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**WHY
SOMOZA
DID NOT
FALL**

—page 1128

Ian Smith's Visit to Washington

By Ernest Harsch

Within hours of the announcement that Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith would visit the United States October 7, protest demonstrations were already being planned to greet him. While Smith can expect a cordial reception from various government officials, his arrival has also provided an opportunity for supporters of the Zimbabwean freedom struggle to actively express their opposition to Smith's racist regime and his attempts to preserve white wealth and privilege.

Smith was invited to the United States by a group of twenty-seven conservative senators, including such right-wing luminaries as S.I. Hayakawa, Jesse Helms, Harry F. Byrd, and Barry Goldwater. The purpose of the invitation, they explained, was to allow Smith to present his case to the American public.

Smith will certainly try to take full advantage of the trip to drum up as much diplomatic support as he can for his "internal settlement," an agreement he signed March 3 with three prominent Black figures that provided for the establishment of a coalition regime. The settlement promises to lead to Black rule by the end of December, but in actuality seeks to perpetuate white dominance for years to come. It has met with increasing resistance from the Zimbabwean masses themselves, who have escalated their struggle for real Black majority rule.

A number of right-wing American politicians, including John Connally, a possible Republican presidential candidate in 1980, have openly declared their support for Smith's settlement and have pressed the Carter administration to recognize it. A few months ago they sought to push an amendment through Congress ending Washington's support for the United Nations-sponsored sanctions against the Smith regime.

The Carter administration itself has been involved indirectly (partly through the South Africans) in trying to keep the Smith regime afloat, at least until a negotiated settlement can be worked out with the main Zimbabwean nationalist forces. Washington's general strategy has been to aim for the eventual establishment of a Black neocolonial regime. But the last thing the American imperialists want to see is Smith's outright overthrow as a result of a massive Black uprising. That could endanger Washington's overall stakes in the region.

Because of the widespread international

opposition to Smith's racist policies, however, Carter has been forced to keep his public distance from the regime and has carefully refrained from saying anything that would indicate that he backs the internal settlement.

The invitation to Smith by Hayakawa and the other senators therefore put Carter in an embarrassing position, particularly at a time when Smith has sharply stepped up his repression against the freedom fighters within Zimbabwe and his bombers have been pounding refugee camps and guerrilla bases in neighboring countries.

Carter was worried that if he approved Smith's request for a visa, Washington would appear to be granting legitimacy to the Rhodesian regime (it is not officially recognized by any government in the world) and would face condemnation from the Zimbabwean nationalists of the Patriotic Front and from various African regimes. If he turned down the application, he could face stepped-up pressure from right-wing forces in the United States. A rejection would also expose Carter to criticism that he did not really favor removal of restrictions on the right to travel, as he claimed.

At first, the State Department stalled on Smith's visa, stating that it was under "review." Hayakawa castigated the delay

in reaching a decision, calling it an "incredible display of spinelessness. . . ."

Under such pressures, the State Department finally agreed on October 4 to issue Smith a visa "on an exceptional basis." Secretary of State Cyrus Vance personally authorized the decision. Reflecting the delicacy of the situation, Thomas Reston, a State Department representative, stressed that the visa okay "does not imply U.S. recognition of or support for the present Rhodesian administration" or for the internal settlement.

Smith left for his visit to the United States in the company of Ndabaningi Sithole, one of the top three Black figures in the regime. The other two, Abel Muzorewa and Chief Jeremiah Chirau, said they would make a later trip.

In an attempt to try to extricate the White House from this embarrassing situation, Carter, fresh from his Camp David "triumph," has tried to present Smith's arrival as an opportunity to hold new talks that could lead to a "peaceful" settlement of the Zimbabwe conflict.

But like the numerous other rounds of negotiations that have been held, the major purpose of any new talks will be to divert the Zimbabwean masses from their struggle for complete independence and an end to national and class oppression. If successful, they would not lead to "peace," but to yet more suffering for the bulk of the Zimbabwean population.

The demonstrations during Smith's visit to the United States can impress upon Carter that the American people will have no part of his schemes, a sentiment expressed in one of the slogans that has been raised for the protest actions: "U.S. Hands Off Zimbabwe!" □

Right-wing Arsonists Hit Chicago SWP Office

By Susan Wald

On October 3 at 7:20 a.m., a right-wing anticommunist group set fire to the Chicago headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party statewide campaign committee.

Two white thugs dressed in army fatigues came to 407 South Dearborn Street and asked the elevator operator if the "commies" were still in the building. They then rode up the elevator, got out on the eleventh floor, went to room 1145, broke down the door, and set fire to the office.

No one was in the office at the time of the attack, but thousands of pieces of SWP campaign literature were destroyed, heavy damage was done to walls and furniture, and party files were stolen.

The Chicago police bomb and arson squad, which arrived soon after the attack, said they had received a phone call claiming credit for the attack from an organization calling itself the "Vietnam Veterans

Against Communists."

The caller told police—and later, during a second call, told a member of the campaign committee—that this act of violence was only the beginning, and that next time, members of the SWP would be machine-gunned.

The SWP in contacting civil-liberties groups, labor unions, and other organizations and asking them to sign a statement condemning the attack and demanding the arrest of those responsible. Many have already done so.

This is not the first time that the SWP has been attacked by right-wing organizations in Chicago. In 1969 and 1970, a racist, anticommunist, paramilitary outfit called the Legion of Justice carried out several violent attacks on the SWP, as well as against other radical groups.

A 1975 grand jury report on police

abuses concluded that there could be no doubt of collaboration between the Legion of Justice and some members of the Chicago Police Department. Moreover, one former Legion member who had taken part in a raid on the SWP testified in court that the cops had provided protection for the attack.

Yet no indictments have ever been brought for these crimes, either against Legion members or against their police accomplices. □

ERA Yes!

By Ann Feder

The United States Senate voted overwhelmingly October 6 to extend to June 1982 the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment barring discrimination on the basis of sex.

The extension, which passed by a vote of 60 to 36, represented a victory for supporters of women's rights and reflected mounting sentiment for the ERA over recent months.

As 1978 began, the amendment seemed to be permanently stalled three states short of passage. (Thirty-eight state legislatures must vote to ratify in order to add the ERA to the constitution; the count has stood at thirty-five since January 1977.) Anti-ERA activity was on the rise, while there was little public expression of the majority sentiment that exists in favor of equal rights for women.

In this emergency situation, supporters of women's rights began to step up activity around the ERA and launched a campaign for extension of the deadline, then set for March 1979. The National Organization for Women (NOW) called a pro-ERA march and rally of 100,000 persons in Washington, D.C., July 9. It was the largest women's rights demonstration in American history and one of the largest protests of any kind since the anti-Vietnam War movement.

On September 26, 2,000 ERA supporters rallied across from the Senate Office Building, demanding passage of the extension bill, which had already been approved by the House of Representatives.

Powerful new forces have been drawn into the battle for the ERA, particularly Blacks and trade unionists. Dozens of unions sent contingents to the July 9 march, including most of the major industrial unions.

Winning the ERA is the central task facing the women's liberation movement in the United States today, and it is the campaign around which the broadest forces can be mobilized. Feminist activists will now be discussing how to build on the extension victory to drive through and win ratification by the three additional states needed. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: October 7, 1978

PERU	1124	How Regime Hopes to "Recover" From Economic Crisis—by Fred Murphy
MIDEAST	1125	Real Meaning of the Camp David Accords—by David Frankel
NICARAGUA	1128	The Deepening Crisis of the Somoza Regime—by Fausto Amador
JAMAICA	1134	Manley's "Socialist Time Now" a Cruel Hoax—by Jon Britton
INDIA	1135	Stalinism in India—A Long Record of Betrayals—by Sharad Jhaveri
JAPAN	1136	"Socialist Women's Council" Founded in Tokyo—by Mutsugoro Kawasaki
ASIA	1138	The Deepening Conflict Between Peking and Hanoi—by Pierre Rousset
USA	1141	Rail Strike Ties Lines in Knots
DENMARK	1146	Workers Tackle the "Zero Front"—by Michael Voss
CUBA	1152	Open Letter to Fidel Castro
NEWS ANALYSIS	1122	Ian Smith's Visit to Washington—by Ernest Harsch
		Right-wing Arsonists Set Fire to SWP Headquarters—by Susan Wald
	1123	ERA Yes!—by Ann Feder
BOOKS	1142	Cambodia Year Zero—reviewed by Matilde Zimmermann
DOCUMENTS	1150	The Syrian Attack on Lebanese Rightists
DRAWINGS	1121	Anastasio Somoza Debayle—by Ivan

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Peru—How Regime Hopes to 'Recover' From Economic Crisis

By Fred Murphy

"We are certain that we will be able to stabilize the economy, overcome the crisis, and reactivate economic growth," Peruvian Economy Minister Javier Silva Ruede told reporters at the Lima airport September 30. Silva had just returned from the annual joint meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington. While there, he had a series of talks with imperialist financiers and government officials aimed at "restructuring" Peru's \$4 billion public foreign debt.

Silva's optimism may be unwarranted, as we shall see later. But it does reflect some progress made by the Peruvian government in recent months toward easing the pressure from its creditors abroad.

After handing down a series of harsh austerity measures in mid-May (touching off the biggest protests in Peru's history),¹ the military regime secured a postponement until January 1979 of \$185 million that was due to be paid to private banks this year. An imminent default was thus avoided.

Relations with the IMF improved after the May austerity decrees, having reached a low point in March when the IMF accused Peru's central-bank administrators of cooking their books. Negotiations were concluded in July for a new IMF loan of \$230 million, which Peru began drawing on in September. This allowed the government to regain solvency; its coffers were virtually empty in May.

Peru's top economic officials are now engaged in complex negotiations with the "Club of Paris" (a group of eleven imperialist governments)² and a consortium of big imperialist banks.³ These talks are aimed at rescheduling Peru's debts and thus reducing the proportion of export income that must go to debt service. Fifty-three percent of Peru's foreign income this year is being used to pay debts; without rescheduling, 68% will be required in 1979.

1. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, June 5, p. 660 and June 12, p. 693.

2. The eleven members of the Club of Paris are the governments of the United States, France, Belgium, West Germany, Britain, Japan, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Switzerland.

3. The consortium involves some fifty banks, including the U.S. banks Morgan Guaranty Trust, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Citibank, and Wells Fargo; the Dresdnerbank of West Germany; and the Bank of Nova Scotia, which is the fourth largest bank in Canada.

The regime hopes to bring the figure down to between 40% and 50%.

Efforts are also being made to obtain new loans. According to Economy Minister Silva, "we are seeking further agreements on easy terms—that is, low interest rates, grace periods, and very long repayment periods—with certain governments, especially with the United States, West Germany, the Netherlands, and other countries that have traditionally provided us with financial cooperation." Credits of \$100 million each from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank have already been secured for various industrial projects.

Thus Peru's rulers are actually putting the country even deeper in debt to imperialist financiers. The burden continues to fall on the Peruvian masses.

To obtain a new loan from the IMF—and thus get a seal of approval to show other creditors—the Peruvian government agreed to a new round of austerity measures. While previous IMF-imposed plans led to sharp increases in the prices of basic necessities, the main effect of the new measures will be a rise in unemployment.

The new package includes immediate cuts in government spending; further devaluations of Peru's currency, the sol; and a tighter monetary policy, aimed at holding the 1978 inflation rate to 70%.

The immediate victims of the new measures were 6,350 public employees laid off or forced into early retirement in August and September. The government had planned to cut 30,000 workers, but ordered an abrupt halt to the layoffs after an unprecedented wave of strikes and street demonstrations by public employees. Further spending cuts will nevertheless be required to meet the IMF's goals.

The ongoing devaluations of the sol⁴ are driving up the prices of imported consumer goods and raw materials. While this cuts demand and frees more foreign cash for debt service, it also accelerates inflation and unemployment. Manufacturers that produce for the domestic market depend on imports for at least half of their raw materials. These companies have begun laying off large numbers of workers in order to cut costs, and some are in immi-

4. The sol stood at 130 to the dollar in January of this year. The exchange rate in mid-September was 175 to the dollar, and the new IMF agreement calls for it to be near 200 to the dollar by the beginning of 1979.

nent danger of bankruptcy.

The regime's "recovery" strategy offers little prospect of relief to these industrialists. It is aimed instead at expanding exports, especially in the traditional sectors of mining, oil, agriculture, and fishing. This will directly benefit only a small handful of local exporting capitalists and big imperialist concerns such as the Southern Peru Copper Company and Occidental Petroleum.

Much of the industry nationalized by the Velasco regime in the early 1970s is to be returned to private hands, but state holdings in mining are to be maintained. Joint investments with foreign or private Peruvian capital are being sought in the export sectors.

The policy of favoring exports at their expense has been bitterly opposed by the industrialists who depend on the domestic market. This reached the point of an open clash in July and August between Economics Minister Silva and Industries Minister Gabriel Lanatta. Lanatta, himself the owner of Peru's biggest brewery, urged looser credit policies and more thoroughgoing denationalizations. Silva prevailed, and Lanatta was dumped from the cabinet on September 16. He was replaced with Rear Adm. Jorge Du Bois, an indication that the military could find no civilian capitalist or politician willing to take the heat from the industrialists.

Of course, the military, the industrialists, and the exporters all agree on the need to stand firm against the demands of the workers. There was no dispute when it came to breaking the miners strike in early September.⁵ If anything, the industrialists favor an even harder line against the unions, since they face a growing number of strikes against layoffs and for wage increases—demands they are less and less able to meet.

The immediate perspective facing the Peruvian workers and peasants is thus one of deepening misery. Concessions from the capitalists might be possible later on, if Silva's recovery scheme does succeed in temporarily easing the state's fiscal crisis and boosting export profits.

But the essence of the military regime's economic strategy is to bind Peru ever more tightly to the world market. Chronic dependence on a few export products is at the root of the present situation. A new

5. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, October 2, p. 1081.

international recession, depressing raw materials prices and reducing the demand for them, will rapidly lead to a new, even more severe crisis.

The military reformists of the Velasco regime tried to break Peru out of this vicious cycle. They failed, because they were incapable of taking the anticapitalist measures required—in the first place, repudiation of the foreign debt. In Peru today,

Hugo Blanco and the FOCEP⁶ are gaining a broad hearing as they urge that such measures be taken and explain that only a government of the workers and peasants will do so. □

6. Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil y Popular (Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front).

A 'Framework' for War, not Peace

Real Meaning of the Camp David Accords

By David Frankel

U.S. policy in the Middle East, as everywhere else in the world, is intended to preserve and extend American economic and political power. Of course, President Carter didn't put it that way when he explained the Camp David accords on television. Instead, he insisted that the purpose of his Mideast policy is "to use our influence and efforts to advance the cause of peace."

Democratic and Republican Party politicians, and virtually every sector of the capitalist media, have given enthusiastic support to Carter's claims. The conservative *U.S. New & World Report* ran an editorial titled "End of a 30-Year War" in its October 9 issue, while the liberal *New Republic* declared on its front page September 30: "Historians will call it the Thirty Years War. . . . It ended with the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1978."

Anybody who wants an idea of what is really going on in the Middle East today would be well advised to skip over Carter's rhetoric and the applause being orchestrated by the big-business media. The real meaning of the Camp David accords can only be understood by looking at the underlying interests that Washington is trying to defend.

Imperialist Conquest

As a strategic crossroad between Africa, Asia, and Europe, the Middle East was always a prime target for imperialist expansion. The military and commercial importance of the region was increased with the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869. In 1882, British troops landed in Egypt. They were to remain there for the next seventy-four years.

With the increasing reliance of the industrialized countries on oil, another factor was introduced. As early as July 1914, the British Parliament heard Winston Churchill, then first lord of the admiralty, argue

that "we must become the owners, or at any rate the controllers of the source, of at least a proportion of the supply of natural oil which we require."

World War I provided the British with the chance they were waiting for. The Ottoman Empire, which ruled most of the Middle East, sided with Germany in the war. In 1916, secret negotiations between Britain and France resulted in the Sykes-Picot Treaty. The two wartime allies agreed to divide up the spoils between them—Palestine, Iraq, and Jordan were to go to the British, and Syria and Lebanon were to go to the French.

What about the people living in those countries? They were never consulted.

When the Arab peoples protested that they had been promised their independence by the British, and pointed to the allied slogans about a "war for democracy," they were answered with French and British armies.

Until World War II, British imperialism reigned supreme in the Middle East. In 1940, Britain controlled an estimated 72% of Mideast oil reserves, compared to a U.S. share of less than 10%. The very terms "Middle East" and "Far East" refer to the location of these areas in relation to Britain.

British Decline

But World War II marked the turning point for the old colonial empires. In 1944, Churchill was to plaintively wire Franklin D. Roosevelt: "There is apprehension here that the United States has a desire to deprive us of our oil assets in the Middle East. . . ."

And indeed, by 1967 estimated British reserves had fallen to 29.3% of Mideastern oil, while U.S.-owned reserves had risen to 58.6%.

Following the 1973 oil embargo, the Arab regimes took over formal control of a large part of these reserves. But in prac-

tice, little has changed. The imperialist-controlled oil companies continue to manage the production of the oil, for a fee, take a guaranteed share for themselves, and buy most of the rest at a fixed price. Thus, production, refining, shipping, and marketing remain in the same hands.

Harold Haynes, chairman of Standard Oil of California, was quoted in the September 11 issue of *Time* magazine on the impact of the Saudi regime's takeover of 60% of Aramco. As Haynes put it, the main result is that "capital investment will be supplied by the Saudis. We are relieved of that responsibility."

Five of the eight largest industrial corporations in the United States are oil companies—Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Standard Oil of California, and Gulf Oil. Together, these giant combines have assets of \$107 billion. Exxon's \$38 billion in assets was about equal to the Italian national budget last year.

In 1977, as in every one of the preceding twelve years, *Fortune* magazine found that the corporations engaged in mining and crude oil production on its list of the 500 largest industrials had the highest return on sales.

As far as Washington is concerned, the central question in the Middle East is how to maintain its hold on the region's oil, which accounts for 38 percent of U.S. petroleum imports, and 57 percent of Japan's and Western Europe's.

At the same time, the Arab world has become an increasingly important market for the imperialist countries, and a crucial area in the military competition between Washington and Moscow.

'Dangerous Processes'

Zbigniew Brzezinski put his finger on Washington's main worry in an interview in the June 1976 *Bulletin of American Professors for Peace in the Middle East*. "There are certain dangerous processes at work in the region," Brzezinski said, ". . . in particular, the underlying process of the radicalization of the Arab masses."

Direct colonial control of the oil-producing areas has been ruled out precisely because of the struggles of the Arab masses, which Brzezinski seeks some way to control. A second method of imperialist control has been to support neocolonial regimes whose repressive policies are aimed at preventing any political movement among the masses.

Washington follows this policy in Saudi Arabia and the various Gulf States today. But the whole history of the Middle East since World War II is testimony to how brittle these regimes are.

The Egyptian monarchy was overthrown in 1952. When the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958, British paratroopers had to land in Jordan to stabilize King Hussein's regime, and U.S. Marines were sent into Lebanon. We have just recently seen a demonstration of how shaky the

shah of Iran's hold is in that key country. Is there any reason to believe that the Saudi monarchy won't be faced with similar mass opposition in the future?

Even the most flexible Arab regimes are caught between the pressure of imperialism and the demands of their own people. Even the most stable must contend with the radicalization of the masses and the possibility of popular insurrection. It is this that explains the link between Washington and Israel.

Counterrevolutionary Base

No State Department official or brass hat at the Pentagon can say what type of regime will be in power in Egypt or Saudi Arabia five years from now. But there is one thing in the Middle East that they can be certain of: As long as the Israeli state exists, it will always side with American imperialism against the threat of social revolution in the Arab world.

Because Israel was established at the expense of the Arab masses and over their opposition, it must maintain its military superiority over the Arab countries. But these countries have far greater populations and resources than Israel. Therefore, the Zionist regime must depend on aid from its imperialist allies, and on maintaining the Arab states in a weakened and backward condition.

Any revolution that inspires and unifies the Arab masses, and pushes forward the modernization and economic development of the Arab countries, automatically threatens the Israeli state.

U.S. policymakers are thus able to rely on a counterrevolutionary army with 400,000 troops in the heart of the Arab world. When it appeared, for example, as if King Hussein might be overthrown during the September 1971 civil war in Jordan, Tel Aviv and Washington agreed on a plan for a joint invasion.

Moreover, Israel has been able to have an effect far beyond the Middle East. It exported \$102 million in arms in 1976 (compared to only \$2 million in 1967), and is now the fifth-biggest arms seller in the capitalist world. Following the recent civil war in Nicaragua, *Washington Post* correspondent Karen DeYoung reported that "The bulk of recent rearmament [by the Somoza regime] has come from Israel, which has shipped at least 500 Uzi submachine guns, 500 Galil assault rifles, and four armed patrol boats, as well as ammunition."

