

Intercontinental Press

combined with **IMPREGOR**

Vol. 16, No. 30

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July 31, 1978

USA 75¢

UK 30p



Training camp of Eritrean People's Liberation Front, one of the groups fighting for Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. An increasing number of voices on the left—including Communist parties of Italy, France,

Britain, Belgium, and Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine—are being raised on behalf of Eritrean freedom fighters, urging Ethiopian regime to adopt policy of negotiation. See news report on p. 918.

Liberation

Eritrean Struggle Wins Growing Support

Peru — Eyewitness Report on Workers Upsurge

Behind the Coup in Bolivia

By Gerry Foley

Almost exactly seven years after he seized power in a military coup in August 1971, Bolivian dictator Hugo Banzer Suárez was toppled July 21 by his heir apparent, General Juan Pereda Asbún.

Banzer and Pereda were extremely closely linked. Pereda was not only the ousted dictator's handpicked candidate for president in the elections held July 9, but was also Banzer's former minister of the interior. Banzer obviously intended that they would share power after the elections, since he was to become head of the armed forces.

The elections were called in an attempt to shore up the government's sagging political authority. Although Banzer succeeded in establishing one of the most stable and durable regimes in the country's history (in which there has been an average of more than one coup per year), and although there was a relatively high economic growth rate during his years in office, the dictatorship did nothing to improve the living standards of the masses.

The average per capita income was about US\$390, the lowest in Latin America except for Haiti. In 1974, the effects of the world economic crisis, in particular the increasing price of imported food products and cooking oil, touched off a major rebellion among the peasants, who had previously provided a base for the right.

Between 1970 and 1978, Bolivia's foreign debt rose from \$670 million to \$2.5 billion. Yearly payments on this debt amount to \$176 million, or 27% of the value of exports.

Economic development was predominantly in nonproductive sectors. This had the effect of exacerbating the bitterness of the impoverished masses, as skyscrapers sprung up alongside wretched slums and shantytowns. At the same time, top figures in the government and their associates become implicated in scandals over massive rake-offs from public-works projects.

Sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie did benefit to some extent from the shallow and distorted economic growth. But this had the effect of inspiring aspirations for a society in which they could better enjoy their relative prosperity—that is, for an end to the atmosphere of terror and arbitrariness.

However, the regime found it extremely difficult to relax its repression or to find a shred of political legitimacy to cover the nakedness of capitalist dictatorship in Bolivia.

Banzer had promised that the first step toward elections and a return to civilian government would be a political amnesty. This pledge inspired a broad campaign by the Standing Assembly for Human Rights, supported by all the opposition parties, the underground workers movement, and the Catholic church's Council of Bishops, to assure that the amnesty would be general and without conditions.

At the beginning of this year, Banzer released thirty-three political prisoners and granted amnesty to 284 exiles. At the same time, the government made public a list of 348 citizens who would not be allowed to return to the country. It included a former president, Siles Zuazo, who later became a major opposition candidate in the elections, a rightist leader, as well as a number of children and persons who represented even less of a credible threat to the "public order," since they were dead.

In the atmosphere of general indignation provoked by the military's dubious concession, a group of four wives of miners began a hunger strike. This touched off a wave of active protests. Groups of workers, students, peasants, priests, and others occupied churches and schools and even the UN office in La Paz.

Then the underground miners union issued a call in mid-January for a one-day general strike, which was massively observed. This action showed that the dictatorship had failed, despite severe repres-

sion, to smash the workers movement. A second strike was called, and this time, the workers in La Paz forced their factories to shut down. Students demonstrated in several cities, and the strike got obviously overwhelming public support.

When Banzer tried to crack down on the protesters, the top church leaders were forced to denounce the regime, precipitating the sharpest crisis it had yet suffered. A section of the military declared that there was a "power vacuum" and that they would have to take action if "order" were not reestablished.

When the elections were held, they failed completely to achieve the objectives the junta had set for them. Even with massive vote rigging, Pereda was unable to get a clear majority of votes required for election. Moreover, the fraud was so obvious that the military rulers gained no authority from the vote. In fact, they managed only to look like crooked politicians.

Pereda himself was forced to call on the courts to throw out the results and schedule a new vote "to avoid sorrow and tears for the nation."

Apparently, Pereda and his backers decided finally that they had no alternative but to drop the attempt to get an appearance of a popular mandate and invoke the "ultimate responsibility" of the armed forces for safeguarding the "nation" and "order." According to a July 21 Associate Press report, the putschists claimed that the coup was necessary to block a threat from "Communism."

Fundamentally, the Pereda coup represents an acknowledgement by the Bolivian bourgeoisie of a grave political defeat. It will not halt the deterioration in the position of the military regime. The ultimate effect can only be to aggravate an already explosive situation and prepare the way for a head-on confrontation between a rising mass movement and a regime without credibility or perspectives. □

The Political Show in Bonn

By Jon Britton

"The world's industrialized democracies are smiling, rather than confronting one another, as they peer over the economic abyss together."

This comment by *Christian Science Monitor* reporter Elizabeth Pond hints at the real character of the economic summit held in Bonn, West Germany, July 16-17.

The smiles were part of a charade, in which the heads of state of West Germany, Japan, the United States, and the other "big seven" imperialist powers put on a show of sweet reasonableness as they went through the motions of deliberating over

the economic problems plaguing the capitalist world.

The final act was the signing of a platitude-filled communiqué, drafted beforehand, calling for faster economic growth "without rekindling inflation" and other equally impossible nostrums.

The imperialist chiefs, who are the instigators of mass terror throughout the world, also signed a declaration pledging stepped-up efforts to "combat international terrorism."

As with the three previous such summits, in as many years, the main purpose

of the Bonn get-together was to prop up waning public confidence in the ability of capitalist governments to deal effectively with the developing economic crisis.

Jimmy Carter, in particular, needed shoring up. *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis wrote from Bonn July 16 that "the worry about American intentions and the concern about Mr. Carter's apparent weakness at home . . . have given way to a consensus that it is in the interest of all to bolster the American leader. . . ."

Thus in presummit interviews, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who only a few weeks before had publicly attacked U.S. world economic leadership, went out of his way to express understanding of Carter's difficulties in getting his proposals through Congress.

Another hope of the imperialist rulers is that the Bonn summit will make it politically easier to impose unpopular measures such as Carter's crude-oil tax, which will sharply increase the price of fuel oil and gasoline.

The *Wall Street Journal* of May 8 quotes Carter's special representative for economic summits, Henry Owen, as saying that "during the last year [Britain, France, and Italy] have stuck with extremely difficult, politically painful stabilization programs and brought down inflation. The officials of those governments tell us that the fact that [last year's London] summit urged this . . . was of some help to them in sticking with these policies."

As they view it, the rulers need all the help they can get. They are caught between an inexorable depreciation of paper currencies, whose restabilization calls for reduced government spending and other deflationary policies, and an increasingly militant proletariat in many countries (Peru being the most dramatic recent example).

Faced with this dilemma, the governments of Carter, Schmidt, Fukuda, and the others have been zigzagging between inflationary expansionist policies aimed at preventing all-out protectionism and a major economic collapse, and deflationary austerity measures, which slash living standards and bring chronic unemployment to millions.

The real verdict on the Bonn summit came a few days after Carter and his fellow heads of state had gone back home. Wealthy investors, banks, and corporations once again began dumping dollars in massive quantities in favor of stronger currencies and gold. From July 18 to July 21 alone, the dollar lost nearly 4% of its value relative to gold.

By their actions, the billionaires are telling Carter in no uncertain terms that his "anti-inflation program" is not enough. He must step up the offensive against American working people or risk financial catastrophe. □

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Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and third and fourth in August.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-

flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

To Subscribe: For one year send \$24 to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates on first class and airmail.

In Europe: For air-speeded subscriptions, write to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP, England. In Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box 151, Glebe 2037. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 1663, Wellington.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Varick Street Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address as well as your new address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

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Hugo Blanco Sworn In to Constituent Assembly

By Fred Murphy

LIMA, July 18—Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco was sworn in as a Constituent Assembly deputy today. The bourgeois deputies took their oaths solemnly, hands uplifted in reverence for the sanctity of the capitalist institutions they seek to defend. But Blanco swore in with his fist in the air and his voice booming: "For the working class, for the world socialist revolution"—and, in reference to the brutal repression unleashed against striking teachers earlier today—"for the blood that was shed this morning; yes, I swear."

In this way Blanco expressed from inside the Legislative Palace the mood of those in the streets outside. For just as the deputies were arriving for the first preparatory session of the assembly, thousands of striking public high-school teachers were marching toward the palace on the Avenida Abancay. They stood in the plaza outside the palace chanting, "SUTEP, SUTEP!" and "No more maneuvers, we want a solution!"

The teachers filled the plaza; their chants drowned out the shouts and songs coming from a crowd of supporters of the bourgeois Peruvian Aprista Party.² The Civil Guard moved in with clubs and tear gas to disperse the demonstration. As the Constituent Assembly recessed at 12:30, the main hall of the Legislative Palace became filled with the pungent odor of the gas. Soon crying and choking deputies, reporters, and on-lookers were scurrying for the rear exits of the palace.

Later the teachers and their supporters regrouped and marched back down the Avenida Abancay toward University Park. Government workers threw confetti and tickertape from the windows of the ministry buildings on the avenue and shouted their support.

In front of the Economics and Finance Ministry, the Civil Guard again launched attacks on the demonstrators. Oscar Buse Thorne, a by-stander, was struck in the

head and critically injured by a tear-gas grenade fired at close range. Numerous other teachers and demonstrators were injured.

The vast majority of Peru's 140,000 public high-school teachers have been on strike since May 8, demanding a 100 percent wage hike, better working conditions, and recognition of their national union, the SUTEP. Thus far, the military government has responded only with repression and maneuvers aimed at dividing the teachers. The regime has refused to negotiate with the SUTEP. But the strike remains 90 percent effective and enjoys growing mass support. It has become a key test of strength between the workers movement and the military government.

* * *

Peru's new Constituent Assembly so far has not taken on the "decorum" and "dignity" typical of bourgeois parliaments. During today's preparatory session, chants, clapping, and singing rang out continually from the spectators' galleries, which were mostly filled with raucous Apristas waving white handkerchiefs—the party's traditional symbol—and supporters of the other main bourgeois party, the PPC (Christian People's Party). But the workers were represented too, and from time to time chants of "SUTEP, SUTEP" and "The left united will never be defeated" could be heard above the din of whistles and Aprista anthems.

If the bourgeois parties managed to carry the day in the galleries, the workers won the first small but substantive point in the session itself. Earlier, deputies from the workers parties had insisted that assembly President Victor Raul Haya de la Torre (the "supreme head" of the Apristas) approve the use of assembly funds to pay the travel expenses for the return to Peru of the political and trade-union deportees still outside the country. During the morning session, Haya announced that this would be done for the exiles who had been elected as deputies.

Hugo Blanco immediately rose in his place, demanding that all the exiles—elected or not—be provided with travel funds. Not wishing to confront Blanco head-on over this point, and as the chant "Deportees to Peru!" broke out in the halls, Haya answered, "And for Señores Letts, Damonte, . . ." listing all the deportees except Ricardo Napurí, like Blanco a dep-

uty from the Workers, Peasants, Students and People's Front (FOCEP). Blanco quickly responded, "Napurí, also!" to which Haya said, "Yes, Señor Napurí, also."

Napurí, Blanco, ten other leftists, and one right-wing journalist were deported to Argentina on May 25. Three more of these deportees—Genaro Ledesma of the FOCEP and Javier Diez Canseco and Ricardo Díaz Chávez of the Democratic People's Union—were also elected to the assembly. Díaz Chávez arrived from Mexico today. Napurí, Ledesma, Diez Canseco, and Ricardo Letts are to arrive from Paris on July 23, and the workers parties are planning a welcoming rally for them at the airport. Several other union leaders and leftist political figures are still abroad, but with the funds provided by the assembly they should be returning soon. The government's emergency decree under which the activists had been deported was withdrawn July 14.

* * *

The assembly adjourned at 5:30 today. Hugo Blanco and several other workers deputies left the Legislative Palace together. Almost immediately they were surrounded by several hundred persons and hurried off down a side street to Lima's central market. Blanco addressed the impromptu rally briefly, calling on everyone to attend the big rally tomorrow night in the Plaza Dos de Mayo. Peru's main trade-union federation, the CGTP³ has called the rally to celebrate the first anniversary of the July 19, 1977, general strike. That national work stoppage was the opening round in the upsurge of the Peruvian masses against the military regime's austerity policies—an upsurge that is by no means over. □

3. Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers).

1. Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores de la Educación del Perú (United Federation of Educational Workers of Peru).

2. "Aprista" refers to the American People's Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), the more commonly used name for the Peruvian Aprista Party. The APRA was a revolutionary-nationalist formation in the 1920s and 1930s, but later entered into collaboration with the parties of the oligarchy. It has the most seats in the Constituent Assembly.

Summer Schedule

Next week's issue will be the last before our summer break. We will resume our regular schedule with the issue dated August 28.

30,000 in Lima Demand Amnesty for Fired Union Militants

LIMA, July 19—Thirty thousand persons gathered in the Plaza Dos de Mayo tonight, spilling over into the Avenida Nicolas de Pierola and other side streets. Across the front of the CGTP's headquarters on the plaza was a huge banner reading "Labor Amnesty."

This demand focuses on the fight for reinstatement of more than 5,000 union militants fired after the general strike that took place one year ago today. Winning it will be the next step in the struggle for democratic rights, which has secured two important victories in the last few days. On Sunday, July 16, came the announcement that all the exiles will be allowed to return and this morning, on the front page of the government-controlled dailies, the decree that all political and trade-union prisoners are being freed. If fully carried out, this will mean the release of dozens of persons, some of whom have been incarcerated for more than seven years.

The crowd on the plaza tonight was broader than the CGTP's own ranks, and in a considerably more radical mood than the Stalinist bureaucrats on the balcony above.

The CGTP is dominated by the Communist Party (Unity). Thus far, the leadership of the CGTP has failed to come out clearly in support of the teachers union, SUTEP, in its fight for recognition by the government (the SUTEP is under Maoist leadership and does not belong to the CGTP).

Hundreds of SUTEP teachers were in the crowd, however, and the immense support for their struggle was expressed in chants of "Let the SUTEP speak" that at times drowned out the CGTP's loudspeakers.

At last, Arturo Sánchez Vicente, the president of the SUTELM (the Metropolitan Lima unit of the SUTEP) mounted the platform. He called on the CGTP leaders to set the date for a national general strike in support of the teachers' demands. As the evening wore on, the CGTP bureaucrats themselves were leading chants of "general strike," although they were careful to say nothing concrete as to when such a work stoppage might be called.

In allowing Sánchez Vicente—along with other leaders of independent unions such as Victor Cuadros of the miners and Avelino Mar of the National Agrarian Federation—to speak the CGTP departed from their usual policy of monopolizing the platform at the federation's rallies. The evening thus reflected the pressure for unity in face of the attacks of the government and the capitalists.

