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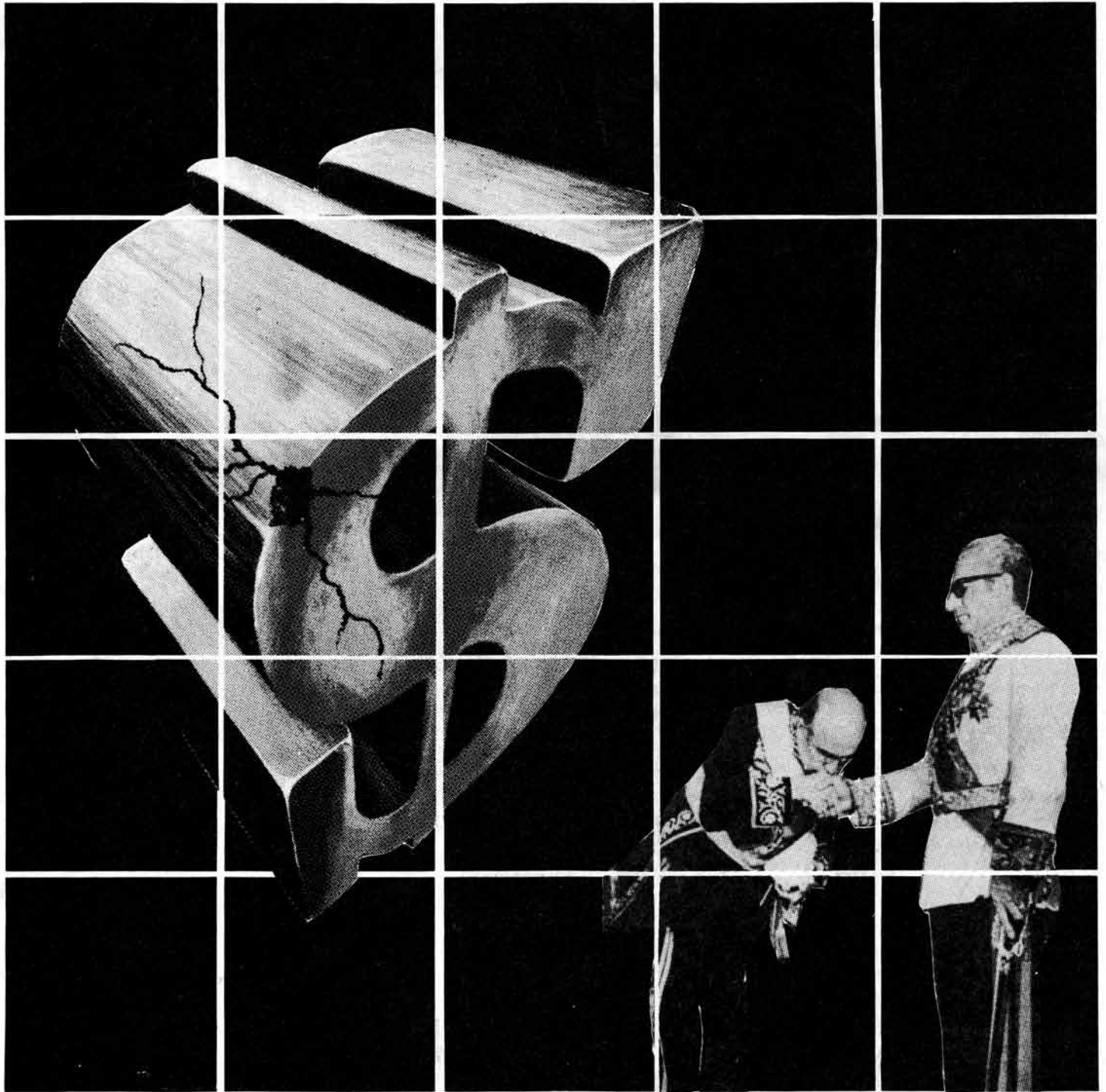
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**In this issue: Big Problems for the Dollar . . . Iran: News of the Upsurge;
A Participant's Diary; What Moscow, Peking, and Havana Are Saying . . .
Spartacist League Goes Into Orbit . . . More on Trotsky's Assassin**

NEWS ANALYSIS

Peking Begins to Lift the Lid on Mao's 'Errors'

By Dan Dickeson

"Is Peking criticizing Mao?"

That incredulous question was the headline on the lead article in a recent issue of the Hong Kong Maoist magazine *Cheng Ming*. Nearly two years after Mao Tse-tung's death, Chinese officials are taking what appear to be the first steps toward abolishing the cult of Mao.

In July, on the fifty-seventh anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, every major Chinese publication carried the text of a speech by Mao that had been withheld from publication for sixteen years.

In 1962, following the failure of the attempt to industrialize China overnight through the campaign known as the Great Leap Forward, Mao told the CP Central Committee that "whoever makes mistakes must criticize himself, and must let others speak up. . . ."

In an unusual moment of humility, Mao went on to admit that "there are many problems in the work of economic construction which I still don't understand. . . . I know very little about industry and commerce. . . . I know something about agriculture, but this is only relatively speaking. I still don't know much." (Quoted in the October 4 *Los Angeles Times*.)

To make sure that readers got the point, the October 9 issue of the CP newspaper *People's Daily* reprinted a speech made in 1949 by former Premier Chou En-lai, who declared that "we must not take him [Mao] as a mystic leader from whom we cannot learn. We must not take him as a unique godhead."

A more candid assessment of Mao's shortcomings has been offered by unofficial sources such as the Hong Kong *Cheng Ming*, which is one of the few foreign publications allowed to circulate inside of China.

According to the September issue of *Cheng Ming*, Mao on his deathbed voiced the opinion that "70% of what I have done had merit and 30% had been a mistake."

Although during his lifetime Mao was hailed as a great philosopher, it now turns out that many of his ideas were simply borrowed from other Chinese thinkers, and some of his most famous works were actually prepared by ghostwriters. *Cheng Ming* cites as an example Mao's 1956 speech "On the Ten Major Relationships," which was largely written by CP propagandist Hu Ch'iao-mu.

Chinese officials are still voicing their criticisms of Mao in a relatively discreet manner, quoting dead leaders whenever

possible to make their points. But the trend is clearly toward open acknowledgement of Mao's responsibility for the governmental policies that resulted in the trampling of democratic rights and the disruption of the economy during and after China's Cultural Revolution of 1966-69.

Rehabilitating Mao's Victims

Large numbers of people who were persecuted during Mao's lifetime are being officially cleared of the charges made against them, given back their former jobs, and in some cases paid compensation. Many of these—including Teng Hsiao-p'ing himself—are old CP bureaucrats who were rivals of Mao and his cronies at various levels. But the campaign to rehabilitate Mao's victims is clearly extending far beyond just a faction of the Chinese CP.

The September 15 *Far Eastern Economic Review* quotes reports that in Kwangtung Province, tens of thousands of engineers and technicians who were thrown out of their jobs under Mao have now been rehabilitated, including more than 10,000 in the city of Canton alone.

The rehabilitation of purge victims is being announced at mass rallies, where the stories of their persecution are recounted in great detail. One newspaper in Liaoning described how the Gang of Four "beat and scolded the masses, frenziedly set up kangaroo courts and used horrible tortures to obtain confessions and inflict unjustified punishments." (Quoted in the September 16 *London Economist*.)

In publishing Mao's crimes, the new regime is seeking to assure the Chinese people that such violations of human rights will no longer take place. A recent article in *People's Daily* admitted that "how to protect the democratic rights of the people in a socialist society [is a] question of extreme importance, and one not yet wholly solved." (Quoted in the October 8 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*.)

The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that Chiang Hua, the new head of China's Supreme Court, publicly called for "ideological and organizational rectification" of the judiciary, emphasizing that "it is essential to attach importance to proof and to investigation and study, and to strictly prohibit the forcing of confessions and belief in such confessions. . . . We cannot have one or two people deciding everything."

The September 26 *People's Daily* also acknowledged the plight of large numbers of youth who were banished to the countryside under Mao and have since returned to the cities, where they lived illegally, unable to get jobs. It was reported that in the city of Tsinen some 50,000 unemployed youth had been given residence permits and jobs in 1977, whereas previously such persons would have been punished and sent back to their rural posts.

Promising "Prosperous Socialism"

The new leadership in China has also blamed the "Gang of Four" for chronic disruption of the economy and the resulting economic hardships for China's workers and peasants.

An editorial in the September 12 *People's Daily* ridiculed the "egalitarian" slogans preached by well-heeled members of the "Gang of Four" in order to justify purging trained technicians and economists to replace them with technically incompetent but politically loyal functionaries. Asking "what kind of 'socialism' would we have if the Gang of Four were running things their way, leaving the country in poverty and the people suffering hardships?" the editorial reaffirmed the goal of bringing about "prosperous socialism" in China.

Following the general wage increase granted to Chinese workers last year, the regime has begun to implement a series of "material incentive" measures aimed at motivating people to work harder and more efficiently. These include paying bonuses to the most productive work teams in a plant, allowing peasants to cultivate private plots and market the produce at crossroads trade fairs, and emphasizing productivity in the management of enterprises, with workers no longer forced to spend long hours listening to "political education" lectures.

To help absorb the increased purchasing power of wage earners, the new leadership has opened the way for an influx of imported consumer goods on the Chinese market. Even though most of the imported merchandise is priced so high that the great majority of Chinese consumers cannot afford to buy it (a Japanese color television, for example, sells for the equivalent of \$1,700), the appearance of such goods in department stores serves as a symbol of the prosperity the new CP leadership promises to bring about.

When Teng Hsiao-p'ing traveled to Tokyo October 22, Peking television declared it "Japan Week," and began broadcasting an unprecedented series of Japanese films and documentaries in addition to extensive coverage of Teng's trip. For Chinese viewers, the high standard of living in Japan can only symbolize the future that Teng and Hua are promising them.

The goals for economic development announced by the CP leadership are staggering. The stated aim of their moderniza-

tion campaign is to turn China into an industrialized country by the end of the century by reorganizing the economy and introducing foreign technology on a large scale. An editorial in the September 27 *People's Daily* projected stepping up the use of farm machinery to such an extent that China's agricultural labor force can be reduced from its present level of 300 million down to 100 million, releasing 200 million people to work in new industries.

The introduction of industrial equipment and technology from abroad is now beginning on a scale unmatched in China's history. Following the signing of the Japan-China treaty in August, Japanese corporations have embarked on an all-out campaign to secure contracts with China. The September 14 issue of the Tokyo daily *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that the total value of two-way trade under the extended agreement may rise from the original figure of \$20 billion to around \$80 billion.

High Hopes and Deep Contradictions

To the extent that the present modernization campaign leads to a higher standard of living for China's workers and peasants, it will represent a progressive step away from the conditions that prevailed under Mao. But the modernization plan advanced by the Hua-Teng leadership is laced with contradictions that will make it impossible to attain the ambitious economic goals that have been set.

The new leadership, like the Mao faction before them, pursues the utopian goal of building socialism in one country. Expanded foreign trade and more rational methods of management can help begin to modernize China's economy, but to finish the job will require massive aid from more advanced workers states. Socialist revolutions in Japan and other industrialized countries are the real key to building socialism in China.

By promising the Chinese people democracy and prosperity, the Hua-Teng regime is raising hopes it cannot fulfill. Sooner or later this will lead to mass struggles against the regime, and eventually to a political revolution that can overthrow the bureaucracy once and for all.

* * *

People in China seem to be well aware of which way the wind is blowing. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that travelers returning from China said "that when the subject of the reviled Gang of Four arose in conversations with their Chinese guides, a guide would sometimes raise his hand and wag all five fingers. The silent sign was obviously intended to impart the message that it was actually a Gang of Five, with Mao as the fifth member."

Newsweek correspondent Fred Coleman reported that during a recent two-week visit to China, "the only people I saw wearing Mao pins were foreign tourists." □

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Carter Announces 'Bitter Medicine' to Halt Plunge of Dollar

By Jon Britton

In the wake of wholesale dumping of dollars on world money markets and one of the biggest plunges of the Wall Street stock market ever, President Carter announced new measures to prop up the dollar November 1.

By the time Carter acted, a panic was beginning to engulf financial markets around the world. The dollar was falling a dizzying 1% to 2% *per day* against major foreign currencies. Gold had shot up by \$17 an ounce to \$243 in five days. The stock market was in a deepening nosedive that had seen the Dow industrial average fall by 105 points in twelve trading days.

To stem that panic, Carter had to signal a real willingness to shift away from the expansionary economic policy he has followed since coming into office, toward credit-restricting "tight money" and sharply reduced government deficits.

Every aspect of Carter's defense of the dollar is to be paid for by exacting further sacrifices from American working people. It is the prospect of more cutbacks in social services, more unemployment, and an all-around escalation of the offensive against job safety, health, and working conditions that has cheered—at least temporarily—Wall Street and the world money markets.

The October financial panic and Carter's response to it are important signposts on the road to the next economic downturn, in which millions of American workers are likely to lose their jobs.

The new slump, which now looms on the horizon, will appear to have been caused by the bitter medicine announced by Carter. But in reality the Carter administration is simply responding in the time-honored fashion of all capitalist governments to insoluble contradictions of the decaying private-profit system. The headlong flight from the dollar was the most threatening manifestation of a developing economic crisis caused by growing overproduction* in the world capitalist economy.

The measures announced by Carter on November 1 include a 1% rise in the discount rate (the interest charged by the

Federal Reserve on loans made to member banks) and an increase of \$3 billion in the amount that banks are required to keep in reserve against certain large deposits.

In addition, Carter said that the Federal Reserve's "swap" lines of short-term credit with the central banks of Japan, West Germany, and Switzerland had been increased and other arrangements made to enable Washington to borrow up to \$30 billion in foreign currencies for use in buying dollars being dumped abroad. Finally, the Treasury Department will sharply increase its monthly sales of Fort Knox gold.

These measures follow a series of moves, begun last January, to counteract a fall in the dollar that threatened to tear apart the international monetary system and collapse world trade.

More Bark Than Bite

Every single one of the earlier pronouncements by Carter turned out to have more bluff than substance from the standpoint of international bankers and corporate financial chiefs. Each time, after a momentary rally, the dollar resumed its downward slide. By late October the U.S. currency had lost half its value in Swiss francs and nearly that much in relation to the Japanese yen, compared to a year earlier.

The main factor behind this decline is the fact that in face of worsening overproduction the Carter administration has continued to run a huge budget deficit (more than \$50 billion in fiscal year 1978) and the Federal Reserve has printed new money in massive amounts to finance a portion of the government's expanding outlays. The "loose-money" policy of the U.S. central bank has also encouraged a ballooning of the credit bubble in the private economy, past the astronomical figure of \$2 trillion.

The Carter administration and Federal Reserve had weighty reasons for continuing an expansionary fiscal and monetary policy beyond the phase of the capitalist business cycle when it was "financially prudent" to do so, including the following:

- Under Carter the U.S. rulers are in the process of reversing a decline in armaments spending (measured in noninflated dollars) that has been going on since the Vietnam War high point. Carter has projected a big step-up in such spending in hopes of stemming the world-wide decline in power of U.S. imperialism that resulted from its defeat in Vietnam.

- Carter has both held down social spending and raised taxes in the past year to help make up for the increased military outlays. But out of fear of massive protests and political upheaval he has not dared to do so on the scale required to achieve a balanced budget.

- For similar reasons, Carter has wanted to avoid presiding over a new slump. The rulers know that a big rise in unemployment while the supposedly "pro-labor" Democratic Party controls both the White House and Congress, and when workers are beginning to radicalize, would shake the capitalist two-party system to its roots.

- Finally, the Carter administration was no doubt influenced by a widely held theory that a fall in the value of the dollar relative to other currencies was not all that much to worry about because it would be self-correcting.

This theory holds that by lowering the price of U.S. exports (in yen, marks, and so on) and raising the price of goods imported into the United States, the falling dollar would strengthen the competitive position of U.S. corporations in world trade and ultimately lead to a stronger dollar. Thus, the dollar's decline was actually a good thing as long as it didn't get out of hand and seriously disrupt world commerce.

Prodded by Carter's expansionary deficit spending and the Federal Reserve's "loose-money" policy, the U.S. economy has continued growing, and at a significantly faster pace than the other imperialist powers. But this has been achieved at the cost of a massive trade deficit (as overproduced goods from abroad have poured into the country) and a faster and faster shriveling of the dollar.

Late last year, the governments of Japan and the European countries with relatively strong currencies began to move toward more inflationary policies themselves, partially as a result of U.S. arm-twisting.

These moves promised to ease the pressures on the dollar in two ways. Speeded-up economic growth would provide expanded markets for U.S. goods, thereby reducing the U.S. trade deficit. And more rapid depreciation of the Japanese yen, West German mark, and other major currencies would reduce their attractiveness as stores of value, discouraging the dumping of dollars to some extent.

Up till now, however, growth in Europe and Japan has continued to lag. While there have been signs of an economic

*Overproduction, which is both disguised and prolonged by inflationary government policies, occurs when too many goods are produced to be sold at prices corresponding to their full values. The tell-tale sign of overproduction going on now is that, since late 1976, prices measured in the money commodity, gold, have been falling in the United States and most other capitalist countries.

pickup in some of these countries, the upturn has so far been too feeble to restore equilibrium in world trade. Moreover, prices in Japan, West Germany, and Switzerland have continued to rise at a much slower rate than in the United States.

Thus, it is not surprising that the international financiers have not been impressed with Carter's past pronouncements on the dollar. Carter's credibility with the bankers was further eroded as a result of the chilly reception given his "Phase II" wage-cutting guidelines by the American labor movement and by working people in general.

By late October, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "pessimism about the dollar and the administration's economic management had become so rampant that the nation was on the brink of, in the words of one New York banker, 'a 19th Century kind of financial panic' from which a genuine depression could have developed" (November 6).

In the opinion of a "Belgian expert" cited by *Time* magazine, "The world was facing its worst economic crisis since 1929" (November 13).

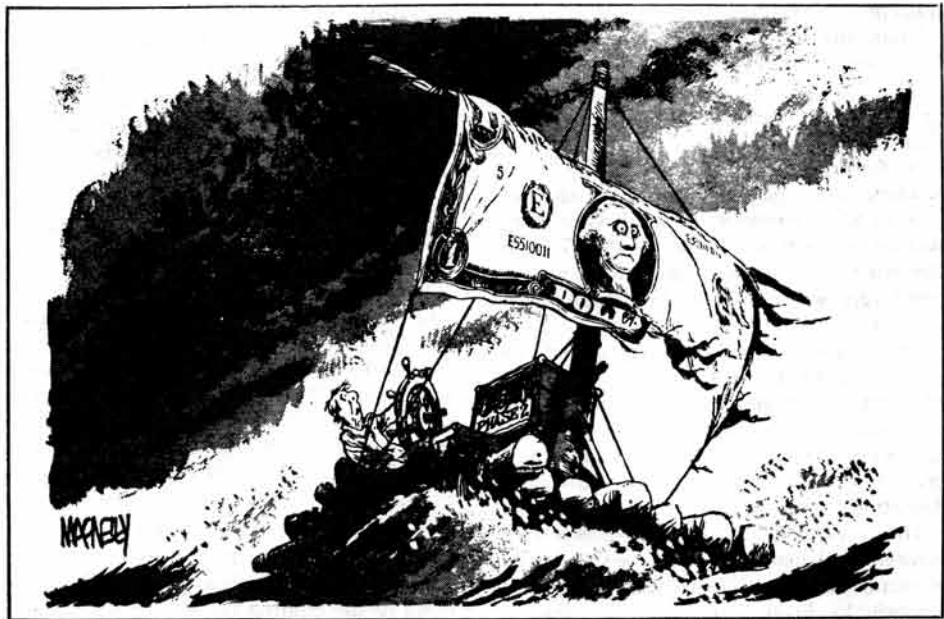
It may be weeks before monetary statistics confirm that Carter has really reversed economic gears. The rise in the discount rate will not by itself affect general interest rates significantly, since banks borrow relatively little from the Federal Reserve. Even the increase in the reserves that banks are required to hold against large deposits, and which will thus not be available for new loans, can be counteracted by other, reserve-creating actions by the U.S. central bank.

The editors of the London *Economist* are, in fact, not yet convinced Carter has bitten the bullet. In the November 4 issue of the influential financial weekly, they state that "what he is still trying . . . is to support the dollar without precipitating the United States from slowdown to slump."

This, however, is probably wishful thinking, reflecting nervousness on the part of the British rulers over the impact of a new U.S. slump on their own shaky economy.

The chances are that Carter is now reconciled to a real shift in policy. He and his advisers must realize that the bluffs and half-measures of the past year will no longer suffice to prevent an all-out flight from the dollar and a panic that would make those of the nineteenth century look mild by comparison.

Wall Street Journal reporters Richard F. Janssen and Richard J. Levine, whose article was quoted earlier, cited "many New York analysts" for a similar assessment of Carter's latest moves: ". . . the package's most vital aspect wasn't any of the specifics but its signal that a 'courageous' Mr. Carter had come to accept tighter credit and an enhanced recession risk now rather than face more severe economic trouble later."



