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Héctor Marroquín's Life at Stake

By Susan Wald

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has notified Héctor Marroquín that his request for political asylum has been denied.

In moving to deport the young activist back to Mexico, an action that many defenders of civil liberties on both sides of the border agree may amount to a death sentence, the Carter administration is once again showing its contempt for human rights.

The next step in the deportation proceedings is an INS hearing, to be held in Texas in late January or early February. At that time, Marroquín will resubmit his application for asylum.

In the meantime, the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee has launched an emergency campaign to step up public pressure and collect funds for the defense effort.

Marroquín's fight for political asylum has already been endorsed by a broad range of groups and individuals, including a number of unions and individual labor leaders. Prominent members of Chicano, Black, and women's organizations, as well as civil-liberties groups, have spoken out on his behalf. And internationally known figures have come to his defense. These include Angela Davis, Noam Chomsky, Simone de Beauvoir, and U.S. Representatives John Conyers, Ronald Dellums, and Parren Mitchell.

Rosario Ibarra de Piedra—from the Mexican National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled—toured the United States to publicize the case.

In the weeks remaining before the hearing, Marroquín's supporters plan to step up efforts to increase such support.

In a letter dated December 21, the INS wrote that Marroquín had "failed to establish that there is likelihood" of his being "persecuted in Mexico due to your political opinion."

The INS made no attempt to refute the 300 pages of evidence submitted by Marroquín and his supporters. Instead, it echoed the Mexican government's claims that Marroquín is wanted for "nonpolitical" crimes.

Marroquín is a member of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance. He has been active in the

labor movement and in the struggle of undocumented workers.

Before fleeing Mexico, he was a leader of the student movement and a participant in demonstrations against police repression.

He was hounded by the Mexican police and spied on by the FBI as part of its program to sabotage Mexican radical groups.

Yet the INS claims that "no issue of political belief" is involved.

This assertion is contradicted by the Mexican government itself. In September, under pressure from a growing human-rights movement, the government enacted an "amnesty law" for certain political prisoners and exiles. Among those listed was Marroquín.

New proof of government repression came last month, with the release of the findings of the Commission of Enquiry, sponsored jointly by the International League for Human Rights, the Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme, and PAX ROMANA.*

The fact-finding mission visited Mexico in the spring of 1978. Its report documents cases of political prisoners being held without trial or sentence for periods far exceeding the Mexican constitution's time limit. While in jail, they were tortured into signing false "confessions" that were later used to convict them.

*Copies of the report can be obtained from the International League for Human Rights, 236 East Forty-Sixth Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Carter's Attack on 'Pravda'

By Gerry Foley

As the movement against the shah's dictatorial rule mounted still more explosively in late December, Washington made a new attack on the reporting of the events by the Soviet press.

On December 28, Carter denounced a report published the day before in *Pravda* about CIA agents being sent to Iran. The Soviet paper had not even reported this in its own name. It said:

"Special indignation has been aroused in Tehran and other cities of Iran by the role of the U.S. in the events. . . . For the fourth day in a row, clashes are continuing in front of the U.S. embassy between troops and demonstrators protesting U.S. interference in the internal affairs of the Iranian people. . . . According to reports in the Western press . . . about sixty persons . . . working for the CIA, the State

The report includes a list of 301 "disappeared" persons. And it concludes that the existence of the Brigada Blanca (White Brigade), made up of members of the federal, state, and municipal police forces, is a "reasonably proven fact." The brigade is primarily responsible for kidnappings leading to "disappearances."

This gives the lie to the findings of the State Department's own whitewash "investigation" into human rights in Mexico. The State Department concluded that "fair public trials in Mexico are the norm" and that the Mexican government's position was "not to condone human rights violations." This was used by the INS to justify denying Marroquín asylum.

Furthermore, the commission reporters made it clear that the repressive conditions they documented continue today, despite the so-called amnesty. At a December 11 news conference in New York, where the findings were announced, Robert Goldman, professor of law at American University, declared:

"We continue to receive reports that persons released by the amnesty have disappeared under mysterious circumstances and in other cases are known to have been murdered."

The report of the Commission of Enquiry, coming on top of previous reports by Amnesty International and the extensive evidence collected by the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee, spotlights again the life-and-death nature of Marroquín's fight for political asylum. It is more urgent now than ever to mobilize broad support for this elementary right.

Letters and telegrams protesting the INS ruling and demanding political asylum for Marroquín should be sent to Leonel Castillo, Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536.

Please send copies of any messages, as well as contributions, to the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee, Box 843, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Department, and other U.S. agencies have arrived in Tehran. They are establishing contacts with leaders of the opposition . . . trying to convince them to go along with a 'solution' acceptable to the U.S."

Why should such a report provoke an official protest from Carter? Did he want the Kremlin to maintain an Iron Curtain against the reports in the Western press?

Is there anyone in the world, in the Soviet Union or anywhere else, who believes that Washington is not sending agents to Iran, and that if anything, a group of sixty would only be a drop in the bucket? This is hardly even news, let alone "provocative."

However, writing in the January 4 *Washington Post*, staff writer Jim Hoagland said that Carter's move was a "carefully considered policy decision."

Next Week . . .

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What is more, according to Hoagland, this move produced results. The Soviet Union stopped Persian-language broadcasts "critical of the shah." These were later resumed. But "administration specialists" thought this came only after "the Kremlin . . . concluded that the shah is now certain to fall." This indicates that Washington is well aware that it is the events in Iran that are pushing the Kremlin, and not the other way around.

In fact, the Soviet press has argued that it is the U.S. that is fanning the flames in Iran.

Following the designation of Shahpur Bakhtiar to form a new government, a Tass dispatch in the December 30 issue of *Pravda* accused Washington of standing in the way of the compromises needed to defuse the situation:

"In conditions in which a way is becoming clearer and clearer for resolving the Iranian crisis, the U.S. is obviously placing its bets on the extreme right-wing circles in the army command."

On December 31, *Pravda* cited the *Washington Post* to the effect that sending U.S. warships to the Persian Gulf would only "increase the disturbances."

It is notable that the only statement by the Tudeh Party, the Iranian CP, that was quoted in *Pravda* in the two weeks at the end of December and the beginning of January raised a call for a "government of national union" without even demanding specifically that the shah give up power.

Thus, there has been absolutely nothing in the Soviet press to justify Washington's claims that it is obliged to make displays of strength and determination to keep the Kremlin from intervening to heat up the situation in Iran. These claims can only be a pretext for stepping up U.S. intervention.

On the other hand, the increasing attention the Soviet press has been paying to Iran does show clearly that the Kremlin cannot remain indifferent to a mass revolutionary struggle in a bordering country. It cannot allow itself to be left without influence in the process or leave the U.S. a free hand to crush it.

Thus, there is a real and increasing danger of a collision between Washington and Moscow in Iran. In fact this was recognized in a year-end interview given by Defense Secretary Harold Brown to the *Washington Post*. It was significant that he placed this danger in the context of the need for Washington to intervene in situations such as the one in Iran.

"Brown said that the prospects of instability in developing countries are such 'that we might have a very difficult time in avoiding the choice between active participation in conflict . . . or a severe damage to our national interests. . . ."

"I think that's a worse problem than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. . . . You say how could it be worse than Vietnam? I guess what I'm saying is that our vital interests are more likely to be involved than in retrospect they probably were' in Vietnam" (*Washington Post*, January 2).□

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Last Days for the Shah

By Parvin Najafi

Shahpur Bakhtiar introduced his cabinet to the shah January 6 and became the shah's new prime minister. Bakhtiar had received a preliminary vote of confidence from the shah's handpicked parliament January 3, with no opposing votes. Washington had endorsed the Bakhtiar cabinet in advance, on January 4.

Until he was expelled a week earlier, Bakhtiar had been the number-two man in the bourgeois opposition coalition, the National Front. He had also been the deputy minister of labor in the Mossadegh cabinet in 1953, until the Mossadegh government was overthrown by a CIA-sponsored coup in August of that year.

As a welcoming gesture for the new prime minister, the Iranian masses planned massive demonstrations for January 8.

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni, the most powerful opposition leader, denounced the new government from his exile in France. According to a report from Tehran by *New York Times* correspondent Nicholas Gage, Khomeyni "called on employees at Iranian Government ministries to refuse to obey the new ministers appointed today and to lock them out of the ministry buildings."

"In a letter read here tonight," Gage continued, "the Moslem religious leader . . . said that obedience to this administration is obedience to Satan."

The appointment of Bakhtiar came as no surprise. He was named by the shah to head a new civilian government on December 29. As soon as news of his appointment got out, shouts of "Bakhtiar the servant of the shah" took their place along with chants of "Down with the shah" in the streets of Iran.

The appointment of Bakhtiar came at a time when the "iron fist" policy had brought the shah's regime to the end of its rope.

Imposition of martial law on the entire country, installation of a military government, and the gunning down of thousands of demonstrators was not only insufficient to beat back the powerful movement demanding the shah's overthrow but instead deepened the hatred of the masses and convinced millions more of the need to overthrow the monarchy.

On December 23, twelve days after the massive demonstrations of December 10 and 11, a new and more powerful wave of mobilizations began. Demonstrations covered Iran from one end to the other almost nonstop, and a powerful strike wave swept the country, bringing economic life to a standstill. Millions of workers walked off their jobs, pledging that they would not return as long as the

shah remained. The concern of the entire nation became how to oust the shah.

The oil workers shut off the flow of oil outside Iran completely. Production fell to a trickle—a mere 200,000 barrels a day, way below the 700,000 barrels needed for domestic consumption.

Since the start of the first strike in early October the oil workers did not aim to cut off the production and refining of fuel for domestic use. But in the last two strikes



they learned that the amount they produced for domestic use was almost totally taken over by the military.

In this regard, *Newsweek* of January 8 reported:

Oil workers attempting to move large quantities of gasoline, kerosene and diesel fuel from Abadan to Tehran last week were prevented from doing so by the army. "I think the government has decided to let the people stew in their own juice and hopes it will turn them against the demonstrators," said a Western oil man.

But as William Branigan of the *Washington Post* noted in the December 25 issue, most Iranians are willing to accept the hardship caused by the strike "as the price for keeping pressure on the shah's military administration."

A professor told Branigan:

If one night the electricity stays on, people would be unhappy because they would feel the government has beaten the strike. I know I would be disappointed if we didn't have the power cuts at night.

In the last week of December, in addition to the oil workers and employees of the electrical power plants, workers out on strike included those in the bus lines, railroads, national airline, water department, natural gas pipelines, fire department, postal service, nearly all government ministries, all banks (including the central bank), radio and television, the official Pars news agency, air traffic controllers at Mehrabad international airport, and countless factories and offices.

While the economy was shut tight by the workers, tens of thousands of protesters confronted the shah's army in almost continuous demonstrations. Tony Allaway reported from Tehran in the December 27 *Christian Science Monitor*:

The demonstrators, mainly students, play a daily cat-and-mouse game with the increasingly frustrated troops, taking over whole streets until the troops appear. Then they instantly dissolve into nearby buildings, down alleyways, or just by pretending to be part of the stream of pedestrians that pass apparently oblivious to the struggle going on around them.

Barry Came of *Newsweek* described one such demonstration:

I watched the students at work at a busy intersection near a statue of the romantic poet Ferdowsi. Lolling in a side street until an army patrol had roared past, the youths darted onto the avenue to erect a makeshift barricade. They used garbage cans, rubble, wooden planks and even limbs torn from the stately pine trees that line the broad thoroughfare. As soon as it was finished, they set the whole works alight, creating a monstrous traffic jam that kept the army trucks at bay. They chanted "the revolution continues until the shah goes," and plastered car windshields with handwritten leaflets calling for the overthrow of the monarchy.

At one point, an army Jeep with three soldiers inside managed to reach the barricade by driving on the sidewalk. The young demonstrators pelted the vehicle with rocks, overpowered the soldiers and took away their guns. Then they upended the Jeep and set it afire. When I asked one of the youths what was going to happen to the soldiers, he replied: "Nothing. We do not intend to kill anybody."

The shah's army began to show signs of serious stress under the blows of the mass movement. Many instances of soldiers refusing to shoot at the demonstrators were reported. In a few instances, when ordered to fire on the demonstrators, soldiers shot their own commanding officers.

The most serious incident of this kind occurred in Tehran December 27 during a funeral procession for a young professor killed the day before while staging a sitdown protest at Tehran University.

The funeral procession had a permit from the military commander of Tehran. A group of Rangers and a colonel were sent to accompany the procession to guarantee its safe passage through the streets.

When the marchers got to 24 of Esfand Square, they were challenged by a company of regular army soldiers, stationed there to guard the entrance to nearby Tehran University. *Newsweek* described what happened next:

The regular troops let loose a fusillade of automatic-rifle fire over the demonstrators' heads to warn them to halt. An outraged ranger colonel at the head of the mourners strode forward, waving his arms and shouting, "no, no, no." Several of the jittery troops at the university entrance, almost all of them conscripts, responded with a burst of fire that killed the colonel. The rangers—tough tribesmen from the hard mountains of Baluchistan—replied in kind and a shootout ensued between the two units.

In Mashad, the population was able to drive the shah's army out of the city in bloody clashes during the weekend of December 30-31. Instead of the army, a coalition of students, workers, and professionals is now running the city from headquarters in the Hyatt Omar Khayam Hotel.

The clashes occurred after antishah demonstrators had killed four SAVAK agents and hanged their bodies from trees. The bodies were later taken to the Mashad garrison and soldiers were forced to march in to look at them. The head of the garrison told a *Washington Post* correspondent that after this, his men were "very motivated."

The army was then turned loose on the people of Mashad. Indiscriminate and unprovoked shooting of demonstrators followed, resulting in 100 deaths according to the government and 2,000 according to opposition sources.

But the bloodbath backfired on the regime. Tens of thousands of people poured into the streets and beat back the army, forcing it to retreat to the garrison. The city then fell into the hands of its residents. The army, except for a short tour for journalists on January 3, has not been able to enter since.

From the way *Washington Post* correspondent Thomas W. Lippman described the press tour, it resembled a guerrilla operation. Four truckloads of soldiers with rifles "escorted" the journalists' bus, which rolled into the city for a very quick visit. "Even so, the army refused to go into most of the city, avoiding the hospitals, the houses of religious leaders, and the Moslem shrine," Lippman reported. "The army is the only organization in the country still loyal to the shah, but here in Mashad its control ends at the garrison gate."

Eric Pace of the *New York Times* reported from Mashad that the commander of the garrison told him "the army worried little these days about safeguarding the country's borders, adding wearily, 'the important border now is our own garrison; we have to fight our own people.'"

"The outcome," Lippman reported, "is that the loose alliance of clergy, workers and intellectuals who have taken over Mashad are in control of the few functioning public services like the power station while the army keeps an uneasy vigil behind its walls."

Mashad is one of the major cities in Iran, with a population of close to one million. In all probability similar scenes have taken place in several other, smaller cities.

CIA Trained SAVAK Torturers

The Central Intelligence Agency, it has now been revealed, helped instruct the shah's secret police in methods of torture, based on techniques developed by the Nazis.