A New Baghdad Pact?

From Washington's point of view, support to reactionary Arab regimes and its alliance with Israel are two sides of the same coin. Both policies are aimed at preventing the Arab masses from taking control of their destiny.

At the same time, Israeli aggression is one of the factors continually undermining the stability of the proimperialist Arab

regimes. The Zionist state—like the imperialist system itself—constantly generates anger and opposition among the peoples who are victimized by it.

For the last five years—ever since the October 1973 war and the Arab oil embargo—U.S. policymakers have been seeking a way to more effectively integrate the two pillars of Washington's Mideast policy. The Camp David accords, which provide for a formal treaty between Egypt and Israel, represent an important success for this imperialist effort.

In fact, it seems as if Washington is trying to revive the idea of a Mideastern NATO. During the Cold War such an alliance, known as the Baghdad Pact, was actually set up. But the only Arab government that joined was Iraq, and after the overthrow of the monarchy there Iraq pulled out. Attempts to include the Lebanese and Jordanian regimes in the Baghdad Pact were scuttled by mass protests in those countries.

If Washington could bring Jordan and Saudi Arabia into the Camp David framework, it would have a more powerful counterrevolutionary alliance in the Mideast than ever before. Certainly, the governments involved have already begun to discuss the possibilities.

After the Camp David summit, *Washington Post* correspondent Jim Hoagland reported in a September 24 article: "Details now emerging from extensive post-mortems of the secret talks indicate that a shared assessment by Carter, Sadat and Begin of a growing Soviet and Cuban threat in Africa and the Red Sea region played a role in getting the movement needed for a peace treaty. . . ."

'Framework for Peace'?

Right after the Ethiopian-Somalian war had focused attention on revolutionary developments in the Horn of Africa, the March 26 *New York Times*, quoting "qualified allied sources," reported that the U.S. Air Force has been using the Israeli base at Etzion, in the Sinai, for "long-range surveillance flights over the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf and the western areas of the Indian Ocean."

The *Times* noted that Washington expected to continue such flights whether the base remained under Israeli control or was returned to Egypt.

As for Saudi Arabia, *U.S. News & World Report* correspondent Dennis Mullin pointed out October 2: "It has become an American aircraft carrier, with warplanes and other military equipment already in place, provided, maintained and manned by Americans. Those planes could be used by Americans if the need arises. Fly in some American pilots, and you've got, in effect, an American base."

"U.S. involvement on a military level in that area would assure the security of oil supplies as well as guarantee the security of Israel and of Egypt."

This is Carter's *real* "framework for peace in the Middle East."

When Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin appeared on television with Carter and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat to announce the Camp David accords, he went so far as to compare the summit to the Congress of Vienna in 1815. It was at that congress that the counterrevolutionary "Holy Alliance" of Russia, Prussia, and Austria was established—an alliance that stood against the democratic revolution in Europe for more than thirty years.

Nothing that Carter manages to set up in the Middle East will survive for thirty years. But insofar as its aim will be to oppose the struggles of the Arab and African masses for national liberation and social progress, Begin's comparison was apt indeed.

No Israeli Concessions

Although the Saudi and Jordanian regimes are eager to participate in this type of counterrevolutionary alliance, they had hoped that part of such a deal would be Israeli agreement to withdraw from the Arab territory occupied in the 1967 Mideast war.

However, the Camp David accords have increased Begin's leverage in this regard, and the Carter administration has made it plainer than ever that it prefers the continuation of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza to any other solution.

Washington Post correspondent Don Oberdorfer, in a September 23 article, quoted a high U.S. official, who Oberdorfer made clear was Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. "Asked if it were true that the United States at Camp David agreed to back Israeli demands that its troops remain in West Bank garrisons after the five year 'transitional' period, the official replied, 'If it appeared it was necessary, the answer is yes, we would.'"

"Another U.S. official who participated in the meetings said both the United States and Egypt had agreed that Israel has a 'good cause' for stationing its troops on the West Bank indefinitely for security reasons."

When U.S. and Israeli officials talk about "security," what they are really referring to are the measures that can most effectively suppress the Arab masses.

Moscow Frozen Out

It is hardly surprising that Moscow has reacted angrily to being frozen out of the Mideast negotiations and to the prospect of a new anti-Soviet alliance in the region under Washington's leadership. Immediately after the Camp David accords were made public, the Soviet news agency, Tass, condemned them as "a plot against Arabs" and denounced Sadat's "betrayal of the cause of the Arab people of Palestine."

But the truth is that it was precisely the

Kremlin's policy of détente with American imperialism that helped prepare the way for Carter's diplomatic triumph.

The first Nixon-Brezhnev summit meeting took place in May 1972. David Hirst reported in the June 29, 1972, *Washington Post* that shortly before the summit "high-ranking Soviet officials" had explained to a delegation of Syrian Communists "that the Soviet Union will not support the Arabs in actions that could lead to confrontation between Russia and the United States."

When Brezhnev met with Nixon again in June 1973, the Middle East was listed by the Soviet leader right after Vietnam as one of the "hotbeds of dangerous tension in the world." The Kremlin chiefs agreed to pressure the Arab regimes to recognize Israel as part of a Mideast settlement.

Spartak Beglov, a Soviet commentator, arrogantly explained in the June 29, 1973, *New York Times*: "The two most powerful countries have clearly given the world to understand that they expect other major and smaller countries . . . to follow their example by adhering to certain rules of conduct. . . ."

But Brezhnev thought the "rules of conduct" would include the maintenance of Soviet and U.S. spheres of influence. On that basis, he was happy to sacrifice the rights of the Palestinian people and the interests of the Arab masses as a whole to the search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

However, things did not work out as Brezhnev planned. As this writer explained in an article in the May 3, 1974, *Militant*: "In practice, much to the chagrin of the Soviet bureaucrats, the blows struck against the Palestinian liberation movement and the more militant anti-imperialist forces in the Arab world have resulted in a shift to the right in Mideastern politics that has begun to threaten the Soviet position in the whole area. There has been a dramatic strengthening of proimperialist currents and a whittling down of Soviet bargaining power."

The Kremlin's policy, which made it easier for Sadat to turn to Washington, also contributed to the defeat of the Palestinian and leftist forces in the Lebanese civil war. Moscow refused to jeopardize its friendly diplomatic relations with the Syrian regime, even though the Syrian army intervened in behalf of the rightist forces in Lebanon.

While the Kremlin stood by and tried to play both sides against the middle, the defeat of the Palestinians in Lebanon helped establish the political atmosphere that enabled Sadat to make his trip to Jerusalem.

Crisis in Lebanon

There is no doubt that American imperialism has made substantial gains in the Middle East over the last five years—gains

that have been formalized in the Camp David accords.

On the other hand, it is already clear that the Camp David accords will not lead to peace. They will not even lead to the stable imperialist domination that is Washington's vision of "peace."

The crisis in Lebanon is the most obvious example. It threatens to blow up the summit accords even before Sadat and Begin sign a treaty. And if an Israeli-Egyptian treaty is signed, it will make it easier for the Zionist regime to embark on adventures in Lebanon or against Syria—adventures that could easily spark an all-out war.

Nor is the Lebanese crisis going to disappear. The pressures generated by Israeli attempts to smash the struggles of the Palestinian population there, by the attempts of the Maronite minority to maintain its privileged position, and by the other aspects of the class struggle within Lebanon will continue to convulse the country.

Insofar as the Palestinians are concerned, the Camp David accords were a faithful reflection of Washington's attitude. There will continue to be plenty of vague promises and rhetoric, but on the central issues, Washington will continue to back the Israeli regime down the line.

It must do so, because the Zionist state remains imperialism's most powerful and dependable bulwark against the Arab revolution, and maintaining the dispersal of the Palestinians and preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state is crucial to Israel's stability.

Washington's inability to offer even the most modest concessions to 1.5 million Palestinians living under Israeli rule, and to nearly two million Palestinian refugees who were deprived of their land and their homes by the Zionist state, ensures that the Arab-Israeli conflict will continue unabated.

The Palestinians will continue to struggle against their oppression, Israel will continue to strike out at the Palestinian population in the surrounding countries, arousing anger and indignation throughout the Arab world, and the Arab regimes will continue to be caught between Israeli threats and the demands of the masses for action against Zionist aggression.

Prospects in Egypt

What about Egypt? Will the signing of a Sadat-Begin pact at least lead to peace and stability on that front?

It may be that Sadat will succeed for a time in separating Egypt from the rest of the Arab regimes forced into confrontation with Israel. But that will hardly solve his problems in Egypt.

In a speech to the Egyptian People's Assembly October 2, Sadat promised that "we are on the way to peace and on the way to prosperity." But Sadat's imperialist supporters know very well that Egypt is

not on the way to prosperity, and they are afraid that his promises will backfire.

On the same day as Sadat's speech, an article by Thomas Lippman in the *Washington Post* described an Egyptian worker observing Cairo's chaotic and antiquated transportation system. Those workers who are lucky enough not to be among Egypt's one million unemployed spend hours traveling to and from work every day.

"After peace comes, no more of that," the worker told Lippman. "Everything will be all right."

Lippman went on to say:

"Similar vignettes can be found all across Egypt, variations on the theme that peace will bring prosperity. The 40 million people of an exhausted and poverty-stricken country are looking forward to peace in the belief it will quickly bring them a better life.

"They are likely to be disappointed.

"Economists, bankers, businessmen and political leaders agree that peace with Israel will mean little immediate relief for the Egyptian masses."

Egypt has a foreign debt of more than \$13 billion. If the U.S. economy were laboring under a similar burden, the equivalent would be a debt of about \$2 trillion.

Sadat was no doubt promised considerable U.S. aid as part of the negotiations leading up to the Camp David accords. But there is no way that he will get the type of aid that would be necessary to get the Egyptian economy out of debt.

Hunger and Speedup

Austerity measures urged on Sadat by the International Monetary Fund resulted in massive riots in January 1977. The average Egyptian worker makes less than \$2 a day, and is heavily dependent on government subsidies that keep down the price of food, cooking oil, and other necessities.

"But donors and lenders, including the United States," Lippman reports, "are pressing for further reductions in the budget deficit, estimated at \$1.3 billion this year, and in the balance of trade deficit, which could be \$2 billion. . . ."

Hunger and speedup. That is the perspective offered the Egyptian people by imperialism. It is not a recipe for social stability.

From this point of view, it is necessary to ask what will be the reaction of Washington and Tel Aviv if Sadat is threatened with revolution in Egypt? After all, the imperialists were prepared to invade Jordan in a similar situation.

The fact is that the deeper Washington gets involved in the Middle East, and the more elaborate and far-reaching its investments—both economic and political—the greater is the danger of U.S. military intervention, and with it, of World War III.

That is the real meaning of the Camp David accords. □

The Deepening Crisis of the Somoza Regime

By Fausto Amador

Since the murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro on January 1, and especially since the first general lockout staged against Somoza, various simultaneous and interconnected processes have been under way in Nicaragua.

There has been a growing mass upsurge, reflected in street demonstrations, strikes by students and workers, and spontaneous urban uprisings. Alongside this, small military commando units have been formed throughout the country, impelled more or less directly by the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN—Sandinista National Liberation Front). Broad social strata are represented in these units, including the upper layers of the petty bourgeoisie. Their main activity has been to acquire weapons, make bombs, and train for armed confrontations in the cities with Somoza's National Guard.

Along with these first two processes, all the opposition political forces have organized themselves in a bloc called the Frente Amplio Opositor (FAO—Broad Opposition Front), whose apparent unity scarcely conceals the heterogeneity of the elements involved.

The FAO has a multiclass base. It embraces the traditional bourgeois opposition (the Partido Conservador), splittoffs from Somoza's party, the "Twelve," both factions of the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense [PSN—Nicaraguan Socialist Party, the pro-Moscow Stalinists], and the trade-union bureaucrats.

The combination of these elements in political action has led to a tumultuous and apparently chaotic surge of activity on the Nicaraguan social scene. Thus, we have seen a succession of strikes, demonstrations, massive rallies, lockouts by bosses opposing Somoza, and insurrectionary outbreaks.

The September Offensive

On August 12, the FSLN staged the most spectacular action yet in its campaign. A commando unit of the front seized the National Palace while both houses of Congress were in full session. This action coincided with an upsurge in the mass movement.

At that moment, the hospital workers (12,000 persons) were in the thirty-second day of a nationwide strike, and the hospitals had been placed under direct military control. On the very day that the National Palace was seized, the most militant union in the country, the SCAAS [Sindicato de Carpinteros, Armadores, Albañiles y

Similares—Union of Carpenters, Fitters, Bricklayers, and Allied Trades] went on strike in solidarity with the hospital workers. On that day also, the workers at the University of León and other sections of workers also joined the strike.

On August 24, the FAO issued a call for a nationwide lockout. The response was slow. Four days later, barely 60% of businesses were on strike, and it was not until September 4 that 80% of economic life was paralyzed.

In the meantime, on August 29, military commando units of the anti-Somoza opposition, coordinated and organized primarily by the FSLN, went into action in Matagalpa. They took the city and held it for a few days. When the National Guard managed to regain control after savagely bombarding the city, the commandos succeeded in carrying out a retreat and escaping annihilation.

The Matagalpa actions, which were probably touched off more quickly than expected, were part of a general plan for an FSLN military offensive against the Somoza regime. The background to this plan was the experience of the last lockout, when it had been wrongly believed that just paying off the workers and clerks in advance and sending them home was enough to bring down Somoza. This time, it was intended to give a military bite to the shutdown called for on August 24 by the employers' associations.

The lockout spread slowly but steadily. In this situation, the FSLN launched its offensive. The actions had two main axes. One was the taking of a number of cities at the same time by urban commandos. The objective of this operation was to tie down the regime's military forces as much as possible so that heavily armed military columns of the FSLN could go into action from bases on Costa Rican territory and "liberate" some militarily and politically important area. The area they had in mind was probably the Peñas Blancas district on the Costa Rican border and the nearby districts of Rivas and San Juan del Sur, a port on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua.

The original plan called for proclaiming a provisional government in the area seized, which was apparently expected to be quickly recognized by some Latin American governments, from which it would have received immediate military aid. Among the governments that raised hopes about such a possibility were reportedly Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico.

The armed actions failed to accomplish any of these objectives. The risings in the cities were scattered; the FSLN military column was slow in moving into action and ran into considerable difficulties. As a result, the Somoza army was able to stamp out the uprisings in the cities one by one, slaughtering the civilian population wholesale with massive bombing and machine gunning.

Masaya, León, Jinotepe, Diriamba, and finally Estelí were put to fire and the sword. The victims were estimated at between five and ten thousand dead, with about fifty thousand persons wounded.

The political objectives of the FSLN's general offensive were to deepen the isolation of the Somoza regime and hasten its breakdown. The front sought to force Somoza's traditional allies, especially the U.S. imperialists, to leave him to his fate. The aim was to show how explosive a situation was being created by the maintenance of the Somoza regime in power.

From the first days, the front called for the formation of a national government made up of the bourgeois group called the "Twelve," with which the FSLN has political accords. The government was to be based on a program of limited, moderate social reforms. The only ones threatened with expropriation were Somoza and his family.

What Keeps Somoza in Power?

The Somoza regime has held out against the massive lockouts organized by the bourgeoisie against it, a succession of violent mass actions, guerrilla actions among the most spectacular in history, and finally an almost full-scale military offensive. If despite all this Somoza is maintaining himself in office, it is because of the special role the Somoza regime plays in the Nicaraguan power structure. Somoza is not just another Latin American dictator, and his dynasty is not just another form of government that might be more or less short-lived.

The formation of the bourgeois state in Nicaragua after independence from Spain was a slow and difficult process. Time and time again the ruling social layers found their political plans upset by imperialist intervention and peasant ferment. Chronic actual or latent civil war was the result of the divisions created within the oligarchy by social clashes and the difficulties of forming a state that would have a monopoly of violence.

In the 1930s, the Sandinista war finally shattered the fragile state structure that had been built up in the past. The state had to be rebuilt from the ground up under the protection of the U.S. army of occupation. The product of the counterrevolutionary U.S. intervention was the Somoza regime, in which form and content are indissolubly fused. It is the first bourgeois state power that has been able to maintain any long-term stability in Nicaragua since independence.

The National Guard and Somoza's gigantic network of economic and political dependents and his direct partners are holed up in the main administrative and military institutions, as well as in institutions of justice. The roots of this network are intertwined with the very foundations of the state, and it runs through the whole state structure.

When the great upsurge of the mass movement precipitated the political crisis in Nicaragua, and the Somoza regime began to find its social base being eroded, the entire structure of the bourgeois state was faced with a deadly threat. The crisis of the Somoza regime is an all-embracing crisis of the state and its institutions. It is an extremely acute crisis of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, which found its first stable structure in the Somoza regime. If Somoza does not fall, despite his weakness, it is because his regime has monopolized the entire bourgeois political field. There is still no alternative that can replace it.

The crisis of the Somoza regime strikes at the very roots of bourgeois and imperialist power in Nicaragua. In their struggle against Somoza, the Nicaraguan masses are putting forward their own class demands, their aspiration for the land and control over the conditions in which they produce the wealth of the country.

The Somoza regime is the concrete form that the state apparatus has taken in Nicaragua. Today this form is eroded and decayed. The bourgeoisie and the imperialists want to abandon the Somoza regime and reorganize the state power in a more stable form. But they find no alternative that could serve even temporarily without threatening to bring down the whole state structure.

The rise of the mass movement is hastening the breakdown of the regime, robbing the native bourgeoisie and the imperialists of the time and the margin for maneuver they need.

The Nicaraguan revolution has found its bed, and is deepening it, although it is still working under the surface. Manifold circumstances have conspired to conceal the class character of the struggle against Somoza. The Sandinista Front itself strives to cover up the class confrontation involved in the crisis and to hide it from the masses.

The FSLN's program defends capitalist property relations; its alliances with sec-

tions of the bourgeoisie and its bourgeois governmental formula calling for a government of the "Twelve" fit into the same logic.

But in the midst of all this, the Nicaraguan revolution is continuing its course. The National Guard is tending to falter and break down. No bourgeois alternative seems viable, and every attempt by the regime and the imperialists to gain time only deepens the decay of the state power.

Imperialists' Options for Meeting Challenge of September Offensive

Given the gravity of the situation, American imperialism had very few options. Somoza's fall would precipitate a deepening of the crisis of the state power and would raise the need for completely reconstructing the state apparatus. This would force the imperialists and the bourgeoisie to find a governmental formula to fill the vacuum that the masses would undoubtedly try to fill on their own. Unless the imperialists could find such a formula, it would be impossible to restructure bourgeois rule in Nicaragua.

Theoretically, such a role could be played by a coalition involving a section of the army whose hands were not too bloodstained and which was ready to break with Somoza and gain some credibility in the eyes of the masses by joining with a section of the bourgeois opposition.

The situation within the National Guard itself would seem to favor such a solution. Somoza, for his part, moved very rapidly. On September 4, he had already arrested more than 200 bourgeois oppositionist and trade-union leaders of the FAO. And on August 28, eighty-five officers were arrested on charges of plotting against Somoza.

Shortly before the uprisings, the main figures on the general staff of the Black Berets, a special corps of uniformed assassins trained and led by U.S. and South Vietnamese mercenaries, were mysteriously killed. The central command of this special force included no less than Ivan Alegrette, a semiretired military officer

with an especially bloody history, who was suspected of being implicated in the murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro.

At the time of the FSLN offensive, Somoza's army was conveniently divided into four sections with different commands, hierarchies, barracks, and logistic support. The Third Company and the armored batallion were under the command and supervision of José Somoza. The Escuela Básica de Infantería (EBI—Infantry Basic Training School), with unlimited resources at its disposal, was under the command of Anastasio Somoza Portocarrero, or el Chingüin [the Punk], Tacho Somoza's son, who is also known as Tachito.

The other sections were the already mentioned Black Berets and the regular army. It should be noted that the provincial units of the regular army have at their disposal only small forces and few military resources.

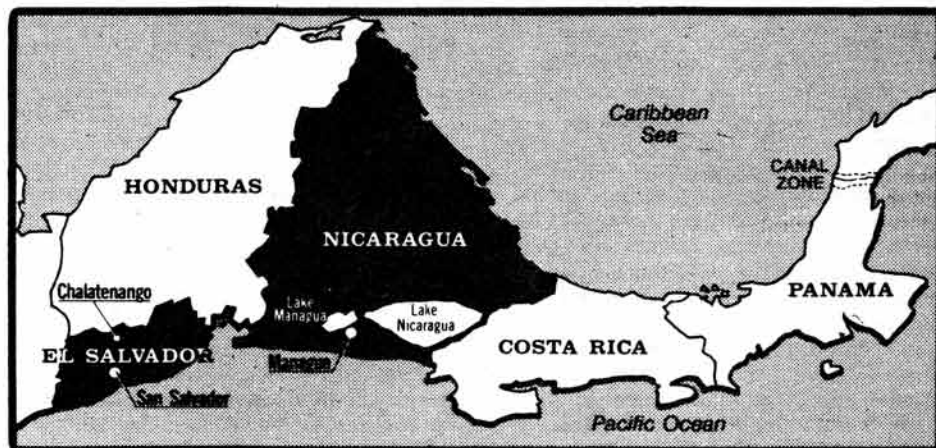
Obviously, as his health improved Somoza did a thorough job of checking up on his corps of officers and on the military cliques.