MacNelly/New York Daily News

Newsweek concurred: ". . . Jimmy Carter rocked the financial world last week with the most dramatic change of policy since Richard Nixon slammed the gold window in 1971: a program to rescue the dollar, check inflation—and almost surely hasten a recession" (November 13).

The magazine went on to explain:

Carter had to make some dramatic move; the alternative was a serious risk of financial chaos within days or weeks. But the strategy he chose, at the urging of Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal, was the biggest political and economic gamble of his career. By accepting a dose of bitter medicine for the U.S. economy in coming months, he was betting that even sterner measures could be avoided later. As a Democratic President, he was abandoning his neo-Keynesian stress on growth and full employment in favor of a conservative doctrine that has been linked to hard times and Republicans for the past 30 years. His calculation was simply that the new policy would work—and that if inflation were reduced and the dollar and the economy were firmly on the upswing in election-year 1980, he could be forgiven.

Newsweek went on to buttress its assessment by revealing that Carter has asked his aides to find at least \$5 billion in additional cuts and deferrals in the current fiscal year's budget, and that he is considering vetoes of half a dozen spending bills passed by Congress. Among them is a measure that would add \$800 million to child-nutrition expenditures and another, costing \$1.6 billion, to shore up the District of Columbia's pension program.

No mention was made of any pending vetoes of military-spending bills.

Budget cuts of this scope would reduce the projected federal deficit for the current fiscal year to around \$34 billion compared to the \$48.5 billion projected as recently as last July. But finance capital will undoubtedly demand more.

A Swiss banker told *Newsweek*, "People have to suffer to pay for a quarter of a century of boom growth."

A Quick, Mild Recession?

While the timing and depth of economic downturns cannot be predicted precisely, it is unlikely that Carter will get his wish for a mild recession that is over and done with by the time he begins campaigning for reelection in early 1980.

The Federal Reserve undoubtedly does have the technical means to precipitate a new downturn in a matter of weeks, but it is unlikely to do so. The drastic curtailment of credit that would be required would set off a big wave of bankruptcies, both personal and corporate, and another financial panic. The central bank is therefore much more likely to squeeze down credit very gradually.

Gradual credit-tightening moves were put into effect in late 1972 following an expansionary policy under Nixon similar to Carter's up till now, and the momentum of a capital-spending boom prolonged the expansion for well over a year.

While there is not a comparable boom going on now, capital spending by the corporations has been picking up significantly in the last few months. (Whatever the present uncertainties, many corporations must replace worn out or technically obsolete plant and equipment if markets are not to be lost to more efficient competitors.)

Such spending could continue to increase for a time even after housing construction, automobile production, and other sectors dependent on easy credit turn down.

The Japanese and European economies will probably continue expanding for some time, also cushioning the effects of a new

tight-money policy.

Thus, the next slump may not hit with full force until late 1979 or early 1980, and unemployment far above "normal" will probably linger on right through the elections.

As for the depth of the next slump, if the economy continues expanding for another year or so, overproduction is likely to be as bad or worse than it was in 1973-74 and the ensuing crisis will have to be correspondingly severe to set the stage for a recovery.

Carter also hopes that price rises will be dampened down next year as a result of his "anti-inflation program." But if the experience of 1973-74 is any guide, the prospects are for a further speeding up of price rises, extending right into the next downturn.

The likelihood is, then, that millions of workers will lose their jobs even as prices continue to soar. Those who are lucky enough to keep working will have to tighten their belts as the purchasing power of their pay checks falls. The millions of youth, Blacks, women, and others now unemployed face an even bleaker future.

Controls No Answer

Working people should have no illusions that accepting wage and fringe-benefit increases in line with Carter's 7% "standard," or going along with mandatory wage and price controls such as George Meany is calling for, will reduce in the slightest the chances of a new round of "slumpflation." Carter's propaganda blitz on behalf of his "anti-inflation program" aims at convincing working people that the only way to avoid a slump is to accept wage restraints (actually wage cuts).

This is a lie.

The truth is that economic slumps have always occurred under the profit system and always will, regardless of what "control" gimmicks bourgeois economists and politicians have come up with in the past or will invent in the future. Overproduction inevitably makes its appearance at regular intervals in the unplanned capitalist economy and can only be eliminated through cutbacks in production, bankruptcies of weaker firms, and massive unemployment.

Inflation invariably occurs whenever the government artificially prolongs overproduction through deficit spending, postponing the day of reckoning. In fact this is precisely what is behind the depreciation of the dollar in the 1970s.

Overproduction, and therefore inflation, have become chronic since the long post-World War II boom ended in the late 1960s. "Small" depressions like that of 1974-75 can only partially eliminate overproduction and can moderate inflation but not end it. Only a major world depression on the scale of the 1930s can lay the basis for another extended period of "healthy" capitalist growth and restabilized paper currencies. The rulers fear the social upheavals

and political explosions that would inevitably accompany such a catastrophe and have acted to stave it off.

Thus spiraling inflation and mass unemployment are both inevitable products of capitalism in decay. These evils can be eliminated in only one way: by abolishing the profit system and putting in its place a planned system of production based on human need rather than profit.

Short of that ultimate solution, which will require a workers government to carry out, the only recourse working people have is to fight for the fullest possible economic protection. That means escalator clauses that fully adjust wages and other incomes to every rise in the cost of living. And it means massive public-construction programs and a shortening of the workweek with no cut in pay to eliminate joblessness.

Accepting wage restraints now only means workers will bear even more of the costs of the coming crisis.

I wrote in a previous article that "Carter's room for maneuver has narrowed considerably since he came into office." In terms of economic policy, his maneuvering room has now narrowed qualitatively. Runaway inflation and a worldwide financial panic leading to a major depression, or a "controlled" slump—that is the choice he faces. To ward off the most immediate threat he appears to have opted for the latter course.

But further down that road also lie financial panics—different in form, perhaps, but the same in essence as the recent rush for hard cash—and potential political crises as well. As these are encountered or approached, Carter will, no doubt, reverse economic gears once again. If society has paid a sufficient price in lost production and increased unemployment, a new recovery could then get under way, possibly by November 1980.

But by the time of the next presidential election, American politics in general and the Democratic Party in particular are sure to have been shaken up considerably.

With wage contracts expiring next year in such major industries as oil, trucking, electrical equipment, rubber, and auto, the Carter administration is openly suggesting that the employers face strikes rather than grant wage increases that exceed the "Phase II" austerity guidelines: "If there are irresponsible unions we may have to take a strike in order to beat inflation," Alfred Kahn, Carter's new wage-control czar said on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" program November 5.

Of course, if and when strikes occur the administration may change its tune. The ability of the coal miners union to defy Carter's back-to-work orders and overcome a calculated union-busting attempt last winter underscored the enormous difficulties the capitalists face in any head-on confrontation with a major industrial union. The example of the miners has also

inspired the ranks of other unions to resist employer assaults.

Thus, the class struggle had already heated up before Carter unveiled his new wage-cutting plan. The Labor Department reported October 30 that strike activity had increased to a four-year high in this year's first nine months. The increase was largely due to the coal strike and the nationwide walkout of railroad workers, both provoked by the bosses' offensive. With the prospect of a slump encouraging the employers to go for blood, even bigger confrontations may be shaping up for next year.

Meanwhile, according to a poll commissioned by *Time* magazine, the number of voters expressing "considerable confidence" in Carter's management of the economy has sagged steadily from 33% in March 1977 to a feeble 14% in October 1978. In light of economic prospects, this figure is likely to sag toward zero.

It can also be imagined what the likely impact of the coming economic crunch will be on New York City's finances, on the conditions of the oppressed communities in the United States, on "affirmative-action" job programs for women and oppressed minorities, and on semicolonial countries such as Peru and Zaïre, staggering under a mountain of debt owed to the imperialist banks.

Newsweek magazine in its November 6 issue attempted to explain why voters were expected to stay away from the polls in droves despite growing concern for the economic outlook. One "expert" they cited was California poll-taker Mervin Field, who said, "People think it's the system. They don't believe you can change it by voting for one candidate over another."

This dawning realization by working people that it is the system that needs to be changed reflects the beginnings of a radicalization that can be expected to speed up in the period ahead. □

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2,000 Oppositionists Jailed as Shah Imposes Military Rule

By Parvin Najafi

To counter the massive upsurge that is shaking the foundations of his throne, the shah of Iran declared martial law throughout the country November 6. Gen. Gholam Reza Azhari, the army chief of staff, was appointed prime minister, and military men were put in charge of all key ministries.

The move came after weeks of mass mobilizations that had created a prerevolutionary situation in Iran.

In several areas the population had armed itself with sticks and ousted the army and police, taking over control of their cities. In one city, Amol, the population even proclaimed the "democratic republic of Amol."

On November 5, the day before the imposition of military rule, Iran was the scene of the biggest demonstrations yet. According to the Persian-language news program of the British Broadcasting Corporation, this nationwide outpouring was in response to the shooting of students at Tehran University November 4, which resulted in sixty-five deaths.

A dispatch in the November 6 *Newark Star-Ledger* gave the following account of the protest in Tehran:

"The capital was paralyzed as the rebellion against Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi escalated and the government teetered on the edge of collapse. . . .

"At several points across the capital, troops and police watched silently as demonstrators hammered open the shuttered banks and shops, ransacked them and set furniture and paper ablaze.

"Witnesses said it appeared troops seemed unwilling to provoke a confrontation with the demonstrators.

"At one point in downtown Tehran, demonstrators and soldiers rode a tank together through the empty streets in a rare mood of friendship. Some troops were grabbed and kissed by demonstrating youth."

In face of this mass mobilization and instances—even though rare—of fraternization between the army and the people, the shah's masters began to get impatient. U.S. rulers openly complained about the shah's "indecisiveness" in calling for a crackdown. *New York Times* correspondent Hedrick Smith wrote from Washington November 5:

"The crescendo of violence and turbulence in Iran this weekend has caused serious fears in the Carter Administration that Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi may not be able to survive the crisis unless he

Threat of U.S. Military Moves

A steady trickle of hints at possible U.S. military intervention in support of the shah's tottering dictatorship has come from Washington.

New York Times correspondent Hedrick Smith reported November 5 that the U.S. embassy in Iran has "prepared evacuation plans" for 41,000 U.S. citizens in Iran. A similar pretext was used to justify the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, as well as the recent French-British-U.S. invasion of Zaïre.

Washington Post correspondent George Wilson wrote November 7, "Before the rioting got so out of hand that

the Shah had to resort to martial law, the administration was so concerned about Iran's need for crowd control training that it was prepared to send U.S. Army troops to Iran to train its troops in handling crowds without harming them." The U.S. officials who leaked this plan told Wilson it was not implemented.

A 1959 U.S. treaty with Iran "pledges appropriate [U.S.] action, including the use of armed forces, in order to assist the government of Iran at its request," reported John Cooley from Washington in the November 7 *Christian Science Monitor*.

takes decisive action to revamp his government within 24 to 48 hours.

"The situation was really boiling yesterday, but it's gotten worse today," a well-placed American official commented. "It's completely out of control. The next 24 to 48 hours are crucial and could be decisive. The shah's present government appears to be a lost cause for holding the line in this deteriorating situation." "We're at the point where something major has to be done," another American official said. "The same business as usual won't work."

After the clampdown was ordered, the American imperialists could hardly conceal their satisfaction. Within hours after the military government was installed, the Carter administration came out in support of it publicly.

The new government "pleases U.S. officials as a clear sign that the Shah is seeking to restore stability," the *Wall Street Journal* reported November 7. "In addition, Gen. Azhari is a 'great friend of America,' said one Pentagon official. He's a graduate of U.S. Army military schools."

Since the imposition of the military government, a dusk-to-dawn curfew has been ordered. Strikes, demonstrations, and the congregation of more than two persons have been banned. All schools and universities have been ordered closed. Censorship has been reimposed in radio and television. All newspapers except *Rastakhiz*, the government's paper, have been closed down.

Some 2,000 of the shah's opponents,

among them a dozen journalists and Karim Sanjabi and Dariush Forohar, top leaders of the National Front, have been arrested. An unknown number of persons have been killed for allegedly violating the martial-law regulations.

A special "emergency committee" has been set up by the military government to "find and uproot" all "agitators." But this is not an easy job, for the "agitators" are tens of thousands of militant youths in the high schools, universities, and plants who in their great majority do not belong to any political party.

Breaking the back of the mass movement, if not impossible, is very hard. The present movement has confronted the shah's military might every step of the way during the last year and a half, and has grown by leaps and bounds despite it.

Consequently the shah's regime is looking for a political solution. Finding one is not an easy job, however. Years of fierce repression have prevented any reformist organization from gaining a grip over the mass movement. Now, in a time of need for the shah's regime, there is no mass reformist organization that the monarchy can strike a deal with to block further mass mobilizations.

As a last-ditch effort to find a "compromise," the shah gave a televised address to the nation a few hours after the military government was installed. He spoke in an unusually humble way:

"I guarantee that after the military government, freedom and a constitution

will be freely reimplemented. . . . Your revolutionary message has been heard. I am aware of everything you have given your lives for.

"I commit myself to make up for past mistakes, to fight corruption and injustice and to form a national government to carry out free elections."

As a follow-up on the promise to fight corruption, the military government ordered the arrest of some fifty top officials of the government and close associates of the shah.

Among those arrested were many former ministers. But the names of two persons stood out—Amir Abbas Hoveyda and Gen. Nemathollah Nassiri.

Hoveyda was the shah's prime minister for thirteen years (1965-77). After that he was court minister until September of this year. He was considered by many to be the shah's closest associate.

Nassiri was the head of SAVAK, the dreaded Iranian secret police, from 1965 until June of this year. He was one of the key architects of this despicable organization.

In another move, the shah ordered an investigation of the business dealings and holdings of the royal family.

To be sure, corruption is a constant source of irritation to millions of Iranians. Any interaction with the government bureaucracy, including simply obtaining a birth certificate for a newly born infant or any other document, requires a bribe. And putting an end to this all-pervasive corruption has been one of the major demands of the mass movement.

But the arrest of a few officials, no matter how high a position they hold, is not going to satisfy the indignant population. The overwhelming majority of the insurgent masses correctly recognize that behind this corrupt bureaucracy stands U.S. domination and its agent, the "Light of the Aryans" himself. Nothing short of uprooting the monarchy from Iran will eradicate this problem.

After the imposition of the military government, there has been a pause in the mass mobilization in the streets, under threat of another bloodbath by the regime.

The masses have temporarily pulled back to organize their forces more tightly and come back in such formidable numbers as to block the government's plans for another massacre.

But while the mass movement has been momentarily pushed out of the streets, it has retaliated with a powerful wave of strikes.

The day after military rule was announced, striking workers cut off water and electricity in Tehran. Telephone service was severely disrupted by a slow-down. Air traffic and telecommunications remain shut tight. Bus and taxi drivers have walked off their jobs. Many government ministries remain closed by a strike of one million civil servants. The bazaars

across Iran remain closed in protest against military rule.

But among the hundreds of strikes being conducted, by far the most important is the strike of the oil workers. Oil is the single



KING OF KINGS: Hears "revolutionary message" loud and clear.

most important industry in Iran, accounting for 60 percent of the gross national product and 80 percent of the government's revenues.

The U.S. rulers and their clients in Iran also understand the key, strategic importance of the oil strike. *New York Times* correspondent Jonathan Kandell cabled from Tehran November 7:

"... the fate of the shah and his military dominated cabinet still appeared to depend on a solution to the week-old strike by about 30,000 oil workers in the south. A military governor has been appointed in Khuzestan Province, the center of oil production."

On the same theme, William Claiborne reported in the November 7 *Washington Post*:

"General Gholam Oveisi, the martial law administrator, was named to head the Labor Ministry. Oveisi, who played a key role in suppressing a Moslem uprising in 1963, will be charged with bringing to an end the crippling strike by oil workers which has threatened to ruin Iran's economy."

The *Christian Science Monitor* of November 8 sheds some light on how the military government is going to try to force back to work these highly class-conscious workers, without meeting their demands:

"There were reports that it was prepared to force the strikers back at gunpoint if necessary. . . ."

"Certainly, with little if any crude oil still leaving the country, the government

has to act quickly to stem a rapidly growing economic crisis."

A November 11 Associated Press dispatch from Tehran reported that the new government had already begun to order troops into the oilfields.

On the other side, the workers are holding firm to their pledge not to return to work until their demands are met in full. They are demanding:

1. An end to martial law and the military government.

2. Unconditional freedom for all political prisoners and return of the exiles.

3. Dismantling of SAVAK and its branches in the factories ("security offices," as they are called in Iran).

4. Punishment of corrupt officials, including Houshang Ansari, head of the Iranian Oil Company.

5. Punishment of the perpetrators of the massacres carried out by the regime.

6. Satisfaction of all demands of the 400,000 striking teachers.

Correspondent Jonathan C. Randal reported from Ahwaz in the November 10 *Washington Post*:

"A three-week-old oil workers' strike that has slashed Iranian production to one-sixth of normal shows no sign of ending quickly, with the shah unwilling to use force and the strikers firmly set on political demands that could lead to his overthrow. . . ."

"So far the only strikers returning to work have done so with the strike leaders' approval. For the most part they are involved in distributing petroleum products throughout the country where, for example, the relatively thin gas station network has caused gasoline shortage even in Abadan, site of the world's largest refinery."

About the mood and understanding of the strikers, Randal wrote:

"Interviews with two young leaders of the spontaneous coordinating committee running the strike at the Abadan refinery suggested a devotion to utopian ideals rather than the give and take of labor-management struggle."

Correspondent Nicholas Gage reported in the November 10 *New York Times*:

"... discipline in enforcing the strike appears strong. . . ."

"A high official of the National Iranian Oil Company recounted today how his office staff, including his secretary, went on strike last week in sympathy with the workers in the oil fields and had come into his office to warn him to stop working too.

"As soon as they left, the phone rang, and the caller said: 'Why are you answering the phone? Didn't we tell you not to do any work?'"

The oil workers in Iran are waging a heroic, self-sacrificing battle for the freedom of all the oppressed and exploited in Iran. Their struggle deserves the enthusiastic support of all revolutionists and unionists around the world. □

A Week of Protest Against Shah's Rule in Gorgan

[The following is a political diary kept by a resident of Gorgan, a small town of about 50,000 some 200 miles northeast of Tehran. It begins on October 23 and ends on October 28. During these days life in Gorgan was pretty much "normal," for massive demonstrations have become a part of the life of its inhabitants.

[There were many other demonstrations before and after this diary was written. What was probably the biggest protest in the city's history took place on November 5. On that day, as part of the nationwide response to the murder of sixty-five students at Tehran University the day before, 70,000 persons marched in Gorgan. This included practically everyone in the city plus peasants who had come in from outlying areas to voice their indignation against the shah's regime.

[The diary itself gives a glimpse of the daily life, mood, understanding, and consciousness of the residents of a small, typical Iranian town during the mass upsurge in the month of October. It has been translated by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Monday, October 23

The police attack the students of Vagheghi High School in Villa Street (an all-female school) for no reason at all. They attack the students with clubs and water hoses, injuring thirteen.

The high-school principal intervenes, telling the police that they have no business there and that they should get lost. The principal also tells the students that they should all leave the school and go home for their own safety.

The students leave—yelling, shouting, some crying. But they go to Iranshare High School in Kakh Street (all male). The students from both schools then assemble in the schoolyard. There are about 2,000 in all.

The police attack this gathering also. The students respond by throwing rocks and bricks. They win. The police have to back down and leave. Four more students, two female and two male, are injured.

At about three or four in the afternoon the news gets around town that one of the students has died in the hospital.

At night about 6,000 persons gather at the Grand Mosque of the city. Everyone is angry as hell. The crowd seems like one big volcano.

Everyone says, "We are going to sit here until they give us the body." At times in

the past the government has murdered protesters and refused to turn their bodies over to relatives.

A delegation is formed to call the SAVAK, the police, and the gendarmerie to find out the fate of Maryam Borna—the person that people think has been killed—and to inform them of the crowd's decision to sit at the mosque until they learn what has happened to Maryam.

The government agencies do not give clear answers. They say contradictory things as to the whereabouts of Maryam.

By this time Maryam's sister has come to the mosque. She says her sister was injured with a club and taken to a hospital for treatment. But she has been looking for her since noon. It is now 7:30 p.m. and she has looked everywhere, but there is no trace of Maryam.

Maryam's sister says that one of the employees of the hospital told her that a body was taken to the morgue. It could very well have been Maryam's body. This news is announced over the mosque loud-speaker. People start crying hysterically.

A delegation of religious leaders is formed to go and confirm this report. The delegation leaves and people stay in the mosque to await the results. They are restless, angry, disgusted, and full of hatred for this regime because of all of the things that it does to people.

The delegation returns at about 1:30 a.m. They say Maryam was injured and taken to the hospital. She has just been released and is at her aunt's house. No one has died; the rumor was wrong.

But people are still very angry. They decide to call a demonstration for tomorrow to protest police brutality.

Tuesday, October 24

The demonstrators begin to march at about 9:20 in the morning. There are 30,000 of them. Every class and layer of society is represented—students, teachers, people from the bazaars, the religious establishment, and many peasants from nearby villages.

