

# Intercontinental Press

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Amauta

LIMA, August 14: Copper miners, families enter Peruvian capital after 100-mile "march of sacrifice." Regime

has declared emergency, sent in troops in attempt to break strike by 48,000 miners that began August 4.

## 10,000 Miners March on Lima

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Somoza Under Siege

By Fred Murphy

In what was perhaps the most spectacular urban-guerrilla action ever carried out, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) forced the Nicaraguan dictatorship of Gen. Anastasio Somoza to release fifty-eight political prisoners August 24 and pay the FSLN the sum of \$500,000.

Wearing olive-green uniforms similar to those used by Somoza's National Guard, about twenty FSLN guerrillas entered the National Palace in Managua on August 22. After a brief shootout with National Guard troops, the commandos succeeded in taking over the palace and capturing the minister of the interior, his deputy, and between forty and sixty members of the Chamber of Deputies, which was in session at the time of the raid. Fifteen journalists and more than 1,000 government employees and other persons were also caught up in the FSLN's operation.

The guerrillas held the palace and the deputies and government officials—among whom were a cousin and a nephew of General Somoza—for almost two days. The regime made no attempt to dislodge the guerrillas, but instead opened negotiations, with the Catholic archbishop of Managua serving as an intermediary.

Late in the evening of August 23, Somoza agreed to allow three FSLN communiqués to be read on Nicaraguan radio stations, free the political prisoners, and provide safe passage out of the country for them and the guerrillas.

A dispatch from Managua in the August 25 *Washington Post* described the scene in the city after the FSLN commandos had left the palace with their hostages and boarded buses:

"Thousands lined the route to the airport cheering the guerrillas as they drove past. The crowds chanted 'Down with Somoza!' and 'Somoza to the gallows!'"

"When the two planes carrying guerrillas and hostages took off, jubilant Nicaraguans broke through security lines at the Managua airport and cheered.

"It's fantastic. It's tremendous. It's a triumph for the people," said one young woman in the airport crowd. Riot police turned water cannon on the demonstrators at one gate when they threatened to swarm onto the runway."

This response to the FSLN's action shows how deep the opposition to the corrupt, repressive Somoza dictatorship has become in recent months, as well as how popular the Sandinista guerrillas are among the Nicaraguan masses.

There have been many other indications

of this as well. On July 5, 100,000 persons turned out in Managua to welcome "The Twelve"—a group of prominent Nicaraguan businessmen, attorneys, and religious and academic figures who are closely linked to the dominant faction of the FSLN. "The Twelve" emerged last October when they left the country and issued a declaration calling for Somoza's resignation and the inclusion of the FSLN in a new government.

Popular support for "The Twelve" became so great that Somoza was forced to drop the charges pending against them and allow them back into the country. Since their return, they have been holding rallies in many cities and towns, calling openly for "popular insurrection" to bring Somoza down.

A twenty-four-hour general strike took place in Nicaragua July 19. It was called by the Frente Amplio de Oposición (FAO—Broad Opposition Front), a formation that includes "The Twelve" and most of the country's trade unions and political parties.

Since then, street protests, hunger strikes, rallies, clashes with the National Guard, and other forms of struggle have kept up the pressure on Somoza. Heavy fighting between government troops and FSLN guerrilla forces has been reported along the southern border with Costa Rica.

Somoza may now face problems inside the National Guard itself. This combination army and police force has kept the

Somoza family in control of Nicaragua for more than forty years. But high desertion levels from the Guard have been reported recently. Somoza abruptly removed thirty out of the Guard's thirty-five army and police chiefs during the second week of August—a move that can hardly have helped to improve morale.

The day the FSLN's spectacular action freed the political prisoners, the opposition forces called for another general strike, this one to last indefinitely with the goal of forcing Somoza out of power. Initial reports from Managua indicated that it was getting off to a slow start, owing to reluctance by the businessmen and industrialists who oppose Somoza to shut down their operations, which they have done voluntarily in previous work stoppages.

The mass upsurge against Somoza's continued rule has thus far remained under the leadership of the dictator's capitalist opponents—"The Twelve" and the Broad Opposition Front. These forces seek to use popular pressure—and the armed threat of the FSLN—to get Somoza to resign so they can replace him with a "government of national unity."

As for the FSLN, its dominant faction offers no political alternative to that of the procapitalist opposition. In fact, it collaborates uncritically with the Broad Opposition Front. On the level of tactics, the FSLN clearly remains committed to its policy of spectacular actions and military confrontations in rural areas with the National Guard.

While the FSLN is greatly admired for its daring, its strategy leaves the masses of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants in the role of passive spectators. No alternative leadership has yet emerged that could base its strategy on the hatred the masses feel for Somoza and organize and mobilize them independently to bring the dictatorship to a quick end. □

## Haven't We Been Through This Before?

By Matilde Zimmermann

It would not be easy for the Pentagon to send U.S. troops back into Indochina to interfere in some country's internal affairs. But a call for such an invasion recently hit the news—and it issued from a most unlikely source. Senator George McGovern, chief Democratic Party "dove" during the Vietnam war, called for a military invasion of Cambodia to topple the Pnompenh government.

McGovern claimed that the rulers of Cambodia, now called Kampuchea, carry out mass murder on a scale that makes Hitler's massacre of Jews "look very tame" by comparison. He more than doubled the widely cited—but thoroughly unreliable—claim that 1 million Cambodians have

died since the fall of the old regime. McGovern asserted that as many as 2.5 million of the nation's 7 million people have perished in what he called "a clear case of genocide."

The newly hawkish senator said he thought the "ideal" solution would be an invasion under the cover of United Nations "peacekeeping" troops. But he expressed fears that the UN would not agree to such an operation and clearly implied that the United States ought to be prepared to go it alone.

"Do we sit on the sidelines and watch a population slaughtered, or do we marshal military force and put an end to it?" McGovern asked at a Senate foreign rela-



McGOVERN: Urges invasion of Cambodia.

tions subcommittee meeting on Indochina August 21.

The *last* thing the people of Kampuchea need is another imperialist invasion.

McGovern's warmongering is objectively a trial balloon, probing the antiwar sentiment of the American people against renewed intervention in Southeast Asia. It should be denounced by everyone who has had enough of U.S. military adventures around the globe.

Washington already bears heavy responsibility for the hardships being suffered in Kampuchea. Five years of saturation bombing coupled with invasions by American and Saigon troops totally devastated Cambodian society and economic life. It seems that Mr. McGovern has a very short memory.

The State Department, which finds the current state of affairs in Kampuchea a useful illustration of the "horrors of communism," was quick to deny any invasion plans. The Carter administration scored an undeserved propaganda point from the whole episode: it was able to pass itself off as a restraining influence on mad dog McGovern. □

### If You Don't Believe Him, Just Ask Him

An FBI official has attacked the *Los Angeles Times* for publishing a story on a visiting scholar who discovered he was being followed by federal gumshoes.

"If a bona fide law enforcement agency is conducting an investigation, then I think the American public and press have to assume that it's legitimate," said Ted L. Gunderson, chief of the FBI's Los Angeles office.

"You have just to take our word for it—if it's our investigation, it's a legitimate surveillance."

## In This Issue

Closing News Date: August 26, 1978

IRAN	980	Shah's Arsonists Claim 600 Victims —by Parvin Najafi
MIDEAST	982	Israeli Bombers Return to Lebanon —by Ann Feder
PERU	983	Junta Moves to Break Miners Strike —by Fred Murphy
	984	Interview With Hugo Blanco
IRELAND	983	British Army Harasses Belfast Trotskyists
	991	"It Is a Miracle No One Has Died in Here Yet"
JAPAN	986	Japanese Trotskyist Beaten by Prison Guards
KENYA	987	Kenyatta—From Freedom Fighter to Neo-colonial Ruler—by Ernest Harsch
ERITREA	988	Mengistu's Offensive Against Eritrea —by Ernest Harsch
CUBA	989	Castro Defends Cuban Role in "Nonaligned Movement"
BRITAIN	990	New Rise of Irish Solidarity Actions —by Ailean O'Callaghan
MEXICO	992	20,000 Demand Release of All Political Prisoners—by Rosendo Mendoza
	993	Mexican Trotskyist Tells of Kidnapping by Police
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	996	Roots of the Charter 77 Movement —by Jan Kavan
NEWS ANALYSIS	978	Somoza Under Siege—by Fred Murphy
	978	Haven't We Been Through This Before? —by Matilde Zimmermann
CAPITALISM FOULS THINGS UP	994	Tokyo OKs Dirtier Air
FROM OUR READERS	1000	
DRAWINGS	979	George McGovern; 982, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi; 987, Jomo Kenyatta—by Copain

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# Shah's Arsonists Claim 600 Victims

By Parvin Najafi

A crowded movie theater in the working-class district of Abadan, the southern oil port city of Iran, was set on fire August 19. In this incident, one of the worst disasters of its kind in history, an estimated 600 persons lost their lives, and an unknown number were injured, many of them critically.

Even though no terrorist group or any one else has taken credit for this murderous act, the shah's regime and the capitalist media around the world have pointed the finger toward the shah's opponents, specifically the "Muslim extremists."

Despite the high-pitched and well-coordinated attempt of the Iranian regime and its international backers to pin this horrendous mass murder on opponents of the shah's despotic rule, all the evidence points to the involvement of the blood-thirsty court gang of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

That this is the conclusion the people of Iran themselves have drawn is shown by the fact that the funeral ceremonies for the victims of the fire quickly turned into massive antigovernment protests.

*Washington Post* correspondent William Branigan reported from Abadan August 26:

"Mourning ceremonies for the victims of last Saturday's Abadan theater fire turned into violent anti-shah demonstrations last night as this southwest Iranian oil town entered what residents said would be a 'day of blood.'

"The feeling against Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and his government—blamed by a majority of the townspeople for the tragedy—is open, virulent and overwhelmingly widespread in Abadan, the site of one of the world's largest oil refineries and a key city in the Iranian economy.

"Seemingly to a man, residents of this hot, humid town at the head of the Persian Gulf accuse the local police and fire department of responsibility for the magnitude of the disaster by locking the cinema doors, preventing rescue attempts and displaying sheer incompetence. Many also claim the fire left more than 600 people dead instead of the 377 reported by the government.

"At bottom is the message, widely expressed, that after eight months of anti-government disturbances and frequently violent police responses, in various parts of the country, the only solution of the problem is that the shah must go. . . .

"Swarming into the streets last night, the demonstrators in Abadan shouted,

'Death to the shah' and 'Burn him.' As the people coursed through the city there were cries of 'We want an end to 50 years of Pahlavi tyranny,' a reference to the shah's father. . . .

"The anti-shah tenor of the disturbances was illustrated by Abadan's leading religious figure, Ayatollah Mohammed Kazem Dehdachidi. In an interview he said, 'The majority of the people are against the shah. The shah has to go. That's the only thing that will satisfy the people.'

Residents of Abadan charge that the high number of casualties in the fire stems from the fact that the doors of the cinema were locked from the outside, trapping the crowd inside. The fire fighters arrived quite late, despite several phone calls, and once they arrived they were not properly equipped. According to news reports, the water tanks of most of the trucks were empty, as were the fire hydrants around the cinema.

"Shocked and embittered survivors accused the fire fighters of being late to arrive and said that their efforts harmed rather than helped the chances of escape by people trapped inside," United Press International reported.

To be noted is the fact that Abadan, the oil capital of Iran, has one of the best fire departments in the country. Only a few weeks before the theater fire, the same fire department extinguished a vastly more difficult oil well blaze within a few hours. Why this well-equipped fire department performed so poorly at the theater fire remains a mystery to be solved!

The regime's explanation of why the doors of the movie theater were locked is quite shaky. The official account is that "the doors were locked as an antiterrorist measure"!

Less than two hours after the fire, a crowd of government supporters, obviously organized beforehand, gathered in front of Abadan's city hall demanding the punishment of "subversives," "extremists," and "saboteurs."

The government announced a national day of mourning for those killed in the fire. Government spokesman Darius Homayun blamed the opposition, saying "people must show they will not stand idly by in the wake of this heinous crime." In a message to the families of the victims, the shah promised "severe punishment for the arsonists."

In the following days, the regime staged further progovernment rallies. In these rallies "representatives" of different layers

of the population have demanded that the government "crack down on the opposition" and "put an end to the turmoil."

The governor of Khuzistan, went to Abadan within hours after the fire and set up a commission "to investigate the incident." He told a reporter for *Kayhan*, the semiofficial daily, that "the members of the commission have already started a massive investigation as to the cause of the fire and a wide search for those responsible for it."

In addition, the prime minister has sent a "royal commission" to Abadan in "search of those responsible."

Already thirteen persons have been arrested as suspects—three employees of the Rex Cinema and ten teachers at a local school. According to officials, the teachers were arrested "because they were known to have provoked students to violence."

Immediately after the arrest of the teachers, the local head of the Ministry of Education lodged a protest, declaring that they were not in any way involved in the disaster.

Both political and religious leaders have repudiated the government charges blaming the fire on the opposition. A press release by the "Young Muslim Organization" (abroad) states: "Ayatollah Shariatmadari [a major leader of the religious opposition], categorically denying the government accusation, declared publicly that the Abadan fire was another action initiated by the government itself, and expressed his deepest sympathy for the victims and their families."

