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## INDOCHINA WAR: MADE IN U.S.A.



**Statement of the Fourth International  
Mounting Imperialist Pressure on Hanoi  
Cubans Rally in Support of Vietnam  
Brezhnev Silent on Washington's Role  
What the Capitalist Press is Saying  
Selections From the Left**

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## The Cuban Role in Eritrea

By Ernest Harsch

The revolutionary government in Cuba is differentiating itself further from the Ethiopian military junta's offensive against the Eritrean independence struggle.

This comes despite months of pressure on Havana—from both Addis Ababa and Moscow—to pit its troops against the Eritrean freedom fighters.

At a March 2 news conference in Rome, a representative of one of the two major Eritrean independence organizations said that all Cuban forces had been pulled out of Eritrea.

According to a Reuters dispatch, "Amde-michael Kahsai, of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, said at a press conference that the Cubans had been transferred to Ethiopia's Ogaden region, in the southeast, about a month ago after a new upsurge of fighting there."

Previously, representatives of the EPLF and of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) had at times stated that some Cuban advisers or troops were present in Eritrea. Such claims were widely publicized in the imperialist press. Havana's repeated denials that it had ever permitted its troops to be used against the Eritreans were generally ignored.

After the Dergue's massive military offensive against EPLF-held areas began in mid-November 1978, however, the EPLF dropped virtually all mention of any Cuban involvement in Eritrea, while sharply escalating its condemnation of Moscow's assistance to the Ethiopian drive.

In an article in the March 3 issue of the New York weekly *Nation*, Dan Connell, a journalist who is well-known as a supporter of the EPLF and who recently visited guerrilla-held areas of Eritrea, stated that "it appears that Cuba held back from direct involvement" in the offensive.

Anticipating the EPLF's March 2 announcement (the article was written earlier), Connell continued, "Recent reports indicate that Cuban military personnel are now withdrawing from Eritrea. . . ."

At the Rome news conference, Kahsai accused Moscow of stationing 2,000 Soviet soldiers and advisers in Eritrea to aid the offensive. He acknowledged that the Ethiopians now held all major towns in the territory, but said that resistance continued.

Whatever the actual extent of Soviet involvement, the Kremlin has made no secret of its enthusiastic support to the Dergue's drive to crush the Eritrean struggle. The Soviet press has hailed the recent

Ethiopian military advances as "victories" for the Ethiopian revolution. In contrast, *Granma*, the Cuban Communist Party paper, has been totally silent on the Dergue's military gains.

Other differences have been apparent for some time, despite the Cuban government's mistaken political support for the Dergue and its failure to support the right of Eritrea to self-determination, including its right to independence.

## Why Smith Bombed Angola

By Jesse Trumbull

With full support from Washington, the white-racist Rhodesian government has continued its bombing raids into nearby Black African countries.

On March 1, Prime Minister Ian Smith ordered the fifth such attack in a period of two weeks. Rhodesian air force planes struck 150 miles into neighboring Mozambique, bombing a Mozambican army camp at Mutarara. The Rhodesians later made the absurd claim that they attacked "only selected buildings" occupied by guerrillas of the Zimbabwe African National Union.

This recent series of raids began in mid-February with three attacks against Zimbabwean guerrilla and refugee camps in Zambia and Mozambique. The February 23 attack on the Nampundwe camp, near the Zambian capital of Lusaka, left a dozen refugees dead and another 114 wounded, according to Zimbabwean leader Joshua Nkomo.

The severest attack was mounted against Angola. On February 26, Rhodesian planes overflew Zambia and struck 185 miles into Angola, bombing a Zimbabwean refugee camp at Vila da Boma, southeast of Luso.

The Smith regime claimed that it had attacked a training camp of the Zimbabwe African People's Union. But according to Angolan authorities, the target was actually a refugee camp.

On February 28, the Angolan regime released the casualty toll: 192 persons had been killed in the raid, and 987 were wounded. The Angolans condemned the attack as "criminal."

As of March 2, the imperialists in Washington had not so much as issued a statement of "regret" or "concern" at the terror bombing of Black refugees.

Smith's bombing raid deep into Angola

While the Ethiopian regime pressed for the military crushing of the Eritrean struggle, Cuban officials have repeatedly said that they favor a negotiated "political settlement" to the conflict.

Havana's attitude toward the Eritrean fighters is quite different from the position it adopted toward the imperialist-backed Somalian invaders. During the war of 1977-78, the Cuban government openly condemned the Somalian invasion as an attack against the Ethiopian revolution. It sent thousands of troops to Ethiopia to help drive the invasion back.

This further confirmation of the Cubans' refusal to bend to Soviet and Ethiopian pressures to send their troops in against the Eritreans should be welcomed by all supporters of the Eritrean struggle for self-determination and of the Cuban revolution. □

was clearly intended as a direct attack on the Cuban forces stationed there as well. Cuban army troops, who had helped turn back the South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76, are helping to bolster Angola's defenses and to train Zimbabwean freedom fighters.

"Official sources," cited in a February 26 Reuters dispatch from Salisbury, as much as dared the Cubans to respond. "I'd be very surprised if there were no Cuban and Soviet advisers in the camp near Luso," one government source declared. Other officials "said they did not fear any Cuban retaliation for the raid."

This provocation comes at a time when the Rhodesian authorities face an increasingly precarious situation. Smith's "coalition government" is a transparent fraud;

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the mass resistance to his regime is escalating sharply.

Smith is gambling that drawing the Cubans in would lay the basis for more substantial aid from the American, British, and South African imperialists. The extremely high risks involved in such a maneuver underline the desperate situation of the white-minority regime. □

## The War in Yemen

By Fred Murphy

The government of Saudi Arabia placed its military forces on alert February 28 and recalled the 4,500 troops it had stationed in Lebanon.

Also on February 28, according to the *Washington Post*, U.S. State Department spokesman Hodding Carter "said the U.S. 'national interest' in the security and integrity of the Arabian Peninsula" was involved in the fighting that broke out February 24 between North and South Yemen.

The current rulers of North Yemen are propped up almost entirely by Saudi aid, while South Yemen's radical petty-bourgeois nationalist regime receives military aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba and calls itself "scientific socialist."

*Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Ned Temko reported from Beirut in the March 1 issue that the Saudi military alert was "seen by some Beirut diplomats as reflecting Saudi fears that Marxist South Yemen might imitate another Soviet ally half a world away: Vietnam."

An Arab diplomat in Beirut told Temko that the Saudis were concerned "that the fighting could spread past the border area and turn into a full-scale South Yemeni drive to unseat the North's rulers."

Each of the Yemeni regimes claimed its territory had been attacked by the other. After several days of fighting, South Yemeni radio claimed that the Northern city of Harib had fallen after North Yemeni paratroopers there rebelled and joined nationalist insurgents. On March 1 the Associated Press reported unconfirmed "claims in Aden [the Southern capital] of the outbreak of all-out rebellion against the North Yemeni government in San'a."

The Saudi troop alert coincided with these reports. However, on March 2, both Aden and San'a were reported to have agreed to a cease-fire and "mediation" by Syrian and Iraqi diplomats.

Because Aden accepts Cuban and Soviet aid and provides support to the leftist opposition forces in the North, the U.S. imperialists and their Saudi clients view South Yemen as a threat to "stability" on the Arabian peninsula. After the fall of the shah's government in Iran, Washington

announced plans to sell \$300 million worth of arms to the San'a regime, a deal that will be financed by the Saudi government.

By pointing to South Yemen as an "Arab Vietnam," the U.S. imperialists

hope to generate support for their stepped-up intervention on the Arabian peninsula. Defenders of the Arab revolution must be alert to further U.S.-Saudi moves and demand "Hands off Yemen!" □

### In This Issue

Closing News Date: March 5, 1979

INDOCHINA WAR	228	Chinese Troops Out of Vietnam!—Statement of the Fourth International
	229	Mounting Imperialist Pressure on Hanoi —by Gus Horowitz
	232	What the Capitalist Press Is Saying
	236	Castro Condemns Chinese Invasion, U.S. Complicity—by Fred Murphy
	236	Brezhnev Silent on Washington's Role
	237	Selections From the Left
IRAN	240	Workers Form Committees to Run Factories and Offices—by Cindy Jaquith
	243	Japanese Chemical Workers Voice Solidarity
	244	What Trotskyists Are Calling For
BRAZIL	245	Socialists on Trial
COLOMBIA	245	Repression Continues
SOVIET UNION	246	Fresh Struggles for Democratic Rights —by George Saunders
	247	Three Armenian Dissidents Executed —by Marilyn Vogt
SPAIN	248	On Eve of Elections—by Angel Muñoz
YUGOSLAVIA	251	Mounting Economic Difficulties —by Catherine Verla
CHINA	254	Bureaucrats Admit Growing Problems in Countryside—by Chün Hsing
NEWS ANALYSIS	226	Cuba's Role in Eritrea —by Ernest Harsch
	226	Why Smith Bombed Angola —by Jesse Trumbull
	227	The War in Yemen —by Fred Murphy

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## Chinese Troops Out of Vietnam!

[The following statement, issued February 21, was approved by a majority of the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The People's Republic of China launched an attack on the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on February 17, 1979. By this act, it dealt a further blow to the new opportunities for the spread of the socialist revolution in Southeast Asia that were opened up by the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Indochina in April 1975.

The military offensive launched by the Chinese bureaucracy cannot be seen simply as a border incident. It is an act of war, the scope of which is shown not only by the number of troops deployed and by the duration of the conflict, but also by the targets chosen by the Chinese troops, which include urban population centers.

The Chinese intervention is a reply to the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia by the Vietnamese regular army and the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation. However, it falls within a broader political context that gives it its true significance and scope. It is the conflict between the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, for which the Kremlin bears the historic responsibility, that constitutes the framework for the clashes between the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer Rouge leaderships. It was the Kremlin that initially mounted an economic blockade against China and massed an army on its frontier.

The debacle suffered by the U.S. forces in Indochina, and the weakening of imperialism's position in Asia, have made it harder for the imperialists to intervene directly, and have made it easier for conflicts between bureaucracies following an orientation of building "socialism in one country" to take a military form.

The Chinese bureaucracy, which is plagued by a grave internal crisis, is committed to a policy of peaceful co-existence with the imperialist powers. By this means, it hopes to be able to meet the needs imposed by the economic options it has taken, reestablish the status quo in the region, and limit as much as possible any spillover of the Indochinese revolution. The Soviet bureaucracy also seeks to uphold stability in the ASEAN zone [Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia], and at the same time extend its own influence by capitalizing on its ties with the Vietnamese regime. The Peking leadership is trying to weaken the Vietnamese regime and to undermine its influence.

Although Hanoi's aim is not to promote

anti-imperialist struggles in the ASEAN countries, its objectives in Indochina, and its ties to the Soviet bureaucracy, represent a factor that may endanger the plans of the Chinese bureaucracy in this area, which Peking considers part of its sphere of influence.

Over the years, U.S. imperialism has deliberately sought to inflict the maximum destruction and slaughter on Southeast Asia in order to weaken the regimes that would emerge from the victory of the revolutions that it was not able to crush. Now it is doing its utmost to exploit these interbureaucratic conflicts in order to prevent the consolidation and extension of the Indochinese revolution in the region. This is why it is imposing an economic blockade of Vietnam and building up the arsenals of the reactionary regimes in Thailand and the ASEAN countries in general.

Today, Peking is objectively aiding these plans. Once again, the bureaucracy is showing its blindness, since in the medium and long term, such a policy can only work against the interests of defending the Chinese workers state from imperialism.

Thus, the infernal logic of interbureaucratic conflicts has prevailed, at the expense of the Indochinese and Chinese masses, who are locked in tragic, bloody clashes. This logic also furthers the betrayal of the struggles of the Southeast Asian peasants and workers against bloodthirsty dictatorships. It gravely disfigures the goals that the Chinese and Indochinese masses fought for over decades against the imperialist warmakers.

A bourgeois propaganda campaign has been unleashed. The imperialists, who for a century have caused wars costing humanity tens of millions of dead, have suddenly been transformed into "the

world's peacemakers." The conflicts between bureaucratized workers states are said to involve the threat of a third worldwide conflagration. It is our duty to combat these claims, which are already being echoed by sectors of the international workers movement. We must denounce the continual threat of a world war that is kept alive by the imperialists, as well as their repeated aggression against the world's peoples. We must also explain the roots of the counterrevolutionary policy of the ruling bureaucracies.

The military actions taken by the bureaucratic leaderships are directly linked to the nature of these regimes, which deny the toiling masses an opportunity to participate directly in political, economic, and military decisions. Only the establishment of genuine socialist democracy in the course of a thoroughgoing struggle against the bureaucracy can eliminate the possibility of a recurrence of the present confrontations, and ensure the implementation of an international policy in the interests of the workers and peasants.

It is up to the international workers movement to do all it can to end the military conflicts between the workers states. It also has the task of mobilizing to defend the Indochinese revolutions, which are threatened by imperialist maneuvers at a time when they are being weakened by interbureaucratic conflicts.

Chinese troops must withdraw immediately and completely from Vietnamese territory! No Soviet military intervention against China!

For a united front of the workers states against imperialist threats and aggression! For joint aid by the workers states to the anti-imperialist struggle of the workers and peasants in Southeast Asia!

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## Mounting Imperialist Pressure on Hanoi

By Gus Horowitz

"Business as usual"—or, rather, business full speed ahead—remained Washington's stance toward Peking two weeks after Chinese troops invaded Vietnam.

While U.S. officials continued to hand out *pro forma* statements of disfavor, proof that Washington was fully behind the invasion by the Peking Stalinists was conveyed by more tangible evidence, such as:

- The formal opening of full diplomatic relations between Peking and Washington on March 1. In a written message to Peking on the occasion, President Carter declared that the threat of war was a particularly important reason for welcoming full relations. Chai Tse-min, the new Chinese ambassador in Washington, could not refrain from crowing that he felt sure he would receive "support and assistance from you and your government."

- Rapid progress in expanding economic relations between Washington and Peking. A key shipping agreement to open U.S. and Chinese ports to each other—they have been closed for thirty years—was announced on February 23, the day that U.S. Treasury Secretary Blumenthal left for a high-level mission to Peking.

Blumenthal capped his mission on March 1, announcing that agreement had been reached to settle the mutual property claims outstanding since the Chinese Revolution and the Korean War. He said that the Carter administration plans, in the context of an overall bilateral trade accord, to grant "most-favored-nation" treatment to China—a status that the USSR has been seeking, without success.

Asked by reporters whether the war was hampering trade negotiations, Blumenthal answered "not at all."

- The basic identity of Washington and Peking's positions on proposed solutions to the conflict. The diplomatic formula for this is: the reciprocal withdrawal of China from Vietnam and Vietnam from Kampuchea, as demanded by Carter in a major policy speech on February 20. Teng Hsiao-p'ing announced in Peking that "we would welcome [reciprocal withdrawal] with the raising of both hands."

Carter's insistence on the "restoration of the independence and integrity of all nations concerned"—that is, the assurance of a stable procapitalist government in Kampuchea—was quickly picked up by Peking. On February 21, the ambassador of the deposed Pol Pot regime declared in Peking that Prince Norodom Sihanouk

(capitalist head of state in Kampuchea from 1955 until 1970) had been asked to obtain "as much support as possible from all other countries." As this idea was being discussed in imperialist capitals, Chinese Vice-premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing told Western reporters that the reciprocal withdrawal deal would include "acceptance of a government headed by Prince Sihanouk."

- The beefing up of U.S. military force in the area. The Pentagon has been pouring arms into Bangkok, both to aid the Thai regime and as a conduit to the rightist forces in Kampuchea and Laos. This armament is being stepped up, the White House indicated on Feb. 20. In addition, a U.S. naval task force, armed with nuclear weapons, was dispatched to the waters off the Vietnamese coast.

### 'Wishing China Luck'

Thus, the Washington-Peking collusion has been all but explicitly announced to the world.

So blatant has been the collusion that most of the major capitalist media made little attempt to cover it up. The British weekly *Economist* said on February 24 that Carter's stand "is about as close as a nominally neutral observer can get to wishing China luck." And Michel Tatu commented wryly in the French daily *Le Monde* on February 20 that the Chinese invasion of Vietnam "caused no surprise. For once the intelligence services can be congratulated for not being caught unawares."

Finally, on March 4 the *New York Times* revealed the startling news that it had not previously seen fit to print: "Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher said last week that the United States learned from Mr. Teng during his visit of China's plans to attack Vietnam."

In general, the British, French, West German, and Japanese imperialists fell right in line behind the Washington-inspired invasion. The *Economist* talked of "the positive impact of China's proven readiness to take up arms on behalf of an overrun ally" and added that if Peking's invasion succeeds, "it will have helped to make the world a slightly stabler place."

At the same time as Blumenthal was in Peking on behalf of U.S. capitalist interests, talks were going on between Peking representatives and the British Secretary for Industry Eric Varley over plans for a \$14 billion trade deal, Bonn was negotiating expansion of a coal deal, and European Common Market president Roy Jen-

kins was going ahead with a visit of his own to Peking to talk business.

Japanese capitalism, which up to now has been predominant in the Chinese market, had reason to be alarmed. Not over the offensive against Vietnam, of course—on his way home from Washington Teng had already consulted with Tokyo about the coming invasion; and Tokyo had previously done a bit of arm twisting of its own when it cut economic aid to Hanoi.

What concerned Tokyo, which has \$20 billion in trade agreements at stake with Peking, was the stiffer competition it now faced from American imperialism, as well as Peking's resulting capacity to press for better trade terms. In fact, Peking froze its contracts with Japan on March 1. Of particular concern to Tokyo was the freeze on a \$2 billion oil deal. Recent events in Iran had highlighted Japanese capitalism's vulnerability as a result of its near-total dependence on Persian Gulf oil.

However, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, one of the leading capitalist dailies in Japan, came out for the position of reciprocal withdrawal, and Japan's Foreign Minister Sonoda offered his government's services to "mediate" the conflict. The key imperialist governments in Europe similarly voiced their agreement with Washington's diplomatic formula.

After a top-level discussion between French President Giscard d'Estaing and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt on February 23, the French government issued a statement calling for reciprocal withdrawal and "scrupulous respect for the independence and territorial integrity" of the states involved—almost the exact words that Carter had used on February 20. Two days later Schmidt spoke on German television, expressing concern over Moscow's possible reaction, but lining up with Carter's reciprocal withdrawal formula.

### New Geneva Conference?

The *New York Times* reported on February 25 that "UN diplomats are also giving serious consideration to a suggestion being made in a number of West European capitals for some form of international conference on Southeast Asia. Supporters of the plan recall the 1954 conference that recognized the division of Vietnam and the political neutrality of Laos and Cambodia. The conference approach was proposed to Mr. Waldheim by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. . . ."

The British *Economist* called for "some kind of compromise coalition government in Phnom Penh, including elements of pro-Chinese and pro-Vietnamese factions, perhaps headed by the durable India-rubber symbol of Cambodian nationalism, Prince Sihanouk."

For the imperialists, the key element in these proposals is represented by Sihanouk. It is not Sihanouk, as an individual,

who counts, of course; there could be other variants. (There may well have to be, in view of Sihanouk's recent hospitalization in New York for a nervous breakdown.) But in these formulas Sihanouk stands out as the symbol that major efforts will be made to maintain capitalism in Kampuchea as a buttress against further spread of revolution in Southeast Asia.

So long as the present government remains in power in Kampuchea, and in particular, so long as the working masses of Kampuchea see before them the possibility of linking up their destiny with that of the Vietnamese workers state, then there is no guarantee of preserving the capitalist stability of the region—regardless of Hanoi's intentions.

*That is why every diplomatic formula promoted by the imperialists insists on Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea.*

That is why the entire capitalist press has had a virtual blackout on news about what is happening in Kampuchea, in particular, the impact that the fall of the Pol Pot regime has had on the peasants and working people.

That is also why the capitalist media have said virtually nothing about Washington's military reinforcement of the Thai regime, and its funneling of arms to Kampuchean and Laotian rightists via Bangkok.

#### **Ideological Offensive**

As part of their coverup of the counter-revolutionary social nature of their diplomatic formulas, the capitalist press all over the world has campaigned to divert attention from the real source of the present war: the drive by the imperialists to assure capitalist stability in Southeast Asia, and Peking's agreement to take military action on their behalf in return for economic aid.

They rule out, as if it should be obvious to all, the possibility that class interests—in particular, the interests of the imperialists—are at the root of the conflict. This theme has been particularly prominent in the capitalist press of those countries where the working class has a long tradition favorable to Marxism, and where the ruling class takes every opportunity to deal ideological blows to the workers.

With most of the tendencies in the workers movement in disarray, the class conscious European bourgeoisie sees an opening to press ahead to get the left to cave in on the ideological front.