The demonstrators chant, "Brother soldiers, why do you kill your brother?"; "Army, you are innocent; your officers are butchers"; and "How long will you remain in the sleep of unawareness?" Of course, the favorite chant is "Death to the shah."

Another popular slogan is, "The shah has recently turned Muslim; he bathed in the blood of the youth" —a reference to Black Friday [the September 8 massacre in Tehran].

The procession marches for a long time.

Then everyone assembles in a large open space for a rally.

Mr. Housain Jabary, an intellectual, speaks. He says: "The reason we have gathered here is to show the ruling regime our hatred and disgust for them and their police in this city." He says that what we want is freedom of political prisoners, full political liberties, and the putting into power of persons who are committed to the people. I think by this he means National Front leaders; from what he says, he seems like a National Front member or sympathizer.

People respond by shouting, "That's right, that's right," after each demand is mentioned.

The procession begins to move again. Before it gets to the Moulin Rouge Cinema, a group of twenty to thirty persons has begun to attack the cinema and nearby cafes. The cinema is set on fire, and smoke is rising from it as the march arrives.

Then a portion of the crowd—about 500 persons, mostly youths around the age of fifteen—follow the lead of the small group, separate from the march, and begin to go around the town burning movie houses, liquor stores, banks, and so on.

A friend of mine who lives near the SAVAK headquarters in the city and could see everything from his window told me later that this group of 500 was led by the 20 to 30 persons to the SAVAK headquarters to burn it down too. They led everyone inside the building and then fled themselves.

One person who was among the group of youths and was injured there told me that when they walked inside the SAVAK headquarters the doors were closed all of a sudden. Someone fired a pistol. Then, from the second floor, SAVAK agents began firing down the stairways onto the youths. Thirteen persons were wounded. Fortunately, all of them survived.

Later people in the city who were neighbors of SAVAK agents told everyone that the twenty or thirty persons who began the burning were members of the SAVAK.

Wednesday, October 25

Today a group of strangers from outside the city, mostly ignorant peasants hired by the Resistance Corps [the right-wing vigilante squad formed earlier in the year] came to the city and began burning buildings.

They burned down many buildings, but the worst thing they did was to burn the homes of two Armenians, Mr. Avasaniyan and Mr. Sokasiyan. People were very disgusted with this action. It was discussed everywhere, and everyone was very angry,

especially because the arsonists were trying to make it look as though the opponents of the shah had done this.

Thursday, October 26

Almost nothing happened today, except that a group of fifty to sixty persons, in all probability paid by the government—no one is enthusiastic about marching for the shah—marched through the town chanting, "Long live the shah."

Friday, October 27

A group of 2,000 to 3,000 club-swinging workers from Hojarb Yazdani invaded the city, riding on trucks and tractors. They were looking for a confrontation with the people. But people very prudently avoided confrontations at all cost.

One of these club swingers was caught alone by the people, however. After they pressured him, he said that he had been paid 75 tomans [US\$11] to participate.

In any event, they really made fools of themselves in front of everyone.

Saturday, October 28

Another demonstration has been called. Again some 30,000 persons pour out. The demonstration is very spirited, and again people from all classes of society participate. The demonstrators march about three kilometers from Golshan Mosque to Jorjan Garage.

When they pass in front of Armenian shops, they chant, "Armenian brothers, SAVAK has burned your house." This is a very popular chant, because everyone is disgusted with what the SAVAK has done.

They are also chanting, "We want freedom in the real sense of the word, for everyone."

The speakers say that the people are opposed to burning down buildings, that in fact such acts are done by known SAVAK agents. They dissociate the shah's opponents from such barbaric acts as burning the homes of the two Armenians. (The city of Gorgan has about 1,000 to 2,000 Armenians.) □

M.A. Beh-Azin Arrested in Tehran

Mahmoud E'temad-Zadeh, whose pen name is M.A. Beh-Azin, was arrested October 24, according to a statement released in New York November 4 by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI).

Beh-Azin is a well-known writer and opponent of the shah. He has been arrested several times and was imprisoned by the regime in 1971.

Beh-Azin has a heart condition and his life is in serious danger. CAIFI is organizing a campaign to demand Beh-Azin's release and urgently asks that letters of protest be sent to Iranian embassies abroad and to the prime minister of Iran.

Copies of such letters should be sent to CAIFI, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003.

A Trotskyist Assessment

The Unfolding Revolution in Iran

By Javad Sadeeg and Azar Tabari

[Javad Sadeeg and Azar Tabari are leading members, respectively, of the Sattar League (the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Iran) and of the Organization of Iranian Supporters of the Fourth International in the Near East and Europe. At present, the two groups are in the process of fusion to form a single section of the Fourth International in Iran.]

* * *

No longer willing to endure the miserable and degrading conditions of life under capitalism imposed upon them by the shah's despotic regime, the oppressed masses of Iran have entered the revolutionary road.

After a quarter century of intense and murderous repression, the masses have become conscious of the strength of their numbers and, while loudly calling for the overthrow of the shah, have heroically faced the machine guns of the royal troops. The traditional methods of wholesale massacre of peaceful demonstrators have not been effective in suppressing the movement, but on the contrary have drawn new layers of the population into political motion.

Within the last month a massive wave of strikes has engulfed the entire country. The working class is waging an economic battle for survival. In the heat of the class battles these strikes are assuming an increasingly political character. Demands of the striking workers include freedom for all political prisoners and an end to military rule. The proletariat is beginning to champion the democratic aspirations of all the oppressed, and to move toward solution of the crisis imposed on Iranian society by the shah's capitalist rule.

The bourgeoisie is scared and is engineering a massive flight of its capital—now reportedly to the tune of more than \$50 million a day!—in anticipation of its worst fears. The majority of the royal court have left the country and are in hiding in such places as Switzerland.

The degree of isolation of the monarchy is such that bourgeois politicians no longer dare to be identified with it. It finds no alternative but to resort, more and more, to military rule and imperialist support. This is bringing its downfall closer.

The present situation is prerevolutionary with insurrectionary tendencies. Under the influence of the mass movement the army is becoming unreliable; there is increasing fraternization with the people. In open defiance of martial law demonstrations

have continued. The soldiers have often looked the other way; at times they have shown solidarity with the people. In some cities and towns—most notably in Amol, northeast of Tehran—the masses have taken over control of the government for periods of time. The longer the shah hangs on to his cracking throne, the deeper becomes the participation of the working class in the revolutionary upsurge, and the graver becomes the crisis of the ruling class.

This is the first time in a quarter century—since the 1953 CIA-engineered coup that brought the shah back to power and signaled the defeat of the second Iranian revolution—that such a situation has arisen in the country. Also, this is the first time since 1946—when the autonomous governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan collapsed, owing to Stalinist betrayals—that deepgoing revolutionary sentiment is emerging within the oppressed nationalities in Iran. This is particularly true of the Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, and Kurds. Other allies of the proletariat—the masses of peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, women, the youth, and soldiers—are involved in the movement to one degree or other.

The convergence of the various components of the revolution in Iran gives it a powerful dynamic affecting the entire region. Development of the revolution in Iran will have a strong impact on the Arab revolution, the Afghan revolution, the revolution in the Indian subcontinent, and the political revolution in the USSR. It will deal a crushing blow to imperialism in the entire Middle East, and will put the socialist overturn on the agenda.

The present showdown between the shah's regime and the masses is the culmination of a series of massive struggles that have taken place during this year.

Until this year the movement against the shah had been made up mostly of students and intellectuals. This was highlighted in early 1977 with the revival of the Writers Association, which called for an end to censorship as its primary demand.

The Writers Association began to grow, finding many new adherents. It held poetry readings that implicitly opposed the shah's dictatorial rule and attracted thousands of listeners. The students came to the defense of the writers when the government tried to victimize them. The increased tempo of student and intellectual activities reflected the intensification of the class struggle as a whole.

Then came the Qum massacre of January 9, 1978, where a massive demonstration in the religious city was suppressed in blood. The Islamic religious leaders called for a national day of observance on the traditional fortieth day of mourning for the martyrs.

The Uprising in Tabriz

On that day, February 18, the police in Tabriz attempted to prevent crowds from gathering. In the course of a confrontation, a youth was shot pointblank as the people watched. The body of the slain youth was carried through the streets, leading to a massive explosion of anger by the population. The outraged masses took control of the streets.

For several hours the masses remained in control. The slogan "Death to the King!" was voiced for the first time by the indignant masses, comprised of workers, the youth, women, and peasants who came from the outskirts of the city. In the course of the Tabriz uprising, only those institutions and shops that were identified as being pro-shah were attacked. No educational institution was damaged, but not a single branch of the shah's Rastakhiz Party was left standing.

The Tabriz garrison refused to carry out a sustained attack upon the demonstrators, forcing the government to deploy troops from other parts of the country. Airborne troops machine-gunned protesters from Bell helicopters. Four hundred SAVAK agents were dispatched from the capital. All travelers to and from Tabriz had to produce identity cards. Oppositionists estimate that the shah's troops massacred at least 500 people, while the Tehran daily *Kayhan* reported at least 645 arrests.

The Tabriz action showed the unreliability of imperialist rule's main base of support—the army itself. It showed that the soldiers—700,000 strong, equipped with the latest weapons, and primarily composed of young draftees—have no fundamental stake in defending the shah's regime. This fact—observed by commentators in the imperialist press—was absorbed by the masses, who consciously sought to fraternize with the troops during the demonstrations of September 4 and 7.

News of the February uprising in Tabriz spread rapidly and became a source of inspiration for the oppressed throughout the country. Waves of demonstrations erupted in almost all cities and towns and in some villages, while at the same time the demonstrators' demands became more and more political. These geographically expanding mass actions kept on erupting in forty-day cycles. In May, the shah took personal command of his troops in Tehran, where demonstrators took to the streets shouting "Down with the shah!"

Following the May demonstrations, the religious leaders in Iran refrained from

any further calls to action and sought to prevent the movement from taking to the streets. However, a fresh series of actions began to spring up without their official call.

On June 8, 10,000 people in the Kurdish city of Mahabad attended the funeral of Aziz Yousefi, a Kurdish nationalist who had spent the last twenty-five years of his life in the shah's jails. These demonstrators raised the slogans of "Free Kurdistan" and "Kurdistan or death!" and listened to militant speeches in Kurdish. They also carried the picture of Mohammed Ghazi, the martyred leader of the 1946 autonomous Mahabad Republic.

In the last weeks of July, antigovernment demonstrations took place in at least twenty cities. And again, on August 10, a new round of protests broke out embracing the entire country. In the industrial city of Isfahan, where the largest of these protests took place, barricades were erected for the first time. The government put the city under martial law. Interestingly enough, the military governor of Isfahan noted that the leadership of the demonstrations was passing from the hands of the religious leaders into the hands of militant youths—high-school and university students. Shiraz was among other major cities where, following the August 10 demonstrations, the authorities threatened to impose martial law.

The Theater Fire in Abadan

It was after the declaration of martial law in Isfahan and the Shiraz action that the theater fire occurred in Abadan. The August 19 arson incident, in which an estimated 600 people were burned to death in a movie theater in a working-class district, triggered another wave of mass outrage against the regime.

The shah sought to use this incident to create a witch-hunt atmosphere in which a crackdown could be launched to stifle the mass movement. But his plan backfired. In Abadan itself, widespread anti-shah sentiment surfaced in the August 26 mourning ceremonies for the victims. This sentiment spread immediately to Qum where, according to *Kayhan*, "the largest demonstrations ever" were held. Other demonstrations blaming the shah for the fire occurred in many cities across Iran. For the shah's regime the danger signals were loud and clear. Rising mass anger, coupled with the inability of the army and police to quell the masses, could lead to the loss of the throne.

Thus, the monarchy ordered a hasty retreat, biding its time for another attack. On August 27, Jamshid Amouzegar, the prime minister, resigned, and Jaafar Sharif-Emami, another court stooge, took his place. As a loyal servant of the shah and one of the main imperialist pawns in Iran, Sharif-Emami had served as president of the Senate for the past thirteen years.

Sharif-Emami formed what he called "a government of national reconciliation." Declaring that he wanted to "bring peace between the different classes of Iranian society," he announced his desire to negotiate with the political and religious leaders of the opposition. Among the concessions he made to religious leaders were the decree to change the "imperial calendar" back to the original Islamic calendar and the abolition of the token ministry of women's affairs.

The change in the cabinet was intended to help stem the tide of mass mobilization. But instead of subsiding, the mass upsurge mounted even higher. Dozens of demonstrations took place each day in nearly every city. At the same time, strikes began to occur, demanding higher wages, better working conditions, housing, and longer vacations.

March of One Million in Tehran

The largest demonstrations in the history of Iran, and perhaps the Middle East, took place on September 4, involving three to four million people. Major actions on that day occurred in Shiraz (150,000), Mashed (300,000), Yazd (100,000), Qum (100,000), Ahwaz (150,000) and Tehran (500,000). In Tabriz, the army locked the mosques to prevent demonstrators from assembling. However, tens of thousands participated in a protest action outside Tabriz and in other smaller Azerbaijani cities.

Three days later, on September 7, more than one million people marched in Tehran alone, shouting "Death to the King!" The echo of this slogan throughout the country declared the verdict of the masses concerning the monarchy. On both September 4 and 7, large-scale fraternization between the demonstrators and soldiers took place. "Brother soldier, why do you kill your brother," cried the masses as they showered the troops with flowers.

Mass demonstrations were to have continued on Friday, September 8. On the morning of that day, the shah hurriedly declared martial law in Tehran and eleven other cities. In Tehran, freshly arrived troops of the Royal Guard machine-gunned the youthful demonstrators. Thousands more were added to the heroic martyrs of the revolution. But the massacre of September 8 did not halt the momentum of the mass movement. Demonstrations, especially in cities not under the martial law, continued to occur. Furthermore, the wave of strikes that had begun in August began to gather momentum after martial law was declared.

On September 23, workers in the vital oil industry in the south, 35,000 strong, went on strike demanding wage increases. Soon thereafter the entire country became engulfed by strikes, including by government employees—all illegal! By October 10, the strike wave included 30,000 steelworkers in the suburbs of Isfahan, rail workers,

copper miners, civil servants, teachers, bank workers, and 7,000 agricultural laborers in the southern province of Khuzistan.

The strikers' demands have been primarily economic, but political demands such as an end to martial law and freedom of all political prisoners are now being raised as well. The workers are also fighting to organize independent trade unions of their own.

The regime's promise of wage increases of 50% or more has sometimes not satisfied the workers, in part because of their fear of galloping inflation but also because the entire strike wave is taking place within a politically mobilized population, where solutions are seen as going beyond the sphere of economic demands.

Economic Chaos Despite Oil Billions

The economic crisis of imperialism is catching up with Iran. The global offensive against working people is hitting the masses, with the most oppressed layers bearing the brunt of the offensive.

The explosiveness of the present situation and the intensity of the contradictions are due to the peculiar circumstance of increasing oil revenues, which had enabled the regime to hold off the crisis for some time.

Inflation is at its highest point since the Second World War. Some reports put it as high as 50%, and it is increasing rapidly. The price of housing escalated almost 75% in one year. Some 60% to 70% of a worker's wages go for housing. Thus, it is not surprising that the first major mass confrontation with the government, which took place in mid-1977 in the outlying area around south Tehran, was around the issue of housing.

The government brought in bulldozers to demolish huts that had been built "illegally" overnight. Angry people resisted the government's wrecking operations. The police opened fire and some people were killed, but massive resistance finally forced the regime to back down. Since then, similar scenes have been repeated several times.

The middle class finds itself squeezed by the housing problem as well. About 50% of the income of a middle-class family goes for rent. A modest two-room apartment in Tehran costs about \$1,000 a month. Generally, the prices in the cities in Iran are on the same level as those in the West.

As inflation continued to rise, the regime took measures to slow down the economy. Ostensibly, this was to curb inflation, which it did not. In fact, it led to cutbacks and unemployment. Earlier this year, the minister of economic affairs and finance declared that "all projects that could be put off without harming the national economy have been put off." The London *Economist* reported September 16 that, "In spite of the shah's huge development plans, economic growth has now come to a virtual standstill."

Stagflation has particularly affected the construction industry, where a large portion of the work force had been made up of poor peasants who had been driven off the land because of the agricultural crisis. The regime has not issued any figures on unemployment, but several months ago the *Tehran Economist* gave an example of hidden unemployment in Tehran: "At this time, there are 700,000 healthy but idle people who busy themselves by selling lottery tickets, watching cars, or peddling. . . ."

For those who have jobs, the situation is not much better. Officially, the minimum wage is \$3 a day, but many unskilled workers receive even less. For skilled workers, the situation is not all that much better. The striking workers at the auto assembly plant in Tabriz—one of the largest such industrial plants in the country—declared in early September that they receive less than \$200 per month. And 2,000 striking workers at Ray Textiles wrote in an October 21 open letter to the government that their salaries are less than \$7.50 per day.

An additional edge of the anti-working-class offensive has been the sharp increase in taxation. This year, taxes are expected to go up by 146%, comprising some 22% of total government income. More than half this sum comes from indirect taxation, under which the poverty-stricken masses pay a greater proportion.

Most of the burden of direct taxation also falls upon the shoulders of the working people. The rich manage to avoid paying taxes through graft and bribes, common at every level of the government. The regime openly admits this inequity. According to the government's own statistics, only one-quarter of the capitalist companies have ever paid taxes.

As a measure to stop the falling rate of profit, the capitalist class, in coordination with the regime, has gone on a speedup campaign. Workers also complain of forced unpaid labor, utilized by the bosses as a form of punishment.

Peasants Driven Off the Land

The situation in the countryside is much worse than in the cities. Agriculture is in disarray. On the average, the rural population earns one-seventh the income of the urban population. The shah's "land reform" left one-third of the peasantry with no land. Of the landowning peasants, 90% cultivate lands where the yield is actually below the level of subsistence. Optimistic reports put the yearly average income per landless peasant family at \$450, and twice that for peasants with land. Nearly half the arable land is owned by absentee landlords.

The state has replaced the rule of the landlords in the village. The city banks and merchants have replaced the landlords as creditors. On the other hand, the

government-run cooperatives are underfinanced and incompetent. Whatever government aid that was available for agriculture—only 13% of the budget of the Fifth Development Plan—went to the very large, mechanized agribusiness and the rich farmers, or, in exchange for graft, to city-dwelling absentee landowners.

The agribusiness complexes were set up through the forceful evacuation of peasants from their lands and villages. These farms were devoted to the production of export items, such as cotton. Their output of foodstuffs for domestic consumption is insignificant. Receiving no aid from the state, the peasants are forced to rely on usurers and loan sharks, who charge interest as high as 100%. Impoverishment of the peasantry has become a general feature of Iran's villages.

Because of the stagnation of agriculture and the apparent boom of the urban areas following the rise in oil income in 1973, the peasants were drawn to the cities. Joining the army of the unskilled urban proletariat, they moved back and forth from city to city and sometimes back to the countryside, depending on the job situation. The net population flow from the village to the city averaged 500,000 a year. Today, reports from different parts of the country tell of whole villages completely abandoned, while in other areas the population consists mainly of women, children, and the very old.

Production of wheat, barley, beet sugar, cheese, butter, and meat have declined. Formerly self-sufficient Iran today must import 60% of its food. Last year, agricultural imports rose by 22%, but the rise in wheat and flour imports was 97%, and in meat and livestock 77%. Between 10% and 20% of all oil revenue goes for food imports. Additionally, the government's annual food subsidies amount to \$2 billion. Imports have softened the impact of scarcity, and subsidies have curbed the astronomical rise in basic food prices. Nevertheless, agriculture is in ruins.

The massive proletarian struggle against economic annihilation is taking place within a larger movement of the oppressed. The allies of the proletariat—the peasants, the oppressed nationalities, women, youth, artisans and shopkeepers, and soldiers—to one degree or another are involved in this movement.

In the course of this year's upsurge, these allies of the working class have begun to come forward in their own independent contingents. Insofar as the allies of the working class overlap and make up the massive core of the proletariat and poor peasantry, they have been the worst hit economically. And in the current struggle they have played, to a great extent, the role of the movement's social vanguard. They have constituted the most militant sections of the struggle. Thus, it was not accidental that the qualitative upsurge in the mass movement started with the explo-

sion of Tabriz in the heart of the Azerbaijani oppressed nationality.

In the subsequent wave of demonstrations before the September 8 massacre, the uprooted peasantry who have joined the ranks of the city proletariat as unskilled workers played a central role.

It was on the basis of the struggles of these oppressed layers that a powerful wave of strikes of the industrial proletariat emerged and led to the strikes by other workers, including the national strike of teachers and those of the civil servants.

For the first time a certain link has been established between the proletariat in the cities and the peasants—through the active participation of the uprooted peasantry in the urban struggles.

Under the impact of the working-class struggles, the peasants have held demonstrations and marches, and at times they have marched to nearby towns. The majority of such actions so far have occurred in Kurdistan and have involved thousands of peasants.

The peasant demands have centered around land, roads, and water. (They are also protesting the destruction of the traditional Qanat system of irrigation through the unplanned introduction of artesian wells by the rich.) Other peasant demands include abolishing the installments they have to pay as rent for working on their own land; abolishing the agricultural shareholding enterprises imposed upon them by the government; and the return of their land.