William Branigan, writing in the August 24 *Washington Post*, reported:

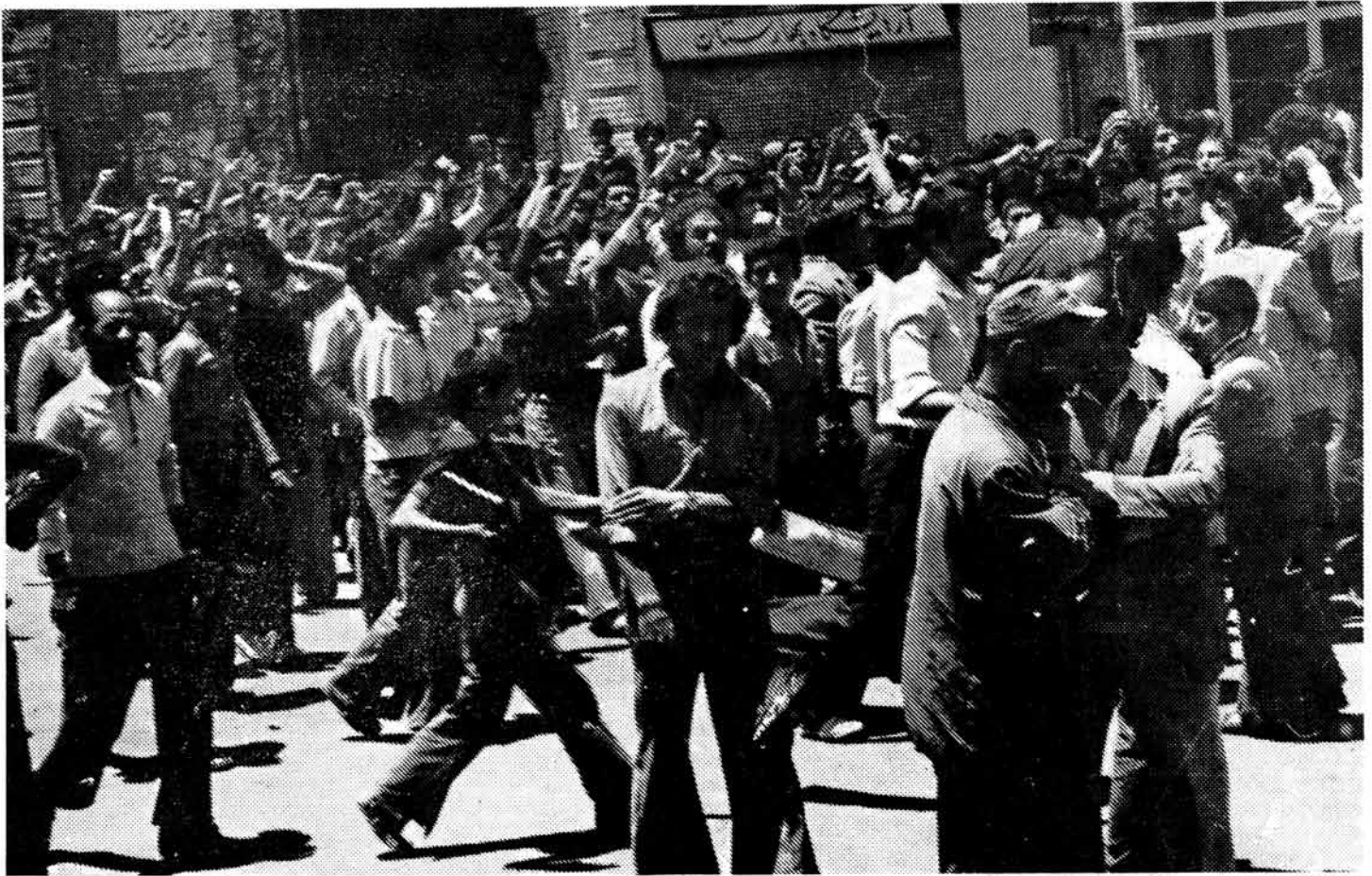
"Moderate political opposition leader Karim Sanjabi told a news conference in Tehran last night that he had no 'correct information' on the fire, but that it reminded him of the 1933 Reichstag fire in Germany as Hitler was coming to power. The Nazis blamed the sabotage on their Communist foes and made significant propaganda advances, but were later considered to have set the blaze themselves."

On August 21 Iranian students demonstrated in Washington and Paris, blaming the shah for the murder of those killed in the fire.

The Abadan fire came after almost a month of antigovernment protests and demonstrations throughout Iran.

After the nationwide protests that began on May 9, the religious leaders did not call for any further mobilizations and actively sought to prevent the indignant population from pouring into the streets. But demonstrations began to occur even without their official call.

The first of this series of demonstrations occurred on June 8 in Mahabad (the capital of the independent Kurdish republic of 1945-46). About 10,000 persons turned out for the funeral of Aziz Yousafi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Iran and the longest-



Anti-shah demonstration in Shiraz, August 11.

Kayhan

held political prisoner in the country. Yousafi spent a quarter of a century in the shah's dungeons. His funeral turned into an antigovernment demonstration as the participants raised slogans for a free and independent Kurdistan.

The next demonstration began on July 22, at the funeral of Sheikh Ahmad Kafi, in Meshed. Kafi, a prominent leader of the religious opposition, died in a mysterious car accident outside Meshed. The police charged into his funeral procession, killing about 40 and injuring scores of others, according to eyewitness accounts and a statement by Meshed religious leaders.

In the next week, demonstrations spread to eighteen cities, according to a government spokesman. In the same week two other prominent religious leaders died—of natural causes, according to the government. Their funeral processions and memorial meetings also turned into antigovernment demonstrations.

In Tehran the memorial meeting held for Kafi and other religious leaders on July 26 became an antigovernment demonstration that lasted through July 28. Qum, Isfahan, Shiraz, Rafsanjan, Kerman, Shahi, Hamadan, Tabriz, and Jahrum were among

major cities where antigovernment demonstrations were held that week.

On August 5 the shah made a nationwide televised speech on the seventy-second anniversary of winning the constitution through the 1906 revolution.

In this speech, which was reported throughout the world, he promised "western-style democracy." He said, "We shall give the maximum political liberties, the freedom of speech and the press, the freedom to stage public demonstrations, within the prevalent limits."

In the week that followed, the shah's promise of political liberties was put to the test, and it was shown to have been very limited indeed.

A new series of demonstrations broke out on August 10, and spread to almost every corner of this vast country. The largest of these occurred in Isfahan, Tabriz, and Shiraz. Other major cities where massive demonstrations were held include Tehran, Ardabil, Ghazwin, Abadan, Arsenjan, Kermanshah, Arak, Ahwaz, Qum, Golpayegan, Brojerd, and Homainshar. In all of these cities demonstrations have occurred sporadically but repeatedly.

In Isfahan, where the most massive

demonstration took place, the government declared martial law for one month. The details of the Isfahan protests, as summarized from *Kayhan*, are as follows:

On Thursday afternoon, August 10, a crowd of about 300 gathered in Pahlavi Square in Isfahan and began chanting antigovernment slogans. Within minutes 500 more joined them. As their ranks began to swell the protesters started marching in the streets. The police, armed with machine guns and tear gas, rushed onto the scene and began to disperse the crowd.

Many of the demonstrators went to the roofs of buildings and began throwing any objects they could get their hands on down on the trucks carrying soldiers. The demonstrators finally had to back down and disperse.

The next morning, Friday, August 11, people began to pour out into the streets in different parts of the city. This time the demonstrators began building barricades throughout the city, using old tires, garbage cans, and anything else they could lay their hands on. They battled with the police and army for several hours.

The next day martial law was declared

in Isfahan and two other nearby cities, Najafabad and Homainshar.

Armored cars and tanks were then stationed throughout Isfahan. But the people began to defy the martial-law regulations on a massive scale. Here is the account of a *Kayhan* reporter from Isfahan on the third day after martial law was declared:

"Despite the fact that martial law was declared in Isfahan fifty-three hours ago and the military governor has issued some twelve communiqués, urging people to remain calm, prohibiting movement during the night, banning any gathering of more than three people, outlawing the publication of any declarations or unapproved manifestos, and further prohibiting any prayer gathering throughout the day, coupled with threats against suspected elements as to their harsh punishment, and persuading shopkeepers not to close their shop—despite all this—as the military governor's twelve communiqués indicate, some of the people of Isfahan still pay no attention to martial-law regulations.

"During the past fifty-two hours, a number of people, most of them between sixteen and twenty-four years of age, have been arrested by the military governor of Isfahan. . . ."

The mass defiance of martial law in Isfahan vividly demonstrates the erosion of the authority of Pahlavi autocracy. Even its martial law, bringing the city under siege, does not work any more.

In Tabriz August 12, the first day of the fall semester of Azarbadegan University, the students organized a massive antigovernment demonstration. After marching through the university and being joined by the faculty, they gathered in front of the administration building, where resolutions of both the students and the faculty were read.

The students presented a list of twenty-seven demands to the university administrators and announced they will not return to classes until their demands are fully met. Among their demands are:

1. Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of guards and SAVAK (the secret police) from campus.

2. Immediate arrest and trial of those responsible for the murder of students May 8.

3. Freedom for all the students who had been arrested in the past few days and throughout the last several years.

*Kayhan* quoted the statement students passed out at the rally:

"In protest against the recent events in the cities of Qum, Meshed, Shiraz, Jahrum, Rafsanjan, and also, in protest against declaration of martial law in Isfahan and probably in other cities in the future, and further, in protest of the murder of several students of Azarbadegan University on May 8 of this year, none of the students of this university will attend classes."

The students of Azarbadegan University

have been on strike continuously throughout the spring and summer semesters. Now the government authorities are threatening to close the university down completely.



SHAH: Imitates Hitler's tactics.

While Isfahan was under martial law, antigovernment demonstrations spread to other cities like wildfire.

More and more, as was admitted by the military governor of Isfahan, the leadership of demonstrations passed from the hands of religious leaders into the hands of militant youth—high-school and university students.

It was in this context that the Rex Cinema in Abadan was set on fire. In all probability the shah's agents, in an effort to turn back the tide of growing mass mobilizations against its bloody rule, set that fire to create a national tragedy and pave the way for a crackdown against the opposition.

But in doing that they took a very risky gamble. Instead of creating a backlash against the opposition as the government hoped, the Abadan fire boomeranged on the regime.

Although tanks and armored vehicles were moved to Abadan August 23, they were unable to halt the protests, which were continuing one week after the blaze.

The growing conviction among the Iranian population that the shah's agents are responsible for the enormous toll of deaths is fueling further antigovernment mobilizations, which can become a link in a chain of mass actions capable of bringing this hated regime down once and for all. □

## Israeli Bombers Return to Lebanon

By Ann Feder

Israeli warplanes strafed and bombed Palestinian refugee concentrations near Beirut at dawn August 21, in retaliation for an attack on an El Al bus in London less than twenty-four hours earlier. Hit with 20-mm cannon fire were the Bourj el-Barjeh refugee camp with 9,000 inhabitants, and the settlement of Damour, which houses Palestinians who fled the besieged Tel Zaatar camp in Beirut two years ago. Several people were killed, and forty were wounded, including children.

This was the second time in less than a month that Israeli planes flew murderous retaliatory raids into Lebanon. On August 3, five hours after a bomb exploded in a Tel Aviv market, four warplanes attacked what the Israelis described as a "terrorist training camp which also serves as a starting point for murder gangs against targets in Israel." According to the PLO there were not even any Palestinians in the area, and the casualties were all Lebanese civilians.

U.S. officials—with their eyes on the upcoming Camp David summit meeting between Sadat and Begin—refrained from making any criticism of the August raids into Lebanon. This was quite different

from what happened last March, when the U.S. government was forced to dissociate itself somewhat from the massive Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon.

The swift retaliatory raids are only one indication that Begin has no intention of moderating his tough anti-Palestinian stance going into the Camp David summit. On August 13 the Israeli government was forced to confirm rumors that it planned to build more settlements in occupied Arab territories. (Details of these plans had been released in posters pasted up by members of the "Peace Now" movement, defeating efforts by the government and military censors to keep the project secret for a time.)

In a recent speech before the National Defense College, Begin made it clear that Israel would not give up any part of the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip. Territory would only be relinquished, Begin said, "on the basis of reciprocity." Since the Palestinians have no "Jewish land" to trade off, it seems clear that Israel plans to go on extracting from the Palestinians the only thing they do have to give, which is blood. □

# Peruvian Junta Moves to Break Miners Strike

By Fred Murphy

The Peruvian military government sent troops and armored vehicles to five mining districts at dawn August 22, in an attempt to break a nationwide miners strike that began August 4.

Martial law was imposed in the districts of Pasco, Marcona, Yauli, Ilabaya, and Ilo. Troops took up positions at mines, metal refineries, and shipping ports. Constitutional guarantees were suspended in the five districts, enabling the army to search union offices and private homes without warrants, arrest strikers, ban public gatherings, and deport citizens from the country.

The government-controlled Lima daily *El Comercio* claimed August 23 that some mines had resumed production, but the National Federation of Miners and Metalworkers of Peru (FNTMMP) said the strike was continuing. The FNTMMP denounced the military measures as "brutal and repressive."

The 48,000 miners of the FNTMMP produce the vast bulk of the copper, iron, lead, zinc, and other metals that account for more than half of Peru's foreign-exchange income. Thus the strike has had an immediate impact on a regime that was already facing acute difficulties meeting its foreign debts. The government claims that losses are running at about \$1.5 million a day. The state metal-export concern MINPECO has informed customers that it cannot meet its contracts.

"We know the mining sector is considered basic to the national economy," FNTMMP General Secretary Víctor Cuadros told me in an interview at the union's Lima headquarters July 24. "The press says so, the government says so. But when it comes to solving the workers' problems, they forget all about the mining sector."

The FNTMMP's main demand is for a "labor amnesty": the reinstatement of 311 mine union leaders fired after the July 19, 1977, general strike, along with almost 5,000 militants in other industries also dismissed at that time. Additional demands include a 25 percent wage increase (at a time when inflation is running at 70 percent) and the abrogation of two antilabor decrees that severely restrict union activity in the mines and enable employers to carry out mass layoffs at will.

The military took a hard line from the outset, declaring the strike illegal two days before it began. Talks with the union broke down when the regime refused to deal with Víctor Cuadros, claiming he could no longer represent the miners since he had

himself been fired after last year's general strike.

Now the regime is trying to break the strike militarily. But the miners have broad support, and the FNTMMP has made special efforts to cut across the isolation that has in the past allowed the government to break miners' strikes.

On August 9, 2,000 miners and their families set out from La Oroya, high in the Andes, on a "march of sacrifice" to Lima, almost 100 miles away. By the time the miners reached the capital August 14, their numbers had swelled to more than 10,000. "During their march the miners received the support of the people," an August 14 Latin News Service dispatch reported. "They were greeted with loud applause and ticker tape from the windows of government and private office buildings."

The miners and their families then occupied the grounds of the Faculty of Medicine near the center of Lima. Street demonstrations and rallies continued in the capital as more "marches of sacrifice" arrived from Huanzála, Cata Acari, and other mining centers.

The workers deputies in the Constituent Assembly have also helped to build support for the miners' struggle. On July 26, before the strike began, Hugo Blanco, FNTMMP activist Juan Cornejo, and other deputies from the Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front (FOCEP) spoke to a rally of 3,000 miners in La Oroya.

## British Army Harasses Belfast Trotskyists

The British Army raided the Connolly Bookshop in Andersonstown, Belfast, August 2. Allegedly, the purpose of the raid was to find a connection to a cache of arms "discovered" behind the store.

John McAnulty, a member of People's Democracy, and John McGeown, a member of the Movement for a Socialist Republic, were taken to the army barracks, held for four hours, and then released. The entire contents of the shop, including books, files, and copies of the PD-MSR joint newspaper *Socialist Republic*, were confiscated by the troops.

The MSR is the Irish section of the Fourth International. Currently, it and PD are in the process of fusing into a single organization.

In a joint press statement following the

"You are the ones, with your labor, who feed the oligarchy and the imperialists," Blanco told the assembled miners. "You are the ones who pay the generals' salaries. And that is why you hold the fate of Peru in your hands. If you stop feeding these scoundrels, that will be the end of them."

The regime has charged that the strike is "political," and the government-controlled press has been making veiled threats against the deputies who support the miners. "The presence in the mining districts of ultraleftist Constituent Assembly members who have nothing to do with the problem shows that the agitation is political and not really a labor matter," *El Comercio* said August 20.

