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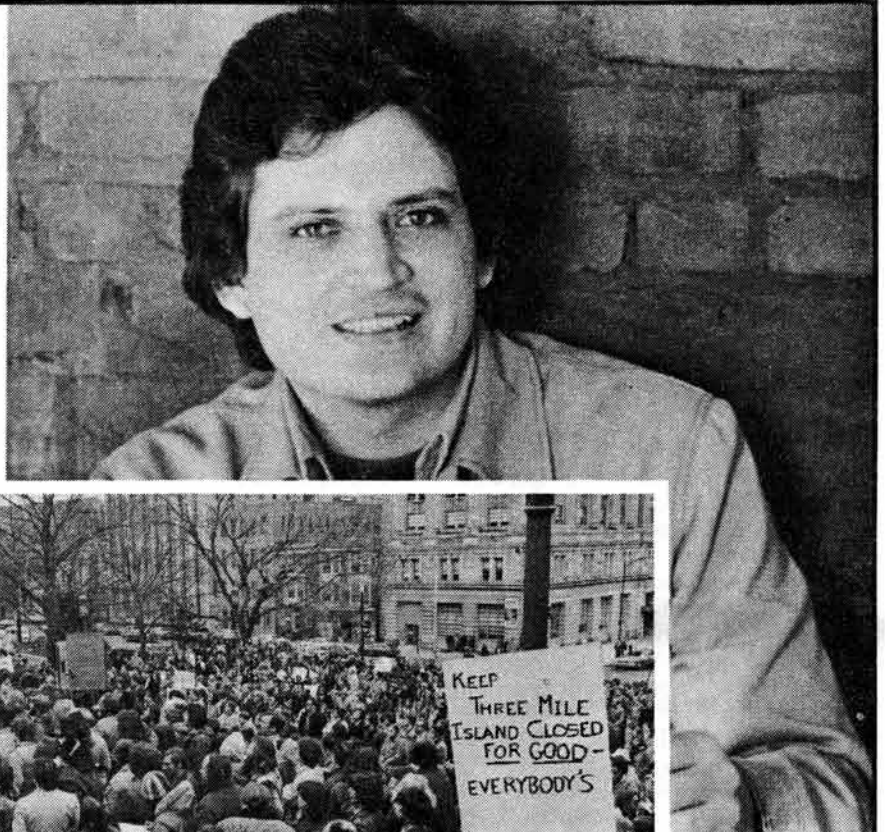
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April 23, 1979

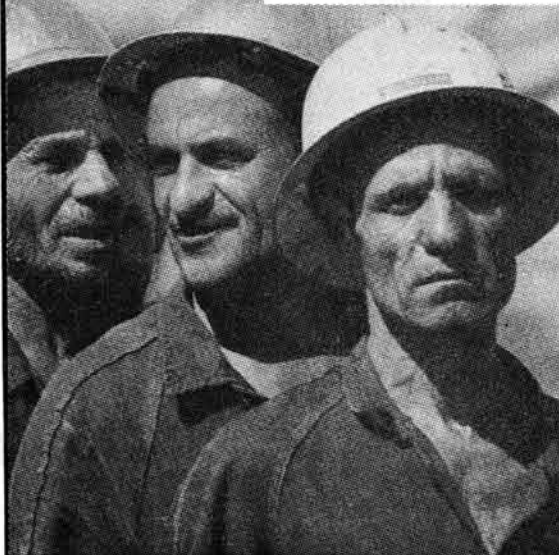
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Iran After Referendum: Trotskyists Gain Wide Hearing Among Workers

Kampuchean Masses Begin to Move

By Fred Feldman

A new military offensive by Kampuchean government and Vietnamese forces is dealing blows to remaining Khmer Rouge units backing the ousted regime of Pol Pot. The offensive is expanding the control exercised by the government of the National United Front for National Salvation (FUNKSN) from the cities, towns, and main roads that were captured in January to large sections of the countryside.

The approach of the rice harvest, needed to feed the Kampuchean people, gives special urgency to the drive against Khmer Rouge bands.

Since the victory of the FUNKSN and its Vietnamese allies, Pol Pot's armed gangs have continued to terrorize much of the countryside. Villagers who cooperated with FUNKSN forces were often slaughtered after government forces left. Units supporting Pol Pot plundered villages of rice or extracted it by forced labor. Many thousands of peasants were forced to accompany retreating Khmer Rouge soldiers into the countryside.

In recent weeks, *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Frederic A. Moritz reported April 9, FUNKSN and Vietnamese forces have made advances in rice-growing regions around Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, Prey Veng, and Tonle Sap.

The decisive battles, however, are being fought along the Thai border over a strip of territory that includes Battambang, the most important rice-growing province. Here the Khmer Rouge forces, with the direct complicity of the pro-Washington Thai regime, have maintained some base areas. Following a seesaw battle the first week in April, the border town of Poipet was taken by progovernment forces.

The recent fighting has produced new evidence of the Thai dictatorship's role in backing Pol Pot. A CBS News report April 10 showed Khmer Rouge soldiers being taken to refugee camps in Thailand. A correspondent on the scene explained that the troops will be rearmed there and sent across the border to resume fighting.

The Phnompenh government's military successes have accelerated the collapse of the Khmer Rouge's grip on the rural population. Many villagers, Moritz reported April 9, "no longer believed Khmer Rouge warnings that the Vietnamese would mistreat them."

The government of Heng Samrin has retreated from its initial promises to immediately dissolve the system of forced agri-

cultural "collectivization" and to allow people to return to the cities and villages they had been forced to leave. The new regime fears the social upheaval that could be unleashed by following through on these promises.

So the Kampuchean masses have begun to take matters into their own hands. "Gone is the Draconian system of collective rice production," Moritz wrote:

The Vietnamese invasion has triggered a tremendous movement of people. Some are city dwellers now trying to return to the homes they were forced to leave. . . . Some are villagers trying to escape the hard labor and rigorous discipline of Khmer Rouge control. Some are flocking to the cities in the hope they will find food and security.

Some are young men led into the hills by the Khmer Rouge. . . . Others are food-seeking scavengers from villages where rice crops have been destroyed or carted into the jungles by the Khmer Rouge. (*Christian Science Monitor*, April 11, 1979.)

The new government's need for popular support has led Heng Samrin to denounce corruption in his own regime, singling out officials who steal property and take concubines. The almost total collapse of the hated Khmer Rouge apparatus presents the regime with the need to organize a new administration from scratch.

Moritz described Kampuchea as gripped by "a new kind of upheaval marked by hunger, chaos, and continued fighting in the countryside."

The social, political, and economic breakdown in Kampuchea, together with the first initiatives of the Kampuchean masses, put heavy pressure on the FUNKSN government and its Vietnamese backers to reorganize and restore agricultural production, renew and expand industrial activity to provide a livelihood for city-dwellers, and establish administrative and military structures that could secure the population from punitive raids by the Khmer Rouge.

In taking steps in this direction, the Heng Samrin government has had to rely heavily on popular mobilizations, according to a report in the March 23 *Le Monde* by correspondent R.P. Paringaux.

In areas under government control, Paringaux reported the formation of what he called "popular revolutionary committees, self-management committees, and militias—recruited essentially from the area."

Rice, medicines, and clothing are being distributed to the population, and "hospitals are little by little resuming operation." Communal dining—enforced by the Khmer Rouge to minimize consumption, is being replaced by family dining, and cooking utensils are being returned to the peasants.

According to Paringaux, FUNKSN Minister of Education Chan Ven "declared that the Khmer Rouge kept the population in a state of illiteracy" and called for "parents, teachers, and students to participate in the reorganization of national education at all levels."

The fall of Pol Pot, and the decisive role of Vietnamese troops in helping to crush the remains of his army, is making it possible for the Kampuchean workers and peasants to begin taking action in their own interests and to press the Heng Samrin government to carry out progressive measures. This process points toward the only road out for Kampuchean society—the mobilization of the masses under a workers and peasants government to replace the shattered and decayed foundations of capitalism with a workers state.

But the abolition of capitalism would only begin the staggering task of social and economic reconstruction facing Kampuchea. Nine years of bloody war and capitalist tyranny—first under Lon Nol (backed up by U.S. saturation bombing) and then under Pol Pot—have left Kampuchea with a shattered economy and a dislocated and malnourished population. The civil war that has been required to do away with the marauding Khmer Rouge army has compounded some of these problems.

Kampuchea desperately needs food, medical supplies, and massive reconstruction aid. The U.S. rulers, who bear prime responsibility for the near-destruction of this people, must provide it, as must U.S. imperialism's allies in Europe and Japan.

But the Soviet rulers, who backed Lon Nol, and the Peking regime, which helped keep Pol Pot in power, also owe a debt to the Kampuchean people.

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The Ouster of Amin

By Ernest Harsch

A Tanzanian-led military force marched into Kampala, the capital of Uganda, on the night of April 10-11, forcing President Idi Amin to flee the city with his remaining supporters.

The Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), a bourgeois opposition force formed in Tanzania in late March under the tutelage of Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere, lost no time in proclaiming a new regime. Yusufu K. Lule, the chairman of the UNLF, was named president.

The American and British imperialists were quick to greet Amin's overthrow. Within hours of Kampala's capture, an Associated Press dispatch from Washington reported: "United States officials welcomed the ouster of President Idi Amin today and said the United States planned to establish a normal relationship with the new Government quickly." British Foreign Secretary David Owen also declared London's sympathies for the new authorities in Kampala.

A representative of the UNLF stated in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam April 11 that Washington was now expected to play "a tremendous role" in Uganda, adding that preliminary talks with American officials were already under way.

As a justification for this pro-American stance, the UNLF representative claimed that Washington had had "a consistently clean record towards Amin's regime." But it was Washington, in fact—together with London and the Israeli regime—that originally helped put Amin in power in 1971 and supported his brutal repression against the Ugandan masses.

It was only after Amin proved an unreliable neocolonial ruler that Washington and London began to hunt for a replacement. The war that broke out between Uganda and Tanzania in October offered them an opportunity. They publicly favored Nyerere in the war and made no secret of their desire for Amin's ouster.

Washington now obviously hopes that Lule's regime will prove suitable. A State Department spokesman declared April 12 that the new government's "composition indicates that it will pursue moderate policies in both the domestic and international fields."

News reports from Kampala indicate that the city's remaining inhabitants greeted the downfall of Amin and the arrival of the Tanzanian and UNLF troops. Such a reaction is not surprising coming after eight years of Amin's brutal dictatorship.

The new authorities, however, are moving quickly to try to bring the population under control and to reestablish "order." In his first address after he was sworn in

as president, Lule denounced the "lawlessness" that had swept Kampala and other parts of the country since Amin's overthrow and called for an end to "vigilantism."

While promising to institute "democra-

cy." Lule has indicated that no elections will be held for at least two years.

Meanwhile, Nyerere has made it known that the several thousand Tanzanian troops now in Uganda are to remain for an unspecified period. □

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Iran—Masses Shifting to Left

By Gerry Foley

TEHRAN—Two weeks after the referendum on the "Islamic Republic," it is already becoming clear that the attempt to use this plebiscite to reconsolidate a strong capitalist government in Iran is running into trouble.

In the first place, the referendum did not arouse general enthusiasm among the broad masses of Iranians. A large percentage of the population apparently did not vote at all.

What is more, it seems that the government expected this result. It fell over its own feet trying to cover up in advance for a low vote, giving wildly different estimates at different times of the number eligible to cast ballots. Then, faced with an indifferent turnout, it issued vote figures that were obviously fake.

The regime claimed a vote of 3.5 million in Tehran, for instance. But such a number could not have voted in two days' time at the 1,200 polling places in the capital even if there had been constant lines in front of the polls, and there were not.

The government's claims of an overwhelming turnout are even more suspect on the all-Iranian level, since the Kurds and Turkmenis did not vote, and probably a large percentage of the Arabs in Khuzestan did not either. This amounts to millions of people.

Moreover, in many villages, people were rounded up and brought to the polls. Their votes were cast for them, en bloc, in favor of the Islamic Republic.

This happened even in the cities. A cab driver in Tabriz told me that at his polling station, the officials tore off the pro-Islamic Republic side of the ballot for the voters. They did it for him, too, and there was nothing he could do about it. In any case there was no secret ballot. The vote had to be cast publicly in front of an armed guard. Such an obviously rigged vote could hardly inspire much fervor.

Unquestionably a large section of the population did vote for an Islamic republic. But even this does not necessarily represent support for the government. The religious leaders made a lot of demagogic promises before the referendum, and most of those who voted "yes" probably did so in hopes that the promises would be fulfilled.

In Tabriz, where the hold of religion is quite strong, activists from the Socialist Workers Party (HKS)¹ found people lining

up to buy their paper, *Kargar* (Worker). Standing next to them were persons trying to sell the publication of Abdul Bani Sadr—one of the chief ideologues of the "Islamic revolution"—who were having trouble getting rid of their bundle. I have heard similar reports from HKS activists from a number of different parts of the country.

The government did try to use their faked referendum results as a mandate for launching a witch-hunt against the opposition to the regime. Shortly after the vote Prime Minister Bazargan delivered a major speech over all-Iranian television. He began by declaring that the opponents of the Islamic republic "represent only 1 percent of the population." He then proceeded to devote about half of his talk to the "danger" such people represent. He paid special attention to the Trotskyists.