As André Fontaine said mockingly in the French daily *Le Monde*, "Could some brilliant debater demonstrate that the Sino-Vietnam war is explained by the class struggle?"

As their alternative to a class analysis, the bourgeois pundits have offered three main explanations for the cause of the war.

1. The need to assert a kind of big power "machismo." *New York Times* correspon-

dent Fox Butterfield, noting what Nixon had said when he launched the 1970 invasion of Cambodia—that the U.S. could not appear to be a "pitiful, helpless giant"—advanced the thesis that "something of the same kind of concern with what nations, or their leaders, think of as honor seems to have been on Peking's mind last week when it attacked Vietnam. The Chinese had become increasingly angry, frustrated and humiliated by Vietnam's actions. . . ."

Tom Wicker, in another *Times* "think piece," says, "a major purpose of China's sudden lurch into Vietnam was to maintain its reputation for toughness and willingness to defend an ally."

*Time* magazine, cruder still, offered this explanation: "For many Sinologists, Peking's invasion was another illustration of China's 'Great Wall mentality': its obsessive fear of encroachments, real or imagined, against its borders."

And the British *Guardian* said on February 19 that Peking had lost a great deal of face with the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

2. Nationalism. This is probably the most common theme advanced in the bourgeois media throughout the world.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* asserts that when "the Reds" get into power they "very soon become flaming patriots, mostly at the expense of neighboring countries. . . . The leap from international working-class solidarity to great-power behavior may have something to do with the fact that the Communists have come to power on their own only in underdeveloped countries so far. There, the national idea still has some validity. . . ."

The *New York Daily News* said that "the conflict has its seeds in fierce national rivalries and national hatreds centuries old, and far too deep to be held in check long by the artificial bond of communism. An open clash was more or less inevitable. It might have occurred sooner had not all the Red factions felt compelled to maintain an uneasy unity as long as the U.S. was deeply involved in Vietnam."

The *New York Times* editors said the conflict "provides the final proof that no ideology makes men immune to ethnic and racial strife, or aggression and chauvinism. . . . Ugly nationalism has triumphed once again in the human family."

3. The war is fundamentally a reflection of the Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnam disputes, which are themselves simply struggles over spheres of influence. This theme is advanced at length by Patrice de Beer in the Feb. 20 *Le Monde*. China, he asserts, is involved in a "struggle for influence" with Vietnam. "Vietnam's ambition to control Indochina and to have a say in the affairs of the rest of Southeast Asia clashed with China's policy in the region. The latter . . . intends to play an important role in this part of the world."

According to de Beer, the conflict of

interest dates back at least to 1975, when "in the background there already existed differences between the two neighboring communist regimes; these differences began to undermine the alliance that had been built up during the long struggle against the French and American 'imperialists.'"

So, he says later, "the capture of Saigon by the soldiers of General Van Tien Dung marked the point of departure for the Sino-Vietnam crisis, which has just degenerated into conflict."

It can be observed that each of these theories leaves out of account the role of imperialism.

Some of these writers allege that once Washington withdrew from the area, the underlying conflicts were free to come to the surface. Reasoning in this way, the *Wall Street Journal* argued that the lesson to be drawn is "that American power is not the root of evil in the world; that it is more likely to be a force for good." The mounting "disorder" in the world "can be averted if the U.S. starts to assert itself once again."

#### **Three Invalid Arguments**

None of the theories being promoted in the bourgeois media are valid.

1. Big power "machismo." This is no explanation at all, although it does appeal to facile modes of thought.

Many individuals, including highly placed ones, do decide their *personal* actions out of motives of honor or prestige. But the characteristic of *government action*, irrespective of class nature or political shade, is cool-headed planning and forethought. Miscalculation may occur, but actions are taken on the basis of what is believed to be in the best interests of the social class or stratum that dominates the government.

Neither Hanoi nor Peking acted blindly, irrationally, or precipitously. If it is maintained that they offended one another's honor, the question remains: *Why* did the one act to offend the other, and *why* was umbrage taken? In other words, what material interests were involved?

2. Nationalism. This argument explains nothing either.

There is no evidence that the masses of Chinese and Vietnamese people are consumed by hatred for each other today (much less that there has existed a constant ancient hatred that has passed down through the ages). For the past twenty-five years, in fact, there has been no sign of serious tension along the border.

As for the masses of Vietnamese and Kampuchean people, for most of the past twenty-five years their determination to throw off the yoke of imperialism often expressed itself in nationalist pride directed against the oppressors. At the same time they exhibited a remarkable spirit of fraternity toward each other, as they joined together in a common struggle.



So what explains the chauvinistic declarations of the governments involved?

Insofar as nationalism is a motivation, it is the nationalism not of the masses, but of the governing regimes that conceive of their own interests as those of the entire nation and thus present their policies in a chauvinistic guise. But once this is recognized as a guise, the question arises again: What are the material interests of the social strata that control the governments?

3. The Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnam conflict. This argument has the seeming merit of explaining the conflict in terms of a clash of interests. But in actuality the argument does not explain anything. For, what exactly are the clashing interests? In particular, what accounts for a war in which conquest of territory or direct economic control is not at issue?

### Yes, the Class Struggle

In fact, only a class analysis can explain the war between China and Vietnam and the preceding action by Hanoi in toppling the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

The point of departure for Marxists is recognition that big historical events, such as wars, are rooted in the class struggle, the sometimes camouflaged, sometimes open, struggle between the capitalists, in particular the imperialists, on the one hand, and the workers and their allies among the oppressed masses on the other. The privileged bureaucracies that exist in the workers movement, whether on a party, trade-union, or governmental level, act as transmission belts for imperialist pressure in this titanic struggle.

In the current conflict this is illustrated in two key ways:

1. *The role of imperialism.* U.S. imperialism suffered a defeat in Vietnam in 1975, but it has not walked away from the class struggle in Southeast Asia—any more than it can at home. The imperialists, albeit from a position of greater weakness on a world scale, are striving to assert their material interests against the toiling masses of the region.

The imperialists are well aware that the anticapitalist measures in Vietnam have given encouragement to the masses elsewhere, and threaten to spread to Kampuchea, Laos and beyond.

So, while the workers and peasants of Vietnam have been suffering as a result of severe economic difficulties created by the devastation of war and horrendous monsoons and floods in 1977 and 1978, the imperialists have been stepping up their economic pressure. Japan and Australia cut off their aid, and Sweden, the main source of aid from the capitalist countries, threatened to do likewise. (The U.S. and New Zealand have never offered aid for reconstruction.)

Domestic considerations in the U.S. make direct military intervention difficult for Washington at this time, so it encour-

aged Peking to act on its behalf. At the same time, the U.S. ruling class has been mounting a two-pronged campaign aimed at the American working people—an economic offensive to drive down the standard of living, and a political offensive designed to drum up support for Washington's foreign policy.

2. *The Role of Peking and Hanoi.* These governments are controlled by privileged bureaucratic castes. Unlike the imperialists, however, they are not driven by internal forces to accumulate, or conquer territory, and to exploit the workers of other countries. To the contrary, it is against their interests to have to take



responsibility for the development of the productive forces of a larger territory. These castes seek stability above all, so that their privileges in the area of consumption can be assured.

But at the same time China and Vietnam are workers states, constantly subject to imperialist pressure and the pressure of the workers at home, against both of which the bureaucracies must defend themselves.

Under imperialist pressure, the castes compete with each other for stable relations with imperialism to allow economic growth and for economic aid—both needed to stave off popular dissent.

In summary form, these two factors provide the key to explaining the current conflict—and the preceding Moscow-Peking and Moscow-Belgrade conflicts as well.

With the Vietnamese workers state under increasing imperialist pressure, Hanoi was finally compelled to respond in self-defense by toppling the hostile, capitalist, and increasingly proimperialist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea. Peking, offered the prospect of large-scale economic aid from the imperialists, fulfilled its part of the bargain by invading Vietnam to try and pressure Hanoi to get out of Kampuchea.

Hanoi is acting out of motives of self-preservation, not in order to promote revolutionary change. It is noteworthy that its propaganda directed towards China is devoid of appeals to working-class interna-

tionism, while in Kampuchea it does not call on the working masses to make a social revolution. But the Hanoi bureaucracy had to defend itself because the Vietnamese revolution was under attack from imperialism. And the toppling of the Pol Pot regime cannot help but encourage the Kampuchean masses to press their own independent interests.

From the class point of view, it is clear that the pious call by the capitalist world's diplomats for reciprocal withdrawal and a negotiated settlement in Kampuchea is in the interests of imperialism above all. The British *Economist* openly stated the hope that "China's western friends can supplement China's stick with some conditional carrot," that is, "offers of economic assistance."

If under pressure Hanoi is compelled to get out of Kampuchea, and if it agrees to a capitalist coalition government and a Geneva-type settlement similar to those it accepted in the past, this would be a setback to the working people.

As for Moscow, its reaction to the war was expressed by Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko on February 26. "The Chinese leaders," he said, "are striving with particular eagerness to set the Soviet Union and the United States at loggerheads. The development of Soviet-American relations is being obstructed under their influence. . . ." His solution was to call for a "more stable" political climate between Moscow and Washington. Some statements by Moscow charged Washington with collusion in Peking's invasion of Vietnam, but this theme was quickly put aside. In a well-publicized speech on March 2 Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev did not even mention the role of the United States, while condemning China as "the most serious threat to peace in the whole world."

Washington—the strongest, most brutal, most aggressive imperialist power in the world—is presented as a helpless, misguided tool of the Peking Stalinists!

While supplying Hanoi militarily, Moscow has been notorious in the past for its stinginess and for the strings attached to its aid. It must be assumed that this is being repeated. And, as in the past, Moscow is undoubtedly pressuring Hanoi to accept a Geneva-type solution.

A particularly unsavory characteristic of Moscow's response is the racist anti-Chinese campaign being whipped up in the media in the Soviet Union.

Of all the workers states, only revolutionary Cuba has responded in the spirit of working-class internationalism. Havana has continued to stress Washington's role in Peking's invasion of Vietnam and the imperialists' objective of surrounding Vietnam with hostile regimes and of restoring a pro-Washington regime in Kampuchea.

In response to Teng Hsiao-p'ing's despicable statements about the Cubans "swashbuckling unchecked in Africa," Cu-



ban government officials announced their readiness to help defend Vietnam militarily. "If Vietnam asks us to intervene, we will send troops," Cuban embassy officials confirmed in Mexico.

It is that spirit of international solidarity that is being promoted throughout Cuba. The *Washington Post* reports from Havana that what is being expressed is a "mobilization of Cuban emotion against a common enemy and moral support for struggling revolutions. The Cuban people have long identified with the Vietnamese, because of what they view as their joint struggles against the United States and their largely self-won victories against 'aggression.'"

It is that same spirit of international solidarity and hostility to imperialism that guides revolutionary Marxists.

The central focus of our concerns is to expose and counter the imperialist drive to shore up and extend its power in Southeast Asia.

This necessitates exposure and rejection

of their drive to force Vietnam out of Kampuchea.

It means rejection of the propaganda designed to portray the workers states as a source of war and imperialism as a source of peace and stability in the world.

The revolutionary Marxist slogans remain:

Hands off Vietnam! Stop the imperialist campaign against the Vietnamese revolution! For massive economic aid to rebuild Indochina—no strings attached! Solidarity with the workers, peasants, and students of Kampuchea, Laos and Thailand in their struggle against imperialist domination!

Within that framework, we demand: Chinese troops out of Vietnam now! No forced negotiations while Chinese troops are still in Vietnam! No forced Geneva conference deals!

And we call upon the Soviet Union to act in the Cuban spirit of international solidarity and give the Vietnamese whatever military supplies they need—with no strings attached! □

the last time that happened the result was world war.

"While the U.S. has little to do with immediate events on the China-Vietnam border, it has a great deal to do with this larger trend. A generation of world stability was built on the bedrock of American purpose and American power. As this foundation becomes increasingly shaky, the world is threatened with the unpalatable alternatives of Soviet domination or sheer anarchy.

"The continued strife in Indochina, for that matter, is especially symbolic. It is one thing to say that it was a terrible mistake to involve American power and prestige so deeply in so insignificant a quarter of the globe. But it is quite another thing to say that American defeat there would be good for the world, or even painless. . . . the killing goes on, the only difference being that now the struggle is between competing brands of totalitarianism. . . .

"In the rest of the world, meanwhile, American influence fades. . . . This is not good for us, not good for our friends, and not good for the people of the world.

"The tragedy is that so much of this is self-inflicted. . . . We did not have to wreck the CIA. . . . Even in Vietnam, we did not have to cut off funds for the South Vietnamese army once our troops were withdrawn.

"The spiral into disorder can be averted only if the U.S. starts to assert itself once again. This does not mean sending the Marines to settle every quarrel in the world. It does mean building the kind of military force we are likely to need in the evolving world . . . asserting our rights unapologetically and keeping our promises to allies. But first, we need to digest the lesson of the current fighting in Indochina: That American power is not the root of evil in the world; that it is more likely to be a force for good."

## On Peking's Invasion of Vietnam

# What the Capitalist Press Is Saying

The following selections from a few of the more influential voices of the capitalist ruling classes around the world offer initial assessments of Peking's invasion of Vietnam.

Of particular interest is the emergence of a number of common themes:

- Hanoi "provoked" the invasion by themselves invading Kampuchea; Peking had no choice if it was not to "lose face."

- The only equitable solution is therefore a Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea and a Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam.

- The various imperialist powers are in no way involved in this, so they can now prove to the somewhat skeptical masses of the world that capitalism is a peaceful and benevolent force—unlike communism, which has now been exposed for what the ruling class always said it was: an aggressive, warmongering threat to world peace.

- The cause of war is now clearly demonstrated to be a classless "nationalism"; not, as Marxists have always asserted, the exploitation and oppression on which class society is built; thus Marxism is finished.

- The reason why all of this is happening now is not the drive toward war inherent in the capitalist system but the supposed helplessness of American imperialism, which is no longer able to play its stabilizing world role.

- The road to peace is through strengthening U.S. military power, and convincing the American workers especially that there are times when it must be used.

The themes of the rulers' ideological offensive come through loud and clear. But as socialists have pointed out from the birth of the Marxist movement—when the rulers talk of peace, it is always the workers who will die.

\* \* \*

### Wall Street Journal (USA)

A February 21 editorial speaking frankly to the U.S. rulers says:

"Didn't we hear somewhere that if only the U.S. got out of Vietnam, the killing would stop?"

"In the immediate sense, there is little the U.S. can or should do about the new Vietnam war. The Chinese invasion of Vietnam is clearly intended as punishment for Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. Intellectually interesting as it was to see Cambodia topple like a domino, it's hard to get overly excited about aggression against so hideous a regime as the one that ruled there. The Chinese expedition on behalf of its Cambodian clients more or less dares the Soviet Union to do something for its Vietnamese client. For once, the U.S. has the luxury of standing back and wishing a plague on all their houses.

"In a larger sense, though, continuing warfare in Indochina is another sign of spreading instability in the world. . . . At the risk of being melodramatic, today we see the world order coming unglued, and

### Le Monde (France)

In a commentary beginning on the front page of the February 20 issue, André Fontaine, a leading figure on the paper, writes:

"Socialist Vietnam, on which Socialist China has now launched an assault, would not have existed without China, without the home base it offered during the French period of the Indochinese war, without the matériel, arms, and financial aid it continually provided to Hanoi, without the possibilities it offered the USSR for using its railroads to deliver tanks, artillery, and every sort of indispensable equipment to the Vietcong." The regime in China itself would not exist without the aid received in an earlier period from the Soviet Union.

In short, every time a "socialist" country has helped establish a "socialist" regime in another country, it has only assisted in the birth of another potential enemy, one

that could prove more dangerous than the others.

"This phenomenon [of allies turning into enemies] is a constant feature of human history. But socialism was supposed to put an end to it. Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto that antagonisms between nations would disappear at the same time as the antagonism between classes. Could some brilliant debater demonstrate that the Sino-Vietnamese war is explained by the class struggle?

"Wouldn't it be more honest to recognize that in this area Marxism has purely and simply proven bankrupt? Should we not add to the conflicts in Asia, if we want to have the complete picture, the Soviet interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which were pure and simple aggressions according to the definition of the United Nations, and the Ogaden war? In all, leaving aside the Ussuri battles in 1969, we are now seeing our fifth Marxist-Marxist war. I would venture to predict that there will be others."

In fact, Fontaine used the Sino-Vietnamese conflict to paint a picture of a world in which there is no one to look to for a solution to the mounting problems and no one to blame for such a hopeless situation.

"The White House, which had already abundantly demonstrated its impotence in the face of the events in Iran, could only 'deplore' the attack on Vietnam, just as a few weeks earlier it had 'deplored' the invasion of Cambodia. I would venture that this is not the last thing they will 'deplore' . . .

"Massacres, one day in Beirut, another in Tehran, a third in the Basque country, or in Nicaragua, or in Ndjamená . . . endless hatreds, impasses of every kind, a growing gap between words and reality, universal impotence—is it exaggerated to speak of a general bankruptcy of the poor substitute for order that the world has rigged together under the aegis of détente? . . .

"Lenin's *Imperialism* . . . has lost none of its timeliness, as long as no country,

socialist or not, is excluded from the number of imperialist powers."

### Dagens Nyheter (Sweden)

"When all is said and done," commented a February 19 editorial, "China acted just as badly as any great power. . . . Vietnam's hardening policy against its Chinese minority, which was part of its introducing a socialist order, led to a stream of refugees from Vietnam to China. That created tensions. There is a lot of condemnation of China's action. It must be condemned. But it is distressing and depressing that not so many people could bring themselves to clearly oppose Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, an invasion, moreover, that led to the whole social order being overturned."

### Cumhuriyet (Turkey)

The February 19 issue of this liberal capitalist daily remarks:

"The twentieth century is the age of contradictions. Socialists fight against socialists. Socialists and capitalists shake hands and toast each other. The Chinese People's Republic fights against Vietnam; it becomes a bosom buddy of the United States.

"Where is there proletarian internationalism today? Is it in the friendship between the U.S. and the Chinese People's Republic? Where is it to be found, in the 'irreconcilable contradiction' [between the classes], in proletarian solidarity, or does it exist only in socialist theory? And where is imperialism, which is supposed to be a 'paper tiger'? After the working class, which was supposed to 'have nothing to lose but its chains,' saw its interest bound up with its own bourgeoisie, are working classes now fighting each other arms in hand in Cambodia and Vietnam?"

"Yes, 'imperialism, the final stage of capitalism' is witness to such 'contradictions' among socialist countries.

"The twentieth century is an age of contradictions.

"On the one hand, Christian Democratic parties make compromises with Marxist parties, on the other, Communist parties wage war against each other. From one standpoint, this is an age of compromise. Compromise on the basis of bourgeois democracy and constitutions. The name for this sort of thing is 'historic compromise.' . . .

"Do workers make compromises with bosses? . . . The name for this sort of thing is 'social contract.' . . .

"In processes of change, healthy steps forward can be taken."

### The Guardian (Britain)

A February 20 editorial comments: "The eruption of China should not be allowed to pose difficult questions for the United States and the West. Yesterday the Foreign Office firmly rebuked Vietnam for its intervention in Cambodia. No doubt it was correct to do so. But in the longer haul of diplomacy there can be no doubt where our sympathy—if that is too strong a word, understanding—should lie. It should lie with the Soviet Union, to which the West is entitled to look for consistency in foreign policy and with which it is a first essential to keep the peace. . . . The West harbors no designs on the Soviet Union or its immediate interests. On the contrary, it can afford to go further than the Soviet Union has done in the pursuit of detente. One way to make that plain is to avoid profit from any discomfort the Soviet Union may be suffering from the behavior of its populous and at present unpredictable neighbor.