As for the crowd's militancy, it was evident in the loud applause that greeted Avelino Mar's declaration that the problems of the Peruvian peasants can only be solved when the working class is in power

and similar calls for an end to capitalism from other speakers.

Support for other strikes now under way in Peru was also expressed in the banners and speeches at the rally. Thirty-five thousand health and hospital workers went on strike across the country July 14. In Chimbote, an important industrial center on the northern coast, the workers at PICSA shipyards have been out for more than 120 days against mass layoffs. An indefinite general strike is to begin in Chimbote tomorrow in support of the PICSA struggle.

Hugo Blanco and other workers deputies

Constituent Assembly—Tribune for Peruvian Masses

LIMA, July 21—Yesterday's Constituent Assembly session did not last more than forty minutes. But before it was over, the workers deputies again turned the assembly into a tribune for the struggles of the Peruvian masses.

After some procedural announcements and the swearing-in of UDP Deputy Ricardo Díaz Chávez and other deputies who had been absent from yesterday's session, FOCEP Deputy Juan Cornejo Gómez tried to get the floor. "The Centromin miners are dying of hunger," Cornejo said in a loud voice, waving a sheet of paper. Cornejo is a copper miner from the department (province) of Pasco.

As jeers broke out from the Apristas in the galleries, assembly President Haya de la Torre declared, "There is nothing up for debate," and quickly adjourned the session. New chants arose, this time from the leftists in the galleries: "Reinstate the fired workers!"

Cornejo Gómez was attempting to read a message to the assembly sent from fifteen miners from the Centromin copper complex in Pasco who have been on hunger strike for more than three months. They are demanding reinstatement for themselves and for seventy-one other miners fired by the Centromin management last year. In this struggle, the fifteen represent more than 5,000 other union activists whom the government ordered dismissed after the July 1977 general strike.

The hunger strikers are being held prisoner in the Police Hospital in Lima. They were taken there after being violently removed from San Martín University where they began the hunger strike in late April. Several are under intensive care, having begun refusing liquids, as well as solid foods, fifteen days ago. "If we wait until July 28"—the day substantive sessions of the Constituent Assembly are to begin—"my brother miners may already be dead," Cornejo Gómez said after yesterday's assembly session.

in the Constituent Assembly sent messages of support to the rally. Blanco was unable to attend because of a television engagement. When the government director of the station canceled Blanco's appearance at the last minute, the moderator of the interview show protested and refused to proceed with his other guests. Viewers were thus presented with a blank screen for half an hour.

The CGTP rally ended peacefully at about 10:30. Nevertheless, a unit of Civil Guards felt obliged to fire several tear-gas bombs in the Avenida Nicolas de Pierola to disperse stragglers. □

While Cornejo failed to get action on the miners' demands from the assembly itself, his efforts did force Haya de la Torre to send a delegation of deputies to the Police Hospital today to visit the hunger strikers.

FOCEP deputies Hugo Blanco, Victor Iano Lozano, and Cornejo were part of the delegation, which also included several Apristas and even a PPC deputy.

The miners' physical health has been considerably weakened by their ordeal. But their will to struggle remains strong. One of them, Miguel Linares Espinoza, was a FOCEP candidate for the Constituent Assembly. He told me, "We intend to stay right here. Our slogan is: 'Either back to our jobs or else to our graves.'"

The delegation of deputies returned to the Legislative Palace, where Haya de la Torre announced that he would meet with the prime minister and the ministers of health and labor to discuss the hunger strike.

Winning the miners' demand for a full "labor amnesty"—reinstatement of all 5,000 fired militants—will not be an easy task. The bosses are now trying to carry out even more massive layoffs to cut costs and deal with their huge foreign debt. Another hunger strike in March forced the military regime to order the rehiring of seventy-eight workers, but thus far only nine have actually gotten their jobs back.

The struggle will intensify in the coming weeks. A July 8 congress of the FNTMMP,⁴ Peru's main miners union, called a countrywide strike for August 2 to demand the rehiring of all its members who have been fired. And FNTMMP President Victor Cuadros and other workers deputies will be able to continue using the Constituent Assembly to give further impetus to this struggle. □

4. Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros y Metalúrgicos del Perú (National Federation of Miners and Metalworkers of Peru).

Czechoslovak Dissidents Assaulted by Plainclothes Cops

[With the rise of protest against bureaucratic dictatorship in Eastern Europe, the Stalinist rulers have resorted increasingly to methods of repression designed to arouse the least possible publicity.

[These operations are quite similar to those long used by the Latin American dictatorships sponsored by Washington. The basic approach is to send plainclothes police to carry out gangster-style attacks on political dissidents.

[In an article circulating in samizdat in Czechoslovakia, Rudolf Slansky, Jr., son of the principal defendant in the frame-up trials of the 1950s, describes the parallel-police operation of the "normalized" regime.

[Slansky chose to cast his denunciations in an ironic form, attempting to turn back on the regime in his own country what the press of the Stalinist parties and the ruling bureaucracies said about the Moro kidnapping affair. Unfortunately, in so doing, he accepts some of the assumptions of the Stalinist propagandists. But this misunderstanding or ignorance of what happened in Italy takes nothing away from what he has to say about what is happening in Czechoslovakia.

[Extensive excerpts of Slansky's article were published in the May 31 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*. They are given below. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

On May 8, Aldo Moro was assassinated in Rome by unknown terrorists belonging to the Red Brigades. On May 15, Ivan Médek was kidnapped in Prague by unknown terrorists after being interrogated at State Security headquarters. On May 19, Jaroslav Matras and Jiri Karlik were mistreated in the Prague State Security building on Bartolomejska Street. On May 22, after being interrogated in police headquarters, Bohumil Dolezal was attacked by unknown terrorists.

Since the circumstances of the kidnapping and death of Aldo Moro are generally known, it seems useful to shed a little light on the cases that occurred in Prague. Ivan Médek is a music critic. He is fifty years of age. He signed Charter 77 and lost his job as a result. He has been taking part in the work of the Committee to Assist Persons Unjustly Arrested.

On May 16, Médek wanted to visit his friend Ladislav Hejdanek, a spokesman for Charter 77. The police watching Hejdanek's apartment ordered him to go with them to the police headquarters on Barto-

lomejska Street. After being questioned for two hours, Médek was released. As soon as he left the building, while still accompanied by a policeman, he was jumped by two men, who shoved him into a car. He was tied up and blindfolded. He was taken to an unknown place, where he was beaten until he lost consciousness. When he came to, he realized that he was in a forest within walking distance of Nove Straseci, which is forty-five kilometers west of Prague. Ivan Médek is a sick man; the beating he got could have killed him.

Jaroslav Matras and Jiri Karlik are workers in Chotebor, a small town in western Bohemia. They signed Charter 77 a few days ago. While in Prague, they wanted to visit Hejdanek. The police watching the apartment took them to State Security headquarters. There they were questioned for four hours, threatened, insulted, and beaten up.

Bohumil Dolezal is a former writer for the magazine *Tvar* and literary critic. He now works as a programmer. He also signed Charter 77. Arrested like the others in front of Hejdanek's home, he was taken to Bartolomejska Street. After he was questioned, the police offered to take him home. As he got out of the police car in Rimska Street, he was attacked by several men. Despite his calls for help, the terrorists managed to shove him into a car and drive off. He was taken to a forest near Pribram, to the south of Prague. There he was beaten and left to find his way home.

The killing of Aldo Moro was the culmination of a series of violent actions committed by terrorists of the left and right. Their aim is to create chaos in Italy, to destroy the democratic system and replace it with a totalitarian system of the left or of the right, and to wipe out the historic compromise between the forces of democracy and socialism.

What is the motive of the terrorist attacks in our country? The assaults in recent weeks have not been the first such acts of violence. Earlier, Jiri Hajek, the first spokesman of Charter 77, was attacked right out on the street. And the same thing happened to Kriegel's wife in her home.

Along with this, we have the coffins sent to the homes of Venek Silhan, Frantisek Kriegel, and Karel Bartosek.

Those responsible for these actions have never been found, although the minister of the interior once said that State Security could solve most of the crimes committed in Czechoslovakia.

Nonetheless, in some cases, it is known who was responsible. The writer Pavel

Kohout, his wife, Jelena Masinova, and Ladislav Hejdanek, for example, were attacked by State Security agents, who have not been punished for this.

It is perfectly clear that the immediate aim of these actions is to intimidate the critics of the regime. With the approach of the tenth anniversary of the military intervention in August 1968, they want to limit the activities of these critics, isolate them from society, and liquidate the movement for civil rights and the other citizens initiatives.

It is possible that this sort of act of violence may arouse in a section of society such a feeling of helplessness that some desperate individuals or adventurists will try to form Czechoslovak Red Brigades or something like the Red Army Faction. And then the State Security would find justification for resorting once again to the sort of terror that was carried out in the 1950s, and of which we are all well aware.

We know well how this terror developed. First the bodies of political oppositionists were found in the forests. They were liquidated by people such as Pich-Tuma and other State Security agents, who were never punished for their misdeeds. Then we saw death sentences handed down in trials against political oppositionists. Among those prosecuted were members and even leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, who were hanged [including Slansky's father]. And this is to say nothing of the tens of thousands of innocent persons who were sent to prison.

Today the terror is being directed against the governmental structures themselves. It is aimed at halting the trend toward a recognition of the need to take positive steps to overcome the crisis of our society, a need that appears more and more urgent even to some of the members of the current state leadership.

The terrorists want to reinsert into such people a feeling of fear and servility, because the state leaders are perfectly aware that such terror may at any time be turned against them. Moreover, they know that in 1968 the question of who was responsible for the political terror in the 1950s was one of the most delicate and burning issues.

It is precisely because the authors of these unsolved terrorist crimes have not been found and those who are known have not been punished that the conviction prevails that these acts were not carried out by isolated individuals but that the State Security, or some people in it, lie behind them.

If the government wants to avoid suspi-

cions that it gave the order for such actions, or at least is tolerating them, it must demand that the security organs put an end to the terror, that they go after the terrorists and punish them. Only such an attitude can restore respect for the law in

our country and avert a wave of terrorism that will spare no one. After the failure of the police in the fight against the terrorists in Italy, the minister of the interior handed in his resignation. Shouldn't we expect the same thing in our country? □

As IMF Tightens the Screws

Zambia on Edge of Bankruptcy

By John Blair

The economic and political crisis facing Zambia has continued to deepen and the country is now even less capable of short-term recuperation than before.

Central as always in determining the scale of these problems is the price of copper—the commodity that accounted for 92% of exports in the first nine months of 1977. After a brief and rather slight revival in mid-1976 and early 1977, copper has now returned to cash values prevailing as long as thirteen years ago.

The problems of this situation are starkly brought home by setting these against the escalation in import prices over the same period. In the fourth quarter of 1977, the London Metal Exchange price for copper was US\$0.5518 per pound, compared with US\$0.5851 in 1965. On the other hand, import prices rose nearly 150% between 1965 and 1975. Not surprisingly, the result has been a huge balance-of-payments deficit.

All sectors of the economy are in recession. Unfortunately (and perhaps conveniently for the government) statistics are unavailable on the key indicators of employment and earnings after June 1976. Even by then, however, we find a drop of 8% in total employment from one year earlier (from 398,840 to 368,360)—26% in the key indicator, construction; 8% in agriculture; 5% in manufacturing industry. Almost daily news items since then of closures, layoffs, production curtailments, etc., confirm that this rate of decline has, if anything, accelerated.

In introducing the 1978 budget, Finance Minister John Mwanakatwe gave figures for manufacturing output, which, he said, had undergone a real decline of 4.1% in 1976 and 5.5% in 1977.

For those able to remain employed, wages have stagnated or even declined in cash terms, while inflation has eaten away at their real value. Once again figures are not available. But those up to mid-1976 indicate that average wages for all industries actually declined in the previous year by 5%. Even if we assume that Zambians' wages actually went up by the 5% per annum that the government gives as the

officially permitted figure, this would in no way compensate for cost-of-living rises.

Nor, despite years of propaganda for the "rural revolution," has agriculture expanded sufficiently to make any significant contribution to reducing the food import bill, let alone to fulfilling the oft-repeated demand that it become Zambia's chief export earner.

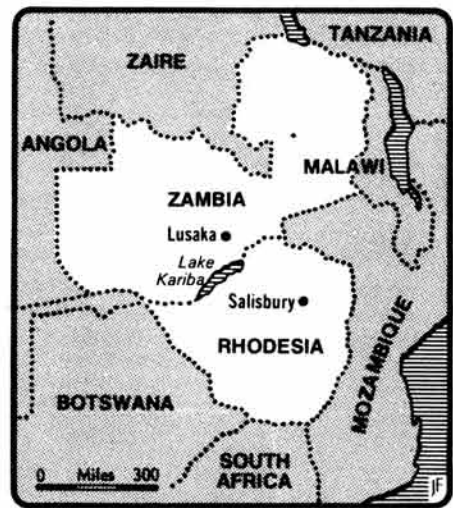
The January 1978 budget reflected Zambia's desperate economic plight and worsened the living standards of its populace. The proposals included a reduction in the subsidy on maize meal, which led to its rising in price by 21.6% and an end to fertiliser subsidies, which will lead to higher prices for all agricultural commodities.

Zambia's economic plight has been the subject of a good deal of attention from the big financial institutions of the capitalist world. This is because it is widely recognised that its government provides one of the most effective instruments for stabilising capitalism in southern Africa. In particular, its role as one of the key "front-line states" makes it inevitably involved in the security of any settlements in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

For the past few years, the country has received periodic loans and outright cash transfers from the leading economies of the capitalist world. March 1978 saw a new step forward with the negotiation of a two-year aid programme with the International Monetary Fund involving a \$390 million credit and the rescheduling of an earlier \$46.6 million facility. This included certain severe conditions that tie the government's hands:

- An immediate devaluation of 10% was imposed, a move that will inevitably lead to further price increases.
- The government has undertaken to further reduce its budgetary deficit in 1979. This will be achieved largely through more cuts in consumer subsidies.
- A two-year wage freeze has been imposed.

The IMF has cleverly ensured that it will be in a position to police these conditions by paying out only \$99 million of Zambia's



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special drawing rights immediately. The other \$216 million will come in three monthly installments and be dependent on "good behaviour."

Even this facility is clearly not enough to solve Zambia's immediately pressing economic problems. The April 24 London *Financial Times* reported government sources as believing that about \$800 million is necessary to pull Zambia out of its economic depression. Consequently, negotiations have now been opened with the World Bank for a further loan, which it is hoped will be worth up to \$400 million.

The 'Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie'

The Zambian ruling class is most accurately described as a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie." Because at independence in 1964 almost all industry, commerce, and capitalist farming was in the hands of foreign companies or individuals, the road to economic power for the ambitious lay via the state machine. The nearly fourteen years since independence have therefore seen a vast expansion in the size of the state-controlled sector of the economy. Now more than half of Zambia's labour force works for it.