The arrest and torture of eighty-five officers, along with the assassination of Alegrette and his general staff, were the culmination of a purge. It should be added that in the massacres and murders that marked the recent clashes, Somoza made sure that even those officers normally assigned to internal administrative jobs would get blood on their hands.

As a result of all this, a coalition between military officers with "clean hands" and a section of the opposition became unviable as a solution. The first section of the bourgeois opposition that dared to try such an adventure would be completely repudiated and discredited.

Another alternative open to imperialism was open military intervention and stationing occupation troops in Nicaragua. This threat will continue to hang over the Nicaraguan revolution that is in progress. But this is not an easy alternative to resort to either.

The political costs would be enormous



Christian Science Monitor

and the consequences unforeseeable. Not only would the imperialists face the repudiation and mobilization of the masses in their own country, as happened during the Vietnam War, but an imperialist military intervention no matter under what cover it was carried out would threaten to touch off a general political crisis throughout the Central American region, which is already unstable and highly explosive enough.

Faced with these alternatives, the U.S. imperialists opted for the least cost politically and the least risk. They chose to back Somoza and prop him up, at least for the moment.

The aid that the imperialists extended to Somoza had two clear political and military objectives. One was to inflict the greatest possible damage on the forces of the Sandinista Front. The other was to stage the most extensive massacre possible of the civilian population under the cover of the armed clashes.

The basic goals of this bloodthirsty strategy of terror were to halt the mass upsurge by a slaughter that would break its momentum, and to cripple the Sandinista Front's striking force. All this was simply to gain some time, a few weeks, or perhaps a month's respite, until they could find a more stable solution.

None of these goals, however, was achieved. In all the cities, the forces of the Sandinista Front were able to make their retreat in time and keep their ranks essentially intact. The effect of the massacre was to spur mass indignation. There are no apparent signs of falling spirits or demoralization.

At present the country is experiencing an ebb in the struggles. But this is basically a period in which the masses are catching their breath and it will probably be rather brief.

The events, on the other hand, have left the situation a thousand times more unstable than it was. The destruction of hundreds of factories and businesses is throwing masses of people out of work. The internal market is shrinking, and the Central American market has been disrupted.

There has been a massive and tumultuous flight of currency. On September 2 alone \$30 million was withdrawn from the banking system. But it was only on September 11 that measures were announced to prevent the flight of currency, and on September 12 the president of the Central Bank announced restrictions on transactions in currency. But all these measures barely scratched the surface and were directed against the public in general.

The Somoza regime had to let the bourgeoisie and its own acolytes take their money out of the country because if it had tried to prevent this it would have created a panic that would have accelerated its internal breakdown still more. Moreover, the bombings and the epidemics that followed have seriously disrupted the picking

of the cotton crop, which is the country's major source of foreign exchange. Thousands of homes were destroyed.

The social conditions existing in the country after the Sandinista offensive have created a much more explosive social and political situation. If Somoza and the imperialists sought to gain time by the massacre, what they achieved essentially was to deepen still more the crisis of bourgeois power in Nicaragua.

The Support of the Masses

In every theater, the Sandinista Front's offensive enjoyed the complete sympathy, solidarity, and support of the masses. But this was an atomized support and solidarity; it was not organized. In most cases, it was only passive. The masses did not go into action directly, except in isolated cases. No organizations sprang up spontaneously, even in embryonic form.

There is no evidence of any independent activity by the masses in the context of the military conflict. In Masaya and Estelí, where the Sandinista Front's military actions met with the greatest enthusiasm, the evidence indicates that only a few scattered neighborhood organizations were formed to defend some areas.

The popularity of the Sandinista Front's offensive contrasts sharply with the lack of organized activity by the masses. There are various reasons for this contradiction. In the first place, the context in which the Sandinista offensive took place was one of a lockout. The workers were paid in full and sent home.

Moreover, the timing of the insurrection was arbitrary and was set by the Sandinista Front without taking into consideration the development of the masses' own activity.

The October revolution and the party of Lenin have left us important lessons in this area. The timing of the insurrection is crucial and must be based on the development of general political activity. It is when the independent action of the masses themselves reaches its culmination that the revolutionary party launches the insurrection—that is, once it has assured that the organs of the mass movement themselves have reached the point where they are capable of undertaking a general, systematic, and organized offensive.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinista offensive occurred in the midst of an upsurge of struggles, but before this upsurge had become generalized or even given impetus to the spontaneous formation of independent class organs.

Finally, the type of action that took place in the cities offered little room for active and organized participation by the masses. Commando groups seized houses and concentrated on collecting what arms were available in the cities and in carrying out sniper ambushes against National Guard troops.

In the recent events, the FSLN has

emerged as the focus of political action and the international attention that has been drawn to Nicaragua. No analysis of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua is possible without studying the FSLN and taking a position toward it. It has to be noted, however, that it is rather difficult to consider the FSLN as a homogeneous unit. It is well known that the Sandinista Front is not a close-knit bloc.

The Sandinista Front

Three public factions operate under the banner and the name of the front. The group known as the Terceristas [Third Force] is led mainly by Daniel Ortega, Víctor Tirado, and Humberto Ortega. Normally, this group does not call itself a tendency but claims to represent the entire front. However, recently it has taken the name of the "Insurrectionary Tendency." The other tendencies are the Prolonged People's War Tendency, led mainly by Henry Ruiz and Tomás Borge; and the Proletarian Tendency, whose main leader is Jaime Wheelock.

Although the Proletarian Tendency reflects a certain inclination to break with the bourgeoisie, the programmatic and line differences among the three tendencies are not sufficient to justify placing greater political confidence in any one as against the others.

The Terceristas bear the direct responsibility both for promoting the bourgeois group of the "Twelve" and for the September offensive. The other tendencies, although in a subordinate way and with little enthusiasm, have collaborated actively in this. The Prolonged People's War Tendency quickly came out in support of the formula calling for a government of the "Twelve" that was launched by the Terceristas, while claiming that its support was "critical."

New divisions are no doubt developing in the front as a result of the various evaluations of the September offensive.

For the moment, however, the various factions have managed to reach practical agreements as regards actions. No line has appeared that differs sharply from the strategy being followed and the common assessment of the process under way as bourgeois-democratic in character. On this basis and in view of the general image the Sandinista movement has in the eyes of the masses, it is possible to talk about the Sandinista Front as one.

The Nicaraguan revolution is continuing its course, but given the present relationship of forces, it is impossible to predict whether it will go on finally to victory or defeat. Will the revolutionary process end in a decisive defeat for the mass movement because of errors by the leadership? That is certainly a danger, and the lack of a revolutionary leadership assumes still more tragic dimensions in view of this possibility.

In fact, although it did not represent a

decisive defeat, the September massacre, the biggest bloodbath in Nicaraguan history, was in itself a consequence of errors in political and military leadership. Some of the political factors that put the offensive in the wrong context have been pointed out. The actions of the FSLN were carried out separate from, and to a certain extent to the detriment of, the activity that was brewing in the mass movement.

But even from a strictly military point of view, the offensive was badly planned. The columns that were supposed to play the role of a rear guard had the striking power that was needed in the front lines, and the units in the cities were left virtually without resources. The Sandinista Front failed to observe the basic rule of warfare, which is that resources have to be apportioned in accordance with military objectives.

In view of the front's plan, the bulk of the forces at the disposal of its military apparatus should have been in the cities. The units that fought Somoza's army did so with almost ridiculously small forces. The front's resources were in fact concentrated in theaters along the frontier, and for the most part were utilized only very slightly in action.

The extent of the destruction and slaughter carried out by the National Guard cannot fail to give impetus to extensive political realignment within the front. The Tercerista tendency preserved almost all its cadres. But sharp conflicts have developed in its command centers.

At present, all the general staffs of the FSLN are making a thoroughgoing reevaluation of their operations, and a crisis appears possible as a result of the differences that are emerging. The leading centers in the cities are coming into conflict with the national leadership. In some sectors this has reached the point of questioning this leadership, which is the product of a very complex historical process and has never been subjected to democratic supervision by the ranks.

Lines of cleavage are appearing over the policy to be adopted for the immediate period ahead. These differences center on whether the front should prepare for resuming the military offensive as soon as possible or whether it should organize a retreat, adopting a policy of developing closer links with the masses. A crisis is brewing in the intermediate and top organs of the FSLN. No matter what the outcome of the new debates developing among the leading cadres of the front, its operational capacity is going to suffer temporarily.

The internal situation among the forces organized in the Sandinista movement should make revolutionists still more cautious about giving political preference to one or another element. The pressure of the masses and the influence of the class struggle are also being reflected in these internal ideological struggles. These pressures could not fail to have an impact, but



Koen Wessing/Vrij Nederland

Refugees from National Guard's shelling of Estelí.

they are being reflected in a very distorted way.

We have to note, however, that in this process unfortunately no sector has moved toward dropping the assessment of the revolutionary process under way as bourgeois-democratic in character or toward abandoning the vanguardist strategy.

Sandinism—Political Camp of the Masses

Despite all this, a qualitative change is taking place in the Nicaraguan political situation, owing to the offensive of the Sandinista Front and the massive popularity of the front's actions, to the regime's repression and decomposition, and to the resulting social and economic chaos.

The Sandinista movement is becoming a general camp that the masses identify with in the struggle against the Somoza regime.

The Sandinista Front is still not an organization of the masses. Neither, in reality, was the July 26th Movement in Cuba.

The Sandinista Front is not an organi-

zation of the masses because the masses do not join it in order to organize themselves politically. The structure of the Sandinista Front on the one hand and the unorganized Sandinism of the masses on the other express the contradiction between the profound decomposition of bourgeois power and the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

This crisis is rooted in the organic weakness of the mass movement itself and in the historic abdication by the leaders of the Nicaraguan working-class organizations of their responsibility to provide class-struggle leadership. The rise of the mass movement has not yet found its own organic forms of expression, largely because the trade-union leaders and the Stalinists have abandoned this task. However complex the path, when these forms do arise in the present political situation they will do so in relation to, and within, the Sandinista camp.

The present situation is the combined product of the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Nicaragua, the rapid decay of the Somoza regime, and the rise of the masses, who have not yet formed their own class

organizations. The Sandinista Front has been present in this entire process, monopolizing in practice all opposition to the regime in the political camp of the workers movement.

The crisis of revolutionary leadership is also expressed in the ranks of the Sandinistas themselves—their division into three sectors or political tendencies. The revolution continues to advance nonetheless, and with it the decay and erosion of the bases of support for the bourgeois power structures in Nicaragua.

The absence of adequate leadership takes an unfortunate and tremendously costly toll on the masses. But this does not halt the profound decay of the regime, which is continually generating conditions in which it remains possible to solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

The structures and organized cadres of the Sandinista National Liberation Front are a thousand times narrower than the broad, still inarticulate and formless Sandinism of the Nicaraguan masses. Not even the national leaders of the Sandinista Front, of whatever faction, enjoy anywhere near the same prestige and mass recognition that Fidel Castro had in Cuba, for example. Sandinism is a general attitude of the masses, and the Sandinista Front is the organization that benefits politically from this attitude.

In this situation, regardless of its program, allies, and governmental slogan, the Sandinista Front becomes more and more the broad camp in which the masses will choose to fight to deepen the revolution. After the recent events there are only two camps of battle in Nicaragua—Somoza and the imperialists, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

This does not mean that the only force in the Sandinista camp is the revolution. Quite the contrary: the Sandinistas' program, alliances, and governmental slogans represent serious, perhaps even mortal, dangers to the revolution. The counterrevolution will raise its head and will have to be fought within the Sandinista camp. But it is more and more evident from the recent developments in Nicaragua that the masses are identifying the Sandinista camp as the ground on which they will fight for their demands.

In every individual strike, in every student mobilization, in every demonstration and class confrontation, the masses take up the Sandinista banner to express their most immediate aspirations. Even in confrontations that the Sandinista Front has had no part in whatsoever, the dead are buried wrapped in the FSLN's flag. This is an eloquent symbol of the ground on which the masses understand the dead to have fallen, of the political camp to which they think those who fall fighting for the most elemental demands of their class belong.

This situation determines the attitude of revolutionists in Nicaragua and through-

out the world. Regardless of the leadership and its program, alliances, and governmental slogans, we revolutionists must place ourselves in a decisive and unconditional way in the camp of the Sandinista Front. We must support it against Somozaism and imperialism, as well as against the bourgeoisie that the front is trying to get close to. We oppose the Sandinista Front's alliances and program; we are struggling for a workers and peasants government and socialism. But we do so within the camp that the masses consider their own.

To hold any other attitude would mean ignoring the real alignment of political forces in Nicaragua. We would risk isolating ourselves from the aspirations and sentiments of the Nicaraguan masses, thereby preventing ourselves from struggling in the camp of the masses for the only solutions to the overall crisis of society—socialist solutions.

The Governmental Question

It has been discussed whether the change in the situation now has not put on the agenda the governmental slogan of "all power to the Sandinista Front without any representatives of the bourgeoisie."

The governmental slogans that revolutionists raise, when referring to organizations in which they do not place political confidence, are determined by two factors. One is the role that these organizations play within the political regroupment of the working class. The other is the responsibilities they have toward the masses as a result of the fact that power is within their grasp.

None of these circumstances apply to the Sandinista Front. Though it is the focus of much sympathy and solidarity, the front is not yet the main pole around which the masses are organizing. Nor can the question of power and of the government be resolved as yet by the Sandinistas making correct or incorrect decisions. However, the decisive point is that a concrete governmental slogan cannot get ahead of the organized, independent movement of the masses.

The slogan of a workers and peasants government is a generally correct propaganda formula that expresses the class character of the process under way. Obviously, we need to give it more of a concrete content. But it makes no sense whatever to try to determine what concrete expression the masses will give to the general slogan that reflects their striving for power in advance of any organized initiatives by them.

The Tercerista current in the Sandinista Front is the only one that has a concrete governmental slogan, and that slogan is bourgeois.

The formula for a government of the "Twelve" put forward by the Terceristas has a great political importance. It conceals the class and revolutionary character

of the current process. It is having a detrimental effect on the revolutionary process right now; the "Twelve" do not actually have to come to power for this to happen. It means that the political alternative Sandinism offers the masses—who identify it with their interests and aspirations—is a bourgeois governmental formula that respects capitalist property relations.

The "Twelve" are even more than this. They are a direct link to the rest of the bourgeois opposition, to imperialism, and to the Latin American ruling classes. They are the pivot for all the maneuvers that are going to represent a deadly threat to any revolutionary wing of the Sandinista Front that emerges.

What are the chances that the bourgeoisie and imperialism will accept the bridge that is being offered to them in the form of a government of the "Twelve"? It is not the "Twelve" that are the determining factor, but rather what political and military force is going to stand behind them directing the state's use of violence and thereby holding state power.

Imperialism is seeking to halt the revolutionary dynamic contained in the action of the masses. A government of the "Twelve" could only be a last-ditch effort to put a brake on the course of the revolution. The "Twelve" do not represent any real organized political force; their entire political weight comes from the fact that the Sandinistas have chosen them as their representatives. The endorsement of the Sandinista Front is their only strength.

For the Sandinistas, the bourgeois "Twelve" are proof of its "good will," of its noncommunist and nonrevolutionary intentions. With their political weight as representatives of the Sandinista Front, the "Twelve" are just another component in the array of bourgeois forces within the Broad Opposition Front. As such, they merely serve as a bridge between the Sandinistas and the bourgeois opposition as a whole.

The Sandinista Front's formula of a government of the "Twelve" would only be viable in the event of a total collapse of the National Guard. Even in that case, however, it would serve only to enable the Sandinistas to evade responsibility that might fall on them to establish a government based on the workers. Meanwhile, the "Twelve" are dutifully playing the role that has been assigned to them—distorting the socialist character of the revolution under way in the eyes of the masses.

If Somoza did not fall, it was not because of his own strength, but because he is still an irreplaceable tool, given the weakness of the power structures in Nicaragua. This means that even greater efforts will be necessary to topple him.

The breathing spell imperialism hoped to gain from the Nicaraguan Black September has become the heavy, ominous kind of lull that precedes great storms.

Formulas for compromise and conciliation, intervention by the church or by the OAS, proposals for change and promises of action—these are all ineffective smoke-screens. The crisis of the regime is continuing to intensify and deepen. In all probability, imperialism will be forced to replace it before long.

It is possible, however, that Somoza will not be docile and reasonable enough to go along with the moves and the whims of imperialism. It is even likely that he will not be, given the monstrous size of the economic empire he has to defend for himself and for his stooges as well.

So to get rid of Somoza, the imperialists may have to assassinate him, his son, his brother, his uncle, his entire family, and his main allies. They already did this to the entire family of former South Vietnamese dictator Diem when they thought it was necessary.

However, none of the foregoing changes the terms of the problem in Nicaragua, unless they decide to occupy it militarily, and thus, in the long run, ignite a more dangerous blaze than the one they are trying to snuff out. That is what happened to them in Vietnam.

Death Agony of the Dictatorship and the Tasks of Revolutionists

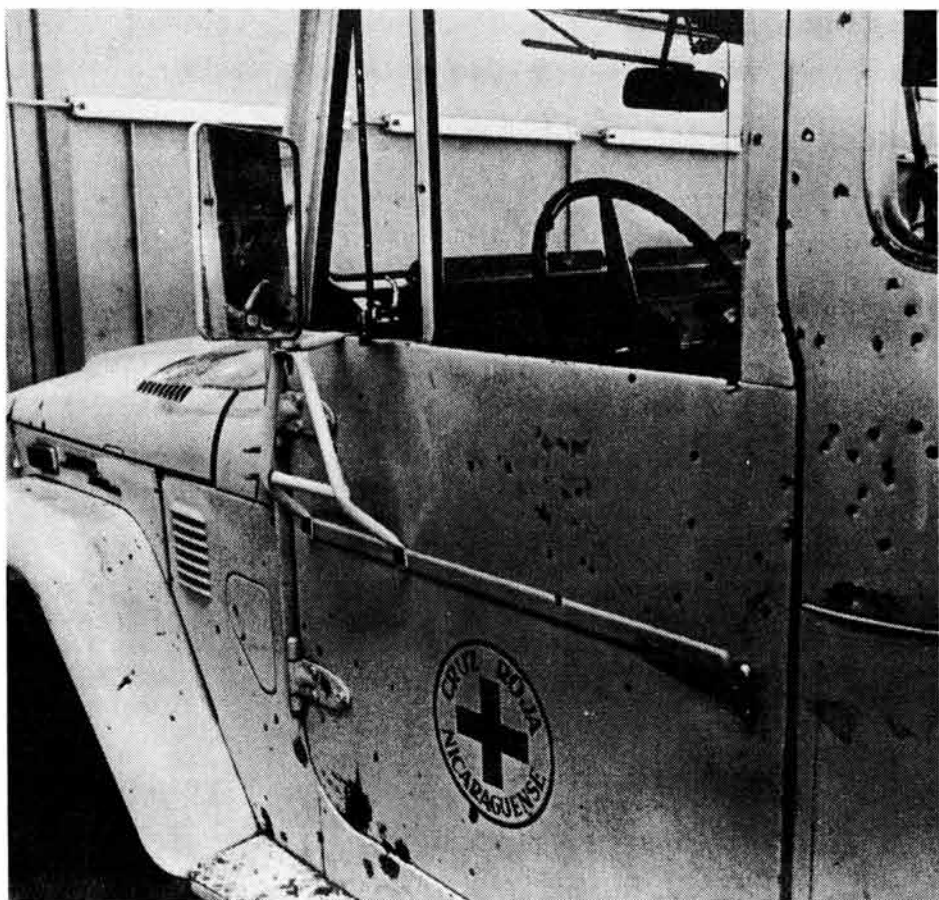
It is up to revolutionary socialists to make all the efforts necessary to remove the obstacles blocking the mass struggle against the Somoza regime from assuming a clear class character.

To do this, it is necessary to struggle for the dissolution of the National Guard and the development of people's militias to defend the revolution against military attacks by imperialism. It is necessary to build the movement for a popularly elected, sovereign constituent assembly, in opposition to all the formulas for provisional governments worked out behind the backs of the masses, formulas designed to get rid of Somoza without even any formal bow to the will of the people.