Fifteen deputies, including FOCEP leader Genaro Ledesma and FNTMMP head Cuadros responded with a public declaration August 23. They denounced the regime's threats as "maneuvers aimed at removing the leftist deputies" from the Constituent Assembly.

In fact, it is the military dictatorship's own hard stance against the miners that has turned the strike into a political confrontation between it and the workers movement. The miners' leaders understood that this could happen when they called the work stoppage.

"We know the government is ready to take all necessary measures to break this strike," Víctor Cuadros told me July 24. "But our goal is to halt the government's offensive against the working class." □

raid, the two organizations said, "The real purpose of the raid was harassment of PD/MSR and its newspaper. The British Army are perfectly well aware of this themselves because they made no attempt to pursue their 'enquiries' about the 'arms cache'. In fact all they questioned John McGeown and John McAnulty about was what they thought of Marxism. . . ."

The groups intend to lodge complaints with the British Army and with the RUC, the Irish police force. "We see this raid as an attack on our democratic rights," their statement continued, "and do not believe that the British Army would have been so quick to back down had it not been for the extensive publicity given to the incident in Belfast." □

## Peru on Eve of Miners Strike

[The following interview with Hugo Blanco was obtained by Fred Murphy in Lima on July 29, the day after the formal installation of the Peruvian Constituent Assembly. Blanco is a deputy in the assembly, having been elected on the slate of the Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front (FOCEP).]

\* \* \*

*Question. You have been back in Peru for two weeks now; before you were deported, you had been in the country for two months. What are your impressions of the changes in the situation here since the May general strike and the elections?*

*Answer.* Even before the recent events the consciousness of the masses was rising, but now that rise is far greater. There is also a much greater willingness to struggle. That is the most important change.

*Q. The APRA<sup>1</sup> has the most seats in the Constituent Assembly. Despite being a bourgeois party with a long history of betrayals, the APRA has been presenting itself as the "democratic left" and has even lent support to the teachers strike and the hunger strike of the miners. What kind of policy do you think is necessary for winning the masses who support the Apristas? Isn't it necessary to do more than simply carry out propaganda about the APRA's past betrayals?*

A. This is a complex problem. The APRA got its start as a reflection of the Russian Revolution. The revolution generally gave rise to workers parties, the Communist parties. But in Latin America, because of the absence of a strong working class, the Russian Revolution also gave rise to petty-bourgeois anti-imperialist movements, such as Acción Democrática in Venezuela, the MNR in Bolivia, the Radical parties in Argentina and Chile, the Febreristas in Paraguay, and so on. Before long, these currents moved to the right and the APRA was no exception.

But the APRA has an advantage in that it has never been in power. So despite all its betrayals, people still hope that the APRA will be able to make some changes if it can ever get into the government.

As you have seen, the APRA uses red flags, and banners with the map of Latin America. And it has a point in its program calling for the federation of Latin Ameri-

can states—an anti-imperialist slogan. The APRA thus appears as a sort of Latin American Social Democracy.

But as the APRA moved to the right, this aspect was combined with the development of fascist-like methods. Some people draw the wrong conclusion from this and simply say the APRA is fascist. But we can't characterize the APRA as fascist. Certainly it has fascist tendencies, and it might split into a Social Democratic wing on one hand and fascist bands on the other. But that hasn't happened yet, and we have to try to ensure that the bulk of the pro-Aprista masses go forward.

We have to understand why the APRA gained a plurality in the elections. It is the oldest party in Peru and the best organized. It has the longest tradition of struggle and has suffered the most murders, the most deportations, the most torture victims. It has been persecuted by many dictatorships. All this is part of its tradition.

Now, what policy does the Communist Party have toward the APRA? The CP has always called the APRA fascist, has always had a very sectarian attitude. But on some occasions the CP has actually stood to the right of the APRA—during the first Prado government in 1939-45, for example. And the APRA has suffered more persecution than has the CP. So this has something to do with the CP's great hatred toward the APRA. The rest of the left has inherited the CP's anti-APRA prejudices, but we should not get caught up in this.

In the election campaign, and up to the present time, the APRA has again taken up a lot of its old Social Democratic demagoguery. It is raising many of the slogans of its early anti-imperialist years. Of course this is all simply verbal, but it is important to note. As soon as the Constituent Assembly opened, when we began raising the most acute problems facing the Peruvian people—the teachers strike, the miners' struggle, and so on—the Apristas joined in, and even went along with us to visit the miners on hunger strike. They solidarized with that struggle, and demanded a solution to the teachers strike.

The APRA does not control the government; the government is in the hands of the military. So our role is not to get in confrontations with the pro-Aprista masses, but rather to unmask the hypocrisy of their leaders. It was for just that purpose that we introduced a motion in the assembly yesterday.

In [APRA leader and assembly president] Haya de la Torre's speech yesterday, he said that the Constituent Assembly is

sovereign, that it will not submit to any other power, and so on. The argumentation was completely against the government. But in conclusion Haya said exactly what [President Gen. Francisco] Morales Bermúdez said in his own speech earlier in the day: The assembly will write a constitution, there will be general elections, and only after that will there be a new government.

So we have presented a motion that the military government must go immediately and that the assembly should assume legislative and executive powers right now. Of course, we know that only a workers government can solve the country's problems or implement the emergency plan that is included in our motion: "full democratic liberties; reinstatement of the fired workers; and urgent measures to solve the economic crisis, which would have as their axis the repudiation of the foreign debt, a general increase in wages and salaries, and free land to the peasants."

We don't expect the assembly to adopt this motion, because it has a bourgeois majority. We know only a workers government could do this. But we have raised the motion precisely in order to unmask the APRA and the PPC.<sup>2</sup> These gentlemen waged their entire campaign saying they were against the military dictatorship, but now they don't want to do anything concretely to put an end to it.

So this is the policy we should have. Toward the APRA's ranks, we raise some of the very same things the APRA itself said in its election campaign. Its ranks will come to see us as the most consistent fighters for what they too are demanding. Meanwhile, we can unmask the APRA leaders as capitulators to the military dictatorship.

This is a very important question. Yesterday we saw physical confrontations between the Apristas and the left. If these continue, given the level of the class struggle and the contradictions in Peru, we could soon be faced not only with the whole repressive apparatus of the government but also with large sections of the pro-Aprista masses converted into fascist mobs. That's why we have to have this type of policy. Even in the heat of physical confrontations, when the Apristas are attacking us, our comrades have to try to communicate with them. We shouldn't chant "Down with APRA," while they are shouting "Up with APRA." Instead we should chant "Down with the military dictatorship." Then the Apristas will have to think twice about who they are beating up and ask themselves who they are defending by attacking us.

This is not the policy of the Communist Party, nor is it the policy of the Maoists in

1. Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American People's Revolutionary Alliance).

2. Partido Popular Cristiano (Christian People's Party), right-wing bourgeois party with the second-largest number of seats in the assembly.



the UDP [Democratic People's Union]. It is the Trotskyists' responsibility to put forward this policy.

*Q. The workers deputies have been working together quite closely since the Constituent Assembly opened, especially the deputies from the FOCEP, the UDP, and the Aragón PSR.<sup>3</sup> Does this mean there are good prospects for forming a new workers party on a class-struggle basis, as you were proposing before you returned to Peru?*

A. Well, right now it isn't possible to speak of a party—it is one thing to make statements in Europe and another to see the concrete reality here in Peru. For the moment what we have is a united front involving the FOCEP, the UDP, and Aragón's PSR. At times this front will be extended to include the Communist Party, and in certain situations we can also reach agreements on concrete points with the parties of the so-called "progressive bourgeoisie."

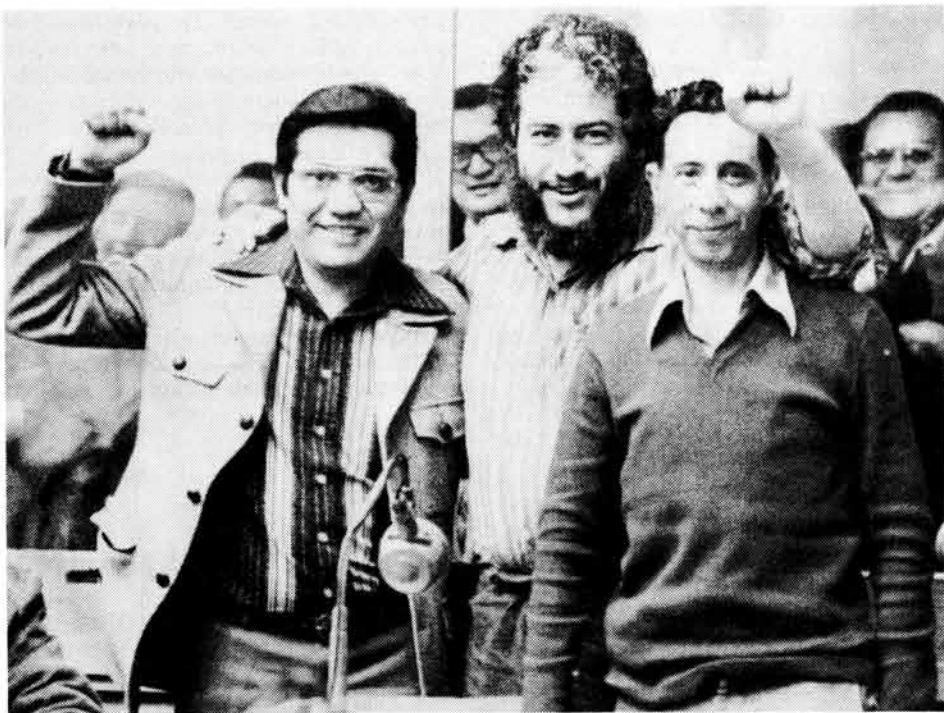
There is an interesting example of how the relationship of forces on the left has changed. During the election campaign, only the Trotskyists took a position for working-class independence. We were the only ones who disagreed with popular-front policies. That is, we and the independents in the FOCEP, like Genaro Ledesma and Juan Cornejo.

Once the elections were over, it came time to elect the Executive Council in the Constituent Assembly. We Trotskyists again declared that we wouldn't support a slate that included representatives of the "progressive bourgeoisie." There was a day and a half of discussion and debate among the leftist deputies. We said it was against our principles to join a bloc with bourgeois forces. So we drew up our own slate, and at first only we two deputies from the PST<sup>4</sup> supported it. Then the comrades of the POMR,<sup>5</sup> who had been planning to abstain, saw that we had a positive alternative and joined us. Then the independents from the FOCEP decided

3. Partido Socialista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Socialist Party). The PSR split in early July. The bulk of its trade-union and peasant leaders form one faction, headed by former Peruvian Trotskyist leader Antonio Aragón. The other faction, headed by Gen. Leonidas Rodríguez, includes most of the bourgeois-nationalist military officers who originally formed the party in 1976.

4. Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party), a Peruvian sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. The PST participates in the FOCEP; Blanco and Enrique Fernández are the two FOCEP deputies who belong to the PST.

5. Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party), Peruvian affiliate of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.



Fred Murphy/Intercontinental Press-Inprecor

Miners leader Víctor Cuadros, Hugo Blanco, and PSR leader Antonio Aragón at opening of Constituent Assembly in Lima July 18.

to support the slate, and Aragón's PSR did too. Finally, the UDP deputies, who had been vacillating, also had to join in.

So together we presented a workers and peasants slate for the Executive Council of the assembly. But the Communist Party wouldn't support it. They walked out, and so did the Christian Democrats and Leonidas Rodríguez's PSR.

This was a big success for us. There were only two slates—the bourgeois parties' slate and the class-struggle slate. There was no popular-front slate.

*Q. The Communist Party seems to have been taken aback by the election results. Before, they were calling the FOCEP and the UDP "tiny grouplets," but now they don't seem to have a policy at all. What do you think they will do?*

A. They may have to do a lot more of what they did when it came time to elect the Executive Council—walk out and keep still.

It is difficult to say what their policy will be. They are no longer seen as the big force on the left—we are. When we take a position now it causes problems for the CP. They have to say whether they support it or not. An example was the question of a popular-front slate in the assembly. They couldn't support our slate, so they had to do nothing.

At times they will reach agreements with the Christian Democrats and Rodríguez's PSR. But this means they will have to tell their ranks that they are seeking bourgeois allies and don't want to join

forces with the left. Even in the Constituent Assembly these bourgeois forces are considerably weaker than we are. The CP is seeking unity with two Christian Democrats and the three deputies from Rodríguez's PSR—five representatives of the "progressive bourgeoisie"—instead of with the nineteen deputies of the FOCEP and the UDP, which represent real forces. So it's a very difficult situation for them.

*Q. There still seems to be a big gap between the combativity of the masses and the degree of organization and centralization that has been achieved on the national level. How do you think this can be overcome?*

A. First of all, we are going to continue to struggle for the organizational unity of the workers movement.<sup>6</sup> At one level, this is the problem of the union organizations. But it is also a problem at the level of the struggles themselves. On August 2 the national miners strike will begin. We are going to try to organize the broadest possible solidarity with this strike, and put pressure on the CGTP to call a general

6. The Peruvian workers movement at present is divided between the main union federation, the CGTP, controlled by the Communist Party, and a number of important independent unions led by forces to the CP's left. In addition, the Stalinist bureaucrats atop the CGTP carried out a purge of militant secondary leaders earlier this year, further endangering the unity of the workers movement.

strike in support of the miners.

There is also a CGTP congress coming up. We want to do everything we can to assure that there are a large number of delegates who are in favor of unification of the workers movement. This will pose a problem for the Communist Party, because if a real unification is achieved, they will be in the minority and the class-struggle forces will be in the majority.

*Q. During the general strikes, forms of organization have developed that go beyond the trade unions—the “people’s assembly” in Chimbote and the “fronts for defense of the people” in Cuzco and Arequipa, for example. How widespread have such developments been?*

A. Unfortunately, these kinds of formations have only arisen conjuncturally; they haven’t become permanent. Of course, we seek to extend this type of organization whenever it is possible to do so. But it is not realistic, for example, to call for such a formation in Lima as an immediate task right now. We raise the idea in a propagandistic way, and we also try to see that when these assemblies spring up they become more permanent and don’t simply dissolve. In any case, I think these formations have played a big educational role. We point to them as examples to explain what kind of government we think should be set up.

Another thing we have to consider now is yesterday’s announcement that the government will hold municipal elections. We have to think about how to raise the idea of the “people’s assemblies” in these elections and present a program similar to the draft constitution we put forward in the constituent assembly elections.

*Q. What are the prospects for the unification of the Trotskyist groups in Peru?*

A. The Trotskyist movement in Peru is taking big steps toward unification. We have already had several joint meetings at the leadership level, and we have scheduled a plenary meeting for all the Trotskyists in Peru. We are beginning to carry out joint activities.