A new mood of political awareness is beginning to develop among the peasant masses. For example, the peasants in the village of Halab and those who had come from surrounding villages held a memorial on October 18 for Ismail Rostami (age twelve), who had been killed earlier in the nearby city of Zanjan while participating in an anti-shah demonstration. To honor the slain youth, the peasants renamed their village after him. Some 600 persons from Zanjan attended the memorial after forcing their way through roadblocks.

On October 20, some 1,500 peasants from Malek Abad marched ten miles toward the town of Arak to protest the imprisonment of thirteen fellow villagers. The gendarmes stopped them on the way. The peasants told reporters that the thirteen had been unjustly accused of setting fire to artesian wells belonging to the city millionaire Hojabr Yazdani. They added that the wells had dried up their Qanats one year ago, causing serious drought.

These are some indications of the forthcoming peasant struggles. In these struggles, as is already evident, the peasants will be looking up to the cities for help. And for the proletariat, the poor peasants constitute the most important class allies.

The link between the city and the village that is being established through these struggles is undermining centuries of peasant isolation.

In regard to the oppressed nationalities, their nationalist sentiments have intensified following the February uprising in Tabriz. There are reports that in some of the Azerbaijani schools, in an open defiance of the regime, the suppressed Azerbaijani Turkish language is being used in place of the official Persian. And, as was mentioned above, in Kurdistan the nationalist sentiment has been expressed more openly in the call for a "Free Kurdistan," indicating the depth of the Kurdish rebellion against national oppression.

There has also been a significant rise in Baluchi national sentiment. In their struggle against the shah's regime Baluchi students have been calling for a "Free Baluchistan." Their struggle is linked with the struggle of Baluchis in the disintegrating Pakistani state. These developments are all the more significant in view of the fact that the Iranian regime has had a consistent policy of brutally suppressing any manifestation of nationalist rebellion.

There is no doubt that with the further development of the mass movement, the struggle of the oppressed nationalities for self-determination—a vital component of the Iranian revolution—will become more and more distinct and assume massive character.

Role of Women in the Mass Upsurge

An outstanding and unprecedented development in the course of the recent upheavals has been the active and massive participation of women. Tens of thousands of women have marched and carried banners in every major city of Iran where anti-shah demonstrations have occurred. Women, organized in separate contingents and covered with their *chadors* [veils], led fraternization with the army troops in Tehran by throwing flowers upon them. Even the official government newspaper, *Rastakhiz*, reported of the pre-September 8 demonstrations: "The most visible thing was the active and massive participation of women shoulder to shoulder with men."

In the present wave of workers' strikes, the demand for child-care centers has been raised both by the coal miners and by the striking teachers.

Women's participation in demonstrations has continued and extended to the countryside. Of special importance has been the participation of female high-school students, whose militancy is becoming well known.

One of the problems that the regime is facing now is the ever-present anti-shah demonstrations by teenagers and their younger brothers and sisters. The regime's appeal to parents to use their authority in curbing their children has been totally ineffective. Elementary school students make up their own colorful anti-shah rhymes fashioned after their school lessons. One such example is the following: "How many parts has 'Death to the

King?'" sings a group of children. "Three parts—'Death/ to the/ King,'" respond their classmates.

In general, the overwhelming portion of the movement has consisted of the youth. A total of 60% of the country's population is under twenty years of age and sees no future for itself under this system. Having been influenced by the worldwide youth radicalization, and not having experienced the defeat of the Second Revolution, they have an optimistic outlook as to the outcome of their struggles.

Other allies of the proletariat who have entered the movement include the artisans and shopkeepers. They have been among the early victims of inflation and have been made scapegoats for its escalation. Small shopkeepers have been subjected to the shah's periodic "antiprofitteering" shows.

As is becoming more and more evident, enormous forces extending beyond the proletariat can be won over, organized and mobilized in the fight for socialism in Iran.

Winning over the allies of the proletariat is a prerequisite for the success of the coming revolutionary struggles. The working class needs a leadership that can meet the challenge.

Absence of Leadership

At the present time, the mass movement in Iran has no visible or recognized leadership. The predominance of religious figures in the pre-September 8 period is a manifestation not of a leadership but just the opposite—the absence of leadership.

Despite the declarations of high Ulema, and despite the propaganda of the imperialist press, Islam or an "Islamic state" is not the goal of the masses. The popularity of certain religious personalities in the movement is ascribable to:

1. The defeat of 1953 and the betrayals by the Stalinists and the bourgeois nationalists.
2. The absence of any political party or leaders who could vocalize the mass discontent.
3. The exile of the most prominent Shi'a leaders and their opposition to the shah.
4. The legality of the mosques, which made them the centers of mass assemblies and agitation against the shah and his regime.
5. The fact that because of their close contact with the peasantry and the urban poor, the mullahs of the lower echelons tended to reflect the sentiments of the oppressed in their own convoluted religious ideology.
6. The traditional ties between the religious hierarchy and the Bazaar.

In addition to the religious opposition, some of the bourgeois-nationalist figures who belonged to Mossadegh's old National Front coalition began to surface. They declared a new coalition of groups. However, as was the case before, the dominant elements within the National Front have been personalities rather than participating parties. There has also developed a vocal opposition of sorts within the shah's

handpicked Majlis (parliament).

None of these groups, including the National Front, has played any significant role in organizing or leading the movement. In fact, the National Front leadership has been willing to form a coalition government under the shah—with the blessing of U.S. imperialism. But they have not been able to convince Ayatollah Khomeini of this move. Khomeini, a Shi'a leader who has lived in exile since 1963, has adamantly demanded the shah's abdication and is regarded as the foremost symbol of opposition to the shah's rule. For the time being, the National Front leaders have agreed to go along with Khomeini.

Of the Stalinist currents the Tudeh Party is the strongest. The Maoists are in crisis and almost nonexistent in Iran. The Chinese bureaucracy's support of the shah and Hua's recent visit to Iran have intensified the already deep crisis of the Iranian Maoist tendencies. The Tudeh Party publishes a small paper, *Navid*, inside the country. But its size and influence are insignificant compared with the pre-1953 period. Nevertheless, through this sheet the Tudeh Party is attempting to put together a coalition of all "antidictatorial" forces; prominent among them, the army officers and the Bazaar merchants. The revolutionary youth shun the Tudeh Party because of the record of its past betrayals and also because of its subservience to the Soviet bureaucracy, which so far has unfailingly supported the shah.

The regime's own political apparatus is also in crisis. Under the powerful blows received from the mass movement, the regime wavered and lost its political equilibrium. At present, it is going through the motions of discrediting some of the central figures of the government, such as former long-time Prime Minister Hoveyda and the former SAVAK chief, General Nasiri. They are being charged with corruption and embezzlement. The shah's Rastakhiz Party, which used to be the sole legal party in Iran with a huge apparatus and "millions" in its membership, has been officially dissolved.

Threat of Imperialist Intervention

Behind the faltering regime and its discredited and corrupt leadership stands world imperialism. The imperialists propped up this regime as a bulwark of the counterrevolution in the region and as the local guardian of its vast oil empire (the region contains 60% to 70% of the world's proven oil reserves). The imperialists do not intend to let the shah fall; or, more importantly, to let the capitalist system be overthrown in Iran. President ("human rights") Carter made this clear when he called the bloody butcher right after the September 8 massacre to assure him of his support.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has started its preparations for direct intervention in

Iran. "Secretary of Defense Harold Brown already has been discussing the possible 'dispatch of appropriate U.S. forces to the scene [the Persian Gulf] in support of friends' and 100,000 U.S. troops are being trained for possible intervention in the Gulf," the *Los Angeles Times* reported August 17. The \$36 billion worth of sophisticated weaponry in the shah's arsenal and the presence of 40,000 American "advisers" in Iran point to the important stakes involved.

Imperialist moves to support the shah and preserve capitalism in Iran have a limited potential. Imperialism itself is also in crisis, including a crisis of leadership. The weakness of imperialism is sensed by the masses, especially in the wake of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. In Iran this has become an important factor in the radicalization and mobilization of youth.

The struggle of the Iranian masses has an international character, for it faces as one of its main enemies the imperialist bourgeoisie. The central task is to forge a leadership that can lead this struggle to a victorious conclusion.

Tasks of Iranian Trotskyists

With the further development of the revolutionary upsurge, the entire transitional program of the Fourth International and its concrete expression regarding the conditions of Iran becomes applicable. The preparatory work of the Iranian Trotskyists in this field has already created the political basis for building a strong proletarian party—the section of the Fourth International in Iran.

The immediate demands of the proletariat have very rapidly been combined with democratic and transitional demands. In some cases the striking workers, acting as owners, have made decisions on production quotas. For example, the striking oil workers decided to produce just enough oil to meet domestic needs. Such tendencies toward workers' control are accompanied with the demand to open the books.

To wage a successful struggle and bring their social weight into play, combining their strength and their numbers, the workers need their own union. Organizing an independent, democratic, and centralized national trade union is the challenge that faces the proletariat in the weeks and months ahead.

The immediate economic demands of the proletariat have already been combined with political demands, such as those for an end to martial law and freedom of political prisoners. The proletariat has joined demonstrations with the massive demand of the population, "Death to the King!" This expression of the solution of the revolution's belated tasks puts forward the question of governmental rule. While the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are busy putting forward their solutions, the proletariat must advance the solution of its

own class in the interest of the majority.

In contrast to the schemes of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, proletarian policy champions the democratic aspirations of the masses. This includes the call for a freely elected Constituent Assembly, to determine the form of the government to replace the shah's murderous regime.

The call for a Constituent Assembly must be tied in with the overthrow of the monarchy, uprooting of imperialist domination, emancipation of the peasantry, establishment of the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, and the liberation of women. No bourgeois government will ever be willing or able to accomplish such elementary democratic tasks, despite the demagogic phrases of the upcoming bourgeois figures.

For a Workers and Peasants Republic!

In contrast to a bourgeois regime, proletarian policy calls for the establishment of a Workers and Peasants Republic. Only through such a regime will the masses be able to get out of the present impasse imposed upon them by the shah and imperialists and carry out the socialist overturn.

The rapid tempo of the revolutionary developments may lead to the creation of higher forms of class-struggle organs—action committees, and soviet-type bodies or *Anjomans* (assemblies which came into existence in the Constitutional Revolution early in this century).

Tendencies toward self-rule have already become evident in cities like Amol, Sanandaj, and Tabriz, where the people took over control of these cities for some time. In Amol and Sanandaj, the embryos of popular militias came into existence. Traditions of the past two revolutions in Iran can play an exemplary role in reconstructing the revolutionary organs of dual power and their mass-based armed bodies.

At present, the slogan of the Constituent Assembly is the central axis of revolutionary agitation and propaganda. Other concrete and immediate demands, such as an end to military rule and freedom of political prisoners, could also be raised along with the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. Propaganda and agitation around this slogan will make it possible to present the entire transitional program for socialist revolution.

The central missing element in the present pre-revolutionary situation is precisely a Bolshevik-type proletarian party that can organize and lead the working class and its allies to overthrow the shah, take power, and lead the socialist revolution. The struggle to forge such a combat party—the section of the Fourth International in the Iranian state—in the heat of class battles is the struggle to which the Iranian Trotskyists have dedicated themselves.

November 1, 1978

Interccontinental Press

What Moscow, Peking, and Havana Are Saying About Iran

Two Inches at Bottom of Page in 'Pravda'

The Soviet press's reporting of the mounting waves of mass rebellion against the crowned dictatorship of the shah, one of the main allies of U.S. imperialism on the USSR's southern border, can hardly be said to show enthusiasm.

The reserved attitude taken by *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, the Soviet bureaucracy's house organs, is indicated most clearly by the headlines on those articles that have appeared about the situation in Iran. The strongest adjective to be found in them is "tense." The most common headline has been simply "Disturbances in Iran," or "Disturbances Continue." They have always been quite neutral, as contrasted to the headlines about the distant struggle in Nicaragua for example, such as "The Flame of the People's Anger Flares Higher," or "Genocide."

For instance, one of the most prominent articles on Iran in the last four months, the one in the August 26 *Pravda*, bears the headline "On the Events in Iran." Another article, a larger one on the same page about Chinese Premier Hua Kuo-feng's travels, has the headline "Chinese Gunpowder in the Balkans." A much longer article on the same page, about Nicaragua, has the headline "The Struggle Continues." So, it hardly seems that Soviet editors insist on neutral headlines.

The main Soviet papers have reported the basic facts about the struggles in Iran. It would, of course, have raised questions in the USSR if they had not, since about two million Persian-speaking people live just across the Soviet border and can understand what is being said over Iranian radio.

However, the reports of the massive upsurges have been so played down that many readers in the USSR must have been startled when their eyes happened to light on these small articles placed in relatively inconspicuous corners of the international news pages.

For example, in the August 2 issue of *Pravda*, under the headline "Disturbances in Iran," a TASS dispatch about two inches long said:

"According to Reuters, over the past week in a series of Iranian cities there have been disturbances of an antigovernmental character. In clashes with police, 7 persons were killed, and more than 300 arrested by the security forces.

"These disturbances, it is said in the Reuters dispatch, are in response to the recent actions of the authorities in Meshed, where forty persons were killed and about a hundred wounded in the suppression of disorders."

On September 22, several days after

gigantic protests and the massacre of thousands of demonstrators, *Pravda* ran a small TASS dispatch headlined "Tension Continues," which said: "According to reports in the local press, in many cities in Iran a state of siege continues. Squares are being patrolled by troops accompanied by police units.

"In Tehran, after the declaration of the state of siege, scattered clashes between troops and demonstrators were noted. Last night, in the northern part of the city, shooting could be heard, and some areas are being patrolled by military helicopters."

This article was tucked into the bottom left hand corner of the page, overshadowed by surrounding stories on an interview with Willy Brandt, an attack on the Cuban embassy in New York, and a press conference held by a civil liberties defense committee in the U.S., which was said to expose Carter's hypocrisy about human rights. The story on Iran was less prominent than one about "Popular Initiative" in a North Korean village.

In the October 4 *Pravda*, a tiny dispatch from Tehran in the extreme bottom left corner said:

"The local press has published official reports on disturbances taking place in ten cities of Iran on October 1. According to the journal *Kayhan*, tens of thousands of persons took part in them.

"In dispersing demonstrators, police used tear gas. According to the paper *Ettela'at*, in the city of Kermanshah police used firearms against demonstrators."

This story was overshadowed even in this corner not only by a dispatch on the fighting in Nicaragua but by an account of a meeting of foreign ministers of "non-aligned countries" in the U.N. Secretariat.

In the October 27 issue of *Pravda*, the story on events in Iran was in its most usual place, the far left-hand corner of the international news page, under the most common headline, "Disturbances in Iran." It was overshadowed by a story on changes in the format of the French CP newspaper *l'Humanité* and by one on protests against the neutron bomb in Italy.

However, the bare facts reported in the story on Iran spoke more loudly than all the headlines on the page. The dispatch, datelined New York, said:

"Demonstrations of tens of thousands of persons formed in Tehran, Meshed, Qum, Gorgan, Khorramabad, and other cities. . . .

"In Gorgan, thirty thousand persons came out on the streets. Fires broke out in university buildings, banks, theaters, and restaurants. To disperse the demonstra-

tors, the security forces used tear gas and firearms. . . .

"AP notes that about a million Iranians are on strike, raising political as well as economic demands."

It was notable that until November 3, the Soviet press did not venture to comment on the extent and meaning of the upsurge in Iran. It merely reported some of the comment in the Western capitalist press.

The closest the Soviet press came to offering a political response to the events was to note that a statement issued by the leadership of the Stalinist Tudeh Party had been reported in Paris and then to give quotations from it. Some rather vague and tepid declarations were cited in the September 12 *Pravda*, just four days after the Black Friday massacre. A TASS dispatch said:

"In the statement [by the Tudeh Party], it was pointed out that the introduction of the state of siege in Tehran and other big cities 'revealed the true face' of the Iranian rulers and of their so-called policy of reconciliation with the opposition. It was said in the statement that the present regime is not able to solve the social problems in the country that have given rise to the political crisis."

The Soviet press has not failed to point to Washington's statements of support for the shah's regime. This was apparently intended to show that the U.S. government backed the repressive regime and was worried that its position in Iran was in danger.

The shah was quoted in one report as admitting that there had been abuses. Another report, a short dispatch from Tehran in the October 11 *Pravda*, noted: "Speaking over state television and radio, Gorbani Nasab, leader of the Iranian workers organization, the union federation that includes in its ranks more than 2.5 million persons, stated that the fact that essential social and economic problems had not been solved was one of the main causes of the workers' dissatisfaction."

That was all there was to it. The dispatch did not even note that this so-called union federation is in reality a state agency and in no way represents the workers.

In the three months preceding the fall of the cabinet the shah set up to try to stave off the assault on his regime, the Soviet press was filled with articles condemning various diplomatic moves by Peking. Hua Kuo-feng's travels in particular provoked dozens of emphatically phrased and prominently placed articles.

In all its barrage against Hua, however, the Soviet press neglected to aim any fire

at a politically highly vulnerable spot. It did not attack the Chinese premier for visiting the shah and hailing him at the very moment that the Iranian masses were confronting the forces of the reactionary dictatorship in the streets.

Apparently, the Soviet leadership did not consider it to be in its own interests to make such an attack. Not only was no criticism of this crime raised by the government and the press that officially represents it. It was not raised either by the press that is supposed to represent the party.

In fact, Hua's visit to Iran got bigger headlines than most of the stories on the demonstrations and clashes. The article on his impending arrival in Tehran in the August 31 *Pravda* ended by noting:

"Official sources stress," the newspaper *Ettela'at* reported, "that Iran is determined to maintain its warm relations with the Soviet Union and does not want to be drawn into the conflict between the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic."

It was only on November 3 that *Pravda* put an article on the situation in Iran in the most prominent spot of its international page, under the headline "Tense Days."

Writing from Tehran, A. Fillipov noted: "In analyzing the situation in this country, some Western observers are inclined to see the mass disturbances only as the result of a clash between the interests of the influential religious opposition and the ruling secular elite. But this is a superficial view."

"The Tehran papers have published no few concrete and convincing articles showing that the origins of the political crisis are rooted in serious economic and social difficulties. . . . For many years, the resolution of vital social and economic problems has been neglected."

This article did not refer to any statements by the leaders of the mass opposition, only to a speech by a deputy in the shah's handpicked parliament. But apparently by this time the Kremlin had decided that "warm relations" with the shah might not be worth much for very long.

Fillipov's article concluded: "I was hurrying to mail this article. The street leading to the building was filled with reinforced detachments of police and soldiers. There, in front of the post office was a demonstration demanding the release of the prisoners and an end to repression."

In its November 9 issue, the *Christian Science Monitor*, whose Washington correspondents usually repeat faithfully what they are told in State Department briefings, took note of the cautious tone in the Soviet reporting of the events in Iran.

Writing from Washington, David K. Willis quoted "one veteran observer here" as saying:

"The Soviets have to be of two minds about the Shah's troubles. . . .

"They can do business with the Shah if he stays . . . but they could pick up strategic foreign policy benefits if he goes."

One thing that is evident from the Soviet

Discreet Silence in Peking

The official New China (*Hsinhua*) News Agency is not noted for its keen coverage of international hot spots. Its coverage of most semicolonial countries consists mainly of a bland mixture of quoted statements by local government officials and a random sampling of economic and cultural news. The real political situation in these countries is effectively hidden from the Chinese people.

Iran has been no exception to the general pattern. Since Hua Kuo-feng's visit to Iran at the end of August, there has been very little coverage of events in Iran at all. The mass movement against the shah was discreetly blacked out at the time of Hua's meeting with the "King of Kings."

Hsinhua's first mention of the mass movement in Iran appeared in an October 6 dispatch from Tehran reporting the shah's address to the Iranian parliament.

[The shah's] opening address dwelt chiefly on home affairs. Referring to the recent disturbances in his country, Shah-an-Shah Pahlavi said that "in the present delicate conditions of the world, our national unity for the defense of our independence, freedom and territorial integrity is more essential than ever before."

The first actual account of antigovernment protests in Iran came in an October 10 *Hsinhua* dispatch from Tehran, which reported the following:

Strikes and demonstrations were held in Iran in the past week. . . .

The strikers demanded wage increases. . . .

Demonstrations and strikes have taken place continually in the capital of Tehran and other cities since the beginning of the year. The demonstrators shouted anti-government slogans. Some religious people among the demonstrators demanded that "the Islamic law be abided." They opposed the practice of boy- and girl-students studying together in a school and demanded that cinemas be closed and alcohol prohibited. Some demonstrators demanded wage increases and the introduction of a multi-party system. Some cinemas, bars, restaurants and banks were burned or attacked during the demonstrations. Casualties were reported when

press is that the Kremlin rulers are not interested in seeing a revolution in Iran, much less in supporting one.

—Gerry Foley

clashes broke out between the police and demonstrators.

Hsinhua dispatches have not given any estimate of the number of people killed by the shah's repression.

