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Diane Wang/Militant

## Protests Greet Ian Smith in Washington

In contrast to cordial reception granted Smith by U.S. congressmen, picketline of 1,000 at White House

October 9 tells Rhodesian prime minister, "Zimbabwe must be free!" For report on this and other protests that greeted Smith, see news article on p. 1157.

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Industrial Workers Enter Battle Against the Shah

By Parvin Najafi

The working people of Iran have responded to the shah's martial law with a powerful strike movement that has paralyzed more than forty cities. The wave of strikes began October 3 when employees of the National Bank of Iran walked out; before noon every bank in the country had been shut down.

In the next few days the strikes spread like wildfire, closing down telecommunications, the post and telegraph, the railroads, bus service, the airlines, and radio and television.

Industrial workers put their massive power behind the strikes. Those who walked out included the 70,000 production workers at the giant Khuzestan oil fields, 30,000 workers at the big steel mill in Isfahan, 30,000 workers in the Beshar Industrial Group, 7,000 agricultural workers at the giant agribusiness complex in Ahwaz, 2,000 copper miners in Sarsheshmeh, several thousand textile workers at different cities, and countless others in smaller industries across the country.

All elementary and secondary schools and all institutions of higher learning have been closed by a joint strike of students and teachers. Several government ministries have been shut tight by striking employees. Courts were closed and trials had to be suspended as Justice Ministry personnel went on strike. In most of the state-owned hospitals, the medical staffs

and hospital workers walked out.

The programs of the radio and television networks were repeatedly interrupted after the employees of the Ministry of Information walked out.

On October 10, 4,000 employees of Tehran's major dailies, *Kayhan* and *Etela'at*, went out on strike to protest censorship. The walkout took place after General Ovasi, the military governor of Tehran, sent a colonel into each editorial office to review all material intended for publication.

Journalists at both papers refused to show their articles to the officers and instead "downed their pens." They were backed solidly by all the workers of the huge printshops affiliated with the two papers. Representatives of the strikers said they will stay out until censorship is lifted.

Most of the strikes have had a similar political overtone. The nationwide strike of university students was called to demand the lifting of martial law imposed on September 8, freedom for political prisoners, and the right to hold antigovernment demonstrations. The striking teachers are also demanding the lifting of martial law and the release of political prisoners.

In the factories, the workers are putting forward a combination of economic and political demands. Most of the economic demands center around higher pay and the government's responsibility to provide de-

cent housing. In many instances, the striking workers have also demanded an end to the military atmosphere inside the plants and an end to martial law.

Alongside the strikes, massive street demonstrations have occurred in more than thirty cities, including Baneh, Kerman, Shahr Kord, Arak, Sari, Dezful, Zanjan, Lahijan, Tabriz, Tehran, Yazd, Shareza, Borujerd, Behbahan, and Kashan. The biggest protests occurred in Amol and Babol, on the coast of the Caspian Sea; and in Khorramabad and Sandaj, two Kurdish towns in the west of Iran.

The police response in several areas was to repeat the bloodbath of September 8. Eyewitnesses reported more than 1,000 killed in Sandaj alone. But despite this savagery, the masses continued to pour into the streets.

The current mobilization erupted less than a month after the imposition of martial law and the gunning down of thousands in the streets of Tehran. That massacre was intended to break the will of the majority of Iranians to resist. Clearly the regime has failed on this count, for martial law has only fueled further mass mobilizations.

In a way, this was the "natural" outcome of the martial law. Military rule was imposed right after millions had poured into the streets to express their indignation against the shah's regime. Through these demonstrations, the masses saw their own power, gained unshakeable confidence in themselves, and won new adherents by the tens of thousands. In this sense, the declaration of martial law came too late to have the intended intimidating effect.

It is true that the bloodbath of September 8 stunned the population. But after a few weeks the shock and astonishment

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wore off. The masses resumed their struggle, this time reaching for a more powerful weapon, the withholding of their labor.

The participation of the working class in the September demonstrations was the decisive factor that changed their size from protests of tens of thousands to protests of millions. But in September the workers participated as individuals. Today they have taken to the field of battle as a class.

With the entry of the working class into the struggle, the movement against the shah's tyranny has entered a new and higher stage. The workers are participating in the struggle against autocracy not just as one of the classes of bourgeois society, but as the leaders of the whole nation. By their participation, they bring with them a higher level of organization and cohesiveness. In fact, they have already put their stamp on the mass movement.

For example, before this strike wave the population took to the streets without any organization and without even official representatives to speak in their names. The religious leaders filled the void in this situation.

But as soon as the workers went on strike they immediately elected representatives to speak for them. They made sure that these representatives were backed up adequately to prevent the government from victimizing them. Speaking in their own names, the workers of different factories issued statements explaining their strikes and setting forth their demands. This is new to the mass movement in Iran, and has already begun to push the religious leaders into the background.

At the same time, the strike movement has had a tremendous effect on the consciousness of the masses. Until now the only weapon the mass movement had used against the shah's regime was street demonstrations, and the masses saw their power as residing only in their great numbers. But now, through the wave of strikes, they are becoming aware of the greater power they possess. They turn the wheels of the economy. Nothing can move in the whole country without their consent.

With its back against the wall, the regime has granted almost all strikers a 100 percent wage increase, trimming the military budget to cover the cost. This wage increase by itself is an encouragement to all other workers to go on strike.

However, the success or failure of the strikes should not be measured so much by the economic benefits won, but by how much they consolidate the organization of the workers.

At present the Iranian working class has no trade unions, action committees, or any other form of ongoing organization whatsoever. Building a centralized, democratic, and powerful trade union is the challenge that faces the workers of Iran in the weeks and months ahead. □

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## The Escalating Conflict in Lebanon

By David Frankel

[The following article appeared in the October 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

Bowing to intense pressure from Washington and threats of military action from Israel, the Syrian regime declared a unilateral cease-fire in Beirut October 7. But after a brief cessation of the battle, gunfire had broken out at an increasing pace only a few days later.

Fighting between the Syrian army and right-wing Christian militias had been raging for a week before the truce was declared, and much of Christian East Beirut has been left in ruins.

This latest round of fighting in Lebanon's on-again-off-again war was initiated by Christian rightists, who assaulted Syrian positions in East Beirut, according to correspondents on the scene.

The Syrian Army is occupying Lebanon in the name of the Arab Deterrent Force, which was charged by an Arab summit conference with the job of policing Lebanon in the wake of the 1975-76 civil war. Apparently the rightists hoped to provoke a crisis and prevent renewal of the Syrian mandate, which expires October 26.

Israel came to the aid of the right-wing militias. On October 5 the Israeli regime sent three warships to attack Muslim neighborhoods in West Beirut to indicate its displeasure with Syrian actions. On October 9 Israeli gunboats reportedly shelled Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

U.S. officials, with good reason, feared that the conflict could escalate into a war between Syria and Israel, possibly blowing up the Camp David accords engineered by President Carter. Carter himself took charge of U.S. diplomatic efforts regarding Lebanon. These included proposals for further imperialist intervention in Lebanon through the introduction of more French troops—either directly, or under the United Nations flag.

It was French imperialism that was responsible in the first place for institutionalizing the divisions between Muslims and Christians that have plagued Lebanon. The French carved Lebanon out of Syria in 1920 and built up a colonial apparatus in Lebanon that relied heavily on the Christian population.

Although the French were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in 1946, they contin-



ASSAD: Caught in trap.

ued their divide-and-rule policy. An unwritten constitutional agreement assured the Christian population a six-to-five majority in the Lebanese Parliament, and permanently reserved the posts of president and the head of the armed forces for Maronite Christians. (Today, at least two-thirds of Lebanon's population is Muslim.)

In the years since then, the imperialist powers have been able to count on the right-wing Maronite Christian establishment in Lebanon as a base for their maneuvers. It was Camille Chamoun, head of one of the main rightist militias, who called U.S. Marines into Beirut in 1958.

But in recent years the undemocratic character and reactionary social policies of the Maronite-dominated government have fueled demands for change. While hundreds of thousands of peasants swelled the slums of Beirut, the government refused to build new schools, low-cost housing, or clinics. Public expenditures for such projects—already miniscule—actually declined from 1969-73, while expenditures for the army and police rose to more than 25 percent of the national budget.

Civil war finally broke out in April 1975. During the civil war, the imperialists did not abandon their right-wing protégés. At the height of the civil war in 1976, the

State Department licensed the commercial export of more than \$800,000 worth of ammunition and other military equipment to Lebanon. Moreover, \$5 million worth of weapons, ammunition, and armored vehicles was sent to Lebanon through the U.S. government at a time when the Lebanese army had completely disintegrated. Virtually all this matériel was funneled to the right-wing forces.

But the rightist militias proved to be no match for the opposing Muslim-leftist-Palestinian alliance. Only foreign intervention could prevent a defeat for the rightists. So in June 1976 Syrian President Hafez al-Assad responded by launching a full-scale invasion of Lebanon.

By November 1976 Assad's troops—with the support of Washington and Tel Aviv—had occupied Beirut. But while both the U.S. and Israeli governments wanted Assad to hit the Palestinian and leftist forces, neither is willing to tolerate similar Syrian action against the Maronite rightists.

Thus, Assad is caught in a trap. On the one hand, he cannot break the power of the rightist militias for fear of Israeli intervention. On the other hand, to withdraw in defeat, or to remain in Lebanon with no solution in sight, are both courses that can only undermine the regime in Syria itself.

Meanwhile, discontent is spreading in the Syrian army, according to a report by Jonathan Randal in the October 5 *Washington Post*. Randal estimates that Assad's forces have been taking six to eight casualties a day since February.

After two years of Syrian occupation, Washington may be looking for another solution in Lebanon. As the editors of the *Christian Science Monitor* pointed out October 3, "it will be hard to restrain the Palestinians [in Lebanon] if the political situation is not pulled together so that the central government can act from a strong unified position."

The Carter administration has already asked Congress for some \$75 million in military credits for the Lebanese government. The *Monitor* adds, "Suggestions that the United States should provide a small contingent of military officers and men to help train the Lebanese Army may be worth considering."

However, continued warring in Lebanon would probably tear apart along communal lines what little is left of the Lebanese Army. And—as the renewed fighting already shows—there is no reason to suppose that the current cease-fire in Beirut will prove any more durable than the dozens that have preceded it. □

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## Protesters Tell Smith 'Zimbabwe Must Be Free'

By Ernest Harsch

While the *Washington Post* greeted Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith's arrival in the United States with an editorial entitled, "Welcome, Mr. Smith," hundreds of demonstrators were mobilizing in New York, Washington, and other cities to protest against the racist leader.

About 1,000 persons—a majority of them Black—turned out for a picket line in front of the White House October 9. "Hell no—Smith must go" and "Zimbabwe must be free" were among the chants that were raised. In contrast to the cordial reception accorded Smith by numerous congressmen and other government officials, the demonstrators carried placards reading, "We don't welcome killers" and "Carter courts criminals."

Speaking to the picketers, a representative of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) declared, "Ian Smith has friends in this country—people like [Senators] S.I. Hayakawa and Jesse Helms. But we have friends here too—in New York, California, around the country, who will greet him too."

The same day, between 200 and 300 persons demonstrated in Atlanta against Smith. And on October 7 and again on October 13, hundreds more attended protests in New York.

Speaking in Maputo, Mozambique, October 8, Robert Mugabe, one of the key Zimbabwean nationalist leaders, accused the Carter administration of according the Smith regime "tacit recognition." He stressed that the freedom struggle against Smith "has got to continue." Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) is allied with ZAPU within the Patriotic Front, the only major nationalist formation currently fighting against the white minority regime.

Amnesty International released a press statement on the occasion of Smith's visit, drawing attention to the stepped-up repression carried out by the Rhodesian regime since the signing of the "internal settlement" in March (an agreement that brought three prominent Black figures into Smith's Executive Council).

Among the measures that it highlights were the imposition of martial law in several parts of the country in September, the outlawing of ZAPU's and ZANU's wings within the country, and the detention without trial of several hundred Black activists opposed to the regime.

In addition, Amnesty International reports that it "continues to receive allegations of torture and atrocities by Rhode-



HAYAKAWA: Heads "Rhodesia lobby" in Senate.

sian security forces, including the execution on sight of persons breaking the severe curfews imposed on large numbers of 'protected' villages. AI is also deeply concerned about the imposition of the death penalty, which is being imposed by special courts for a wide range of offenses, often in secret, and in some cases without any judicial review."

It was with the aim of covering up the true nature of the internal settlement—and of winning American support for it—that Smith embarked on his visit to the United States. He came at the invitation of a group of twenty-seven conservative senators, led by S.I. Hayakawa.

Smith was accompanied on his public-relations operation by Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, a former Zimbabwean liberation leader who is now one of the white regime's closest collaborators and a member of the Rhodesian Executive Council. Abel Muzorewa and Chief Jeremiah Chirau, the other two members of the council, were also to come to the United States later.

During his press conferences, television interviews, and meetings, Smith appealed to the American government, "as leader of the free world," to back the internal settlement against "Marxist terrorists," a label that the Rhodesian regime has pinned on the Black freedom fighters of ZANU and ZAPU.

To Sithole was left the task of claiming that most Zimbabweans supported the deal worked out between Smith, Sithole, Muzorewa, and Chirau. "What the majority of black people fought for has been won by the internal settlement," he declared, going on to describe the freedom fighters as a "black minority" fighting against the interests of the "black majority." He did not try to explain why, if that were really the case, ZANU and ZAPU are winning increasing support and extending their influence over more and more of the country.

One of the high points of the visit was an October 9 meeting between Smith and American Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Both said that "no progress" had been made in settling their differences, although what was actually discussed remains a secret.

Nevertheless, by agreeing to meet with Smith at all, Vance gave the Rhodesian regime a political boost in helping it to break out of its diplomatic isolation (it is not officially recognized by any government in the world).

Smith also sought a meeting with Carter, but the president turned him down. Smith's visit itself is embarrassing enough to the White House, which is attempting to cover up its complicity with the racist regimes of southern Africa and is engaged in delicate backstage maneuvering aimed at preparing a transition to a Black neo-colonial regime in Zimbabwe.

Coinciding with Smith's public relations junket in the United States, the Rhodesian regime announced new measures designed to spruce up the internal settlement. On October 10, the administration announced its intention to abolish all statutory racial discrimination.

However, according to Rowan Cronje, the cominister of education and health, the legal racial restrictions are to be replaced by "monetary discrimination." Access to formerly white-reserved schools, hospitals, and neighborhoods will be based on ability to pay the high costs and rents, which will automatically exclude virtually all Africans. Whites earn on average eleven times what Blacks do.

If the new measures will do little to reduce white privilege within the country, the regime clearly hopes that they will make the internal settlement more presentable abroad. The vigorous protests that greeted Smith and his entourage at each stop in their tour provided an effective response. □

# British Killer Squads in Northern Ireland

A growing number of victims of British undercover killer squads in Northern Ireland, including persons obviously uninvolved in IRA activity, has begun to force even the British press to raise an eyebrow about these operations.

In its October 8 issue, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* wrote:

The death of innocent people shot either by mistake or because they stumbled unawares into traps set by plain clothes soldiers for terrorists is becoming a grim fact of life in Northern Ireland. In the past four months three people who were indisputably innocent have been shot. . . .

The innocent deaths appear to be the inevitable spin-off from the policy which encourages under-cover army work. . . .

These under-cover soldiers, hiding in hedge-rows and in inner city terraces and plotting the movements of suspects, as well as mounting stake-outs, have proved invaluable in helping to build up dossiers to catch and convict terrorists. If there was 'a bit of psychological warfare' involved as well, because of the terrifying image they have gained, and because people accepted they were "more dangerous than they are" it was not necessarily a bad thing.

The problem identified by a number of Northern Ireland politicians is that too often the under-cover soldiers appear to have reacted to the arrival of someone on the scene too quickly, and to have fired before attempting to stop or question.

Over the past year and a half in particular, there have been a number of assassinations of republican activists and attempted assassinations of others, without this evidently interesting the British press. The above article itself indicates that the sensibilities of even the liberal British papers are not very tender when it comes to Irish people.

What forced the *Guardian* to take note of these murders was the shooting of a young Protestant in Coagh Co. Tyrone, on September 30.

Jim Taylor, a twenty-two-year-old resident of the area, had gone out with some friends to hunt grouse. They found themselves to be game for other hunters.

Returning to their car, they discovered that the air had been let out of the tires. As they brought back an air pump, they saw two cars following them. They asked the occupants if they were the ones who had flattened their tires. Two shots rang out. One of the survivors described what happened then as follows:

Jim dropped to the ground but the men who had shot him wouldn't let us anywhere near him. We were put up against our car for about three hours, then removed for questioning.

Taylor, given no medical assistance, was allowed to bleed to death.



Pacemaker/Magill  
CREASY: British army commander is "known to be keen on covert operations."

Before this latest murder, the shooting of a sixteen-year-old Northern Catholic youth had aroused the attention of the press in the formally independent part of Ireland.

John Boyle had told his father about finding an arms cache, and the father told the police. When John went back on July 11 to see if it had been removed, he was shot down by a stakeout team that had been stationed on the site, in response to his father's report.

What happened then was described by Ed Maloney, writing in the Dublin monthly *Magill*:

Two of the soldiers who fired on him were only eleven feet away and all the Army bullets hit him in the rear. The fatal round hit him in the back of the neck and blew the top of his head away.

The British military claimed that the youth had been spotted aiming an automatic rifle at the soldiers, and had been shot only after being given due warning. Maloney commented:

As a press statement it must be one of the most banal ever issued from Lisburn barracks [British army headquarters]. Apart from being a crazy suicidal action on Boyle's part if true, how, if he really was aiming the Armalite at the soldiers, did all the bullets manage to hit him from behind? And uninvolved in the paramilitary

activity as he was, surely he would have responded to the Yellow Card warning—if indeed one was given.

The Boyle case "lent credibility," Maloney noted, to the Provisional IRA claim that three guerrillas killed on July 16 were shot down in cold blood by British soldiers without being given a chance to surrender. One of the dead men, Paddy Mealy, reportedly had sixty-three bullets in his body.

The British "undercover" campaign had been developing for some time, Maloney pointed out:

On April 15th, Peter Cleary from Crossmaglen was shot a few yards inside the Northern border by a group of mufticlad British soldiers who claimed Cleary was killed "attempting to escape." On May 2nd the body of 49 year old Seamus Ludlow was discovered just inside the Republic. Three days later suspicions that the S.A.S. [Special Air Services, the British "counter-insurgency" force] were responsible for all these incidents seemed to receive confirmation when eight heavily armed S.A.S. men were arrested 700 yards inside the south. They claimed the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] made a mapping error.

Those were merely the incidents in which there were clear indications of SAS involvement. There are many other cases in which the finger of suspicion points to them.

For example: In December 1977, Colm McNutt, an activist in the Irish Republican Socialist Party in Derry City was gunned down by unidentified killers as he sat in a car. On February 1, assassins tried to kill Kevin Hanaway, a Belfast republican, badly wounding his eighteen-month-old son in the attack.

The British supremo for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, had shown a special affection for the SAS in his previous career, Maloney pointed out. While he was in the Ministry of Defense between 1974 and 1976, Mason often visited SAS regiments stationed in Oman and other places in the Arabian Gulf. So, the Irish journalist commented:

It was therefore not much of a surprise when he brought in Major-General Timothy Creasey to be the new G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] and to help with the construction of his new security policy. Creasey commanded the Sultan of Oman's forces up to 1975 and is known to be keen on covert operations.