The government that replaces Somoza must be a workers and peasants government, representing solely the interests of the oppressed. Only a government of this type will expropriate the landowners, distribute land to the peasants, and establish a monopoly on banking and foreign trade. Only such a government will expropriate not only Somoza's holdings, but also those of Alfredo Pellas and the Bank of America corporation, holdings of the financiers tied to the Julio Martinez consortium, Banic, and the gold mines in imperialist hands, such as the Bonanza and Siuna.

Only in this way will it be possible to rebuild over the ruins left behind by the dictatorship, provide housing and jobs for the entire population, and make a serious attempt to satisfy the social aspirations that are the moving force behind the anti-Somoza struggle.

None of the public factions of the Sandi-



Koen Wessing/Vrij Nederland

Red Cross ambulance in Estelí riddled with bullets by National Guard.

nista Front defends these demands. However, in the struggle against Somoza, there is a general tendency among the masses to identify with the Sandinistas. The masses are taking part in the struggle against the regime, even if it is still in an uncoordinated way. We also take part in this struggle, without ever ceasing to fight for our own program and to denounce the bourgeois forces that have gone along with the struggle, offering themselves as allies. We maintain this attitude particularly toward the Tercerista current, which has the largest number of forces and resources.

While clearly taking the side of the Sandinista Front in the civil war, whose first battle took a toll of 10,000 persons murdered by the National Guard, revolutionists base their strategy and political action on the independent action and organization of the masses, linking the anti-Somoza struggle to broader social demands that are felt by all the oppressed layers of the population.

Despite the apparent calm, forces are at work beneath the surface, preparing the way for the coming explosions of the Nicaraguan revolution. The Terceristas of the Sandinista Front, seeking to iron out the differences that emerged as a result of the offensive, are preparing for new spectacular actions along the same lines.

The masses are in a desperate situation and find themselves facing an increasingly weak and decaying regime. Imperialism is looking for and trying to impose alternatives without any guarantee of being able to find one in time. Somoza, for his part, is clinging to power, and carrying out a purge within the National Guard that cannot fail to cause fissures. The bourgeois opposition is at an impasse. There is no way for it to negotiate with the regime without losing prestige. At the same time, it is incapable of taking action against the regime without precipitating a movement that it would be incapable of controlling.

The bourgeois opposition in the FAO is seeking a way to acquire its own military apparatus. In doing so, it creates strong centrifugal pressures within the Sandinista Front, at the same time that the more radical sectors of the front are rapidly gaining an awareness of the dangers. Imperialism is probing for an opening wherever it can find one, sparing no means or resources, and not shrinking from any criminal methods.

In spite of the slaughter during the dark days of September, the insufficient organization of the masses, and the crisis of revolutionary leadership, the Nicaraguan revolution is continuing its course.

September 24, 1978

Manley's 'Socialist Time Now' a Cruel Hoax

By Jon Britton

In August, after a fourteen-week strike, workers at the Gore Brothers' tile factory in Jamaica won a 30% wage increase and substantial fringe benefits, including work uniforms, a lunch allowance, twelve weeks' maternity leave with full pay, and an insurance scheme.

While tile manufacturing is not one of Jamaica's major industries, the settlement was impressive in view of the near-slave conditions that had prevailed at this plant prior to the strike.

The victory was especially noteworthy in that the wage increase decisively broke through a 15% ceiling that had been laid down by Prime Minister Michael Manley at the behest of the United States-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The tile workers have not been the only ones to resist Manley's austerity drive. This year has also seen strikes by teachers, bank clerks, sugar workers, bus drivers, cement workers, dockers, and tobacco workers.

The IMF demanded new belt-tightening measures in return for a US\$244 million loan, agreed to in May. These included a 30% devaluation of the Jamaican dollar (on top of a similar devaluation last year); new taxes on such items as gasoline, cigarettes, and alcohol; rigid limits on public expenditures; cuts in public subsidies; hikes in bus fares of 40%-50%; and wage controls.

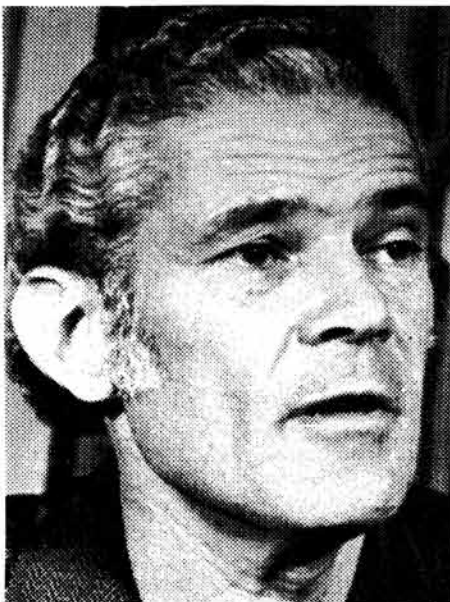
As a Finance Ministry official explained it, the strategy of Manley and the IMF was to use a "jolt of inflation to help dampen workers' buying power and bring consumption into line with production."

Consumption was indeed slashed as prices rose sharply for almost everything, including basic necessities. With workers deprived of catch-up pay increases, retail sales fell sharply, in some cases by as much as 40%, according to Art Pine writing in the July 24 *Washington Post*.

Pine described the cruel dilemma facing Jason R., a forty-eight-year-old worker:

The gaunt father of six earns \$40 a week at his full-time job. But he must spend \$30 for food alone, \$10 a week for rent, \$5 for transportation and \$10 for lunches for his school-age youngsters. For now, Jason R. is eking out a living by dipping into a small nest egg the family accrued when his wife worked as a domestic in the United States a few years ago. But in two weeks, that money will be gone. . . .

Pine pointed out that many Jamaican workers still earn the national minimum of \$24 a week. Moreover, the squeeze is so bad



Christian Science Monitor

MANLEY: Prescribes "jolt of inflation."

that it is even hitting the middle class, many of whom are simply giving up and emigrating to Miami.

Manley signed an agreement with the IMF last year for a loan of US\$74 million. But by December, despite severe austerity measures, the government had failed to meet some of the IMF's requirements and the credit was withdrawn. Almost immediately, Manley, hat in hand, began begging the IMF for an even bigger handout.

Last February, an IMF "field team" flew to Jamaica to begin negotiations, but—with the previous year's performance in mind—insisted on a much tougher set of conditions. The government was forced even before the talks began to agree to an additional currency devaluation of 15%.

Manley's appeals for IMF "aid" came in the context of a disastrous economic situation in this "island paradise" a hundred or so miles south of Cuba. Jamaica, which is roughly the size of Puerto Rico, may well be the only country in the world whose Gross Domestic Product *declined* every year since 1972.

Even before this year's stepped-up austerity drive, living conditions for the mass of Jamaicans were abominable. At the end of 1976 unemployment exceeded 25%, and inflation from 1976 through the first quarter of this year averaged more than 10% annually.

In 1970 in central Kingston one survey revealed that only 14% of all dwellings had water piped within the building; 80% of all households shared toilet facilities with others; and 43% of all dwellings had one room only.

More than 80% of the population is of African descent, and inequality based on race is extreme. In 1974 the top 5% of income earners (mostly whites) received the same proportion of all individual income as the bottom 60%.

Declining agricultural employment opportunities have resulted in large-scale migration into the cities from rural areas, further swelling the ranks of the urban unemployed.

In 1973 more than half of the population of Jamaica was nineteen years old or younger. As a result of poverty, hopelessness, and frustration, many young people have turned to crime.

Michael Manley first led his People's National Party (PNP) to power in 1972. Founded by the prime minister's father, Norman Manley, in 1938, the PNP originally espoused a form of British Fabian socialism, calling for a cautious, evolutionary approach to economic development, guided by "Christian inspiration."

Following his election, Manley's initial response to Jamaica's pressing problems was to swing to the left. By 1974, the government had acquired several sugar plantations, Radio Jamaica, the island's electric company, and a larger shareholding in imperialist-owned bauxite and alumina operations. The PNP began to announce publicly that the days of capitalism were numbered.

Manley and the PNP maintained this left face through the December 1976 election, in which the PNP decisively defeated the rival, procapitalist Jamaican Labor Party (JLP).

Thus, in the months preceding the election, the PNP made an effort to attract the support of a number of popular militants. It also pushed to the fore leaders, such as Donald K. Duncan, who were widely known as left-wingers.

Duncan subsequently became head of the new Ministry of National Mobilization, with responsibility for supervising the government's "People's Programs" and the "democratization" of education. Upon assuming his post, Duncan pressed for adoption of some aspects of Cuban education that combined academic studies and practical work experience.

Prior to the election, Manley had also become known for his leftist proclamations on foreign policy. He gave verbal support to African liberation movements such as the MPLA* in Angola, championed the

*MPLA—Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola).

cause of the "Third World" with his support for a "new international economic order," and established friendly relations with Cuba and the Soviet bloc.

For awhile in 1976 it looked as if Manley might suffer the same fate as Chile's Salvador Allende. Economic chaos threatened as businessmen sent their money abroad, and gang warfare broke out between rival PNP and JLP supporters in which at least 300 persons died. The American CIA was widely suspected of instigating the violence.

In June, six months before the election, Manley declared a state of emergency, which wasn't lifted until the following year. In November all marches and public meetings were banned. His response to the "crime problem" was to use harsh repressive measures under the Gun Court legislation of 1974.

Under this law, police were given powers to arrest and detain anyone suspected of possessing or using firearms. Detainees, most of whom were under twenty-one years of age, were taken to a barbed-wire-enclosed compound in the poor area of West Kingston, tried there, and given sentences that could be unlimited in length.

Despite these reactionary measures, Manley, with his radical rhetoric and slogan of "Socialist Time Now," was able to convince a majority of voters that he and his party were the best hope for progressive social change.

These hopes were soon to be dashed, however. By the time Manley was returned to office, the country was in a truly desperate situation. Unemployment and the cost of living were soaring. Some \$300 million [US\$273 million] in capital had been sent out of the country, and foreign reserves were exhausted. Imports were in danger of being cut off owing to a lack of funds to pay for them.

Instead of taking the Cuban road and mobilizing the masses for a socialist revolution, Manley moved to the right, agreeing to the harsh belt-tightening demanded by the international bankers in return for loans.

Financial aid was obtained from the IMF, the United States, Great Britain, and Norway. Devaluation of the currency and the other austerity measures followed. Soon Duncan and other left-wingers were purged from the PNP.

The workers of Jamaica have been handicapped in resisting Manley's austerity drive because the biggest unions are tied either to the PNP or to the JLP. Thus, in the case of the Gore workers, the union, although it called the strike, supported it only half-heartedly.

Nevertheless, the victory of these workers shows that the obstacle of a timid, class-collaborationist leadership can be overcome. Undoubtedly more workers will be following the Gore workers' example in the months to come. □

Stalinism in India

A Long Record of Betrayals

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—All the various strains of Indian Stalinism—whether they are pro-Moscow or pro-Peking, whether they are "neutral" like the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or whether they are splinters from the Naxalite¹ movement—preach and practice class collaboration with the Indian propertied interests.

A consistent theoretical application of class collaboration leads them to project various forms of popular frontism as the only national alternative to the crisis-ridden bourgeois regime. The formation of popular-front type governments in states like West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura is merely a stepping-stone toward the realization of this policy countrywide.

Class collaboration has been practiced by Indian Stalinism for several decades. It has been very effective in allowing the Indian bourgeoisie to retain the class initiative, despite the militant struggles of the toiling masses. It inhibits the growth of independent proletarian politics and disorients and demobilizes the working class.

In the most recent period, the pernicious influence of Stalinism was nowhere more glaringly manifest than on questions over the nature of democracy and Indira Gandhi's state of emergency, and over how best to defend democratic and trade-union rights. The Stalinist parties raised the question of democracy in an abstract way, without defining its class content or exposing the real nature of bourgeois democracy. They did not pose the perspective of socialist democracy, and instead asked the proletariat to rally behind this or that bourgeois political formation.

This class collaboration impedes the Indian working-class movement, both on an organizational and theoretical level.

Any strategy aimed at developing an independent revolutionary Marxist orientation that does not grasp correctly the roots and ramifications of the Stalinist influence on working-class politics will have big difficulties in coming to grips with the major political issues that arise.

Origins of Indian Communism

The initial nucleus of the Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged in the 1920s. It established roots in the working class through the militant strike actions of

industrial workers under its leadership.

These militants, however, soon came under the influence of Stalinism, the ideology of the Soviet bureaucracy, which triumphed over the genuine Marxist leadership of the Bolshevik Party, politically expropriated the Soviet proletariat, and usurped the leadership of the Third International.

The CPI evolved and pursued policies that were derived, not from the needs of the Indian class struggle, but from the diplomatic exigencies of the Soviet bureaucracy. Its task was largely limited to exerting pressure on the Indian bourgeoisie or the British colonialists to maintain friendly relations with Moscow.

For example, in the wake of the collapse of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance during the Second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the CPI followed Moscow's lead in adopting an ultraleft adventurist line of opposing the Indian national liberation struggle, which was led by the Indian bourgeoisie. The correct policy would have been to participate in the anti-imperialist movement on the basis of an independent proletarian program and methods of struggle, in order to win the leadership of the movement away from the bourgeoisie. The CPI's sectarian mistake discredited it and isolated it from the mainstream of the struggle.

After Hitler's triumph in Germany, when Stalin began to woo the so-called democratic capitalist powers in the name of building an "antifascist people's front," the CPI started courting the nationalist leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi. It advocated a policy of mass entry into Gandhi's Congress Party, which it now characterized as a "national front" of the Indian people, discarding its earlier characterization of the Congress as a capitalist party.

On the outbreak of the Second World War, the CPI initially condemned it as an imperialist war. But after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the CPI executed an unabashed about-face. The imperialist war was suddenly converted into a "people's war." As a result, the CPI became the most ardent supporter of British imperialism's war efforts. Hence during the 1942 "Quit India" movement against British imperialism launched by the Congress, the CPI, instead of exploiting the movement's revolutionary potential, wrecked the struggles of the workers and peasants.

In the postwar period, the CPI followed a class-collaborationist line in relation to the

1. "Naxalite" is a term generally applied to members or supporters of the Maoist Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).—IP/I

Indian bourgeoisie, in pursuance of the global Stalinist strategy of appeasing world capitalism. It supported the 1947 deal between British imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie—both its Hindu and Muslim wings—that resulted in the partition of India and Pakistan on religious lines.

The “cold war” offensive of imperialism against the Soviet Union briefly led the CPI to adopt an ultraleftist and adventurist approach, codified in the Ranadive Thesis of 1948, of all-out “insurrectionary” war against the Indian bourgeois state. However, after 1952, the CPI again pursued a policy of collaboration with the Indian bourgeoisie.

Stalinism and the Indian State

The attainment of India’s independence on August 15, 1947, did not mark a social revolution. Private property in the means of production was retained. The social structure was left untouched. It was simply a transfer of political power at the governmental and state level, from the alien bourgeois class to the native bourgeois class.

The army, state bureaucracy, police, judiciary, and executive, evolved by British imperialism for subjugating the Indian population, were taken over by the Indian bourgeoisie and kept more or less intact. They were sanctified under the bourgeois constitution, adopted on January 26, 1950.

In 1947, both feudal and capitalist modes of production coexisted in India. In some regions, even prefeudal relations survived. But the capitalist mode was advancing, and since then it has become dominant. The bourgeois state in India has performed a crucial role in this whole process of consolidation of the capitalist mode of production.

In their definitions of the Indian state, the Stalinists have ignored this basic social reality.

According to the CPI, “The State in India is the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole, in which the big bourgeoisie hold powerful influences.” The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]), which emerged from a split in the CPI in 1964, views the state as that of the “monopoly” bourgeoisie, which compromises with imperialism and rules in alliance with the big landlords. The Maoist Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) calls the state semicolonial and semifeudal, ruled by the comprador-bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords, in which the principal contradiction is between feudalism and the masses.²

Each of these Stalinist parties declare their opposition to a certain wing of the

bourgeoisie—“big,” “monopoly,” or “comprador-bureaucratic”—while supporting other bourgeois strata. Thus their characterizations of the Indian state are used to justify their respective class-collaborationist policies.

They each describe their “progressive” wings of the bourgeoisie as anti-imperialist and antifeudalist. But they do so in an abstract and schematic manner. They ignore the close ties between the bourgeoisie and the landlords and the bourgeoisie’s vacillations and hesitations in its dealings with imperialism. Moreover, the Indian capitalist economy is an integral part of the decaying world imperialist system and is therefore subject to inherent limitations and constraints.

Class Collaboration in Practice

The CPI(M)’s Left Front government in West Bengal has just completed its first year in office.

In an exclusive interview in the June 19 *Economic Times*, CPI(M) leader Jyoti Basu, who is chief minister of West Bengal, stated that the people of India would soon realize that a Left Front government on the national level was the only option open to them.

Basu was specifically asked whether he thought the Indian revolution would be peaceful or violent. He replied that the CPI(M) aimed at a basic transformation of Indian society through peaceful means, but that it depended on the bourgeoisie’s response. He also took great pains to explain that the CPI(M) was not attempting at the moment to introduce socialism or communism.

In a report in the June 30 *Times of India*, Sivasdas Banerjee commented, “The Left Front has been extremely cautious in handling problems pertaining to industrial employers, almost risking its radical leftist image. The government, for example, has not uttered a word about renewing the wage agreements—expired long ago—in the jute and engineering industry so far in spite of trade union pressures.”

Why a 3-cent Box of Cereal Costs 64 Cents

Dollars & Sense, a monthly bulletin published by radical economists in the United States, offers in its September issue the following object lesson on the glories of capitalism:

“Take a typical box of cereal, whose average price these days is about 64¢. The actual cereal costs a manufacturer about 3¢ to make. The cardboard carton and its handling however, costs a lot more. Five and a half cents goes to making the box, three and a half cents fills it, two cents ships it and another penny is pitched in to

A day earlier, Banerjee reported that the CPI(M)’s appeal to workers and students has, if anything, declined over the years.

The concept of a Left or Democratic Front on a national level, as now put into vogue by the Indian Stalinists, is silent about the class composition of such a regime.

The whole idea of such a national popular-front alternative to the crisis-ridden bourgeois regime seriously miseducates the working class regarding the real class nature of the bourgeois state and of bourgeois democracy in India. It dulls the workers’ senses toward the real dangers posed by the state.

Class collaboration also miseducates the masses into thinking that the uncompleted tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, such as agrarian reform, can be carried through by an alliance of various classes, without effecting a socialist revolution.

Class collaboration has had disastrous effects in the past and continues to do so. It seriously affects the policies of the trade unions under the influence of the CPI and CPI(M). When the CPI’s former ally, Indira Gandhi, imposed a state of emergency in 1975, the working-class movement under the CPI’s influence failed to respond, since it was politically tied to Gandhi’s wagon. To a lesser extent, the CPI(M)’s support to the ruling Janata Party now has a similar effect on the unions under its sway.

Objectively, this helps the bourgeoisie keep militant trade unionism within the limits of the bourgeois political game. It hampers the politization of active trade unionists and prevents them from transcending the bounds of economism. Because of their decisive hold over the organized working class movement, the policies of the CPI and CPI(M) sap the strength of the workers movement and greatly weaken its political effectiveness.

In a nutshell, class collaboration as preached and practiced by Indian Stalinism is one of the most pernicious political obstacles facing India’s toiling masses. □

store it in a warehouse—so the breakfast box of goodies leaves the factory costing 15¢.

“Most food processors mark up every processed food item 3 times, so the 15¢ box of cereal heads for the supermarket carrying a price tag of 45¢. And supermarkets mark up too. Their average heist in price on a box of cereal ranges from 15 to 30 cents, which inflates the markup price of the box of cereal to between 60 and 75 cents. Or a grand markup total of about 210%.”

2. See A.R. Desai (ed.), *A Positive Programme for Indian Revolution*, C.G. Shah Memorial Trust Publication 2 (Bombay: 1974).

'Socialist Women's Council' Founded in Tokyo

By Mutsugoro Kawasaki

TOKYO—More than seventy delegates and observers attended the national founding conference of the Socialist Women's Council on August 26, 1978. Women came from all over the country to discuss the situation of women in Japan and the future activities of the council.

The founding of the Socialist Women's Council marked the culmination of seven years of work by the staff and supporters of *Fujin Tsushin* (Women's Correspondence). This monthly magazine has been published by women members of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL—Japanese section of the Fourth International). Its readership consists primarily of activists in the women's movement, many of whom have come out of the Japan Communist Youth (the youth organization of the JRCL).

The newly elected officers of the Socialist Women's Council addressed a rally the day after the conference. Other speakers included representatives of the JRCL, the JCY, the Buraku Liberation League,* and peasants from the farming community of Sanrizuka, which faces destruction at the hands of the Japanese government to make way for the completion of the new Tokyo International Airport.