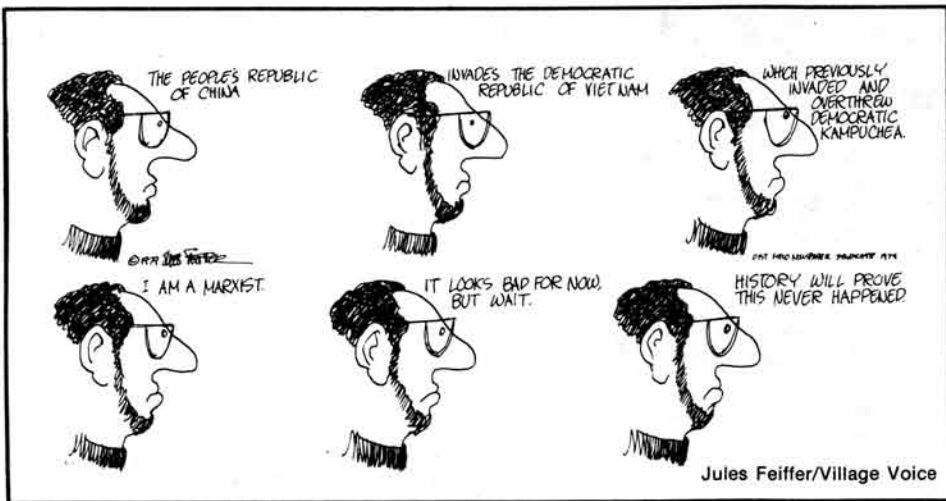
"It would, however, be untrue to say that the West does not wish to profit at all: the ideal profit would be a better understanding with the Soviet Union. This could show itself in an easement where the strain hurts most: in the Middle East, along the frontier in Central Europe, and to some extent in Southern Africa. At times like this the West should concentrate on its immediate concerns, and they do not include the fortunes of Vietnam and Cambodia. If it is true that the Vietnamese punitive mission into Pol Pot territory prompted the Chinese punitive mission into Vietnam then it is hard on any grounds whatever, whether based on strategic thinking or on human rights, to express a preference."

In the previous day's editorial, as summarized by the BBC's survey of the British press, the *Guardian* said that "the United States has been almost reduced to the status of a helpless bystander."

### Der Spiegel (West Germany)

A news article in the February 26 issue remarks:

"They still sing the 'International,' the Communists throughout the world. And in fact, Karl Marx wanted to make his sup-





porters into cosmopolitans. "The workers have no fatherland."

"But when they get into power, the Reds very soon become flaming patriots, most at the expense of the neighboring countries. Then the old nationalist dreams of historical borders, from the empire of the czars or the Great Chinese empire, or in the most recent case, a union of all Indochina.

"The leap from international working-class solidarity to great-power behavior may have something to do with the fact that the Communists have come to power on their own only in underdeveloped countries so far. There, the national idea still has some validity; it furthers the construction of a state and of a feeling of cohesion, it compensates for the old too obvious backwardness. . . .

"So far, Communists have only come to power through violence. So, they have to find a substitute for the lack of majority support—national glory. Under the pretext of a national emergency, a militarized people can be more easily controlled."

The article gives a long list of the violations of national rights of peoples by Stalinist regimes and of territorial claims made by various Stalinist workers states on others.

Although the Sino-Vietnam conflict is the featured story in this issue, being given thirteen full pages, there is not even a reference to the fact that the West German ruling class obviously has some interests of its own in containing the spread of revolution in Indochina.

#### Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan)

In a February 26 editorial entitled "For a Cease-Fire and Speedy Troop Withdrawals in Indochina," the editors endorse the resolution before the emergency session of the United Nations Security Council calling for the withdrawal of "all foreign troops in Vietnam and Kampuchea."

While the Japanese government's public

stance toward the China-Vietnam fighting has been similar to Washington's, Tokyo has some special concerns of its own, in part because of its more extensive economic ties with both countries. The editors characterize the fighting as "a tragic war for all of Asia," and express the fear that Chinese forces may become "bogged down" in Vietnam for a prolonged period, something which could impede China's growing economic and technological ties with imperialism.

They also warn that "the longer the war goes on, the more Vietnam will require military and economic aid from the Soviet Union. This would lead to a strengthening of Soviet influence in Southeast Asia, creating the very type of situation China wants to avoid."

The editors put in a plug for the Japanese government, which has been seeking to play a more direct role in imperialist diplomacy while building up its own military forces. They note with satisfaction that "on February 23, reactions from the West to the situation in Indochina were reported in China for the first time, informing the Chinese people of Western governments' calls for the withdrawal of all foreign troops. Among those reported were Prime Minister Ohira's statement in favor of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, as well as Foreign Minister Sonoda's announcement that Japan would be willing to mediate the dispute between China and Vietnam.

"This can be viewed as a sign that China really does want to pull out of Vietnam soon and settle the dispute through negotiations, and that it is willing to have Japan act as a mediator if necessary. If this were to come about, it would demonstrate that our country's peaceful foreign policy is not necessarily ineffective, but can actually play a certain role in bringing about a peaceful settlement in Indochina.

"Our country should strengthen its inter-

national cooperation with other nations, in particular the United States, and actively pursue a peaceful settlement."

#### New York Times (USA)

An editorial entitled "The Red Brotherhood at War," in the February 19 issue, says:

"They are singing 'The Internationale' on all sides of the Asian battles this week as they bury the hopes of the Communist fathers with the bodies of their sons.

"There was once a time when Communists, like Christians, Moslems and other peoples in the first flush of a new faith, felt themselves to be brothers incapable of war against each other. . . .

"The conflict that spread this weekend from Cambodia to the border of China and Vietnam and to hostile exchanges between China and the Soviet Union provides the final proof that no ideology makes men immune to ethnic and racial strife, or aggression and chauvinism. While an impotent United Nations looks on, hot-headed governments with no apparent economic interest at stake risk even major war. Ugly nationalism has triumphed once again in the human family.

"Americans can afford to reflect sadly on this spectacle because they are not immediately threatened and face no foreseeable involvement. . . .

"In a world of interdependent nations and interlocking alliances, armed trespass anywhere threatens people everywhere. The ruthlessness of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia provoked invasion by Vietnam. The aggression and anti-Chinese policies of Vietnam have provoked invasion by China. And the aggression and anti-Soviet policies of China now invite response from the Soviet Union. . . .

"The only alternative to recurrent international violence is international law. Now at least we can see that no ideology can alter that choice."

#### The Economist (Britain)

Under the headline "China says enough," in the February 24 issue the editors comment:

"The question is whether China's necessarily limited show of strength will have the desired effects. The aim is to make Vietnam and Russia more cautious in the future, and to stiffen the anti-Soviet resolve of the third world, and of China's friends and trading partners in the West. Both of these things are desirable, and if China achieves them it will have helped to make the world a slightly stabler place. . . .

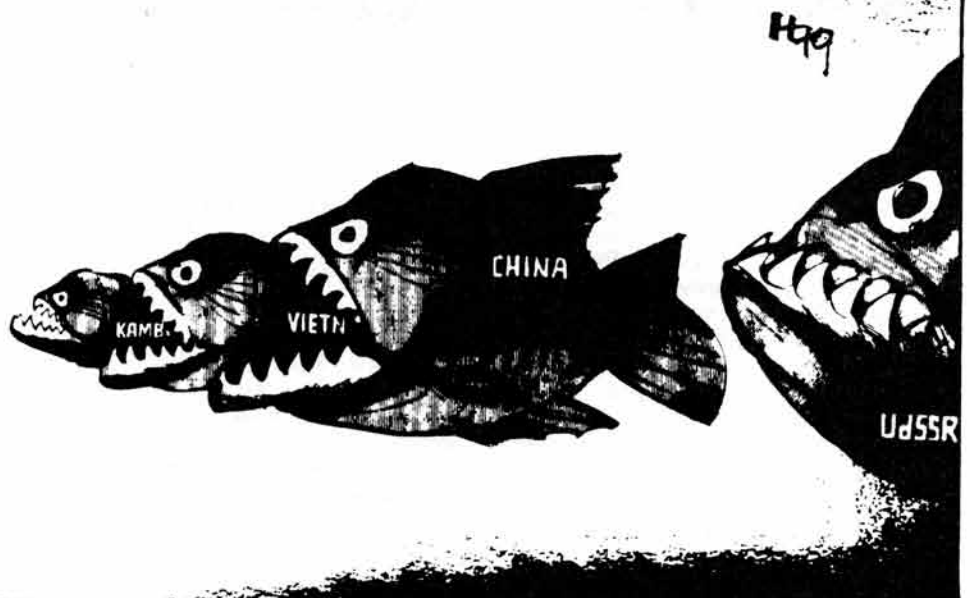
"The British government's willingness to supply arms to China has also suffered an embarrassment, just as its industry minister, Mr. Varley, was setting off to Peking to negotiate the sale of some 70 Harrier jumpjets and a licence to manufac-



"As the antagonism between classes within a nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."

Auth/Philadelphia Inquirer





ture some 200 more, at a price of over £1,000m. But, despite the predictable storm this week by left-wing opponents of the sale, the British government reckons that this sweetener for a multibillion pound trade package will go through once Chinese troops and world attention have withdrawn from the battlefield. The European Economic Community similarly, did not let its disapproval of the Chinese invasion—carefully balanced by equal disapproval of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia—interfere with a visit to Peking this week by the commission president, Mr. Roy Jenkins. . . .

"The Vietnamese will probably behave rather more circumspectly in the border area from now on. They will probably also be compelled to reinforce their border guards with regular troops, which will increase the strain on Vietnam's already overstretched army and thus relieve pressure on the Chinese-supported guerrillas now fighting the Vietnamese in Cambodia. Still, China's hopes of regaining a foothold in Cambodia will continue to depend more on the effectiveness of these guerrillas—and of China's aid to them, channelled through Thailand—than on any direct action against Vietnam.

"Unless, that is, China's western friends can supplement China's stick with some conditional carrot. There is a possibility, admittedly remote, that Vietnam could be coaxed out of Cambodia, and also out of a tight Soviet grip, by offers of economic assistance. The starting point for such a scheme would have to be some kind of compromise coalition in Phnom Penh. . . .

"China's raid this week should have driven home to the Vietnamese the cost of their own abandonment of a profitable balancing act between China and Russia. If an offer of western investment could reinforce the lesson, it would be worth a try."

#### Christian Science Monitor (USA)

A February 20 editorial, entitled "When communists fall out," says:

"The US is correct to take a position of neutrality now that its own military involvement in Southeast Asia's plight is over. Yet stability is important not only to the people of communist nations who have things bad enough already but to the noncommunist Southeast Asian states that are demonstrating the kind of economic progress that is possible under peacetime conditions. And, of course, stability far beyond Southeast Asia would be threatened if Sino-Vietnamese border conflicts were to kindle Sino-Soviet warfare.

"Therefore it has not been inappropriate for the US to use private and public channels to express concern. Washington has taken the sound position that Vietnamese troops should withdraw from Cambodia, China's ally, just as China's troops should withdraw from Vietnam, although the situations are not comparable in the sense that Hanoi entered Cambodia to overthrow the government, while Peking claims only defensive intentions. . . ."

The editorial concludes with the observation:

"A general lesson confirmed again is one that historian Arnold Toynbee noted at the height of the Vietnam war—'We are all nationalists first and capitalists or communists second.'"

#### Hawks and Doves (USA)

The February 22 issue of the *New York Times* surveyed a number of prominent U.S. political figures, well known for their differing views on how the U.S. rulers should have protected their interests in Indochina prior to April 1975. The one point on which all concurred was the pious assertion that Peking's invasion of Vietnam certainly has nothing to do with U.S.

interests in the area. To hear them talk you would think the U.S. ruling class washed its hands of Indochina in 1975.

Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, ruling-class "dove" at the end of the Vietnam War, expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would "exercise restraint." "I don't see a role for the U.S.," he added. "We should never have gotten involved then. I hope we have the good sense to stay out of it this time."

Eugene McCarthy, former Democratic Party Senator from Minnesota, likewise a Vietnam "dove," remarked, "I'd rather see the Chinese fighting the Vietnamese than us fighting the Vietnamese."

Former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, a Vietnam war "hawk," stated, ". . . I do think the attitude of the U.S. is the right one—that Vietnam should withdraw from Cambodia and China withdraw from Vietnam. . . . I don't think this is a matter for the U.S. to get involved in.

"If you want to think of irony think of Senator George McGovern calling for an international force to do something about Cambodia. Now there's irony."

Walt W. Rostow, former special assistant to President Johnson and a prominent adviser of U.S. rulers, summed it all up. The real problem is that U.S. imperialism is no longer present to play its world-historic peacekeeping role.

"I expect a lot of trouble in that area, simply because there is no effectively stabilizing power, which we were as long as we were there, so there's a vacuum."

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# Castro Condemns Chinese Invasion, U.S. Complicity

By Fred Murphy

A vigorous campaign has been launched in Cuba in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. According to a February 23 dispatch from Havana by *Washington Post* correspondent Karen DeYoung, "Government-printed posters pledging Cuban support for Vietnam 'to the last drop of blood' appeared throughout Havana within hours of the invasion. Every day this week, the entire front page and most of the internal pages of *Granma*, the Cuban Communist Party newspaper, were filled with news of the fighting."

Activities are being organized across the country by the Cuban Committee of Solidarity with Vietnam, which was reestablished last August.

Tens of thousands of Cubans turned out for a solidarity rally in Havana on February 21. President Fidel Castro made an unscheduled speech in which he termed the Chinese invasion "the most repugnant betrayal of the revolutionary movement in the whole history of humanity."

Castro's speech was printed in the February 22 edition of the daily *Granma*. He blasted U.S. imperialism for its complicity in the Chinese attack:

"... the U.S. government—which was undoubtedly involved all along and which without the slightest doubt has associated itself with this adventure of Peking—is saying that the Vietnamese must withdraw from Kampuchea if the Chinese are to withdraw from Vietnam. So the Yankee imperialists and the Chinese rulers have made common cause in the invasion. They have made common cause in this wild and crazy adventure.

"This is a signal that both the United States and China are seeking the reestablishment of the genocidal Pol Pot/Ieng Sary regime in Kampuchea. That is their political objective: attack Vietnam precisely in order to make it halt all cooperation and solidarity with the revolutionary government in Kampuchea; in order to reestablish the genocidal regime and surround Vietnam... from the south and from the north. That is the policy of the United States, while it appears to be washing its hands of the matter."

Castro condemned the imperialists' "hypocrisy" regarding the Pol Pot government—"one of the most brutal, most criminal, most genocidal regimes ever known":

"The U.S. government talked about human rights, and a proposal was even made in the U.S. Senate for international intervention to put an end to the genocide in Kampuchea. . . .

"Nonetheless, scarcely had that genocidal regime been overthrown when a violent international campaign was begun

against Vietnam because of Vietnam's solidarity with the Kampuchean revolutionary movement—an attempt to portray Vietnam before world opinion as an aggressive country, as a country that violates the independence of other peoples. All this in order to cover up the obvious fact that the [Pol Pot] regime was intolerable and could not be supported."

Castro termed the fall of Pol Pot "a tremendous blow to the Chinese leadership clique."

"In that situation came the visit of Teng Hsiao-p'ing to the United States, where that supercynic declared that it was necessary to punish Vietnam and Cuba. That's what he said—punish Vietnam and Cuba. He was telling the Yankees: You punish Cuba. . . ."

The Cubans have always viewed imperialism's attacks on Vietnam as a danger aimed at the heart of their own revolution as well. In recent weeks the Cuban government has declared that it is ready to send troops to Vietnam, repeating an offer made in the 1960s.

Warning of the gravity of the situation and calling for international solidarity with Vietnam, Castro declared: "... this is no time for vacillation and ambiguity, this is no time for spinelessness, this is no time for placing Vietnam and China on the same level. This is the moment to define who's who and what's what. Because no one who loves peace, no one who is progressive, no one who is revolutionary or who considers himself revolutionary anywhere in the world can fail to condemn in the most energetic and categorical way this criminal adventure by the Chinese government."

Searching for a historical parallel, Cas-

tro likened the Chinese attack to Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 and termed China's present rulers a clique of "fascists." The analogy is a bad one. While the Peking bureaucracy's foreign policy is counterrevolutionary to the core, China remains a workers state. A more apt comparison would have been Stalin's crushing of the Spanish revolution in the 1930s.

But on a related point—the sentiment toward the war among the Chinese workers and peasants—Castro was entirely correct. The Chinese people, he said, "with their revolutionary spirit and qualities," will not support an invasion of Vietnam. "At this moment that people does not know that Vietnam is being attacked, that it is being invaded. The Chinese people are being fooled by all the mass communications media... under the control of that clique. But it is no longer so easy to fool a people."

In China, Castro said, "the factions have been purging each other for many years. They are purged, rehabilitated, purged again, then rehabilitated, until the day when the Chinese people will purge them all once and for all."

Rallies similar to the one in Havana have taken place throughout the island. Commenting on the Cubans' solidarity, DeYoung said in the *Washington Post* article: "The Cuban people have long identified with the Vietnamese, because of what they view as their joint struggles against the United States and their largely self-won victories against 'aggression.'"

As an example of this, DeYoung cited the following incident: "U.S. visitors on tour of a rural Cuban junior high school were greeted by students who cheered, 'Hands off Vietnam.'" □

## Brezhnev Silent on Washington's Role

It is of interest to contrast the February 21 speech by Fidel Castro to one given in Moscow on March 1 by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

Brezhnev centered his fire on China, which he characterized as "the most serious threat to peace in the whole world." The invasion of Vietnam, he said, "revealed fully to the whole world the perfidious, aggressive essence" of Chinese foreign policy.

As for the role of imperialism in the attack on Vietnam, Brezhnev said only that "the entire danger of any forms of connivance" with Chinese policy "is more evident now than ever before."

According to a report of the speech in the March 2 *New York Times*, he "did not mention the United States in this context."

Elsewhere in the talk, the *Times* account said, Brezhnev "took a conciliatory stance toward the United States, forsaking the harsh anti-American language that has been appearing in the official press and describing a treaty on strategic arms as virtually concluded."

Could there be a clearer signal to Washington that Moscow is unwilling to let defense of the Vietnamese revolution endanger its own counterrevolutionary deals with imperialism?

# Selections From the Left

[The entire column this week is devoted to assessments of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.]

## rouge

*"Red," revolutionary communist weekly, published in Paris.*

The February 23 issue features two articles on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. The first, by Pierre Rousset, is entitled "Internationalism Assassinated." It traces the origins of the conflict.

The accompanying article, by Daniel Bensaid, assesses its implications. He writes: "The entry of regular Chinese troops into Vietnamese territory is a very grave event for every revolutionary activist. . . . This offensive fits into the logic of the Sino-Soviet conflict. It is the culmination for the moment of a series of bureaucratic low blows. . . ."

"Overshadowing everything is the criminal responsibility of imperialism which spread the poison of poverty, underdevelopment, national humiliation, of wars and plundering, of violence and corruption.

"The Chinese intervention opens a new stage in the conflicts among bureaucratic workers states. But it does not represent, strictly speaking, a surprise or a revelation but rather the logical extension of a policy that was already present in embryonic form in the Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country.' Today armed interbureaucratic conflict is playing a directly counter-revolutionary role. . . . But in a more fundamental way, it is dealing the gravest kind of blow to the very concept of socialism.

"Of course, a long time ago, Stalinist terror and the Moscow trials betrayed and disfigured the revolution. But during the 1930s, the workers of the entire world were mainly concerned about the fascist danger and continued to believe in the country of the soviets and the homeland of socialism. The Stalin organs [rocket launchers used in World War II] were to drown out the cries that rose from the prisons of Kolyma and Lubyanka.

"But today on the other hand, skepticism, disarray, and doubt have gripped millions of workers confronted by the spectacle of peoples who only yesterday symbolized revolutionary hope now being led into killing each other. But it is not socialism and internationalism that have failed. . . ."

"Contrary to the skeptical Spanish ex-Communist Jorge Semprun, who says that he has lost his convictions and retained his illusions, we have lost some illusions

and gained some solid convictions—that the socialist revolution will be international or that it will not be, that internationalism and socialist democracy are inseparably linked, that internationalism cannot be reduced to mere solidarity but must be embodied in building a revolutionary international. . . ."

"The only conclusion to be drawn is that we must take up the tasks of the period ahead in order to revive the internationalism that has been assassinated.

"Just as we have demanded the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, we demand the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam. This is not because we are champions of a new naïve pacifism, which would simply tell everyone to go home. But because we are convinced that bureaucratic chauvinism has to be rooted out, and that only the Chinese and Indochinese workers themselves can carry through their fight to establish real socialist democracy to a successful conclusion."

## Socialist Action

*Published twice monthly in Auckland, New Zealand.*

Under the headline "What's at stake in Southeast Asia conflicts" the editors state February 23:

"The Chinese raid into Vietnam that began on February 18 should be condemned by the labour movement. For the Peking bureaucrats' military provocations against Vietnam are providing an invaluable smokescreen for imperialist moves against the Vietnamese revolution.

"Ever since US imperialism was driven out of Vietnam with the defeat of the Saigon puppet regime in 1975, Washington has sought to isolate and economically crush war-devastated Vietnam.

"Vietnam's massive aid to Kampuchean rebels in the toppling of the tyrannical Pol Pot regime last month was seized on by the imperialists as a further opportunity to push forward their campaign against the Vietnamese revolution. . . ."

"Washington is reported to be stepping up military supplies to the dictatorship in Thailand, the main imperialist military beachhead in Southeast Asia.

"China has no stake in a major war with Vietnam. Both are workers states. . . . It is the imperialist powers' unceasing expansionist drive for new markets, new investment opportunities, and new military footholds to protect these interests, that provides the major war threat in the world and in Indochina today.