Of the eight deaths Maloney said could be attributed to the SAS since the start of the year, two were persons indisputably uninvolved in guerrilla activity. One, the leader of an Orange band, was a passerby when an SAS unit opened fire on some republicans.

By this count, the Taylor shooting raised the killer squads' percentage of uninvolved civilians to one-third. No wonder even the blindly chauvinist British press is beginning to express concern that the operations are creating a political scandal. □

# Vietnam Hit With Worst Floods in 35 Years

By Matilde Zimmermann

In the wake of its most devastating floods since the early 1940s, Vietnam has issued an emergency international appeal for food, clothing, and medicine.

At a Hanoi news conference October 3, a Foreign Ministry representative detailed the damage wrought by Typhoon Lola: 2.3 million acres of riceland submerged; 2.8 million tons of rice lost; 4.5 million persons affected, two-thirds of them in need of immediate relief; more than half a million homes destroyed; 10 to 20 percent of all livestock gone.

According to the Foreign Ministry official, the Vietnamese have been using hand pumps and scoops to save what they can of the rice crop. A recent visitor to Vietnam told an *International Herald Tribune* reporter that the roads in the Mekong delta were lined with rice spread out to dry, but that the immature rice would not be fit for human consumption.

According to a report in the October 3 issue of the Japanese daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the situation has been especially critical in the area of the delta nearest the Cambodian border. In the province surrounding Sa Dec—its population already swollen by refugees from the border fighting—special camps have been set up to house those evacuated from flooded areas.

The worst may not be over. Heavy rains in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia have swollen the main tributaries of the Mekong, presenting a danger of new flooding in the delta.

September's floods came after three years of disastrous weather in Vietnam, which had already taken a heavy toll on agricultural production. A drought in 1977 made it necessary to import more than one million tons of grains. Much of the 1978 summer crop was lost even before Typhoon Lola struck, because the Mekong River overflowed its banks in August, more than a month earlier than usual.

In addition, almost 900,000 acres of riceland has been destroyed by insects. Pesticides are in short supply, and much of Vietnam's U.S.-made spraying equipment is useless because spare parts cannot be obtained. There exists a pest-resistant strain of rice widely used in Indonesia and the Philippines, but the seeds have not been made available to Vietnam.

The American government has a particular responsibility to respond to Vietnam's emergency appeal. Ten years of U.S. terror bombing destroyed dikes and flood-control equipment, defoliated forests, and scarred

the countryside with twenty-six million craters. Vietnam has had to devote a major part of its resources to resettling abandoned farmland, clearing away live bombs and other war debris, and rebuilding the water-control system.

The task has been made more difficult by the U.S. trade embargo imposed after the war and renewed by Jimmy Carter in September 1978.

The U.S. media, instead of supporting the appeal for humanitarian aid, has been escalating its propaganda war against Vietnam. The *Christian Science Monitor* of

October 6, for example, picked up a charge that the food emergency in Vietnam is not really caused by the floods but rather by "bureaucratic corruption and the destruction of the economy in the name of ideology."

Washington was forced to end its shooting war against Vietnam and should not be allowed to continue a war of propaganda and economic sabotage. The least the White House should do is immediately provide whatever is necessary to feed, house, and clothe the victims of the recent floods in Southeast Asia. □

## Appeal for Syrian Political Prisoners

[The following appeal has been issued by the Committee for the Defence of Political Detainees in the Middle East. It was accompanied by a list of sixty-five Syrian detainees accused of belonging to "Marxist" organizations.

[Letters and telegrams demanding a halt to torture and the release of political prisoners in Syria should be sent to Syrian embassies or to President Hafez al-Assad, Damascus, Syria.]

\* \* \*

No one is ignorant of the fact that the most elementary human rights are practically nonexistent under military police dictatorships in various Third World countries. In such countries, the usual fate of any political opponent of the regime is prison and torture.

This is the case in Syria, where about one thousand Syrian political prisoners fill the regime's jails. Many have been there for a number of years, most notably the partisans of the previous regime, or those of the Baath party in power in Iraq (where repression is no less severe), not counting Palestinian militants arrested in Syria, and Palestinian and Lebanese militants arrested in Lebanon by Syrian troops and transferred to Syria in the most arbitrary fashion.

To the above-mentioned can be added since the beginning of 1977 around 150 men and women, students and workers, accused of membership in Marxist organizations. None of these can be charged with anything that is not in fact a simple exercise of the elementary democratic rights: i.e., no act of "terrorism," no possession of arms . . . nothing but membership

in the "League of Communist Action," the "Workers League," or other groups whose only crime is to have dared to oppose the established dictatorship and called for a democratic resistance of the masses against this oppression.

For the past eighteen months, dozens of arrests have taken place daily in Syria. Most of those detained were released after this routine practice of terrorism, while others are still imprisoned without any form of trial other than the interrogations carried out by the "security" services, often accompanied by maltreatment.

There has been no official accusation, no trial and lawyer until this day, in spite of the fact that the regime has announced the annulment of emergency laws. If there was any such annulment, it only benefited the speculators and monopolists. As for political militants, arbitrariness still reigns.

Several cases of torture were reported, the most common forms being: beatings with rods, electric shock treatment, electric charges applied to the genitals, and sodomitization. An innovation in this field—which was inflicted on two female militants—is hanging heavy weights from the breasts in front of their fiancé and brother respectively. *The fact that the torture of women is being practiced for the first time in Syria reflects an aggravation of the repression.*

There is an urgent need for action to demand a halt to torture and the liberation of political detainees. It is imperative that an international delegation visit Syria to investigate the conditions of prisoners. To this end, we address our call to all democratic organizations and democrats.

June 20th, 1978

# 'The Majority of the Population Is Undernourished'

By Enrique de León

SANTO DOMINGO—The new government of the Dominican Republic, made up of a broad coalition of the national bourgeoisie under the auspices of U.S. imperialism, is in trouble. Its stability is being undermined by a severe and rapidly growing economic crisis.

Although the government headed by landowner Silvestre Antonio Guzmán benefits from the illusions of the working masses who voted for the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD—Dominican Revolutionary Party) in the May 16 general elections, it is caught in a dilemma. It is torn between a pressing need to make concessions to those sections of the masses that still support it, and a more and more tight-fisted attitude on the part of the multinationals and the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie, owing to the bankruptcy of the economy.

Following the major crisis that came in the wake of the elections, the different ruling-class sectors agreed, on the advice of U.S. Ambassador Robert Yost, to a two-party government.

In this division of powers, the PRD got the executive branch—the presidency, vice-presidency, and cabinet—while the loser in the elections, the Reformist Party, regained control of the Senate, and thus of the congress and the judicial branch. The Armed Forces and National Police remained under a new military clique tied to the apron strings of the United States.

This pact, which disregarded the election results, was made necessary by the fear, shared by all sectors of the national bourgeoisie and the imperialists, that the working masses would intervene independently in the political crisis that erupted when the military halted the vote-counting early on the morning of May 17. An additional factor was the severe economic crisis, which impelled the capitalists to unite in an attempt to cushion its worst effects, and shift these onto the shoulders of the workers and peasants.

However, in the few weeks since the Guzmán government took office, the democratic and constitutional liberalization the country is now experiencing has enabled the workers to begin to mobilize around the demands that had been held in abeyance during the twelve years of the Balaguer regime.

If the workers mobilization continues to grow, the economic crisis that helped to bring the different sectors of the bourgeoisie together will begin to have the opposite effect. It will foster divisions between the

most reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie and the populist wing represented by the PRD.

With the national economy in desperate straits, it is impossible to make major concessions to the workers without cutting into the profit margins of the banks, insurance companies, industries, import-export firms, landholders, and multinational corporations entrenched in the country.

The period opened up on August 16 with the transfer of power to the PRD has been marked by the existence of a vacillating and erratic government, which weaves back and forth, presenting itself as a conciliator of class conflicts. Likewise, it has been marked by bursts of activity in the workers and peasants movements, and by the threat of a coup to establish a military junta.

The stability of the new government has been eroded both by its internal limitations—owing to the fact that power is divided among the components of the coalition—and by the economic crunch, which makes it impossible to carry out the kind of reforms that can hold the masses in check.

While the Dominican gross national product rose by 11.9% in 1974, the growth rate is now only 3.2%. What is the reason for this precipitous decline?

The ruin of the sugar industry, the dizzying rise of imports, the failure of the agrarian reform and industrialization, and an incorrect policy of public investments have brought the country in the last three years to the verge of economic collapse.

The permanent crisis afflicting the Dominican Republic because of its dependence on the advanced capitalist countries, and the unequal exchange in world trade that benefits these countries, has now been aggravated by the low prices for sugar.

Production costs in the country's sugar industry exceed the current market prices. A pound of sugar costs an average of thirteen cents to produce, but it is sold on the world market at less than nine cents.

The recent protectionist measures taken by the U.S. government, setting a five-cent import tax on every pound of sugar that enters its territory, have hit Dominican sugar producers especially hard, since most of what they export is destined for the U.S. market.

Sugar exports are the largest source of foreign currency for the Dominican government. The drop of sugar prices below the profit line drastically reduces the coun-

try's capacity to import the production and consumer goods it requires.

Concurrently with the crash of the sugar industry, imports have grown. The rise in the price of petroleum and its derivatives, the implementation of a model of industrialization based on importing raw materials, and the use of the income from the sugar boom in 1973-74 to meet the demand for foreign luxury goods are creating a chronic deficit in the balance of payments.

For example, petroleum and fuel alone account for 25% of total Dominican imports, and this single item uses up as much currency as the sale of the total sugar crop brings into the country.

Despite the fact that the Dominican economy is based on exporting agricultural products, we import an annual average of \$51.38 million of foodstuffs that are produced or could be produced on our own soil. This fact alone is a sufficient illustration of the situation in agriculture. But a few other facts help to complete the picture.

In contrast to an annual population growth rate of 2.9%, the agricultural sector (farming and livestock-raising) is increasing by less than 1%, which means that it is lagging.

Low productivity in agriculture is directly related to the unjust system of landholding. The penetration of capitalism into agriculture has increasingly tended to concentrate land ownership even more in the hands of a few, and has multiplied the number of *minifundistas* and impoverished peasants who are forced to migrate to the shantytowns on the outskirts of Santo Domingo and other big cities in search of better living conditions.

While in 1950, holdings of more than 400 *tareas*\* represented 5.4% of the total, and took up 63.8% of the land available for cultivation, by 1960 they already accounted for only 2.4% of holdings and occupied practically the same area, 62.5%.

Lagging production and the consumption of foreign-made items by the ruling classes are not the only causes of the increase in imports. An additional factor is that the taxation system depends on import duties. This means that state restrictions on imports would cut into the main source of income for public expenditures and investments.

The catastrophic situation of the economy is also the result of the economic policies of the public administration.

\*One *tarea* equals 62.8 square meters.



In the Dominican Republic, the economic importance of the state sector is greater than in the other countries in the region, except for Cuba. Since 1961, the state has come into possession of the Trujillo family's property, which includes the big sugar plantations, the majority of industrial plants, and the most extensive landholdings.

Furthermore, the resources of the state sector, together with the extraordinary income from the sugar boom in the recent past, were put into the creation of "external economies" [public works], that is, an infrastructure for private investors.

Public investment was put into construction of roads, dams, hotels, monuments, and housing for the upper middle class. By their nature, such investments have a very low or long-term rate of return. However, in the short run, they use up the state's reserves and add to inflationary pressures.

The case would be different if the investments were applied to agriculture. However, during 1976, the reality was that for every peso [equals US \$1.] produced by the agricultural sector, only twenty centavos were put back in the form of investments, while the construction sector got \$1.16.

The new Guzmán government is tormented by the economic crisis, because it means falling profits for the capitalists, and because, under the current political circumstances, it is impelling the workers into struggle to maintain and improve their standard of living.

For the workers, the crisis means a rise in the cost of living, a drop in the buying power of the peso, and higher unemployment, malnutrition, and infant mortality.

In 1977, the cost of living for the lowest income category rose by 125% compared to 1969. However, this figure represents an even greater calamity for the workers if we consider that nominal wages have been frozen since 1966. It need only be noted that average annual wages of industrial workers in 1975 were lower by \$124.77 than in 1972.

However, it is in the loss of the buying power of these wages that the figures really show the ravages of inflation. For example, in 1975, the increase in the cost of living was around 46.3%.

According to the index of buying power of the peso in relation to the level of income for 1977, the real value of the peso for all income groups was reduced to 47.2 centavos now costs a peso, without their to 44.3 centavos.

This means that when the workers go shopping, what used to cost them 44 to 47 centavos now costs a peso, without their getting a wage increase to make up for it.

Employment is one of the best indicators of whether economic development is taking place, and whether it corresponds to real needs. Here, too, the Dominican Republic is in a deplorable situation.

In 1973, a study was carried out by a

panel of the International Labor Organization and the results were later published in book form under the title, "Generation of Productive Employment and Economic Growth." This work states that 20% of the economically active population in Santo Domingo suffered from unemployment. It also points out that about 80 percent of the economically active population is underemployed.

How high will unemployment go? The answer is indicated by the fact that 260,000 persons between the ages of ten and nineteen—5% of the population—are neither in school nor working.

The sharply falling lines of the government graphs that economic experts use for their analyses, or what they elegantly term a "bottleneck," represent for the masses chronic, gradual deterioration of their health, and death.

The economist Arismedi Díaz Santana, a professor in the Economics Department of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, concluded in analyzing a recent study of nutrition published by the National Office of Planning, that "75% of the population receives only 29% of the available income, and attains an insufficient level of protein and calorie consumption. In other words, the majority of the population is undernourished. By way of contrast, the 6% of the population that receives 43% of the income is generally overfed."

The effects of the economic crisis are felt in a tragic way by infants. Two out of every three children do not live to the end of their first year. More than 90% of the infant deaths recorded are related to diseases attributable to malnutrition and the lack of health services.

What does President Guzmán offer as a solution to this crisis? The new government is hoping to obtain international financing to carry out a series of projects that have not yet been spelled out publicly.

But can increasing the foreign debt help

to solve the present crisis? Up to now the country has gone into debt at a rapid rate, but its economic difficulties have continued.

In 1961, a scant seventeen years ago, the Dominican Republic did not have a foreign debt. In 1977, according to the Central Bank, the debt rose to the sum of 1.08 billion dollars.

Plunging the country even further into debt will only deepen the chronic aspects of the crisis. It may bring some temporary relief, but will later on throw the country into an even more desperate situation. This road leads us into the trap of going deeper into debt to repay previous debts.

The real cause of the Dominican economic crisis, as in any other colonial or semicolonial country, lies in its dependence on capitalist powers and in lagging production because of failure to carry out an agrarian reform.

The growth of the foreign debt will make our economy more dependent on the United States by way of the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, private financial agencies, and so on.

If the government really wants to solve the economic crisis, it can begin by nationalizing the foreign consortiums which repatriate the monetary resources needed for our development, and by expropriating the land from the big *latifundistas* in order to undertake an effective agrarian reform.

However, the Guzmán government has set itself the task of defending the private property of the national and foreign capitalists. And today—unfortunately for them—it is impossible to put a stop to the capitalist crisis within the limits of capitalism.

The sharpening of class conflicts that goes hand in hand with the deepening of the crisis, makes social revolution the only alternative for solving the country's economic problems as well as for emancipating the workers. □

**MEMO**

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### Why Nicaragua Keeps Carazo Awake at Night

[The following article appeared in the October 2-16 issue of *Que Hacer?*, fortnightly newspaper of the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Organization), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Costa Rica.]

\* \* \*

The Nicaraguan people's struggle against the Somoza tyranny has aroused a vast wave of solidarity among the masses of every country in the world. In the Central American region in particular the workers know that threats to the Nicaraguan people's struggle can be launched from their own countries.

In Costa Rica, the Carazo government faces a very complex situation. The course of the Nicaraguan revolution threatens to bring about a revolutionary conquest of power by the workers and the destruction of capitalist property relations right on Costa Rica's doorstep. This is a very grave situation for the Carazo government. Before long, the Costa Rican masses themselves would move in the same direction. So, defending capitalism in Nicaragua is one of Carazo's main preoccupations.

But how can he defend capitalism in Nicaragua? At this point, it is not clear whether Somoza is the best available defender of capitalism there, or the worst possible one. What is clear is that for the moment the bourgeois state structure, the power of the bosses, is bound up with Somozism.

If Carazo defends Somoza, by openly persecuting and jailing the Sandinistas, for example, the Costa Rican masses will turn against their own government in defense of the struggle against Somoza.

Unfortunately for Carazo, moreover, the Costa Rican government cannot just duck the issue. Not only does it border on Nicaragua but it is the only country in the region with some tradition of bourgeois democracy, and that makes it quite an important element in the imperialists' maneuvers.

Any moves by the imperialists against the Nicaraguan masses will need the Carazo government's support for "democratic" cover. Already in the case of the Dominican Republic, the imperialists needed Costa Rican participation in the military intervention. Costa Rican "soldiers" were brought in only to direct traffic. From a military point of view, they served no purpose. But that was not why they were there. The Costa Rican "troops" were there to provide democratic cover for the imperialists' invasion and slaughter of the Dominican people.

The democratic freedoms that have been won by the masses in Costa Rica make this country and these masses themselves the best rear guard for the Sandinista movement and the best refuge for those who have to flee. This means that Carazo has to confront Sandinista forces on Costa Rican territory, as well as the enormous social problem represented by the refugees.

He arrests Sandinistas, and then has to release them. He expropriates El Murciélago [Somoza's Costa Rican ranch], and then pays Somoza compensation. He has sent more than 2,000 Civil Guards to "watch" the border, and he is supporting the OAS's attempt to mediate in Nicaragua to "bring peace."

But Carazo has less and less room for maneuver to maintain this ambiguity. The deepening of the revolution in Nicaragua will force him to openly take the side of the "gorillas" and the imperialists. That's all

the Costa Rican masses are waiting for to eat him alive.

Carazo is going to have a hard time keeping the revolution in Nicaragua from crossing the borders that he is anxiously trying to guard against revolutionary "contamination."

All these factors explain why Carazo has been doing so much fancy footwork and juggling. He is trying to maintain an ambiguous policy. He cannot openly oppose the Sandinistas, and he cannot let them operate either. He cannot keep the Costa Rican people from mobilizing in support of the struggle in Nicaragua, but he cannot let these actions go on growing indefinitely, or allow money to be collected for Nicaragua.

Carazo wants the Central American countries with their military strongmen to intervene in Nicaragua and he has sent Junior\* to meet with these "gorillas." But he cannot get his hands dirty in such an operation either, and so he ended up just keeping quiet. □

\*Foreign Minister Rafael Calderón Fournier. His father was president of Costa Rica in the 1940s; hence the nickname "Junior."—IP/I

### Letter From Argentine PST

### The Release of Nahuel Moreno and Rita Strasberg

[The following open letter was issued in Madrid September 28 by the exterior leadership of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

On the eighteenth of this month, the Brazilian authorities released and expelled from the country Hugo Miguel Bressano (Nahuel Moreno) and Rita Strasberg, leaders of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Argentina. They had been detained in São Paulo on August 22, together with a group of nineteen leaders of the Socialist Convergence movement.\*

The release of the Argentine leaders has been the result not only of the lack of substantive charges against them and the powerful movement of protest inside Brazil, but also, and to an important extent, of the large number of demands for their release made by political personalities and institutions. Protests came from parlia-

mentary and trade-union figures in the United States, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, France, Italy, Greece, England, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, and West Germany.

