

## Washington Pushes Toward War in Yemen



### IRANIAN WOMEN DEMAND THEIR RIGHTS

**The Lessons  
of the  
China-Vietnam  
Border War**

**The War  
Between  
Uganda and  
Tanzania**

## The War Between Uganda and Tanzania

By Ernest Harsch

Armed conflict in East Africa has intensified sharply since late February, when Tanzanian regular troops invaded Uganda, in conjunction with stepped-up efforts by Ugandan opposition forces to overthrow President Idi Amin.

The imperialists in Washington and London have made clear which forces they are backing, and why.

"A Uganda that is friendly toward the West would obviously be a welcome addition in efforts to achieve a politically and economically stable Africa," an unidentified "Western diplomat" was quoted as saying in the March 7 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*.

Correspondent Richard R. Leger stressed in the same report, "The departure of President Amin would be important to American interests in part because of Uganda's proximity to the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia and Somalia, where the Soviet Union, along with Cuban troops, has been trying for years to gain dominance."

While opposing Amin, the American and British imperialists at the same time clearly favor Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere in this conflict, both in their public declarations and in their provision of economic assistance to Nyerere.

Most reports in the capitalist press have tried to cover up imperialism's real interests in the conflict under a barrage of denunciations of Amin's "barbaric," "mad," or "capricious" dictatorship. The open racism of this campaign is matched only by its hypocrisy, as it comes from the very forces who helped place Amin in power in the first place.

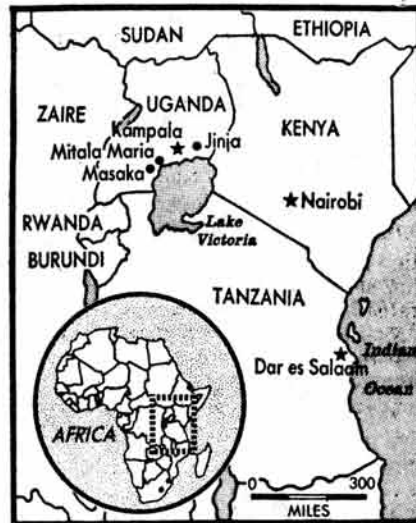
From the time he joined the King's African Rifles in 1946 until Uganda's independence from Britain in 1962, Amin was trained and groomed by the British colonialists to help them protect their interests. Under Milton Obote's regime, Amin, as army chief of staff, established close ties with the Israelis, who provided his forces with arms and additional training.

According to former Central Intelligence Agency officials, the Israeli secret police, in collaboration with the CIA and British intelligence, helped Amin overthrow Obote in January 1971, after the latter initiated a series of nationalizations, reduced his ties with Israel, and broke diplomatic relations with London.

Both before and after Amin's coup, the CIA channeled funds to Amin through the Israelis. At least ten of Amin's security officers received special training at the

International Police Academy in Washington.

Almost as soon as he came to power, Amin instituted mass repression, aiming to stifle even the mildest dissent. The American, British, and French imperial-



ists signalled their approval by continuing to arm and fund his regime.

It was only after Amin broke ties with Israel in 1972 and expropriated a number of local- and foreign-owned businesses the following year that the imperialists began to sour on their protégé. Amin had become "unreliable," and his regime proved not to provide the stability that the imperialists had hoped for. They began to look for a replacement who could better protect their interests.

Washington and London suddenly discovered Amin's suppression of democratic rights. Professing humanitarian concern, they condemned him as a "mad dictator." President Carter went so far as to declare that Amin's actions "have disgusted the entire civilized world."

Washington threatened direct military intervention against Amin in early 1977, using as a pretext Amin's temporary prohibition on Americans leaving Uganda.

In October 1978, the U.S. Congress struck a severe blow at Uganda by imposing a trade embargo. Until then, the United States had been the largest market for Ugandan coffee, the country's main export. The cutoff of oil by American companies deprived Uganda of 45 percent of its fuel supplies.

Under such steadily mounting imperialist pressure, Amin sought and received

military or financial assistance from such diverse sources as the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, and Libya. Amin also appears to have established some ties with the Rhodesian regime, providing training for the military forces of Bishop Abel Muzorewa and Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, two of Ian Smith's Black collaborators.

Uganda's deteriorating economic conditions—together with Amin's repressive rule—have generated sporadic opposition to his regime over the years. There were an increasing number of reports of internal unrest shortly before the outbreak of the war between Uganda and Tanzania. Peasants were said to have burned down several sugar plantations and to have refused to grow cotton. Rifts and rebellions were reported within the military.

In late October, Amin ordered several thousand troops to invade northern Tanzania, an area where Ugandan exiles opposed to Amin were active. He announced the annexation of 700 square miles of Tanzanian territory. A few weeks later, Tanzanian troops were mobilized to repel the invaders and the Ugandan troops withdrew.

The Nyerere government condemned the attack, accusing Amin of being an "instrument of imperialism." Several other African regimes also denounced the invasion.

The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a November 16 statement, charged "the forces of colonialism and neocolonialist imperialism" with fueling the conflict so as to undermine African unity, weaken Tanzania, and punish the Nyerere regime for its aid to the Zimbabwean and Namibian liberation movements.

The American, British, and other imperialist powers, for their own reasons, also condemned Amin. The U.S. State Department demanded that Amin withdraw his troops from Tanzania, a demand it did not later raise against Nyerere when Tanzanian troops invaded Uganda.

Nyerere met with the American and British ambassadors just a few days after the Ugandan invasion, and in November the Carter administration announced a grant of \$5 million worth of corn to Tanzania. Meanwhile, the proimperialist regime in Kenya, through which the bulk of Uganda's foreign trade passes, further restricted shipments of oil supplies to Uganda.

The imperialists favor Nyerere in this war despite his assumed image as a "socialist." They know that his "socialism" is a fraud, amounting to little more than attempts to expand economic production through rural cooperatives and state-controlled enterprises, while keeping Tanzania tied to the world capitalist market.

In 1977 and 1978, following the impact of the world recession and the poor results of Nyerere's economic policies, the Tanzanian authorities initiated a series of significant policy shifts that laid the basis for more direct political and economic ties

with imperialism.

Certain enterprises that had been nationalized were turned back to private ownership, and new private investments were encouraged. Measures were introduced to tighten labor "discipline." Tanzania was already one of the biggest recipients of "foreign aid" in Africa, and the current economic plan provides new incentives for private foreign investment.

Nyerere still gets many of his arms from Moscow and the East European governments, but he is also exploring arms purchases from Canada and Britain. And while he gives some aid to the southern African liberation movements, he has likewise played a key role in backing American and British efforts to impose a neocolonial "settlement" on Zimbabwe.

The Tanzanian regime's current war against Amin could place severe strains on Tanzania's meager economic resources, making the country even more dependent on imperialist financial assistance. The imperialists would not be upset if the pressures of the war compelled Nyerere to reduce his aid to the southern African freedom fighters.

Besides mobilizing his own military forces, Nyerere also gave the green light for Ugandan exiles in Tanzania to step up activities against Amin. Under Tanzanian tutelage, an armed force of about 1,400 followers of former President Milton Obote was assembled in December. After eight years of political obscurity, Obote himself was allowed to make a declaration in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam in January calling for a countrywide uprising against "the fascist dictator."

In late February, a force of several thousand Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles, covered by artillery and air strikes, swept across the border into southern Uganda. Although news reports on the war are sketchy and unconfirmed, it appears that this force made some rapid gains in the south, taking several towns. There have also been reports of rebellions and guerrilla attacks in other parts of Uganda, which may not necessarily be part of the Tanzanian drive.

Around the same time, the British government tightened the noose around Amin even further, halting all air-freight flights from Britain which had been made up largely of medical supplies.

Officially, the Tanzanian regime has presented its war against Amin as strictly a "defensive" move. But the government-controlled press and Nyerere himself have admitted that they are intent on "destroying" Amin.

The *New York Times*, in a March 3 editorial, declared, "An early end to President Amin's despotism would, of course, be heartening. . . ." But the *Times* went on to warn Nyerere not to try "to select Mr. Amin's successor by installing Mr. Obote." The imperialists, after all, may have a

different candidate in mind than the person they themselves helped overthrow in 1971.

The maneuvers by Carter and Callaghan to try to replace Amin with a more reliable bulwark against the African revolution are aimed directly against the Ugandan masses, who alone have the right to determine what kind of government they want. If the imperialists are successful in imposing their choice, they will be in an even stronger position to hold back the struggles of Uganda's workers and peasants.

An advance for imperialism in Uganda, moreover, will make it that much easier for the upholders of Western "civilization" to strike out against Blacks struggling for their liberation in other African countries—including Tanzania.

The current war, however, is also not without some risks for the imperialists and their local allies. It could help bring to the surface the sharp social antagonisms that have been building up under eight years of Amin's brutal capitalist rule. And once powerful social forces are set in motion, they could prove difficult to control. □

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## Big Stakes in Yemen Conflict

By David Frankel

Step by calculated step, President Carter is pushing toward a dangerous new military confrontation in the Middle East.

Invoking "national security interests" and emergency legislation to bypass Congress March 9, Carter ordered the Pentagon to begin immediate delivery of twelve F-5 jet fighters, sixty-four M-60 tanks, and fifty armored personnel carriers to Saudi Arabia for shipment to North Yemen.

The State Department set the stage for Carter's war moves by warning February 28 that the U.S. "national interest" was involved in an outbreak of fighting between North and South Yemen. On the same day, the Saudi Arabian regime placed its army on alert and recalled 4,500 troops it had stationed in Lebanon.

Further steps quickly followed.

- U.S. Air Force jet transports airlifted 7,000 antitank rockets and thirty anti-aircraft guns to the North Yemeni capital of San'a.

- On March 6, a U.S. destroyer and two frigates sailed into the port of Djibouti, only hours away from Yemen.

- Also on March 6, administration officials announced that the aircraft carrier *Constellation*, a guided missile cruiser, and a guided missile destroyer were on the way to the area.

- On March 7, the White House made public an offer to send a squadron of F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia. Eager to push the Saudi regime into the war, U.S. officials announced the offer "was designed to facilitate possible Saudi involvement in the fighting between Yemen and Southern Yemen," the *New York Times* reported.

- And on March 8, Carter took another step to prod the Saudis into action by ordering two U.S. radar control planes to Saudi Arabia. Such planes serve as information and command centers to direct aerial combat and ground support operations.

### Thirst For Oil

As in everything the American imperialists do in the Middle East, concern about maintaining control of the region's vast oil wealth is central to Carter's moves in Yemen.

"In normal times," the British *Economist* reminded its readers in its March 3 issue, "the non-communist industrial world drinks around 35 [million] barrels of oil a day. It has come to depend, to a quite extraordinary degree, on a handful of five Middle East countries for the regular satisfaction of that nagging, unquenchable thirst."

With the revolution in Iran, U.S. policymakers have come to realize that a similar upheaval in Saudi Arabia and the smaller oil states on the Arabian Peninsula is far from impossible. This fear has been growing ever since the Ethiopian monarchy was overthrown in 1974 by a revolutionary mass upheaval, in a country right across the Red Sea from Arabia. It was deepened by the defeat last year of the imperialist-backed Somalian invasion of the Ogaden—primarily due to the rapid response of Cuban troops, which are now stationed in both Ethiopia and South Yemen.

In this situation, and with Cuba's revolutionary forces also committed to aiding the advancing struggle for Black liberation in southern Africa, Washington is brazenly seeking to reassert its armed might.

The U.S. ruling class is convinced that the Mideast is the best place to flex its military muscle not only because of its objective interests there, but also because they hope that years of racist propaganda around the Arab-Israel conflict and the "energy crisis" have made the American people more ready to accept military action in the Mideast than in southern Africa or Indochina.

Trying to reinforce Carter's moves, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* asked rhetorically March 8, "Do we dare to hope that President Carter is after all drawing the line in the Middle East, organizing the defense of North Yemen against South Yemen's Soviet-advised armies?"

Critics who have been complaining that Carter has been too bashful about throwing U.S. military weight around "should welcome the president aboard," the *Journal* advised.

Returning to its favorite theme the following day, this mouthpiece of American finance declared that "there will be no substitute for an actual U.S. presence in the area."

The *Journal* went on to note that "a South Yemen controlled by the North or a friendly local regime could offer a huge strategic asset; we can think of nothing that would stabilize the area and protect the oil lanes better than a U.S. carrier operating out of the port of Aden."

Support for Carter's war-probe also came from the editors of the *Washington Post*, who, March 8, raised the specter of "Soviet expansionism on [Saudi Arabia's] back doorstep."

Known as a major voice of liberalism, the *Post* said that Carter had "wisely"

decided that "it was not enough to warn the Russians, it was necessary to see that their South Yemeni clients are taught a lesson."

As of March 10, not a single prominent capitalist politician had uttered a word of protest against Carter's war preparations.

Of course, they know very well what is involved. As one "congressional source" quoted in the March 7 *Washington Post* put it: "There is a feeling that Carter is drawing the line to stop the Russians and Cubans in North Yemen. He seems to think the progression from Angola through Ethiopia has to be stopped here."

### Why Yemen?

Although Yemen has no large oil reserves, it is central to the politics of the Arabian Peninsula. Its mountains catch the monsoon from the Indian Ocean, making it one of the only parts of the Peninsula to receive regular rainfall. As a result, about half the people in the Peninsula are concentrated in Yemen.

Out of a Saudi Arabian population that is estimated to be as low as 4.5 million, and which is certainly no higher than 9 million, more than 1 million are immigrant workers from North and South Yemen.

These Yemeni immigrant workers, along with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, Egyptians, and others, have always been viewed by the Saudi regime as a potential source of rebellion. During the latest events, Ned Temko reported in the March 6 *Christian Science Monitor*, "... Saudi authorities began cracking down on illegal immigrants (many of whom are Yemeni) by setting up checkpoints and expelling visitors who lacked valid visas."

Nor is potential unrest among immigrant workers a problem that is limited to Saudi Arabia. Well over half of Kuwait's population, for example, are expatriate workers.

Most important, rebellion in Yemen itself has threatened imperialist domination in the area.

Imperialism's problems with Yemen began back in the early 1960s. Until then, North Yemen had been ruled for centuries by *Imams* who were religious as well as political leaders. South Yemen, which had broken away from the Imamate in 1728, was taken over by the British in 1839.

The British wanted two things in Yemen. First, they wanted the port of Aden, the best natural port on the Arabian Peninsula, and a valuable link in the chain of bases connecting Britain to India. Second, they wanted stability, both so that Aden could be more easily ruled and so that Yemen as a whole could serve as a buffer to protect British rule in India.

The port was secured by occupying it, and stability was ensured by reinforcing the traditional tribal system. Infusions of guns and bribes strengthened rival sheikhs, who were thus tied to the British. At the same time, economic development

was frozen except in the port of Aden itself. Preservation of the Imamate in North Yemen fit in perfectly with this policy.

For the Yemeni people, however, the cost of preserving British imperial interests was high. In 1962 North Yemen—with a population then estimated at about 5 million—had only fifteen doctors (all foreigners) and 600 hospital beds in the whole country. No money at all was spent on education by the government!

Things were little better in South Yemen. "Up to 1940," notes Fred Halliday in *Arabia Without Sultans*, "not a penny had been spent on the hinterland, and what followed was a mean trickle. . . ."

Halliday points out that "even in 1967, when the British departed, the country had only fourteen tarmacked miles of road outside Aden, three Yemeni doctors and 950 hospital beds. Educational facilities hardly existed outside Aden."

### The Masses Rebel

Not surprisingly, such conditions led to mass rebellion. In September 1962, a group of young army officers influenced by the Arab nationalist ideas of Nasserism seized control of San'a, North Yemen's capital, and proclaimed the Yemen Arab Republic.

Cheering crowds welcomed the overthrow of the Imamate in the main cities of Taiz, San'a, and Hodeida. There were peasant uprisings in some rural areas.