Most of the rest of Bazargan's speech dealt with the problems posed by the nationalist movements of the Kurds and Turkmenis.

Bazargan's address was followed by stepped-up harassment from the Imam's committees² of activists selling the HKS newspaper. This happened especially in the southern oil center of Ahwaz, where the Iranian Trotskyists have faced fierce persecution. One woman activist was badly beaten.

Unable to offer the population any improvement in their lives, the government has sought to gain support by filling the front pages of the Tehran press with pictures of executed officials of the old regime lying on morgue slabs. The masses are certainly glad to see these hangmen brought to justice. However, one political effect of the quick, secret trials and immediate executions is to cover up the extent of the repression under the shah. The public is being given little or no information about the scope of the tortures' activities or their collusion with the CIA and other imperialist agencies.

Trotskyist Proposals Debated on Countrywide Television

But what the Iranian people want most is answers to the mounting economic problems they face. Their concerns and their mood became strikingly evident after April

11. On that date, Trotskyist leader Babak Zahraie, editor of *Kargar*, debated government partisan Abdul Bani Sadr over all-Iranian television. The debate became a major political event.

Zahraie began his presentation by saying there had been no public discussion of the way to solve the country's economic problems. He then proceeded to lay out a program for dealing with these difficulties by building a socialist economy.

The favorite formula of the Muslim politicians is that the Islamic Republic means national independence. Zahraie demolished that point by showing how the Bazargan government is doing nothing to combat the wrecking of the economy by the big imperialist corporations. He contrasted this passivity with the bold moves the Castro leadership took in Cuba to break the power of the imperialists and rebuild the economy.

The Trotskyist spokesman explained that the only way the Iranian anti-imperialist revolution could succeed was to overturn the capitalist economy.

Bani Sadr prefaced his contributions with the phrase "in the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful." But Allah apparently could not help him offer any concrete answers to the problems facing the Iranian masses. He could come up with little more than vague formulas, and he was obviously floundering about.

At the time of the debate I was in a Persian village near the Turkmeni area. There, local Muslims said that they had once thought that Bani Sadr was the *bisnallah*—"the holy scourge who would drive away the devil." But now they thought that Bani Sadr must be the devil and Zahraie the *bisnallah*, since when the Trotskyist spokesman talked, Bani Sadr ran away.

The two major Iranian dailies, *Kayhan* and *Ettela'at*, ran the full text of the debate along with editorials about the importance of public discussion of these problems.

The debate has focused national attention on the HKS and on the socialist alternative for solving such problems as unemployment, inflation, food shortages, the backwardness of Iranian agriculture, and so on.

The day after the debate, at the Tehran General Motors plant (where the Imam's committee had succeeded in destroying the workers organizations), the workers chanted, "Zahraie, you're the apple of our eye."

Everywhere on the streets of Tehran and other Iranian cities, people can be heard discussing the debate, mostly agreeing with Zahraie. Everywhere he goes, people give him the victory sign. Some construction workers, inspired by the debate, began occupying buildings and demanding nationalizations.

There has been an immediate wave of sympathy with the HKS. This has, for

1. Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist, the Iranian section of the Fourth International.

2. Committees set up by the religious hierarchy, composed of supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini is usually referred to as "the Imam"—a title connoting "messiah" in the Shi'ite religion.

example, forced the Iman's committee in Ahwaz to back away from its persecution of Trotskyist activists.

There are many reports of workers in the plants saying that Zahraie said exactly what was on their minds.

Even many Tudeh (Communist) Party members have called Zahraie to congratulate him for raising the voice of socialism in the country as it has never been raised before. And rank and file members of some of the sectarian Maoist groups, which in the past have disrupted HKS meetings and called the Trotskyists CIA agents and traitors, are now coming to the HKS to apologize for their actions.

The debate has established the HKS on the political scene. It has shown that this party has a real program for the Iranian socialist revolution. This contrasts with the position of the much larger centrist groups, such as the People's Fedayeen, which are not clear about the nature of the government or about how to carry forward the fight for socialism. It has shown that the Iranian workers have a tremendous hunger for political discussion and that they are beginning to think that socialism may be the answer.

The masses of Iranian people, having done away with the shah's dictatorship, are beginning to move further to the left. Of course, Zahraie's presentation in the debate did not cause such a turn. But it did give expression to the shifting public mood.

This achievement was in fact a result of the Trotskyists' confidence in their program. Bani Sadr had challenged all Marxists to a debate, but none of the other groups took him up. This was probably because they had no alternative to offer, and perhaps even because they were afraid of taking on the Islamic demagogue directly.

The centrists' attitude toward the government and the religious leaders has been marked all along by fuzziness and conciliation. The Trotskyists, however, took up Bani Sadr's challenge, and this quickly attracted the attention of journalists from the main Tehran dailies. Although the editors tried to avoid giving the debate any but the most minimal advance publicity, the word got out and an estimated 22 million persons viewed the program.

The television editors tried to limit the debate to narrow fiscal questions. But Zahraie was able to take advantage of the opportunity to raise all of the broad economic issues facing the Iranian people.

The standing of the HKS has risen dramatically among the rank and file of the centrist groups, and even among sections of their leaderships, because it stood up for socialism in the way they hoped their own organizations would but did not.

The response to Zahraie's appearance and the growing interest in revolutionary-socialist ideas points the way forward for the Iranian revolution.

There is a class polarization under way among the diverse forces that united to bring down the shah. This is reflected not only in the reaction to the televised debate, but also in the increased desperation of the conservative, procapitalist forces. For example, the week after the referendum I saw a demonstration of about 2,000 youths at the University of Tehran, shouting for the execution of the Fedayeen. It was the first armed rightist demonstration that I have



ZAHRAIE: 22 million view Trotskyist leader's TV debate with government spokesman.

seen here. It was led by a squad carrying heavy automatic weapons, and a number of demonstrators also had guns. Many of them were wearing army uniforms. There were a number of other such demonstrations in that week, although none of them was very large.

Hunger for Socialist Ideas

But the overall situation seems to be turning in the opposite direction. There are many signs of this; one came in Tabriz at an April 10 meeting of unemployed high-school graduates. An official from the local Imam's committee arrived with a gun and tried to break up the meeting. The crowd picked him up bodily, gun and all, and deposited him outside. Maoists who came to disrupt the meeting got the same treatment.

Also in Tabriz, when a local Imam's committee arrested HKS activists for selling the party paper, all the young men in the committee sided with the Trotskyists against the Islamic official who had arrested them.

Any indication that the religious leaders are losing influence over the committee members is extremely important. There is still a very large number of armed committeemen in the country. For example, on the train I took from Tehran to Tabriz, there were about twenty of them. Everywhere in Tabriz I saw armed civilians, most of them obviously ordinary people who chatted with their neighbors as they leaned on their heavy infantry rifles.

The hunger of the Iranian people for socialist politics is also shown by the sales of the HKS paper. About 16,000 copies of the special issue of *Kargar* on the referendum were sold in Tehran alone.

In Kurdistan the week before the referendum, a team of three HKS members sold in less than two hours all the papers that they were able to carry into the area. Local news agents in the three main Kurdish cities decided to take bundles of 300 papers each. *Kargar* was obviously the hottest item in the newspaper trade. Some buyers on the street were so enthusiastic that they took bundles to sell themselves.

In one poor neighborhood of Tabriz, when the local Imam's committee tried to drive the HKS paper sellers away, the population would not let them leave and insisted that they keep selling. And while the HKS activists were counting up the receipts from the sales, local people took over selling the paper.

Workers Demand Jobs

The unemployed are in the vanguard of the reviving workers movement in Iran. Actions demanding jobs are flaring up around the country, often organized by trade-union activists.

Lack of jobs is the biggest problem Iranian workers face; about half the work force is unemployed. The only way to provide enough work is to nationalize all the big plants and start them producing to meet the needs of the Iranian people. Only the Trotskyists are putting forward a clear program for doing this, and that is another reason why Zahraie's debate with Bani Sadr has had such an impact.

The importance of this was shown, for example, by the HKS's experience in Tabriz. A handful of Trotskyists there won the leadership of a section of the unemployed movement simply by presenting an effective proposal for united action. Those who sought to raise sectarian obstacles were unceremoniously booted out of the meeting by the workers.

Such experiences prove that the Iranian masses are eager for a perspective to carry their struggle forward. They did not fight for the revival of Islamic fundamentalism, or for religious vigilantes flogging people for their "moral offenses." They fought for the same things that the oppressed and exploited masses fight for all over the world—for the freedom to discuss their problems and to take control of their fate so that they can build a better life.

The Iranian Trotskyists are showing that they are the only party that can present a program that meets the needs of the masses. That, overnight, has given their message a broad hearing.

April 13, 1979

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Three Mile Island Cover-up Collapses

By Fred Murphy

The confidence of the American people in the safety of nuclear power and in the government's ability to control the nuclear industry was gravely shaken by the March 28 near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island power plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This growing distrust found rapid confirmation when the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was forced by a Congressional committee on April 12 to release transcripts of its closed-door meetings during the Three Mile Island crisis.

Of the more than 800 pages of transcripts, the brief excerpts reported thus far in the capitalist press show that the NRC commissioners had little or no idea how to bring the damaged reactor to a safe condition, brushed aside repeated urgings for evacuation of the area around the plant, and sought to prevent accurate information on the situation from reaching the public.

On March 30, the day it became publicly known that a catastrophic accident was a distinct possibility, NRC Director of Regulation Harold Denton discussed the situation with NRC Chairman Joseph Hendrie:

DENTON: . . . I think the important thing is for evacuation to get ahead of the plume [of radioactive gas] is to get a start rather than sitting here waiting to die. Even if we can't minimize the individual dose, there might still be a chance to limit the population dose.

HENDRIE: It seems to me I have got to call the Governor.

FOUCHARD [NRC public affairs director]: I do. I think you have got to talk to him immediately.

HENDRIE: To do it immediately. We are operating almost totally in the blind. His information is ambiguous, mine is nonexistent and—I don't know, it's like a couple of blind men staggering around making decisions.

Hendrie made no recommendation of evacuation to Pennsylvania Governor Richard Thornburgh, even after a further report on the dangers from Roger Mattson, NRC safety director:

MATTSON: . . . we have extensive damage to this [reactor fuel] core. . . .

My best guess is that the core uncovered, stayed uncovered for a long period of time. We saw failure modes, the likes of which has never been analyzed. . . .

The latest burst [of radiation] didn't hurt many people. I'm not sure why you are not moving people [i.e., evacuating]. . . .

[NRC Commissioner] GILINSKY: What is your principal concern right at this minute?

MATTSON: Well, my principal concern is that we have got an accident that we have never been designed to accommodate, and it's, in the best estimate, deteriorating slowly, and the most pessimistic estimate it is on the threshold of turning bad. And I don't have a reason for not moving people. I don't know what you are protecting by not moving people.

The answer to Mattson's rather frantic question was provided later in consumer advocate Ralph Nader's comment on the NRC transcripts:

For political reasons the mass evacuation that should have been carried out was not because it would have shown 150 million people watching on TV a picture of half a million people fleeing from a potential disaster. That picture would have terminated the nuclear industry right there and then. [Washington Post, April 14.]

But even if the NRC had decided that it

"TO ERR IS HUMAN, TO SQUEEZE OUT EVERY BUCK POSSIBLE IS DIVINE"



was necessary to risk such damage to its favorite industry by ordering an evacuation, it was apparently totally unprepared to organize one. This summary of a portion of the transcript appeared in the April 13 Washington Post:

"Do we have some idea of precisely what would happen today?" asked Commissioner Victor Gilinsky. "Do they have places to tell people to go?"

The evacuation expert, Don Collings, had no answer. "I imagine that they do," he said, "but you know, those are things that people decide when they do it." . . .

Collings returned a half-hour later, saying a total evacuation could be carried out in about one hour.

"Let me ask you," Gilinsky said, "are you talking about Harrisburg, too?" The transcript then reads:

"Mr. Collings: 'Let's see, Harrisburg is in which county?' (Mumbling to himself, obviously looking at a map.)"

It is clear from the transcripts that keeping the truth from the public was an overriding concern of the NRC. "Which amendment is it that guarantees freedom of the press?" NRC Chairman Hendrie asked at one point. "Well, I am against it."

Public relations man Fouchard and President Carter's press secretary Jody Powell were both particularly alarmed when the public learned on March 30 that there was indeed a danger of a meltdown at Three Mile Island:

FOUCHARD: Jody Powell just called and said something about some story on meltdown.

HENDRIE: Yeah—we had a UPI condensation of a briefing given in the press room at Bethesda [NRC headquarters].

FOUCHARD: Goddammit. . . .

Despite the best efforts of Fouchard, Powell, and the NRC commissioners, the government's Three Mile Island cover-up is unraveling rapidly. Other information that has come to light during the two weeks after the Pennsylvania accident reveals the following:

- By rushing the Three Mile Island plant into operation by the end of 1978, the General Public Utilities Corporation (GPU) was able to gain approval of a \$49 million hike in electrical rates paid by consumers, and was also able to secure a tax break of between \$37 million and \$48 million. The NRC approved the reactor for operation on December 30 despite an inspector's report that some tests of the plant's equipment "could not be ascertained to meet acceptance criteria."