In an interview with correspondent Seymour M. Hersch, published in the January 7 *New York Times*, former CIA agent Jesse J. Leaf disclosed that a "senior CIA official" headed the CIA-SAVAK "torture seminars." The *New York Times* reported:

"Mr. Leaf . . . said in the interview that he and his colleagues knew of the torture of Iranian dissenters by Savak. . . . Furthermore, the 38-year-old Mr. Leaf said, a senior C.I.A. official was involved in instructing officials in the Savak on torture techniques, although Mr. Leaf said that to his knowledge no Americans did any of the torturing. The C.I.A.'s torture seminars, Mr. Leaf said, 'were based on German torture techniques from World War II.'"

In early October, in the cities of Amol, Sanandaj, and a whole range of others with populations of 50,000 to 100,000, the army was pushed out and defense guards

declared illegal.) He also promised that he would lift martial law, but only "gradually."

On one of the main demands of the strikers and demonstrators—that the imperialist military and civilian advisers be immediately expelled from the country—Bakhtiar took a diametrically opposed position. He told reporters in a news conference in Tehran before he took office that he would seek to persuade the fleeing Western "advisers" to return once he took power.

On the key question in Iran today, for which thousands have laid down their lives—that is, the overthrow of the monarchy—he told reporters January 6 that "I hope and think and pray" the shah will remain the monarch. He added that he hoped his government could settle the "misunderstanding" between the shah and his people.

With this program it is not difficult to see that the chances for survival of the Bakhtiar government are very slim. This is no secret to the shah himself, the Iranian bourgeoisie, and Carter's advisers in Washington.

The very fact that there are no National Front figures in Bakhtiar's cabinet apart from himself, even though he had planned to put National Front figures in half the posts, shows what the Iranian bourgeoisie thinks of the shah's chances at this time.

The mood of the U.S. ruling class, as the Pahlavi dynasty begins to fall apart, was best summed up in an almost tearful editorial in the *New York Times* January 7. It said in part:

The loss of the shah and what he represented for American diplomacy is a serious setback. Wisely confronted, it may not be a calamity. And shrewdly observed in Saudi Arabia or Turkey and wherever else we see frightened partners, it may even prove to be a timely warning of other storms. In the sad days of the shah's decline, we have in fact demonstrated that we are respectful friends in foul weather as well as fair. The greater calamity would be to believe or pretend that we control the weather.

That is true: the U.S. ruling class no longer controls the "weather." And a whole generation of the oppressed is rising up to make sure that they no longer control the world. January 7, 1979



KHOMAYNI: Urges general strike against Bakhtiar government.

were created to protect the residents from the shah's army and police.

With the serious erosion of discipline in the army, with at least one of the major cities under the control of its residents, and with the continuous massive onslaught against the regime, the shah's masters in Washington have had to sound a retreat. It was under these circumstances that Shahpur Bakhtiar was brought to power to try to salvage whatever could be saved of the monarchy in Iran.

In a televised speech to the nation while he was premier-designate, Bakhtiar promised he would free political prisoners, but "only those who are really political prisoners." He said he would end censorship of the press, but not radio and television. At the time the employees of radio and television and the official Pars news agency were on strike demanding an end to censorship.

Bakhtiar promised that he would legalize political parties, but only those that have this right under the Iranian constitution. (In an amendment to the constitution passed in 1931, all political parties that call for collectivizing private property were

Behind Declaration of Martial Law in Turkey

By Gerry Foley

Beginning December 22 a massive pogrom was carried out by rightists in the southeastern Turkish city of Kahraman Maras. It lasted four days, ending only after 3,000 troops occupied the town. Over a hundred persons were reported killed and many hundreds wounded.

Turkish newspapers carried photos of piles of bodies. In one such picture, published in the December 27 issue of the liberal Istanbul daily *Cumhuriyet*, was the body of a young man, apparently mutilated. The body of a child, about three years old, lay at his feet.

Other pictures in the Turkish press showed refugees streaming into the city government buildings to find safety from the rampaging rightist gangs. Still others showed large-scale wreckage of small homes and shops. A common caption reminded readers "This is not Beirut."

On December 26, Premier Bulent Ecevit declared martial law in thirteen provinces, including most of the major Turkish cities, among them Ankara and Istanbul. Constitutional guarantees were "suspended" and special military tribunals were set up to "maintain order." The last time martial law was declared in Turkey, on March 12, 1971, it was followed by two years of military dictatorship.

The pogrom in Kahraman Maras began when gangs of "Idealists," the rightist terrorist gangs, attacked a funeral procession of 10,000 persons (the city has a population of 60,000 to 70,000). The march was in memory of two teachers, members of the leftist Töb-Der union, who had been murdered by a group of right-wing students at their high school.

According to the December 23 issue of *Cumhuriyet*, the "Idealists" attacked, shouting: "Communists and Alevis [Shi'ites] cannot be allowed to say the prayers for the dead."

The National Action Party, with which the "Idealists" are associated, claims to be secularist in the tradition of the Turkish national revolution. Its role in this pogrom shows that it is simply a ferociously reactionary group.

The orthodox Sunni sect, opposed to the Shi'ites, has always been the pillar of the established authorities in Turkey. It was closely associated with the Ottoman state.

Those Turkish tribes in the east of Anatolia that remained nomadic or semi-nomadic and did not benefit from the Ottoman empire, adopted the Shi'ite or Alevi version of Islam. Under the banner of this religion they rose up several times in the Middle Ages against the rule of the sultans. These rebellions tended to be marked by social radicalism. The Shi'ites

remain generally a disadvantaged group and are more inclined to the left than the dominant Sunnis. Moreover, a large part of the oppressed Kurdish population are Alevis.

Historically, the Alevis in Turkey have tended to look for support to Iran, where Shi'ites are a majority. It might be expected that the mass upsurge in Iran, in which Shi'ite mullahs have played a major role, would have its first impact in Turkey on the Alevis.

Kahraman Maras lies near the Kurdish area. And it is precisely among the Turkish petty bourgeoisie in such zones that the fascist-like National Action Party has one of its strongest bases of support.

According to the December 23 *Cumhuriyet*, the rightists followed their attack on the funeral by wrecking shops and homes belonging to Alevis and known supporters of the Republican People's Party, the party of Premier Ecevit. The slogan was: "Wherever you find Alevis, kill them one by one."

The Republican People's Party, which was founded by Ataturk, is a populist national formation similar in a general sense to the Peronist movement in Argentina.

In recent years, in particular under the leadership of Ecevit, who calls himself a "Social Democrat," the party has tried to adopt a more left-wing image. Since there is no mass workers party in Turkey, the hopes of the workers, poor peasants, and the oppressed Kurdish population have become focused on it and on Ecevit. The fears of the Turkish rightists and neofascists also focus on it.

In the past decade the structure of Turkish society and politics has been changing very rapidly to the disadvantage of the conservative forces. The working class has become a much larger part of the population. Trade unions have been growing and radicalizing. Socialist ideas have begun, for the first time, to spread rapidly, although still mainly among students, intellectuals, and some layers of trade-union activists.

There have also been signs of a new upsurge of nationalism among the Kurds, a substantial minority of the population.

Moreover, an alliance has been developing between Kurds fighting national oppression and the new socialist and left forces. This is a new turn in Turkish politics. Previously, the Turkish left, influenced by the nationalist tradition of Ataturk, rejected the Kurdish fighters as "tools of imperialism."

The changes taking place in Turkish society were reflected in the 1977 elections. The Republican People's Party did not win

an overall majority, but its vote rose dramatically against the conservative parties as a whole.

Key sections of the Turkish bourgeoisie considered it advisable to turn the government over to Ecevit, who subsequently got the support of enough deputies from rightist or religious parties to form a cabinet. Crossovers from the conservative groups were included in the new government as a guarantee that Ecevit would not be led into taking too liberal a course.

Nonetheless, the right yielded governmental power with an extraordinary and strident bitterness.

A rightist murder campaign was already under way before the installation of the new government. Fascist-like figures such as Colonel Alp Arslan Türkes, leader of the National Action Party, urged action against the "Communists" and "terrorists" released from prison after the ending of military rule.

The terror escalated as Ecevit failed to stop the rightist gangs and their political patrons. In fact, he tended to try to tie the hands of those trying to defend themselves. For example, he repressed left organizations formed in the security forces, arguing that politics had to be kept out of them. In fact, he left them to the rightists, who dominate them as before.

When students in many parts of the country held demonstrations to protest the pogrom in Kahraman Maras, they were repressed. In Istanbul alone about 350 participants were arrested. By January 1, only 94 had been released.

The main call of the fascist murder gangs has been for restoration of martial law. They argued that the atmosphere of insecurity created by their own outrages showed that Ecevit was letting the country slide into "anarchy."

Thus in declaring martial law, Ecevit was in fact granting the demand of those responsible for the massacre in Kahraman Maras. This move touched off an outcry in his own parliamentary fraction.

According to the December 30 issue of the British *Economist*, Ecevit answered by arguing that if he had not declared martial law, the commanders would have brushed him aside. This illustrates the real role of his government.

In fact, the cutting edge of martial law seems to have been directed mainly against the left. Local military commanders have been issuing decrees banning public political activity of any kind.

The Turkish press carries a number of reports of youths being arrested for putting up posters protesting rightist terror and of quantities of posters being confiscated. Moreover, universities and high schools in Istanbul and Ankara have been closed.

On December 27, the military commander of Erzurum and Karas issued a bulletin stating:

"All indoor or outdoor assemblies, forums, seminars, panels, or demonstrations and marches are forbidden.

"Any strike or lockout . . . requires prior permission."

But Ecevit's action did not make him more popular with the right, which has

taken the opportunity to launch a new offensive to bring him down. For example, in the January 1 *Cumhuriyet* Demirel was quoted as saying: "While supporting martial law, we are not supporting this government. We are supporting the armed forces in their task."

Clearly Ecevit's move is a betrayal of the masses who have supported him, a betrayal for which they may pay dearly. The dictatorship in Argentina, for example, was established as the culmination of a rightist terror campaign and its path to power was paved by a state of siege declared by the government it overthrew.

However, the rightist offensive in Turkey comes in a different context. The Argentine coup followed the establishment of brutal dictatorships in the neighboring countries. The rightist onslaught in Turkey comes in conjunction with the most powerful and sustained mass struggles yet seen in neighboring Iran. In fact this must have added to the desperation of the Turkish rightists.

For example, shortly before the Kahraman Maras pogrom, Celal Bayar, a founder of the main conservative party, was quoted in the press as saying:

"Allah defend Iran. If it falls, the Communist and separatist movements here will go on a rampage."

To be sure, as the example of the Iranian masses spreads through the area, along with the processes they have set in motion, the Turkish rightists may find that their offensive will blow up in their face.

At the same time, the crisis in Turkey puts the lives and liberties of all progressives, socialists, trade unionists, and members of oppressed nationalities in grave danger. It is essential that the international workers movement and democratic public opinion rally to their defense. □

Business Is Business

When the unemployed husband of a paralyzed New England auto accident victim became unable to keep up on payments for his wife's wheelchair, the local medical supply company repossessed it at the end of December.

"I had been asking them nicely for the rent," said Pittsfield, Massachusetts, wheelchair dealer Everett Cook, "but when he started swearing at me and threatening me and hanging up the phone I said 'This has gone far enough.'"

12,000 Freed in Afghanistan

Since taking power in April 1978, the Taraki government in Afghanistan has released 12,233 prisoners and reduced the sentences of 2,300 others, according to a statement by the Ministry of Justice reported in the December 19 *Le Monde*.

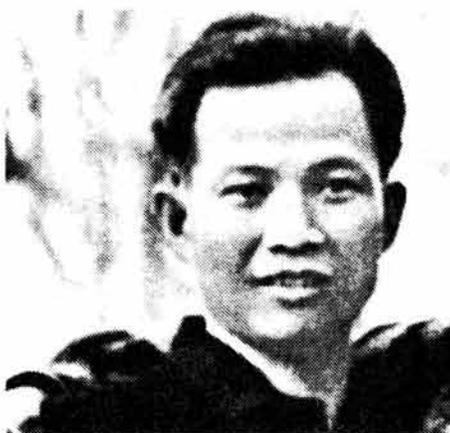
The ministry did not specify what proportion of these prisoners were serving terms for political charges or how many prisoners remained behind bars in the country. Most of those released had been sentenced under the old regime.

Pnompenh the Target

Hanoi Steps Up Offensive in Cambodia

By Will Reissner

Fighting in Cambodia between Vietnamese and Cambodian armed forces reached a decisive stage in the first week of January. A Vietnamese force of more than 100,000 troops was reported to have



KHIEU SAMPHAN

drawn a circle around Pnompenh, Cambodia's capital, less than two weeks after it began its present offensive on December 25.

Cambodian Premier Pol Pot hinted in a January 5 radio address that he and other leaders of his regime were preparing to abandon the capital city.

The same day, a Japanese news agency reported from Peking that China was likely to airlift Cambodian leaders out of the country.

At least part of the diplomatic corps in Pnompenh has been evacuated to the countryside in anticipation of an attack on the city.

As of January 5 the fighting was taking place on five fronts, to the east, south, and north of the Cambodian capital. Vietnamese units were reported to be within forty miles of Pnompenh on the north and thirty-seven miles on the south. At least three provincial capitals had been captured by Hanoi.

The likelihood of Pnompenh's capture was heightened by the fact that Vietnamese units had cut off the Mekong River to the north of the city and were moving to cut access to the country's only seaport, Kompong Som, to the south, effectively isolating the capital from the outside world.

The present Cambodian regime came to power in 1975, after years of struggle against the American-puppet Lon Nol regime. During the guerrilla struggle against Lon Nol, Cambodian forces fought

alongside Vietnamese troops, who were struggling to oust the U.S. from South Vietnam and overthrow the Thieu regime.

Clashes between the two countries escalated into large-scale fighting in September 1977, and Pnompenh broke relations with Hanoi three months later. In the present struggle, Pnompenh has the backing of the People's Republic of China, while Hanoi is backed by the Soviet Union.

In response to Vietnamese advances, Peking has moved what an official described as "substantial numbers" of soldiers, as well as fighter planes and bombers, to its border with Vietnam, where a number of skirmishes have been reported recently.

A formation called the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation, which is backed by Hanoi, is reportedly preparing to announce the establishment of a "liberated area" in eastern Cambodia. The front is calling for establishment of a "true" socialist regime. It describes the Pol Pot regime as "a dictatorial, militarist and fascist regime, matchless in history for its ferocity."

Pol Pot, on the other hand, has pledged that "the fighting will go on for eternity if necessary, until the aggressors have been completely defeated." His forces, he claims, will wage a prolonged guerrilla war against their opponents if they are driven into the countryside.

Soon after it came to power, the Cambodian regime ordered an evacuation of most of the population out of the cities. A high official of the foreign ministry stated that "even if they [the insurgents] take our cities, what do they have? Our people are in the countryside."

In an abrupt turnaround from the regime's previous stance of "self-reliance," Cambodian leader Khieu Samphan called on "all countries and world organizations to immediately oppose the acts of aggression of Vietnam and the Soviet Union."

According to the Reuters dispatch in the January 3 *New York Times*, Cambodian Foreign Minister Ieng Sary appealed to the United Nations Security Council to take measures to end the conflict in Indochina.