Other weighty factors were the decisive interventions of the United Nations (through its High Commission in Brazil) and the Amnesty International organization.

Through this letter, the exterior leadership of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Argentina sends you our warmest appreciation. We have counted on your invaluable support and solidarity during this campaign for the release of our leaders.

We also want to reiterate our request that the campaign go forward until we secure the release of the Socialist Convergence members who are still detained. Their only crime has been to try to build a socialist party in Brazil within the legal framework.

Expressing again our thanks for your solidarity, sincerely,

*Eugenio Greco*, for the exterior leadership of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores.

\*For more information on the Socialist Convergence prisoners in Brazil, see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, September 25, p. 1059.

## Shah's Regime Rattled by Earthquake 'Aftershocks'

[Few events demonstrate as clearly as a natural disaster the corruption, inefficiency, and brutal lack of concern for human life that are the hallmarks of capitalist rule. For this reason, even under the most repressive regimes a major disaster can also have far-reaching political implications, bringing to the surface long-simmering hatred for the established order.

[A case in point is the September 16 earthquake in Tabas and the surrounding region of eastern Iran. The bitterness aroused by the Iranian regime's utter failure to take effective action to help the survivors has been chronicled by the press around the world. One example is the following report, which appeared in the September 29 issue of the Tokyo daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*. It was written by *Yomiuri Shimbun* correspondent Fujimoto following a visit to Tabas. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

TEHRAN—The tremendous earthquake that left 25,000 dead in the Iranian town of Tabas has given another jolt to the already unstable political situation in this country. For the Sharif-Emami cabinet, it has underscored the urgency of carrying through the long-delayed modernization of agriculture, and alleviating the disparity between Iran's cities and countryside.

As I drove the 1,500 kilometers from the capital city of Tehran out to Tabas, near the epicenter of the quake, I got a picture of the stark contrast between urban and rural Iran.

Tehran is a city built with the revenues from oil exports. High-rise buildings are going up one after another, and the broad, eight-lane freeways are covered by caravans of big, expensive cars. Even in farming villages 300 or 400 kilometers outside the capital, the better houses now have brick walls and tin roofs.

But as I got closer to Tabas, I saw nothing but ancient huts with sun-dried brick walls and mud roofs. Nomads were herding their sheep and camels, and occasionally there would be few farms clustered around an oasis. In little farming communities, the only signs of the modernization and industrialization that have passed these people by are the splendid paved highways and the new police stations with their flashy Mercedes-Benz patrol cars.

Although per capita income in Iran has reached \$2,250 per year, there is still an awful disparity between the cities and the countryside. It is estimated that some two

million agricultural workers have not benefited from the agrarian reforms carried out so far. As those workers abandon their villages and pour into the major cities, the countryside is left even poorer and more exhausted.

It was in this context that the earthquake hit Tabas. And in the aftermath of the quake, I found that the bitter feelings resulting from these age-old problems were transformed into a chorus of angry voices. Typical complaints were, "Sure, the army and the government sent aid, but it was way too late!" or "The shah came out to inspect the damage, but do you know how long he stayed here? Ten lousy minutes!"

Anti-government activity by Muslim organizations has gotten a major boost in this situation. The Islamic sect headed by Ayatollah Khomeyni (who is at present in exile in Iraq) is helping to organize rescue work, and its members now operate freely, without restriction, throughout Tabas.

Truckloads of food and clothing have poured into Tabas from Muslim organizations across the country. In spite of the burning 40°C [104°F] sun, even ice is in plentiful supply. Young students and other volunteers busily distribute relief supplies while talking to the people about Khomeyni and criticizing the monarchy and the army. In Tabas, where 80 percent of the population was lost in the earthquake and huge numbers of people have come in to look for relatives or help with relief work, the influence of Khomeyni's followers is not to be underestimated.

The army has also brought large quantities of food and other supplies into Tabas, but it seems that their method of distribution is inept. I heard disgruntled complaints such as, "I came eighty kilometers from my village to get food, and now they say they've run out!"

The army has offered its vehicles for use in transporting the wounded, and even to carry people who are not wounded but simply going to visit friends in the makeshift clinics. Army trucks are being used in place of public buses. Clearly the troops are trying hard to help the quake victims. But even so, there seems to be no letup in the antimilitary sentiment in Tabas. I took a ride in one truck where some youths were openly cursing the army and the shah. The soldiers just pretended not to hear them.

Immediately after the Sharif-Emami cabinet was formed there was a certain relaxation of the ban on political activity. Leaders of the National Front and other opposition parties came out of hiding for a brief period, although they have now gone back underground. The Iranian Commu-

nist Party also has a functioning organization outside the country.

Although the Muslim student volunteers doing relief work in Tabas invariably insisted to me that they were not getting any aid from Marxists or leftists, one can nevertheless easily imagine those young people going over to the left-wing opposition at a certain point.

The Sharif-Emami cabinet has announced that it will pay more attention to developing the agricultural sector. But closing the gap between rich and poor in Iran will require more than just improving conditions in the countryside, for there are stark contrasts of wealth and poverty within the cities as well.

In Tehran, where martial law remains in effect, soldiers and tanks are visible everywhere, although the situation has calmed down for the moment. But if the smoldering discontent here is ever expressed in organized form, it seems certain that Iranian politics could be plunged into chaos once again.

September 26, 1978

### The 'Israeli Option'

Brendan Willmer, a South African who bills himself as national director of the "Save Rhodesia Campaign," has placed a bounty of 100,000 rands (US\$115,000) on the heads of Zimbabwean nationalist leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe.

In a letter to the editor published in the September 30 weekly edition of the *Johannesburg Star*, Willmer calls for pledges aimed at underwriting the bounty, which would be paid "to anyone who succeeded in bringing either Nkomo or Mugabe to a country that would be prepared to try them for their crimes against humanity." To the white supremacists, of course, it is a "crime against humanity" to fight for Black majority rule.

Willmer made it clear that if it were not possible to kidnap Nkomo and Mugabe, more drastic measures would be appropriate. He declared that "as a last resort, we give the thumbs up to the 'Israeli Option.'"

In case any prospective bounty hunters were unsure of what that option was, Willmer elaborated somewhat:

"Besides spicing Eichmann out of Argentina and putting him on trial in Jerusalem," he explained, "the Israelis have dealt quietly and efficiently with several agents of Palestinian groups in France and Scandinavia. They have also knocked out nests of terrorists in Beirut itself. . . ."

# 57,000 Ford Workers on Strike in Britain

By Brian Grogan

LONDON—The central plank of the British Labour government's anti-working-class policies—the 5% limit on wage increases—is on its last legs. It has been mortally wounded by the determined strike action of 57,000 Ford workers and the overwhelming sympathy the strike has received inside the working class. On October 2, the Labour Party Conference decided by a 2-to-1 margin to throw out the 5% "and any wage restraint by whatever method."

The context of this vote showed how the Labour bureaucracy had been thoroughly shaken up by the action of the Ford workers. Despite threats by Prime Minister Callaghan that he would resign, and typical phony appeals to "unity" by the likes of "left" Cabinet Minister Michael Foot, the bloc votes of the large unions centrally involved in Ford and the overwhelming sentiment of the rank-and-file delegates carried the day.

Callaghan's immediate response was the typically insulting declaration that the 5% limit remains, plus threats to further slash public spending and increase taxation on the working class.

The union bureaucrats, frightened by what they have done and totally lacking in any serious alternative, are now trying to save Callaghan's bacon by arranging to meet to fudge up some "more acceptable" austerity package. What's more, instead of fighting for the removal of Callaghan and all the "five percenters" from their positions of responsibility, or insisting that a Labour government implements Conference decisions, the trade union tops will undoubtedly be looking for some scheme to sell out the Ford workers.

### Callaghan's Bluff Called

Callaghan received a body blow by the Labour Party decision. On September 7 he had surprised all the pundits by declaring that there was not to be a general election this autumn after all. This postponement, however, staked everything on imposing a fourth round of wage controls on the working class. Ford's were to be the first group of workers forced to swallow the 5% limit, followed by the public-sector workers, and then everyone else.

The Ford rank and file upset all these carefully prepared plans. As soon as they heard of the management's derisory offer, workers in the militant plants immediately downed tools and within twenty-four hours 57,000 workers were out and all twenty-three plants closed.

The union's claim is for £20 across the board and an hour off the day. In addition it demands a guaranteed week's pay, even if layoffs occur, as frequently happens. Also included are clauses on improving pensions, length of holidays, holiday bonuses, and demands to improve pay and conditions of shift and line workers.

The claim amounts to a 25% increase. If they win the claim in full, they should just about be able to make up for the decline in their living standards since Labour's pay policy was introduced in mid-1975. A victory would also open a breach through which other workers could follow, particularly other car workers and low-paid public-sector manual workers, who are both in the process of submitting claims.

Ford is clearly in a position to meet the union claim. Its profits last fiscal year were a whopping £300 million—up on the very good £246.1 million for 1977. Moreover, the Ford share of the British market is increasing.

On the surface, it would appear that Ford has a lot to lose. The sanctions that the government threatens to bring in against them if they succumb—orders to government departments for 25,000 cars—are hardly the biggest pressure on them. Rather, the Ford management, alongside other big capitalists, sees the holding of the government's guidelines as a necessary step to further depressing the living standards of the working class, sapping their morale and eventually defeating the organized strength of the unions.

Ford workers are therefore fighting the government—despite the ostrich-like stance of the union leadership, who insist that the battle is just with Ford.

The Labour Party Conference decision massively enhances the chances of a victory by the Ford workers. Especially as this was only the most highly publicized of a whole series of moves by the broader Labor movement. Right away, dockers in the Liverpool docks, next to the important Halewood Ford plant, decided not to touch any Ford products. This was quickly followed by boycotts at the Southampton, Hull, and London docks and by the National Union of Seamen. Now, no Ford products are being moved into or out of Britain.

The leadership of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), which represents the majority of the public-sector manual workers, has instructed its area and divisional committees to prepare contingency plans for strike action in pursuit

of the NUPE claim, which calls for a £60 minimum wage and a 35-hour week—a massive 40%. This claim would have remained no more than demagoguery for fading left leaders if it had not been for the Ford workers' action.

The miners' leaders have also been making threatening noises. They are even threatening to bring their claim forward by four months from next March to coincide with the Ford struggle. Workers in British Leyland have also been given a boost.

These developments signify an important boost of confidence for the British workers movement. This poses the very real possibility of reversing the setbacks of the past three years. It creates the best possible conditions for fighting for a socialist alternative to Callaghan and the right wing and halting the drift to the right in a number of unions (most clearly expressed in the recent victory of the right wing in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers [AUEW], the second largest industrial union).

If the left can seize the time, force out the five percenters, and fight for a socialist alternative, they would give the lie to Callaghan's claim that a consistent fight for workers interests will only let in a right-wing Tory government.

### Socialist Alternative Needed

In the absence of a credible socialist alternative, this potential could be frittered away. The working class has certainly suffered setbacks in the past period. But its organizational strength—including the integrity of the rank-and-file leadership—remains intact. The setbacks were suffered because of the failure of the left to win the argument for an alternative political course to that of Callaghan and to polarize the base of the mass organizations against the right wing. This would best have been done in the fight for united front action against the Labour government's offensive on the working class.

But instead there was no real fight against the first three phases of the government's austerity measures. Although the firefighters did go into struggle, the right-wing leaders of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) refused to launch class-wide action behind them and the lefts refused to organize to fight this betrayal. This sealed the national blockage on class-wide struggles.

Nonetheless, given the continuing underlying strength of the class, big defensive struggles have been possible and workers have even gone onto the offensive through local and sectoral struggles. Examples in the past year have been numerous: the Post Office Engineering Union's fight for thirty-five hours, the Leyland toolroom workers and Chrysler lorry plants' strikes for parity, the strikes for local agreements by the social workers, and a whole series of plant-based fights to win phony productiv-

# AGAINST THE 5%, FORD WORKERS ARE FIGHTING FOR EVERYONE



Laurence Sparham/IFL

Ford workers demonstrate in front of Transport and General Workers Union headquarters in London.

ity agreements allowed under the last round of pay laws. Hence the over-15% average wage increase won during the life of the "third phase" which was meant to hold the line at 10%.

At present the action of the Ford workers does not break out of this sectoralism. Union leaders argue that this dispute is a special case because of Ford's high profits. This argument is undoubtedly the main factor behind the determination of the rank and file. The main danger is that the demand could be taken to imply that where low profits are made—as at British Leyland—the workers should get a commensurately low rise in wages. This is in fact what those union leaders opposed to the 5% limit mean by "responsible collective bargaining." But worse is the cover this gives to union leaders in their failure to chart a real alternative to that of Callaghan.

There has been no real reply in face of Callaghan's charge that breaking the 5% will ruin Labour's electoral chances. There is similar silence to Callaghan's appeals to "national interest," saving the *British* car industry, keeping out the Japanese, and so on. This barrage of ideological arguments is being thrown at Ford workers and those taking solidarity action.

The utter bankruptcy of the left reformists was revealed for everyone to see at the Labour Party Conference debate. The best that was offered was the nationalistic rhetoric of Clive Jenkins, the "left" leader of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs: "We need higher wages to boost home demand" and "bring in import controls" was his only answer. But the argumentation of Moss Evans, newly elected leader of the nearly two-million-strong Transport & General Workers Union (T&GWU), was even worse. Dubbed by the press as the main architect behind the defeat of the 5%, he nonetheless conceded Callaghan's case.

"Yes," Evans said, "the fight against inflation [read wage controls] is vital, but it's not the only battle. We also need to fight the scourge of unemployment."

Following the vote, one after the other, the union leaders declared that the part of the resolution committing them to actually "campaign against" wage restraint was not seriously meant. They were all in favor of "responsible" collective bargaining. All of them welcomed Callaghan's invitation to more talks to try to concretize what "responsible" actually means in terms of holding down the standard of living of the working class and boosting profits.

Faced with opposition from a ruthless multinational firm and from the Labour government itself, the Ford workers can only be guaranteed victory if they mobilize the support of the rest of the working class. Unifying and class-wide demands are essential. The Ford claim itself is a good basis from which to start.

The £20 increase to make up for the decline in living standards must be linked with a call for a cost-of-living clause which rises with the rise in inflation. This type of demand is often called the sliding scale and would link the Ford claim to that submitted by the Cowley plant of British Leyland.

The demand for an hour off the day should be coupled with the call to hire more workers so that the problem of unemployment can begin to be tackled now. This would link the Ford claim with that of the public-sector workers and offer a real answer to the demands for productivity strings so bandied about by the Ford management and union leaders as a solution to the dispute.

Ford's high profits should be brought in front of all Ford workers. Such a situation clearly shows who gains from wage controls—the bosses. However, it is not fundamentally because of high profits that

workers should get a raise. Whatever the profit situation, workers should get increases which keep living standards up beyond the rate of inflation.

The fight for these alternative policies is part and parcel of a fight to build an alternative leadership of the Labour movement capable of taking up class-struggle demands and hostile to appeals for class collaboration. In the first place this means a serious fight to remove all the five percenters from their positions of trust and responsibility in the Labor movement—starting with the removal of Callaghan as Labour leader.

#### Democratic Self-Organization

Ford workers are now in a tremendously favorable situation. Their action and the sympathy and solidarity they have aroused has put victory within reach. But new dangers now face them.

The course of the strike is in the hands of the full-time officials and their hangers-on. Systematic mass meetings have not been held, mass picketing has been discouraged, and no strike committee has been elected. This leaves it open to the officials to sell massive speed-up, redundancies, and line discipline for a small increase over 5%. Other demands the Ford management is raising center on closer discipline of the work force—including penalty clauses for lateness, absenteeism, and the like.

The lessons of the 1971 Ford strike need to be kept in mind. The lack of control over the negotiators led to a sellout after nine weeks of strike, despite the equally militant rank-and-file walkout. Then the workers were tied to a two-year no-strike deal, far below their original demands. The traditional mass meetings where workers collectively discussed what to do and whether it was possible to win more, and where opponents of the deal could argue it should be rejected, was replaced by the then-unprecedented postal ballot. Nineteen-seventy-one went down as the "big stay-at-home strike."

There is another lesson of the 1971 strike. In that dispute, the Ford management made good use of the multinational character of their operation. Work was transferred to plants in Germany and Canada. Moreover, the president of the U.S. United Auto Workers union was flown into Britain to help sell the deal to the rank and file. Henry Ford II made his usual threats to withdraw the Ford operation from Britain altogether if the workers didn't show more "reasonableness." Solidarity actions from Ford workers in Europe and North America—which has already been promised through the top officials—could stymie similar moves this time around.

Messages of solidarity should be sent to: Ford(UK) Workers Combine Committee, 25 Dearmer House, London SW2, England.

October 5, 1978

## Nixon, Pollution, the Shah, and South Africa

### Topics to Be Treated With Care in Polish Press

*It is necessary to eliminate information about the direct danger to human life and health caused by industry and chemicals used in agriculture.*

*All publications presenting generalized facts and figures concerning safety and hygiene at work, and industrial diseases, must be withheld.*

The above directives are contained in secret instructions circulated to employees of Poland's censorship offices and carried to the West last year by a former censor, Tomasz Strzyzowski. They provide a chilling glimpse of the extent to which the Stalinist regime in Poland tries to suppress not only political dissent but basic information that might cast doubt on its policies and leadership of society—even when that information is of life and death importance to the average citizen.

While former censors have previously given personal accounts of how censorship operates in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, this is the first time documents such as these have been made public.

The July-August issue of *Index on Censorship*, published in London, contains an article describing the documents, which are dated from February 1974 to February 1977.\*

The directives quoted above are from a document of more than seventy pages entitled *Memoranda and Recommendations From the Central Office for Control of the Press, Publications and Performances*. Strzyzowski worked at the Cracow Branch of this "Central Office."

Judging from another "guideline" contained in the same document, the regime wants to keep from citizens facts concerning not only potential hazards to life and limb but actual industrial disasters. "No information should be published about the catastrophe at the 'Katowice' mine, where four miners were killed," it stated.

Another sensitive question for the Gierek regime is Poland's economic relations with the Soviet Union and also with the capitalist countries.

For example, a long-standing complaint of Polish workers has been the shortage of meat. The censors were told that "there should be no mention of Poland's meat exports to the USSR."

Apparently there have also been complaints about the shoddiness of goods purchased from the Soviet Union. A direc-

tive specifies that "there should be no criticism of drilling equipment produced in the USSR and used for geological purposes in Poland."

On the other hand, "All information about licenses obtained by Poland in capitalist countries should be eliminated from the mass media." Also, "No information should be passed out about the annual coffee consumption in our country so as to eliminate all possibilities of calculating the amount of coffee which is re-exported." And finally, "No information should be published concerning possible trade with Rhodesia and South Africa, or contacts between Polish institutions and South Africa."

Gierek was concerned about what was said in the Polish press about the shah of Iran even before that "crowned cannibal" butchered thousands of peaceful protesters recently: "All material (including the briefest references, photographs, etc.) on Iran, past and present, the Shah, his family and persons connected with him, or 'predictions' on the future fate of monarchy in Iran, should be cleared with the Central Office for the Control of Press, Publications and Performances (COCPPP). . . . Emphasis should not be placed on Iran's role in the context of the policies pursued by imperialist forces in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean." The Gierek regime has had friendly relations with the shah for some time.