- New York Times reporter Ben A. Franklin found the NRC's file on Three Mile Island to be "full of troubles with stuck valves, failed or out-of-commission pumps, 'personnel errors' and crucial instruments that gave false readings." According to Franklin, each report bears the statement, "This event did not affect the health and safety of the public."

- The situation at Three Mile Island was by no means unique. A report released in February by the Congressional General Accounting Office showed that the NRC in a recent year discovered violations in 2,500 out of 6,400 inspections of nuclear installations, but imposed penalties on the operators in a mere thirteen cases.

The longstanding claims of the nuclear industry that atomic power is "safe, clean, and inexpensive" have been shattered by Three Mile Island, and Washington's total complicity with the industry's monumental cover-up of the dangers involved is becoming obvious to working people across the United States.

Antinuclear activists now have an unprecedented opportunity to take their message to American workers and to the trade unions. There they will find the power that can win the demands:

Open all the secret books and records of the nuclear industry and the government!
Shut down all nuclear plants now!

Antinuclear Protests Continue in Many Countries

By Susan Wald

The political effects of the near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant continued to be felt during the April 6-8 weekend, as antinuclear activists took to the streets in cities around the world. Following are some of the major actions that took place:

Australia. Thirty thousand persons marched in Sydney, calling for a halt to uranium mining and the shutdown of all nuclear plants. Other marches were held in Brisbane and Adelaide.

Denmark. Fifteen thousand demonstrators gathered in front of the parliament building in Copenhagen April 6 to demand the shutdown of Sweden's Barsebäck nuclear plant, which is located just twenty-four kilometers from the Danish capital.

Sweden. Nearly 10,000 persons assembled in Stockholm to demand the shutdown of all six Swedish nuclear reactors now in operation and to call for the swift development of alternative energy sources. A march in Göteborg drew 2,000 participants.

Swedish antinuclear activists scored an important gain April 4, when the Social Democrats presented a motion in parliament calling for a referendum on nuclear energy to be held in early 1980. Several tens of thousands of signatures have been collected on petitions demanding that such a referendum be held. The widespread opposition to nuclear power in Sweden is bringing the Social Democrats to reconsider their pronuclear stance.

West Germany. Marches held to protest the building of a nuclear waste recycling plant at Gorleben in Lower Saxony drew 5,000 protesters in Hamburg and 3,000 in Frankfurt. A March 30 demonstration in Hanover, near the Gorleben site, drew 100,000 persons—one of the largest street actions ever held in the Federal Republic.

Netherlands. Two thousand persons marched on the Borssele nuclear plant and staged a sit-in at another plant nearby.

France. One thousand demonstrators responded to the call of a regional antinuclear committee in Gravelines April 7. A typical slogan was, "Harrisburg today—Gravelines tomorrow."

At an April 5 news conference, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) called for a three-year moratorium on the building of new nuclear plants "to give the French people and their representatives a chance to make decisions for the future." The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the country's largest trade-

union federation, continues to support nuclear power. But it has called for a slowdown in the construction schedule for nuclear plants.

United States. A march on Washington has been set for May 6, called by several major antinuclear groups.

More than 1,500 protesters rallied in Los

Angeles April 7, demanding the shutdown of all nuclear plants in California. The protest was fueled by news that the San Onofre plant, 100 miles south of Los Angeles, had been shut down the night before to repair leaking valves. One thousand persons took part in an antinuclear protest in Phoenix, Arizona, on the same day. □

'Close Three Mile Island Forever'

2,000 Rally at Pennsylvania State Capitol

By Arnold Weissberg

[The following article appeared in the April 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

HARRISBURG, Pa.—In a dramatic show of anger, 2,000 area residents demonstrated on the steps of the state capitol here April 8 to demand permanently shutting the crippled Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.

The demonstration was sponsored by Three Mile Island Alert (TMIA).

Demonstrators also demanded that "we do not pay for Met Ed's [Metropolitan Edison, the operator of Three Mile Island] mistakes." Met Ed has threatened to seek a \$7.50 monthly boost in each customer's electric bill to pay for the disaster.

Speakers and participants also called for shutting down all nuclear power plants.

It was an authentic community outpouring. Children of all ages, grandparents, young couples, and pregnant women filled the wide steps. Homemade signs were everywhere.

A steelworker from the big Bethlehem plant in nearby Steelton, wearing a blue-and-white United Steelworkers hat, said he recognized at least a dozen or more co-workers.

"I'm angry," Newberry Township Commissioner Bruce Smith told the rally. "I'm angry with Met Ed, I'm angry with the state and federal government, and most of all, I'm angry with myself for not recognizing the potential danger in the midst of our communities."

Smith urged the crowd to "follow the example of Newberry Township and form a Three Mile Island Committee. Organize volunteers in your community, circulate petitions, get involved and get others in-

involved," Smith urged. "Close Three Mile Island forever."

One of the members of the Newberry committee told the *Militant* the group's first action would be to bring in an expert on radiation to explain the possible effects of the Three Mile Island disaster. And there will "definitely" be more rallies, she said.

"Radiation levels have been played down," Dr. Thomas Winters told a press briefing. Winters, who spoke at the rally, said it was misleading to compare radiation exposure to medical X-rays, because X-rays last only fractions of a second and are aimed at a small part of the body.

"The problem is definitely not over for the people who live in the immediate area," said Kevin Cassidy. Cassidy, his wife Susan, and their daughter Sabrina live three miles from the plant.

"The problem is not over for people who live in any immediate area of any nuclear power plant," Cassidy went on. "I have a fourteen-month-old baby, and my wife is one month pregnant. Somebody waited two and a half days before they decided it was hazardous to our health."

The name of Gov. Richard Thornburgh was booed when TMIA activist Kay Pickering announced he had turned down an invitation to attend.

Chairing the rally was William Vastine, TMIA coordinator. Other speakers included Renny Cushing, a founder of the Clamshell Alliance; Dr. Judith Johnsrud, longtime area antinuclear activist; Martha Bush, staff attorney in the Pennsylvania Office of the Consumer Advocate; Jim McGee of Three Mile Island Alert; and German antinuclear activist Burckhard Kretschmann. □

U.S. Judge: No Asylum for Marroquín

By Larry Seigle

Immigration Judge James Smith has ruled that Héctor Marroquín is not entitled to political asylum in the United States.

In a decision released on April 11, Smith declared that "the fact that an alien would not enjoy in his own country the same type, degree, and extent of political freedom and the freedom of the press that he would enjoy here does not entitle him" to political asylum.

Smith gave Marroquín thirty days in which to leave the country "voluntarily" or be deported back to Mexico.

Marroquín's attorney, Margaret Winter, said she will file an immediate appeal.

The Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee has issued an urgent appeal to all of its supporters to step up their activities in

order to block the Immigration and Naturalization Service from expelling Marroquín.

"We are asking all individuals and organizations who support this fight to let INS Director Leonel Castillo hear a thunderous outcry of protest," said Jane Roland, coordinator of the defense committee.

She added that the committee, which is already deeply in debt, is desperately in need of funds to cover the costs of the appeal.

In a cynical effort to turn the broad support Marroquín has received into a reason for denying asylum, Judge Smith, in his decision, argued that Marroquín's "political speaking tours and activities here have endeared him to numerous per-

sons and organizations who will undoubtedly remind the Mexican authorities that such a celebrity should not disappear."

He went on to attack the Socialist Workers Party, of which Marroquín is a member, claiming the party has defended Marroquín solely "because it wanted a cause to promote."

He argued further that Marroquín is not in the United States legally, and therefore not entitled to protection under the law of asylum.

Letters and telegrams protesting Smith's ruling should be sent to Leonel Castillo, Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, D.C. 20536.

Donations, resolutions of support, and copies of protest messages should be sent to: Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee, P.O. Box 843, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003. □

Witnesses Document Mexican Government's Repression

By Harry Ring

[The following article appeared in the April 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

HOUSTON—The hearing on Mexican socialist Héctor Marroquín's request for political asylum in the United States ended here on April 5.

The target of a political frame-up in Mexico, Marroquín sought refuge in the United States in 1974. Apprehended here without documents, he was jailed for three months.

Despite broad support for his right to political asylum, the Carter administration refused Marroquín's appeal. The Immigration and Naturalization Service ordered him to appear at the deportation hearing that was held here April 3-5.

The U.S. government has never granted political asylum to anyone from Mexico.

To grant Marroquín asylum in the U.S. would constitute an admission by the Carter administration of political repression in Mexico. That repression—aimed at workers, peasants, students, and others—has been backed all along by the U.S. government, which seeks to protect American investments in Mexico.

The trial here also made clear that the U.S. government opposes asylum for Marroquín because he is an active member of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

Arguing against Marroquín was INS trial attorney Daniel Kahn, a venomous red-baiter who evoked memories of the McCarthy era. He said there is no reason to grant asylum to a socialist like Marroquín. And, besides, he asserted, the present

Mexican administration is cleaning up its act.

He called no witnesses and submitted but two pieces of evidence. One was the amnesty law for political prisoners in Mexico enacted last year.

The other was a clipping from the Huntsville, Texas, *Item*. The *Item* quoted the internationally known Mexican rights fighter, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, as saying the situation has improved in Mexico since the government announced an amnesty.

This was proven false at the hearing by Piedra herself, who appeared as an expert witness for Marroquín. She testified to the continuing repression in Mexico.

She was buttressed by the testimony of Prof. Robert Goldman, who did a recent major study on repression in Mexico for the International League for Human Rights.

There were other witnesses in Marroquín's behalf.

His wife, Maria, confirmed that he fled Mexico only after lawyers insisted he could not get a fair trial on the trumped-up charge that he "conspired" to kill a school librarian.

Delia Duarte de Ramirez described how her entire family fell victim to Mexican cop terror.

Sister Victoria Zuñiga appeared as a character witness for Marroquín. She is a member of Hermanas, an organization of Hispanic nuns, and an activist in the Marroquín defense committee.

Roger Rudenstein, executive secretary of the Political Rights Defense Fund, testified about documents implicating the FBI in the Marroquín frame-up.

Both Goldman and Piedra testified that the Mexican amnesty law in no way assures Marroquín's safety if he were compelled to return.

The dean-designate of the American University Law School, Goldman has served on a number of international commissions investigating human rights.

As a representative of the prestigious International League for Human Rights, he was permitted to interview more than 100 political prisoners there.

These findings were cited by the recent U.S. State Department report, partially conceding, for the first time, the facts of political repression in Mexico.

In almost all of these cases, Goldman emphasized, the sole element of proof was confessions by the defendants.

These confessions, he said, were extracted by the most grisly kind of torture.

But, interjected the judge, could this happen to a "notorious" figure like Marroquín, who has spoken in sixty U.S. cities, and whose case is widely known?

All the more likely, Goldman responded. Someone like Marroquín would be a special target of the White Brigades, the extralegal arm of the government, which carries out much of the repression.

The White Brigades, Goldman explained are a "not so clandestine" vigilante gang composed in the main of military, federal, and state police.

Press accounts, he said, have openly discussed the fact that the head of the White Brigades is a high official of Mexico's department of justice.

Goldman also testified that for two years he had studied the problem of Mexico's

"disappeared." These are political activists who have been taken into custody by the cops in the presence of witnesses and then vanish.

Goldman flatly rejected the contention that the amnesty has ended political repression.

He was "skeptical" about its worth, he said, because the government has done nothing to end continuing abuses. Particularly, he stressed, it has not acted to end the illegal activities of the White Brigades. In fact, it still pretends the vigilante gang doesn't exist.

Until these practices are stopped, Goldman declared, the amnesty offers only "illusory protection."

Rosario Piedra continued the dissection of the amnesty myth.

She spoke with firsthand knowledge as the founder of the Committee to Defend Political Prisoners, the Politically Persecuted, "Disappeared" and Exiled.

She recalled that in October 1978, a month after the amnesty was approved by the Mexican congress, 100,000 people marched in Mexico City commemorating the tenth anniversary of the police massacre of students at Tlatelolco.

The principal demands of the demonstration, Piedra said, were: amnesty; free the political prisoners; and present the "disappeared."

To rally so huge a throng around these demands, she observed, suggested that the Mexican people are certainly skeptical about the amnesty.

She said only some of the political prisoners have actually been freed under the amnesty. And she cited the cases of two of these, teachers, who were since taken back into custody, tortured, and forced to confess to new "crimes."

Several of those named in the amnesty had already been released on bond.

And several, she noted dryly, were already dead.

Furthermore, she continued, there are now a total of 451 known "disappeared." She said that at a press conference after the amnesty, Mexico's attorney general blandly asserted that these people had either gone underground or had been killed—either by their comrades or relatives!

She cited several specific cases of people who had been tortured or killed by the White Brigades since the amnesty.

Piedra assessed the amnesty as a concession to the rising anger of the Mexican people, an attempt to persuade them the situation is indeed improving.

It was also, she added, a move to undercut the impact of the human rights movement in Mexico.

"They thought we would go away," she concluded. "But we will fight until there are no 'disappeared,' no political prisoners—until we can take Héctor safely home." □

Marroquín's Testimony at Hearing

[The following are excerpts from the April 3 testimony of Héctor Marroquín at the Immigration and Naturalization Service hearing.

