the Cuban experience and the possibilities for its repetition. The key to the toppling of Batista was the rise in the class struggle in Cuba. The rise was not "sparked" by the guerrilla actions; on the contrary, the rise made it possible *in this instance* to win even through guerrilla actions.

American imperialism and its satellite forces in Latin America, learning from what happened in Cuba, resorted to more repressive regimes to suffocate the class struggle; hence the installation of military dictatorships that in their first actions sought to stamp out all organizations of the working class. As the masses fell back in face of the murderous onslaught, it became increasingly difficult for guerrilla movements to gain headway. The problem of linking up with the masses could not be solved by them.

The general conclusion to be drawn from this turn of events is that more effective means than a guerrilla band is required to lead the struggle for socialism. What is required is a mass working-class party of the Leninist type.

2. Guided by their desire to construct a common front against American imperialism, the Cubans failed to distinguish the components of this front according to program. Thus supporters of the capitalist system were hailed, provided that they were "progressive," i.e., denounced imperialism or spoke well of the Cuban revolution. Confusion was thus sown among supporters of the Cuban revolution, with the consequence that many of them were diverted down false trails.

A case in point was the support given the Chilean regime headed by Salvador Allende. Although Castro may have sensed a coming showdown in Chile when he was there on tour—his parting gift to Allende was a submachine gun—the support he offered the regime appeared to be support for its adherence to capitalism. Allende's failure to act against the plotters in the military forces cost him his life. More important, the seizure of power by Pinochet dealt a cruel blow to the cause of socialism in

Latin America, and a deadly enemy was added to the roster of regimes hostile to the Cuban revolution.

3. Similar criticisms can be made of Cuban policy in Africa today. The programs of the Neto regime in Angola and the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia have not been presented for what they are—commitments to maintain capitalist relations in those countries.

The Cubans seem to be primarily interested in bolstering the *anti-imperialist* aspects of the upheavals in these areas. But to overlook the struggle for *socialist* goals can only prove counterproductive. And it is dangerous to believe that an anti-imperialist struggle automatically reinforces the struggle for socialism. Such a view can lead to defeats for socialism, as was shown in Chile. In both Angola and Ethiopia we have already seen repressive measures taken against revolutionary socialists.

In the case of Eritrea, the Cuban government at first supported the national liberation struggle there. As the Dergue organized expeditionary forces with the objective of smashing the rebellion by military means, the Cubans appeared to be having difficulty deciding what to do—participate, stand aside, or withdraw? Havana's hesitancy demonstrates how dangerous an inconsistent anti-imperialist line can be.

* * *

What does Cuba's new role in African affairs tell us about the nature of the Cuban revolution and its leadership? Let us recall that when Havana responded to the MPLA's plea for aid, the shipment of troops received wide acclaim in the left. It was argued that the support granted by Havana not only proved how internationally minded the Castro regime was, it proved the progressiveness of the Neto government.

However, this argumentation was shelved when the Mengistu regime appealed for similar aid and the Cubans responded favorably. Castro plummeted in leftist opinion. According to this view, Castro's granting aid to Ethiopia was a sure sign of the degeneration of the Cuban revolution.

It is unfortunate that these analysts lacked the capacity to maintain both arguments simultaneously. Had they insisted that their deductions held with equal force in both cases, they would have provided us with an educational demonstration of the traps awaiting those who believe Havana's relations with the Angolan and Ethiopian regimes offer fresh evidence concerning the nature of the Castro regime and the status of the Cuban revolution.

The same goes for the contention that the Cuban role in Africa amounts to providing surrogate troops for the Kremlin. It might be argued that the State Department's propaganda on this point does not necessarily mean that it is untrue. We can agree with that. However, this does not alter the questions that arise if we take a close look at the propaganda rather than simply brushing it aside.

Why did the Kremlin select the Cubans for this role and not the Latvians, the Poles, or the Czechs? Was it because Cuba is the farthest from the scene and the transport problems from there are the greatest? Did the Cuban record in guerrilla war tip the scales? Did Moscow calculate that the White House would react most angrily to the choice of Cuba, thereby assuring a rise in tensions between Havana and Washington? Or did the Kremlin have more devious reasons for wanting to incite the Americans?

The answers to such questions and to others of similar nature point to the conclusion that the Castro regime exercised a certain initiative in bringing Cuban influence to bear in the struggle against imperialism on the African continent.

As for the argument that Havana's rising prominence in Africa indicates the crystallization of a hardened bureaucratic caste in Cuba, the available evidence would seem to indicate the contrary. Hardened bureaucratic castes, such as the ones in the Soviet Union and China, characteristically display conservatism, even a counterrevolutionary outlook, particularly in foreign policy; hence

their pursuit of "peaceful coexistence," of "détente," of deals with the imperialist powers at the expense of the masses. But in Africa, Cuban activities have greatly increased instability at the expense of the imperialist powers. Castro has followed a course that closed off rather than invited a deal with American imperialism. This fact alone speaks decisively against the contention that the events in Africa offer proof that a hardened bureaucratic caste has taken over in Cuba.

The Cuban course in Africa requires no essential alterations in the Marxist analysis of the lines of action adopted by the Castro team after they had consolidated the victory of the revolution.

* * *

Cuba's influence in African affairs appears completely out of proportion to the size of this small Caribbean country. How is this anomaly to be explained? The answer is obvious—it lies in the power of the Cuban revolution.

The record is there for all to see: First, in the contrast between the Cuba that *was*, under the American puppet Batista, and the Cuba that *is*, under a revolutionary regime. Second, in the contrast between today's Cuba and the rest of Latin America. Cuba demonstrates what can be done under a planned economy to improve the standard of living of the poor. Countries like Chile are hangmen's showcases.

The achievements made possible by toppling capitalism are impressive. The list includes the elimination of unemployment, once the scourge of the Cuban working class; the banning of racism; the promulgation of equal rights for women; the setting up of child-care centers on a national scale; the construction of a free educational system that provides not only books but food and clothing to students; the establishment of a model social-security system, including health care; the slashing of rents and initiation of an ambitious program to end the acute shortage of housing, inherited from the past; and an agrarian reform that was decisive in establishing the firm worker-peasant alliance on which the first workers' state in the Western Hemisphere depends.

The government's concern for the needs of youth should be added to the list. In the first period following the victory, when one of the most pressing needs was reliable personnel, teen-agers were given responsible posts throughout the island. The perspectives for young people in Cuba today include broad educational and job opportunities on a scale that cannot be matched in any capitalist country.

It is the *example* of Cuba, the example of achievements made possible by the revolution, that accounts for Havana's standing among the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial countries and thereby its political weight internationally.

An accounting of developments within Cuba, particularly in the last decade, is of course required in any balance sheet of the revolution as a whole. Such a balance sheet is not included in the documents in this book, which center on defense of the revolution in the early years and on analysis of the particular pattern that made possible a socialist victory without the presence of a Leninist party. Nonetheless, a few points should be taken up.

The Cuban revolution faced extreme difficulties from the beginning. Inadequacies of leadership counted among them, the prime one being, as I have indicated, reliance on guerrilla war to extend the revolution. Another was the failure to proceed immediately to establishment of forms of proletarian democracy.

However, the main source of the difficulties was American imperialism. The mightiest military power on earth, located only ninety miles away, decided to strangle the Cuban revolution. Castro was marked for assassination. Farm animals were inoculated with contagious diseases. Saboteurs set bombs. The blowing up of a merchant ship in Havana harbor and arson that succeeded in burning down one of Havana's biggest department stores were two of the more spectacular incidents. Forays of this kind were topped by the armed invasion at the Bay of Pigs. Worst of all was the blockade, which completely disrupted Cuba's traditional pattern of trade with the United States and greatly

reduced the possibilities of free trade with other countries. Tiny Cuba, dependent on imported oil as its source of energy, was truly an isolated fortress under heavy siege. In defense of the revolution, the Castro team placed Cuba under wartime regulations.

Wall Street and its political agents in Washington bear full responsibility for blocking the Cuban revolution from developing freely. This should never be forgotten in criticizing the weaknesses and mistakes of the Castro regime.

The Kremlin must be held responsible for another source of difficulties. Without help from the Soviet Union, the Cuban revolution would certainly have been smashed by either Eisenhower or Kennedy. The Cubans were completely correct in seeking that aid. It was due them in accordance with the program of world revolution supported by the Soviet government when it was headed by Lenin and Trotsky.

Stalin's heirs felt obliged to respond to the Cuban plea, but instead of providing aid free of charge, as was their duty, they demanded that a price be paid—principally on the political level. In short, to get the required aid the Cubans had to let the red glow of the Cuban revolution shine on Khrushchev and Brezhnev.

From many things that have appeared in the record—a good example is Castro's criticisms of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which he reluctantly supported—it is clear that the price demanded by the Kremlin for Soviet aid rankled with the Cubans. They had to forego speaking out freely. While they were able to get the required material aid in time to save the revolution, the cost was heavy in terms of their political independence.

Both the American campaign to crush the revolution and the strings attached to Soviet aid must be taken into consideration in dealing with the problem of bureaucratism in Cuba. By isolating and further impoverishing the country, the blockade helped increase the social importance of the layers charged with the defense. In the distribution of scarce supplies top priority had to be given the armed forces. One of the consequences was an army now recognized as the best in Latin America. Another consequence, however, was the introduction of ranks, a sign of bureaucratization. The Kremlin's influence was shown in the growth of bureaucratic tendencies under the auspices of figures who were prominent in the Stalinist apparatus in Batista's time. These case-hardened bureaucrats were met head-on by Castro. A more difficult problem is the example set by the Soviet ruling caste, which liquidated the proletarian democracy fostered under Lenin and Trotsky. No model of proletarian democracy exists in the world today to counter the totalitarian forms of rule upheld by the Kremlin.

It would be untrue to say that the battle against bureaucratism has been won in Cuba. The indications are that this insidious social disease has gained, as the introduction of ranks in the armed forces would indicate. Similar signs include the continuation of the ban on formation of tendencies and factions in the Communist Party and the jailing of the independent-minded poet Heberto Padilla on March 20, 1971; the brush-off given to protests against the jailing by leftist intellectuals like Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Octavio Paz, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Mario Vargas Llosa; the show trial of Padilla, which included a Moscow style "confession" by the poet; and the accompanying clampdown in the cultural field, where the Cubans had previously shown their intent to make the revolution a "school of unfettered thought" in opposition to bureaucratic practices. Another bad indication has been the pillorying of homosexuals.

However, the headway made by bureaucratism has not reached such a degree that one must conclude that a hardened bureaucratic caste has been formed, exercises dictatorial power, and cannot be dislodged save through a political revolution. No qualitative point of change has yet been adduced to substantiate this hypothesis.

* * *

The stand taken by the Socialist Workers Party towards the

Cuban revolution flows from its initial analysis of that event. It can be summarized in three points:

1. For defense of the Cuban revolution against all its enemies. As a party within the United States, the SWP considers it to be its special duty to foster the strongest possible political opposition to the main enemy of the revolution, American imperialism. This defense is unconditional—it does not hinge on the attitudes or policies of the Cuban government.

2. For the development of proletarian forms of democracy in Cuba. The purpose of this is to bring the masses into the decision-making process in the most effective way, thereby strengthening the struggle against bureaucratism. The initiation of workers' councils would add fresh power to the Cuban revolution as living proof that socialism does not entail totalitarianism but on the contrary signifies the extension of democracy to the oppressed in a way that will lead eventually to the withering away of the state.

3. For the formation of a Leninist-type party that guarantees internal democracy, that is, the right of critical opinion to be heard. The power of a party that safeguards the right to form tendencies or factions was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks. A replica shaped in accordance with Cuban particularities could do much to induce the formation of similar parties in the rest of the world. This would greatly facilitate resolving the crisis in leadership faced by the proletariat internationally, thereby assuring a new series of revolutionary victories.

May 1, 1978

Pope Tries to Sabotage New Law

Italy—Abortion Under Attack

When Italy's new liberalized abortion law went into effect June 6, the Catholic Church hierarchy immediately launched a campaign to sabotage it by telling medical personnel to invoke reasons of "conscience" for refusing to perform abortions.

The law theoretically gives women over eighteen the right to abortion on demand during the first ninety days of pregnancy. But it does not require doctors or hospitals to perform abortions. It gives doctors the option of being exempted on moral or religious grounds. Furthermore, abortion facilities are so inadequate that even before the law went into effect, medical and legal specialists were predicting it would not significantly reduce the huge number of back-alley abortions in Italy.

Cardinal Ugo Poletti, the pope's representative in Rome, launched the sabotage campaign in the June 6 issue of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. He reminded Catholics that the penalty for performing or having an abortion is excommunication, and urged all medical personnel—nurses and staff as well as doctors—to "refuse to be present or carry out professional duties in any medical facilities where abortions are performed." The pope himself made a statement the next day backing Poletti's injunction.

If obeyed, this directive would do away with Italian women's right to legal abortion. A large percentage of the hospitals in Italy are owned and operated by various religious orders, and an initial survey indicated that 90 to 95 percent of the staff in these hospitals would register as "conscientious objectors" to abortion. In the public hospitals, a large number of the nurses are nuns.

The church's campaign gives Italian doctors—many of whom make huge sums performing illegal abortions—an excuse for refusing to comply with the new law. The *New York Times* of June 7 reports that the Rome Medical Association predicted 90 percent of the doctors in the Rome area would register as objectors to abortion. □

Two Students Killed in Panama Protests

Progovernment provocateurs fired on student rallies at the University of Panama June 14, killing two persons and wounding at least eighteen. Gen. Omar Torrijos quickly seized upon the incident as a pretext for banning all protests during President Carter's June 16-17 visit to Panama.

New York Times correspondent Alan Riding reported from Panama June 15 that "most evidence suggests that pro-Government students tried to break up anti-Carter meetings in the departments of architecture and law. After being fought off with stones, they apparently returned with firearms. Both the known dead, Jorge Camacho and Demóstenes Rodríguez, belonged to the radical Students Revolutionary Front [FER], which opposes Mr. Carter's visit."

The Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League (LSR) worked with the FER to organize the student protests. An LSR leader told Marlise Simons of the *Washington Post*, "All our manifestations have been peaceful. It was a deliberate government provocation to keep the protesters off the streets for Carter."