We are also working with the comrades of the POMR inside the FOCEP. We don’t have the perspective of a rapid unification with them, since there are some problems at the international level as well as here in Peru. But we are working more closely with them now.

*Q. What will happen in Peru in the coming months?*

A. It all depends on the economic situation. For the moment, there is no solution to the crisis in sight—unless they discover a uranium mine in the Plaza de Armas tomorrow.

The economic crisis is going to make the class struggle and the problems of the

masses more acute. The government is going to have to lay off more workers and decree more harsh economic measures. The government claims things are going to improve, but their pronouncements are based on hopes, not on concrete facts.

Their next big problem will be the miners strike. Unlike the teachers strike, it will have an immediate economic impact on the government. The miners strike will affect one of the fundamental economic bases of the country.

We will have to see what attitude the APRA and the PPC take toward all this, what the left is able to accomplish, how

the workers are able to organize themselves. I think one very important thing has been the victory of the teachers strike.<sup>7</sup> This has tremendously raised the confidence of the masses in their own strength, in their own struggles.

The class struggle is definitely going to intensify. □

7. Peru’s 140,000 public-school teachers carried out an eighty-day strike that ended July 27 when the government granted most of their demands for union recognition, a wage increase, and better working conditions.

## Japanese Trotskyist Beaten by Prison Guards

Shinjitsu Meguro, a trade-union activist and a member of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International, was severely beaten by guards in Chiba City jail July 24.

Meguro is a well-known activist in the Tokyo Section of the Japan National Railway Workers Union. He was one of the hundreds of demonstrators arrested as the result of a March 26 protest against the opening of the New Tokyo International Airport at Narita, near Chiba. Because prosecutors demanded extraordinarily high bail, most of those arrested are still in jail awaiting trial.

On the morning of July 24, after he and several other prisoners refused to answer roll call, Meguro was dragged from his cell by five guards who threw him into an interrogation room. There they grabbed him by the hair and slammed his head against the wall several times. One of the guards then held a blanket over his head while the others beat him about the face for several minutes until he lost consciousness.

In response to protests by other prisoners Meguro was allowed to see a doctor later that day, but a week later he was still suffering from loss of hearing in his right ear, persistent bleeding from the nose, and severe headaches.

Following the mass arrests at the airport March 26, most of those arrested have demanded to be tried as a group. But government prosecutors, anxious to minimize publicity surrounding the demonstrators’ trials, have proposed that they be tried separately, and that most of the trials be transferred to courts outside of Chiba, where public opposition to the new airport runs high.

Defense attorneys and activists have launched a public campaign to defend the demonstrators’ right to be tried in Chiba. As a way of protesting the proposed transfer of their trials, Meguro and other

prisoners in his cell block were staging a campaign of passive resistance, refusing to answer roll calls or to obey other instructions from their jailers.

Reporting on the beating incident, the JRCL’s weekly *Sekai Kakumei* called for “a broad campaign to publicize this outrageous repression in order to help defeat the attempt to transfer the trials.” □

### Correction

We have been informed that an error in translation crept into the item “Interview With a Lebanese Trotskyist Leader,” published in our May 1 issue.

As printed, on P. 527, the sentence in question reads: “Insofar as they are able to force the Zionist army out of southern Lebanon and to protect the Lebanese border against Zionist intervention, we support the UN forces; to do anything else would be to allow the occupation to continue.”

The sentence should have read as follows: “Insofar as they are able to force the Zionist army out of southern Lebanon and to protect the Lebanese border against Zionist intervention, we cannot stand against the UN forces; to do otherwise would be to allow the occupation to continue.”

### Churches Aid Zimbabwe Rebels

The World Council of Churches has announced a grant of \$85,000 to the Patriotic Front, which is waging guerrilla warfare against the Smith regime in Salisbury.

According to a report in the August 11 *Washington Post*, the council said that the money came from a special fund to combat racism, and that it would be used for food, medical, and educational programs for Zimbabwean refugees now living in neighboring countries.

## From Freedom Fighter to Neocolonial Ruler

By Ernest Harsch

Shortly after the announcement of Jomo Kenyatta's death August 22, an Associated Press dispatch reported, two American-made F-5E jet fighters circled Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, "in an apparent show of strength meant to discourage disturbances."

The death of Kenyatta, the doyen of Kenyan politics, has left the country's ruling rich—as well as their imperialist allies—with a distinct feeling of unease and uncertainty. Can they continue as before with their lucrative exploitation of Kenya, the capitalist "showcase" of East Africa, without the towering figure who made political stability possible for the past fifteen years?

With at least the beginnings of a "smooth" transition of power, Vice-President Daniel arap Moi was sworn in as acting president for a period of ninety days, while elections in the one-party state are scheduled to formally approve a successor. But neither Moi nor any of the other contenders for Kenyatta's mantle have anywhere near the prestige or political power of the "old hawk," who proved so capable over the years of keeping the sharp class conflicts in Kenyan society from seriously challenging neocolonial dominance.

Ironically, Kenyatta did not begin his long political career as a defender of imperialist interests, but as a fighter for Kenya's national independence from British colonial rule.

Born in the last decade of the nineteenth century (he himself was not sure what year), Kenyatta first entered politics in the 1920s to fight for land rights for Kikuyus, the largest nationality in Kenya.

The immediate postwar period was marked by a big upsurge of the anticolonial struggle, as peasants organized to take back their land from white settlers and as workers went out on strike and set up trade unions. Numerous political groups emerged. Although Kenyatta's prestige rose and he managed to build up a popular following, he was not particularly known for his militancy.

By 1952, the ferment against colonial rule, especially among Kikuyus, reached the boiling point. Militant nationalists initiated a massive insurrection.

The colonial authorities labeled the revolt "Mau Mau," and sought to crush it, along with the entire national liberation struggle. In October, Kenyatta and nearly 200 other prominent figures were arrested. Although Kenyatta denied any direct connection with the uprisings, he was con-



JOMO KENYATTA

victed of having "managed" them, and was sentenced to seven years in prison.

The revolt lasted for three years and was among the most massive anticolonial struggles ever waged on the African continent, involving at its high point about 30,000 freedom fighters. To suppress it, the British herded much of the Kikuyu population into specially guarded "villages," detained 80,000 persons in concentration camps, and butchered more than 11,000 Africans.

The uprisings were crushed, but the British realized that they could not maintain direct colonial rule without risking even bigger explosions. They adopted a policy of gradually moving toward political independence for Kenya, while trying to maintain imperialist economic domination. Toward this end they sought out African collaborators.

Because of his victimization at the hands of the authorities, Kenyatta's prestige among Africans had grown. The British were initially distrustful of Kenyatta as a result of his popularity, but they eventually decided, under mass pressure, to release him in 1961. Kenyatta's Kenya African National Union won the preindependence elections the following year and in 1963 Kenyatta became the prime minister of an independent Kenya. The imperial-

ists were not to be disappointed.

From a fighter for independence, Kenyatta became the centerpiece of an elaborate system of neocolonial domination that kept the country tied to the world capitalist market and subject to rapacious exploitation by foreign firms. Foreign capital retains a dominant influence and even many of the local white settlers were able to set themselves up as wealthy farmers and businessmen. Roger Mann commented in an obituary published in the August 23 *International Herald Tribune* that Kenyatta "became better trusted by the likes of Henry Kissinger, General Motors and Union Carbide than by radical black youths."

A small handful of Kenyans benefited from their alliance with the imperialists by becoming capitalists themselves. Through a system of patronage and rampant corruption, they acquired a degree of wealth, significant in the context of the poverty of Kenya's workers and peasants. Kenyatta himself became a wealthy landowner, and his wife and daughter are reportedly deeply involved in the illegal ivory and charcoal trade, which has led to the decimation of Kenya's elephant herds and to widespread deforestation. Kenyatta's Kikuyu, moreover, have come to dominate in government and business, to the detriment of Kenya's approximately forty other peoples.

In the words of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a well-known novelist who was detained by Kenyatta in December, Kenya is dominated by a "system that bred hordes of round-bellied jiggers and bedbugs with parasitism and cannibalism as the highest goal in society. . . . These parasites would always demand the sacrifice of blood from the working masses."

For the masses, Kenya's capitalist economic development since independence has meant growing landlessness, the proliferation of shantytowns (about one-third of Nairobi's population live in slums), unemployment, inflation, and hunger.

Although repression has not been as widespread as in many other African countries, prominent critics of the regime have nevertheless been assassinated, detained, or barred from political activity. Opposition parties have been banned.

During the past few years, some significant signs of opposition have surfaced. Students have on occasion demonstrated in their thousands, in some areas peasants have taken over land, strikes have been threatened, and underground leaflets and pamphlets have been circulating.

While Kenyatta's popularity declined during the last years of his life, he still retained enough personal prestige and political influence to keep the lid on the simmering discontent. His removal from the scene could signal an end to the period of relative "stability" that the imperialists and their Kenyan allies have relied on for so long. □

## Mengistu's Offensive Against Eritrea

By Ernest Harsch

For the first time since it came to power four years ago, the Ethiopian junta, known as the Dergue, has made significant military advances against the Eritrean independence struggle. In recent weeks Ethiopian forces have retaken a series of towns and cities that had previously been liberated by the Eritrean freedom fighters.

Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, the head of the Dergue, launched this large-scale offensive despite offers by the main Eritrean liberation groups to open negotiations and despite pleas from several West European Communist parties, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and other forces on the left urging the Dergue to seek a negotiated settlement.

Mengistu also acted despite the failure of his attempts to draw Cuban military forces into the war against the Eritreans. Cuban officials such as Fidel Castro and Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez have repeatedly stated that they favor a negotiated settlement to the conflict, not a military one. As recently as July 29, when Mengistu's offensive was already under way, Rodríguez declared that "we reject accusations that Cuba is involved in that situation [Eritrea]. We are not involved. . . ."

The Cuban affirmations have been confirmed by the Eritreans themselves. In an interview in the August issue of the London monthly *Middle East*, Ahmad Nasser, the chairman of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), stated:

Of course, given the good relations between Ethiopia and Cuba, there are [Cuban] soldiers and experts. But, up to this time, while fighting the enemy and taking prisoners we have never found one identity card to prove that Cuban soldiers are involved. And we have reason to believe that the Cubans will not intervene against our fighters. Cuba's leaders have said that the solution of the Eritrean question must be found through peaceful negotiations, and until now we have had good relations with Cuba and its ambassadors, and we know that Cuba doesn't support violence against Eritrea.

The Cubans never called us reactionaries, in spite of Mengistu's accusations about our links with Nato. We have fought for 17 years, we are building a democratic society, we have the support of all the progressives in the world. For us there is only one solution—a fully independent Eritrea to assure progress both in Ethiopia and in Eritrea.

According to a report by correspondent Fulvio Grimaldi in the same issue of *Middle East*, Moscow has also tried to take its political distance from Mengistu's offensive, despite the massive arms aid it

has given to the Dergue. Grimaldi attributed this partly to pressures from some of the Arab regimes in the area, such as those in Iraq, Syria, Algeria, and Libya, and



Economist

from the Italian Communist Party, which has openly declared its support for the Eritrean struggle.

Mengistu's political isolation on the question of Eritrea notwithstanding, his regime formally decided in late June to launch the offensive, after several months of preparation. According to varying estimates, between 100,000 and 200,000 Ethiopian regular troops and militiamen were sent into Eritrea from bases in the northern Ethiopian provinces of Tigre and Gondar.

The offensive did not show any marked signs of success until mid-July, when the Dergue started to claim a series of advances, beginning with the recapture on July 18 of the town of Adi Quala, south of Asmara, the Eritrean capital. Within a few days the Ethiopian forces took nearby Mendefera and managed to break through the Eritrean siege of Asmara.

In western Eritrea, the Ethiopian troops captured the major towns of Tessenai and Agordat in late July and early August. Both had been held by the ELF. Tessenai's several thousand inhabitants fled before the Ethiopian advance, and many refugees crossed the border into neighboring Sudan, where between 200,000 and 300,000 Eritreans are already living in exile. According to a government radio broadcast,

the Ethiopian army made "a considerable sacrifice" at Tessenai, indicating that it had suffered heavy casualties.

Also in the west, the Ethiopians claimed to have broken the siege of Barentu,\* which had been maintained by a combined force of the ELF and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the other main independence organization.

The EPLF initially denied that it had lost any significant ground to the Dergue, but on August 2 it acknowledged that it had "voluntarily" conducted a "tactical withdrawal," pulling its forces out of the town of Decamere and the port city of Massawa, much of which had been under EPLF control for several months. The EPLF later declared, however, that it would resist any Ethiopian attempts to retake Keren, which, with a population of 50,000, is the largest city under the control of the liberation fighters.

Despite the Dergue's recent advances, the ELF and EPLF are still in a strong position, both militarily and politically. They have carried out a seventeen-year-long struggle against Ethiopian domination and for Eritrea's independence, in the process winning the active support of virtually the entire Eritrean population.

It was the Eritrean struggle, in fact, that provided an important inspiration to the Ethiopian masses themselves, who rose up in a popular revolution to overthrow Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 and destroy the feudal system that he represented. If the Dergue also fails to crush or derail the struggles of the Eritrean masses, it could provide an additional spur to the Ethiopian revolution, a prospect that Mengistu is seeking to avoid.

Though the Dergue's superior firepower may enable it to regain nominal control of many of Eritrea's urban centers, the widespread hostility of the Eritrean population to Ethiopian oppression will make a military "reconquest" of the territory extremely difficult. The ELF still holds sway in the rural areas of western Eritrea and has already begun carrying out guerrilla operations behind Ethiopian lines. And the EPLF has claimed successes in two battles near Asmara, in which it said that it had killed 700 Ethiopian troops August 15 at Embadno and captured one Ethiopian tank and destroyed three others at Adi Yakob.

Mengistu may already realize the futility of trying to completely crush the Eritrean struggle. According to a report by correspondent J. Regan Kerney in the July 29 *Washington Post*, "Observers say the current Ethiopian successes may reflect a strategy of retaking key Eritrean towns

\*Unlike the situation in most of the rest of Eritrea, the Dergue was able to take advantage of ethnic frictions in the Barentu region, winning some support from the local Baza people, who have historically suffered attacks from the surrounding Beni-Amer and other Eritrean peoples.

and leaving the countryside to the rebels, in an effort to give Ethiopia some bargaining chips during any future negotiations on the province."

So far, however, Mengistu has shown no apparent willingness to negotiate. And a report in the August 12 issue of the London *Economist* commented that "after its recent string of victories the Ethiopian government may well be interested in nothing short of clear military victory."

If Mengistu continues to pursue a course of trying to crush the Eritrean struggle, the prospect could be one of a long, drawn-out war in which the real losers will be the Eritrean and Ethiopian populations. Not only would it inflict even more suffering on the Eritreans, but it would seriously jeopardize the tremendous gains made by the Ethiopian masses themselves since their overthrow of Selassie. Like the Dergue's repressive and anti-working-class policies, a long war in Eritrea could foster demoralization among Ethiopians and could further undermine the revolutionary process, making it easier for imperialism to renew its attacks against the Ethiopian revolution.