However, with help from Britain and Saudi Arabia, the Imam was able to rally a royalist army based on the mountain tribes—the traditional base of the Imamate. The Republic, meanwhile, received aid from Nasser's regime in Egypt. The result was a civil war that lasted eight years and is estimated to have killed up to 200,000 people.

Had the Republican side advanced a social program in the interests of the peasantry, it would have been able to win the ranks of the royalist army. Under the Imamate, 80 percent of the poor peasant's crops were taken by the landlord and by various feudal taxes. The anthem of the Imam's army included the lines, "We, the soldiers of the King, are stronger than all the peasants."

But the Republican leadership, which included rich merchant landowners and some dissident tribal leaders, refused to carry out a land reform. Left-wing forces who tried to push forward radical social measures were suppressed with the help of Egyptian troops.

As a result, the war turned into a stalemate. Eventually Nasser and the Saudi monarchy, with the support of the more conservative forces in the Republican camp, struck a deal. The Imam and his family were exiled and the Imamate abolished. But a weak central state dominated by the merchants and a rising bourgeoisie had to coexist with the continued domination of the tribal sheikhs in the mountains.

The resulting North Yemeni state has been little more than a Saudi satellite. Saudi subsidies to the mountain tribes have kept the central government weak and encouraged constant internal conflicts.

Civil war in North Yemen, however, contributed to the destabilization of British rule in South Yemen. In October 1963



Yemeni nationalists fighting for liberation from British colonial rule initiated a guerrilla war in the southern mountains, and in August 1964 the armed struggle was extended to Aden.

Military victories by the Yemeni forces, coupled with Britain's other economic and political difficulties, led to the withdrawal of British troops from South Yemen in November 1967.

A period of conflict between the left and right wings of the national liberation movement, and between the new government and openly proimperialist forces, followed. Finally, in June 1969, the more radical nationalist forces—which declared themselves to be "Marxist-Leninist"—won out. In November 1970 the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was declared.

Internally, the South Yemen government carried out a land reform, nationalized banks, insurance companies, trading houses, and some other enterprises, and promulgated laws improving the status of women. Among these was a 1974 divorce law prohibiting child marriages and polygamy and equalizing divorce conditions. A campaign to eradicate the legacy of illiteracy left by British colonialism was also undertaken.

### U.S.-Inspired Attack

In its foreign policy, the new regime in South Yemen followed a strongly anti-imperialist course. It sought to foster opposition forces in Saudi Arabia and North Yemen, gave active support to the rebellion of the oppressed Dhofari people in the neighboring Sultanate of Oman, and appealed for aid and support from the workers states.

Cuba was among those countries responding favorably to South Yemen's re-

quests for aid, and Cuban advisers were reported there as early as 1973.

Although the regime in South Yemen was a thorn in the side for the imperialists, Washington, with its hands full in Vietnam, chose not to intervene there openly. For a while such action appeared unnecessary, especially when the British-officered army of Oman, aided by some 4,000 Iranian troops, succeeded in crushing the Dhofari rebellion in 1975.

But Washington was jolted in early 1978 by the arrival of substantial numbers of Cuban troops in Ethiopia and their successful defense of the Ethiopian revolution against the invasion by the Somalian army. The defeat of the imperialist-inspired invasion was a sharp blow to Washington, and it was followed by the staggering impact of the revolution in Iran.

For propaganda purposes, the U.S. ruling class is claiming that it is responding in Yemen to a Soviet and Cuban-backed invasion launched by the South. But there is not the slightest bit of evidence for the charge that either Soviet or Cuban forces have been involved in the clashes between North and South Yemen. In fact, what evidence there is points to an imperialist-inspired provocation by the North Yemen regime.

Immediately following the outbreak of hostilities, *New York Times* columnist William Safire—a former Nixon aide who is kept well informed by high-level contacts in government circles—said in a February 26 column that "Yemen is reported to have attacked the Marxist state of South Yemen."

Urging his readers to root for North Yemen anyway, Safire said, "They may be the aggressors, and our State Department will tut-tut at that, but the Communists in South Yemen are the danger to us."

A March 8 Associated Press dispatch from Kuwait reported that according to the conservative newspaper *Al Seyassa*, nearly 3,000 Cuban troops and Soviet military advisers have been shifted from Ethiopia to Aden to "help ward off an attack against South Yemen in which the United States would participate."

Under the propaganda cover of fighting "Soviet expansionism," Carter has been moving full speed ahead toward a military confrontation in Yemen.

However, the Saudis have not yet taken Carter up on his offer to send them F-15s, and the statements from Washington have been a good deal more belligerent than anything reported from Riyadh.

The Saudis, who have some experience in Yemen, may well fear that they will wind up facing an insurrection in the North as well as a war in the South. Nor is their own home base so secure. And—as the South Africans and Somalian rulers discovered—taking on the revolutionary Cuban army can backfire.

Nevertheless, the U.S. ruling class has

clearly decided to push as far as they can. Writing in the March 9 *New York Times*, James Reston summed up the issue as the imperialists see it:

"The critical foreign policy question in Washington now," Reston declared, "is whether the United States, so soon after its disappointing experience in Vietnam, is prepared to commit itself politically and militarily to some kind of economic and military defense of the Middle East."

Oil, of course, is the first concern of the imperialists in the region. They seek to

stamp out any upsurge inspired by the revolution in Iran, especially on the Arabian Peninsula.

At the same time, Carter hopes to "teach a lesson" to the Cubans, and if possible to use a victory in Yemen as a wedge for moving against the Ethiopian revolution and the Cubans in the Horn of Africa.

Finally, Carter wants to convince the skeptical and still antiwar American working class that U.S. military force must be used to stop "Soviet expansionism."

All this is a tall order. As Reston noted,

"The mood of the American people is against any more overseas commitments—indeed, it is . . . almost isolationist."

The editors of the *Washington Post* also paused in the midst of endorsing Carter's war moves to recall that "North Yemen is an unlikely and, some would say, unworthy vehicle to be loaded with so much geopolitical freight. It is small, backward and unstable and not widely known as a champion of human rights."

But that is what the imperialists have at their disposal in the area, and that's what they will use. □

## Attempt to Wrap Up Counterrevolutionary Pact

# Carter's Visit to the Middle East

By David Frankel

On March 9, the day before President Carter was scheduled to arrive in Israel, Palestinian mayors were summoned by Israeli occupation authorities and warned that there would be reprisals if they left their towns to protest, or if there were demonstrations of any kind during Carter's visit.

Although this example of repression was largely ignored in the capitalist media, it was a fitting symbol for Carter's trip. Beyond making gains for his reelection campaign, Carter hopes to win the Egyptian government's approval of a pact that would further institutionalize the suppression of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

On March 1 Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin arrived in Washington and threatened to blow up the negotiations for a Mideast deal unless it was made clear that even the phony Palestinian "autonomy" plan he himself had earlier advanced would not necessarily be carried out.

Carter agreed, and on March 5 announced that he would go to Egypt to try to get President Anwar el-Sadat to go along. Israeli Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich warned March 9 that Sadat had better accept what was offered. "We have gone as far as we can without endangering our national security," he said.

Begin also chimed in, threatening that the negotiations "cannot continue forever."

It is clear that Carter desperately wants a treaty between Sadat and Begin. In order to get it, he is offering substantial increases in economic and military aid to both regimes. Carter's push for an Egyptian-Israeli pact reflects the fear aroused in the U.S. ruling class by the Iranian revolution.

For the American imperialists, the revo-

lution in Iran has made the conclusion of this counterrevolutionary alliance in the oil-rich Middle East an urgent necessity. Not only would it help to free Israeli forces for intervention in the region. *It would also give political cover for the use of U.S. military forces in the name of "peace" and "national security."*

However, the same revolution that has imparted new urgency to Washington's diplomatic offensive against the Palestinians and the Arab masses as a whole, has also made both Begin and Sadat pull back from the terms they agreed to at the Camp David summit last September.

Sadat's openly proimperialist stance, at a time when the Iranian revolution has strengthened all the anti-imperialist forces in the Middle East, has left him more vulnerable than ever. Even the Saudi Arabian regime has had to bend to the pressure and take some distance from Washington on the Camp David issue.

In light of this, Sadat delayed a final agreement on the Camp David deal. He had to reconsider how brazenly he could act in betraying the Palestinians.

Begin, meanwhile, was also having second thoughts. With the cutoff of Iranian oil and the possibility of Iran's revolution spreading to the Arab world, the oil fields and military bases in the Sinai Peninsula became more important than ever to the Zionist regime.

"Evacuation [of the Sinai bases] seemed a reasonable measure in the relative tranquility of last September," *New York Times* military analyst Drew Middleton noted February 13. But now, "Israeli diplomats and politicians have been asking Washington about American contingency plans in the event of a revolution in Saudi Arabia."

Moreover, the Israeli regime fought bitterly from the very beginning of the negoti-

ations against even the most modest concessions to Sadat. It wants to keep the Sinai if it can, and in any case it has no confidence in any deal with Egypt lasting very long.

Begin has hit hard on this point, continually reminding Carter that Israel is "the only stable ally of the United States" in the Middle East.

Sadat has tried to counter this argument by offering his services as a cop for imperialism in the Middle East. He has asked for a few billion dollars worth of arms and a chance to prove his loyalty.

But with the example of the shah still fresh, the U.S. ruling class is not about to shift its reliance from the imperialist outpost of Israel to Sadat's weak, semicolonial regime.

As an editorial in the March 4 issue of the British *Manchester Guardian Weekly* put it, "it is fair to ask what would happen to the myriad squadrons of F-16s and the massed M-60 tanks if Egypt decided, on reflection, that its destiny lay elsewhere."

So, Carter is trying to beat Sadat into line with empty promises, knowing that if Begin has the slightest chance, he will again stall any treaty.

Even if Carter does manage to extract a piece of paper signed by both Sadat and Begin, the struggle of the Palestinian people has been given new life by the Iranian revolution. And as that revolution shows, imperialist-imposed treaties aren't worth much when the masses decide they have had enough. □

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## Lessons of China-Vietnam Border War

By Fred Feldman

The U.S.-inspired invasion of Vietnam by the Peking regime's armed forces is shaping up as a setback for imperialism and a political victory for the Vietnamese revolution.

The invasion has failed to deal military blows severe enough to pressure Vietnam into withdrawing its aid to the new government in Kampuchea (Cambodia).

While Teng Hsiao-p'ing's regime was beset with signs of antiwar opposition among Chinese working people, all initial reports indicate that the morale of the Vietnamese workers and peasants remained high.

And Carter's attempt to present Washington as a "world peacemaker" has met with a skeptical response in the American working class, which is deeply imbued with antiwar sentiments.

The Vietnamese revolution is today more, not less, attractive to the workers and peasants in Southeast Asia. They have seen the Vietnamese masses stand off yet another assault.

But the beginning of Peking's military withdrawal doesn't mark the end of imperialism's offensive against Vietnam. On the contrary, Washington's fear and hatred of the revolution has grown.

### A War of Destruction

The criminal blows to Vietnam's war-battered and flood-devastated economy may prove to be the most substantial gains imperialism has derived from the brief border war.

Peking announced its decision to withdraw March 5. But as they left, Chinese forces destroyed "bridges, rail and road facilities and other installations as they moved toward the border," according to Henry Kamm, reporting from Bangkok in the March 9 *New York Times*.

Hanoi offered to hold discussions at the deputy foreign minister's level once the invading forces had withdrawn "to the other side of the historical border that both sides have agreed to respect."

But Washington was unable to force a withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, or impose a proimperialist regime on Vietnam's western border as part of the deal.

The March 7 *Christian Science Monitor* concluded:

China appears not to have inflicted enough "punishment" to force Vietnam to loosen its hold in Cambodia and Laos. Moreover, Vietnam has been able to deal with the invasion without committing large numbers of regular troops in a

way which would require disengagement from Cambodia. . . .

Indeed, the Vietnamese-aided forces of the new Cambodian government have stepped up their efforts to control that country right up to Thailand's border. On March 5, the Cambodian district of Poipheth bordering on Thailand fell.

Later reports admitted that Kampuchean rightists had abandoned Pailin, the last provincial capital they held.

Peking's invasion demonstrated the deadly seriousness of U.S. imperialism's intentions. Under these circumstances, a proimperialist regime on Vietnam's western border would be like a dagger at the throat of the Vietnamese workers state.

Thus, far from succeeding in pressuring the Vietnamese rulers to accept such a regime in Kampuchea, the invasion may press Hanoi toward countenancing the popular mobilizations needed to defeat the rightists and move toward a workers and peasants government.

Throughout the Chinese invasion, despite the dangers it posed and the devastation it brought, Hanoi's spotlight remained fixed on the civil war in Kampuchea and the rightists' supply lines across the Thai border. That remains the main avenue of imperialism's attacks on Vietnam.

This was further underscored when the Carter administration announced March 5 that it would sell a squadron of F-5 jet fighters worth \$100 million to the Thai dictatorship.

The Vietnamese rulers kept their crack military units and a significant part of the air force assigned to the Kampuchean fighting. In contrast, they relied primarily on militia units to stalemate Peking's military thrust.

Despite the fact that both sides had substantial air forces at their disposal, there is no evidence that a single plane went into combat.

Hanoi's measured response resulted from cold political calculation. The Vietnamese rulers knew that Peking's invasion had built-in limitations both as to extent and duration.

As Mary-Alice Waters wrote in the February 19 issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*:

A major war with Hanoi is the last thing that the Peking bureaucrats are interested in. With economic modernization uppermost in their minds, they stand to gain nothing from the instability and drain on resources that would result from becoming embroiled in a war.

This assessment was confirmed by what

the invasion revealed about Peking's military capacities and strategy. Teng was right when he commented during his U.S. visit that China's armed forces have "limited and defensive military capabilities."

*New York Times* military expert Drew Middleton noted "a problem in shifting the [Chinese] army's attitude from defensive war, for which it has been indoctrinated and trained, to one suited for an invasion, limited though it was."

This defensive orientation stems from the fact that the Chinese workers state is free from the expansionist profit drive that is at the root of war in the imperialist epoch. Massive arms spending is a burden not only to the Chinese workers, but also to the bureaucratic caste that feeds off the planned economy.

This fundamental defensive stance will not be changed as Peking seeks to modernize its military machine in years ahead.

### An Unpopular War

The brief war also deepened criticism of the Peking regime among the Chinese masses. Despite an official ban on posters about the war, two went up on Democracy Wall in Peking.

"China has forfeited its international reputation and will find itself isolated in the world community," one poster warned. Another, according to the March 12 *Newsweek*, "implied that the war did not reflect the will of the people, but had been imposed on the nation by China's bureaucracy."

The "antiwar poster campaign has spread to nearly every important city in China," *Newsweek* continued, asserting that "antiwar rallies" had taken place in a number of cities.

The Chinese masses supported the Vietnamese in their long struggle against imperialist domination. They see no convincing reason to switch sides now.

The workers and peasants of China correctly sense that this war undermined rather than aided the defense of the workers state they created through their own mass struggles. In fact, the invasion is one of the gravest blows to the Chinese workers state in many years.

The haughty declarations about "punishing" Vietnam merely put a bold face on Peking's policy of shamelessly groveling before the imperialists.

An example was the welcome accorded in Peking during the war with Vietnam to the first visit since 1949 of the British governor of Hong Kong—a piece of Chi-

nese territory that has been under colonial occupation for more than a century.

The result of this course has been increasing isolation of the Chinese workers state from its only reliable defenders—the working people of the world.

Contrary to the racist assertions of bourgeois journalists who claim that “traditional Chinese hatred” for Vietnam is behind the war, Teng’s military adventure, and the opposition it evoked, brought closer the day when Chinese workers and peasants will topple the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish workers and peasants democracy in its stead.

#### Peking’s Aims

What did the Peking rulers hope to gain from this unpopular war?