The essential beneficiaries of the process that its propagandists variously describe as "socialism" or "humanism" are the top administrators from the cabinet and Central Committee downwards who are charged with administration of the state machine and the economy. Both because of their high individual salaries and because their bureaucratic positions allow them to profit from large-scale corruption, these individuals use their tenure of office to accumulate capital. For them this process is particularly urgent because of the multitude of examples in neighboring countries of the sudden dispossession of political power holders by the military.

Such systems then tend to show stability only in periods of economic expansion when the ruling bureaucracy finds few

problems in its own self-enrichment. Economic stress of the kind experienced by Zambia since late 1974 when the copper balloon burst produces serious tensions and fissures in an elite scrambling for rewards. Having made these preliminary observations, it is possible to isolate a number of different tendencies currently at work among Zambia's bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

The 'Right-wing' Grouping

The representatives of the "right-wing" grouping consist in the main of politicians who have been excluded from office over the recent period. However, some of its proposals have wide support throughout the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Its most long-standing figure is Arthur Wina, a prominent leader in the immediate pre- and post-independence era in the politically volatile Western Province. Three other figures in this grouping, Sefelino Mulenga, Axon Soko, and Aaron Miller, have been dismissed from office. They had all associated themselves with Arthur Wina in Parliament as critics of the government, developing a clearly defined opposition to many of Kaunda's policies:

- It makes constant reference to the closure of the Rhodesian border (effective since January 1973) and blames this for many of Zambia's economic problems. In that respect its representatives particularly delight in pointing out that the border is closed only for Zambia itself. Thus copper from the neighbouring Shaba Province of Zaïre travels through Zambia, Rhodesia, and Botswana into South Africa to be shipped from East London. Practically all essential supplies of mining equipment and consumer commodities, including a large part of the food consumption of the province, travel in the reverse direction. Meantime, 90,000 tons of Zambian cargo is marooned at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, its only directly accessible port.

For many of its advocates, reopening of the border is not just a means of cheapening transport costs. They are convinced that such a move would reduce the price of many commodities currently very costly in Zambia because they are brought in from the northern hemisphere. If full trading relationships could be reopened with South Africa and Rhodesia, these could be obtained more cheaply from these more developed neighbours. The problem with this argument is that in the long run such a development could of course have a debilitating effect on Zambia's own infant industries.

At the time of independence, 40% of Zambia's imports came from Rhodesia and a further 21% from South Africa. From 1965 onwards, gradual attempts were made to reduce Zambian dependence on these areas. Because of the much larger markets in the south, a full reopening of the borders would undoubtedly lead to a

reconcentration of industry there and a rundown of that in Zambia.

This analysis enables us to see that the "right-wing" grouping that we are discussing here does not in fact articulate the aspirations of most of Zambia's bureaucratic bourgeoisie on this issue. The latter will prefer to strengthen state-owned enterprise, which is their own avenue to wealth and privilege. For these, the border closure has provided fertile ground. It would be more accurate to say that the Wina grouping expresses essentially the positions of international capital, which would of course much prefer to achieve regional hegemony through the concentration of production in one efficient plant.

- This link is reflected again in a second key feature of their attitudes. They are the foremost advocates in Zambia in favour of widening the sphere of openings for foreign investment. They often accuse the government of discouraging its potential contribution to development through nationalisations, bureaucratic controls, etc.

On this issue they won a victory with the introduction of the Industrial Development Bill on August 11, 1977. This was rapidly passed through Parliament and contains an Investment Code guaranteeing the repatriation of profits and capital for private investors. Little attempt is being made to disguise the fact that this represents a major policy change by the government and heavy stress has been laid on the fact that there will be no more waves of nationalisations like that of 1968-71. Less honestly accounted for is why Kaunda has made this reversal. Not only is it in contradiction with the professed aim of "building socialism," but it is also a step backwards for a ruling class whose power is based on the control of state-owned enterprise.

- More clearly directed at members of the bureaucracy is the Wina grouping's increasing stress on reducing the number of office holders in the state. Here they direct most fire at the institutions of Zambia's single party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). This has a twenty-eight member Central Committee (each earning 12,000 kwacha [about US\$15,000] per annum plus expenses).

Perhaps most importantly, the Central Committee tends to be generally composed, like the party administration right down the line, of members whose rise to position has usually come through long-time loyalty to the machine. Many of these bureaucrats have minimal education and tend to be regarded with contempt by other sections of the elite who feel they have won their own positions through talent and not "crawling."

Related to this is the fact that the Central Committee has tended to become a parallel organ of government that is not responsible to parliament but is largely under the direct control of the president. It is elected by the National Council, where Kaunda's position is unchallenged. Its

general secretary, who is the president's deputy, is appointed by Kaunda. The demand for a cut in its influence has been accompanied by one for the election of its general secretary.

- On two issues, the positions of this "right" grouping find a more dynamic response throughout the bureaucracy.

First, Zambia's dire financial position has led to demands for economy through the restoration of fee paying in schools and hospitals. Through such a move, it is argued, the quality of these services, currently deteriorating in disastrous fashion, could be improved. Clearly of course this would apply only to those who would then be able to afford them. The financial position of most members of Parliament is clearly shown by their overwhelming support of such proposals.

Second, Zambia's "Leadership Code" is supposed to apply to all civil servants with incomes exceeding K2,000 [about US\$2,500] per annum, who are officially forbidden to have incomes from any private business. On September 9 the annual meeting of managing directors of FIN-DECO (Financial and Industrial Corporation, embracing all of Zambia's parastatal companies) called for the restriction of the code's application to persons in political positions only. They alleged that its embracing of persons like themselves with money to spare for investment was effectively slowing down the potential rate of growth in the economy. Once again their plea gained overwhelming parliamentary support, particularly from the "right-wing" grouping.

As long as most of these complaints of the "right" were heard only in frequent speeches by members of Parliament, they could safely be largely ignored by Kaunda. A potentially much more dangerous threat was posed, however, when many of them were contained in a Parliamentary Select Committee report presented November 29 and unanimously accepted by the House the next day. Amongst other things, it proposed:

- A "recipient contribution" be instituted for social services.
- All consumer subsidies to be phased out over the next three years.
- Further encouragement to be given to overseas private investors.
- Revision of the Leadership Code.
- Making the Central Committee elective from regional conferences of the party.
- Electing the general secretary of the party by popular vote.
- "Some form of coercive redeployment" to be implemented for urban unemployed.

Kaunda reacted angrily to the report. In his opening speech to the National Council of the UNIP December 11 he attacked Parliament strongly for taking up matters that lay outside its constitutional prerogatives, such as the call for changes in the functioning of the party. He insisted, "I

regard Parliament as a committee of the National Council."

But despite the bluster, Kaunda did not feel strong enough to take action against Mwanakatwe or the other two ministers involved. Furthermore, it is now clear that on economic and social questions the government is moving in the direction pointed to by the committee.

Reemergence of the UPP, A 'Populist' Current?

On September 9, 1977, a press conference of prominent leaders of the ex-United Progressive Party (UPP)—Simon Kapwepwe, John Chisata, Justin Chimba, Peter Chanda, and Musondo Chambeshi—announced their reentry into the UNIP.

The first test of popularity of the ex-UPP members came when one of them, Chambeshi, entered for the by-election held in the Roan constituency, Luanshya. Chambeshi won 1,126 votes, 56% of the total in a poll now down to 13% of the electorate. This happened despite heavy-handed attempts to prevent his victory and Kaunda's own last-minute intervention.

In face of this intervention, Chambeshi's victory must be seen as a very clear indication of the low level to which Kaunda's popularity has now sunk. On the other hand, unfortunately, it cannot be seen as a conscious opting for any radical alternative politics.

Before its banning in January 1972, the UPP was notable for its opportunism and its willingness to use tribalism as a means to win support. It got a great deal of support on the Copperbelt through exploiting economic discontent during the early 1970s recession, complaining about, among other things, the government-imposed wage freeze. On the other side, it lined up with the distinctively right-wing African National Congress, whose main base lay in the Southern and Western Provinces and which complained persistently of the adverse effects of the scaling down of contacts with the white-ruled south. Its origins as a party lay in the factional disputes of the late 1960s inside the UNIP in which alignments were formed on tribal lines. The UPP was associated overwhelmingly with the Bemba, who are dominant on the Copperbelt and in Northern Province.

That they intend to attack once again through appealing to their "natural" constituency among the Copperbelt working class is apparent from an aggressive speech made by Chambeshi in Parliament on March 29. Kaunda has frequently suggested that Zambia's economic problems arise from its people's tendency to prefer foreign "luxuries" to good traditional food and drink. He has called for reestablishing nshima (boiled maize meal) as the basic national dish. Chambeshi commented that some leaders who at this moment call for eating nshima in place of bread will tomor-

row be suggesting we should return to our ancestors' practice of eating only one meal a day. Instead of posing such false solutions to economic problems, the govern-



KAUNDA: Popularity plummets.

ment must look for the real causes and recognise that many people, even among those who are working, have difficulties in affording even nshima.

On the political front then, Kaunda's leadership is now confronted with a dual threat. It can be safely predicted that the route to success in the general election that is due to take place this year will be increasingly outspoken criticism of government policies. Those who have been longest associated with such opposition (in particular the clear outsiders of the ex-UPP grouping) will benefit the most.

Just now it seems unlikely that a candidate will emerge to challenge Kaunda in the simultaneous presidential election. While Kapwepwe is the strongest political rival, he may feel that for the present his base remains too narrow to make an effective challenge.

From the standpoint of Zambia's labouring masses, of course, there can be no advantage in supporting any one of these contenders for bureaucratic power and privilege. With the complete absence of any real alternative, however, it is certain that large numbers of "protest" votes will go to these "rivals," particularly in the elections to Parliament.

The situation would be more hopeful were there any signs of a revival in the trade-union movement, which at leadership level is a thoroughly integrated part

of the party and government machinery. Objective conditions, however, militate against this, and the past year has seen a continuation of the sad history of working-class defeat in nearly every struggle.

On June 1, 1977, thirty-two "strike leaders" were sacked at Reckitt and Coleman's factory in Ndola.

On December 16, "strike ringleaders" were sacked at Livingstone Motor Assemblers. The management action was endorsed without question by the National Union of Transport and Allied Workers executive January 20.

On March 12, 1978, about 100 workers were fired at Zambia Clay in Kitwe after a three-hour strike protesting delays in the implementation of a negotiated wage agreement.

Given the ready availability of thousands of unemployed, the totally bureaucratic leadership of the unions and the absence of any important traditions of struggle, the Zambian working class is disabled in crippling fashion from conducting any real economic fight.

The one section of the class with which the government has until now assiduously avoided any confrontation and which has a history of strike action going back to 1935 is the labour force in the copper mines. But right now their position is gravely weakened by the fact that this is being gradually run down through a deliberate process of premature retirement and that the mines are running at a loss because of copper prices.

The situation of the trade-union movement then poses gigantic tasks for revolutionists. Only when sections of the class can be won to a programme that takes up demands like the sliding scale of wages against inflation, generalisation of all struggles, and the posing of workers control against that of the state bureaucracy, can the present logjam be broken.

Those massive external developments in southern Africa that are not dealt with here but which have formed an essential part of the Zambian political scene will continue to play an increasingly important role in this process. It is highly likely that proletarian revolution in Zambia will come about ultimately only as part of an upsurge of the entire region, in which the central role will obviously be played by the Black proletariat of South Africa. □

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Selections From the Left

**la
gauche**

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

In a news analysis column in the June 29 issue, François Massion unmask the latest phase of Belgian imperialist intervention in Zaïre:

"People are talking about the return of the paratroopers from Shaba. What's not being talked about so much, however, is that ninety new Belgian paratroopers were sent to Zaïre to take their place. Our government is really displaying a great deal of 'humanitarianism.' A few weeks ago, the pretext that was used for the first operation, code-named 'Red Beans,' vanished—the 'Europeans' were repatriated. The highly inventive general staff came up with a new justification for maintaining a Belgian military presence in Zaïre.

"Officially, the purpose of the new mission—nicknamed 'White Beans'—is to distribute food and medical supplies provided by Belgium to the population. A neat subterfuge—for it will probably take quite a while before the people of Shaba see the true colors of this Belgian aid.

"The cabinet announced at its June 23 meeting that the government would maintain a Belgian division in Africa after the return of some of the paratroopers on June 30. A few days prior to this decision, the UPI and Reuters wire services reported that Kinshasa had furnished the Western governments with information indicating that a regroupment of 1,000 'rebels' had taken place near Luashi, and had asked these governments to step up their military aid. (*Le Monde*, June 20).

"A sixth sense tells us that there must be a cause-and-effect relationship between Mobutu's new quakings and the outpouring of humanitarianism on the part of our government. We can understand how Mobutu feels—after all, 2,400 troops of the all-African force, plus a team of Chinese military instructors, plus 'white' experts directly overseeing Mobutu's state apparatus, plus a decaying army, doesn't add up to much when it comes to holding back the anger of an entire populace.

"For once, we agree with the chairman of the Socialist Party in Flanders, Karel Van Miert, when he says: 'It is unacceptable that things should still be portrayed as though our aid were benefiting Zaïre, when, on the contrary, it winds up in the pockets of Mobutu and his advisers. . . . Furthermore, it is unacceptable that Belgian paratroopers should continue to function as Mobutu's gendarmes.'

"What is equally unacceptable is for ministers or parliamentary deputies who claim to defend the interests of labor to participate in, or sanction, a government that sends military aid to an increasingly isolated dictatorship."

United Irishman

Newspaper of Sinn Féin the Workers' Party, published monthly in Dublin.

At the end of 1974, the "Official" republican movement began degenerating rapidly into a Stalinist economist sect. The circulation of its paper plummeted. The June issue of the *United Irishman* indicates that this process has reached a new low point.

The paper is now notably smaller than it was when the "Officials" still played a role in the national struggle. Whereas it was once an organizer of anti-imperialist actions, it now testifies to the way that these former republicans have turned into their opposite.

For example, the June issue reports a speech by an "Official" spokesman, Séan O Cionnaith, who argued that the Dublin premier began to call for a united Ireland just to divert the people's attention from economic problems.

"Jack Lynch, the man who stood idly by in 1969, is now all for a United Ireland. Why? Not because he seriously wants a united Ireland but in order to stop the people down South worrying or talking about the 180,000 unemployed."

Since the "Officials" are proving unable to understand the new rise of anti-imperialist feeling and the pressures it exerts on Irish political life, they seem destined to become still more isolated and politically paralyzed.