Overseas greetings were received and read from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Jean Tussey, a representative of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, spoke on the struggle for women's rights in the United States, in particular the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. constitution.

Although many members of the Socialist Women's Council are sympathizers of the Fourth International, the organization is an autonomous and independent group. It seeks to involve women of all political persuasions in its activities. The council's organizational structure provides full democratic rights to all members, while ensuring that majority decisions are implemented with the weight of the entire organization.

The council will take over publication of *Fujin Tsushin*, using the magazine to organize an independent mass movement around current women's struggles.

According to a spokeswoman, the council holds that the oppression of women is

rooted in class society and the private property system and can be eliminated only through the overthrow of capitalism. Since this oppression is thousands of years old, a strictly independent women's movement is necessary to take up and successfully confront the issues facing women today.

Such an attitude is in marked contrast to that of the National Mothers Congress, which is controlled by the Japan Communist Party (JCP) and until now has been the main women's organization in Japan. This group was once a fairly progressive force, organizing around the slogan, "Against War, for Democracy." Nowadays, however, it has degenerated to such a point that it is totally inactive on women's questions and devotes most of its efforts to finding ways for women to get their children into the more prestigious schools and universities.

The recent activities of *Fujin Tsushin* supporters, on the other hand, have had a marked success in drawing many previously inactive women into a conscious struggle for their rights as women and as workers. In addition to supporting the Sanrizuka anti-airport struggle, *Fujin Tsushin* has played an important role in the occupation of the Petri Camera factory. A work-in is taking place there to keep the plant open and protect the jobs of the workers. This company employs about 200 workers and was deliberately driven into bankruptcy by its owners after the work force won a long fight for an independent trade union. Unlike the situation at nearly all other workplaces in Japan, the part-time women workers at the Petri plant are unionized. These women make up one-third of the work force and have played an important role in the struggle.

Fujin Tsushin has also lent support to the fight against nuclear power plants, particularly the one at Onagawa. Militant fishermen and residents there are totally opposed to construction of such a facility and have mounted a fierce fight against the government with the help of various other groups. *Fujin Tsushin* is also supporting a struggle against a new cargo-train line through Yokohama, southwest of Tokyo, which threatens a number of residents with eviction and many more with constant noise and vibrations.

Another important solidarity campaign is being waged in support of the women workers in the Tong Il cotton-spinning plant in South Korea. The women there have managed to transform the company-controlled union into an independent one

truly representing their interests. This has incurred the wrath not only of the bosses and the government but also of the union bureaucrats, who have all joined forces to destroy the new union. International support is urgently needed for these women.

In Japan, the most acute attacks on women at the present time are directed against working women who have children. Since any form of child care—let alone free nurseries—is very hard to obtain, many women who want to work are prevented from doing so. And as the capitalist crisis squeezes profits, women are the first to be put out of work. It has been estimated that some 20 million women had jobs during the boom years of the 1960s and the early 1970s, but many of these women are now unemployed. It is difficult to estimate the exact figure, as female unemployment is masked in the official statistics. Thus a key demand of the Socialist Women's Council is for the right to employment. An indispensable step toward realizing this demand is adequate child-care and education facilities.

The Socialist Women's Council is also protesting the discrimination that places women in the most boring, demeaning, and lowest-paying jobs.

Women in Japan today also face a direct ideological attack on their status in society. Currently out in front in the race to head off the rising consciousness of women is the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. The LDP has worked out a "Social Participation Program" to "give women a more equal place in society and encourage them to take part in social activities." This program is enthusiastically supported by the Socialist and Communist parties. In reality, it is nothing more than a glorified volunteer program that would put women into "community work," that is, looking after the aged and sick and similar tasks in other areas where the local authorities are cutting back spending.

The Socialist Women's Council will be posing an alternative for women who want to take a more active part in society. By organizing women in solidarity with struggles, particularly the women's struggles taking place all over Japan and Asia, they will be showing the way forward to the day when women have a completely equal place in society. □

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* The main organization fighting for the rights of the Buraku people, an oppressed minority in Japan. See *Intercontinental Press*, December 6, 1976, p. 1754.

The Deepening Conflict Between Peking and Hanoi

By Pierre Rousset

The Sino-Indochinese conflict emerged into the open just nine months ago when Cambodia's central leader made a dramatic denunciation in Peking of Vietnam's "invasion" of his country. Since that time it has gotten sharper and sharper. War has become a permanent feature on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, while on Vietnam's northeastern frontier there are increasingly frequent clashes, some resulting in deaths.

In May 1978 Peking began a great hue and cry in defense of the Hoas (the Chinese in Vietnam), who had been hit hard by the measures taken in March against large-scale capitalist commerce. Chinese aid to Vietnam was cut off, political relations between the two countries deteriorated to an unprecedented low, and a new wave of refugees brought grief to a divided Indochina, as tens of thousands of Hoas returned to China.

The statements issuing from the various capitals became frantic. Phnompenh declared that in May it had uncovered a new "coup" plot, backed by Hanoi. Pro-Peking newspapers in Hong Kong openly speculated about the possibility of war. *Wen Wei Pao*, for example, remarked that "the possibility of its [Vietnam's] launching a partial invasion of China, relying on Soviet power, still exists." (Cited in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of July 14.)

Hanoi ordered an unprecedented military mobilization of the population and used the September 2 independence celebrations to launch slogans calling for a "resolute struggle to achieve victory in the war on the southeastern frontier" with Cambodia, and for "readiness to fight and defeat a major war of aggression" by the Chinese.

There is no doubt that the "Hoa problem" between China and Vietnam is real, since the two countries have drastically different interpretations of the written and oral agreements made in the past concerning the legal status of Chinese in Vietnam. But the vicious turn relations in the region have taken cannot be explained simply by reference to this legal question—any more than the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict can be reduced to the problem of defining the border.

Nor can the conflicts be explained simply on the basis of the traditional national hostilities that have marred relations between Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cambodians through the ages. The "Hoa problem" and the border disputes are not

so serious that they could not be resolved through negotiations. After several decades of common struggle against imperialism, it should have been possible to avoid this rebirth of narrow nationalism.

Regional Impact of Sino-Soviet Conflict

The crisis in relations between China and Indochina shows first of all how the Sino-Soviet conflict has become a central factor in Southeast Asian politics over the last few years. According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of July 7, it is commonly held in Peking that the question of the Hoas in Vietnam became explosive only because the Chinese leadership was convinced there was a "Soviet conspiracy" behind the trouble.

Hanoi made a good point when it contrasted Peking's silence on the fate of the Chinese in Cambodia to the official outrage expressed when blows were dealt to the large-scale commercial capitalists of Chinese origin in the Cholon district of Ho Chi Minh City. The abolition of capitalist trade was not an act of racial discrimination but rather a measure necessary to safeguard the revolution. This was confirmed by the measures taken in April to curtail small-scale private trade and to move toward socialization of agriculture in south Vietnam. Both the latter measures directly affected the native Vietnamese population.

Hua Kuo-feng's trip to Romania and Yugoslavia, Peking's support for French military intervention in Zaïre (described as an example of unity between "the second and third worlds"), the dispatching of Chinese military instructors to help the Mobutu regime, the scandalous support Hua Kuo-feng extended to the bloody dictatorship in Iran while the shah was being challenged by unprecedented mass mobilizations—all this is further proof, if any is needed, that the struggle against the "social-imperialist" danger outweighs everything else for Peking.

Now the Peking leadership has started describing Southeast Asia as one of the hot spots of the Sino-Soviet conflict. They complain because the Soviet bank Novotny is active in the area. When they call for protecting the coastal straits from a strengthened Soviet fleet in the Pacific, they are obviously calling for the United States to maintain and even to build up its military strength in the region. Peking hails the consolidation of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as an "ascending force." It extols the

strengthening of ties between the dictatorial regimes of this thoroughly reactionary bloc and Japanese imperialism.

This is the context in which Peking accuses Hanoi of making Vietnam into "an Asian Cuba," and warns that the new physical threat in the southeast while Soviet armies are massed on the northern frontier, is a move toward encirclement of China. More specifically, Peking accuses Hanoi of turning over the old U.S. naval base at Camranh Bay to Soviet warships—something extremely unlikely given the lack of confirmation by Western intelligence services.

Peking's attitude is important. It signifies that the Sino-Vietnamese conflict is not going to be resolved in a lasting way unless there is a profound change in the foreign policy of the Chinese leadership. The Soviet leadership bears most of the historic responsibility for the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split, and it continues to play an actively counterrevolutionary role in world politics. But this does not lessen the current responsibility of the Chinese leadership. Its decision to cut off aid to Vietnam, just as Moscow cut off aid to China twenty-five years ago, dealt a harsh blow to a revolution in difficulty. Similarly, Peking has not balked at frequently supporting foreign policy efforts of Washington in the interests of fighting against the "main enemy," namely "social imperialism."

The Sino-Vietnamese Conflict

The political conflict between the Vietnamese and Chinese regimes is a long-term factor in Southeast Asian politics, and even world politics. This was shown at the recent conference of "non-aligned" nations in Belgrade, where supporters and opponents of the struggle against Soviet "hegemonism" squared off against one another.

And the Sino-Soviet split is not the only reason for trouble between China and Vietnam, which gives us even more reason to believe the Sino-Vietnamese conflict will be around for a while. As tensions mount in the area we are getting a clearer picture of how relations between the two countries developed during the second Indochinese war.

We should explore why the Chinese CP has allowed relations with Hanoi to deteriorate. By its intransigence Peking has pushed the Vietnamese leadership more and more into the arms of the Soviets,

when Hanoi's evolution in that direction was not at all predetermined. In the mid-1950s, for example, Hanoi was ideologically much closer to Peking than to Moscow, and the Vietnamese leadership showed on more than one occasion that it could take political steps that went counter to the pressures being exerted by the Soviet Union. The most notable example was in 1959 and 1960 when Hanoi decided to renew the armed struggle in South Vietnam.

Peking also opposed the launching of armed struggle at the time, even though the logic of the Sino-Soviet split would seem to indicate that they should have supported the Vietnamese CP. Peking's position in those days was to advocate the renewal of national liberation movements and to support anti-imperialist movements around the world.

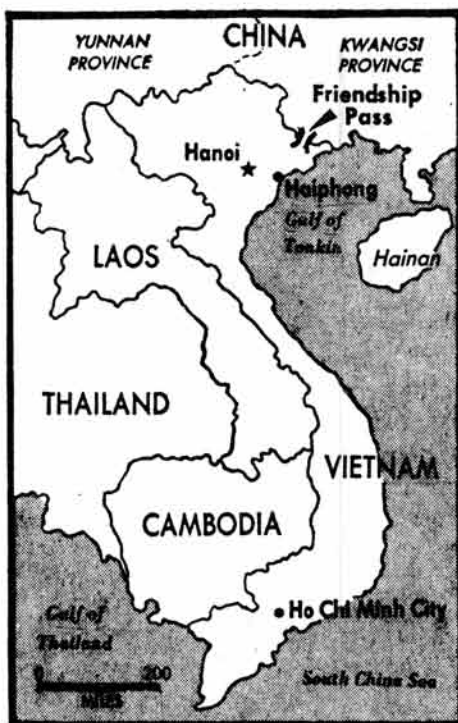
To clear up this apparent paradox, it is necessary to look again at the history of relations between the two regimes, as well as at the history of relations between Cambodia and Vietnam.* Both sides are now tending to place the origins of the conflict in the distant past. Hoang Tung, a member of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese CP and editor-in-chief of the party daily *Nhan Dan*, asserted at a news conference that "as a whole the best elements [within the Chinese CP leadership] were those who opposed Mao." He also said that it was during the Liu Shao-chi period that China carried out "a truly socialist policy" (reported in the August 8 issue of *Le Matin*). If this citation is to be believed, then the Vietnamese leadership seems to be rethinking the history of the Chinese CP and of the struggles that developed within it, in terms more or less along the lines of those used by the Soviet leadership.

In 1954, Hanoi stood alone at the Geneva Conference in opposing partition of Vietnam. Both Moscow and Peking were pressuring Hanoi to accept partition. The Vietnamese leadership reluctantly accepted this measure—a decision it now regrets.

At the time Peking was angry about the adventure Stalin had plunged China into in Korea, and was trying to carry out a policy of "détente" with the West as far as China's frontiers were concerned.

In spite of China's role at Geneva, the Vietnamese CP remained ideologically close to Peking. Two unfortunate experiences caused a deterioration in relations: first the catastrophic mistakes of the 1956 land reform and then the position the Chinese leadership took towards its responsibilities to support Vietnam during the second Indochinese war.

In 1960 Peking opposed the renewal of



Washington Post

armed struggle in the South. In 1963-64 Krushchev's actions led Vietnam to look more toward Peking, but then in 1964-65 Peking refused to join in a united front with the Soviet Union in defense of the Vietnamese revolution, a front to which the Vietnamese attached great importance.

During 1966 and 1967 while the Cultural Revolution was in progress, Peking continued and even stepped up its aid to Vietnam, but allowed the rail transport of Soviet aid through China to be seriously disrupted, just when the Americans were carrying out a brutal escalation of the war. After a slight improvement in relations during 1969, the Chinese developed a foreign policy based on regarding the Soviet Union as the "main enemy," which led to visits by Kissinger and then Nixon to Peking (and later to Moscow) in 1972, despite the unprecedented U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

Chinese aid was desperately needed in Vietnam. As for Soviet aid, it was doled out at least as sparingly as that of Peking. This is one more area in which the historic betrayal of Stalinism will not be forgotten.

But, to understand how the Sino-Soviet conflict was reflected in Indochina and why the Chinese leadership never tried to win the Vietnamese CP away from Soviet influence by making defense of the Vietnamese revolution one of the central themes of its foreign policy, we need to return to what Southeast Asia represented for Peking. If the Chinese CP leadership basically ignored the Vietnamese revolution during 1960 and again in 1965 and 1966, it was because Indochina was regarded as an immediate "buffer zone" for China, and

Southeast Asia was considered China's natural "zone of influence."

Here we find the same problem as in analyzing the Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict. The Asian Communist parties, whatever their level of combativity, have all been affected by the Stalinization of the international workers movement, the retreat from internationalist traditions, and the framework in which they carry out their wars of liberation. Thus they have all to one degree or another become tainted with profound nationalist deviations, which are reinforced by the process of bureaucratization after they take power.

This is particularly true of the Maoist faction—and of the whole leadership of the Chinese CP. Given China's considerable potential, it can play the role of a leading power in Asia—particularly if it develops its industrial power more. But from the bureaucracy's point of view, the dynamism, influence, and geopolitical role of the Vietnamese revolution represent a threat to consolidation of Chinese authority in the region. This is why it was out of the question for China to ward off the growing closeness of Moscow and Hanoi by extending generous aid to, and thus reinforcing, the Vietnamese regime. This is also why the Sino-Vietnamese conflict is not about to be resolved, especially since the Vietnamese CP as well thinks it has a role to play in Southeast Asian politics.

Indochina in Crisis

The interweaving conflicts in Indochina have repercussions in all the countries concerned. The situation seems particularly unstable in Cambodia.

In terms of food supply, Cambodia, with its richness and its natural advantages for rice growing, is probably in the best situation of the three Indochinese states. It escaped the series of natural catastrophes that hit Vietnam and Laos last year. Laos is now again experiencing heavy floods, which destroyed a substantial part of its harvest. South Vietnam is apparently suffering an insect invasion that is also threatening part of its harvest. And the Mekong has been spilling over its banks, dangerously flooding the delta.

But in a political sense the Pol Pot government is none too stable. The negotiating terms suggested by the Vietnamese February 5 were remarkable in that they not only proposed a risky withdrawal of armed forces to five kilometers either side of the frontier but also agreed to international supervision of the cease-fire. The Cambodians did not even respond, except in the most perfunctory way.

Since spring, fighting has intensified along the border, and the Vietnamese seem to have stepped up air strikes into the interior of Cambodia. Cambodia has had to pull some of its troops from the border with Thailand because they were needed on the eastern front. Pnompenh has been receiving more Chinese military aid, espe-

*See "Origins of the Conflict Between Hanoi and Pnompenh" by Pierre Rousset in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 27, 1978, p. 240.

cially in heavy artillery and perhaps aircraft. It is generally thought that there are between 5,000 and 20,000 Chinese advisers in Cambodia. In spite of all this, many observers think that the Khmer army has been seriously weakened by the last few months' fighting.

Even more important, pockets of Khmer opposition have appeared in the eastern provinces of Cambodia and perhaps also in the northwest. There is no way of knowing their exact strength, but there is talk of 20,000 to 25,000 guerrillas in the border areas nearest Vietnam. For a long time Radio Hanoi has been broadcasting calls for insurrection addressed to the Cambodian population and military. An April 3 broadcast said, "Fellow Cambodian soldiers . . . many in your ranks are laying down their arms. This is a sign that they are beginning to wake up." (Quoted in *Le Monde*, April 18.)

On August 29, Radio Hanoi denounced the fact that a thousand soldiers and officers had been massacred, on Pnompenh's orders, in Cambodian military zone 203, encompassing the provinces of Kompong Cham, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. Then it broadcast a call to insurrection, signed by "the patriotic and revolutionary forces of front 203." According to the text of the call: "Since liberation, the clique [in power] has constantly and without hesitation destroyed the fruits of the revolution and committed countless crimes in our country. . . . It has acted as a faithful satellite of the Chinese reactionaries, provoking a border war with Vietnam. . . ."

Vietnamese sources indicate that this internal resistance is being led by So Phim, the former vice-president of Democratic Kampuchea and once the commander in chief of the liberation army. This is not impossible, since the leadership of the Cambodian CP has gone through many internal crises. Just last May the sixth attempted "coup d'etat" was uncovered. The names of several well-known leaders are not heard on Pnompenh radio any more. According to refugees, a vast purge is under way in several provinces, involving a number of intermediate cadres. Finally, the large number of refugees who have fled to Vietnam (estimated in June at 132,000 Khmers, 18,000 Cambodian Chinese and 170,000 Vietnamese who had previously lived in Cambodia) is proof that there exists a mass base for such a resistance movement.

Nonetheless, it is not possible to evaluate the depth of the crisis the Cambodian regime is going through. We still do not know how Peking is going to react to this situation. The Chinese leadership is faced with a difficult choice, if in fact the Pol Pot team is in danger. Either it does nothing and loses an ally in a country with Cambodia's geopolitical importance in Indochina, or else it risks getting embroiled in supporting with force of arms a regime that is extremely isolated internationally.

New tensions have also appeared in Laos. The CP leadership has finally come out openly in support of Vietnam. It is possible, however, that a certain section of the leadership disagrees with this step. Chinese aid has been important, especially in the northern part of Laos, where thousands of Chinese workers and soldiers have been working since 1961 to construct a major road network. Now it appears that many of them have been called back to China, and the others are simply finishing up the work on one uncompleted segment. This region of Laos is inhabited by Montagnard minorities who make up 40 percent of the total population of Laos, and three-quarters of these Montagnards originally came from southern China.

Radio Hanoi has recently given a lot of coverage to Vientiane's charge that the Chinese leadership favors the construction of an "independent Meo kingdom" in Laos and Vietnam, and that General Vang Pao, the former chief of the CIA's secret army, was invited to Peking. Vietnam has also sent many workers and soldiers to Laos. If the Sino-Vietnamese conflict gets a little worse, or if Peking decides to try to shore up the Pol Pot regime by applying pressure in the northern border regions of Indochina, a new stage of confrontation could open up in Laos.

Tensions in Vietnam

In spite of the success Vietnam has had in the past in relations with its ethnic minorities, tensions are beginning to show up in this area. Three of the best-known Montagnard leaders of the Vietnamese CP have in effect been stripped of their responsibilities: the Tay and Nung generals Chu Van Tang, Le Hien Mai, and Le Quang Ba. They have been accused of "feudal practices" and corruption. The Nung are still one of the ethnic groups that furnish the largest number of generals for the Vietnamese army. There is no doubt that Peking and Hanoi are currently fighting for political and economic influence in these remote regions, rich in minerals and forests.

It is above all in the economic sphere that the impact of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict is being felt. Vietnam is getting ready for war. A significant section of the armed forces that was supposed to be turning toward production, especially to building up the country's infrastructure, is tied down in the border regions. Some of the areas where New Economic Zones were supposed to be established have had to be evacuated because of the fighting. More than 700,000 refugees have left the frontier provinces nearest Cambodia and resettled in the interior. It is significant that only 9,000 persons have left Saigon to resettle in the countryside, whereas the number was supposed to be much higher.

The withdrawal of Chinese aid meant that around eighty economic projects had to be put off. Some of them were extremely

important to the national economy, such as the modernization of the Mao Khe coal mines, the expansion of the steel mill at Thai Nguyen, the construction of a bridge over the Red River and of a railway center near Hanoi.