The Carter administration, which for several years has been accusing Cambodia of all kinds of human-rights violations, declared its support for Pnompenh's request. The American statement also criticized Vietnam for "intervention by armed force in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation." The cynicism of this statement, considering the ferocity of U.S. military intervention in both Vietnam and Cambodia, is remarkable.

Why Washington Recognized People's Republic of China

By Matilde Zimmermann

[The following article appeared in the January 12 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

President Carter's announcement that Washington is finally extending diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China is an important victory for workers and the oppressed in China, the United States, and throughout the world.

As long as the U.S. rulers insisted that Chiang Kai-shek and his heirs were the legitimate government of China—and armed this gang to the teeth—they were signaling their determination to seize any opportunity to intervene militarily against the Chinese workers state.

Under the impact of events during the past decade, in particular its defeat in Vietnam, U.S. imperialism has been forced to give up this cold-war perspective for the foreseeable future. Recognition of China is a sign of the weakening of U.S. imperialism and the growing strength of revolutionary forces around the world.

American newspapers have devoted thousands of column inches to the new relationship between the United States and China. Missing from all this ink and newsprint is any serious attempt to explain why recognition was delayed for thirty years. The long refusal to recognize Peking is passed off as an inexplicable, perhaps somewhat naïve, reluctance by Washington to face up to reality.

The truth is that the United States did everything possible to block the victory of the Chinese revolution and then carried out an aggressive political, economic, and military campaign to overturn the revolution and reestablish capitalism in China.

The Korean War in 1950 gave the imperialists the chance they were looking for. U.S.-led invaders, under the cover of a United Nations mandate, penetrated all the way to China's borders before being stopped and pushed back by Chinese troops. Washington had every intention of driving past Korea if possible into China itself. And the option of a nuclear strike against China was seriously weighed.

The U.S. government carried out an unrelenting anti-China campaign throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

An economic blockade aimed at strangling the new, desperately poor workers state imposed severe hardships on the Chinese masses struggling to repair the damage done by imperialist invasion and capitalist rule.

A racist campaign was whipped up

against the "yellow peril" and the "Chinese hordes."

Washington did everything possible to isolate Peking politically and strengthen the counterrevolutionary Kuomintang clique holed up on the island of Taiwan.

In 1958 the U.S. government came close to provoking nuclear war against China. Encouraged by Washington, Chiang Kai-shek moved troops onto the tiny islands of Quemoy and Matsu—just a few miles off the coast of China—and proceeded to blockade important mainland ports. The U.S. Seventh Fleet was moved into the area and seemed prepared to attack as soon as China began to defend its coastline against the blockade.

Washington retreated from the brink of world war, but only to wait for a more plausible pretext for a military attack on China.

It was the Vietnamese revolution that forced the United States to give up the short-term perspective of overthrowing the Chinese workers state.

Around 1968, bogged down in its efforts to crush the Vietnamese fighters and facing a growing antiwar movement at home, Washington began an attempt to tie the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies into a political deal that would isolate the Vietnamese revolution. Nixon's trips to Peking and Moscow in 1972—while American bombers were pulverizing Vietnam—were the culmination of this campaign.

But the Vietnamese fighters won, despite Mao's and Brezhnev's betrayals.

The Vietnamese victory and deep antiwar sentiment in the United States left Washington with a sharply diminished ability to intervene militarily against developing revolutions or established workers states anywhere in the world, including China. This weakened condition made it even more important for Washington to cement its détente relationship with the Chinese and Soviet Stalinists to ensure their cooperation in keeping the lid on other revolutionary struggles.

So Carter's "surprise" announcement December 15 should have surprised no one.

Recognition of China was the logical next step in a process that has been under way for a decade and openly apparent since Nixon's Peking trip in 1972. The culmination was stalled by, among other things, the political problems posed by the Taiwan government.

The White House had until recently been reluctant to stir up a hornet's nest among staunch right-wing supporters of the Taiwanese regime in this country. So it had stopped short of full recognition, while

taking many steps toward widened relations with the Chinese government.

It is probable that recent events in China encouraged the U.S. rulers to speed up the process. Big business increasingly begrudged any unnecessary obstacles to tapping the growing opportunities for lucrative trade and investment deals with the Chinese regime.

"Any nation of over 950 million people growing at the rate of 18 million individuals a year is a tremendous market," says Donald Regan, chairman of the top Wall Street brokerage house, Merrill Lynch and Company.

This starry-eyed eagerness was no doubt spurred by the Chinese government's signals last year that it wants greatly expanded economic contacts with imperialism—a policy most closely associated with Vice-premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing. During the first week of December, Peking announced that for the first time it would permit Western and Japanese firms to open offices in China; that it would gladly accept foreign loans and even foreign aid; and that it would sign contracts with capitalist firms on a profit-sharing basis and even give these firms long-term partial "ownership" in plants constructed in China.

The Chinese government has recently signed highly publicized deals with Coca-Cola, Hilton Hotels, and McDonalds. But China's real interest is in the advanced technology of heavy industry: computers, factory and mine construction, and offshore drilling equipment.

From Wall Street's standpoint, continued U.S. nonrecognition gave an annoying edge to its Western European and Japanese capitalist competitors in cashing in on the China bonanza. U.S.-China trade in 1978 was an estimated \$1.3 billion, triple the figure for 1977. But, as an article in the December 28 *Wall Street Journal* explained, "The U.S. remains far behind the China trade rush. So far, the overwhelming share of business has gone to Japan, which signed a \$20 billion long-term trade agreement with China this year. Western Europe—primarily West Germany, France and Great Britain—is in second place."

Given the intensifying interimperialist rivalry over a shrinking world market, big business in this country wants to make up for lost time in what it hopes will be an important new market and outlet for investment.

The Chinese bureaucracy and all its factions—from that headed by Mao and the so-called gang of four, to that now led

Teng Strikes a Democratic Pose

By Leslie Evans

After a tentative crackdown on Peking's "democracy movement" at the end of November, the Chinese Communist Party has plainly decided to try to coopt the popular sentiment for democratic reform. To do so, however, the party leadership has had to speak more candidly than in the past about continuing bureaucratic abuses in Chinese society, and to legalize,

for the time being at least, the right of individual critics of the regime to voice a wider range of opposing views than were permitted in the Mao era.

In the last ten years of Mao's rule, with the brief exception of a few months at the end of 1966 and beginning of 1967 when there was talk of imitating the democratic institutions of the Paris Commune, all of

by Teng—have gone out of their way for more than a decade now to demonstrate their desire to come to comfortable terms with imperialism.

In fact, this has been their aim from the beginning, although the active hostility of imperialism throughout the cold-war years prevented them from making much progress.

The Chinese bureaucracy is constantly looking for ways to assure capitalist governments that it is willing to do their bidding around the world in return for diplomatic deals and economic and technological aid.

Peking sees the establishment of formal ties with Washington totally within the framework of the Stalinist policy of socialism in one country. What the bureaucracy hopes to achieve is consolidation of its authoritarian rule and bountiful privileges.

The goal of Teng Hsiao-p'ing's diplomacy—like that of Mao before him—is preservation of the world status quo. This means active opposition to revolutionary upheavals in Iran, in southern Africa, in Sri Lanka. It leads to an open call for Washington to use its military might against revolutionary Cuba.

In exchange for this support to imperialism, the Chinese bureaucracy hopes to find a road to quick economic modernization. As a conservative clique fearful of the masses, the Stalinist regime rejects the only real road to economic development—through extension of the world revolution, especially to the advanced capitalist countries, and the establishment of worldwide economic planning and cooperation.

There are powerful revolutionary forces stirring in the world today—including in the United States. But Teng's orientation is not to the masses in the streets and oil fields of Iran, or to American coal miners, auto workers, Blacks, Chicanos, and women. Teng feels more at home with capitalist politicians like the shah and Carter, and with the corporation lawyers who negotiate for Coca-Cola and Pan American World Airways.

Peking does not look to the deepening

class struggle in Japan, Western Europe, or Latin America for revolutionary victories that would genuinely advance the Chinese revolution.

The Chinese workers state has a right to seek diplomatic ties, trade, and economic assistance from capitalist governments. But its current rulers rely on such deals at the expense of the world revolution.

When Teng comes to the United States January 29, he will not stay in Harlem as Fidel Castro did when he came to New York in 1960. He will not talk to miners in West Virginia or auto workers in Detroit. And he certainly won't call for cutting the Pentagon's war budget to provide more funds for needed social programs.

What he will do is pose for plenty of pictures with Jimmy Carter, the two leaders smiling their agreement on the need to strengthen NATO's nuclear strike force against Soviet "hegemonism."

U.S. recognition of China should meet with a favorable response from the American people—and from the people of China. Recognition is a matter of simple justice. Working people in both countries will benefit from any increased cultural exchanges and trade ties.

According to the *New York Times* of December 19, a poll conducted after Carter's announcement indicated that "a sizable majority opposes further arms sales to the Chinese Nationalists."

This is a good time to demand that the United States immediately extend diplomatic recognition to Cuba and Vietnam and lift its economic blockade.

For twenty years Washington has been trying by political, economic, and military means to overthrow the Cuban revolution.

The U.S. government continues to lead an economic and political drive to isolate Vietnam and punish the Vietnamese for their heroic fight for liberation.

Campaigning for the recognition of Cuba and Vietnam is an appropriate way to celebrate the victory of Washington being forced to acknowledge the overturn of capitalism in China, three decades after the fact. □

the government's campaigns focused on strengthening the "dictatorship of the proletariat" through witch-hunts against innumerable "class enemies." The Mao regime sought to extract compulsory agreement with every aspect of government policy from each citizen. It tried to regulate individual behavior not only on political questions but also on what books people could read, what plays they could see, what clothes they could wear, and how they wore their hair.

The faction around Teng Hsiao-p'ing, who is the de facto head of China's post-Mao government, clashed with Mao on numerous occasions in the past over the usefulness to the bureaucracy of such extreme conformity—they held that far from being a means of stamping out dissent, Mao's monolithic repression would breed opposition under explosive conditions. They looked to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for examples of other Stalinist regimes that had sought to safeguard the power of the privileged bureaucracy by building in some safety valves.

Today, Teng and Company find themselves attempting to carry out the reforms they had long proposed, but under circumstances in which the Communist Party and government has suffered an enormous loss of credibility and become the focus of hostility from a large section of the Chinese people. To escape the onus of responsibility for the Mao era, Teng and his supporters, like Khrushchev in the mid-1950s, are compelled to admit many of the government's past crimes and to take a defensive stance toward popular sentiment for radical change.

One symptom of this is the change in the official press. During the Mao era, and throughout the first two years of the Hua Kuo-feng/Teng Hsiao-p'ing regime, the Chinese press contained little information and made scarcely any pretense of seeking to convince its audience through argument. Where Mao denounced his factional rivals as "capitalist restorationists" and Soviet agents, the new government in turn claimed that Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, was a fascist who aimed at the restoration of capitalism. A new tone was set in the late fall of 1978, which seemed to indicate that the government was faced with a more critical public opinion that would not be satisfied with stereotyped denunciations.

The New Line on Democracy and the 'Gang of Four'

An important policy statement on the question of democracy in China appeared in the December 21 Peking *People's Daily* under the title, "Long Live the People." This piece attempted a criticism of the Mao era—still politely attributed to the "gang of four" and not Mao—that focused on the real abuses of power by the previous government. It is necessary to quote it at some length to get the drift:

The social productive forces were seriously undermined, and therefore the people's living standards for a long period did not improve and

even fell. Overnight, veteran cadres, workers, labour heroes and intellectuals were labelled "renegades," "spies," "capitalist-roaders," "worker aristocrats" and "reactionary authorities" and were the objects of struggle and persecution. . . . Thousands upon thousands of people were falsely charged, arrested, imprisoned and tortured and a like fate awaited every Communist and revolutionary who expressed the slightest discontent or criticism. . . .

Socialist production aims at ensuring a happy and fine life for all the labouring people. . . . Why did the gang of four smear this as "revisionist" and preach puritanism and austerity?

In socialist countries the people are the masters. . . . Why did the gang . . . persecute the people and deprive them of their constitutional right . . . to freedom of speech, correspondence and assembly? . . .

Why did they turn Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought into a kind of religious dogma? . . .

Socialism is based on the whole body of experience of capitalist culture. Why did they adopt a policy of isolation and reject the cultural legacy of the human race?

The article quotes various classic Marxist works to show that these Maoist policies violated the norms of socialism. It seeks to explain these antisocialist practices by citing Lenin's description of the early Soviet Union:

Moreover, our country is still, in Lenin's words "A workers' state with a bureaucratic twist to it." . . . There still exists the "contemporary 'Communist bureaucracy.'" . . .

In such conditions, encroachment on the democratic rights of the people is common and losing what has already been achieved remains a grave danger.

The article's conclusions embody two contradictory ideas, reflecting the gulf that the Chinese bureaucracy is now trying to straddle. On the one hand, it states:

The democratic rights of the people can be won only through their own struggle. They are not bestowed by saviours or rulers.

On the other hand, however, the Chinese people are urged precisely to entrust their

aspiration for democratic rights to their present rulers and warned to disregard those who act independently of the CCP:

It is the party alone that can lead the continuing struggle to win and defend people's democracy from victory to victory. This struggle is extremely acute and complicated. . . . Bureaucracy also shows up in the guise of "party leadership." These evils can hardly be defeated by spontaneous mass struggles. There must be unified leadership by the party and protection by the state. On the other hand, the people, under the influence of various kinds of non-proletarian ideology are prone to anarchy and ultrademocracy once they are divorced from the unified leadership of the party and democratic centralism.

All of this constituted the political framework for the announcement by the *People's Daily* on January 3 that the government would not interfere with the circulation of oppositional wall posters. An editorial declared: "Let the people say what they wish. The heavens will not fall." It added:

A range of opinions from people are good for a revolutionary party leading the Government. If people become unwilling to say anything, that would be bad. When people are free to speak, it means the party and the Government have strength and confidence. [*New York Times*, January 4, 1979.]

Such abstract reassurances have been made before by the Chinese government without any accompanying loosening of the bureaucratic restriction on the right of free speech. This time, however, the regime seemed intent on demonstratively tolerating public expressions of criticism, as long as they were confined to isolated individuals or small groups.

The Wall-Poster Campaign

The current wall-poster campaign began in Peking November 19 with a broadside criticizing Mao Tsetung, insisting that Mao bore responsibility for the evils attrib-

uted to the "gang of four." This soon led to the creation of "democracy wall" near Tien An Men Square, where thousands of people gathered daily to read wall posters criticizing various leaders, including party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng.

When these poster readings resulted in large demonstrations requesting democratic reforms, the government on November 30 issued a nineteen-point directive that specifically prohibited demonstrations and any overt criticism of Mao. The directive did not, however, outlaw the posters. While the crowds became much smaller—on most days numbering a few hundred—people continued to gather at "democracy wall," and it has become a kind of free speech center. This precedent has since spread to other cities, in some cases sparking the kind of demonstrations that were seen in Peking in mid-November.

Reports by Western correspondents in Peking indicate that a majority of the posters now being put up are either purely personal grievances or mildly critical political statements within the framework of the party's new "democratic" line. An important minority, however, have raised more probing questions.