Their eyes were focused not on Hanoi or Moscow but on *Washington and Wall Street*. They expected to be rewarded not with increased “influence” in Southeast Asia, but with vastly increased aid, trade, and credits from U.S. imperialism.

Just as Stalin in the 1930s did not hesitate to use thousands of Soviet agents to massacre revolutionists in Spain in order to win the favor of the U.S., French, and British imperialists, so Peking is today throwing itself behind Washington’s drive to block the extension of the Vietnamese revolution to Kampuchea and beyond. The invasion was an effort, fostered by Washington, to prove Teng’s usefulness as a guarantor of capitalist stability in Southeast Asia.

In describing Peking’s goals, the March 7 *Christian Science Monitor* reported Chinese spokesmen as claiming that “America was too ‘afraid’ to confront the Soviet Union in Angola and elsewhere. . . . So, they say, it was up to China to take up the task.”

It’s a bald admission that Chinese troops are being used by U.S. imperialism in an area where it is “afraid” to intervene directly because of massive antiwar sentiment in the United States.

Teng accompanied his invasion with calls for U.S. action against Cuba: “We cannot tolerate the Cubans to go swashbuckling unchecked in Africa, the Middle East and other areas. Nor can we tolerate the Cubans of the Orient [Vietnam] to go swashbuckling unchecked in Laos, Kampuchea or even China’s border areas.”

The March 3 issue of the *Economist*, a prestigious voice of British capitalist interests, chimed in:

That China should want to discourage Vietnamese expansionism in south-east Asia is understandable. . . .

Most people appreciate this. They also appreciate that Vietnam—like Cuba and maybe now South Yemen—is a pugnacious ally of the Soviet Union. China commands a fair amount of sympathy in its attempt to contain the south-east Asian part of this expansionist alliance.

Teng’s anti-Cuban demagoguery coincides with stepped-up activity by the South

African regime against Angola, where Cuban forces are stationed; by the Somali regime against eastern Ethiopia, where Cuban forces are stationed; and by U.S.-armed Saudi Arabian, North Yemeni, and U.S. forces against South Yemen, where it is reported that Cuban troops have been dispatched to help repulse any invasion.

This coordination of Teng’s words and



CARTER: “World peacemaker” meets skeptical response from U.S. workers.

deeds with the latest moves of U.S. imperialism is no coincidence. The Chinese Stalinists are bidding for the role of Washington’s chief partner in détente.

#### Moscow’s Wretched Role

The Soviet bureaucratic caste was not to be easily outbid, however. The Kremlin’s attention throughout Peking’s invasion was not on aiding Vietnam, but on proving its own superior reliability to Washington. That required placing no obstacles in the way of Carter’s attack—through Peking—on Vietnam.

The March 6 *New York Times* noted:

There have been unconfirmed reports from diplomatic sources in Peking that the United States passed on information about Chinese intentions to the Soviet Union and vice versa. The diplomats believe the reported American role may have helped prevent Soviet armed intervention in the conflict. The Soviet Union denied on Saturday that it had engaged in secret contacts with China and the United States concerning the war.

But Brezhnev & Co. reacted with a passivity indicating they were well informed about the scope and purposes of the military moves in Vietnam. There was not even a massive airlift of military supplies.

Statements by Brezhnev and Gromyko aided Carter’s cover-up by placing respon-

sibility for the invasion on Peking. In an unmistakable overture to Carter, a March 5 *Pravda* commentary said:

As for the Soviet Union, we can point out with legitimate pride that our party, government, and people saw through the Peking leaders’ treacherous scheme in time and did not fall for their provocations, the purpose of which was to get us into a collision with the United States.

For both the Soviet and Chinese Stalinist leaderships the Vietnamese revolution seems like a small sacrifice to make on the altar of détente.

In stark contrast, the Cuban leadership zeroed in from the outset on Washington’s central role. Castro said in a February 21 speech in Havana:

This is a signal that both the United States and China are seeking the reestablishment of the genocidal Pol Pot/Teng 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 correctly interpreted Teng’s anti-Cuba blasts as threats from imperialism, and saw the invasion of Vietnam as a direct threat to the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban government backed up its words by publicly offering troops to help the Vietnamese beat back the imperialist-inspired attack. While the Vietnamese rulers did not accept, the Cuban offer itself was a factor that Washington and Peking had to weigh in the fighting. The offer also made it more difficult for Moscow to deny assistance or to pressure Hanoi into making concessions.

What was the response to the invasion in Vietnam itself?

Reporters and members of the U.S. Congress who were there at the time reported that the morale of the Vietnamese people was high. Massive rallies were held in several cities, and military training was introduced in all schools and factories.

According to the March 3 *Washington Post*, a Hanoi radio broadcast the previous day responded to Ambassador Andrew Young’s call for Vietnam to withdraw from Kampuchea as the price of a Chinese withdrawal. The broadcast reminded listeners that President Johnson had demanded that North Vietnam cut off aid to freedom fighters in the South in exchange for a deescalation of the U.S. war. It called this a comparable confusion of “the aggressors with the victims of aggression.”

Reflecting its Stalinist character, however, much of Hanoi’s propaganda focused on conflicts with Chinese regimes dating back hundreds of years. It issued no internationalist appeals to the Chinese troops, which undoubtedly included many young workers and peasants who questioned Peking’s policies.

This reflects Hanoi’s fear of promoting



mass opposition inside China to the Peking regime. A political revolution in the giant country on its northern border would be a powerful stimulus to antibureaucratic struggles in Vietnam as well. It would threaten Hanoi's own regime, which can be maintained only by the suppression of all democratic rights.

#### U.S. Workers Not Convinced

Carter's claims of innocence in regard to Peking's invasion were greeted with skepticism in the American working class. While most on the left did fall for Carter's bait, many working people noted some basic facts. The conclusions became more obvious as the days went by.

- Carter's response to the invasion of Vietnam contrasted sharply with the response several weeks earlier to the toppling of the brutal Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea. That was greeted with howls of outrage in Washington.

- The invasion followed by only a week Teng's U.S. visit and talks with Carter. The U.S. State Department finally had to admit that Teng informed Washington of his plans for the attack during his stay.

- Carter immediately linked Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam with Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea, which was clearly his real concern. The complicity was confirmed when Teng endorsed Carter's formula "with the raising of both hands."

- Diplomatic relations between Washington and Peking were formally opened during the invasion, while Hanoi's overtures for diplomatic relations have been persistently rejected.

- Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal went to Peking in the midst of the war to prepare major trade agreements, while the U.S. government maintains its trade embargo against Vietnam.

- When the Soviet Union sent ships into the South China Sea in a symbolic gesture of support to Vietnam, Washington sent a nuclear-armed task force to the shores off Vietnam.

- Calls by capitalist politicians for renewed U.S. military interventions abroad became increasingly strident, while Carter talked of a worldwide U.S. "peacemaking" role.

The American people remember well that Johnson, Nixon, and Ford all talked about their peaceful intentions—and were all proven to be liars many times over. Everything about Carter's treatment of the invasion of Vietnam tells most American workers that he, too, is lying through his teeth.

The American people are learning through this experience and others the lesson pointed to in the February 19 *IP/I*:

Of course Peking's military buildup along Vietnam's border does create a danger of sporadic outbreaks between Chinese and Vietnamese troops. But this is not the source of the war threat in Indochina today.

Neither is Vietnam responsible for "the increasing tensions in Southeast Asia," as the Carter administration demagogically claims.

The war threat comes from U.S. imperialism and its unceasing expansionist drive for new markets, new investment opportunities, and new military footholds to protect these interests.

The war threat comes from U.S. imperialism's drive to recoup some of the losses it suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Kampuchean people four years ago.

#### Overtures in South Vietnam

Added to these losses was the toppling of capitalism in South Vietnam last year. This revolutionary event marked the consolidation of a workers state encompassing 50 million people, making Vietnam the third most populous workers state. This was the first extension of socialist revolution since the Cuban workers and peasants toppled capitalism.

The February 26 *Toronto Globe and Mail* condemned Hanoi for taking "a hard line on the imposition of a socialist economy in the South."

And Henry Kamm in the March 4 *New York Times* blasted "Vietnam's dogmatic design to make the south like the north, politically and economically. . . . Hanoi has aggravated all problems by a determined program of nationalization of industry and commerce. . . ."

The imperialists know that a social revolution such as that in Vietnam has powerful reverberations, despite attempts by the Stalinist leadership in Hanoi to contain them. It threatens the stability of imperialist domination throughout Southeast Asia. This region stretches from the Philippines to Indonesia, with a combined population of more than 300 million people.

With its vital shipping lanes and sources of tin, tungsten, oil, rubber, rice, and other raw materials, Southeast Asia is not an area that U.S., European or Japanese imperialism will ever peacefully retire

from. They fought World War II in the Pacific over these riches.

The imperialists did not "give up" after the 1975 victories by the Indochinese liberation forces, which shifted the relationship of class forces against them in the area. They are fighting to hold on to what they have, and to regain lost ground.

That's why the imperialists are trying to deal blows to the Vietnamese masses who accomplished this latest historic overturn, break their revolutionary will, and "punish" them for daring to tamper with the sacred institution of capitalist property relations. They want to discourage others—the Kampuchean and Thai masses first of all—from taking the same course.

*Times* correspondent Kamm wrote in the March 8 issue from Bangkok:

In the view of most diplomats and analysts of Indochinese events here, China's long-term strategy is to stretch Vietnamese resources—both economic and military—to the utmost. These observers believe that China's analysis of Vietnam's liabilities coincides with theirs.

The liabilities are Hanoi's difficulties in integrating the former South Vietnam with the North, the enormous economic problems and shortages brought on by two years of disastrous weather, the burden of administering Laos and dominating Cambodia, and now the border conflict with China.

What Kamm means by "administering Laos" and "dominating Cambodia" is Hanoi's support to the anti-imperialist struggles in these countries.

But the "long-term strategy" he is describing is that of *U.S. imperialism*. Peking is helping carry out this strategy as payment for "peaceful coexistence."

Working people around the world have a life-or-death stake in defeating Washington's campaign against Vietnam.

Hands off Vietnam!

Stop the imperialist drive against the Vietnamese revolution!

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## Iranian Trotskyists Demand Full Democratic Rights

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following article appeared in the March 16 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

The Iranian Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist (Socialist Workers Party) has opened an aggressive campaign for its right to function freely and openly and for the democratic rights of all political parties in Iran.

The campaign was launched immediately after a gang of thugs attacked the SWP's first public meeting in Tehran on March 2. More than 2,000 people had turned out for the rally, held at Polytechnic University, on only two days' notice. Enthusiasm was high: this was the first public meeting of a workers party in Iran since the overthrow of the shah.

But when the disrupters, brandishing switchblades, made it clear they wanted to provoke a violent confrontation, the SWP discontinued the rally to protect its supporters. The meeting was rescheduled.

In a statement on the attack, the SWP appealed to "all militant workers, students, and toilers" to join in condemning the assault on democratic rights, an assault that threatens the rights of all political parties, workers' committees in the factories, and other organizations.

### Democracy Debate Widens

With the disruption of the socialists' meeting, which was front-page news the next morning in the daily *Ayandegan*, the debate over democracy has intensified in Iran. Workers are already protesting government attacks on their right to elect their own factory committees. The Kurdish people are demanding autonomy and national rights. Soldiers want the right to organize in the armed forces. Students and teachers are fighting for the right to run the universities. And women are defying challenges to their right to organize.

These demands have met with a cold response from Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan's government. Bazargan has opposed democratically elected committees in the factories and elsewhere. He has told the workers they must instead accept representatives appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Committee. The committee has also attacked democratic rights, banning demonstrations and harassing activists distributing political literature.

In a fact sheet the SWP explains the

events leading up to the March 2 disruption.

On March 1, the day before the SWP's meeting, two dozen people confronted SWP activist Zia Abrahimi, who is a professor at Polytechnic University. They threatened that "the SWP won't come out of tomorrow's meeting alive." Some of those making the threats said they were Islamic students, while others said they belonged to the Militant Students of Polytechnic, a small Maoist sect.

That evening a wall poster appeared on campus. Signed by Militant Students of Polytechnic, it charged that the revolutionary poet Reza Baraheni and Babak Zahraie, a well-known leader of the SWP, were CIA agents operating under the name of socialism and the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This slanderous charge is familiar to many supporters of the Iranian revolution. It originated with the shah's secret police, SAVAK. For years SAVAK carried out a campaign to discredit Baraheni while he lived in the United States in exile. SAVAK wanted to silence Baraheni because of his work in collaboration with Iranian Trotskyists to expose the shah's torture and repression.

Some Iranian Maoist groups shamelessly picked up SAVAK's lies and carried out violent attacks on meetings in the United States where Baraheni spoke. They tried to disrupt not only meetings sponsored by the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI), of which Baraheni is honorary chairperson, but also meetings of Iranian Trotskyists.

When the slanderous wall poster went up at Polytechnic, SWP leader Bahram Atai immediately lodged protests with the Islamic Revolutionary Committee and Bazargan's offices.

### Auto, Cement Workers

On March 2, the day of the SWP meeting, workers, students, and others gathered at the gates of the university at about 1:30 p.m. A busload of cement workers arrived to hear the SWP speakers. Workers came from the General Motors plant and the Iran National auto factory. Two teachers were there; they had traveled all the way from Yazd, 250 miles from Tehran.

A group of ten people, who identified themselves as members of the Militant Students of Polytechnic, had chained the gates of the university shut. The crowd was outraged. "The university belongs to

all!" they chanted. "The chains belong to SAVAK!"

The throngs of people who had come to hear the SWP grew to 2,000. Inside the university, a group of about 150 people also gathered to protest the chained gate.

The Committee of Islamic Students at Polytechnic arrived and put up a wall poster stating that while it disagreed with the SWP's views, it supported the party's right to hold the meeting.

At 2:30 p.m., ten armed representatives of the Islamic Revolutionary Committee arrived. One of them stated that the committee opposed the purpose of the meeting, that it had been called without Khomeini's permission, but that the gates should be opened.

The committee spokesperson said an armed group of people was going to attack the meeting if it took place, so people should go home.

But the crowd responded with the slogan made popular during the battles against the shah: "Neither guns nor tanks will stop us!" They marched onto the campus and into the gymnasium where the meeting was to take place.

Before the rally began, an Islamic Revolutionary Committee representative spoke to the crowd. He said that while the socialists had a right to hold their meeting, his committee would not be responsible for defending it. The committee members then left.

A group of goons surged to the platform and attempted to start a fight with SWP monitors. To prevent confrontation, the monitors allowed one of the thugs to speak.

### Goons Hail Stalin

This goon launched into a diatribe against Baraheni and Zahraie, repeating the slander that they were CIA agents. He demanded the crowd leave, but no one did. Having nothing more to say, he left the podium, hailing "the great Stalin." His cohorts then cut the microphone wires.

Meanwhile, in the back of the room a gang of more than 100 hoodlums began shouting: "Death to Baraheni!" "Renegade Baraheni should be hanged!" "Death to Babak Zahraie, the servant of the U.S.!" Both Baraheni and Zahraie were in the room, surrounded by defense guards.

The disrupters were a heterogeneous grouping. They were led by provocative elements who have been seen at other political meetings. Usually presenting themselves as "Islamic," or "workers,"

these goons try to start fights to break up political discussions.

Also in the crowd of disrupters were people throwing statements in the air from the Union of Iranian Communists. This group has political ties to the U.S. Revolutionary Communist Party and, along with the RCP, carried out violent attacks on Iranian Trotskyists in the United States.

Other thugs carried statements from a group known as *Paykar* (Combat), which is another Maoist organization. The Militant Students of Polytechnic also participated in the attack.

After a half-hour of chanting, the gang left, again demanding the audience walk out with them.

