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The Near-Meltdown at Three Mile Island



Antinuclear Protests Across USA

Plight of Victims of Nuclear Accident

Family Near Reactor Tells of Ordeal

Pennsylvania Farmers Face Uncertain Future

NEWS ANALYSIS

The Near-Meltdown at Three Mile Island

By Fred Murphy

The near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Middletown, Pennsylvania, has confirmed to the hilt the insistent warnings by opponents of nuclear power that catastrophic accidents are an ever-present danger of this energy source.

The accident gave the lie to the claims of such hireling-scientists of the nuclear industry as Dr. Norman Rassmussen, whose government-sponsored "Reactor Safety Study" (repudiated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission just two months ago) contended that the chances of a catastrophic meltdown were on the order of once in a million years.

By exposing the true dangers of nuclear power for all to see, the Three Mile Island accident has dealt severe blows to the credibility of the nuclear industry. Nonetheless, the Carter administration remains determined to keep existing plants in operation and to continue to support the building of new ones.

What Happened

The accident at Three Mile Island began at around 3 a.m. on March 28. A water pump failed, but the reactor did not shut down immediately. Pressure mounted. A relief valve opened but then failed to close. Intensely radioactive water spilled into the concrete-and-steel containment building.

The cooling water in the reactor dropped to a dangerously low level, briefly exposing as much as twelve inches of the highly radioactive and intensely hot uranium fuel elements. Some of these were badly damaged, releasing more radioactivity into the containment.

Had water flow not been rapidly restored, the entire fuel assembly could have melted, collapsing into a fiery mass on the floor of the reactor and burning its way through to the environment. A wide area of eastern Pennsylvania might then have been turned into a radioactive wasteland. Thousands would have died almost instantly, and tens of thousands more would have faced cancer or genetic damage.

The danger of such a meltdown was thought to have been averted within hours of the first sign of trouble. But radiation inside the containment building mounted, reaching levels a thousand times the fatal dose. Gamma radiation streamed through the containment walls; radioactive steam was vented to the surroundings; and hundreds of thousands of gallons of contaminated water were dumped into the Susquehanna River.

Radiation levels within three miles of the plant reached 25 millirems an hour on

the first day. This compares to the maximum "safe" dose set by the government for the general public of 170 millirems a year (a figure that is coming under increasing fire from radiation biologists).

According to Dr. Ernest Sternglass—an expert on low-level radiation damage—the radiation released from Three Mile Island during the first day alone "correspond[ed] to a major fallout pattern from a bomb test."

"The government is giving us the same fictions as in the bomb tests," Sternglass declared, "that it is insignificant. But in a matter of hours people . . . are getting nearly a year's dose of the normal background radiation."

Troublesome Bubble

For two days, officials of the Metropolitan Edison Company, which operates the plant, tried to minimize the danger. "There was nothing there that was catastrophic or unplanned for," said Met Ed Vice-President John Herbein in a typical comment on March 29.

But on March 30 it was made known that a possibly explosive bubble of hydrogen and other gases had formed inside the reactor vessel. This posed the danger that cooling water to the still extremely hot fuel assembly might be blocked. There was renewed danger of a meltdown. State and federal officials began to speak openly of the possible need to evacuate the area. Pennsylvania Governor Richard Thornburgh urged that children and pregnant women be evacuated from the area within five miles of the plant.

But the government wanted to avoid a full-scale evacuation at all costs. Not because it wasn't necessary—indeed, the danger was so great that a precautionary evacuation should have been organized at the outset—but rather because the Carter administration and Pennsylvania officials feared the consequences for the public attitude toward nuclear power. Evacuation would have concretized the atomic threat for everyone living anywhere near a planned or operating nuclear plant; that is, for a substantial portion of the entire U.S. population.

Fortunately, the gas bubble was eventually brought under control. On April 2, officials announced that the danger of a meltdown had become "remote." But the situation during the previous four days had come perilously close to unleashing radioactive devastation across hundreds of square miles of some of the richest farmland on the eastern seaboard; poisoning

the water supplies of Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia, New York City, and countless smaller cities and towns; and contaminating the lower Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay with deadly nuclear wastes.

The U.S. government's role in the Three Mile Island accident has been to orchestrate a cover-up—one that began long before the March 28 "general emergency" at the power plant.

At the beginning of this year an NRC inspector filed a report pointing to problems with the Three Mile Island cooling system. His recommendation for a more extensive probe was overruled by his superiors.

The reactors at Three Mile Island were built by the Babcock & Wilcox Company. In 1977 a B&W reactor at the Davis-Besse nuclear plant near Toledo, Ohio, experienced an accident uncannily similar to the one at Three Mile Island. A valve failed to close, spilling 11,000 gallons of radioactive water. That leak was brought under control before more serious damage could occur.

Similar problems have also arisen at other B&W reactors. "If anyone had been paying attention, Three Mile Island wouldn't have happened," said former NRC staffer Robert Pollard.

Despite such warnings, the NRC voted April 6 not to order precautionary shutdowns of the eight other B&W reactors in the United States. These "can continue to operate without danger to the public health and safety," NRC Chairman Joseph Hendrie said in a letter to California Governor Edmund Brown, Jr.

Evidence has also come to light that "human errors" that allegedly contributed to the Three Mile Island accident may have resulted from exceedingly heavy work loads forced on the plant's employees. Maintenance crews reportedly worked ten-hour shifts for almost six weeks without a day off during the period leading up to the accident. The NRC was aware of this, but took no action.

With immediate danger of catastrophe apparently past (although the reactor remained at high temperature and pressure as of April 6), the government stepped up its efforts to soothe the public. Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano declared April 4 that persons living near the plant faced no additional cancer risk. This flies in the face of a report issued in February by Califano's own department, which concluded that "existing knowledge is insufficient to provide an unequivocal answer to the low-dose question."

In fact, there is no way of knowing how much radiation was absorbed by persons in the vicinity of Three Mile Island. "Monitoring of radiation levels in residential areas . . . has been so haphazard that the exact cumulative dosage to residents may never be known," Walter Pincus reported

in the March 31 *Washington Post*.

Before the Pennsylvania accident, President Carter had been planning to use the "energy crisis" to press for accelerating nuclear development and "streamlining" reactor-licensing rules. But he dropped all references to such plans from his April 2 energy speech. Instead, he said only that "the recent accident . . . has demonstrated dramatically that we have other energy problems."

Carter also promised to set up an "independent" commission "to make recommendations on how we can improve the safety of nuclear power plants."

While Carter's commission studies what additional "safety" gimmicks can be tacked on to a technology whose inherent dangers are becoming clearer than ever, the 70 nuclear plants currently operating will be allowed to remain at full power; the 100 or so plants under construction will proceed toward completion; and the 500 to 1,000 additional plants deemed necessary for the year 2000 by the Energy Department will remain on the drawing boards.

But Carter will face a fight before such reckless plans can be achieved. Three Mile Island has brought home to millions of American working people the urgent need to shut down the entire nuclear industry.

Antinuclear activists now have both the opportunity and the responsibility to carry their campaign to American workers and to their mass organizations, the trade unions.

A powerful working-class antinuclear movement will put the responsibility on Carter and his government to:

- Shut down all nuclear plants;
- Provide accurate information on all radiation dangers;
- Grant full compensation to all victims of the Three Mile Island accident; and
- Provide jobs at full union-scale wages, and retraining where necessary, for all workers displaced by the shutdown of the nuclear industry.

Working people in the United States—and in other countries threatened by nuclear disaster—are now more ready than ever before to join in such a campaign. □

Special Note

In the article by George Novack published in the February 15, 1979, issue of the French-language *Inprecor/Intercontinental Press*, and in the January 29, 1979, English-language *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, there is a passage stating that the 1953 split in the Fourth International was inspired by Michel Pablo. Along with many other comrades in the International, we do not share that view.

Pierre Frank
Livio Maitan
Ernest Mandel

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Victims of U.S. Nuclear Accident Face Double Disaster

By Michael Baumann

MIDDLETOWN, Pennsylvania—"At nine o'clock Thursday night [March 29], when one of the TV stations announced that an explosion at the reactor could come at any minute, we all thought we were going to die. We tried to start packing, but my wife and daughter became hysterical."

These were the words of a resident of Middletown, telling *Intercontinental Press* of the horror his family had been through a few days earlier.

The near-occurrence of the ultimate nuclear disaster—a meltdown—and the continuing release of radioactivity from the crippled Three Mile Island nuclear plant on the edge of town here have seared the danger of nuclear power into the consciousness of millions of people in the United States and around the world.

The deepest scars have been left on the hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers whose homes are located within a few dozen miles of the plant. For them the experience of living at the center of one of the world's worst nuclear accidents has been more shattering than perhaps any other event in their lives.

Many of them became America's first nuclear refugees, fleeing the five- and ten-mile radius of the plant even before Pennsylvania's governor "advised" evacuation of preschool children and pregnant women because of leaking radiation.

But the vast majority of working people in this heavily industrialized area cannot leave. They are bound by the iron chains of economic necessity to their farms and to their jobs and paychecks in the local mills, plants, and factories.

For them, the accident at Three Mile Island has been a double disaster—they cannot afford to leave; their health and safety are in jeopardy if they stay.

It has also been an intensely radicalizing experience. In many cases the opinions of a lifetime have been changed overnight as anger mounts over the danger they have been exposed to by the accident and the crass disregard displayed for their elementary well-being afterward.

Evacuation compensation, supposedly being handed out freely, is in reality a cruel hoax of red tape, inhuman restrictions, and a deliberate lack of information on how to obtain it.

Lavoyne King, her two children, and her husband Bill, a steelhauler at the nearby Bethlehem mill, live in the house closest to the Three Mile Island plant. Nonetheless, her family has been ruled "not eligible" for evacuation funds. (See

accompanying interview.)

Local farmers face a similar dilemma. If they leave, who will feed their animals and tend to their crops? If they stay, what



Not too young to be scared. Father, daughter apply for nuclear insurance benefits.

guarantee do they have that their crops and herds will not be rendered worthless by radioactive contamination? How many years will be taken from their lives by constant exposure to air- and water-borne radioactive debris?

Among workers at the plant itself, fifteen have already received extremely high doses of radioactivity. They have been told that they will live the rest of their lives under the threat of cancer.

Ahead of their co-workers lies the dangerous task of decontaminating some two million cubic feet of air and 272,000 gallons of water in the reactor containment building.

The two million people who live within a fifty mile radius of the plant have been hit by radiation equivalent to 300,000 chest X-rays, with the share increasing sharply the closer they live to the reactor site.

Deep lessons are being drawn from the way the utility companies, the nuclear industry, Democratic and Republican politicians, and the federal government have

lied day in and day out, claiming that such an accident "could never happen."

If the government lied about the safety of Three Mile Island, local residents are beginning to ask, is there any reason to believe other things it says, particularly about the energy shortage and about nuclear power being essential to keep jobs?

Priscilla Noon, a Black nurse who worked at the Frye Village nursing home here—until all its patients were evacuated—had nothing but contempt for President Carter, who made a brief, nationally televised appearance here April 1.

"Mr. Almighty," she said, gave a speech that could be summed up in one word—"evasive." He "just avoided anything" that had to do with what people here most wanted to know. In the first place, was it safe to remain in Middletown?

"I never thought much about nuclear power until now," Noon said. "But if there's any way we can do without it, we should."

Today, Noon is without an income or a home where she feels safe to stay. "I have clothes to wash in my car," she said, "but I don't want to start washing them because I don't know if I'll have to hurry up and leave."

Noon goes every day to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission news briefings, held in the Middletown town hall. So do many other area residents, hoping to find out the facts about the situation they face.

On the day I talked with her she had listened to the top government spokesman, Harold Denton of the NRC, for the first few minutes and then walked to the rear of the room in disgust.

"It seems like everything they are saying today is a repeat of what they said yesterday," she said. Meanwhile, no one in authority has lifted a finger to help her.

When she went to the unemployment office, "they gave me some forms and told me to come back next Thursday."

Her reception at the nuclear insurance company was even worse. "The man told me 'Things are tough.'"

"I don't qualify. I'm not pregnant. I don't have a preschool child. If I have to evacuate, it has to be with what provisions I have. So I tore up my rent check and I have that money right in my pocket.

"It's the only money I have. It'll be weeks without another penny. I don't know what I'm going to do."

Noon's sister, Anna Manning, also comes to the briefings. Her husband, a

member of the United Auto Workers employed at the Fruehauf truck body plant here, was laid off when Fruehauf decided to shut down for a while after the accident.

"They should let us know one way or the other what is happening," she said, but they don't "What should we do? Leave town? Stay away for a week? Come back? Or just sit here? I don't know."

George Burkett, a young steelworker, one of 4,000 at the Bethlehem mill in nearby Steelton, has made up his mind. His wife is pregnant. He would like to leave. But he can't.

"We went to my mother's," he said, "but that's only about fifteen miles away. We need to get further away."

He wanted to take a few weeks off from his job. "I've got two weeks vacation coming, but the company won't let me take it."

The bosses at Bethlehem, on the other hand, are being allowed to take time off with pay. □



Part of march of 1,500 in New York March 30.

50,000 Rally in San Francisco

Three Mile Island Spurs Antinuclear Protests

The damage done at Three Mile Island to the myth of nuclear safety is swelling the ranks of the opponents of nuclear power.

The most dramatic sign of this so far came April 7, when more than 50,000 persons gathered in San Francisco for an antinuclear rally—the largest action yet held by the U.S. movement against nuclear power.

The April 6-8 weekend was also the occasion for dozens of smaller actions, as antinuclear groups across the United States mounted emergency protests.

In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania—the state capital, just fifteen miles from Three Mile Island—1,000 persons gathered for a rally on the steps of the capitol building on April 8.

Three thousand demonstrators converged on Groton, Connecticut, on April 7, to protest the launching of a Trident nuclear submarine. More than 200 persons were arrested there following a civil-disobedience protest.

More than 3,000 participated in a picket line outside a Consolidated Edison electric company substation in New York City on April 6, and then marched several miles to the Manhattan offices of the governor of New York State. Some 1,500 took part in an earlier protest in New York March 30.

In Philadelphia, 1,000 persons marched on the offices of the local electric company on April 8.