On December 7, a group of dissidents calling themselves the Human Rights Group took advantage of their government's present infatuation with the American government and addressed an appeal to President Carter to make a statement in defense of human rights in China. Their poster, which was quickly torn down, declared:

It can happen to any citizen that he can be cruelly harmed and oppressed in a political movement about which he knows nothing. . . . We would like to ask you to pay attention to the state of human rights in China. In the process toward industrialization in China, we want to accelerate China's movement toward a positive and effective human rights policy, because until now human rights in China have not compared well with the rest of the world.

China is one quarter of mankind. The Chinese people do not want to repeat the tragic life of the Soviet people in the Gulag archipelago. This will be a real test for your promise of human rights, about which you as the representative of the United States have said so much in praise. [*Toronto Globe and Mail*, December 8, 1978.]

This immediately touched off a controversy at the "democracy wall." A counter-poster went up on December 9 addressed to the Human Rights Group. The reply admitted that "it is true that the people want more democracy," but attacked the Human Rights Group for appealing to "the democratic emperor Jimmy Carter." It warned the dissenters that if they trusted American imperialism they would wind up like the "900 believers of the American Peoples Temple."

Someone immediately wrote on this new poster:

Dear citizen. Do you know it is a fact that without democracy there can be no socialism? Please read some more Marxism and stop making such silly scurrilous commentary. Abuse is a poor form of argument. [*Globe and Mail*, December 9.]



Peking citizens gather to read wall posters.

The December 10-11 *Le Monde* confirmed the existence of the Human Rights Group, saying that members of it had made contact with foreigners in Peking. On December 10, a copy of the original poster reappeared. This time someone signing himself "a witness" said he had copied the original and was putting it up again. He added that "the appeal to the U.S. President could be taken as being reactionary, but it is very important to let people express fully their opinions. Tearing down dazibao [wall posters] is unconstitutional." [*Globe and Mail*, December 11.]

This time a man in the crowd began to denounce the poster as the work of Russian agents. No one paid attention to him until he pulled down the poster, at which point the crowd of several hundred became furious. The censor defended his actions by shouting "I have torn down this dazibao because it is reactionary." According to the *Le Monde* Peking correspondent, someone in the crowd replied, "You are the reactionary. You wear the same hat as the gang of four." At that point:

At no time did anyone defend the censor of the Chinese "Human Rights Group." He was chased for some time by a large group before he disappeared. [*Le Monde*, December 12.]

One of the most striking posters, which was reportedly widely copied by crowds in Peking, was quoted at length by both the *Globe and Mail* and *Le Monde*. Signed by a "railroad worker," the poster declared:

Vice-Premier Teng thinks that stability and unity . . . are in the public interest, but I have a different perspective from him. For example, what kind of modernization does China plan to have? The Soviet type? The American? The Japanese? The Yugoslav? On these issues the masses know nothing.

Chairman Hua visited Romania and Yugoslavia, but I have never been able to read any book where the systems of Government in these two countries are provided in detail. . . .

Salaries were frozen for 20 years and the peasants' livelihood has remained almost at the level of the 1950s. In lots of places, food has not been sufficient. It is fair to ask how much our wages will be increased to reflect the remarkable growth of production in the years following the fall of the Gang of Four. . . .

We know that great historical figures made mistakes. Then can we not also ask who can guarantee that comrade Hua has not made mistakes as well as comrade Teng. . . . ?

China's system of government is modelled on the Soviet system. . . . This is a system that produces bureaucracy and a privileged stratum. Without changes in this system, modernization will be stillborn or else we will move in the direction of Russian modernization where the state is strong and the people poor. . . .

All representatives must be properly elected and responsible to the people. Officials should be paid the same as workers. [*Globe and Mail*, December 19, 1978.]

The December 12 *Washington Post* reported that wall posters in the Peking style had gone up in Shanghai, Tientsin, Nanking, Wuhan, Chungking, Canton and Shihchiachuang. It also reported a

prodemocracy rally of 10,000 in Shanghai, although it did not indicate whether this had stuck to official themes or not. A few days later, there were reports that there had been a demonstration of 5,000 in Shanghai protesting the condition of unemployed youth who had returned illegally from rural exile to the city, where they could not take jobs because they had no work permits or residence or ration cards. A similar demonstration of about 100 was



Teng Hsiao-p'ing

reported in Peking at which one person was arrested. Toronto *Globe and Mail* correspondent John Fraser described the Peking incident:

Close to 100 people were milling on the sidewalk and some were pasting up posters. The focus of most complaints was unemployment. . . . As in Shanghai, Peking is home for thousands of illegal citizens—young people shipped off to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution and who had drifted back to town.

As illegal residents, they can survive only on handouts from friends and relatives. They cannot apply for housing, basic food or clothing rations, or look for legal employment. . . .

A diplomat who witnessed the scene at the ministry reported that one man was escorted protesting to the military barracks at the ministry. "We are allowed to put up posters," he shouted as he was led away. [*Globe and Mail*, December 16.]

The issue of the youth sent to the countryside is one of the most sensitive in China today, as it involved upwards of fourteen million people, according to the official figures. On December 27 a group of twenty-eight Chinese from Yunnan province arrived in Peking and began a

demonstration, declaring they would not leave snow-covered Tien An Men Square until they had met personally with Hua Kuo-feng or Teng Hsiao-p'ing to demand human rights and democracy for the youth sent to Yunnan. This groups handed out a leaflet that claimed that they represented 50,000 striking urban youth sent years ago to rural areas in Yunnan to do farm work. They said the strike was for human rights and had begun on December 9. Western reporters met the young people and obtained copies of their leaflet, but were unable to obtain any further information about the report of a strike in Yunnan.

In addition to the continuing wall posters and the actions of the unemployed youth, Western reporters claim they have been told by Chinese of the existence of several activist groups formed recently in Peking to campaign for democracy on their own. These groups appear to be very small, but they have begun publication of at least two different "illegal" mimeographed journals, *Today* and *The People's Forum*, copies of which have been pasted up on walls in various parts of Peking. Fox Butterfield, writing from Peking in the January 4 *New York Times*, reported a meeting with someone from the group that puts out *The People's Forum*:

Last night, according to one member of the group, the editors debated whether they had so far been too mild in their criticism of the Government. "Some were afraid the official line will shift again, and they don't want to go too far," the young man said.

The second issue of the four-page paper carried an article reviewing China's history over the last 100 years in which it charged: "In the age of computers in the world, the feudal imperial system still exists in China."

These are brave people. It is not for lack of courage that they try to weigh the shifts in official line. The government today in China has decided to tolerate an unusual degree of dissent—it has not granted democracy. The regime recently organized secret ballot elections for some low-ranking officials. But no opposition party is tolerated. The police, the army, the courts, the press, the state apparatus as a whole including economic management, is monopolized from top to bottom by the privileged bureaucratic caste. And people cannot have forgotten the last time the CCP permitted a comparable range of dissent.

That was back in 1957 in the brief "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" campaign. Those who then took the government at its word and voiced their grievances were arrested afterward and shipped off to labor camps in the countryside. The last of them were released just last year—and after twenty-one years there were still 110,000 of them who walked out of jail. □

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New General Strike on the Agenda in Peru

By Miguel Fuentes

LIMA—Peru's military rulers stepped up their austerity drive in December with further currency devaluations and a series of new price increases on items of basic necessity. Popular outrage at the intolerable misery these measures will cause finally forced the leaders of Peru's main union federation to set January 9-11 as the dates for a national general strike.

The latest price hikes include rises of 18% for sugar, 33% for bread, 35% for milk, and 20% for gasoline. The latter will in turn push prices up on many other products, particularly agricultural goods that must be transported from the countryside to urban markets. (A recent jump in fertilizer prices will have a similar effect.)

The regime's measures can be traced to the recently concluded negotiations on "restructuring" Peru's huge foreign debt. Finance Minister Javier Silva Ruete toured various banking capitals during the past few months and obtained postponements on much of the debt. This means no immediate improvement of the situation of the masses, however, since the price exacted by the big banks and the International Monetary Fund is continued "rationalization" of the economy. Among other things, this involves a speed-up drive in the mining industry to boost foreign income and severe cuts in public spending. Rather than decrease a military budget that is among the highest (per capita) in the western hemisphere, the regime has chosen to go on eliminating price subsidies on fuel and foodstuffs.

After facing down a popular explosion last May over a package of austerity decrees, the government introduced subsequent measures little by little and without fanfare, hoping to avoid more head-on confrontations with the masses. The regime and private employers thus faced during the latter half of 1978 a series of isolated and defensive strikes, protests, and walkouts. Such dispersed actions have generally proved unsuccessful, usually crumbling under economic pressure and heavy repression.

An additional reason for the failure of such partial struggles has been the refusal of the Stalinist bureaucrats atop the CGTP,¹ Peru's main union federation, to offer solidarity. In fact, the recent acceleration of price hikes can probably be attributed in part to the CGTP's failure to

respond in any way to a sharp hike in bus fares in October. While high-school students across Peru demonstrated for two solid months against the fare hike, facing heavy repression and even several police killings, the CGTP took no action.

Lessons are being drawn from this round of struggles, however, and demands are increasing for an unlimited national general strike.

At the CGTP's Fifth Congress in September, opposition delegates won a big majority for a call for a series of national

remain a somewhat weak and "leftist" grouping. Its leaders recognize this problem, however, and are campaigning for the broadest possible participation in the upcoming congress of Lima unions that they have called. There will be much pressure for the CGTP as a whole to join the Lima federation; a number of its member unions have already done so.

On December 19 the CGTP leaders finally announced that they were calling a three-day general strike for January 9, 10, and 11. Among the demands of the strike

'State of Emergency' in Peru

Peru's military rulers declared a state of emergency January 6 in an effort to head off the general strike set for January 9-11.

According to a dispatch from Lima to the January 7 *New York Times*, the police had arrested at least 120 union leaders in the capital by January 6. The regime suspended several constitutional guarantees, "including the right of free assembly and the right to prevent po-

lice from entering homes without a search warrant." The government also said publications that promote "subversion" would be banned.

United Press International reported from Lima January 5 that Alfonso Barrantes Lingán, president of the leftist Democratic People's Unity (UDP), had been arrested outside his office by agents of the Directorate of State Security.

work stoppages that would culminate in an unlimited strike. The Stalinists could not openly oppose this, but they did manage to avoid actually scheduling any of the proposed walkouts at that time.

After the congress pressure mounted on CGTP officials to set a date for a national strike. The fight was taken up by unions—both inside and outside the CGTP—whose leaders have a class-struggle orientation.

The campaign took on a unified character December 7 with a mass rally of trade unionists in downtown Lima. The gathering drew some 12,000 persons and was initiated by the national metalworkers federation. It had the support of the miners, teachers, public employees, bank workers, and many other unions, as well as of the main peasant federation and most of the political groups that stand to the PCP(U)'s left.

Besides demanding a date for a general strike from the CGTP officialdom, the rally also hailed the formation of the Lima Departmental Workers Federation. This could be a big step toward overcoming a weakness in past struggles in the capital—the absence of a trade-union coordinating body for the metropolitan area. The new organization is made up of many of the same unions that built the united rally.

Such a development has long been opposed by the PCP(U), because it would find itself in a minority. Lacking the endorsement of the CGTP and a number of important Lima unions, the new federation could

are abrogation of the price-hike decrees, a wage and salary increase of 10,000 soles (US\$50) a month, reinstatement of the thousands of union leaders fired during past strikes and mobilizations, an end to layoffs in both the public and private sectors, and respect for democratic rights.

Peru's workers are eager for this battle, but they enter the fight with one hand tied behind their backs. The Stalinists of the PCP(U) have been against the general strike from the outset, and they will do everything they can to limit and weaken its impact.

The PCP(U)'s real perspective is to help the ruling generals provide a smooth transition to bourgeois civilian rule and bail out Peruvian capitalism.

The party's general secretary, Jorge del Prado, and CGTP President Isidoro Gamarra attended the Annual Conference of Executives in mid-November. Before the 300 top businessmen and 100 generals and government officials, del Prado praised the effort to "restructure" the foreign debt, explicitly rejected proposals for renouncing or declaring a moratorium on payments to creditors abroad, and welcomed foreign investment in Peru. The clear implication was the readiness of the PCP(U) and the CGTP tops to enter a "social pact" with the government and big business.

The Stalinists have sought to reassure the regime that the work stoppage will last only three days. CGTP officials have explained in a series of newspaper interviews

1. Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers). The apparatus of the CGTP is controlled by the *Unidad* faction of the Peruvian Communist Party, or PCP(U).

that "conditions" are not right for an unlimited general strike and that this one should not be seen as a prelude for such a struggle. They are in effect telling the regime that if it will sit tight for three days it can weather the storm.

The CGTP leaders also carefully limited their strike call to economic issues, despite the widely expressed desire among the workers and their allies for an all-out political challenge to the dictatorship.

The PCP(U) wants to make sure things do not get out of control during the walk-out. As in the past, it is refusing to call any central mobilizations of the workers, who are simply to stay home and keep still for three days.

There will no doubt be demonstrations in Lima's shantytowns, as well as in provincial cities where the PCP(U) is weaker and class-struggle union leaders will call the ranks into the streets. But these will be less effective in the absence of a centralized mobilization in the capital.

To further ensure control, the Stalinists are refusing to open up the strike committee and are limiting participation to those unions or federations legally recognized by the government. This effectively excludes the teachers, public employees, and other strong unions with militant leaderships. The maneuver is particularly cynical since even some CGTP unions whose leaders support the PCP(U)'s perspective lack legal standing.

Finally, the PCP(U) and CGTP leaders have coupled almost all their statements on the strike with sectarian attacks on the more militant and independent unions. And they have also stepped up the formation of rump or parallel unions alongside those not directly under their thumb, hoping to provoke the class-struggle-minded leaders into intra-union conflict when the working class least needs it.

So far none of the independent unions have fallen for such provocations; they are calling instead for full support to the general strike and for one unified strike committee to organize and lead it. The PCP(U)'s opposition to a united, thorough-going fight could backfire, since the class-struggle forces are gaining in strength and the Stalinist party's own members and union following are suffering as much from the economic crisis as the rest of the workers.

A key to the coming class battles will be Peru's miners, historically the most powerful and militant sector of the proletariat. Since their nationwide strike was crushed with brutal repression in early September, they have been relatively quiescent. So an important question regarding the upcoming general strike is the miners' morale. Some recent developments seem to indicate that their will to struggle remains intact.

At the Southern Peru Copper Company's big Cuajone mine in Moquegua Province, a newly reorganized unit of the national miners federation, the FNTMMP, won recognition from the company in early November. The SPCC then refused to negotiate, and the union struck on December 5. The government ruled the strike

Hugo Blanco—'Man of the Year'

The Lima weekly *Amauta*, one of the most widely read leftist periodicals in Peru, has named Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco its "man of the year" for 1978.

Blanco was "indisputably" deserving of this title, *Amauta* said in its December 21 issue, "because through him hundreds of thousands of persons said 'enough!' in the elections last June. . . .

"Because through him those who struck throughout the country twice

this year, those who are engaging once again in the old struggle for land, express their desire for an authentic popular revolution.

"Because Blanco is the greatest mass leader of that revolutionary left that has rapidly been converted into a political force of the first magnitude. And finally, because with his voice the ancient Quechua tongue resounds once again."

illegal, declaring a "mining emergency," and sent 1,000 troops to occupy the mine area. The Cuajone workers were given until December 9 to return to work.