[Under direct examination by his attorney, Margaret Winter, Marroquín explains why he joined the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. This is followed by excerpts from the cross-examination of Marroquín by INS trial attorney Daniel Kahn.]

Direct Examination

Winter. Mr. Marroquín. While you were in the United States, did you join any political organizations?

Marroquín. Yes. In 1976 I joined the Socialist Workers Party and, later, the Young Socialist Alliance.

Winter. Do you want to say anything about your membership in the organizations?

Marroquín. I joined these two organizations because I fully agree with the program of these two organizations. Because of the perspective they have for social change. Because they are the only political organizations in this country that stand for the political independence of working people from the Democratic and Republican parties.

I joined these two organizations because they have a correct program for changing this society toward a society in which production is for human needs and not for profit.

When I joined these two political organizations, nobody asked me for any papers.

When I was in the hospital, for example, I was in trouble for eight hours before I was accepted, because I didn't have any documents.

Whenever I looked for a job, I was always asked for documents.

Wherever I went, I was always asked for documents.

When I joined these two political organizations, nobody asked me for any papers.

And I saw these two political organizations as those standing in the forefront of the fight for democratic rights in this country, in the fight for political freedom, in the fight against racism, against sexism, in the fight against unemployment, in the fight for better standards of living, and in the defense of working people in this country.

I was active as a trade unionist. I helped organize a Teamster drive in the Coca Cola plant where I was working at the time. We had a successful drive. We won the election to be represented by the Teamsters.

I was also active in the antideportation movement in this country, particularly here in Texas.

Kahn. A Marxist-type government, the type of government they have in Cuba,

would you like to see that kind of government in the United States?

Marroquín. In the sense that it is a workers and peasants government?

Kahn. Any way you want it.

Marroquín. Yes. I would like to see a workers government in the United States. . . .

Kahn. If the president of the United States, in your opinion, began acting like Mr. Batista, then do you feel it would be justified to throw him over, by force?

Marroquín. If the president of the United States begins acting like Batista, like Pinochet, like Somoza . . . like the military junta in Brazil or like all of these dictatorships in Latin America, I think the American people have every right to defend themselves against being executed, tortured, assassinated. . . .

Kahn. So you would accept the violent overthrow of the United States government?

Winter. Mr. Kahn, I think that's quite beyond the. . . .

Judge. Does he believe in the violent overthrow of the United States government? Simply answer yes or no.

Marroquín. I believe the American people have every right to self-defense. Just like when you fought for the independence of this country from the British. And just like when you fought against slavery in this country.

Kahn. If Cuba is the country you admire most, for their government, why wouldn't you seek asylum there instead of here?

Marroquín. Why not here, if that right is granted by the United Nations protocol? And it is precisely because the Immigration Department does not grant this right to Chileans, Nicaraguans, Haitians, that I want to fight for this human right to be recognized here.

So that I can find a way to explain what is happening in Latin America, how we are starving to death, and what the role of the U.S. government in Latin America is. Explain it to the American people and seek their solidarity.

Kahn. Did you ever starve to death in Mexico?

Marroquín. No. I wouldn't be here. There are cases of literally thousands of babies that have not received the right nutrition, that have died at a young age because of sickness, have died before they are. . . .

Kahn. But what does it have to do with political persecution?

Marroquín. Well, those happen to be the same victims that the government kills in Mexico, the exploited and the oppressed.

Kahn. Isn't that more of a social problem?

Marroquín. It is a social and a political problem. In order to change society, you have to present a political alternative.

Kahn. But isn't that mainly a problem

that the World Health Organization should look into?

Marroquín. I think this is a problem that the working people of the world can take care of. The toilers of the world—those that create everything. Those are the people that can take care of this problem.

Kahn. You mean something like, "workers of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains"?

Marroquín. [Laughing] What does this have to do with it?

Kahn. You said "the toilers."

Marroquín. Yes. I said that.

Kahn. Is that your motto: "Workers of the world"?

Marroquín. I believe in international workers solidarity. And I think this, in the end, is going to end this situation of oppression in the world.

Kahn. And are the enemies the fat cats? The owners of industry? The owners of oil companies, are they the enemy?

Marroquín. Well, if you want to call them fat cats, call them whatever way you want. I call them capitalists.

Kahn. When you left Mexico in 1974, who was the president of Mexico?

Marroquín. At the time, the president of Mexico was Mr. Luis Echeverría.

Kahn. And what was his political persuasion?

Marroquín. Oppression.

Kahn. All right. Was there an election in 1976?

Marroquín. Yes.

Kahn. And who was elected?

Marroquín. Mr. López Portillo.

Kahn. Is he from the same political party as Mr. Echeverría?

Marroquín. From the same political party as all the presidents in the past fifty years have come from.

Kahn. Did he run on a platform of reform?

Marroquín. They always run on platforms of reform and social change.

Kahn. But didn't he come through with an amnesty [for political prisoners]?

Marroquín. Yes.

Kahn. Didn't that indicate some change for the better?

Marroquín. He came through with an amnesty—a limited and conditional amnesty—that has not benefited, as I said before, or protected, or applied to more than 30 percent of the political prisoners in Mexico.

Kahn. Now, what if you found out that you personally were named in the amnesty for political or criminal indiscretions or crimes? Would that make you happy?

Marroquín. No. My case is not an individual case. My case is only an example of the kind of repression that exists in Mexico. If they give me an amnesty individually and at the same time leave the overwhelming majority of political prisoners languishing in jail and they do not present a solution to the hundreds of disappeared political activists, that does not make me

happy at all.

Kahn. Are you seeking asylum, or withholding deportation, based on your individual case, or for all the prisoners, for all the victims in Mexico?

Winter. Mr. Kahn, he has already testified he does not believe it will make him safe.

Kahn. I'm saying, are you seeking political asylum for yourself or all the political prisoners in Mexico?

Marroquín. I think that it is obvious that the application is made in my name. I am seeking political asylum for myself—Héctor Marroquín Manríquez. It doesn't mention 500 names.

Kahn. OK. But then again, if it turns out that you, Héctor Marroquín Manríquez, have been granted amnesty for all criminal and political events of the past—committed or alleged—it's all wiped out, that wouldn't make you happy?

Marroquín. That wouldn't make me feel happy because that wouldn't make me feel safe in Mexico.

Kahn. Why not?

Marroquín. Because as long as there are political prisoners, as long as there are disappeared, for as long as there is torture, how can I feel safe?

How can I say that the government has decided to stop assassinating, torturing, and disappearing political prisoners, if they are still doing it? How can I feel safe?

Kahn. When you say that you approve of the Cuban government, do you approve of the Cuban foreign policy? Do you approve of the Cuban practice of sending soldiers to Angola?

Marroquín. Yes I do.

Kahn. Would you approve, if it would help to bring about a revolution of the workers, would you approve if Cuba sent its soldiers to the United States?

Marroquín. I don't think that that is going to be the case. I think the American people are perfectly capable of taking care of their problems.

Kahn. My question was, do you approve

of exporting revolution?

Marroquín. I approve of international working class solidarity. And if the Cuban people sent some of their best people to fight in Africa, and concretely in Angola, it was because the United States government was backing the South African government to intervene in Angola, and because they were backing the Somalian government to intervene in Ethiopia, to crush the revolutions that were taking place.

Kahn. Then you feel Cuba was justified in doing what it did because the United States was in opposition?

Marroquín. I said the United States government. I did not mean the American people.

Kahn. But the government?

Marroquín. Yes. There is a book by [John] Stockwell that very well documents the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in Angola and the attempt to crush the revolutionary movement taking place there for national independence.

Kahn. So I take it that you do not approve of the United States government as it now exists?

Marroquín. You are correct.

Kahn. And it's your wish to change it, if you could?

Marroquín. Yes, it is.

Kahn. But the American government, as it now stands, has seen fit to support a country in Africa. And you approve of the Cubans' actions in opposing the present actions of the American government. True?

Marroquín. Well, I approve of the Cuban solidarity with the revolutionary movement for national independence and against imperialism in Asia, in Angola, and in Ethiopia.

Kahn. And you consider the United States part of that imperialism?

Marroquín. The United States government and the big American corporations.

Kahn. I have no further questions.

New Elections Called in Britain

[As a result of a March 28 vote of "no confidence" in Parliament, the British Labour Party government has been forced to schedule countrywide elections for May 3.

[The Labour Party has been in power since 1974, when it promised "a fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people."

[But the actual record of the government has been quite different. Since 1974 unemployment has doubled, real wages have fallen, and the gap between the wages of women and men has widened.

[Labour's record on other questions has been equally bad. It stood behind the shah

of Iran to the end. It has maintained British troops in Northern Ireland and refused to give political status to nationalist prisoners there.

[Although the immediate issue that brought down the government was the question of home rule for Scotland, the vote reflected the bourgeoisie's concern over the Labour Party's declining ability to contain labor militancy.

[Prime Minister James Callaghan's 5 percent ceiling on pay raises—at a time when inflation was running at 9 percent—was left in shambles by a number of big strikes in recent months.

[The opposition Conservative Party (Tor-

ies) is now calling for more stringent measures to restrict the right to strike and to curtail the flying-picket tactic that proved so successful in the truckers strike in January.

[The International Marxist Group (IMG), the British section of the Fourth International, is calling for workers to vote for the Labour Party in the coming elections, although it has no doubts about the kind of policies a new Labour government would pursue.

[At the same time, the IMG is cooperating with other socialists in running Socialist Unity candidates in a number of constituencies where a Labour victory is assured, in order to provide working-class militants with an opportunity to reject Labour's anti-working-class policies.

[The following editorial, explaining this position, appeared in the April 5 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper sponsored by the IMG.]

* * *

Commenting on Airey Neave's death,¹ Merlyn Rees² said it would strengthen his determination to maintain a "bi-partisan" approach to Ireland. On that basis, at least as far as Ireland goes, there seems little to choose between Tory and Labour.

Many would extend such a judgement to other issues: unemployment, racism, inflation, or reactionary foreign policy—Callaghan and Thatcher, much of a muchness.

The shop stewards at the Dunlop factory in Liverpool threatened to call for an abstention in the Edge Hill by-election unless Labour acted in defence of their jobs. Public sector workers disillusioned by Labour's pay policy talk of disaffiliating NUPE³ [National Union of Public Employees] from the Labour Party. These are no solutions to Labour's betrayals.

To call for an abstention on Labour will only aid the party of big business—the Tories. When workers cast their votes for the Labour Party, they are voting for a party of their class—whatever its policies.

But the best conditions for defeating the Labour government's reactionary policies for once and for all is when Labour is in office. Then these bureaucrats—who claim to represent working class interests—are judged by the policies they implement.

And, as we have seen after five years of Labour rule, more and more working class people are refusing to accept its measures. The civil servants' decision to reject the latest offer, despite the election, is a case in point. The proof is the way the capitalist press has held up this dispute as evidence that Labour can't "control" the working

class any longer.

If the Tories were in office, these Labour leaders and their friends at the head of the unions would be let off the hook. Then we would hear all sorts of left noises and promises never to do again what they've done between 1974 and '79.

And after several years of the Tories, they may well even be believed—including by many of those who today are rejecting

Labour's policies.

Socialist Unity will be contesting the election in safe Labour seats on the basis of policies which provide a real socialist alternative. The best condition for extending this alternative is to return a Labour Government. Not because it will deliver socialism, but because under Labour the real socialists can be seen much more and heard much louder. □

'Security Statute' Aimed at Workers and Peasants Struggles

Colombia—Campaign of Repression

By Socorro Ramirez

More than 3,000 persons have been jailed in Colombia in three months. Each day brings news that workers, students, and intellectuals have been tortured or murdered. The most elementary democratic freedoms can be arbitrarily violated for a mere hint of opposition to the "sacrosanct rights of the state." Such measures, and many others that are anti-working-class and aimed against the masses of people, are sheltered behind the "Security Statute." This is the decree, dating from 1923, with which the Turbay Ayala regime was inaugurated. It was applied on September 6, 1978, "using the powers that the state of siege confers on the President" to legislate directly, without the consent of parliament. A few historical remarks will explain the significance and impact of such a measure.

The Historical Background

1. The National Front is finished. This was a pact between the two big bourgeois parties (the Liberals and Conservatives), which constitutionally gave these two parties an equal share in administering the state. In short, control of the entire bureaucratic apparatus became the institutionalized monopoly of both parties. The result of more than twenty years of the National Front and of the policies carried out by its various governments is a crisis-ridden two-party system, which has lost whatever consensus of support it once enjoyed among the masses. There was always a huge gulf during this period between the programs, plans, and interests of the two-party system, and the real changes required by the insecure living conditions of the immense majority of Colombians. The weakening of this form of government was accompanied by growing social and moral corruption in the state bureaucracy, engaged in and defended by the top civilian and military officials.

2. Contrary to the objectives of the National Front, the combativity of the masses

continued to assert itself in various ways. To mention only the most recent and best-known facts, in 1977 there were nearly 100 strikes and massive work stoppages—the *paros cívicos*. This upsurge of mass struggles reached its peak around the time of the *paro cívico nacional* [citizens' national general strike] of September 14, 1977. This really was a full-scale general strike. One of the most significant aspects of this strike was the widespread tendency toward trade-union unity among the workers, in opposition to the traditional atomization that characterizes the Colombian labor movement.