Similar actions were held in many other cities.

Plans have been set for further antinuclear actions in coming weeks. On April 28, demonstrations are scheduled to protest uranium mining in Grants, New Mexico; and to protest nuclear arms and nuclear power at the U.S. government's Rocky Flats, Colorado, plutonium weapons plant.

Some 150 representatives of antinuclear organizations met in Washington, D.C., on April 6, and issued a call for a national antinuclear march in Washington on May 5.

The Three Mile Island accident has also spurred protests in other countries.

In West Germany 50,000 demonstrated against a proposed nuclear waste storage site in Hanover on March 30, chanting "We all live in Pennsylvania."

In Japan, on April 2, environmentalists and trade-union leaders called for the shutdown of Japan's nineteen nuclear plants.

In the French city of Nantes, fifteen miles from a partially built nuclear power plant, the municipal council voted on April 2 to rescind a previous resolution in support of the plant.

The Socialist mayor and deputy mayor of Nantes had already participated in a March 10 mass demonstration against the nuclear facility, for which they had been severely criticized by their CP partners in the council and by the president of the local chamber of commerce.

The projected plant is of the same type as the one at Three Mile Island, but much

larger. The acting mayor of the city asked: "Does there have to be a new catastrophe before the appeal of the people of Nantes and their elected representatives is heard?"

Last November, long before anyone outside Pennsylvania had ever heard of Three Mile Island, voters in Austria vetoed plans to open a nuclear facility that had been built at a cost of \$600 million.

In March, regulations that would give local residents in Switzerland veto power over construction of nuclear plants in their area were narrowly defeated in a nationwide referendum. But another vote on a new nuclear safety law is scheduled for May. A Swiss official has noted that the Pennsylvania accident now casts "a long shadow over that vote."

The Soviet rulers, however, steadfastly maintain that there is no inherent danger in nuclear power. A Soviet energy official interviewed in the newspaper *Trud* attributed the Harrisburg disaster to the slipshod attitude of private owners of nuclear power plants. This is in line with the long-held position of Soviet bureaucrats that their facilities are safe because they run them. □

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Michael Baumann/IP-1

Scott, Lavoyne, and Billy King display protest banner in front of their home. Three Mile Island nuclear plant is only a few hundred yards away.

Family Closest to Plant Tells of Ordeal

In Shadow of Three Mile Island Reactor

By Nancy Cole

[The following article, based on an interview obtained April 3 by Nancy Cole and Michael Baumann, appeared in the April 13 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

MIDDLETOWN, Pa.—When Lavoyne and Bill King built their home in 1973, a few hundred yards across from Three Mile Island, they didn't give the nuclear reactor there a second thought.

Now the young couple, along with their sons Billy, twelve, and Scott, nine, think of little else.

They have lived a nightmare ever since March 28, when the "general emergency" bulletin at the plant was issued.

They have already "voluntarily evacuated" their home twice.

And they never know whether the latest commotion virtually outside their door is a signal for the final evacuation.

Sitting in their living room April 3, Lavoyne, Billy, and Scott were interviewed by the *Militant*. Several hours later we returned to take a photo of the banner Bill had planned to make for their front yard after he got home from his job as a steel hauler at the Bethlehem Steel plant in Steelton.

The hand-lettered sign painted on a sheet had attracted so many reporters to their door that they had taken it down.

But they held it up for us. It read:

"Thank you, Met Ed. Co. For all of the mental anguish, inconvenience, lower property value, and higher electrical costs."

Their home is the closest one to the plant. From the Kings' vantage point on top of a slope, there's no escaping the four monstrous cooling towers on Three Mile Island. From their front yard, the towers appear stark and overpowering across the river.

Lavoyne King's main concern is her children and what this threatened disaster will do to their lives. After that, her concern is their home—whether they can stay in it and what it will mean for the property value, which represents their life savings.

"I was at work when they started talking about the school closing on Friday," she says.

Because their home is so close to the plant, she didn't want the school district sending her kids home. But they did it anyway. A frightened Lavoyne left her job at a department store and rushed home.

'Kids Were Scared'

"I knew it was about radiation," says Scott of the ruckus caused at school. "Kids were scared. Two kids were crying. They were mostly scared about their animals—their dogs and cats and hamsters."

A day or two before, Scott said, the teacher had read to the class—without explanation—a letter about Metropolitan

Edison's dumping of contaminated water into the river.

The night they closed the schools, the Kings left and went to stay with Lavoyne's mother. But Saturday night, believing things had improved, they returned. It turned out to be the worst night thus far.

"I was scared," she recalls. "They had maybe eight or ten police cars with their lights flashing, all kinds of trucks. Then at midnight they started pounding in 'No Parking' signs. We didn't know what they were doing. I thought they were setting up some kind of system. I didn't know.

"They left again the next day."

Not knowing is one of the biggest complaints of communities close to the plant.

"We have not had one official come to our door and say this or that. They have not been here or at any house around here, as far as I know. It's upsetting."

And that includes President Carter, who dropped in at the plant—and left just as quickly—on April 1.

Carter's Visit

"Well, he pulled up in his limousine," Scott explains. "He talks about [gas] shortages, and he drives this big limousine."

"The kids really notice," Lavoyne laughs. "They said either he'll come on a ten-speed or in a Volkswagen because of the energy—and here he comes in a limousine."

What did Lavoyne think of Carter's visit?

"To sum it up in one word: politics. He had to make a showing here.

"He wasn't in town very long. He made his appearance—that's what it seemed to me, just an appearance. I thought he would try to take a tour of the area, talk to people here," she continued.

"There has not been anyone from TMI [Three Mile Island] or any congressman—nothing—around to talk to people."

"He says he knows everything about it," Scott says of Carter. "But he doesn't, because he doesn't go to people's houses and talk."

"I don't think any politicians at this point are interested in what people think," Lavoyne continues. "I just think that money is the big thing—they're just worried about how much money it's going to take."

Can't Trust Government

"If you can't go to your government, who can you go to? If you can't trust people who are supposed to be for you, it hurts. This is what we feel."

She believes that "someone has got to be responsible" for the property damage and other losses due to the accident.

"Why should we, the people, take the loss? Somebody definitely made a mistake, and they have more money than us."

The Kings still owe \$17,000 on their

home. But even if they could get a fair price for it, she's not sure they would want to move unless forced to.

"This is our home. It has a lot of memories. We had it built, and we did the yard—seeded it ourselves and planted trees and everything. We put a lot of time into it that can't be replaced."

When they decided on this site for their home, she says, "I imagine that we had heard of the dangers, but we never thought anything could happen. You feel that when something like this is built, the people building it know what they're doing. You just kind of put your safety with them and trust them."

That trust disappeared about the same time that the flashing lights on cop cars appeared—and the disruption of their lives began.

Antinuclear Protest

She recalls last year's protests against the plant by Goldsboro residents on the other side of the island.

"I thought they were really dumb, because I thought nothing is ever going to happen. Those people who run the plant are too smart, they know too much about what's going on.

"But I was the dumb one."

To those people who live in other areas where there are nuclear plants operating or under construction, she advises, "If they value what they have, if they think a lot of themselves, they should protest it."

Like most residents affected by the nuclear accident, King has no love for Met Ed's insurance company. The day before, she called the insurers to find out if she was eligible for compensation for some of the evacuation expenses. After all, they live the closest to the plant and have felt it necessary to leave twice so far.

"The man said, 'No, but if you are forced to evacuate, just give us a call and we'll see that you get some money to go.'

"I have to evacuate, and I'm going to go up there and get money? He's got to be kidding!"

She has heard reports that insurers refuse to say whether homeowners will be reimbursed if anything happens to their property. "So if we had to evacuate and could never come back, they might never

Nearby Farms Face Uncertain Future

By Arnold Weissberg

[The following article appeared in the April 13 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

ANNVILLE, Pa.—The rolling farmland of Lebanon County in central Pennsylvania is some of the most fertile in the country. Driving through it, it's hard to imagine the fields, still brown and waiting for spring, as a wasteland.

But the Three Mile Island nuclear plant could do it. A core meltdown, which is still possible, would release a huge amount of radioactivity into the atmosphere and poison hundreds of square miles. Even a less catastrophic accident could contaminate vast areas.

Jake Brandt's farm here is only twelve miles from Three Mile Island, and he's worried.

"I saw what happened to Hiroshima," Brandt said. "I know what radiation can do. I've seen the pictures of land where everything is destroyed."

Brandt farms 500 acres. He owns 80 and leases the rest, raising mostly soy beans, corn, and pigs.

"That accident never should have happened," he told me. "With the possibility of so many people getting hurt or killed, they should find a new way" of generating electricity.

"They say that coal pollutes the air,"

give us a penny."

Even the little insurance money handed out to pregnant women and families with preschool children can't begin to replace what they've lost, she says.

"What about the mental anguish they have gone through? They're not making any restitution at all for that." □

Brandt went on. "But you can clean that up. You can't clean up radiation."

Many farmers in the Three Mile Island danger zone are worried. Inspectors have been around checking the milk for radioactive iodine. The government keeps saying it's safe, but nobody will explain exactly what the test results mean.

A Middletown farmer told a reporter for the *New York Times* that a milk test in York County—where people had complained of a metallic taste in their mouths—came up with a reading of ten. "We don't even know what ten means," he said.

No one has been out to Jake Brandt's place at all.

By now some farmers have heard about a uranium fire in Windscale, England, more than twenty years ago that contaminated 200 square miles of farmland and forced the dumping of a half-million gallons of milk.

As Jake and his wife Dotty talked about the possible threat to their land, she suddenly asked, "Jake, what about your garden?"

He turned to me, hoping for some assurance it was safe. I wasn't a scientist, I told them.

"I just don't know," Jake answered sadly.

Farmland around here sells for up to \$5,000 an acre, Brandt told me. But nobody is saying who would cover the farmer's losses if crops, animals, or land are poisoned by radioactivity.

Most likely nobody would. Federal law limits insurance liability in a nuclear accident to about \$600 million—a tiny fraction of the potential damage from a meltdown.

"The small farmer never really gets out of the debt hole," Brandt commented. Their farms are mortgaged to the hilt. Three Mile Island has thrown their entire livelihood into jeopardy, as well as their lives.

State authorities have suggested that if an evacuation becomes necessary, farmers with livestock to feed and milk will be "advised" to stay behind.

"We understand that we have to fight the elements of nature," one farmer said. "But is this one of nature's elements?" □

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Kurds in Iran Struggle for Self-Determination

By Gerry Foley

KURDISTAN PROVINCE, Iran—The authority of the central government, both material and political, has waned to the vanishing point here. In the cities of Mahabad and Sanandaj the government was not able to conduct the March 30-31 referendum at all. Its representatives were thrown out of Mahabad.

Even in those areas where voting took place, only a small percentage of Kurds—who make up about one-tenth of Iran's population—cast ballots.

The mood of the people in the streets of Sanandaj was unmistakable. As I came into the city on the day of the referendum, several thousand Kurds were holding a demonstration. Their banner said, "No referendum—Self-determination first!"

The march had begun as a procession in honor of Kurdish volunteers killed in an automobile accident while going to the aid of the Turkmeni people in northeastern Iran who were under attack by the forces of the central government. But the funeral quickly became a mass demonstration against Tehran's attempts to maintain national oppression.

Sanandaj is in the very heart of the Kurdish mountain country. There was a major SAVAK center here, a walled compound covering an acre or more. Now it stands totally deserted, every window smashed and every movable object carried away.

There was a large local police force as well, judging from the size of the police station and the number of blue cars around it. All the cars have been wrecked and burned and the station is deserted. The gutted building stands amid a carpet of paper—all that is left of the police files.

Only the army garrison remains, and its survival is tenuous.

But there are still elements in the town that are hostile to the Kurdish struggle. For example, at the demonstration I saw an unveiled, well-dressed woman scream abuse at people who "do not trust Khomeini or respect Islam." She kept this up for five minutes, until the driver of her bus shut the door and drove away.

At a number of points in town arms bazaars were in full swing. The Kurds had been disarmed by the shah's dictatorship, but now the open-air buying and selling of weapons has come to rival the traditional markets in scope. A very large percentage of men in Kurdistan can be seen carrying weapons in the streets.

The attempt to reconstitute a centralized bourgeois state in Iran will require some

careful maneuvering in Kurdistan. So far, the Tehran authorities have fallen over their feet.

The first fighting in Sanandaj in mid-March was apparently between the supporters of one Kurdish religious leader, Moftizadeh, who sought a measure of autonomy from the central government; and those of the Shi'ite leader Safteri, who was sent in from Qum to be Khomeini's direct representative.

Both formed armed factions and strove to consolidate their control over Sanandaj. The government itself touched off the conflict by trying to reinforce Safteri, shipping in two truckloads of ammunition to the local garrison that was under his control.

The Moftizadeh faction demanded a share of the ammunition on March 16 and was refused. They then called on their supporters to gather in front of the barracks. From there they marched to the headquarters of the Safteri faction, where they were fired upon. Several were killed or wounded.

Masses of people from the city then began to converge on the barracks, demanding arms for self-defense.

At this point, according to representatives of some of the armed groups in the city, all the organizations lost control of

the situation and there was a sort of spontaneous rebellion by the masses demanding arms. On March 17 a crowd marched to the gendarme post near the barracks and seized it without opposition. But as they marched up to the barracks itself the troops inside opened fire, reportedly on Safteri's orders. A number were killed, and 142 persons were arrested.

The people then began to put up barricades to defend themselves from the army. At this point the national commander of the army announced over television that the people surrounding the barracks were counterrevolutionaries and opportunists. The army was given orders to fire. Shooting continued through the night and into the next day.

On March 18 helicopter gunships began firing on Sanandaj. About noon on that day the provisional council of all the organizations in the city called for a cease-fire. Nonetheless, the Tehran regime sent in more troops—surviving units of the shah's Imperial Guards from Kermanshah.

A solidarity campaign with Sanandaj was mounted throughout Kurdistan. Peasants brought in food, and the townspeople besieging the army barracks were reinforced. One local chief in Boukan, several hours away by road from Sanandaj, told



Informations Ouvrières

Although Kurds were disarmed by Shah, many now have weapons.

me proudly that one of the people from his town had died in the siege of the Sanandaj barracks.