The regime also ordered the brief detention of Constituent Assembly deputy Hernán Cuentas by the political police in Cuajone on December 4. Cuentas, a leader of the Trotskyist POMR,² was general secretary of the Cuajone union in 1973 and is now the technical adviser of the miners there and their representative to the FNTMMP. His arrest was a violation of the "parliamentary immunity" supposedly granted to assembly deputies by the regime. He was taken to Moquegua by the cops, released, and then prevented by the army from re-entering Cuajone.

On December 8 the Cuajone miners decided to return to work temporarily, but only until the strike deadlines set by miners at the SPCC's neighboring Toquepala and Ilo installations. A coordinated strike at all three mines could begin at any time.

The miners are seeking radical leadership. The Cuajone miners have rebuffed attempts by the government and the SPCC to get them to reject Cuentas for a more moderate representative. When workers at a smaller mine in the sierra held elections recently, they chose the self-styled "Hugo Blanco Slate." Trotskyist leader Blanco went to the mine to assist in the installation of the new officers.

At the national level, a number of central leaders of the FNTMMP have recently been won to the Trotskyist program.

Another important development has been the spread of struggle to the Amazon jungle region. On December 4 a massive general strike totally shut down Iquitos, the most important port city on the upper Amazon. During the day residents mobilized by the thousands to press demands that the government fulfill pledges to devote a set percentage of jungle oil revenues to development projects in Iquitos. An indefinite general strike is to begin in the city on January 8 if these demands are not met.

The struggle in Iquitos is being organized by the Front for the Defense of the

People of Loreto. (Iquitos is the capital of the department of Loreto.) This body unites some eighty labor, political and civic organizations, and is similar to the broad-based committees that have been leading local struggles in Pucallpa, Moquegua, Cuzco, Chimbote, and other cities. These "people's assemblies" or "fronts for the defense of the people" are based on but not restricted to the trade unions. They often form to press demands for basic public services and for regional political autonomy. They call mass assemblies that discuss and take votes on demands and methods of struggle. In some cases they have been so broad and powerful as to temporarily take over the running of some cities during general strikes.

Leftists are usually elected as central leaders of these bodies. In Iquitos, for example, POMR supporter José Sicchar is president of the front. Supporters of the Trotskyist PRT³ have been elected in Cuzco and other cities, and POMR activists are leaders of the people's assemblies in Moquegua and Chimbote.

The spread of these independent organs of struggle, along with the growing combativity of the masses, indicates that the January general strike could go considerably beyond what the Stalinists are hoping for.

The Trotskyists of the PRT have organized a series of rallies in the shantytowns of Lima to build support for the general strike. On December 24, I attended one such meeting in the Comas district north of the capital. Besides Hugo Blanco, one speaker was a woman who has been leading a struggle for potable water and sewage disposal. She started to describe the impoverishment of her own family during the past year, but broke down crying when she told of having to cut the children's milk out of the budget.

With the new price increases, she said, bread would have to be cut. Her tears turned to anger as she spoke on. She had been afraid in the past, she said, but now she was not. "I have no fear of this military; I'm ready to fight," she declared as the crowd cheered. "It's for the children!" □

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

3. Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers Party), sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. Hugo Blanco is a central leader of the PRT.

Eritrean Freedom Fighters Suffer Military Setback

By David Frankel

[The following article appeared in the January 12 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

After a bitter six-month offensive, Ethiopian troops captured the Eritrean city of Keren November 29. The fall of Keren, the last major city held by Eritrean liberation forces, was the latest in a series of setbacks for the Eritrean liberation fighters. They have now been forced back from much of the territory they previously controlled and have returned to reliance on small-scale guerrilla raids.

An appeal for supplies by the Eritrean Relief Association indicated the impact of the Ethiopian offensive on the Eritrean population.

"Heavy artillery and tanks shelling in very large numbers have inflicted heavy casualties and destruction of property," the association reported. "In large areas crops have been burnt to ashes. About 160 villages have suffered heavy damage and 40 of them have been completely ruined. 5,000 civilians are reported seriously wounded or dead, and 8,000 others require medical attention. In addition 100,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes and flee to safer areas in the north."

A statement by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), one of the two major Eritrean liberation groups, named specific villages that had been wiped out. The EPLF charged that the invading Ethiopian forces used napalm, cluster, and phosphorus bombs on both military and civilian targets.

Meanwhile, the government-controlled Ethiopian press is crowing that "the second revolutionary army has enabled the broad masses of Eritrea to breathe the air of freedom," and that "artistic troupes have briefed the masses on the political bankruptcy of the separatist groups. . . ."

The fall of Keren, the Ethiopian government gloated, "amounts to the end of the 17-year-old secessionist dream in Eritrea."

With this statement the Ethiopian junta, which pretends to uphold revolutionary Marxism, acknowledged the continuity of its reactionary policy in Eritrea with the course pursued by Emperor Haile Selassie.

Eritrea is religiously, culturally, linguistically, and ethnically distinct from the rest of the Ethiopian state. A former Italian colony, it was taken over by Britain during World War II and then joined to Ethiopia in 1952 as a federated area. This decision was made by the United Nations, not the Eritrean people.

Selassie formally annexed Eritrea ten years later over the protests of the people who lived there. As a result, the Eritreans resorted to armed struggle against the Ethiopian regime.

For thirteen years the Eritreans continued their struggle for self-determination. U.S. counterinsurgency teams and military aid failed to tip the balance in Selassie's favor. The stubborn resistance of the Eritrean people forced the aging tyrant to commit more and more troops and resources to the war.

Eventually, the war in Eritrea helped undermine the very foundations of the Ethiopian monarchy. It aggravated all the social tensions within Ethiopia. The mutiny of the beleaguered garrisons in Eritrea was one of the key factors in the revolution that finally toppled Selassie in 1974.

One of the demands raised by Selassie's own troops in Eritrea during the Ethiopian revolution was for the recognition of the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination. The Ethiopian troops had had enough of the dirty war against Eritrea.

But the military junta that replaced Selassie—known as the dergue—refused to acknowledge the right of the Eritreans to self-determination. Instead, it continued Selassie's war.

Nevertheless, the revolution in Ethiopia, which the Eritrean struggle had helped to bring about, now resulted in rapid gains for the liberation forces. By the beginning of 1978 the liberation fighters controlled 85 percent of the Eritrean countryside. Ethiopian garrisons were besieged in a few major cities, and the road between the Eritrean capital of Asmara and the major Red Sea port of Masawa was in rebel hands.

Over the past half-year, however, the Ethiopian regime regained the military initiative. This followed several earlier offensives that the Eritreans turned back.

In its statement on the recent Ethiopian invasion, the EPLF places heavy responsibility on the Kremlin for the recent reverses. The EPLF said that more than 200 Soviet military experts helped plan and supervise the offensive and that more than 1,000 Soviet troops participated, along with extensive Soviet military equipment.

The U.S. State Department, however, said November 30 that it had no evidence of direct Soviet military involvement.

Whatever the extent of direct Soviet military aid to the Ethiopian offensive, the Kremlin gave full and enthusiastic public support to the dergue's efforts to crush the Eritrean struggle.

During Selassie's reign, Moscow had

backed the Eritrean organizations. After establishing close ties with the dergue, however, the Soviet bureaucrats made a 180-degree turn. They denounced the Eritrean fighters as reactionary tools of imperialism.

Commenting on the dergue's "great successes," the November 30 issue of *Pravda*, the Soviet Communist Party daily, declared that "the liberation of Keren was another major victory over those who are plotting against the Ethiopian revolution."

The EPLF has called on "all peace-, justice-, and freedom-loving countries, organizations, and individuals to raise their voices in unison and condemn the barbarous crimes by the Soviet Union against the Eritrean people."

Although the military campaign against Eritrea—like the suppression of democratic rights throughout Ethiopia—has been carried out in the name of the Ethiopian revolution, the blows dealt to the aspirations of the Eritrean people will actually hurt the prospects for progress in Ethiopia itself.

This military and political setback for the Eritrean struggle—a struggle which helped spur the Ethiopian revolution—strengthens all those forces within Ethiopia and within the dergue itself that are opposed to any extension of the gains won by the revolution.

The defeat will also inevitably strengthen the most conservative wing in the top leadership of the Eritrean organizations. It will increase the vulnerability of these leaders to pressures from imperialism and from reactionary Arab regimes such as Saudi Arabia, where they have been forced to turn for military assistance.

Certainly Washington has not made any mistake about the character of the Eritrean struggle. The vast Ethiopian operation against Eritrea has gone by with barely a whisper from the State Department.

This stands in sharp contrast to the reaction in Washington when Ethiopia, with the aid of Cuban troops, pushed back the invasion by the Somali regime in February and March 1978. The Carter administration even sent U.S. warships to the Red Sea during that confrontation.

Although capitalist propagandists have shed some crocodile tears over the Eritrean struggle and tried to score some points from the situation there, Washington continues to oppose an independent Eritrea as a threat to imperialist interests in the Horn of Africa.

One of the propaganda claims in the capitalist press has been that Cuban troops have been involved in the fighting

in Eritrea. The Cubans themselves have denied this, and the State Department admitted November 30 that it had no information to indicate that the Cubans were directly involved in the fighting.

The difference between the political stance taken by Moscow and that taken by the Cubans in Eritrea has been striking. Instead of joining *Pravda* in hailing the

Ethiopian advances in Eritrea, *Granma*, the newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, has not said a word about them.

The refusal to commit troops and line up behind the dergue's propaganda campaign represents a political decision by the Cuban government to differentiate its policy toward Eritrea from that of the Ethiopian and Soviet governments. □

In contrast, Cuba showed during the imperialist-inspired attack by Somalia last winter that it had both the political will and military power to intervene decisively when it saw that the gains of the Ethiopian revolution were imperiled by reactionary invaders.

This decision to take a dramatically different stand toward Eritrea came despite immense pressure from the Kremlin—to whom the Cubans' stance is a political embarrassment—and from the dergue, which hoped to dress up its policy with the prestige of the Cuban Revolution.

It is worth noting in this regard that while the EPLF bitterly condemned Moscow's role in Eritrea, its statement said nothing about Cuba. This recognition of Cuba's differences over Eritrea with the Kremlin and the dergue seems to indicate a desire by Eritrean fighters to keep communications open with the Cuban revolutionary government.

At the same time, the Cuban government has not spoken out clearly in support of the right of the Eritreans to decide their own future, including their right to full independence.

Cuban statements have placed growing emphasis on the aid received by the Eritreans from reactionary Arab regimes, suggesting that this has changed the progressive character of the struggle there.

This error is closely tied to Havana's incorrect policy of giving almost unconditional public political support to Ethiopia's military rulers.

The Cuban position on Eritrea was summed up several months ago by Vice-president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez: "We helped the Eritreans in their fight for self-determination from the time of Haile Selassie onward. We feel there has to be some political solution to the Eritrean problem and there have to be talks between Eritreans and the central government."

This desire for a negotiated settlement fell on deaf ears in Addis Ababa and Moscow, where the decision to push for military victory had already been made.

The setback in Eritrea injured not only the Ethiopian revolution, which Cuba rallied to support during the Ogaden war, but also the Cuban revolution and the anti-imperialist aims it is pursuing in Africa. The negative consequences for Cuba will grow if it persists in this error of not supporting the Eritreans.

Despite the confident assertions by the dergue, the Eritrean struggle will not disappear as a result of the recent military defeats.

"Our strategy is to retreat to the mountains, where we will begin again as we did three years ago," one EPLF leader explained.

The Eritrean people have fought for independence for seventeen years, and their will to rebel will not be crushed by the dergue's army. But the Ethiopian regime's reconsolidation of power over all major Eritrean cities marks a serious setback in that nation's just struggle for self-determination. □

Somali Regime Steps Up Fighting in Ethiopia

By Steve Clark

[The following article appeared in the January 12 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

The Somali government is stepping up military activity in the Ogaden.

Last winter, the Ethiopian government, aided by Cuban troops, defeated an imperialist-backed invasion of the Ogaden by the Somali army.

This renewed fighting coincides with press reports of growing White House opinion that the U.S. government should have acted more decisively to provide military help to the Somali invaders when they were battling Cuban troops in 1978. According to *New York Times* correspondent Richard Burt, the rethinking is in response to current revolutionary events in Iran.

Writing in the January 1 *Times*, Burt reported that Carter administration officials now believe they were wrong to "adopt a low profile in the [Ogaden] conflict."

Given Washington's mounting woes in the Mideast and Persian Gulf area, the renewed Somali probes in the Ogaden are a danger signal that should be noted by opponents of imperialist moves against the Ethiopian revolution.

Reporting from Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, John Darnton said in a December 21, 1978, *New York Times* dispatch that the Somali forces are "waging a growing campaign of hit-and-run attacks" and "have claimed a string of small-scale but significant military successes."

Throughout the invasion in 1977 and early 1978, Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre claimed that no government troops were involved in the offensive and that all the fighting was conducted by guerrillas indigenous to the Ogaden. That claim was subsequently dropped.

But Siad Barre is again disclaiming direct participation in the recent attacks. According to Darnton, however, "Western sources dispute this and believe that, at the very least, the Government has permitted army officers from the Ogaden region to go 'on leave' to join the fighting there."

As in the past, the Somali government-backed forces are not just fighting in those parts of the Ogaden that are populated by a majority of Somalis.

After reporting statements by the Western Somali Liberation Front, Darnton continues: "Mohammed Ali Rube, the secretary general of the Somali Abo Liberation Front, a related group that carries on the war in the three southern Ethiopian provinces of Sidamo, Bale and Arusi, said his troops had free rein outside the major towns and garrisons."

The vast majority of the people living in these provinces are Sidamos and Oromos, not Somalis—a fact that belies Siad Barre's claim that what is involved is a war of national liberation by the oppressed Somali people. Actually, the Somali government's military activity in the Ogaden is an imperialist-backed maneuver aimed at the Ethiopian revolution.

Darnton's dispatch from Mogadishu also provided new information indicating that some Somali government troops last year opposed Siad Barre's invasion.

"As an added twist to the already complicated situation in the Horn of Africa," writes Darnton, "Ethiopia is training a large band of Somali dissidents who presumably want to overthrow President Mohammed Siad Barre. The group, from a clan in central Somalia, is headed by a commander who defected after a coup attempt failed in April. He is now fighting against the Somalis in the Ogaden."

This information takes on added interest in light of Fidel Castro's account last March of Cuba's role in the Ogaden War. Castro had appealed to those inside Somalia who opposed Siad Barre's policy of using Somali troops to serve imperialist aims in the Horn of Africa.

Addressing himself to the ranks of Siad Barre's army, Castro said: "The people of Somalia have great merits and virtues. As *Granma* explained, Somalia's soldiers aren't cowardly. It is fair and right to say this. They were tough and showed real fighting spirit."

"... There are progressive and left-wing forces in Somalia," Castro said, "and we shall see what happens in coming weeks. Of course, this is a matter that concerns only the people of Somalia, not any of us or any other country." □

Why Steelworkers Are Out on First Strike in Fifty Years

[On November 28, 1978, for the first time in fifty years, West German steelworkers in the Ruhr Valley went out on strike, demanding a thirty-five-hour week to counter mounting unemployment and a 5% raise in wages. The steel barons responded by locking out nearly 30,000 workers in the key plants affected by the strike.