Another chief of state highly unpopular with the citizens in whose name he ruled benefited from a similar news blackout. During the Watergate scandal it was widely noted that all the Stalinist regimes, from Brezhnev to Gierek to Mao, suppressed information on the problems of their friend in the White House, Richard Nixon. Now we have documentary evidence that the censorship office in Poland was specifically told to do exactly that. "Until further notice, material independently acquired on the Watergate affair in the United States will not be published," a directive stated.

Evidently, Gierek was worried that exposure of the criminal conspiracy against democratic rights carried out by Nixon and his predecessors, if publicized in Poland, might give Polish working people "bad" ideas about the nature of their own government. □

\*The entire collection of documents, which amounts to some 700 pages, has been published in Polish in two volumes under the title *Black Book of Polish Censorship*. The publisher is *Aneks*, a London-based Polish political quarterly.

Keep your files complete and up-to-date. Missing issues for the current year may be ordered by sending 75¢ per copy. Write for information about previous years.

## Gloomy Prospects for World Capitalist Economy

By Jon Britton

The official reports were upbeat on prospects for the world capitalist economy. But the mood of the thousands of bankers attending the recent annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington "was overwhelmingly pessimistic," *Business Week* reported.

"I've never seen anything like it," *Newsweek* quoted a "senior U.S. Treasury official" as saying. "Our economic prospects are genuinely improved, and even the speeches are a little brighter. But the general mood is funk, blue funk over the dollar."

The 3,500 finance ministers, private bankers, and economists who attended the September 25-28 meeting heard a welcoming speech by President Carter. Earlier, the Interim Committee had agreed to boost by 50% to \$75 billion the IMF's lending power by increasing individual countries' quotas in the common fund. In another significant change, the number of executive directors was expanded from twenty to twenty-one with the addition of a permanent seat for Saudi Arabia, now after the United States the second-largest provider of funds to the 135-country agency.

But the most noteworthy feature of this prestigious gathering was undoubtedly the wide gap between the official optimism expressed in speeches and the gloom conveyed by private bankers in interviews with reporters.

It's true, of course, that government officials invariably paint things brighter than they are, especially when it comes to the economy. Central bankers, treasury officials, and economic advisers to presidents are not known for sounding an alarm at the approach of a slump, for example.

In this era of mounting economic problems and uncertain profit prospects, capitalist confidence is shaky, and so public officials go out of their way to assure their masters that everything is under control, or will be soon. (They also try to calm the workers, of course.)

Thus, Carter told the assembled financial elite that he was staking his "honor" and "reputation as a leader" on his pledge "to maintain a strong dollar." The next day Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal predicted that the deficit in U.S. international payments would be reduced some 30% to 40% next year from this year's estimated figure of close to \$20 billion.

Jacque de Larosiere, the new managing

director of the IMF, told his audience that the world's major international economic ailments "are on the way to being cured."

The main grounds for optimism cited by Larosiere were (1) that the wide gap between the U.S. growth rate and economic expansion in other countries, which has contributed to a massive U.S. trade deficit, would narrow in 1979 and 1980; and (2) that the high levels of inflation in most of the industrialized capitalist countries have been brought down—with the notable exception of the United States.

The two points are related in that lowered inflation in Europe and Japan has encouraged the governments of the affected countries to adopt more expansionary fiscal and monetary policies in hopes of bringing about faster growth.

If at the same time the Carter administration and the Federal Reserve succeed in their current efforts to slow the U.S. economy, along with inflation, without precipitating a severe downturn, the happy result will be a convergence of growth rates and the alleviation of the huge trade imbalances that have contributed to the international flight from the dollar and have heightened protectionist pressures.

True enough, the "converged" growth rates would be rather modest. The IMF's forecast calls for real growth in the "industrial countries" of only 3.75% this year and in the first half of 1979, which means continued high levels of unemployment. This figure compares to the more sprightly 5.2% rate of economic expansion for the same countries in 1976 and is only slightly above the 3.7% recorded in 1977. But, a banker might ask, what does a little joblessness matter if stability is restored to world finance?

As we already know, however, this "optimistic" projection did little to dispel the "overwhelmingly pessimistic" sentiment that pervaded the bankers conclave.

### Dollar the Overriding Concern

As *Business Week's* October 9 report makes clear, the main concern of the world's financial chiefs is the continued weakness of the U.S. dollar. Even as the meeting got under way, dumping of dollars in favor of stronger currencies and gold picked up speed. On the third day of the conference, the Commerce Department announced that the U.S. deficit in international trade had narrowed to \$1.6 billion in August from \$3 billion in July, but even this favorable omen did little to buoy the battered greenback.

The dollar's fall seemed to be accelerated by a development that was much discussed at the IMF-World Bank meeting: moves by the nine members of the European Common Market to set up a new currency union by the beginning of next year.

The plan is to create a zone of monetary stability by reestablishing among the Common Market countries a fixed-exchange-rate system similar to the Bretton Woods system that collapsed in 1971.

Should this "European Monetary System" (EMS) get off the ground, the weaker European currencies, which would now be tightly bound to the West German Deutschemark, would become more attractive. The result would probably be added downward pressure on the dollar as multinational corporations and banks, as well as the oil-exporting countries, "begin to diversify into the French franc, the pound, or even the lira as they already have been doing into D-marks and Swiss francs," an official of the West German central bank admitted to *Business Week*.

The fear that a European currency bloc would further undermine the dollar seemed to be confirmed a few days after the bankers meeting when a move by the Swiss central bank to realign the Swiss franc and West German mark in preparation for fixed exchange rates quickly precipitated a new dollar plunge.

The financiers are also worried that Carter is too weak politically to take the unpopular steps necessary to stem the dollar's slide. As *Business Week* put it:

... it is hard to find many private bankers who believe that the White House is strong enough to cut the government deficit or to come up with an effective program to contain wages and prices. "The budget deficit is being reduced, but the sad fact is that it is still enormous at a time when the U.S. economy is near or even at the top of its business cycle," says Ken Mathysen-Gerst, president of Capital International, an investment fund in Geneva. "It will be very difficult for the Administration to put together a tough wage-and-price program, since the unions will not go along," he adds.

There are good reasons for the gloom evoked by the fall of the U.S. dollar. For one thing, it reinforces the uneven growth rates and trade imbalances that are contributing to the dollar's weakness in the first place.

As the exchange rate of the dollar falls relative to the yen, for example, prices of U.S. exports in terms of yen decline while the prices of Japanese goods in the U.S. market rise. The net effect is to put down-

ward pressure on the profits of Japanese firms as they are forced to slash prices to meet the competitive threat. If they fail to cut prices, they may lose markets, which also results in lowered profits. The shrunken profits, in turn, discourage investment, causing the Japanese economy to stagnate.

The sinking dollar has had a similar depressing effect on West Germany and a number of other European economies.

Thus, if the dollar continues to decline relative to other major currencies, the scheme to converge growth rates by "reflating" in Europe and Japan may come to nought.

On the other hand, there are signs that the European and Japanese economies are beginning to pick up. For example, industrial production in Japan in August was up nearly 1% from the previous month and up 5.6% from a year earlier.

### A Marxist Assessment

What then are the real prospects for the world capitalist economy? A Marxist assessment requires that both political and economic factors be taken into account.

On the economic side, the most important factor to keep in mind is that since around the turn of the decade, when the long post-World War II boom came to an end, the world capitalist economy has entered a period of declining profit rates, increasing overproduction, intensified competition, and threatening depression.

In fact, overproduction cannot be fully liquidated and the basis laid for a restored high rate of profit and renewed "healthy" capitalist economic growth without a major world depression like that of the 1930s and the social agony and explosions that would go with it.

But here is where the key political factor comes into play. Beginning with the outcome of the Second World War, which within a decade saw capitalist property relations overturned in Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, and North Vietnam, the anticapitalist forces on a world scale have experienced a qualitative increase in strength. This has caused the imperialist powers, with the United States in the lead, to take a series of immensely expensive countermeasures. In the language of the Vietnam War, these could be summed up as a worldwide pacification program against social revolution.

As in Vietnam, the effort combined a giant military apparatus with social spending aimed at winning, or holding, the "hearts and minds" of the masses in face of the "communist threat." While the long boom lasted, employers also made concessions in regards to wages and benefits. Militant leaders of the labor movement were corrupted and bought off, and those who weren't were purged or otherwise gotten rid of—in the United States

under the blows of the McCarthyite witch-hunt.

Because it assumed the role of world policeman, and even adopted the long-term goal of rolling back the socialist revolution where it had conquered, U.S. imperialism came to be burdened with the biggest military expenditures. All the imperialist powers, with the exception of Japan, undertook relatively large social-welfare outlays (relative, that is, to their budgets, not to the needs of working people).

Up till the last half of the 1960s, these expenditures could be financed without serious problem, since buoyant economies provided plenty of tax revenue both for direct expenditures and for paying interest on government debt. But then the financial burden of the war in Vietnam and the "Great Society" programs at home overstrained the financial capacities of the Yankee colossus. Blocked by mass antiwar sentiment from drastically raising taxes, Lyndon Johnson resorted to the printing press to finance both guns and a little butter. The result was that in March 1968 the dollar's good-as-gold status was suspended, prices soared, and the international flight from the U.S. currency began in earnest.

### Rug Pulled Out

In 1969-70 Nixon held down government expenditures, brought the budget into surplus, and restored the dollar's official gold parity of \$35 an ounce. But no sooner had he accomplished that than the rug was pulled out from under the government's financial feet by the long-term slowdown of the world capitalist economy.

The renewed financial crisis of U.S. imperialism, which was now to become chronic, was again signaled by a dollar crisis. In August 1971 Nixon was forced to adopt his "New Economic Policy" in response.

In essence, Nixon's NEP marked a recognition by the U.S. imperialists that political considerations, namely the threat of social revolution, immediate or potential, required a continued high level of government spending despite the deteriorating economy, both to maintain their worldwide pacification program and to forestall a major depression. This decision was incompatible with maintaining the convertibility of the dollar, since a portion of the expenditures would have to be financed with printing-press money, which would inevitably result in the depreciation of the currency.

And so Nixon slammed shut the gold window to foreign holders of dollars. At the same time, he stepped up government deficit spending and the Federal Reserve began creating massive amounts of new money to finance it.

Nixon also imposed a wage freeze, the opening shot in an antilabor profit-boosting operation that in one form or

another has been carried on ever since. As a sop to labor, he declared a freeze on prices, which wasn't and couldn't be seriously enforced.

Nixon had some temporary success owing to the fact that the new policy was initiated at the beginning of an upturn in the short-term business cycle and also to the fact that as usual there was a lag between the time the money supply began growing rapidly and when the effects on prices began to show up.

But as the cycle reached its peak in 1973-74, inflation threatened to soar out of control and the Federal Reserve moved to slow the growth of the money supply. This triggered a "credit crunch" (an extreme shortage of credit), which in turn precipitated the slump of 1974-75. As demand for imported goods in the United States fell, the crisis spread, producing the first worldwide downturn since 1937-38.

### Major Crash Averted

A continued high level of government spending provided a floor for the economy, however, and prevented a major collapse. Soon excess inventories were worked off, workers were "disciplined" as a result of mass layoffs, profit prospects improved, the dollar strengthened, and the basis was laid for a cyclical recovery, which is still under way more than three years later.

The current expansion has been hesitant and uneven, for a number of reasons.

First of all, the corporations have been slow to resume large-scale capital spending, since many of them barely avoided bankruptcy during the 1973-74 credit crisis, and quite a few actually went under. Uncertain profit prospects owing to the continued high rates of inflation have added to their hesitancy.

In addition, the upsurge of inflation and intensified competition caused capitalist governments around the world to launch austerity drives of varying severity to reduce the financial burden of social spending and to lower workers' expectations regarding wages, control over conditions on the job, and government services of all kinds.

A further indication of the financial pressure is the fact that direct U.S. military outlays have fallen substantially since the high point of the Vietnam War, both in terms of constant dollars and as a percentage of the Gross National Product.\* Carter is now trying to reverse the trend, which will further depreciate the dollar unless major new cuts are made in social

\*The U.S. imperialists have avoided a comparable drop in their warmaking potential through technological "improvements" and by selling tens of billions of dollars worth of arms, including sophisticated missiles and fighter planes, to allied client states such as Iran. The shah is now having to cut back on such purchases, however, because of his own financial difficulties in face of the continuing mass upsurge.



spending, or taxes are raised, or both.

Up till now the United States has recovered faster than the other imperialist economies mainly because of Carter's relatively expansionist policies, which have called forth a tremendous buildup of both government and consumer debt. Since 1974, consumer installment debt is up 49% to \$300 billion, residential mortgage debt 54% to \$750 billion, and borrowing by the U.S. government 47% to \$825 billion.

The relatively faster growth of the giant U.S. economy was crucial in propping up world demand and making possible the more "fiscally prudent" policies that have been pursued in Europe and Japan.

### New Slump Imminent?

Because the current recovery has lasted longer than the previous upturn of 1971-73, and in fact longer than all the previous post-World War II upturns but one, it is tempting to conclude that a new slump is just around the corner. The renewed flight out of the dollar that began last year and the movement back toward double-digit inflation rates would seem to clinch the case.

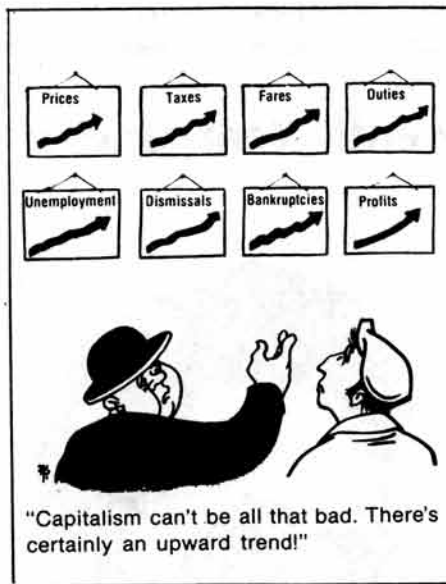
Arguing against such a conclusion, however, is the fact that the major imperialist governments, including the government of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, which was the last holdout, have thrown caution to the winds and are now following highly stimulative policies. While the Carter administration has taken some gingerly steps towards tightening up, U.S. fiscal and monetary policy remains strongly stimulative. Carter obviously hopes to keep it that way at least through the 1980 elections.

Meanwhile, the very fact that the upturn has been so sluggish has undoubtedly stretched it out. Capital turnover has been significantly slowed because underutilized equipment takes longer to wear out and therefore has to be replaced less quickly. Sooner or later, though, equipment does wear out, or becomes hopelessly obsolete, and has to be replaced. When that happens on a large enough scale, it can spur a significant upturn in capital spending, which in turn boosts economic activity generally.

Such spending has, in fact, been picking up in the United States in recent months. One indication of this is that new orders by manufacturers for machines that shape metal parts for both consumer products and industrial equipment were up 57% in August from a year earlier.

If the expansionary policies now being pursued in Europe and Japan coincide with and help bring about a similar upturn in those countries, a certain convergence of world growth rates could occur and the U.S. trade deficit could decline, temporarily strengthening the dollar relative to other major currencies.

The dollar would probably also be



buoyed if the proposed European currency union fails to get off the ground, which is not at all out of the question. A similar scheme foundered in 1973, because political pressures made it impossible for the participating governments to subordinate national economic policy to maintaining fixed exchange rates with the other currencies in the arrangement. European governments will not be less buffeted by the class struggle in the period ahead.

In short, it is by no means excluded that the current expansion could be further prolonged, though at the cost of accelerating inflation worldwide such as occurred during the last synchronized boom in 1973. Most likely the inflation will be worse this time around since government deficits are generally higher and the underlying economies weaker.

Should this short-term perspective be realized, workers in many countries will face relatively favorable conditions for waging militant trade-union struggles. In fact they will *have* to wage such defensive struggles if they are to win wage gains that keep pace with inflation, as well as to defeat the "give back" campaign of the employers.

Whether the current expansion is prolonged for a year or two or is cut short in a matter of months will most likely be signaled by the dollar's fortunes in the foreign-exchange markets. If the U.S. currency continues to plunge, the European and Japanese upturns could be aborted. Moreover, Carter and the Federal Reserve will come under more and more pressure to slash the government deficit and to slow the growth of the money supply in a decisive way. The resulting constriction of demand and credit is likely then to precipitate in short order a new slump of uncertain severity.

### What the Future Holds

Whatever the near-term perspective, the

longer-run prospects for the capitalist economy are much more certain. They can be briefly summed up as follows:

The capitalist governments everywhere will continue to follow an inflationary policy, combined with austerity drives against the working class to the extent they can get away with it. This policy will be adhered to regardless of the ups and downs of the business cycle and regardless of which procapitalist party or combination of parties is running a particular government. Even Pinochet in Chile has continued to inflate, though, thanks to his horrendous austerity measures, on a much reduced scale compared to the previous government of Salvador Allende.

Thus, as the workers movement gains strength, as overproduction worsens, as slumps get deeper and upturns weaker, money has to be printed in more and more prodigious amounts to finance state expenditures and forestall a major slump.

What this points to in the long run—and not too long at that in view of current trends—is runaway inflation on a world scale, culminating in a hyperinflationary explosion that will bring about the most catastrophic economic, social, and political crisis imaginable. That is what the future could hold if the crisis-ridden profit system maintains its sway.

Although the bankers who gathered in Washington in late September may not have this clear a view of the future, they undoubtedly see large elements of it. That nightmarish vision, concretized today in the inexorable fall of the dollar, accounts for their "overwhelming pessimism" as well as the frantic efforts of public officials to assure them—and us—that better times are ahead.

October 13, 1978

### Go Forth and Sin No More

The White House excused a major corporate polluter October 6, in return for a promise of better behavior in the future.

Republic Steel, which had been fined \$3.1 million for polluting the air at its facilities in northeastern Ohio, had the fine lifted in return for a promise to build cleaner production facilities near Warren and Youngstown, Ohio, over the next four years.

Republic has violated the federal clean-air standards since they were tightened in July 1977. The facilities in question spew some 2,700 tons of dust, soot, and other debris into the air each year, an average of more than twenty pounds for each resident of Youngstown and Warren.

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## Philippines Enters Seventh Year Under Martial Law

By Dan Dickeson

Four hundred demonstrators marched in downtown Manila protesting against the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos on September 21, the sixth anniversary of the imposition of martial law in the Philippines. According to an Associated Press dispatch, at least seventeen persons were arrested as police broke up the march.

The next day in Manila, former Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal announced the formation of a "People's Coalition for Democracy," consisting of some ten opposition parties and groups. The coalition's program calls for an immediate end to martial law, the restoration of democratic rights and due process, and the holding of free elections to replace the current regime.

There have also been reports of ongoing guerrilla fighting in the countryside. According to an article in the August 27 *Washington Post*, the New People's Army, described as a Maoist-oriented guerrilla group, now has an estimated 2,500 to 3,000 armed fighters and is active on the main island of Luzon.

In addition, the Muslim minority centered in the southern island of Mindanao has long been resisting control by the central government in Manila. The *Washington Post* report estimated that nearly 85 percent of the government's combat troops are currently involved in fighting the nationalist movement in the south. The *New York Times* reported July 31 that fighting has spread to three more southern provinces following the breakdown of negotiations between the Marcos regime and the Moro National Liberation Front, the main insurgent group.

Nor has Marcos succeeded in breaking the resistance of Filipino workers. In spite of a government ban on all strikes, the regime's Department of Labor acknowledged that at least 135 strikes took place in 1976 and 1977, and 20 more were reported in Manila alone during the first five months of 1978.

There have even been protests against the construction of a nuclear power plant.

All signs point to continuing ferment against the hated dictatorship, which remains on shaky ground after six years of direct military rule.