"That is an example of our solidarity," he said. "Everyone who could carry a weapon went to Sanandaj."

An uneasy cease-fire was achieved after negotiations between Kurdish leaders and a delegation from the central government headed by Ayatollah Taleghani of Tehran.

A provisional council of five was set up to run the city until new elections, with two representatives chosen by the left-wing and Kurdish nationalist organizations, two Moftizadeh supporters, and one Taleghani supporter.

The Tehran press presented the outcome as a generous grant of autonomy to the Kurdish people. But the Kurdish nationalist leader I talked with in Boukan—who was a member of the negotiating committee—took a dimmer view of the results. He said that the government team had said that it had no power to make decisions. Therefore he thought that nothing had been resolved.

Demand Sovereignty

He made it clear that the Kurdish people will not settle for cultural concessions—such as the right to wear their own costumes and speak their own language, rights that they have already effectively taken. They demand full control of their country.

The Kurdish nationalist leaders do not use the term "autonomy"; they use the term "sovereignty." They do not call for separation from Iran but sovereignty obviously means that they want to run things in their own country. They place no prior limitations on how far this freedom can extend.

At least a major section of the Kurdish nationalists have taken a turn to the left. The Boukan chief explained:

"In our opinion our earlier national struggles failed for two reasons. One is internal—the question of leadership; that is, the class character of the leadership. The original leadership was feudalistic, and by their own nature they were localist. They could not all unite all the forces of the people.

"About the time of the Second World War, a bourgeoisie developed. But it is very weak and cannot take the leadership from the feudalists.

"The other reason is that the Kurds in the various states did not show solidarity with the struggles of the other peoples of those countries and the other layers of society."

He said that the Kurdish people in Iran have now decided to form alliances with the other oppressed peoples of the country—especially with the Azerbaijanis, with whom they have the closest geographic and historical ties—and that the immediate task was to assist the struggle of the Turkmenis. He said that his organization, the Society for the Defense of the

Revolution and Freedom, believes that the toiling masses of Kurdistan, under a leadership that is representative of them, can free the Kurdish people.

A number of organizations have sprung up in Kurdistan, representing a combination of older nationalist forces and young leftists. They claim to be organizing direct popular government based on councils of



toilers and students. It is not yet clear whether any of these organizations or all of them together have the support of the majority of the working people in any area. But it is obvious that a number of them have substantial support among the working population.

In Mahabad, there is a "Council of the Revolution" that has the support of the main organizations of the city.

However, the present situation is still largely one of competing military and political factions, which are not clearly differentiated from each other by political program.

In Sanandaj there are three organizations: the Society for the Defense of the Revolution and Freedom, the Fedayeen, and the Moftizadeh faction. In Mahabad there are also three factions: the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, the Fedayeen, and the Joint Staff of the Democratic Forces.

Mahabad is the stronghold of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK), the main pro-Moscow organization in the area. It seems to be a fairly minor force in Sanandaj.

Kurdish nationalists such as the Boukan leader I spoke with regard the DPK as a Trojan horse for the central government, ready to make a deal with Tehran at the expense of the national rights of the Kurds. The DPK is also distrusted by the young leftists in these groups, some of whom come from a Maoist background.

When I was in Mahabad on April 1 and 2, armed clashes broke out between DPK supporters and the other groups. The story that the other groups told was that the central government had given the DPK control of the local barracks and had sent

in ammunition to reinforce the DPK's forces. On the night of April 1, the DPK tried to smuggle some of the ammunition out of the barracks to its own party militia. The team doing this was spotted and a fight developed in which one DPK member was wounded.

It is clear that in the present situation there is the danger of armed factionalism. This will persist until a revolutionary leadership is able to create democratically elected bodies that have the support of the majority of the people and can replace the vanishing authority of the old governmental institutions in Kurdistan. As long as this is not done, the central government will be able to find opportunities for maneuvering in this area, which it can no longer control directly.

The rejection of the referendum by the Kurdish people indicates that a head-on confrontation with the central government is shaping up. By their attitude toward this vote, the Kurds have in fact denied the legitimacy of the Khomeini-Bazargan regime.

The downfall of the monarchy has brought on an upsurge of nationalism among the other oppressed peoples of Iran as well; they find inspiration in the Kurdish struggle. Almost every day new groups raise demands. The latest are the Arabs of Khuzestan.

For the moment it is the oppressed nationalities of Iran, especially the Kurds, that are the main stumbling block in the way of the reconsolidation of the Iranian bourgeois state. The central government will use every means at its command to break them. So the Kurdish leaders are wise to seek alliances with the other oppressed nationalities. That represents an important step forward from the previous isolated struggles. But only the working class in the big Iranian cities can decisively defeat the attempt to restore strong bourgeois rule.

Unless the Iranian workers in the cities and industrial centers—and particularly in the oil fields—move, the Iranian bourgeoisie may be able to recreate an army that could overwhelm backward and rural Kurdistan. For example, most of the guns now held by hundreds of thousands of Kurds are contraband weapons—old army rifles and shotguns. But even the pro-Khomeini militiamen in the big cities generally have modern infantry weapons.

For the moment, though, the oppressed nationalities of Iran, even those in the most backward areas, have given the working class some time in which it will have a chance to regain the initiative and begin to organize. □

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Chinese Regime Arrests Dissidents

By Dan Dickeson

The Chinese regime, beginning in mid-March, launched a sharp attack on the dissident movement, announcing new restrictions on freedom of expression and arresting a number of activists in Beijing.

The move to crack down on dissent was apparently initiated by Deng Xiaoping, who reportedly declared that the democracy movement had gone "too far." Speaking to government and Communist Party officials at a meeting on China's invasion of Vietnam, Deng accused unnamed dissidents of meeting with foreigners and "selling" state secrets.

An editorial in the March 18 *Beijing Daily* repeated Deng's charges. On March 22, the *Beijing Daily* and *Workers Daily* both published major articles alleging that "human rights" is a bourgeois slogan that should not be raised in a "socialist" society such as China.

On March 31, the *Beijing People's Daily* published an announcement by the Beijing Revolutionary Committee (the city administration) which for the first time spelled out concrete restrictions on dissident activity. It stipulated that wall posters could only be pasted up in officially designated places, and that any public meetings or demonstrations had to be carried out under police supervision. It also warned:

Anyone who opposes socialism, opposes the dictatorship of the proletariat, opposes the Communist Party leaders, opposes Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung thought, or discloses state secrets also opposes the constitution and the law. Any *dazibao* [wall posters], publications and drawings etc. which go against the constitution and law are completely forbidden. [Quoted in the April 2 Toronto *Globe and Mail*.]

On April 1, officials began tearing down all the wall posters in Beijing except those on "Democracy Wall."

The regime also instituted police surveillance of known dissidents. Some members of the Communist Party were reportedly investigated for possible links with the dissident movement. One foreign correspondent talking with Chinese in Beijing reported being followed by security police.

And there began to be reports of dissidents being arrested.

These moves to intimidate dissidents were at least partially successful. Fewer wall posters and public discussions have been reported at Democracy Wall since late March. The dissident journal *Reference News for the Masses* announced that it was temporarily suspending publication.

But some dissidents have made a determined effort to fight back.

On March 23, a poster went up on Democracy Wall blasting the official slanders against human rights advocates. Denouncing the current CP leadership as "the heirs, the bastard offspring of the Gang of Four," the poster continued:

The government claims that because the demand for human rights was raised by the people of America in the eighteenth century, anyone who calls for human rights today is therefore a supporter of capitalism. Who are they trying to fool? This only shows that the Chinese people are still being oppressed, even in our socialist society, even after the fall of the Gang of Four.

On March 25, a group of dissidents gathered at Democracy Wall to sell pamphlets denouncing Deng Xiaoping and accusing him of trying to maintain "the same kind of dictatorship we had under Mao Zedong." Charging that "the Hua-Deng regime is trying to blame the democracy movement for the bankruptcy of its own economic plan," the pamphlet warned that so long as Deng tries to deny people their rights "we must no longer place our trust in him."

On April 4, four activists of the Human Rights Alliance went to Democracy Wall with a poster entitled "The Slogan of Human Rights and the Swindle of 'Marxism-Leninism.'" Warning that "the enemies of democracy have begun to attack," their poster blamed the suppression of individual liberties on bureaucrats who know that if the democracy movement wins its demands, "they would no longer be able to keep the positions that have procured them substantial income without having to be responsible to the people."

The authors of the poster insisted that they are communists, and they called the authors of tirades against human rights in the official press:

... imbeciles [for whom] Marxism must necessarily signify the abolition of human and political rights. ... Why don't they analyze the concrete demands made by the Chinese democratic movement to find out whether it represents the interests of the bourgeoisie or those of the people?

Before the four activists could paste up all the pages of their poster, however, plainclothes police moved in to arrest them. Four more activists were reported arrested the next day, on the third anniversary of the Tian An Men demonstration.

As of April 5, an estimated fifteen dissidents had been arrested. Among the better known are:

- Ren Wanding, the 35-year-old deputy chairman of the Human Rights Alliance, one of the four arrested April 4. He had been victimized as a "bad element" in 1968 during the Cultural Revolution, and was rehabilitated only in late 1978. It is not known what—if any—charges will be made against him.

- Fu Yuehua, a 32-year-old activist who was arrested January 17 after helping peasants who had come to Beijing to press their demands for more food and clothing. Deng Xiaoping stated in March that she would be given a public trial, but there are conflicting reports about what she might be charged with. The Hong Kong monthly *Guan Cha Jia* (Kuan Ch'a Chia) reported in February that she was accused of participating in plans for a demonstration by the Human Rights Alliance during Deng's trip to the United States. Other reports have it that she was arrested after seeking asylum in a foreign embassy, a charge which members of her family deny.

- Wei Jingsheng, a 26-year-old electrical worker who was arrested March 29. One of the most outspoken dissidents in Beijing, Wei wrote an article in the dissident journal *Inquiries* under the title "We Demand Democracy as the Fifth Modernization." Dissident sources speculated that he was singled out for arrest because of his stinging criticisms of Deng Xiaoping.

The current crackdown against dissent is the most serious one since the establishment of Democracy Wall in Beijing in November 1978. Although local officials in Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities had attempted from time to time to clamp a lid on public criticism, this is the first time that Deng Xiaoping has openly taken the lead in a coordinated crackdown.

The phony charge of "selling secrets to foreigners" is obviously aimed at discrediting those who have spoken up against the invasion of Vietnam. But it also reflects the regime's real fear that fighters for democratic rights in China might link up with their real allies—working people—in other countries. The labor movement internationally must seek to publicize the cases of the arrested dissidents and demand an end to the repression against them. □

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'Cahiers Leon Trotsky' Begins Publication in France

By George Breitman

The first number of the new magazine *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* (Leon Trotsky Notebooks) has just arrived from France and it deserves a cordial welcome.

Cahiers is a quarterly concentrating on studies of Trotsky—his ideas, his life, the people he was connected with, the movements of his time, literature on these and related subjects, and so on.

It is published by the Leon Trotsky Institute in Paris. Organized in 1977, this institute represents an effort by different political tendencies to work together for the widest possible publication and distribution of Trotsky's writings in French. The seriousness and high quality of their work can be seen in the first four volumes of Trotsky's *Oeuvres* (covering 1933-34), all published during the past year.

This can also be seen in the first number of *Cahiers*. Well edited and well annotated, its 128 pages provide a veritable storehouse of information about the early years of the Fourth International and its leaders, much of it published here for the first time. Something new and necessary has definitely been added to our international arsenal.

To avert misunderstandings, however, it should also be pointed out that most of these articles were not written for the "average reader" or for readers completely unfamiliar with Trotsky, the Fourth International, and so on. In general, I think, they will appeal most of all and be most useful to readers who already know some of the literature by and about Trotsky and his movement. I mention this not as a criticism but to indicate the level at which most of the *Cahiers* is written (which I think is the correct level).

Because the first number was published soon after the fortieth anniversary of the founding conference of the Fourth International (France, 1938), *Cahiers* commemorates the occasion by devoting more than one-third of its pages to several documents connected with that conference.

Two of these are excerpts from circular letters from the International Secretariat, written in the spring of 1938 by Rudolf Klement, the IS administrative secretary who was kidnapped and murdered shortly thereafter by Stalin's GPU. Klement's circular letters, intended only for the leaders of the national sections, have never been published before.¹

1. I hope that some day room can be found to print more from these letters, particularly the summary Klement gave in them about the weak organizational state of the Fourth International-

But the centerpiece of this number is a forty-page presentation of two sets of minutes made at the founding conference of the Fourth International. To explain this, let us recall that in 1938 tape machines, cassettes, and so on, were not yet available. In those days minutes were taken by hand, their value depending very much on how experienced, well-informed, conscientious, and objective the minute-taker happened to be.

The founding conference elected three of its delegates as secretaries: Marcel Hic of France, Nathan Gould of the United States, and Charles Sumner of Britain. The aim probably was to compare and combine the three versions in preparing an official set, but no official and complete minutes were ever circulated.

In 1938 a set of minutes in French, obviously incomplete, was published in *Quatrième Internationale*. This may have been the version prepared by Hic, or it may have been another, prepared by Pierre Naville, a member of the IS and the French section. It was not translated at the time and was largely forgotten during and after World War II.

In his 1963 book *The Prophet Outcast* (p. 419), Isaac Deutscher said he had an English-language set of minutes "obtained from former British Trotskyists." In 1973 Tamara Deutscher provided Pathfinder Press in New York with a copy of this English set, and it was printed later that year in Pathfinder's *Documents of the Fourth International: The Formative Years (1933-40)*, edited by Will Reissner.²

The two versions are not at all identical.

ist movement following its international conference in July 1936. As administrative secretary, Klement was better qualified than anyone else to discuss the organizational strengths and weaknesses of the movement. This is important because you can't really measure what an achievement the founding of the Fourth International was in 1938 if you have only some general ideas about the many obstacles to its founding that had to be overcome in the period 1933-38.