Many of the 160,000 Hoas who left North Vietnam for China were workers with skills that are in short supply. For example, the Hoas make up 60 percent of the work force in the mines, and they play an important role in the fishing industry and in the operation of Haiphong port—in other words in sectors that are vital for exports and the accumulation of currency reserves.

In this emergency, the Vietnamese leadership has lowered its sights from what was projected in the second five-year plan. The priority of priorities is now agriculture—the goal is to reach a production of 21 million tons of foodstuffs in 1980.

The natural disasters that struck in 1977, plus the current crisis, have highlighted the social and political weaknesses of the Hanoi regime. The leadership now regards the fact that they waited so long to move against the bourgeois merchants of Cholon as a "right deviation," committed in the name of the ideology of "national concord." It admits that the consequences of the terrible weather in 1977 were worse than necessary, because of the carelessness and lack of training of too many cadres. It knows that the numerous examples of corruption, especially in the south, have dealt a blow to the regime's prestige. It has taken note of the results of the July 1977 municipal elections in Saigon, at the height of the rice shortage. These elections were a real protest vote, in which several official candidates were replaced by "rank and file" candidates.

It is likely that significant political differences are beginning to appear within the Vietnamese CP leadership, although it is impossible to tell exactly what they consist of. Several people have been removed from the Central Committee for the "errors" they committed in the area of economic development. A steady campaign is under way against corruption and "bureaucratism," and quite a few cadres have been dragged into court. The party press has become more critical in its style.

The current political tension and the state of military mobilization are being used to stimulate cooperatives, the socialization of agriculture in the south, and the "moral rearmament" of the party.

Another step the leadership has taken to try to bring things under control is to push aside, in the last year or two, elements judged too "pro-Chinese," such as former Political Bureau member Hoang Van Hoa (they had already straightened out the "pro-Soviet" elements).

In early August the Vietnamese press began to issue warnings against "opportunistic tendencies." *Nhan Dan* has several

times reminded its readers that the history of every revolutionary party reveals "traitors" who "end up selling out to the enemy." An editorial in the August 18 *Nhan Dan* said these opportunists and traitors "cannot accept defeat and continue to conspire to carry out acts of sabotage, with the backing of international reactionaries and imperialists." (Quoted in *Survey of World Broadcasts*, August 23.)

The mass departure of the Hoas represents a setback for the Hanoi regime, spotlighting as it does one of the most serious shortcomings of the Vietnamese revolution, the absence of socialist democracy. It is easy to understand why the capitalists in the south and the former collaborators departed en masse, but Hanoi has not been able to explain adequately the flight of the northern Hoas, who were small shopkeepers, peasants, and urban workers.

It is true that the close family ties and clannishness of sections of the Chinese community in Southeast Asia mean that hysteria easily spreads in the kind of tense political atmosphere that exists today. This can produce panic and mass flight. It is very likely that Peking actively abetted this fear when Hanoi's anticapitalist measures started to affect and disturb the Chinese population and when Vietnamese security forces stepped up their activity, looking for "provocateurs."

But this only shows that the Vietnamese CP has not been successful enough at replacing family and clan cohesion with a clear identification on the basis of class interest. If this is true, it can probably be blamed on the absence of instruments of socialist democracy in the true sense of the term; that is, workers and peasants councils, the fundamental units of a workers state, a place where the masses can genuinely express themselves politically, carry out debate, and make decisions.

The way in which a party like the Vietnamese CP has been substituted for the political role that the masses should play, depriving them of any real power of discussion and decision making, can only weaken the general level of class consciousness. This makes it more difficult to combat the remnants of procapitalist attitudes, both petty bourgeois and neocolonial.

Under these circumstances, the measures being taken to reestablish control run the risk of reinforcing the public security forces as well as increasing the power of the military hierarchy and party apparatus. The campaigns against "bureaucratism" cannot do any more than scrape the surface of the problem. They will not do away with the conditions under which corruption inevitably spreads: the granting of privileges, even on a limited basis, to those with particular functions; the setting of wage scales on the basis of political privilege; the abandonment of the

Russian revolutionaries' norm that no Communist should make more than a skilled worker; and the absence of any direct, large-scale, ongoing popular participation in state affairs.

Under the existing political and economic conditions of bureaucratic deformations in the regime and the pressure of a generalized scarcity of basic necessities, the Sino-Indochinese crisis tends to accelerate the process of bureaucratization, although not everywhere in the same way. This is true in spite of the real progress that has been made in the last few months, particularly with the collectivization and nationalization campaigns carried out in the south.

Peking may count this as one of the main achievements of its regional politics: that it has been able to aggravate the Vietnamese revolution's problems, as well as the resulting social and political tensions.

Finally, we should return to the effect the Sino-Indochinese conflict is having on Hanoi's regional policy and the rapid evolution of its diplomatic efforts to normalize relations with the United States and with the ASEAN nations now that Vietnam has joined Comecon [the East European trade bloc]. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong was asked at a

Bangkok news conference whether the normalization of relations with General Kriangsak's government meant that Hanoi would halt its aid to the Thai Communist Party and resistance. "That is the case," he answered. But there can be a big difference between the diplomatic statements of the Vietnamese and actual reality, as was shown several times during the Indochina war.

Just on the basis of "realpolitik" considerations, relations between the Thai CP—which follows Peking but is leading an important guerrilla struggle—and the Vietnamese CP pose very complicated problems. Too complicated for Pham Van Dong's response to really be true. If Hanoi expects some day to win the Thai resistance away from Peking's ideological control, it would be dangerous to jeopardize this potential development by cutting off the aid sent through Laos by Vietnam. If Hanoi gives up all hope of such a development taking place, then the logic of bureaucratic "realpolitik" may lead them to actually put into practice what they are saying in their diplomatic statements.

The question is posed. How it is resolved will be crucial both for the Indochinese revolutions and for the struggles now under way in Southeast Asia. □

Rail Strike Ties U.S. Lines in Knots

A nationwide rail strike September 26-29 stopped two-thirds of all U.S. rail traffic in its tracks and showed the power rail workers wield over the nation's economy. The coast-to-coast walkout was called in sympathy with a two-month-old strike against a single railway line over the issues of job security and union jurisdiction.

At 5 a.m., September 26, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), which had been on strike against the Norfolk and Western Railroad since July 10, threw up picket lines against forty-three other railroads that "interchange" goods and services with the N&W. BRAC said the N&W was refusing to negotiate a settlement and was trying "to destroy our union and all of railway labor."

Some 350,000 rail workers walked off the job and traffic stopped on 200,000 miles of track.

On September 27 Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall gave the strikers twenty-four hours to get back to work, warning that otherwise: "We'll take action at noon tomorrow to start the trains moving again." BRAC's response was to expand picketing to include all seventy-three lines that had been contributing to a \$800,000-a-day "mutual aid" fund for the struck N&W.

After the twenty-four-hour deadline passed, Carter set up an emergency arbi-

tration board under the provisions of the National Railway Labor Act and ordered a sixty-day "cooling-off" period. "This will take the railroad workers back to the job," the president assured reporters, noting that the strike had caused an "almost complete shutdown of rail service" in the country.

But the strike continued—and even spread—following Carter's invocation of the antistrike law. BRAC President Fred J. Kroll refused to order union members back to work until a day later, after a federal judge banned company reprisals against strikers.

The court order requires the railroads to rehire all workers laid off since July 10 and keep them on payroll at least through the sixty-day "cooling off" period. Kroll called it "damned good protection against reprisals." According to BRAC, strike-related layoffs had already begun to occur, involving up to 1,000 workers at one company.

The four-day strike demonstrated the massive economic power of rail workers. One day after the strike began, the country's two largest auto makers announced plant closings and shortened work turns because of parts shortages. Coal traffic dropped to one-quarter its usual tonnage. Under normal conditions about 70 percent of all freight is carried by rail. □

Cambodia Year Zero

Reviewed by Matilde Zimmermann

François Ponchaud's *Cambodia Year Zero* has been called "the best-known unread book in recent history." Articles and editorials in the American press since mid-1977 have used Ponchaud's authority to portray the Pnompenh regime as the most barbarous of modern time.

But the authors of these articles did not actually read Ponchaud, whose book has only recently been translated into English. They took their material from Jean Lacouture's review of *Cambodia Year Zero* in the March 31, 1977, *New York Review of Books*.

Lacouture publicly acknowledged a few months after his review appeared that he had misrepresented some of Ponchaud's material, but the damage had already been done. It is now widely accepted, for example, that some two million people have been killed by the new regime in Cambodia. Some of those who cite this "fact" may think they are quoting Ponchaud, but the figure is nowhere to be found in *Cambodia Year Zero* and in fact appears only rhetorically in Lacouture's review. Lacouture, not Ponchaud, dreamed up the analogy between Pol Pot's rule and that of Hitler, which has now become almost a cliché.

Ponchaud's book is better than the treatment it has received from Lacouture and the American press. In spite of the author's anti-Communist bias and the questionable character of some of his sources, *Cambodia Year Zero* is a serious book that contains a good deal of useful information not readily available elsewhere.

Cleaning Out the Cities

Ponchaud, a French missionary, lived in Cambodia from 1965 to 1975. He spoke Khmer and was in charge of a study center and translation operation in Pnompenh. He gives a first-hand description of the reception rebel soldiers met when they walked into Pnompenh early on the morning of April 17, 1975:

An almost physical sense of relief welled into general rejoicing. No more rockets to fear, no more blind slaughter, no more compulsory military service, no more of this rotten, loathed regime that didn't even pay its soldiers, no more food rationing because of the blockade. At last, the peasants could go back and cultivate their rice-paddies.

The celebration turned to confusion,

says Ponchaud, as the soldiers began a forcible evacuation of the city, starting with the sick and wounded. "There was nothing very brutal about this first deportation," he admits. The soldiers went from house to house telling residents to leave

Cambodia Year Zero, by François Ponchaud. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978. 231 pp. 95p.

immediately by the most direct route, assuring them they would be allowed to return in a few days when the threat of American bombing had passed.

The city—its population swollen to nearly three million by refugees from U.S. bombing—was quickly emptied. Ponchaud describes driving through the center of Pnompenh the evening of April 18:

During the half-hour I had been driving, I had seen nothing but desolation: abandoned cars, rubbish and litter everywhere, and above all, a dead city. From time to time I saw more small groups of people trudging along with their bundles over their shoulders.

This drive was one of Ponchaud's few excursions out of the French embassy, to which he and other French nationals were confined for three weeks. During this period, by his own account, he "could see little" of what was happening in Pnompenh. He says the city electricity and water mains were shut off in order to drive out those still hiding from the evacuation teams. He also reports that groups of Khmer Rouge swept through the empty city, collecting medicines and destroying or removing objects made in the West. Ponchaud says one refugee later told him "that until mid-May he was employed transporting furniture, television sets, refrigerators and other household appliances to an enormous bonfire about six miles north of the capital."

Three weeks after the rebels entered Pnompenh, Ponchaud and the other foreigners were taken by truck to the Thailand border and expelled from the country. The towns and cities they passed had all been evacuated. "The outskirts of every town looked the same," Ponchaud reports, "like a car-cemetery."

On the basis of his own observations and the experiences of other deportees, Ponchaud asserts that the evacuation of



cities outside Pnompenh followed an unvarying pattern. The Khmer Rouge first ordered a drastic reduction of the prices of staple foods, to as little as one-fiftieth their former price. Then soldiers and officials of the old government were lured out of town on the pretext they were to be given a role in the rebuilding of the country, and, according to Ponchaud's informants, were massacred. Finally, the entire urban population was evacuated and dispersed through the liberated zones over which the rebels had established control during the war.

Ponchaud acknowledges that security needs and a shortage of rice were factors in the decision to evacuate Pnompenh and other cities. (He asserts, however, without citing any source, that there was enough rice in Pnompenh itself to feed the native, non-refugee population for two months.)

Nonetheless, he believes that ideological reasons were dominant, that the rapid and thorough evacuation of the cities "reflects a new concept of society, in which there is no place even for the idea of a city." He says "a political official" told him the morning after the liberation of Pnompenh: "The city is bad, for there is money in the city. People can be reformed, but not cities. By sweating to clear the land, sow and harvest crops, men will learn the real value of things. Man has to know that he is born from a grain of rice!"

Ponchaud traces this mistrust of the cities back to the war years:

Ever since 1972 the guerrilla fighters had been sending all the inhabitants of the villages and towns they occupied into the forest to live, often burning their homes so they would have nothing to come back to.

More recent statements by Cambodian leaders seem to confirm that the cities were regarded as inherently hostile and uncontrollable, and that this was one reason for their destruction. Foreign Minister Ieng Sary, for example, told reporters at the conference of nonaligned countries in Belgrade July 28 that the cities were evacuated "because otherwise we would have had a civil war." According to a report in the *New York Times* of July 29, the foreign minister said "that the revolutionaries considered the city to be full of agents, ammunition dumps and conspiracies to undermine the new regime, and



Scene from the forced evacuation of Pnompenh in April 1975.

Sipa-Press

therefore felt total evacuation to be necessary for defense."

Three years after the evacuation of Pnompenh, the government apparently decided it was safe to begin rebuilding the capital. Japanese journalists who visited in September 1978 were told that 200,000 people worked in the industrial belt surrounding Pnompenh, many of them residing within the old city. If true, this would indicate a new level of industrial activity and the beginnings of urban life. The Cambodian government is also starting to establish trade relations with Western European countries and Japan.

Tales of Mass Murder

The aspect of Ponchaud's book that has received the most attention is his contention the Khmer Rouge systematically massacred people connected with the old regime. All the evidence for this is drawn from refugee accounts. Ponchaud admits that he "personally saw no dead bodies either in Phnom Penh or outside the town."

According to the author himself, refugee testimony must be treated with the greatest caution. Ponchaud recognizes that those who fled immediately after the collapse of the old government were frequently "military leaders or corrupt high-ranking officials too deeply involved in the old regime, with too much to lose in the new." He describes the desperate conditions of life in the camps across the Thai border and acknowledges the pressure on refugees to remember and describe events as more horrible than they really were.

But Ponchaud insists he has tried to take these factors into account.

I was instinctively suspicious of people who had "revelations" to make, and came bearing sensational tidings. I also mistrusted those who spoke French, and those who came from the wealthier classes and who had too much to lose under the new regime. I was mainly interested in the ordinary people, the army privates, peasants and labourers who could neither read nor write nor analyse what they had seen but whose illiterate memories could supply exact details.

Ponchaud recounts a number of refugee

descriptions of soldiers being taken away and shot, and concludes:

So many accounts contain similar statements that it can safely be affirmed that the revolutionaries had simply decided to kill off the bulk of the former civilian and military establishment in the hours following the capture of Phnom Penh.

This is the basis for Ponchaud's much-quoted conclusion that "the Khmer revolution is irrefutably the bloodiest of our century."

The body of material in *Cambodia Year Zero* and elsewhere is enough to convince most observers that the Pnompenh regime is a brutal one that carries out purges and executions. But the evidence presented by Ponchaud—who is more responsible and careful than most people who have written about post-1975 Cambodia—provides no basis either for estimating the number killed or for comparing Cambodia's "bloodiness" to that of other social upheavals.

'With Rice We Have Everything'

There are other aspects of *Cambodia*

Year Zero that have been ignored by reviewers interested only in the stories of mass murders. Some of Ponchaud's material on the ideology of the Cambodian rulers is not readily available elsewhere and is less suspect than his massacre stories.

Drawing on Radio Pnompenh broadcasts as well as refugees' testimony, Ponchaud depicts a society that places the highest value on self-sufficiency, on agriculture, and on the military life, and that is hostile to all things urban, intellectual, and foreign.

Cambodia, the victim of one of the most brutal imperialist assaults in history, could have drawn on considerable international support to rebuild its shattered economy after the U.S. and its puppets were driven out.

Instead the new regime sealed its borders and rejected almost all assistance. Ponchaud gives some examples of the extremes to which this was taken. A plane-load of badly needed medicine was refused permission to land on the grounds that Democratic Kampuchea could take care of its own sick. A typical radio broadcast from early 1976 included the boast that: "There is no need to import machines built in foreign countries, the only worthwhile ones are those invented by the peasants." The next month the radio reported that "thanks to their inventive spirit the peasants are rapidly achieving mastery over wheat, the rice-paddies, and water."

The most highly valued form of self-sufficiency involves agriculture. Rice is not only the mainstay of the economy but also something of great social importance. "In Phnom Penh you eat rice but you don't grow it," one official told Ponchaud. "You should go to the country where you can eat the rice you have grown." Radio Pnompenh teaches that the aim of all factory activity should be to help the peasants grow rice. "With rice we can have everything; steel, factories, energy, tractors." "We defeated the Americans because of the rice we produce."

The virtues of agriculture are counterposed to the worthlessness of old-style education, as in the slogan "the fountain pen of today is the hoe!" Cambodians are told that "diplomats can't get you anything to eat," and "it is the people alone who confer true diplomas." Ponchaud describes an anti-Buddhist campaign whose target seems to be more than just religion. He quotes propaganda statements such as: "The bonzes [monks] aren't any wiser than you: the only wise man is the man who knows how to grow rice."

Ponchaud says that he was witness to book burnings while still in Pnompenh:

I personally saw several trucks filled to the roof with books going past the embassy to the north. I also saw the books from the cathedral library burning on the lawn.

According to Ponchaud's refugee

sources, it is the peasant soldiers of the Khmer Rouge who control daily life in Cambodia. Ponchaud gives his impression of these troops as they entered Pnompenh on April 17, 1975. The Khmer Rouge all seemed to him very young, "hardly into their teens." (Two French reporters who were in Pnompenh at the time guessed that the majority of the liberation forces were between twelve and fifteen years old.)

The young revolutionaries who were having their first taste of a new world showed a marked predilection for its gaudier aspects. They took special delight in one particular gadget, the ball-point pen with a click-in tip. . . . Some went around with four or five wristwatches on one arm, and another showed me his shiny nickel-plated surgical kit. At least once every hour, some soldier turned up to "borrow" something, a motorbike or bicycle. . . .

We spent the night talking to these soldiers. Visibly, no ideology had yet made much of a dent in their reactions, which were those of the peasants we had known before. They hated nobody and had no very clear idea what they were fighting for. . . . The long night wore on; suddenly they decided that they wanted to learn how to drive the abandoned cars that were littered all around. What a great new toy! But many of the cars refused to go any farther than the row of trees edging the boulevard, because these guerrillas had had little experience with steering-wheels.

According to Ponchaud's informants, the peasant soldiers felt they had earned the right to help themselves to whatever was available. As Ponchaud describes the situation at the end of 1975:

There is nothing surprising in the fact that food should be poor and scarce after so devastating a war. But what hurt the people even more than famine was the flagrant injustice. While the workers were literally dying of hunger, the Khmer Rouge soldiers who were supervising them had more than enough to eat and refused themselves nothing; they had rice, meat and fish in plenty. Their reasoning was simple enough: "You are prisoners of war. We went hungry for five years. Now it's your turn."

One refugee, when he complained that his family was starving, was told by his chief: "The revolutionaries suffered ten times worse than you during the war; they had no rice and no medicine and nothing to eat but the leaves on the trees."

Ponchaud suggests the Khmer Rouge commonly regard with suspicion everyone who did not go "into the woods" with the guerrillas.

The Pnompenh government considers its peasant soldiers as more trustworthy than people who were workers under the old regime; the latter have apparently been permanently banished to the countryside. Ponchaud was told by refugees that:

The people who formerly worked in the factories were understudied by soldiers from the revolutionary army for several months and then, around mid-December 1975, were ordered to leave and help with the harvest in the north-eastern part of the country, after the young revolutionaries had become proficient enough to take over

and run the factories themselves.

Other sources have also reported that factories now employ only people who were not workers during the pre-1975 period, and that the cities contain only ex-peasants, not former urban dwellers.

The Mysterious 'Angkar'

Ponchaud, like other commentators, refers to the Pnompenh government as "communist." But his own material suggests the regime has only the most slender ties to the international Communist or Socialist movement. According to Ponchaud:

Until September 1976 the radio and cadres often referred to the "international revolutionary movement" and the "construction of socialism," but they never, contrary to the usage in eastern Cambodia between 1970 and 1975, claimed kinship with Marxism or communism. Local cadres did sometimes mention the "Khmer Communist Party"; and "party celebrations" were held in Battambang and Angkor in 1975. But no official declaration has ever qualified the new regime in Kampuchea as "communist."

Yugoslav journalists who visited Cambodia in March 1978 also reported little familiarity with Marxist ideas. According to the *Christian Science Monitor* of September 13:

Many of these members [of high-level government committees] told the visitors they had not had the opportunity to read books on Marxism. Nightly political sessions for party members avoided abstract theoretical questions, concentrating instead on tasks like building up the country's defense and economy.