Torrijos ordered the university closed indefinitely and suspended classes at the National Institute, a high school where students had also protested Carter's visit. A demonstration planned for June 15 was banned, as was a memorial for Leopoldo Aragón, a Panamanian who burned himself to death last September in protest of the canal treaties.

Labor Minister Adolfo Ahumado made an angry radio speech in which he sought to blame the violence on exiled political leaders who have recently returned to Panama. New deportations have been rumored.

When Carter arrived, Torrijos turned out a crowd of government employees, school-children, and peasants transported from the countryside at the regime's expense. Many wore T-shirts with Carter's likeness on the front and Torrijos's on the back.

Before addressing this captive audience, Carter and Torrijos formally exchanged documents marking the ratification of the new treaties on the Panama Canal. The protocols included an explicit Panamanian acceptance of all amendments, conditions, reservations, and understandings adopted by the U.S. Senate—including the DeConcini reservation that provides for a permanent U.S. "right" to send troops to Panama should the canal be closed for any reason.

In light of this and the earlier events, Carter's speech was the height of hypoc-

risy. He called for building "a hemisphere in which citizens of every country are free from torture and arbitrary arrest, free to speak and write as they please, free to participate in the determination of their own destiny."

Only a week before Carter's visit, 100,000 persons had turned a welcoming rally for ex-President Arnulfo Arias into

For a New Plebiscite on Canal Treaties!

By Eduardo Frías

[The following article appeared in the May 2 issue of *La Verdad Socialista*, the newspaper of the Liga Socialista Revolucionaria, (Revolutionary Socialist League), a Panamanian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

U.S. President James Carter's visit to Panama has been announced. No Panamanian is unaware that this visit has one central goal: *The imperialists, along with the national government, are to impose the Torrijos-Carter treaty with its thirty-nine amendments on the Panamanian people.*

We Panamanians cannot accept this. The nation's constitution, adopted and supported by this government, clearly states: "Treaties entered into by the Executive Organ on the Canal and locks, their adjacent zone, and the protection of said canal; as well as on the construction of a new canal at sea level, or on the construction of a third set of locks, shall be submitted to a national plebiscite" (Article 274). The government claims that the Panamanian people already approved the treaty in the October plebiscite, and that a new vote is unnecessary because the thirty-nine amendments are not substantive.

Two things require comment, however. First, if the government now says that no changes have been made, it was lying to the Panamanian people during the brief and one-sided discussion before the October plebiscite. It said then that no right of U.S. intervention in the isthmus was being granted, no military bases would be maintained, there would be no right to expeditious passage, and so on.

Second, there certainly *were* changes made through the amendments adopted by the U.S. Senate, even though these changes are apparently separate from the

the largest antigovernment demonstration in years. Arias was cheered wildly when he attacked the depressed state of the Panamanian economy, high taxes and food prices, government corruption, the Torrijos personality cult, and the canal treaties.

The real purpose of Carter's visit was explained to *New York Times* correspondent Riding by LSR leader Miguel Antonio Bernal. "By coming here," Bernal said, "Carter is returning Torrijos's favor of accepting treaties that were so negative for Panama. Carter is coming to bless the Torrijos dictatorship just one week after its repudiation in the reception for Dr. Arias."

main body of the treaties and take the form of unilateral interpretations. They remain part of the treaty as a whole.

In other words, the outcome of the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty [the old 1903 treaty], some of the articles of which the American imperialists interpreted as it suited them and imposed *their* interpretation on us, is now not to be rectified, either in fact or in law. The amendments clarify, make more precise, and interpret the main body of the treaties; that is to say, they incorporate into law what were before only accomplished facts imposed with force. The treaties as a whole have this purpose. The proof is that the military bases have been imposed on our territory but now they are being legalized by the Carter-Torrijos treaties. After 1936, the right to intervene "even in internal affairs" was a fact, but now it is being given the force of law by the Carter-Torrijos treaties.

The government has lied, is lying, and will always lie. We cannot leave the decision on the fate of our country in its hands. We have seen that the constitution grants that right directly to the Panamanian people.

Carter's visit signifies ratification by the Torrijos government of the proimperialist treaties with their thirty-nine amendments. The government has stirred up a pro-Carter campaign. Mario Velazquez's television program with [Torrijos aides] Betancourt and Royo had that purpose. Carter has been exalted, and even his advisers have been praised—from Ellsworth Bunker, the negotiator of the crimes against Vietnam and the architect of the 1965 intervention in Santo Domingo; to Sol Linowitz, the banker who makes high-interest loans to our government from Marine Midland Bank.

The Panamanian people can place no trust in Carter and his camarilla or in the henchmen of his regime. Their fundamental interest lies in preserving domination

over the canal route. Thus they sought a treaty that responds to *their* interests, and that is what they got.

The Panamanian workers can place no trust in a man who, in face of the coal miners' strike that lasted more than 100 days, imposed the U.S. version of Law 95—the Taft-Hartley Act. This law denies the right of workers to strike, imposing penalties of a \$5,000 fine or a year in jail.

The Panamanian workers can place no trust in a man who, because of a lack of safety in the mines (the main reason for the strike), allows more than 4,000 workers a year to die of "black lung"—miners' tuberculosis.

Indians and Blacks can place no trust in a man who encourages and promotes unequal wages, forcing oppressed national minorities to earn 60 percent of the wages of whites.

How can we place trust in a man and a government that sustain and support, while covering themselves with the mask of human rights, governments such as those in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Haiti, and so on; regimes that repress the masses of people on a daily basis, whatever their demands for better conditions of life. Obviously, the Carter government is based on the most blatant demagoguery, and its goal is to impose on us treaties that are to its benefit alone.

The ruling class of our country is so degraded that it could not even obtain a direct payoff of millions in return for these treaties. Instead, the treaties will mortgage the country still further, through conditional loans. These will also allow the imperialists to more easily expand the Colón Free Zone, build new ports, and so on.

"Arguments" have been raised to the effect that the imperialists will intervene whenever they want, neutrality pact or no. In this the defenders of the treaties such as the Party of the Panamanian People [the CP], the leadership of the Student Federation of Panama, and the Broad Front of Professionals have completely surrendered. They have argued for the approval of the treaty with its thirty-nine amendments by saying that the pacts represent an advance toward decolonizing, even though the Yankees can now intervene in our country in fact and in law. They say we should not renounce the material benefits of the treaties because of amendments that clearly state the right of the imperialists to intervene and maintain bases after the year 2000. What a surrender!

We socialist think that the legal situation the United States has obtained with the new treaties takes away a key weapon in our fight for the total expulsion of imperialism. This weapon consisted in the fact that in the eyes of the world the imperialists were intruders in our country and imposed their intervention as an accomplished fact. The defenders of the treaties forget that the meeting of the U.N.

Security Council on Panama and the results of that meeting were possible only for this reason. With what legal right could we call for another Security Council meeting in face of an American intervention if it is legalized? (Although the treaties might be nullified by international law.) The change in the situation is obvious, but those who are promoting the sellout have become blind to this.

The supporters of the sellout also forget that only the mobilization of the people can stop an intervention, but such a method is precisely what they do not want.

Letter to the Panamanian People

[The following "Letter to the Panamanian People" was issued June 15 by Pedro Miguel Camejo, 1976 Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States.]

To the People of Panama:

On June 16 President Carter will arrive in your country. Claiming to speak in the name of the American people, he will hail the Panama Canal treaties, which aim to legitimize the occupation of your country by U.S. troops.

But there are two Americas here in the United States—just as there are two Americas in the hemisphere. One America, represented by Carter, is the America of the Panama Canal treaties, the America of the Vietnam War and the invasion of Santo Domingo, the America of the Bay of Pigs invasion and CIA "destabilization" against Chile and the Cuban revolution. It is the America of the capitalist class.

The other America is the America of the

The Panamanian people now have only one weapon left in this situation: mobilization before Carter's arrival. Carter must not set foot on Panamanian soil, because that would signify the ratification of the treaties with their thirty-nine amendments by the Panamanian government. Panama's ratification of the amended treaties is the sole right of the Panamanian people according to Panama's constitution itself. To demand this right and to hold a new plebiscite is our main task today.

*Let the people decide in a new plebiscite!
Reject Carter's visit!* □

Black and Chicano liberation struggles and the anti-Vietnam War movement. It is the America of the coal miners, who earlier this year told Carter that his antilabor injunctions wouldn't mine coal. It is the America of the U.S. working class.

In the name of that America, we in the Socialist Workers Party want to express our opposition to the new treaties, which preserve the imperialist domination of your country. We especially want to express our opposition to the U.S. military occupation and the U.S. control of the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone.

We hope that, despite the repression of the Torrijos regime, you will be able to mount massive demonstrations to tell Carter what you think of him and his canal treaty. We pledge our continued solidarity with your fight against imperialist domination and for full national sovereignty.

All U.S. troops and bases out of Panama!

Panama for the Panamanians!

'A New Era of Struggle'

[The following is excerpted from an editorial in the May-June issue of the Panamanian magazine *Diálogo Social*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

Teddy Roosevelt, arrogant and powerful, arrived at the isthmus in 1904 to inaugurate a canal and a new era in Latin America—dollars and the big stick.

Thirty-three years later came his "son" Franklin Delano with his "New Deal." . . . The Good Neighbor Policy was under way. Panama was quick to feel it. The merchants got some breathing room; the people, noting what interests it benefited, called the 1936 pact the "Meat and Beer Treaty."

Today it is James Carter's turn.

The stage is being set. The first diplomats arrive; their Panamanian counter-

parts are ready. The apologists wave their handkerchiefs. . . . Another "new era" is about to begin. . . .

Today our people feel the omnipresence of Empire perhaps as never before. They feel it in the canal enclave. In the Financial Center, where the right to unionize is denied. In the Colón Free Zone, with its \$1.2 billion in trade each year—right next to the Colón ghetto.

A long tradition of struggle, humiliation, and suppressed rage cannot be erased from one day to the next nor from one treaty to the next. Little by little, with slow, solid steps, our people are learning to tell friend from foe.

The emperor has new clothes in Panama. But the people know it is only a matter of apparel. A new era of struggle—more firm, clear, difficult—is beginning. □

Maori Land Occupation Crushed by Troops and Bulldozers

By Peter Rotherham

[On January 5, 1977, Maoris of the Ngati Whaatua tribe began an occupation of ten acres of ancestral land at Bastion Point, outside Auckland, which the government was about to subdivide. Resisting all threats of legal intimidation, they set up dwellings and built a meeting house, making the occupation a major focus of the Maori struggle to regain the land stolen from them.

[The following article on the police operation ordered by the Muldoon government to end the occupation appeared in the June 2 issue of *Socialist Action*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in Wellington.]

* * *

AUCKLAND—On Thursday, May 25, the New Zealand government carried out a barbarous act. It mobilised the police and army to end the historic occupation of ancestral Maori land at Bastion Point.

The occupation had lasted seventeen months, 504 days, enduring many government eviction threats, abuse from the Prime Minister, a bitterly cold winter last year, the tragic death of one of the children living on the land, and a carefully-orchestrated government campaign to drive deep divisions among the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki.

The occupation ended with 222 arrests, most for "wilful trespass," making this the largest mass arrest in New Zealand history. It ended with every building in the protest camp being demolished. Aroha nui, the large meeting house which had become the symbol of the land occupation, was smashed to the ground by an army bulldozer.

The government brought in police from all over the country for this operation, and made ready army trucks, land rovers, and helicopters. Up to 700 police were directly involved in the eviction, and scores more cops and soldiers must have been involved in a "back up" role.

They massed at Hobsonville air base, and left there early Thursday morning in a convoy over a mile long.

A team of "volunteers" from the Lands and Survey Department were also flown in from all over the country, for use in much of the demolition work.

There had been a propaganda buildup in the days preceding this operation. The government had said that it was mobilising hundreds of cops and the army, no doubt with the aim of intimidating sup-



Auckland Star

Police block supporters of Maoris from entering occupation site.

porters and hoping that they would stay at home. But when the convoy arrived at Bastion Point, and the cops began to spill out of army trucks, there were already about 500 people on the land and hundreds more gathered around the main gate.

First the police encircled the whole camp, but allowed people to come and go from the area and permitted the news media free rein in the camp. Then the head

of police, Overton, and Commissioner of Crown Lands McMillan were driven on to the land in an open-topped army land rover. They went through a ritual announcement about "trespassing on Crown land." Following that the police began to gradually seal off the camp, with many supporters who were arriving late having to make a dash through police lines.

The news media had been allowed to

record the first arrests that were made outside Aroha nui. But then the police began to drive out all those who weren't prepared to get arrested, and finally escorted all reporters off the land. Now the arrests began in earnest, at the same time as all the huts surrounding Aroha nui were systematically demolished.

Meanwhile, the crowd around the edge of the land had swelled to over a thousand. Dozens of supporters had arrived too late to get onto the land, including many trade unionists who had hurried to the area when they heard the news that the government was at last acting on its threat to carry out an eviction. Some had been stopped from driving to the area by police road blocks.

Those arrested were put into already overcrowded police buses and wagons and driven to Central Police Station. Many complained of not being able to breathe properly in these vehicles and some later complained that women had been locked in a stinking toilet at Central.

The first police bus to drive out of the area took some time to get to Central, however. Supporters and people from the neighbourhood crowded round the bus, showing support for those arrested. Another arrest took place when a man lay down in front of the bus.

By the time the police had arrested all those occupying Aroha nui, the rest of the camp had been demolished. Then an army bulldozer began to rip apart the meeting house. This house had been the scene of countless meetings, many great speeches, and thousands of people must have passed through it during its existence. No one who knew this house could have failed to have been especially outraged at this stage of the combined police and army operation. For many of those who were watching, this was when they fully understood the real meaning of what the government was doing.

As huge army dump trucks moved on to the land and as every piece of splintered timber was put on to these trucks, it became clear that the government was determined to erase all trace of the heroic stand at Bastion Point. The caravans were carted away on tank transporters. The contents of Aroha nui and of the huts were put into army trucks. The signs at the front gate—"Bastion Point, Maori land," "No alcohol or drugs allowed on this land"—were ripped down.