2. For some reason the *Cahiers* editors attribute the English minutes to "an American delegate" to the founding conference. Since Deutscher did not identify the nationality of the minute-taker, and since Pathfinder was silent on this question in the book from which the *Cahiers* editors took the English minutes, we can only wonder where this attribution came from. It is better to scotch such errors before they are repeated. Will Reissner confirms that the English minutes used in *Documents of the Fourth International* originally had British-style spell-

In some places the French version is fuller, in other places the English is more detailed; each lacks important passages that the other supplies.

Anyway, it was an inspired idea that the *Cahiers* editors had when they decided to run the two versions side by side. We will never know which version was "more accurate" or "more complete," but thanks to their juxtaposition in the *Cahiers* we now have a much better grasp of the different political and theoretical positions debated at the founding conference and a clearer picture of what the international movement was like one year before World War II.

Another very valuable article is one by Pierre Broué, about some of Trotsky's secretaries and other close collaborators in his last exile. In the 1930s little was known publicly about such people as Jan Frankel, Otto Schüssler, Rudolf Klement, Erwin Wolf, and Walter Held, whose associations with Trotsky made them targets of harassment and deportation by bourgeois-democratic governments and of assassination by the Soviet secret police.

These five were brave revolutionaries, who dedicated their lives to the movement when they were quite young. Three of them actually were murdered. While editing many Trotsky books, Broué learned a great deal about these five through old documents, interviews in several countries with survivors who had known them, correspondence, and so on. The results are fascinating biographical/personal sketches of each of the five, including what is known about their political course after Trotsky's death.

Other contents of the first issue of *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* include:

- An interview by Rodolphe Prager with Jean Van Heijenoort in March 1978, never before published. Van Heijenoort explains why he chose to write the kind of book he did about Trotsky (published in the U.S. as *With Trotsky in Exile: From Prinkipo to Coyoacán*, Harvard University Press, 1978).

- Two items by Trotsky: One is an essay on Nietzsche written in 1900 under a pseudonym for a Siberian periodical when the author was twenty-one years old and serving a sentence in his first exile for his early revolutionary activities. Its title was "Something About the 'Superman' Philosophy." The other is a short letter, probably to Otto Schüssler, sent from Norway to France on the eve of an international conference in July 1936. Norwegian fascists stole it from Trotsky's home, and Hitler's Nazi paper in Berlin reprinted it to prove that Trotsky was engaging in "sub-

ing ("programme" instead of program, "favour" instead of favor, etc.). This was Americanized to make the style consistent with the rest of the book. My own guess is that these were the minutes made by Sumner, whose real name was Hilary Sumner-Boyd.

versive" activities on Norwegian soil.

• An article by Michel Kehrnon on the relations between Trotsky and the outstanding Russian poet Sergei Essenin, who committed suicide in 1925.

• A book and bibliographical department by Michel Dreyfus and Jean-

François Godchau. As they state, deciding what to include and how to handle it is not an easy task, so we will reserve judgment until we see a little more of what they do in practice.

The Leon Trotsky Institute's address is 29 rue Descartes, 75005 Paris, France. The

price of single copies of *Cahiers* is 20 francs; a year's subscription from abroad is 55 francs. Special arrangements can be made to send copies by air mail.

For the minority that can understand French and want to learn more about the history of the Fourth International, it's a good buy.

Black Freedom Fighter Sent to Gallows

Solomon Mahlangu Executed in South Africa

By Ernest Harsch

Solomon Mahlangu, a twenty-three-year-old Black freedom fighter, was murdered by the white supremacist regime of South Africa April 6. A government spokesman said that he was hanged shortly after dawn, at Pretoria Central Prison.

The South African mission to the United Nations claimed that Mahlangu had been "found guilty of a criminal offense and was not convicted on political grounds."

But Mahlangu was executed for political reasons. His "crime"—like that of many other young Blacks sitting in South African jails today—was to fight for the liberation of the oppressed Black majority, to struggle for an end to the racist system of apartheid.

Mahlangu became politically active in 1976, during the massive Black uprisings in Soweto and other South African townships. He helped organize student activists in Mamelodi, a township outside of Pretoria.

During his trial, he explained that he then joined the outlawed African National Congress and left the country for military training, returning in mid-1977 with two others. They were soon discovered, and

during a shootout in Johannesburg, two whites were killed. Mahlangu testified that he himself had not fired the fatal shots, a fact that the judge acknowledged. He was sentenced to death anyway.

In his testimony, Mahlangu also revealed that he had been severely beaten while in police detention and that the police forced him to make a false incriminating statement. One of his comrades, Mondy Johannes Motlaung, was even more severely beaten, suffering brain damage so extensive that he was declared unfit to stand trial.

This treatment did not dampen Mahlangu's spirit of resistance, however. After he

was sentenced to death in March 1978, he turned to the packed courtroom, gave a clenched-fist salute, and shouted "Amandla!" (power).

Although many Black activists have been killed by the regime—in the streets or in jail cells—Mahlangu's murder is the first judicially sanctioned execution of a political prisoner in a number of years. It could be the opening move in a government bid to send other Black activists to the gallows as well.

International protests against Mahlangu's execution and for the release of all South African political prisoners could help save their lives. □

The Hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

During the early morning hours of April 4, in a prison in Rawalpindi, Pakistan's military dictators hanged former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Coming in the midst of Gen. Zia ul-Haq's campaign of brutal repression against dissent by workers and peasants, the execution served as a warning to Pakistan's 77 million people that the same thing could happen to any one of them.

Bhutto had been found guilty more than a year earlier on charges of murdering the father of one of his political opponents in 1974. But the charges in that case, whatever their validity, were not the actual reason Zia had Bhutto executed. Nor was the reason Bhutto's very real crimes against the Pakistani masses while he was in office.

What Zia hopes to accomplish is to further strengthen the repressive atmosphere that he has been building up since seizing power from Bhutto in July 1977. This has included the jailing of political dissidents, the introduction of public floggings and a few public executions, censorship of the press, and the gunning down of scores of striking workers.

Despite Bhutto's own brutal methods of rule while he held power, many in Pakistan have seen the execution for what it really is—an attempt to terrorize the masses. For that reason, demands for Bhutto's release were featured prominently in many of the antigovernment protests in the months leading up to the hanging.

Though Zia may calculate that Bhutto's hanging will have a dampening effect on political dissidence, it could also serve to harden opposition to his regime.

Within hours of the announcement of the execution, small protest demonstrations were held in both Rawalpindi and the industrial city of Karachi. The next day, thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets of Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and other cities around the country, condemning the execution, chanting anti-government slogans, and clashing with police.

These actions were held despite a heavy show of force by the Zia regime and the "preventive detention" of some 2,000 leaders and activists of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. During the protests against the hanging, hundreds more were arrested in the main cities. □



SOLOMON MAHLANGU

Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund Goes Over the Top

George Novack and Reba Hansen—chairman and treasurer respectively of the Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund—have announced that the fund has surpassed its goal of raising \$20,000 by March 31. They report that as of April 5, contributions and pledges received totaled \$22,906. Donations are continuing to come in from Trotskyists and other supporters around the world.

A \$950 contribution from Socialist Workers Party members in the northern Minnesota Iron Range, a contribution of \$400 from Britain, and a \$500 contribution from Nahuel Moreno on behalf of the Argentine Socialist Workers Party put the fund over the top.

Hansen, who died January 18, was editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* since its inception in 1963. The money collected will be used to begin publication of some of his major writings in book form.

The first two volumes in the series will contain articles by Hansen on revolutionary strategy in Latin America.

Later volumes will include his writings on the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe following World War II, revolutionary strategy for the world Trotskyist movement, and such varied topics as the Malthus theory of population explosion, the American forms of fascism, whether a new world war is inevitable, and the place of freedom for scientific investigation in the Soviet Union.

Sponsors of the fund include the contributing editors of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, leaders of the Trotskyist move-

ment in many countries, and many other internationally known persons.

Among those who have recently added their names to the list are George Fyson and Russell Johnson, leaders of the Socialist Action League of New Zealand; George Lavan Weissman, editor of *Monad Press* and a longtime leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party; and Michel Pablo, leader of the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency.

Pablo wrote:

"I agree, naturally, that my name should appear as one of the sponsors of the fund to publish J. Hansen's works. I never took part in G. Healy's slanders against him, putting them in the category of an unacceptable outgrowth of faction fights and polemics within the revolutionary Marxist workers movement.

"It is correct and useful that J. Hansen's ideas, like those of any other militant who has dedicated himself to the cause of socialism, should soon be presented in a systematic way."

The fund was launched at a New York meeting on January 28, where 550 persons gathered to pay tribute to Hansen. That meeting raised an initial \$8,000.

Since then, meetings held in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cleveland, Louisville, New Orleans, Seattle, San Diego, and Detroit, and in countries around the world have brought in sizable contributions.

The Communist League, the Indian section of the Fourth International, organized a meeting in Baroda on March 14 to pay tribute to Joseph Hansen. Correspondent

Jagdish Parikh wrote that fifty persons, including workers, students, and other activists, attended the meeting, and donated \$50. He added, "Many workers and employees have contributed their one-day payment." A committee of six persons was formed to raise additional funds for the purpose of publishing Hansen's works in Hindi.

Although the target date for the fund has passed, further contributions—and outstanding pledges, which total \$6,915—are still welcome and may be sent to Joseph Hansen Publishing Fund, 14 Charles Lane, New York, New York 10014. □

FBI Spied on Brecht

Playwright and poet Bertolt Brecht was spied on by the FBI during the last thirteen years of his life, particularly during the years he spent in the U.S. as a refugee from Hitler's Germany, according to information revealed by Brecht scholar James K. Lyon on March 29.

While Brecht remained organizationally unaffiliated, his writings reflect his deep identification with the cause of the working class and oppressed. This made him suspect in the eyes of America's political police. It also led to Brecht's receiving a subpoena to testify before the witch-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947.

One contemporary remarked that the Committee's interrogation of Brecht gave the impression of apes who had taken to studying the biologist.

Information about the FBI's file on Brecht was revealed by Dr. Lyon, chairman of the literature department of the University of California at San Diego, at the International Brecht Symposium held at the University of Maryland. Lyon presented a paper entitled, "The FBI as Literary Historian: The File of Bertolt Brecht."

The 1,000-page file, covering the years 1943 to 1956, shows that the FBI maintained a wiretap on Brecht's phone. Although the snoops took pains to conceal this fact—J. Edgar Hoover personally ordered the Los Angeles field office to keep it under wraps—Brecht was aware he was being bugged and took steps to frustrate the FBI. Brecht's wife, the Polish-born actress Helene Weigel, "on at least one occasion read recipes from a Polish cookbook over the telephone to another friend who knew no Polish," according to Dr. Lyon. □

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Joe Hansen—'Disciplined Soldier' of Revolutionary Movement

[The following is the text of Farrell Dobbs's speech at a memorial meeting for Joseph Hansen held in San Francisco on February 11.

[Dobbs is a longtime leader of the American Trotskyist movement; he served as national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 to 1972.]

* * *

One fact stands out with particular clarity in reminiscing about Joe Hansen: He lived a fruitful and rewarding life as a dedicated revolutionary socialist fighter. Joe gave a lot to the Socialist Workers Party, and yet—just as is the case with all of us in the party—he got back more than he gave.

The party gave strong purpose and meaning to his life. His association with the party made him a complete human being. It made it possible for him to savor the zest of life to the full. And that's the main thing to remember.

The end is not a tragedy. Everybody, as old Hondo Lane once said, has to get dead. The important thing is, what kind of a life did you have?

Other comrades have spoken about various aspects of Joe's role in the revolutionary movement. Jack Barnes, in his talk in New York, tied together the threads of Joe's career and summed it up in rounded form.*

So I feel free to confine my remarks simply to some observations about Joe as I came to know him through our years of association in the central leadership of the party.

Both Joe and I were youths who had become radicalized by the severe economic depression of the 1930s. We joined the Trotskyist movement—then called the Communist League of America—in the same year, 1934.

During our first years in the party, we worked in different spheres. I was a young, rebel worker who remained active for some time in the Midwest Teamsters movement.

Joe's first major assignment was as a helper to the party's maritime fraction right here in San Francisco. After that he was assigned to Trotsky's secretariat and staff in Coyoacán, Mexico.

There was a short hiatus in Joe's service in Mexico that I want to take note of.

Toward the end of the 1930s, Joe was brought to the party center in New York to

help out in the faction, fight against the petty-bourgeois opposition that arose with the outbreak of World War II—a faction that tried to divert the party from its principled position of unconditional



Reba Hansen

Joe Hansen in late 1976.

defense of the Soviet Union against the attacks of the imperialists. This petty-bourgeois faction wanted to back out of that position when you had to put things on the line—there was a war, and it was no longer a matter of chattering about your professed stand; you had to live by it and act by it.

Well, to save a lot of words, they didn't have the guts to do that.

Joe was brought in to help out in that fight. It was at that same time at the beginning of 1940 that I left the Teamsters and went to the party center to function as the labor secretary of the party.

There, for the first time, Joe and I worked directly together.

It's an interesting thing. Sometimes you will perceive some very fundamental aspects of a person in a circumstance that has nothing directly to do with the work you're carrying on together.

Joe, Jim Cannon, and I rented a little unoccupied farm house out in the Pennsylvania hills to have a relaxed weekend. It was chilly at that time of year, and we were sitting around in the kitchen. It had a lot of drafts.

We built a fire in the old cast-iron stove and sat around a table, and decided, in view of the temperature, to have a hot toddy.

One thing led to another, and we got into a contest over who could make the hottest hot toddy.

Joe won, hands down. So help me, he set a toddy before us that continued to boil in the cup as we sat there and looked at it.

That aroused my curiosity. I thought over all the motions Joe had been going through in the background while Jim and I had been having an argument about something.

I noticed we had some big old thick cups. And Joe had very carefully set them on this cast-iron stove—you know a cast-iron stove gives off a rather slow heat. He set the cups there well before he started bringing the water to a boil. So when he was ready, the cup was hot enough to keep the water boiling after it was put in it.

That made a big impression on us.

Not only because, when I want a hot toddy, I mean *hot*.

But it said something to me about Joe. I knew he was an intellectual. I knew he was a dedicated revolutionist. But I never knew how much savvy he had about everyday living in this world.