ΕΚΦΡΑΣΗ

"Socialistike Ekphrase" (Socialist Expression), central organ of the youth affiliate of the Cypriot Social Democratic Party. Published fortnightly in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The June 16 issue contains a letter from a group of EDhEK [the Cypriot Socialist Party] and independent Cypriot students in Romania. The statement says:

"In the recent period it has been noted that students are leaving the Union of Cypriot Students in Romania. Specifically, a whole group of students left this organization in the city of Cluj. The former members complain of antidemocratic procedures prevailing in the student union. It is anticipated that there will also be

resignations from the organization in Bucharest, Ploesti, and other cities in Romania. Students are walking out of the Union of Cypriot Students in Romania en masse.

"The reason for these events is the determination of the students attached to AKEL [the Cypriot Communist Party] to hold on to the leadership of the student union by any means, legitimate or illegitimate.

"With the decision of the Romanian government three years ago to accept paying students in the country, the small Cypriot student union there, which has consisted overwhelmingly of scholarship students sent by AKEL, grew to perhaps the largest Cypriot student organization in the socialist countries. The students attached to AKEL tried, shrewdly, to present the student union as a nonpartisan body and managed to get all the Cypriot students to go into it, while they kept the leadership in their hands. . . .

"Recently the officers of the student union (which is supposed to be nonpartisan, we repeat) all exhorted the members to contribute to an AKEL fund drive, and the money was collected by the treasurers of this 'nonpartisan' organization.

"In Cluj in particular the situation reached an impasse. The student committee in this city consisted of four supporters of AKEL and one supporter of EDhEK, who was never called to meet with the other four and never knew about the decisions of the committee of which he was supposed to be a member.

"Once the students who were not supporters of AKEL began to act together, the student committee in Cluj was forced to resign. It admitted to all the students that it had been functioning in violation of the statutes. Elections were then expected to choose a new committee.

"What followed can be compared only with a coup d'état. The students attached to AKEL announced in record time to a number of students that a general meeting was being called (they did not say what would be discussed). Other students were not informed at all of the assembly. The non-AKEL member of the committee was informed of this 'assembly' only minutes before it began, so that he was unable to attend.

"Thus, only two of the five members of the committee (which according to the statutes is the only body that can call elections) were present. They announced that elections would be held right then, violating both the statutes and democratic principles. This touched off a storm of protest from the non-AKEL students. They demanded postponement of the elections and for the candidates to present programs on student questions and the Cyprus situa-

tion. The AKEL-dominated committee responded to these protests and proposals by calling for a vote to hold elections immediately. The AKEL 'majority' that had been carefully summoned outvoted the opposition. . . .

"So, with the withdrawal of all the oppositionists, AKEL was left alone with its 'majority' in the 'strictly nonpartisan' Union of Cypriot Students in Romania. . . .

"It is a disgrace that those who claim to be democrats have staged elections reminiscent of those carried out by the junta in its seven years of rule [in Greece].

"In concluding, we want to make one thing clear, the Romanian authorities intervened in no way in this affair. They have maintained a consistently neutral stand. This problem arose among Cypriot 'democrats' and democrats. We await the response of the Cypriot organizations that have an interest in the matter."

lippu

"Banner," monthly organ of the Finnish Social Democratic Youth League. Published in Helsinki.

Issue No. 3 for 1978 has a column on youth unemployment by Hannu Kuikka.

"The crisis of the capitalist market economy makes life very insecure for young people. A young person who has finished school has been prepared to take up the task allotted him or her by society—to work. Work is the basis of all human activity and of everyone's livelihood.

"Typical of capitalism is a large 'reserve army' of labor. And Finland certainly has a large enough one, since 200,000 workers are without jobs. [The country's total population is under five million.]

"In central Finland, the percentage of youth employment is higher. One out of two unemployed workers is a young person. Their prospects for the future do not look very bright.

"The youth are being driven to Sweden or to the unemployment offices. . . .

"This is a great challenge to the Social Democratic workers movement and especially to the youth league and its members, who have to be able to answer the questions of the unemployed about jobs and their rights as equal members of society.

"This is a question of the credibility of Social Democrats in the struggle to improve the position of youth and for achieving a higher socialist form of society.

"The Social Democratic Party congress will discuss a remarkable orientation document laying out the road into the 1980s. The section of this document that lays out a framework for an economic policy seems very weak to me.

"First of all it is confused and inconsistent by comparison with the position

adopted by the party congress in Jyväskylä. Thus, it accepts part of the bourgeois economic policy. In fact, it must be said that it is a jumble. Logic is entirely lacking in the presentation, or is the intention to take the road of our 'sister' Center Party [a bourgeois party]?—something for everyone except the wage workers.

"What is lacking is a consistent and purposeful economic line in accordance with the interests of the working people.

"The party congress must adopt the basis of an economic policy suited to the interests of the working people and to long-lasting cooperation on the left."

CRANN-TÀRA

Scotland's radical quarterly. Published in Aberdeen, Scotland.

The statement of purpose of this magazine says that it seeks to provide a "forum for radicals of both nationalist and socialist movements in Scotland to discuss common interests, and arrive at mutual solutions to outstanding problems."

The spring 1978 issue has an article by Robert Griffiths, research officer of Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party. It is entitled: "How Socialist Is Plaid Cymru?" Griffiths writes:

"Plaid Cymru has never formally committed itself to the aim of building a self-governing Wales which is socialist. Yet, many ordinary members of the party, and probably a majority of its activists, would readily accept the contention that a truly free Wales could only exist in a socialist society. So why Plaid Cymru's reluctance to embrace unstintingly the third element in Gareth Miles' memorable slogan 'Free Wales! Welsh Wales! Socialist Wales!?'

"Plaid's wariness of lifting any of the Labour Party's verbal baggage is understandable even when not commendable. But this is not the main reason for the party's procrastination: nor is it that there lurks in the leadership or in the rank-and-file any substantial body of opinion in favour of capitalism as a social and economic system. Rather, many of Plaid's older and long-serving members are still groping around in an ideological fog created by the party's early leadership.

"For the first 30 years, at least, of Plaid Cymru's existence, its founding pioneers and their chosen successors kept a white-knuckled grip on the party's organisational and intellectual reins—whilst indulging in a search for some 'third way' between socialism and capitalism. In the 1930's the guiding principles which would shape a self-governing Wales were crystallised in key policy documents such as 'Cymru Rydd' ["Free Wales"] (1937). These included, arguably in order of increasing absurdity:

"1. The family as the basic (economic) unit of a Christian society;

"2. The widest possible distribution of land and property ownership;

"3. Progressive control (but not necessarily ownership) of industry by the workers organised together in cooperatives;

"4. Agriculture would be the chief industry in Wales and the basis of its civilisation; and

"5. South Wales would be deindustrialised as small craft and cottage industries were encouraged.

"Obviously, the architects of such a blueprint were idealising the Welsh speaking, Nonconformist peasant democracy that had reared them in the past, and were projecting it into the future. Their attitude to [mainly English-speaking] industrial South Wales (where more than two-thirds of the Welsh population lived and worked) and its working class was that of the petit-bourgeois: they renounced the class struggle; they dreaded slipping down into what they wrongly (at the time) labelled a 'rootless' proletariat. Yet, they were also anti-landlord, anti-big-capitalist, anti-British State and mostly pacifists.

"They could not call themselves socialists, still less Marxists, because they could not agree with the means of achieving socialism, i.e., a period of socialist—and possibly ruthless—State power. Instead, and consciously in the tradition of Robert Owen, they believed the capitalists could be convinced or peacefully coerced into abandoning their own social and economic order—retreating in Wales, at least, before the 'moral force' of nationalism. . . .

"The mass influx of new members into Plaid in the 1960's and 1970's has injected a huge dose of realism into the party. . . . Deindustrialisation has long given way to industrial diversification; socialism—how to achieve it in Wales and, necessarily, elsewhere is firmly on the party's agenda. Discussion of new ideas, ideals, and political philosophies is burgeoning after 30 years of stultification. For this the Left in Plaid Cymru can claim much of the credit. The socialist quarterly magazine 'Y Saeth' (The Arrow) has reached its seventh issue and, if anything, has broadened its ideological range of contributions; socialists in the party also produce a monthly bulletin 'Y Faner Goch' (The Red Flag). . . .

"Plaid Cymru is not a socialist party, although its membership is moving in that direction. Nevertheless, those socialists who endeavor to speed up or guide this process are also agreed upon the need to keep the party open—and tolerable—for all those non-socialists who support the party's unfulfilled aims of self-government and restoration of the Welsh language. . . . We socialists in Plaid Cymru are there because we are Welsh patriots—Plaid is making the most practical contribution in our part of the world to an essential task of socialists in western Europe: The break-up of the old imperialist nation-states."

New Wave of Political Trials in South Africa

By Ernest Harsch

More than sixty political trials, involving about 300 defendants, are now under way in South Africa or are soon to begin. Scores of other Black activists or critics of the regime have been arrested in recent weeks, joining the many more already held in indefinite detention, without trial or charges, under such draconian police-state laws as the Terrorism Act and the Internal Security Act.

This new wave of repression comes a full two years after the first massive Black protests in Soweto and other townships around the country. Clearly, the racist white-minority regime fears a resurgence of open and massive Black resistance to its white supremacist policies and is using the many repressive laws at its disposal in a bid to intimidate and terrorize the Black population as a whole.

This broader aim of Prime Minister John Vorster's continued crackdown was evident in a series of large-scale raids in various Black townships. On the night of March 30, a huge "combined operation," involving the army, police, and traffic units, was mounted against the townships in the Johannesburg area, including Soweto and Alexandra. Roadblocks were set up on all roads leading into the townships and troops with rifles and fixed bayonets searched every vehicle and its occupants. Several arrests were reported.

The authorities described this display of force as a "routine" measure designed to combat "crime." But Dr. Nthato Motlana, the chairman of the Committee of Ten, a broadly based Soweto community group, pointed out that in reality it was "purely designed to intimidate the people."

Another operation was conducted several weeks later in Hillbrow, an area of Johannesburg. More than 3,000 persons were arrested during the raid, the overwhelming majority of them for violations of the racist pass laws that stipulate where Africans may or may not live and work.

Reflecting the basic agreement of all the white parties in South Africa on the question of maintaining white dominance, the parliamentary "opposition" Progressive Federal Party (PFP) hailed the raid in Hillbrow. PFP leader Harry Schwarz called for another similar crackdown on "crime" in Soweto. Minister of Justice, Police, and Prisons James T. Kruger agreed to see what he could do.

In late May, the police erected roadblocks in Soweto, Eldorado Park, Lenasia, Kliptown, and Western Township in conjunction with a country-wide wave of political arrests. According to a report in the

June 3 issue of the Johannesburg *Star* weekly edition, "The police action took place one day after two high schools were painted with radical political slogans. . . .

"The slogans called on black people to join the revolutionary forces in the struggle for power."

Among those arrested in the country-wide crackdown were Juby Mayet and Phil Mtinkulu, both journalists; Harry Makubire, a former executive member of the South African Council of Churches; and Wageng Mekwa, Velile Soga, Themba Ngcezula, and Attie Mooi, all members of the recently formed Azanian People's Organization, a number of leaders of which had already been arrested in early May.

In the days preceding the June 16 commemoration actions marking the second anniversary of the initial uprisings in Soweto, the police carried out another series of massive raids in Soweto, Durban North, Lenasia, Kliptown, Vereeniging, Eldorado Park, Brakpan, Benoni, and other places. According to a report in the June 14 *Rand Daily Mail* of Johannesburg, more than 3,000 Blacks were arrested at roadblocks and during house-to-house searches.

Even before these most recent crackdowns, the Vorster regime admitted in March that more than 600 persons were being detained under the Terrorism Act and about 50 under the Internal Security Act alone. Many other political prisoners are being held under additional laws.

During 1977, 144 persons were brought to trial on charges stemming from the Terrorism Act, which defines "terrorism" so broadly as to include virtually any act of protest against the regime, even speeches and writings. The defendants received sentences totalling 898 years in jail. This year, more than twice as many defendants are facing trial, also largely under the Terrorism Act.

The most important of the trials to have been concluded so far was that of the Pretoria Twelve, who had been accused of belonging to the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) and of carrying out sabotage actions. Six of the defendants were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from seven to eighteen years.

The other major trial is still under way. It involves eighteen alleged members of the outlawed Pan Africanist Congress, including Zephania Mothopeng, a founder and long-time leader of the PAC who has served time in prison on Robben Island. The defendants are accused of taking part in "terrorist activities," conspiring to overthrow the government, and furthering the aims of the PAC between 1963 and 1977.

Besides the eighteen, six other alleged PAC members are facing trial in three

Thousands in Soweto Mark 1976 Uprisings

In defiance of severe police intimidation, more than 5,000 Blacks rallied June 16 and 17 in Soweto to mark the second anniversary of the beginning of the massive Black upheavals of 1976 and to commemorate the hundreds of Black protesters who were killed by the police.

Because of the continued prohibition of any unapproved political gatherings, the only official anniversary ceremonies were held at the Regina Mundi Roman Catholic Church. The most prominent speaker at both memorial services was Dr. Nthato Motlana, who was detained for five months by the security police and released in March.

Motlana noted before the largely young audience that nothing fundamental had improved in the conditions of South Africa's oppressed Black majority since the 1976 upheavals. "It is quite obvious that the Government of this land has no desire to change," he said. Motlana also commended the protesters for drawing international attention to the apartheid system, stating

that "because you, the youth of South Africa, you, two years ago, stood up and challenged these racists, the world has been forced to look."

Although Motlana declared that whites would be allowed to live in a Black-ruled South Africa, he stressed that the country "will revert to its [original] owners." The crowd responded by shouting "amandla ngwetu" (power is ours) and giving clenched-fist salutes.

When the crowd left the church after the second memorial service, April 17, the police opened fire and used tear gas to disperse hundreds of Black protesters.

Besides the two memorial services, many Black workers stayed away from their jobs to mark the anniversary. Commuter traffic between Soweto and Johannesburg, where virtually all of Soweto's workers are employed, was about 60 percent of normal. In addition, Indian shopkeepers in Wynberg and in Johannesburg's Oriental Plaza closed down their shops in solidarity. □

separate cases. Of the numerous other trials, many involve defendants accused of furthering the aims of the ANC. One of them, Solomon Mahlangu, was sentenced to death in March.

In one case, Enoch Duma, a Black reporter for the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*, was acquitted of charges under the Terrorism Act while his codefendant, Aitken Ramudzuli, was found guilty and sentenced to fourteen years in prison. Don Mattera, another journalist and a former leader of the outlawed Black People's Convention, was acquitted of charges that he broke his banning order, which imposes a form of house arrest.

Many of the defendants and witnesses in these trials report that they have been tortured by the security police. In the trial of the eighteen alleged PAC members, for instance, fourteen have filed civil suits against Kruger charging that they had been subjected to electric shocks, forced to stand naked for long periods, threatened with being thrown out of windows, and in one case handcuffed to a hot electric heater.

Rufus Rwexu, a state witness in one case who refused to testify and as a result was sentenced to a year in jail, said in court, "I know nothing about the accused except that I was persecuted by the police. They suffocated and throttled me." A recently passed law that allows detention of "terrorism" trial witnesses for the entire period of the case, instead of the previous limit of six months, gives the police even greater leeway to extract phony testimony.