The National Trade-Union Council, made up of the country's four union federations, emerged stronger from the general strike. The wave of mass struggles continued in 1978, with hundreds of working-class and mass conflicts that reflected the extreme impoverishment of the Colombian masses—the rising cost of living, increased unemployment, growing inflation, and general repression.

3. While the majority of Colombians are sinking into starvation, the capitalists have enjoyed their greatest economic "prosperity" in twenty-five years, with unprecedented growth in several economic sectors. Thus, industrial growth was up 15% in 1978, while the value of exports increased by 27% over 1977. The boom in the coffee industry, as well as the cultivation and traffic in narcotics, put a huge volume of capital in circulation. Import capacity was increased by the accumulation of large amounts of foreign currency during the last three years. Foreign and private investment was stimulated, side by side with a drop in public expenditures. This drop is particularly apparent in social services, where the state has abandoned several major programs for "lack of resources." The obvious concentration and centralization of wealth, with the predominance of the banking monopolies, contrasts with the dramatic pauperization of the workers. This is the result of capital-

1. The Conservative Party spokesman on Northern Ireland, killed on March 30 when a bomb exploded in his car.—IP/I

2. Home Secretary in the Labour Government.—IP/I

ist development based on superexploitation in the framework of semicolonial dependency.

4. An immediate forerunner of the Security Statute mentioned earlier was the convening of the "little constituent assembly" by then-President López Michelsen. López Michelsen had assigned openly reactionary functions to this body, on the pretext of the "need" for a so-called reform of the state bureaucracy and the judiciary. It soon became clear that what was fundamentally involved was a transfer of legislative power—which traditionally has belonged to parliament—to the executive branch and thus to the hands of the president.

So the result had to be to weaken the role of Congress at the national level, as well as to weaken the departmental assemblies and municipal councils. The measures that were to have been considered included a reform of the judiciary, to institutionalize and make permanent the practice of trying ordinary cases before military courts. "Arbitration" of civil suits, normally a function of the civil courts would have fallen to military tribunals through the procedures of military justice, such as courts-martial.

But the constituent assembly, fraudulently approved by the Congress in face of open opposition from broad sectors, was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Justice. The bourgeoisie then tried to continue implementing the same policy by other means. The goals pursued through adoption of the Security Statute, which at bottom are identical to those of the judicial reform dreamed up by López Michelsen, prove this.

It was a matter of establishing a regime based on repression and terror that could "guarantee" the preservation of the bourgeoisie's comfortable profit margins, obtained through superexploitation of the workers, without having the workers rebel against their conditions of starvation, price hikes, and unemployment. It is no accident that soon after the adoption of these measures, which were supposed to bring "security" to Colombian citizens, the government announced a series of price increases, particularly of fuel, transportation, and basic necessities. It also launched a major offensive aimed at destroying the National Trade-Union Council and other expressions of the unity and combativity of the Colombian workers movement.

5. The state of siege has been in force in Colombia for thirty years. President Turbay has promised to announce the lifting of this measure soon. In so doing, he hopes to reaffirm the demagogically fostered image of constitutionality and civilian rule that the Colombian regime has enjoyed in the eyes of world public opinion.

In fact, the majority of the extraordinary provisions of the state of siege have been incorporated, bit by bit, into civil law. The Security Statute represents the culmination of this process. But at the same time, none of these reactionary, anti-working-class, and antipopular measures have been able to permanently contain the mass discontent. On the contrary, the crisis of the two-party system shows that the masses have undermined the regime's plans and put them in check. The government's current measures are no exception to this rule.

Reactionary Reform of the State and the Two-Party System

The government has legitimized political and trade-union victimizations in order to pave the way for a reactionary political "reform" of the state and enable the bourgeoisie to deal with the new realities of the class struggle. The aim is to make the repressive apparatus—whose main instrument is the army—more efficient, while keeping up the appearance of a democratic regime, with a parliament, elections, and political parties.

Within this framework, the president has prolonged the existence of the two-party system of government by applying Article 120 of the constitution, which stipulates a fair and adequate division of posts and public offices between the two traditional parties that live off the booty of the state. In the same way, he has implemented his plan to extend the two-party monopoly in the judicial sphere, as well as in the political life of the nation as a whole. Since the two-party system and the Congress are bound up with each other as institutions, even in their crises, an attempt is being made to revamp their image through institutional reforms.

Of course, as we have seen, the Congress has ceased to have a real decision-making function in the exercise of power. But its ideological and political role is still important. The executive branch is taking over, in practice, powers that are usually reserved to the Congress, such as reform of the codes of law, lengthening of penalties, and so on. What is demanded of Congress—and is now, in fact, the condition for its continued existence—is to be accommodating and take orders from the president. Turbay is skillfully profiting from the crisis and from the Congress's loss of prestige in order to impose on it a so-called "self-reform."

Thus, inasmuch as the legislators rarely

Free González and Gallego!

Colombian socialists have issued an urgent appeal for international protests to ensure the safety of Libardo González.

González, a professor at the Free University of Bogotá and a leader of the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR—Revolutionary Socialist Party), was seized by a unit of the Colombian secret police who broke into his house early on the morning of March 29.

He has been held incommunicado since his arrest, and there is reason to believe that he is being tortured. Another socialist, Gloria Stella Gallego, of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), is also being held by the regime.

In an especially ominous move, the March 31 issue of *El Tiempo*, one of the country's main capitalist dailies, accused González of having been involved in the killing of Rafael Pardo Buelvas, a former cabinet minister, in September 1978.

González was deeply involved in the struggle against the government's repression. He was elected as a delegate of the Union of Professors of the Free University to the Forum on Human Rights held in Bogotá March 30-31. Although González's arrest prevented him from attending, 1,500 other delegates and several hundred observers

did turn out to protest repression in Colombia and organize to oppose it.

The Turbay Ayala regime is apparently seeking to tie González and the Trotskyist movement as a whole to the assassination of Pardo Buelvas, which was carried out by a group calling itself the Movimiento de Autodefensa Obrera (MAO—Workers Self-Defense Movement).

Quoting "sources close to the investigation," *El Tiempo* claimed the MAO is "a group of Trotskyist orientation," and presented a completely fabricated account designed to link the MAO to the Fourth International.

As the PSR noted in a March 29 news release on the arrest of González, the real terrorists are the government and its secret police, which "are trying to destroy the most basic democratic rights of Colombians."

Emergency telegrams demanding the release of González and Gloria Stella Gallego should be sent to the Colombian embassies, or to Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, Presidente de Colombia, Palacio de San Carlos, Bogotá, Colombia.

Copies should be sent to the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, 853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, New York 10003.

attend the sessions, the number of participants necessary to attain a quorum is being lowered. As it has become "natural" for a maximum of powers to be concentrated in the executive branch, the Congress has concurred in granting the president the maximum number of extraordinary powers to carry out reforms of the electoral system; the status of political parties; the educational system; the codes of labor, public health, and public administration; and finally . . . anything else, if it becomes necessary!

The first decision this "self-reformed" Congress made was to give its members outrageous salary increases on the grounds of higher living costs, just as workers' demands for wage increases were being rejected on the pretext that this would add to inflation. And to top it all off, at its first session, the Congress adopted the Security Statute as the law of the land. What it actually is is a rump parliament, impotent and servile in contrast to the all-powerful executive.

The Security Statute

The so-called Security Statute is a frontal attack on some of the most elementary democratic freedoms. Military judges and bureaucrats are endowed with responsibilities that correspond to those of civil courts. Political crimes are put in the same category as common crimes, based on the false contention that the borderline between the two is tending to disappear. Strikes and street demonstrations are considered common crimes.

In the name of combating terrorism, measures have been taken against the peasants and free rein given to armed gangs operating on behalf of the big landowners. Freedom of expression and of organization have been greatly curtailed.

To put it another way, the exercise of elementary democratic rights has been made into a crime, whereas selective repression by the regime—searches, arrests, and torture—has been legalized.

The executive branch has taken over functions that go beyond those provided by a state of siege or by wartime emergency powers. Thus, Articles 1 through 6 of the statute directly modify the criminal code, lengthening penalties and creating new crimes. Article 9 modifies the criminal procedure code and transfers crimes that had come under the jurisdiction of the civil courts to military tribunals. Articles 7 through 10 modify the police code, while Article 11 abolishes the right of defense, in defiance of international covenants on human rights. Defense attorneys may now be implicated in the trials of their clients, and may thus be arrested and tried for aiding "subversion."

The government is now also applying Article 28 of the constitution, which goes into effect in the event of a "state of war." Any citizen can be arrested merely for being "suspect." Once detained, he or she may be tried without any real right of defense or possibility for appeal, since lawyers, in particular, are under heavy threat and their work has been made practically impossible.

Those sentenced in courts-martial are

confined to the island prison of Gorgona, while their relatives and friends—whose names, for example, might have been found among their papers—are arrested, interrogated, tortured, and released after having signed statements in which they claim to have been well treated.

More generally, prisoners are regularly transferred from one prison to another in order to prevent recourse to a petition of habeas corpus. Many citizens have disappeared after having been arrested by the military during early-morning searches carried out on the authorization of a blank search warrant signed by a military judge.

A protest movement has developed against this, involving workers organizations, trade unions, bar associations, professional and artistic associations, prominent bourgeois political figures, the church, and international human-rights organizations such as Amnesty International.

The Security Statute makes it possible to fire strike leaders, trade-union leaders, or any worker who fights for better living conditions. Cases of mass dismissal of workers in the name of the Security Statute—in order to turn down their wage demands—now number in the dozens.

Those who try to prove the existence of torture, to tell the truth, are being fired and repressed. Such efforts are considered a prop of subversion and put in the category of "plotting against the government." In this way, the director of the Institute of Legal Medicine was arrested for having agreed to investigate the tortures to which imprisoned students had been subjected.

The Supreme Court of Justice, in order to prove its unwavering support for the president, declared the Security Statute to be in keeping with the constitution. The three Supreme Court justices who reserved their opinion were threatened with an administrative investigation by the president himself, who characterized their attitude as a "judges' mutiny."

Guerrillas are being hunted down, but the existence of the "Death Squadron" and the emergence of the "Triple A"—initials that are all too tragically familiar in other Latin American countries—are hushed up.

Need for a Counteroffensive

The present situation calls for a consistent, ongoing struggle for democratic rights. It is necessary to denounce the whole escalation of repression and militarization. It is necessary to organize a general repudiation and a massive mobilization against the reactionary reform of the state.

It is in this context that the Partido Socialista Revolucionario (PSR—Revolutionary Socialist Party),¹ fought first against the "little constituent assembly" called by López Michelsen and then

1. A sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Colombia.

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against the Security Statute by organizing committees that included the broadest possible forces, in order to mobilize to defeat this reactionary policy. It is clear that only a united-front policy on the part of the working class and its trade unions and political parties, the mass organizations, and the opposition can win this important democratic battle. Committees have been formed in nearly all regions of the country, involving the families of political prisoners, sectors of the labor movement, and so on. Still, there are a number of obstacles in the way of these initiatives.

1. The Stalinists provoked a suicidal division with their clashes over their respective loyalties to Peking and Moscow. The Maoists organized separate, parallel committees, and the pro-Moscow CP responded with a policy aimed at isolating these committees. This spread confusion and apathy among many sectors of the labor movement.

2. The CP puts a priority on alliances with Conservative or Liberal bourgeois figures and greatly subordinates the need for unity of all forces opposed to the Security Statute.

What we are witnessing, in fact, is a demagogic campaign, with the rise of new "progressive" Liberal and Conservative factions that are seeking new alliances in order to revitalize their parties. So if the emphasis is not placed on organizing and mobilizing the masses in this struggle, the CP's tactics will run counter to the class independence of the workers. Obviously, all the contradictions within the ruling class are important; they open up opportunities for action and weaken the bourgeoisie's image. But they must be seen for what they are, and nothing must be done to give the masses the illusion that these bourgeois *caudillos* of the struggle for democracy are the ones who can deal a defeat to the reactionary plans of the rulers.

There exist sectors of the bourgeoisie that are trying to strengthen their position by making radical-sounding proclamations. The struggle for democratic freedoms may be held back and endangered by the attitude of certain workers parties that agree to let the liberal democrats play a leading role in this fight. This can only invite demobilization and frustration.

3. Another obstacle comes from the fact that some tend to consider the struggle for democracy as an occasional, sporadic activity, and therefore weave back and forth and wind up supporting supposedly progressive measures taken by the government.

4. The adventurist and irresponsible policy of individual terrorism has given the government an excuse for escalating the repression, and has led to confusion among many sectors of the workers movement. After the theft of a cache of weapons in the northern district of Bogotá carried

out by the M-19 (April 19 Movement) guerrilla group, the assassination of a former cabinet member by the "Workers Self-Defense Movement" (MAO), and the commando actions of the "Pedro Leon Arboleda" division of the People's Liberation Army (EPL), the government launched an all-out war on these organizations. It can now report major successes, such as the dismantling of the urban apparatus of the M-19.