Here was a man who thought things out, saw all the angles in a given situation, and showed the capacity to put a few things together, improvise, and come up with an answer.

I saw Joe do that many times afterwards, and I was never surprised after I saw him make that hot toddy.

I never saw Joe lose his cool, his self-control—no matter what kind of a situation we were in. And believe me, across a period of thirty, forty years in the revolutionary movement, you go through one or two.

That was the main reason that Joe was sent back down to Coyoacán after the assault in May 1940 to be on Trotsky's staff.

Stalin's political police were determined to kill Trotsky and we had to do everything we could to stop them—a very difficult job when you're facing a state power.

Joe, throughout that period, worked as a disciplined soldier under the leadership and with the guidance of Trotsky to expose the Stalinists to the world.

And he was still Cool Hand Luke the day that Stalinist hit man then known as Jacson, who had wormed his way into Trotsky's confidence, drove the alpenstock so symbolically into Trotsky's brain—the brain that Stalin feared above all else.

Joe helped nab this guy and prevent his getaway, and at least lay that much of a foundation to hang the responsibility for the terrible crime where it belonged—on Stalin.

After Joe came back to the center following the assassination of Trotsky he began

*The text of Barnes's speech appeared in the February 9, 1979, issue of the *Militant*. For excerpts, see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 12, p. 100.

to show his quality as a theoretician. He began to show that he had learned from Trotsky, had been a good student.

I saw several people that had some great chances to work with Trotsky. But they liked to think of themselves as "independent thinkers." You know, just small enough that they couldn't admit that a genius like Trotsky was a little bigger than they were. They get so concerned with showing how independent they are that they lose the opportunity to *learn* from a man with the capabilities and rich experience of Trotsky.

Joe wasn't like that. He learned, and he learned well, during his period with Trotsky.

He learned this very important thing: revolutionary theory has to be kept abreast of the richness of changing reality as humanity marches forward in the course of the class struggle. But it is important in doing that not to lose past conquests, not to get the idea that because something is new you've got to throw everything aside and start all over.

Because if you don't know how to defend past conquests, you'll never make new gains. Joe learned that from Trotsky. This attribute came to the fore in the latter part of the 1940s when the question was posed of the character of the East European states that had emerged after World War II. A majority of the party leadership, including myself, were a bit slow in coming to grips with this. A minority of the comrades in the leadership—including Joe—pressed ahead.

They took the lead in thinking out this question theoretically, and in order to do so they formed a tendency. Applying what Trotsky had taught, they recognized on the one side what was new—that several workers states had come into being in Eastern Europe.

But yet there was the presence of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste that continued to usurp the democratic rule of the working class. Instead of making the mistake of saying, "Oh, no, we've got to reexamine Stalinism and change our theory of it," they recognized that these were *deformed* workers states and that a political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist oppressors and establish workers democracy was necessary.

Another very fundamental aspect of this discussion was the manner in which this tendency functioned.

It's the easiest thing in the world if you're cocksure and don't take the party as seriously as you should, to start making a racket like a mule in a tin barn inside the party when you have a difference. Get everything at sixes and sevens to no useful purpose.

A leader *always* has a responsibility for the internal equilibrium of the party—a precious condition in building a revolutionary party—so that its work is not unnecessarily disrupted; so that the party is in a

position to go forward in its efforts to reach out to the masses and advance the class struggle.

This tendency was exemplary in that respect. They were a model of taking a



Farrell Dobbs speaking at a Young Socialist Alliance conference.

firm stand and arguing—and arguing cogently, since in the end, they convinced the majority—for their position and yet doing so without disrupting the party.

It has always been my opinion that Joe, who was only one of the members of that tendency, was one of the members most directly responsible for this particular aspect of the manner in which that tendency conducted itself.

Joe wasn't a theoretician who lived in an ivory tower. He concerned himself with all the mundane aspects of building a revolutionary workers party, with all aspects of the party's good and welfare.

I recall a particular instance.

There was, on one occasion, a faction fight going in the party. There was a young comrade in an opposition faction that Jim and I, who were responsible for the central administration of the party, thought would make a good business manager for the *Militant*. So we proposed that.

The leaders of that faction came to us and said no, you can't make him the business manager of the *Militant*. This comrade is National Committee material! Too good, you know, for a little Jimmy Higgins job like that.

We thought this was a good occasion to set an example for the whole party and to put things back in proportion.

We decided we're going to nominate a National Committee member—not just a comrade who is "promising material" for the NC—to be the business manager of the paper.

Who'd we think of? Joe.

Joe had the savvy and the bigness so that we'd no more than raised the question

with him than he saw the whole point. He grabbed the assignment and did a bang-up job.

Another thing that I remember with great feelings of warmth is the way Joe stood like a rock during the long, hard period of the witch-hunt and McCarthyism.

That was a long drought for the party. From 1947-48 to the turn of the 1960s.

One of the problems we had during that period was with people who tried to find one or another way to leap over objective reality, to find some gimmick that could miraculously take the party by its bootstraps and lift it up out of this adverse situation and put it on the high-road to . . . I don't know where.

The kind of people who don't know how to identify themselves with the movement—who can only identify the movement with themselves. Whether they know it or not, when they get to this stage, they're always asking themselves not only why is the movement not doing so good, but what's the score going to be for *me*.

There's no easier or quicker way to get off the beam than to start misidentifying your own personal problems with the problems of the party—which means the problems of the future of the human race.

Joe helped immensely in fighting off each one of those "theoreticians" who came up with some new gimmick.

Joe was an internationalist, but he was different from one kind I have met who call themselves internationalists. Unlike that type, Joe was not a kibitzer.

These kibitzers can tell you all about the necessary strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle in Timbuktu or Tibet, but when it comes to the class struggle in the United States, they don't know their posterior from their elbow.

Joe wasn't that type.

He knew that internationalism begins with the revolutionary struggle in your own country. He knew that when you lead internationally, you lead with and through your party, which is itself internationalist to the core.

Joe always acted that way. He functioned as a member of the leadership team of the party, in the closest cooperation with the other leaders of the party, as a comrade *assigned* to that work by the leadership of the party.

Finally, in the last years of his life, Joe did some of his richest writing on theoretical questions. These, in my view, are perhaps going to prove to be his most lasting contribution. In my view, they have profound value for the movement.

It is fitting that the party is planning a special publication project beginning with these writings.

It is through that last phase of his work as a revolutionary theoretician that Joe is going to find the continuation of the example he set during his lifetime in the young fighters who survive him. □

New Imperialist Moves Against Zimbabwean Revolution

By Ernest Harsch

Despite a formal international arms embargo against Rhodesia, the regime of Ian Smith has recently acquired significant additions to its arsenal.

Coming at a time of growing insurgency among the Zimbabwean masses, this new infusion of military equipment testifies to a stepped-up intervention by imperialism behind its local allies to help hold back the Zimbabwean revolution.

One of Smith's latest acquisitions is a version of the American-made "Huey" helicopter, which is well-suited for large-scale counterinsurgency operations. During the Vietnam War, the Huey served as a mainstay of the American efforts to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

At least eleven Augusta Bell 205A helicopters—the commercial version of the Huey—arrived in Rhodesia in late 1978. They had been converted for military use by the addition of extra armor plating and through the mounting of machine guns on the side doors. The helicopters significantly expand Rhodesian air-strike capabilities.

On December 14, a Rhodesian military representative admitted that the air force was now using the American helicopters. Both the Carter administration and the Bell helicopter company also acknowledged that Smith had obtained the aircraft, though they sought to deny any responsibility.

After conducting an "investigation," the State and Commerce departments claimed that the helicopters had originally been built in Italy under an American license, sold to the Israeli armed forces, and then resold to a "reputable" American firm in Singapore. The White House did not explain how the helicopters ended up in Smith's hands, and it refused to name the American firm that was supposed to have taken delivery of them.

The arrival of the Bell helicopters in Salisbury is not an isolated case, but part of an emerging pattern of greater foreign military backing for the Rhodesian regime. Other known indications of this include the following:

- In 1976, the Rhodesian air force had only sixteen French Alouette III helicopters as part of its counterinsurgency strike force. According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, which publishes the authoritative annual *Military Balance*, the number of these French helicopters had climbed to sixty-six by 1978.

- Also according to the *Military*

Balance, the Rhodesian army now has sixty AML-90 Eland armored cars, manufactured in South Africa, in its service.

- An unknown number of French-made Mirage jet fighters have been added to the Rhodesian air force. The distinctly shaped Mirages have frequently been sighted in the air, and the Mozambican government charges that they have taken part in some of the Rhodesian bombing raids against Mozambique.

- Citing unnamed sources in London and Pretoria, a "Voice of Zimbabwe" radio broadcast from Mozambique reported February 11 that 1,400 tons of British firearms and several tanks recently reached Salisbury via Britain, Portugal, and South Africa.

- The December 16, 1978, issue of the South African *Rand Daily Mail* reported that "independent intelligence sources in Washington" had taken note of "reports earlier this year that [American-made] C-130 aircraft with Iranian markings were bringing unknown cargo into Rhodesia." (That was before the overthrow of the Shah.)

- American officials have acknowledged that there have been reports of the appearance in Rhodesia of about twenty American Cessna FT-337B reconnaissance planes manufactured in France under U.S. license.

- According to a report in the January issue of the London monthly *Africa*, Smith has earmarked for the 1979 military budget \$26.5 million out of a recent loan of \$150 million raised from the Saudi Arabian regime.

Look to 'Internal Settlement'

The immediate aim of the imperialists in stepping up covert aid is to bolster Smith's rapidly deteriorating position. Both Washington and London (not to mention Pretoria) fear that if Smith were overthrown by a mass revolutionary upheaval, imperialism's substantial interests throughout southern Africa would be endangered.

At the same time, however, they realize that Smith and the white-settler community that he represents are no longer capable of containing the struggles of the Zimbabwean workers and peasants. For that reason, the ultimate aim of Carter and Callaghan is to pave the way for the establishment of a neocolonial regime that could serve as a more effective bulwark against the Zimbabwean revolution.

Until recently, they attempted to achieve that through the convening of round-table negotiations involving all the major Zimbabwean nationalist factions—those led by Joshua Nkomo, Robert Mugabe, Abel Muzorewa, and Ndabaningi Sithole. Although the negotiations succeeded for a while in diverting the liberation struggle, they failed to give birth to a viable neocolonial administration, the imperialists' main objective.

There are now indications that Washington and London are looking toward the "internal settlement" Smith reached with Muzorewa and Sithole (as well as Chief Jeremiah Chirau) as a possible basis for such a neocolonial regime.

The increased arms shipments is one sign of this. Another was the attempt by Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, to get the Chinese government to aid the internal settlement, an attempt that was revealed in memoranda of conversations between Michael Oksenberg of the National Security Council and John Carbaugh, an aide to Senator Jesse Helms.

Summarizing the memoranda, correspondent Jonathan Steele reported in the December 22 London *Guardian* that Brzezinski, while in Beijing (Peking), "asked the Chinese to use their influence with Robert Mugabe to join the leaders of the internal settlement and isolate Joshua Nkomo, his colleague in the Patriotic Front who has made frequent trips to Moscow. He also asked the Chinese to persuade President Samora Machel of Mozambique, who was about to visit Peking, to help in the internal settlement by denying bases and sanctuary to Mugabe's guerrillas." There has been no indication whether Beijing tried to act on this request.

This maneuver shows that greater imperialist backing to the internal settlement would not rule out continued attempts to further divide the Zimbabwean nationalist movement or efforts to bring either Mugabe or Nkomo—or both—into a neocolonial regime.

Yet another indication of imperialist interest in the internal settlement was a debate within the United Nations Security Council March 8, when the American, British, and French representatives strongly opposed a resolution condemning the elections Smith has called for April 17-21. Those elections are designed to set up a new proimperialist "majority rule" regime, with Black figures like Muzorewa playing

the most visible roles, but with white officials continuing to wield considerable influence.

The imperialists may hope that if Smith is successful enough in compelling a sufficient number of Blacks to participate in those elections—and if Smith then steps down to make way for a Black prime minister—that could serve as a political cover for more direct imperialist aid to a “popularly elected” Rhodesian government.

The proposal in the U.S. Congress by Senators George McGovern and S.I. Hayakawa to send a team of “impartial” American observers to monitor the elections could provide a vehicle for the supporters of the internal settlement to paint the elections as “democratic.”

Although 2.8 million Black Zimbabweans will be allowed to vote for the first time, the fact is that the elections, by their very nature, will be highly undemocratic.

Smith's Election Scheme

First of all, the elections will be held in terms of a new constitution, which was approved in late January by a whites-only referendum. The Black majority had no say in its drafting. The constitution, while providing for a Black prime minister and Black majority in parliament and the cabinet, nevertheless seeks to maintain a strong white role in the government apparatus itself; continued white dominance of the army, police, civil service, and judiciary; and protection against expropriation of white-owned property.

Secondly, each white vote in the elections will in effect carry nine times the weight of a Black vote since, under the new constitution, whites are to have 28 percent of the seats in parliament and the cabinet automatically reserved for them, despite the fact that they are only 4 percent of the entire population.

Thirdly, Black voters will have no opportunity to cast ballots for the Patriotic Front, the only major Zimbabwean nationalist formation now fighting against Smith. The two components of the front—Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)—are both outlawed by the Rhodesian regime. They have called for a boycott of the elections.

Finally, the elections will be held under the guns of the Rhodesian army. Since Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole, and Chirau will require as high a Black turnout as possible in their bid to use the elections as a basis for more direct imperialist support, Blacks who try to boycott the polls will run a serious risk of physical reprisal.

The Rhodesian regime is preparing for a massive military mobilization during the elections and has cancelled all leaves and deferments. Plans have also been laid for staggered balloting over several days to

make it possible for large concentrations of troops to be moved from one polling area to another.

White employers and farm owners have been urged to instruct their Black employees to vote. According to Ayoun Kara, a leader of Muzorewa's United African National Council, “It is in the White interest to see a very large turnout at our first one man, one vote elections.”

Terror Drive Against Blacks

The elections come at a time when the regime has sharply escalated its military campaign to terrorize the Black masses and to crush the liberation struggle.