Now the government is wallowing in hypocrisy over the cruel act it has carried out. Some Cabinet ministers declared that they "had no option" but to do what they did. But that's a lie. From the very beginning they had the option of doing justice to the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki and redressing many of the past wrongs by simply returning the land at Bastion Point to the Ngati Whaatua. Instead, the government set about dividing the Ngati Whaatua of

Tamaki, offering a deal which does little to redress past injustices, and cynically using those members of the tribe who were shortsighted enough to play the government's game.

Likewise, the Prime Minister has been busy praising the "conduct" of the police during the eviction, implying that there was no violence because of the handling of the affair. That's another lie. The stand at Bastion Point had always been nonviolent. The government's use of so many police and the army was nothing if not a deliberate threat of violence against those occupying the land. The reason why the situation didn't explode is because of the discipline and dignity shown by the protesters themselves. Those occupying the land were organized by marshalls. They were in the company of many elders, including Joe Hawke's parents, Eddy and Piu Piu Hawke. Some of the older men were wearing their Maori Battalion ribbons. The protesters kept up their spirit of defiance with a haka, the strains of which could be heard from the main gate until the last few people were arrested and escorted from Aroha nui.

The reaction throughout the country was swift and angry. Protest activity took place in Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch (400 marched in Christchurch, 600 in Wellington, and 150 in Hamilton). The feelings of many people were reflected in the actions of a woman at Opotiki. As soon as she heard the eviction was underway, she made a placard and stood outside the

local police station with it all day. At one stage her picket grew to seven.

Determined to rub salt into the wound, the government then put up several hundred cops at Auckland's swankiest hotel, the Intercontinental. There they were allowed to "celebrate" their "victory." In the meantime, police chiefs were busy denying a persistent rumour that six policemen had walked off the land in disgust during the eviction.

Now the Orakei Maori Committee Action Group, the organisation which led the land occupation, is planning its next move. To begin with it is organising a hui at the Orakei marae for Queen's Birthday weekend where it plans to rally supporters and discuss its plans for further action. Among the subjects discussed will be how to protect the memorial for Joann Hawke, the girl who died in a fire at Bastion Point last year. The government is threatening to destroy that too.

Likewise, a campaign has been started to demand that all the charges against those arrested be dropped.

One thing is certain. If the government thinks it is now rid of the Bastion Point issue, it had better think again. Many sections of Maoridom which earlier stood aside from the struggle have now begun to express support for the stand taken by the Action Committee. The actions of the government on May 25 have laid the basis for an even stronger and more united stand which demands "Return Bastion Point to the Ngati Whaatua of Tamaki!" □

Woman Wins British Abortion Test Case

By Sarah Roelofs

A husband has no legal rights to stop his wife having an abortion, a leading British judge ruled May 24. During divorce proceedings brought by Joan Paton, her husband Bill Paton had sought a court order to prevent her from obtaining an abortion.

Appalled by the case's implications, the National Abortion Campaign and the women's liberation movement immediately launched a national solidarity campaign in support of Joan Paton. Solidarity pickets and demonstrations were organised in Liverpool, where the case was actually heard, in Edinburgh, and in London.

Immediately after Sir George Baker's ruling, Joan Paton had the operation, saying afterwards: "It's my body and my right to choose. I feel super!"

But at what a cost. Accused of murder, reduced to tears throughout the court hearing, damned across newspaper banner headlines as irresponsible, vengeful, vin-

dictive and spoilt, it's no wonder she also said: "I feel I've been a pawn." Headlines such as "Let My Baby Be Born!" "Husband Loses Abortion Battle," and "I've Lost My Baby—Grief of Test Case Husband" were commonplace in the national daily press.

In his ruling, Baker noted that the provisions of the 1967 Abortion Act had been complied with in the Paton case, and the necessary certificates had been signed by two doctors. The 1967 Abortion Act legalises abortion in certain circumstances, with the permission of two doctors. While it does not grant any rights to the father or the fetus, neither does it ensure that women have the right to make the decision whether to have an abortion themselves, as this case so blatantly showed.

This recent attempt to attack women's abortion rights was not the first, and we can be certain it will not be the last.

Delicate Balancing Act at Austrian SP Congress

By Raimund Loew

VIENNA—The congress of the Sozialistische Partei Oesterreichs (SPOe—Socialist Party of Austria) concluded its three-day deliberations May 20, voting unanimously to adopt a new party program.

The Austrian Social Democratic party is one of the strongest parties in the industrialized capitalist world. It has 700,000 members, which means that one out of every ten Austrians is an SPOe member. Since 1970 it has been the sole governing party under Bruno Kreisky, and can count on about 51 percent of the vote.

Because of the special structure of the Austrian economy (25 percent state-owned, and 20 percent of its foreign trade is with Eastern Europe), the government has succeeded up to now in preventing a high level of unemployment by shortening the workweek to forty hours in 1975 and carrying out massive anticyclical measures.

The application of a "social partnership policy" on all levels—i.e., the working out of the entire economic policy in extensive collaboration with the employers' associations—has virtually eliminated workers' struggles in recent years. Only in the last few months has the SPOe's economic and political line begun to run into difficulties. A rapid increase in the balance-of-payments deficit and national debt compelled the government to adopt a restrictive budget policy, although economic growth is declining.

At the same time, the domestic political climate has changed. A change in leadership has taken place in the Freiheitliche Partei Oesterreichs (FPOe—Austrian Liberal Party), a small bourgeois formation. The new party chairman, Alexander Goetz, is directing sharp attacks against the Social Democracy, and is obviously aiming for a coalition with the Oesterreichische Volkspartei (OeVP—Austrian People's Party, a Social Christian formation) following the 1979 elections. In their propaganda, the Social Democrats are talking about a "reactionary" bourgeois bloc, without, of course, ruling out a coalition with the conservatives.

It is in this context that the discussion about updating the 1958 Vienna Program must be seen. Although the classical Social Democratic theses based on Marxist terminology were cut back in 1958, the SPOe did not adopt its own "Bad Godesberg program";* mention is made of "capitalist



KREISKY: Explains "social partnership" as "sublimated form" of class struggle.

class society," and a "classless society" is still presented as the goal.

In an initial draft, two tendencies emerged by comparison with the 1958 program. On the one hand, antihierarchical and anticentralist ideas, for which there was previously no tradition in the Austrian Social Democracy, were introduced. On the other hand, questions of property ownership were scarcely mentioned. According to this draft, the "decision-making structures" were the focuses for Social Democratic change by means of "democratization." The concepts about nationalizations were supposed to be dropped.

A flood of motions from the district and state organizations (there were 1,135 in all) finally convinced the party Central Secretariat to revise this "revision." Sections on the need for "nationalizations" were restored, as well as a paragraph that describes the economic decision-making structures as dependent on property ownership.

But even the new "self-management"-oriented concepts were heavily watered down. The choices offered for democratic management and self-organization naturally stuck in the throats of the top trade-union bureaucrats, high-level state officials, and managers of state-owned

Party; which abolished most of the vestiges of Marxism, including the definition of the party as working class.—IP/I

industries who sit in the top party echelons. Many such points were struck out by their pens.

The question of socialist strategy was completely omitted. Class collaboration in the form of "social partnership" is implicit throughout. The road to a classless society is described as the "continual penetration of democracy into all areas of life." There is almost nothing beyond these vague statements.

To be sure, party Chairman Bruno Kreisky calls the Austrian "social partnership" a "sublimated form of the class struggle," but says that it is not a programmatic question. Here they are obviously trying to avoid a conflict with the SPOe youth organizations, which are rebelling against the "social partnership" policy.

The main function of the discussion around the program is to coopt opposition elements. Four years ago the few left elements in the party put forward an opposition action program, so this time they were involved to a considerable extent in drafting the official program. Thus, their hands were tied. At the congress, there was no principled criticism whatsoever of the leadership's course. Disagreeable motions, such as those against excessive income disparities, for example, could, in the old tradition, easily be "referred to the party Central Committee" for action, and thus scuttled.

Like the whole discussion around the party program, Bruno Kreisky's main speech to the congress was relatively "left". For over an hour, he defended "Marx and his thought" against the "miserable boorish anti-Marxism" of the bourgeois camp. With a grand historical sweep, he declared that "democratic socialism" was the historic alternative to "barbarism" and "ruin." This radical rhetoric did not keep the delegates, at the start of the proceedings, from enthusiastically applauding West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as the most prominent foreign guest.

Doubtless, both Kreisky's speech and the program itself will have hardly any effect on the party's concrete policy. None of the speakers had anything to say on the burning issues, such as the building of nuclear plants, discrimination against the Slovene minority, this year's widespread wage cuts, and all the SPOe propaganda notwithstanding—the slowly but surely mounting rate of unemployment.

The new program is being made out by the Austrian media to be a "historic monument" to the party chairman. The tributes to the chancellor, which border on a personality cult, play up this picture. Kreisky's virtues were celebrated by artists in a multimedia exhibition, and scenes from his life were presented to the delegates. Obviously, the party chairman's image is going to be the SPOe's big gun in the 1979 election campaign. □

* The program adopted in Bad Godesberg in 1959 by the West German Social Democratic

The "De-Maoization" Campaign in Peking

By Frédéric Carlier

The Fifth National People's Congress of China was held February 26—March 6. Originally scheduled for the end of last year, this meeting of the highest body of the Chinese state was postponed because of the continuing purges of supporters of the "Shanghai group," particularly in the provinces, and because of differences within the new leadership between supporters of Hua Kuo-feng and supporters of Teng Hsiao-ping. The congress was unusually well publicized in contrast to the last one which was held in utmost secrecy. Its purpose was to sanction and "legitimize" China's entry into a new period—the "post-Mao" era.

The People's Congress thus ratified Hua Kuo-feng's power grab against the "Shanghai group," which led to the official rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping in July, 1977, the arrest of the "Shanghai group" last October, and especially to the line adopted at the Twelfth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. This line, from the angle of the new plan for economic development, as well as the related question of a radical change in relations between the Chinese bureaucracy and the masses, represents the most fundamental political turning point in China since the victory of the revolution in 1949.

The goal of the Chinese leadership in carrying through this radical turnabout is clear: to stabilize the bureaucratic layer. By continuing the process of "de-Maoization" initiated more than a year ago, the new Chinese leadership is settling once and for all the debate that has divided the bureaucracy since the Cultural Revolution, if not earlier.

A New 'Model' for Economic Development

"Unite to build a strong, modern, socialist state" was the title of Hua Kuo-feng's report to the congress. Hua was careful in his choice of words, and gave his speech a Maoist flavor by peppering it with dozens of quotes and slogans from the "great helmsman." Nevertheless the goals set forth in the report represent a definite break with the old "model" of development.

The goals were not new, however. At the Third People's Congress in 1964, Chou En-lai projected a campaign around "four modernizations" (in agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology). But this perspective was swept aside by the shake-up of the Cultural Revolution. In

1975 a revised plan—partly with the aid of Teng Hsiao-ping, now rehabilitated—was presented, in Mao's absence, to the Fourth People's Congress. It projected "making China a major industrial power before the end of the century." But the fragile bloc that had been created between the "Shanghai group," Chou En-lai, and those who had been "rehabilitated" after the Cultural Revolution fell apart soon after the death of the Chinese premier. While the "antiright campaign" was getting under way, with Teng Hsiao-ping as its target, the plan adopted by the congress was put aside once again.

This is the plan—reworked by Teng Hsiao-ping and polished by the various sectorial conferences held over the past year—that is beginning to be applied today in China.

The major themes of the plan can be briefly summarized as follows: strengthening centralized planning; concentrating on heavy industry by carrying out "120 major projects"; greater specialization of production through increasing cooperation among various industries (which puts at least a dent in the old concept of "self-reliance"); increasing the productivity of labor through the use of more advanced technology, purchased abroad if necessary; and the quest for profitability ("Make profits," the *People's Daily* urges factory managers).

The Chinese leadership is thus trying to broaden the country's industrial base through major investments in heavy industry, and to rationalize production by avoiding the considerable waste of labor power that occurs in the small-scale or independent craft-type industries in the communes.

The "ten-year plan" (1976-1985) is supposed to lay the basis for this project. The goals set for this new "great leap forward" do not seem too ambitious. They call for an increase of 4 to 5 percent in agricultural production (grain production is supposed to reach 400 million tons, compared to the current 285 million tons), and an increase of more than 10 percent a year in industrial production. To achieve these goals, the plan projects "mechanizing at least 85 percent of the major agricultural activities" and establishes a number of industrial priorities: metals (steel production is supposed to increase from the current 23 million tons to 60 million); energy, through expansion of coal, oil and electricity production, and the use of nuclear power; and

building up new, technologically advanced industries, such as petrochemicals and electronics. Planning is to be carried out by setting up six big regions for rounded economic development.

The relative modesty of these goals (except in the key sectors) is mainly the result of the somewhat disorganized state of the Chinese economy—spoken of as "sabotage by the gang of four"—a consequence of the political struggles over the last three years. The disorganization in agriculture is also the result of the many natural disasters, such as droughts and floods, that have struck China over the last few years, necessitating a major increase in the purchase of grain abroad. (This, in turn, has put a strain on China's finances, making it impossible to release a sufficient amount of currency to buy foreign technology.)

Finally, the plan emphasizes scientific research and education. These areas, vital to the success of the new "great leap forward," are those that suffered the most from the actions of the "Shanghai group." The exile of the "red guards" to the countryside after the Cultural Revolution, the closing of institutions of higher learning and scientific research for long periods—to say nothing of the endless attacks on teachers, academics, and researchers—now present a serious handicap to the Chinese economy, which has fallen many years behind in training technicians and researchers.

Carrying out such a policy means first of all "reestablishing order and discipline" on the social and political level. After three years of upheavals, the new rulers have to show that they are firmly in the saddle and will not tolerate any independent initiative on the part of the masses. On the other hand, to achieve "national unity" around their goals, they have to move toward a measure of "liberalization": "liberalization" of the bureaucratic and ideological regimentation of the masses; "liberalization" of cultural affairs and scientific research, to win over the intellectuals and scientists that the CP had largely alienated during the Cultural Revolution. Finally, the leadership is holding out to the masses the prospect of a "fairly substantial rise in its standard of living," according to Hua Kuo-feng's report. From now on, "material incentives" are back in favor, and it is likely that members of the bureaucracy, and technicians, whose coop-

eration is indispensable, will enjoy a distinct growth in material privileges.