### Martial Law Under Marcos

Martial law was imposed in September 1972, concentrating virtually unlimited power in the hands of President Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos rules by decree, and has the power to appoint or remove govern-



MARCOS: Rule by bayonet.

ment officials ranging from cabinet ministers down to provincial governors and city, town, and village mayors.

Thousands have been jailed for speaking out against the dictatorship. Widespread use of torture against political prisoners has been documented by Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. According to a report in the September 22 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, delegates to the August 1978 meeting of the International Law Association in Manila received an open letter from political prisoners in the Bicutan "Rehabilitation Center," who described in detail the savage torture and summary executions of political detainees.

In April 1978, in an attempt to project a more "democratic" image, Marcos allowed elections to be held for an "interim National Assembly." The election campaign took place under martial law, with Liberal Party leader Benigno Aquino and other prominent opposition figures still in prison. Even so, the massive outpouring of support for opposition candidates startled the regime. The vote counting was marked by such transparent fraud that even members of the U.S. Congress were forced to protest Marcos's stealing of the election.

Even though the new assembly is packed with a pro-Marcos majority, and cabinet ministers handpicked by Marcos chair all its major committees, it is not allowed to exercise any real power. Marcos still legislates by decree and has unrestricted veto power over decisions of the assembly. Perhaps most importantly, Marcos can simply jail any assembly members who step too far out of line.

In recent months the Philippine press has speculated that Marcos's wife Imelda, now the governor of metropolitan Manila, may be appointed deputy prime minister. Government officials have so far declined to confirm the rumors about the start of a "Marcos dynasty," but the fact that the censored press gives wide play to such speculation shows that the regime is not averse to the idea. Imelda Marcos's appointment to the number two spot would mean that even in the event of her husband's death the government would still be headed by a member of the Marcos family, the biggest capitalist group in the Philippines.

### Economic Stagnation

When martial law was declared, Marcos proclaimed the goal of building a "New Society." But six years later the country remains bogged down in an economic crisis that shows no signs of abating.

The Philippines was hit hard by the rise in petroleum prices and the worldwide economic recession. The recent decline in the market price of sugar has further exacerbated the problems of the economy.

Recent statistics released by the National Economic and Development Authority show that sugar exports, which used to be the country's largest source of foreign exchange, fell to \$102.8 million in the first half of 1978, compared with the already-depressed figure of \$277.6 million during the same period in 1977.

This has led to an acute trade imbalance, with imports exceeding exports by a total of \$733.6 million in the first half of 1978. To cover the deficit, the regime has had to obtain massive loans from abroad. Between January and August it has already borrowed \$950 million, the limit imposed by the International Monetary Fund for all of 1978.

Various schemes have been proposed for dealing with the economic crisis, but none of them seem to have much chance of success.

In hopes of getting IMF approval for additional loans, Marcos is reportedly

considering plans to impose a series of new taxes in order to increase government revenue and decrease internal consumption, making more products available for export.

The regime is also trying to negotiate a new agreement with the United States under which the Pentagon would pay some \$1 billion in "rent" for the American military bases in the Philippines over the next five years (the U.S. has refused to pay any rent for the bases up to now).

In another big gamble, Marcos has stationed a garrison of Philippine troops on one of the Spratley Islands in the South China Sea, where deposits of oil are believed to exist. Those islands are also claimed by the governments of Vietnam, China and Taiwan, and both Hanoi and Taipei have also stationed troops there to stake out their claims.

#### Doubts in Washington

Marcos' hopes for relief from the country's economic crisis are pinned on obtaining more U.S. aid in the form of IMF-approved loans, military aid and base "rent" payments, and U.S. backing for Manila's claim to oil in the Spratley Islands. But it is not at all clear that the American ruling class wants to extend that sort of aid to its former colony.

After the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Indochina, and with recent improvements in military airlift capabilities, the big U.S. air and naval bases in the Philippines have lost some of their former strategic importance. It is now questionable whether U.S. imperialism will consent to shell out a billion dollars in "rent" for the bases, and highly unlikely that Washington wants to give Marcos the direct military backing he will need to successfully assert his government's claim to the Spratley Islands.

In addition, American officials are nervous about continuing opposition activity within the Philippines. The very presence of U.S. bases implies a commitment to intervene militarily on behalf of the regime in the event of a mass popular uprising. American capitalists, facing deep antiwar sentiment at home, hardly relish the prospect of a new Vietnam. At the same time, the presence of U.S. troops can only encourage Marcos to take an arrogant, hard line toward his opponents. Washington also has to weigh the political cost of openly bankrolling a dictatorship whose crimes have become increasingly well known to American working people.

A debate is now going on within the American ruling class over whether to keep the bases in the Philippines or transfer them to other, more "reliable" locations in East Asia. The August 27 *Washington Post* carried a major article by George Kahin, a prominent academic figure with contacts in the U.S. military establishment, who argued that by maintaining the bases ". . . the [Carter] admin-

istration is keeping the United States hostage to unpredictable political developments within the Philippines and to Filipino military requirements that clash with U.S. strategic priorities."

One clear indication that U.S. capitalists now view the Philippines as a lower "strategic priority" is the fact that the U.S. State Department, Congress, and mass media have openly criticized the suppression of human rights under Marcos. In the case of crucially important countries such as Iran, American officials willingly sacrifice their own credibility in order to cover up the crimes of their client regimes. But in contrast, Carter has chosen to make the Philippines an example of his supposed concern for human rights.

## Trade-Union Rights Under Attack in India

By Sharad Jhaveri

JAMNAGAR—Trade unionists and political activists in India are moving into action to oppose a new repressive labor relations bill that was introduced into the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) August 30.

In the Lok Sabha itself, there was vehement opposition to the bill, with some members of Parliament denouncing it as "anti-working-class." According to a report in the September 9 *Economic Times*, trade unions in Bombay, a major industrial center, have started to mobilize against the proposed legislation.

The professed aim of the bill, which was introduced by Labor Minister Ravindra Varma, is to provide the conditions for the growth of a "healthy and responsible" trade-union movement. In actuality, it represents a frontal attack on basic trade-union rights.

The right to strike in India is not constitutionally recognized, but was won as a de facto right through important working-class struggles. Now, the Janata Party regime is seeking to curb this de facto right to conduct strikes, pickets, occupations, and other direct labor actions.

According to the bill, there will be no right to strike at all in what the regime will regard as essential services. Provisions will be made for compulsory arbitration of disputes. Moreover, the regime can include any industry under this category, thus giving it the power to extend the strike ban even further.

In those industries not considered essential, the right to strike will still be curbed to a degree. A strike action can be launched only when an appointed negotiating agent—not the workers' own trade union—conducts a secret strike ballot, and 60 percent of the workers vote for a strike. Even then, fourteen days' advance notice is required before the workers can down

The U.S. Congress has also threatened to reduce or withhold aid to Marcos, in an effort to pressure him into cleaning up his image. This was one factor underlying the regime's decision to hold fake elections in April and establish a showpiece "National Assembly."

Demonstrations protesting U.S. aid to the Marcos dictatorship and calling for an end to martial law took place in a number of American cities in late September. This sort of protest activity needs to be continued and broadened. International solidarity can play a key role in helping the Filipino people throw off the brutal martial-law regime they have endured now for six long years. □

their tools. Not only are the unions deprived of their right to decide on strike action, but there is nothing to compel the negotiating agent to conduct a vote.

Picketing has been made illegal, as have "work to rule" and "down the tools" actions. They are listed as unfair practices prohibited by the bill.

If despite such stringent measures, the workers go on strike anyway, the bosses can legally declare a lockout.

Aiming at the very heart of trade unionism in India, the bill also refuses to recognize unions as bargaining agents on behalf of their workers. Even registered trade unions are to be bypassed.

Industrial tribunals appointed by the regime will determine whether the union is to be considered a "negotiating agent," an "associate union," or a "local union." A registered union with the support of 65 percent of the workers can be recognized as the sole negotiating agent. Unions with between 50 percent and 65 percent support can act as chief negotiating agents. The rest will be designated either as associate or local unions.

The method of determination is left up to the regime. The workers themselves have no right to elect or recall the bargaining agent through democratic assemblies. The negotiating agent will not be required to consult with the workers, conduct open negotiations, or even report back before reaching an agreement. The agent's decision will be final and binding, with no right of the workers to challenge it.

These measures seek to legitimize state intervention in every aspect of the life of a trade union, from the time of its formation to any effort to launch direct action. It is necessary for the Indian working class to give an organized response to this capitalist effort to tighten the legal noose around their unions. □

## Revolution in the Third World

Reviewed by Ernest Harsch



Under the impact of the anticolonial upsurge of the 1950s and 1960s—especially the Algerian independence struggle and the Cuban revolution—a series of vaguely defined beliefs gained credence among certain nationalist and revolutionary circles. They fell under the loose label of “Third Worldism.”

It was held that the peoples of the colonial and semicolonial world could rid their countries of imperialist domination either by waging guerrilla campaigns and wars of national liberation or by pursuing nationalist-inclined economic policies that promised greater industrial growth. Political strategy and class struggle were pushed to the background—if they were considered at all.

One of the popularizers of that myth was Gérard Chaliand, a journalist and radical political analyst who has closely studied revolutionary movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, often on a firsthand basis, for many years.

In the 1950s, Chaliand travelled through the Middle East and Asia. During the Algerian war, he worked underground for the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), and in 1963 became editor in chief of *Révolution Africaine*, the FLN’s central organ. In subsequent years he visited the insurgent areas of Guinea-Bissau, interviewed peasants in North Vietnam during the American bombing raids, lived among Palestinian resistance movements, investigated guerrilla-held areas of Colombia, and travelled with the Eritrean independence fighters.

Chaliand has written several books based on his studies and made the acquaintance of such figures as Ché Guevara, Ben Bella, Sékou Touré, and Amílcar Cabral.

Despite its title, *Revolution in the Third World* (which was originally published in French in 1976) is not another contribution to the myth of Third Worldism. It is instead an honest attempt to come to grips with the brutal truth, with the realization that Third Worldism is indeed a myth—and, more importantly, that it needs to be deflated. Coming from someone with as much experience as Chaliand, the conclusions he draws are of more than passing interest.

In essence, Chaliand draws up a balance sheet of what he sees as the successes and

failures of the various guerrilla movements, national liberation struggles, reformist experiments, and revolutions that have taken place since the late 1950s. With a few exceptions, he finds that the debit column comes out way ahead.

Surveying the dismal record of guerrilla

*Revolution in the Third World*, by Gérard Chaliand. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978. 202 pp. £1.50, \$2.95.

warfare in Latin America, Chaliand notes that the Cuban revolution and the failure of the American-backed Bay of Pigs invasion led many currents on the continent to overestimate the efficacy of guerrilla warfare and underestimate Washington’s determination to avoid a repetition of the Cuban example.

The Cubans themselves played an important role in spreading the myth of guerrilla invincibility. Citing Guevara’s book *Guerrilla Warfare*, Chaliand points out that “Guevara called for imitation of the Cuban example and attached no basic importance to what made it special.”

Guevara’s ideas were later developed in a more systematic way in Régis Debray’s work, *Revolution in the Revolution*, which elaborated the “foco theory,” that is, that a small group of guerrillas operating in the countryside could create the conditions for an insurrection.

Chaliand writes, “The weakness of the foco theory, according to which one headed straight into armed struggle without any serious mobilization of the population, was precisely that it cut off the guerrilla fighters from popular support.”

A simple listing of the failures experienced by those who sought to put these ideas into practice fills nearly an entire page of Chaliand’s book. Guevara’s own death during a guerrilla campaign in Bolivia in 1967 was but the most dramatic symbol of the failure of this entire approach.

Telling though Chaliand’s criticisms are, they nevertheless revolve around questions of technique. He does not seem to question guerrilla warfare itself as a strategy for revolution, claiming that the “basic weakness” of the guerrilla movements in Latin

America was “organizational.”

Chaliand does note in passing that some revolutionists in Latin America have tried to follow a different approach, most notably the Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco, who “made a serious attempt to organize the Indian peasantry in the valleys of La Convencion and Lares through a campaign of land occupation—which in the final analysis was the most important mass movement in Peru during the 1960s. . . .” But Chaliand does not indicate whether he thinks that such a class-struggle strategy of mass mobilization could be more fruitful than guerrilla warfare.

While Chaliand has just begun to question the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare, he appears to have shed most illusions in the “radical” petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes, which are more successful in spouting anti-imperialist rhetoric than in freeing their countries from imperialist economic domination.

Chaliand looks back on the accomplishments of such regimes as those in Egypt under Nasser, Guinea under Sékou Touré, Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, Peru under Velasco Alvarado, Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah, and Indonesia under Sukarno. Many of them, especially in Africa, have proclaimed themselves “socialist.” But, Chaliand notes, “. . . they have rejected the essence of Marxism-Leninism: the class struggle.”

These regimes, he concludes, “. . . are characterized, as we have seen, by the rise of a social stratum, originally petty bourgeois, which uses its possession of modern knowledge, and its control of the State and the nationalized sector of the economy, to turn itself into an administrative bourgeoisie.”

“. . . a significant part of the petty bourgeoisie,” he states, “manages to use its control of the government apparatus, whether through the army or a single party, as the means to develop, to its own profit, the capitalist mode of production (nationalized or not)” [emphasis in the original].

At the same time, these regimes (Chaliand cites the examples of Ghana and Peru) seek to keep the working class in check, sometimes through the trade-union bureaucracies, so as to prevent strikes or other labor actions.

The nationalist regimes in the semicolonial world may be able to enrich the ruling classes and petty-bourgeois bureaucratic layers to an extent, and even wrangle some concessions from imperialism, but their policies do very little to improve the livelihood of the masses.

In this regard, Chaliand points out, "These regimes differ markedly from the three or four really radical revolutions that have occurred in the Third World since the end of World War II: in China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba."

What is needed, he indicates, is a social revolution. This is the most important conclusion that Chaliand has come to, and his arguments on this point deserve to be read carefully by those who still hold illusions that regimes like those of a Kwame Nkrumah or a Velasco Alvarado offer a way forward for the masses of workers and peasants.

Chaliand does not stop there, however. He goes on to examine a few of the countries where socialist revolutions have been made.

He devotes a good deal of attention to Vietnam, with which he has had the most first hand experience. In general, Chaliand appears impressed with what he sees as the National Liberation Front's "constant linkup of political and armed struggle," and with the North Vietnamese regime's advances in the face of tremendous imperialist opposition (the bulk of the book was written before the final liberation of the south in April 1975).

Chaliand takes due note of the social gains made in the north: the agrarian reform, the revival of industrial production, the drive against illiteracy, the substantial improvements in health care. But he also cautiously recognizes some drawbacks. On the local administrative level, he finds that "in practice authoritarianism cropped up repeatedly." He refers to the "bureaucratic nature of the regime" and concludes that "the fact still remains that party cadres continue to impose party directives, and things are a far cry from Marx's 'free collectivity of producers.'"

Turning to Yugoslavia, Chaliand finds that the Tito regime's system of "workers' self-management" on the factory level does not equal workers democracy. He states, "... self-management means primarily trying to involve the workers in caring about their enterprise through their own direct interest in its profits—leaving real power in the hands of the state and the bureaucracy. Bestowed on the workers by the bureaucracy, self-management has turned out to be a way of keeping workers' perspective limited to the horizons of their own enterprise."

On China, Chaliand writes, "The little that can be said about China without fear of error shows at least a few points which make short work of the pious image cherished by a goodly number of Mao's unconditional admirers. The personality cult of

Mao Tse-tung; absurd, Stalinist-style accusations against political opponents after their fall (Liu Shao-shi, Lin Piao); a limitation of criticism of Russia to the post-Stalin era; extremely sharp and clearly defined hierarchies within the leadership, suggesting that China's presumed grassroots democracy has very narrow limits; and last but not least, a foreign policy and official diplomacy attentive not to the development of revolution but to the interests of the state."

Referring to these countries (and in passing to Cuba as well), Chaliand affirms that "bureaucracy is the central issue." But he sees no way of overcoming the problem. He does not appear to think that the bureaucracies can be overthrown through political revolutions or that workers democracy is a realizable alternative in the present world. This leads him to very pessimistic conclusions, notably that bureaucracy is an "inevitable phenomenon."

Recoiling from Stalinism, Chaliand also

places in question aspects of revolutionary Marxism, in particular Lenin's contributions on the role of the vanguard party. He thinks that the seeds of bureaucratism "are to be found in the very conception of the vanguard party." He apparently takes the undemocratic Stalinist caricatures that he is familiar with as the genuine item. In any case, he admits that a revolutionary party is probably necessary to carry through a socialist revolution.

The political limitations and weaknesses of Chaliand's book are nevertheless outweighed by the strengths.

Chaliand does not pretend to have all the answers to the questions he raises. Instead, he has set himself the more modest task of piercing obstructive myths, sweeping away misconceptions and illusions, and stimulating critical thought about the failures and wrong turns that have taken place in Asia, Africa, and Latin America over the past two decades. In that role, he has made a valuable contribution. □

## 'The Cubans Are Not the Enemies of Our People'

### South African Resistance Journal Answers Carter

*Resistance, Resistance* is a new South African opposition journal published in typescript in Gaborone, Botswana. Its first issue, dated July 1978, carries an article answering the imperialist red-scare campaign mounted against Cuban and Soviet involvement in Africa.

Entitled, "Who Are Our Enemies? Who Are Our Friends?" it notes that both South African Prime Minister John Vorster and "President Carter in his role as political chief of American imperialism are trying to whip up hysteria against Cuba and the Soviet Union."

The article explains that the biggest enemy of Blacks in South Africa is the white supremacist regime, which maintains its colonial domination through massive violence. "Colonialism," it continues, "cannot succeed without violence which must be initiated and maintained at all cost in order to subjugate and rule over the colonised people. So it is an accepted fact that the Boer regime in Azania [South Africa] is there because of violence and it exists because of repression and suppression."

"But these Boers," it goes on, "cannot exist and survive on their own without the assistance of their allies and collaborators, the imperialist countries of America; Japan; West Germany; France and Britain, who support them with arms [and] ammunition and support them economically by trading and investing in Apartheid South

Africa. These are Vorster's allies because they assist and aid the Boers to further oppress, suppress and exploit our people on their behalf. These are the countries who say yes to our National oppression and exploitation. These imperialist states . . . are the ones who talk so much about peace in Southern Africa yet support regimes that perpetuate violence.

"These imperialist countries who assist Vorster to kill and oppress Blacks in Azania and who are in close collaboration with him, say that the people of southern Africa should stand up against the Cubans and the Soviet Union. The Cubans and the Soviet Union and other Communist countries are not the enemies of our people as far as the National Liberation Struggle is concerned." □

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## Why the Mexican PRI Has Declared Itself a 'Workers Party'

[The following interview with Manuel Aguilar Mora appeared in the October 9 issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a revolutionary-socialist fortnightly published in New York.

[Aguilar Mora is a central leader of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party, the Mexican section of the Fourth International). The interview was conducted by Anibal Vargas. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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*Question. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the ruling party in Mexico, held a congress at the beginning of August where it declared itself to be a "workers party" with a Social-Democratic ideology. What significance does this have?*

*Answer.* The PRI's national assembly has been one of the most widely discussed issues in Mexican politics lately. This discussion has centered on the fact that clear and tangible differences have appeared for the first time within the PRI.

Since 1976, Mexico has been in the grip of its worst economic crisis in forty years. But it is only now, because of the PRI assembly, that we clearly see the splits and fissures that have opened up.