Further evidence of police torture surfaced in the cases of two prisoners who died in custody. An inquest into the death of Dr. Hoosen Haffeejee, who died less than a day after being arrested in August 1977, found that there were between forty and fifty "abraded bruises" on his lower torso, as well as extensive bruising on his scalp. An inquest has also been opened into the death of an unnamed sixteen-year-old youth in Mdantsane, near East London. According to a report, "After being detained in Mdantsane police cells, he was admitted unconscious to Frere Hospital (where he died) with extensive bruises on his chest, a paralysed right arm and septic ulcers on both legs. Other evidence showed wounds to his feet, the soles having apparently been burnt off" (*Focus on Political Repression in Southern Africa*, May 1978).

Despite the long prison sentences, torture, and possibility of death, few jailed activists have expressed regrets about their political activities. For instance, twenty-two-year-old Naledi Tsiki, who was sentenced to fourteen-years in prison in the Pretoria Twelve case, declared, "I wish to make it clear to the court that what I did, I did with my eyes open. By so doing, I was merely trying to make my contribution towards a free and democratic South Africa. . . ." □

Largest Demonstration in History of Colony

10,000 Protest Shutdown of Hong Kong School

By Siu Dim

HONG KONG—More than ten thousand persons participated in a mass meeting here May 28. The action, the largest in Hong Kong's history, was called to protest the arbitrary closure of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Middle School by the Education Department two weeks earlier. It marked the climax of a series of protests after the closure of the school and signified a revival of the student movement in Hong Kong.

The school had been established five years as a government-aided Catholic school. With the aid of a group of enthusiastic young teachers, most of whom had been active in the student movement in the early 1970s, a new form of education essentially different from the traditional colonial education system was experimented with. Students were encouraged to ask questions, to challenge authoritarian sources, to think independently, and to be analytical and critical.

In February 1977, teachers at the school discovered serious problems in the school finances. Their investigation showed that a sum of more than HK\$200,000 (about US\$40,000) had been misappropriated by the school authorities from students, government subsidies, and other sources. In April they brought the matter before the school authorities and demanded that the sum be returned to the students and the school. When the authorities acquired greater powers to sack teachers, the students rose up in support of the teachers. They staged a two-day sit-in June 9-10, 1977, until then the largest student action in the history of Hong Kong.

To counter the dissident teachers and students, the authorities resorted to various repressive measures, including banning of the student association, introduction of a new group of teachers who were told to remould the students and isolate the old teachers, and constant threats to the job security of the old teachers. In addition, teaching methods aimed at developing students' independent thinking and ability to organize were proscribed.

On May 1, 1978, four students were suspended from their classes for two weeks and three others were warned, after they had made complaints about searches of students' schoolbags. On May 9, some 400 students, twenty of their parents, and eighteen teachers began a protest action in front of the bishop's residence, demanding an interview with the bishop. For four days and three nights the protest continued with some thirty teachers, students, and parents staying outside the residence.

On May 14 the Education Department announced that the school would be permanently closed, and that in its place a new school would be opened in September. The headmistress and those teachers who did not participate in the protest could remain, but sixteen teachers directly involved would not have their contracts renewed.

In response to this shocking action by the government, various forums and rallies were held, drawing more than 1,000 participants. The protesters sent petitions to the governor, the Education Department, and the bishop demanding the reopening of the school.

The high-handed measures of the government, the church, and the school authorities, provoked a widespread response. The first and foremost result has been the reactivation of the student movement in postsecondary circles and also in some secondary schools. With the disorientation of the local Maoists after the "Gang of Four" incident in China, the student movement had ebbed. But the four-day sit-in and the subsequent closure order have pushed the student movement forward again, despite the vacillation of the Maoist-controlled Hong Kong Federation of Students. So far, the Maoists have not gone beyond verbal denunciations of the closure.

With strong pressure from the ruling class and the religious bodies, and with the generally negative attitude of the Maoist leadership in Hong Kong, the prospect of the current movement depends very much on the consciousness of various groups and student bodies and their effort to keep up the movement and raise its political level.

The Trotskyist groups in Hong Kong have taken an active part in support of this movement by organizing forums and mass meetings, distributing leaflets, issuing special editions of Trotskyist publications (such as *October Review*), collecting signatures, and raising funds.

What is most important is support from the workers, which, up to now, is very limited. The strongest movement involving workers and secondary-school students must now be built to press for the immediate reopening of the school.

International solidarity is also strongly needed. Letters or statements condemning the closure order can be directed to the Education Department, Lee Gardens, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Copies should be sent to *October Review*, 9 Bailey Street, 7/F., Hunghom, Hong Kong. □

Growing International Support for Eritrean Struggle

By Ernest Harsch

At a time when the Ethiopian junta is continuing its threats to escalate the war against Eritrea, an increasing number of voices on the left are being raised on behalf of the Eritrean freedom fighters and in support of a policy of negotiation. These appeals come in the context of a deep revolutionary ferment among the Ethiopian peoples, a massive struggle by the Eritreans for their self-determination, and attempts by imperialism to crush or derail both upsurges.

The Italian Communist Party, which has supported the Ethiopian regime since early 1977, declared its backing to the Eritrean struggle in a front-page article in the May 18 issue of *l'Unita*, its daily paper. Signed by Romano Ledda, a member of the International Affairs Commission of the party's Central Committee, the article affirmed that "the liberation struggle of the Eritrean people is a just struggle."

Ledda stressed that the progressive character of the Eritrean struggle was not altered by the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 and the abolition of Ethiopian feudalism: "Whether Haile Selassie or young officers of progressive inspiration are in the government in Addis Ababa changes nothing of the legitimacy of the Eritrean cause."

In addition, Ledda drew a distinction between the fight for self-determination in Eritrea and the recent war in the Ogaden, in which regular Somali troops, with the encouragement of imperialism, invaded Ethiopia in order to weaken the Ethiopian revolution. "Eritrea is not the Ogaden," Ledda declared, "and the questions posed by the Eritrean independence movement cannot be confused with the Somali military intervention."

Ledda concluded by calling for a "political solution," rather than a military one, based on "self-government for the Eritreans." This, he said, could then serve as a basis for negotiations between the Eritreans and Ethiopians to find "more flexible and realistic governmental solutions than the ties that have been maintained for the past twenty years."

About the same time as the *l'Unita* article, a number of members of the Italian CP and other leftist figures in Italy issued an appeal to the Cuban government, which had sent troops to Ethiopia to fight against the Somali invasion, not to "line up your children against the Eritrean peoples and patriots." They added that the situation differed greatly "from your inter-

vention in support of the Angolan people. . . ."

According to a report by Dan Connell in the May 31 issue of the New York weekly *Guardian*, both the French and Belgian Communist parties have also called for an end to the fighting in Eritrea and for a political solution that recognizes Eritrean self-determination. Many other groups to the left of the Communist parties have long supported the Eritrean independence struggle as well.

The Cuban government, which previously gave assistance to the Eritrean freedom fighters, differs with the Ethiopian junta's military campaign against the Eritreans and has thus far resisted Mengistu Haile Mariam's efforts to draw the Cuban forces into the war.

In one of the first major Cuban statements on Eritrea, Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez declared, "We helped the Eritreans in their fight for self-determination from the time of Haile Selassie onward. We feel there has to be some political solution to the Eritrean problem and that there have to be talks between the Eritreans and the central government."

In an interview in the June 9 issue of *Paris Match*, Fidel Castro explained the Cuban position toward the conflict in Eritrea. He charged that since Selassie's overthrow the Eritrean leadership has been transformed into "an instrument for the reaction and imperialism to liquidate, or help to liquidate, the Ethiopian revolution." But at the same time he stressed that "it is necessary to take into account first of all the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination; it is necessary to take that into account. It is necessary to take into account the fact that there are progressive forces among the Eritreans, and consequently, we believe that it is best to struggle for a correct solution to this problem, and that is, of course, on the basis of self-determination."

Several other political forces have likewise urged the Ethiopian junta to negotiate with the Eritreans, including the regimes in South Yemen and Madagascar. According to a report in the July issue of the London monthly *New African*, Nayef Hawatmah, the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, has lobbied for a negotiated settlement and George Habash, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, discussed the matter with Castro during a visit to Havana. The Eritrean and Palestinian liberation organizations have

had fraternal relations for a number of years.

So far, however, Mengistu has refused to heed the international pressure and has continued to stress military actions against the Eritreans. While the Ethiopian junta, known as the Dergue, gives lip service to the right of Ethiopia's oppressed nationalities to self-determination, in practice it has opposed every concrete struggle on their part to exercise that right.

The Dergue's course toward the oppressed nationalities, combined with its repression against working-class activists and revolutionists throughout the country, endangers the substantial gains of the Ethiopian revolution itself and gives imperialism greater openings to intervene and try to halt the revolutionary process.

On June 19, the Dergue announced once more that it would soon launch a military offensive against the Eritreans. A representative of the junta claimed that the only "solution" to the Eritrean conflict was a military one. A week later, Cuban Foreign Minister Isodoro Malmierca reaffirmed Havana's position during a June 26 news conference in Algiers. He advocated a "political solution," adding that it "must be found within the framework of recognition of the rights of peoples within a united Ethiopia."

The Eritrean liberation fighters have taken cognizance of the Cuban stance. Although they initially denounced Cuban involvement in Ethiopia, perhaps assuming that the Cubans would join the Ethiopian war against Eritrea, they have since toned down their criticisms.

At a June 21 news conference in Paris, Nafi Kurdi, a member of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front who was speaking on behalf of both the EPLF and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), stated, "Today, we deplore the Cuban involvement on the side of Dergue, but if there are still some Cuban elements in Eritrea, they have stopped all participation in the fighting since last February." Kurdi also said that South Yemeni forces were no longer fighting in the war against the Eritreans and that the Libyan regime had pledged to resume the "precious aid" to the Eritreans that it had suspended last year.

According to a report in the June 7 *Le Monde* by K. Nezan, a journalist who spent several weeks in the areas of Eritrea controlled by the ELF and EPLF, the Eritreans privately blame Moscow for the cutoff in aid to the Eritreans from certain countries. Nezan said that "the Eritreans

are convinced that it was the Soviet Union that twisted the arms of South Yemen and Cuba, two countries that are very dependent on it economically. They also affirm that Moscow pressured Libya and Iraq in order to get them to end their assistance to the Eritrean movements."

Despite the persistent rivalries between the two main Eritrean liberation groups, the ELF and EPLF signed a unity agreement April 20 in the Eritrean-held town of Keren. According to a report in the June issue of the New York monthly *Eritrea in Struggle*, the two organizations have launched a joint military action against the Ethiopian garrison in Barentu, in the western Eritrean district of Barka.

At a joint news conference in Beirut June 29, the top leaders of the ELF and

EPLF called for a negotiated end to the long war in Eritrea, stating, "The continuation of the fighting is not in the interest of either the Ethiopian or Eritrean people."

The declaration was issued by Ahmed Nasser, the secretary general of the ELF, and Ramadan Mohammed Nour, the secretary general of the EPLF. It called for negotiations with the Dergue without any preconditions. Previously, the two groups had maintained that they were willing to talk with the junta only after it first recognized Eritrean independence. Despite this shift, however, the declaration stressed that the talks must accept "the right of self-determination for the Eritrean people."

The offer came just ten days after Nasser visited Moscow, but leaders of the

ELF maintained that there was no direct link between the two developments.

The call for negotiations was denounced by Osman Saleh Sabbe, the openly proimperialist leader of the small Eritrean Liberation Front-People's Liberation Forces. He charged the ELF and EPLF with selling out the Eritrean struggle in the interest of Moscow.

On the other hand, the British Communist Party, in an editorial in the June 30 issue of its daily *Morning Star*, urged the Ethiopian regime to respond positively to the offer of negotiations. "National feeling in Eritrea is such that attempts at a military solution offer no hope for the future," it concluded.

Thus far, Mengistu has not openly responded to the negotiation offer, and his war against the Eritrean people grinds on.

A Preliminary Balance Sheet

Rise of Class-Struggle Tendencies in Spanish Unions

By José Montero

Over May and June, a number of trade-union congresses were held in the Spanish state, in particular those of the two main union confederations, the Workers Commission (COs) and the General Federation of Labor (UGT). These congresses make it possible to draw a preliminary balance sheet of the Spanish trade-union movement as it has emerged from the union elections.

The most important aspect is the breadth and rapidity of mass unionization. Barely a year after the unions were legalized, the COs claim two million members; and the UGT, 1.8 million. The smaller confederations—the Workers Trade Union (USO), the National Confederation of Labor (CNT), the regional unions, and the two small dual unions formed by the centrist Labor Party (PT) and the Revolutionary Workers Organizations (ORT) claim a total of more than 500,000 members.

So, at present there are about 4.5 million union members in Spain, more than in France and more than the German union confederation had under the Weimar Republic at the end of the 1920s, before the great depression. About 50% of the working class is already organized, a percentage equal to that in Great Britain, which has the strongest unions and the greatest tradition of unionism of all the major imperialist countries. It is clear that we are only in the first stage of this mass unionization of wage workers in the Spanish state. This movement is going to become

even more extensive in the future, regardless of the conjunctural ups and downs of the workers struggles.

The speed of this mass unionization has made it impossible to solve, or even seriously pose, the question of trade-union unity. This will remain one of the burning questions in the Spanish workers movement, as it was under the Second Republic [which was destroyed by the fascist uprising led by Franco].

However, the rate of growth has also had another result. The bureaucratic apparatuses have not been able to grow as rapidly as the membership. So, the Spanish unions today are marked by a degree of democracy and freedom of initiative for the members, the rank-and-file bodies, and the local organizations that goes far beyond what exists in the other European countries.

Of course, we cannot lose sight of the fact that both the Spanish Communist Party leadership, which dominates the COs, and the Socialist Party (PSOE) leadership, which dominates the UGT, are going to undertake a sustained and systematic campaign to change this situation. They will strive to greatly tighten the grip of the bureaucratic apparatus over the rank and file and over trade-union activity. This is the precondition for their being able to apply their class-collaborationist policy with at least some credibility in the eyes of the bourgeoisie.

However, along with this delay in establishing strong bureaucratic control, a current critical of reformism exists in the

working class that is much stronger than similar trends in France, Italy, Great Britain, and Germany were at the end of the Second World War. This opens up room for the development of a broad left opposition in the Spanish unions, such as the European workers movement has not seen since the 1920s. This was demonstrated strikingly in the congresses of the UGT, the COs, and those of the various regional and occupational union organizations affiliated to the two big confederations.

The UGT congress was held May 25-28 in Barcelona. Although the Social Democratic leadership, which is completely subordinated to the PSOE of Felipe González, dominated the congress, many oppositionist voices were raised, especially with respect to the proposed statutes. It should be noted that the critically minded delegates had been angered by arbitrary dissolutions of particular locals in the months preceding the congress, as well as by the refusal of the UGT leadership to recognize the right of tendencies and to give representation to minorities in the national leadership bodies, in open violation of Article No. 2 of the statutes.