'Restoring Order in the Country'

While in his report to the Fifth Congress, Hua Kuo-feng added the phrase "basing these activities on the class struggle," this "orthodox" statement could be seen for what it was, a rhetorical flourish. Starting with the downfall of the "gang of four," and continuing up to now, the new Chinese leadership has issued innumerable appeals for "order," discipline," and "unity around the Central Committee led by President Hua Kuo-feng."

The leadership desperately needs this campaign to restore order. This is partly because it does not have the "legitimacy" that Mao used to have and because it seized power under circumstances that are still rather obscure. But it is also because of the situation that has existed in the country since the death of the "great helmsman."

The leadership first has to establish its authority with the middle-ranking bureaucrats, who have been paralyzed for some time by the clashes taking place at the top. These cadres, continually threatened by the various "campaigns" led by one or another faction of the bureaucracy, have always had to be on the lookout to see which way the wind was blowing for fear of losing their place in the hierarchy or being sent for an indefinite time to be "reeducated through work." This situation was not propitious to undertaking initiatives, which partly explains the disorganization of the economy.

But above all the leadership must establish its authority with the masses. Ever since 1974, there have been continual strikes and confrontations—some of them armed—in various provinces. These reflected at this level the struggle for power going on among the tops. The workers often took advantage of the paralysis of the bureaucracy or of the clashes between various factions to press their own demands. The situation also provided fertile soil for the growth of small groups based on an antibureaucratic program, sometimes made up of "veterans" of the Cultural Revolution.

But instability was spreading to the social sphere, with the growth in number of unemployed youth and workers in the cities, escaping the control of the authorities.

Many of them were youths, exiled to the provinces in the wake of the Cultural Revolution who had secretly returned to the cities with the help of their friends or relatives. Meanwhile, China was experiencing a wave of delinquency and banditry, such as always develops in periods of unrest, although this was still limited.

The Chinese leadership has to carry out a struggle on three fronts. First, harsh

repression of delinquents, which undoubtedly corresponds to the desire for security of a good part of the population, after so many years of upheaval. Second, intimidation of the working class, elimination of whatever remains of the "conquests" of the Cultural Revolution, and relentless repression of antibureaucratic groups. Third, continuing to purge the apparatus of all currents sympathetic to the "gang of four" and hostile to the "de-Maoization" campaign now underway.

The media have been quick to point out that death sentences have been handed out much more frequently since the liquidation of the "gang of four," and that the executions have been accompanied by considerable publicity within China. Even if most of these sentences were meted out to criminals, there have still been a number of victims of executions for political reasons. The clearest example was the smashing of "thirteen counterrevolutionary groups," said to have involved thirty-two persons in all, in January in the city of Hangchow, the capital of Chekiang province. On the wall posters announcing the sentences, eight names had red lines drawn through them, meaning that eight of the leaders were executed on the spot. The rest were sentenced to long prison terms. One of the groups was accused of having organized "counterrevolutionary activities with political programs, and of having tried to spread propaganda designed to undermine the socialist system." Its members, according to the official poster announcing the sentences, were "motivated by profound dissatisfaction with the Central Committee of the Chinese CP, led by Hua Kuo-feng." Another group was accused of obtaining weapons and threatening to use them unless people provided them with food. Earlier, in 1977, nine persons were executed in Hangchow for similar reasons.

The real meaning of these executions is clear when we consider that throughout the 1974-76 period, at least, Hangchow was the scene of disorders, armed confrontations between rival organizations, and especially of long strikes that paralyzed the whole city. After the downfall of the "four," the leadership attempted to pin the blame for this unrest on the "Shanghai group." However, it was Wang Hung-wen [one of the "four"] himself who was sent to Hangchow at the time to get the workers back on the job. When they refused, Teng Hsiao-ping sent the army in to restore order.

Many more examples could be given. He Chun-shu, forty-five years old, was executed in Canton in mid-February for having drafted and printed a "counterrevolutionary" pamphlet that was distributed locally and sent abroad. At the end of January, Hsu Kwei-chang was executed in Kunming, in Yunnan province, for "rape, spreading harmful rumors about President Hua Kuo-feng, and robberies." These executions and the publicity surrounding

them constitute a clear warning to the more advanced elements of the working class: the new leadership will not tolerate any initiative by the workers that goes against their interests, much less a challenge by antibureaucratic groups against their monopoly on political power.

The third aspect of this campaign is the attack on the "gang of four." The first section of Hua Kuo-feng's report to the People's Congress was devoted to this effort. He defined it as "the task of first priority, both now and in the next period." The renewal of a third campaign against the "four" indicates that their supporters have a base within the apparatus, and that a section of the middle- and lower-ranking cadres continue to be wary of the new leadership. This distrust undoubtedly increased with the rehabilitation of Teng, who had been sharply criticized by Mao, and the downgrading of the Cultural Revolution, which has become fashionable in the party press. In addition to major purges (40 percent of the members of the Central Committee and two-thirds of the members of the provincial revolutionary committees have lost their positions), this campaign is designed to get the bureaucracy and the masses to endorse the leadership's new line on the political, economic, and even theoretical plane. It is also designed to force acceptance of the theory that Mao Tse-tung had nothing to do with the "gang of four," who were responsible for all the sins of bureaucratic oppression.

Finally, the restoration of "order" means that conquests won by the workers during the Cultural Revolution have to be wiped out. The workers have to work harder to accomplish the new "great leap forward." Political discussions in the factories during work hours have been eliminated or sharply curtailed. What remained of the workers' right to have a say in the management of their plants has been eliminated. The revolutionary committees in the plants have been abolished and replaced by a single manager, and by ideological campaigns against the Cultural Revolution.

Tens of thousands of cadres who were purged during and after the Cultural Revolution are now being released from the "reeducation" camps, and supporters of the "gang of four" are taking their places. Meanwhile, the rulers are reestablishing all the traditional vehicles for controlling the masses, which had been abolished during the Cultural Revolution. Thus we see the reappearance of the trade unions, the Communist Youth League, and women's organizations—to say nothing of the revival of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. This ghost from the past, which had disappeared for fifteen years, is supposed to represent the "united front" with the parties of the "national bourgeoisie." Set up as a pre-

parliament in 1949, it has absolutely no meaning today, but is apparently supposed to symbolize "national union" and is specifically aimed at intellectuals, artists, and national minorities. Teng Hsiao-ping has been appointed its president—which is also symbolic.

Liberalization and Glorification of the 'Zest for Work'

It is obvious that repressive measures by themselves are notoriously inadequate for "putting China back to work" and stabilizing the bureaucratic layer. The new Chinese leadership has to win a certain amount of support from the masses, or at least neutralize them, in order to achieve their goals. Moreover, after more than a year of denouncing the "dictatorship of the gang of four," the scapegoats for bureaucratic oppression, the leadership is compelled to respond in some way to the masses' desire for change.

Developing a "zest for work"—the orders given by the Peking newspaper *Ming Bao*—in face of the fact that for the last few years there has been a distinct tendency toward a slowdown of work and a growth of absenteeism, and coming right at the time when the last remaining gains of the Cultural Revolution are being eliminated—can only be achieved by promising to raise living standards. Therefore, while Teng Hsiao-ping's famous slogan "establish and bring to perfection reasonable regulations; strengthen discipline and organization" was being painted in the workplaces, 60 percent of the blue- and white-collar workers received their first wage increase in fifteen years. The workers undoubtedly appreciated this advance payment for the results of the new "leap forward." Furthermore, while time-keepers are beginning to reappear in some factories, and workers are beginning to see their wages docked for lateness and absenteeism, productivity bonuses are being reintroduced on a massive scale. *Ming Bao* recently explained that "revolutionaries have to get used to the idea of reinstating bonuses based on production."

The question of material incentives, which has been debated since the Cultural Revolution, is not a question of principle. Material incentives can be dispensed with on the basis of a high level of class consciousness and a genuinely democratic organization of production, together with a sufficiently high level of development of the productive forces so that all workers receive an adequate income. By the same token, excessive reliance on material incentives—to say nothing of piecework payment—can only sharpen divisions within the working class. It is still too early to determine how far the Chinese have gone in reintroducing incentives. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in

some industries, bonuses already account for one-quarter to one-half of the workers' total wages. And, in view of the ideology of "productivity at any cost" put forward by the current Chinese leadership, particu-



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larly the faction led by Teng Hsiao-ping, it is reasonable to be worried about the emphasis being placed on material incentives, even if there does not seem to be any immediate danger of the development of a Chinese variety of Stakhanovism.

The "carrot" of incentives—the counterpart of the "stick" of repression—may produce an increase in productivity, but it also threatens to increase social inequality, in view of the fact that the wage scale currently ranges from 1 to 15, leaving aside the various privileges that the functionaries enjoy.

The "liberalization" has also affected other aspects of society, and these are what the Western press has concentrated on. To begin with, on the cultural plane, the leadership has revived the slogan "let a hundred flowers bloom," though in a tightly controlled way. People in China are finally able to see films made before the Cultural Revolution, which were proscribed under the "gang of four." They can finally see other operas (a traditional Chinese art form) besides the "revolutionary" sops served up by Chiang Ching. The foreign writers whose works had been banned—along with many Chinese writers—are being published again. Cultural xenophobia, which was glorified only two years ago, has been eliminated. Artists are once again being encouraged to produce.

To be sure, art must "serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers," as Hua Kuo-feng said in his report to the People's Congress, "portray the glorious exploits of Chairman

Mao, Chou En-lai," and so on. But the new leadership places the emphasis on quality and variety, and explains that people must not be "prohibited from coming in contact with things that are incorrect, ugly, or hostile to us." Although it is obvious that Stalinist artistic criteria are still being applied, these steps will probably lead to a substantial rise in the quality of cultural output—which should not be too difficult, given the vacuum and wasteland that have existed in this area since the Cultural Revolution.

Finally—and this is a small revolution in itself—it appears that the Chinese can now buy tickets when they want, to see performances of their choice; previously these were distributed by the factory or neighborhood revolutionary committees.

There also seems to be a slight loosening of bureaucratic control over the urban population, with respect to behavior and life style. To dress differently, wear one's hair a few centimeters longer, or for couples to hold hands in the parks of Peking, is no longer automatically considered a sign of antisocial behavior, "perversion," or a step toward delinquency. There is no doubt that this kind of loosening of the bureaucratic vise is a welcome relief, particularly for the young.

First and foremost, however, the "liberalization" affects social layers that the regime is trying to placate: intellectuals, scientists, students, and functionaries.

The rulers are putting special emphasis on the rehabilitation of intellectuals, who were subjected to humiliation by the "Shanghai group." Hua Kuo-feng passionately defends the right to criticize, to hold "the liveliest discussions on theoretical issues," and to debate controversial questions. Teng Hsiao-ping resolves the contradiction between "red and expert" by explaining that when researchers and other technicians devote all their time to professional work related to the needs of science and production, this is a "living testimony to their love for the socialist cause" and proof that they are both "red and expert." Moreover, the work of these "experts" is no longer subjected to political and ideological monitoring by teams. The leadership insists on the "respect for discipline" that students should show their teachers. Such campaigns are probably accompanied by a system of rewards capable of whipping up a "zest for work" among intellectuals as well.

As for the functionaries of the state and party apparatuses—except for those with ties to the "gang of four"—the leadership offers them security above all. They no longer need fear rank-and-file accusations or campaigns against the "new bourgeoisie." With these pressures gone, they are free to add to their privileges, but are no longer forced to more or less conceal them as before. In Peking, bureaucrats can be

seen driving around with their families in official cars, buying goods (unrationed, for them) in special stores, and sending their children to special schools.

Through the policies of "national unity" and "liberalization," the new leaders hope to win general support for their goals. They are also trying to give the impression of being stable and unified, in order to command, if not confidence, at least obedience. There are open differences and clashes within the leadership, however, especially since the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping. In distinction from the period following the Cultural Revolution, the bureaucracy is not divided on any fundamental questions. General agreement exists, both with respect to the program for economic development, of which Teng Hsiao-ping is the most tireless defender, and to the goal of stabilizing the bureaucratic layer. The current clashes cannot, however, be reduced to a power struggle between Teng Hsiao-ping and Hua Kuo-feng, although that element is undoubtedly present. They are concerned with putting into effect the goals as outlined, and especially how far to extend "de-Maoization."

Once Again, Tien An Men

Since the downfall of the "four," the Chinese leadership has been preoccupied by two sticky problems. The first involved the official rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping—how fast could it be done, and what post should he be given? The second, closely related to the first, involved revising the official "verdict" on the events of April 1976 in Tien An Men square, which led to Teng Hsiao-ping's dismissal.

These questions came to the fore again at the huge square in Peking in January 1977 and April 1978. Both have now received official answers. In July 1977, Teng Hsiao-ping was officially rehabilitated and restored to all his former positions, including those of Political Bureau member, deputy prime minister, commander of the Popular Army of Liberation, and vice-president of the Chinese CP (at the time of the Eleventh Congress).

On April 7, Chou En-lai's widow offered a "new interpretation" of the Tien An Men incidents. She said that they were a great outpouring of "mass emotion for Chou En-lai," that "repeated investigations" had proved that Teng had nothing to do with them, but that, of course, "it was impossible to prevent such demonstrations from having their counterrevolutionary aspects." So the verdict seems to have been revised, at least halfway. It remains to be seen whether the children who were killed, wounded, and imprisoned are to be considered "counterrevolutionaries."

The Tien An Men affair is a really thorny issue for the Chinese leadership, particularly, no doubt, for Hua Kuo-feng.