The four-day strike by workers at Iran's major daily newspapers, demanding an end to censorship, was reported to Chinese readers only after it had been settled October 15. In the weeks following that, when even the Iranian bourgeois press gave extensive coverage to the demands and grievances of the Iranian masses, *Hsinhua* remained silent. The next *Hsinhua* report on events within Iran did not come until October 28:

Shah-an-Shah of Iran Mohammad Reza Pahlavi said, "Undoubtedly mistakes and irregularities have been made, but these can be rectified and corrected," the Iranian press reported today.

The remarks were made in reply to the congratulations of the Majlis (lower house) speaker Javad Sayeed at Salaam ceremonies marking the monarch's 59th birthday. . . .

The Shah pledged that liberalisation measures would be stepped up and more political prisoners would be released. It was reported that 1,126 political prisoners had been set free to mark the Shah's 59th birthday.

The press reported that in the northwestern town of Rezaiyeh, farmers drove their tractors through the streets on October 26 to celebrate the Shah's birthday, and took part in demonstrations supporting the monarch. On the same day, workers in the nation's vital oil fields announced the end of their strike.

The mass upsurge that was then building up, soon to reach proportions unmatched in Iranian history, merited two sentences at the end of the *Hsinhua* dispatch:

"Meanwhile, workers and students in nearly ten cities and towns of the country continued their strikes and demonstrations on October 26. A sniper killed the police chief and wounded the martial law administrator of the southern city of Jahrom."

—Dan Dickeson

'Granma' Denounces Shah's 'Bloody Terror'

Since the end of August, Cuba's press has been following developments in Iran closely. An article in the September 3 weekly English-language *Granma* carried the headline "The Largest Popular Rebellion in the Last 25 Years." Describing Iran as a "country where the people are being victimized by ferocious government repres-

sion," *Granma* writes that "the rebellion came about due to the dictatorship's reign of terror, headed by the Shah, which has lasted 25 years. Needless to say, lurking behind the army are 30,000 U.S. 'military advisers' made available by the Washington administration."

When Huo Kuo-feng visited Iran, in the

'Solidarity' Messages Greet Shah on His Birthday

The shah of Iran celebrated his fifty-ninth birthday on October 26. Heads of state around the world sent their best wishes and greetings to the monarch.

We have translated three of the more interesting birthday messages from the October 28 issue of the Tehran government's daily *Rastakhiz*. So far as we

have been able to determine, none of these greetings were published in their countries of origin, being intended only for Iranian consumption.

From Carter . . .



As I have mentioned before, we have thought about Iran very often in recent months. I know very well that the recent unrest has occupied your majesty's thoughts a great deal. But at the same time I am well aware of

the fact that your majesty can be very proud and satisfied with all that you have achieved for the progress of your country during the past thirty-seven years.

The current problems will pass and the nation of Iran will emerge as one of the great nations, thanks to the program your majesty has put forward for the country's development.

I wish to ask your majesty's permission to reaffirm once again that the United States values highly its strong

and lasting relationship with Iran. Our close relations have a special importance for us. Our two nations, in cooperation with each other, will continue to have a big share in the well-being of the entire world.

From Hua . . .

It is a great pleasure for me to express my sincere greetings on the occasion of your majesty's fifty-ninth birthday.

I hope that your imperial highness will enjoy good health, and that Iran will meet with new successes in the defense of its independence and national sovereignty, and will also reach new heights in progress and development.

I sincerely hope the friendly relations and cooperation between Iran and



China will continue to grow and be consolidated.

. . . and From Brezhnev

Your majesty Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, light of the Aryans, king of kings of Iran: On the occasion of a day of national rejoicing for the Iranian nation—the birthday of your majesty—please accept the sincere greetings of the Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and my own as well.

For you I wish good health and happiness. For the Iranian nation, I wish progress and success. I am certain that the good neighborly relations between Iran and the U.S.S.R. are to the benefit of both countries, and that they will have an all-round expansion leading to the consolidation of peace and stability in Asia and the entire world.



midst of the upsurge, *Granma's* September 10 article on the visit was entitled "Jumping on the Imperialist Bandwagon."

"Hua Kuo-feng visited Iran in the midst of the popular rebellion that the regime was doing all it could to crush. He visited a country where the watchword is anticommunism. It was not for nothing that the CIA—which has some 5,000 agents there—masterminded the coup that brought Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to power 25 years ago."

Granma noted that Hua extended his visit, which had originally been scheduled to last less than 24 hours, to four days "to show his confidence in the Shah."

The Cuban newspaper stated that "the unpopular Iranian regime draws its greatest support from Saudi Arabia. The present Chinese leadership doesn't want to be left behind, particularly at a time when the Shah badly needs this help. Plainly put, all three countries jumped on the imperialist bandwagon quite some time ago."

The September 24 *Granma* describes the scope of the protests taking place in Iran and reports that more than 3,700 people

have died. Despite the repression, "actions against the government continue throughout the country. In addition to the religious opposition, representatives of the most diverse political trends are taking an active part in the protests, demanding democratic freedoms, respect for the constitution and the release of political prisoners."

The September 22 edition of the magazine *Bohemia* contained a substantial article on the development of the crisis in Iran. Describing the serious crisis facing the monarchy, *Bohemia* concludes that the premier and his new cabinet may be able to extend the life of the system but will not be able to prevent "its ultimate downfall."

According to the October 29 *Granma*, the regime of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi faces "serious problems, threatening unforeseeable consequences for the autocratic system based on bloody terror."

The article by Rodolfo Casals goes on to describe the conditions that have led to the political eruption, as well as the demands being raised by the demonstrators and strikers.

Granma comments that "observers have also noted the official insistence on a

religious nature to the protests. Of course," *Granma* continues, "when we discuss Iran's problems we must take into account that the majority of the 30 million people are Moslems, at least in theory. But the systematic campaign to depict the militancy of the masses as being due to religious fanaticism and to center the wave of protests on old Ayatollah Khomeiny, a religious leader now in France, is aimed at limiting the scope of the popular upheaval and blocking the drive for unity initiated by the opposition."

The article then goes on to report the demands being raised by the demonstrators, including the establishment of a republic, use of oil funds to develop the country, implementation of a genuine agrarian reform, and opposition to imperialist intervention in Iran's internal affairs.

The November 5 issue of the paper reports on the deepening crisis, with special emphasis on the strikes taking place. It notes that reliable sources have said that the majority of the shah's family has fled the country.

—Will Reissner

The Strange World of James Robertson and Spartacist League

By Will Reissner

Nearly two years ago, in January 1977, James Robertson, national chairman of the Spartacist League, gave a speech at Barnard College in New York in which he laid out his understanding of the then-current state of the world revolutionary struggle.

The speech came to our attention because the October 20, 1978, issue of the Spartacist paper *Workers Vanguard* devotes nearly three full pages to defending the points made by Robertson against attacks by a gaggle of groups (RSL, LRP, CRSP, CTC, CTCM¹) that revolve around the Spartacist League and that, with it, make up a political current that can only be described as "Groucho-Marxist."

Were it not for the fact that Robertson and his group claim to be Trotskyist, there would be no point in discussing his speech.

The Spartacist League does, however, claim to represent the authentic continuation of Trotskyism in the United States. And since some of those in Robertson's camp may be there by mistake and may be led to see that mistake by reasoned argument, it is of educational value to examine his positions.

An 'X-Rated' Speech

Earlier this year a group called CommunisTCadre, which appears to have issued from a split in the Workers World Party, published a pamphlet entitled *What the Spartacist League Really Stands For: A Self-Exposure by James Robertson*. This pamphlet contains a verbatim account of most of Robertson's Barnard speech, along with interspersed commentary and editorializing by CommunisTCadre.

Any doubt as to the authenticity of the transcript was resolved in the *Workers Vanguard* article, which stated that "despite the schoolmarmish commentary and crudely falsifying 'editing,' the speech still makes interesting reading. We give it an X-rating only for those who are shocked by Trotsky's admonition to 'call things by their right names.'"

Robertson's presentation of the world situation begins with Vietnam and the rest of Indochina. For the Socialist Workers Party, defense of the Vietnamese Revolution through building the antiwar move-

ment was the center of political work for a decade.

What Spartacists Really Thought About Vietnam War

The Spartacists, however, seemed to place a higher value on "revolutionary" slogans than on mobilizing American public opinion against the warmongers. Typical was a 1971 leaflet to the antiwar movement (the Spartacists always aimed their propaganda at the antiwar movement rather than putting out antiwar propaganda to the American people in general—that unimportant work was left to the "reformist SWP" and its "liberal allies"). This particular leaflet was entitled "From the SWP to Trotskyism: Break with the Class-Collaborators!"

One of the demands (on whom?) of this leaflet was "For unconditional military support and victory for the DRV-NLF! All Indochina must go communist!"

An April 15, 1967, Spartacist leaflet addressed to the giant antiwar demonstration in San Francisco, told the demonstrators that "the war in Vietnam is both deliberate and necessary because American capitalism can't survive without crushing revolutions everywhere."

But now that the war is over, Robertson tells us what the real Spartacist view of the importance of the Vietnamese struggle was.

The biggest event in Southeast Asia, he states in his speech, was the "Indonesian military coup of 1965 . . . in which not merely the Communist Party was beheaded but the masses were given a tremendous defeat. . . . And if there was any virtue in the domino theory in Southeast Asia, it was what happened in Indonesia. See, that's where the people are. There aren't anybody much who lives in Indochina and Thailand, but—what?—there are 150 million people in Java? And Java remains safe for democracy."

Robertson goes on to explain: "And after that, the balance of the Vietnamese war was an exercise in imperial egotism on the part of competing American institutions, government, and jockeying around in an attempt to come to an understanding with the Chinese. As is clear with what has happened in Vietnam: [it] went Communist—big deal!"

And that is the sum total of Robertson's analysis of Indochina.

So for Robertson, Indonesia is important because it has 150 million people and Indochina and Thailand are unimportant

because hardly anyone lives there.

Just to clear up some of Robertson's facts, all of Indonesia had about 139 million people in 1977. Indochina and Thailand had over 101 million people in 1977. I suppose that for the Spartacist League this illustrates the dialectical principle of quantitative changes becoming qualitative. For Robertson, somewhere between 101 million and 139 million lies the point at which we go from isn't "anybody much" there, to a lot of people.

Robertson's remarks make it clear that since 1965 the Spartacists saw the Pentagon's struggle to destroy the Vietnamese revolution as unimportant, as "imperial egotism." No wonder the Spartacists were unconcerned about building the struggle against the imperialist war. It didn't much matter for them.

We can now see the slogan "All Indochina must go Communist" for what it was: something to throw at the SWP. All Indochina went "communist" and Robertson says "big deal!"

After exhausting the subject of Indochina, Robertson continues his world tour with a few sentences about the level of consciousness of industrial workers, public workers, and farmers in Japan, and then proceeds to the Mediterranean countries of Europe.

These, he explains, are unstable economically and politically and ripe for the establishment of popular fronts.

His treatment of Greece is especially illuminating. Here it is *in toto*:

"Greece is going through one of its unusually rare periods since the Metaxas dictatorship of 1935, in which it is possible for the masses to come out into the streets and argue 'Which of the two Communist or three Maoist parties do you support?' And they do it in the hundreds every night. You know, it's an interregnum between dictatorships in a country that again [like the ones Robertson mentioned previously] chronically consists of exporting its children and selling expensive wristwatches to each other. (And I'm not sneering, because after you've been to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem it is goddamn good to get to Athens, I'll tell you that! It is a *giant* step up!)"

Regarding the Southern European workers in Northern Europe, Robertson says:

"In the present situation of economic difficulty in West Europe, they [the advanced capitalist countries] have a very easy out: they simply deport their *Gastarbeiters*, their guest workers, back to their

1. Revolutionary Socialist League, League for a Revolutionary Party, Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party, CommunisTCadre, CommunisTCadre-Marxist.

native villages where they go and scream for the Popular Front."

Robertson's View of Albania

One would think it would be difficult to assess the world political situation without discussing developments in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China. But Robertson had no trouble doing it. Aside from his comment on the negligible impact of the victory in Vietnam, the only workers state he mentions is Albania. And what does he say about it? Here it is, every brilliant word:

"And the harder Maoist types, looking for a spiritual homeland that has state power, are now looking at Tirana. We have had our comrades checking, and it is not yet assured, but we believe that Marx referred to the Albanians as 'goatfuckers.' Is that true? But then he was prone to be ethnically pejorative of races. And it must be pointed out that, to this day, and under conditions of the fourth 5-year plan, the production of goats is still the principal activity in Albania."

In the subsequent defense of this speech in the Spartacist paper *Workers Vanguard*, the author (Robertson?) writes: "For people of such refined sensibilities that their hair is standing on end [over this passage from the speech], we must advise them not to expand their obviously meager reading of Marx on the national question. For what will they say when they find Marx comparing Turkey to the stinking corpse of a dead horse, labeling the Poles slothful or speaking of the Chinese nationality 'with all its overbearing prejudice, stupidity, learned ignorance and pedantic barbarism?'"

Let's first dismiss the comment about Turkey, since the Ottoman Empire was certainly a corpse by the 1840s and 1850s, maintained solely by the inability of the stronger powers to decide how to divide the spoils if they dismembered it.

But it is quite true that Marx, and especially Engels, made pejorative statements about various nationalities. During their early development Marx and Engels saw capitalism, for all its evils, as a great step forward for many of the peoples of the world. In relation to precapitalist forms, capitalist penetration was a major advance. They supported, for example, the U.S. takeover of Mexican territory in the southwest as a progressive step.

The first question is, were the young Marx and Engels right in making these characterizations? On this there is considerable disagreement within the Marxist movement.

But even if they were right under the circumstances of an advancing capitalist system that had not yet played out its progressive role, would we be right today, in the age of imperialism, and living in the most powerful imperialist power on earth, to make such characterizations? Would Robertson today support the U.S. lopping off another chunk of Mexico?

Such characterizations today play into the hands of imperialism. Such attitudes smack of the "white man's burden," of the civilizing role of Americans and Northern Europeans in the world.

And, in fact, to a great extent the editors of *Workers Vanguard* seem to have fallen into this racist and chauvinist attitude, bordering on subtle apology for imperialism in a number of areas.

In their defense of Robertson's speech, *Workers Vanguard* maintains that "at the risk of offending our oversensitive opponents, we would point out that the post-independence regimes in Asia and Africa are frequently more ruthless and violent in their exploitation of the workers and peasants than were the colonial governments." It would be interesting to know what political conclusions they draw from this assertion.

In his speech, Robertson also turns his attention to the Fourth International. "The majority of the United Secretariat, associated with Ernest Mandel (an extremely bright man; he knows lots of languages. And erudite!) and a whole gang of young, very hard, very macho guys who (all of them from France), who all think they're movie actors." This group of tough guys spend their time, according to Robertson, running around from country to country looking for openings wherever the action happens to be.

If they have any success, he warns, "like the guys in Ceylon did, you sell out and become ministers; you become 'responsible.' But in the meantime, you can really make it with the chicks in Paris if you say, 'By the way, I just came back from Madrid where I smuggled in plastique to the Basques to off a bunch of cabinet ministers.' You know, 'Wow! That's really where it's at!' I'm not kidding you. You want to know the real social fabric of the United Secretariat? That's it!"

Lest one think that the male chauvinism reflected in this passage was an accident, or was supposed to reflect the attitudes of the United Secretariat, earlier in the speech Robertson had this to say about a member of *his own organization*:

"In about 1954, in the middle of the witch-hunt and the cold war, we [presumably the Shachtmanite group he was then hooked up with] ran a candidate for some student office against a relatively more populist Stalinist candidate. (Right, he was gonna get 100 votes out of 20,000; we were gonna get 50 votes out of 20,000.) So, this last year we [the Spartacist League] ran a really pretty girl on that campus and got 18 votes. We'd better learn. And I checked—I thought maybe they didn't pass out any leaflets or something!"

Occasional Doubts About Spartacist Cadre

Is it any wonder, with this attitude, that



Two recent examples of Robertson-thought.

Robertson can say that "when you sit in your administrative offices it's too easy to believe that your whole membership is just a big bag of shit."

He hastens to add that he only feels that way sometimes, although apparently more often than he is conscious of.

Having previously listened to Robertson expound on the character of small nations, let's hear what he has to say about the Black struggle in the United States.²

Actually, in his speech itself he had little to say. One of the problems facing the American ruling class, he says, is "a black population which said, 'why wait?' and proceeded to burn down their own ghettos and they're still waiting for some Jews to come back and open their drugstores. It doesn't happen."

In response to a question in the discussion period, Robertson returned to this theme. "We have a racist country, baby!" he tells his questioner. "Do you know what the black ghetto [inaudible] did in the burnings in the late 60s? Yeah, remember the stores that just said, 'Soul brother, don't burn it down'? Who is going into the black ghetto but a poor Jew marking up 20% more because he's being ripped off by all the black kids? And he gets burned down, and in Washington, Newark, and a whole bunch of other places, he's been burned down and never came back, and you don't like it: you can't understand that. You're just like the god-damned bourgeois newspapers who won't give the race in criminal reports! This is a racist country. You've got to speak the truth about what it's like in this country."

At another point in the discussion period Robertson says, "You know, comrades, there's something very bad about liberal America. It does not want to call, if you'll pardon the, uh, (no offense intended), a spade a spade. Do you know about anti-Semitism among blacks? Do you know (here's a thing that may surprise you guys; I'm not sure about it though) do you know that we have a considerable black membership and some of them think it's all right to kill Jewish shopkeepers! Yes! They're black, right? And it corresponds to their experience. Yes, of course, they're Marxists, and they believe it's all right to kill Jewish shopkeepers!"

The article defending Robertson's speech in *Workers Vanguard* returns to this theme. "Like all good liberals, the Anti-Spartacist League wants to deny that oppression oppresses. In their eyes, the downtrodden are morally cleansed by the very fact of their subjugation. By definition, there can be no black criminals. They rail against the likes of racist mass murderer Vorster in South Africa but you will

2. For a description of the Spartacist League's attitude toward the Black struggle in practice, see "Spartacist: The Making of an American Sect" in the June 6 and June 13, 1977, issues of *Intercontinental Press*.

not find a word in their papers against Idi Amin, who has directly killed many tens of thousands of black Africans, far more than the apartheid Führers."

A Neglected National Question— Rights of White South Africans

Robertson seems to be particularly concerned that the racist South African regime is not getting a fair break from socialists. When asked from the floor whether he supports the right of the Boers in South Africa to self-determination, Robertson replies:

"Yes, of course we do! There's about three million of them. And I'll tell you a thing, by the way: If you say the Boers have no right to exist—they have a modern industrial economy and a weapons establishment—if they have no right to exist, then they have no moral limits to follow, do they? To kill every black African (which they can do in about three days if they want to), to defend their own existence, just like all people?"

Someone calls out from the floor: "Do you defend their morality?" Robertson replies: "Defend the morality? The morality is the morality of nationalism! Yes."

In touching concern for the survival of the Boers, Robertson seems to forget what the struggle is really about in South Africa. The struggle is not to take away the rights of the Boers to their language or culture. The struggle is to destroy the apartheid system instituted by the Boers and other whites to oppress the African majority in South Africa.

And Robertson appears to miss the whole essence of the situation of the Boers. If the Boers were to wipe out every African in three days, they would have destroyed the whole fabric of their existence and destroyed the "modern industrial economy" Robertson seems to feel they are responsible for. For in fact the South African economy and the standard of living of the Boers rests on one thing and one thing alone: the superexploitation of the country's Black population.

The Boers are not carrying out their present brutal repression of Blacks because their right to *exist* as a people is being threatened. They are jailing, torturing, and murdering Blacks by the thousands because their "right" to *exploit* is under attack.

Will Spartacist League Membership Follow Robertson to Outer Space?

Robertson's speech takes up a number of other points as well. Most appear to have emanated from a universe of negative gravity and are thus of marginal interest to those of us forced to limit our existence to this galaxy alone.

But a few points might be of interest to those who want to plot the velocity at which Robertson's thinking is moving into outer space.

He informs his audience, for example, of "the principal grievance that we have with organizations in this country, such as the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party."

One can hardly wait to find out, considering that acres of innocent forest have been destroyed over the past decade to provide the paper to print Robertson's constant attacks on the politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

What's his principal grievance? That the SWP is "all geared up to play the role of rendering less brittle, more elastic, more plausible, the trade union bureaucracy. . . . And that's what the YSA [Young Socialist Alliance] is—an available 1000 youth instantly to be hired as assistant educational directors and assistant editors of union newspapers in order to explain to the workers that black is white and this is the best of all possible worlds."

In fact, all of the SWP's work in the union movement aims at building a class-struggle left wing in the unions that can defeat the class-collaborationist policies of the current bureaucrats.

What does it matter to Robertson that there is not one single member of the YSA or SWP who is an assistant educational director or assistant editor of a union or union newspaper? Those are only facts: and facts, for Robertson, get in the way.

And what is the current state of the Spartacist League? Robertson explains that "any experienced politician in the audience can tell on the basis of the description that I've given of the conjuncture in North America about where we're at. We're fairly static. Unlike the Maoists and most other groups, we have not disintegrated, we've not had qualitative losses, but we're surely not going anywhere. There's a dribble [out] of members who've been in for a while, our youth bring us new members, but not enough because the campuses are quiet. And so, we're simply holding."