Partly in response to the Dergue's current offensive in Eritrea, prominent supporters of the Eritrean struggle have stepped up their pressure on the Dergue to abandon its military drive and to adopt a policy of negotiation.

On July 27, some sixty French leftist figures, including members of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor, issued a statement in support of the Eritreans' right to self-determination and independence. It urged the Dergue to accept the offer of negotiations made by the ELF and EPLF.

Yassir Arafat, the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, declared at a July 30 news conference in Havana that the PLO would again try to act as a mediator between the Dergue and the Eritrean organizations.

A day earlier, Cuban Vice-President Rafael Rodríguez said during a meeting of "nonaligned" states in Belgrade that "Cuba favors a political settlement" of the Eritrea conflict.

Whether Mengistu responds to these pressures for negotiation or continues to press for a military defeat of the Eritrean fighters could seriously affect the course of political developments throughout the Horn of Africa. □

### Iron Law of Capitalism

Because of the yen's rapidly growing buying power against the dollar, consumer prices in Japan should have fallen about 2 percent between January 1977 and June 1978, according to calculations by the Mitsubishi Bank of Tokyo.

Instead, they went up nearly 8 percent.

## U.S.-Backed Maneuvers Thwarted

### Cubans Defend Role in 'Nonaligned' Movement

As part of the American-led propaganda campaign against Cuba, a number of pro-Western regimes launched attacks against Cuba's internationalist policies during the July 25-30 conference in Belgrade of "non-aligned" countries. Citing American news reports, Fidel Castro charged in a July 26 speech in Santiago de Cuba that Washington "has approached 15 nonaligned countries with a view to contesting Cuba's role in that Movement."

The day after Castro's speech, the delegates of a number of regimes, including those in Morocco, Somalia, Senegal, Ghana, and several Middle Eastern countries, accused Cuba of "aggression" in Africa. The attacks continued into the following day.

Somalian Foreign Minister Abdirahman Jama Barre claimed that Cuba "has allowed itself to be used as proxy for . . . the Soviet Union, in the promotion of the latter's designs and ambitions within the context of superpower rivalry and competition." This was especially hypocritical in the light of his own regime's close alliance with American imperialism, and of the American-backed Somalian invasion of eastern Ethiopia last year, which was eventually turned back by the Ethiopians in February and March 1978 with Cuban assistance. The Somalian representative endorsed a call made by the Egyptian regime that next year's conference of "nonaligned" states, scheduled to be held in Havana, be either moved or postponed.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja told reporters that the Cubans were "Soviet stooges." He then lamented, "It is a pity that American policy is so passive."

Other delegates made more veiled jibes at Cuba. On the opening day of the conference, Yugoslav President Josef Broz Tito declared, "We are witness to attempts to establish in the vitally important regions of the nonaligned world, primarily in Africa, new forms of colonial presence or of bloc dependence, foreign influence and domination." He then condemned "hegemony," a term commonly used by Peking and other political opponents of Moscow to describe its foreign influence, with which the Cubans are said to be identified.

The Cuban representative at the conference, Foreign Minister Isidoro Octavio Malmierca Peoli, defended Cuba's role in Africa:

Cubans came back to the continent of Africa, which their forefathers had left as slaves centuries ago, to support the struggle against the underdevelopment inherited from colonial oppression and in response to appeals from the

peoples and legitimate governments faced with aggression by racists, annexationists and servants of imperialism, and in order to make a modest contribution to the national liberation struggle against racism and apartheid.

During his July 26 speech, Castro himself responded to those like Tito who stress avoidance of political debates within the "nonaligned" movement and maintenance of its unity at all costs:

We have always thought and will continue to think that the Non-Aligned Movement should not be an amorphous, opportunistic, weak-kneed current but should be an anti-imperialist, anticolonialist and progressive force that can have a positive influence on world policy.

Castro also blasted Washington's campaign against Havana's leading role within the "nonaligned" movement:

Why is the United States so interested now in the 6th Summit Conference, to be held in Havana? Why is it trying to sabotage it? Who is going along with this maneuver? What objectives do they seek in our Movement? It is clear that the United States, the traitors, the opportunists, the neocolonized, the fence-sitters and those whose principles are negotiable are worried by the militant, firm, staunch and honest role of Cuba.

At the close of the conference itself, those regimes that had pushed for a condemnation of the Cuban role in Africa suffered a setback. Cuba and its supporters succeeded in thwarting any denunciation of the Cuban military involvement in Africa in the final resolutions of the conference. The delegates also agreed to hold next year's conference in Havana. □

### Puerto Rican Veterans March in San Juan

Protesting a bill that would exclude Puerto Rico's war veterans from increased disability benefits, seventy pajama-clad veterans from three wars marched out of a government hospital in San Juan August 8, formed a picket line on one of the city's main streets, and blocked traffic for two hours.

"They treated us like Americans when we were in the Army, they should treat us like Americans now," said Vietnam veteran Fernando Fernandez, one of the participants in the protest.

The patients, veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, were protesting a bill before the United States Senate that would increase disability benefits for all veterans except those who reside in the American colony of Puerto Rico.



Socialist Challenge

Part of London march of 3,000 July 9 in support of Irish political prisoners.

## As Labour Government Cracks Down on Prisoners' Protest

# New Rise of Irish Solidarity Actions in Britain

By Ailean O'Callaghan

LONDON—Protests by Irish political prisoners in six British jails in the first week of July and a demonstration of more than 3,000 persons in support of republican and socialist political prisoners in Northern Ireland July 9 have been answered by a brutal crackdown. The main victims have been republican prisoners in Britain, who number eighty-two.

According to the Prisoners Aid Committee (PAC), six prisoners in Albany jail on the Isle of Wight have received sentences of up to fifty days' solitary confinement and fines up to £20, about half of what a prisoner can earn in a year.

The Irish prisoners in Gartree prison, Leicester, have been put in solitary confinement as have those at Parkhurst (also on the Isle of Wight), where in addition the time allowed for visits by relatives has been cut to thirty minutes.

Owing to a news clampdown by the Home Office, news about the treatment of the prisoners has been sparse, and silence still reigns over Long Lartin and Wormwood Scrubs, two other prisons where Irish political prisoners are held.

Word that the prisoners had taken action began to filter out on July 5 while public meetings building for the demonstration the following Sunday were still in progress. The march had been called by the PAC in solidarity with the campaign for prisoner-of-war status being waged by the prisoners in Northern Ireland, especially in H-block of the Long Kesh prison camp. [See accompanying statement.]

The prisoners' action was taken in solidarity with this campaign and to demand the right of Irish prisoners in British jails to be transferred to Northern Ireland to serve the remainder of their sentences.

On July 6 a group of feminists who were in contact with the prisoners' relatives drew public attention to these demands by disrupting the changing of the guard outside Buckingham Palace. They organized a similar action at Selfridges, the famous London store. Later the same day Labour MPs Joan Maynard and Tom Litterick spoke at a packed news conference in defense of the rights of Irish political prisoners.

More details of the prisoners' action became available in the following days. Nine prisoners at Gartree staged a protest by climbing onto the roof with banners stating their demands and remained there without food for fifty-two hours. Two hundred English prisoners in the same jail refused to go back into their cells at the appointed time until they were given assurances that the republican prisoners would not be victimised for their protest.

The Home Office admitted that it had riot squads standing by on the Isle of Wight ready to intervene at both Albany and Parkhurst, where prisoners had taken action. It was later learned that one of the prisoners at Albany had his nose broken by his warden.

The prisoners at Long Lartin and Wormwood Scrubs went on hunger strike, and the only reason no action took place at Wakefield was because the authorities had

acted two days before and removed the Irish republican prisoners to jails in Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool.

These protests displayed the great courage of the prisoners in the British jails and the extraordinary solidarity with the national liberation movement in Ireland they continue to hold under extremely difficult conditions. The prisoners' action also helped to build the July 9 demonstration, which was by far the largest single march in Britain in defence of Ireland's struggle since 1974.

The march reflected a unity of action not seen for many years in Britain, not only between forces of the British far left, but also between Irish republicans and British socialists. In addition, there was a large contingent of feminists, and for the first time since the Prevention of Terrorism Act forced them off the streets in 1974 a significant presence from the Irish immigrant community.

The opportunity that now exists to extend solidarity work in Britain was recognised by many on the march. Jacqueline Kaye, an organiser of the PAC, told the participants:

There is a great precedent set for us in our demands and in our building a mass campaign on the issue: the precedent set for us by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the last century, who through the International Workingmen's Association were able to mobilise 200,000 people on the streets of England to call for an amnesty for Fenian prisoners. It is this great example that we ask you to try to emulate. We are asking

for a principled and disciplined campaign in support of the prisoners.

In the buildup to the march, a modest example of what is possible today was provided by the lively exposure material carried by *Socialist Challenge*, the news-weekly sponsored by the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the Fourth International. Letters smuggled out from H-block and interviews with prisoners' relatives figured prominently in the paper as it led the campaign to build the July 9 demonstration. In the aftermath of the campaign, the Ministry of Defence threatened to prosecute the paper for breaking the Official Secrets Act in revealing that the British army was breaking its own rules in a number of the latest killings by soldiers.

The IMG leaflet handed out to protesters on July 9 explained the importance of the prisoners issue:

The [prisoners] question is not only at the centre of the Labour Government's strategy of repression; it is also the issue on which people in the ghettos of Belfast are again taking up in street activity after some three or four years of decline of the mass movement in Ireland. *It is a key test of strength in the present period.* . . . When decisive questions are being resolved over the issue of the prisoners, the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland cannot be asked to wait for our tiny forces to transform themselves into a mass movement for troop withdrawal before we can contribute anything. In the meantime even the most partial issue must be utilised to the fullest extent to limit the British State's room for immediate manoeuvre and to lever wider openings for the building of a "Troops Out Now" current.

The statement urged continuing united actions in defence of the prisoners. It also called for allocation of major resources to building the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland. The tribunal, which is due to begin its work in London in October, already has a wide international sponsorship.

With dates such as the tenth anniversary of the birth of Northern Ireland's civil-rights movement (October 5) coming up at the same time as a general election in Britain, the tribunal and other initiatives could well become vehicles for making the Irish question once again a central issue in British politics. □

### Carter Hated Even More Than Nixon

Half of the American people do not want Carter even to run for president again in 1980, let alone vote for him, according to an Associated Press-NBC poll.

In fact, Associated Press reported August 11, "Carter's job rating has dipped so far in the last six months that it is below that which the public now gives Richard M. Nixon in looking back on his years" in the White House.

## Statement Smuggled Out of Long Kesh

### 'It Is a Miracle No One Has Died in Here Yet'

[The following are major excerpts from a statement by Roibeard O Seschnasaigh smuggled out of Long Kesh prison, Northern Ireland, where some 350 male political prisoners have rejected criminal status by refusing to wear the convict uniform. Such status was decreed by the British Labour government for persons convicted of political "offences" after March 1, 1976. In retaliation, the prison authorities have left the men to lie naked in their cells, except for their blankets.

[Twenty-four women prisoners in Armagh jail are also demanding political status. They also face severe harassment, having been deprived of exercise and all normal prison "privileges."

[In March of this year the men stepped up their protest through a "No Wash—No Cooperation" campaign. The appalling conditions now faced by these prisoners are described below.]

\* \* \*

H BLOCK 3, 4, and 5, LONG KESH, July 29—The present situation and conditions within the H Blocks containing Republican POWs are as follows:

We are now on the blanket protest for political status twenty-three months. As you know we escalated our protest even further four and a half months ago to highlight our plight and the inhuman conditions and treatment to which we are being subjected.

We took the only form of protest left open to us, that was further self-denial. We refused to wash, shower, clean out our cells or empty the contents of our chamber pots. We continue to do so and we shall pursue this line as long as we remain under such conditions, until we are granted the rightful restoration of political status.

This protest has brought us to the stage where our bodies are disgustingly filthy and smelling, our cells are atrocious. Large heaps of decaying waste food and putrefying rubbish have built up, littering the floors and corners of each cell and giving off the most sickening and revolting stench.

We have no furniture or beds in our cells, the prison administration having removed them to make life harder for us, which it certainly does. It means that we must eat our meals on the floor amid heaps of rubbish. This is made worse by the thousands of flies, fleas and maggots which have overrun each cell. . . .

One of the most degrading acts that we must carry out, having no other alternative, is the natural act of going to the toilet. . . . In a small eight-foot-square

cell, one must retreat to a corner to go to the toilet in front of one's cell mate. When this is complete, the matter is put out of the cell window, as is urine. If we do not do this it will be left to lie until some screw kicks it around your cell.

The food we receive is disgusting usually. It is of meagre portions or just simply uneatable. It is deliberately rationed or destroyed by being served cold. Never do we receive a hot meal. . . . Often we find maggots and dead flies lying on our plates among the food. This is to try and shatter our spirit, as food is the only thing we have to look forward to even though it is disgusting, as each meal time helps break up our long day as each day is an eternity of boredom and depression.

An unbelievable number of us suffer from various medical complaints—toothaches (we are denied toothpaste), stomach complaints, chest complaints, and migraine headaches are quite common. Most of this is caused by being held so long in solitary confinement.

The prison doctors take their orders from the prison governors. The medical officers who make up the rest of the medical staff are glorified message-boy screws who wear a white coat. At present we are refused any form of medical examination or treatment by these people because we won't wash. Only when a man becomes very visibly ill will they treat him. . . .

Men suffering in pain must go without any form of painkiller simply because these men are intent on using this suffering to force us to break our protest. These people are not doctors or medical officers, they are war criminals. It is a miracle no one has died in here yet, but how long can this go on?

The situation here is very bad, but morale is high and resistance solid. During the past four and a half months, the prison administration have really gone to the utmost extremes to break us. Hundreds of men have been sent to the punishment cells. We have been and still are hosed down by high-powered hoses. Disinfectant is sprayed into our cells. Beatings are handed out at will by the screws. Cell searches are regular with mattresses and blankets being covered with the contents of our pots [chamber pots]. Letters and small personal possessions are destroyed or stolen. Some nights the screws come round every hour opening and banging shut the heavy steel doors to keep us awake all night and provoke us.

The latest attempt to break our spirit has come about during the last few weeks. We receive one statutory visit per month. The

prison administration, no doubt under the experienced guidance of the NIO [Northern Ireland Office], have attempted to stop this visit, our only means of communication, by subjecting us to the most degrading and dehumanising search procedure. . . .

Needless to say we have refused to cooperate or accept these degrading acts. When we refuse to bend over a table or touch our toes to allow the screws to visually and physically probe our anus and other private parts of our bodies, our

visit is refused to us, or we are forcefully held by six or seven heavyweights.