A Revolutionary-Marxist Strategy

The central tasks that serve as the basis for the PSR's proposals are the following:

1. Unity in a single front of struggle for trade-union unity and centralization, construction of a single trade union, and unity in action against the Security Statute. On the basis of a united-front policy, to fight for the inclusion of all possible sectors, which may include bourgeois figures, in the struggle against the statute and for democratic rights. Within this framework, however, to emphasize the mobilization of the masses as the main instrument for ensuring that the workers themselves take the lead in this fight. At the same time, it is necessary to take advantage of all remaining legal openings in order to widen our field of action; it is also necessary to wage a great ideological battle against all forms of capitulation in the face of this fight.

2. Big working-class struggles have begun to develop after several months of isolation and intimidation that resulted from the offensive aimed at destroying the National Trade-Union Council. The oil workers held a solidarity conference in Barrancabermeja to prepare for their mobilization. Government workers have mobilized against the 18 percent limit on wage increases that the government wanted to impose. In the Paz del Rio steel mills, a strike is brewing that may become one of the most important conflicts of the next period. The workers at Ericson and Corona; the workers in civil engineering; the miners of Antioquia; the dockworkers, telephone workers, and television workers; the workers at Indupalma; teachers at the Universidad del Valle at Cali; the activists in FECODE (Colombian Teachers Federation)—all have mobilized recently to one degree or another. They show the possibility for a wave of centralized struggles capable of weakening the government and forcing it into retreat.

Solidarity with these struggles is fundamental; centralizing them is decisive. More and more, everyone is beginning to understand that it is impossible to mobilize around wages or around trade-union rights without also condemning the Security Statute and opposing the other maneuver that the government is in the process of carrying out against the workers movement—the drafting and implementation of a labor reform that could lead to the destruction of the trade unions. This re-

form has already made it possible for more than 400 contracts to be negotiated without the participation and against the will of the trade unions involved. The fact that leaders of more than twenty trade unions are among the political prisoners makes it all the more necessary that no leaflet, no trade-union assembly, and no mobilization omit condemnation of the Security Statute.

3. A big National Forum on Human Rights was held on March 31, called by different Conservative and Liberal party figures, the CP, the Firmes movement, the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party),² and the PSR. Supporting this initiative were many artists and writers, such as Gabriel García Márquez, and trade-union organizations and federations. Many regional forums led up to it. Unified committees were formed, and a campaign was begun for a national referendum to repeal the Security Statute.

The PSR, for its part, organized conferences in the major cities and published a special pamphlet on the political reform of the state to build this forum. The pamphlet denounces the tortures, arbitrary detention, and attacks on human rights, and in addition proposes solidarity with the struggles of the working class and the resistance of the peasants and Indians to the military offensive in the countryside.

In the same spirit, a day of action for the right to abortion and contraception and against forced sterilization was held on March 31, organized by various feminist groups and by our party. Other themes were the sexual violence during torture committed against many women prisoners and the violence that women are subjected to in the workplace and in their cultural, sexual, and family lives. On this basis, we also celebrated International Women's Day on March 8 in Bogotá, linking up women's struggle against their oppression with the struggle to repeal the Security Statute.

4. The reactionary reform of the state, encouraged by the two-party system, is not inevitable, provided that the masses mobilize to put a stop to it. A partial lifting of radio and television censorship has been announced. This represents a victory for the journalists who fought in a determined way against this dictatorial measure with the support of all the working-class organizations and of many democratic organizations nationally and internationally. Even though the lifting of censorship means nothing but a return to the previous statute, which significantly limited the exercise of the journalistic profession and the opportunities for real information on events, it does represent a partial victory won through struggle.

The role of international opinion is very important. Committees of Colombians have been formed in Belgium, France, 2. A sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

Britain, Spain, Switzerland, West Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Their goal is to publicize the real situation in Colombia, carry out campaigns to expose the repression, organize solidarity actions, and collect statements from prominent persons, human-rights organizations, and the workers movement. Each day, the government must destroy hundreds of messages, declarations, and public statements of protest from all over the world.

5. As an alternative to the political reform of the state that the "little constituent assembly" was supposed to carry out earlier, and that the Security Statute is putting into effect today, the PSR puts forward the proposal for a big, popularly elected, and democratic constituent assembly, which could discuss and solve the problems created by imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation. It is that crisis which the Colombian regime is trying to solve through reactionary reforms

aimed at perpetuating the regime. The working masses must play the decisive role in the democratic struggles, by unifying their battles, building a single united front to carry out these tasks, struggling for political class independence, forging their own party—a revolutionary socialist party—and their own organizations. The only democracy we believe in is the kind that the working masses will win and guarantee through their own organizations. □

'Attorney General Is Not Above the Law'

'The Nation' Condemns Court Ruling Against SWP

[We are reprinting below the text of an editorial by Aryeh Neier that appeared in the April 7 issue of *The Nation*, an influential liberal weekly published in New York, commenting on a recent ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit against government spying and disruption.

[The court ruled that Attorney General Griffin Bell should not be held in contempt of court for disobeying a federal judge's order to turn over the files of eighteen informers to the SWP attorneys.

[While continuing its fight to obtain evidence of illegal activity by the FBI, the SWP has made public a proposal to the Justice Department to settle its five-year-old lawsuit.

[The proposal calls for an injunction against the use of informers to infiltrate and disrupt the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance; burglaries of the organizations' offices, or the homes of members; electronic surveillance; cooperation with right-wing terrorist organizations; interference with SWP election campaigns; and the maintenance of files on SWP or YSA members.

[In addition, the socialists are asking for a declaratory judgment affirming the SWP's status as a legal political party, and \$5 million in damages, plus legal fees.

[At a March 23 news conference, Larry Seigle, speaking for the SWP, condemned the appeals court ruling as "a blow to the rights of the American people." However, he explained that the ruling, by letting the government off the hook on the question of the identities of the eighteen informers, "clears the way for a settlement of the central issues."

["The Carter administration has said repeatedly that it has been fighting only to protect the identities of its informers, and that it no longer defends the decades of

illegal activities against our party," Seigle said.

[If this is true, he added, "there should be no obstacle to a settlement of this case along the lines of our proposal."]

* * *

First, the good news. A United States Court of Appeals has just "unequivocally affirm[ed] the principle" that the Attorney General of the United States is not above the law. Now, the bad news. The court doesn't mean it.

The court made plain its disregard for its own rhetoric by overturning a contempt order against Attorney General Griffin Bell that had been issued last June 30 by Federal Judge Thomas P. Griesa. The judge cited the Attorney General for contempt because he had engaged in a "totally unjustified attempt to obstruct" justice by disobeying a court order to turn over to lawyers for the Socialist Workers Party files on eighteen of more than 1,300 "informants" the F.B.I. had employed between 1960 and 1976 to spy on and disrupt the party.

The Socialist Workers Party is a small organization, and it is, as the Government now concedes, law-abiding. By contrast, the Government has been anything but law-abiding in its treatment of the Socialist Workers Party. For forty years, the F.B.I. has attempted to destroy it by tapping its telephones illegally, intercepting its mail, burglarizing its offices, not protecting it against bombings the Bureau knew about in advance and playing "dirty tricks" on it. A good deal of this was exposed during the court proceedings that started in 1973 when the party filed suit against the Government seeking an end to spying and disruption and asking for

compensation for the damages it had suffered.

The F.B.I.'s dirtiest work was done by the 1,300 "informants," a euphemism, as we now know, that often masks a much uglier behavior. Exactly what these informants did to the party is not publicly known but Judge Griesa, who has reviewed the eighteen representative files he wants turned over to the party's lawyers, says that they contain "the most important body of evidence in this case, recording in immense detail the activities of the informants, the instructions by the F.B.I. to the informants, and the F.B.I.'s evaluation of informant activities." It is evidence the S.W.P.'s lawyers need to devise an order that will protect the party against any continuation of these activities and to demonstrate how much the Government should pay to compensate it for the injuries it suffered. Even if they got the eighteen files, the party's lawyers would operate under a handicap because the great majority of files would still be withheld and because Judge Griesa deferred to the Government's fear that informants would face retaliation, and prohibited the lawyers from discussing the files with their clients.

To overturn Judge Griesa's citation of Attorney General Bell for contempt, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit—Judges Lumbard, Friendly and Oakes—had to do some pretty fancy footwork. In October 1977, the same court had ruled that Judge Griesa's order to turn over the files was within his powers and, in March 1978, had denied the Government's request for a rehearing. On June 12, 1978, the Supreme Court turned down the Government's effort to get it to review Judge Griesa's order. Then, on June 13, Attorney General Bell threw down the gauntlet and announced that he was assuming personal responsibility for defying

Judge Griesa's order and that he wanted a review of the order by the courts.

It was an astonishing assertion, and it should have made not the slightest difference legally because Bell, as the boss of the F.B.I., was already a defendant in the suit. The previous appeals had been brought in his behalf, and he was responsible in any case for complying with the court order. Even so, it worked. Stuck with its own earlier decisions, the United States Court of Appeals ruled on March 19 that Judge Griesa had the power to order Bell to turn over the files but—and here is the fancy stuff—that Griesa had abused his discretion when he cited Bell for contempt for defying that order. "Alternative sanctions" should have been considered, it said.

The effect of all this is that those informant files will probably never be revealed to the Socialist Workers Party's lawyers. As the Court of Appeals had to acknowledge, fashioning alternative sanctions "will not be easy." Leonard Boudin, the party's principal counsel, is pursuing the

matter in the courts, and Judge Griesa is now considering the appointment of a magistrate or a special master to review the files and come up with findings on which a decision in the case might be based. Boudin also has made a formal proposal to the Government to settle the case in exchange for an order prohibiting future harassment and is asking for \$5 million to compensate the party for the damages it suffered. A Government attorney, riding high now that it appears the files will never be disclosed, scoffed at the \$5 million figure. It might have been worth a lot of money to the Government to prevent their disclosure, but that pressure is now off.

It is just a few years, of course, since a President was forced from office for withholding information about illegal wiretapping against another political party. An Attorney General and several other high officials went to prison for their parts in that affair even though the intrusions on the rights of Democrats and other enemies of Richard Nixon were bush league com-

pared to what the F.B.I. did to the Socialist Workers Party. Why then should Griffin Bell be able to get away with defying a Federal court when Nixon et al. could not do so?

Of several possible answers, the most plausible one is the identity of the victims. A *New York Times* editorial on March 24 encapsulated the low level of outrage that is aroused by depredations against the rights of people such as those in the Socialist Workers Party: "We never thought he [the Attorney General] would or should be remanded to the custody of his own Bureau of Prisons for contempt of court, even though we agreed with Federal Judge Thomas Griesa that the files should be turned over." That's just how the Court of Appeals saw it: Even if Judge Griesa is right, the Attorney General shouldn't be held in contempt for defying him. The legal principle that emerges is less than resounding. It goes something like this: An Attorney General is not above the law, except in cases involving groups like the Socialist Workers Party. □

\$7,000 Raised for Scholarship Fund

500 Attend New York Memorial Meeting for Evelyn Reed

By Matilde Zimmermann

[The following article appeared in the April 20 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

NEW YORK CITY—Five hundred people turned out here April 8 for a meeting in tribute to Evelyn Reed. A member of the Socialist Workers Party for forty years, known internationally for her contributions in the field of anthropology, and as a fighter for women's rights, Reed died of cancer March 22.

The meeting was chaired by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Barnes noted that hundreds of messages had been received—messages from every corner of the world, "messages from friends who were sixty years younger than her, and those who were her own contemporaries."

Mary-Alice Waters, speaking for the Political Committee of the SWP, gave the featured talk at the meeting. She paid tribute to Reed the rebel, Reed the Marxist scholar, Reed the feminist, and above all, Reed the revolutionary fighter.

"When she became convinced that the



Della Rossa

EVELYN REED

working class could transform society, Evelyn turned her back on the first thirty-

five years of her life and gave every ounce of her energy to the task of building a revolutionary working-class party in the United States," Waters said.

Other speakers at the meeting included Willie Mae Reid, SWP vice-presidential candidate in 1976; Carolyn Kerry, forty-five-year veteran of the SWP who had known and worked with Reed over the years; novelist James T. Farrell; and Connie Harris, a leader of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International.

Harris described Reed's leading role both as an internationally known figure in the women's liberation movement and in the world Trotskyist movement.

"Evelyn the feminist was inseparable from Evelyn the revolutionist," Harris declared. "She saw the women's movement as an integral part of the class struggle, and she understood that the liberation of women was possible only through the struggle for socialism."

A collection for the Evelyn Reed Scholarship Fund totaled \$7,391. The fund will be used to help establish a school where selected members of the SWP can set aside time for intensive study of Marxism. □

What the Steelworkers March and the Elections Showed

On March 23, following months of protest in the heavily industrialized north and east of France, 100,000 steelworkers, coal miners, and their supporters shook the boardrooms of Paris with a march on the capital to demand a halt to layoffs in the steel industry.

On March 25, in the final round of elections for 1,848 local government posts, the results confirmed that the capitalist Giscard-Barre regime was in fact a minority government. A majority of French voters cast ballots for the candidates of the two major workers parties—the Socialist Party (32.9%) and the Communist Party (17.3%).

What do these developments reveal about the level of the class struggle in France? What has been the role of the CP and SP and of the two major trade-union federations—the CGT (dominated by the CP) and the CFDT (influenced by the SP)? What is the road forward for French workers in face of the government's program of austerity and layoffs?