It is important to remember that the April 1976 rebellions, directed against the

"Shanghai group" and violently repressed, were at the time condemned by a "unanimous Central Committee" as "counterrevolutionary." Teng Hsiao-ping was stripped of his powers, and Hua Kuo-feng was appointed premier to replace Chou En-lai after the latter's death. This "unanimity" obviously implicates the whole leadership (except, of course, Teng Hsiao-ping), including Hua Kuo-feng, who seems to have been the main beneficiary in the matter, Wu Teh, the mayor of Peking, and Chen Hsi-lien, general commander of the military region and the individual most directly responsible for the repression. At least theoretically, it implicates Mao Tse-tung himself. It is obvious that this is a delicate issue, especially since Wu Teh and Chen Hsi-lien now seem to be Teng's least fervent supporters within the Political Bureau. If they or the other leaders who took part in the attacks on Teng Hsiao-ping were demoted, Hua Kuo-feng would find himself seriously isolated within the new Chinese leadership and would have some difficulty in maintaining any kind of independent position.

However, at least up to now, in spite of repeated attacks against the two in wall posters, in spite of the self-criticism that Wu Teh had to make and the charges leveled against him that he tried to "influence" the election of delegates to the People's Congress, these two Political Bureau members have retained their positions within the party and state apparatus, as shown by the nominations in the People's Congress. What is more, Hua Kuo-feng's position seems to have been stabilized: for one thing, no new supporter of Teng was appointed to a key position following this meeting; secondly, Hua, around whom a miniature personality cult is developing, held on to both his positions as chairman of the Chinese CP and premier. He also prevented the reestablishment of the office of president of the republic, which, according to persistent rumors in Peking, could have been bestowed on Teng Hsiao-ping.

Nonetheless, it would be premature to conclude that Hua Kuo-feng has been able to stabilize his "bonapartist" ("centrist") position in the apparatus. First, because the attacks on his closest supporters are continuing, and every retreat is just a prelude to renewed attacks. Second, because as an "unknown" party figure before Mao lifted him out of obscurity to avoid having to choose between the "four" and supporters of Teng, Hua does not have the prestige of many of his peers in the Political Bureau, either within the apparatus or among the masses. His only legitimacy comes from the fact that he was appointed by the "great helmsman" ("with you in charge of things, I don't have to worry"). But today, the "great helmsman's" policies are under attack in practice.

It is understandable why Hua, forced to implement a program worked out by Chou

En-lai and polished by Teng Hsiao-ping, to which he can offer no alternative, should try to limit as much as possible the political effects of "de-Maoization." Besides participating in the race for powerful positions in the apparatus that followed Teng's rehabilitation, the chairman of the CCP is visibly trying to preserve a certain number of "gains" or Maoist concepts to counter the extreme emphasis on productivity of his deputy premier and a good number of officials, particularly in the economic and military sectors.

In this sense, the appeals to the authority of Mao, to the restatement of the "class struggle as the axis" (even if its purpose is to "restore order"), as well as the call to "extend the conquests of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (which have in fact been eliminated)—may be a reflection of clashes within the leadership.

Hua Kuo-feng, who does not enjoy the popularity of Teng Hsiao-ping—considered by many Chinese to be their "real" leader—is trying to build a base of support among a section of the bureaucracy that is uneasy about the scope of the current political "revision." These are officials, moreover, who are seeing the importance of their roles reduced to the advantage of those involved in production, planning, or scientific research. The current leadership needs "experts" more than "reds."

Whatever the vicissitudes and outcome of the perpetual maneuvers and struggles within the top layer of the bureaucracy, the entrenchment of Hua Kuo-feng will require either additional breaks or an agreement of a broader scope than the compromises made within the leadership so far.

But, for the leadership as a whole, the task right now is to carry out the program that has been adopted and deal with the expectations the masses have acquired as a result of the overthrow of the "Shanghai group." The question is whether this is possible. If it is not, then the Chinese masses could become disillusioned again, with unpleasant consequences for the bureaucracy. This is especially true since antibureaucratic actions have recently proliferated.

A Respite for the Chinese Bureaucracy

There is no doubt that for the great mass of the population, the downfall of the "four" and the change in leadership of the CCP has generated, and continues to generate, a hope that life will get better. The new Chinese leadership has taken advantage of the weariness and demoralization caused by the eight years of antibureaucratic struggles at the top, in which, with a few local exceptions, the masses could not intervene autonomously. This explains why the Chinese working class, which no doubt participated in a very deep and prolonged antibureaucratic mobilization in the course of the Cultural Revolution,

watched from the sidelines as the power struggle unfolded following the death of Mao. This, together with a certain drop in the standard of living that has become noticeable these last few years, also explains why the Chinese workers are once again putting their hopes in a section of the bureaucracy. The propaganda of the leading team, blaming the "four" for all the evils of the bureaucratic system, has reinforced this tendency.

But this momentary relative passivity cannot be equated to the demobilization, the thoroughgoing depoliticization of the kind that may exist, for example, in the Soviet Union. The store of confidence that the bureaucracy possesses may turn out to be merely a respite, which will last only as long as it is able to satisfy the expectations of the masses. This has two basic aspects. The first, and most important, involves a rise in the standard of living and thus depends upon fulfilling the economic plan. The second involves the demand for more democracy, including the demand for political democracy that is more and more frequently put forward by the Chinese opposition.

In this regard, to what extent can the Chinese leadership deliver to the workers the reward of a better standard of living, which it is promising in exchange for a stepped-up effort? The fact is that, considering the current state of the Chinese economy, the major investments that are being planned, the need to import the necessary technology from abroad, including entire factories "ready to go," the need to modernize the Chinese army, which the armed forces chiefs have been demanding for a long time and which the new leadership has agreed on, it is hard to see how the Chinese masses could profit from this "great leap forward," either in the short or medium term—especially if they have to wait until the year 2000.

Moreover, the wage increases that have been granted, which affect only the urban population, threaten to be afflicted by a scourge unknown in China since the revolutionary victory: inflation.

Considering the strict rationing that the urban population has been subjected to for several years, it does not seem that the consumer goods corresponding to the increase in wages can readily be put on the market, even if attempts have been made to improve distribution.

In addition, the increase in productivity threatens to increase the widespread underemployment, as well as the disguised unemployment that exists on a massive scale.

The Chinese masses are thus in danger of not deriving for a long time any increased benefits from the added work being demanded of them. And in addition they are sure to see social distinctions increase heavily within Chinese society.

This will probably show up first and

foremost in the countryside, with greater importance given to the "private plots" of the peasants, which, according to a speech by Cheng Yung-kuei at the conference on agriculture in December 1976, "supply one-quarter of the agricultural produce received by the department of commerce." On minuscule acreages, the former peasant from the model brigade of Tachai said, it is necessary to "permit and encourage family occupancy, on condition that a priority is given to collective farming."

Taking into account the shortage of grain owing to many natural disasters, and the fact that top priority is more and more being placed on production, an expansion of "private" agriculture appears likely—which is what the "Shanghai group" tried to resist.

This can only intensify social differentiations in the countryside and eventually endanger China's "workers and peasants alliance." This is sure to have serious consequences in a country where more than three-quarters of the population works on the land.

The cities will also be hit by an increase in social stratification. The workers are likely to resent the increase in rewards and privileges given party and state officials as well as technicians, researchers, engineers, intellectuals, and others—even though the Chinese leadership has launched a major campaign to rehabilitate these social layers.

And within the working class itself, the probable widening of the wage spread (a reform currently under consideration), and the proliferation of bonuses, will heighten divisions among the workers.

The Question of Privileges

The question of privileges is even more explosive in China than it is in the other workers states. This is shown by the frequency with which this theme was raised by the "red guards" during the Cultural Revolution, and the fact that it was carried over into the antibureaucratic demonstrations (Li I-che),* as well as the campaigns launched by the "Shanghai group" to win support within the working class for an assault on privilege and the bureaucrats who were dubbed a "new bourgeoisie"—a characterization that has now fallen into disuse. These themes were in turn exploited by the Hua Kuo-feng leadership as a weapon against the

* "Li I-che" was the pen name of a group of three former Red Guards from Canton, Li Cheng-t'ien, Ch'en I-yang, and Wang Hsi-che. In December 1974 the three pasted up a pamphlet-length wall poster in Canton entitled *Concerning Socialist Democracy and the Legal System*, calling for a struggle for socialist democracy in China and an end to bureaucratic privilege. The three have been imprisoned since early 1975 and a worldwide appeal has been launched on their behalf by other former Red Guards now in exile in Hong Kong.—IP/1

"Shanghai group," to portray it as a "superprivileged" group.

This theme may be combined with others, such as "democracy" and "socialist legality," which seem to have been the central issues for groups and individuals in the antibureaucratic opposition over the last few years. These demands have been raised consistently, often cropping up in the campaigns for Teng's return—from the Li I-che wall posters to the one put up in Peking on April 7, proclaiming that "the people do not rule China," and that things were not any better since the fall of the "four." In January 1977, posters signed by "groups of workers" demanded that "the people be able to choose their own leaders" and called for an extension of "democratic rights" and of certain "freedoms" for the population. Other posters put up in April 1978 dwelt on the need to "prevent the return of a KGB that operates outside the law and against the interests of the proletariat." Many other examples could be given. It was unquestionably owing to this pressure, as well as to the aftereffects of the campaign against the "dictatorship of the four," that the constitution adopted at the Fifth People's Congress was remodeled in a more "democratic" direction. Thus Marshal Yeh Chien-ying called for fighting against "all actions that threaten democracy and the rights of citizens."

Of course, there is no chance that the new leadership will take a single step in the direction of genuine workers democracy. This is obvious from their appeal for "strengthening the state apparatus," for "centralism," and their call to "combat anarchy, bourgeois factionalism, and all actions that undermine discipline and unity"; in other words, any and all opposition to the present government.

In light of this, the crumbs of formal "democratization," such as an effort to legitimize bureaucratic arbitrariness, cannot in any way satisfy the aspirations of the opposition and a large section of the masses.

The existence of this opposition, and its ability to provide an alternative to all of the bureaucratic factions, can play a critical role in the years to come, as the illusions that now work to the advantage of the bureaucracy fade away. Through its struggle against arbitrary rule and bureaucratic privilege, for genuine workers democracy and defense of the standard of living of Chinese workers, the opposition can broaden its following and make it more difficult for the bureaucracy to achieve its desired stabilization. This is especially true if the opposition is able to win support from a working class that, unlike the working class in the Soviet Union, has never experienced full-scale repression and atomization. More than ever in the years to come, international solidarity with the antibureaucratic opposition in China must be one of our central tasks. □

The Lessons of May 1968

[The following interview with Daniel Bensaid, a member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League), French section of the Fourth International, was conducted in mid-May.]

* * *

Question. We used to speak of May 1968 as a "prerevolutionary crisis." Wouldn't it be simpler to label the twentieth century's tragedy in three acts—the Popular Front, 1944-47, and May 1968—the three French revolutions betrayed by the Communist Party?

Answer. Starting in 1968, we discussed the possible ways to characterize the "events" of May—as a revolutionary or a prerevolutionary crisis. We did this by taking the classics—Lenin's *Collapse of the Second International*, Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*—and applying their criteria: those at the bottom no longer wish to be ruled as before, and those at the top can no longer rule as before, and so on.

We were careful to define May 1968 as a "prerevolutionary crisis," insisting on the importance of the subjective factor—that is, the existence of a revolutionary party—in order for the crisis, once it has become revolutionary, to find an outlet.

We were conscious at the time of the fact that such a party was nonexistent, or barely at an embryonic stage, and therefore that the taking of power was unthinkable under such conditions; we thereby indicated the limitations of May 1968 and of the spontaneous uprising by the masses.

Nevertheless, it was perfectly correct, given the reformist deadlock and prevailing academic theories, all of which exaggerated the inertia and bourgeoisification of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries, to forcefully point out what 1968 underscored: the vitality of the revolutionary capacity of the working class, the sharpness of the class struggle, the timeliness of the revolution.

Well, what we probably didn't do was to draw out all the conclusions from our analysis. The lack of a revolutionary party is not merely a missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle; it conditions the very forms of the radicalization, the struggles and demands of the working class.

The absence of a revolutionary party is not unrelated to the fact that the largest general strike in the history of the French workers movement brought out only demands that, all told, were fairly modest. No general platform of demands gave an

inkling of what was to happen later on at Lip¹ around such problems as the reorganization of labor and forms of struggle.

We ourselves paid inordinate attention to the most advanced forms of self-organization, such as elected strike committees, which were the exception—see Jacques Pesquet's book, *Des Soviets à Saclay* (Soviets at Saclay), published by Maspéro in 1968—some of which were more or less imaginary. We talked about the restarting of production at CSF in Brest, manufacturing walkie-talkies and electronic instruments—this belongs in the realm of folk tales.

Now, the exceptional character of these examples—which at least had the value of showing the way—and their small number are an indication of the low level of consciousness and organization. If, at the time, we had only had the revolutionary organization we have today, with several hundred worker activists implanted in the factories and unions, bringing the discussion into them, this would have made a qualitative difference in the general strike. From this standpoint, we can say that 1968 was the signal and starting point of tremendous workers struggles in Europe, and, at the same time, greatly limited in itself, even compared to the previous crises of 1936 and 1945.

Q. All right, then, in retrospect, can we not say that the political importance of 1968 was more the social dimension of the legacy of 1968—the crisis of bourgeois values and institutions, the general crisis of capitalist society—than the way in which the question of power was posed concretely for several days running?

A. When people say "social dimension" nowadays, they have a tendency to mean the social movements that developed later—the women's movement, ecology movements, aspects of workers struggles, and so forth. It's obvious in some cases that 1968 was the starting point—workers' insubordination, the challenging of authority, the desire to take control of production that have come out in discussions.

But take the women's movement. Their participation was massive, had its own character, and was often decisive in all the

great proletarian and people's movements in French history, starting with the revolution of 1789 and including the days of 1848, not to mention the Paris Commune.

Well, look at the literature on May 1968 for the last ten years—very few traces of the specific presence of women. The fact that a women's movement did not emerge in 1968 is an additional indicator of the limitations of that upsurge, and of the gap that exists between the militancy that took the movement itself by surprise and the fact that there was not enough time for all the ripening potential to be expressed.

Another example: we cannot say that ecological concerns were very much a part of 1968. Rather, the mushrooming of the ecology movement can be seen as a reaction to the sudden replacement of the consumer-society ideology, characteristic of the postwar prosperity period (and still visible in 1968), by the 1974-75 recession, the debate over zero growth, and the anxieties of the capitalists themselves in face of the growing crisis of their society.