As I have said, this is an attempt to break us, to destroy our morale and our only link with our friends and families. It is also intended to stop the real facts of what is now taking place behind the closed doors of the H Blocks reaching the outside world.

Finally and most importantly we must ask ourselves what is the mental and physical state of health of the 350 Republican POWs on the blanket protest? What

will it be like if the British government persist in this torture of naked men? How long before the first blanket man, or men, dies?

But let us assure you that our courage, revolutionary resolve, and determination are as strong as ever. We will never allow ourselves to be turned into common criminals. We thank you for your magnificent support and unselfish response and ask you to keep up your fantastic work in our fight for political status.

Venceremos. □

## Commemorate Tenth Anniversary of Massacre of Students

# 20,000 in Mexico Demand Release of All Political Prisoners

By Rosendo Mendoza

MEXICO CITY—More than twenty thousand spirited demonstrators braved rainy weather July 26, demanding the release of all political prisoners and an end to the repressive policies of the current Mexican government.

The march, which was scheduled to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the Cuban revolution, was sponsored by the Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de Presos, Perseguidos, Desaparecidos y Exiliados Políticos (National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled), along with a number of trade unions and political parties.

The demonstration also served to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the massive student upsurge which ended in a bloody massacre on October 2, 1968, when government troops attacked a demonstration in Mexico City's Tlatelolco plaza.

A contingent organized by the committee led the demonstration, which marched down Reforma Avenue into the downtown area. The most popular chants were: "*Presos políticos, libertad*" (Freedom for political prisoners), "*Por cada represión, la movilización*" (Answer each act of repression with mobilizations), "*Cuba si, Yanquis no*" (Cuba yes, Yankees no), and "*Cuba socialista, México en la lista*" (Cuba is socialist, Mexico is on the list).

Also present was a large contingent organized by the SNTSA (Sindicato Nacional de los Trabajadores de Salubridad y Asistencia—National Union of Public Health and Welfare Workers), which is engaged in a strike against Mexico City's General Hospital. Several days before the demonstration, police raided the hospital, arresting most of the union's leadership.

The largest contingents were those repre-

sented the STUNAM (Sindicato de los Trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México—Union of Workers of the Mexican National Autonomous University).

This was the largest in a recent series of demonstrations held to protest new government attacks against striking workers and leftists that have called into question the new-found democratic pretensions of the current Mexican government, led by José López Portillo.

Portillo, whose Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has maintained an absolute monopoly of governmental power for the last fifty years, has recently announced a plan of "political reform" that will theoretically allow for the legalization of opposition parties and a liberalization of the country's political life.

However, one year after the announcement of the political reform measure, repression continues if only in a more selective and discreet form. Even the political parties that have been granted or offered the possibility of legalization have not been immune. Virtually every leftist political party, including the PCM (Partido Comunista Mexicano—Mexican Communist Party), which was granted legal recognition last May, has suffered from the attacks.

Hardest hit, however, has been the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International), which is still campaigning for its legalization. Since last April the PRT has reported sixteen separate incidents of arrests, kidnappings, and brutal torture involving as many as seven members at a time. The victims of these attacks have included one member of the party's Politi-

cal Committee, two members of its Central Committee, and a party candidate for public office in the State of México.

Also hard hit has been Mexico's trade unions. One of the demands of the July 26 march was for the immediate release of imprisoned strike leaders from the Nacozari mines\* in the State of Sonora, along with those from the General Hospital strike.

Upon reaching the scheduled rally site, the demonstrators were met by lines of armed riot police and cops mounted on horseback who employed city buses to block the avenue and prevent the marchers from proceeding further. The massive show of police force served as a reminder of the demonstration's purpose.

During the rally several trade-union leaders brought greetings, including Evaristo Pérez Arreola, president of the STUNAM, who denounced the "government campaign aimed at excluding the left from the trade-union movement."

Drawing the warmest response from the demonstrators was a speech by Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, founder and leader of the committee. Ibarra de Piedra has been working for the release of political prisoners since 1975 when her son was kidnapped by police in Monterrey, Mexico. He has not been heard from since.

Demonstrators cheered when she declared, "With this rally, with this march,

\*The Nacozari workers have been on strike for the past two months and have been under heavy pressure from both the government and the official trade-union bureaucracy from the beginning. In June the federal police arrested the leaders of the strike. They were immediately flown hundreds of miles to the capital, where they were imprisoned.



we begin a national campaign of the workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals of this country, for a general amnesty and freedom for all of those who have been persecuted, imprisoned, and exiled."

She concluded her remarks by calling on all of those present to aid the committee in its project of collecting one million signatures on petitions demanding a general amnesty. The petitions are scheduled to be delivered to President Portillo on October 2, the tenth anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre.

The final speaker was Edgar Sánchez, a member of the Political Committee of the PRT, who spoke on behalf of both the PRT and the PCM, two of the organizations that sponsored the march. Sánchez stated: "This is the moment to begin the popular offensive because today, ten years after the struggles of '68, it is still impossible to speak of political liberty in this country." He called for a massive campaign in favor of trade-union rights, a general amnesty, and in opposition to the government's austerity measures.

When a small group of Maoist protesters attempted to shout down the speaker, Ibarra de Piedra took the microphone to protest the disruption. The rally broke into chants of "A united left will never be defeated" when she declared, "Compañeros, the enemy is not here, the enemy is there," as she pointed in the direction of the police lines and the Presidential Palace a few blocks away.

One example of the breadth of the campaign was the presence of a small group of protesters who marched behind the banner of the newly formed FHAR (Frente Homosexual de Acción Revolucionaria—Homosexual Front of Revolutionary Action).

This was the first time such a contingent has been organized and it attracted a great deal of attention from demonstrators and onlookers alike. In a statement distributed during the march the FHAR related the current wave of repression to the treatment of homosexuals and called for support from the workers movement for their struggle. □

### Food for Thought (Only)

When Chinese Premier Hua Kuo-feng was taken to a supermarket during his recent visit to Romania, not all was as it seemed.

The store "had been specially stocked for the occasion with high quality meat, sausages, and other goods normally in short supply," Michael Dobbs reports in the August 20 London *Sunday Times*.

As soon as the Chinese delegation left, the store "was promptly declared closed."

A reporter who tried to buy a bottle of Pepsi-Cola was told by a store official that it was "only on exhibition."

## Tortured in Clandestine Military Prison

### Mexican Trotskyist Tells of Kidnapping by Police

[The following interview appeared in the June 3 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, weekly newspaper of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party), published in Mexico City. The introduction is by *Bandera Socialista*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

As we recently reported, our comrades Rafael Villeda Ayala and Julia Barrera Amaro were kidnapped by police in Tlanepantla, in the state of México, on Saturday, May 20. For five days, they were held incommunicado in an underground prison—apparently in Military Camp No. 1—and subjected to torture. The gravity of this latest attack on the PRT is without comparison.

In the following interview, Rafael Villeda describes the details of his detention. Rafael is twenty years old and has been in the Trotskyist movement for three years. This is the third time he has been kidnapped by the police and tortured. However, this kidnapping lasted the longest and was the most brutal in terms of torture.

\* \* \*

*Question. Under what circumstances and by whom were you detained?*

*Answer.* On May 20, in Vidriería Los Reyes, in Tlanepantla, we were selling *Bandera Socialista*. Three patrol cars pulled up beside us. Cops got out of one of them holding pistols, and out of another one holding shotguns. There were only two of us, and we obviously weren't going to put up any fight. It was absurd, the lengths they went to to capture us.

*Q. What police bodies were involved?*

A. The patrol cars were from the BARAPEM (Radio Patrol Squad of the State of México). Specifically, numbers 243, 246, and 249. After they seized us, they took us to an empty street. We stayed there for an hour and a half, until a car full of police came for us—a red Dodge Coronet—and we were handed over to them.

*Q. It goes without saying that no formal charges were involved in the detention.*

A. That's right. Nor any arrest warrant. Nor did the cops identify themselves. When they brought us to the clandestine prison, there was no record or formal procedure, either for our detention or for our release. The reason for this is that in a

prison like that, they could deny having detained us, and show that they had no record of our being there. Naturally, they stole our belongings, even my eyeglasses.

*Q. Where did the cops take you?*

A. I can't say for sure, because from the time we were handed over to the police they kept us blindfolded. The people there were political prisoners. So-called guerrillas. It was a big, cold room, designed to keep many people imprisoned for a long time.

*Q. Could the place where you were held have been Military Camp No. 1?*

A. I think so, although I can't be sure. When Julia and I went over some of the details together, a few things seemed to indicate it. For example, there was a railroad crossing near there, or a place with a lot of traffic. Furthermore, those who interrogated us there were police with special political training.

There are frequent charges to the effect that the military camp is where political activists are secretly held for months or perhaps even years. Knowing that they are alive, and are being held incommunicado in that place should be an extra incentive to continue the struggle for a general amnesty and the return of those who have disappeared.

*Q. Did they torture you?*

A. Yes, especially the first few days when the initial interrogations took place. Afterward, not so much.

*Q. I heard that there were some previous cases of repression in the area where you were picked up. What were they?*

A. First of all, the workers of Vidriería Los Reyes are organized by COCEM (Worker and Peasant Confederation of the State of México), led by Jesús Moreno Jiménez. This bureaucrat is running for a deputy seat in the district, where we are also running our election campaign and our candidates.

It's obvious that the COCEM bureaucrats are alarmed at the extensive political work we have carried out at Vidriería. The BARAPEM had declared that a municipal ordinance made it illegal to hold rallies in the industrial zone. The following Saturday they told us that at the bosses' request we would be forbidden to sell the paper at the plant gates, and that we had to do it 50 or 100 meters away. That's what we were doing when we were kidnapped May 20. □

# Capitalism Fouls Things Up



## Tokyo OKs Dirtier Air

[The following article appeared in the July 24 issue of *Sekai Kakumei* (World Revolution), the weekly central organ of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International. The translation and footnotes are by Dan Dickeson.]

\* \* \*

On July 11, the Environmental Agency announced a wholesale retreat in its enforcement of environmental standards for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a major component of air pollution. The standards for maximum allowable NO<sub>2</sub> concentration (on a daily average basis) will be drastically relaxed from the present 0.02 parts per million to between 0.04 and 0.06 ppm.

Today, even under the present environmental standards, there are many people who suffer from pollution-induced ailments such as bronchial constriction and impairment of the central nervous system. But instead of trying to deal with this problem, the government is now going to allow air pollution levels to rise by a factor of two or three.

A French study carried out in 1976 showed that exposure to a daily average of 0.03 ppm of NO<sub>2</sub> produced symptoms of bronchial constriction in thirteen out of twenty asthma sufferers. And Soviet researchers reported in 1974 that exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations of 0.074 ppm for periods of five to twenty-five minutes affected the central nervous system badly enough to cause noticeable vision impairment in four out of four subjects studied.

Yet in spite of the publication of these and other studies, the Environmental Agency has pushed through a set of greatly relaxed air pollution standards in what it calls "a reassessment of environmental standards on the basis of scientific evidence."

This obviously represents a "reassessment" of the standards along the lines demanded by big business—especially the steel trusts. Not surprisingly, the first to hail the new regulations were the industrialists of the Steelmakers Federation, along with officials of the Construction Ministry and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

Under the new regulations, the huge

steel corporations will no longer have to invest in NO<sub>2</sub> removal equipment, and furthermore they will be able to avoid making payments under the Pollution Victims Compensation Law. It is estimated that the savings in pollution-control investments alone will amount to some two trillion yen (US\$10 billion).

Up to now, environmental standards were supposed to be made strict enough to protect those who are most susceptible to the effects of pollution (such as the sick, the aged, infants, and pregnant women). And for this reason a certain safety factor was employed in setting the standards.

But all such considerations were ignored in formulating the new standards. The government has decided to sacrifice the health and even the lives of "weaker" people in an attempt to stimulate investment in plant and equipment by the big capitalists and thus pull out of the prolonged recession.

Under conditions of prolonged recession and economic crisis, the big capitalists are losing their margin for making even the most minimal investments in pollution-

control equipment. In particular as they confront the structural crisis and stagnation of the world capitalist economy in the form of a crisis of the rising yen rate,<sup>1</sup> the government and big capital have been forced to impose sacrifices on working people in increasingly brutal ways, displaying an undisguised contempt for our rights. In the past period they have made a wholesale retreat in all areas of environmental protection.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Bill, which was originally proposed in 1971 as a means of "stopping pollution before it starts," has been watered down and defeated in the Diet [parliament] time and time again. This is a reflection of the fact that the government and the big capitalists are grappling with increasingly sharp contradictions, and sinking further into a crisis.

During the economic boom of the late 1960s, the government could make certain concessions to the demands of the environmental movement in an attempt to appease massive discontent and defuse the antipollution struggles that were spreading like wildfire throughout Japan. That is why even leading capitalists in those days proclaimed themselves in favor of strict environmental standards, insisting on the necessity of sealing off pollution sources almost completely. In 1970 the Diet enacted a set of pollution-control laws, and in 1971 the Environmental Agency was established.

But the economic boom ran out of steam, and the worldwide economic crisis put a brake on the export of pollution<sup>2</sup> through overseas investment. As a result, the capi-



Sand Toler/Washington Post

1. The value of the Japanese yen has risen sharply in relation to the U.S. dollar, from an exchange rate of over 300 yen per dollar in early 1976 to less than 200 yen per dollar today. This is driving up the prices of Japanese products in other countries, thus seriously undermining the export trade which has been central to the Japanese economy.

2. Japanese corporations faced with stricter pollution-control regulations have often chosen to close down their plants in Japan and build new ones in South Korea or Southeast Asian countries where there are fewer if any antipollution laws.

talists have lost their margin for compromising with the environmental movement even within Japan. In this situation the government is once again forced to carry out policies that will fan the flames of the environmental movement and make for increasing confrontations with local residents opposed to the construction of polluting industrial projects in their communities.

The Environmental Agency was supposed to give the illusion of responding to mass discontent and taking up the demands of local residents fighting against pollution. But today, it can no longer maintain even the deceptive facade of a pollution-control agency. It has begun to openly abandon the goal of environmental protection, and blatantly act as a subsidiary organ of the big monopolies and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Now it has even reached the point of turning into an administrative center for the government's crackdown on antipollution struggles.

Of all the government office buildings in Kasumigaseki,<sup>3</sup> there are only two which routinely observe "emergency security precautions," searching all visitors: the Ministry of Transportation (which has jurisdiction over the problems of Narita Airport) and the Environmental Agency. It's certainly no accident that the capitalist state gives the same reception to Minimata Disease victims and opponents of nuclear power or polluting industries as it does to

3. The seat of government in the heart of Tokyo.

activists in the fight against Narita Airport.

The reformist local government administrations in the prefectures of Tokyo and Kanagawa<sup>4</sup> have taken a stand in opposition to the Environmental Agency's relaxation of NO<sub>2</sub> controls. And considerable attention is now being focused on the impending "re-examination" of pollution control agreements that have been negotiated between big corporations and local governments around the country.