"But both China and Vietnam are ruled dictatorially by privileged bureaucracies.

Instead of pooling their resources to build up a cooperative socialist economy and to advance the interests of the working people the world over, these regimes focus on building up their own economies by each individually trying to come to terms with imperialism. . . . In exchange they offer to do their best to maintain capitalist stability in the rest of the world. This also leads to nationalist rivalry between the regimes in the different workers states.

"At the centre of Peking's strategy has been its brazen alliance with U.S. imperialism. . . ."

"But the Peking bureaucrats are deluding themselves if they think they have a long-term friend in US imperialism. Washington would like to see the Chinese workers state overthrown and capitalism restored there. And it will move to try to achieve that if and when it feels that the time is right. But in the meantime it is only too happy to use Peking as a cover for its *very real* moves against the Vietnamese revolution today.

"We demand:

"Halt all imperialist aid to the Thai dictatorship!

"End the economic blockade of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam!

"Provide massive international aid to reconstruct Indochina, with no strings attached!

"Stop the imperialist campaign against the Vietnamese revolution!"

## 世界革命

*"Sekai Kakumei" (World Revolution), central organ of the Japan Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in Tokyo.*

*Sekai Kakumei* published February 19 a two-page extra edition on the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.

"When Vice-premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing stopped off [in Tokyo] on his way back from the United States, what did he say to Prime Minister Ohira and Lockheed defendant Tanaka? He said 'As long as we stand by with folded arms while Vietnam is manipulated by the Soviet Union, things will only get worse. Vietnam has to be punished. The aggressor must pay. Chinese mean what they say.'

"Teng's threat is now being carried out, through massive Chinese aggression against Vietnam.

"China's military 'punishment' of Vietnam is an absolutely unforgivable crime against the Vietnamese revolution. . . . an openly treasonous act on behalf of imperialism and reaction."

Another article, under the headline "What is the Chinese Leadership's Aim?" states that the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea "was a major blow



to the Chinese leadership, which had blocked with imperialism worldwide in an attempt to sabotage the Indochinese people's struggle. China's bureaucratic leaders are now committing this open, direct, criminal act in an attempt to recoup their badly damaged 'prestige.'

"The immediate purpose of this military aggression is to assist the desperate resistance of Pol Pot's forces by drawing Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea . . . to the northern border regions of Vietnam."

The article ends by calling on "all workers . . . trade unions and other groups to raise our voices together to protest China's military aggression against Vietnam! Focus our protests on the Chinese embassy! All out in a struggle to defend the Indochinese revolution!"

The next regular issue of *Sekai Kakumei* reports that 200,000 copies of the extra edition were distributed at universities, factories, and street corners in major cities throughout Japan. An emergency protest action in front of the Chinese embassy in Tokyo February 19 received coverage in the broadcast media. The main slogans at that action were "China out now!" "Defend the Vietnamese revolution!" and "Fight for an international anti-imperialist united front!"

Another article notes that "American imperialists have been shedding crocodile tears, crying for 'an end to aggression.' The Japanese government, while informing Chinese authorities of its 'regret' at the invasion, sent a note to the Vietnamese government telling it to 'get out of Kampuchea.' The anticommunist military states of ASEAN, in an emergency joint communiqué, screamed for 'the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the disputed areas of Indochina.'

"Talk about the logic of thieves! Talk about hypocrisy! The imperialist ruling classes, who are the real aggressors in Asia and around the world . . . have not the slightest right to mouth such words!"

## Socialist Challenge

*Newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in London.*

In an article entitled "Chinese invasion of Vietnam: A crime against socialism" in the February 22 issue, Tariq Ali says that the invasion was "not unexpected" and the Chinese are unlikely to stay in Vietnam very long.

In Ali's view the reason for the invasion is that the Chinese felt "the Vietnamese had to learn 'some necessary lessons'. In other words, the Chinese troops were on a punitive expedition. . . .

"Why had the Vietnamese to be subjected to this invasion according to Chinese logic? Because Vietnam had become a 'Cuba in Asia.' Its intervention in Kampu-

chea was a major affront to the Chinese. Peking had 'lost face.' . . .

"There can be no hesitation at all in asking the Chinese to get out of Vietnam," Ali states. Furthermore, "there is no equation between what happened in Kampuchea and the Chinese invasion." The overthrow of the Pol Pot regime was "undoubtedly a step forward for the masses of that country." Ali also notes that there had been the danger of an imperialist return to Pnompenh.

"It would have been much better if the Kampuchean people themselves had been able to remove Pol Pot and his cohorts." But, he notes, "they could not do so without Vietnamese help."

Vietnam, Ali writes, "should now begin the task of withdrawing its troops from Kampuchea."

Ali states that Teng's "aggressive turn outwards is aimed to bolster his position internally" in a faction fight in the Chinese party leadership.

He concludes that the Vietnamese are "quite capable of dealing with the Chinese incursion.

"But they should do so by mobilising their own people and appealing to Chinese workers and peasants to oppose this bureaucratic escapade. An intervention by the Soviet Union would not benefit anyone."

## Bandera Socialista

*"Socialist Flag," the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party. Published in Mexico City.*

In the February 26 issue, Héctor de la Cueva writes:

"Unlike the conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea, the first being a workers state and the second a country where capitalism had not been eliminated, in the war between China and Vietnam, two states with a mode of production superior to capitalism are locked in confrontation. This can only create confusion and demoralization among the workers who throughout the world are fighting to change capitalist society. . . .

"In the same way that it did in the conflict with Kampuchea, Vietnam is defending itself against an aggression. The accusation of the Chinese government that Vietnam first attacked Chinese towns is only a pretext. . . .

"In reality, the Chinese punitive operation is vengeance for the overthrow of the despotic Pol Pot regime by Vietnamese forces—who undertook this action to defend their frontiers—and by the Kampuchean people themselves. This visibly irritated both China and the American imperialists. . . .

"From the openly counterrevolutionary policy of the Chinese leadership . . . many have drawn the conclusion that China has definitively gone over to the side of impe-

rialism, a claim that is comparable to Peking's attacks against the Soviet Union as 'social imperialist.' Both assertions are totally false. The workers state that emerged from the Chinese revolution remains in place. There has been no counter-revolution. . . .

"Like the Soviet Union, the Chinese bureaucracy promotes detente and 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism. But in its competition with the USSR to be the favored client of the U.S., the Chinese bureaucracy has maintained a more overtly and scandalous collaborationist policy toward imperialism. There is a reason for this.

"The terrible backwardness of the country has been aggravated by the ten years of stagnation caused by Mao's cultural revolution. . . .

"Now they want to modernize China. . . . To achieve this, the Chinese bureaucracy has chosen the road of shameless collaboration with the imperialists, with whom it has made large-scale economic deals. . . .

"No one can believe that the American government is sincere in its supposedly peacemaking and neutral attitude. The imperialists not only knew about, they encouraged the Chinese intervention by their 'denunciation' of the 'Vietnamese invasion' of Kampuchea. Prevented from acting directly by the broad antiwar sentiment in the U.S., the American government utilizes allies, and in this case, what could be better than to use another workers state. . . .

"The Chinese troops should leave Vietnam immediately. We must continue demanding that the U.S. compensate Vietnam for the damage caused during the imperialist war and that the aid that some countries were giving the Vietnamese before the Cambodian events not be suspended."

## Lutte ouvrière

*"Workers Struggle," Paris weekly supported by a grouping of militants who view themselves as Trotskyist in orientation.*

Under the headline "Imperialism Is the Only Winner," the February 24 issue states:

"In crossing the frontier of Vietnam, China wanted to prove it is the guardian of order and the status quo in Southeast Asia and that anyone who threatens the status quo is going to have to deal with Peking.

"This warning is aimed at the entire world, as well as at the governments and peoples of the region. . . . It is designed to prove that not only the USSR's attempts to find allies in this region will run up against the political determination of China but that they will also be met with its military power.

"It is here that the Chinese intervention in Vietnam perfectly serves the interests of the imperialists, of U.S. imperialism in particular. . . .

"Whether or not it is acting in accord with the U.S., China is acting as a de facto ally of Washington. Despite the withdrawal of American troops, Southeast Asia remains a hot spot. But now it is no longer the imperialists who have charge of maintaining order and blocking any attempt by the USSR to extend its influence there. . . .

"It is because Vietnam helped to replace the Cambodian regime with a government friendly to it, that is, indirectly, one less hostile to the USSR, that the Peking leaders decided to 'punish' Vietnam. This role, which up till now was played directly by the American gendarme, will henceforth be assumed by the Chinese gendarme. . . .

"Even if this war remains limited, it will help to open up a gap between these two peoples, who have the same interests in opposing imperialism. . . . On the basis of this division between the peoples of the underdeveloped countries, imperialism will be able to enjoy a few more salad days."

## Internationalen

"The International," central organ of the Communist Workers League, Swedish section of the Fourth International. Published weekly in Stockholm.

"Chinese Troops Out of Vietnam" is the main headline on the front page of the February 23 issue. Inside, a statement by the Political Bureau of the Communist Workers League says:

"Chinese troops have crossed the border into Vietnam. The leadership in Peking said earlier that Vietnam had to be 'taught a lesson' after its invasion of Kampuchea.

"The Communist Workers League is against the invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops and demands their withdrawal.

"But the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea can in no way justify . . . the Chinese army crossing the border into Vietnam.

"In recent years the Peking bureaucracy has attacked the Vietnamese workers state more and more openly. . . .

"The invasion of Vietnam has to be seen against the background of the Chinese bureaucracy's appeals for wide-ranging collaboration between the U.S., West Europe, and China to block the Soviet Union's access to bases and raw materials.

"The Chinese attack on Vietnam must be strongly condemned. It stands in direct opposition to the interests of the Chinese masses. It undermines the defense both of the Chinese and Vietnamese workers states, as well as endangering the victories for which the Vietnamese peoples paid a

heavy price in blood in a decade of struggle.

"Just as the imperialists used Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea as a pretext for renewing their efforts to crush the Vietnamese workers state, they will exploit the Chinese attack for the same purpose.

"After Vietnam's attack on Kampuchea, voices began to be raised calling for United Nations intervention and a halt to aid for Vietnam. After the recent events, these calls are going to be renewed.

"Any attempt to open up the way for the imperialists to take back, under UN cover, what they lost when U.S. imperialism was defeated in 1975 must be strongly opposed.

"Condemnation is growing of the leaderships in Peking, Moscow, Hanoi, and Phnompenh. There can be only one winner in their complex power game—the imperialists. The workers and oppressed throughout the world must now focus their efforts against the imperialists' attempt to exploit the situation for its own ends!

"No UN intervention in Indochina! No halt to aid for Vietnam! Chinese troops out of Vietnam! No use of force in relations among workers states! Democratic rule by the Indochinese masses! For an Indochinese socialist federation!"

## DAILY WORLD

Newspaper of the American Communist Party. Published in New York.

The *Daily World* has been regularly featuring statements by leaders of the pro-Moscow CPUSA calling on the U.S. government to break all ties with the Peking regime over the invasion of Vietnam.

According to a speech by Gus Hall, the general secretary of the CP, reported in the February 27 issue, "while one generation of socialism' has not been able to change the feudalistic warlord mentality, he was confident that 'the Chinese people will teach these leaders a lesson.'"

The same issue reports on a speech by CP youth leader James Steele to a demonstration at the Chinese Mission to the UN. It notes that Steele urged "that there be no trade, no diplomatic relations, no exchanges of any kind 'until the People's Republic of China withdraws from every inch of Vietnamese soil.'"

In a similar vein, the March 2 issue complained that "the Carter administration is encouraging U.S. business to open trade with Beijing (Peking), while dragging its feet on removing obstacles to increased U.S. trade with the Soviet Union."

The *Daily World* also sees the Chinese invasion as part of "the Carter Administration's maneuvers against completion of a SALT II agreement with the Soviet

Union." The February 21 issue quotes the leader of a CP-dominated peace group as saying that the peace movement "must demand that the Carter Administration halt its flirtation with the Beijing regime, demand Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam, and immediately conclude a SALT II agreement."

The March 2 issue quotes a letter from the Puerto Rican CP to President Carter calling "for a condemnation, rather than a statement of neutrality. 'In this adventure of life and death,'" the Puerto Rican CP told the U.S. President, ". . . neutrality makes one an accomplice of the aggressors."

## Guardian

An independent radical newsweekly, published in New York.

"These are sorry days for socialism. . . . China has invaded Vietnam. Vietnam has invaded Kampuchea. The words evoke nausea. Where will it end?"

"Is this why the men and women of the Paris Commune, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Chinese Revolution and a thousand uprisings . . . have so courageously given their blood and lives?"

"Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Ho—imperfect beings all . . . we pity your unquiet sleep."

"Are we now to accept the thesis that war between socialist states is an inevitable, permissible extension of policy, as it is in wars between imperialist states. . . ? We do not accept this. Marxist-Leninists have no material basis for going to war with Marxist-Leninists."

As these quotes from the February 28 issue show, the *Guardian* has been deeply shaken by recent events in Southeast Asia.

Under the front page headline "End the Wars in Indochina!" the *Guardian* "denounces" U.S. imperialism. It "condemns" the Soviet Union for its deviations from Marxism-Leninism that set the stage for the split in the socialist world. It "condemns" China's invasion of Vietnam and its attempts to form an alliance with the U.S. It "criticizes" Vietnam for its invasion of "socialist" Kampuchea. And finally the editors "deplore aspects of the Kampuchean government's road to socialism as ultra-'left' and repressive."

The *Guardian* makes an initial attempt to explain why so much has gone wrong with regimes that it has previously been largely uncritical of. But it cannot get very far since it begins without questioning its assumptions that Stalin and Mao were exemplary Marxist-Leninists.

The following week's issue is headlined "Emergency!" The reference is to the *Guardian's* financial situation, which the editors say has confronted them with the "prospect of going out of business."



# Workers Form Committees to Run Plants and Offices

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following article appeared in the March 9 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

TEHRAN—The Iranian revolution has entered a new stage. A deep confrontation is unfolding between workers committees in the oil fields, factories, and offices and the capitalist government headed by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan.

On February 17, after an appeal by Ayatollah Khomeini, the great majority of workers, students, and shopkeepers ended their months-long general strike and shut-down. But the return to the workplace and schools has not demobilized the struggle. Just the reverse. The Iranian people are now taking confident steps forward to organize themselves to fight for their demands.

They are not waiting for any government—or any individual leader—to carry out the tasks of reconstructing Iranian society for them. Instead, democratically elected workers committees have burst onto the political scene—to the alarm of the Bazargan government and imperial-ism.

“... Nearly every ministry, bank, office or factory has a workers’ committee that must pass on almost every order if it is to have a chance of being carried out,” wrote Nicholas Gage in the February 24 *New York Times*. Rank-and-file airmen and soldiers are demanding the same right to organize in the army, as are students, and others.

### Debate Grips Nation

The entire country is now gripped by a debate—and a struggle—over how to move forward and the interrelated question of democracy—who will decide the fate of the nation?

This debate encompasses far-reaching revolutionary questions: should workers elect their own committees to run the factories? Should rank-and-file soldiers set up their own committees and elect their own officers? Do the oppressed nationalities—the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and Baluchis—have the right to self-determination? Should women organize to win their rights?

Each of these questions points inexorably to the biggest question of all: who should decide the new government? Should a regime be imposed on the people by leaders they never elected? Or should

democratically elected representatives of the workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities—the exploited masses of Iran—become the new government?

The nationwide ferment over these issues has sent Khomeini’s newly appointed government into a tailspin. Bazargan found himself suddenly in office February 12 through an insurrection he neither led nor controlled. Because this was an insurrection from below, capping one of the greatest mass mobilizations and general strikes in history—not a coup from the top—the revolutionary upsurge has been all the more difficult to tame.

On February 14 a grim-faced Bazargan went before the television cameras to explain why he could not meet the demands of the people. Acknowledging that he was besieged by a “flood of revolutionary expectations,” the prime minister pleaded for patience. “Just because you were able to topple the shah in three days, please don’t think I can move as quickly on your demands,” he said.

In point of fact, since taking office, the new government has carried out no social or democratic reforms. In line with the wishes of the bankers, businessmen, and landlords his government is responsible to, Bazargan has been preoccupied with trying to restore capitalist law and order.

The workers, on the other hand, returned to the job with the opposite goal in mind. Their attitude is: “We’ve gotten rid of the shah and his U.S. advisers. So now the factories belong to us. We will run them from now on, through our own democratically elected bodies.”

### Oil Workers

This is the spirit among the oil workers, whose combativity in a strategic industry has thrust them into the vanguard of the revolution.

Initially Bazargan congratulated himself when most of the oil workers returned to the job. But the back-slapping proved short-lived. The workers used the fact that they were all back together again to revive and reorganize their struggle.

The same “problem” runs throughout Iran’s industry. As Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Amir Entezam complained, “Despite the Ayatollah’s commands, none of the major industries in the country are functioning, because workers spend all their time holding political meetings.”

In the oil fields, as elsewhere, the political thrust of these meetings is the fight for workers’ control of the factories. An exam-

ple is the series of demands raised by a group called the Progressive Workers and Employees of the Oil Industry, in Abadan. According to the February 20 *Kayhan International*, this group calls for the rehiring of all fired workers; cancellation of agreements with foreign capitalists who have robbed Iran’s oil resources; opening up the books of the industry to examine current contracts with foreign corporations; and an end to discrimination against production workers and women workers.

To accomplish these tasks the workers have to run the industry. This has led to fights to elect factory committees and to oust the old employers. At one assembly of oil workers shortly after the insurrection, for instance, the participants voted to fire eleven corrupt managers.

The pattern is being repeated throughout the country. Workers at the Ardo factory in Tehran recently sent a letter to the newspapers outlining their demands: control over production; rehiring of fired workers; and better food and housing allowances.

And at Mehrabad Airport outside the city, the workers committee refused to allow airlifts of foreign nationals to take off until it had met and discussed the matter. Not even a letter signed by Bazargan demanding swift passage for the planes produced action. They let the planes leave after they organized the security to ensure that Iranian agents of the old regime could not escape on these flights.

### Bazargan Denounces Soviets

By February 19, Bazargan was compelled to again go on television, this time to polemicize against the spectre of “soviets” haunting his regime. His speech reflected the fear that the Iranian workers would follow the example set by their Russian sisters and brothers in 1917.

It’s all right if workers form committees that play a “consultative role” in decision making, Bazargan said. But there is a “dangerous logic” if the workers begin thinking they should elect their own leadership—either at the factory level or higher.

After all, he explained, if workers elect representatives to run the factories, why not elect representatives to run the cities? And if workers are to decide who runs the cities, why not elect the representatives that run the provinces and the central government as well? For that matter, why not elect the leader of the revolution itself?



"Ah, but this cannot be," Bazargan insisted, "for we already have our national leader—Imam Khomeini." And he is not subject to election—in the capitalist book of rules.

No society can be run from the bottom up, through democratically elected councils or soviets, the prime minister insisted.

The next night another glum-faced representative of the government appeared on television to lecture viewers on workers' control of industry. "The workers want to control the factories, what is produced and how," he complained. "But this is against all laws of commerce and capitalism. In fact, it is the exact opposite of our system."

Instead of their own elected committees, the official continued, workers should dutifully accept the factory delegates Khomeini has appointed for them and respect what these appointees order them to do.

### Dissension in Armed Forces

Just as the workers refuse to kowtow to orders from above, so do the rank-and-file soldiers, particularly the *homafars*, the young skilled workers or technicians in the air force. Having risked their lives before the shah's tanks and machine guns in the battle that sparked the February 9-12 insurrection, the *homafars* were outraged when Bazargan turned around and appointed an old shah loyalist to be the new air force commander.

The appointment of Gen. Saeed Mehdioun led to a series of demonstrations by airmen February 15-17 in Tehran. These were the first street actions against the new government's policies. In other parts of the country, airmen went on strike.

Students, other soldiers, and their relatives joined in the *homafars'* actions, which denounced not only Mehdioun but the whole series of hated generals Bazargan had installed in power. Perhaps the most blatant appointment was that of Mohammed Ali Nowruzi to be the new chief of the national police. Nowruzi was closely associated with SAVAK and its efforts to crush anti-shah guerrillas.

It was only a matter of days before Bazargan was forced to retract his appointments of four top generals and replace them with figures whose records were less tarnished. Both Mehdioun and Nowruzi, along with the proposed heads of the navy and state police, were cashiered in the face of mounting protests.

Axing Mehdioun was not enough to stifle dissent in the Air Force, however. First of all, the airmen are demanding the right to elect their own officers, not to have them appointed.

Moreover, the struggle for democracy in the armed forces has expanded to include other demands: the right to freedom of speech and of the press; the right to organize committees on the bases; the right to vote and to join political parties.