As for the soldier's movement—which has become a permanent feature of the political situation since 1973, with the proliferation of committees, the soldiers' own demands, and the challenging of military discipline—we can cite only a few outstanding examples of it in 1968, such as the famous Mutzig regiment, where the soldiers put out a leaflet stating their refusal to act as strikebreakers. There too, we see both the basis of future developments and the very clear limitations of such phenomena at the time.

On the political level, it seems obvious that we would not pose the question of power today the way we did then. I think we have mulled over the lessons and approach, and given more thought to the elements of revolutionary strategy that have been largely submerged, or with which there has been a break in continuity since the early years of the Communist International, and, of course, throughout the whole period of Stalinist reaction.

For example, we called for "centralization of the strike committees." Fine! There was nothing wrong with that, of course. Propaganda in favor of centralizing the leadership bodies in a strike, and for a central strike committee, belongs to the classical tradition. However, to go beyond propaganda, it was still necessary for sufficiently massive and meaningful examples of strike committees to exist already, involving the unorganized, and appearing as more legitimate and representative than the trade-union leaderships themselves.

However, we cannot say that in 1968 a movement toward self-organization really challenged the trade-union leadership's control of the strike. The few examples we know of their control being bypassed in no way sufficed to make the slogan of a central strike committee agitational, to

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

give it some sort of credibility, to make it tangible.

Should we have raised the slogan of a CP-SP government in 1968, at a time when these parties were negotiating the composition of a "people's government" with Mendès-France? It is certain that our central political slogans remained extremely limited, for several years even. On the other hand, 1968 saw the revision of our thinking on the key problem, the problem of the general strike and of self-organization.

And the general strike, as the starting point of a reflection on strategy, opens up the possibility in France of an alternative to the electoralist, parliamentary policy of the traditional leaderships. From now on, our thinking on 1968 will have to be coupled with what appears to be its opposite: the 1978 electoral defeat.

The experiment remained unfinished. What makes it hard to talk about 1968 is that we are not dealing with a closed experience, complete in itself. We are still in the midst of 1968 inasmuch as the lessons of 1968 are not those of May and June, but those of ten years, extending from the general strike to the establishment of the Common Program and Union of the Left, up to the electoral sellout of March 1978 that put the finishing touch on the betrayal of 1968. It is up to the vanguard to draw from this the basis for a political and strategic alternative.

Q. Not only did the bourgeoisie retain power, but in spite of the persistence of the general social crisis and the economic crisis, it seems that the ruling class was able to deal worse blows to the French workers than in previous years, at least since the first Barre government in August 1976. So didn't we tend to be too optimistic, to think that by themselves, workers struggles would manage to grow over into a revolutionary crisis (we said that May 1968 was a "dress rehearsal")? And isn't it legitimate to ask ourselves whether the recent electoral defeat, in a nutshell, marks the end of a period—the one inaugurated by May 1968, to be precise?

A. This is a tricky subject, and I'm going to be careful! But the starting point that remains absolutely true, where we committed no real error, is that 1968 marked the beginning of an impetuous rise of struggles and of the workers movement in France and throughout Europe.

Look at the whole picture: May 1968 in France, the struggles in Italy in the autumn of 1969, the 1974-75 explosion in Portugal, the first six months of 1976 in Spain, during which the world record for the number of days on strike was broken, the Italian workers movement again in 1976—we cannot deny the explosive upsurge of the West European workers movement. If you deny that, if you retain your skepticism in face of the series of ups and

downs that mark the course of the class struggle, you ignore the fundamental, underlying tendencies of the political situation.

It is impossible to understand the post-Franco period without taking this upsurge of workers struggles into account. The internal maneuvers of the decaying regime cannot explain this process. But the February 1976 strikes in Madrid, and the outpouring in the Basque country after the Vitoria massacre precipitated the downfall of the Arias government, and the establishment of democratic institutionalization around the Suárez government.

In France, we haven't reached such peaks, mainly for economic reasons (however, we did make some mistakes in analyzing the evolution of the French economy and its political consequences at the time of the Chaban-Delmas "progressive contracts"² and the devaluation of the franc in 1969). But even leaving aside the bigger strikes—1947-48, 1953, 1963—the average frequency of strikes is still higher than it was in the past decade. Even if the number of strike days in France is three times less than in Britain, and four times less than in Italy.

Incidentally, we should note that the increase in conflicts, in their duration, has not been reflected in a proportional growth of the workers organizations and their influence. The membership of the trade unions has remained constant relative to the number of wage earners, and the CGT³ has suffered a setback, although the other unions have maintained themselves.

Here we run across the paradoxical combination handed down from 1968: militancy combined with a low level of consciousness, producing hardly any gains for the workers organizations except at the polls, which, while not inconsiderable, is still much too limited.

Should we therefore conclude that we made major errors of prognosis? Our estimate of how struggles would develop was correct; it has been corroborated, even allowing for the adjustments made for French conditions.

The point on which we had a fairly one-sided view of the social processes, of mounting struggles, was our underestimation of the weight of the reformist bureaucracies—which remained dominant in the working class in all the countries in

2. Accords modeled on that signed December 10, 1969, between union and management officials at Electricité de France, the state-owned power utility. The agreement, which ended a strike of several days, tied wage increases for two years to productivity and the growth in national income, and barred strikes for the duration of the contract. It was followed by a series of similar accords in other state-owned sectors.

3. Confédération Générale du Travail—General Confederation of Labor, the largest labor federation, dominated by the Communist Party.

question—and their capacity to intervene, divide, and demobilize. We misjudged the dialectical process between the social radicalization and the policy of the reformist leaderships. We can look at the past two years for a better understanding of the prospects.

In France, the SP and CP orchestrated the electoral defeat by dividing the working class. But the question that comes up right away is, How could they impose such divisions without encountering unified opposition among the ranks of the workers movement—without a certain loss of control, without more widespread, clear attempts to break away from the bureaucracies, such as might have occurred if the subjective maturity of the working class had been greater? Three factors help explain this:

First, the effects of the 1974-75 recession, the austerity policies put into effect in the various countries, together with the stabilization of a large number of unemployed. Without there having been a defeat for the working class anywhere, we could say there was an attrition in some sectors, a fragmentation of fronts of struggle leading to an undeniable weakening of the necessary reactions to the capitalist attacks.

Second, the policy of the reformists, their tactic of struggles, their electoralism, disarm and disorient even the vanguard elements.

Finally, the cumulative impact of the partial, limited defeats in southern Europe that Ernest Mandel talks about at the end of his article (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, June 12, 1978, p. 696).

It seems reasonable to say that while none of these defeats constitutes a decisive setback in itself (we cannot even compare the defeat of November 25, 1975, in Portugal to the July days of 1917 in Russia), their simultaneous occurrence in France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal probably ushers in a new political situation, one in which, without a qualitative reversal of the relationship of forces, the problems are posed differently, in a way that makes the day-to-day struggles of the workers more difficult, especially with regard to connecting their fight against austerity to the overall political solutions.

And yet, this new situation, these new difficulties are accompanied by relatively intense thinking and political discussion, and the necessity for real political solutions can only occur more and more to a growing number of advanced workers and trade-union officials, who at the same time are trying to decide where to place the blame for the defeats and how to overcome them.

The connections between mass movements and political solutions are now more than ever a question whose time has come. And the transition, over a decade, from a mass movement with no alternative to an electoral alternative with no mass move-

ment is fairly well perceived by a mass of worker activists that is by no means insignificant. A new political situation? Granted. A change in the period? Premature, to say the least.

Q. To put it more precisely, can we expect that, paradoxically, the repeated failures of the mass workers parties in Western Europe will result in a thoroughgoing challenge to the line adopted by these parties—a challenge, we should add, that no longer appears confined to a few intellectuals, who formerly posed no threat to the leaderships, and which we hope will not be entirely right-wing in character, intensifying the “Eurocommunist” drive of the Stalinist parties?

A. Whether or not the workers latch onto the debate that has been launched inside the French CP, for example, largely depends on the struggles ahead and the kind of lessons that will or will not be drawn, on the basis of previous years.

It is unthinkable that a workers' left opposition could develop in a period of relative social peace. Marxism has its logic, after all, and the least we can ask, really, is that it work itself out—and that we understand it!

Either we diagnose a deepening downturn—and, in that case, it is likely that the reformist parties will undergo only some erosion and minor splits on their left flanks, while at the same time generating essentially opportunist, right-wing currents that will speed up, in the case of the CPs, their process of “social-democratization.”

Or, we think that there hasn't been any turnabout in the period, and therefore, let's be consistent: the challenges that are already visible will go in two directions—toward a hardening on the right, in the Elleinstein mold, which may, incidentally, take with it the support of a section of the trade-union bureaucracy—but also one or more waves of criticism, left breakaways, capable of giving rise to relatively large currents, left centrist currents, inside the reformist workers parties and in the unions.

That is the prognosis we can make, provided we use caution with respect to the timetable. The attacks on the working class are continuing and will continue; there has been no major defeat that prohibits the working class from fighting; and the French CP has even verbally dissociated itself from the SP, refusing to administer or endorse austerity, but also taking care not to launch any real battles that would match its actions to its words.

But will this organized inactivity hold up under the repeated attacks of the bosses and austerity? A prognosis of the situation and the period largely depends on what answer is given to that question. If the layoffs proliferate, with uncontrolled factory closings, if ten or twenty struggles in

major sectors of the civil administration and in bastions of industry end in a series of huge defeats, then, of course, the rate of demoralization will become significant, together with what that can generate.

On the other hand, if a counteroffensive takes shape around one or two poles of resistance, the critical questioning of the strategy of the reformist political and trade-union leaderships will unfailingly deepen and spread. At least among a working-class vanguard, which, as everyone now agrees, is radicalizing mainly within the reformist parties and trade unions.

Q. Now we come to the far left. Isn't it in a paradoxical situation? Many of the demands that it was alone in raising in 1968 and after have been won, or taken up by the organized workers movement, such as those centering around the quality of life. The far left has even entered the political arena in its own right, including on the electoral plane. But nearly everywhere it is said to be in crisis, in Italy, for instance, and even in France. In particular, here in France, for the last two or three years, we have met with growing difficulties in organizing common campaigns with the other revolutionary organizations. So, two questions. First, under these conditions, what would you say are the prospects for the far left in Europe and in France? Second, looking back on our own past, what are the main political errors we have committed in recent years? Could we have done substantially better? The revolutionary process has turned out to be slower than we expected. Is this entirely due to objective factors?

A. The crisis of the revolutionary organizations in Spain, Portugal, Italy and France is a reality that cannot be ignored. It is connected to the fact that most of these organizations are products of the post-1968 radicalization, without historic links to the international workers movement. Hence their obvious lack of preparedness to deal with the central problem—unifying the working class, and thus the relationship of these new organizations to those that already hold sway, the trade unions and political parties.

This is even truer for the Maoist currents, which start out by consigning the reformist parties, the CPs, to oblivion, only to suffer a rude awakening when the reformists' clout, at least in the elections, calls them back to order and to reality, and even when internal divisions within these parties come to light. It was in this way that we could see how the Spanish CP was able to reintegrate, reabsorb certain groups like Bandera Roja.

Without a full programmatic and strategic line of opposition, combined with a consistent battle for workers unity and a united front with these parties, most of the far-left groups have continually oscillated

between ultraleft rejection, overestimating the relationship of forces—as in Portugal during the preparations for November 25, 1975—and opportunistically adapting to the reformist parties or applying pressure tactics to these parties, more or less fitting in with the logic of these parties.

A typical example: the Italian PdUP,⁴ which may well appear as a group critical of the CP, but in no way as an organizational and strategic alternative. Or again, in Spain, a big Maoist group like the PT⁵ comes out with the same positions as the CP, even to the right of it where alliances with the bourgeoisie are concerned.

In France, judging by the legislative elections, and the campaigns carried out by the various organizations to the left of the CP, the record is anything but outstanding. In what way did they campaign against the SP and CP policy of dividing the working class? And in what way did they prepare for the post-election period?

Here it must be said that even those organizations whose roots supposedly go deep in the history of the revolutionary movement, and whose background and traditions, like Lutte Ouvrière and the OCI,⁶ supposedly come out of the Trotskyist movement, and which continue to base themselves on it, were in no way protected or forewarned against major deviations.

In the OCI's case, this took the form of adaptation to the reformist bureaucracies, with a campaign centered exclusively on standing down in the second round⁷ without intervening in the debate on program. This in no way prepared for the elections and their aftermath, and conferred totally uncritical support on the Social Democratic leadership as opposed to the CP leadership. In Lutte Ouvrière's case, it took the form of abstention on the need to defeat the right, on unity of the working class, on standing down, on the need for a CP-SP government, and so on.

Finally, what is our problem? It's that our situation is fairly new. We want to build revolutionary workers parties starting from a position of being nearly totally outside the working class—which was not the case with the CPs as compared to the SPs. Therefore, all our experience handed down over decades of isolation—on the workers united front, on transitional demands, raised in a propagandistic way,

4. Partito d'Unità Proletaria—Party of Proletarian Unity.

5. Partido del Trabajo—Labor Party.

6. Organisation Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Organization.

7. French elections are held in two rounds. Only candidates who poll 12.5 percent of the vote or more are eligible to run in the second-round runoff. Traditionally, the workers parties agree beforehand to stand down in favor of the workers candidate with the best chance of winning.

and more or less directed at members of the reformist parties so that they would take them up themselves—has had to be put into practice as the independent line of a major organization, even if it is numerically small.

Thus, we are running into concrete tactical and political problems that cannot be solved simply by consulting books. That is what explains why each group claiming to be Trotskyist has its own interpretation of the writings in question and such different reactions to any given situation.

Have we committed major errors and could we have changed the course of events? We committed big errors in the past decade, that is undeniable. Up to 1972, what mainly separated us from the reformists was our tactics of struggle, "daring to struggle," "how to struggle." In the unions, supporting across-the-board wage increases as against percentage increases, or the sliding scale, were sufficient to mark the dividing line between us and the leadership during contract negotiations.