But to effectively fight back against the government, local residents need to launch a series of direct actions, and to link their struggles together on a national scale. The recent relaxation of NO<sub>2</sub> standards has posed for all antipollution fighters the task of turning their many separate struggles into a huge nationwide campaign. We must make the fight of the Sanrizuka farmers against Narita Airport into a pole of attraction for antipollution and antinuclear activists throughout the country. □

4. In each of these prefectures (provinces), Socialist and Communist party members comprise a majority of the prefectural assemblies, and the governor is an SP member elected with the support of the CP.

#### **Pollution a Hot Topic in East European Press**

Increasing coverage of pollution problems in the Eastern European press may reflect "a growing environmental movement," Roger Boyes reports in the August

16 London *Financial Times*.

"Signs of the new, relatively open approach appear almost daily, especially in the more economically advanced Comecon countries. A leading Radio Moscow commentator, Mr. Vladimir Pozner, recently criticized the Ministry of Building Materials for ignoring a 1974 decree on pollution controls. Soviet newspapers have dealt recently with water conservation in Uzbekistan, the control of salination in the Caspian Sea, and the cleansing of the Dnieper River.

"Czech and East German journals have also been devoting an unusual amount of attention to environmental subjects. One Czech magazine even issued a tacit appeal recently for more action against noise pollution.

"The scope of the press coverage is significant not only in view of the secrecy which had previously surrounded environmental issues, but also the hints it contains of a growing environmental movement in Eastern Europe."

#### **Polish Censors Tackle Environment**

In Poland, however, pollution remains a taboo subject, unless it can be blamed on the country next door.

According to the Book of Indexes and Guidelines issued by the Polish bureau of censorship, "materials concerning the actual state of pollution caused by Poland's industrial activity within the Polish sector of rivers whose sources are in Czechoslovakia are not to be released."

On the other hand, according to the book—smuggled out last year by a former censor—"information about the pollution of these rivers caused by industrial activity within the territory of Czechoslovakia may be released."

#### **Only 'Some' Decontamination Necessary**

"The [U.S.] Energy Department is asking the public to help identify possible sites where radioactive materials were processed or stored in the early days of the atomic age, starting in the 1940s. The department has identified more than 70 former atomic energy sites in 23 states, most of which it says will require some radioactive decontamination. It is looking for additional sites formerly used for processing uranium and thorium ore for which records have been misplaced or destroyed."—Associated Press, August 21.

#### **Free Geiger Counter With Every New House**

The Québec government has confirmed that soil containing radioactive waste from an abandoned mine was used for landfill near Montréal. However, according to a report in the August 18 *Washington Post*, it dismissed reports of possible dangers as "premature and alarmist."

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## Czechoslovakia—Roots of the Charter 77 Movement

By Jan Kavan

[The following is the text of remarks delivered by exiled Czechoslovak dissident Jan Kavan at a meeting held at the Mutualité in Paris May 17. The meeting was organized by the French Trotskyist group Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.]

\* \* \*

I believe that to understand what is happening in Czechoslovakia today we have to look back to at least 1968. Ten years ago Alexander Dubcek was elected general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in what was a classical party coup d'état.

Different party factions reacted to political and economic tensions in the society. Alexander Dubcek was the compromise choice acceptable in January 1968 to all the factions.

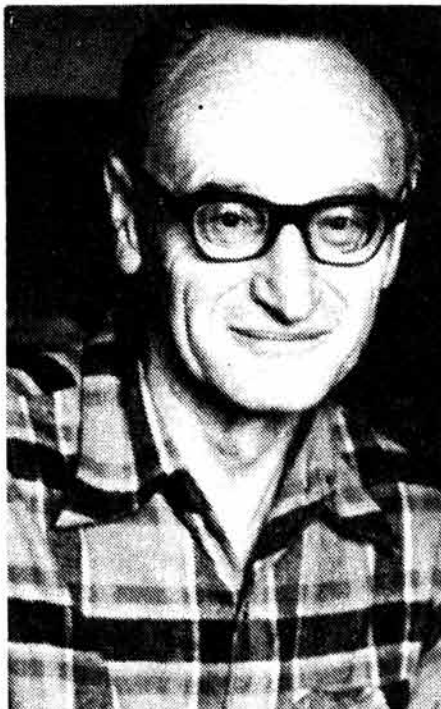
The first two months under Dubcek revealed that the factions were united only by their opposition to [former CP boss] Novotny, for it slowly became evident that they did not have a clear political program for reform.

At the same time, Novotny refused to give up. He visited important factories, arguing demagogically that the change had been organized by party intellectuals so as to deprive workers of what they had gained in 1948. The general attitude of the workers at that time was one of "wait and see."

In March 1968 Dubcek decided to introduce a radical change that would prove to have a revolutionary impact—that is, to completely abolish censorship. He received support from some of his colleagues, though not from all, because they believed that freedom of the press would allow people to express their opinions on Novotny's regime, to express the bitterness that had remained bottled up in them for twenty years, and that this would help to defeat Novotny.

A few weeks later Novotny lost his post as president and his last remaining power. But it was not possible to reintroduce censorship, and people began actively to use their new freedom of press, speech, assembly, and association.

What started as a coup d'état acquired the characteristic of a mass spontaneous movement. If one had to characterize the whole of the Prague Spring in one sentence, it would probably be best described as a nationwide discussion about what



Charter 77 spokesman Jiri Hajek

sort of socialism we want, how the society we want to live in should be structured to allow the people to make—or at least influence—the decisions that affect their lives, and how the power of the government should be limited and controlled so that abuses of power could never be repeated.

There were many different opinions on many different subjects. Early in the spring the students were probably the most radical. But through their spokesman Lubos Holecek in March, even they expressed their support for Dubcek, mainly because unlike Novotny he allowed them to meet, to discuss politics and their future political program quite openly, without fear of arrest. But at the same time Holecek warned that when the program of the young generation was finally formulated it would be different from the program of the party reformists.

The party eventually published its program in April 1968, calling it the Action Program. It was a program that in January would have justly been acclaimed as the most radical put forward by a Communist party. By the time it was issued in April, however, it was out of date on a number of points. The masses had moved

faster, not waiting for the promised freedoms to be legalized. They had simply put them into practice.

There were a number of disagreements. It is impossible to list them all here, so I will give just one example. Many people were concerned about the growing power of the technocrats and were therefore extremely interested in the factory councils, or workers councils as the workers preferred to call them. The government proposed that such councils should be composed of three parts—one elected directly by the workers, one by the managers and local party bureaucrats, and one made up of representatives of the State Planning Commission and the banks.

Under popular pressure the government eventually backed down and proposed that the whole council be elected by the workers themselves. It added, however, that the council should have only the power to elect and recall managers and put forward suggestions to the managers. Power to make final decisions was to be left to the managers.

In the summer, such discussions virtually ceased and an artificial unity was established, as everyone felt that there was a grave external threat to the whole reform movement. They rallied behind Dubcek. In the middle of the night of August 21 the Russians invaded and immediately dragged the entire Dubcek leadership off to Moscow in chains.

People responded with a well-organized passive resistance that not only prevented the establishment of a puppet "revolutionary workers and peasants government," but also forced the Russians to return Dubcek and the others alive and back to power. But before the politicians returned they were forced to sign the so-called Moscow Protocols, an agreement that in effect meant the death of all the reforms. Dubcek and his friends argued that this was necessary, but the fact that Dr. Frantisek Kriegel, a member of the party presidium, was able to refuse to sign proves that there was an alternative to capitulation.

But the majority of people still believed in Dubcek, believed his promise that the most important achievements of the Prague Spring would be salvaged. Only after the Central Committee plenum in November did it become clear that the post-invasion Dubcek government was prepared to make one concession after

another, always giving in to Soviet pressure.

The students decided to call a strike against this policy. They adopted a ten-point manifesto that did not include a single specific student demand, but represented a minimal program based on the Action Program of the party. And so, ironically, the students who in April considered the Action Program too moderate, in November defended this program against the government that had created it in the first place.

The most important aspect of the three-day occupation-strike was the tremendous support it received from the workers. Workers assemblies accepted the ten-point manifesto as their own program and threatened to go on general strike if the government arrested the student strike organizers. Half-hour work stoppages took place; buses of the urban transport were placed at the disposal of the strikers, enabling them to come out without contravening the law forbidding assemblies of more than twenty persons; agricultural cooperatives sent food; and so on.

The most important result of the strike was that the students and workers got to know each other and trust each other. Important political agreements were signed between the student union and every industrial Czech trade union. This made the government very angry. The bureaucracy, understandably, felt threatened by this political activity of the working class. Husak went so far as to call these agreements counterrevolutionary, and he described such slogans as "Students, Intelligentsia, Workers, Unite" as antisocialist and antiparty.

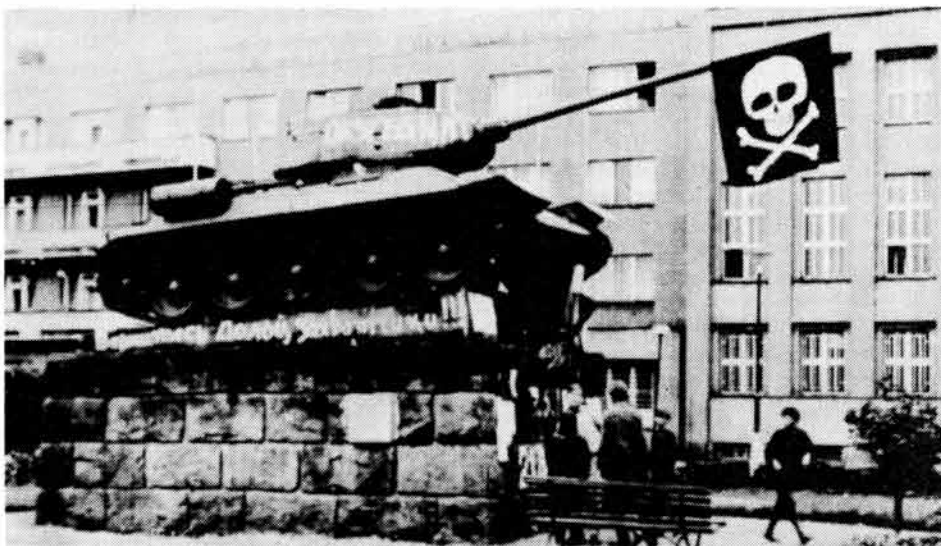
At the same time, the workers refused to wait for the law legalizing the workers councils to be passed by parliament. They began electing councils and took over the running of at least 150 major factories.

In January 1969, the workers councils held their first congress and elected a central council. The government was powerless to stop them. Only in the summer of that year was the Husak government able to ban the councils and purge all the trade-union militants. But the government couldn't purge the informal network of student/worker action committees. They couldn't reverse the process of politicalization.

The level of political consciousness of the students is clear from their 1969 letter addressed to the New Left in the West. In it the student leaders declared:

The original slogan "Society is not free if the intelligentsia is oppressed" has been corrected. It now reads, "Only when the immediate producers enjoy full and genuine democratic rights will the intelligentsia then perhaps have the right to speak about its own freedom."

By April 1969, Dubcek had made all the concessions he could and had lost most of his popular support. And so the Russians



Der Spiegel

"Invaders Go Home!" Slogan painted in Russian on Soviet monument in Czechoslovakia in 1968 protests against invasion.

were able to achieve their main aim—to remove him completely and to install the "more reliable" Gustav Husak.

By the time of the first anniversary of the invasion, the only opposition against Husak's government that was possible was that utilizing classical clandestine methods. The first political group that decided to go underground was the Revolutionary Socialist Party. But they were soon arrested and sentenced to up to four years' imprisonment. Other groups went underground, and the opposition functioned in this way uninterruptedly for nine years, although Western newspapers scarcely reported it.

In 1971, hundreds of persons were arrested. In 1972, forty-six persons were sentenced, some to up to six and a half years' imprisonment. Those victimized included Milan Hübl, former rector of the party school and friend of Husak; former Secretary of the South Bohemian Party Dr. Jaroslav Sabata, who is the current spokesman of the Charter 77 movement; and former New Left student leader Jiri Müller. But even these setbacks did not destroy the opposition.

At the end of 1976, a number of different political groups united in a defense campaign on behalf of two groups of rock musicians who were then on trial. At the same time, the government published the full texts of two International Covenants on Human and Civil Rights, which by the act of ratification became part of Czechoslovak law.

The plain little brochure became a best-seller overnight. People learned for the first time that they had a legal right to freedom of press, speech, assembly, and association, and also freedom to strike and freedom to set up independent trade unions. They began to point out the differ-

ence between this law and everyday practice. Thanks to the defense campaign for the musicians, there was an informal organization prepared to express these feelings, and that is how Charter 77 was born.

The Chartists made it clear that they were not a political organization, had no political program, and did not want to be an opposition. Their only aim was to draw attention to individual cases of human-rights violations, and they offered to enter into a dialogue with the government over the solution to such problems.

Of course, they did not expect the government to say, "Sorry, we forgot to implement all these freedoms but we will do so now." It is clear to everyone that to give such freedoms would be suicidal for the government, and no government voluntarily commits suicide. But the Chartists did not expect the hysterical reaction by the government, which saw in the movement the greatest danger to its stability since the invasion.

The government began to broadcast vicious daily attacks on the movement, and thus accomplished what the Chartists could never have hoped to accomplish. That is, within a few days every worker and every peasant in villages where the Chartists could never have reached knew that something called Charter 77 existed. They did not know what it was, because the party did not allow the text of the charter, or even extracts from it, to be read out. But they assumed that it must be very radical and very powerful to make the government so worried.

The party argued that the Chartists were just a small group of former politicians and intellectuals. And in the beginning they were almost correct. Among the first

242 signatures, there were only seventeen workers.

But then the government helped the movement again. It organized assemblies of workers and tried to get them to vote for anti-Charter 77 resolutions. The workers argued that they would condemn the Charter only after they had heard its text. This could not be allowed, and so the campaign had to be called off. Instead local managers and party and trade-union representatives were asked to condemn the Charter in the name of the whole factory.

This made the workers even more angry and more interested in finding out more about Charter 77. By the end of last year, more than a third of the 1,000 signatures had come from workers, and thousands more workers support the Charter, distribute its documents, and participate in its actions.

The Charter 77 movement has always been politically very heterogeneous. It is comprised of Dubcekists, socialists, Trotskyists, liberals, democrats, Christians. That is another reason why the Chartists could not agree on a political program even if they wanted to. Their only common denominator is a determination to defend mutually agreed-upon principles.

Ladislav Hejdanek, one of the three present spokesmen of Charter 77, defines these principles as follows:

1. Struggle in behalf of basic human and civil rights for every individual, for which support from all people in the world is sought.

2. Struggle to respect the existing Czechoslovak law, which includes the International Covenants.

He paraphrases Marx of 1871 in saying that the Charter 77 movement wants to enlarge the domain to be removed from state control and that will be freed from the chains of governmental violence.