That the Spartacist League is going nowhere should not surprise anyone who has been exposed to this cornucopia of Robertson-thought. But unless Robertson's initial view of the membership "from the administrative office" was correct, a further exodus from this aberrant sect can certainly be expected.

In closing, *Workers Vanguard* gets to the heart of the matter when it answers Communist Cadre's question: "What can one say of a man who claims to be a revolutionary and who publicly refers to the Albanian peasants as 'goatfuckers'? Who complains of the poor showing made by an SL candidate to student office even though 'we ran a very pretty girl'?"

Workers Vanguard replies: "One can say of the SL that it does not mince words, that it is not afraid to speak frankly to the socialist public about any subject—including itself."

Well said, *Workers Vanguard*, well said.

Movement for Abortion Rights Growing in Belgium

By Marie-Anne Marais

In Belgium, more than 3,000 persons recently declared in public that they had violated the criminal statutes on abortion. This was one more sign of the vitality and radicalization of a movement now five years old. Becoming part of an international campaign for free abortion and contraception was exactly what this movement needed.

It was five years ago, in 1973, that a Namur gynecologist, Dr. Peers, was arrested for performing abortions. This arrest sparked a broad movement that won the doctor's freedom. Today, he is being prosecuted again, along with about twenty others. But what happened in the meantime?

After 1973, various bills were introduced in parliament, a panel was set up, and the public prosecutor's office temporarily stopped initiating indictments. When the highly restrictive recommendations of the "Commission on Ethical Problems" (*sic*) were finally announced in 1976, the women's movement regained the initiative. A women's day of action was organized around the slogan, "Abortion—let women decide." A number of organizations signed the platform of the women's movement, which included demands such as decriminalization of abortion, no to antiabortion counseling services, and support to the freestanding (nonhospital) clinics providing abortion.

From that day on, committees were set up on a regional or neighborhood basis. Today, these committees have two national demonstrations to their credit: one in Brussels, the capital, and the other in Gent, a northern city dominated by a Catholic majority.

Despite a few ups and downs in some particularly isolated areas, these committees have proved to be well-established and capable of providing a pole of attraction for the groups and organizations in each region. Often, they have even led to the formation of feminist groups in places where they did not yet exist.

Finally, these committees have gained a very important tool—a national coordinating committee. It includes a French-speaking and a Flemish-speaking coordinating committee (corresponding to the language division of the country), and meets an average of four times a year. The rest of the organizing work is done by a volunteer staff, which is usually completely swamped. But it is working. Actions have begun again in most regions, common leaflets have been distributed,

street or marketplace presentations have been organized, and signatures have been collected in favor of the only bill we can support—a bill for the total decriminalization of abortion. The addresses of clinics that perform abortion have also been mass distributed.

All of this, of course, was far from pleasing to the public prosecutor. Prosecutions began again at the end of 1976, and have accelerated in the last few months. This is obviously the authorities' way of forcing parliament to enact legislation.

The law of 1867 is notoriously unenforceable, or is not being enforced; at least 30,000 Belgian women have abortions each year. As long as abortion was clandestine, it could be tolerated (we all know that women's health has never been a prime concern of these gentlemen). But since several freestanding clinics have openly begun doing abortions on demand and at minimum cost, the situation has become "intolerable." Some hospital departments were already beginning to defy the law, but this was totally insufficient.

After contacts with a big family-planning movement in the Netherlands, an initial family-planning center began to do abortions on its own in Brussels. Another collective was soon founded by feminist groups, also in Brussels. Four others have been set up since then in less than two years' time, and others will open shortly. But they are still a long way from meeting the demand.

The situation is even more disastrous in Flanders, which is dominated by a Catholic majority. No clinics exist there to perform abortions at the present time—either inside or outside a hospital. If everything goes as planned, the first clinic will soon open in a Flemish city. This is especially urgent in view of the fact that a bill has been introduced in the Netherlands that would make it impossible for foreign women to continue going there for abortions.

As can be seen from all this, a good part of the activity of the women's movement, and particularly of the Committees for Decriminalization of Abortion in Belgium, revolves around setting up, defending, and publicizing freestanding clinics. Abortions done in these clinics are covered by national health insurance, as are the ones done in hospitals.

These clinics are undoubtedly a special characteristic of Belgium. Abortions are done by doctors trained in the Karman method, but the clinics are run collectively

by those who work in them—physicians and others. A majority of the nonmedical personnel, who do patient interviews and contraception counseling, are women.

These clinics have recently formed an Action Group to coordinate their work. In addition to basing themselves on common principles, the clinics want to fight repression and play a bigger political role. The Committees for Decriminalization have naturally done everything possible to encourage this trend.

The fact is that experience has taught that it is not necessary to choose between performing abortions in clinics and demonstrating in the street. On the contrary, it is necessary to continually combine mass mobilizations for the right to abortion (in the law and especially in practice) with the greatest number of local struggles related to exercising that right, both in hospitals and in alternative groups, around freestanding clinics, as well as around women's groups that are working on ways to learn about our bodies.

In other words, the movement in Belgium has drawn the lessons of the experiences of its close neighbors in France and the Netherlands. In France, the movement underestimated the kind of battle that would be necessary to enforce the Veil law. In the Netherlands, mobilizations for the right of all women to abortion were subordinated for a while to setting up freestanding clinics. We think that the only way to keep up the momentum in Belgium and win is to continually combine putting pressure on parliament, providing abortions with everything that implies, and mass action.

Before taking a closer look at how each aspect of the struggle in Belgium has developed, it is important to repeat that the Committees for Decriminalization do not just promote the freestanding clinics. These clinics come under the heading of women's struggle to freely control their bodies, and against the authority of the medical profession, to the extent that they are nonhierarchical and that women play a big role in them. We do not want to rely solely on hospital services, which are often expensive and provided grudgingly. But neither are we about to give up demanding that hospitals and clinics provide abortion. That is an important condition for seeing to it that the masses of women have access to abortion. Moreover, many clinics in Belgium are run by Socialist Party members who claim to defend women's right to abortion. Some of these clinics are

already doing abortions, but they are quite reluctant to say so.

Three types of bills are being discussed in parliament. One type proposes allowing abortion in certain well-defined cases (the woman's health, rape, incest), as long as it is done in a hospital setting, and as long as the woman undergoes antiabortion counseling first. The most important of these bills—the only one under discussion at the time the government fell—was introduced by a woman member of the Flemish Liberal Party, Mrs. Herman-Michielsen. If this law were passed, it would create a much worse situation than the one that now exists under an obsolete criminal code. It would make it possible to prosecute everyone who goes outside the law—and there are many who do so.

Two bills supporting decriminalization were also introduced at the beginning of 1978, one by three Socialist Party deputies and the other by Communist Party deputies. The SP bill is limited to making abortion a normal medical procedure. The CP bill, introduced later, provides reimbursement by the national health insurance and calls for hospitalization after the fifteenth week of pregnancy. (This has been criticized by the women's movement, because it appears as a barrier to women's right to choose and also ignores the advances that have been made in medicine.)

The CP, of course, hoped to polish its image by sponsoring this bill. Nonetheless, the movement is supporting the two decriminalization proposals, while putting pressure on their sponsors to get them to lead a joint battle in parliament—assuming that these bills ever get out of committee and come up on the floor of the assembly!

Finally, in view of the fact that these bills have been stalled in parliament, certain prominent figures in the Liberal and Socialist Party milieus and in the French-speaking Democratic Front have sponsored bills to suspend all court action for two years. This proposal has gotten a rather favorable public response.

But the danger of the latter bills has slowly dawned on the Committees for Decriminalization, and they are now trying to explain it to the other sectors of the movement for free abortion.

First of all, it has become clear that what was involved was a compromise by political forces that are trying to avoid a showdown on this question and that cannot see beyond a parliamentary battle. Such a compromise threatens to lead from one concession to the next; as a matter of fact, the freestanding clinics narrowly missed being excluded from the bill (thanks to repeated protests by the committees and clinics involved).

Secondly, the sponsors of these bills (and of the committee set up to support them) refuse to take a stand in favor of decriminalization. So what will their proposal be

after two years of a moratorium on court action?

Finally, it is to be feared that this type of bill may have a demobilizing effect, since it appears to give more weight to the persuasive power of scientific evidence than to the existence of political and class relationships of forces.

Whichever bill is actually passed, and however long it takes (which no one can say for sure), it will be necessary to continue the struggle for complete decriminalization. The fact is that decriminalization is still an essential precondition for winning our other demands (such as abortion on demand and under the proper conditions, reimbursement by national health insurance, sex education, and doing away with antiabortion counseling). The Committees for Decriminalization stressed this at the joint rally they organized at the end of October with the Action Group representing the freestanding clinics.

Such a perspective blends in, of course, with an extraparlimentary struggle and mass actions. The Committees for Decriminalization have already initiated two national demonstrations that each drew from 5,000 to 7,000 persons—not so bad for Belgium in the last few years. Other actions of lesser scope have taken place throughout the year—rallies, festivals, street performances, and leaflet distributions publicized by press conferences.

Some of these actions have brought out as many as 1,200 persons. For every national action, the Committees for Decriminalization write to various organizations asking for their participation on the basis of a platform of demands. More direct contacts have increased, particularly in terms of reaching out to the labor movement and trade-union organizations.

Without giving way to excessive optimism, we can detect a certain shift in the relations between the trade unions and the women's movement. In 1976—the first year of the struggle—the women's commission of the FGTB* came to the women's day of action for the decriminalization of abortion practically over the head of the federation's general secretary. The FGTB made a poor showing at the first national demonstration in 1977.

By way of contrast, however, the March 1978 demonstration was announced in all the SP-dominated trade-union papers and in some union locals. This shift is certainly related to the ongoing, mass-movement character of the Committees for Decriminalization, as well as to the efforts of left trade unionists and feminists, who are becoming more and more aware of the need for their presence within the trade unions.

In any case, all of the activists in the

*Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique (Belgian General Federation of Workers), union federation dominated by the Socialist Party.

Committees for Decriminalization are now determined to concentrate their efforts on winning support from the labor movement. They know that this is a decisive element in reaching out to new sectors and in reversing the relationship of forces in Belgium.

This determination to involve the trade unions will not be absent from the international campaign for free contraception and abortion as it has been visualized in Belgium. The discussions that have already taken place in several regional committees (in Brussels and Liège, a working-class bastion, for example), indicate just the opposite—it will be the main axis. The site of the March 31, 1979, day of action, as well as the methods of action to be employed, will be chosen in accordance with this central aim.

In addition to the publicity ideas raised at the second meeting of the international coordinating committee (a poster, calendar, demonstrations, rallies, festivals), the Belgian committees will discuss holding a tribunal to which women from other countries would be invited. Suggestions from each region will be discussed at a national meeting at the end of November. Until then, the women's movement will be busy publicizing the international campaign, especially by way of an October rally on the theme of "Abortion in Belgium Today" and a Women's Day action in November.

The Women's Day action, scheduled for November 11, will be a reply to the government's policy in favor of the nuclear family. The government can be counted on to use the "1979 International Children's Year" to increase the flow of women back to the home and to try to pass off the consequences of the economic crisis—which is being reflected in a massive increase of unemployment among women—as "natural."

We know that the best guarantee of the success of a broad movement is to involve as many people as possible in discussions on what positions to take. Across the country, the committees have already agreed to participate in the international campaign, as well as to its general principles. We now have to discuss specific ways to draw the workers movement into this effort. We have four months left to mobilize; past experience tells us that that is sufficient. □

Forgive and Forget

What organization has one of the most liberal policies in the world regarding employment of ex-convicts? Apparently, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Former RCMP Commissioner W.L. Higgit told reporters in Ottawa October 24 that it was RCMP policy to back members caught breaking the law under orders by paying their fines and also their salaries if they were jailed, and to rehire them.

Selections From the Left

ROJA WELAT

"Rising Sun," political and cultural fortnightly. Published in Kurdish and Turkish in Ankara.

The slogan under the masthead of this Kurdish publication reads, "Workers and Oppressed Nations of the World Unite." The September 29 issue comments on the mass mobilizations in Iran. The article is entitled "Bloody Shah's Regime Nears Its End." It begins:

"One of the most reactionary and barbaric dictatorships of our time, the regime of the shah, has faced great explosions in recent days. The throne of the shah rests on the most naked oppression and terror."

The Kurdish paper points out: "In Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, the struggle of the Kurdish people for freedom is a central question, and the regime of the shah has stood at the head of the reactionary forces ready to crush this struggle. In fact, Iran is a 'prison house of peoples.' In this country, Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Baluchis, and Arabs are denied their most elementary rights."

The article falls into a certain contradiction, however, saying: "If the patriotic forces in Iran come to power, the imperialists' interests will be endangered."

A governmental alternative to the shah that is simply more "patriotic" will hardly be likely to have a different attitude to the struggle of the Kurds and the other oppressed peoples in Iran. And any new government that does not meet the demands of these peoples will not be able to establish the sort of democracy that this Kurdish paper hopes for:

"The workers and the oppressed nations will certainly destroy this regime of oppression, drive the imperialists out, and establish a democratic society."

Only a government based directly on the masses of workers and peasants in Iran and on the masses of the oppressed nationalities could do that. And such a government would have to move very quickly to liquidate capitalism and begin to build a socialist society.

YURUYUŞ

"March," weekly paper of news and comment, published in Ankara. Reflects the views of the Workers Party of Turkey.

The October 17 issue focuses on the murders in the preceding week of six members of the Workers Party of Turkey (TIP)—Latif Can, Efraim Ezgin, Faruk Ersan, Salih Gevenci, Hürcan

Gürses, and Onuri Uzunlar. This massacre came in the context of the slaughter of many hundreds of socialists, trade unionists, and radical youth and intellectuals over the last two years by rightist murder gangs operating in a pattern similar to the Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA) in Argentina.

Yuruyus's editorial begins by noting:

"Turkey is living through momentous days. The massacres of Mamak, Balgat, Etlik, and Sisli have been followed by yet another. Six members of the TIP fell in an ambush. One party member who survived was badly wounded. The number of persons who have died in massacres and the way this is investigated is important. But the most important thing is the political dimensions and responsibilities.

"It is wrong to think that the National Action Party is something different from the other fascist organizations or from the imperialists and the big bourgeoisie. It is wrong to think that the imperialists and the big bourgeoisie are not just as responsible for these crimes. . . .

"There was only a short interval between the previous raid on the Workers Party of Turkey central headquarters by a group of armed fascists seeking to kill the party general secretary and the brutal murder of six party members in Ankara. A series of events have occurred in a short space of time that have shocked public opinion. The provincial and district headquarters of the TIP have been raided, bombs have been planted, and raids have been organized designed to kill party members.

"The wave of fascist crimes has hit every layer of society—from workers to scholars, teachers, youth, and even patrons of coffeehouses. Even workers going to and from work in buses have fallen victim to fascist terror. In order to clear their road to power, the fascists are opening fire on society as a whole. As regards the TIP . . . their target is not just the general secretary, or lower ranking leaders, or even individual members. They are seeking to destroy the organization as such.

"It is the primary task of a class-conscious socialist party to prevent the intimidation of socialist and progressive democratic movements. This latest massacre challenged the ability of the political movement of the Turkish working class to achieve this task. The way in which the funeral in Ankara [for the six victims] was turned into a giant antifascist demonstration exemplified this movement's consciousness and sense of responsibility."

An article inside the paper draws the following lesson from the protest demon-

stration: "The task is to unite the tens of thousands who expressed their determination marching shoulder to shoulder with the power of millions of workers."

la brèche

Twice-monthly French-language organ of the Revolutionary Marxist League, published in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The October 28 issue contains a report on a national trade-union conference on energy and nuclear energy attended by hundreds of unionists on October 8:

"The proposal for this conference had come from the trade unionists present at the Whitsuntide antinuclear meeting in Lucens. The call for the conference was endorsed by sixty-eight trade unionists, including several trade-union leaders, and by several groups or union locals. . . .

"The conference first heard greetings from the national coordinating commission of antinuclear organizations, and saw the remarkable film by the French Democratic Confederation of Labor . . . on working conditions in the La Hague nuclear fuel reprocessing plant.

"The leadership of the USS [Swiss Union Federation] had been invited to delegate a representative to outline the energy proposals it is going to present at the USS congress, scheduled for October 26-28 in Lugano. The invitation was accepted! The fact that the USS leadership came to a discussion at an all-trade-union conference called outside official channels is an event in itself. . . .

"Benno Hardmeier, USS secretary and director of energy issues, and a member of the joint Socialist Party-USS commission that drew up the 'energy proposals' . . . came to explain why the USS leadership is opposed to the initiative 'For democratic control over nuclear energy' ('because it would put a major stumbling block in the way of developing atomic energy'), why the leadership thinks a four-year moratorium [on construction of nuclear reactors] is unimportant ('unless you throw in the Gösgen and Leibstadt plants, which would pose the risk of an energy shortage'), and why it supports amending the law on atomic energy passed by parliament, 'which introduced the necessary conditions and restrictions into the use of atomic energy.'

"After the presentation of an antinuclear position, a discussion took place. The policy of the USS leadership was sharply criticized by all the participants, who adopted a resolution [calling for a four-year moratorium]. A committee was elected to publish and circulate background material and a discussion bulletin, and to call another national all-trade-union conference to discuss the issues."

The Debate Over 'Leninism' in Italy

By Livio Maitan

The vacation period and the first weeks of the fall in Italy were marked by the opening up of polemics between the general secretaries of the Communist and Socialist parties over major political and theoretical questions.

It was the dispute over "Leninism" and a so-called third way that produced the hottest debates and led the participants to take the most significant stands.

The positions defended in these debates are more deserving of analysis for their political implications and the tactical objectives involved than for any intrinsic theoretical interest. They had virtually no serious theoretical content.

The objective context in which these debates took place has to be kept in mind. It is characterized by social tensions and conflicts that remain very acute. Although the policy of national unity and austerity has led to an erosion of the strength of both the Communist Party and the unions, the relationship of forces between the contending classes has not changed qualitatively since the upsurge that began at the end of the 1960s.

It is in this context that we have to look, for example, at the attempt of the Socialist Party under the Craxi leadership to get back into competition. It is trying to accomplish this by identifying itself more closely with "European socialism" and by differentiating itself more sharply from the CP. In order to demarcate itself from the CP, it is using both traditional right-wing arguments and arguments that are meant to appear left (the SP not being overly troubled by any scruples about consistency).

The bourgeois politicians and intellectuals have taken advantage of the polemics between the SP and CP to demand additional "guarantees" from the CP of its loyalty to "the democratic system." They are pressing the CP to make more and more extensive revisions of its ideological heritage.

Those elements that, while going along with the policy of national unity, want to keep the spirit of "togetherness" from getting too liberal are striving to show that the CP, despite everything, remains a qualitatively different party from the others. It cannot, they argue, be admitted to the game of the democratic "alternation" of parties in power.

Other forces, more conscious of the stabilizing role that the CP can play, even in the long term, are taking this opportunity to step up their admonitions to the Communists. Their aim is to force the CP to



SP "THEORETICIAN" CRAXI

integrate itself thoroughly into the system and to remove the last vestiges of a revolutionary cutting edge from its ideology.

"It would not be helpful at all if there were a reversal of the process under way in the Italian CP and the party turned backward toward Stalinism or Marxist-Leninist dogmatism," the Christian Democratic Party official in charge of international relations, Granelli, recently declared in New York.

Craxi's 'New' Theories

The first round of the debate on "Leninism" goes back to the beginning of August. In an interview given to the independent daily *Repubblica*, which is close to the SP, Berlinguer said:

"If when you say Leninism (or Marxism-Leninism), you mean a kind of handbook of doctrinal rules that are seen as unchanging, a body of positions fossilized in scholastic formulas that are supposed to be applied uncritically regardless of the time and place, that would by no means do justice to Lenin (or to Marx). . . . In that sense, we are no Leninists." But would anyone acknowledge belonging to such a category of "Leninists"?

Berlinguer said that as far as he was concerned he favored reformulating the article in the Italian CP statutes that refers to "Marxism-Leninism." Then he went on to specify what he considered still valid and relevant in Lenin's legacy. It was "the lesson that Lenin taught us in developing a real revolutionary theory, in going beyond the 'orthodoxy' of reformist evolutionism." It was the lesson that

Lenin taught "in looking at the subjective factor represented by the initiative taken by the party acting as an autonomous agent, the role played by the party in fighting the positivism, vulgar materialism, and messianic atheism characteristic of the Social Democracy." It was "the role of the party in opening up a breach for the proletarian forces of renewal and liberation that were struggling in Russia and throughout the world."

In 1917, moreover—according to Berlinguer—Lenin had envisaged the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in which several parties would be involved. He had conceived of socialism "as a society that would bring the full flowering of democracy."

Berlinguer attacked the SP as having a tendency to try to serve as "a rallying point for a whole array of neoliberals, neo-Social Democrats, and even ultraleftists." Then he went on to conclude by reaffirming that the CP is against the Social Democratic road as well as the road represented by the countries that are supposed to exemplify "real socialism." He said that the Italian CP believes that there can and must be a "third way," the road of democratic transition to socialism.¹

Craxi accepted the challenge and answered about three weeks later in the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*. The main idea in his article was that the entire history of socialism and of the workers movement is marked by the conflict of "two broad currents," that is, "the statist, authoritarians, and collectivists" on one side, and the antistatist, libertarians, and noncollectivists on the other.