#### Thugs' Appeals Rejected

No one followed the thugs, and the program began as scheduled. The planned speakers were Hormoz Rahimian, national secretary of the SWP; Babak Zahraie; Javad Sadeeg, a longtime Trotskyist known for his writings on the national question; Parvin Najafi, a prominent feminist and socialist; and Hooshang Sepehri, whose four brothers died in guerrilla combat against the shah's army.

A railroad worker and two auto workers also planned to speak to explain why they had just joined the SWP.

But before the meeting could progress, the disrupters rushed in again, this time attacking the literature table and tearing up pamphlets. Participants in the meeting had already purchased \$500 worth of Trotskyist literature when the attack began.

The goons also moved toward the stairway, intending to tear down the SWP's banners that hung from the balcony. These banners declared the SWP's support for the workers, peasants, oppressed nationalities, and women of Iran. One read: "Build the committees of workers and soldiers; the soviet of the toilers; forward to the Constituent Assembly!"

At the stairway the provocateurs bared switchblades and chains. But the monitors of the meeting foiled their attempt to start a fight. They explained that disruption of political meetings was a SAVAK technique that could only hurt the workers movement. This had an impact on many of the attackers in the rear, who drew back.

#### Worker Condemns Attack

Meanwhile, an Azerbaijani worker took the podium to denounce the disruption. He explained he had come to the meeting to hear about socialism and how workers could build soviets. He said every group had the democratic right to present its ideas.

The disruption continued, but the armed thugs were unable to provoke the fight they wanted. At 5 p.m. the organizers of the meeting announced it would be impossible to continue without violence and urged everyone to leave.

People left the gymnasium, but hundreds

gathered outside to continue the political discussion.

All three Tehran dailies covered the story the next day. Reporters from the Paris *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* also attended the meeting.

The bourgeois press in Iran has tried to portray the disruption as an inevitable fight between political groups, thus creating the pretext for the government to ban meetings because they "lead to violence." The Polytechnic administration announced the day after the attack on the SWP that no more political meetings could take place on campus.

#### Workers Demand Discussion

But suppression of political discussion and political parties—particularly workers parties—is the exact opposite of what the Iranian masses are fighting for today. Having thrown out the shah and his censors with their bare hands, the Iranian people are not about to tolerate new attacks on democracy.

There is an explosion of political discussion in every sector of the population. SWP members report selling as many as 120 copies an hour of the Trotskyist newspaper

*Kargar* (Worker). They also report that since the attack on their meeting a discussion about Trotskyism has begun on all the campuses.

It's in this context that the Bazargan government still refuses to legalize political parties and is postponing the election of a constituent assembly. Bazargan is well aware that his proposed referendum—"Do you want a monarchy or an Islamic Republic?"—is growing more and more unpopular. Workers are looking for genuine political alternatives—and parties—that represent their interests.

The SWP is demanding that the government guarantee the right of all political parties to freedom of expression and activity. It calls on Bazargan to release the SAVAK files seized during the insurrection. These files should be made public, the socialists explain, so working people can see the truth about SAVAK's slanders and disruptive methods.

The next public meeting of the SWP will take place in several weeks. In the meantime, Trotskyists are circulating petitions in support of the SWP's democratic rights and contacting supporters to turn out for the next SWP rally. □

## Hansen Publishing Fund Nears \$20,000 Goal

Contributions to the Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund and messages from Hansen's comrades and collaborators are continuing to come in.

The goal is to raise \$20,000 by March 31 to begin publication in book form of some of Hansen's major writings. Hansen, the founding editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, died January 18.

As of March 9, contributions and pledges received totaled \$17,548.

Stephen Page, a senior shop steward and district secretary for the Norwich District of the National Union of Public Employees in Britain, sent the following letter:

"I was very saddened to hear of the death of Comrade Joseph Hansen. . . . He has undoubtedly been a worthy asset to the world Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International, and the Socialist Workers Party.

"The international support that is being won to help raise the twenty thousand dollars for the publication of the most important works by Joseph Hansen is surely an indication of the respect he had, within and outside the Fourth International.

"To add my support for the above you will find a money order enclosed with this letter. I sincerely hope you achieve your objective."

Author and human-rights activist Tamara Deutscher wrote from London:

May I add my voice to all those who express the greatest sorrow at the death of Joe Hansen. Joe was one of those steadfast comrades whose whole life was devoted to the cause of revolution. To further this cause he spared neither his strength nor his health.

"I shall remember him not only for his singleness of purpose, his qualities of a revolutionary, but also for his warm-hearted, loyal friendship, his kindness and attentiveness, which he was always showing me personally."

Wang Fan-hsi, a veteran Chinese Trotskyist, wrote to express his condolences. He recalled that Hansen had written him to ask when his memoirs would be published, and commented: ". . . alas, when it does come out there will be short one of the few who are really interested in this book. It is certainly a heavy blow to our common cause. I have met only a few people among the revolutionaries who were so plebian and at the same time so noble, so devoted and so unsectarian like Joe."

Sponsors of the fund include Reba Hansen, Joseph Hansen's companion and collaborator for forty-eight years; the contributing editors of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*; leaders of the Trotskyist movement in many countries; and many other internationally known persons.

Contributions may be sent to Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014. □

## Iranian Women Demand Their Rights

By Fred Murphy

Tens of thousands of Iranian women have joined in strikes, street demonstrations, and sit-ins to counter attempts to restrict women's rights spurred by the statements of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

On March 7 Khomeini declared in Qum that women employed in government ministries "must be clothed according to Islamic standards." Outrage at this decree brought some 20,000 women to Tehran University the next day for International Women's Day activities that had already been planned. Students at a number of women's high schools went on strike the same day.

The women marched from the university to Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan's offices, after attempts by right-wing gangsters to break up the protest with chains and knives failed. Chanting "We shall fight the veil" and "In the dawn of freedom there is an absence of freedom," 15,000 women held a sit-in at Bazargan's headquarters.

Khomeini backed off after the first day of protests, saying that wearing the veil was a "duty" but not an "order." This did not stem the rising tide of women's anger, however. On March 10, tens of thousands of women went on strike.

The *New York Times* reported March 11: "The women employees of Iran Air issued a statement saying that the only veil women need is 'a veil of purity which is in their hearts.' They were joined by nurses in many Government hospitals, teachers in high schools and most of the women employees in the Ministry of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs who refused to go to work."

Seven thousand women conducted a three-hour sit-in at the Ministry of Justice on March 10, while at the same time 10,000 women were marching from Tehran University. Among the slogans chanted were "Women's freedom is neither Western nor Eastern," "We are Iranian women, we will not put up with bondage any longer," and "An autocracy in any form is doomed."

At the Justice Ministry, according to the *New York Times*, "a list of eight demands was read. They included the right to choose the attire that best suited women and the country's customs; equal civil rights with men; no discrimination in political, social and economic rights; and a guarantee of full security for women's legal rights and liberties."

Rightists tried to disrupt the women's protests by throwing stones and shouting verbal abuse. Three women were report-

edly wounded by gunfire, and one was stabbed. However, the *Times* reported, "male supporters of the protesting women formed human chains on both sides of the marchers to shield them."

According to United Press International, Khomeini "disowned the revolutionaries [sic] who attacked the women and warned them of 'harsh punishment' unless they stopped their assaults." However, it was Khomeini's own antiwoman declarations that touched off the protests. In the days leading up to March 8 the religious leader urged a ban on abortion, suspension of a law that had prohibited bigamy and restricted arbitrary divorce by men, and an end to coeducation in the schools.

The present regime's ability to implement such repressive moves against women is questionable, but that does not make Khomeini's statements less serious a threat. Iranian women are making it crystal clear that they are ready to wage a fight against any measures aimed at forcing them deeper into oppression.

The March 8-10 protests also reflected the rising overall discontent with Khomeini's stepped-up efforts to "Islamicize" Iran, which in practice means attacking democratic rights. For example, on his arrival in Qum on March 1 Khomeini declared that "the press must not betray Islam . . . radio, television, cinemas—all must take on Islamic forms." In a referendum set for March 30, voters may choose only between an "Islamic republic" and the monarchy.

To make clear what he means by this, Khomeini said: "We neither want just a republic nor a democratic republic. . . . Democratic is a Western term and we reject Western terms." Deputy Prime Minister Ibrahim Yazdi declared March 4 that Marxists, non-Islamic republicans, and "opportunists" were among those "who will have no place in the revolution. The revolution is Islamic. Anyone who thinks otherwise is in serious error."

Prime Minister Bazargan himself and his allies in the secular and bourgeois National Front have shown some uneasiness with Khomeini's "Islamicization" efforts. They all made it a point to attend a huge rally in Ahmadabad on March 5, which had been organized to mark the twelfth anniversary of the death of Mohammed Mossadegh, the National Front prime minister who nationalized foreign oil interests and was ousted by the CIA-organized coup in 1953.

Because Mossadegh symbolizes secularism as well as anti-imperialism for many

Iranians, and because Khomeini offered no support to the commemoration of the nationalist leader's death, the turnout of hundreds of thousands in Ahmadabad indicates that discontent with the ayatollah's recent moves may run quite deep.

Although Prime Minister Bazargan was present at the platform, the organizers of the rally would not allow him to speak. Instead Mossadegh's grandson, Hedayat Matine-Daftari, denounced the Bazargan government's attacks on democratic rights.

Ayatollah Taleghani of Tehran also spoke at the rally. Taleghani withdrew from the Islamic Revolutionary Committee in late February, and spoke out in favor of elected workers committees on the same day that Bazargan denounced them. There are reports that posters of Taleghani and Mossadegh are beginning to go up on the walls in Tehran, replacing Khomeini posters that are being torn down.

Another important rally took place in the Kurdish city of Mahabad in early March. Some 200,000 Kurds gathered at the call of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan to assert their right to national autonomy. According to a report in the March 6 *Le Monde*, Kurdish leader Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou denounced "the reactionary forces that are circulating the rumor that the Kurds want to secede." *Le Monde* continued:

He nonetheless made it clear that the boundaries of Iranian Kurdistan must be determined by the Kurds themselves, taking into account history, geography, and the economy. The central government would be responsible for defense, foreign policy, and currency. On the other hand, the elected parliament and administrative officials in the province must be organized there and not from the capital. Kurdish must be taught in the schools and must be the official language of the provincial government, with Farsi [Persian] continuing as a parallel language. Finally, the other minorities (such as the Assyrians) living in Kurdistan should enjoy equal rights and be able to use their own language.

Iranian Trotskyists report that the central government has been unable to assert its authority in Kurdistan. Armed Kurds patrol the streets. The Kurdish national flag is flying, and Kurdish has been proclaimed the official language in Mahabad, Sanandaj, and Kermanshah. The Kurdish people have also begun to wear their traditional clothing, which was banned under the shah. □

## Mexican Socialist Faces U.S. Deportation Hearing

By Susan Wald

On April 3, Héctor Marroquín will face U.S. immigration officials at a deportation hearing in Houston, Texas.

Marroquín is a twenty-five-year-old student leader and trade unionist who has requested political asylum in the United States. He is a member of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance.

In 1974, Marroquín was framed up by the Mexican government on phony charges of terrorism and subversion. If deported, he—like hundreds of other Mexican dissidents—could be kidnapped, tortured, imprisoned without charges, or murdered.

The U.S. government will try to prove that Marroquín should be deported. In an initial ruling in December, the Immigration and Naturalization Service turned down his request for asylum. At that time, the INS claimed there was no political persecution in Mexico.

Following the December INS decision, the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee launched an emergency support campaign. The committee plans to present a large number of witnesses, including several from Mexico, at the hearing to back up Marroquín's claim that his life would be in danger if he were forced to return to Mexico.

Among those testifying on Marroquín's behalf will be Rosario Ibarra de Piedra. Mrs. Piedra is a founder of the Mexican Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled. Her own son, Jesús, was "disappeared" nearly four years ago.

The Mexican government has yet to give a satisfactory account of the fate of Jesús Piedra and other "disappeared," estimated by the committee to number more than 350.

Amnesty International is preparing a statement on Marroquín's behalf about the state of human rights in Mexico today.

Other testimony and affidavits will come from Mexican torture victims and their families. These personal accounts will be backed up by the International League for Human Rights (ILHR), which recently published a report of its fact-finding mission to Mexico.

The weight of the evidence amassed by independent organizations like Amnesty International and the ILHR have forced the U.S. government to back down a little from its earlier denials that torture, repression, and other violations of human rights are practiced by its ally and potential big oil supplier, the Mexican government.

Before the INS ruling in December, the U.S. State Department had issued an advisory opinion urging that Marroquín's request for asylum be denied. However, in its recently published "Report on Human Rights Practices in Countries Receiving U.S. Aid," the State Department admits:

"Arbitrary arrest, detention and disappearance of suspected political subversives have been charged by human rights groups, opposition political parties and by the press. In the case of arrests for politically motivated crimes, a number of the charges appear credible."

Marroquín's attorney, Margaret Winter, pointed out to the INS in a February 17

letter that "the new State Department human rights report contradicts its advisory opinion of June, 1978, which was relied on by you in making your determination [to deny Marroquín political asylum]."

The defense committee is organizing to flood INS Director Leonel Castillo with protest letters and telegrams.

In recent weeks, Marroquín's case has picked up important new support from the labor movement in the United States and abroad.

New endorsers include Mike Olszanski, executive board member, United Steelworkers of America (USWA), Local 1010 in East Chicago, Indiana; Ignacio Rodríguez, former candidate for USWA international secretary; Ray Majerus, director of United Auto Workers Region 10; and Mike Nye, business representative of the Santa Clara County Central Labor Council.

The Human Rights Committee of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Federation of Teachers sent Castillo a telegram.

The Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec (Québec Teachers Federation) sent a telegram signed by its vice-president, Micheline Sicotte. The message read: "The Québec Teachers Federation, representing 90,000 workers, demands that the U.S. government recognize Héctor Marroquín's right to political asylum. His life is in danger because he is fighting for democratic rights that are denied in Mexico. A government that is for human rights must act favorably upon this demand."

Similar messages have been sent by the Philosophy Department at the University of Québec in Montréal; by the Regroupement des Militants Syndicaux, a Québec trade-union grouping; and by the Rassemblement des Jeunes Pour le Socialisme (RJS), a youth organization in solidarity with the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. The RJS is distributing a leaflet on Marroquín's case.

Defense activists must raise \$15,000 by the April hearing to cover the costs of preparing testimony, bringing in witnesses, and stepping up publicity.

Contributions may be sent to the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee, P.O. Box 843 Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Letters and telegrams supporting Marroquín's right to political asylum should be sent to Leonel Castillo, Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536. Please send copies of all messages to the defense committee. □

### Cuban Solidarity With Mexican Prisoners

A committee has been formed in Cuba to support the work of the Mexican Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared," and Exiled.

In a statement issued in Havana, the support committee said that its aim is to "help change the false image" of the Mexican bourgeoisie as "champions of democracy." Concretely, it has undertaken to establish an information center in Cuba to help circulate the truth about violations of human rights in Mexico.

On November 30, the support committee issued a statement in solidarity with a hunger strike organized by the Mexi-

can group to publicize the demand for a full and unrestricted amnesty.

"The struggle for a general amnesty," the Havana committee said, "is part of the struggle of the Mexican people to increase their rights, and can count on the support of broad sectors of workers, peasants, and students."

On December 10, the weekly English-language edition of *Granma* carried a dispatch reporting the release of files disclosing FBI spy operations inside Mexican political parties, universities, and student groups. The FBI documents were those obtained and released to the press by the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee.

# Selections From the Left

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

## Socialist Voice

*English fortnightly newspaper reflecting the views of the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire. Published in Toronto, Canada.*

The March 5 issue features a statement by the Political Committee of the RWL/LOR, entitled "Hands Off Vietnam! Peking's invasion aids imperialist drive against Indochinese revolution." It says:

"The February 17 invasion of Vietnam by troops of the People's Republic of China, and the subsequent slaughter of thousands of Chinese and Vietnamese troops, is the fruit of a counterrevolutionary deal between Washington and Peking. It is a contribution by the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy to the escalating campaign by U.S. imperialism against the Vietnamese revolution.