When the Common Program was signed, we understood fairly quickly that there had been a change in the political situation, even though the Third Congress of the Ligue Communiste [Communist League, forerunner of the LCR], in December 1972, did not avoid mistakes and fumbling. But it must be admitted that it took several years to assimilate the change and its consequences on our line, and that this has only now been completed. We did not really get ahead of the situation; we grasped it as we went along, through a series of adaptations.

So, yes, we could have had a clearer line at the outset, especially on the united front. We could have had a different impact on the situation, first and foremost on the evolution of the far-left organizations and their debates on line, while at the same time winning broader influence. As to whether we could have radically changed the outcome of events, that I do not think was possible. There are some relationships of forces that it is impossible to jump over.

But what we should understand is that even in 1968, the question of the united front was posed in a way that was quite abstract. The fact that the phenomena of self-organization were limited meant that CP activists were hardly at all involved in structures where they would have had to answer for their actions and leave the parliamentary and electoralist terrain.

There was an almost total separation between the arena of struggles, where we intervened to the extent of our forces, and the parliamentary arena, which we, of course, left to the reformists, who, naturally, made it into the only general political solution imaginable.

We only made up for our delay on the

united front when the Common Program and the resurgence of the SP once again made it a current issue. We could have and should have avoided this delay and the errors associated with it; but, over and above the programmatic continuity of the Fourth International, there was, in fact, a certain break in continuity between generations of activists, which partially accounts for the mistakes made in 1968 and after.

Without going into detail here on our obvious errors, we should point out their common base, namely our failure to pose the problem of the united front until 1972. From this stemmed the glaring weakness of our transitional demands, because since 1968 we had been thinking largely in terms of a general outflanking of the traditional reformist leaderships.

This led us to be suspicious of all slogans having to do with workers control, and to be satisfied with a very rudimentary analysis of the development and contradictions of class consciousness, such as the relations the workers have with the reformist organizations. That was the starting point for our disconnection from the battles for control, for transitional slogans, and from the governmental slogan that should crown our approach.

From this angle, in one or another struggle, we find traces of ultraleftist or workerist positions that left their mark on our activities, even though each of them must be placed in its own context, which was more complex than it appears. Nevertheless, the general framework is as I have just described. And since 1972, a process of rectification has been under way, with its half-finished aspects, its contradictions, its partially continued errors.

It will be the task of the LCR's Third Congress to go back over all these questions; for if we expect the advanced workers to draw a balance sheet on the past decade, it is up to us to do the same! This congress will have to put our evolution over the last few years into perspective, characterize the period, evaluate our battle last year for unity of the working class, draw a balance sheet on the Union of the Left, and size up the situation of the far left.

Those are four basic elements that will enable us to turn the corner on the ten years that we have just lived through. But the essential thing is that the congress must deal with the tasks that we will face in the period ahead.

Q. Let's broaden this out, finally, to the international level. The Fourth International analyzed 1968 as the "year of a turning point in the world situation"—for the colonial revolution, it was the Tet offensive; the "Prague spring" illustrated the upturn in the political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed workers states;

and the French and Italian prerevolutionary crises, the starting point for the socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. There again, we are tempted to ask whether we did not overestimate the convergence of these three sectors of the world revolution.

A. The remarkable unity of the world revolution in 1968 was immediately perceptible to revolutionists at the time, given the ideological origins of the student radicalization. This helped us, while at the same time undoubtedly keeping up certain illusions. The mass revolutionary enthusiasm of those years largely fed upon this simultaneousness, and on the opportunity to identify easily enough with a figure like Che, for instance, or with the Vietnamese revolution—especially since the latter was a component of the international communist movement, embodying the prospect of a revolutionary victory in the short run.

Nowadays we see that those who do not subscribe 100 percent to the global program, the all-embracing historic vision of the world revolution, and the synthetic analysis of Stalinism do not know which way to turn. Those who threw themselves into defending the Vietnamese revolution are bewildered by the Vietnam-Cambodia war; those who identified with the Cultural Revolution have had to witness the turbulent ups and downs of the "gang of four" and others.

In Latin America, there has been a series of defeats. All of this has produced an ebb in the spontaneous internationalism of the 1960s, and thus growing difficulties in waging consistent internationalist campaigns, even with regard to the Portuguese revolution. As for Africa and the Mideast, the fact that the leaderships do not have Communist backgrounds and traditions creates doubt and confusion, and prevents the movements in these countries from having the same power to crystallize the international relationship of forces as the previous revolutions, from the standpoint of the emerging vanguard.

More than ever, that is what justifies the existence and the role of the Fourth International, and the further efforts we will devote to its development. □

Clarification From the White House

"It's inaccurate thinking to say that the use of nuclear weapons would be the end of the human race. That's an egocentric thought. Of course, it's horrible to contemplate, but, in strictly statistical terms, if the United States used up all of its arsenal in the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union used up all of its against the United States, it would not be the end of humanity. That's egocentric. There are other people on the earth."—Zbigniew Brzezinski, quoted in the *New Yorker*, May 1, 1978.

Debate Continues in French Communist Party

[A lively discussion continues in the French Communist Party following the defeat of the Union of the Left in the parliamentary elections held March 19.¹ Since the CP leadership has refused to open up the pages of the party daily *l'Humanité* to this debate, much of it has taken place in other publications, including the bourgeois Paris daily *Le Monde*. We are reprinting below a selection of the statements issued by CP members critical of the leadership's policy. The translation and introduction are by Martin Meteyard.]

* * *

An attempt by the leadership of the French Communist Party to divide and isolate its critics has blown up in its face.

Alarmed at the persistence of dissent inside the party after the Central Committee meeting of April 27, at which CP General Secretary Georges Marchais claimed that the party bore "no responsibility" for the defeat of the left in the March general elections, the CP leadership decided to concentrate their fire on the "left" critic Louis Althusser and his supporters.

Two Political Bureau members, Jacques Chambez and Paul Laurent, openly attacked Althusser in the party daily, *l'Humanité*. Chambez went so far as to state that the attack on "busybodies composing monologues at their desks" made by Marchais at the Central Committee meeting was aimed at Althusser and no one else.

This was accompanied by an opening to

the "liberal" critics. For the first time one of their representatives, Raymond Jean, was given an "open forum" in *l'Humanité*, on May 12. At the same time the historian Jean Elleinstein, another leader of this wing, was given a personal interview by Marchais in an attempt to arrive at an understanding that would isolate the "left" critics.

But this maneuver had the opposite effect. Elleinstein left Marchais's office convinced that there was nothing for it but to seek to ally all the critics around the demand for democratic discussion in the party.

On May 20 the bombshell arrived. More than 300 CP members—including both Althusser and Elleinstein—signed a statement published in the bourgeois daily *Le Monde* that accused the leadership of "contempt for the working class" and demanded greater freedom of criticism and discussion inside the party.

This is not the only sign that the opposition inside the party is beginning to organize. Also published in *Le Monde*, in the issue of May 17, was another text by 100 rank-and-file CP members specifically denouncing the leadership's twists and turns during the election campaign and demanding a really democratic preparation of the next party congress.

Below we are reprinting the text of these two statements along with the text of an interview with Althusser published in the Rome daily *Paese Sera*. We are also including an interview with Jacques Frémontier, former editor-in-chief of the French CP's factory journal, *Action*.

100 CP Members Demand 'Extraordinary Congress'

[The following statement, signed by 100 members of the French Communist Party, was published in the May 17 issue of *Le Monde*.]

* * *

After a month's debate in the party, the Central Committee has met to ratify the initial conclusions of the Political Bureau—that is, to disclaim our political responsibility in the electoral defeat of March 19. For it certainly was a defeat. To

deny it or minimize its scope is to refuse to analyze the causes and rule out in advance the possibility of overcoming it.

There could in fact be a strong temptation to maintain that it was only one electoral defeat among others, ignoring the fact that not only had these elections marked the horizon of struggles for a long time, but that they had further constituted the touchstone of the whole strategy of the party and, more than that, of the left as a whole.

The March 21 communiqué issued by the Political Bureau declares that "the French Communist Party bears no responsibility in this situation." Considerations of a tactical nature cannot bring about accep-

tance of the unacceptable—that we, as Communists, would reject our responsibilities without careful examination and before any discussion; that a question which, as we know, is at the center of the thinking of all Communists should thus be settled for good and all.

Make no mistake about it. Such practices, contrary to the principles so often put forward, are not unconnected to the defeat we have just undergone. After having disoriented the workers and the militants by what we should not shrink from calling the inconsistency, nay, incoherence, of our policy, such haste in denying all responsibility is unlikely to win us back the confidence of the masses.

One can recall that if the party took the extreme risk on September 22² of breaking the unitary impulse, it was in order to obtain, through the nationalizations, the economic conditions for a "real change"—economic conditions which our political leadership, relying on the analyses of the party's economic experts, considered to be absolutely necessary. To such an extent that when the Socialists later rallied to the demand for a minimum monthly wage of 2,400 francs, we considered that this was of no real significance, since in not yielding on the nationalizations the Socialist Party was refusing to assure the left of the economic means of its policy. In short, there could not be a good agreement below a minimum threshold of corporate subsidiaries to be nationalized. And yet the agreement signed on March 13 left this question in abeyance.

One can recall equally the declarations of Georges Marchais at the national conference of January 7: "21 percent is not enough, 25 percent would be all right." This statement posed a new condition, political this time, for a "real change"—a minimum influence of the party on the electoral terrain (not to recognize this is to make of the main conclusion of the conference a pious wish unconnected with the conjuncture). On March 13 we signed an agreement after having obtained only 20.6 percent of the vote.

On the other hand, the same communiqué of March 21 called on us to "draw all the lessons of the political battle which has just concluded," and it added: "this is what all the section committees, the federal committees, and then the Central

1. See "Growing Dissent in French Communist Party," in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 15, p. 564.—IP/I

2. Date of the breakdown in negotiations between CP and SP over updating the Common Program of the Union of the Left.—IP/I

Committee would do. . . ." This proposal was at the very least inadequate for all the Communists and, beyond them, all the workers to be able to intervene in a real way in the elaboration and criticism of our policy. The last Central Committee meeting is proof of this.

A congress is needed for that. But what kind of congress? A congress which should analyze our political line, our practice of the policy of unity as we have carried it out since 1972, and which should draw out all the implications of the defeat. So that this can be done in a really consistent fashion, it is absolutely necessary that all inconsistencies and disagreements can be expressed at the level of the congress itself.

This can be ensured only if there is direct election of congress delegates by secret ballot—without proposals from the section leaderships—in section assemblies where the militants as a whole can make themselves heard. Such a way of organizing the congress should allow the political line adopted to be really the collective work of the party, preventing elements of it from being discreetly abandoned—as has recently turned out to be the case with the slogan of the Union of the French People.

We know it is quite likely that purely legalistic restraints and supposed techni-

cal obstacles will be raised as objections in order to impose the classical method of election of delegates: a method which always assures that the positions of the leadership receive a near-unanimous vote. But of what weight are organizational difficulties, of what value are legalistic formalities, faced with the demands of democracy? Yes, the Twenty-third Congress must be an extraordinary congress. □



ELLEINSTEIN

Der Spiegel

Statement by 300 CP Members

[The following statement was published in the May 20 issue of *Le Monde*. It was signed by more than 300 members of the French CP, including historian Jean Elleinstein and philosopher Louis Althusser.]

* * *

The undersigned Communists, belonging to all socio-professional categories, cannot hide their astonishment at a certain number of formulas and assertions contained in the report by Georges Marchais.

We will proceed, like all other Communists, to a thorough analysis of the whole of this text; but a number of serious statements call for an immediate response.

Under cover of a reference to the theses of the Twenty-second Congress, which appears to be very formal, a number of summary formulations caricature the positions of Communist intellectuals who have expressed themselves in the recent period in journals other than the organs of the CP—either because of their rejection by our press, or because of a choice tied to our conception of pluralism.

Of course we have varying points of view in relation to these contributions, but that is precisely the richness of our party. To treat any analysis which doesn't come from the party leadership as "thought which has gone adrift," to talk in this

regard of a desire for a panacea in the "liquidation of the party," the "renunciation of being Communist," or a "return to the dictatorship of the proletariat," represents an extreme simplification.

The fact that comrades, local or factory cells, sections or even federal committees are demanding a discussion forum in an exceptional period, and that they equally want to debate ways of urgently perfecting democratic centralism, is likened to an "attempt to dismantle the party in the name of a vague petty-bourgeois anarchism."

The fact that they make so bold as to criticize the role of full-time party officials—which isn't to question their necessity—and the danger that these full-timers could be cut off from production, from real life, from the masses, is reduced to an anti-working-class attack by well(?) paid intellectuals. This workerist reaction shows a great contempt for the working class. It is ridiculous—particularly as a large number of workers share these concerns.

Beyond references to the essential alliance of intellectuals and the working class, which now seem ritualistic, these assertions are evidence of a real regression in relation to the gains made by our party in this sphere, under the influence of Maurice Thorez in the thirties and then in the Argenteuil Central Committee meeting

twelve years ago. They show a regression first as to the role and activity of Communist intellectuals and now as to their very place in the party; and, beyond that, in terms of the alliance between intellectuals and the working class. How can one not underline the contradiction between such language and the policy of alliances that we envisage?

Contrary to this fantastic caricature, what is involved is in no way a challenge to the achievements of the Twenty-second Congress, to which we are deeply committed. Nor do we underestimate the political responsibility of the Socialist Party in the defeat of March 1978. We are concerned to examine, without complacency, why the revolutionary current was unable to maintain this unity on the objectives for change, why it was unable to stimulate a powerful popular current. The schematic rejection of such an examination testifies to a defensive attitude, to a lack of confidence in the masses and in the members of our party, whom they persist in not treating as adults.

We continue to think, and will continue to say, that only such political courage—not refusing to examine any question—is capable of vitalizing political life, of establishing the conditions for the political creativity of our party, and of finally making possible the renewal of the Union of the Left through patient and fraternal work at the base.

Faced with a bourgeoisie which is mercilessly applying a "liberalism" that will weigh very heavily on the wages and conditions of manual and intellectual workers, the requisite struggles need a Communist Party which is powerful because it is wide open to the needs and aspirations of the workers, capable of listening to them and also to its supporters, whether they be workers or intellectu-

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als. To attempt to set the one against the other does not render any service to our cause.