Airmen are also demanding an end to the domination of the U.S. military advis-



Tehran demonstration prior to Khomeini's arrival.

Militant/Cindy Jaquith

ers. They call for keeping the civilian population armed.

### Rebuilding the Army

This program of struggle is having an impact throughout the armed forces, posing a grave problem for the government as it seeks to reconstruct an army that they can use against the rebellious workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities.

During the insurrection, the combat ability and discipline of the old army disintegrated. The process was uneven around the country, however. In Tehran, the elite Royal Guards took heavy casualties in the fighting, while the ground troops were evacuated from the city and sent home. The garrisons were then invaded by the revolutionary force, who seized huge quantities of arms.

As the insurrection spread to other parts of the country, however, some of the generals were more prepared to keep their forces intact. In the oil field city of Ahwaz, for example, the military commanders surrendered to Khomeini before real battles began, thus avoiding a repetition of the rout in Tehran.

On February 19, the troops were recalled to their bases by the government. Only about 50 percent—by official estimates—returned, and far fewer in Tehran.

The government also put the police back on the streets, for the first time in months. But only the traffic cops appeared, and they had to wear Khomeini armbands for protection.

In response to demands for a popular militia, a National Guard has been set up in an attempt to absorb the thousands of youths who have arms and had been functioning on the streets independently of the government. Sensitive to the hatred of generals, the government announced the Guard has only "provisional supervisors"—all colonels.

Nine of the most despised military commanders—such as Monir Taheri,

charged with setting the Abadan theater fire that burned hundreds of people alive last September—have been executed. More than 108 generals have been retired.

It remains to be seen, however, if this will satisfy the demand of the people for the trial and punishment of those who committed the most monstrous crimes during the shah's rule. The government clearly wants to avoid public trials and the revelations this could bring. The nine executions, for example, took place without announcement, after brief secret trials by "Islamic courts."

What relationship the new army will have with U.S. military advisers is another open question.

On February 20 Gen. Mohammed Vali Qarani, the new chief of staff of the armed forces, suggested American military advisers be invited back to Iran soon. He also said the government would probably live up to an agreement made by the shah to never release American-made weapons to other semicolonial countries or to national liberation movements.

This includes the Palestine Liberation Organization, Qarani emphasized. His statement pointedly coincided with the tour of Iran by PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who received a hero's welcome from the Iranian people. During his visit, Arafat warned the masses in a speech in Mashad that their revolution "is not finished" and that U.S. imperialism remains a major threat throughout the Middle East.

### Kurdish Struggle

Although the armed forces are still in a shambles, the government is seriously threatening to militarily suppress another explosive challenge to its rule, the liberation movement in Kurdistan. Media reports from this province—while scanty and often contradictory—confirm that battles between armed Kurdish youths and guerrillas on one side, and the army and police on the other, have continued since



Student defense guard at Tehran University after insurrection.

Cindy Jaquith/Militant

the insurrection. Many Kurds have been killed.

One report said that a representative of the central government sent to Kurdistan to be part of the new government there was arrested by the people. Another representative reportedly was shot on arrival.

Khomeini has meanwhile lashed out at the Kurdish national struggle, with a hostility scarcely distinguishable from the shah. Branding the Kurdish resistance "divisive," he said February 19, "I will not tolerate this uncultured behavior. I shall regard this as an uprising against the Islamic revolution."

Khomeini's charges slander the Kurdish people, who along with the Azerbaijanis and Baluchis, the other largest oppressed nationalities, have historically played a vanguard role in the Iranian revolution. They suffered some of the highest casualties of the last year's battles. Joining together with the rest of the country's population to overthrow the shah, these nationalities also raised their own democratic demands: for the right to use their own language, observe their own culture, and for their own autonomous governments.

Nothing could be more "divisive" or "antirevolutionary" in Iran today than to

deny these rights. The Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Arabs, and other oppressed national groups represent 60 percent of the country's population. A firm alliance between them and the rest of the working class—based on the right of the oppressed peoples to self-determination—is crucial to preserving and extending the revolution.

A weakness of the revolution is the lack of organization among the peasantry. Sections of the peasantry participated in the mass demonstrations against the shah's regime and took action to eliminate representatives of that regime in the villages. There have been some seizures of farm equipment and animals from landlords.

But to win the peasantry, the revolution will have to meet its social demands—for land, better credit and marketing conditions, and so on. The Bazargan government is opposed to these demands, and Khomeini has issued warnings against the expropriations some peasants have carried out. It will take a revolutionary working-class leadership to champion such a deep-going agrarian revolution.

The Bazargan government has also resorted to censorship in the media in a desperate attempt to bring the country under its control. Like its other attacks on democratic rights, this has met with anger.

The protests began when Bazargan appointed Sadeq Ghotbzadeh to run the media. Prior to this, the radio and television workers, who had liberated their stations from the marital law authorities, made their air waves available to all political groups. Detailed news was offered for the first time in years. Exposés were run on SAVAK, the prisons, and other features of the degenerate old regime. The radio and television became organization centers in the last hours of the insurrection, alerting the population to areas of the city in need of armed reinforcements or hospitals in need of blood donations.

Once Ghotbzadeh arrived on the scene, however, the iron fist of censorship was back. No more political statements from organizations—of the left in particular—were read. The news became dry and vague, filled with official government statements.

There was a rebellion among the television workers, who threatened to strike if the censorship continued.

Even the *Tehran Journal*, which is generally pro-Khomeini, felt obliged to speak out. In an editorial on February 18, the *Journal* said: "The way Ghotbzadeh runs the station, you'd think he was an old hand, except that his censorship is far



worse than the old: 'No reds under the camera here, please, this is an Islamic station. . . .'

The *Journal* mocked Ghotbzadeh's claim to represent the cultural interests of the "barefoot proletariat." "Someone should tell him that the proletariat is yawning as widely as everyone else at his revolutionary broadcasts," the editors wrote.

In closing they called for an open political debate on television and radio: "How about a discussion or two on where we go from here? Isn't it time for all Iranians, who actually fought most of the revolution while Ghotbzadeh was sitting in Paris, to join in the great debate about the future of our country and this includes the leftists, who in a democracy are just as entitled to a voice as anyone else."

These protests forced the government to back down part way. It established a council to monitor the media, which includes Ghotbzadeh and other government appointees but also has representatives from the television and radio workers, and writers and lawyers associated with the fight against the shah's censorship.

The result has been a compromise, with lectures by mullahs broadcast side by side with some fine examples of revolutionary journalism.

The other most serious invasion of civil liberties has been a ban on public demonstrations issued by Khomeini. On February 17, armed supporters of the Ayatollah ringed a demonstration of *homafars* and other soldiers and their families opposed to Bazargan's military appointments. There were no incidents, but the government went on a big campaign to intimidate people from joining the airmen. The radio announced the morning of the action that participants were "betrayers of the revolution." And in the midst of the rally, a soundtrack from Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Committee disrupted the speeches, urging people to get off the streets and go to work. But the crowd, about 5,000, held its ground.

A week later, Khomeini made his sharpest attack on democratic rights to date by banning a planned march by the People's Fedayeen guerrilla group. First he made a provocative speech calling on his own armed supporters to "take their posts" against an unnamed "enemy." The next day he named the enemy as the Fedayeen, whom he called "antirevolutionary."

Faced with the possibility of a violent confrontation, the Fedayeen canceled the march and held a public meeting at Tehran University, together with other forces, including the Iranian Socialist Workers Party. More than 100,000 people turned out in a massive show of defiance for Khomeini's antidemocratic policies.

This meeting was an important test of the relationship of forces between the masses and the government. It underscored the fact that the government is in no position today to launch a real crackdown

## Japanese Chemical Workers Voice Solidarity

Chemical workers in Japan have begun a campaign in solidarity with the Iranian revolution.

The Japanese Trotskyist weekly *Seikai Kakumei* reported February 12 that activists at the Mitsui Toatsu Chemical Company launched an educational campaign at eight of the company's plants and offices in late January, calling attention to the company's investments in Iran, condemning its complicity with the Iranian government, and urging support for the Iranian people's demand that foreign corporations get out.

Mitsui Toatsu is part of a group of Japanese companies that hold a 50 percent share in the huge petrochemical complex under construction at the Persian Gulf town of Bandar-e Shahpur, near Abadan in southwestern Iran. The \$2.75 billion complex is one of the biggest industrial plants in Iran, and is also the largest single foreign investment by Japanese capital.

As late as mid-January, when most foreign operations in Iran had already been shut down, work on the Bandar-e Shahpur complex was continuing under the protection of a platoon of Iranian

army troops. At the peak of construction work, a total of 8,000 workers, including 3,400 from Japan, were employed on the project.

Iranian laborers, working in the sweltering heat and humidity, received wages as low as \$2 a day. They lived in tents, and were forced to pay for drinking water.

Japanese engineers, on the other hand, got fully air-conditioned facilities. Japanese personnel were represented by a company union, whose list of demands for "improved conditions" reportedly included such points as "guaranteeing security"—in other words, bring in more troops and SAVAK agents.

The rising mass movement finally brought construction at Bandar-e Shahpur to a halt, and forced Japanese firms to start evacuating their employees, leaving the huge plant only 85 percent completed. On February 14, however, Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan met with the Japanese ambassador in Tehran, and reportedly assured him that the new government would try to bring about a speedy resumption of work at Bandar-e Shahpur.

on the people.

While the government is reconstructing a new state apparatus, the question of its authority is still undecided. Thus far, it has been unable to effectively block the deepening demands for democracy in all spheres and the interrelated social and economic demands raised by the masses.

Under pressure, Khomeini was forced February 19 to issue a statement declaring people's right to disagree with his government. "Mistakes must be pointed out and criticized," he said. "I never said you should accept mistakes by decision-makers. . . . In speech, in writing, in journalism, there is perfect freedom."

The very next day, however, he launched his diatribe against the Fedayeen.

Bazargan has also made contradictory statements. At one point he declared the Stalinist Tudeh Party "illegal," but later turned around and said that "communists" could serve in the government if elected.

It is understandable in this situation that Bazargan is reluctant to make any decisive moves toward elections of a new government and will do everything he can to avoid a freely elected sovereign constituent assembly. Some trial balloons have been floated: A referendum on "Do you want a monarchy or an Islamic republic?"; another possible referendum on a draft constitution, which no one but the govern-

ment has thus far seen; or vague promises of elections for a constituent assembly that would rubber-stamp such a constitution.

The provisional government would far prefer, however, to stabilize itself before putting anything up to a vote.

The immediate problem is that the Bazargan government has little credibility. It lacks both authority among the people and the enforcement powers of a disciplined army.

As a result Khomeini—either in his own name or in the name of his Islamic Revolutionary Committee—has taken responsibility for all the major steps of the new regime. Because of his uncompromising stand against the shah throughout his exile and upon his return to Iran—while members of his newly appointed cabinet wavered on the monarchy—Khomeini earned the respect of the Iranian masses. The new regime is now banking on his past record to bring those same masses into line.

Thus it was Khomeini, not Bazargan, who called on civilians to turn in their arms after the insurrection, telling the masses it was a "sin" to hold onto their guns. It was Khomeini who ordered the banning of demonstrations. And it is Khomeini who has launched the sharpest attacks on those advocating democratic rights, labeling them "antirevolutionary."

However, by using his authority to try to

enforce unpopular measures, Khomeini is also beginning to use it up.

Wherever possible, Khomeini has sought to use the Islamic Revolutionary Committee to absorb the independent committees that have sprung up, or to take over the leadership of these committees where necessary.

No one knows who is on the Islamic Revolutionary Committee, which has been centered in Tehran. Its meetings are secret. Similar committees have been set up in the other major cities, where they appear to play the same role of directing the local government.

Now that the strikes are over but the factory committees have been revived, the Islamic Revolutionary Committee is trying to appoint the leadership of these bodies over the heads of the workers. This has brought the demand for elected factory committees to the fore.

During Khomeini's exile, the workers had some bitter experiences with orders imposed from above. Spokespersons for the Ayatollah within Iran established a Strike Coordinating Committee, which really functioned more like a strikebreaking committee. It sought to get the oil workers to end their strike but met resistance. It succeeded in convincing the postal workers and dock workers to go back to work, but the workers had misgivings. The postal workers, for example, carried out a slow-down after returning to work and continued their political meetings on the job.

Representatives speaking in Khomeini's name also functioned in the other strike committees. They were usually the higher-paid employees—technicians, office workers, or engineers. Their undemocratic practices were resented by the lower-paid workers.

#### Neighborhood Committees

The Islamic Revolutionary Committee has also tried to bring under control the popular committees that carry out neighborhood defense.

Before the insurrection, neighborhood committees arose in areas like south Tehran, a poor working-class section. These committees, which functioned out of the mosques, distributed supplies made scarce by the general strike, organized to deal with health problems, and carried out some self-defense activities.

During the insurrection itself, these committees sprang into action, setting up barricades and, once they were armed, patrolling the streets. Defense teams spread to the rest of the city as well.

Despite Khomeini's plea to disarm, the neighborhood defense network persisted after the insurrection. Armed teams searched cars at night for arms caches being transported by counterrevolutionaries. They sought out and captured criminals of the old regime and some foreign intelligence agents. These people were

arrested and turned over to Khomeini's headquarters.

The new regime cannot tolerate such independent armed groups administering even sections of the city for long. One means of undercutting these groups has been the establishment of the National Guard, which has tried to recruit the armed youths. Another has been to recentralize the neighborhood committees in the mosques, so all the arms are kept there and parceled out each night only to those approved by the mullahs.

It remains to be seen how successful Khomeini will be. He has been unable to convince the Fedayeen to relinquish their weapons. The Mujahedeen, an Islamic guerrilla group, functioned in the first days after the insurrection as an armed wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Committee.

## What Iranian Trotskyists Are Calling For

[The following article appeared in the March 9 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

TEHRAN—The Iranian masses overthrew the shah and his hated regime in one of the most powerful and sustained mass mobilizations in history. In the deepening revolutionary situation subsequent to the February 9-12 insurrectionary uprising, the following are among the main points being raised by the Iranian Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist (Socialist Workers Party—Iranian section of the Fourth International):

- For the development, extension, and coordination of the democratic committees of the toiling masses in the factories and offices, in the armed forces, and in the neighborhoods.

The committees should be run completely democratically, elected by the toilers and soldiers, and with all political parties and viewpoints given equal rights.

The objective is the formation of broadly based councils or soviets of workers', soldiers', and toilers' delegates to fight for the needs, interests, and rights of the masses.

- For workers' control of the factories and offices through the workers committees. Open the books of the enterprises to the workers committees and public. Immediate expropriation of the properties of the shah and the royal family, and of the imperialists. Expropriation of the banks, oil industry, and other key branches of the economy.

- Build the alliance between the workers and peasants. Land, cheap credit, ade-

quate machines and fertilizers, and guaranteed markets for the peasants. Access to adequate irrigation.

But in the widening fight against the government's antidemocratic decrees, the Mujahedeen has begun to differentiate itself from Khomeini's policies. In a statement February 25, the group said it supports the Fedayeen's demand that workers be allowed to elect their own leadership. And it denounced threats to use the National Guard to repress left groups.

Whether Iran's new rulers can stem the "flood of revolutionary expectations" will be determined by the masses themselves, who have thus far shown the same determination to complete their revolution as they expressed by the millions in the fight against the shah.

As one "Western expert" quoted in the March 5 *U.S. News and World Report* put it: "This country has tasted revolution. The Ayatollah may find that stopping one is much harder than starting it." □

- Against the attempts of the capitalist government to rebuild the old army, the rank-and-file soldiers committees should elect all officers and forge links with the workers committees and armed civilians to build an armed force under the control of the soldiers and toilers committees.

- Against the attempts of the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Committee to impose censorship and restrict democratic rights. The workers, soldiers, and toilers committees serve as the only guarantee of the protection and extension of democracy.

- Key democratic rights that must be fought for now are freedom of religion and the separation of church and state, equal rights for women, and for the right to self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, including the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and Baluchis.

- No imposition of a government or of a constitution from above. For the immediate convocation of a freely elected, sovereign constituent assembly to decide these and other questions facing the masses.

- No capitalist government can meet the demands and needs of the toiling masses; the opposite is the case. For a workers and peasants republic, a government based on broad, democratic councils of the workers, soldiers, and toilers.

- For the defense of all the conquests of the revolution against domestic reaction and imperialism.

- Workers and toilers of the world: Come to the aid of the Iranian revolution by demanding that the imperialists keep their hands off Iran!



## Brazilian Socialists on Trial

SAO PAULO—Twenty-five members of the Socialist Convergence organization went on trial here February 19. They are charged with "subversion" and face up to five years in prison.

Since its founding in January 1978, Socialist Convergence has carried out legal, public efforts aimed at organizing a new socialist party. It has complied with the regime's own laws for doing so. Nonetheless, twenty-three of the organization's leaders were arrested by the São Paulo political police last August 22, shortly after the group's first national congress.

The arrests touched off street demonstrations by students, various protest meetings, and a hunger strike in support of the prisoners. Internationally, messages of protest came from trade unions, human-rights groups, and even from parliamentary deputies in Colombia, Peru, France, Spain, and Portugal. By September 18, all but eight of the socialists had been released.

Then on October 30 two more leaders of Socialist Convergence were seized at the group's public headquarters in São Paulo. After further protests, the ten remaining prisoners were released on December 7. This marked the first time that the military dictatorship has released prisoners charged with subversion before a trial.

Socialist Convergence has continued to receive broad support in its defense efforts. Trade unionists, religious leaders, student groups, and the Brazilian Committee for Amnesty have registered their outrage about this attack on opponents of the military regime.

On the third day of the trial, Congressional deputy Edson Kahir of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo state legislative deputy Geraldo Siqueiro both testified on the defendants' behalf. They affirmed the legality of Socialist Convergence's goals, and defended the democratic right to form political organizations. They also called for a broad, general, and unrestricted amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles.

The military government is accusing the socialists of violating three articles of Brazil's National Security Law—Article 12, "contribution to the organization of a clandestine organization with international connections"; Article 41, "reorganization of a clandestine organization"; and Article 43, "participation in written and oral propaganda and agitation against the government." If convicted, the activists could be sentenced to up to five years in jail.

During the first two days of the trial, the testimony of two government witnesses turned out to be full of holes and was thrown out of court.

The night porter of the building where several of the activists were arrested de-

clared that the police entered the apartment of the Socialist Convergence members on the night of the arrest and stayed there until the next day. The cops then left with allegedly subversive material found there. The judge was forced to rule that the evidence supposedly seized in the apartment was inadmissible because it had not been taken in the presence of those arrested.

"They had all night to forge any kind of document that they wanted to," commented Maria Jose Lourenço, one of the arrested socialists, at a news conference about the trial.

A second government witness broke down during defense questioning and admitted that he had been prompted by the police before coming to court.

Julio Tavares, National Coordinator of the Socialist Convergence, explained at the news conference why the socialist activists were arrested:

## Repression Continues in Colombia

"Not a day goes by without new raids and arrests by Colombia's military forces," *IP/I* correspondent Miguel Fuentes reported from Bogotá on February 17.

Among the most recent victims of the repressive campaign of the Turbay Ayala government is César Torres, a member of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR—Revolutionary Socialist Party), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. Torres, an economist, was arrested at his home at 5 a.m. on February 20 by agents of the B-2—army intelligence. They ransacked his house and confiscated his library.

Torres's arrest shows "the phoniness of the statements of President Turbay, who claims that 'in Colombia no one is arrested for their political opinions,'" a PSR news release declares.

Further proof of this was provided by the February 13 raid on the Bogotá offices of the newspaper *El Socialista*, organ of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), also a sympathizing group of the Fourth International. This attack was carried out by the army. Troops confiscated the newspaper's archives and funds and arrested four PST activists—Rodolfo Galindo, Carlos Alberto Trujillo, Alvaro Niño, and Isabel Lorens.

The four were released two days later. An officer told them this was because the government wanted no more "scandal" and "noise."

The raids on Torres's home and the PST's offices were but two of hundreds of human-rights violations carried out in recent months by the Turbay government

"The Socialist Convergence offers a real threat to the government because we are demanding things that challenge the very basis of the military regime. We are actively supporting the recent call by metalworkers union leaders in São Paulo to form a workers party. We are involved in the struggles for trade-union independence from government control. We are demanding the restoration of full democratic liberties. The false charges against us are an attempt on the part of the government to defuse the social forces such as the independent trade-union movement and rank-and-file militancy that we have been involved in building."