Martial law has been extended to cover 80 percent of the country. Under it, the military has a completely free hand to brutalize the rural population and to execute anyone suspected of sympathizing with the freedom fighters.

Citing church sources, correspondent John F. Burns reported in the December 28 *New York Times* that “a picture has emerged of perfunctory trials resulting in quick death sentences for guerrillas and for those assisting them, and of troops descending on black villages and burning the huts of tribesmen accused of assisting the insurgents. In other cases, the troops are said to have rounded up all the young men living in an area and taken them to detention centers to prevent their being drafted by the rebels.”

Napalm is now being widely used, and there have been frequent reports of massacres of Black villagers.

In attempts to starve the insurgent Blacks into submission, the army has shut down shops, destroyed granaries, killed cattle, and prohibited the Red Cross from distributing food to civilians in certain areas.

Rhodesian troops have rounded up hundreds of Black students and taken them to martial-law zones to participate in forced-labor programs for white farm owners.

Commenting on the measures against rural Blacks, Smith stated in an interview, “This is mild treatment by comparison to what could happen to them. According to the laws of the country, they could be convicted and hanged. So if they are still alive and able to talk about these things, they have gotten off lightly” (*New York Times*, February 9).

These terror operations have induced thousands of Blacks to flee the country. There are now thought to be some 140,000 Zimbabwean refugees in camps in Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana, plus hundreds more in Angola and Tanzania.

Silence in Washington on Salisbury's Aggression

In a serious extension of the war, the Rhodesian forces have bombed Zimbabwean refugee and guerrilla camps in nearby countries, taking thousands of lives since the first such large-scale raids

in 1976.

In one of the recent attacks, 192 refugees were massacred during a February 26 raid into Angola.

The virtual silence in Washington and London over these murderous bombing raids is yet another indication of the support in those capitals for the Salisbury regime. As the imperialists see it, the heavier the losses inflicted on the liberation struggle, the better.

Besides such large-scale air strikes, the Rhodesian forces are also engaged in sabotage and other actions against neighboring Black regimes that provide sanctuary and assistance to the freedom fighters. Gen. Peter Walls, the Rhodesian commander, has admitted that Rhodesian troops were active outside of the country on a daily basis.

One prominent target of these attacks has been the Mozambican government. Units of the Rhodesian Special Forces and of a Rhodesian-backed group in Mozambique called Free Africa have struck at numerous economic and civilian—as well as military—sites in recent months, including buses, truck convoys, trains, bridges, and regular army camps. The destruction of a railway bridge near M'Cito has cut off the bulk of Mozambique's coal exports.

This escalating aggression against other countries—especially the raid into Angola—is also a sign of the regime's growing desperation.

The strains on Salisbury are likewise evident in the stepped-up flight out of the country by white settlers. During 1978, Rhodesia suffered a net loss of nearly 14,000 whites, more than a quarter higher than the outflow for 1977. Hundreds of those who left were young men liable for military call-up. Hundreds of the foreign mercenaries who were fighting for Smith have likewise packed up and gone.

Because of the weakening grip of the white settlers and the need to begin building up additional military forces for the “majority rule” regime that is slated to emerge from the elections, the authorities in Salisbury have sought to recruit additional Blacks into the army, whose ranks are already majority-Black. Conscription of certain categories of Blacks was introduced at the beginning of the year.

In addition, both Muzorewa and Sithole have been building up their own armies, which number anywhere between several hundred and several thousand troops each. A leader of Sithole's group has admitted that they serve as “auxiliaries” to the regular security forces.

These “auxiliaries” have been involved in some of the terror operations against the rural population, plundering villages and killing suspected supporters of the Patriotic Front. A sworn statement by an African peasant in the Nembutsiya Tribal Trust Land said, “Many people are being

tortured and killed, especially the men," by Sithole's forces.

Despite everything Smith and his Black allies have attempted to do so far, however, the Zimbabwean struggle for national and class emancipation continues to gain momentum.

In a rare admission, General Walls stated in October that the situation was "pretty serious" and that "in some areas we have slipped back a bit."

Freedom Fighters Gain

Walls was understating. Despite the vacillations of the Patriotic Front leadership and the continued factional squabbles between ZAPU and ZANU, the front has won increasing mass support. Its fighters are now believed to be operating in about three-quarters of the country, with many rural areas, especially along the eastern border with Mozambique, under their effective control.

ZANU remains the more active of the two groups, and has an estimated 10,000 guerrilla fighters and political activists functioning within the country, primarily in the east. ZAPU, which has thousands of supporters based in Zambia, is reported to have increased the number of its militants within Zimbabwe to about 2,000, most of whom operate in the western part of the country, or clandestinely in the cities.

Reflecting their growing confidence against the Rhodesian forces, the freedom fighters are operating in larger units than before. Some of the new recruits are now even being trained within Zimbabwe, instead of in bases located outside the country.

The increasingly effective guerrilla war has even reached Salisbury itself, with a mortar attack on the airport in February and the destruction of some 15 percent of Rhodesia's oil supplies during a raid against Salisbury's fuel dumps in December.

The reason for these gains is the growing mobilization of the Zimbabwean masses, especially in the countryside. According to a report in the January 19 issue of the London weekly *New Statesman*, missionaries returning from rural areas "tell stories that would be treasonable if overheard in Salisbury. They report almost 100 per cent support for the guerrillas. . . ."

In response to calls by ZANU militants in eastern Zimbabwe, large numbers of the country's 320,000 Black agricultural workers are refusing to work for the white farm owners. As a result, some 70 percent of the white farms in the Umtali region have been abandoned by their owners.

A November 10 radio broadcast from Mozambique reported that "guerrillas are politicizing farm workers in the farming regions of Zowa, Chitomborgwizi, Zwimba and Musengezi, all around the racist capital [Salisbury], explaining why it is necessary for them, the farm workers, to

terminate their services to the racist rich white farmers."

Ferment in Cities

There have also been new signs of ferment in the cities themselves. In September, ZANU militants distributed leaflets in Umtali, the fourth-largest city in the country, calling on the 48,000 Black inhabitants to stage a general strike. The strike failed to materialize after the Rhodesian army rushed in, but a month later the entire population of the Zimunya township (1,500 inhabitants) left in response to a ZANU call.

A campaign against conscription into the Rhodesian army has been launched by Black students in several cities. Demonstrations by hundreds of university and high-school students were held in late 1978 in Salisbury, Bulawayo, Gwelo, and other towns, against the draft as well as against the internal settlement.

Many Blacks who were called up to report for induction into the army have refused to show up. Some, including more than 100 students from the University of Rhodesia, chose to join the guerrilla fighters instead.

Appeal to Havana

It is against the background of this mounting upheaval—and the stepped-up imperialist involvement to contain it—that the Zimbabwean nationalist forces have appealed for greater assistance from the revolutionary government in Cuba.

Havana has already provided training and other forms of aid to the ZAPU forces for several years, but now ZANU is also appealing for such assistance. Following ZANU's failure to enlist continued material backing from Beijing (until recently its major supplier of military aid), ZANU leader Mugabe was reported to have met with Fidel Castro at least twice to discuss possible Cuban support. Although no announcements on this subject have yet been made, Mugabe stated in an interview in the February 7 *New York Times*, "We are now expecting aid from the rest of the socialist bloc."

The imperialists have frequently expressed fears that Cuban forces could become more directly involved in the Zimbabwean struggle, presenting a formidable obstacle to imperialist intervention and acting as a spur to the revolutionary process in all of southern Africa.

Even without Cuban involvement, however, the situation in Zimbabwe is serious enough from the viewpoint of the American, British, South African, and other imperialist powers.

Fear 'Losing' Zimbabwe

In a dispatch from Salisbury in the December 15 *New York Times*, correspondent Flora Lewis summed up the situation

as seen by American officials. Noting that the "long-term, overall stakes for the United States in the conflict are increasing," Lewis concluded that "it would be a setback to the United States if southern Africa lost the valuable contribution that a healthy [i.e., capitalist] Rhodesia could make to its economic advance. . . ."

Given the stakes involved, the imperialists cannot afford to "lose" Zimbabwe. They will do everything they can to safeguard their dominant position there and in the rest of southern Africa.

If the increased arms shipments are insufficient to contain the insurgency, if the internal settlement regime proves too weak to survive, or if the attempts to divide the Patriotic Front or win its leadership over to collaboration with imperialism continue to fail, a very real danger exists that Washington, London, and Pretoria will attempt more direct intervention against the Zimbabwean revolution.

The stepped-up arms flow to Salisbury through South Africa—and the unconfirmed reports that South African pilots may be flying Smith's new Mirage jets—indicate that Pretoria may be considering a military intervention along the lines of its 1975-76 invasion of Angola.

According to John Stockwell, the former head of the CIA's covert war against

Given the stakes, the imperialists cannot afford to "lose" Zimbabwe . . .

Angola during that period, the CIA already has agents operating in Zimbabwe, under the cover of foreign mercenaries. "To my knowledge, the CIA is in Rhodesia to have its finger on the pulse," he said in an interview in the February 26 issue of the California fortnightly *Internews*. "The agency knows who all the players are. It has people on the ground, in the military, gathering information. Of course, this could be in preparation for a paramilitary operation like Angola."

In 1978, British Foreign Secretary David Owen revealed that a British battalion had been placed on standby alert for possible intervention in Zimbabwe, ostensibly to "rescue" whites, a justification that is commonly used by the imperialists to cover military aggression. Similar plans are under consideration in Washington.

The diverse attempts by Washington, London, Salisbury, and Pretoria to strangle the Zimbabwean revolution demand that all supporters of the freedom struggle in southern Africa remain on the alert. They should be ready to move into action at the first sign of any new aggression against the people of Zimbabwe. □

Initial Balance Sheet of Spanish Elections

[The following has been excerpted from a statement issued March 3 by the Executive Committee of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR—Revolutionary Communist League), the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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During the election campaign, the LCR said that defeating the UCD¹ should be the main goal of all workers. This aim was not realized, but the election results demonstrated that it was nevertheless possible. Although the leaderships of the PSOE² and the Communist Party, each in their own way, failed to follow the course necessary for victory, the difference between the votes for the right and for the left were minimal. That is the first lesson of the March 1 elections.

The winner of the elections, however, was the UCD. With the help of a tailor-made electoral law, the UCD obtained a large enough "relative majority" to govern on its own. The basic responsibility for this victory rests entirely with the ill-fated policies followed by the PSOE and CP leaderships over the past twenty months and during the election campaign itself. That is the second lesson of March 1.

The political situation has now changed. It was necessary to defeat the right, but instead the right has won and is going to continue to govern the country. In the coming months the workers will have to confront a full-scale offensive, both economic and political, by the bourgeoisie and the bosses.

The workers movement does not lack the forces to counter this offensive. Its strength was demonstrated in the struggle during the last round of wage negotiations and in the votes obtained by the workers candidates in the March 1 elections. The problem is that its strength has been dissipated through the policies of pact and consensus with the bourgeoisie.

It is necessary to draw the correct conclusion: The course being followed by the workers movement must be changed. That is the third lesson of March 1 and the biggest task for vanguard workers. It is necessary to begin that process right now.

1. Unión de Centro Democrático (Democratic Center Union, the main bourgeois party).

2. Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Workers Party, the Spanish Social Democracy).

It has been said, and it's true, that the new parliament is almost the same as the old one. But its political significance is quite different. The vote results have to be analyzed, without falling prey to any form of exaltation or defeatism. The most significant aspects of the vote are the following:

1. The rate of abstention was very high—32%. In certain cases, it was even higher than in the June 15, 1977, elections (Barcelona, 37%; Asturias, 40%; Euzkadi [the Basque country], 35%; and in the industrial zones of Vizcaya, nearly 42%).

March 1: What Has Changed

Without a doubt, an important part of those who abstained were the hundreds of thousands of workers who have become disgusted with the policies of the major workers parties. Rather than look for excuses along the lines of an alleged "vote of fear," [PSOE leader] Felipe González and [CP leader] Santiago Carrillo would be better advised to take a hard look at this "abstention from consensus" they provoked.

2. The UCD lost nearly 170,000 votes compared to June 15 and gained only two seats. But it has improved its position in Catalonia and Euzkadi, and suffered no major reverses in any region. The significance of its victory is that it can continue to govern, having several possibilities for coalitions with bourgeois forces that would give it a limited, though real, absolute majority in parliament.

That does not mean the UCD will be able to govern "comfortably." That does not depend on its number of votes or parliamentary seats, but on what happens in the streets.

The other bourgeois parties received even fewer votes than they did in 1977, with the significant exception of the fascists, who gained 300,000 additional votes and as a result won a seat in parliament for their leader, Blas Pinar.

For the Coalición Democrática³ the elections were a veritable debacle. It lost nearly 500,000 votes and six seats in comparison to the showing by the Alianza Popular in 1977. It should be noted that the combined total of seats won by the UCD and the Coalición Democrática is less than those won by the UCD and the Alianza Popular in 1977 (177 compared to 181).

3. Democratic Coalition, new name of the Alianza Popular (People's Alliance), a rightist grouping led by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, a former minister in the Franco government.

Finally, the PNV⁴ lost 12,000 votes and one seat, while the Catalan bourgeois nationalists maintained their position.

We can thus see the very real limits of the victory of the right.

3. The PSOE lost only 8,000 votes compared to its 1977 showing. That is the basis for Felipe González's claim that his party "consolidated itself." But what happened to the nearly 800,000 votes of the PSP⁵, which should have gone to the PSOE?

Instead of bragging, González should acknowledge the setback suffered by the PSOE, which lost three seats. And the situation is even more serious if you take into account that the PSOE lost five seats in Andalusia and three in Euzkadi where it fell from first place to third, behind the UCD and the PNV. Although it gained two seats in Catalonia and three in Galicia, that is no compensation for the reverses in the country's two most important regions.

The CP is trying to portray its vote total as a tremendous success—a claim that does not correspond to reality. It did increase its vote by 200,000 (not 400,000 as [the CP daily] *Mundo Obrero* said) and gained four seats at best (not the ten that the party leaders had predicted). It's vote went up in Madrid and Andalusia but down in the four Catalan provinces and in three of the provinces of Euzkadi, while rising by only 2,000 votes in Vizcaya. It did not win seats in Galicia, Euzkadi, or the Canaries, trailing far behind the nationalist groups in all three areas.