The delay of our party in opening itself up—rightly pointed out by Georges Marchais on several occasions—cannot con-

tinue without grave injury to the future of our people. It is very urgent that the Twenty-third Congress take up this backwardness in all spheres. The way in which it is prepared will, from this point of view, be decisive. □

secretariat and Kanapa for the Political Bureau.

A. I can't confirm that. I left for Toulouse on a reporting job for *Action* and when I got back to Paris I was summoned to a meeting at CP headquarters where I found all the members of the collective with Juquin and Hincker.⁵ There I learned that the pamphlet had been altered in my absence.

On seeing the first copies arrive, Plissonnier⁶ had banged his fist on the table. The secretariat was convened and the decision taken to stop the printing of the pamphlet, although a million copies had already been run off.

A second version was then prepared. On the left-hand page a photo showing the CRS [Compagnies Republicanes de Securite—Republican Security Companies, the French riot police] at Chausson⁷ replaced the one of the handshake. On the right there was a photomontage of different attacks on civil liberties in different countries: Chile, West Germany, the USA, and a photo of a labor camp in the Soviet Union. This last, taken from a film shown on French television, had been authenticated by a statement from the Political Bureau issued the day after the showing.

This second effort again received the approval of the same three members of the secretariat. Plissonnier opposed it, and it was stopped once again.⁸

Q. There was a fresh vote?

A. Yes and we arrived at the final version which was distributed. On the left Chausson and on the right a photo of the Twenty-second Congress. Well, at this meeting Juquin explained the reasons for the secretariat's rejection: the mass of the party wouldn't understand, for many Communists the USSR was still the motherland of socialism, etc. Everyone protested against this blow.

5. François Hincker, a member of the central committee, is editor of the party monthly *Nouvelle Critique*, which has echoed some of the dissidents' criticisms.

6. Gaston Plissonnier, a member of the CP since 1935, is widely regarded as representing the hard-line Stalinist wing inside the secretariat, along with *l'Humanité* editor Roland Leroy. However, on both this issue and that of opening a discussion in the party press, he also appears to have won the support of Fiterman and another supposed "liberal," René Piquet, thus putting Marchais in a minority along with Laurent and the seventh member of the secretariat, Jean Colpin.

7. The CRS were sent in by the French government to evacuate striking workers at the Chausson plant in Gennevilliers.

8. The minimum cost of this operation was calculated by CP member Daniel Verdier, writing in *Le Monde* on May 5, at two million francs (about US\$430,000).

The Pulping of a Pamphlet

[Jacques Frémontier has rapidly become one of the central figures in the French Communist Party opposition. Although he joined the party only in 1971, he soon became editor-in-chief of the party's million-selling factory journal, *Action*. However, as he explains in the interview below, he recently resigned his post in protest at the party's sectarian course during the election campaign and its suppression of certain criticisms of the repression in Eastern Europe.

[Most recently, Frémontier published a caustic attack in the bourgeois daily *Le Monde* (May 10) on the report by General Secretary Georges Marchais to the CP Central Committee. Contrasting Marchais's refusal to allow an open discussion in the party with the professions of democracy made at the party's Twenty-second Congress in 1976, Frémontier concluded that the accounts of his report in the bourgeois press must be "a crude forgery concocted in the dens of imperialism."

[Stung into replying directly to a critic for once, Central Committee representative René Andrieu commented in the CP daily *l'Humanité* that "perhaps Frémontier is in the wrong party." At the same time the CP Political Bureau issued a statement saying that it was "unthinkable that activities disputing the policy and the rules of party life should develop without entailing the necessary political riposte."

[The interview below was conducted by Patrick Rotman and appeared originally in No. 309 of the French weekly *Politique Hebdo* (April 24-30, 1978).]

* * *

Question. In what circumstances did you come to take part in the editing of this pamphlet on civil liberties?

Answer. During the election campaign a rather informal collective was established out of the Central Committee with the responsibility of preparing various propaganda documents intended for the party campaign. Pierre Juquin, with whom I have a fraternal relationship, asked me to take part in producing the pamphlet entitled *Vivre* (To Live), of which eight million copies were to be printed.

At the beginning, it was simply a question of illustrating the document from the National Conference. But it was such an extraordinary example of "wooden lan-

guage" that it seemed impossible to us that a text written in such a style could be distributed on so vast a scale. Approaches were made to the leadership of the party. They replied: "Good grief, you can't want to rewrite a document adopted unanimously by the National Conference."

In the end we found a solution thanks to Marchais, who proposed to publish the conference text as it stood, and to print eight million copies of another pamphlet written in everyday language.

Q. You therefore collaborated on this second pamphlet?

A. Yes, a special collective was set up for this pamphlet in which two professional journalists took part.

Straightaway a problem was posed: what we call in the party "barriers." Why is it that people who objectively ought to vote for the party don't want to? What holds them back? We had a discussion and concluded that there was a double barrier: on civil liberties and on the socialist countries. We therefore looked for a document to express the idea that the French CP is free to criticize the socialist countries. Finally our choice settled on the photo showing the handshake between Juquin and Plyushch.³ We didn't think that this would pose any problem because Juquin had been mandated by the Political Bureau to attend this meeting where he had met Plyushch. Besides, seven million copies of his remarks were run off.

The pamphlet was ready on Monday, January 23. Inside on a double page spread, under the heading "freedom is indivisible," there were two photos. One showed the handshake between Plyushch and Juquin, the other a demonstration against the *Berufsverbot* in West Germany. On Wednesday the proofs arrived for the Central Committee. Three members of the secretariat and an influential member of the Political Bureau gave their approval.

Q. Reliable sources indicate that it was Marchais, Laurent, and Fiterman⁴ for the

3. Dissident Ukrainian mathematician freed after a campaign in the West.

4. Paul Laurent is generally regarded as the leader of the "liberal" wing inside the party. Charles Fiterman has risen rapidly in the party and was generally regarded as a protégé of Marchais until recent events (see note 6).

That very evening I wrote to Marchais to inform him of my resignation from my post as editor-in-chief of *Action*. Two days later he received me: he congratulated me for having written to him. He said that in his opinion the problem of the socialist countries could not be reduced to that of the dissidents. The real question was the functioning of democracy in these countries. He added that even if one could

compare Stalin to Pinochet, it was excessive to liken Brezhnev to the Chilean dictator.

Following this discussion I took back my resignation. I have now handed it in again for good, and for more general reasons—those arising from the way in which the party conducted its election campaign. But I will obviously remain in the party. And to fight! □

“election” of the federal secretary, who is in fact nominated by the leadership. It’s necessary to do likewise in order to alter the practice of democratic centralism. The definition in the statutes is extremely simple, concise, and formally acceptable. It’s in the application that a correction has to be made.

Q. A basic objection is raised to your argument: Wouldn't the creation of a strong Social Democracy favored by Giscard d'Estaing have ended up by perverting the CP, which you describe as sclerotic and shut up in its fortress?

A. In 1972 the party had a choice between a policy of running the Union of the Left through contracts at the top, and one of popular unity tying the contract at the top to popular mobilization and involving the masses. The party leadership chose the first policy, forbidding the establishment of unitary committees because there could have been a risk of “manipulation.” But by whom? By the Socialist Party, which was then very weak? If it had encouraged these committees, the CP would have established the instruments for its own domination at the base. Instead, the CP saw dangers coming from this direction rather than from the establishment of a strong Social Democracy. The party was afraid of what might happen at the base, as in May 1968, because it doesn't have control over the mass movement.

Q. Your criticism takes up the gap between the Communist leadership and the masses, and between the Communist leadership and the militants. It takes up the double language, its absence of any analysis of the class relations. Do you consider this analysis to be equally valid for the other Western Communist Parties?

A. With certain differences, of course, the criticism goes equally for the other parties. One cannot say that the cautious approach of the French CP is solely the result of its organizational structures. It is the fruit of a long history, that of the Stalinist period. And equally for the other parties, one can say that the same holds true. A double separation results from it—between the party and the masses, and between the top layers of the party and the militants. This structure inherited from Stalinism has not been substantially changed. The forms have been modified so that today they are more open, more liberal, more democratic, with a greater awareness of “public relations”; but the organizational substance and this double separation have stayed the same. Under more flexible forms it is still the leadership which co-opts, in France as in Italy or Spain. Even if the internal style is different and more compatible, as in Italy and Spain, the substance is everywhere the same. □

Interview With Louis Althusser

[The following interview with Louis Althusser appeared in the May 6 issue of the Rome daily *Paese Sera*, which is closely associated with the Italian CP. We have taken the text from the May 17 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*.]

* * *

Question. What do you think of Marchais's response to the current debate in the French CP and to the criticisms which have been made, particularly by you?

Answer. The Central Committee, before replying to the questions and criticisms of the militants, should have come up with answers to the objective questions that are posed after the defeat of the Union of the Left: on strategy, on tactics. Marchais's report provides no answers either on strategy or, in consequence, to the questions of the militants. What is striking about this report is its totally defensive character. Even the events of the last six years are treated simply in terms of a comparison between the line of the CP and that of the SP, without the slightest reference to the action of the popular masses and the militants, nor to the class struggle of the bourgeoisie—as if history was made by the leaders of parties.

Q. However, can it be said that there was a reply in Marchais's report?

A. In reality Marchais replied. But he replied in a totally strange way, in response to imaginary questions. For example, he says: “One comrade has said that the party should debate in the public square. Another that full-time officials should be abolished.” But he doesn't specify who and what he is talking about. So he's replying to imaginary questions. It's the method of making an amalgam so as not to have to reply to the basic questions that the militants have posed, and will continue to pose even more after this non-reply, which refuses to take account of the real questioning that is going on.

What is the reaction of the militants, and first of all my reaction? One should call things by their name—in the party



ALTHUSSER

Der Spiegel

today there is a relatively high number of serious militants who are tempted to hand in their cards and leave the party. That would be to fall into the trap; it would be the best present for the leadership and for Marchais, who would like nothing better. It's absolutely necessary to remain in the party and fight to change it, using all the weapons at our disposal—starting with the party statutes which, within their limits, offer means for taking a stand.

Q. So you still stick by what you wrote: “The workers cannot conquer in the class struggle without the CP, but nor can they conquer with the CP as it is.”?

A. I think that's absolutely obvious. The CP must be changed through the struggle of the militants to obtain respect for the existing statutes and to change them where they are open to abuse—as in the

Upheaval in Afghanistan

By Tariq Ali

[The following article appeared in the June 8 issue of the London weekly *Socialist Challenge*, sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

For centuries Afghanistan was ruled by monarchs and religious divines. During British rule in India, the Afghan King Amanullah, who resisted British political and military incursions, was replaced by the Yusufzai dynasty. This family ruled Afghanistan till the April 27 upheaval.

The last ruling monarch, Zahir Shah, was removed from office in 1973 by his brother-in-law, Sardar Daud. Daud pledged democratic reforms. He stated that the preceding regime had been a "corrupt and effete government, with its pseudo-democracy based on personal and class interests which had taken Afghanistan to the edge of the abyss."

Daud promised to convoke an elected Loi Jirga (Grand National Assembly), but nothing happened. The Jirga was the same old combination of divines and feudal notables (most of them provincial governors).

Daud imposed a one-person rule and ruled, in everything but name, like a monarch. He imposed an equally repressive regime and resisted three attempts to topple him.

Then in early April this year a popular trade union leader was assassinated. His murder provoked a wave of angry protest demonstrations and meetings, in open defiance of Daud's ban on all political assemblies. The funeral procession turned into the largest antigovernment demonstration seen in Afghanistan since the 60s.

Daud ordered large-scale arrests and was preparing a bloody purge of all leftists in the country.

The response was sharp and well-prepared. The tank corps (a leftist stronghold) and the air force overthrew the Daud regime.

The scenes which followed were reminiscent of Portugal in 1974. The masses celebrated without inhibitions. Soldiers were garlanded with flowers.

Radio Kabul announced that this was not a traditional military coup, but a "national democratic revolution."

A revolutionary Council was created consisting of eighteen civilians and three army officers.

Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Council is Noor Mohammed Taraki. Vice chairperson and deputy Prime Minister is Babrak Karmal.

The significance lies in the fact that both men were leaders of two different factions of the People's Democratic Party (the public factions were called Parcham and Khalq). The April incidents saw a reunification.

The PDP is a political party which contains all Afghanistan's pro-Moscow Communists as well as a layer of independent intellectuals.

Every member of the new Revolutionary Council is a member of the PDP. This is different from other countries where Communists have participated in governments: Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Indonesia, Bangladesh are the most obvious examples.

The program of the new regime is democratic. It calls for the end of landed estates through a sweeping land reform, and the abolition of feudal and pre-feudal relations.

If implemented this would mark a radical shift in Afghanistan's agrarian structure. At the moment the landowners (comprising 2 percent of the population) have more land than that owned by 81 percent of the peasants.

Forty thousand families own 73 percent of the cultivable land, while 1.5 million

peasant households are landless. Any real change would unleash new struggles and pose the question of a total abolition of existing social relationships.

The new program states that it will ensure "equality of rights of women with men in all social, economic, political and cultural and civil aspects." This, coupled with the promise of a "democratic solution of the nomads' issue" reflects real revolutionary democratic positions.

The decrees on equal rights for women would make Afghanistan the most advanced Muslim state, a striking contrast to its barbaric neighbour, Pakistan.

The events in Afghanistan have created consternation in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. The Pakistani dictator Zia is worried about the impact it will have within the army. Furthermore in the event of former Prime Minister Bhutto being hung, the ensuing instability could further complicate matters.

For the Iranian butcher, matters are even worse. The new Afghan regime will become a rallying point for Iranian dissidents. Radio Kabul can be heard and understood in Iran. The language in both countries is similar and radical measures in Afghanistan will have their impact in Iran.

It is reported that the shah considered a military intervention against Kabul, but was overruled by his superiors in the US State Department. They saw more clearly than their short-sighted client that a military intervention might well be the final blow to bring the shah down.

Socialists must follow the events in Afghanistan carefully in the coming months. If the new regime carries out the measures it has promised, class struggles will intensify in the medieval, tribalist state. The result could well prove yet again the originality of the historical process. □

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