[In the following interview Jacob Moneta, former editor-in-chief of the West German steelworkers' union newspaper *Metall*, discusses the background to the strike. The interview appeared in the December 22-25 issue of the French Trotskyist daily *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Q. How did the IG-Metall [Industriegewerkschaft Metall—Metal Industry Union] come to demand the thirty-five-hour week? How do you explain the massive mobilization of German steelworkers around this demand?

A. To the astonishment of everyone, the delegates at the last IG-Metall congress decided to include the thirty-five-hour week in the action program. The leadership had submitted a resolution to the congress calling for reduction of work time in different forms (increase in paid vacation, lowering the retirement age) without explicitly mentioning the thirty-five-hour week. Clearly the idea that the way to fight unemployment is through reducing work time is now spreading in the German working class.

Even the officials who regulate the labor market say explicitly that a decrease of one hour of work can prevent the unemployment of 650,000 workers. They add that this would involve a stepped-up pace of rationalization, but would be accompanied by the creation of 300,000 jobs.

It should be noted that there are now one million unemployed in the Federal Republic of Germany and that 1.7 million jobs have been eliminated in recent years.

The struggle for the thirty-five-hour week began in the steel industry. Unfortunately the union leadership did not demand that contracts lay out a schedule of stages for achieving the thirty-five-hour week. They declared only that they wanted to begin moving toward thirty-five hours.

But the bosses had no illusions. They understood that if they yielded to this logic, the steel industry would be just the beginning of a movement that would spread, extending to other sectors, particularly within the metal industry.

Therefore the steel barons, the toughest sector of German employers, put up obstinate resistance on this point.

This resistance is so strong that the

thirty-five-hour week is not being demanded in the new collective contracts that will govern the industry. Instead the demand is for an increase in paid vacations (at least six weeks for everyone) and wage increases.

Q. It appears that a massive revival of combativity is taking place in the German working class.

A. There is no doubt that things are bubbling in Germany. Up to now the German model has always been held up before the European working class: "German workers are wise; they never strike." But in 1978 there was a struggle that involved a total lockout in the printing industry. This lockout nearly killed the union financially. There has also been a strike and lockout in the metalworking industry in Baden-Württemberg. Now this is the third strike involving a lockout. In addition, the dockworkers were also out on strike, as were the construction workers in Berlin. This last strike was surprising since the construction union has a right-wing reputation. It had favored collaboration with the employers, but completely changed its attitude. This shows that the situation has changed fundamentally.

There had previously been spontaneous strikes—the strike wave in the Ruhr Valley in 1969 and 1973. But this is the first official strike in fifty years. It shows that

There is no doubt that things are bubbling . . .

the center of the German proletariat, which is in the Ruhr, is now beginning to move.

In Germany the workers in Baden-Württemberg had been the most advanced as far as the class struggle is concerned. But I met several workers from there who had gone to the Ruhr, and they are unanimous in saying that the level of militancy in the Ruhr is much greater. This can be explained by the fact that the working class in the Ruhr has very deep roots, including historical roots.

In the Ruhr they are fourth or fifth generation trade unionists, as well as fourth generation Social Democrats. In Baden-Württemberg on the other hand, the working class is young and still very marked by its peasant origins. The workers there sometimes still cultivate small plots of land, which doesn't happen in the Ruhr.

The general sympathy of the population is much more active than it was during previous strikes.

Even the slogans of the strikers reflect

their militancy; they say that the employers should be locked out. That is how there will be social peace. In speeches, even by some delegates of the office workers, people now are talking about nationalization, which was taboo for some years.

The entire climate has changed, and it is not at all certain that the workers will accept any compromise. They know very well that they will not win the thirty-five-hour week. But their determination is important. One must not forget that management accepted the six weeks of paid vacation, which meant nine more days for young workers and three more days for those with more than thirty years. The workers rejected it. They understood that the main thing is the struggle against unemployment, meaning the struggle to lower the work week.

Q. How do you explain the differences within the apparatus of the IG-Metall itself, for example between a section of the leadership that does not want to extend the strike and Steinkühler, the Baden-Württemberg leader, who made an appeal to spread the action?

A. After the experiences of the lockouts in Baden-Württemberg the regional leaders of the IG-Metall, and especially Steinkühler, understood very well that to win this battle, which is very important for the German working class, you must broaden the active demonstrations throughout Germany, the protest demonstrations against the lockout, if not the strike itself.

At first the leadership of the central union did not accept this because here you are bound by the labor contract, that is you are obliged to maintain social peace. For example, even the demonstrations that took place two hours before the end of work could lead to a demand by the bosses that the union pay damages and interest. So far this has not happened since it is very difficult when there are hundreds of thousands of strikers and the union never officially called such an action. They have taken place without an "official" call.

On December 12, on the other hand, the union asked all the workers, not just the metalworkers, to participate in demonstrations against the lockout. In the entire Ruhr some 140,000 to 150,000 workers left their work place to participate in these demonstrations. That's not as many as might be hoped, but it should be noted that getting a bigger turnout would have required a much bigger campaign of information and explanation than took place. Under those circumstances there could have been greater participation. In Duisburg, for example, there were 35,000 to



Steelworkers demonstrate in Dortmund, November 17. Informations Ouvrières

40,000 demonstrators, and that's important.

Q. There is currently a lot of talk about compromise. What, in your opinion, are the prospects for the strike? And if there is a vote on a compromise, how will the strikers respond, and how about those steelworkers who are not on strike but who will also have to make a decision?

A. There is enormous pressure to go out by the steelworkers who are not yet on strike. They say their entry into the strike would help to win more quickly what the employers are now turning down. The employers are absolutely opposed to any mention of a workweek of less than forty hours. Even if they make concessions in line with supplementary days off for those who have, for example, three days off and eight days on, they want to prevent anyone from saying that it is a step on the road to the thirty-five-hour week. They are fighting on that.

But if the steelworkers don't win what is on all their minds, if the workers are disappointed, it is possible that 75% of the votes would be for continuing the strike (75% have to vote in favor for the strike to continue). Even if the vote ends up, for example, with 40% in favor of going back and 60% for staying out, the strike would not continue since it would not have the required 75%. But this could create a very serious situation, with enormous discontent, large-scale demoralization, and also currents that will criticize the union lead-

ers much more strongly if they abandon this fight, a fight for the entire working class, in which they are the vanguard.

On the other hand, everyone understands that in the long run the fight for the thirty-five-hour week cannot be waged solely on a national basis. The main

The year 1978 marks a profound change in the social system . . .

argument the employers use is international competition. If the struggle for the thirty-five-hour week is not carried out on at least a Europe-wide basis, it will be very difficult to win in one or another country.

I believe that it would be totally possible to carry out joint European demonstrations next May Day for the thirty-five-hour week and against the lockout, demonstrations in which workers all over Europe would participate. If such a demonstration took place in the Ruhr, where the fight started, it would encourage the workers there enormously, even if the struggle they are now engaged in doesn't succeed.

Q. How is this strike affecting workers in other branches? Are they considering taking up the demand for a thirty-five-hour week?

A. The demand for the thirty-five-hour week has begun to catch on in the working

class nearly everywhere in Germany. A great deal of sympathy has been expressed. For example, in Baden-Württemberg, trucks have been mobilized to carry thousands of Christmas presents for the children of those on strike or locked out. In all the factories people are beginning to collect money to aid the Ruhr strikers. No union meeting takes place without someone speaking of the Ruhr strike. I don't think that the idea of the thirty-five-hour week can now be suppressed.

At present, in certain regions, the workers are calling for an increase in the number of days of paid leave. It's a legal problem: if there is a national strike around a single demand, the factories that are no longer receiving raw materials close and the workers don't have the right to collect unemployment compensation. The union provides benefits and this empties its treasury. At present I don't think the workers could massively go out on strike without first being assured of union benefits. And we don't have the tradition of demanding that the employers compensate a portion of the strike. That, undoubtedly, will come when people see they cannot continue like this.

Q. What is the Social Democratic government's position in this matter?

A. At its congress the SPD [the Social Democratic Party] officially came out in favor of the thirty-five-hour week and against the lockout, and this is part of their European program. The reason is very simple. Nordrhein-Westfalen is the SPD's great stronghold and the Social Democrats want to preserve their electoral base. They have to express solidarity with the workers.

But, at the same time, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has urgently asked the minister of labor of Nordrhein-Westfalen to arbitrate this conflict because he is afraid it will spread. The employers' pressure is also a pressure on the government, which reacted indirectly by submitting the conflict to the arbitration of the minister of labor of Nordrhein-Westfalen, who is a Social Democrat.

Q. Is there anything you would like to add?

A. Germany will no longer be an exception among all the countries of Europe, and the year 1978 marks a profound change in the social situation in Germany.

The "German miracle" was the result of different objective conditions, and circumstances allowed capitalism to avoid a crisis for a long time. Now we have entered the same cycle of crises as the other countries. Until now this had always been denied; social peace was a fact. But today everyone openly says that that period has ended.

The will, the tenacity of the union is also explained by the fact that the leadership has clearly understood that it is impossible to continue as in the past. □

Houari Boumediene Dies in Algiers

By Will Reissner

The December 27 death of Algeria's President Houari Boumediene following a forty-day coma has increased speculation about the country's future course.

Boumediene's death leaves a large vacuum to be filled. In recent years he had concentrated tremendous power in his hands, serving simultaneously as chief of state, minister of defense, and head of the only legal party—the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN—National Liberation Front). Although the 1976 constitution empowered the president to name a vice-president and prime minister, Boumediene had chosen not to do so.

Speaker of the National Popular Assembly Rabah Bitat was named interim president, but the constitution stipulates that

the Algerian capitalist class was even more stunted than the typical colonial bourgeoisie.

When Algeria gained its independence in 1962, after seven years of guerrilla struggle



Ben Bella and Boumediene in 1962.

The Algerian capitalist class was stunted . . .

the FLN must choose within forty-five days a successor, who is then to be ratified by popular referendum.

In fact the successor will be named by the eight remaining members of the Council of the Revolution, with the FLN rubber-stamping the council's choice.

The Council of the Revolution was the body led by Boumediene that staged a successful coup against Ahmed Ben Bella on June 19, 1965. That coup ended the leftward development of the Ben Bella years.

Although Algeria's National Charter describes the country as "irreversibly socialist," while making Islam the state religion, and although Boumediene often used socialist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, Algeria remains capitalist, despite the state's control over a large portion of the national economy.

The extent of state ownership is the result of the circumstances under which Algeria won its independence. In contrast to most colonies, there was large-scale European immigration into Algeria in the colonial period. At the time of independence approximately one million Europeans lived in the country. Algiers, the capital, was overwhelmingly French in population.

On the eve of independence, Europeans controlled 65% of agricultural production. Control of industry was even more striking. In 1956, for example, fewer than 40 of the 1,140 corporations in the province of Algiers were owned by Algerians. The French also numerically dominated the civil service.

Because of the massive French presence,

and bloody repression, there was a massive exodus of Europeans from the country. By 1968 fewer than 30,000 French remained.

In effect this meant that virtually the entire capitalist class had left in the space of a few years, abandoning their factories and farms.

Algerian workers and peasants responded by taking over the abandoned property and running it themselves. Some 430 industrial enterprises were taken over by workers who formed self-management committees to run them. More than 2,000 huge European estates were occupied by agricultural laborers who ran them collectively.

The Ben Bella regime accepted these moves and recognized the organs that had developed spontaneously. The regime tried, however, to reestablish its control over the seized enterprises through the introduction of a director named by the state in each enterprise and through strangulation of resisting self-managed enterprises by the banks and the administration.

By 1963 Ben Bella's regime had been effectively transformed into a workers and peasants government, one in which the bourgeoisie had been displaced from political power and far-reaching changes in

property relations had taken place. It did not, however, take decisive steps to destroy the vestiges of the bourgeoisie, nor did it move to establish a workers state.

Ben Bella's unwillingness to establish firm control over the actions of the masses led the Algerian bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie to hail the 1965 Boumediene coup as a way of reestablishing capitalist law and order in the country.

Because of the weakness of the capitalist class the state had to remain the prime force in the accumulation of capital and economic development.

But under Boumediene this state capitalism was organized to benefit the bourgeoisie and ensure its future enrichment and strengthening. While the state made large infrastructural investments and nationalized key elements of the economy, the bourgeoisie was given incentives and guaranteed markets for investments in the consumer sector.

Algerian "socialism" has been a boon to the capitalist class. By 1976 the private sector of the economy represented more than half of national production, excluding petroleum and natural gas production. Approximately 80% of retail and wholesale trade is in private hands, as is more than 60% of construction and public works, and 65% of the textile industry.

Although the wealth of the capitalist class has been growing rapidly, the Algerian economy has been in poor shape for a number of years. Unemployment remains a gigantic problem. Algeria's foreign debt is now \$14.7 billion.

An estimated 70% of the population lives

Algerian "socialism" has been a boon to the capitalist class . . .

on the land, but under the first four-year plan only 15% of investment went to agriculture. An "agrarian revolution" to redistribute land to the peasants has been slowed down and partially blocked by the opposition of rural capitalists.

The economic difficulties led to a wave of student and workers struggles in 1977. Dockworkers struck the major ports. This was followed by a national rail strike, two strikes by Algiers transport workers, and other job actions.

Faced with the growing social and economic problems, Boumediene had been trying in recent years to expand the regime's base. A new constitution was promulgated in 1976. A national assembly was elected. Organizations of workers, peasants, veterans, women, and youth

were refurbished, and plans were under way to revive the moribund FLN.

The Algerian bourgeoisie, which had been pressuring Boumediene to turn more of the economy over to capitalists, closed ranks behind the president, aiming to make their presence felt in the resurrected FLN.

With Boumediene's death it is likely that bourgeois pressure on and weight within the regime will increase, leading to a process of "Sadatization" in Algeria. Sadat dismantled large parts of the state capitalist apparatus built by Nasser in Egypt, turning much of the economy directly over to the bourgeoisie.

The Council of the Revolution has been avoiding an open power struggle and is likely to try to unite behind a single figure. Whoever that is, the process of denationalization, already in the wind while Boumediene lived, will accelerate.

We can also expect that the workers and student struggles of the past two years will continue.

This is an appropriate time to call on Boumediene's successors to release Ahmed Ben Bella, who has been held without charge or trial since the 1965 coup.

Whatever balance sheet one draws of Ben Bella's years in power from 1962 to 1965, his continued imprisonment is a stain on the present leadership. □

New Issue of 'USLA Reporter'

A special double issue of the *Reporter*, published at the end of December by the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, highlights the international campaign against political repression in Mexico.