These questions were taken up in a statement issued by the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), French section of the Fourth International, and published in the March 30-April 5 issue of their weekly newspaper, *Rouge*.

Major class battles clearly loom on the horizon, the LCR states:

The working-class explosions in Longwy and Denain, the mobilizations in the Nord, Lorraine, and Ardennes, and the rise of struggles in other regions and sectors all reflect an abrupt acceleration of the class struggle in France. The results of the local elections, in which the governmental coalition was once again shown to be a minority, demonstrates, above all in the regions hardest hit by unemployment, workers' desire to finish with this regime once and for all.

These two developments reveal that the working class's capacity to respond has not been broken by the electoral defeat in 1978, that workers' militancy and radicalization stands at a high level, and that a major confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie in France is on the agenda in the period ahead.

It is still too soon to predict how the struggles of the next few months will unfold, the LCR states. But "the steelworkers remain highly mobilized, and [Premier] Barre's statements show that they can expect nothing from negotiations. Thousands of them are so exasperated that there remains the possibility of an explosion that would set off chain reactions."

At issue is the ability of the Giscard-Barre government to push ahead with its austerity program:

If Barre's policy is to succeed in extricating

French capitalism from its crisis, it must first deal the working class a significant defeat. It has to substantially increase profits at the expense of wages, through a major increase in the rate of exploitation. The relationship of class forces makes this impossible at present. Consequently the brutal attacks of the Barre [austerity] Plan III have above all provoked a rise in workers' protests and the social climate we are experiencing today.

In this situation, the response of the Communist and Socialist parties has been to do everything in their power to hold these struggles back.

From 1972 until a few months before the March 1978 legislative elections, the CP and SP channelled and controlled the mass movement through appeals to "unity." Since the breakup of the Union of the Left, however, these parties have used a policy of division to block the aspirations of the working class and to provide a cover for their policy of class collaboration.

The endless polemics with which the CP and SP went after each other following the defeat in March 1978 were primarily aimed at persuading workers they had suffered a grave setback that could not be overcome in the short term, that working-class unity was impossible, and that consequently the CP and SP leaderships were justified in their policy of inaction, class collaboration, and refusal to challenge the government. . . .

The immediate effect of this policy was to legitimize the present government by drumming into the workers that no alternative to it existed. And when, in face of mobilizations, that was no longer enough, the CP and SP gave the Giscard-Barre government direct support by demanding a special session of parliament [to "discuss" the layoffs] and then presenting two separate motions of censure.

The CP is using the SP's close relations with the capitalists in other European countries where Social Democratic parties are in power to discredit the SP, counterposing its own call for a union of all "patriotic" forces in France. The CP's policy, the LCR states, "is crystallized today in its calls for increasing 'French production' and for a struggle against a 'German-dominated' Europe—along with all the other chauvinist poison it raised during the Lorraine steelworkers' struggle."

The SP, on the other hand, seeks to present itself to French capital as a possible alternative to the present government, an alternative that would seek to impose "reasonable negotiations" on the workers in the name of an "austerity of the left."

What accounts for the degree of success the Stalinists and Social Democrats have had so far in this wrecking operation?

The margin of maneuver they have today for this dirty work stems from the gap between rank-

and-file militancy (reflected in major but scattered upsurges) and the subjective weaknesses of most of the advanced workers engaged in these struggles. The latter stems both from their limited experience in previous struggles and from the still too small implantation of revolutionary Marxists in the working class.

The march on Paris, impressive though it was, could have been many times larger, the LCR states. The CFDT refused to take part in it, partly to show the bosses how far it was willing to go in terms of class collaboration, and partly because the CP, owing to its heavier implantation in the industrial working class, "was in a much better position to capitalize on it politically."

The CGT, which supported the march, did so for its own narrow reasons:

In backing very early the idea of a march on Paris, the CGT had a three-fold aim:

- To base itself on an existing mobilization to establish a minimal relationship of forces for future negotiations with the bosses.
- To discredit the CFDT and play upon its internal divisions.
- To enhance its image by appearing as the only federation that was both militant and interested in unity (while at the same time negotiating, along with all the other federations, on how the layoffs would be carried out).

[CGT leader] Séguéy was no more desirous than [CFDT leader] Edmond Maire of unleashing a wave of massive struggles and tests of strength—above all in the climate that had been created by Denain [the northern steel center where workers fought a pitched battle with riot police March 7].

That is why, while using militant rhetoric, Séguéy fixed very firmly the limits the march could not go beyond. It was supposed to be limited solely to the "steel regions" with stress not on "all together for the same demands" but "a warm welcome by Parisians for the workers from Lorraine." Separate marches were called for CGT government employees, March 29; for the Ardennes, March 30; and for secondary school teachers, March 20. And in reply to charges that the march was "political," he emphasized its strictly "trade-union" character.

To combat the government's austerity program and to counter the obstacles presented by the CP and SP's divisive maneuvers, the French Trotskyists are seeking every opportunity open to them to urge a general, united, and effective response to the bosses' attack.

Today in the unions, to counter the leaderships' proposals to simply "manage" the crisis or to organize a local response, members of the LCR must take the offensive by systematically linking proposals for immediate struggles and for united actions with a political alternative. This is the only way to fundamentally take on those who are seeking to demobilize the workers.

Contrary to the claims of the leaders of

the major workers parties and the union federations, "such a political alternative does exist—a government of the SP and CP!"

The present regime is discredited. It came to power by a razor-thin majority, and has since been rebuffed in every by-election. In the wake of all the mass mobilizations, in the wake of the local elections, it is clear that the SP and CP have the confidence of the great mass of workers in whose name they claim to speak. These two majority workers parties must face up to their responsibility and present themselves as an alternative government. That is what the workers must relentlessly demand of them. . . .

The workers are making clear their desire to finish once and for all with the present government of unemployment and austerity. It is through their mobilizations that they can and must compel the leaders of the majority workers parties to unite, in action, to defend their demands, support their struggles, and announce clearly the intention to form a government to replace that of Giscard-Barre. . . .

To be sure, it is not enough to simply demand that the SP and CP end their policy of dividing the workers and collaborating with the bosses. . . . Only the massive mobilization of the workers can force the SP and CP to face up to their responsibility.

As slogans for these mobilizations, the LCR proposes:

No layoffs! A thirty-five-hour workweek immediately!

A 2,600 franc monthly minimum wage, with an across-the-board increase of 400 francs for all!

No cutbacks in social security or any other services!

End the divisions! Unity of the trade unions and workers parties to win our demands, to get rid of Giscard-Barre!

Coordinate our struggles! Everyone together against the government! Prepare a general strike!

Out with Giscard-Barre and the Assembly! For an SP and CP government!

tion of the adultery laws, the rights of women in divorce cases, abortion, etc.

These demands have always been part and parcel of the struggles of the workers movement from its inception, even if they were supported by bourgeois feminists. The *Communist Manifesto* testifies to this. It says: ". . . the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private." The existence of the "double exploitation" of working women leads to the existence and necessity of a special orientation based on the program of the Fourth International.

'In Sorrow Thou Shalt Bring Forth Children'

Teacher and student comrades discussed the effects of the government's austerity policy as it relates to women's health care. The shortage of hospital personnel has wiped out medical advances in the field of painless childbirth, perpetuating the Catholic church's reactionary doctrine of "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Likewise, the cost of the medical tests necessary for insertion of an IUD induces doctors to dispense with them, leading to accidents or to doctors' simply refusing to provide this contraceptive method.

A nurse's aide explained how the fighting spirit of women workers was beginning to challenge the exhausting working conditions found in hospitals.

Various other questions were raised. Should the OCI itself try to make up for the inadequacies of capitalist society in such areas as child care and babysitting? Should the OCI help set up abortion clinics on the campuses? Wouldn't that mean substituting, without any real guarantees of security? Are we going to build a separate women's organization? Is our women's liberation work essentially concerned with raising demands?

We're Not Trying To Set Up 'Counter Institutions'

These questions were answered by redefining them according to Marxist principles. The goal of the revolutionary party is not to create an ideal "counter society" among its own members, but to overturn capitalist society. Within this perspective, it includes the special demands of women in its revolutionary struggle as a way to mobilize working women against capitalist society and the bourgeois state. Thus, this special political orientation takes on its full significance in the context of the struggle to win 10,000 members to the OCI, and to pave the way for the democratic assemblies.

This discussion was only a preliminary one. In order for the OCI to be able to decide what specific forms of activity to carry out, individuals were designated to set up the women's commission of the OCI.

Hold Meeting to Discuss Fight for Women's Rights

OCI Demands Halt to Restrictions on Abortion

[The following article appeared in the March 7-14 issue of *Informations Ouvrières*, the Paris weekly reflecting the views of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI—Internationalist Communist Organization). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

"This government claims the right to tell women and couples what to do in their personal lives. Madame Veil, a 'liberal' woman and member of a 'liberal' cabinet, is the sponsor of a law that restricts abortion on demand and payment for abortion through social security. Four years ago, all the parliamentary delegations in the National Assembly voted for this law!"

Just prior to the opening of a legislative session whose agenda will include a vote on extending the Veil law, six women members of the OCI drafted the call from which the above quote was taken.

How, in fact, can we allow these bourgeois moralists in the National Assembly, who take their orders from the church, to discuss and vote approval of restrictions on the right to free abortion on demand, which is solely a personal right of women and couples?

It was to discuss these questions that a meeting of OCI members was held on February 28.

The reporter echoed the words of the Transitional Program to lay the basis for the OCI's formulations and specific orientation to working women as part of the

task of building a revolutionary party. He stressed the importance of the fight for free abortion on demand, a democratic right that stands in opposition to the Veil law. He recalled the role of women in making a revolution, using the example of the Union of French Women in 1944, which controlled the tenants' committees and reopened the schools but lapsed into inactivity owing to the policy of the French CP. He also cited the sixty-seven-day strike by women employees of Social Security in 1978.

Women's Double Exploitation

In the discussion, several women raised the "classic" question of the value of political work oriented specifically to women. Several comrades, for instance, held that issues such as child care, parents' involvement in their children's education, and abortion affected men as well. By developing a special orientation to women, didn't the OCI run the risk of sliding into ultraleftism, which counterposes the interests of "men" and "women" and winds up counterposing the interests of women, regardless of their class, to those of the proletariat?

In capitalist society, women are "doubly exploited," both as workers and as those who bear the main burden of caring for children and housekeeping. All class societies have oppressed women. History is studded with attempts to win recognition of elementary rights for women within the framework of the overall fight for democratic freedoms—the right to vote, abroga-

Cuba Twenty Years After the Revolution

By Livio Maitan

The twentieth anniversary of the Cuban revolution was celebrated in a somewhat paradoxical situation. Those who had been its most enthusiastic supporters in the 1960s kept silent or issued summary condemnations whose recurrent theme was that Havana is the same as Moscow. At the same time, eulogies of Cuba and its leaders were spun by those who for years had made no secret of their mistrust, and indeed, hostility, particularly the bureaucrats in Moscow, Prague, and East Berlin, and those leaders of the Latin American Communist parties who continue to hold some of the more orthodox Stalinist views.

However, the real record of the workers state's twenty years warrants neither blanket condemnations nor apologetic judgments. We will strive to show this in the remarks that follow.

A Synopsis of the Record

To begin with, we must not forget the impact of a revolution that can only be compared, in the history of this century, with the Russian and Chinese revolutions. The victory of the July 26 Movement qualitatively transformed the country's socioeconomic structures, sweeping away the old ruling classes and bringing an end to all forms of oppression and exploitation by imperialism. What remains of the classes representing the old regime, essentially in agriculture and commerce, has absolutely no specific weight such as constitutes a danger for the collectivized economy born out of the destruction of the old state and the thoroughgoing expropriation of capitalist property, both foreign- and native-owned.

Second, we must not underestimate the fact that the very existence of the Cuban workers state implied and implies a structural weakening of imperialism in that part of the world. Nor should we minimize—after the fact—the impact the Cuban revolution had on the evolution of the political relationship of forces throughout Latin America and on the subjective maturation of significant sectors of the working class, peasantry, and radicalized petty bourgeoisie.

We should not lose sight of the fact that the victory of the rebel army, the mass mobilizations that accompanied it, and the revolutionary social measures adopted in 1959 and 1960 gave an unequivocal practical reply to a question that the Latin American workers movement had been discussing for decades—whether it was

possible to launch a revolution in a region most directly under the control of U.S. imperialism, and to ensure its victorious outcome.

Finally, let us remind ourselves again that, despite all the difficulties that we have analyzed elsewhere and which we will come back to further on, Cuba has experienced an economic and cultural growth that has no equivalent among other underdeveloped countries, in Latin America or on other continents, which have remained in the capitalist framework.

Here are a few brief figures having to do with the increase in production from 1958 to 1977: steel, 11.5 times; electricity, 4.3 times; cement, 3.6 times; oil refining, 1.7 times; fertilizer, 5 times; nickel, 2 times; citrus (1976), 4.3 times; eggs (1962-78), 10.4 times; milk (1963-77), 4 times; ice (1976), 7.6 times; tractors (1975), 6 times; construction (1976), 6.5 times; fishing (1976), 8.8 times; merchant marine, 14.2 times; exports (1976), 5.4 times; imports (1976), 6.4 times.