These fissures are expressed in a general way by the development of two big tendencies. One is the tendency that has direct ties to the government, to President José López Portillo. The other has ties to the political wing of the trade-union leadership, in other words, the bureaucrats, who have managed to carve out a base for themselves within the official party itself.

The first tendency is the one directly tied to the regime. It supports López Portillo, the austerity policy, the devaluation policy, the accords with the International Monetary Fund.

This austerity line—with its blows to the masses' standard of living—represents a break with the previous economic policy, which has been associated with certain reformist concessions to the masses. The turn was not carried out without certain consequences. The government had to pay a price to put this policy into effect. One result was the open break between the government and the PRI. Of course, this situation has not gotten to the point where the PRI openly refuses to support the government.

President López Portillo was anxious to see Carlos Sansores Pérez leave the PRI. Carlos Sansores Pérez is the chairman of the PRI, who was put in this post by López

Portillo's predecessor, Luis Echevarría. Sansores Pérez is a politician who is widely detested both inside and outside the PRI. He has become a link to the old Echeverristas, who six months ago everybody thought had been cleaned out. Now he suddenly emerges as one of the main mouthpieces for a so-called peoples, or populist, policy.

What is happening? How could a man like Sansores Pérez hang on in the PRI, contrary to all expectations?

What happened, as I was saying, was that there was a split in the official circles. Sansores Pérez realized that he could exploit this in an opportunistic and demagogic way. He maneuvered to become the spokesman for these groupings and official circles, especially the trade-union bureaucrats, who are increasingly worried about the rank-and-file movements that are springing up in the unions under their control.

These movements have erupted in the hospital workers unions, at General Hospital and other hospitals, and in the automobile and textile unions. The ranks of these organizations are becoming increasingly interested by movements in the so-called academic unions, such as the college teachers and staff workers union and other smaller ones that have carried out very important struggles.

We should recall that in June and July of last year, the biggest demonstrations that have occurred in Mexico since 1968 were held in support of the strike by STUNAM [Union of Personnel of the Autonomous National University of Mexico]. This strike was smashed by the invasion of the campus by more than 10,000 police on July 11.

This discontent is being expressed in the workers movement, including in the official unions controlled by the bureaucrats.

One of the most outstanding, contradictory, and ironic examples of this was last year's May Day demonstration. More than a million workers, united in the May Day parade, took to the streets in the biggest working-class demonstration Mexico has ever seen. The march was controlled by the bureaucrats, and in the last analysis, manipulated by the president and the state as it always has been. But it represented an impressive show of strength.

In addition, we should mention the demonstration by the independent trade unions, which was also the biggest that has taken place up to now, a demonstration that drew 20,000 to 25,000 persons. It was held separately because it was not able to get into the official parade. The bureaucrats managed to isolate this march

from the march of one million workers, even though the tactic used by the comrades of the independent unions was to try to get into the official parade.

The point is that a force of one million workers is not that easy to control or manipulate, especially when it is directly feeling the impact of the economic crisis.

Therefore, the PRI assembly was a clear reflection of the differences that are being created by the objective social and political reality in Mexico. This was expressed in the proposal, put forward by Sansores Pérez with the support of the trade-union groupings, that the PRI become a "workers party." This is pure demagoguery! But it says a lot in itself that the PRI is forced to tell the workers, "Take it easy. Look, you are the privileged ones. You are our strength. You are the darlings of this regime; we are going to do things for you. This party is yours; it is not the party of the capitalists or of the corporations."

On the other hand, Rodolfo González Guevara, the president of the Chamber of Deputies and the head of the PRI's parliamentary bloc, is very much against all this demagoguery about a "workers party." He's afraid it will "scare off" the capitalists. He's afraid they'll take even more capital out of the country than they've taken out recently on account of their fear of strikes and the people's reaction to the austerity drive imposed by the government.

That's not all. The Mexican government has a bonapartist character, meaning that it is a bourgeois government that serves the capitalists but that is based on popular support. That's what we mean by bonapartist. However, the government *cannot* let go of this mass base. It wants to manipulate it.

These characteristics of the Mexican bourgeoisie give the bonapartist government special features that are hard to find in other countries. That is, while the masses are its principal base of support, they are nonetheless those who suffer the most from its austerity policy. This is the contradiction in the present period of the class struggle in Mexico. It explains all these strange things, such as the fact that at the same time that it is dealing blows to the masses, the regime is trying to win their support. It's an insuperable contradiction.

*Q. What are the Mexican parties that claim to be revolutionary trying to do in this contradictory situation?*

*A.* This question goes right to the heart of our identity, our reason for being, and our growth.

I am going to explain what positions other groups have taken, so you can see why I say that.

First, take the ultraleft comrades, the ones who think that the struggle has to take on the government directly. The result of this attitude was, for example, that a struggle by the hospital workers union at General Hospital in Mexico City, which they led, was aborted at an early stage. Because instead of using their struggles to reach out to the great majority of hospital workers who are in the bureaucratized union, they merely gave the bureaucrats an excuse to kick them out. This is a clear example, because they said that the bureaucratized union and the government were the same thing. Actually, this is correct, but it is only *partially* correct. It's not the whole story.

The other side of the story is that the rank-and-file members of these bureaucratized unions are *not* the government. Even though the government uses them for support, the ranks have their own interests, which, if they are allowed to be expressed, go against the government. This case was a clear example of how an ultraleft line cuts the comrades off from the possibility of winning struggles.

Another example is the rightist tactic, the reformist tactic, best exemplified by the history of the Mexican Communist Party. It can still be seen in the CP today, although in a diluted form and a less clear way, since the CP has drawn forces mainly in the sectors outside the government and the bureaucratized federations, in other words, in the so-called independent sectors—college teachers, campus workers, independent industrial unions outside the official federations.

However, the CP's tradition is that it has to ally with sectors of the PRI and the government, with reformist nationalist sectors, since it believes that the task is to struggle above all against the imperialist corporations and the sectors in Mexico that have the most direct ties to imperialism. Ultimately, of course, the chief link between the Mexican economy and politics and imperialism is the government itself, the PRI itself.

We, the PRT, have a different conception from both the reformists and ultraleftists. We recognize that the bureaucratized trade unions are being manipulated by the government and controlled by leaders who have sold out completely to the PRI, but that they are real trade unions that have been built by the ranks, especially from a historical standpoint. They are organizations that the masses are not going to walk out of because revolutionists tell them to, but are going to use to the greatest extent possible, since these trade unions are the most direct weapons they have in this time of austerity.

Therefore, our policy is to participate in these unions, to build opposition currents

inside them, and this includes forcing those same bureaucrats at times, if we are not in the leadership, to confront the government. Even though we know—



LOPEZ PORTILLO: Feeling the heat of Mexico's worst economic crisis in 40 years.

because at the same time we carry out propaganda and education, for example, in our newspaper, *Bandera Socialista*—that these leaders are inconsistent, that they are limited, that they are totally unworthy of any confidence whatsoever. The ranks must replace them with their own *authentic* representatives. That, in a nutshell, is our line.

*Q. Could you briefly go over some specific cases in which resistance on the part of the workers has prompted the government to adopt a more populist attitude?*

*A.* I'm going to give you several examples. The first is the one I already mentioned, of the campus workers who last year carried out the biggest demonstrations that have occurred in Mexico since 1968. There were three or four demonstrations that drew 50,000 to 100,000 persons. This struggle was defeated, but not smashed.

In that sense, it was a victory, because they didn't destroy the union. The police invaded the campus and broke the strike. The basic demand of this movement was for union recognition. Formerly there were two unions, one for teachers and one for workers, and now they want to unify. They were also seeking a contract covering all the workers, which ultimately would have meant union recognition and a wage increase. But basically, the struggle was for union recognition.

The second movement I want to point to is that led by the hospital workers at General Hospital, which I also mentioned earlier. This is a struggle that began two or three months ago, made some progress

for a while, and has now been defeated. Here too, the strike was broken. Police and goons, known as "Hawks," came in and broke the strike. But it was a very important strike also, because it took place in a union that is part of the bureaucratic structure itself, part of the state apparatus, the public employees unions.

Even though it was defeated, this strike was an important warning signal to the bureaucracy.

The other case I want to mention is that of the miners of Nacozari, in the state of Sonora.\* In this struggle, the miners of northern Mexico had to confront both the bosses and the bureaucrats, who were sabotaging and obstructing their defense. The struggle was suppressed, as I said, but it indicated the level of the militancy that we see among a lot of workers.

These three struggles won much support. Although they were hard hit, and in many ways could be said to have failed, these were not historic defeats. They were not defeats that crushed the working class.

In reality, all these struggles had a fundamentally economic basis, the demand for higher wages. In the case of the campus union, recognition was an important issue; but there too, the need to raise wages and improve the standard of living was included; and this was even clearer in the case of the miners and hospital workers.

However, in these mobilizations, there were two elements that were clearly related. One was the problem of preventing an even bigger drop in the standard of living, in other words, wages. The other—very important—element was that struggles of a social and political nature were waged for control of the trade unions by the workers, for trade-union independence, for internal democracy. In other words, these struggles were directly related to broader issues than just economic problems.

*Q. Let's go back a little. Since the PRI has decided to call itself a "workers party," do you think that this has accelerated its crisis, that the party is cracking even farther apart? Will there be bigger opportunities for revolutionists in the next period, or bigger obstacles?*

*A.* I think there will be more opportunities, because it's obvious that the PRI is

\*Spurred by miserable living conditions and low wages, some 3,500 workers at Mexicana de Cobre, a giant industrial complex that is destined to be one of the biggest copper mines in Latin America and is being financed by U.S. banks, went out on strike in February. The López Portillo government ordered soldiers and federal troops to break the strike. In June, a goon squad invaded the homes of thirty-three strike leaders. The strikers were tied up, brutally beaten, and thrown in jail. Some were released on bail, but were forbidden to return to the mines. Many had to flee to avoid constant police harassment.

coming apart at the seams. It's obvious that the government, and therefore, its party, is in an advanced stage of crisis. What's more, the crisis is having a harder impact on the official party than on the government itself. The government will continue to exist, even if it doesn't take the form of bonapartism. It has many ways of surviving, including its trump card, an open military dictatorship. There's no doubt about that.

The PRI, on the other hand, is another matter. Its very existence is at stake. Its survival as a multiclass party is in ques-

tion, as its most representative, traditionalist leaders put it. Its very existence as the official party, as the government party, as the party that really holds *political* sway over the masses, is in question, now that the masses are increasingly challenging not only the PRI but the government.

However, in this respect, I think that the way the PRI chooses to characterize itself is much more a reflection of internal *crisis* than of strength. Therefore I would say yes, such characterizations do point to increased opportunities for the growth of revolutionary organizations, even though

this sort of thing always has negative aspects, in that it leads to confusion, making the situation more complex and difficult.

But if we look at history and its overall dynamic, we see that, okay, there's always going to be this confusion, it's not going to vanish all at once. What's good about the current situation is that the confusion is going to be an increasingly secondary element, it's going to be the least important aspect of the decisive sorting-out process now taking place in Mexican politics. What is essential is to clarify positions.

## Central Themes—Nicaragua, Women's Liberation

# Costa Rican Trotskyists Hold First Congress

By Mike Kelly

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica—More than eighty delegates, members, and international guests attended the first congress of the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST—Socialist Workers Organization) held here September 14-17. Cheers and applause broke out on the last day as congress delegates voted unanimously to apply for recognition of the OST as the Costa Rican section of the Fourth International.

Two years of organizing have brought the OST from an initial nucleus of four Trotskyists to an organization of about 100 members with a history of important initiatives in the class struggle.

The delegates at the congress reflected the OST's leading role in a number of class battles. One woman delegate was a leader of a strike by hospital workers, the biggest labor struggle in San José in recent years (see interview below).

High-school students were present from the "Primero de Mayo" (May 1) branch of the OST. They had initiated a successful struggle for clean water in Desamparados, a poor district on the outskirts of San José. The enthusiasm of these youth was infectious. Like young people everywhere, they often had their ears glued to portable radios. But with an important difference—they were listening to the hourly battle reports from nearby Nicaragua. At mealtimes, shouts of "The people are fighting" or "Somoza is tottering" would ring out.

Other delegates at the congress had joined the OST during the fight to free imprisoned Sandinista leader Plutarco Hernández (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, June 19, p. 732).

Participants were present from the struggle by the Black community of Limoncito

for electric lights, paved streets, drinking water, and other necessities. The OST's presidential and congressional candidates—Carlos Coronado and Alejandra Calderón—had been jailed by the government for their support to the Limoncito struggle.

The OST's congress was preceded by a discussion period of three months. Twelve documents were published, on topics ranging from Angola to Portugal to women's liberation. Each of the OST's four branches held discussions on the documents and on proposals being presented to the congress. The right to put forward minority viewpoints was scrupulously respected. Participants in the congress were thus thoroughly informed on the issues being discussed throughout the world Trotskyist movement.

International observers were present from Trotskyist groups in El Salvador, Colombia, Panama, Mexico, the United States, and from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. These guests were invited to present their views on the various topics under discussion in the world movement. The result was a lively exchange on Cuba's role in Africa, the Angolan and Portuguese revolutions, the recent elections in France, and other subjects.

Two resolutions on women's liberation were presented for a vote—a draft resolution being discussed in preparation for the next world congress of the Fourth International and a document on the perspectives for women's liberation in Costa Rica. Such a thorough discussion on the oppression of women is unusual for Latin America, where the women's liberation movement has not yet developed in a major way.

Nevertheless, the OST spoke out during its election campaign for the right to abortion and against the forced sterilization of women being promoted by the Costa Rican government with funds provided by the U.S. State Department.

The OST's support for women's rights is reflected in its composition. About one-third of the membership are women, and the percentage is growing. More than one-third of the National Committee and three of the seven members of the Executive Leadership Team are women.

The congress also discussed and voted on resolutions entitled "The Party and the Working Class" and "Sectors of Intervention Outside the Organized Workers Movement." Special attention was paid to the growing movement to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. The OST has been holding informational picket lines here on an almost daily basis, as well as participating in rallies held by the Committee in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, October 2, p. 1079).

The congress closed with the singing of "The International." The hall rang with the enthusiasm of an organization confidently preparing for bigger class battles ahead. □

### Report From the Marketplace

"When peace came to the U.S., the tear-gas business pretty much dried up," reports Frank MacAloon, editor of the police-trade publication *Law and Order*.

"It's like cockroaches—if you don't have them, you don't need roach killer."



### The Hospital Workers Strike in Costa Rica

[In mid-August, in one of the largest strikes in recent Costa Rican history, 15,000 hospital workers conducted a ten-day walkout to press their demand for a wage increase of 400 colones (about US\$47). The following interview assessing the outcome of the strike was conducted with Cecilia Madriz Mora, a leader of the union at the National Childrens Hospital and a member of the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Organization), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Costa Rica.]

\* \* \*

*Question. What impact did the strike of the CCSS<sup>1</sup> workers have on the Costa Rican working class and the public in general?*

*Answer.* This strike expressed and concretized the will to resist on the part of workers throughout the country in the face of the Carazo government's growing attacks on their standards of living. To my knowledge this is the largest strike that has been carried out in Costa Rica in recent times. A victory in this strike would have signaled a radical change in the relationship of class forces. But I think that the most important thing about the strike was the organizational ability displayed and developed by the workers. The union leadership was initially opposed to the strike, but the workers forced them to lead it.

In this strike, the workers ran the hospitals, proving their organizational abilities and putting into question the very existence of their bosses as administrators.

*Q. Can you explain the organizational and political characteristics of the union? What sort of tradition does it have in the Costa Rican trade-union movement?*

A. UNDEHNI<sup>2</sup> is a young union. It was formed six years ago, and has led three important struggles. The first was in 1972, when it fought for a wage increase and for a minimum law to safeguard the rights already won by workers who were about to be transferred to CCSS. The second was in 1976 when Children's Hospital was transferred to CCSS. That struggle lasted seven days. The third struggle is the one that has just ended, after ten days on strike.

1. Caja Costarricense del Seguro Social (Costa Rican Social Security Administration).

2. Unión de Empleados del Hospital de Niños (Children's Hospital Employees Union).

The present leadership council of the union is composed of nine members, including activists of the OST and the centrist Costa Rican Socialist Party.

*Q. Could you summarize the political activity of the OST in this strike?*

A. The OST actively supported the hospital workers' strike from the beginning. We took advantage of every opportunity to help teach the workers that any confrontation with the bosses has a political character. We publicly denounced all the maneuvers of the capitalist government against the strike, and called on the workers to beware of the union bureaucrats. Every time the bureaucrats betrayed the strike we exposed them. The workers recognized the OST as the only party that was with them all along. We put all our resources and all our members at the service of the strike.

*Q. It seems that ever since the possibility of a strike became evident, the "smiling" regime of President Carazo took a hard, antilabor line. What did the government's policy consist of?*

A. The Carazo government and the employers behind it understood clearly from the beginning that their confrontation with the hospital workers was a confrontation with the entire working class. This is the only thing that can explain the bosses' aggressiveness and intransigence. The government utilized all its repressive machinery against the workers, from the threatening propaganda in the media to the police. You can be sure that at least for those ten days, that famous smile had been wiped off Carazo's face.

*Q. Through what organizational forms was the strike prepared and carried out? What was the level of participation by members of UNDEHNI?*

A. A few months ago, the hospital workers union had formed the FUNASS,<sup>3</sup> a strike organization which the leaderships tried to impose on all the workers on the basis of a vertical structure that would dictate the line to be followed. In other words, the leadership in FUNASS wanted to impose its own setup so that it could control the strike without any initiative from rank-and-file workers.

3. Frente Unitario Nacional del Sector Salud (National United Front of Health Sector Unions).

But the leadership was unable to carry out this scheme because the workers created their own organization. The time came when the union bureaucrats no longer had control over the movement. Children's Hospital was a clear example of this. It was the workers who set up their own committees with representatives they themselves had chosen. It was they who called general assemblies, forcing the leadership to keep the rank and file informed about what was happening.

In other words, there was extensive participation by all the workers. The members of UNDEHNI were convinced that the ones who organized the strike and gave the orders there were the rank-and-file workers.

*Q. You say that most of the union leadership betrayed the workers. Could you explain how you justify that charge?*

A. The "high-level" commission in charge of the negotiations arose outside the real movement and was imposed on the workers by the union leaderships. The commission acted autonomously, without any consultation with the general assemblies. The only thing the assemblies could do was to accept or reject the decisions of the negotiators. The commission was composed of the staff of the union bureaucracies, the General Confederation of Workers, the Confederation of Costa Rican Workers, and the National Federation of Public Workers.

The struggle took on great scope, to such an extent that it could no longer be defeated by outside forces, but only from within. The union bureaucrats waited for the right moment to step in and undermine the strike. They took advantage of the workers' fatigue and the bosses' threats of firings in order to propose a private deal with the management *instead of a collective contract*. They forgot about the aspirations of the workers, starting with the demand for a wage raise of 400 colones—the key demand we went on strike to win. Instead, they settled for a raise of 200 colones to be paid starting in 1979. They forced the workers back to their jobs without any guarantees and even let the employers get away with not paying back wages to the strikers.

*Q. What advances were made in the course of this struggle?*

A. The workers became convinced of the fact that when they organize and carry on a militant fight against exploitation by the bosses there is no force that can stop them. And they realized that they knew how to stand firm in spite of all the threats. It was a big victory that in spite of everything they became conscious of the great power of workers' unity. □

# Malachy McGurran—a Dedicated Revolutionary

By Gerry Foley

Malachy McGurran died of cancer in Dublin on July 27. He had been one of the main leaders of the "Official" republican movement in Northern Ireland since the start of the recent struggles in 1968-69. He was also one of the leaders of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement, and an elected county councilor at the time of his death.