The dates for the closing statements by the prosecution and defense, and for judgment and sentencing, have not been set so far. According to Tavares, this could come some time in March. Letters or telegrams demanding the dropping of all charges against the socialist activists should be sent to Brazilian embassies or to Ministro Armando Falcão, Ministério da Justiça, CEP 70064, Brasília, Brasil. □

under its Security Statute decreed in September 1978 and the "state of emergency" imposed in January. The regime claims these are necessary measures to combat the guerrilla group known as the April 19 Movement (M-19), which carried out a spectacular New Year's Eve raid on an army weapons depot.

The army has dealt heavy blows to the M-19, arresting many of its members and recovering the vast bulk of the stolen arms.

But the repression has been by no means limited to, or even aimed at, the M-19. Hundreds of persons have been arrested, and many have been brutally tortured. Besides attacking the PSR and the PST, the government has also arrested members of the leftist group Firmes and a number of artists and intellectuals.

A movement is growing in opposition to Turbay's repression. Some 400 persons attended a February 1 rally at the Free University in Bogotá, where representatives of various trade unions and political and human-rights organizations denounced the more than 300 cases of torture, disappearances, and arrests.

Several trade unions have called for national actions against the Security Statute, the "state of emergency," and the torture.

Letters and telegrams demanding an immediate halt to torture, due process of law, and the release of César Torres and all the other political prisoners should be sent to Colombian embassies or to Julio César Turbay Ayala, Presidente de la República, Bogotá, Colombia. □

## Fresh Struggles for Democratic Rights in Soviet Union

By George Saunders

New struggles in the Soviet Union on several different fronts indicate that the pressure for democratization continues to find avenues of expression. This is despite a certain disorientation among dissidents over the last two years as a result of illusions about Carter's "human rights" campaign, and despite constant repression by the ruling bureaucracy, which recently applied the death penalty to three dissidents. (See accompanying article.)

### 'Left Opposition'

In Leningrad, some two hundred young persons, including students from at least four universities, participated in a demonstration at Kazan Cathedral on December 5, which is observed as "Constitution Day" by the Soviet civil-rights movement. They were protesting reprisals against a group using the name "Left Opposition."

Reports are sketchy on the exact nature, extent, and activities of this grouping, but a certain amount of information has become available. The following is a summary of what is known at present.

Early in October 1978, KGB searches were made of the homes of members of the group, and samizdat materials were confiscated. Aleksandr Skobov, a twenty-year-old history student at Leningrad University and a leader of the "Left Opposition," was arrested and charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

Since the October arrests as many as forty persons have been called in for questioning. The family of one of the detainees has been told that the interrogations will continue at least until March. The main topics the political police seem to be interested in are the production and distribution of a samizdat journal called *Perspectives* and alleged plans to hold a national conference of left-wing groups.

Aleksandr Skobov had operated the Leningrad "commune" for a year and a half before his arrest. According to dissident sources in Moscow, this was a house where young people from many parts of the USSR—including Moscow, the Baltic republics, Byelorussia, and Moldavia—could find lodging and a place to hold wide-ranging discussions on politics, philosophy, and the arts. Authorities closed down the "commune" in September 1978.

On October 14, 1978, two more reputed members of the "Left Opposition" were arrested in Leningrad on charges of "hooliganism." One, Andrei Besov, was from Moscow; the other from Gorky, an industrial city on the Volga northeast of Mos-

cow. His name was Viktor Vladlenovich Pavlenkov. His father, a history teacher at a technical institute in Gorky, had been arrested in 1969 and sentenced to seven years in a labor camp in connection with an attempt to form a group calling for



ROY MEDVEDEV

democratic rights and the rehabilitation of all the victims of the 1936-38 trials.

There was unusual ferment in university circles in Gorky at the time. A document written from a Marxist viewpoint by history students, entitled *The State and Socialism*, was circulating there. (See *Intercontinental Press*, July 27, 1970, p. 700.)

### 'Election 79'

Meanwhile a group calling itself "Election 79"—a clear echo of the name of the Czechoslovak human-rights group Charter 77—has tried to place the names of two dissidents on ballots as candidates in the March 4 elections for the Supreme Soviet.

This effort, announced on February 2, attempts to use against the bureaucracy the formality of Soviet elections, which has been preserved since the time of the 1917 revolution. (Similarly, the Soviet constitution formally allows free speech, freedom of association and assembly, and freedom of the press. Thus a key demand of Soviet rights fighters is "Respect the constitution.")

In practice, of course, the bureaucracy uses its one-party system and the ban on factions within the party to control "elections" and allow only its selected candidates to run and win. Yet under the letter of Soviet law any organization can nominate a candidate. (The catch is that only approved organizations have been allowed to exist, although that situation has been challenged more and more in the last decade.)

The candidates nominated by Election

79 are dissident Marxist historian Roy Medvedev and Liudmilla Agapova, the cofounder of a workers' rights group formed recently in Moscow and the wife of exiled Soviet dissident Valentin Agapov, a merchant seaman who left his ship in Sweden in 1974. Agapova has unsuccessfully sought to leave the USSR to join her husband.

The head of Election 79 is Vladimir Sychyov, a photographer and art dealer. He announced February 6 that the two local electoral boards in the Moscow area that had accepted the nomination papers for Medvedev and Agapova were refusing to actually place the dissidents' names on printed ballots. The reason given was that Election 79 is not an officially registered organization. Sychyov said the decision was being appealed to the central elections commission.

Election 79 claims about forty members. They are mostly "ordinary workers and religious believers," as Roy Medvedev described the members who visited him. Medvedev also said, according to an account in the February 3 *New York Times*:

"I don't know this organization myself. Maybe in a group of that many people there are some bad ones, but the idea is not bad. It will be an interesting political experiment."

### 'Metropol'

On a third front, a group of Soviet writers have produced a "literary almanac" entitled *Metropol* and are asking that it be officially published *without any changes*. This group includes some of the country's best-known literary figures: poets Andrei Voznesensky and Bella Akhmadulina, actor and singer Vladimir Vysotsky, and prose writers Vasily Aksyonov, Fazil Iskander, and Andrei Bitov.

*Metropol* represents a direct challenge to the bureaucracy's all-embracing censorship. It comes from circles that are not at all noted for militancy or dissidence. In fact, their effort is primarily literary. Nevertheless, because the bureaucracy insists on rigid control over the printed word, the move has political implications.

The appearance of *Metropol* is the first indication of stirrings among the liberal circles in the official Soviet cultural establishment since the 1967-68 period. As such it surely reflects broader discontent felt by these barometers of social moods.

In 1970 the liberals' control of two literary monthlies *Novy Mir* (New World) and



*Yunost* (Youth), was ended by a reshuffling of editorial boards (see *Intercontinental Press*, January 17, 1972). More and more the editorial boards of publishing houses and literary publications are now controlled by conformists loyal to the regime or by Russian-nationalist elements (often referred to as neo-Slavophiles). It is significant that *Metropol's* editors and contributors include Akhmadulina, a Tatar; Iskander, an Abkhazian; and several Soviet Jewish writers, as well as Russian anti-Stalinist liberals. Half of the twenty-three writers in the *Metropol* collection are members of the official Writers Union and have been officially published up to now.

The request for full and free publication of *Metropol* was made to the Moscow branch of the Writers Union on January 18. On January 22 the Moscow branch rejected the request. The head of the branch reportedly even warned the writers that their journal—which tries to break such nonpolitical taboos as explicit reference to sexual activity—might, of all things, “sabotage the SALT talks”!

Since the rejection, a number of reprisals have been taken against the writers involved. A café in which the *Metropol* editors had planned to present their “almanac” to the Moscow literary community was closed the day of the intended party.

Six typewritten copies of *Metropol* are reported to be circulating in Moscow, and it is being republished in the United States. In their preface, “with purity of heart” (i.e., with clean consciences), the editors invite anyone who so wishes to read it.

The *Washington Post* reported on February 4 that the five editors of *Metropol* had been “called in and upbraided by officials of the Soviet Writers Union and several others have been threatened with expulsion.”

Meanwhile, the *Post* said, films, plays, novels, and other publications containing works by any of the twenty-three contributors to *Metropol* are being withdrawn from circulation. For example, a film with a screenplay by one of the editors, Andrei Bitov, “was removed from several Moscow theatres where it was playing to large audiences.”

#### 'Poiski'

Another unauthorized publication has recently appeared in Moscow, but this one is explicitly political. It is called *Poiski* (Searchings) and is produced by a number of veterans of the Soviet Communist Party of the 1920s, including Lev Kopelev and Raissa Lert. Most have been expelled from the bureaucratized party of today but still consider themselves socialists.

They are apparently trying to continue the type of prosocialist publication that Roy Medvedev brought out in 1975 and 1976 under the title *Twentieth Century*. Medvedev suspended publication after po-

lice threats. A number of *Poiski* supporters had contributed to *Twentieth Century*.

According to the *Washington Post* dispatch quoted earlier, the founders of *Poiski* issued a protest over the secret-police searches of their homes at the end of January, reporting that the KGB had confiscated some of their materials.

There have been other, similar developments in the recent months, including the formation of a new independent workers' association to replace the group led by Vladimir Klebanov broken up by the KGB in February 1978.

The overall significance of these continuing outbreaks of struggle was well de-

## Framed Up in 1977 Subway Blast

## Kremlin Executes Three Armenian Dissidents

By Marilyn Vogt

Three Armenians were sentenced to death and executed in the USSR in the last days of January in connection with a Moscow subway explosion two years earlier. The three had been convicted at a trial that was closed to their relatives and friends.

On January 8, 1977, an explosion in a Moscow subway killed at least four passengers. Within two days' time official government sources were leaking a report that the explosion and deaths had resulted from a terrorist bomb planted by “a dissident group.” The explosion served as a pretext for police searches and harassment of numerous activists in the civil-rights movement.

More than 300 activists from a wide range of dissident groups signed a statement repudiating the Kremlin's charges and the police pressure against the movement, and reiterating their commitment to fight for democratic rights through legal and open means. Andrei Sakharov called for a public investigation of the explosion and stated the blast may have been “the latest and most dangerous provocation in recent years by the repressive organs.”

No public investigation of the explosion was to occur.

Of the three Armenians executed, the name of only one is known—Stepan Zatikyan, a thirty-three-year old worker and former Yerevan University student. Zatikyan had served a four-year term after a 1968 trial on charges of helping to produce a paper that defended the Armenian language and culture.

According to Armenian dissidents cited in the January 30 *Washington Post*, Zatikyan and two other Armenians were arrested in November 1977 and “accused of conspiracy to plant a bomb in the Kursk railway station.” Apparently, however, no

attempt was made by the rulers at that time to link the three with the Moscow explosion. In June 1978, the Soviet news agency TASS reported several arrests in connection with the Moscow subway explosion but gave no names.

Zatikyan's relatives were informed of his trial, verdict, and sentence on January 26, 1979. They immediately traveled to Moscow to seek the help of Andrei Sakharov in publicizing the case internationally. Sakharov held a news conference in Moscow January 29.

All that has become known thus far about the trial of Zatikyan and the other two defendants is Sakharov's report that witnesses who could have confirmed that Zatikyan was not in Moscow at the time of the subway explosion were not allowed to testify at the trial.

The convictions were confirmed by TASS on January 30, and by the official government newspaper *Izvestia* on February 1. The latter reported that “Zatikyan and his accomplices were sentenced to the exceptional measure of punishment—the death penalty. The sentence has been carried out.”

Opposition to Russification in the Armenian Republic has generated numerous protests over the past decade, most recently in April 1978, when the Kremlin rulers tried to extend the predominance of the Russian language in the Transcaucasian republics.

With its “exceptional measure of punishment,” so swiftly implemented and announced in the government newspaper, the Kremlin hopes to intimidate other Armenians and terrorize all opponents of Russification into silence.

That the Kremlin would resort to such a measure seems to indicate that anti-Russification sentiment is becoming stronger in the Armenian republic. □

# Spain on Eve of Elections

By Angel Muñoz

The December 6, 1978, referendum on Spain's new constitution resulted in a slight majority of "yes" votes in the country as a whole—59.4%. In Euzkadi, a majority voted against the constitution (only 27.34% "yes" votes in Guipúzcoa and 31.14% in Vizcaya).

Two major events had taken place prior to this. During the night of November 16-17 a section of the military command attempted what has been called "Operation Galaxy." They tried to take over the Moncloa Palace, home of President Adolfo Suárez, to demand that the king form a strong, right-wing government and that the constitution be suspended. Three days later, on the anniversary of Franco's death, 100,000 fascists gathered in Madrid to demand the return of the dictatorship. There was probably a connection between these two events.

On December 27, the government decided not to renew the Moncloa Pact between the trade-union federations, the bosses, and the government. It dictated a decree-law that limited pay raises to 13%. Two days later, President Suárez announced the timetable for the elections—dissolution of the Cortes, general elections on March 9, 1979, municipal elections on April 3. The statute on autonomy for the oppressed nationalities was to be held in abeyance until the end of the election period.

As 1979 opened, the Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna (ETA—Basque Nation and Freedom) made a qualitative change in its terrorist strategy and began direct attacks on army officers. In this way, Commander Herrera was killed in San Sebastián, and immediately afterward, General Ortín, the military governor of Madrid. The crisis in the army broke out afresh. General Ortín's funeral gave a section of the military command, representing the most reactionary wing of the army, an opportunity to protest against the vice president, Lieutenant-General Mellado, sponsor of the military reform the government is carrying out; and against the king himself.

A few days later, Military Police chief General Bartret and several superior officers of that outfit turned in their resignations. The wave of resignations threatened to spread to all the superior officers of the most important state security bodies.

Finally, it should be noted that the elections are being held at a time when a large number of labor struggles are taking place. The level of strikes is reminiscent of the first six months of 1976, both because

of the large number of workers taking part in them (there were 600,000 persons on strike on January 11 alone), and because of the breadth of these strikes across the country (telephone system, banks, the schools, and branches of industry such as metals).

These strikes are the direct result of the fact that the trade-union leaderships (of the Workers Commissions and the UGT)<sup>1</sup> have rejected the government's offers for

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### The Moncloa Pact led to a drop in workers' real wages . . .

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the first time in the three and a half years of the social pact.

Today, on the eve of the elections, Spain's army is experiencing the biggest crisis in its history. It is also the biggest crisis the UCD (Democratic Center Union) government has ever had to face. Moreover, the government can no longer count on the support of parliament.

But the biggest problem for the workers movement is that these crises are not the result of its mobilizations. Even worse is the fact that the workers movement has not responded to any of the attempted coups or fascist provocations. Its dominant leaderships have mobilized it exclusively against ETA terrorism, in solidarity with the army.

The political crisis is relatively unaffected by the economic struggles. The effect of a year and a half of the union leaderships' policy of an economic pact with the bourgeois government has been to keep the working class deeply demoralized.

In the pre-election period, the leaderships of the PSOE<sup>2</sup> and the Communist Party are calling for a continuation of that policy, going so far as to declare the need for a coalition government.

Moreover, it is clear that the bourgeoisie cannot expect to win a significant victory over the workers parties, and that it will have to continue relying on close and active collaboration with these parties if it is to continue to rule. So the shaky equilibrium that has existed in Spain for several months will extend beyond the elections.

The Moncloa pact was signed in the

1. Unión General de Trabajadores (General Workers Union).

2. Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party).

autumn of 1977 by all the political parties represented in parliament. These parties agreed to an economic and political program that was the UCD's from beginning to end. The PSOE and CP forced the trade unions to swallow this pact, including its wage restraints. The arguments put forward at that time were that it was the best way to reabsorb unemployment and that it provided "social concessions in the areas of health, housing, and so forth."

In the political realm, the Moncloa pact implied acceptance of the Suárez government's proposals for reforming the police and army. It set back a solution to the problems of the oppressed nationalities by accepting the formation of "pre-autonomy" bodies (which were supposed to prepare the way for granting autonomy to Catalonia, Euzkadi, and other nationalities).

The text of the new constitution was drafted according to what has been called "the policy of consensus." This meant getting the political parties' prior agreement on the document before it was discussed in parliament. In fact, the only opposition that was voiced to the constitution—drafted by forces ranging from the Popular Alliance (represented by Fraga, minister of the interior at the time of the Vitoria massacre) to the CP—came from the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), a minority opposition grouping that proposed reestablishing the system of *fueros* or privileges of self-government accepted by the Spanish monarchy, that had existed in Euzkadi since the Middle Ages. The PNV abstained on the final vote because it had not gotten its way. A few individual deputies also voted against the proposed text.

The effects of "consensus" can be seen in figures. In terms of wages, the Moncloa Pact was scrupulously adhered to, to say the least. Nowhere did pay raises go beyond the 22% limit that had been set, and in the great majority of plants, increases fluctuated between 16% and 18%. This signified a drop in real buying power for the workers.

At the same time, unemployment went up by 500,000, chiefly young people. There was a cutback in the social security budget when the reform of the hospital system began, with the threat that health services would be returned to the private sector.

In education, the pact provided for the creation of 700,000 new teaching jobs. The cost of this project (40 billion pesetas, or US\$560 million) was to be covered by an



increase in the public debt. Although a portion of this amount was placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Education, no major steps were ever taken.

Another so-called "social concession" contained in the Moncloa Pact had to do with agricultural policy. But the only thing actually carried out was elections to the "agricultural chambers," which met with strong opposition from the peasant organizations because of their undemocratic character.

In the political realm the results were equally negative. The "consensus" constitution makes no mention of democratic rights for government employees, stipulates that a strike may be declared "non-existent" if it "interferes with the lives of citizens," institutionalizes the market economy, legalizes lockouts, dismisses the right to self-determination and sovereignty for the oppressed nationalities, does not recognize women's right to abortion, protects private education (which receives numerous state subsidies), and so forth.

Within the framework of the "consensus," the fascists—who tasted defeat in the June 15, 1977 elections—have been able to rebuild their forces, consolidate their ties with sectors of the armed forces and police, and reappear as a danger to the workers.

It is necessary to go into a little more detail on one aspect of the current situation—the ETA's terrorist campaign. In the last year and a half, the ETA has

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### **ETA's armed actions are totally detrimental to the working class . . .**

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noticeably stepped up its activities. The army has become its principal target. In Euzkadi, these terrorist actions receive fairly substantial mass support. At the time of the referendum, the capacity for mass mobilizations shown by the coalition of parties in Eritbatasuna (People's Unity) was a significant indication of this.

The ETA's armed actions are today completely detrimental to the working class. They disorient and divide the workers. They offer a pretext for instituting "antiterrorist" laws, which in reality are a threat to the people. They alienate large sectors of Basque workers from the struggle for sovereignty and self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, while anti-Basque sentiment grows in the rest of the country.

Still, the impact and the roots of this terrorist campaign can only be understood in light of the policy of "consensus" on the part of the workers' traditional leaderships, which ignore the struggle for Euzkadi's basic political demands. The holy alliance between the reformist workers parties and the government only serves to convince the terrorists that their actions are correct. While simultaneously calling for strikes and actions against terrorism,

the reformists support the government's repressive measures against Euzkadi. In fact, the government used the maneuvering room that the policy of "consensus" gave it to put a repressive policy into effect—in Euzkadi above all, where a situation of a "special nature" is said to exist.

In summary, after a year and a half of "consensus," militant activity on the part of the workers parties has plummeted. Estimates of the drop in real membership in the PSOE range from 75,000 to 250,000.

The same phenomenon is occurring in the trade unions. The workers do not see their leaders' policy of supporting the government as an alternative. UGT leader Nicolás Redondo cynically sums up the mood of Spanish worker militants when he says: "This 'consensus' has led to confusion and to the disillusionment of the great masses of workers who voted for the left parties."

### **The Referendum and the Timetable for the Elections**

Three factors stood out during the period of the constitutional referendum:

1. The sharpening of contradictions among the bourgeoisie, particularly within institutions such as the army and police. "Operation Galaxy" (mentioned earlier) and the revolt by the police against General Timón de Lara during the funeral of police officers killed in Euzkadi are eloquent examples of this. The bourgeois crisis of leadership and the weakening of governmental authority are intensifying.

2. The traditional workers leaderships have given total support to government policy, and have backed the constitution to the hilt without putting forward any alternative and without calling for a response to the moves by the right wing. To the contrary, on December 4 they called for a day of action against terrorism and in defense of the constitution alongside the main bourgeois party, the UCD. "Yes" votes were a majority in the workers movement. As a Catalan bourgeois politician bluntly put it: "The workers' massive 'yes' vote saved the constitution."

The fact that the workers ratified the constitution is the result both of the control that the traditional leaderships continue to exert over the workers movement despite a year and a half of the social pact combined with the workers' determination to abolish the Francoist laws, as well as of the workers' illusions about the future usefulness of the wording of the constitution.