"Washington . . . made its position known almost immediately. 'We call for the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia and Chinese troops from Vietnam,' said an official spokesperson of the Carter administration, linking the two from the outset. . . .

"The real attitude of the imperialists became clear through a comparison of their relatively calm reaction to the Chinese invasion with their hysterical response to the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by Kampuchean insurgents with Vietnamese military backing. . . .

"An editorial in the February 26 [Toronto] *Globe and Mail* blamed Moscow, Peking, and Hanoi for the bloodshed. Expressing the hypocritical view of Canadian ruling class circles, the *Globe* condemned Vietnam for 'marching into Cambodia like the neighborhood bully of Southeast Asia, dominating Laos and making a grab for the sponsorship of Communist insurgency in Thailand and Malaysia,' as well as for taking 'a hard line on the imposition of a socialist economy in the South [of Vietnam]. . . .'

"The latter charge is a reference to the sweeping anticapitalist measures undertaken by Hanoi last March. . . . This marked the consolidation of the entire country under a single planned economy—a major advance for the Indochinese revolution.

"Fearing that this revolutionary impulse could set the masses of Kampuchea, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries in motion, Washington intensified its campaign against the Vietnamese revolution.

Increased contacts were established with the tyrannical procapitalist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea by the Thai dictatorship and the CIA-backed counterrevolutionary insurgents in Laos.

"Confronted with the growing threat of attack by imperialism through Kampuchea and Laos, as well as by military threats by China on its Northern border, Hanoi took action in December and January, along with Kampuchean rebels, to replace the Pol Pot regime with one less oriented to blocking against Vietnam with imperialism and its right wing Asian vassals. . . . The fall of the Pol Pot regime opened the door for a struggle by the workers and peasants of Kampuchea to establish their own government and institute a planned economy. . . .

"Peking's aim is not to restore capitalism in Vietnam—that would threaten the Chinese regime itself—but to preserve stability on its borders to facilitate its dealings with imperialism. Nonetheless, its actions in Indochina contribute to the goal of imperialism and pose a danger to the Chinese workers state as well as to Vietnam.

"For these reasons defenders of the Indochinese and Chinese revolutions must demand that Peking immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Vietnam and end its counterrevolutionary complicity with Washington's drive to roll back the revolution in Southeast Asia.

"But calling for withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam does not mean accepting President Carter's blackmail linking Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam with withdrawal of Vietnamese military support to the new Kampuchean government. It does not mean accepting or promoting the big lie of ruling class politicians that the source of the war danger is Moscow, Peking, and Hanoi, rather than Washington. . . .

"Workers in this country . . . should demand that imperialism get out of Indochina now. We should demand that Washington and Ottawa recognize all the Indochinese governments, including the new government of Kampuchea. Massive economic aid—with no strings attached—should be sent by the Canadian and U.S. governments to rebuild Indochina."

## rood

*"Red," Flemish weekly paper of the Revolutionary Workers League, Belgian section of the Fourth International.*

In the February 23 issue, Ida Dequeecker writes:

"Vietnam invades Kampuchea. Two months later, China undertakes a 'bloody

punitive expedition' against Vietnam. Former allies take up arms against one another. A disastrous development that discredits socialism in the eyes of workers throughout the world and can only benefit imperialism. In this affair, the ruling bureaucracies in the workers states bear the responsibility for the most criminal outrages. . . ."

The capitalist press "explains that no social and economic system can avoid war—a demoralizing conclusion.

"There is another explanation. In none of these countries is the working class in power. The power is in the hands of a limited group, a bureaucracy. This group blocks any political democracy in the country and abroad it follows a policy that serves its interests and not those of the workers. . . .

"The explosive situation in Indochina created by the leaders of the workers states profits only the imperialists. . . . They may give the imperialists an opening for a counteroffensive to roll back the gains of the Indochinese revolution and the enthusiasm that it aroused among the workers throughout the world. . . .

"Our support and sympathy must go to upholding the gains of the workers states, of the Indochinese revolution and defending them first of all against imperialism. Therefore, we demand the unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea as well as of Chinese troops from Vietnam. Therefore, we denounce the criminal attitude of the bureaucracies in the workers states that strangle workers democracy, ignore proletarian internationalism, and refuse to form a common front against imperialism."

## El Socialista

*"The Socialist," weekly of the Socialist Workers Party, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. Published in Bogotá, Colombia.*

Under the headline "China Out of Vietnam!" the February 22 issue says:

"The facts are very clear. A workers state, the second most powerful on the earth, has invaded another neighboring and much weaker workers state. Such an invasion of a sister state can only be explained by the extremely nationalist positions of the Stalinist bureaucracies encrusted in the leaderships of the workers states and by the reactionary policy they follow internationally, which has led them to commit the worst crimes against the workers movement. Clear examples of this are the support given to Somoza, Pinochet, the shah of Iran, and now this invasion. There is no valid reason for the Chinese army remaining in Vietnam. Yesterday it was the Soviet Union that invaded Czechoslovakia, today China is invading Vietnam. Chinese troops out of Vietnam!"

"Workers News," open forum for the class struggle. Published weekly in Paris.

The February 28 issue analyzes the reasons for the conflict as follows:

"Statements by Peking officials have made it clear what China's 'war aims' are. It wants to force Hanoi to withdraw its troops from Cambodia, to block the attempt by the Vietnamese leaders to assert their political and economic control over the entire Indochinese peninsula, and to combat Moscow's influence in this part of the world. . . .

"In refusing to accept linking a withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia with withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam, the Hanoi leaders and their allies in the Kremlin have made it clear that they view what is at stake in the same way. It is control of Indochina by Hanoi, which has signed long-term treaties with its protégés in Laos and Cambodia. . . .

"The stakes in this conflict are quite concrete—the considerable economic, political, and strategic advantages represented by control of the entire Mekong valley, the large petroleum resources believed to lie under the South China Sea and the Gulf of Tonkin, and so on.

"What the bureaucracies want to do with these advantages is made clear by the unfolding of events since the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam in 1975 and its total withdrawal from Indochina. . . .

"It must be recalled that the unification of Vietnam was carried out in violation of the political program of the Hanoi leaders. . . . In order to prevent a revolutionary explosion that would go out of their control, the northern leaders had to take over Saigon and extend to the south the expropriation of the imperialists, as well as impose their bureaucratic tutelage over the entire country. . . .

"The 'Khmer Rouge' leaders, confronted with an identical situation, did not fundamentally act any differently. The gigantic exodus from Pnompenh was designed to prevent a revolutionary development that would get out of control of the chiefs of the Khmer Communist Party.

"The collapse of the bourgeois regimes left the various bureaucratic parties no choice but to extend social relations of production such as already existed in the USSR, the East European countries, China, and North Vietnam. . . .

"The international policy of the various bureaucratic parties was marked by active participation in the struggle against revolution and for the defense of the positions remaining in the hands of the imperialists in this area. Before the unleashing of hostilities between Vietnam and Pol Pot's Cambodia, both the Hanoi and Pnompenh leaders were rushing to the doorsteps of the bourgeois regimes in Southeast Asia,

proclaiming their determination to maintain the best relations with regimes as reactionary as those of Thailand or Singapore. . . .

"The contradictions that today beset the parasitic bureaucracies and are forcing them into military confrontation with each other are a feature of the worldwide crisis of the imperialist system.

"The reactionary wars that these bureaucracies are conducting on the Indochina peninsula indicate that in Vietnam, China, and also in the USSR, these contradictions are leading to a weakening of the bureaucratic regimes and to their seeing their survival more and more as dependent on the advantages they expect to gain from loyally collaborating with imperialism.

"The reason they are fighting arms in hand to gain the disputed positions in Southeast Asia is to be able to win 'most-favored' client status in negotiations with imperialism.

"The workers and peasants in this region have no reason to favor the Chinese bureaucracy over the Vietnamese one or vice versa. . . .

"The question that is posed today for the workers and peasants in Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and also the USSR, is the following: How to take advantage of conflicts breaking out between the bureaucracies as well as within them in order to fight for their overthrow, to open up the road to the political revolution."

## **OWE HAGER?**

"What Is To Be Done?" Fortnightly newspaper of the Socialist Workers Organization, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Costa Rica. Published in San José.

An article in the February 26 issue, headlined "Imperialists Behind China's Criminal Attack on Vietnam," poses the following questions: "What are the reasons for the Chinese military action [in Vietnam] and what dangers does it present for the workers internationally?" It gives the following answers:

"In recent weeks, Vietnamese troops invaded Kampuchea . . . and overthrew the reactionary regime of Pol Pot. . . . The ouster of the Pol Pot regime was a severe blow to imperialist positions in the area. But the imperialists cannot take the chance of intervening openly in Indochina. The murderous war that was waged against Vietnam for decades aroused massive protests in the U.S., and it is clear that the workers in the United States and the rest of the world will not permit a new direct imperialist intervention in Indochina.

"Moreover, in these last days also China was reestablishing diplomatic and trade

relations with the United States. The attitude that Carter and the UN took toward the Sino-Vietnamese conflict made it clear what price Washington demanded that the Chinese pay for the reopening of diplomatic and trade relations. It was a campaign of harassment against Vietnam to prevent the further deterioration of imperialist positions in the Indochinese region.

"When Carter says 'Vietnamese troops out of Kampuchea, Chinese troops out of Vietnam,' he is making it clear that he will press for a cessation of hostilities by China only if Vietnamese troops withdraw from Kampuchea.

"The consequences of a war between two workers states can only favor imperialism. In the first place, in this specific case, it shores up the weakened imperialist positions in Indochina; and in the second place, a war between two workers states endangers the gains of the workers in both countries. In order to maintain its alliance with imperialism, the Chinese bureaucracy is not only endangering the Vietnamese workers state and the gains achieved by the workers in that country but also the gains of the Chinese workers themselves. . . . Workers throughout the world must . . . demand the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops and a complete end to the fighting."

## **十月评论**

"October Review," Trotskyist monthly magazine published in Hong Kong.

The March 5 issue, in an editorial entitled "Our Basic Attitude Toward the Sino-Vietnamese War," says:

"Peking's policies led directly to the outbreak of this war. But at the same time, we must not overlook the fact that from the moment relations went sour between the Chinese and Soviet CPs, a tendency appeared toward military confrontation between the two states and it subsequently gained momentum.

"After the victory of the revolution in southern Vietnam, Hanoi could not remain neutral in the Sino-Soviet conflict and finally went over to the side of the Kremlin. Aided and abetted by Moscow, it invaded Cambodia and sought to tighten its control of Laos. Under such circumstances, the relations between China and Vietnam deteriorated to the point of extreme hostility.

"This situation compelled Peking to continue its rightist course. Diplomatically it sought to ally itself with imperialist powers, especially the U.S., against the Soviet Union. Militarily, it built up its forces against the Soviet Union and Vietnam. From Peking's reckless invasion of Vietnam, it may be surmised that the alliance of the Soviet and Vietnamese bureaucracies has posed an intolerable threat to its rule in China. So, it decided to

launch a preemptive strike to try to undermine the weaker link in the opposition camp. . . .

"The present war may very well be the prelude to a future Sino-Soviet war. Such a crisis is rooted in the deep contradiction between the ruling castes of these two big workers states. . . .

"The contradiction between these ruling bureaucracies is caused mainly by their extremely narrow nationalism. . . . Thus the contradiction between them is a contradiction between states, but this by no means indicates contradictions between the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union and Vietnam and the workers and peasants of China. . . .

"Only ruling bureaucracies will hope to secure gains from such a war. And only regimes that feel the foundations of their rule crumbling will recklessly gamble on war, playing with fire near a powder magazine.

*"This war is definitely unfavorable to China and the toiling people of China. China does not need one inch of land from other countries. . . . The war inevitably uses up a lot of material resources. This can only harm the economic development of the country.*

*"This war is definitely unfavorable to the toiling people of Vietnam. . . . They do not need any war with Cambodia or with China. . . .*

"Undoubtedly, Vietnam's bureaucratic rulers should be punished; and they will be by being overthrown by the toiling people of Vietnam. . . . But today, Peking's attempt to 'teach them a lesson' by the use of force has the adverse effect of giving these bureaucrats the excuse to incite nationalist fervor among the Vietnamese and divert their discontent into hatred of China. . . .

*"This war is definitely unfavorable to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union. First of all, the Kremlin will exploit Peking's invasion of Vietnam to incite narrow nationalist feelings in the Soviet Union, which will help the Kremlin launch a wave of patriotic propaganda in the event of a Sino-Soviet war. . . . In addition, if a Sino-Soviet war should break out, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union will suffer immense pain and losses, just as will the workers and peasants of China. . . .*

*"This war is also definitely unfavorable to the world revolutionary movement. In the eyes of the toiling masses of every country, China and Vietnam are both countries with nationalized, planned economies. . . .*

"At the present time, massive strikes are developing in England and France; the Iranian revolution, after its initial victory, is still advancing. . . . At this moment, the world bourgeoisie and their agents. . . . will surely exploit the Sino-Vietnam war to mount an anti-Communist propaganda campaign. . . .

"We demand that both sides immediately stop fighting. . . .

"We appeal to the working people of the world and particularly in China, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union: Unite and carry out every possible action to halt the Sino-Vietnam war and keep it from expanding. We appeal to the soldiers of China and Vietnam to immediately lay down their weapons. . . ."

## **klasse-** **kampen**

*"Class Struggle," published weekly in Copenhagen by the Revolutionary Socialist League, Danish section of the Fourth International.*

The editorial in the February 22 issue, headlined "Stop China's Aggression," is a statement by the National Bureau of the Revolutionary Socialist League. It says:

"The bureaucratic rulers of China have sent the Chinese army on a punitive expedition into Vietnam.

"A new level has been reached in the anti-working-class policy followed by the Chinese chiefs, headed by Teng Hsiao-p'ing.

"Internationally the working class must support the Vietnamese people in its struggle to halt the criminal Chinese punitive expedition. . . .

"In recent years, the Chinese leaders have stepped up their anti-working-class foreign policy and it has had more and more catastrophic consequences. They have made diplomatic alliances with the U.S., Japan, and the bourgeois regimes in the ASEAN bloc (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore), which surround Vietnam.

"This constitutes a direct threat to the Vietnamese workers state. In this situation, the bureaucratic Vietnamese leadership carried out a military operation to overturn the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, and thereby defend the Vietnamese workers state militarily against the imperialist threat.

"The Chinese bureaucratic leadership wants to weaken Vietnamese influence in Southeast Asia in order to assure Chinese control over developments in the region. The aim is to maintain and improve the possibilities for 'peaceful coexistence' alliances with the imperialist powers and the ASEAN countries.

"That is why the Chinese bureaucrats are attacking Vietnam militarily and murdering Vietnamese workers and peasants. While the armies of two workers states are locked in combat, the imperialists can rub their hands in glee. In this situation the workers movement throughout the world must raise the following demands:

"Stop the Chinese military attack.

"Immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops.

"Renew and step up economic aid to the Vietnamese people, who for years had to fight against the war machine of U.S. imperialism and now have to fight against Chinese troops."

## **was tun**

*"What Is To Be Done," weekly paper of the International Marxist Group. Published in Frankfurt, West Germany.*

The featured article in the February 22 issue is headlined "Chinese Troops Out of Vietnam!" It states that Peking's aim is not "to subjugate Vietnam militarily":

"The real calculations of the Peking bureaucracy have to be seen in a wider context. . . . Its entire foreign policy is based on trying to come to an arrangement with imperialism. . . . In this respect, it in no way differs from the Soviet bureaucracy and the bureaucracies in the 'people's democracies.'

"The nationalist conservatism and chauvinism of these bureaucracies leads not only to different bureaucracies allying with imperialism against each other but to outright war against each other. In this, the Peking bureaucracy's foreign policy has now assumed the most repugnant and unscrupulous features.