Such feelings led 20% of the delegates to abstain in the election of the confederation leadership. In the discussion on the president's report, a majority of the unions represented in the congress demanded that a federation congress be called before any local could be dissolved. This motion of no confidence in the leadership was barely defeated, and then only by taking a vote of

individual delegates by name.

The executive, on the other hand, was defeated in two votes on the statutes. One proposal rejected was that national congresses be held only every three years. The other sought to increase the weight of the bureaucracy in the national congresses themselves by strengthening the representation of the national leaderships of the occupational unions.

The subordination of the UGT to the PSOE was openly proclaimed by the PSOE leader Felipe González. He declared that there was "an identity between the PSOE and the UGT" and did not hesitate to add that "anybody who doesn't like it can get out." This deeply anti-unity and anti-union statement shocked a good number of delegates to the congress and created a real malaise.

Unlike the congress of the UGT, the congress of the COs implicitly recognized the existence of minority tendencies, and elected representatives of these currents to the confederation Executive Committee and National Council. These representatives are politically close to the LCR and the MCE.* This is certainly a step forward, but it is still far from recognition of a real right of tendencies and a real climate of trade-union democracy.

However, it is unquestionable that both during the pre-congress activity and in the congress itself, the opposition was able to speak out strongly. In particular, it was able to do so on key questions of trade-union policy, calling, for example, for rejection of the Moncloa Pact, which accepts austerity.

On June 21-25, the first congress of the Workers Commissions was held in Madrid, with about 1,400 delegates in attendance. This congress had been preceded by congresses of the union organizations for the various industries, nationalities, and regions. Some 50% of the delegates were elected to represent branches of industry, and the other 50% represented various territorial units.

The discussion both in the preparatory congresses and the national congresses of the two confederations was centered around five key themes—the reports of the outgoing leaderships, the program, the statutes, the axes of union activity, organization, and finances.

On each of these themes, there was a confrontation between the majority positions, which were published by the CP fraction; and the minority positions, backed by the parties to the left of the CP, mainly the MCE and the LCR.

Thus, in the discussion on the general report, which was approved by a vote of 993 to 125, with 40 abstentions, the main

argument was over the results of the Moncloa Pact. While the union leaderships reaffirmed that it was correct to support the pact, the minority pointed up the negative consequences of it for the workers' interests and the need to draw conclusions about this for the future. It explained that the lesson was that any new pacts that involved the workers bearing the burden of the economic crisis should be rejected.

In this respect, the minority and various critical currents rejected or challenged the so-called "plan of national solidarity against unemployment." This scheme requires that the workers contribute an hour's pay per week to help solve the problem of unemployment. The bosses are supposed to make a contribution equivalent to two hours of pay a week for each of their workers.

Other subjects raised in the discussion on the general report included the problem of violence, the attitude to be taken to the draft constitution, and trade-union unity. In his speech to the congress, the UGT representative rejected the proposal drawn up by the COs for institutionalizing united action between the two confederations.

As regards the program, the points most debated were democratic rights; unemployment and the economic crisis; and wage demands, along with certain special questions such as health, transport, and nuclear energy. On the first point, there was a proposal for a referendum on the form of government and discussion of the need for dismantling the apparatus inherited from the dictatorship and for establishing self-determination for the nationalities. In the debate on unemployment and the economic crisis, there was a proposal for nationalization under workers control.

In the discussion of the statutes, there was a confrontation among three positions. A minority sought to extend the democratic aspects of the union's functioning and concretely the rights of minority currents. It failed to achieve its objective. In addition, there was the position of the union leadership, as well as that of a minority within the majority, that sought to make the statutes more restrictive by eliminating the possibilities for minority expression and eliminating proportional representation in elections to the various leadership bodies. The minority within the majority also failed to get its way.

The new Executive Committee includes forty-three members. Thirty-eight represent the CP, two the MCE, one the LCR, and two are independents. The minority is underrepresented by comparison with its actual support in the congress, which has between 10 and 15%.

Opposition tendencies showed still greater strength in the congresses of the regional organizations and occupational unions than in the national congresses of the UGT and the COs. This goes for affiliates of both confederations. I will

refer here mainly to those of the COs because the opposition tendencies there are more systematically and better organized.

At the congress of the CO union of bank and savings institution workers, which has 24,000 members, the minority got 25 to 30% of the vote. This minority was highly politicalized, since, in addition to rejecting the Moncloa Pact, it called for a referendum to decide the question "monarchy or republic," for the extension of democratic rights to soldiers, for recognizing the right of self-determination of nationalities in the constitution, and so on. It should be noted also that this minority won a majority of the votes for the proposal that negotiations with the bosses be carried out by joint delegations of the unions and united plant committees (committees of democratically elected delegates).

At the congress of the CO health workers union (30,000 members), which was held on June 3-4, a motion rejecting the Moncloa Pact won 30% of the votes, with 10% of the delegates abstaining. The pressure of the rank and file was so strong that the union statutes adopted at this congress are far more democratic than those of the other CO unions. In particular, they explicitly recognize the right of currents to exist and for proportional representation of these currents. They also give minorities that get more than 10% of the vote the right to have their opinions expressed even in the union's public organs.

The lumber workers union congress in mid-June was marked by a still stronger minority. It fluctuated around 36 to 40% of the votes throughout the congress, showing particular strength in the vote on the Moncloa Pact. An amendment rejecting any deal with the bosses or the government that involves cutting the buying power of the workers even won a majority of the votes.

It should be noted finally that at the Vizcaya provincial congress of the UGT held in Bilbao May 13-14, when the leadership refused to allow a vote on the Moncloa Pact, the opposition called for abstaining on the president's report. About 30% of the delegates followed this recommendation.

In the UGT provincial congress in the Valencian country, the majority of the delegates voted for a motion rejecting the Moncloa Pact and condemning the executive for bureaucratically dissolving the Valencian provincial committee of the steelworkers union.

The overall picture that emerges, then, is one of a rise of left opposition and class-struggle tendencies in the Spanish unions. These votes, moreover, do not faithfully reflect the feelings of the ranks. In both the UGT and the COs, members of outgoing leaderships are allowed to vote at union congresses even if they are not elected by the rank and file delegates. These officials sometimes account for up to a third of the votes in congresses! □

*Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, Revolutionary Communist League, Spanish section of the Fourth International; Movimiento Comunista de España, a semi-Maoist group.—IP/1

From Prague Spring to Charter 77

By Ludwig Kavín

[The following is the text of a talk given by Ludwig Kavín at a forum on "The Oppositions in East Europe" during a gathering in Paris May 27-28 organized by the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International), and by the Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The contributions of the other participants in the debate were unfortunately not written down.

[Those invited included Alexander Smolar, a former participant in the massive student movement in Poland in June 1968, and Victor Fainberg, a participant in the demonstration in Red Square in Moscow in 1968 to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Since Fainberg was unable to attend, Leonid Plyushch discussed the situation in the Soviet Union.

[Ludwig Kavín, thirty years old, is a former student of political philosophy. He was a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia before the Prague Spring of 1968, with leadership responsibilities on the university level. He is a signer of Charter 77, as is his wife, Nika Brettschneider, an actress. As a result, he was forced to accept jobs below his qualifications—when he could find any at all.

[Kavín and Nika both know the meaning of political repression on the job in Czechoslovakia. It was what finally forced them to leave the country in July 1977, with their young child, and go to Austria. Kavín is now writing a dissertation on the Prague Spring. He is a Marxist and is close to those known in Czechoslovakia as "radical communists."

[The translation from the French is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Dear friends and comrades,

Your invitation to this forum allows me to present my views on the evolution of Czechoslovakia's "socialist" society from the Prague Spring of 1968 to Charter 77. In my concluding remarks, I will return to the tactical problems confronting oppositionist tendencies in my mother country—or rather my stepmother country—and I will try to explain my opinions on the political differences that exist within the Czechoslovakian opposition.

During the 1960s, elements of democracy were gradually introduced into social life, especially into the structure of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC). Natu-

rally, strong post-Stalinist tendencies, whose aim was to maintain the status quo, also appeared. Through their control of state power, these tendencies and their representatives tried to suppress the social criticisms that were arising in the political and cultural spheres.

Efforts to rectify the social situation and to overcome the crisis through political and economic reforms were more and more a part of the ideological climate as reflected by the party organs themselves, including the official leading bodies of the party. It was especially the progressive current in the party that tried to overcome this crisis. A prerequisite for any changes—we thought then and I still think—was to change first the party organs, then the state organs, through a change in personnel and partly even in the structure, and to change their relationships to one another and to the institutions of society. We were convinced that the rot had begun at the top. It still seems to me to have been a correct analysis.

When Novotny was replaced by Dubcek as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPC at the beginning of 1968, many people saw it as a palace coup. It was not until after a larger number of persons were replaced, and especially after the Communist Party's program of action was approved, that most members of the CPC and other citizens understood that a deeper and more fundamental change might be involved. This led to an explosion of political opinions and points of view and paved the way for a break in social development. These ideas were formulated in a confused way. But they were based, of course, on the social and economic gains made in 1945-47.

We should realize that, in the opinion of widely varying groups that had at least a partial influence on political events, it was not a question of ushering in a qualitatively new era of social life. It was a matter of reforming the system.

In the realm of international relations, no thoroughgoing changes were planned. The calls for a position of neutrality had no support whatever. All that was demanded was a degree of autonomy within the framework of Comecon and the Warsaw Pact.

The economic proposals especially were aimed at finding a solution within the framework of a situation where the dogmatic government of the party and the state was based solely on an economic

plan over which it had unchallengeable control and which it administered in an arbitrary way. The relationship between the requirements of the plan and of the market was completely ignored. The bureaucratic centralist character of the planning and management of the economy, which closely depended on the needs of the Soviet economy, have produced a crisis.

Even the ideas about developing the political institutions arose from the need to maintain the leading role of the Communist Party, even in terms of their progressive approach. Other political, trade-union, and social organizations were only able to obtain a little more breathing space.

Despite this, the Prague Spring sowed many hopes in the hearts and minds of people. As it unfolded, it transformed itself from an obscure palace coup into a mass movement striving for democracy and attempting to undo the many errors of the past twenty years.

The population gave Dubcek a blank check to put his own policies into effect. However, if the ideas of his government are examined from various angles, it can be seen that they were far from consistent. (I do not want to spend too much time here on this subject, which I intend to treat in depth elsewhere.)

Nevertheless, these ideas and the developments of several months showed the strength of socialist ideas and of the workers movement.

One interesting aspect of the Prague Spring was the factory councils, which had numerous opponents. Many party functionaries who tended to be progressive were skeptical of them. The councils were supposed to play an important role in the management of factories and within Czechoslovakian political and economic life. As autonomous working-class bodies, they were supposed to begin to take the place of the CP and the state institutions within the domains of decision-making, supervision of personnel, and management of the factories.

It is interesting to note that until August 1968 these councils were established only with great difficulty. The majority were not even set up until the moment of greatest danger (retrospectively, we can say when it was already too late), that is, after the August 1968 occupation of Czechoslovakia, when the workers understood that "now" was the showdown and when they wanted to take the running of affairs into their own hands. There were about 800,000

active participants in these councils, representing a remarkable force that threatened the position of the Husak regime after April 1969. That was why one of the first measures of the neo-Stalinist regime was to abolish the councils.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army represented a political defeat for the Soviet Union. Democratic ideas continued to emerge (as shown by the workers councils that I just spoke of). Those who support such ideas, the workers and their genuine allies, continued, in difficult circumstances, to struggle against the tanks and against those who had betrayed the development of society in a progressive direction.

These forces and ideas were finally overcome, after a relatively short period of time, during the period of the so-called "consolidation," that is, the "normalization" that began when Husak became first secretary of the CP and that, according to Husak, officially ended in 1973-74. To tell the truth, this attempt by the CPC, which was and still is Stalinist, to normalize the country was not successful in the early 1970s, nor has it reached success today.

In 1970, about a half-million members, often the most active and progressive, were expelled from the CPC. From the beginning, Husak had no hope of realizing his goal of normalizing Czechoslovakian society with this recently purged, neo-Stalinist and pragmatic party. Nevertheless, he kept trying to accomplish it by all kinds of methods. Most recently, for example, there was a barrage of nationalist propaganda around the first flight of the Czechoslovak cosmonaut Remek.

It was in 1973-74, just as Husak was declaring that things had completely returned to normal, that the political opposition, after two or three years of near-total silence, once again found its voice. At first it was only small, eclectic groups of former political prisoners, former CP members and functionaries, members of the radical socialist opposition (close to the Fourth International), militant Christians, reformist socialists, and intellectuals and artists with no definite political orientation.

(Briefly on the word "group." It is a term that recognizes that in Czechoslovakia there exist different political and ideological currents within the opposition, but we should not and cannot confuse this term with the concept of an organization. First of all, these groups do not have a real political line, which an organization cannot get along without. Secondly, to speak of an organization gives ammunition to the secret police, who have no scruples about using any kind of material as evidence, even indirect, against the opposition to its regime.)

Toward the end of 1976 and beginning of 1977, the most active members of the Czechoslovakian opposition came together around a common platform with the signing of Charter 77. This has already had,

and will have in the future, a greater and greater importance. I will explain where I think the importance of this regroupment around the Charter lies.

1. The network of those who openly criticize the regime is no longer limited as before to reform-minded Communists. Workers and young people have joined with them and with the intelligentsia in supporting the Charter. For instance, two-thirds of the signers of Charter 77 have never been members of the CPC.

2. Another important thing to note about the charter, in my opinion, is that it reflects the political thinking of the generation that is now in its thirties, and of a younger generation that did not go through the experience of 1968 and has never known anything but the oppression and sterility of the official ideology and government power of the 1970s. It was only through the experience of Charter 77 and the regime's reaction to it that these young people had their first opportunity to participate in criticizing the regime and seeing how it responds. If we look beyond the skepticism that is a distinguishing mark of much of the younger generation, we see that groups of young people are involved in the work around the Charter, and that the overwhelming majority of youth sympathize with it.

3. I see another key aspect of the charter in the fact that it has stimulated the development of ideology, that it has prompted concrete political and ideological discussions that are especially important right now for Charter 77. These include discussions of the prospects for the development of Czechoslovakian society, which at this point are still open. Democratic and socialist views are the starting-point for these discussions, and I do not think that they in any way reflect reactionary social tendencies. To the contrary, they are trying to combat official Soviet policy, which is nationalist and neocolonialist, as well as the Czechoslovakian bureaucracy, which is the offspring of a totalitarian society that calls itself socialist.

The milieu critical of the Czechoslovakian regime has reached agreement on a common strategy. In 1976, the Czechoslovakian parliament ratified an international treaty concerning economic, social, and cultural rights and another on political and civil rights that had been previously signed by representatives in Helsinki. Since then, the citizens of Czechoslovakia have the right, and the state has the obligation, to honor those commitments. It is this fact that we wanted to emphasize by signing Charter 77 and by publishing the principal document and sixteen others, as well as much other material generated by the charter.