But there was also a certain distrust of the constitution, which was seen as a lesser evil by many workers who voted "yes." This was shown by the rallies and demonstrations prior to the elections. The rate of abstention was high—32.3%. But if we subtract the accepted figure of 20% with no opinion, we can consider this abstention as revealing two distinct positions. On

the one hand, it reflected political positions ranging from outright rejection to the views of the Basque Nationalist Party. On the other hand, it expressed disappointment, disillusionment, and loss of interest in politics on the part of the

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### **Militant activity by the workers parties has plummeted . . .**

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essentially petty-bourgeois layers of the population.

The "no" vote was large only in Euzkadi, where it corresponded to the proposals of the worker and socialist left. Outside of Euzkadi, the "nos" won 5% of the vote, unevenly distributed according to district. This came in part from the independent working-class left, which felt that the constitution denied fundamental freedoms and democratic rights and created anti-working-class legislation.

Some of the "no" votes also came from the far right, expressing a desire for a return to dictatorship. In this case, the "no" votes showed the weakness of the most reactionary sectors of Spanish society. These sectors thereby demonstrated that their strength was not at the polls but in the support they got from the state apparatus.

The constitution was born feeble, but its weakness, contrary to what the PSOE and CP say, does not come from the influence of terrorism or from the government's lack of firmness. It is the social-pact policy of the traditional workers leaderships that is responsible for the fact that the constitution ignores the guarantees and fundamental rights of the Spanish people, including the right to self-determination and sovereignty for the oppressed nationalities. It is this conciliatory policy that has led to apathy on the part of broad sectors of the masses.

On the other hand, the disproportion between the 90% vote for the constitution in the Cortes and the results of the referendum reflects the weakness of parliament, demonstrating that it does not reflect the real political relationship of forces in the country. It should be stressed that this is not owing to any hostility toward parliament on the part of the workers, but that it is a result of the existing social crisis.

The bourgeoisie had hoped to capitalize on the massive "yes" vote for its leading party, the UCD, and present this party as the main vehicle for the transition to democracy. Its objective was to change the relationship of forces vis-à-vis the PSOE in its favor, enabling it to put forward a new version of the Moncloa Pact in the economic sphere, with the support of foreign Socialists and Communists, and thus stabilize the situation.

The results of the referendum also con-

stituted a serious obstacle to Suárez's policy, and forced him to make a very difficult choice with regard to the election schedule.

From December 6 to December 29, the government maintained absolute silence. This reflected its state of disarray and the lack of a real alternative favoring its interests. If it dissolved the Cortes and called a general election, it would have a lame-duck regime on its hands at a time of big social struggles, when the crisis of institutions and of the army was deepening. At the same time, it was impossible for it to obtain a social pact in advance, which would be unacceptable to the left because it would hurt its chances in the elections.

Moreover, this forced the government to shelve the autonomy statutes, which would have had harmful effects on the UCD vote. So the 1979 calendar includes general and municipal elections, as well as elections for the pre-autonomy bodies, which means greater instability together with the possibility of mass participation. Above all, Suárez threw away any possibility of winning an absolute parliamentary majority, which would have allowed him to govern with a large margin of maneuver. What is worse, he took the risk of losing the elections.

But the opposite course would have been equally dangerous. If he had not called a general election, Suárez would have had to submit to a vote of confidence in the Cortes, negotiate an election timetable with the PSOE and CP, and appoint a new cabinet to increase the government's efficiency and authority. To see to it that the vote of confidence was not a dismal failure, Suárez needed the PSOE and CP not to vote against him, but at least to abstain. Even with this, he would still have needed a majority of the bourgeois parliamentary blocs. Meanwhile, on the right, former Interior Minister Fraga Iribarne had launched a campaign calling on Suárez to make the necessary concessions if he wanted the votes of Fraga's deputies' (some of whom were UCD members).

Fraga Iribarne's goal was a center-right government, and Suárez had to deal with his forces. Meanwhile, the Basque and Catalan nationalist parliamentary blocs were going to demand concessions with respect to the autonomy statutes. The Suárez government, feeling the pressure of the army and big business, which favored centralism, could not guarantee this either.

So Suárez opted for a general election. History will show whether he was wrong or whether his tactical judgment was

correct. But what should concern the workers are the goals of the timetable presented by the bourgeoisie, and how to deal with it. These goals are as follows:

1. To try to limit the political importance of the all-but-certain victory of the left in the municipal elections, and to prevent the left from having an impact on the general elections, which Suárez expects to win.

2. In theory, to get elections out of the way for four years and thus eliminate

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### **The CP is pushing a program of "national unity" . . .**

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political wheeling and dealing. (But the political situation in the country makes it unlikely that the present legislature can last that long.)

3. To obtain a social truce that would make it possible to sign the major labor contracts that are pending and to stabilize the social situation.

4. To prevent the political parties to the right of the UCD—and especially the CDE (Spanish Democratic Confederation)—from becoming consolidated and asserting their political domination over the bourgeoisie.

5. To restore the authority of the Cortes, which is of the utmost necessity for getting the autonomy statutes ratified.

Finally, the bourgeoisie's general goal is to improve the relationship of forces between it and the workers parties, to win the general election, and to have the capacity to impose future social pacts.

### **Defeat the UCD and Stop the Right**

The calling of elections has led to a moderate increase in political activity among the masses, and also to a degree of political polarization, which means that opportunities are opening up to begin to overcome the present confusion. But if the reformist parties do not change their attitude, these opportunities may be lost. The most negative aspects for the workers movement do not stem from the timetable for the elections nor from the fact that city halls are still controlled by the right. Its weaknesses come from the attitude that the PSOE and CP seem to have adopted toward the elections.

The PSOE has even renounced its rhetoric about the possibility of a "socialist alternative in power." It emphasizes the need for a strong government with a broad majority, a clear preview of its willingness to form a coalition government with the UCD if it wins the elections, or to participate as an opposition party if Suárez wins, and, of course, if it is allowed to do so.

As for the CP, it is even more explicit. Its entire electoral policy centers in an agitational way around the need for a UCD-PSOE or PSOE-UCD coalition govern-

ment, with the support of the Communists and a program of "national unity"—a four-year version of the Moncloa pact.

Within the UCD, opinions on a coalition with the PSOE vary. The Christian Democratic wing thinks that an alliance with the PSOE is the best variant for preserving its leading role, given the anticipated election results, even if they won more votes than expected.

To the right of the UCD, the CDE led by Fraga is guided by the idea that the UCD cannot hold power alone, and that it therefore must govern alongside the CDE. That is why the CDE has refused to coalesce with forces that were opposed to the constitution.

The majority position in the UCD, and Suárez's position, is that it must hold power alone with a margin of maneuver to the right and left, at best avoiding a polarization of forces. Curiously, the only forces desiring to participate in a UCD government as minority parties are the PSOE and CP.

The campaign of our party, the LCR,<sup>3</sup> is centered around a single task and idea—that it is possible and necessary to beat the UCD, that that is our goal and the precondition for ensuring further victories later.

The LCR's prospects are relatively uncertain. They depend in large part on the possibilities of the trade-union left's breaking out of the straitjacket imposed on it by the Moncloa Pact, and making its voice heard in the political and electoral arena. In the last few months, the LCR has undergone a certain weakening at the central political level. However, its influence in the rank-and-file structures has increased, as well as in the leadership of the country's major trade unions, where there is a great deal of receptivity to its proposals and initiatives.

The LCR will strive to use its influence in the trade unions in the electoral arena. It will also be very important for its candidates to express the most urgent needs of the workers through the LCR representatives in the UGT and the Workers Commissions, who will be candidates in thirty-four provinces.

This is not to say that the LCR will run a left-trade-unionist campaign. The role of the revolutionary-Marxist youth will also be very important in the campaign. Special attention will be paid to the national questions and to the question of women.

Above all, however, the LCR will make the election campaign—including the radio and television time it has been assured of in advance—serve to publicize the task of defeating the UCD and the right wing, and remobilizing the working-class left within the trade unions and all the mass organizations.

January 17, 1979

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3. Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Communist League), section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state.

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## Mounting Economic Difficulties in Yugoslavia

By Catherine Verla

"Too general and not very clear." With those words, according to an October 18-19 dispatch from the Yugoslav Press agency *Tanjug*, the Chamber of Republics and Provinces rejected the development plan presented by the Yugoslav government in October.

The Yugoslav press criticized the plan severely. The October 29 Belgrade daily *Borba*, for example, said that because the document did not contain an in-depth analysis of the objectives of the previous resolution that "were not attained, it is therefore impossible to analyze the causes of the gap between the plan and its results" (*RFE*, November 1978).

This is not the first time a government plan has been rejected in this way. But the commentaries in the press and the scope of the problems being raised give this rebuff special importance. The press is demanding nothing less than an initial balance-sheet of how the recently installed economic system is working.

The phase of unbridled economic liberalism introduced by the 1955 reform had resulted in a deepgoing dismantling of economic planning and reliance on free market laws, with the consequences that might be expected. These included an increase in inequality and in social and national conflicts, and the tendency toward restoration of capitalist relations in the Yugoslav economy.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1970s there was a turn in official policy, marked by repression of all opposition to the new course of recentralization—that is, the installation, by stages, of a new system of production codified in the 1974 constitution and especially in the "Law on Associated Labor" adopted at the end of 1976.

The Eleventh Congress of the League of Yugoslav Communists (LYC), which took place last June, stressed the "leading role of the party" in the establishment of new self-management relationships. But there had not yet been sufficient experience with it to draw-up an initial balance-sheet of this program. While it is true that in recent years the international context has added to the difficulties of the Yugoslav economy, both from the COMECON [East European] countries and from the capitalist countries, the major economic problems are of domestic origin.

The world capitalist recession led to a

redirection of the broad outlines of Yugoslav foreign trade in 1974. Although the Common Market countries were Yugoslavia's principal trade partners, there was a substantial rise in long-term agreements signed with the COMECON countries at that time (as well as a search for new markets in the oil-producing countries).

The restrictions the capitalist countries imposed on their imports had a severe impact on Yugoslavia (particularly with respect to meat exports). However, in 1976 there was a new turn in foreign trade, which appears to be continuing to the present—a tendency to reduce trade with COMECON and to seek special agreements with the Common Market countries.

The main problems that arose with the countries of Eastern Europe were, first, the USSR's inability to keep its promises regarding the enormous credits it pledged in 1973; and second the mediocre quality of these countries' products and the Yugoslav leaders' desire for advanced technology.

Finally, the changes the USSR introduced in its pricing system in 1976 reduced COMECON's relative price advantage over capitalist world prices.

The foreign trade deficit with the Common Market remained substantial in 1977 (\$2.4 billion, which is 55% of the total Yugoslav foreign trade deficit). The same tendencies were at work in 1978, but lengthy negotiations resulted, in October, in a proposal that the Common Market establish a special agreement with Yugoslavia for five years.

In the meantime Yugoslavia is continuing its overtures toward foreign investments, under the form of joint ventures. These are mixed investments in which at least 51% of the capital must be Yugoslav. But the results of ten years of experience with these mixed investments have been very modest, despite the enticements the Titoist leaders introduced to attract capitalists who are suspicious of the constraints imposed by the Yugoslav system of production.

Under the 170 joint venture agreements signed in ten years, only one-fifth of the funds were supplied by foreign capital, a total of \$350 million during this whole period.

### Problems in the New System

The overall economic results since the 1974 Tenth Congress of the LYC are by no means completely negative. According to the official report published in *Politika* on June 21, 1978, in the previous four years

industry grew 33%, agriculture was able to supply domestic needs, employment grew 4.5% a year, and purchasing power increased 25% in five years.

In other words, while the Yugoslav economy was subjected to the repercussions and pressures of the world economic environment, there was no recession as there was in all the capitalist countries during the same period.

All the same, the main problems are still unemployment and a set of factors—ranging from the low competitive level of Yugoslav products, to the extremely high level of indebtedness of enterprises, to a high rate of inflation—all of which can be traced back, to one degree or another, to the mechanisms for investment and for determining price and income.

Unemployment (around 800,000 according to the Yugoslav annual statistical abstract) is aggravated by the mass of emigrant workers (around 800,000) who are returning to Yugoslavia at a rate of 60,000 to 80,000 each year. The pool of unemployed is made up primarily of those looking for their *first* nonagricultural job—that is, the youth and the mass of small peasants whose patch of land, often smaller than five hectares, is not large enough to provide them with a sufficient standard of living, and who are also seeking the social security benefits that come from being listed as unemployed.

In theory there can be no layoffs on grounds of profitability, and each company that wants to change the number of its employees must first be reclassified.

This does not lessen the fact that in the difficult objective conditions of a country that started out very agricultural, unemployment results from a whole period of liberalization of the market and of opening the borders to international competition, which meant that the dismantling of central planning made it impossible to assure full employment for the whole work force made available primarily by the rural exodus.

The other weaknesses of the Yugoslav economy can often be traced to what the leaders call a "lack of discipline" in the plants, "insufficient social control over reproduction" (investments), and so forth. We should briefly note that the new system, while halting the free rein of market laws, remains different from Soviet-style centralized planning with self-management.

It is useful to look at how what are called self-management decisions are actually

1. See *Critique Communiste*, special issue No. 18/19.

made (in particular which social layers make and oversee these decisions) in order to understand the present system's problems.

In principle the 1976 "Law on Associated Labor" gives the self-management bodies (of companies as well as localities, communes, republics, etc.) control of the entire social surplus, through the new "system of delegations" and "communities of interest."<sup>2</sup>

Control is supposed to flow from a long process of discussion and study that takes into account local development plans. But the new law also leaves quite a large degree of autonomy to the Republics that make up the Yugoslav federation and to local development plans.

Finally, the portion of the social surplus product that goes to collective consumption (for example, schools, health, day-care) is increasingly managed by funds belonging to "communities of interest" that bring together workers and consumers of these services.

Prices have to be determined by "self-management agreements." This means that there has to be a very complex multi-level study to estimate, by means of criteria worked out in common, the value of the work carried out at each level.

But in practice the workers don't have time to participate in this since they work more than forty hours a week, and often supplement their legal job with under-the-table work due to their low basic pay.

The decisive role of "specialists" in determining development objectives means that the workers don't have the full knowledge required to make decisions. The workers have no knowledge of anything beyond their individual, "tangible" experience, of anything beyond the conditions of work and individual and collective income over the short- and medium-range. Moreover, because the workers lack the time to fully consider other alternatives, it is clear that they cannot really participate in determining overall objectives.

In practice there is no real opportunity for political debate that would allow differing broad national orientations to be counterposed, clarifying the possible choices. The party's monolithism precludes this.

As has been noted, the rejection of the government's plan by the Chamber of Republics and Provinces was motivated by the plan's inadequate analysis of the reasons for the gap between the goals of the previous plan and the results achieved.

2. See "The New System of Self-Management in Yugoslavia," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 8, 1978. The "system of delegations" is supposed to provide for direct representation of elected workers' delegates in the formulation of budgets worked out by cities, autonomous provinces, and republics (although not on a federal level).

"Communities of interest" are bodies made up of users and producers of services such as health care and education. —IP/I

Because of the lack of facts, it is difficult to use the results of the plan to determine the relationship of social forces.

But the situation appears to combine several characteristics in regard to the relationship of social forces. On the one hand, in comparison to the 1965-71 period when the decentralizing reform was being applied, the present greater emphasis on certain large-scale development priorities is evidence that the federal bureaucracy has regained partial control over the instruments of planning. This has put it in a position to emphasize large investments in natural resources and to step up development funds for the most backward regions.

At the same time, it has been able to overturn agreements and plans established locally and regionally, both in regard to prices and investments.

But here too it is necessary to analyze the different results in various segments of the economy. It has been said that the workers had the most impact and influence in matters that raised their own level of consumption. And it appears that in the past period collective services developed more than the federal plans had forecast.

On the other hand, it also appears that disputes and strikes were more frequent in enterprises involved in production, and that the cause of these disputes was often the division of the plant's income between the wage pool and productive investments (with the directors wanting to increase investment at the expense of wages, and the workers taking the opposite view).

#### A New Campaign Against Millionaires?

While the Yugoslav bureaucracy, like its counterparts to the East, wants to maintain the single party come what may, it has at its disposal many levels of contact with (control over) the masses. Not the least of these is the self-management system. These levels of contact allow social conflicts to be expressed and, at the same time, blunted and decentralized.

Thus it is not surprising that the social tensions in Yugoslav society are expressed even in official speeches. In the past few months there have been many articles in the Yugoslav press quoting speeches by high dignitaries who decry the growth of social inequality and the diversion of rights from the workers to the technocrats.

In analyzing the strikes, several Yugoslav press organs denounced with great fanfare the decline in the weight of workers in the self-management bodies. A high official of the Yugoslav unions, Nica Jovanov (commonly known as "Dr. of Strikes" because he recently received a doctorate for his thesis analyzing strikes in Yugoslavia), has gone furthest in these analyses. In several interviews (see the August 27 and September 2 *Vjesnik* and the September 6 and 20 *Start*) he has bluntly stated that the *institutional* strengthening of the workers councils has been accompanied by a decline in the social

weight of the workers within them.<sup>3</sup>

Jovanov notes

The people who are part of what we call the hierarchical structures have begun to insinuate themselves into society's self-management structure, and to assume key positions, which had not been foreseen. That is why in a relatively brief period the number of workers in the workers councils has fallen to 55%, while the technocrats attained decisive influence within them.

A paradoxical situation has arisen: the workers councils began to strengthen their position as institutions at a time when their social composition (and their influence as well) was no longer working-class. That is why members of the workers councils were among the workers on strike. [*Vjesnik*, September 2.]

In addition, Jovanov noted that the weight of workers was declining throughout the system—in the Federal Assembly as well as in the LYC and the unions.

Of interest is also his characterization of the mechanism for decision-making, to which we already alluded, and the conclusions he draws:

The only way to harmonize and resolve the numerous and contradictory interests is to present several alternative courses of action. This means that each proposal should be presented in different versions . . . indicating the consequences of each of the alternatives put forward. [*Ibid.*]

Finally, in recent months the question of social inequality has again been raised several times in the press, as well as at the trade-union congress held in November. The core of this problem can be seen in the denunciation of the position of financial and commercial bodies in a system that remains quite decentralized. It has reached the point where Jovanov says that "all the banks should be nationalized" (*ibid.*),<sup>4</sup> echoing a similar statement by Bakaric, one of the regime's principal Croatian leaders and a member of the State Presidency<sup>5</sup> and party presidium.

Jovanov points out that the wage spread between factory workers and certain bank workers is 1 to 15 and sometimes 1 to 25 (*ibid.*); and he shows that such inequality is also found in other areas of daily life.

#### "The Private Sector"

In an interview published in several newspapers (in particular, in *Vjesnik*, September 23-24; *RFE*, September 28), Bakaric attacked the *private sector*, especially the renting of apartments and houses, as a

3. This is discussed in the May 8, 1978, *IP/I*.

4. In Yugoslavia the banks are not, however, privately owned. They are social property. In this context, the term "nationalization" means recentralizing the banks on a national level, as opposed to the present decentralization that stimulates the development of group forms of property.

5. The 1974 constitution established a collective presidency of nine members. After Tito's death the presidency is supposed to rotate among its members. —IP/I



source of abuse, including by party functionaries.

The solution he put forward was not suppression of this sector, but instead more strictly supervised limitations on it (making it impossible to employ more than five workers; curtailing the rental of "weekend houses" of some "thirty beds"; or possession of full-scale rental chains obtained by putting apartments in the names of different members of a single family, which circumvents the limits of the law).

But the strongest attacks come from Jure Biblic (president of the Croatian Assembly), who stated in the October 21 *Vjesnik* that "the number of billionaires in Yugoslavia has grown to several thousand in recent years." He cited examples taken again from the private sector (house rentals, boat rentals). According to the 1977 Yugoslav statistical abstract, in 1975 there were about 250,000 people (not including those in agriculture) working in the artisan sector of the economy or in small private enterprises. This represents 5% of the work force employed in the socialized sector.

One of the basic problems with this sector was exposed by Tito in September (September 8, 1978, *Tanjug*). Tito stated that people working in the private sector hide their real income and do not pay taxes corresponding to their income. The November 18 *Le Monde*, citing the Jure Biblic interview, noted the risks of social turmoil (Biblic even speaks of "civil war") that maintaining this system could produce.

The recent trade-union congress dealt with another aspect of social inequality—the very method of evaluating income.<sup>6</sup> How do you measure "to each according to their work" in sectors as different as production, services, and commerce?

In reality, for a whole period in Yugoslavia the tendency was that everyone was paid not "according to their work," but according to the results of the work in the marketplace. The moves against the economic reform and the free play of market laws was also reflected in the discussions on the method of determining income. These discussions called into question (still very theoretically) all income advantages resulting from a better position in the market. In contrast there has been investigation of criteria of evaluation that take into account (and stimulate) effective progress in collective organization and productivity of labor.