"We have every reason to assume that during Teng Hsiao-p'ing's recent visit to the U.S. and Japan, he got the tacit approval of the imperialists for his 'reprisal action.' It is our opinion that by its invasion of Vietnam, the Peking bureaucracy wanted to prove its 'reliability' to the imperialists in a way that it had previously been unable to do."

What Peking offered the imperialists, was to "tame 'irresponsible' Vietnam," to try to get a neutralist regime in Cambodia under Prince Sihanouk, and to serve as a shield for the Southeast Asian regimes threatened by revolution. In return, it expected "massive imperialist credits and economic aid for its modernization projects."

The article concluded: "So, it is clear that this policy—supposedly aimed at opposing hegemonism and the Soviet Union—directly plays into the hands of imperialism and in the last analysis undermines the bases of the Chinese workers state itself."

*Was Tun* raised the following slogans:

"Immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam! End the military threats and conflicts between workers states! Unity of the workers states against imperialism! For a democratic socialist federation of the Indochinese peoples with full equality and the right of self-determination. Down with bureaucratic dictatorship; for democratic rule by the workers and peasants!"



## Lessons of the West German Steel Strike

By Werner Hülsberg

The longest struggle in the history of the working class in West Germany (with the exception of the Schleswig-Holstein metalworkers strike<sup>1</sup>) lasted six weeks. As it drew to a close January 11, 100,000 of the 150,000 organized workers in the steel industry in the Rhine, Ruhr, and Weser valleys were on strike for a reduction of the work week to thirty-five hours.

The steelworkers' strike was the first official union struggle in this branch of industry in about fifty years. But that reflects only one side of the actual situation of this section of the working class. Of course the steel industry is the only branch of industry that functions under "co-management." But this does not mean that its workers did not play a decisive role in the class struggle in West Germany in the past.

In fact in 1969, through a spontaneous strike that ended in victory, the steelworkers fired the opening shot in the new rise of workers' struggles that followed the breakdown of the German "economic miracle" and continued through the generalization of the economic recession in 1974-75.

"We are reaping what we sowed," they said. In fact in 1973, through a spontaneous strike around wages, which was broken by the union bureaucracy, the steelworkers at Hoesch and Mannesmann unleashed the wave of struggles that followed in the summer of that year.

The steelworkers strike was the fifth official union struggle in 1978, and IG Metall's<sup>2</sup> second of the year. That's already quite a schedule. Because of the battle lines on which it was fought, the steelworkers movement was like the struggles of the dockers, the printers, the Baden-Württemberg metalworkers, and the Berlin construction workers. That is, the mobilizations focused not on the question of wages, but rather on resistance to the economic crisis in the capitalist system.

The steelworkers' struggle faced many more obstacles than the earlier battles. In the first place, workers in the steel industry had their backs to the wall. In the last three years alone, more than 30,000 steel jobs were eliminated in the Rhine and the Ruhr valleys.

1. The metalworkers of Schleswig-Holstein went on strike in October 1956 to demand payment of full wages for sick leave. After 112 days they settled for a compromise guaranteeing them 76.2% of their pay.

2. *Industriegewerkschaft Metall—Metal Industry Union.*

Second, the call for a thirty-five-hour week, which marks a qualitative breakthrough in demands, faced a united front of the entire West German capitalist class. However, the demand itself was adopted and put forward by only a segment of the union movement, or more accurately, by a single union.

Despite all these obstacles, the strikers showed great determination; their participation in the movement far surpassed all the usual norms of workers struggles in West Germany. The union leadership, however, used the unfavorable relationship of forces with the bourgeoisie to put forward a compromise, which they were able to impose on the workers after several attempts.

The agreement signed by the bureaucrats projects a reduction of one hour in the workweek for a portion (60%) of the steelworkers: those who work rotating shifts and those over fifty years of age. And that only in 1983.

Despite this unsatisfactory outcome the steelworkers' struggle deserves more detailed analysis since it sheds specific light on the class struggle in this "island of stability," as West Germany is called, and is an example for all workers in other countries who find themselves in the same situation.

### The Thirty-Five-Hour Week— a Goal of Union Struggle

The overwhelming majority of the West German union bureaucracy still totally rejects the idea that the economic downturn of 1974-75 represents a watershed in the capitalist system, that there will be no return to the "economic miracle," and that trade-union activity must thus be aimed fundamentally against the system.

A phrase as simple as "the crisis of the capitalist system" sticks in the throats of the bureaucrats.

From 1974 to 1977, they maintained it was possible to incorporate the great majority of the working class into capitalism. They viewed the crisis as analogous to that of 1966-67, a passing incident, and professed total confidence in the Social Democratic government's ability to regulate the economic difficulties. For the broad masses this meant "toning down their demands" and "waiting for the upturn."

Plainly what they were talking about was an upturn in profits and speedup, things that are not designed to fight unemployment. Meanwhile, an upturn took

place, but not the one the bureaucrats expected. There was an upturn in mobilizations, in unions taking responsibility for struggles, in discussion inside the unions, and in the desire to find new solutions.

For years, revolutionary Marxists who called for dividing up the available work among all the available workers seemed to be preaching in the desert. Even the influential centrist movements fought this demand for a long time, using the same arguments the union bureaucracy did.<sup>3</sup> The demand became popular after the slogan for a thirty-five-hour workweek was adopted at a general assembly of more than 10,000 workers at the Rüsselsheim Opel plant in April 1977. The assembly voted unanimously to place the demand for the thirty-five-hour week before the IG Metall convention.

As a result, in September 1977 the thirty-five-hour-week demand was passed by a very slim majority at the IG Metall convention, but against the will of the leadership. This electoral victory was possible not only because of the presence of numerous delegates representing the workers (from the plant and office-staff committees), but also because a segment of the middle layer of the union bureaucracy sensed the changes taking place in the rank and file and took this into account in their vote.

The "success" achieved at the IG Metall convention was followed by another in May 1978 at the convention of the federation of unions.

This did not, however, prevent the thirty-five-hour demand from sinking into oblivion. Aside from the IG Metall, only the printing union (IG Druck und Papier) officially put it forward and included it in its action program. In the other large unions (especially civil service and chemical) the bureaucracies were able to maintain rigid control until very recently. Their main concern however is not reducing the workweek but winning six weeks vacation.

Actually the thirty-five-hour demand was imposed on IG Metall's bureaucratic leadership against its will. This had two consequences. First, the bureaucrats did not make the slightest effort to mobilize the membership as a whole, and in fact

3. The "Sozialistische Büro," for example, until the middle of 1977 explained that this demand could not be achieved on the economic plane and that reductions in work time automatically led to an acceleration of the pace of work and a decline in wages.

continued to publicly call for six weeks vacation. Second, IG Metall's stance was on the whole followed by the majority of other union leaderships.

The objectives of this tactic couldn't be clearer. It was directed against the union ranks and has so far achieved its aims. In fact, polls show that despite the introduction of the demand for a thirty-five-hour week by the strikers, the majority of union members put six weeks vacation above a reduction in the workweek.<sup>4</sup>

#### Situation in Metalworkers Union

With 2.7 million members, IG Metall is the most powerful West German union. It covers the metalworking industries (machines, electrical components, auto) as well as steel and iron. These latter two branches have separate contracts.

Since the end of the Second World War, IG Metall has participated in the decisions of the bosses through "bipartite representation" or co-management. Co-management was instituted after the war to deflect pressure for nationalizations. What does "bipartite representation" mean? It means that the administrative council is made up of equal numbers of representatives of the unions and the bosses, to which an "independent" is added; and within the board of directors formed in this way, the union representative is in charge of work conditions.

In the 1950s and 1960s the leadership of IG Metall felt it could claim co-management was a success and that it safeguarded the interests of its members. Statistics for that period have shown quite clearly that income and jobs in basic steel had little connection with the short-term situation in the industry, which was certainly not the case in the fabrication and assembly sectors. That is why pay levels in basic steel soon passed those in the metalworks.

Then toward the middle of the 1970s, the miracle of "participation" lost its attractive force. The steel trusts made clear they were no longer content with the suppression of jobs "inherent in the market" and instead began to use market fluctuations as a pretext for massive layoffs. At the same time steelworkers' pay fell below that of the metalworkers.

"Participation" played no part in the struggle to defend jobs and maintain purchasing power. The bureaucracy thus lost its magic wand, which had for years served as a substitute for an aggressive trade-union policy.

This became clearer during the spring 1978 strike in Baden-Württemberg (which took place against the wishes of the local union leaders) and in the delegate elections in the summer of 1978, where opposition slates formed in a large number of facto-

ries registered impressive successes.

Since the spring 1978 strike in Baden-Württemberg the atmosphere has been stormy throughout the organization. In the 1978 union elections opposition slates were set up in a number of the most important steel complexes. Avowedly Maoist slates received as much as 40% of the vote, and this took place in plants where the workers are 100% unionized.

Little by little the bureaucracy's lack of any experience in struggle in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen also became a problem. The regional union leader personally complained to the delegates that during the previous wage negotiations one of the foundry owners had told him that he was not ready to make a concession because IG Metall was incapable of waging a strike!

Thus there was not a wide range of solutions for the regional union bureaucracy to choose among. It had to provide new perspectives that would replace the increasingly discredited "co-management" scheme, and provide proof through an opening—limited, of course—that it was able to lead a strike. This was the only way to revive contact with the ranks.

#### The Union Leadership's Thinking

This explains why the bureaucratic faction that took up the thirty-five-hour demand was the very faction that had fought hardest against the slogan. Of all the present union demands, it is the only one that, thanks to the word "Einstieg,"<sup>5</sup> could in a short period establish a new perspective for reformist union activity while also being part of a struggle against layoffs.

But a new idea does not automatically bring about new practice. In West Germany many hours of work and conditions of work are governed by "under the table" contracts, separate from those that fix wages. The union bureaucracy used these "under the table" agreements as a pretext to put forward the proposal "toward thirty-five hours" without discussion with the members. In many factories and among the delegates there was great surprise. At first this demand was seen as a "trick" to raise the stakes in the overall negotiations with the bosses.

When the demand was made public in the middle of last June, the union leadership did nothing to publicize it and even less to mobilize support for it. The thirty-five-hour week was increasingly termed a demand particular to the steel industry. The IG Metall leadership consciously refused to raise the same slogan in the metalworking industry, sticking there to the demand for six weeks vacation.

In the course of the first negotiations the bosses didn't want to listen to anything about a shorter work week. In the union commission on wages it was suggested

that the thirty-five-hour week be dropped. But this time the bureaucrats didn't want to lose face. Instead they turned to those blast furnaces with a tradition of struggle and to the left-wing delegates in the union, explaining that they now had to "unleash the mobilization."

Meanwhile the negotiations became less frequent and shorter, to the benefit of the usual wage negotiations that fell at the very end of the year. The proposals from the factories regarding wage demands ranged from 8% to 10%.

To appease the bosses and to link the wage demand to the demand for the thirty-five-hour week, the bureaucrats postponed the wage negotiations and, through an internal referendum, reduced their wage demand to 5%. But this self-control did not satisfy the bosses. In the first discussions the bosses proposed a 2.1% raise and two more days vacation for all.

The counterposed positions were hardening and it became increasingly difficult to find a solution around the negotiating table. The bureaucrats rediscovered a union left wing that they had until then forgotten about. Barely two weeks remained to popularize the demand and dissipate the fears the bureaucrats themselves had sown.

#### The Referendum and the Beginning of the Strike

In order to guarantee the success of the November 18-21, 1978 strike referendum, IG Metall called, on its eve, by regions, a warning strike or meetings held during work time. The call was answered by 120,000 workers and there were twenty-two demonstrations. This was the most important mass mobilization in the steel industry in decades. If one takes into account the long practice of negotiations without participation by the ranks, without warning strikes, it is clear that a movement of such breadth covered over some things hiding in the shadows. These were, unfortunately, rapidly revealed. A mobilization launched from above did not make possible the full development of the capacity for struggle.

The mobilizations often reflected the uneven state of preparation in different plants. In Dortmund (20,000 participants) and Duisburg (25,000 in three demonstrations) participation was higher than average. The workers did not wait for ready-made banners. They made them themselves. The union leaders took a purely defensive stance, with the aim of demobilizing the struggle. They mocked the initiatives taken by the workers and provided them with no perspectives.

Despite this, the referendum was an enormous success. Of the 95.1% of the workers who voted, 86.96% voted yes. In the history of the IG Metall there has not been a single higher total than that.

Three days later the bosses stirred and presented their positions. To prevent the

4. A poll by *Die Zeit* showed that during the strike itself 44% of union members were for a reduction in the work week, 50% were for six weeks vacation, and 6% had no opinion.

5. "Einstieg," literally "embark upon" (the thirty-five-hour week), refers to a specific union plan of progressive steps toward the thirty-five-hour week over a five year period.

announced strike they offered the possibility that the "dream" of the unions might be achieved and immediately proposed six weeks vacation for all. On the eve of the referendum this "dream proposal" would have meant an end to the conflict. But in the meantime propaganda and agitation for the thirty-five-hour week had made headway among the steelworkers. The simple slogan "division of work among all available workers," having been put forward primarily by the bureaucracy and the factory union leaders themselves, had penetrated their consciousness. It was not possible for the bureaucracy to retreat now without paying the price of deepening internal conflicts and sharp disagreement.

The rejection of the employers' proposal completely changed the atmosphere in the factories. No doubts remained—the struggle was being actively prepared. Fear and reticence were swept away in a single stroke by the strike. One could almost speak of a sense of "euphoria."

In incorporating the thirty-five-hour week into its platform, the leadership of IG Metall, loyal to its long policy of class collaboration, planned to continue the same collaboration through different means, while providing medium-range perspectives. This would have allowed them, among other things, to regain their prestige among the ranks. The dream vanished like a pricked bubble when the steel barons forced the workers out on strike. The bosses' intransigent opposition to any reduction in the work week was a sharp obstacle. The noose was labelled "thirty-five hours" and rather than allow the bureaucrats to withdraw their heads from it, the bosses tightened it around their necks.

What is the explanation for this? Are the West German bosses stupider than their foreign counterparts? Are they too stupid to grasp the hand extended to them by the union bureaucracy, which wanted collaboration with a "new look"?

One thing is clear: while the German bosses are clearly the most economically powerful in Europe, they are undoubtedly not the sharpest and most lucid representatives of their class. Helmut Schmidt is much better than they are in the role. Put simply, for years they had grown accustomed to the union leadership's methods of functioning. "A barking dog doesn't bite," the proverb says. This "experience" with the union leadership led them in this past period to exacerbate the situation, even to throw gasoline on the fire, for instance by threatening the workers with lockouts.

But undoubtedly this is only the visible side of the bourgeoisie's calculations. Their attitude is also explained by many other motives. It stems from their portion of the pie. Up to now nothing in the world would make them share it with the working class. They held tight to one fact: any decrease in the work week directly entails a decline in their profits.

Working-class combativity is rising and strikes and conflicts are becoming more numerous. But the breadth of these conflicts and the radicalization of the workers have not reached the point where they have forced the bourgeoisie onto the defensive.

What the bourgeoisie fears most is that each new struggle, even a partial struggle, could unleash an avalanche of expenses by stimulating the reactions of the unions.

The German employers today still feel they are strong enough to be able to force a "recalcitrant" union to retreat, without this spurring a radicalization of the working class. Up to now, unfortunately, history has proven them correct.

It should be pointed out that the employers have a powerful argument—in the sphere of finances. Each workers struggle can draw on a special fund (workers who pay into the fund—1% of their salary—according to the rules, receive their full salary during a strike). But what can happen is that the money is used for other things, and there is not enough in the fund. Even the powerful IG Metall federation is not secure against such a risk.