Such a description is in fact a direct reply to the present discussion inside the movement. There always has been such a discussion—about strategy and tactics, aims, the best means to employ, and so on. Last year the internal discussion resulted in a Charter 77 statement recognizing informal interest groups within the movement, which could act independently of others and prepare and sign their own documents. These groups would be based not just on geographical divisions and on professional interests, but also on political sympathies.

Only this year, an internal discussion became public when Jan Tesar, a Chartist and historian who spent a full six years in prison, wrote an open letter to the then-spokesman of the movement, Professor Jiri Hajek, a former foreign minister. Tesar argued the necessity of political plurality both before and after victory in any struggle. He argued for democratic competition between different political tendencies. He expressed his suspicion that Hajek and the group of purged Communists—reformists,

or “ex-Communists,” as Zdenek Mlynar, a former party secretary now in exile calls them—are hoping to reach an agreement with the ruling bureaucracy eventually and be integrated slowly back to power. He suspects them of being against the interna-



DUBCEK

tionalization of the Charter struggle because they hope for the emergence “of an enlightened ruler” in Czechoslovakia.

Tesar refers to a number of interviews with Hajek that Western journalists published and attacks him for expressing fears that international pressure on the Soviet bloc to get it to observe human-rights obligations will only result in increased repression.

Hajek answered in his own open letter and denied that he ever expressed such fears, though it is possible that some Western journalists distorted his words when he explained that he is against support for a Charter that is in reality aimed against “the dialectical unity of human rights and peaceful coexistence.”

These two letters sparked off a series of reactions from a number of Chartists. The most balanced so far is the one I mentioned earlier from Charter spokesman and philosopher Hejdanek, who also explains that there is no legal way in which the Charter movement could become an organization.

This, of course, should not stop and does not stop activities carried out by the Chartists. But these are outside the framework of the movement as such. For example, the unofficial university, sometimes called the University of Jan Patocka in memory of one of the first Charter spokesmen, who died last year, can find justification in both Czechoslovak and international law.

It functions on the simple principle that purged lecturers and young people who were not allowed to study can get together. But it is not a Charter activity. It's a “specific citizens' initiative.” There is probably no limit to such initiatives, which take encouragement from the atmosphere created by the Charter.

One of the best organized, and in the West the best known, political grouping of Chartists is the group of Communist reformists. Petr Uhl, a Trotskyist who recently joined the public exchange of opinions, is highly critical of them and points out that they illogically link the Charter to the Prague Spring (some Western journalists do the same) and regard the Prague Spring as the spiritual father of present-day Eurocommunism.

Uhl, unlike Tesar, recognizes though that the reformists are highly differentiated into “moderates, center, and radicals.” Among the “radicals,” he would probably place those Communist leaders of 1968 who opposed the Moscow Protocols during the invasion and continue to oppose the conciliatory policy of the post-invasion Dubcek government (for example, Kriegel, Sabata, and a few others).

It is highly significant that these men are among the signatories of last month's new manifesto entitled “100 Years of Czech Socialism”<sup>1</sup> This manifesto contrasts sharply with a document entitled “Ten Years Since the Prague Spring,” released only three days earlier by twenty-eight Prague Dubcekists, who take as their starting point the Prague Spring and compare the present situation with 1968. The signers of the latter document conclude that present political and economic problems are the same as the ones existing at the end of 1967, only more widespread and deeper. They indirectly offer cooperation with the government in solving these problems, because the “situation is grave.”

The twenty-three signatories of the “100 Years of Czech Socialism,” on the contrary, take as their starting point the first program of a socialist and working-class movement in Bohemia, the founding program of the Czech Social-Democratic Party of 1878. They show clearly that many socialist principles have never been implemented over the hundred years, and some that the workers won have been again taken away from them by the bureaucracy after 1948 and after 1968. They conclude that they are determined to fight for the implementation of all socialist principles and that today this fight would have to be a struggle against the Communist bureaucracy, which “the workers today do not regard as a workers party but as a party of ‘overlords.’”

The government's reaction to the two

1. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, August 28, 1978, p. 964 for an English translation of the text of this document.

documents was instructive. They ignored the "Ten Years Since the Prague Spring" and its signatories, but the secret police immediately subjected most of the signers of the "100 Years of Czech Socialism" to great harassment, interrogation, and house searches. During these searches, more documents were apparently found. Some were draft documents for discussions between socialists of different opinions, probably first in Czechoslovakia and later maybe also between socialists in different East European countries and between socialists of the East and West.

A report written by one of the interrogated signatories is very interesting. He states that he was questioned thoroughly about his proposal to create an independent trade union at his place of work. The interrogators apparently told him that such a union would be illegal because it would be contrary to the law concerning a unified trade-union movement, and that anyway every new organization must join the National Front, otherwise it would be a criminal act.

Premysl Janyr answered that first the union would have to be set up, which hadn't yet happened. Then it would have to be evaluated to see if its creation was contrary to the law or not. And lastly it would have to be proved that a criminal act was indeed committed. He regarded that interrogation as a bit premature. But the reaction of the secret police indicates that they do not share his view.

The examples of Klebanov and his comrades and the initiative in Poland was enough to scare the bureaucracy. It knows perfectly well that the greatest danger to its survival is cooperation between socialists across the borders, of East European countries and between East and West, and the strength of an organized working class. That is why bureaucratic regimes like Dr. Husak's cannot tolerate even attempts to set up free trade unions. That is why support for the right to set up such unions cannot be underestimated. It is today one of the most important developments in Eastern Europe.

It is extremely important to express solidarity with those who actively oppose the rule of the bureaucracy in the so-called socialist countries. In this connection I would like to thank FEN<sup>2</sup> and FO<sup>3</sup> for launching a campaign to raise money for unemployed, or partially or badly employed, Chartists. In this regard, FEN followed an earlier example of an Italian trade union, UIL.<sup>4</sup>

2. Fédération de l'Education Nationale (National Education Federation, the largest of France's teachers unions, with more than 500,000 members).

3. Force Ouvrière (Labor Force, a French trade-union federation).

4. Unione Italiana dei Lavoratori (Italian Federation of Trade Unions).

To express solidarity verbally is important because it helps to break down the barriers of isolation that the Czech government tries to raise around the population.



HUSAK

But words are not enough. For words to be believed and not to be taken as a mere hypocritical public exercise with some other political aim, such words should be translated into concrete action. Financial support for the unemployed, that is those who are unemployed for political reasons and who were abandoned by their own trade unions in Czechoslovakia and who cannot get any unemployment benefits because officially there is no unemployment, is one such clear concrete action. It could convince people in Czechoslovakia that they have genuine allies and supporters among the Western left and especially trade unions.

I have read with great interest the CGT<sup>5</sup> statement following their recent visit to Prague, and I agree with all their proposals, spelled out to me also yesterday in Dijon by a CGT representative. I can here only express my sincere hope that the CGT will soon decide to translate this expression of solidarity into concrete actions that can have an actual impact on the lives of persecuted trade unionists in Czechoslovakia.

Two of my best friends are among to-

5. Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor, France's largest union federation).

day's Czech political prisoners. Both were known for their support of the workers councils in '68 and '69 and of cooperation between students and workers. One of them—Ales Machacek—is now serving the longest sentence of all the Chartists—three and a half years. For what? For alleged distribution of literature that the police failed to find because, as the judge explained, Machacek had time to hide it. His hostility to socialism was proved by the court by simply referring to his refusal at the trade-union meeting to condemn the Charter. He was never a member of the CP, he is unknown in the West, he is young and a technician, not an intellectual, and therefore it is very difficult to organize a campaign in the West on his behalf.

But I strongly believe that the fight to release prisoners like Machacek must form an integral part of a struggle of any socialist force anywhere. I strongly believe that workers in the East will finally win their struggle against the bureaucracy only if they are unceasingly supported by all those who oppose exploitation.

I strongly believe that those in power both in the East and in the West are defeatable. But we have to realize that our struggle is a common struggle, and we have to unite! □

#### 'The Skunks of the World'

An article in the June 16 *Far Eastern Economic Review* describes the "elaborate network of arms, military and quasi-military cooperation, electronics, uranium and [weapons] 'laundering' operations" linking Taiwan, Israel and South Africa.

Taiwan—whose military arsenal is stamped "Made in USA"—supplies South Africa with small arms and "riot-control" equipment. *Review* reporter Melinda Liu was told that Taiwan officials undergoing "anti-riot" training took a trip to South Africa to "watch rioters being shot" during Black demonstrations.

Israel has supplied South Africa with fast patrol boats, missiles, submachine guns, radar stations, antiguerrilla alarm systems, and computers. "The two countries also collaborate," says Liu, "in armour development and military electronics."

Israel sells sophisticated heavy weaponry to Taiwan as well, much of it "laundered" through South Africa.

Perhaps most ominous of all, both Taiwan and Israel look to South Africa to supply the uranium that they need to be able to produce nuclear weapons.

This cozy triangle is apparently comforting as well as profitable. It must be reassuring to deal with another government as internationally despised as your own. Reassuring enough to joke about it. Liu quotes "a representative of one of the three countries" as saying "The skunks of the world must unite."

# FROM OUR READERS

We have received a letter from James Daly, public relations officer of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, responding to some points in the interview with Michael Farrell, published in our August 7 issue.

Farrell is a leader of the People's Democracy group (PD), which is now in the process of fusion with the Movement for a Socialist Republic (MSR), the Irish section of the Fourth International.

We have had to abridge Daly's letter considerably for reasons of space. In so doing, we have tried to keep his main political arguments. Daly writes:

"The Coalisland conference was not 'a new awakening of the spirit of resistance.' It was an attempt to get the IRA and the INLA [Irish National Liberation Army, a group politically allied to the IRSP] to declare a ceasefire, with the bait that certainly the CPI [Communist Party of Ireland] and possibly SFWP [Sinn Féin-The Workers Party, the former "Official" republicans] would then join in a united front on specific demands. The Coalisland conference was totally undemocratically organised, and was deliberately very divisive. The platform and the main speaker, none of whom were named even a day in advance to those bidden to the conference (although it had been in preparation for six months), all inclined to a call for a ceasefire; Fr. Denis Faul, the main speaker, explicitly called for one. The response of the overwhelming majority of the eight hundred strong audience, especially the supposedly non-aligned masses—was vociferous, even, thunderous, support for the armed struggle.

"The main resistance to the 'Independent Ulster' [i.e., an imperialist-backed "independent" Northern Irish state] is found in the armed struggle, which PD has consistently tried to discourage. They refer to it as 'militarism,' and completely wrongly contrast 'armed struggle' with 'mass action.' Armed struggle is in fact one of the many forms of mass action, and requires a high degree of organisation, long tradition and great popular support—all of which are found in the Irish national liberation struggle. The PD does not advocate abandonment of armed struggle by the PLO, ETA, etc., nor would they have called for a ceasefire from the Algerian FLN or the Viet Cong. What are the specific differences in the Irish situation?

"Granted, the PD/MSR have never themselves called for a ceasefire as a precondition for joining a united front. But they have, as at Coalisland, encouraged those who did, and have spoken (as your interviewer does) as if the Provisionals

and the IRSP were 'trying to develop an ideological defense of the primacy of armed struggle . . . leading to an ideological sectarianism similar to that of the ultraleft groups.' This is a total misunderstanding of the position. As far as the IRSP is concerned (and we have no reason to believe the Provisionals think otherwise) there is no refusal to co-operate with those who do not support—or even those who do not recognise the legitimacy of—the present armed struggle. The rejection of co-operation has not come from us but from those who condemn the present struggle. What we do however, and categorically, reject is the right of anyone to dictate our refusal of support for the armed struggle as the price of their co-operation.

"Meanwhile, in their present campaign against the armed struggle, it must be said that PD/MSR are objectively helping the international forces which obviously judge the importance of the armed campaign much more highly than they do.

"By their continued attempts to discredit the 'physical force party,' and to split Republican supporters away from them, Bernadette McAliskey and Michael Farrell are objectively helping the forces of right-wing Republicanism.

"The attitude of Michael Farrell seems to be that because the armed national liberation struggle is not Marxist-led, it not only should not be supported but should be discouraged. For the sake of 'the leadership that we would give to a united-front movement' he seems prepared to sabotage the actual mass armed movement going on—and going on successfully! There also seems to be a lack of any sense of urgency; the present struggle can be wound down to prepare for some later one which would be Marxist-led.

"But in fact the masses have declared that the national struggle has priority. That is why they have supported the Republicans, not the Marxists—and not, as you suggest, because 'the socialists were organized in a loose and amateurish way.'

"Finally, may I say that this contribution is intended in a spirit of fraternal criticism, not only of PD/MSR but of your own paper, for presenting the Irish struggle through interviews with Bernadette McAliskey and Michael Farrell, who do not have much mass support, instead of through interviews with organisations more closely involved in the national liberation struggle."

Gerry Foley, who conducted the interview in question, replies:

Perhaps because of his "sense of urgency," James Daly makes a number of hasty judgments. One of the hastiest is his concluding statement. For eight years, this publication has presented the Irish struggle through interviews with representatives of the full range of Irish revolutionary forces. I was the interviewer in many cases.

In particular, we published interviews with the leaders of the IRSP in 1974, when it was under physical attack by the "Officials" and being subjected to a campaign of vilification in the press. We published long interviews, for example, with Séamus Costello, the assassinated founder of the IRSP. We have also frequently published selections from the republican press. Perhaps Daly is unaware of this because he is a rather recent recruit to the current embodied in the IRSP. But a number of IRSP leaders will recall being reminded to send us material regularly so that we could publicize their views.

Daly is also hasty in dealing with the political views and analyses indicated by Farrell and myself in the interview. I do not think, for example, that the only reason the Marxist-oriented groups were bypassed in 1969 was organizational. They also made basic political errors about the role of the national question, as I have said in many articles over the last eight years. Here, Daly draws a sweeping conclusion from one specific point in one interview.

Some other arguments are misplaced. No one denies that most of the participants in the Coalisland conference sympathized with the armed struggle. Furthermore, the argument that PD does not support the armed struggle because it is not Marxist-led ignores the history of this organization.

I do not think the argument that criticizing the guerrilla strategy "objectively" aids the imperialists or the right wing is very useful. This sort of thing has a very bad history.

But I welcome Daly's assurance that his criticisms are meant in a fraternal spirit and that the IRSP is willing to work with forces that do not share its views on armed struggle. □

## Like a Celestial Parking Meter

A Catholic church in Baltimore has gone modern with its ritual lighting of votive candles. Now the candles are electric and coin-operated.

"By dropping a dime or a quarter into a slot in front of the candles, parishioners can light an electric candle for an hour," UPI reported August 21.

The Rev. Robert Petti, pastor of the church, explained that "the electric candles are more profitable since the church does not have to keep buying wax candles and the electricity costs are minor."