The CP's demagogic campaign against the PSOE had only a minimal impact, most notably in relation to the PSUC⁶ of Catalonia. It continues to have a presence in parliament that is clearly inferior to its influence within the organized workers movement. And it can no longer employ the excuses it used two years ago to explain away its poor electoral results (the "fear of communism" after forty years of dictatorship).

An important figure is the 600,000 votes cast for workers candidates to the left of the CP, reflecting the desire of sectors of the workers movement to reject the policy

4. Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party).

5. Partido Socialista Popular (People's Socialist Party), which merged with the PSOE.

6. Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (United Socialist Party of Catalonia), the Catalan branch of the CP.

of "consensus" with the bosses.

Unfortunately, half of these votes went to two parties, the PTE⁷ and the ORT,⁸ that have demonstrated on key questions (the constitution, the "anti-terrorist crusade") that they offer no alternative to reformism. The central political weight and the organizational superiority of these two groups have given them some credibility as "alternatives to the left of the

The radical nationalist currents received an important vote . . .

CP that may be able to enter parliament." This has gained them thousands of voters who place a higher value on this possibility than on the course or the political program of the various other workers parties that reject consensus.

It is worth remembering that a united slate based on an accord between the Movimiento Comunista and the LCR would have undoubtedly received a majority of the votes to the left of the CP and would have expressed a powerful revolutionary pole in the elections. The fact that this did not happen is not our fault.

4. Different variants of the radical nationalist current received a very important vote. The most significant results were obtained in Euzkadi. But it should also be noted that 125,000 votes in Galicia went to the BNPG and the UG,⁹ nearly 60,000 votes and one deputy to the UPC,¹⁰ and more than 300,000 votes and five seats to the PSA.¹¹

These results show that the bourgeoisie's plans for centralization are in a crisis. But they also highlight a worrisome phenomenon—the inability of the workers parties to take up and respond to the national and regional demands of broad sectors of the population. This situation is the most serious in Euzkadi.

That the Euzkadiko Eskerra¹² gained 30,000 additional votes (although it still obtained only about half the votes of the Herri Batasuna¹³) is an important fact.

But without a doubt, the most spec-

tacular fact is the number of votes obtained by the Herri Batasuna (170,000). No one can now doubt the strength and the social base, especially among the Basque youth, of radical nationalism, and in particular the support that the ETA¹⁴ fighters can count on. Nor can the spectacular growth of this current since the 1977 elections be doubted.

The basic reason for this is the disastrous policies with which the PSOE and CP leaderships have responded to the demands and struggles of the Basque people for their national rights and against repression, in particular the hypocritical and reactionary fashion in which they claim to be fighting the problem of terrorism.

The results of this have been a very serious risk of a break and confrontations between the workers and the Basque people; a no less serious risk of confrontations between Euzkadi and the other peoples in the Spanish state; the threat of a new escalation of ETA actions; and the growth of sentiment for Euzkadi independence, a political option whose right to exist and to be expressed in total freedom should be defended with the full strength of the workers movement, but which clearly does not completely correspond to the interests of the workers.

Under such conditions there is more need than ever for a revolutionary workers alternative in the Basque country. By this we mean a leadership that consistently and effectively struggles against reformism in the workers movement; that raises the national, social, antirepressive, and other demands of the Basque people, within the framework of opposition to capitalism; and that, on such a basis, wages the indispensable political battle against the Herri Batasuna.

5. The electoral results on the regional and national plane call for an additional observation. Although the workers parties retained a majority of the deputies in those places where they had them in 1977, they are now much weaker than before in Andalusia, Asturias, Catalonia, Valencia, and the province of Madrid.

The most complex situation is that in Euzkadi. In addition to the problems to which we have already referred, two more should be noted.

First, the very modest results obtained by the parties to the left of the CP, especially in Navarre. It is significant that while the UNAI-ORE coalition won about 40,000 votes in Navarre in 1977, this time its various components—the UNAI-ORE, the ORT, and the ENK—obtained only 13,000 votes.

Second, the majority won by the bourgeoisie in Navarre, seriously compromising the area's integration into Euzkadi. This will become one of the most serious conflicts in the coming months, in a gen-

14. Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna (Basque Nation and Freedom).



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eral context that makes Euzkadi the most critical point in the new political situation.

6. Finally, the absolute majority won by the UCD in the Senate increases the bourgeoisie's margin for political maneuver and reinforces the Senate's role—another result of the policy of consensus—as a reactionary braking force in the hands of the UCD.

On the other hand, the setback suffered by the PSUC in the Senate elections in Catalonia is very important in the medium term. It constitutes a serious reverse for the policy of "national unity" in Catalonia and should give all members of the CP cause for reflection.

7. After having analyzed the electoral results of the other parties, we have an obligation to review our own and to draw a balance sheet for the LCR.

It is clear that the confusion created by the false news of our withdrawal from the elections contributed in a big way to a loss of votes.¹⁵ Moreover, some of our votes mistakenly went to parties with electoral symbols similar to our own. But in any case, 50,000 votes is much less than we had hoped to obtain, and certainly does not reflect the influence of the LCR in the mass movement in general, and within the unions in particular.

We believe that there are three political reasons that explain these results. They should be examined carefully so as to correct immediately the errors that they reflect:

First, the weakness of our party's politi-

15. On February 27 a news agency transmitted a false notice that the LCR had withdrawn its candidates from the elections. Despite public denials by the LCR, and a retraction by the news agency, the national radio and numerous newspapers ran the same notice the next day, leading to considerable confusion on the status of the LCR campaign.

7. Partido del Trabajo de España (Labor Party of Spain).

8. Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers Organization).

9. Bloque Nacionalista Popular Gallego (Galician People's Nationalist Bloc); Unión Gallega (Galician Union).

10. Unión del Pueblo Canario (Union of the People of the Canary Islands).

11. Partido Socialista de Andalucía (Andalusian Socialist Party).

12. A militant Basque nationalist group that rejects guerrilla warfare.

13. People's Unity, composed of sympathizers of the ETA's military wing.

cal activities in the unions, in the working-class neighborhoods, and among women.

Second, and precisely because we are the workers party that struggles most consistently for unity, we have been particularly affected by the tendency among certain sectors of the trade-union left to abstain or to "make their vote count."

Finally, we have not been able to win a significant part of the youth vote, which reflects an error in our campaign, and in general in the way the LCR carries out its work among the youth.

In regard to the last problem, we must nevertheless note that the campaigns of the JCR,¹⁶ despite their inadequacies, have significant influence among the youth. This experience constitutes the best basis for correcting the error that we referred to.

It is possible that many of those who voted for us have the impression that they wasted their votes. We would like to address ourselves to them and tell them that is not true, and that a different conclusion should be drawn from the March 1 elections.

March 1 confirmed, unfortunately in a negative fashion, the necessity of what we have proposed—changing the orientation of the workers movement and, in the process, reinforcing the revolutionary working-class alternative. That is the key for mobilizing anew those sectors of the workers movement who have become demoralized or abstentionist. That is the key to preventing the leaderships of the PSOE and CP from once again leading the workers to defeat.

We are convinced that the political bases for that alternative are those that the LCR defended during the campaign and that constitute, as we said then, our daily practice.

Experience helps to quickly correct mistakes. That is exactly what the LCR will do, beginning with the next municipal elections.

After March 1

What are the consequences of the general elections? They resolved a fundamental problem: who will govern the country as of March 2, in principle for the next four years; who will consequently be in the best position to maintain the interests of the social class they represent in face of the economic crisis, the institutional crisis, the negotiations over the statutes of autonomy, and the fifty laws that will very soon concretize the text of the constitution.

The victory of the UCD gives the bourgeoisie an appreciable margin for maneuver in taking up these problems and will help it resolve the crisis of bourgeois political leadership, which has become more acute over the last several months, especially within the UCD itself.

16. Juventud Comunista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Communist Youth), the youth group affiliated with the LCR.

However, it would be a serious error to think that the elections have decided anything; that over the next four years the UCD will be able to "comfortably" carry through its policies; that ultimately the UCD's 800,000-vote edge over the PSOE will put an end to the economic, institutional, national, and other problems of the Spanish bourgeoisie and give Suárez a magic formula to resolve them "in peace."

The limits of the bourgeoisie's gains must be remembered. In the short term, it would appear on the surface to be a "victory." But in the medium term, when political activity revives, its limitations will become apparent.

It is therefore necessary for the workers to begin preparing a counteroffensive against the economic and political attacks that the government is going to launch. There are excellent opportunities and sufficient forces to do that, but the problem is, how?

The initial reactions of the PSOE and CP leaders since March 1 show that they have not even understood how to evaluate their own electoral results. They do not seem to have any idea that those results were a consequence of their policies of consensus with the bourgeoisie, for which they have had to pay in terms of workers' votes and confidence.

The setback suffered by the PSOE was certainly much clearer. The CP managed to save face in Madrid and Andalusia, but Carrillo knows that they lost thousands of votes in the working-class districts of Catalonia and Euzkadi, their traditional bastions of support. But none of this seems to be important to him.

Change the Orientation

The two major workers parties have said that they will "go into opposition." But they have not said what kind of "opposition."

We say that real opposition means proposing a united alternative by the workers movement to every attack by the bourgeoisie and to every problem of the country, and calling on the workers to mobilize around the alternative. It means chipping away, day by day, at the victory of the UCD. It means not sitting back and waiting four years for new elections to come around. It means struggling to reorganize the forces of the workers movement to create the conditions for the future defeat of the UCD.

It means above all putting forward a political approach very different from that of González and Carrillo.

What is clearly missing more than anything else is workers unity. We must call for it in parliament, in the municipal councils, and, of course, in the trade unions. But we will need to mount a real fight to attain unity and to avoid the signing of the pacts that Suárez needs to maintain "four years of order."

In order to do that, it is necessary to:

- Strengthen the people's and workers organizations, above all the unions.
- Strengthen within them the influence and the cohesion of the most combative sectors of the left, establish agreements essential for united action among those parties ready to put into practice a united working-class line.
- Move forward toward the construction of a revolutionary party, strengthening the LCR by organizing and attracting to it the best militants in the unions, in the working-class neighborhoods, in the women's movement, and elsewhere.

These three tasks are inseparable.

To begin this process, the first battle will be to win the municipal councils for the workers. We must win councils capable of defending the interests of the workers and the masses against a government that is going to do everything it can, economically and judicially, to strangle those councils led by the workers parties.

After the municipal elections, there will be other important battles.

We must demand the right of the nationalities to determine every last word of the statutes of autonomy, without the least interference from the central government. To guarantee solidarity against the common enemy, it will be necessary to fight against all attempts to set some peoples against others. It will be necessary to struggle in each national region for sovereign and democratic statutes that will help to satisfy the social and political aspirations, without any ifs, ands, or buts.

We must not forget the danger represented by the most reactionary sectors. The victory of the right also indirectly benefits reaction, which can continue to strengthen itself with impunity under the UCD government. It will be necessary to keep on stressing in the workers movement that the reactionary forces will continue to grow without a radical purge of the state apparatus.

Finally, it is necessary to continue to struggle in the wage negotiations and to back up our comrades who are now negotiating under less favorable conditions, owing to the encouragement the UCD victory gave the employers.

It is necessary to prepare a united trade-union strategy to counter the economic offensive, the "economic reform" of Suárez. We have already been told one aspect of this "reform": 150,000 more workers will lose their jobs by the end of the year. This is the main front on which we have to fight.

These are the initial objectives necessary to confront the offensive of the bourgeoisie and the bosses. We cannot allow our struggles and our hopes to be shattered against the wall of consensus once again. We must change the orientation of the workers movement.

This is not easy to do. Nor will we achieve it immediately or without effort. But it must be done. □

Bolivia—Political Fronts and the Elections

[The following is an introduction to the document of the Bolivian Trotskyists, "With the Working Class, for Socialism," written by a leader of the POR (Combate).¹]

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With Banzer's coup in 1971, the Bolivian regime's decision-making center shifted, geographically speaking, from La Paz to Santa Cruz, where imperialist investments were concentrated after the revolution of April 1952. A dynamic, aggressive bourgeois sector developed as a result of these investments. This sector began to assert itself under Banzer.

The coup against Pereda [Banzer's successor], which was led by General Padilla and executed by those known as the "institutionalist" officers, can be seen as an episode in the rivalry within the bourgeoisie. This conflict is tending to bring to an end—although in an incomplete way—the domination of the [Santa Cruz] agribusiness interests. Other bourgeois sectors are now assuming a bigger role. They are active mostly in La Paz, in manufacturing, commerce, construction, mining, and so on.

These sectors seem to have adopted the line projected by Carter and the American embassy calling for a "flexible democratization." The aim is to ward off premature confrontations at a time when the ranks of the bourgeoisie are divided and its armed forces have lost all prestige and are divided as well.

These struggles within the bourgeoisie, which in turn explain the change in attitude of the armed forces, are reflected at the political level in the erosion of the parties and fronts representing the agribusiness bloc. The UNP (Unión Nacionalista del Pueblo—Nationalist People's Union) has been dissolved. The groups that made it up are groping for new alliances, trying to carry out a regroupment around the figure of Banzer. Likewise, the political instrument of the Banzer regime—the Military-Peasant Pact and the official National Peasant Confederation—is disintegrating.

Within the UDP (Unidad Democrática y Popular—Democratic People's Unity), the bourgeois MNRI (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario de Izquierda—Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) is uncomfortable with its allies in the pro-Moscow Communist Party and is pressing for an opening to the right. This would make the UDP even more "moderate."

1. Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party), Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The POR is often referred to by the name of its newspaper, *Combate* (Combat), in order to distinguish it from several other groups on the Bolivian left that use the name POR.

Nevertheless, the currents that would be part of an initial regroupment are already taking shape.

What is known as the bourgeois-democratic tendency—which has various shadings—is pushing for early elections that would lead to a constitutional government. This has a dual aim:

1. To contain and divert mass struggles until the elections, by drawing them into the defense of bourgeois institutions.

2. To use leverage gained by the above maneuver to improve the Bolivian capitalist state's diplomatic relations and obtain outside financial help to rescue it from the crisis it is facing.