The bosses have drawn the lessons of this, and two confrontational employers' organizations (BDA and BDI) have published an "employers' handbook" in which they suggest to their colleagues that in the event of workers resistance to measures outlined in this "handbook," the employers should use the tactic of locking out their employees and should hold out with the help of their own "struggle" fund in the event of a serious conflict.

In this "handbook" they list concessions that should not be granted:

- No workweek of less than 40 hours.
- No vacations over six weeks.
- No supplementary wage increases in contracts.

#### The Strike Unfolds

The high level of militancy that was evident from the first day of the strike surpassed all expectations. IG Metall concentrated all its efforts on eight plants with 40,000 workers. In all the struck plants there was no problem setting up picket lines and developing the mobilization.

No one was afraid of a long strike. Of course the union bureaucrats downplayed what the strike might actually win, but no one doubted that they had to move toward a plan to reduce the work week by stages. Above all, there was an expression of the objective of the mobilization, of the logic inherent in the reduction of the work week, and of the need to take new measures to prevent a speedup in the pace of work.

In the first days of the strike the union bureaucracy was undoubtedly the big winner. It had attained its goal—the strike. It had carried out what had been thought to be impossible and had drawn the steelworkers into the struggle. Its

attitude had given it such credit among the workers that in the early period any criticism of the union leadership was seen as an affront to "His Majesty." This did not, however, mean rejection of the left-wing organizations. Anyone could discuss the strike as long as they were in solidarity with it and did not simply confine themselves to criticizing it.

From the first day of the strike the employers used the lockout against those workers already on strike and against 30,000 others working in seven different plants. The atmosphere hardened a little more and one delegate summarized the situation in this way: "This is the beginning of the end of harmony and co-management in the steel industry."

The protest meeting at Bochum, called in total haste one day before the lockout, surpassed all expectations and brought together more than 10,000 workers.

The atmosphere was one of struggle, but, beginning with this mass meeting, the first demands upon the union leaderships saw the light of day: "Kurt (the first name of the local leader), you know what to hold out for; we want to work five hours less" was the theme that reverberated through the assembly.

The strikers and the delegates from factories that were not yet in the movement left the meeting with the firm conviction that spreading the strike was the only way to respond to the lockout. This is what was demanded in motions in several factories.

After the first week of the strike and a day after the lockout began, the leader of IG Metall in Baden-Württemberg proposed a token strike in the whole metalworking industry in order to fight the lockout. The bosses screamed. Loderer, the president of IG Metall, got scared and came out against the Württemberg leader's proposal and took disciplinary measures against him.

Meanwhile this proposal had been warmly received by the strikers and those who were locked out, and they publicly spoke against Loderer.

In the course of the meeting of union leaders that followed, Loderer was forced to retract his condemnation. He himself announced that the union recommended similar activities in Nordrhein-Westfalen and called on all the workers in the metalworking industry and other unions to participate. For the first time, Loderer's image was tarnished.

But IG Metall gave up on spreading the strike and declared its readiness to respond to the desires of the bosses and name an arbitrator. Thus the actions against the lockouts were to be restricted to three days duration. Meanwhile the local union leadership in Duisburg, under pressure from the workers, opposed the federal leadership. In one of the largest demonstrations of the strike, 35,000 persons marched through the streets of Duisburg chanting, "Down with the arbitrator,

only the general strike will let us win!"

The demonstrations against the lockout, supposedly limited to three days, took place in more than thirty cities. More than 145,000 workers demonstrated. In many cities in the Ruhr valley they blocked traffic and distributed leaflets in the department stores. In Dortmund there was a veritable international demonstration. About sixty Dutch steelworkers came and chanted: "Long live international solidarity. Your strike is our strike!" But the mobilization was not a success everywhere. In Nordrhein-Westfalen, for example, a very halfhearted call did not suffice to mobilize the ranks, owing to the lack of a tradition of struggle.

It was clear from these actions that a change had taken place in the strike. There was a lack of enthusiasm and combativity among those not yet in the movement, while the strikers and the victims of the lockout adopted a wait-and-see attitude because the strike was not being widened and an arbitrator was intervening.

Speeches by union leaders in these meetings called on everyone to lower the pressure a bit and not get excited.

#### **Effects of the Arbitration**

The acceptance of Farthmann, Social Democratic labor minister of Nordrhein-Westfalen, as arbitrator was a bad sign. Already the previous year he had obtained a rotten compromise for the steelworkers. In addition, he had openly come out in favor of a settlement that would bring advantages to only certain groups; that is, a solution on the same basis as the one proposed by the bosses. It was also clear that the union bureaucracy would think twice before causing a breakdown in the arbitration process by repudiating an important SPD politician and an old union bureaucrat.

The strikers were inclined to reject the political arbitration. Many felt that it was a sign of the way the leadership was now moving to end the conflict. Moreover, many felt that a satisfactory solution was scarcely imaginable while all the union's means of struggle were still far from exhausted. (At this point the automobile industry, which should have been one of the first affected by the strike, was shouting to the rooftops that it could still produce through the middle or end of January.)

But the arbitration weighed most heavily on the fighting spirit. The widely shared sentiment was that the workers' struggle would move to the wings while the negotiations with the arbitrator were going on. All of a sudden it was no longer the strikers but rather the arbitration that determined what would happen.

From being active participants in the battle the workers became passive spectators. To find out where things stood, one no longer discussed with one's comrades but rather tuned in punctually to the radio

and television news. The scope of their aspirations was clearly diminished; but at the same time distrust of the leadership was growing. The leadership very rapidly lost the margin of trust it had recently acquired.

#### **What Helmut Schmidt Did**

Many observers were surprised that Helmut Schmidt did not personally intervene in the strike as a mediator, and that he preferred to brown himself under the sun in Guadeloupe. Rather than intervene, the federal chancellor told the population in his televised Christmas message that "the strikes were not a national disaster" and said in interviews that "the thirty-five-hour week is possible and will come one day." In saying this he was not simply in accord with the line of the union bureaucracy, but also with the line of his party, the SPD, which often happens.

Shortly before the strike began, the SPD held a party congress to approve its program for the European parliament, in which it put forward the slogans "progressive introduction of the thirty-five-hour week" and "prohibition of the lockout." Helmut Schmidt knows that he has problems at present with the SPD's electoral base and that he has to do something to resolve them.

But the federal chancellor was not twiddling his thumbs. He preferred to act behind the scenes. The members of the cabinet were required to keep silent in public and to abstain from expressing an opinion on the workers' struggle. Certainly Schmidt did not lack a telephone with which to quietly ask the IG Metall leadership to hasten the end of the workers' struggle.

It is also certain that the leadership of IG Metall received effective advice from Schmidt to beat a retreat in order to win over a segment of the Wage Commission and to vote for a compromise. No part of these "backstage operations" became known publicly, but many strikers rapidly noted the sudden change in the attitude of their staff members between Christmas and New Year's.

#### **Gap Between the Ranks and the Bureaucracy**

The reason for this development was the growing gap between the leadership and apparatus on one side and the ranks of strikers on the other. The first difference was over whether to widen the strike or submit it to arbitration. The strike leaders and the delegate bodies openly took a position against the conduct of the union leadership.

On December 17 the arbitrator presented a proposal from the negotiations, widely reported in the press, that was based only on discussions and agreement with the president of IG Metall, Loderer.

But conditions for acceptance of the

compromise seemed unfavorable. Strike leaders at many factories had been far-sighted enough to convene plant-wide assemblies of strikers. They were concerned with the possibility of such a compromise, and so the assemblies called for rejection.

A new offer was presented on January 3, 1979. It did not differ in the slightest from the first one and failed to take into account the desire for a reduction in work time. The workers were astonished to learn that the bureaucracy had accepted this proposal "in principle and in specifics." These reports caused more discontent. Many delegate bodies sent detailed protest letters to the Wage Commission. More than 800 strikers, including all the plant-level strike leaders from some Duisburg and Dortmund factories, occupied the site of the Wage Commission and demanded to take part in the meeting. This was of course rejected.

When the final result of the arbitration was presented on January 6, 1,000 strikers were again assembled at the site of the Wage Commission. This time the precaution had been taken to bolt the doors, and the members of the Wage Commission slipped in through the back. The compromise was accepted by an 88-to-37 vote.

But the bureaucracy had to pay a price for it. The representatives of the three most important steel mills wrote a resolution explaining their rejection and naming those responsible for the agreement: the regional bureaucracy and the federal leadership. They further explained that they were ready to coordinate and work together to "change something in the union," and they openly called on union members to vote "no" in the final vote. In the context of the strict norms of discipline in the West German unions, this was tantamount to rejecting an order.

It was nonetheless obvious at first glance that the bureaucracy would pull through the vote with a comfortable margin. There was 90.8% participation. Of those eligible to vote, 49.5% came out in favor of the compromise and 40.9% were opposed—a perfectly "normal" outcome. But when the results are broken down by plant, the picture is different:

- In the plants on strike from the beginning, the "no" vote ranged from 55% to 95%.
- In the plants that had gone out on strike in the last three days the "no" vote was still 40% to 50%.
- Only in the plants that had not been on strike did the "no" vote not exceed 25%.

#### **The Limits of the Struggle**

IG Metall's setback in its attempt to obtain real access to the thirty-five-hour week for all undoubtedly means a step back in the struggle for reduction of the work week. The other unions—which are much weaker—will reorient themselves after what has happened and give up this fight.

For the bureaucracy, the dilemma is as follows: On the one hand, the pressure of the ranks has been strengthened and the bureaucracy must react to it. On the other, any encouragement of militancy, however modest, puts the bureaucracy in conflict with the bourgeoisie. Each encouragement of struggle by the bureaucracy, moreover, provokes euphoria in the ranks and raises expectations. That is what happened this time—for the first time, the bureaucracy provided, through the strike, the possibility for those with a class-struggle orienta-

tion to coordinate their activities, and the chasm that the bureaucracy wanted to fill got still deeper.

But these class-struggle forces also have difficulties owing to their weak numerical importance and the low level of consciousness of the working class. They can draw in the masses only to the extent that they march in step with the official leadership. They can go so far as to explain and criticize the poor conduct of the official leadership, but they cannot yet pass from this criticism to independent action.

Many people opened their eyes to this problem during the strike. They have returned to work with bitterness. They feel they were duped by their leadership, but they are not demoralized. In the course of the strike they became conscious of their strength. They have now decided to use this strength in showdowns inside the unions, at the plant level first of all. It is more important to grasp this fact than to provide an answer to the question of whether the battle ended in a victory or a defeat. □

## DOCUMENTS

### Polish Oppositionists 'Appeal to Society'

The Committee to Defend the Workers (KOR) was formed in Poland in September 1976 by a group of Warsaw intellectuals, the majority of whom had been active in the earlier opposition movements of 1948 (ex-members of the PPS, the Polish Socialist Party), 1956, and 1968. The KOR's purpose was to help workers who were being victimized for their part in the strikes of June 1976.

The committee fought for the release of the imprisoned workers, the rehiring of the strikers who had been dismissed, and the dropping of all charges against them. It demanded that the truth be told about the June events. It also gave material aid to the families of the worker victims of the repression.

A big innovation in the committee's methods of work was its attempt to exercise its legal rights. The founding members of the KOR made their names, addresses, and even their telephone numbers public. They all stressed the fact that the activities they were carrying out were entirely legal.

The KOR's initiative found wide support among the Polish people, who were impressed by the renewal of ties between workers and intellectuals for the first time since 1956. Large sums of money were collected and distributed to the families of the fired or imprisoned workers. Legal aid was given to those who had been indicted, and actions on behalf of the imprisoned workers (as well as intellectuals) were undertaken, such as the circulation of petitions, and hunger strikes.

At the same time, the KOR set an additional goal—breaking the regime's monopoly over the means of information. It began publishing a news bulletin in *samizdat* form. This bulletin was quite

successful, and other clandestine publications, either close to the KOR or expressing the views of other currents, followed it.

The KOR's activity, and its relative success in reaching workers (the letter from the Ursus workers demanding the release of their comrades who were fired, for example), combined with pressure from the international workers movement, played a large role in the Polish government's decision to amnesty the striking workers. Thus, in the summer of 1977, the KOR lost one of the main reasons for its existence.

While this was happening, the KOR was making considerably deeper inroads into the Polish CP's monopoly over the means of information and political life in general. After hesitating for a long time between outright repression (KOR leaders were jailed in the spring of 1977) and a generally tolerant attitude, the regime chose a third approach. This consisted of repression in small doses—attempts to discourage individual oppositionists (particularly those who were not as well known), short periods of detention, beatings, harassment on the job, and systematic surveillance. At the same time, the government did not resort to really severe repression (except in a few cases, such as the murder of the student Pyjas and the prolonged detention of Switon, one of the founders of the free trade unions).

This made it possible for the opposition to grow considerably. Two currents emerged. Outside of the KOR, the largest grouping was the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights (ROP-CIO), which had stronger nationalist tendencies and more ties to the traditional pre-1948 opposition than did the KOR. The number of clandestine publications coming

out on a more or less regular basis today in Poland is estimated at twenty-five to fifty, not counting the books published in *samizdat* form.

The KOR has tried to find its own place within this general rebirth of the opposition by converting itself into the Committee for Social Self-Defense/Committee to Defend the Workers (KSS/KOR), whose aims, according to its founders, are as follows:

1. To fight repression aimed against one's political views, religion, race, or personal beliefs.
2. To fight to assure respect for legal rights and to help those illegally victimized.
3. To fight for constitutional guarantees of the rights and freedoms of citizens.
4. To aid and support any struggle for human rights.

Thus the KSS/KOR, like the KOR before it, defines itself as having basically humanitarian aims (helping the victims of repression and discrimination; struggling for human rights). At the same time, the great majority of its members have taken part in forming the "Democratic Movement," which defines itself much more as a political movement and which states that its aim is to struggle for democracy and national independence. The terms used in the founding statement of the "Democratic Movement" are fairly precise, probably because this statement was the result of a compromise among the different tendencies that make up KOR.

Nowadays, it is hard to speak of the KSS/KOR as a homogeneous organization; instead we should speak of a "KOR current." This current encompasses parent organizations, such as the KSS/KOR and its political arm, the "Democratic Movement," as well as organizations, movements, magazines, and so on that are heavily influenced by the KOR and often led mainly by KOR activists. These nonetheless cannot be formally identified with the KOR, nor can all their actions be considered wholly controlled by or in agreement with the leading current in the KOR. Among the most important of these organizations are the student solidarity committees (SKS); the editorial board of

*Robotnik* (The Worker), a magazine aimed at the working class and distributed among workers; some peasant committees and the free trade unions of the Baltic Coast and Silesia; the Society for Scientific Courses (TKN), an underground university, and so on.

KOR activists (unlike those of Charter 77) do not define themselves in "Western" terms. It is hard to say that one leader of the movement is more of a Eurocommunist, while another is a liberal, Marxist, or socialist. They all see their main goal as the "reconstruction of Polish society"—which today is kept atomized by the bureaucrats. They seek to accomplish this by fostering the development of social movements; that is, self-organized movements that are not under any bureaucratic tutelage. That is why they support free trade unions as an expression of self-organization on the part of the workers, peasant committees, and the independent organizations of students, teachers, and artists. The ultimate goal is democracy and genuine self-determination.

Within the KOR, two wings can be identified with differing opinions on how to reach this goal:

1. The wing that might be called "reformers from the outside" (and which probably dominates the movement). It thinks that, given Poland's geopolitical situation (the constant threat of Soviet tanks), realism requires making compromises with the regime. It does not seek to change it from within, but rather to apply pressure from the outside through the mass movements. This will then force the regime to negotiate with the opposition and reach a compromise with it. Predictions as to the nature of this compromise—that is, the limits to the regime's flexibility—vary according to the optimism or pessimism of the various oppositionists who have stated their views on this question.

2. There also exists a radical wing of the KOR. It starts from a position that is much less fatalistic about the outlook for Soviet intervention and therefore rejects any kind of compromise or negotiation with the bureaucracy. (See the interview with a Polish oppositionist in the French-language *Inprecor/Intercontinental Press*, No. 43, January 18, 1979, p. 25.)