But another type of criteria steps in at that point: the "quality" of labor (the type of responsibilities, efforts, qualifications, and so on). This is a source for the appearance of obvious privileges (particularly for the "competent" bureaucrats). But it is

6. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 8, 1978. Within the framework of limits fixed by law, the workers council determines how the total income of the company is to be divided.

also a source for the transfer of value from the productive sector to the financial and commercial sector.

As a general rule commerce does not share the fate of production, does not bear the same risks, and receives an income that is too high in relation to its contribution. Some commercial organizations impose conditions on productive organizations that result in a transfer of income that has no relation to the real contribution to income created in common. [Spiljak, president of the Yugoslav unions, quoted in *The Journal of Yugoslav Unions*, November-December 1978. Proceedings of the recent congress.]

One of the points stressed in this context by the congress of unions was the need to *revalue productive labor*, and particularly the hardest *manual labor*.

#### Legalization of Strikes?

According to Jovanov (in the interview cited), these inequalities between sectors explain why strikes primarily involve productive workers. Strikes, according to him, have increased in the recent period, which is what has prompted the debate on their legalization.

In this regard Jovanov referred to the debates that took place at the time of the adoption of the 1976 "Law on Associated Labor." He publicly confirmed that the Yugoslav leadership was divided on the question of legalizing strikes.

As a result, the law does not mention the question and, in practice, strikes have been tolerated. It should be noted that the congress of trade unions did not mention them.

Thus Jovanov's position on strikes is still not the mainstream. He feels it is wrong to speak of the workers striking "against themselves," as they call it in Eastern Europe. Rather the strikes point out dysfunctions in the self-management system and real social conflicts.

Jovanov criticizes the often-followed practice where "the factory manager, the party secretary, and the union leader make decisions behind closed doors and then compel the workers to vote for them" (*RFE*, September 6, 1978).

He adds that many union leaders and leaders of party bodies are quicker to defend the interests of the technocrats than those of the workers. Often, he says, the organizers of a strike are punished and even fired from their jobs or thrown out of the party. Jovanov suggests that it is the party and union functionaries that should be punished. (*Ibid.*)

So far these statements, which have appeared in the press, have not been attacked by Yugoslav leaders. Clearly Jovanov is expressing a point of view that is currently being discussed inside the LYC within the framework of the regime's new "Bible"—Kardelj's recent book *The Paths of Development of the Self-Management Political System*, which explains what Yugoslav self-managing "pluralism" should be.

Does Jovanov's point of view contradict the characterization of Yugoslav society as bureaucratic, where the party monopoly remains intact?

In other interviews, cited in the May 8, 1978, *IP/I*, we showed that Jovanov's ideas represent the "intelligent bureaucratic" viewpoint (which in no way diminishes the obvious interest of his declarations and their importance for Yugoslav workers).

Citing the Polish example of the explosive Baltic coast strikes, Jovanov argues that the social situation is much more controllable, much less dangerous for the regime if tensions are allowed to be expressed and the right to strike is legalized. Using Yugoslav examples he shows how conflicts remain limited, localized, and are often rapidly resolved when strikes occur in a climate of tolerance.

It is clear that in the view of Kardelj, the regime's main theoretician, the unions and the Socialist Alliance (a sort of mass front led by the LYC) play an essential role as transmission belts of the LYC's orientation, and that such belts are even more effective when they can reflect the real tensions in society.

To go from there to accepting Jovanov's call for "the independence of the unions" from the Socialist Alliance and the LYC is a step the Yugoslav leaders certainly have not taken, aside from formal declarations.

To be real, such independence would mean the possibility for unions to have genuine debates on orientation, out of which might emerge leaderships with different positions than those of the LYC. This is patently excluded under the present regime. In fact, after a period where the Yugoslav unions had seeming autonomy from 1968 to 1971, that autonomy was quickly snuffed out.

The fact that at the recent union congress there was no position taken, nor even public discussion, on the right to strike again shows, if it needed showing, that the unions still express the dominant official position and nothing more.

Nevertheless the analyses of inequality made at the congress, in the context of official speeches that were aimed primarily against the millionaires, indicate that a series of measures will undoubtedly be taken. Unquestionably the regime again faces crucial choices regarding the commercial (particularly import-export) and banking sector and the private sector. The question posed is whether it will exert more effective social control over the funds that accumulate there.

As in 1972, a new version of the "Tito letter," which led to a mini-"cultural revolution" against abuses and against millionaires, should not be excluded.

But the Yugoslav leaders will not resort to that unless they exhaust the more controlled means of a more active LCY intervention through the unions.

December 1978

## Chinese Bureaucrats Admit Growing Problems in Countryside

By Chün Hsing

[The following article appeared in the February 5 issue of *October Review*, a Trotskyist monthly published in Hong Kong. The translation is by Reed.]

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The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party met from December 18 to December 22. The stated aim of the gathering—officially titled the “Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee”—was to “solve the problems while stabilizing the situation.”

Prior to the plenary session, a working meeting of the Central Committee was held, with participation from various levels of the party, government, and military leadership. After about a month of bargaining and compromise, many questions were resolved. They were then brought before the plenary session for adoption.

Teng Hsiao-p'ing revealed some of the Central Committee's “decisions” to foreigners during the fortnight before the plenary session was held. This makes clear that the real policymakers are the top leaders. It is not true, as the official communiqué would have it, that the plenary session “fully revived and brought into full play inner-party democracy.”

None of the speeches given at either the working or the plenary session have been published; only a communiqué of 8,000 words has so far been released. The people of China, including party members, know nothing at all about the details and decisions of the plenary sessions apart from what was reported in the communiqué. Nor were they given any opportunity to participate in the preplenary discussion. Yet the communiqué still reiterates that “at present, it is still necessary to lay particular emphasis on democracy.”

### Temporary Compromise

The communiqué reveals that factional struggles exist within the party, and that the factions are striving for temporary coexistence. The concrete expressions of this are the following:

1. The plenary session announced an end to the nationwide movement to expose and criticize Lin Piao and the Gang of Four, and endorsed a policy of shifting the emphasis of the party's work to “socialist modernization.”

This is contradictory to the assertions in official newspapers before the plenary session. Just two months ago, on National Day, the editors of *People's Daily* said:

Criticism of the Gang of Four's counterrevolutionary, revisionist line and reactionary ideology has only just started, and it needs further developing. . . . In fact, every step forward on the road to modernization is obstructed by the poison of the Gang of Four's counterrevolutionary, revisionist line. Without criticizing Lin Piao and the Gang of Four, thinking cannot be liberated and steps forward cannot be taken.

But, now, for precisely the same reason of “advancing modernization,” it is necessary to stop criticizing and exposing the Gang of Four!

2. The plenary session tried to cover up and defend Mao's errors. Though it did not deny that a leader may make mistakes and suffer from shortcomings, it deliberately avoided pointing out exactly what Mao's mistakes were and completely distorted the facts to absolve him of his crimes. For instance, it is well known that the movement to “oppose the right-deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts” in 1975 was launched under Mao's directive. Mao's endorsement on letters from Liu Ping and others said “their target is me”; this started the Gang of Four's attack on Chou Yung-hsin and Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

But the communiqué says that Teng at that time, “in accordance with Comrade Mao Tsetung's instructions, waged tit-for-tat struggles against the Gang of Four's movement to ‘oppose the right-deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts.’” While Teng in fact has “reversed” many of the “verdicts” of the Cultural Revolution and rehabilitated many of the victims, the communiqué nonetheless states that Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution “primarily in light of the fact that the Soviet Union had turned revisionist, and for the purpose of opposing revisionism and preventing its occurrence”—not as a means to purge dissident leaders.

The plenary session also refused to draw a balance sheet of the shortcomings and mistakes of the Cultural Revolution, postponing this task to an “appropriate time” in the future.

3. The plenary session elected Ch'en Yun as an additional vice-chairman of the Central Committee; elected Hu Yao-pang, Teng Ying-ch'ao, and Wang Chen as additional members of the Political Bureau; and added nine members to the Central Committee. Most of them were attacked during the Cultural Revolution. All are old cadres who supported Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-p'ing. Thus, the Teng faction now has predominance in the top leadership. And though Wang Tung-hsing still retains his title as vice-chairman, his actual power has

been taken away. Personnel shifts in other posts also reflect the acute yet temporarily compromised factional struggle. An unusual development to be noted is the fact that the number of members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau was increased from five to six—an even number that may sometimes fail to yield a majority vote.

The Hong Kong monthly *Cheng Ming*, which supports the Teng faction, commented in its December issue: “It is said that Hua Kuo-feng promotes democracy and uses a veto in the top leadership; that if one person persists in his opposition, a motion cannot be adopted as a Central Committee resolution.”

If this system of veto is indeed practiced in the top leadership of the Chinese CP, the communiqué's emphasis on “democratic centralism” is a farce. This further reveals an unstable power struggle within the party's leadership.

4. The communiqué reports that at the plenary session, Hua Kuo-feng “laid stress on the importance of collective leadership in the party Central Committee and in party committees at all levels,” proposed less publicity of individuals in the newspapers, urged that party members call each other “comrade,” and suggested that the personal views of leading members of the Central Committee not be called “instructions.”

This reveals that the new personality cult promoted after the fall of the Gang of Four has met resistance and must somehow be dropped. But in the Chinese CP, which practices bureaucratic centralism in place of party democracy, the term “collective leadership” can only mean a temporary compromise and equal status among a handful of leaders. It is, if not a coverup for “individual leadership,” a springboard for just that. In fact, after the plenary session Teng's actual power has greatly increased, apparently surpassing that of all other leaders.

The communiqué tries to create an image of harmony within the party leadership, declaring that no damage will be allowed to the stable and united political situation required for “socialist modernization.” The aim is not only to promote a new policy of developing the economy and securing large loans from foreign powers, but also to deal with the great difficulties faced by the present leadership in various fields.

In rural areas, the hard life of the



several hundred million peasants has not improved over the last twenty years. Thus, they have been passive toward collective production. This caused the "per capita grain availability in 1977 to match only that of 1955, with the result that the increase in food production has merely equalled the increase in population and industrial consumption."<sup>1</sup> Improvement in the living standards of the peasants and arousing their enthusiasm for production still await an effective solution.

In the past twenty years, "increases in industrial production have entirely or primarily depended upon an increase in the number of workers." Although five five-year plans have been carried out, China's "national economy basically remains in a state of 'semiplanning.'"<sup>2</sup> In the workplaces, the need remains to "overcome the present common phenomenon of no one taking responsibility."<sup>3</sup>

Politically, the results of the Mao era—numerous wrong and false verdicts, bureaucratic control, suppression of democracy and freedom, and criminal acts—have caused discontent and hostility, fostering an irreconcilable antagonism between the people and the ruling caste. The broad masses are now putting forward (or expressing by silent action) numerous demands for correction of past mistakes, for an end to bureaucratic dictatorship, and for the establishment of socialist democracy. The increasing strength of these demands poses a growing pressure and threat to the ruling caste.

In foreign policy, the Soviet-Vietnamese military alliance poses a serious war threat to China. The Kremlin may use the excuse of intermittent clashes on China's southwest border to provoke a military conflict in the north.

The above difficulties and problems must be solved before China can develop and modernize its economy. Factional struggles within the party have to stop to create a stable environment for construction. But precisely because China is at present far from stable, Hua Kuo-feng has to appeal for a "stabilization of the situation." And there exist in China today "many questions that need correction. Without correcting these, not only will it be impossible to realize the Four Modernizations, it will also be difficult to maintain the status quo."<sup>4</sup> This indicates the gravity of the situation.

1. Quoted from Hu Ch'iao-mu's article "Work According to the Law of Economics, Realize the Four Modernizations Quickly," in *People's Daily*, October 6, 1978.

2. "Work According to the Law of Economics," *People's Daily*, October 6, 1978.

3. Teng Hsiao-p'ing, in a speech October 11, 1978, at the Ninth National Congress of the Trade Unions of China.

4. Quoted from the article "Nineteen Points in Teng Hsiao-p'ing's Dialogue With the Group



A village in northern China.

Vrij Nederland

In short, the two sessions show that factional struggle within the party has not ended with the fall of the Gang of Four. Though there is at present a temporary compromise, representatives of various factions still maintain their positions and power in the leadership. New factional struggles will erupt when the situation deteriorates or when divergences in policies become more acute.

#### Problems in Agriculture

The Central Committee plenary session particularly discussed the problems in agriculture, calling on the entire party to concentrate its main efforts on advancing food production as fast as possible. After the establishment of the communes,<sup>5</sup> agricultural production dropped in many places. The communiqué calls for a "vigorous restoration and speeding up of farm production," revealing that today food production is still at the stage of "restoration."

As an illustration, the *People's Daily* recently published an investigative report on six provinces in the mid-Yangtze River region. It pointed out that in this area (at present chiefly agricultural) with a population of some twenty-four million, food production per mou is only 170 catties,<sup>6</sup>

Visiting China From Japan's Democratic Socialist Party," in *Wen Wei Po*, November 30, 1978.

5. In August and September 1958, responding to a severe shortage of grain for the cities, the CCP government by edict consolidated the 750,000 Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives into 26,000 giant "People's Communes." A sharp peasant reaction to this measure led to drastic declines in harvests in 1959-62. The communes were retained, but their powers greatly reduced in favor of the original peasant villages, now called production teams.—*IP/I*

6. A Chinese mou is equal to one sixth of an English acre. One catty is the equivalent of 1.1 pounds or 500 grams.—*IP/I*

and that a considerable portion of land yields only 30 to 50 catties per mou. In quite a number of places, production and the living standards of the masses are at present "still lower than in the early period of liberation or during the Sino-Japanese War."

Kuyuan County in Ningsia Province, which in the past was famous for food production, with an output of 820 catties per capita in 1949, decreased to a per capita output of 380 catties in 1977. In two counties in Yunnan, the output per capita in 1943 was 1,400 catties, which decreased to around 500 catties in 1977.<sup>7</sup>

The example of these six provinces is not an exception. It is the result of the policies of the CCP's bureaucratic regime, which are applied throughout the country.

The masses of Shensi Province recently pointed to the following measures as required to change the situation:

First, peasants' rights must be safeguarded, private holdings and privately owned livestock must be protected, the state purchase of grain must be reduced, and food rations and living standards of commune members must be raised.

Second, the bureaucratic arbitrariness of the cadres must be changed.

Third, planting policies blindly directed by the cadres must be changed.

But all of these problems are linked to the party's main agricultural policies and to the entire bureaucratic system. The situation cannot be effectively changed and problems in the rural areas cannot be radically solved if the party introduces only partial reforms based on the premise of maintaining the present system and its fundamental policies.

Let us illustrate this with a concrete instance. Six months ago, the party circulated a document called the "Hsianghsi-

7. *People's Daily*, November 26, 1978.

ang County Experience" along with directives from the Central Committee, in an attempt to resolve the question of the extremely unreasonable burden imposed on the peasants. It was intended to arouse the peasants' enthusiasm in production. But several months after the directives were issued, they still met with resistance from departments and cadres at various levels. The result was that "on the upper levels, no move was made; on the lower levels, no orders were carried out."<sup>8</sup>

The plenary session agreed to distribute to the provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions, for discussion and trial use, "Decisions of the Central Committee of the CCP on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development (Draft)," and "Regulations on the Work of the Rural People's Communes (Draft for Trial Use)." Since these two drafts have not been published, their details are unavailable. But from the communiqué it is known that the plenary session suggested some concrete measures on the agricultural question. Let us look at the most important ones:

1. "The right of ownership by the people's communes, production brigades, and production teams, and their power of decision-making, must be effectively protected by the laws of the state." Since Mao set down that "the people's communes are at the same time base-level economic organizations and base-level organs of political power," the current special emphasis on "effectively protecting" their power of decision-making suggests that the nature of the people's communes as base-level organs of political power will be changed.

2. "It is not permitted to commandeer the manpower, funds, products, and material of any production team." But in the past, almost all government departments, communes, and production brigades commandeered from production teams, mainly to fulfill the pressing tasks assigned by the state. In the future, there will be more of

8. The editorial in the November 22, 1978, issue of *People's Daily* pointed out: "Recently, the Hsianghsiang County Committee conducted a sample investigation in several communes and found that altogether, forty-nine departments at all levels commandeered from the production teams. There was a total of seventy-two incidences of requisitioning by transfer, rationing, and shifting of responsibility. The situation revealed in many of the places investigated shows that industry, transport, irrigation, trade, education, health, public security, and the militia commandeered from the peasants in differing degrees, thus increasing the burden of the peasantry by various means."

Nearly five months after the Central Committee issued the directives, "quite a number of units remain passive in attitude, slow in action, adopt a wait-and-see attitude, and some even go on increasing the burden of the peasants. . . . Some leading institutions, including the leadership of departments on the central and provincial level, still have seldom taken active and effective measures about concretely learning from the Hsianghsiang County Experience."

these "tasks" rather than less. As long as the peasants remain powerless, they will remain under exaction from all sides, despite any changes in its title, style, and degree.

3. Economic organizations at various levels of the communes are called upon to conscientiously implement the principle of "to each according to his work." But it is not enough to follow this principle only. If the policy of "more public accumulation and less individual distribution" is not dramatically changed (the communiqué does not mention this at all, which means there won't be much change), then a limited rationing among the toiling masses based on the amount of labor they contribute will not result in a considerable improvement in the living standard of peasants of weak or simple labor. That may deepen the split among the peasants, a very small number of them becoming rich and working their way into the ranks of the privileged bureaucracy.

4. The plenary session reinstated the legal existence of private plots of land, domestic side-occupations, and village fairs. The first two were defined in the constitution adopted at the Fifth National People's Congress; their "reinstatement" today means they have been arbitrarily sabotaged by local cadres.

5. "The communes must resolutely implement the system of three levels of ownership, with the production team as the basic accounting unit, and this should remain unchanged." This is an obvious revision of the constitution adopted at the Fifth National People's Congress, in which Article 7 provides: "A production brigade may become the basic accounting unit when conditions are ripe." The present revision is obviously a temporary concession to the "private interest" of the peasants, required by the failure of the previous ultraleft policy of transition to production brigades and communes.

6. "Organizations at various levels of the people's communes must firmly carry out democratic management and election of cadres, and make public all their accounts." This attempts to alleviate the extreme discontent of the peasants toward the people's communes and the cadres. It objectively challenges the bureaucracy's power at the basic level in the rural areas, and will be exploited by the peasants to wage, legally, an antibureaucratic struggle. The struggle between the rulers and the ruled in rural areas will become more acute, since cadres at various levels still hold enormous political privileges and will fight to maintain them.

7. The session decided that, for a fairly long period to come, the figures for state purchase of grain will not be raised, whereas the purchase price will be raised 20% while the price of manufactured goods for farm use will be cut by 10% to 15%. This is a concrete concession to the peasants, but the first to gain from it will be the "collec-

tive" production teams. Furthermore, since the price the state has paid for grain has been very, very low and the price of industrial manufactured goods very high, the difference will remain startling despite the present narrowing.

On the whole, the plenary session made some concessions to the peasants, which if carried out would raise by some degree their extremely low standard of living. But the concessions are not big and by no means fundamental. Furthermore, what is provided for in writing has yet to be carried out in practice. And the Chinese CP is used to being inconsistent in words and practice.

Protracted factional struggles and "political movements" have seriously weakened the party Central Committee's prestige and control. Party discipline has been lax, and local or individual tendencies toward "independence" have emerged. This situation was noted in a recent feature article in the *People's Daily*:

In many places and departments, the situation of disorganization and no discipline created by Lin Piao and the Gang of Four has been and is being corrected. But in a number of places and departments, there still exist quite a lot of problems, some of which are rather serious. Some people take a careless attitude toward the party's line and policies and toward their superiors' directives. They pass on and carry out those that suit them and ignore those that do not. . . . On important questions for which the party has repeatedly ordered a solution, some people simply turn a deaf ear, act as they please in their old way, and even dare to act without restraint, committing the same errors they criticize.

. . . some people are used to anarchism, and they have forgotten party rules and regulations. They will not be bound by organizational discipline. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

This is why a 100-member "Central Commission for Inspecting Discipline" was set up. The communiqué says: "Observance of party discipline by all party members and cadres is a minimum requirement for restoring normal political life in the party and the state." (Emphasis added.) Since normal political life in the party and state today is still at the stage of "restoration," the situation of lack of discipline therefore involves not just "some places" or "some people."

But even with the setting up of a "Central Commission for Inspecting Discipline," the laxity in party discipline cannot be radically and effectively solved. It is not a problem concerning a few individuals but is instead closely related to the party's entire political structure, line, and policies, as well as to its serious political and economic difficulties.

None of these fundamental questions were resolved at the plenary session. Nor is the solution within the capacity of the present leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. January 2, 1979

9. *People's Daily*, November 12, 1978.