This sector has hitched itself to Carter's policy on human rights and a democratic

The working class has not been able to close ranks nationally . . .

opening. It is the most astute section of the bourgeoisie, and seeks to rescue the capitalist system from its current ills. It wants to speed up the elections and the change in government before the radicalization of the Bolivian masses deepens and they begin to look to the revolutionary left.

The other tendency consists of the hard-line bourgeois sectors; i.e., the far right, which is now trying to bring off a regroupment centered in Santa Cruz with the remnants of the groupings and currents that ruled under Banzer.

The Oppressed Classes Are Reorganizing

The working class is completing the reorganization of its trade unions. It has mobilized to some extent to win wage demands and to regain democratic rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, the workers movement has not yet been able to close ranks effectively on a national scale around its wage demands or around the political perspectives that have been put forward in the commonly accepted programmatic positions. What the workers movement did in the last elections, and what was done after that by the UDP—which acts as a brake on struggles—played a role in keeping the workers movement from making more headway.

The development among the peasantry is more spectacular. The Military-Peasant Pact has practically stopped functioning. Major political currents have emerged in the countryside. The official National Peasant Confederation has been reduced to nothing more than the bureaucrats on the payroll of the Ministries of the Interior and Peasant Affairs. The bourgeoisie, through the church and the Ministry of Peasant Affairs, is trying to stop this process and

keep the peasantry from turning toward the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana—Bolivian Workers Confederation). Such an alliance between the workers and peasants is the essential basis for the victory of the masses.

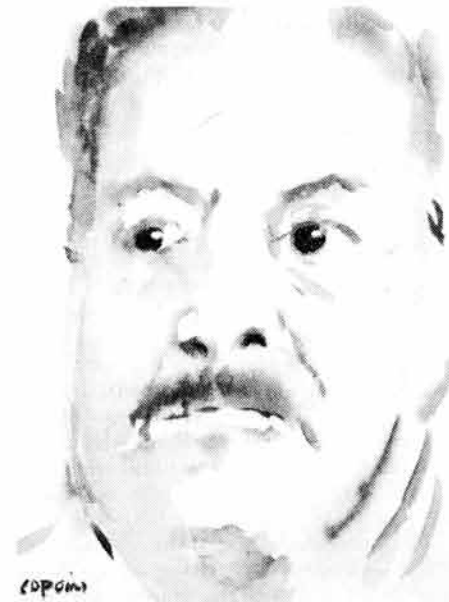
Among the petty bourgeoisie we also see a new upsurge of struggles, with the bank workers' strike, the mobilizations by teachers, white-collar workers in commerce and industry, and so on.

The high-school and university student movement is actively mobilizing to win back the gains it had previously won in running the university, and is fighting for democracy in the schools. But this process has been halted halfway with the initial successes achieved by the reformist and Social Democratic currents in the UDP.

The Role of the Left

The practical experience of previous struggles shows that while the masses may be able to win their immediate demands up to a certain point, beyond a certain stage they face having to retreat or suffer defeat so long as they cannot find a solution to the acute problem of revolutionary political leadership. The instrument that makes it possible to answer this need is a revolutionary party that can root itself among the masses and acquire political authority. There is no such party in Bolivia, but there do exist several small parties that claim to be revolutionary, to represent the workers, or to stand on the left.

In the last elections, two electoral fronts



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came forward—the UDP and the FRI (Frente Revolucionario de Izquierda—Revolutionary Left Front), which seemed to be similar and to take a position on the left.

The UDP was not formed in an attempt

to solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership, but with precisely the opposite aim—to prevent or obstruct the movement of the radicalizing masses toward revolution. The UDP is a multiclass bloc dominated by a section of the bourgeoisie (the MNRI); it is trying on its own to rescue the capitalist system by bringing about a return to a

The FRI presented a working class and socialist alternative . . .

constitutional form of government and bourgeois democracy. Its strategy is not one of revolution, but of capitalist reform, which it seeks to achieve by bringing a supposedly progressive sector of the bourgeoisie into the government. This is a bourgeois scheme supported by sections of the workers movement (the CP) and the student movement (the MIR, Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left).

Contrary to the UDP, the FRI recognizes the decisive role of the proletariat in drawing behind it the oppressed masses, and the fact that the workers must provide the leadership in the revolutionary process. Although the program and platform that the FRI presented to the electoral court suffer from vagueness and a certain obscurity, in a general sense it presented a working-class and socialist alternative in its campaign.

This is what justifies the FRI's existence and shows how it might become a temporary, transitional solution to the problems posed by the crisis of revolutionary leadership, until the proletarian revolutionary Marxist party can be built. Thus, its reason for being is not the number of votes it got in the last elections, but the problem of a revolutionary leadership, which is given urgency by the situation in Bolivia, and which the FRI must solve in order to make it possible to reconstruct the country on a socialist basis.

The FRI—Its Errors, Programs, Perspectives

To be noted is the fact that the FRI lacked homogeneity in the elections. It was a mistake to bury the distinct identities of the parties and organizations that make it up: the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), the Vanguardia Comunista del POR, the POR (Combate), and the PRT.² This encouraged sectarianism and disloyalty. The members of the front did not join together in common tasks. Facing the problems of doing mass work, the FRI hesitated over which sectors to concentrate on in order to gain influence. For fear of alienating the moderate bourgeois sectors,

2. Vanguardia Comunista del POR—Communist Vanguard of the POR; PRT—Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers Party).

it did not firmly throw all its weight into a campaign aimed at the worker and peasant masses. In many cases, this reached the point where it was difficult for most people to distinguish it from the UDP.

After the elections, these organizational and political weaknesses persisted and were extended into other spheres. Although the FRI had often insisted that it was not electoralist, in practice it devoted its major energies to campaign activities, neglecting the problems of the masses for which it should have provided revolutionary solutions. It allowed itself to be outflanked by the UDP in this area.

Moreover, under the pressure of some of its components, which echoed the criticisms of the right, accusing the FRI of self-isolation and ultraleftism, the FRI was induced to open negotiations and sign joint documents with the MNRH (Historic Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) of Paz Estenssoro, the PRA (Partido Revolucionario Auténtico—Authentic Revolutionary Party) of Guevara, and the Christian Democracy of Miguel.

This error, which consisted of putting a stamp of approval on bourgeois parties that had become discredited in the eyes of the workers movement, was promoted by currents that look toward a revolutionary process taking place "in stages" and that advocate class collaboration with sectors of the bourgeoisie. The FRI did not need a bourgeois accompanist to come out against "continuity" and call for early elections or

to protest violations of human rights. It could have done this alone and made more of an impact on the masses. It would be naïve to think that this attitude brought these bourgeois parties over to working-class positions; it is the opposite that occurred.

It is correct to broaden the base of the FRI. But it is necessary to do this by opening it up to the left, by bringing in the groups that had remained outside, by taking the initiative and acting flexibly, without sectarianism or bureaucratism. At the same time, the FRI must begin to carry out activity among the organized sectors of the workers and peasants to convince them to join this front. Struggle, political clarity on the goals, and determined intervention in the entire process will strengthen the FRI, whereas hesitations and compromises with bourgeois sectors will weaken and ultimately destroy it.

The POR (Combate) can and must generate such a new dynamic in the FRI, while at the same time building up its own organization, rooting itself among the masses, and winning new members in order to compete more effectively with its allies in the front.

One of the basic corrections that must be made has to do with the platform of struggle and the program. They must take on the character of a transitional program based on the present situation.

Cochabamba, Bolivia
December 6, 1978

With the Working Class, For Socialism

[The following statement by the POR (Combate) was issued in Bolivia November 28. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

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In view of the confused situation created by the opportunists with their false analyses and perspectives, and by the far-right groups, which have begun cynically and arrogantly to rally their forces in order to contain the mass upsurge, the POR (Combate), Bolivian section of the Fourth International, issues the following statement to the workers, toilers, and peasants, to students and revolutionary intellectuals. We would like to point out the following things:

1. The coup that took place at dawn on November 24, 1978, reflects the contradictions, conflicts, and differentiations among the Bolivian bourgeoisie, which are a result of several factors. These include:

The economic collapse and mounting corruption of the government bureaucracy under the Banzer and Pereda regimes.

International pressure from the coun-

tries that bankrolled these regimes.

And, finally, the fear that the ruling class feels as a result of the new awakening of the masses, who in their first few



mobilizations are beginning to break out of the straitjacket in which the military has

kept them imprisoned since 1971.

2. This inner decay of the bourgeoisie, with its corresponding effects on the economic crisis and the sharpening of the class struggle, could not help but have an impact on the armed forces. This institution constitutes an armed political party that became discredited, having been used to defend the interests of the agribusiness bourgeoisie of Santa Cruz, of the exporting sector, and of imperialist capital.

Within the armed forces, the old generals tied to the Banzer-Pereda clique have lost status, while the layer of officers known as "institutionalists" have gained it by making speeches about the need to restore the army's prestige and authority in the eyes of the people and to avoid armed confrontations with the workers.

3. The government that emerged from the coup, with Pereda's appointed army commander-in-chief as president, reflects this struggle within the military between the old generals who bear the taint of the policy carried out since 1971, and the younger junior officers who sense the danger to their institution. The aim of the latter, in their own words, is to "save the reputation of the military, in whose name atrocities were committed," and to "clean up the face of the army," which has been spattered with mud by previous military dictatorships.

In this conflict, the junior officers have scored a point by forcing the calling of elections within six months. In this way, they are trying to get the military to withdraw to their barracks and not become directly involved in the struggles that will be touched off by the economic crisis. However, the old army officers are still powerful, and they are the ones Banzer is appealing to in hopes of rebuilding a base of support to maintain the domination of Santa Cruz agribusiness, which he belongs to and represents.

The conflict within the army—we repeat—is a test of strength between sectors of the Bolivian bourgeoisie, which is itself dependent on imperialism.

By this very fact, from the class standpoint, the Padilla government is a bourgeois regime and the solutions it proposes for the present situation are bourgeois. It is opportunist and dangerous to confuse this regime with a government of the people, of the workers. Its bourgeois class nature is shown by its refusal to withdraw the army from the mines and countryside.

4. It is the historic aim of the working class, in alliance with the peasantry and the poorer layers of the middle class, as well as the revolutionary intellectuals, to advance toward assuming state power in order to build a new society of equality and social justice, free from oppression and exploitation. It is this struggle for such a socialist society, in which the workers will hold power, that must become the focus of all the activity of the revolutionary vanguard and the masses. If this perspective

is lost, through opportunist, ambiguous formulations with no class content, it will only help the bourgeoisie and the imperialists. In order to safeguard their interests, they may well adopt varied approaches, including democratic façades. But they will never relinquish their exploitation of wage labor and the surplus value that it creates.

5. On the basis of this criterion, seeing that elections have been called for July 1979, the POR (Combate) calls on the workers to act to block the maneuvers of the opportunist parties and bourgeois fronts that are trying to set up a constitutional cover for continuing capitalist rule. The way to do this is to build a united front and run a slate of working-class and people's candidates who are totally independent of any section of the bourgeoisie. It is time once again to point a way forward, to advance along the path that will lead us to a workers and peasants government, as was done through the FRI in the last elections.

We must not take the wrong road! We must close ranks in a united front based on the working class. We must maintain our class independence. No alliances with the bourgeoisie, or with the military government that represents its interests!

6. To the young military officers who took party in the November 24 coup, who have said that they consider it their duty to safeguard the country's future, and who are calling for national unity, we say:

The survival of the capitalist, imperialist system not only endangers the country's

future; the crises and violence to which it gives rise are prolonging the sufferings and the anguish of the Bolivian people.

The interests of the big Bolivian capitalists (in the export trade, medium-sized mines, the agricultural industry) and those of the multinationals stand in opposition to the future development of Bolivia. If they are sincere and honest with themselves, the young military officers must try to establish real communication with the working class and its political vanguard, in order to really discuss and plan Bolivia's great future on a solid basis. To take that step, they must go beyond their present ambiguous position, which is midway between competing sectors of the bourgeoisie, and which echoes U.S. President Carter's demagoguery on the theme of democratic rights. We warn these young officers that unless they can make this leap and come over to the side of the workers, who are the best patriots and the best defenders of Bolivia's interests, the rightists who spawned this new government will find a way to get rid of them. We say once again loudly and clearly that Bolivia can never really develop until capitalism and imperialist domination, which are what is holding the country back, are eliminated. This can only be done by taking the socialist road. Socialist democracy is infinitely superior to any form of bourgeois democracy. Under this new kind of democracy, a democracy of equals with neither national exploiters or foreign imperialists, the Bolivian people will be able really to close ranks in powerful unity. □

Shah on the Run

The shah of Iran, who lived in Morocco after fleeing Iran in January, left that country for the Bahamas March 30.

This followed a series of student and labor strikes in Morocco, during which the strikers demanded the shah's expulsion.

Students in Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakesh, and numerous other cities and towns around the country went on strike in early March. Referring to King Hassan II, slogans painted on walls near Rabat and Casablanca universities said: "One shah in Morocco is enough."

A number of students were arrested by the authorities and several were reportedly beaten.

According to a report from Casablanca in the March 22 London *Guardian*, the student protests "seem to have been engendered by indignation at the King's alleged profligacy—he has palaces in all large Moroccan cities—in the face of high unemployment, inflation, and shortages in schools. . . ."

"The Shah's visit as the official guest of the King proved the last straw. The stu-

dents make no secret of their support for the Ayatollah Komeini, and hint that they search for a similar figure in Morocco."

Striking workers have raised banners demanding the shah's extradition to Iran to face trial. According to a March 23 Associated Press dispatch from Rabat, "One such banner put up by striking teachers outside a school in Casablanca led to a police charge in which several persons were injured."

Coming at a time of rising discontent over Morocco's deteriorating economic situation—as reflected in a series of strikes by tens of thousands of coal miners, railway workers, oil workers, and teachers that began in January—such protests against the shah made Hassan quite uncomfortable over the presence of his guest. This was an obvious factor in the shah's decision to leave.

According to the Associated Press, "sources close to Hassan have hinted that the shah has stretched Arab hospitality to the limit." □