Cambodia Year Zero contains as an appendix the Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea. Although it goes into some detail on the national flag, emblem, and anthem, the constitution neglects to mention anything about socialism. It defines Cambodia as "an independent, unified, peaceful, neutral, non-aligned, sovereign and democratic State enjoying territorial integrity."

The ruling body in Cambodia today is not a party but a remote and anonymous Angkar, "The Organization." According to Ponchaud, the radio is full of "expressions of almost religious respect for the Angkar:"

The Angkar is "believed in," it is "loved," its "blessings" are "remembered," it is "thanked for the good it has done us, for freeing us from slavery," for "resurrecting the national soul," for "freeing us from the scorn of the imperialists," for "making us masters of the factories and land." "I respect and I love it"; "thanks to the Angkar, every day is a holiday"; "thanks to the Angkar, rice is beautiful"; "I sing thanks to it with all my voice," etc.

In September 1977 Cambodian Premier Pol Pot was identified in Peking as secretary of the Cambodian Communist Party. This was the first official word that such an organization existed. Pol Pot claimed the party had been founded seventeen years earlier, in 1960.

But Ponchaud's biographical sketches of the central figures in the Pnompenh government do not suggest a long or close relationship with Stalinism of either the Moscow or Peking variety. Most of the current leaders are described as sons of landowners who became nationalists while studying in France in the 1940s and 1950s. Only Ieng Sary appears to have been a member of the French Communist Party.

When the nationalists returned to Cambodia from France they tended to support Prince Sihanouk and portray him as an anti-imperialist fighter until he drove them into opposition. (This was also the line of Peking and Moscow.) Khieu Sampham, who is now president of Cambodia, was Sihanouk's secretary of state for commerce in 1962.

None of the current leaders appears to have had anything to do with the Cambodian Communist Party that existed in the 1950s. (According to Ponchaud this party won 40 percent of the vote in some wards in the 1955 election.)

The section of the rebel forces that ended up in power in Cambodia did not have very close ties to the Vietnamese Communist Party, even though they were fighting the same enemy. Nor were relations with either Moscow or Peking particularly intimate during the years the Cambodians were fighting against U.S. imperialism. Ponchaud describes how Soviet and East German diplomats were rounded up like all the other foreigners in Pnompenh, before being deported by the new regime. According to *New York Times* reporter Sydney H. Schanberg, the Khmer Rouge fired a rocket through the second floor of the Soviet Embassy and looted the building.

Little is known about the backgrounds and political origins of the Cambodian rulers. Even their real identities are unknown in some cases. Ponchaud gives no sources for his biographical data, and some of it is probably speculative. But it is interesting that his own material seems to provide little basis for his assumption that the Pnompenh regime comes out of the world Communist movement.

And the CIA, which tries to keep tabs on the world Stalinist movement, knew no more than anyone else about the new leadership that surfaced in Pnompenh in April 1975. According to *New York Times* reporter Joseph B. Treaster:

By the war's end, the State Department's background file on the members of the National United Front cabinet consisted of 10 typewritten pages, some of them only half-full.

Ponchaud insists that in the beginning he "was not opposed to the Khmer revolution." He says he "welcomed the revolutionaries' victory as the only possible means of bringing Cambodia out of its misery." Unlike many of those who have used and misused his material, Ponchaud describes in some detail the devastation wrought by U.S. bombs and the utter



François Ponchaud

Two of the Khmer Rouge freedom fighters who entered Pnompenh April 17, 1975. Most were between twelve and fifteen years of age.

corruption and cruelty of the U.S.-backed Lon Nol regime.

Ponchaud believes, however, that the conditions he describes in *Cambodia Year Zero* are not only consistent with communism but in fact flow inevitably from the victory of a Marxist revolution. He calls Cambodia "the perfect example of the application of an ideology pushed to the farthest limit of its internal logic." He thinks that Cambodia has experienced not just a "revolution" but "incontestably the most radical ever to take place in so short a time." He seems to favor a "humanitar-

ian" intervention in Cambodia by France or the United Nations. He thinks that French colonialism was a rather benevolent force in Cambodia, compared to its ruthlessness in Vietnam.

Regardless of what François Ponchaud thinks, however, Cambodia's problem is not an excess of communist revolution. It is just the opposite. *Cambodia Year Zero* shows in fact the extent to which the Cambodian people were cheated of the revolutionary victory that should have been theirs after the defeat of U.S. imperialism. □

Danish Workers Tackle the 'Zero Front'

By Michael Voss

For the first time—except for periods during the two world wars—the Danish Social Democracy has formed a government with a major bourgeois party. After negotiations that lasted several weeks, a coalition government was formed between the Social Democrats and Venstre—the Liberal Party.

The new government represents more than just a continuation of the incomes policy, which Social Democratic minority governments have implemented in collaboration with different bourgeois parties for several years. It marks a deepening of the class-collaborationist course pursued by the Danish Social Democracy.

The immediate response was an outpouring of protest from locals of the Social Democratic Party and from the trade-union movement. More than 50,000 of the country's 1.2 million trade unionists stopped work for one or more days, paralyzing 150 of the largest plants in Denmark. So powerful was this pressure from the rank and file that the Social Democratic leadership of the national trade-union federation—Landsorganisationen (LO)—has been forced to criticize the government.

Parties of Two Different Classes

To understand what lies behind the formation of the new government and the protests against it requires an examination of the roots of the Danish Social Democracy and Liberals.

The Liberal Party is one of the major employers parties in Denmark. Originally, it represented the interests of the big farmers. But as agriculture lost its influence, the Liberals became a typical bourgeois party.

While its base in elections is mainly the petty bourgeoisie, the Liberal Party's policy is one of supporting the capitalist class. Consequently, it has close connections with several of the big monopolies and with the Danish Employers Association. The working class views the Liberals as a capitalist party.

The Social Democracy is a typical reformist party. Apart from a few short periods, it has held governmental power since the Second World War, either in coalitions with smaller, bourgeois parties or as a minority government based on support from different bourgeois parties. For two brief periods, it formed a minority government with support from a small reformist workers party, the Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF—Socialist People's Party).

The Social Democracy is firmly based in and supported by the Danish working class. The party totally dominates the trade-union movement at its top levels. The majority of workers credit the Social Democracy with having helped to overcome the crisis of the 1930s and providing reforms during the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

Immediately before the economic crisis hit Denmark in 1974, the Social Democratic Party was about to lose a big part of its influence. The three other workers parties—SF, Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti (DKP—Communist Party of Denmark), and Venstresocialisterne (VS—Left Socialist Party)—were gaining, as was the bourgeois tax-protest party, Fremskridtspartiet (Progress Party).

But with the onset of the crisis, these trends were cut short. The working class still supports, even though not actively, the Social Democracy. It does so not because it wants or supports the bourgeois incomes policy advanced by the party, but because the party is still associated with economic security.

Thus, the party gained a big majority of workers votes in February 1977 and the support of between 30% and 40% of the total population. This has not meant an increase in membership, however.

The Fight Against the Incomes Policy

Since 1974 a tradition has developed in parts of the Danish working class of industrial action and protest against governments, laws, and parliamentary agreements.

In May 1974, for example, the Liberal minority government implemented some of the first cutback measures in response to the economic crisis. These were not very severe compared to later decisions of the Folketinget, the Danish parliament.

But they were met with a forceful reaction. Two hundred thousand workers went on strike, and a like number participated in demonstrations in Copenhagen. Smaller demonstrations took place in many other cities.

Later the same year, there were more strikes and demonstrations against the Liberal government, which was subsequently forced to resign, after new parliamentary elections in early 1975. The Social Democracy then formed a government.

The new government carried on and sharpened the austerity policy. Cutbacks in the social sector, in health and educa-

tion, were implemented. Big subsidies for the capitalists were granted. And narrow limits were imposed on negotiations for general agreements between the trade-union federation LO and the Employers Association, such as by setting ceilings for wage increases.

This incomes policy was accompanied by a hardened attitude on the part of the employers in local wage negotiations. The Employers Association financially supported firms that refused to concede wage increases. Thus, there came into being a front consisting of the employers, the bourgeois parties, and the Social Democratic government. This is what we in Denmark call the "zero front"—the front to keep wage increases down to zero.

The Social Democratic governments have been able to do this without provoking the kind of reaction that rocked the Liberal Party in 1974.

For one thing, it has been much more difficult to mobilize for actions against what most workers see as a "workers government" than against an open bourgeois government. Social Democratic propaganda portraying the policy of the party and government as a lesser evil has been partly successful.

The imposition of austerity has also been aided by rising unemployment, which has weakened the fighting will of the working class. Nearly 200,000 workers are without jobs today.

Certainly there have been protests and strikes against incomes-policy legislation, but they have declined. One of the reasons for this is that the three other workers parties represented in the Folketinget have not been able to present a credible political alternative to the Social Democracy. In fact the DKP, which has the most influence in the trade unions, has actively discouraged struggles against the incomes policy.

The result is that such struggles have taken place mainly at the local level. There have been long strikes for better wages and against layoffs, and some have been won. Tenants in new, expensive housing projects have refused to pay rent or rent increases. Students and apprentices have taken action in defense of their voice in educational policy and for more financial support. Parents have protested against bad conditions in kindergartens by withholding payments. In Copenhagen, parents and their supporters prevented for half a year the tearing down of a kindergarten.

These actions and others have shown that some groups are ready to fight against austerity. But the struggles have remained localized and isolated, mainly because most of the participants have lacked a coherent political perspective.

Coalition Government—An Excuse for a Procapitalist Policy

At the same time, parliamentary crises

have been occurring more frequently.

Earlier this year, four bourgeois parties, among them the Liberal Party, proclaimed that they would collaborate more closely. The purpose was to strengthen their bargaining position before negotiating with the government.

Prime Minister Anker Jørgensen's aim in initiating talks with the Liberal Party for a coalition government was to split this bloc. At the same time he wanted to build a strong government in preparation for the negotiations on wage agreements scheduled for spring 1979. The new coalition government controls just under half of the members of the Folketinget. Thus it needs support from only one or two of the small bourgeois parties to gain a majority for its proposals.

During secret negotiations between the two parties, which lasted three weeks, it became clear that such a coalition government would mean a sharpened austerity policy. Jørgensen hopes that the coalition will provide the alibi he needs to step up moves in that direction.

"We have to defer to our coalition partner," he will say to party members and the rest of the working class.

That this is what Jørgensen has in mind was confirmed when the government was proclaimed at the end of August. None of the demands trade unions and other groups have raised were in the government's program, of course. Neither were some of the traditional Social Democratic proposals such as more just tax and housing policies. And there was to be absolutely no interference against speculators and their "unearned income."

On the other hand, the new government's program called for an increase in the Value-Added Tax (a general indirect tax) from 18% to 20.25%. It also included a freeze on prices, rates, and wages, though everyone knows that only the lid on wages will be effectively implemented.

Apart from these additions, the program was mostly a continuation of the policy of the previous government, plus some vague declarations of purpose.

The government consists of fourteen Social Democratic ministers and seven from the Liberal Party.

The Trade Unions Say 'No'

After the formation of the new government was announced and its program outlined, there were immediate and vehement reactions from the trade-union movement. Resolutions of protest from workplaces and trade unions poured in from all parts of the country.

The day after the announcement, workers of one shipyard, in Frederikshavn, went on strike. Two days later all the other shipyards of Denmark were struck. The postal workers, the sanitation workers of Copenhagen, and workers in the metal industry followed suit.

Demonstrations took place in several

cities. The sentiment against the government was so strong that even the local labor councils, which are dominated by the Social Democracy, were forced to partici-



Klassekampen

JØRGENSEN

pate. They did not use their resources and influence to mobilize the workers, however. And Social Democratic trade-union leaders used the occasion to tell demonstrators to stop striking.

Two national unions, the Painters and the Electricians, held their congresses during the strikes. The Social Democratic leadership of these unions was forced not only to protest against the government, but also to sharpen the wording in resolutions. The steering committees of several other national unions also protested.

Even the chairman of the LO, Thomas Nielsen, dissociated himself from the government. And everywhere in the trade-union movement the traditionally close relationship between the Social Democracy and the LO was questioned.

The protests from the unions varied in character, of course. Each bore the stamp of the current in the labor movement that had the most influence in that particular place. Among these tendencies are the Social Democratic reformists, DKP/SF reformists, centrists, and revolutionists.

Even in the unions and meetings where the Social Democrats were dominant, the protests varied in regard to the severity of the criticisms and to the radicalism of the demands raised. Generally the resolutions from these meetings contained demands for a more just tax and housing policy. They stressed that not *only* the working class suffers from the crisis, and they asked for Økonomisk Demokrati (Economic Democracy) to compensate for the sacrifices being made.

(The latter is a Social Democratic project through which the trade-union movement is supposed to gain influence in the management of companies. The real result will be a further influx of capital from the workers, who will thereby be tied to their "own" firm. The aim is to break down the solidarity and fighting spirit of the class.)

But in spite of these differences in the protest resolutions, most of them have in common a dissociation from the whole *idea* of a coalition government between the Social Democracy and the Liberal Party. This view has penetrated deeply into Social Democratic trade-union circles, even though the same people have accepted common drafting of legislation by the two parties.

An Important Split

Protests and severe criticism have also been raised inside the Social Democratic Party itself. Many branches have protested. In fact, in the second largest city of Denmark, Århus, all branch leaderships in the area, all town council members, all candidates for parliament, and others met to sharply dissociate themselves from the government. In two branches, the Executive Committees resigned. And many members left the party.

Some Social Democratic shop stewards are trying to build a new workers party, the Reform Party, which promises to hold on to Social Democratic politics. However, the new project has no chance of competing with the three reformist workers parties and one centrist party now in existence.

Protests also occurred at higher levels of the Social Democracy, but they soon faded. At an extraordinary meeting of the party's steering committee ten days after the coalition government was formed, criticism was aimed mainly at the *procedure* followed in arriving at the decision to form a government with the Liberal Party. Anker Jørgensen promised that this would not be repeated.

The outcry against the government in the parliamentary group of the party didn't last long either. Only one Social Democratic member of the Folketinget voted against the first measures of the new government.

As a result, Social Democratic trade unionists are now discussing how to get more union members into parliament.

Although there are political shortcomings in the protests from trade-union and Social Democratic meetings, and although the actions against the government ended inconclusively, the formation of the coalition government has led to the deepest split in the Social Democracy since communists and syndicalists left the party at the beginning of the century. Never before have so many Social Democrats declared war on a government with Social Democratic participation.

This is a split that goes along classical

lines: The nearer you get to the rank and file, the more forceful the protests are. And the trade-union bureaucracy has shown more energetic opposition than the bureaucracy of the state and party apparatus.

Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that the party and government will ride out the gale, at least until the spring 1979 general-agreement negotiations. There is no force to the left of the Social Democracy strong enough to put forward a real political alternative to the coalition government and able to mobilize the working class and its potential allies against class collaboration.

Other Workers Parties

During the crisis, the three other workers parties represented in the Folketinget have often formed a common but inconsistent front against the bourgeois austerity policy. Therefore they are seen by a majority as a left wing in Danish politics.

The SF is a reformist party formed in 1958 by a right-wing splitoff from the official Communist Party. Their declared aim is to draw the Social Democracy to the left, mostly through negotiations. A wing of the party does participate in rank-and-file activities in various movements.

The Stalinist, pro-Moscow DKP is clearly reformist. It rejects the "Eurocommunist trend." The DKP has the largest influence in the trade unions next to the Social Democracy, mostly at the shop-steward level. The party has a majority in quite a number of local trade-union leaderships, it forms a minority in some national trade-union leaderships, and it controls the Sailors Union.

VS is a centrist party formed in 1967 as a left-wing splitoff from SF. The break came when SF, which was supporting a Social Democratic minority government, voted against automatic cost-of-living compensation. VS combines opportunism in the Folketinget with a thoroughly sectarian attitude in the mass movements toward the Social Democracy and the majority of the working class that supports that party.

These three parties responded to the coalition government by forming another class-collaborationist coalition. They drafted a common resolution with a small bourgeois party, Retsforbundet. The resolution pointed up the fact that these four parties, together with the Social Democracy, control a majority in the Folketinget.

The resolution promised support to some Social Democratic proposals that were not a part of the government program. They wanted thereby to show that there exists "another majority,"—in contrast to the majority that the Social Democracy normally forms with bourgeois parties.

As a result of this class-collaborationist project, the parties have cut themselves off from influencing those Social Democrats opposing the government. They have pre-

sented an alternative that is really no alternative at all.

The resolution does not address some of the most important problems of the working class, such as unemployment. And no wonder, since to do so would have provoked serious disagreements with their old-style bourgeois-liberal ally.

Furthermore, the resolution has a purely parliamentary aim, and therefore it will not be possible to realize even the diverse and modest proposals the parties have agreed upon.

This was made clear at the news conference where the resolution was presented. The chairman of Retsforbundet declared that his party was strongly opposed to extraparliamentary actions.

Apart from this initiative, members of the three parties do participate in the protests and strikes against the government, without however giving them political or organizational direction.

VS has demonstrated its total inability to take advantage of the opening that the formation of the coalition government has created inside the Social Democracy. VS has made it a central part of its agitation and propaganda to stress that nothing really is changed by the Liberal Party's participation. The movements must continue their opposition to the incomes policy and cutbacks, VS says, paying no special attention to what kind of government is in power.

A Revolutionary Answer

In contrast, the Revolutionære Socialister Forbund (RSF—Revolutionary Socialist League), Danish section of the Fourth International, has provided a clear-cut class answer. It has already had some success in presenting its proposals, even though its modest size prevents it from having a decisive influence on the development of the antigovernment mobilization.

The RSF has explained the character of the Liberal Party, how the Social Democratic leadership will use the coalition, and why the outcome is bound to be unfavorable for the working class.

In a Central Committee resolution, the RSF points to some of the demands that have been raised in the trade unions and other movements and poses the question: What are the prospects for winning these demands when the Liberal Party is in the government? It says, for example:

There justifiably exists great dissatisfaction with taxes. The working class pays 80% of the taxes, while employers, real-estate sharks, and other speculators pay only a small fraction of the value they are squeezing from Danish workers.

Will there be a more equitable tax policy as long as the Liberal Party is in the government? No! Why should this party agree to tax the social class it represents, the capitalist class?

Concerning the motives of the Social Democratic leadership, the resolution states:

We must not forget that the Social Democracy,

whether in or out of government, has not helped the working class to defend its standard of living and its democratic rights. On the contrary.

But the government coalition will be used by Anker Jørgensen as an excuse for implementing a more severe antilabor policy. The coalition is the means to pressure party supporters into acceding to the functioning of the Social Democracy as a highly useful tool for the crisis solutions of the employers.

For a Workers Government

As an alternative to the coalition government, the RSF puts forward the slogan of a workers government, consisting of the four workers parties. But as the resolution points out:

We know that nothing is settled just because the workers parties form a government. We must demand that this government implement a policy in the interest of the working class, and we must be ready to take action to make it do this. Otherwise it will not be the workers government that we need.

The resolution sets out the demands making up a workers policy. The RSF puts forward and supports the same demands in the trade unions and other mass movements.

- A thirty-five-hour workweek with no reduction of pay and no speedup. This demand is gaining more and more support in the trade unions. Recently the chairman of the National Union of Metalworkers declared that it must be raised in the general-agreement negotiations.

- Payment of the "frozen cost-of-living adjustment." This refers to a portion of the automatic cost-of-living adjustment that was stolen from the workers through legislation passed in August 1977. Instead of the employers' payments going to the workers, the state placed this money in the public workers pension fund. A lump-sum payment would amount to 6,000 Danish kroner (about US\$1,100). This is the most widespread demand in the trade unions today.

- An improved cost-of-living adjustment that compensates fully for inflation—that is, a sliding scale of wages.

- Proposals for an improvement in the situation of the unemployed.

- The construction of 40,000 new apartments a year. This is a Social Democratic election promise that the party will not carry out.

- A freeze on residential rents.
- A halt to preparations for nuclear-power production in Denmark.

- Removal of a ministerial directive that bans picketing by workers and others engaged in struggle.

A number of other demands are raised concerning special groups and the defense of democratic rights. The latter have been under heavy attack as part of the effort to stymie the struggles against the incomes policy.

The RSF resolution points out that such a line will not be accepted as a matter of

course by the employers. The demands interfere with private property, and many of them cannot be fully implemented so long as the profit drive is the guiding force in society.

Thus, the workers government must be ready to implement a broad program of nationalizations, including companies that will not comply with the demands of the workers, as well as the entire housing sector and the building industry.

The Active Support of the Working Class

The resolution continues:

A government would not be able to carry this policy through on its own even if it had the best of intentions. Only the working class and other oppressed layers can fight back against the capitalist offensive and show the way out of the crisis on a basis that corresponds to their interests.