Craxi focused his fire on the first current and sought to paint up the second, in which he included the Italian SP. In support of his argument, he did not hesitate to try to enlist all sorts of witnesses in a helter-skelter fashion, even though he could not do this without resorting to the well-known method of taking quotations out of context.

Craxi brought out Proudhon, the young Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Martov, Volodya Smirnov, Isaac Deutscher, Carlo Rosselli, Nberto Bobbio, Milovan Djilas, Gilles Martinet, and even

1. In his interview, Berlinguer also said: "Lenin conceived of the fight for democracy as a battle that the working class had to carry through to the end but one that remained in the framework of a struggle to complete the bourgeois revolution. For us, on the other hand, democracy (the so-called formal freedoms, which originally represented a gain for the bourgeoisie as well) is a historical value, which, as historical experience has demonstrated, is a universal and permanent one." It is clear that Berlinguer, who no longer raises the problem of the destruction of the bourgeois state, at the same time forgets the difference between the struggle for democratic rights and the struggle for building soviet democracy, which is qualitatively superior to any bourgeois democracy, even the most advanced.

the brothers Cohn-Bendit. (I hope I will be excused if I have forgotten someone!)

Craxi defined the current represented by Leninist communism, to which he claimed the Italian CP remained tied, as "inherently totalitarian." This current, he said, could be combated effectively only by "democratic, secular, and pluralistic" socialism. From this he concluded—and this point was made explicit in the polemics that followed publication of the article—that while the CP might be accepted as a partner in a national-unity government or parliamentary coalition, it could not offer a governmental alternative to the existing regime either on its own behalf or in alliance with the SP.

Finally, Craxi argued that, contrary to what Berlinguer maintained, there are not three roads but only two—the road of "totalitarian" Communism and the road of "democratic" socialism.

Needless to say, Craxi's arguments were picked up widely by the big bourgeois press and television. Even figures or parties that are certainly no experts in Leninism got involved in the uproar, cheering for Craxi. On the other hand, the SP secretary was criticized by some well-known figures in his party, including De Martino and Achilli, while others, such as Signorile and Lombardi, who are part of the left wing that supports Craxi, limited themselves to dotting a few of his "i's."

The Italian CP responded cautiously, stressing the danger that such polemics might provoke a split between the two workers parties. *Rinascita*, the CP's weekly magazine, correctly denounced the method used by Craxi in selecting his sources:

"Such procedures are suited to the political indoctrination of paratroopers, but they do not promote informed debate, the confrontation of ideas, political democracy, or pluralism."²

After making this comment, *Rinascita* offered an editorial entitled: "Leninism, Democracy, and the Italian Communist Party." This statement stressed among other things that "since the founding of our party, it functioned as a member of the Third International in a way that, for better or worse, was marked by implicit and explicit manifestations of independence."

Let's pass over a style of writing history that is no less agile than the free and easy method of Craxi, which *Rinascita* condemned. This is not the first time, and you can bet that it will not be the last, that the Italian CP's scribes have tried to convince us that Togliatti was never a Stalinist or that this party never heard of the "third period" or "social fascism."

2. I am quoting here an article by Spriano [the most prominent CP historian] that demonstrated in detail the extent to which Craxi had used the method of falsifying by taking quotations out of context.

The most interesting thing about this editorial is that it reaffirms the conception of the "third way" and explains that "adherence to democratic methods is a common feature of the two major currents



CP "DIALECTICIAN" BERLINGUER

in the European socialist movement." Could this common feature help in mapping out a "third way?" But as to what concrete forms such a third way might take, we are given little indication.

The author of the article, Badaloni, tells us that "the political tasks facing the working class in a phase of transition can be summed up in a plan for gradually reducing the social functions of the old ruling classes (this is not the same as decreasing their will to command), which can bring about a shrinking of the need for, and the usefulness of, the role they play."

Over and above the deliberately nebulous phrasing in this statement, what it offers is the most vulgar kind of gradualism. There is nothing original about this, moreover. The Social Democrats themselves have already helped several times to promote a shift of the relationship of forces in favor of the exploited classes within the framework of capitalist society. The Italian CP wants to do exactly the same thing, and in fact has been doing it for many long years.

It should be noted in passing that those intellectuals with whom the CP is so fond of engaging in dialogue have openly taken the side of Craxi. This is true for example for Bobbio, the advocate of a "broad expanse of socialist opinion." He has written that there is no third way, and if you don't

accept the road of the USSR and "real socialism," you have no other choice but to take the road of Social Democracy, "which does what it can within the limits of the democratic method it says it wants to follow." (*La Stampa*, September 3.)

This is the same ground on which Lucio Colletti has chosen to stand. Despite his age, he wants to gain the laurels of an "Italian new philosopher." After having rid himself of such encumbrances as materialism, the theory of value, and other mere baggage of this sort, he now says that there is no need to look for a third way. He sings the praises of the "European left," which, unlike the left in Italy, understood long ago that the most practical system is a "mixed economy"; that is, an economy with two sectors—one public, one private—held together by the setting of general goals. Let's not have any of this chatter, he concludes, about the need for "a way out of the system."³

Berlinguer's 'Left Turn'

It was an adept tactical ploy on Berlinguer's part to open up his counterattack in a speech given before hundreds of thousands of persons. He was able to show in this way that he is ready to deal with even the most delicate subjects in front of the masses. At the same time, he showed his readiness to combine the discussion of theoretical and historical questions with a definition or redefinition of short-term political needs and perspectives.

Berlinguer is clearly very much aware of the difficulties his party has been experiencing for some time now, of the erosion of its credibility, and of the dangers that flow both from the end of illusions in the Soviet model as well as from the position of the Communist parties in capitalist Europe. This is why he put a lot of stress on the party's identity and at the same time projected a less accommodating attitude toward the Andreotti government and the Christian Democrats.

Berlinguer was anxious first of all to reaffirm the historical legitimacy of founding the Communist parties and breaking with the Social Democracy. Between the CPs and the Social Democratic parties, he said, there is a fundamental difference. Opting for the democratic road does not mean that Communists are abandoning "the anticapitalist content of their political struggle and their ideological battle."

On the other hand, "the common feature of all the Social Democratic parties is their refusal to fight to break out of the capitalist system and transform the bases of

3. Colletti scored a point, however, by making fun of the word *fuoriuscita* (way out), which is being used very widely now in Italy. The *Il Manifesto* group can claim the rights to it. This is a formula obviously designed to fuzz over or eliminate the problem of achieving a qualitative leap, a revolutionary break from the past.

society in a socialist direction."

This argument is not new. Togliatti used it often in the debates that followed the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But it is a doubly false argument in any case.

1. The classical Social Democratic parties did not, on paper, reject fighting to "break out of the capitalist system." Rather they argued that this could, and had to, be done by the democratic and parliamentary road, by "successive approximations" (or, to use the language Berlinguer is so fond of, we could say by the gradual achievement of "elements of socialism" within the framework of the existing system).

2. Ideological declarations are by no means enough to guarantee that the Italian CP will not integrate itself into the system through the reformist logic of trying to rationalize it. This is all the more apparent since, despite its statements about the urgent need to find solutions to the acute problems created by the general crisis of capitalism, it envisages the "transition to socialism" as something taking place in an indefinite future.

Nonetheless, it is important from the political standpoint that Berlinguer felt the need to defend the identity of the Communist Party as opposed to the Social Democracy and to declare emphatically that he was not prepared to make any concessions on certain basic principles or to "renounce our history."

It is no less important that at the same time he was reaffirming the need to take a third way different from that of the Social Democracy and from "real socialism," he made a choice of camps. He lined up in the camp of the Soviet Union by refusing to put the experience of the Social Democracy on the same level historically as that of the October Revolution and the USSR.

In the last part of his speech, the CP secretary took a slightly tougher stance toward the Christian Democratic government. He declared that some concrete decisions had to be made, that the Christian Democrats had to clarify their attitude, and that "the burden of cleaning up the mess and bringing about renewal cannot be borne solely by the working class while the rest of society sits back."

At the same time, Berlinguer raised a cry of alarm. The problem was becoming more acute regarding the fate of "enormous masses of youth and women, of people in the cities, in the agricultural regions, in the mountains, of the subproletariat and underprivileged of all sorts in every city in our country. . . . There is a danger that great sections of these masses and social aggregations will fall victim to reactionary operations, if only after they have gone through the frustrating experiences of blind rebellion."

What Berlinguer apparently failed to realize was that this danger has increased

markedly precisely as a result of his party's policy.

The adjustments made in Berlinguer's speech in Genoa in no way involved a turn by the Italian CP. Not only is it continuing to support the Andreotti government but it is striving at the same time to present a favorable balance sheet of this government's accomplishments.

In discussion in recent weeks of the platform of demands for the new round of collective bargaining, in particular the new contract for the steelworkers, the CP and its current in the unions have fought to keep wage demands to the strict minimum and to cut the heart out of any demands for a reduction of hours.

However, precisely because it is determined to continue its policy and maintain its strategy of "historic compromise," the CP has to reaffirm its *raison d'être*, its identity, and exploit everything that may appear to be a *specific* strongpoint in its strategy. Otherwise, it could not maintain the homogeneity of its ranks or be in a position to mobilize them effectively, and it would risk seeing its influence in the electoral arena shrink.

Paris, Moscow, and Belgrade

It is in this perspective also that we have to view the trips Berlinguer made recently to France, to the USSR, and to Yugoslavia (as well as travels projected for the near future).

The Italian CP leaders are convinced that in order for their strategy to appear credible, it has to have a European dimension. This is why they have developed proposals about the need for transforming the Common Market and about using the bodies set up by the European Economic Community, and so on. This is why they have tried to form a bloc of so-called Eurocommunist parties.

However, at a time when Europe-wide problems are going to be posed before broad masses by the upcoming elections to the European parliament, the CPs are in danger of revealing a serious weakness. Not only will they get far fewer votes than the Social Democrats but they are also going to appear deeply divided.

In fact, in a recent meeting of the West European CPs, four positions emerged. The Italian CP was in favor of active participation in the Common Market and the elections to the European parliament. It also favored extending the European Economic Community to include Greece, Spain, and Portugal. The French CP is going to participate in the elections, but it opposes extending the EEC. The British CP is for the withdrawal of Great Britain from the EEC. And the Irish CP favors a boycott of the elections to the European parliament. So the situation gave little cause for rejoicing.

Berlinguer wants to limit the damage by seeking a minimum accord with the French CP. To judge from the final com-

muniqué on his visit to Paris, the bases of such an agreement would be to concentrate electoral propaganda around some common axes and to organize common initiatives, the nature of which has not yet been made clear, by the two parties.

In Moscow, Berlinguer could lay out a concrete enough deal. The Italian CP cannot ignore the existence of the USSR, which is a major factor in world politics. The day of the "guide-state" and the "model" for socialism is over. But the USSR remains a reality. And the Italian CP leaders—as the Genoa speech showed once again—consider that on the historic and strategic level not only the October Revolution but what remains of its accomplishments are an element of strength rather than weakness for the CPs as they are.

Therefore, the Italian CP leaders have an interest in establishing a *modus vivendi* with Moscow. And this could be discussed more easily after the Genoa speech. The fact that Moscow reaffirmed that it would not attempt to revise the framework for relations among Communist parties laid down at the Berlin conference in 1976 and that it approved of the overall strategy of the Italian CP indicates that progress was made toward achieving a *modus vivendi*.

Finally, Berlinguer's trip to Belgrade revealed another aspect of the Italian CP's approach to the problems of the international Communist movement. The Italian party has reaffirmed that it is prepared to maintain friendly relations with all the CPs, regardless of differences that may exist, and to restore ties that were broken in the past, notably with the Chinese CP.

This position fits in perfectly well with the logic of "national roads," and it would be wrong to interpret any overturn toward Peking as a move toward breaking from Moscow or taking distance from it. In a recent interview, Pajetta said explicitly: "I refuse to believe that there is any basis for considering the relations between the Chinese CP, Romania, and Yugoslavia as an anti-Soviet plot, or that they are directed against the USSR."

The Italian CP, moreover, saw Hua Kuo-feng's trip to Europe as a "positive" development (*Corriere della Sera*, October 10).

Contradictions of Eurocommunism

The Eurocommunist parties are unquestionably in a more difficult situation than they were two years ago. At the time, they could present themselves as a credible alternative in the short term for very broad sections of the masses in key countries.

In Italy, the CP had increased its influence and won resounding electoral victories. In France, the victory of the Union of the Left seemed quite possible, even very probable. The French CP could hope to play an important role in this alliance, consolidating its dominant position in the working class. In Spain, the CP was re-

gaining legal status in an atmosphere of euphoria and could legitimately hope to acquire a decisive weight within the proletariat and the other exploited masses.

Today, the Italian CP's position is obviously eroding, and it is unable to combine following a strategy of its own with supporting the moderate policy of the Andreotti government, which is trying to shift all the costs of overcoming the economic crisis onto the workers.

The French CP is paying much more of the price for the defeat of the Union of the Left in the elections than the SP. It is losing ground day by day, including among the workers. It finds itself obliged to retreat into a sectarian shell.

The Spanish CP has shown itself to be much weaker than the SP in the electoral arena, and it has not covered itself with glory by its fervent defense of the Moncloa Pact [a social pact between the big workers parties and the bourgeois government].

Moreover, as already noted, major differences have developed among the Eurocommunist parties on important questions, such as the extension of the European Economic Community. Some rather sharp polemics have taken place, notably between the French and Spanish CPs.

It is possible that some conjunctural problems may be overcome and that some homogeneity may be achieved on the level of general ideological formulations (for example, in rejecting the formula "Marxist-Leninist" as outmoded). The coming congresses of the Italian and French CPs, scheduled for 1979, will provide some additional elements for assessing where these parties are going. These gatherings may mark a new stage in the long march of the CPs toward "renewal"; that is, their adaptation to the new national and international conditions in which they are operating.

However, it is clear as of now that the Italian CP, which originated the "new course" after 1956 and stood out as the main inspirer of Eurocommunism, is marked by contradictions that can be broadly summarized as follows:

- Autonomy from the USSR and criticism of the Soviet leadership have brought some temporary tactical advantages. But this involves at the same time a danger of weakening the party's separate identity vis-à-vis the Social Democracy.

- Abandoning the "model" of "real socialism" makes it possible to avoid having to take responsibility for the crimes and failures of the Soviet bureaucracy. But at the same time it weakens the strategic perspective of the Italian CP. It can no longer point to a concrete example. It limits itself to advancing hypotheses that are generally quite vague and nebulous, and, moreover, tend to resemble the traditional Social Democratic conceptions.

- The growing integration of the CP into the institutions of bourgeois democ-

racy and the state apparatus in the strict sense is increasing its influence in all spheres and enabling it to maintain more of a role in the game of "normal" politics. But this seriously undermines its ability to offer a credible alternative to the masses hardest hit by economic stagnation and the prolonged crisis of the system. The party's attitude toward the Andreotti government and its austerity policy can only magnify this problem.

- The attractive power of the Italian CP's Eurocommunist perspective depends also on projecting the outlines of a Europe-wide alternative. But as their integration in the system increases and as they come

to share, directly or indirectly, the responsibilities of government, the CPs' policies become conditioned by the specific needs of their own bourgeoisies. And then, like the Social Democratic parties, they tend to develop differences among themselves that reflect the differences between the various "national" bourgeoisies or among various strata of these bourgeoisies.

Thus, it can be safely predicted that in the months and years to come there will be not a few polemics in the workers movement and in the Italian CP on "Leninism," on the "third way," and on other subjects.

October 23, 1978

10% in U.S. Say They Favor 'Socialism'

Big Business Takes a Nose Dive in Polls

In the past decade and a half the confidence of people in the major institutions in the United States has dropped steadily and precipitously. And one of the biggest casualties has been confidence in big business.

That's the conclusion reached by sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset and polling consultant William Schneider in an article entitled "How's Business? What the Public Thinks," published in the July-August issue of *Public Opinion* magazine.

In 1968, they report, pollsters found that fully 70% of the American people agreed that "business tries to strike a fair balance between profits and the interests of the public." But since then the number who agree has steadily fallen, until scarcely 15% concurred by 1977.

Similarly, a 1966 poll found that 55% of the public expressed high confidence in leaders of "major companies." In recent years barely one-fifth of the American people expressed such confidence.

The only solace for business leaders is that their decline in popularity has been shared by every other major institution. Pollster Daniel Yankelovich summed up the changes in attitude registered by polls in these words:

We have seen a steady rise of mistrust in our national institutions. . . . Trust in government declined dramatically from almost 80% in the late 1950s to about 33% in 1976. Confidence in business fell from approximately a 70% level in the late 60s to about 15% today. Confidence in other institutions . . . sharply declined from the mid-60s to the mid-70s. More than 61% of the electorate believe that there is something morally wrong in the country. More than 80% of voters say they do not trust those in positions of leadership as much as they used to. . . . By the mid-70s, a two-thirds majority felt that what they think "really doesn't count."

Yankelovich summed up his findings in these words: "Within a ten- to fifteen-year

period, trust in institutions has plunged down and down, from an almost consensual majority, two-thirds or more, to minority segments of the American public life."

It was the development of the antiwar movement, the rise of the Black, Chicano, and women's movements, and the effects of the 1974-75 economic slump that, in the view of Lipset and Schneider, "changed the perceptions which Americans had of their country."

Within the context of this massive loss of confidence in all institutions, the farthest and fastest drop has been experienced by leaders of "major companies." In addition, the pollsters note, opposition to big business is no longer confined to economic grounds. Business is now seen to be responsible for many social ills as well, such as pollution, exploitation of colonial and semicolonial countries, public corruption, and the like.

Early in 1976 pollster Pat Cadell asked people, "Would you favor or oppose introducing socialism in the U.S.?" Ten percent replied they favor socialism, 27 percent said they "don't know," and 62 percent were opposed.

It should not be surprising that in the United States, which is the only industrialized country that doesn't have a labor or socialist party represented in its parliament, and where the labor movement remains totally tied to the capitalist parties and the capitalist system, people have been slow to draw all the conclusions from their experiences. There has as yet been no mass force to provide an alternative to the ideologists of the capitalist system.

But as the ruling class's own polls show, identification with the capitalist system rests on shaky grounds, and there is a huge reservoir of people who can be won over to socialism if they have the opportunity to hear the socialist alternative. □

Fresh Struggles Break Out in Peru

By Miguel Fuentes

LIMA—Contrary to the military government's hopes and to predictions in the press, the defeat of the miners strike in early September did not lead to a big downturn in the mass movement in Peru. By mid-October, fresh struggles were breaking out among workers, peasants, and students.

Word reached Lima October 19 of the latest stage of a militant peasant movement in Cañete, an agricultural area 150 kilometers down the Pacific coast from the capital.

Some 8,000 casual agricultural laborers, or *eventuales*, are fighting for land against the big landowners (*gamonales*) of the Cañete region. The struggle began last April when the *eventuales* launched an indefinite general strike to demand an end to the fifty-year-old labor system known as *enganche*.

Under this system, casual laborers are paid about 270 soles (US\$1.50) for a thirteen-hour working day—wages below the legal minimum. The *eventuales* receive no benefits, vacations, medical care, or social security.

After five days of mobilizations in April, the government-operated "cooperatives"—where *enganche* was also in effect—agreed to eliminate the system and raise wages. The private landholders conceded a pay increase for the duration of the cotton harvest, but refused a permanent settlement.

Peasants Seize Land

The struggle entered a new stage after the cotton crop was in. The landless *eventuales* began occupying the lands of the *gamonales* throughout the Cañete region. The landlords responded with a series of attacks. Mobilizations involving up to 2,000 peasants were called to defend the occupations.

The land seizures continued, and the struggle reached its most intense stage to date in late September.

On September 22, *eventuales* at La Cachibana were attacked by armed landlords. The police moved in and arrested the wounded peasants, taking them to Quilamana.

Two thousand peasants marched eight kilometers to Quilamana the next day and freed their *compañeros*.

On September 28, two combined assaults by armed landlords, police, and Civil Guard troops failed to dislodge the squatters at La Cachibana.

Agriculture Minister Gen. Luis Arbulu

10,000 in Lima Rally Against Somoza

LIMA—"Somoza y Morales, lo mismo criminales" (Somoza and Morales, they're both criminals) was one of the more popular chants as 10,000 persons gathered here October 31 at a Nicaragua solidarity rally.

The rally was cosponsored by the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee and a broad range of trade unions, peasant organizations, and leftist political parties.

Among the sponsors were Peru's main union federation, the CGTP; the peasant federations CNA and CCP; the Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front (FOCEP); the Democratic

People's Unity (UDP); and both of the public factions of the Communist Party.

The main speakers at the rally were two representatives of the Sandinista National Liberation Front—Commandante Mauricio and the outstanding Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal. Cardenal called for the formation of a brigade of Peruvian volunteers to join the fight against Somoza in Nicaragua.