The regime reacted to the charter and its signers with an incredible hysteria in the mass media and with repression. We were picked up for "interrogation" (some were arrested). In many cases, these "interroga-

tions" lasted for days at a time and even led to some deaths by "natural causes." In fact, they were the result of the "interrogations" and other acts of repression. The best-known case is that of Professor Jan Patočka, a spokesman of Charter 77. But there is also the case of Joseph Kazik, a young worker who, in a moment of desperation, committed suicide rather than remove his signature from the charter.

Enormous pressures have been applied to the families of signers. For example, I, who had been an assistant professor of philosophy and since 1970 had worked as an unskilled laborer, lost my job after signing the charter. The same thing happened to my wife, who is an actress. We were forced to rely on the support of a circle of friends, nonsigners who gave us financial aid despite their own difficult situations. Our son, who was less than two years old, was kicked out of the nursery under pressure from the state police, who also hampered our efforts to find new jobs, even ones at low pay. Even distant relatives, who have in no way been active, were "interrogated" by the police to make them talk about us and destroy family ties. Threats were leveled against our friends and relatives at their jobs to get them to disown us and refuse to help us. It is these kinds of pressures, and sometimes worse ones, that have been applied to most of the signers.

From June 1977 to March 1978, the government tried slowly and underhandedly to snuff out Charter 77. It attempted to exploit and widen the ideological differences among the signers. This tactic failed, and that is why the repression has been stepped up since March 1978. Sympathizers of the charter are being arrested, as well as less famous signers. People are being beaten by the police and the daily "interrogations" have again become commonplace.

A large number of activists have found themselves out of a job, which is a serious problem, because since unemployment supposedly does not exist in Czechoslovakia, there is no unemployment compensation whatever. After six weeks of unemployment, those without work become "social parasites," according to Czechoslovakian law, and are subjected to constant harassment by the criminal police. They must prove that they have not been able to find a job. It's a vicious circle. In this sense, Czechoslovakia is still the country of Kafka.

The number of signers of Charter 77 has now reached a thousand. The number of active sympathizers has also grown considerably. Over the past year, thanks to the influence and courage of the signers, the average Czechoslovakian citizen has become less and less frightened and more and more critical. This is also certainly a result of the deterioration of the economic situation, which is now hitting the population harder than before.

The charter demands freedom of the press, of speech, of assembly, of movement, and so on. The signers are trying to broaden their contacts with other sectors of society. They are attempting to explain their goals to people. At the same time, under the very difficult conditions of a totalitarian regime, they are discussing the possibilities of realizing their goals, as well as the problems confronting Czechoslovakian society.

Since the abolition of the management councils, workers no longer have any say over production, any opportunity to participate in decisions, or any possibility of organizing free unions. The discussions conducted among some groups are also directed at these problems. They deal with questions of workers self-management and the possibility of establishing free unions.

In this regard, I consider as extremely positive the important step taken by some Italian left trade unionists, whose representatives have promised solidarity and aid if free unions are established. Some Italian unionists are now already giving financial assistance to a group of unemployed signers who badly need it. They need very concrete gestures of solidarity (both ideological and financial at this time, from the left-wing union movements of Western Europe).

We have likewise welcomed the very important initiative by the French unions, which I have heard a great deal about, and which I am sure will play a very important role in the history of the workers movement and in the history of relations between the Western left and the antibureaucratic opposition movement and the movement for human rights in Eastern Europe.

Charter 77 is the beginning of a movement that will, I think, have greater consequences than the Prague Spring. The charter does not have a political program, but it has a moral and political force that is very important for the future. It represents a point of departure that can give rise to political conceptions and forces that will help Czechoslovakian society to qualitatively outgrow the present pseudo-socialist stage.

Charter 77 represents a moral impulse. But it will be the Soviet and Czechoslovak bureaucrats who will provide the material incentive. They cannot do otherwise, because they strive for wealth. They can maintain their bureaucratic-bourgeois privileges only by keeping Czechoslovakia in its present state. The bureaucrats' conservatism has long since set in motion an opposition that threatens them and reflects the hopes of the peoples of central and Eastern Europe, as well as those of progressive left currents in the rest of Europe. It will become a matter of revolutionary change versus totalitarianism, bureaucracy, and the monopoly of power.

The date for such changes remains a



Demonstrators in Prague protesting 1968 invasion by Soviet troops.

question for the prophets. What is important right now is to continually analyze the evolution of Czechoslovakian society in greater depth, and within that context develop practical solutions. Above all, it is the solidarity of the Western left that can aid the Czechoslovakian opposition, both within the country and in exile.

In conclusion, I want to present several demands that I and my Czechoslovak colleagues consider the most timely and urgent, especially in connection with the tenth anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the so-called fraternal armies. I appeal to you to support these demands:

- End the professional blacklisting in Czechoslovakia! Since 1969, about half a million persons have been victimized, ranging from former members of the CP to Christians and others. Up to that time, there were tens of thousands of persons who were forbidden to practice their occupations, and were compelled to take less-skilled jobs.

- Free the political prisoners! Since 1969 there have been 6,000 political prisoners in Czechoslovakia. I want to single out the demands for freedom for Jiri Lederer, a journalist and signer of the charter who was sentenced to three years in prison, and Jiri Cerny, a worker, who was also sentenced to three years in prison for having pasted up posters and who is now seriously ill. Cerny is an antifascist fighter who was imprisoned in Hitler's camps. In addition, Vladimir Lastuvka and Ales Machacek,

technicians, have been imprisoned for more than a year, and Petr Cibulka, a worker, Libor Chloupek, a librarian, and Petr Pospichal, an apprentice baker, were jailed last month. All are workers and not well known. International solidarity will be necessary to win their release.

- Withdraw Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia! Husak declared in 1969 that after "normalization" of the country he would conduct discussions on all questions, including the withdrawal of Soviet troops. At the present time, however, Husak and the party leadership still need the Soviet army in Czechoslovakia. But the people will never accept it. The people want respect for human rights. They want freedom, democracy, and socialism, a workers society. The occupation and the bureaucratic caste make both freedom and democracy impossible. This occupation reflects a policy of great-power chauvinism toward the Czechoslovak nation and is directed against the workers.

End professional blacklisting!

Free the political prisoners!

Soviet tanks out!

Down with the bureaucracy! For a workers society in Czechoslovakia!

Might Even Go Down

The mayor of Newark, New Jersey, says the best way for cities to save money is to fire policemen, the July 14 *Washington Post* reports. If this were done, "the crime rate wouldn't change one-hundredth of 1 percent," Mayor Kenneth Gibson said.

Polish Bureaucrats Try Price Increases on the Sly

By Cyril Smuga

[The following account of life in Poland today is excerpted from the May 31 issue of *Rouge*, the French Trotskyist daily. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Almost two years after the general strike that rocked Poland in June 1976, touched off by an attempt to put through price increases of 70% and 100%, the situation on the domestic market has not improved. Necessities are often unavailable in the stores, and meat cannot be obtained at the official prices. Prices have been raised on the sly by introducing "new" products and removing "inferior" quality ones from the market.

At the same time, it has been made a deliberate policy to increase social differentiation. The main objective of this is to provide a broader social base for the bureaucracy among the well-to-do sections of the population.

Special stores have appeared selling scarce goods—in particular meat—at so-called "commercial" prices, that is, twice the average regular price. So, if your wallet is fat enough, you can get meat. It seems that now most of the meat destined for the internal market goes through those stores. The windows of the stores that sell at the official prices stand empty.

For consumer durables—furniture, certain electrical appliances, cars, and so forth—which are also unobtainable on the regular market—"quick sale" prices have been established. And so by paying 30% to 50% more, it is possible to buy these items without having to wait from two to six years to get them (which is the time between the purchase and delivery of an automobile at the regular price).

In the same pattern, only "cooperatives" can build housing. And in order to become a member of one, you have to be able to lay out several tens of thousands of *zlotys*. (The officially recognized average monthly pay of a worker is 4,168 *zlotys*)*.

In general, after joining a "cooperative," it takes several years before you get a dwelling. But, if you don't want to wait, you can always buy one with dollars (or any other Western currency). In Poland there is an officially sanctioned parallel market. It differs from the market on which ordinary people have to buy in that

it is quite well supplied and you can pay only in foreign currency.

Unable to reduce the standard of living of the masses by cutting wages or raising prices, the bureaucracy is trying to accomplish this by other means that will not spark a response by the workers. So, at the start of 1978, the social consumption funds were slashed. The stated aim of these funds, which were thought up in the 1950s, is to introduce a social form of remuneration into the economy, remuneration in services rather than in money.

Subsequently, these funds became a handy means for financing the services that enterprises would have to provide for their employees in any case, such as cafeterias and day-care centers (the latter are quite rare despite the obvious need for them).

Besides this, a part of these funds was used to finance the vacations of workers in resorts planned for this purpose as well as the construction and maintenance of the resorts themselves. So, even though abuses were widespread, such use of the funds at least enabled the poorest families to go on vacations.

For several years, and especially since 1976 (a pure coincidence, of course), articles in the press have been questioning the social funds. They argue that these funds have become a breeding ground for corruption and cronyism and that the workers would be better motivated if they got all their pay in money, and so this would increase productivity.

However, no notable increase in wages has followed the cutbacks in the social consumption funds, cutbacks whose effects are already making themselves felt. In some factories, the number of meals served by the cafeterias has been sharply reduced, in others the prices have gone beyond the reach of the workers. Projects for constructing social facilities have been postponed.

Many working-class families will not be able to go on a vacation this year. The prices of train tickets (which were formerly taken care of, at least in part), as well as of lodging and food in the resort centers, have gone beyond their reach.

At the same time, the organized excursions to the Western countries, which were cut out in July 1977—owing to a lack of foreign currency, although this was not officially acknowledged—have been reinstated. So, some will be able to spend three weeks in Spain, paying 40,000 *zlotys* per person (which is equivalent to ten



Poles lining up to buy meat.

months' wages for an average worker).

It cannot be said that the slogan raised by the Gierak team when they came to power in 1970—"We will build another Poland," that is, a better one—has not been realized. To the contrary, at every level the bureaucrats are building a better Poland for themselves. □

What Is 50 Yards Long and Eats Potatoes?

In Poland, as throughout the rest of Eastern Europe, humor is often used to express sentiments for which there are few other outlets.

The following are two examples cited recently by the *Washington Post*:

• On the continuing shortage of meat: "What is fifty yards long and eats potatoes?" Answer: "Poles lining up to buy meat."

• On the black market purchase of dollars for Polish *zlotys*: "Comrade, why are Poland and America exactly alike?" Answer: "Because in neither country can you buy anything with *zlotys*."

*About US\$130 at the official exchange rate.—IP/I

The Opposition Movement in Poland Today

[The following interview with Pawel Bakowski, a member of the Polish Workers Defense Committee, was obtained in New York in March by Gerry Foley.]

* * *

Question. What campaigns is the Workers Defense Committee engaged in now?

Answer. The Workers Defense Committee is working in four main directions. The first is a continuation of its original work, that is, defense of persons arbitrarily sentenced by courts, and so on. We have some lawyers and some people observing trials, and some of our members are being persecuted.

The second field of activity is developing an independent press and independent publications. The main independent publication that exists is *Zapis*, which is a literary quarterly. There are also several monthly publications that publish poems and stories, and several political publications. We have an independent publishing house called *Nowa*.

The third field is running an independent university. There are more than fifty lecturers who support this university. Lectures are held in several towns, and are attended by from fifty to a hundred persons, most of them students.

The fourth field is promoting an independent student movement.

Q. How widely do these samizdat publications circulate?

A. The record for any one issue is three thousand. It was set by the third issue of *Zapis*, which had the story "The Polish Complex" by Konwincki. I think that is a record not only for Poland but for all of Eastern Europe. This story has also been put out in book form. But not so many copies of this have been circulated. When I left Poland, it was about 500.

Q. How much contact do you have with workers in the factories?

A. Very little. The workers are more atomized and dependent on the regime. They are dependent on the government in all aspects of their lives. Their children are in government schools. They live in government-controlled housing. They work in government-controlled factories.

Q. Your contacts with workers, then, are much fewer than they were in 1976?

A. In 1976, we helped several hundred

workers who were persecuted. Now they don't need our help in an immediate way. It is only those who don't fear reprisals who cooperate with us. This is a smaller number. It is hard to help the movement when you are so dependent on the government.

Q. Aren't intellectuals and students just as dependent on the government as workers?

A. Individuals as such have some options. There is now a large private sector in Poland. Certain types of labor are much in demand. If you are willing to work as a painter, for example, you can make more money than I make in my job at a meteorology institute.

Q. Are there any independent organizations of workers left in the factories?

A. I don't think so. Maybe there are small groups of strike committee members. But those who took part in strike committees have been persecuted, and they are afraid of having contact with us.

Q. So, do you think that the situation in Poland has been stabilized?

A. No. From time to time, we get information from different factories about strikes occurring again. A strike may develop, for instance, when there is no meat in a local factory shop. Then there is a strike and the government collects meat from all the surrounding factory shops and brings it to this shop immediately. Or if there is a strike for higher wages, the government will grant the demands in that particular factory, so that wages in one factory may be twice what they are in another.

Q. In that case, what is the mood of the population like? Are feelings so high that another explosion is likely in the near future?

A. No, I don't think so. I don't expect an explosion. But nonetheless the situation is very unstable. The government has to decide whether it is going to change its general policy, not only toward opposition and cultural freedom, but in economic questions as well. It has to decide if it is going to turn toward a liberalization, or put every dissident in jail. I don't think that the situation can endure very long as it is.

Q. How likely do you think a liberalization is?

A. Well, let's look at what the government has done already. First of all, it has virtually stopped the prosecution of dissidents. Secondly, it has stopped police brutality against the ordinary people. Third, it has accepted the existence of opposition groups such as the Workers Defense Committee and the Movement for Human Rights.

Of course, in a certain way this has weakened us. Our activity was dependent on persecution. When the government decided to release all the Workers Defense Committee members, we stopped attacking the government for violating human rights. Now our criticisms are much milder.

Q. What are the immediate objectives now of the Workers Defense Committee?

A. We want to force the government to undergo a certain kind of evolution. We know that it is impossible to make rapid changes in government policy, so we would like to create a certain space in social life independent of the totalitarian government. There are now certain openings in social and cultural life, the Polish samizdat, the independent university I mentioned, as well as the Workers Defense Committee and the Movement for Human Rights.

For many years, the only area of Polish life where there was any independence from the government was the Catholic Church.

What we want to do now is encourage people to create independent forms of social activity like the Workers Defense Committee and the other things I mentioned.