Therefore, the government must encourage and support activities in all the combat organizations of the class, ranging from trade-union locals to strike committees and workers defense guards, that can protect against strikebreakers and other employer-backed gangs. It must also support the activities of tenants associations, rent-strike committees, tenants defense guards, women's liberation organizations, the antinuclear movement, soldiers unions, and so on.

The resolution also says that a workers government must call for the formation of committees and organizations that can see to it that the workers' demands are implemented as intended. For example, employers would have to be investigated to make sure they were not vitiating the reduced workweek with speedup, or preparing to send capital out of the country.

The RSF explains that such a government will meet fierce resistance from the capitalists. But, the resolution continues:

It can count on a much stronger social force—the active support of the working class and the many other oppressed groups that suffer from the profit drive and the malaise of capitalist society.

This will be so because it will be carrying out a working-class program that points directly to the final solution of the capitalist crisis: a planned economy under workers rule, assured by the working class and its allies depriving the capitalist class of its social power.

The resolution, which was adopted just before the coalition was actually formed, also explains what the RSF will be doing in this situation:

In the months ahead, the RSF will spread and win support for this policy, concentrated in the demands: Break with the bourgeoisie, form a workers government, implement a working-class policy.

At the same time, the RSF will support any proposal for the independent activity of the working class for just one or a number of these demands.

Then the resolution lists some of the initiatives that trade unions and other movements can take against the coalition government. For example:

- Pass resolutions that strongly protest the coalition government and that call upon the workers parties to unite on a working-class policy.

- Discuss and prepare effective measures that can put force behind the demands, such as protest meetings, demonstrations, shop-steward conferences, workers meetings during work hours, and strikes.

The RSF will propose that the local initiatives become as powerful as possible through a national coordination of the protests. . . .

A temporary culmination could be a national day of protest.

Revolutionary Politics in the Factories

This political line has been propagated through the fortnightly paper of the RSF, *Klassekampen* (Class Struggle), and through the distribution of 20,000 leaflets that reproduce the most important parts of the Central Committee resolution.

Members of the RSF have taken the platform into the factories, unions, housing districts, and various movements they are active in.

Both *Klassekampen* and the leaflet have been positively received in many places, and RSF members have gotten support for several of their proposals. There is a certain unwillingness, though, in movements other than the trade unions to taking a formal position on the government.

But in some work places, RSF members have been able to gain a majority for their proposals. For example, a shop steward for 115 throwers in a big porcelain factory, Bing & Grøndahl, in Copenhagen, gained support among his comrades for the following resolution:

We reject the incomes policy. We have no use for bourgeois politics. We need a working-class policy.

That is, a policy that fights unemployment with a thirty-five-hour workweek at no reduction in pay; secures the real wage with a full cost-of-living adjustment; secures a good general agreement in 1979; stops the skyrocketing of residential rents and secures the building of 40,000 inexpensive apartments per year; secures tax relief for common wage-earners, heavily taxes rich people, and confiscates the profits of real estate speculators; stops the profiteering of the employers and nationalizes banks, bankrupt companies, and companies that will not accede to the necessary demands of the workers.

The Social Democracy, SF, DKP, and VS must form a workers government that fights for these demands. Such a government will receive the support of the throwers of Bing & Grøndahl. We also think that the trade-union movement and the tenants organizations will support it.

The resolution supports a proposal for a nationwide day of protest on October 3. The proposal was first put forward by the trade unions of Fredericia, a provincial city, and is now backed by other sections of the trade-union movement.

October 3—A Day of Protest

The direct protests lasted only for a couple of days. After a week all strikes and demonstrations stopped.

The task now is to prepare a militant show of force October 3 that involves even larger sections of the working class in demonstrations and strikes. This day can also be a preparation for the mobilizations that will be necessary at the time of the general-agreement negotiations.

It is then that the decisive confrontation between the coalition government and the working class will take place. One way or another, the government will try to prevent the workers from making gains. At the same time, there is a widespread reluctance in the trade unions to accept dictation from a government that includes the Liberal Party.

But the Social Democrats at the head of LO are absolutely not interested in mobilizing the working class against the government. They will try to water down the demands even before they are presented to the employers, and they will be ready to defer them as well.

One government proposal is for tripartite negotiations—between the government, the trade unions, and the employers—to decide the outcome of the general agreements. In this way the trade-union movement would effectively be deprived of its right to negotiate and to take action.

LO said no to these negotiations initially, but a few days later they withdrew their objections.

The task of the RSF in the period ahead is to encourage the oppositional trend inside the Social Democracy and help maintain the willingness to take action that has been shown.

This must be done by spreading the idea that the socialist alternative to the coalition government is a workers government, and by making October 3 an unforgettable experience for the present government and for the trade-union tops.

September 9, 1978

Birds of a Feather

A delegation of U.S. district attorneys recently toured the Soviet Union. At the conclusion of the visit, National District Attorney Association President Robert Leonard commented somewhat wistfully: "Our Soviet colleagues have good conditions for carrying out their responsibilities."

Leonard would undoubtedly like to take some of these "conditions"—like closed trials and the confinement of dissidents without trial—home to Flint, Michigan.

The American Stalinists praised the prosecutors' contribution to détente. The *Daily World* of September 26 quoted the San Francisco DA who expressed hope that "this beginning of direct and personal communication between Soviet and American prosecuting attorneys will contribute to developing guarantees of permanent peace and friendship between our peoples."

The Syrian Attack on Lebanese Rightists

[The following statement was issued July 5 by the Executive Bureau of the Groupe Communiste Révolutionnaire (GCR—Revolutionary Communist Group), Lebanese section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

There cannot be the slightest doubt that Damascus held the initiative in the war that broke out July 1 between Syrian troops acting in the framework of the "Arab League peacekeeping force" and the rightist "Lebanese Front."¹

To all indications, this war—which came to resemble a war of annihilation against eastern Beirut and its suburbs—was unleashed in accordance with a Syrian plan. There was nothing spontaneous about it. Of course, it was not a question of revenge either, contrary to what some people thought when it began. In reality, the objectives of the Damascus leadership go far beyond mere vengeance for the massacre at Ehden,² even though this massacre did create the conditions that enabled the Syrian army to carry out its plan.

To grasp the full dimensions of the plan revealed by the Syrian shelling of eastern Beirut and its suburbs, it is necessary to place the latest fighting in an international, regional, and local context, which the Lebanese situation has always been dependent on.

Proposals for a Peaceful Settlement

Since 1975, Lebanon has been—and still is—the focal point for all the contradictions and conflicts throughout the Middle East. In particular, it has been the arena in which the Syrian government has opposed American plans for a settlement not in accordance with its interests. Thus, the war in Lebanon reached its peak during its fourth round, which broke out in September 1975 as a result of the signing of the Sinai agreement between Sadat and the Zionist government under Kissinger's sponsorship.

Damascus, which had been totally ignored by Kissinger, supported the camp of

the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese National Movement,³ using that support as a lever to counter Kissinger's plan. This stance, along with a shift in the relationship of forces in Lebanon to the disadvantage of the rightist camp, enabled Damascus to compel American imperialism to recognize it as the main party to the settlement and as the chief cop in Lebanon. Once this had been achieved, Damascus's role in Lebanon was transformed into an effort to put a brake on the Palestinian-Lebanese anti-imperialist forces, and later into support to the rightist camp after the fighting resumed in 1976.

In 1977, the situation in the region gradually reverted to what it had been at the start of the war in Lebanon. Begin's victory in the Israeli elections created the conditions for this reversal by reducing the prospects for an overall settlement—sought by Damascus and supported by the Soviet Union—to nil. The backtracking was completed by Sadat's visit to Israel and the continued negotiations between the Egyptians and Zionists throughout the past year. But the slow pace of negotiations prevented a total blowup of the Lebanese situation, just as the tortuous progress of Kissinger's efforts prior to 1975 had prevented an outbreak of the war in Lebanon on a wider scale.

Today, the American settlement proposal has become acceptable again and found new chances of being implemented, with Sadat's new "plan" stipulating that Israel must return the Gaza Strip to Egypt and the West Bank to Jordan in five years. This plan leaves Syria, and, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization—not to mention the Soviet Union—completely out of account. Washington has announced its complete support for this plan, which was the real topic of U.S. Vice-President Mondale's visit to the Zionist state.

Despite the fact that Washington has not received official Zionist approval of Sadat's new plan, Mondale succeeded, with its help, in getting official Egyptian-Israeli negotiations off the ground again (the upcoming London conference) and drew up a plan with Israeli aides in Washington (Yadin, Weizman, Dayan, Peres) that could lead to Begin's ouster in the short or medium term if he persists in hampering the American efforts. The next meeting between Sadat and Peres, in

3. A coalition of the reformist left, including the bourgeois party led by Jumblatt, the Stalinists, and various petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations.

Vienna, no doubt falls within this context. Thus, it is not surprising that the Syrian shelling of eastern Beirut began precisely on the heels of Mondale's arrival in Israel.

Syrian Control of Lebanon

The principal motive of the attack carried out by Syrian forces against the Lebanese Front was opposition to the Egyptian-American plan. Still, this attack was facilitated by certain local circumstances, namely the events in southern and northern Lebanon.

In the south, the deployment of United Nations troops south of the Litani River created a barrier that removed the possibility of Israeli military intervention in the fighting in Lebanon through an overland route. This in turn changed the relationship of forces to the disadvantage of the rightist Maronite Front, depriving it of its main trump card against its enemies.⁴

In the north, the Ehden massacre led to the biggest split in the Maronite camp since the beginning of the war in 1975. The massacre had two main consequences. It cemented the allegiance felt by a large section of the Maronite population to the Syrian government, thus bolstering Damascus's claims to complete control of the country; and it brought down wide condemnation, both locally and worldwide, on the Phalangist (Kataeb) Party, greatly limiting this party's chances of winning sympathy from "international public opinion," even when it was under attack by the Syrian army.

These conditions, taken together, encouraged Damascus to launch its attack on the Lebanese Front. The relations between it and the Christian rightists had steadily deteriorated throughout 1978, reaching a breakingpoint at Fayadieh.⁵ In reality, as we explained earlier (see footnote 4), the plan for building a Lebanese state that would be based on Damascus (represented by the Arab League peacekeeping force) and on Washington (represented by the Kataeb Party) had failed, at the same time that the alliance between its two supporters collapsed and the contradiction between their respective interests deepened.

It was natural, therefore, that the conflict between the two parties should center around rebuilding the Lebanese army, since what was at stake in the struggle was control of Lebanon. Since the army is the backbone of the state, rebuilding it is the necessary prerequisite for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. The conflict between the Lebanese Front

4. On this point, see the pamphlet *La guerre du Sud-Liban et le plan réactionnaire* [The War in South Lebanon and the Rightist Plan] distributed by the GCR. This pamphlet analyzes the situation in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion.

5. Violent battles broke out in February 1978 between the Lebanese army and Syrian troops stationed near the Fayadieh barracks.

1. A coalition of right-wing Christian parties, including the Phalangist Party led by Pierre Gemayel and the National Liberal Party (PNL) led by Camille Chamoun.

2. On July 13, 1978, the Phalangists massacred the Maronite Christian deputy Tony Franjeh, an ally of Damascus, along with his family, and about thirty of his supporters.

and Damascus over the issue of the Lebanese army recently reached its peak with the question of expelling Haddad and Chidiac,⁶ which the Lebanese Front refuses to do, and which Damascus insists on (how could it do otherwise after having criticized Sadat, while pointing to its own refusal to have any direct contact with the Zionist government).

What Position Should Revolutionists Take?

The objective Damascus wanted to accomplish by attacking the Lebanese Front was to diminish what has become the main obstacle to Syrian control over Lebanon (the Palestinian resistance, all its sectors included, and the Lebanese National Movement no longer stand in the way of this control). Damascus's terms have been made public. They include acceptance by the rightist front of Damascus's role in maintaining "security" in all parts of Lebanon; an overhauling of the composition of the Lebanese army so as to guarantee Damascus's influence over it; and a guarantee of the Syrian army's right to intervene in Lebanon even after the Arab peacekeeping force's mission expires, through a Syrian-Lebanese pact on military cooperation and the maintenance of "security."

In a nutshell, Damascus's objective is to tighten its grip on Lebanon. It wants to use this grip to strengthen its position in the Arab-Israeli conflict, to make sure that the conflict is settled in a way that is agreeable to Damascus. This is in keeping with its general bourgeois interest in controlling Lebanon, a competitor of Syria in its quest for an "economic opening," in order to make it into a subsidiary of the Syrian economy.

The leadership of the National Movement ignored these facts. It supported the Arab peacekeeping force without reservations in the recent battle it fought against the Lebanese Front, and expressed support for the Syrian role in maintaining "security." It seems as though this leadership has forgotten that the rocket launchers and tanks that are shelling East Beirut today bombarded West Beirut yesterday, and that Damascus's tightening its grip over Lebanon will work to the disadvantage not only of the rightist front, but first and foremost of the Lebanese mass movement now controlled by the National Movement.

We mentioned earlier that the struggle between Damascus and the Lebanese Front is not a struggle between "anti-imperialists" and agents of imperialism, or between "Maronite Christian" and "Muslim" Lebanon, but a struggle for control of Lebanon. In this struggle, Damascus's objectives are not "anti-imperialist."

If the government in Damascus were

"anti-imperialist," as some claim, why has it waited until now to go after the Lebanese Front? Didn't the Damascus leadership know that the Kataeb Party and PNL had close relations with Zionism when it came to their aid in Lebanon by massacring the Lebanese and Palestinian anti-imperialist masses?

Wasn't it informed about the regular contacts between the leadership of the Lebanese Front and the Zionist government when it greeted Gemayel and Chamoun in Damascus and cooperated with them in Lebanon?

Are we to believe in Assad's sincerity, when he told *Newsweek* that he had no "evidence" of relations between the leaders of the Lebanese Front and Israel?

Enough of these smokescreens and this hypocrisy! Enough of these flipflops and lame excuses! The real objectives of the Damascus leadership ought to be clear to everyone—to control Lebanon in order to get better terms from American imperialism for Syrian help in liquidating the Palestinian cause, and to crush whoever gets in the way in Lebanon, no matter what front or movement they belong to.

As revolutionary communists, we are of course glad to see the rightist Front weakened, but we are not glad, on the other hand, to see Damascus's presence in Lebanon strengthened. We would like to see both participants emerge from this combat in a weakened state, not have one of them establish total control over the country.

We warn the anti-imperialist masses that there is always a possibility of Damascus aiming its cannons at them. We do not think that what the Syrian troops have done in the last few days is a reason to

stop demanding that they withdraw from Lebanon, even if Chamoun himself demands it. What Chamoun is really demanding is that the Syrian troops withdraw from the areas controlled by the front that he heads. What we demand is that the Syrian army withdraw from all Lebanese territory, so that the blow dealt to the rightist front can be the work of the anti-imperialist masses, and not of those who want to strike at both the Lebanese Front and the anti-imperialist masses.

We will not participate in the current battle, unless the circumstances were to change qualitatively as a result of foreign intervention on the side of the rightist front. We will continue to warn the anti-imperialist masses about Syria's role in Lebanon and explain to them the necessity of preparing to confront it when their turn comes. □

Albano—Keep Argentina Albino

Argentine Interior Minister Gen. Albano Harguindeguy told a group of businessmen in mid-September that the military government's immigration policies are aimed at keeping Argentina "one of the three whitest countries in the world."

According to Harguindeguy, "being a white country" offers "a big advantage in human quality, even beyond that of the big industrialized nations." So, in accord with the Argentine constitution, his government's policy is "to favor white immigration."

"The constitution says European," Harguindeguy said, "and by extension, I say white."

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6. Lebanese officers collaborating with Israel in South Lebanon.

Open Letter to Fidel Castro

[The following open letter to Fidel Castro from M. Fernandez appeared in the September 21 issue of *Combate*, weekly newspaper of the United Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist League and the Communist League of Spain, Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

Comrade Fidel:

You, your government, and your country recently gave a resounding welcome to Adolfo Suárez, head of the Spanish government and the main leader of the Democratic Center Union (UCD) party.*

We do not doubt that you would have preferred to receive a delegation from a revolutionary government. But we also know that wishes are one thing and reality is another, and that relations between parties and relations between states are two very different things.

We have no objections, therefore (although it raised the hackles of a few of us) to the Cuban workers state's receiving the head of the Spanish bourgeois government. Nor do we object to the fact that Cuba, in its transition to socialism, wishes to improve its economic, political, and cultural relations with capitalist Spain. We too want that. We want to keep Spain from being a bastion of anti-Cuban reaction, and we do not see accomplishing this as something to be put off until after the socialist revolution, which is not for today, or, perhaps, for the immediate future.

However, we repeat: relations between states are one thing; relations between parties are another. Diplomatic relations are one thing, but certain opinions you expressed about the political process in Spain at the time of Suárez's visit are another matter entirely. Frankly, when we witnessed your final joint press conference, in which you never stopped praising Suárez's virtues and swearing that he had no faults, many of us could not help feeling a vicarious sense of shame. Not only because we could not believe a word you said—seeing as how we have to put up with the UCD government every day in our own lives—but because we could hardly believe it was you saying it.

As an example, I am going to take two sentences that have been repeated by the bourgeois press here to the point of nausea. One is: "The transition in Spain is being carried out in a brilliant and progressive way. Spain's future seemed doubtful at first, but it has become clear that nothing

amiss is happening there."

The other is: "Suárez is a brilliant and capable man, and, together with Juan Carlos, he has written a very important chapter in Spanish history." These sentences combined can be summed up as follows: the transition is terrific, and we have Suárez and the king to thank for it.

Let's take them one by one. "The transition in Spain is being carried out in a brilliant and progressive way." What is progressive about it? To be sure, the workers have won the right to organize, express themselves, and demonstrate with a considerable degree of freedom. No one questions this gain, which is vital for the struggles to come. But Fidel, don't you know that we already have a draft constitution that, while recognizing these rights, basically restricts them?

Don't you know that the right to self-determination, autonomy, and self-government for the peoples of Spain is virtually nothing but a worthless scrap of paper? Don't you know that the dictatorship's state apparatus has been preserved almost intact—its army, its police, its prisons, its bureaucracy? Don't you know that your father's birthplace, Galicia, is presided over by a bloody family of petty tyrants whose power dates back to the civil war, by a henchman of Suárez? Don't you know that it is he who has really made this transition "brilliant" by managing to "change something so that nothing should change"?

"Spain's future seemed doubtful at first, but it has become clear that nothing amiss is happening there." Is that so? What about those killed and the many wounded in Pamplona and San Sebastián, the one dead and two wounded in San Sebastián, the police vandalism in Rentería—are they nothing? Are the trials and jailings of actors and journalists nothing? Are the closing of factories and the dizzying rise of unemployment nothing? Is the impunity enjoyed by the fascist gangs nothing? Aren't these perhaps some of the most "brilliant" aspects of the transition?

To continue: "Suárez is a brilliant and capable man, and, together with Juan Carlos, has written a very important chapter in Spanish history." Since when are chapters in history written by individuals and not by the people? And since when, in class society, have the rulers and the ruled written the same lines together? The chapter in history you refer to consists of the winning of political and trade-union rights for the workers, the release of nearly all political prisoners, the recognition of some rights—only a few—for women and youth,

and so on.

But this chapter was written by working men and women, by young people, and others. And how did they write it? Through their struggles. Against whom? First against the Franco dictatorship, then against the new representatives of the ruling classes, of the exploiters, of the oppressors—i.e., against Suárez and Juan Carlos first and foremost. The chapter written by Suárez and Juan Carlos is a very different one. It is the chapter of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus to the demands of the working peoples, of the repression of mobilizations, of the restriction of freedoms and rights. It is the opposite side of the story.

Shouldn't you know this in Cuba, of all places, a country that has experienced a wide range, not only of "transitions," but also of "revolutions" that have done very little to change things, that have brought in new rulers, but have changed little or nothing in the situation of the ruled, particularly their material conditions?

Now, if it were not for the fact that Suárez has already had to realize that the workers and peoples of Spain are not naive enough to believe him, he could tell them without the slightest embarrassment: "You see? Fidel said it, the king and I have written this page in Spanish history. Vote for the monarchy in the constitutional referendum, and vote for me in the general elections." Yours would be a sad "transition"—from the leader of a revolution that gave a powerful morale boost to revolutionists here under the dictatorship, to providing a moral alibi to the chief political representatives of the bourgeoisie and its state.

What the peoples of Spain need from Cuba, Comrade Fidel, is not flattery of Suárez and the king, but just the opposite—solidarity with their demands and their struggle, against the UCD government today, against the monarchy tomorrow. □

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*Suárez and Spanish Foreign Minister Marcelino Oreja Aguirre paid an official visit to Cuba September 9-10. —IP/I