Other speakers included representatives of the FOCEP, UDP, CP and Nicaraguan Solidarity Committee. A spirited march through downtown Lima took place after the rally.

Ibáñez then made assurances of support to the *gamonales*. Civil Guard reinforcements were sent in. After three hours of fierce fighting, the peasants were finally evicted from La Cachibana, at least for the present.

General Arbulu has told delegations of peasants from Cañete that there is no more *gamonalismo* in the country and that "social justice is the rule" throughout Peruvian agriculture. But the landless *eventuales* know better. Fewer than fifteen landlords exploit 25 percent of the cultivable land in the Cañete region, holdings that far exceed the legal limits set by the government's own agrarian laws.

Pucallpa Shows the Way

The citizens of Pucallpa, one of the two largest cities in Peru's vast Amazon department of Loreto, were literally dancing in the streets October 21 as word spread that the demands of their two-week general strike had been granted by the government.

Pucallpa is a port city on the Ucayali River with a population of about 100,000. It has undergone rapid growth during the past decade owing to increased development of the rich natural resources in the surrounding jungle—gas, oil, and timber. But the city has remained virtually without basic public services.

In October 1975 Pucallpa's trade unions organized the United Front for the Defense of the People's Interests (FUDIP). Their demands were simple—paved streets, potable water, a sewage system, electric power. Despite heavy repression by the military

government, the FUDIP was able to mobilize a large segment of the city's population around these demands.

In November 1976 President Morales Bermúdez felt obliged to bring his entire military cabinet to Pucallpa. At a town meeting, he declared: "I tell you now, in the name of the Revolutionary Government here present, that we commit ourselves to a program to build twenty kilometers of roads in Pucallpa during the next year." But two years later only a fraction of the promised construction work has been completed.

The struggle was first renewed by the Pucallpa Drivers Union. On September 20 the union gave the regime ten days to resume work on the interprovincial Federico Basadre Highway and to implement the promised paving of Pucallpa's streets and the installation of water, sewage, and electric systems—or else face a general strike.

The ten days passed without any motion by the government. Early on the morning of October 6 the general strike began.

The strike was organized by the Front to Defend Coronel Portillo Province—a coalition of some thirty-six trade unions and leftist political parties. The front soon involved as well numerous civic and professional organizations—even the Boy Scouts and the Rotary and Lions clubs joined in!

The defense front quickly took on the character of the "people's assemblies" that are springing up more and more during mobilizations in Peru today. Mass meet-

ings involving thousands of Pucallpa citizens were held on an almost daily basis. The assemblies added to the basic list such new demands as a new hospital and university and autonomy for Coronel Portillo Province (of which Pucallpa is a part).

The mayor and other officials were ousted by the strike committee, which took over the running of the entire city.

All transit through Pucallpa was prohibited except when authorized by the strike committee. Markets and other stores were allowed to remain open only until 10 a.m. Traffic control, maintenance of order, the issuing of administrative decrees and permits, and other public functions were assumed by the strike committee. Pickets mobilized each day to enforce the committee's rulings.

The result was a very tightly disciplined strike that shut down every bank, store, and factory in Pucallpa for the duration. River traffic was effectively halted, cutting off supplies to the departmental capital Iquitos, which is almost totally dependent on shipments from Pucallpa.

The government news agency ordered its usual blackout on any information about the strike in the regime's newspapers and radio and television broadcasts. But after news of the Pucallpa struggle reached Lima by phone and through delegations sent to the capital, the independent periodicals began running stories about the strike.

The broad and militant support for the strike forced the dictatorship to negotiate. A typical session found the regional military commander, General Miranda, talking with the strike committee while thousands of demonstrators gathered outside chanting, "Down with the military government!"

The strike ended October 21 after no less than four cabinet ministers traveled to Pucallpa. They pledged a series of concrete projects to begin immediately and the formation of a high-level development commission with full powers.

Students Go Into the Streets

Students from Lima's public schools



IP/I map by Ernest Harsch

took the lead in protesting a steep increase in urban transportation fares decreed October 12. For almost a week beginning October 16, hundreds of students marched daily in the capital. Student protests also occurred in Cuzco and Arequipa.

The government mobilized Civil Guards and police in an effort to halt the protests. Tear gas, clubs, and water cannon were used to break up demonstrations composed mostly of young people between the ages of ten and fifteen.

On October 24, hundreds of youths joined a march of 5,000 teachers organized by the SUTEP,* Peru's teachers union. The SUTEP demonstration demanded that the government stop stalling and implement the agreement it signed with the union July 27 to end a militant eighty-day strike by teachers across Peru.

The government ordered all schools closed for three days on October 25 in an effort to halt the movement. Meanwhile,

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

the regime's daily newspapers launched a slander campaign against the students.

"Yesterday it could be noted that children of only six and seven years of age were employed by the agitators," said an article in the October 25 *El Comercio*. "These little ones, along with adolescents, participated in the marches organized by SUTEP members. The marches degenerated in street disorders."

El Comercio went on to accuse the youth of an outlandish plot to blow up the Legislative Palace with molotov cocktails—supposedly organized by "a foreigner who offered to pay them in dollars. . . ."

From what I could see the student youth were doing quite well in the streets by themselves. They were well organized and had little need of "adult" or "foreign" assistance. As for "agitation," it was the government that provided it with the abrupt hike in bus fares.

The transportation increases of from 33 to 50 percent dealt a sharp blow to the students and to their parents who must travel to work. A worker earning the minimum daily wage of 300 soles (US\$1.67) and who is likely to live in a shantytown on the outskirts of Lima may now have to spend as much as 100 soles a day on transportation alone. For families with one or more children who must take public buses to school, the cost is that much greater.

Under pressure from the student mobilizations, the bourgeois majority in the Constituent Assembly was forced to agree to debate the fare hikes and finally voted up a motion of protest. But a motion put forward by some of the workers deputies to declare the fare hikes null and void was not even admitted to debate.

The bourgeois parties in the assembly continue to refuse to assume any form of governmental authority that might put them in conflict with the military regime. They prefer instead to stick to their "sole duty" of writing a new constitution. It was considered a victory of sorts for them even to debate and approve the protest motion.

October 25, 1978



LIMA: High-school students march against steep hike in bus fares. Protests were continuing as of November 9.

Peru—Founding of the Revolutionary Workers Party

[The following resolution was approved by a conference of five Peruvian Trotskyist groups¹ held in Lima October 8. It appeared in the first issue—dated October 23—of *Combate Socialista*, the new organ of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party). *Combate Socialista* replaces *Revolución*, which the five groups had been publishing jointly. The translation is by Anne Teesdale.]

* * *

The organizations and tendencies participating in the first conference of the organizing commission for the unified party consider that:

1. Our country is in the midst of a deep social and political crisis. Broad sectors of the masses have engaged in revolutionary struggles, as shown by three national general strikes. This was only partially reflected in the election results. This struggle has brought to the fore the urgent need to equip the masses with a revolutionary party capable of organizing and leading the way to the socialist revolution.

2. Conscious of their responsibility in this situation, organizations adhering to the Fourth International have joined in a unification effort to form one single party.

3. More than two years of discussion and coordination in the Trotskyist Coordinating Commission, and later in the Unification Commission, demonstrated that basic agreement exists. This made unification not only possible but urgent. Therefore, the Organizing Commission for the Unified Party was formed on August 24. The commission resolved to carry through the fusion.

4. The same agreements that led to the formation of the Organizing Commission make up the basic principles of unification. These agreements can be summarized as follows:

- Common allegiance to the program, principles, statutes, and revolutionary traditions of the Fourth International.

- Common desire to construct a Leninist combat party, based on the principles of democratic centralism; that is, the widest

freedom of internal discussion and iron-clad unity in external action.

- Firm conviction as to the socialist character of our revolution, which can triumph only through the conquest of power by the workers. A workers and peasants government is the only government capable of meeting the democratic, anti-imperialist, and anticapitalist demands of our people.

- Common membership in the FOCEP.² We are struggling to make it a pole for socialist regroupment and for the unity of the exploited masses in a single front of working-class independence.

- We reject class-collaborationist politics and popular frontism, which seek to hold the masses back through reformist illusions.

- We reject all illusions in bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary institutions as roads to power. At the same time, as revolutionists, we must utilize bourgeois-democratic openings to promote direct action by the masses and convince them that socialism is the only road for the revolution.

- We call for the independent organization of the masses to fight for their demands, in bodies such as the Fronts for the Defense of the People and the People's Assemblies.³

- The deepening political crisis in our country and the lack of a revolutionary leadership make our unification of the utmost urgency, as a decisive step forward in the building of a revolutionary party. In this sense, the organizational barriers that exist between Trotskyists have become obstacles to unification. A common organizational framework will not only improve conditions for carrying out practical tasks but will also allow an orderly and systematic discussion of the positions we are to adopt.

6. Even though all the political discussions have not been carried out, the first steps in the unification should be taken and the fusion should be completed in the shortest possible time.

Therefore we resolve:

1. To dissolve our organizations in order to build only one group, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [PRT—

2. Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil, y Popular (Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front).—*IP/I*

3. Independent organs that have arisen from time to time in the course of the past year's general strikes and struggles in Peru.—*IP/I*

Revolutionary Workers Party].

2. To proceed with the fusion of party cells and all other organizational structures at all levels.

3. To convene a new conference within fifteen days that will resolve:

- programmatic positions;
- political line;
- resolutions from working commissions;
- organizational norms.

4. To convene the First National Congress of the party within ninety days. The congress will approve:

- a program;
- a political resolution;
- statutes.

5. To elect a Central Committee, including representatives of all the organizations and tendencies participating in the unification. The Central Committee will be the highest leadership body of the party until the First Congress.

6. To publish *Combate Socialista* as the organ of the new party.

7. To call on the PST⁴ to join in the unification as rapidly as possible.

8. To request recognition from the Fourth International as the Peruvian Section of the Fourth International.

Long Live the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores!

Long live the Fourth International!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

4. Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers Party), another sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Peru. The PST was involved in the unification discussions but the majority of the organization has chosen not to participate in the fusion at the present time.—*IP/I*

1. The five groups are the Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (FIR—Front of the Revolutionary Left), the FIR-IV (FIR-Fourth International), the Grupo Combate Socialista (Socialist Struggle Group), the Círculos Natalia Sedova (Natalia Sedova Circles), and the Tendencia Pro-Unificación (Pro-Unification Tendency) of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party).—*IP/I*

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For One Big Trotskyist Party in Peru!

By Hugo Blanco

[The following article appeared in the October 23 issue of *Combate Socialista*. The translation is by Anne Teesdale.]

* * *

Che Guevara, the Latin American who said, "Either socialist revolution or a caricature of revolution," fell on October 8, 1967.

On October 8, 1978, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores was founded. But it didn't begin from scratch. The PRT is the fruit of more than two years of unification efforts by several revolutionary Trotskyist groups.

Of course, not everyone agreed to a unification. There were those who remained behind, because it was difficult for them to abandon their sectarianism. But they will come around.

The groups that have unified are the FIR, the FIR-IV, the Combate Socialista Group, the Natalia Sedova Circles, and part of the PST. *Now we are a party.*

We are the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, fighting for:

- A government of the workers of the city and the countryside.
- Factories into the hands of the workers, not the capitalists.

We do not believe any section of the capitalists will fight together with us against imperialism. The workers must maintain their class independence.

We believe that workers throughout the world should join with us in the struggle against capitalism. This is why we are part of the Fourth International.

At first we thought we had to fully discuss our tactical differences in order to achieve unity. We wasted a lot of time and made very little progress this way. Then we changed our method. While continuing to discuss our differences, we carried out joint activity in those areas where there was agreement. This helped us progress faster and cut through many misunderstandings.

We are still not finished discussing. But the differences are not so great, and they can be worked out within the unified party. The discussion is now much more fraternal in the atmosphere of joint activity.

Our congress will take place in three months, after we have fully discussed the most important political issues. If differences still exist, they will be discussed and voted on at the congress, and the party will carry out the line approved by the majority. This is called democratic centralism; we discuss all positions democratically, then carry out the line adopted by the majority.

We are optimistic about this unification. It has turned out well, and we have learned a great deal. We hope this expe-

rience will help us to extend the unification. We call first of all on the comrades of the PST who did not want to unify, as well as on the comrades of the POMR,* to join us in forming one big Trotskyist party in Peru. We also call upon the other, smaller groups that want to join in this effort.

For now, we will work together with the PST and the POMR to strengthen the FOCEP and to make it an even stronger organization fighting for a workers government and socialism, with no alliances with any sectors of the bourgeoisie.

*Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Marxist Workers Party), Peruvian affiliate of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.—IP/I

Long Live the Nicaraguan Revolution!

[The following statement by the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST—Socialist Workers Organization, a Costa Rican sympathizing group of the Fourth International) was read at a meeting in solidarity with Nicaragua organized by the Sandinista National Liberation Front in San José, Costa Rica, on October 13. The meeting was attended by 2,500 persons. The translation is by *Intercontinental press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Comrades:

The OST salutes the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista Front against Somoza.

After the barbarous massacres in September, the tyrant thinks he has won a round. But today, the people of Nicaragua and the Sandinista Front are more willing than ever to fight to the end to bring down the hated dictatorship. Today, more than ever, the people of Nicaragua are preparing to frustrate the criminal maneuvers of imperialism, their old enemy. Today, more than ever, they remain vigilant in face of the repulsive farce of "mediation" with the despot.

In their struggle against Somoza, the Nicaraguan people are demanding land, jobs, education, health, decent wages and housing, genuine democracy and national independence.

The OST unconditionally supports these social aspirations of the masses. No capitalist government can satisfy them. The ruling classes of Nicaragua, Central America, and the rest of the world can only try to exchange one form of exploitation for another. Only a government that directly

And what about the rest of the left?

When these compañeros understand that the workers cannot join with sectors of the bosses; when they understand that the bosses are united against us; when they understand that the only way to free ourselves from imperialism is to sweep away capitalism—when that day comes, we will form a single party of all the workers against all the exploiters.

As long as the compañeros of the other left parties don't understand this, we cannot form one single party. But we will still work with them in all activities that advance the workers struggles, in favor of democracy within the mass movement, with a spirit of unity and without sectarianism. Our slogan shall always be, "The left united will never be defeated."

Compañero: If you are for a workers government, if you are against capitalism and for socialism, if you are for unity of the left, join the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores! □

represents the working class, a government that carries out socialist measures, can solve the social problems and rebuild Nicaragua.

Comrades, the struggle of the Nicaraguan people is sowing hope in the hearts of the oppressed peoples on this continent. The first duty of all sincere democrats is solidarity with the struggle of Nicaragua and of the Sandinista Front against Somoza.

We are doubly obligated to do this because the Nicaraguan revolution puts the total defeat of tyranny in Central America on the agenda. Our party declares that it is ready, as it has always been, to take part in any and all solidarity efforts, without preconditions.

We must remain vigilant, whatever the cost, to ensure that the forces conspiring against the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista Front do not rob them of their victory. Freedom for Nicaragua requires the total expulsion of Somoza and the dissolution of the National Guard. It means that imperialist intervention—either direct, or through the bosses' governments in the region—must be prevented. It means that the future government must be decided upon by a constituent assembly representing the wishes of the people.

Our party commits itself wholeheartedly to this struggle, and we take our stand on the side of the Sandinista movement in the Nicaraguan revolution.

Long live the Sandinista National Liberation Front!

Long live the working class of Nicaragua!

Long live the Nicaraguan revolution!

New Puzzles in Reported Death of Trotsky's Assassin

By Joseph Hansen

Writing from Madrid October 27, James M. Markham, a foreign correspondent of the *New York Times*, said: "The reported death last week of Ramon Mercader, the Spanish Communist who murdered Trotsky in 1940, has stirred faint, guilty murmurs on the Spanish left, and a notable silence among embarrassed Communists."

The dispatch appeared in the October 28-29 *International Herald Tribune*, and not the *New York Times* which was still shut because of a prolonged strike.

"Neither Mundo Obrero, the official organ of the 'Eurocommunist' party, nor La Calle, a Communist-leaning [leaning?] weekly," Markham continued, "has reported or commented on Mercader, who is said to have died on Oct. 18 of bone cancer in a Havana hospital."

"The shadowy Mercader, recruited by Stalin's intelligence agency GPU to murder the legendary Bolshevik and founder of the Red Army, is a difficult legacy for Spanish Communists, who today pride themselves on their independence from Soviet dictates."

"Moreover, too much probing into Mercader's past risks linking it with the earlier incarnations of Spanish Communists who today hold positions of some authority. . . . Jorge Semprun, a former Communist, hints strongly that Gregorio Lopez Raimundo, the grandfatherly president of the Catalan Communist Party, knows details about the GPU's ties to Mercader, a Catalan."

Semprun, a successful novelist, entitled one of his pieces of fiction, published in 1969, "The Second Death of Ramon Mercader." Last week, he wrote a short obituary called "The Last Death of Ramon Mercader." Among other things, Semprun said:

"And today, in this day of Ramon Mercader's death, after so many decades of obstinate and fierce silence, will the companions of youth of this self-sacrificing comrade speak? Will they tell us, now without risk, punishment or glory, the truths of his distant past? Will they explain to us, finally, the many things they know about that epoch?"

The November 6 issue of the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* points to some "new puzzles" arising from the report from Moscow by Luis Mercader that his brother Ramon had died in a Havana hospital of bone cancer.

"The Havana correspondent for the

Spanish news agency EFE, Federico Villagraú, on October 12, six days before Mercader's death, asked the deputy director of the Cuban government hospital for permission to interview his prominent patient," *Der Spiegel* reported. "Three hours after that, Major Agramonte, reportedly the doctor treating Mercader, informed him that Trotsky's murderer had 'never been in this hospital.'

"The guard post in front of the clinic, however, assured the journalist, 'This person is in critical condition and all visits are forbidden.'"

"Moreover," according to *Der Spiegel*, "what Luis Mercader, who has lived in Moscow since the end of the Spanish civil war, told Western correspondents shortly before cannot be true; that is, that his brother Ramon had left the Soviet Union eighteen months before and gone to Cuba to undertake treatment."

The reason is that at the end of May 1977, at a time when according to his brother's account he was already in Havana, Ramon Mercader—to believe *Der Spiegel*—went to the international book fair in Warsaw in order to make contact with the representatives of Western publishers.

"A Czechoslovak emigrant, a consultant of the Frankfurt publisher Fischer, was in Warsaw for the occasion and remembers having a short discussion with the murderer. 'Ramon Mercader looked old and ill. He talked about applying for an exit visa for a trip to Yugoslavia. Allegedly, he was working on his autobiography and wanted to bring the text through Yugoslavia to the West.'"

According to *Der Spiegel*, the meeting had been arranged by a common acquaintance of the two men, the Czech exile Hanus Weber, who left the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic after the Prague spring and is working today as an editor for Swedish television in Stockholm.

"While still in Czechoslovakia, Weber, then a TV journalist, had learned from the Western papers of the move by Trotsky's murderer to Prague. Curious, he began to try to find out where Mercader was living, and soon found him. Mercader was working as a researcher in the party's Institute for Marxism-Leninism."

"To shield their charge from unwelcome inquiries," continues *Der Spiegel*, "the Security Division of the Central Commit-

tee of the Czechoslovak CP had provided Mercader with a new name and a false history. He was supposed to be an American citizen who had fled to Prague to escape McCarthy's witch-hunt.

"The official version did not hold up against Weber's investigation. The journalist found out that there really had been an American of this name but that he had already returned to the United States before Mercader's release [from prison in Mexico] in 1960."

"A whole series of persons," according to Weber, learned of Mercader's identity, but he lived in almost total isolation. "Already at that time, the first signs of his illness had appeared. As Weber recalls, Mercader was always going to Karlsbad to take the cure."

Der Spiegel notes several changes in Mercader as reported by Weber. He never let a word slip about the murder and his years in prison. "However, the area of study to which Mercader turned his interest in the Institute for Marxism-Leninism, showed that he had not yet settled accounts with his history. The murderer of Trotsky concerned himself primarily with Trotsky and the history of Trotskyism."

Besides this, Mercader began to show sympathy for the opposition and reform movements in the so-called socialist countries. "He welcomed Alexander Dubcek's efforts to liberalize the regime, and was hard hit by the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops in 1968."

"The change of mind from being an agent of Stalin to a sympathizer of Dubcek was probably, Weber supposes, not only the result of better insight but also of personal resentment."

According to this view, Mercader believed that the Soviets had rewarded him insufficiently for his service. "The neglected murderer, as he confided to Weber at the end of the 1960s, was thinking of revenge. He was thinking of writing his memoirs and passing them to the West."

The Kremlin suddenly regained interest in Mercader, as *Der Spiegel* sees it. "Shortly after the occupation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, they took him to Moscow, under the pretext that they could give him better medical care there."

Mercader was given work in historical study in the state archives and in the Lenin Library, "where two years ago, by chance, he ran into an Austrian Communist. This astonished comrade reported in Vienna that Trotsky's assassin was alive and 'with the insight that comes with age, expressed sympathy for Russian dissidents.'"

"Moreover," the account continues, "he did not want to give up his plan to write his memoirs. Through intermediaries, he informed Weber that sections of his manuscript had been completed and hidden in a safe place." □