McGurran dedicated his life to making the Irish revolution, and when he was not incapacitated by his illness, he continued to work just as hard at his tasks even after he was told four years ago that he probably had only a year to live. He was respected and loved by almost all who knew him, including many revolutionists from other countries. The world revolutionary movement has lost a comrade and a brother.

Malachy was only forty years old, but his long experience in the republican movement made him seem older.

His premature death is even sadder because in the last years of his life he continued courageously to try to build an organization that had gone entirely off the track politically and was degenerating and dying. It was a grievous waste.

Malachy exemplified the potential and the tragic failure of the "Official" leadership. He was one of the central team, which consisted mainly of men who had been young guerrilla fighters at the time of the 1956-62 IRA campaign, and, as a result of their experience had adopted a socialist perspective and a mass-action orientation.

It was this group that played the decisive role in the attempt to make the republican movement into an organization that could lead social struggles and mount a campaign for socialism in Ireland.

McGurran is the third member of this central group to die in the last three years. Two others, Séamus Costello and Billy McMillan, were assassinated, as a direct or indirect result of the split that took place in the "Officials" at the end of 1974.

Malachy was one of the most thoughtful in the "Official" leadership, and one of those with the soundest revolutionary instincts. He was a franker and more open person than most of the others in the central team. He was also the one who developed the friendliest relationship with Trotskyists.

In particular, Malachy sought to promote closer relations between the "Official" republican movement and the Fourth International in the period 1970-72, when

the key nucleus was tending to move to the left of its old Stalinist advisers and was open, to some extent, to revolutionary Marxist ideas.

In this period, other key leaders in the "Officials" became interested in Trotskyist ideas. They were interested also in the example given by the Socialist Workers Party in the United States of how to go about the practical work of building a revolutionary party and giving revolutionary leadership to mass movements. They were interested in the alternative offered internationally by the Fourth International.

The "Officials" came in contact with the SWP by chance, through their attempts to build a support movement for the Irish struggle in the United States, where they needed allies on the left. But the existence of an international revolutionary movement was important for them.

The "Officials" had looked to the Communist parties for help, especially the larger European CPs. But these parties showed no interest in the Irish struggle, and in fact very little active interest in general in events outside the immediate political context of their own countries. The "Officials" did not find an international Communist movement ready to come to their aid, as they apparently expected.

Instead, those forces interested in the Irish struggle were generally those groups based on youth looking for an alternative to the left of the Communist parties. And of these, only the Trotskyists had any real international perspective.

Of all the "Official" republican leaders, McGurran knew the Fourth International the best. He had been in the United States in 1970, and came in contact with the SWP. In 1972, he went on a tour of France and Scandinavia that was largely organized by the European Trotskyists.

As a reporter for *Intercontinental Press*, I accompanied McGurran on his European tour. By that time, a strong personal and political friendship had developed between us. I had gotten to know him and other "Official" leaders on a number of visits to Ireland.

In traveling to Malachy's various meetings, we had many discussions about revolutionary politics in general and how to build the international support movement for the Irish struggle in particular.

The European tour was an exacting test of Malachy's political instincts, and they proved to be sound. A problem arose before

the tour even began. One romantic independent involved in the initial contacts had told the other organizers in Paris that an IRA man would naturally have to carry a gun "to protect himself." They were worried.

Malachy was worried by the story himself, as well as amused. It was a conditioned reflex for him to avoid anything that might play into the hands of police. But he continued to treat the individual who dreamed it up with the greatest tact and consideration.

In his talks, Malachy presented a political profile rather similar to that of the broadest layer of radicalized youth at the time. The anecdotes he told were all about guerrilla actions by the "Official" IRA. He mentioned an expropriation of a truckload of shoes in Derry City and the destruction of a coal shipment carried out in solidarity with striking miners. He contrasted the last action with the Polish government's shipping coal to countries where miners were on strike.

### An Anti-Stalinist

Malachy obviously wanted to make it clear that he was an anti-Stalinist. And he genuinely was. He showed this in Sweden also, in his attitude to the Maoists there.

The "Officials" had built the tour by sending telegrams asking for help to all the left groups whose addresses they had collected. In Sweden, the main Maoist group had split some time before, and so two different and mutually antagonistic organizations with almost the same name had replied. One of these groups had a line modeled on the popular-front Stalinist policy of the 1930s. The other had a line modeled on the classic Stalinist ultraleftism and adventurism of 1927-33. The "Officials" unwittingly accepted invitations from both groups, thinking that they were the same organization.

So, when Malachy got to Copenhagen, he found that he was scheduled to speak at two different meetings at the same time in Malmö, the Swedish city just across the strait from the Danish capital. His response was to insist on unity, that there be one united meeting to which all those who supported the struggle against imperialism in Ireland could come and participate on an equal footing. He stubbornly maintained this position, much to the discomfort of both Maoist groups.

Under his pressure, the ultraleft Maoists, the smaller group, agreed to support the rally organized by the right-wing Maoists.

But this proved only to be a formal agreement.

In Malmö, the meeting began. McGurran had been speaking for about ten minutes when suddenly the sound of tramping began to rise from the street, as if a large number of people were marching on the building in lock step. The tramping started up the stairs to the hall, and in another minute the front lines of the group brought by the ultraleft Maoists burst through the doors in a flying wedge. A pitched battle began with the right-wing Maoist defense guard.

McGurran was astounded and obviously shocked by this display of sectarian fanaticism. Trembling with anger, he appealed for unity, forcing both Maoist groups to sit down and listen quietly.

Everywhere else in Sweden, he was confronted by the same war between the two Maoist groups, which agreed on only one thing—the Trotskyists had to be excluded.

The right-wing Maoists argued that the Irish solidarity group they had initiated was “the broad organization,” and therefore should have the right to run all the meetings. They said that it was “broad” because it was organized on the basis of “democratic centralism,” and therefore could expel any group or individual that presented positions going beyond the lowest common denominator.

The Maoist who put forward this argument worked very hard at putting on the appearance of a sincere, “reasonable” and “ordinary” youth.

#### Favored Unity in Action

Malachy rejected these arguments as totalitarian sophistry. He insisted that a broad front had to be based on the principle of nonexclusion. He found that the only group in Sweden that agreed with him and was willing to fight for this position was the Trotskyists.

In order to impress his point about the need for unity on the Maoists, I think, Malachy insisted on treating me as an ex-officio member of his entourage, always explaining that I was a Trotskyist. This was at a time when there had been some physical attacks on the Swedish Trotskyists by the ultraleft Maoists in particular, and threats of others.

But since Malachy insisted on bringing me along, I found myself inside the ultraleft Maoist offices, surrounded by Maoist leaders, mostly professors and students, who were obviously trying very hard to convince themselves that they were “tough” revolutionists. I don’t know exactly where they looked for their models, but they all seemed to be playing characters in old American gangster movies. Perhaps that was their interpretation of the character of their hero, Stalin, the original “great helmsman.”

The Maoists repelled Malachy. After we

left one Maoist headquarters, he breathed a sigh of relief and said to me: “Did you see all the Stalin they had in there!” He had no use for worshippers of dictators or for radical playacting.

Malachy was a product of a long revolutionary tradition, one deeply rooted in the Irish masses. He personified its strengths. Revolutionary struggle was not an abstract idea for him, or something that happened in a faraway exotic country. It was part of the life of the ordinary people from which he came, and had been from time immemorial. He had learned to be a revolutionist as naturally as a tree grows, and a practical, workmanlike attitude to revolutionary activity was in his marrow. Striking heroic poses was something totally alien to him. He saw it as a mark of inexperience or unseriousness, and just plain silly.

For historical reasons— isolation, social backwardness, the weakness of the Irish people relative to their oppressors—the tradition Malachy represented was an objectively adventurist one, and he remained basically within it. In terms of his underlying political ideas, he remained a guerrillaist. But the accumulated experience of the guerrilla struggle in Ireland and its popular character made him more politically serious and thoughtful than most representatives of such currents in other countries. I was struck by this when I first met him in New York.

McGurran was obviously impressed by the SWP’s well-organized political activity. But that did not make a revolutionary organization as far as he was concerned. He said in effect: “This is all very nice, but are there any *militant* organizations in the U.S.?” I said: “The SWP is militant.” He replied, “I mean, militant, you know, *militant*.” It occurred to me what he might mean. Perhaps it was the way he jumped every time a truck backfired in the street that suggested it to me.

So, I said: “Well, there is the Weathermen group. Some of them were just blown up. The newspapers say they were boiling dynamite to extract nitroglycerin.”

Malachy was shocked. He despised amateurism in “military matters” since he was dedicated, as he saw it, to raising the level of professionalism in the Irish revolutionary movement. He began explaining that no one was accepted into the IRA until they could assemble and disassemble a machine gun blindfolded. He asked no more questions about “militant” groups in the U.S.

Malachy had no resemblance to the popular image of an IRA man, although he was a veteran guerrilla fighter and had spent four years in prison on charges related to the 1956-62 campaign, and, as I later learned, lived a life of constant jeopardy.

He was a modest, sensible, down-to-earth person, not afraid to admit fears. He was

nervous about airplanes, for example, and expressed these feelings again and again, in emphatic terms, on his European tour.

In Paris, some organizers of his tour insisted on taking him from meeting to meeting on the back of a motorcycle “to elude the police.” He told me that it was one of the more terrifying experiences in his life.

Malachy had an ironic attitude toward his experiences in the 1956-62 guerrilla campaign. I remember him telling other republican leaders that if he had “been old enough to have any sense,” he never would have gotten involved. While continuing to think, basically, in a guerrillaist political framework, his experiences had deeply impressed on him that the traditional republican military methods had no chance of success.

#### A Historic Dilemma

He had thought deeply about the Irish tradition and the defeats inflicted over the centuries on the poorly organized and scattered Irish forces, who had no political program that could unite them and give them effective direction. He expressed this in singing his favorite song, “Sliabh na-Ban.”\*

This ballad commemorates the defeat of a leaderless peasant force in the rebellion of 1798. It is one of the few surviving authentic expressions of the feelings of the Irish masses who had participated in the uprising and bore the brunt of the ruthless repression that followed its defeat.

It represents a deeper and older tradition than the ballad poetry of the mid-nineteenth century Young Irelanders and Fenians, who are the political ancestors of the IRA. To some extent, the nationalist poets in English drew on the older stratum, but they largely created a new folk history to fit the needs of the petty-bourgeois nationalist ideology that developed among the English-speaking intelligentsia of the towns.

“Sliabh na-Ban” does sum up, perhaps better than any other, the ancient dilemma

\* The following is a rough translation of the original of this song, which was composed in the Irish language, apparently by a participant in a skirmish between Irish peasants and British forces during the period of the 1798 uprising:

“It is a sorrow to me that that day broke on the poor Gaels, who were slaughtered by the hundreds, that the rebels [this reflects the Jacobite tradition that the existing English government was illegitimate] are hunting us like wild animals, mocking our pikes and spears. Our major did not come to us before the dawning of that day on us. And we by ourselves were no more than scattered herds without their drove on the sunny hill slopes of Slieve-na-Mon.

“My sorrow it is that we were a helpless throng, that we did not wait for the rising, when the southern tribes and the men of western Erin would come together from our beloved land. Our camp would then have swelled with strong forces. The blessing of God would have been on

and tragedy of Irish resistance to British rule. Although the world of its anonymous author was shattered by the defeats of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and buried by the great famine of 1848, its words can still express the feelings of an Irish fighter reflecting on the present situation in Northern Ireland. That was evidently the way Malachy interpreted it.

It was at a Christmas Eve gathering in Derry City that I first heard him sing it. The location was an appropriate one. The contradictions of the Irish struggle are concentrated in Derry. This city originated as a fortified British trading settlement. The broad and deep Foyle River makes it an important inland port. As the native Irish society was destroyed, the older population came increasingly to settle beneath the walls of the British fortress, which became the new center of life. It was from the native community outside the walls that the modern Catholic ghetto, the Bog-side, developed.

The various stages in the growth of the British state and the British empire, of the development of British capitalism, passed over the native Irish like a steamroller. They left few visible monuments of pre-conquest Ireland. Almost everything has been destroyed.

The latest stage of British capitalism has brought urban "renewal" that has made Derry an even more forlorn British industrial wasteland sprawling over the beautiful rolling Irish hills overlooking the Foyle.

But underneath the dreary exterior of the town, the tradition of Irish resistance has lived on with an impressive vitality and continuity. That struck me as I listened to Malachy sing "Sliabh na-Ban."

The song is very powerful, both in its words and in its melody. He rendered it with obvious feeling, and gave away what was on his mind even at such a time. Some

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us throughout our lives, and I would not have to wait to avenge my humiliation until that coming day, but shouts of triumph would have echoed then on Slieve-na-Mon.

"The battle of Ross was our sorrow and defeat forever. A large part of us were left lying wounded. Our young children are burnt ashes [na leabhái óga 'na smólaibh dóighte]. And those of us still alive are left hiding in ditches or secret places. But I swear to pay them back with pike and spear. And I will make the yeomen tremble in their boots, and pay them back in full on the slopes of Slieve-na-Mon.

"Many an old man and vigorous strong youth have been taken captive. They lie tightly bound deep in dread dungeons, and their guards will not loosen their bonds, although they perish, nor give them a breath of air until they are tried in a land far away. But we will strike them free, when the day comes on the slopes of Slieve-na-Mon.

"The eager French in their well-stocked, high-masted ships are on the sea. Everyone says that they are coming to Ireland and that they will restore the Gaels to their rightful heritage. If I could believe this story, my heart would be as light as the winds on the sunny hill-slopes of Slieve-na-Mon."

of those present chided him for giving too "serious" a performance for the occasion. I remember his saying: "Well, I can't help it, it's a tragic situation," as if he were joking. But he clearly wasn't.

Malachy did not sing the song in Irish and I cannot remember all of the English version he used or find it anywhere. But I recall that it emphasized the lack of leadership of the Irish forces more than the original one. I remember the words, "We had no hero leaders." In singing the ballad, Malachy added special stress to this line.

#### **From Spontaneous Resistance to Revolutionary Strategy**

Malachy took the responsibilities of leadership very seriously, although his republican military training tended to give him a rather mechanical view of it. I remember standing next to him during a battle between Catholic youth and the British army in Derry on August 13, 1970. Malachy was disgusted at the apparent lack of familiarity with military tactics on the part of the Catholics. He pointed out that no forces had been stationed along the streets behind the front lines to prevent a British flanking maneuver.

In fact, the British troops did surround the crowd and make sallies through it. But they could not crush the resistance without making mass arrests, or shooting to kill, which, as a general rule, they were not yet ready to do. In any case, the population itself tended to fulfill the function of patrols and scouts.

A few minutes before the British started their flanking attack, I heard an old woman shout from a window in the new high-rise apartment building towering over the ruins of the old Catholic neighborhood: "Wee boys, wee boys, the soldiers are coming down the road over there."

Malachy did have an awed respect for the way in which the Irish people organized militarily on a certain level, almost by instinct. I remember his describing large republican families that were organized, he said, like clans or miniature armies, with the men and boys of different ages playing various military roles, and the women and girls operating as a propaganda and political department.

Desperate ghetto youth are difficult to organize and direct. But some friends in Derry told me later that Malachy was able to organize these youth effectively in some actions. They described an instance when he organized a crowd of youth and had them march in perfect order until, all at once, on signal, they launched a rain of rocks on the British soldiers.

But the republican commanders faced a more fundamental problem in Derry, as well as in the other Catholic ghettos in the North, than the uncontrollable belligerency of much of the youth. I could see that as I left the scene of the fighting on August 13, 1970.

Behind the British troops on the front lines, thousands of reserve troops were resting in the nearby streets. There must have been nearly as many of them as there are youth of military age in the Derry ghetto.

Unless the fighters in the ghettos can get support in the rest of Ireland and abroad, they have little hope of being able to defeat the British state. And as long as there is no real perspective of victory, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to raise the level of the fight beyond skirmishing or symbolic actions.

#### **The Need for International Allies**

Irish revolutionists still have the same tendency to look to hypothetical foreign allies, as the composer of "Sliabh na-Ban" looked to the French, to give them the help they need. If such allies do not exist in fact, they have to be invented, since otherwise there would be no hope.

As the "Officials" failed more and more obviously to provide that political leadership and strategy that could overcome the dilemma the song expresses, some of the "Official" leaders decided to stake everything on the hope of an alliance with the Soviet Communist Party and its client parties and movements.

To some extent, this move was a reaction to the fact that the young radicalized forces in Britain and Western Europe, while they took a more active interest in the Irish struggle than the Stalinists, failed generally to do effective work in building broad support for it in their countries.

At the same time, the "Official" leadership responded in a one-sided way to the contradiction they faced. They had learned from their own experience, and learned the lesson profoundly, that a traditional republican military campaign had no chance of success. They could see how the Provisionals' tactics were undermining the gains that had been made both in Ireland and internationally by the mass struggle for civil rights. But at the same time, they found that the Provisionals were gaining the bulk of militant nationalist support and leaving them increasingly isolated. They did not see that this was a result of their own political failures but tended to blame it more and more on a diabolic conspiracy between the right and the Provisional "militarists," plus the "ultra-left."

Malachy, sadly, had no more understanding of what was going wrong politically than the other "Official" leaders. His attitude to the Provisionals was completely subjective.

As one of the Northern command of the IRA, he had been personally involved in the split that led to the formation of the Provisionals. He was affected by the paranoia that accompanies conflicts within military organizations. I remember his telling me that if the Provisionals ever got

any concessions from the British, they would only take advantage of that to launch an extermination campaign against his own organization.

Malachy's dislike of the Provisionals, on the other hand, was increased by the humane side of his character. He was probably the warmest human being in the republican leadership. He was genuinely sickened by the killing and mutilation of innocent civilians that tended to accompany the bombings that the Provisionals carried out in the naïve belief they could accomplish something by disrupting normal life in the Northern cities. I could see his reaction on the European tour, as he watched the television news from Northern Ireland.

Malachy was also politically sensible enough to see the effect of these bombings on public opinion. He said: "You see the victims covered with blood and screaming, and then the British army rushing to their rescue. It makes it look like the Brits are the humanitarians."

Like the best of the "Official" leaders, Malachy had a seasoned practical feeling for politics. Also like them, this never really rose above the level of common sense, which proved increasingly insufficient. But he did not pretend to be a strategist. I do not remember his ever taking part in the discussions of general political strategy that occurred in "Official" meetings. He always stood apart and never expressed a position of his own on broad political questions.

Malachy was not a general. He was a captain, a loyal, devoted, and intelligent applier of the line. It was not that he was uncritical. He made a point of saying openly many times that he made up his own mind and didn't care what the Dublin leadership thought. Within his own sphere, that seemed to be true. But to my knowledge he never questioned the general political approach that was laid down.

On the other hand, he did not try to escape from the contradictions of the "Officials" line by a flight into dogmatism and fanaticism as the other "Official" leaders did.

When toward the end of 1972, some of the Stalinist-trained "Officials," in particular the editor of the organization's paper, lost his balance and launched a vehement campaign against the "Provo-Trots," Malachy stood up and fought against this. His influence was apparently one of the main factors that held back the complete Stalinization of the "Officials" for some time.