*Q. What is the difference between your committee and the Movement for Human Rights, which publishes the magazine *Opinia*?*

A. The main difference is the political roots of the people involved in the two groups. Most of the people in the Workers Defense Committee were involved in activity around social issues on a left-wing basis—not all of them, but most of them. Most of the people involved in the Movement for Human Rights have a background of pure political activity aimed at achieving the independence of Poland. But some of them are also leftists. And some of the people in the Workers Defense Committee came from the right.

Q. Is there a difference of political program between the two organizations?

A. No. Both have the same aims. Sometimes in discussions, members of the Movement for Human Rights say that our first objective should be to achieve the independence of Poland. They say that it is impossible to conceive of democracy without independence. Sometimes, the Workers Defense Committee people say that achieving independence is impossible now and that it is an irrelevant issue since it is not realistic at present. They say that what we can do now is promote social self-organization.

Q. That is, they say the character of the society has to be changed before it is possible to struggle for independence. But independence for Poland would also be an aim of the KOR, would it not?

A. Of course, without independence democracy is impossible. The difference is over which is the primary aim.

Q. Is there much interest in Poland in the opposition movement in the Soviet Union?

A. Yes. But we have no direct contacts. It is very difficult to make contact, especially for the Russians. We Poles have more freedom to go abroad. For example, I am here. But Russians can't get out.

Q. Would you have more contacts with oppositionists, say, in Lithuania, than in the other Soviet republics?

A. No. All our contacts are through our supporters in the West. For example, I was not allowed to leave Poland for eight years, not even to go to the Soviet Union. Now the government agreed to give me a visa, but two years ago they refused me one to the Soviet Union.

Q. Could you go to the Soviet Union now?

A. No, I think there is no chance. I suspect that it will be a long time before I am able to leave Poland again.

Q. How long have you been known to the government as an oppositionist?

A. I spent five months in prison in 1968. I took part in the student strike committee at the University of Warsaw. I was a student in the physics department at that time. After that I did not take part in any political activity, but the government did not want to give me a visa to go abroad. That was only one form of persecution, but it was very unpleasant for me, since my mother and sister live permanently in the United States.

Q. When did you become active again?

A. It was only after the formation of the Workers Defense Committee. I collected money. I spread information about our work, and asked people for help. I asked all

sorts of people for help. I know a policeman for example who contributed to the fund to aid the workers.

It is hard to distinguish those who support the government and those who do not. People hide their feelings. For example, one of my friends was arrested. The policeman started to search him. He found some Defense Committee documents, and started to read them. This was at the very beginning of the committee's work, and so this was an ordinary street policeman. It was the first time he found out about the persecutions.

In a document, he found the name of my friend, the student Tomczyk, and it said that he was beaten by the police. Tomczyk had been an observer at the trial of workers in Radom. He was arrested and taken to police headquarters, where he was badly beaten up.

So, the policeman asked: "Is this Tomczyk you?" My friend said yes. Then he asked: "Are you a member of the Workers Defense Committee?" Tomczyk said no. The policeman said: "But your name is here." My friend said: "Yes, but so are the names of the policemen who did the beating." The policeman got angry and said: "Don't pull my leg, those are policemen who have broken the law."

Q. What are conditions like in the Polish prisons.

A. That depends. Political prisoners are kept in relatively good conditions. I don't know much about conditions in American or Swedish jails, but I would say they are worse than in Sweden. You can't have a radio and you can have only one visit a month from relatives.

But sometimes dissidents are sentenced for "hooliganism." And then you are put in with criminals, and the prison administration will encourage them to attack you. That happened to some of my friends, who were sentenced.

I was not sentenced. I was kept in prison without a trial. You can be held in Poland for six months to a year without trial.

Q. What lessons did you draw from the 1968 student demonstrations? Did you learn things that proved useful in 1976?

A. Yes. All the leading activists in the Workers Defense Committee came out of the 1968 student movement. This is where the people came from who had experience and a knowledge of how to organize. They had experience as well with the state security police. And that is very important. You have to know how to talk to them, how to react to them.

Q. What about the politics of the 1968 demonstrations? Did that have any bearing on what you did in 1976?

A. The situation in 1968 was quite differ-

ent. Then we were fighting simply for cultural freedom, for a free press. What started it was the banning of a performance of *Dziady* ["Forefather's Eve," a revolutionary nationalist play by the national poet Adam Mickiewicz].

But now, in 1976, the movement started from defending workers, and so it was quite a different situation; the fight was a much broader one.

Q. Were you taken by surprise by the port strikes in 1970?

A. Yes. I was surprised. I did not expect the 1970 strikes. And I was taken by surprise as well by 1976. But I do not have a lot of political experience. Kuron, on the other hand, expected 1976. When the price rises were decreed, he said that there would be great strikes in Poland. I was sure that nothing would happen.

Q. There was a feeling, then, that the workers were apathetic?

A. Yes. It's true. The workers are quite apathetic. And so, for me, it was quite surprising that they did what they did.

Q. Do you think that divisions are developing in the Communist Party now under the pressure of the situation?

A. I do not know. I think that there is a strong group of pro-Moscow people in the Party. They act openly. One of them is Lukaszewicz, for example. I do not know how strong this group is, but it seems that they are very strong, if you compare the statements made by apparatchiks. I am sure that the existence of the Workers Defense Committee must have an influence on the thinking of all the apparatchiks. Some of them must realize that very profound changes have to be made. But the only open statement along those lines was the one made by the fifteen former Politburo members.¹

Q. What kind of force did that statement represent?

A. None. These people are politically dead. But the statement had a very great impact, because it was the first time Party members decided to write a letter. But politically they are dead. In the Party, those who are outside of the Politburo and the Central Committee are nothing. And they cannot come back to power. That is quite impossible in this system. They have no social base. Anyhow, they are not oppositionists. They support the rule of the Party leadership.

Q. But in the letter they make some very sharp criticisms. They describe the rule of

1. See "Former High Officials Voice Alarm Over Increasing Discontent," in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 30, 1978, p. 102.

the Communist leadership, for example, as a dictatorship.

A. Some of my friends say in a joking way that they are waking up two years too late.

Q. *Be that as it may, it seems that they think the 1976 crisis is not over.*

A. Yes.

Q. *Are you able to talk to workers enough to get an idea of what the mood is in the factories?*

A. No. I am not. I have not been involved in this work. My work has been with students.

Q. *Could you describe the formation of the independent student movement after the murder of Stanislaw Pyjas?*²

A. The situation in Cracow was very tense after Pyjas's death. A group of students decided to hold days of mourning instead of participating in the Juvenalia [the annual student festival]. A conflict developed with the organizers of the Juvenalia, that is the Socialist Student Union. This came to a head when these student officials called on the police to arrest participants in the mourning demonstrations.

This incident was the immediate reason for forming a kind of student self-defense organization. In its first statement, it called for the formation of an independent student movement. Because it is in the constitution of the Socialist Student Union that it acts under the direction of the Party leadership. When officials of this organization helped the police to arrest other students, this was a special encouragement to form another one.

As of now, the Student Solidarity Committees, which came out of the Cracow experience, are active in five cities—Cracow, Warsaw, Lodz, Gdansk, and Poznan. In Lodz, the group is somewhat different, but it is also a kind of independent student committee. I have heard that there is a Student Solidarity Committee in Wroclaw as well, but I am not sure about that. And there are independent student magazines, *Bratniak* and *Indeks*.

The Student Solidarity Committees took part in organizing the flying university, and they issue statements. For example,

2. Pyjas was found dead on May 7, 1977, at the bottom of a staircase in a building in Cracow. He was a student and had been active in the Workers Defense Committee. The authorities claimed that he died in a fall while drunk. But his friends said that he had no reason to be in the building where his body was found. They charged the police with carrying out a gangland-style murder of the student activist. On May 15, 2,000 persons turned out for a requiem mass for Pyjas. Later, 5,000 persons marched through the city in a mourning demonstration.

the last statement by the Cracow committee was about students' right to read the books in university libraries. Because some of the books in the libraries are forbidden. For example, all books in Polish published abroad are forbidden, as are books by writers that the government claims are enemies of People's Poland.

Q. *Is it possible to read Trotsky's writings in Poland?*

A. No. That is quite impossible.

Q. *Are any copies of any of his writings around?*

A. I don't know of any.

Q. *Does any of the Western left press get into Poland?*

A. The revolutionary papers do not, although I saw a copy of *Rouge* once. The CP papers do, but not all of them. On the basis of the Third Basket of the Helsinki Agreements, International Press clubs have been opened in many places, where you can find *Newsweek*, *Time*, *l'Humanité*, and so on. But strangely in the last two years I have not seen one article about Poland. When *l'Unità*, the Italian CP paper, writes something about Poland, for instance, that issue does not appear.

Q. *Have you ever seen the Spanish Communist Party publications?*

A. No. Never. I would like to get a copy of Carrillo's book *Eurocommunism and the State*. People are interested in that.

Q. *What sort of help do oppositionists in Poland expect from Western socialists?*

A. Polish students want help from the student movement in the West. The Workers Defense Committee expects help from the Western labor movement first of all. Its success was owing largely to the support it got from Western trade unions. I think that the success of the Student Solidarity Committees will depend to a

considerable extent on the support that they get from the student movement and the youth movement in the West.

So, I would like everyone who comes to Poland to visit us, not to be afraid to contact us.

Q. *How could a visitor contact you?*

A. We work quite openly. Our publications carry names and addresses. You can get them from the books about the Polish opposition published here in the West.

Q. *Would anyone going to a campus be likely to come across your publications?*

A. At the University of Warsaw, yes. On other campuses, it would be more difficult.

Q. *Are people in Poland afraid of talking to foreigners, especially if you ask questions about the opposition?*

A. Some are, and some are not. We would like to see you try. That would be a good test. We know so little about our society. The ordinary Pole would not talk readily to other Poles about these questions. They are afraid of police provocateurs. There is no information. There are some studies of the attitudes of people by Party sociologists and security police agents. But they are not available.

Q. *Wouldn't a foreign visitor be deported immediately if he or she began asking people on the street political questions?*

A. I don't think so. Our government doesn't like to get bad publicity in the Western press.

Q. *Are you getting a lot of visitors from the West now? Do people come from the revolutionary Marxist groups?*

A. Yes, we get many visitors. And I think that people are coming from the revolutionary groups. But I don't know these people personally. I think that they are watched more closely by the police than others. □

South African Exiles Jailed in Swaziland

During April, dozens of Black South African exiles were arrested by the regime of King Sobhuza II of Swaziland, a small country bordering on South Africa that is dominated economically and politically by the apartheid regime.

Fifty-nine exiles from Soweto, the large Black township near Johannesburg that has been the center of much of the recent resistance to the racist South African regime, were arrested after a demonstration through the streets of Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland. The demonstration, which had been banned by the authorities, was called to protest the detention of

several other student exiles, who were being held for unspecified reasons.

In addition, more than thirty members of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) were detained. One of them was Joe Mkwanzu, the PAC's chief representative in Swaziland, who has lived in exile in that country since 1963. Sobhuza has threatened to expel the PAC members from the country, although he maintains that they will not be sent back to South Africa.

The arrested Soweto students were released in early May, but Deputy Prime Minister Zonke Khumalo announced that three other Soweto student exiles would be deported.

Women in India

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—Although there is no organized feminist movement in India today, the centuries of oppression suffered by women have made the issue of women's liberation a potentially explosive one.

When British imperialism annexed India in the nineteenth century, the position of Indian women was one of extreme degradation. Discrimination according to birth, age, and sex was maintained by the patriarchal family and by the system of hierarchical castes. Rigid standards of purity and chastity were imposed upon women to preserve the "sanctity" of blood and family.

Women were subjected to forced marriage at an early age, to the practice of polygamy (which created perpetual insecurity, particularly for women who did not give birth to male children), to a double standard on the question of divorce in upper-caste families, and to the inhuman custom of "sati" whereby a widow was expected to follow her husband in death. Where "sati" was not practiced, the widow was condemned to a life of drudgery and permanent disfigurement. She was regarded as evil and was barred from social life.

A daughter was a liability, since she had to be married before a certain age and into a particular group. If she did not have a male child, she would be frowned upon and maltreated. Some communities—even in this century—widely practiced female infanticide as a result.

The impact of British rule was far-reaching but dual. British capital introduced changes in the social structure only to suit its own needs. Nonetheless it did provide an economic framework within which a social reform movement to eradicate "sati," female infanticide, and other cruel practices was launched by enlightened forerunners of the Indian bourgeoisie. They pressed for the passing of laws allowing widows' remarriage, raising the marriageable age, providing for female education, and so forth.

Independence in 1947 placed state power at the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. To fulfill its own needs of developing a home market, the bourgeoisie had to do away with some of the most blatant manifestations of sexual inequality in India. Even though the socioeconomic roots of inequality were not touched, the recognition of legal equality between men and women, the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex, and the introduction of uni-

versal adult suffrage represented major advances for Indian women.

Indian women now have the legal right to divorce under certain conditions and with their husband's consent. They have the legal right to abortion. They can inherit and own property independently. They can compete for jobs and posts, whether political, economic, or social.

But the way in which these reforms have been introduced shows that the bourgeoisie still intends to limit women's rights.

First of all, they insist that changes be made through the legislative process alone and are deadly opposed to an independent women's movement.

Secondly, their legislation does not strike at the economic and property basis of the oppressive patriarchal family—particularly the Hindu family, where a male child gets property rights by birth, and a female suffers under many legal disadvantages.

Thirdly, the rulers in India have not produced a uniform civil code for all the communities of India—even though this is promised in the Indian constitution. The result is a patchwork quilt of different laws—many of them discriminatory against women—governing marriage, inheritance, adoption, divorce, and the legitimacy of children.

Women therefore continue to be oppressed in India. According to the 1971 census, only 18 percent of women are

literate, and only 2 percent have the advantage of higher education. From the time she is born, the average Indian girl is made to feel inferior to her brother. He is entitled to better clothing, better education, better overall treatment in life.

The problem of female unemployment is greatly aggravated by the uneven development of the capitalist economy in India and by the traditional social taboos against women performing certain types of work. Only 13.2 percent of women are in the work force. They are predominantly in agriculture. More than 80 percent of female workers are in agriculture. Half of them belong to the scheduled (most oppressed) castes and tribes. Women workers are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. They are denied the social services they need. Where laws provide for child care or maternity leave, the bosses use this as an excuse to fire women workers. In the unorganized sector, women are paid less than men.

Women job-seekers are increasing at all educational levels. The majority of them are in the twenty to thirty-four age group. This is bound to have a far-reaching effect on Indian society.

Women have already played an important role in some significant social struggles. These include the 1974 railway strike and the recent wave of government-worker strikes in Maharashtra.

Study groups initiated by socialist feminists are also beginning to appear in India. One such group, in Bombay, has prepared many papers dealing with various aspects of the oppression of Indian women.

The weight of centuries of sexual oppression gives the struggles of women an explosive character in India. The fight for women's liberation can be expected to play an important role in building the revolutionary Marxist party and struggling for socialism in India. □

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