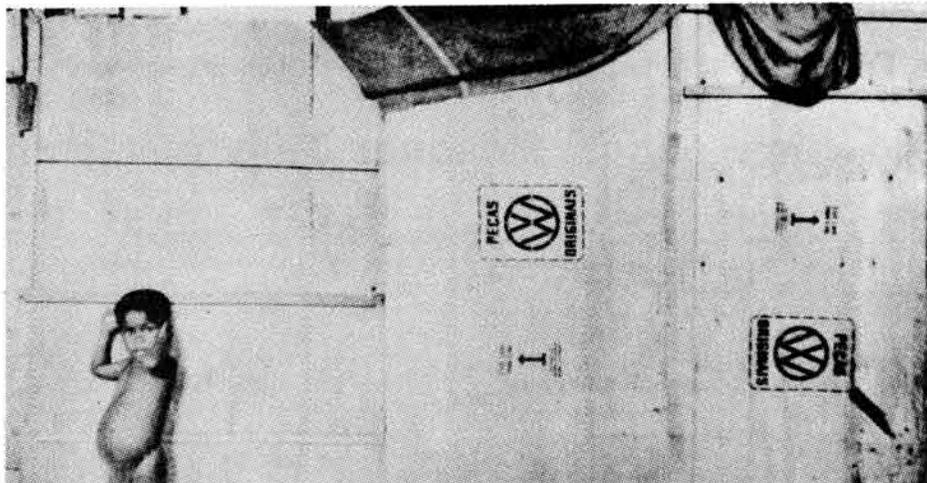
Three separate articles take up the plight of the "disappeared" (activists kidnapped and detained indefinitely by plainclothes police), the rising movement for a general amnesty of all political prisoners, and the campaign to win political asylum in the United States for exiled Mexican socialist Héctor Marroquín.

Other items in the issue include assessments of the human-rights situation in El Salvador, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, and Uruguay; an appeal for the release of the Puerto Rican nationalist political prisoners held behind bars in the United States for more than twenty-five years; and a report on the tribunal established in Peru to investigate recent attacks on trade-union and political leaders, including Hugo Blanco.

Copies of the special issue are available for \$1 from USLA, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003. One-year subscriptions cost \$4.

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Brazil's 'Economic Miracle' Runs Out of Steam

By Martin Fernandez

The Brazilian regime had hoped in 1978 to lower the rate of inflation, which had reached 39% in 1977. But in fact, by the end of November, the annual rate of inflation had already climbed to 42%. All indications were that it was going to increase further. That is the reason why Minister Simonsen finally decided to take stern credit-tightening measures.

The aim of these measures, which chiefly affect the use of loans from abroad or those in foreign currency, is to drastically reduce the volume of credit, from the equivalent of \$10 billion in 1978 to \$4 billion in 1979.

Several big state investment projects will be held back or scaled down. Many small and medium-sized businesses have been hit hard by the hike in interest rates. It is quite possible that these measures may precipitate an absolute drop in the gross national product in 1979, for the first time in a long while.

The cause of inflation resides chiefly in the enormous state subsidies paid to both publicly owned or mixed enterprises and to exporters.

The accelerated growth that Brazil has experienced since the military dictatorship was installed, and the sharp cut in workers' real wages, has largely been based on the growth of public investment, financed either by inflation or by foreign loans.

In the 1967-74 period, the state made some 60% of investments in Brazil. According to the Brazilian magazine *Visao*, the state in 1976 controlled 48.5% of the net assets of all businesses having assets of \$1 million or more, compared to 37% for private companies and 14.5% for foreign companies. But a portion of the enterprises classified as state-owned are actually mixed, with the private sector and foreign capital owning a minority of shares.

Foreign indebtedness went hand in hand with this expansion of government investments and subsidies. There was a real explosion of the foreign debt in the last few years. By the end of 1973, this debt went as

high as \$12.5 billion. By the end of 1977, it had leaped to \$32 billion. It currently stands at \$40 billion, or 25% of the Brazilian gross national product. Here too, it was necessary to slam on the brakes so as not to shake Brazilian capitalism's credit.

In the last few years, more and more lavish subsidies, handed out to stimulate exports, have become an additional spur to inflation. The exports that had partly supported the Brazilian "economic miracle" continued to be the traditional products, such as coffee, soybeans, iron ore, and textile products. However, this branch of industry, which provided 20% of jobs and 12.7% of the industrial value produced, was hard hit by the aftereffects of the 1974-75 recession. The value of its exports dropped by one-quarter. As a crowning blow, poor harvests reduced the value of agricultural exports in 1978 by \$1.5 billion.

To avoid a permanently lopsided trade balance, the military dictatorship began to subsidize the exports of the relatively new sectors of Brazilian industry, primarily automobiles and heavy machinery. The Brazilian subsidiaries of Volkswagen and FIAT are increasingly using the tax breaks and low wages offered by the Brazilian dictatorship to overrun not only countries like Algeria and Egypt, but also some European countries.

Brazil has also signed a big agreement with China, which it supplies with iron ore and steel. But again, this is a deal that must be financed through credit.

Given the size of the balance-of-payments deficit in 1978 (probably more than \$5 billion), the fight against inflation looms as an absolute priority for the technocrats associated with the military dictatorship. But the temptation to indirectly subsidize exports through a sharp devaluation of the cruzeiro (one cruzeiro equals approximately US\$.05) will become more and more irresistible. Such a devaluation will stimulate a new round of inflation and thus provoke new restrictive measures. Hence the probability of a recession. □

Mexican Political Prisoner Tells of Conditions Behind Bars

[The following interview with Alejandra Cárdenas Santana, a former member of the Partido de los Pobres,¹ was obtained November 7 at a press conference held in Mexico City to announce her release from prison. Cárdenas is a long-time political activist who was arrested July 18. She is one of the first political prisoners to be freed under the new amnesty law announced by President José López Portillo on September 1.

[Also present at the press conference was Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, founder and leader of the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled, who gave the large audience of reporters new information concerning the application of the government's amnesty plan.

[According to Ibarra de Piedra, only a very small number of political prisoners have been released so far. Of these, some have apparently been kidnapped by the government upon leaving prison.

[In her statement to the press, Cárdenas denounced the continued imprisonment of her friends and comrades who are presently being held in Acapulco, in the state of Guerrero. She also used the occasion to announce her decision to apply for membership in the PRT.² Cárdenas also read statements by several other imprisoned ex-members of the PDLP, expressing their desire to join the PRT upon their release.]

* * *

Question. Can you tell us something of your personal history?

Answer. I was born November 30, 1943. I did my schooling up to junior high school in Ensenada, Baja California Norte. In January 1961 I moved to Mexico City and entered the National School for Teachers. That is where my political activity began, when I joined the Juventud Comunista³ in 1963.

In 1965 I won a scholarship to study history at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. In 1970 I took my teaching exam there and got another scholarship to do postgraduate work in philosophy. However, I did not finish it, because in 1972 I went back to Mexico.

1. PDLP—Party of the Poor, founded in 1967 under the leadership of Lucio Cabañas. Based among the peasantry in the state of Guerrero, the organization gained national prominence in the early 1970s for its guerrilla activity.

2. Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party, Mexican section of the Fourth International.

3. Communist Youth, the youth group of the Mexican Communist Party.

In 1972 I started working at the Autonomous University of Guerrero as a history teacher. That same year I met my companion, Antonio Hernández Fernández, while we were both active in the Communist Party.

In 1974 Antonio and I were invited to give some talks on history and economics to the comrades of the Peasant Brigade for Justice of the PDLP.

During our three-day stay in the Sierra de Atoyac, we had an opportunity to talk with some of the PDLP leadership, among whom was Lucio Cabañas. He told us the history of the PDLP and also a little about the Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria,⁴ pointing out some of the differences between these organizations. It was a most interesting experience for us.

On our return to Chilpancingo, we could no longer justify remaining in the CP, so we decided to leave it. As soon as we were out of the CP we began to work with the PDLP.

Q. Why did you leave the CP?

A. Essentially because I had some differences with respect to the party's reformist policy, but also because I did not agree with the way the organization approached the problem of tendencies and internal disagreements. Above all, it was because we felt in our bones what was harmful about this policy.⁵

Q. Since the PDLP was an underground party, there is still some confusion about its character and functioning. Can you give us a brief description of the party and how it functioned?

A. Because of its ties to the peasant masses, the PDLP was basically composed of peasants—small landowners, *ejidatarios*,⁶ and agricultural workers—and some intellectuals. The objectives, as can be deduced not only from our observations,

4. National Revolutionary Civil Association, a guerrilla organization that operated in the state of Guerrero at about the same time as the PDLP. The best-known member of this organization was its leader and founder, Genaro Vásquez Rojas.

5. "In 1975, when they arrested Antonio Hernández, the members of the Mexican CP did nothing to win his release. To the contrary, they supported the policy of the state, devoting themselves to slandering him, accusing him of being an informer, provocateur, and guerrilla—at the same time—and giving more credit to the police campaign than to the statements and proof presented by Antonio" (Alejandra Cárdenas).

6. Peasants who work on *ejidos*, lands that were declared public property as a result of the land reform measures.

but also from the PDLP's documents, were socialist revolution, formation of a revolutionary party, and extension of the armed struggle to the rest of the country.

However, the organization suffered from certain limitations, such as the lack of rigorous criteria for selecting and recruiting cadres, the lack of thoroughgoing political training, and above all, the lack of a revolutionary program. In addition, the social base itself obviously represents an important limitation with respect to work in the mass movement and even with respect to internal functioning, owing to the absence of working-class support for the organization.

On the one hand, the PDLP carried out broad mass work. In fact, we were integrated into that aspect of the party's

Torture is a routine method of interrogation in Mexico . . .

activity. And on the other hand, there was the Peasant Brigade for Justice, which was the PDLP's armed wing.

Q. At the beginning of 1974, the PDLP came under heavy repression from the Mexican government. Can you give us some details on how this campaign was carried out and what its impact was?

A. After the kidnapping of Rubén Figueroa Figueroa, who was then a candidate for governor of the state of Guerrero, there was a resurgence of repression. It was aimed not only at members and sympathizers of the PDLP, but at all democratic sectors, and, in Atoyac,⁷ at the peasants in general. In this way, entire villages were uprooted and sometimes even demolished. Antiguerilla groups from the U.S. and Brazil took part in this operation, collaborating with the Mexican army. From 1973 on, the Sierra de Atoyac was bombarded with napalm and defoliants with the aim of liquidating the guerrilla movement.

On November 8, 1974, Lucio Cabañas and a good part of the leadership of the PDLP died in a confrontation with the army.

In January 1975 my companion Antonio Hernández was kidnapped by agents of the Federal Bureau of Security and by

7. In May 1967, a rally to protest against an unpopular state official was held in Atoyac, Guerrero. When police attacked the meeting, killing several residents of the town, the meeting organizer, Lucio Cabañas, was forced to flee into the mountains. He then founded the PDLP. From that time on, Atoyac and the mountains surrounding the town served as an important base for the formation.

members of the army. For one week he was horribly tortured, and it was the student and people's mobilizations alone that succeeded in getting then State Governor Israel Noguera Otero to order his release.

As a result of this period, more than 800 members and sympathizers of the PDLP were kidnapped or died victims of the fierce repression by the Mexican state.

Q. How did you sum up your experiences in the wake of the repression?

A. The lessons derived from the successes and mistakes of this movement brought home to us the need to build a revolutionary workers party based on Leninist organizational principles. It became obvious that the party is not an end in itself, and that in this period, its function is to lead the struggle of the masses, starting from their present level of consciousness, and raising it to an understanding of the need to take power. Finally, it should be emphasized that the PDLP added to the theoretical-political arsenal of the revolutionary movement in Mexico, forcing revolutionists to think and draw the lessons of this experience.

In this framework, like anyone who participates in one way or another in political-military organizations—concretely, in my case, in the PDLP—we assimilated our experiences in a critical-minded way. This led to a reorientation of our activity inside the organization. It began to develop in the direction of building a revolutionary party that would successfully lead the struggle of the working class and its allies toward the dictatorship of the proletariat. Right in the midst of this effort, we were arrested.

Q. As a recently freed political prisoner, can you tell us what it means to be jailed for political reasons in Mexico? What was your experience?

A. On July 18, agents of the Federal Bureau of Security and the Judicial Police of Guerrero arrested us in Mexico City, without presenting arrest warrants. For twenty-one days we were held incommunicado, tortured, and threatened with attempts on the lives and physical well-being of our families. This experience acquainted us with the system of torture in Mexico.

In this country there are a good number of clandestine prisons; we ourselves were in several of them. First, as soon as they kidnapped us, they took us to a clandestine prison in Mexico City. There they tortured us for three days. Then we were moved to another clandestine prison in Acapulco,

Just a Coincidence

Dr. Milton I. Roemer of the School of Public Health at the University of California at Los Angeles reports that when local physicians went on strike in 1976 to protest high rates for malpractice insurance, the death rate dropped by about a third. When the doctors returned to work, the death rate returned to normal.



Roberto Flores/Perspectiva Mundial
Mexico City demonstrators call for release of political prisoners.

which seemed to be in the old headquarters of SAHOP.⁸

The conditions in which kidnapped persons are kept there—some of them for years—are terrible. There are eight small cells of approximately one by one-and-a-half meters, with only one cement latrine and one water faucet. The light, which is kept on all the time, is an extra torture in that place, in addition to the rats, lizards, and cockroaches that live there. The prisoners, who are kept blindfolded, do not receive any food from the state. It is the guards who make deals among themselves to give the prisoners sparse rations of beans and six tortillas. That is all the food they get for twenty-four hours. However, when they bring in a new prisoner, or when they forget—which frequently happens—they give the prisoners nothing to eat for days at a time.

There is a torture chamber next to the tiny cells where they torture these prisoners, sometimes to death. Each time they interrogate someone they turn the radio up to full volume, so that the questions cannot be heard. In spite of this, you can hear perfectly, so that everyone mentally relives this painful experience.

In addition, there are a good number of prisoners in the corridors who are kept not only blindfolded but chained. When we were assigned and moved to Prison No. 1—pretentiously called the “Center for Social Rehabilitation”—we felt we were practically in heaven.

I would only like to add that torture is a routine method of interrogation in Mexico. The Acapulco jails are filled approximately ninety percent with peasants charged with “crimes against public welfare,” who plead guilty under atrocious torture to crimes they have not committed.

Right now there are seven political prisoners in the jails of the state of Guerrero—Antonio Fernández (who for an unexplained reason is still in prison even though I was amnestied by the same process), Juan Islas García, José Arturo Gallegos Nájera, Aquilino Lorenzo Avila, Eloy Cisneros Guillén, Ramón Ernesto Arellano, and Aarón de Meza Padilla.

8. Ministry of Urban Development and Public Works.

There are also twenty peasants being held for political activity, although they are charged with common crimes.

The relatively small number of political prisoners may seem surprising, but this can be explained by the fairly high number of “disappeared” persons, which amounts to more than 320.

One of the least restrictive amnesty laws in the country was promulgated in the state of Guerrero. However, it was done in this way to legalize the situation of those previously freed who had obtained their release by making a deal with the government. The amnesty lists are full of previously released prisoners, and only ten persons were let out of jail—six peasants who had never been involved in political activity, and whose release was only a matter of correcting an injustice; three prisoners who had been in Military Camp No. 1, and who were taken to Guerrero and freed there; and me.

I was amnestied owing to the pressure of actions led by the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, “Disappeared,” and Exiled. For reasons that appear to be unexplainable, the comrades mentioned earlier are still in prison despite the amnesty decree. I think that Governor Figueroa wants to go on blackmailing the Autonomous University of Guerrero.

Q. Why did the two of you decide to join the PRT?

A. The current development of the mass movement and the changes in political tactics on the part of the state apparatus have convinced us that the militarist road is not the most effective way to bring about a revolutionary transformation of the country today. We are convinced that change in this country is going to require armed participation of the masses led by their vanguard organized in the revolutionary party. Therefore, we think that the task before us consists of building the revolutionary party and organizing the mass movement.