But when a fight opened up in the "Officials" in the fall of 1972 over the fundamental error in their strategy—its abstract and utopian concept of "working-class unity" between Catholic and Protestant workers in the North, and the logic that was leading the "Officials" to counterpose this vision to the real unfolding of the struggle of the oppressed population—Malachy failed completely to understand

what the issues were. He stood apart from the battle in bewilderment.

However what was at stake in the fight,



Jean Vertheim  
MALACHY MCGURRAN

as has become clear since, was no less than the fate of the "Official" republican movement and the honor and political credentials of its leaders.

#### Turning Point for the 'Officials'

The "Official" Sinn Féin convention that year was almost evenly divided between supporters of the old line, apparently led by Tomás Mac Giolla and Cathal Goulding, and a bloc pushing for a change in the organization's attitude to the political role of the national question, which was led by Séamus Costello and Seán Garland.

The programmatic document of the Costello-Garland bloc was entitled "A Brief Examination of the Republican Position: An Attempt to Formulate the Correct Demands and Methods of Struggle." It started out as follows:

The development of the Movement's consciousness, particularly its class consciousness, over the past few years has at times tended to put the National Question, as it is termed, in the background, not deliberately, but in our efforts to make up for former times and win the working class, North and South, to our revolutionary objectives.

The third paragraph gave a resounding rejection of the Irish Communist Party and their supporters in the "Official" republican movement itself.

It is feared that the people today are unable to distinguish between Republican and C.R.A. [Civil Rights Association] demands simply and solely because we have not been putting Republican demands before the Irish people, Catholic, Protestant or dissenter. The C.R.A. demands, which unfortunately people see as our ultimate

demands, fit in very well with the Communist Party concept of struggle—reforms not revolution, the gradualist approach, the "Don't Rock the Boat School." Remember the call for progressive Government in the 6 Counties which in reality meant 50 Unionists and 2 "Communists." Who in all reason wants that!

This position, the demand for a 6 County State, is of course occupied by Conor Cruise O'Brien and those left sectarians who propagate the 2 Nation theory in Ireland [that is, that the Protestants are a nation and have the right to self-determination]. To accept it, even in part, leads one inevitably to the position where, as one foreign observer pointed out recently, we expect and look to the British Army to play a progressive role in Ireland.

The "demand for a 6 County State" refers to the Stalinist concept that the civil-rights struggle would lead to a democratized Northern Ireland as the "first stage" in the struggle, preparing the way for an anti-imperialist struggle later on. On this attempt to divide the "democratic" from the national struggle, the document said:

In this country more and more the events of the past few years demonstrate that the struggle for democracy is also the national struggle since it is the British power and influence that maintains the undemocratic structures and it is the Nationalist population that suffers under this system.

The document also expressed an objective assessment of the reasons for the Provisionals' strength—to the best of my knowledge, for the first and last time, in the history of the "Official" republican movement:

Correct or not, but the feeling is abroad, that a lot of people in the country and many of our members have the idea that we are not in favour of the "National Struggle" or the ending of this "Struggle." This is one reason why the Provos are still a force today and why they will not fade away for a long time yet.

I remember trying, and failing, to convince Malachy that the civil-rights struggle was essentially national in character. The basic problem, it became clear, was that for him a national struggle meant a military campaign against the British army and nothing else. Since as a military man he could see that the conditions for such a campaign did not exist, therefore there could be no national struggle.

#### Virtues and Limitations of a Battlefield Leader

Sensible and practical as he was, Malachy lacked subtlety and a dialectical approach to politics. He understood only head-on political confrontations. Once he had decided what he was for and what he was against, he would hold his place in the "gap of danger" and keep swinging his claymore without a second thought.

Garland, the most political of the "Official" leadership, was torn by doubt, a real Hamlet figure. That worried Malachy, who by nature was a battlefield leader; he

would not let himself be slowed down by doubts.

But Malachy also did not have the makings of a fanatic sectarian. The worst he was capable of, to my knowledge, was spitefulness, a very human fault, as all his faults were. His subjective resentments, in fact, were usually the reverse side of the coin of his strong personal loyalties. But this weakness kept him from being the kind of revolutionary political leader that was needed.

His weaknesses came to the forefront at the time of the 1974 split in the "Officials," after which the process of degeneration in what was left of the organization reached depths that the authors of the 1972 document foresaw in a general way but went beyond the worst apprehensions they expressed.

Malachy's main reaction to the 1972 debate was fear that a treacherous conciliatory attitude toward the Provisionals was developing. But while his attitude was in general sectarian and defensive, he did not carry this to its logical conclusion, as the more politically conscious "Official" leaders later did.

I remember a discussion in which one of the ultra-Stalinist sectarians who later came to set the tone in the "Officials" argued in essence that only a totalitarian machine could make a revolution in Ireland. Among other things, he said something like the following: "If there is ever a socialist revolution in Ireland, the counter-revolutionaries will use the slogan of 'workers control' to divert it and only an iron-hard party will be able to prevent that." He then proceeded to argue that the "Officials" should "deal" with all those groups that were trying to "mislead people."

I remarked, as I recall: "It looks like you think that the only way you can make a revolution in Ireland is to shoot or beat up most of the Irish people." Malachy muttered in agreement under his breath.

But I was surprised to see that another, more political leader was nodding in agreement with the ultra-Stalinist.

The bloc between Garland and Costello was made essentially on the basis of principles and broke apart on tactical questions. Costello had clear insights into what was wrong with the "Officials'" line, but his alternative was more guerrilla action, essentially a suicidal course, as Garland recognized. But at some point Garland gave up trying to develop a revolutionary political alternative and fell back on the old Stalinist-educated leadership.

Important in this process, apparently, was a visit by Garland to Moscow for a world peace conference. He seemed to be most influenced by discussions he had with representatives of guerrilla movements in Africa supported by the Soviet Union. These figures convinced him that guerrilla movements could get effective backing from the Soviet Union. The fact

that such arguments had an effect shows that Garland, like the other "Official" leaders, never really broke out of the guerrillaist framework.

Apparently, he did not realize that politically, it was quite a different thing for the Soviet Union to support guerrilla warfare in Ireland than it was to do that in the case of the Portuguese colonies. He also failed to see that what he would have to give up politically in adopting an orientation toward the Soviet Union was far more important than anything he could hope to gain.

In this respect, Malachy was superior to Garland. He had a firmer grasp of reality. He told me that he considered it foolish to think that the "Officials" could get any significant support from the Soviet Union.

Once Garland made his choice, he followed the logic of it with a fatal consistency. He tried to suppress opposition to a clearly failing policy by means of bureaucratic intimidation and old-fashioned republican gunman thuggery. The inevitable result was a violent split in the organization in which the "Officials" lost the bulk of their supporters. In a desperate attempt to stop the desertions, the "Official" leaders launched a war against the breakaway group led by Costello.

In the statements issued by the "Officials" at the time, I recognized the ultra-Stalinist attitude I had heard expressed a couple of years before, and said so in articles. McGurran, who stuck to his personal loyalties, was upset by these articles and took the trouble to call me from Ireland to make a protest. I told him that I would go to Ireland and listen to what the "Officials" had to say.

By that time, he had already been ill with cancer of the bone for some time. I visited him in the hospital. His illness seemed to affect him in a way similar to severe arthritis. This made him even more paranoid. He said that in the shape he was in, if he ran into a group of Costello's people, he couldn't even defend himself, and then went into an explanation of what he had had to do to "live as long as I have." Survival, he indicated, depended on a sharp eye, good reflexes, and a quick draw.

He was overflowing with personal resentment against Costello; and, on the basis of our friendship, he expected me to accept an account of the split that depended on believing that Costello always did the opposite of what he said. He regarded my criticism of the campaign against Costello as a betrayal and complained that the fact that Trotskyists were taking such a position was "embarrassing" him.

#### **The Tragedy of the 'Officials'**

There was, however, a certain objective basis for Malachy's fears. Once violence was injected into the split in the North, a

pattern of gang warfare developed. It was made almost unbelievably savage by the bitterness of Belfast life, and neither side could control it. Eventually, the Belfast commander of the "Official" IRA and Costello himself fell victim to adventurist gunmen who took advantage of the conflict to get into "the action." Garland narrowly escaped the same fate. He was shot several times in the stomach.

The last time I saw Malachy was in that hospital. I remember the obvious affection that the hospital staff had for him, despite his equally obvious cantankerousness.

Costello also was fond of Malachy. I remember that when I told him about Malachy's reaction to the conflict, he was deeply downcast. That impressed me. Because, unlike Malachy, Costello's temperament was not visibly softened by sentiment. He was a totally ruthless individual, but also objective and capable of rising above subjective feelings and many common human weaknesses.

Malachy, for example, suffered from a certain personal ambition, of a narrow kind. The rank he held in the organization to which he had devoted his life was important to him. The organization was his life, and he could not see beyond it. Costello was above such feelings. He was not interested in a position in an organization that was going down the wrong path. He was prepared to break with it and go his own way without a backward glance.

At the time of the split, Malachy's subjectivism and his personal loyalties blinded him to arguments, and made him close his ears even to appeals to him to use his influence to stop the fratricidal warfare. But at the same time, he was sensible enough to realize the damage it was doing, and was shocked by the outrages perpetrated by the dead-end Stalinist sectarians, who now had the ball in their hands.

When one of the "Official" leaders, an outspoken ultra-Stalinist, planted a story in a Protestant terrorist publication accusing the Costello group of assassinating Protestants, and then had it reprinted in an "Official" organ as evidence that the "Protestant workers" knew who their friends were and who their enemies were, Malachy recognized how demented this action was. He told me that this crude attempt to sic the Protestant killer gangs on the rival group would "horrify the Celtic people."

At least up to a year after the split, I know that Malachy continued to maintain a degree of independent judgment. He understood what the so-called Peace Movement that arose in Northern Ireland was, and predicted accurately that it would not last long. This was at a time when other "Official" leaders interpreted this British propaganda operation as a "revolutionary" upsurge against "sectarian warfare" and marched in the "peace demonstrations." Nonetheless, Malachy remained one of the main "Official" spokesmen and

helped push an aberrant line. If he had continued this, obviously, it would have had to finally corrupt him.

By the time of his death, the rot in the "Officials" had gone so deep that they not only implicitly accorded a progressive role to the British troops but explicitly offered their support to a "democratic police force." Thus, the July *United Irishman*, the "Officials'" monthly paper, said:

The question of Peace is central to the creation of Northern democracy. The British contribution therefore should emphasise complete demilitarisation of the area.

Sinn Féin, the Workers' Party, recognises that a Police Service is essential and that Roman Catholic and Protestant Armies have played a major role in frustrating the creation of such a Police Service.

Following the logic of their positions, the "Officials" have been led so far to the right that even their Communist Party mentors are embarrassed and have felt obliged to take their distance.

I do not know what Malachy thought about the rapid rightward march of the "Officials." Once the ultra-Stalinists got the upper hand, they whipped up an atmosphere of paranoid hatred of the Trotskyists reminiscent of the CPs in the days of the Moscow Trials, which apparently they regard as the golden age. This made any dialogue, or even communication, with "Officials" impossible.

This atmosphere also suited the right-wing leaders, who used the ultra-Stalinists to suppress any criticism of opportunist positions. It had the effect, however, of denying these right-wing leaders the hoped-for fruits of their opportunism. The sectarianism and thuggish style that resulted from such methods isolated them increasingly even from reformist circles.

At this point only the strongest and most political leader could stand up and fight against the process of degeneration in the "Officials." I do not think Malachy could have done that, at least not on his own. But he might eventually have recognized that if he could not change the direction of the organization he would have to break with it.

At any rate, his death spared him the sight of the final disgrace and ruin of his comrades and of the organization to which he devoted his life. At the end of this process, unless there is a major change in this group, he may prove to have had the gentlest end of all the "Official" leaders.

At least, I think he died with his personal integrity as a revolutionist still basically intact. Moreover, he was already a dying man at the time of the 1974 split and so did not bear the same responsibility as the other leaders.

With Malachy's death, little remains of the leadership team that led the republican movement during its leftward turn in the 1960s. With all its individual and collective weaknesses, it was an impressive group, and if those with the greatest political

capabilities within it had made the right decision at the key turning point in 1972-73, it might have made great accomplishments. The fact that it played the key role in building the Northern Ireland civil-rights movement is an indication of this.

The capabilities and revolutionary moral qualities of the "Official" leadership gives its degeneration and disintegration a tragic dimension. Malachy's last years were wasted in futile activity. If he had not let himself be trapped in a rotting organization, he could have made an important contribution to training a real revolutionary leadership in Ireland, by transmitting his rich experience and painfully acquired practical sense. That would have been a worthy culmination to his career, his greatest achievement.

Certainly, the petty-bourgeois Walter Mittys that the "Officials" have been attracting with their right-wing line could learn nothing from Malachy.

It was Malachy's personal tragedy that he was not able to carry further what he had begun and was diverted into a blind alley. But it was not his tragedy alone but the result of yet another defeat of the Irish struggle, a severe but not decisive defeat of the mass struggle opened up by the civil-rights movement.

In a small country such as Ireland, especially, national tragedies tend to be embodied in the fate of individual leaders. In this case, the failure of the best of the "Official" leaders to find a revolutionary path was a tragedy for the international revolutionary movement as well, since this also reflected its weakness, and not merely theirs.

But this is not the first time a revolutionary advance has occurred in Ireland before the international revolutionary movement has been in a position to provide the necessary support. Lenin said of the 1916 rebellion that the tragedy of the Irish was

that they rose too soon, ahead of the revolutionary wave that brought the Bolsheviks to power and threw the imperialists on the defensive throughout Europe.

The struggle in Ireland does tend to get ahead of the development of the class struggle internationally. Because of the constantly smoldering conflict in Ireland, any weakening of capitalism on a world scale tends to lead to immediate explosions there before the process matures elsewhere. This gap has led to the destruction and wearing out of more than one Irish leadership in the past. It was a major factor in the degeneration of the "Officials."

However, today the crisis of international capitalism has become so chronic and so extensive that declines in mass struggles tend to be less deep and prolonged.

The struggle that began in Ireland in 1968 still continues, although it went into an ebb for a period, and it now appears to be going on the advance again. A prolonged, continuous struggle of this level is something new in the long history of mass movements in Ireland. It offers better opportunities for drawing political lessons and correcting errors.

The growth of revolutionary struggles and organizations worldwide is also tending to create the conditions for more international support for Irish revolutionists and for ending their centuries-long isolation.

#### McGurran's Legacy

Malachy did not live to see his hopes and those of the anonymous composer of "Sliabh na-Ban" accomplished. But he helped bring that day closer. If he could not be a revolutionary general, he was an exemplary captain. And that was a political and moral accomplishment of a very high order. In fact, it has been mostly the captains who have been the backbone and

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the real heroes of the Irish struggle. The greatest failures have been at the highest political level. It is the captains like Malachy who have shown what kind of revolutionary movement can be built in Ireland if the necessary kind of political leadership and support develops.

Although at the end of his life, Malachy was cut off from the rising generation of revolutionists in Ireland, the qualities he represented will be carried on. They grow

out of the rich tradition and experience in which he was deeply rooted, out of the ancient and still vital mass revolutionary experience of the Irish people.

As the Irish revolution advances, there will be more and more Malachys. They will be organizing and leading all sorts of actions and campaigns, carefully trying to prevent mistakes and to perfect the discipline of their forces, studying every available example with an open and thoughtful

mind, and applying the solid practical sense that comes from strong links with the people.

And when the long hoped for allies of the Irish people appear and the Irish fighters get the generals they have been awaiting for centuries, hundreds and perhaps thousands of Malachys will organize and lead the hosts that will finally raise the shout of triumph on the sunny slopes of "Sliabh na-Ban." □

## 2,000 at NOW Conference Celebrate Equal-Rights Victory

# American Feminists Debate Strategy for Women's Movement

By Matilde Zimmermann

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The eleventh national conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW) convened here October 6, only hours after the U.S. Senate bowed to pressure from women's rights supporters and extended the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to June 1982. Thirty-eight state legislatures must ratify the ERA in order for equal rights for women to be added to the U.S. Constitution, and the extension gives the feminist movement time to organize to win the three additional states needed.

The mood among the 2,000 delegates and observers at the conference was one of enthusiasm and of confidence that the ERA can be won. With the massive march of 100,000 ERA supporters July 9 and the extension victory October 6, the momentum had clearly passed to the pro-ERA forces. No longer was the small but vocal anti-ERA minority taking the initiative and chalking up all the victories, as had seemed to be the case a year earlier.

A technical snafu produced an incident that captures the enthusiasm of the conference. At one point it was announced that due to a wiring problem, the conference proceedings were suddenly being broadcast all over the swank Washington Hilton hotel. Two thousand women immediately began a loud and prolonged chant of "Three More States," taking advantage of our surprised new audience.

The central political question facing the conference was how to maintain this momentum and drive through to win ratification of the ERA. There emerged two different interpretations of how the initiative had been gained and two different strategies for actually winning the ERA.

The NOW leadership insisted the extension victory had been won primarily through lobbying senators and representatives in person and by mail, and promising to support them at election time in return for their voting the right way. The leader-

ship urged more of the same on a national level and in the unratified states, even if this meant holding off on demonstrations in order not to embarrass women's "friends" in the legislatures.

Another section of NOW thought the extension victory was directly attributable to the huge July 9 demonstration, and that more national actions were needed, perhaps in some of the unratified states.

Most of the women who attended the conference did not see the two strategies as counterposed and thought both demonstrations and lobbying were needed. The majority voted against the ERA action proposal in response to the leadership's plea for "flexibility." Many did so not because they were opposed to actions but rather because of the authority the leadership had acquired precisely by having called the July 9 demonstration.

The issue was further obscured by a red-baiting campaign against supporters of the action proposal. The plenary discussion was marred by open attacks on the Socialist Workers Party and attempts to intimidate those who supported the action proposal or simply wanted more democracy and more political discussion inside NOW.

Although several thinly disguised red-baiting motions were passed, one proposal that could have led to a true witch-hunt within NOW was overwhelmingly defeated. It would have changed the bylaws to allow expulsion of officers, entire chapters, or members who did not support the "policies" of NOW.

Two other important issues before the conference were the relationship between the feminist movement and the labor movement and the fight against forced sterilization. The delegates adopted a strong resolution that lays the basis for actively reaching out to trade-union women and throwing NOW's support behind affirmative action on the job and

other issues of importance to working women.

A resolution was passed committing NOW to a campaign against forced sterilization. Unfortunately, this resolution included opposition to a thirty-day waiting period for sterilizations, supported by many Chicana, Native American, and Black organizations (and by a significant section of NOW) as a measure of protection against the coercion to which poor and minority women are subjected.

The October 6-9 conference showed how the prestige and authority of NOW has increased in the year and a half since the last national conference. The largest feminist organization in the United States, NOW is approaching a membership of 100,000. There were daily articles on the conference in major newspapers, as well as coverage on network television. The gathering was addressed by speakers like Coretta Scott King and by prominent Democratic and Republican politicians.

NOW called the largest women's rights demonstration in American history. It was July 9 that gave NOW much of its new clout and prestige. The recent conference did not issue a specific call for future demonstrations. But that is the road NOW will have to follow if it is to continue to grow and to lead the fight for the ERA to victory. □

### Coffin Money Only

Although some 500 veterans of the Vietnam War have filed for disability benefits for skin lesions, nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, headaches, backaches, and lack of sex drive suffered as a result of exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange, the Air Force is taking a hard line against paying such claims.

There is no evidence of any lasting health damage to the veterans, an Air Force official told a congressional subcommittee, because "there had not been a single death."