The document we are publishing below seems particularly interesting. While not strictly programmatic, it gives an overview of the KSS/KOR's positions on the situation in Poland and the methods of action that it advocates.

The second section (the action proposals) restates some of the group's familiar positions, such as the need for self-organization of society. The first section, however, shows a new development within the KSS/KOR: the importance given to the problem of social inequality. This issue does not appear at all in the KSS/KOR's founding principles. Of course, there have

been articles dealing with individual problems (such as the shortage of meat and medicines) in the KOR's information bulletins. But to our knowledge, this is the first time that the problem of the growth of social inequality, the low living standards of part of the working class compared with the extravagant (and hereditary) privileges of the bureaucracy, has been so sharply posed or considered important enough to make up the entire first part of "An Appeal to Society," being put ahead of the "traditional" issues dealt with by the KSS/KOR (democratic freedoms and development of social movements).

It is perhaps interesting to mention here that the tentative solution proposed by the KSS/KOR to the problem of a meat shortage (rationing, under society's control) is diametrically opposed to the suggestion that meat prices be raised, made by a group of economists with KOR leanings in a document entitled, "Remarks on the Economic Situation." This probably means that the view of those economists has remained a minority opinion.

The fact that a very clear and interesting analysis of social inequality has appeared may signify the beginning of a shift by the KSS/KOR toward linking up with the immediate concerns of workers.

## **Appeal to Society**

The workers protest movement of June 1976 showed that there was a profound economic and social crisis in the country. In the two years that have gone by since then, we had a right to expect that the authorities would offer at least some tentative proposals for resolving the situation.

Not only has there been nothing of the kind—the causes of the explosion remain untouched—but new sources of tension have appeared. The country's economic, political, social, and cultural life is in a slump and is suffering from growing disorganization. Given the gravity of the situation, we think it is our duty to inform Polish society of our analysis of the situation, and to try to suggest some possible remedies. We also hope that our statement might serve as a warning to the authorities not to continue a policy that consists of consciously neglecting the real social problems instead of attempting to solve them. On several occasions, society has seen the tragic results of this policy, for which the authorities are entirely to blame.

### **I**

1. A hidden rise in food prices has been substituted for the increases rejected by society in 1976. This practice has been carried out on a large scale with substitute goods being put on the market. The price tag has changed along with the label. This tactic has been applied to many manufac-

ured goods and most foods, including bread. The price increases in the state trading operations were passed along to private vendors, leading to an increase in the price of fruits and vegetables. It is difficult to determine what proportions this phenomenon has reached. However, there is no doubt that the inflationary process, including the official price increases, is greater by far than is indicated by the official figures.

Difficulties in procuring both food and manufactured goods are increasing. Many commodities can only be acquired by wasting a huge amount of time waiting on line, unless one has special connections.

The problem of supplying the population with meat has not been solved, unless the creation of a large network of "commercial" stores is considered a solution. In these stores, the price of a kilogram of sausage corresponds to a worker's average daily earnings—150 to 200 zlotys! The hidden price increases and difficulties in finding goods are sending the cost of living shooting upward. The hardest hit are the worst off layers of the population.

2. The situation in health care is alarming. The chronic inadequacy of investments in this sector in recent years has led to a decrease in the number of hospital beds, which was already only a small proportion of what was needed, especially in the psychiatric and maternity wards (1977 *Statistical Yearbook*). The shortage of space, and the physical condition of many hospitals where no renovations have been done since before World War II, are creating health hazards for the patients.

A further obstacle to providing proper medical care is the inadequate supply of food and drugs in hospitals and on the market.

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3. The housing situation, which has always been serious, has not improved in the last few years either. The number of persons waiting for housing to become available increases from year to year, and the waiting period is lengthening. At the same time, the cost of shelter is systematically rising, placing a heavy burden on family budgets. In the building cooperatives, monthly rent combined with interest payments can go as high as 3,000 zlotys.

The authorities are trying to compensate for the disorganization of the economy through stepped-up exploitation of the workers. The average work day is getting longer for many groups of workers. Bus conductors, miners, construction workers, and those in many other job categories are working ten to twelve hours a day.

Depriving miners of the right to take time off for Saturdays worked, forcing them to work on Sunday, and imposing a system of determining wages that subtracts the time involved in setting up for the job has meant a 20 percent drop in monthly wages. This can only be com-

pared with the kind of exploitation carried out in the early days of capitalism.

4. A comparison between the daily earnings of a worker and prices in the "commercial" stores brings out another disturbing fact—social stratification is increasing. Wage differentials are excessive and out of proportion to the level of skills. The gap in pensions is enormous. In Poland there are families whose living conditions are extremely hard, and others—of whom there are few—who have no material worries whatever. An additional factor in the growth of social inequality comes from the privileges accruing to those layers that have ties to the regime. Special access to goods, special health services and vacation centers, housing, real estate, and cash allowances—these are only a few of the opportunities enjoyed by the ruling groups. The result of this is an alienation of these groups from society, since they lose their capacity for perceiving the real social problems.

Increasingly, the following fact can be observed—parents passing on their privileges to their children. The principle of equal opportunity for young people is becoming illusory.

In a situation where the economic crisis is affecting society as a whole, especially its poorest layers, the fact that special privileges are accorded to the ruling groups is arousing justifiable anger and moral indignation.

5. The fundamental factor in the social, economic, and political situation of the country in recent years has been the profound crisis in agriculture. Now, it is apparent what the results were of the policy of discriminating against the family farm and trying to wipe it out over the last thirty years. The crop obtained from a hectare of arable land by a family farming unit continues to be bigger than the corresponding crop on a state farm. However, neither this nor the fact that operating costs on state farms are higher than the value of their yield have stopped the channeling of gigantic investments toward these farms and the agricultural cooperatives.

Problems stemming from the general economic crisis have made themselves felt in an especially strong way in recent years. The lack of coal, fertilizer, fodder, farm machinery, and building materials decisively limits the capacity of farmers to invest in improvements, resulting in an exodus of young people to the cities.

To this must be added the waste of farm products as a result of disorganization and corruption that pervade the agencies that buy up the produce.

At the present time, since the institution of old-age insurance for farmers, the financial obligations of a farmer to the state often amount to more than half his income. The refusal to pay insurance premiums, expressed by more than 250,000 farmers throughout the country, best ex-

emplifies the attitude of the rural population to the state's agricultural policy.

6. Law violations, which began at the time of the June 1976 events, have turned out to be a systematic policy. Far from being confined to a few isolated cases, the beating of prisoners by militiamen seems to be a form of kangaroo justice that is sanctioned by the commanding officers.

The documents collected and published by the KSS/KOR's Action Bureau bear witness to the total impunity that the militia and security forces enjoy. Even officials who are guilty of murdering prisoners do not suffer any consequences. . . . The Council of State, Parliament, and the Ministry of Justice continue to turn a blind eye to signs of perversity and anarchy that are rampant within the criminal-justice and legal system.

7. The party's usurpation of the exclusive, unchecked right to control all aspects of life and to impose its views and decisions presents a special threat to Polish science and culture. The outrageous limitations on free scientific research—both its scope and the publication of its results—particularly where the social sciences, such as philosophy, economics, sociology, and history are concerned; the rigid demands of official doctrine, which long ago ceased to be an ideology and became a stockpile of dogmas and arbitrarily dictated government directives; and, finally, the appointment to scientific posts of individuals who are incompetent but ready to docilely carry out the orders of the political apparatus, have all hurt Polish culture, preventing it not only from developing but also from preserving and using its heritage. . . .

The system of prior censorship affects not only science and culture, but the whole of the country's social and economic life. Censorship works to stifle not only all criticism, but also any authentic information that might go against the authorities' wishes and show society a true picture of itself. . . .

The works of the most eminent authors and scientists are banned. The most serious films are never shown. Whole periods of contemporary history are falsified or ignored.

The system of misinformation constitutes a vicious circle that winds up damaging the regime that instituted it. According to the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, 65 percent of the figures sent to the National Statistical Institute are falsified. This must be considered an optimistic estimate. Since false information cannot provide a basis for correct decisions, the life of the country faces inevitable paralysis.

Afraid of their own society, the authorities are incapable of presenting the situation in its true light. The famous "economic maneuver" [the term applied to the economic policy in effect for the last two years], which was put forward as a solution to the crisis, has proved to be a collection of arbitrary, uncoordinated stop-

gap measures resulting in a growing disorganization of the economy:

- The freeze on investments, as a consequence of which many construction projects have been halted, has entailed losses estimated at millions of zlotys.

- The sudden curb on imports has caused production halts lasting several weeks throughout Poland.

- The export of food products, which has aspects of plundering the farmers, has exacerbated problems of supply on the market.

- The decay of the planning system, combined with the absence of a market economy and the retention of an anachronistic system of factory management by means of orders and directives, has deprived the Polish economy of all regulatory mechanisms.

A system whereby the party-state authorities make arbitrary, irrevocable decisions—presenting them as infallible—has done untold damage to the social consciousness of the nation. The effort to eradicate independent thinking, and the demand for blind obedience to all commands from on high, give rise to self-serving, hypocritical attitudes, and contribute to the growth of conformity, servility, and careerism. These are the character traits that represent assets in seeking a leadership post. At the same time, competent, enlightened persons who think for themselves are deprived of opportunities for advancement and sometimes even denied jobs altogether.

The results of this growing social nihilism can be seen in the rate of alcoholism, corruption, disdain for honest labor, and the glorification of scheming.

Thus, a thoroughgoing economic reform is necessary. But such a reform, however well thought-out and coherent, cannot change anything if it meets indifference and discouragement from society.

The Conferences on Workers Self-Management [set up by the Gomulka regime as a substitute for genuine workers councils] are not what it takes to get the economy going again. The Committees for Social Control [set up a few months ago], whose membership is drawn from the authorities, will not be able to locate the causes of economic problems, corruption, and illegal practices. The only result of their activity will be to disorganize the country.

## II

Polish society has enormous reserves of initiative, determination, and energy, which offer the means for overcoming the present crisis. The precondition for releasing these reserves is to give all the social groupings a chance to establish their own representative bodies. At the same time, it is necessary to publish the real facts about economic and social life. Only when these conditions have been met will it be possible to work out a detailed program for

reforming the economic system and the social situation. Such a program will have to be formulated after the broadest possible discussion, with the participation of independent experts. If the above conditions are not met, any attempt by the authorities to open up communication with society will inevitably end up with the government talking to itself.

1. The experiences of December 1970 and June 1976 showed that it is possible to obtain concessions from the regime by applying social pressure. However, the achievements of these actions have been shown to be short-lived. The disintegration of society has made it possible for the government to take back the gains that were won. Only continuous, generalized, and organized pressure can prevent that.

At the end of 1975, a discussion began on the changes in the constitution proposed by the authorities. The proposals made in the letters and petitions from citizens may be considered a new approach to achieving the goal of independent social action—winning freedom of opinion, speech, and information, freedom of association and assembly, and freedom of the press, and making the government responsible to society. Actions toward that end should be accompanied by the building up of the sort of social relations that have been destroyed by a system characterized by the monopolization and centralization of power. This action must be carried out independently of the official organizational structures.

This is, therefore, far from giving in to helpless despair. It is by demanding that the government respect its rights, in a firm, dignified, and determined way, that society can recover them in the end, and open the way to the regeneration of the Republic of Poland. The proposed social program entitled "Declaration of the Democratic Movement," drawn up under the auspices of the KOR, signed by more than one hundred persons, and published in October 1977, testifies to this conviction. This outline of a program for the self-organization of society offers an alternative to the growing danger of a spontaneous explosion that could bring our country to the brink of national disaster.

The appearance, this very day, of a number of independent social initiatives confirms the correctness of this program:

- The biweekly *Robotnik* has taken up the defense of working-class interests.
- In July 1978, the Interim Committee for Farmers' Self-Defense for the Lublin region was formed, and in the beginning of September, the Farmers' Self-Defense Committee for the Grojec region. Both act as independent representative bodies for sixteen villages in Lublin Province and of twenty others in Radom Province. The issues in the campaign have been mentioned in the biweekly *Gospodarz* (The Farmer).
- The activity of the KSS/KOR's Action

Bureau consists of exposing violations of the laws and aiding persons who suffer as a result.

- The student solidarity committees, which have been set up in many Polish universities, aim to break the monopoly of the Socialist Union of Polish Students, and to bring about the rebirth of an independent movement capable of defending the interests of students and of the universities.

- To fight back against the enslavement and misuse of science, the Society for Scientific Courses, which includes several dozen eminent scientists, was created. Throughout the past year, it organized a number of courses that were attended by several hundred students, who were able to work in an atmosphere of truth and seriousness undisturbed by censorship and numbing political jargon.

- The development of an independent press has struck at the state's publishing monopoly. Social and political journals and the Independent Publishing Office testify by their existence to the rebirth of cultural life.

This list is not exhaustive, but it suffices to prove that it is possible to carry out independent, organized, and efficient social activities. The more massive the independent organizations are, the more effective they will be, and the less vulnerable their members will be to police repression.

### III

The independent social action that has reappeared in Poland in the course of the last few years consists of organizing genuine public opinion, carrying out defense activities against repression, putting forward society's real demands, and combating the state monopoly over the dissemination of information. Such activities are open to everyone.

1. It is necessary to open the broadest possible discussion on the economic and social situation in the country. This discussion cannot be initiated by the government. To the contrary:

- All citizens can and must speak out at public meetings to demand that the authorities really inform the Assembly, to state what facts they know, raise demands, and have them approved by the Assembly. In this way, the workers in several plants were able to win payment of an average wage [that is, not tied to the fulfillment of quotas] last summer, despite the halts in production through the fault of the management. It is in this way that Polish society participated in the nationwide debate in 1956 and won important concessions from the authorities.

- Each citizen can and must take the initiative in discussing living and working conditions with those around him, as well as the economic and political situation in the country. Such discussions should lead to the formulation of a genuine demand for

change in the workplace in question; they should also lead to documents centered around a program for reforming the Republic of Poland. Finally, they should become a starting point for action both inside and outside the official structures.

2. It is necessary to organize to defend our rights. Only those who are organized can elect genuine representatives. All citizens who are members of trade unions and corresponding farmers associations have the ability to elect genuine representatives from top to bottom, and to draft a program to defend workers interests. For example, miners, who are demanding—without being heeded—that compulsory overtime on Sunday and the twelve-hour work day be eliminated could make this an issue in the trade-union elections by voting for candidates who promise to fight for this. Citizens who see no opportunity for action within the official organizations—since the latter have generally lost all semblance of credibility—can establish new organizations modeled after those set up by the farmers of the Lublin and Grojec regions. This course of action can be followed in all social milieus.

3. It is always easier to struggle in an organized way. Each strike and collective action by the workers in a factory or the residents of a village will be effective if we act in a unified and disciplined manner. This becomes particularly important in cases where violence by the authorities arouses feelings of indignation, anger, and despair. Participants in struggles must be defended even more strongly than the demands put forward. We will not get anything without organization and solidarity.

4. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights contains the following provisions:

#### Article 19:

1. Everyone has the right to his own opinion.

2. Everyone has the right to freely express his opinion. This right includes freedom of research, freedom to obtain and publish any information or ideas, whether verbally, in writing, or in print, without regard to national borders, as a work of art or in any other chosen form.

#### Article 22:

1. Everyone has the right to freely associate with others, including the right to form trade unions and to join them in order to defend his interests.

This convention was ratified by the Polish Council of State in March 1977, and thus constitutes a legal norm binding in Poland. By organizing to defend its rights, Polish society will initiate a process that can make it possible to overcome the social, economic, and political crisis, the root cause of which is the expropriation of the rights of the citizens and of the sovereignty of the state.

Warsaw  
October 10, 1978