Thus, after extensive discussions, we think that the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores is the choice that is closest to our goals, and therefore we have applied to join the organization. □

AROUND THE WORLD



Socialists Released From Jail in Brazil

Ten members of the Brazilian organization Socialist Convergence who had been jailed by the Geisel dictatorship were released in São Paulo on December 7.

Eight of the socialists had been held in "preventive detention" since their arrest in late August. The other two, including the group's national coordinator, Julio Tavares, were arrested on October 30.

The ten still face trial before a military court on charges of violating various provisions of the draconian National Security Law, such as organizing an "illegal" political party and "distributing propaganda of a subversive character."

In fact, however, the activities of the Socialist Convergence have consisted of public, legal efforts to comply with the regime's own laws regulating the formation of new political parties. After hundreds of persons from across Brazil attended the first national congress of Socialist Convergence last August 19-20, Geisel's political police moved to head off the growing movement for a new socialist party.

The arrests backfired, touching off street demonstrations by students, various meetings and a hunger strike in support of the prisoners, and wide publicity for Socialist Convergence. Finally, the regime was forced to release the activists pending their trial.

With this initial victory, a new international effort should be made to force the Brazilian military to halt its attacks on Socialist Convergence. Letters and telegrams demanding the immediate dropping of the charges against the ten socialists should be sent to Brazilian embassies or to Ministro Armando Falcão, Ministério da Justiça, CEP 70064, Brasília, Brasil.

'Habeas'—New Human-Rights Group in Latin America

Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez has announced the formation of "Habeas," a foundation that will seek to aid the victims of political repression in Latin America.

A declaration issued in Mexico City December 21 to mark Habeas's founding termed Latin America "an area outrageously dominated by insecurity, persecution, violation of civil guarantees, grossly arbitrary acts, humiliation, and the degradation of human dignity."

The statement called for a "powerful campaign of solidarity with the Latin American peoples that are suffering tyranny, barbarity, and the denial of their essential human rights." It was signed by

García Márquez, Argentine writer Julio Cortázar, Cuban writer Nicolas Guillen, Nicaraguan poet and activist Ernesto Cardenal, Archbishop Paulo Evaristo Arns of Brazil, and the widows of ex-presidents Juan José Torres of Bolivia and Lázaro Cárdenas of Mexico.

Also lending their names to Habeas's founding statement were two Latin American heads of state—Rodrigo Carazo of Costa Rica, and Aristides Royo of Panama—and Michael Manley of Jamaica.

García Márquez, who will fund Habeas with the royalties from his books, told the Colombian weekly *Alternativa* that "we seek to make Habeas an organ for negotiations with governments to clarify the situation of the disappeared and open the way for the exiles to return to their countries. In other words, we have greater immediate interest in aiding the oppressed than in denouncing the oppressors."

García Márquez added that while Habeas would concentrate its initial efforts on the highly repressive regimes of Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Guatemala, "we will also take up the task of freeing the Puerto Rican *independentistas* headed by Lolita Lebrón, who have been imprisoned [in the United States] for more than twenty-five years."

"Cuba has granted freedom to 3,600 prisoners whose crimes were much graver than those the Puerto Rican patriots are charged with," the novelist said. "So in any case we are going to try to help President James Carter to give reality to his human-rights policy."

Storm of Protest Frees Philippe Ries

French socialist journalist Philippe Ries was released December 23 by Polish authorities in Gdansk, where he had been imprisoned since December 6, and allowed to leave the country.

Ries, a reporter for *Informations Ouvrières*, the weekly paper of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI—Internationalist Communist Organization), was arrested as he was getting ready to board a ferry for Copenhagen. During his stay in Poland, Ries had interviewed several well-known representatives of the Polish dissident movement, including Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR).

The authorities at first gave no reasons for the arrest. Later, however, official sources stated that Ries was "suspected of espionage."

The police used Ries's arrest as an excuse to carry out searches of the homes

of leading oppositionists. Two persons were arrested in Gdansk and released the next day after a four-hour interrogation.

As soon as word of the arrest reached France, a broad and vigorous campaign was launched to demand release of the imprisoned journalist. Many trade unions sent delegations to the Polish embassy in Paris, including the National Union of Journalists. Ninety reporters and employees of *Le Monde* issued statements of protest, as did several well-known celebrities.

A number of Communist Party members also protested the arrest. The mayor of Le Mans, a CP member, wrote to the Polish embassy asking for further information. A CP deputy from the Sarthe region declared that he was "against such methods and for the release of Philippe Ries."

However, the CP-dominated trade-union federation CGT ignored the protest campaign.

On December 14, 2,000 persons demonstrated outside the Polish embassy in Paris.

Kim Dae Jung Released

South Korean oppositionist Kim Dae Jung was paroled and released from detention December 27, under a limited "amnesty" declared by President Park Chung Hee. As a former presidential candidate and a leader of South Korea's major bourgeois opposition party, Kim was the best-known political prisoner in the country. His case had been the focus of an international defense campaign ever since August 1973, when he was kidnapped in Japan and secretly returned to South Korea by agents of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA).

Kim's release came just two weeks after elections were held for the South Korean National Assembly. Although Kim himself was not allowed to run as a candidate, his New Democratic Party won a plurality of the popular vote. Under the regime's election laws, however, Park's Democratic Republican Party was awarded sixty-eight of the elected assembly seats, while the NDP got only sixty-one. In addition, seventy-seven assembly members were handpicked by Park himself, thus assuring his control over the body, which has little power in any case.

According to a report from Seoul in the January 3 *New York Times*, Kim began speaking out against Park's dictatorship soon after his release, in defiance of the same presidential decree under which he

was imprisoned in 1976. Park's 1972 "emergency decree" prohibits all criticism of the government or of Park himself.

In an interview at his Seoul home, Kim is reported to have denounced the constitution imposed by Park as "illegal," charging that it "suppresses the opposition parties." He warned that "unless democracy is fully and quickly restored, South Korea will go the way of South Vietnam and now Iran. . . ."

'Out Now!' Is Out

Fred Halstead's account of the American movement against the Vietnam war, much of which first appeared in these pages, is now available in book form.

Initial reviews are highly favorable: "A vivid and valuable account of a mass popular movement that had a remarkable impact on modern history" (Noam Chomsky).

"Brings back vividly the whole story of the struggle to end the Vietnam war. It is told by one of the key organizers who knew personally all the others, and he pulls no punches. . . ." (Benjamin Spock).

Out Now!—A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War is available for \$8.95 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014. Add \$0.75 for postage.

Geisel's 'Relative Democracy'

The Brazilian dictatorship's "institutional acts" were allowed to lapse on January 1. These decrees had been the legal veneer on the military's arbitrary rule. They were abolished as part of Gen. Ernesto Geisel's policy of "relative democracy"—liberalization at a snail's pace while keeping the basic structures of the regime intact.

The expiration of the institutional acts, along with a series of constitutional amendments that also went into effect on January 1, curtails presidential power to shut down Congress, dismiss elected officials, jail citizens without cause, deprive persons of their political rights for up to ten years, and overrule the courts. The death penalty and life imprisonment have been abolished.

Geisel made sure that some "safeguards" were provided in his reform package, however. Presidential ability to declare a "state of emergency" without consulting Congress means that he and his successor, Gen. João Figueiredo, who takes office March 15, will retain many of the powers of the institutional acts. The National Security Law remains in force, and trade unions and political groups still have virtually no rights. Nor has any amnesty been declared for the hundreds of political prisoners and thousands of exiles.

The military's concessions and cosmetic changes in the laws should only whet the appetites of Brazilians for more freedom, and encourage the growing movement for democratic rights. Conscious of this difficulty, Geisel said his reforms were "a calculated risk." He warned in a December 29 speech that "the political opening should not serve as a pretext to return

to the same errors and fantasies of fifteen years ago." (The military has ruled Brazil since 1964.)

500 in Lima Honor Slain Trotskyist

More than 500 persons attended a memorial meeting at Catholic University in Lima on December 1 to mark the second anniversary of the police murder of Fernando Lozano Menéndez, a Peruvian Trotskyist leader.

On November 26, 1976, cops raided the printshop of the Front of the Revolutionary Left (FIR), which was functioning clandestinely owing to the state of emergency then in effect. Lozano, a leader of the FIR, was arrested and taken to police headquarters.

Less than twenty-four hours later, Lozano was dead. The coroner ruled he had suffered a "heart attack," but examination of the body by Lozano's family revealed he had been tortured to death.

Lozano's comrades of the FIR recently joined with four other Trotskyist groups to form the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). The PRT was joined by hundreds of students and members of other left groups to honor Lozano's memory at the December 1 meeting.

The memorial was sponsored by the Peruvian Students Federation of Catholic University, where Lozano had been a student. Speakers included PRT leader Hugo Blanco, Manuel Dammert of the Revolutionary Communist Party, and representatives of trade unions and high-school student organizations.

The broad range of political forces at the meeting was noted by various speakers as a fitting tribute to the work Lozano was carrying out at the time of his murder. The gathering itself was one of the larger political events at the university in the past two years.

Fernando Lozano's family has marked the second anniversary of his death with a lawsuit against the police demanding that those responsible for their son's murder be apprehended and brought to justice.

Thousands of Haitians Face Deportation From United States

"While the United States is acting to admit more Indochinese immigrants who wash ashore in Asia," Karen DeYoung reported in the December 22 *Washington Post*, "it is attempting to deport other thousands of 'boat people' who have landed on southern Florida beaches from Haiti."

Civil-rights lawyers and members of Congress held a news conference in Washington December 21 to denounce the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for its efforts to expel some 9,000

Haitians through mass deportation hearings in Miami.

Since 1972 thousands of Haitians have fled the poverty of their homeland and the viciously repressive regime of President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier. They make the 800-mile trip to Florida on flimsy wooden fishing boats.

At first the INS simply rounded up the "illegal" Haitians and flew them back to Haiti. But in 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Haitian immigrants requesting political asylum had the right to interviews and hearings before the INS.

The INS recently began to "expedite" the Haitians' cases, holding as many as 150 deportation hearings a day in Miami. The agency has also stopped issuing temporary work permits and is again throwing the refugees into jail pending deportation.

INS Commissioner Leonel Castillo claims the Haitians are being given "the full benefit of the law and due process," but that "practically none" of them have been granted political asylum. He said U.S. law is "very specific" in granting special status to refugees fleeing "communism," but "says nothing about right-wing refugees."

U.S. Rep. Walter Fauntroy charged in a release issued for the December 21 news conference that the Haitians have been "singled out for mass rejection" because they are "black, poor, and fleeing" from a right-wing, anticommunist regime. INS officials "apparently have a bias based on skin color, class, or ideology," Fauntroy said.

Argentines Rally Against War Threat

More than 2,000 persons demonstrated in Buenos Aires on December 26 against the threat of war with Chile, according to a Reuters dispatch.

The crowd, mostly Catholics, was addressed by Cardinal Antonio Samoré, a special representative sent by the pope to mediate the territorial dispute between the Videla and Pinochet dictatorships over three small islands and maritime rights at the southern tip of South America.

Aid for Political Prisoners in Asia

The Committee Against Repression in the Pacific and Asia is a newly formed organization whose aim is "to aid in defending victims of political persecution and injustice . . . regardless of their particular beliefs, affiliations or associations."

The first two issues of its quarterly newsletter, the *CARPA Bulletin*, focus on the cases of Said Zahari, a journalist and poet who has been imprisoned without trial in Singapore since 1963, and W.S. Rendra, one of Indonesia's leading writers. Rendra was imprisoned in Jakarta in May 1978 on charges of "sowing hatred" after giving a public reading of some of his poems.

Subscriptions to the bulletin (\$6 for one year airmail) and more information about the work of the committee may be obtained from CARPA, P.O. Box K717, Haymarket 2000, Australia.



Lozano

FROM OUR READERS

R.H., a long-time reader in St. Catharines, Ontario, helped us start off the new year with this note:

"Enclosed is a money order for \$10.00 American as a Christmas gift to Intercontinental Press/Inprecor."

"This money is not intended to pay for a sub or anything but to give some help and encouragement in the continuance of your fine work."

Our shoestring budget, pinched more than ever by rising costs, could use more of this kind of encouragement. Here's hoping that other readers can dig down for a dollar or two and get our seventeenth year off to a flying start.

A welcome message of a different sort came from our distributor in Winnipeg, Manitoba. "For the New Year," the Other Bookshop writes, "we've decided to try to increase IP/I sales. Please increase our bundle."

Several readers have commented favorably on our extensive reports of the events in Iran.

"Let me congratulate the entire staff of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor for the truly excellent quality of the recent coverage of Iran," S.W. in Detroit writes. "IP/I has been a constant source of truth in the battle with the endless barrage of bourgeois lies."

And S.M. in Denver, Colorado, says: "IP/I continues to be the best source of information on world politics, bar none."

"It has proved invaluable in preparing a recent Militant Forum talk on the upsurge in Iran. The confusion sowed by the capi-

talist press on the nature of the religious influence there would have been overwhelming had it not been for my reading of IP/I over the past months."

"Just a short note," writes P.K. in New Haven, Connecticut, "to say that in these past 6 months I have enjoyed reading IP/I very much and have come to regard it as an indispensable source of information. As many readers whose letters have been printed indicate, one soon comes to wonder how one did without such a magazine in the past."

"I previously subscribed to Time, Newsweek, etc. but became so fed up with their trite comments and sloppy reporting that I didn't renew. However, there soon developed a void so I would eventually resubscribe. Since I started with IP/I it has replaced, to a large degree, these capitalist voice boxes."

"I am aware that IP/I is still a small paper. This being the case I find the depth and breadth of IP/I's reporting to be amazing. I certainly look forward to the day when IP/I will have a correspondent in every major capital."

We received this note from B.H. in Lund, Sweden: "Some months ago, while living in California, I received a sample copy of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor. I was very pleased with its contents and would now like to enter a subscription. Please let me know your subscription (one year) rates to Sweden (surface mail and airmail)."

One-year rates to Western Europe are still a bargain at US\$24 for surface mail and US\$32 for air-mail subscriptions

posted in New York or £13 for airspeeded subscriptions via London. For the air-speeded subscriptions, send checks and orders to Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 50, London N1 2XP, England.

A reader in the Far East reports that "only a few odd copies" of IP/I have made their way past the local political police in the last year. "Nevertheless," he adds, "we can have another try" as "I am very interested in your political comments and analyses, especially on the world economy."

"They are all very penetrating, and they help us to better understand the present workings of international monopoly capital as well as the future trends and developments of modern capitalism in the world economic crisis."

"Enclosed please find \$3.00 for 4 copies of the December 4 issue of IP/I," H.R. in Seattle told us. "I found this issue so impressive that I'd like to give copies of it to friends who've never read your journal before."

K.S. in Saskatoon, Canada, wants to make sure that he doesn't miss any copies: "I am anxious to renew my subscription in time to prevent a discontinuity in my file of your excellent journal, so am enclosing herewith a money order."

"Though I am now retired and may find it difficult to renew again after this year, I would like you to know that I have derived great value from the issues I have received this year and I therefore wish to continue to receive this journal for as long as possible."

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