It should be added that, using 1958 as the base year, some of the operations involved in sugar production began to be mechanized (the indexes for 1978 range from a low of 29 to a high of 98).

As for education, it is sufficient to recall that before the revolution, secondary-school students numbered 85,000, and university students 15,000. In 1978 they numbered 1,043,000, and 145,000 respectively.¹

I would like to underscore a fundamental point. Cuba has not been able to go beyond the condition of a country that essentially has a one-crop economy, despite its success in exporting nickel, tobacco, and fish. Sugar still represents more than 80% of its exports (90% of sugar production is exported). However, especially in the last five years, the price of sugar on the world market has fluctuated drastically (in 1973, by international agreement, it went from \$.0325 to \$.0515 per pound; the following year it hit \$.60, and in 1977 it plunged again to a level between \$.06 and \$.11, with a bracket between \$.11 and \$.21 as the basis of the international agreements). In a colonial or semicolonial country, with a "free" market economy, such fluctuations would have caused terrible economic and social dislocations.

Cuba, on the other hand, was able to

1. All these figures were published by the Cuban press, including *Bohemia* and *Granma*, for the twentieth anniversary.

avoid having its economy completely disorganized and a large part of its population reduced to starvation, precisely because the revolution introduced collectivized relations of production, and because the country has established economic ties with other workers states, particularly the Soviet Union, which, in general, bought sugar at higher prices and sold oil at lower prices than those on the world market.

Economic Development: Bottlenecks and Tensions

The unfavorable evolution of the terms of trade owing to the world recession has not, however, been without negative consequences for the Cuban economy, which obviously had a reduced importing capacity. To take one example: the increase in labor productivity in some sectors of industry could not be exploited to the full because of bottlenecks created in other sectors by the scarcity of certain imported materials.

The projections made in 1975 of a 6% average annual rate of growth (between 1970 and 1973 this rate was roughly 26%, 10% in 1973) were not reached in 1976 (the increase was 3.8%), or in 1977 (4%). In 1978, however, the results were higher than anticipated—9% as compared to 7.4%. Nineteen seventy-eight was also a good year for sugar production, with the second largest crop in history—7.3 million tons—being recorded. It was second only to the harvest of 1970, which, as we know, was obtained only through strenuous efforts and under exceptional circumstances.

Industrial production grew by 9% overall, copper by 8%, and construction of factories by 14%. Tourism, which is now being promoted after much hesitation in order to increase the supply of foreign currency, developed considerably. However, some service industries did not reach the goals of the plan.

For 1979, the plan anticipates a 6% growth in the total social product, and a 4% growth in economic productivity overall.

The conclusion that can be drawn, based on official statistics, is that, even after the 1970 turn, economic growth has continued to be uneven and relatively slow, on the whole. As we have already indicated, the basic handicap represented by a one-crop economy has not been eliminated. As far as the difficulties that the Cuban economy continues to run up against are concerned,

such as the bottlenecks and pressures, we will limit ourselves here to mentioning a few of the significant problems in different areas.

First, if we look at the building industry, we note that the need—calculated at 100,000 housing units per year—is not expected to be met until 1985. In 1978, the goal of 24,500 units was not even met; only 16,000 were built (the failure is officially attributed to weather conditions as well as to late deliveries of materials from abroad).

Everyone knows that to promote housing construction, “minibrigades” were used, that is, brigades formed in the workplace which were supposed to provide additional labor. But in practice, in a number of workplaces, the “minibrigades” were organized out of the excess labor force. Thus—to use Castro’s expression—instead of having an excess of work, they had an excess of workers. So a solution was worked out that revolved around transforming the “minibrigades” into government brigades, with the advantage that the housing they built would be distributed to any citizen, whether or not they belonged to a given workplace. But this ran up against major resistance, mainly from workers who did not want to leave workplaces where they earned higher wages.²

It should be added that another difficulty in the area of housing lies in the fact that rents are not sufficient to cover either construction costs or maintenance costs. That is why the decision was made to change one of the basic standards of the urban reform law. For new housing, the principle that rent corresponds to a percentage of the wages earned by the head of the family unit will no longer be applied. These steps will result, among other things, in increasing the variations in the real standard of living among the workers.

A whole series of problems have persisted in the area of factory management and the organization of labor. As we have mentioned elsewhere, the criterion in effect is one of “individual responsibility combined with collective leadership.” In fact, the manager is the supreme authority; he is designated by higher bodies and assisted by a management board that includes the trade-union leadership.

Workers’ participation in discussions of the plan, analysis of the results, and the use of funds to provide material incentives is guaranteed by “different ways and forms” (especially by mass assemblies). In the final analysis, this participation does not include any real decision-making power over crucial issues; we are closer here to the Soviet than to the Yugoslav “model.” Moreover, it should be recalled that while enterprises have their own status in the eyes of the law, they are under the control of the state, which sup-

2. The housing problem was discussed on numerous occasions. See, for example, Castro’s speech to the trade-union congress (*Granma*, December 17, 1978).

plies their basic means of production and working capital in the framework of centralization.

One of the features of the new direction taken after 1970 was that a system of production norms was brought into general use, while at the same time a priority was placed on material incentives. Such a system can, of course, ensure an increase in labor productivity, but it involves serious drawbacks, tendencies liable to cause tensions. In his speech to the trade-union congress at the end of 1978, Castro gave a fairly clear picture of the problems that had arisen.

To begin with, the norms remain very uneven. In some cases they are fairly mild

“The revolution has left behind it certain idealist stages . . .”

(for example, in agriculture), while in others they are too harsh.

Second, as a result, tangible wage differentials persist and are even sharpening, so that, on the one hand, it is difficult to find workers to fill certain jobs (machinists’ helpers, for example), and on the other hand, one-way transfers take place (for example, as a result of the pay increase given to college professors, it is now difficult for JUCEPLAN, where salaries are lower, to hire economists).

Third, there is an incipient tendency for historically new wage levels to be created, that is, privileged wage levels compared to the average. In addition, what happens is that the wages paid are either higher or lower than they should be in relation to the work actually accomplished.

Finally, one of the consequences of these problems and tensions is what in other latitudes is called “alienation in the workplace,” in other words, the tendency to arrive late and be absent frequently without sufficient reason. Neither Castro nor the reporter Roberto Vega spared their criticisms of managers and cadres who, for the sake of avoiding trouble or not disrupting friendly relations, look the other way.³

We mentioned earlier, in regard to agriculture, that sugar production is still the decisive factor. But Cuba’s agricultural economy is running up against a further obstacle of a structural nature. Thirty percent of the arable land still belongs to the private sector. This is partly subsistence farming. Still, this sector produces nearly all the coffee and tea, and about 25% of livestock raising, 20% of deliveries to the sugar industry, 50% of fruit and vegetable cultivation, etc. The last congress of the peasants association (ANAP) in May 1977 criticized all of the drawbacks of such a situation, such as the difficulty of

3. See *Granma*, December 12, 1978. Cases of school absenteeism were also condemned.

promoting efficient mechanization. It decided to build up the cooperatives, but without much success; cooperatives are being formed at a fairly slow pace (by the time of the congress there were only 43 cooperatives; a year later there were 136, including a total of 21,500 hectares and 3,650 peasants).⁴

Finally, in a few years Cuba may find itself facing the same problem China has had for a decade, that is, the disproportion between a growing number of graduates and the relative scarcity of available jobs. Castro is concerned with this; he has indicated some of the difficulties that already exist (for example, the impossibility of granting everyone who receives a diploma from the Facultad Obrera admission to the universities), and he is starting to say that it is good for everyone to be able to get a college education, but that this does not imply that everyone can have a job corresponding to his or her degree.

The leading group is seeking a solution to the multiple tensions we have just mentioned, and to the problems of economic growth in general, putting the emphasis on the need to further step up production. For instance, it is insisting on the need to raise labor productivity still further, both through tighter discipline and stricter supervision by the managers and cadres, and through increasing material incentives. The leadership explicitly states that consumption must be subordinated to the needs of accumulation. It is, in fact, outlining the prospect of sacrifices and of a very modest improvement in living conditions for the present generation, which—as the recent trade-union congress made clear—must devote itself to development. Holding down consumption will make it possible, within the scope of the planning now under way, to export more industrial products (such as cement and textiles) and thus to raise necessary imports.

To use Castro’s expression, it is unquestionable that “along the way, the revolution has left behind it certain idealist stages, certain utopian, unreal stages.” Unfortunately, it has done so, and is increasingly doing so, by adopting, in theory and in practice, conceptions and methods that have already been tried—with what results!—in the USSR and other countries of Eastern Europe.

Institutionalization

Beginning in 1976, the institutional structures spelled out by the new constitution began to be set up. Therefore, it is possible to outline an initial assessment—even if it is only a rough one—of how these bodies (municipal assemblies, provincial assemblies, and a national assembly elected by the municipal assemblies) have functioned. Each district was made up of a relatively small number of voters (from a

4. See *Granma*, No. 4, 1978.

minimum of 250 to a maximum of 3,000), and each voter cast a ballot for a single delegate from the list of candidates in the district. A total of 10,725 delegates were elected. Those who got more than 50% of the vote on the first round were elected immediately; in districts where no candidate received a majority of the votes cast, a second round was held. The first variant occurred in 7,888 cases.

There were 30,000 candidates, that is, three times as many as the seats to be filled. Two significant details were that 70.4 percent of those elected were members of the Communist Party or youth organization, and that the delegates had to take an oath, in which they promised to "consciously and freely submit to the leading role that the Cuban Communist Party plays in society."

The national assembly, whose members, like delegates to the other assemblies, are recallable, is the supreme institutional body, according to the constitution. But how does it really function? In 1977, it held two sessions (in July and December), which lasted three days each and dealt with a huge number of problems. For example, at its July session, after having elected some twenty-odd commissions, the national assembly unanimously approved a number of proposals in the space of one morning. These had to do with protection of Cuba's cultural heritage, national monuments, military tribunals, and the organization of the court system.

On the following day, it passed four other bills, including one on the family code. At the same session, it was decided that deputies should report back to their constituents every four months—instead of three, as previously planned—and that the plenary sessions of the municipal assemblies should be held four times a year instead of six. Sometimes there were amendments passed by majority vote. At the December session, the seventeen points on the agenda were discussed, including the plan for economic development, the government budget for 1978, and the new criminal code.

It is clear that under such conditions the assembly cannot really exercise its decision-making powers in areas that it should have jurisdiction over. The fact that the party Central Committee—which also met twice a year during the same period—decides the same questions in advance (at least in the most important cases, such as the plan) says a great deal about the assembly's real role. It should be added that the last three plenary sessions of the Central Committee lasted only a single day, which shows that this "supreme body" does not have substantial powers either.

The lower-ranking assemblies and delegates do, of course, have more direct ties with their constituents and make real decisions in their respective areas. Furthermore, the Committees for the Defense of

the Revolution (CDR), in which more than four million citizens are active, according to official figures, are continuing to function. However, they carry out circumscribed tasks that require nothing more than horizontal forms of democracy. It is significant in this regard that the first national congress of the CDRs was not held until 1977, that is, seventeen years after their formation!⁵

In an article published at the time, we analyzed the preparations for and conduct of the Cuban CP congress, which was held for the first time at the end of 1975 (see *Intercontinental Press*, April 26, 1976, p. 698). The least that can be said is that propagandistic and ritual aspects distinctly prevailed over real democratic debate.

In 1977, the Union of Communist Youth (UJC), whose membership had gone from 122,000 to 411,000 since the previous congress (1972), convened its third congress. The role that such an organization could play is shown by the mere fact that 45% of the country's labor force is under thirty years of age. In fact, the UJC congress was not very interesting from a political standpoint.

The speeches by representatives of the party—Perez and Raul Castro—were marked by moralistic and paternalistic tirades and by worry about the dangers that would await the revolution in twenty or thirty years if a stubborn struggle were not carried out against all the "revisionist" and "antisocial" tendencies to which the younger generation might fall victim.

Raul seized the opportunity to illustrate his conception of the "three pillars of the Cuban revolution," namely, "internal unity of the party under its first secretary, Comrade Fidel; indissoluble unity between the party and the people; and the unity of all Cubans with the USSR, birthplace of the great October revolution and of the brilliant Lenin." A Stalinist or Brezhnevite bureaucrat would not have put it differently.⁶

The congress of the trade-union federation (CTC—Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions), held at the end of last November, did not add anything new or make any changes in the conceptions and practices brought to light by the previous congress. From the official reports, it is clear that orchestration and propaganda

played an inordinate role. (Castro personally chaired most of the sessions.) A detail whose exact significance is hard to grasp is that during the election of the leadership by secret ballot, ballots were cast against certain prominent leaders. The announcement was greeted with a few murmurs from the audience, but Castro commented favorably on what had happened.

As regards the role of the trade unions and their relations with the state, the documents and speeches repeated the formulas ratified by the previous congress, combining correct observations about the need for a distinction between the trade unions and the state, and on the trade unions' particular task of protecting workers' rights against "all kinds of incomprehension, arbitrary acts, and injustice" with the clear reaffirmation of the party's leading role in relation to the trade unions and other mass organizations, and an idealization of the "socialist" state in its present form.

"What happens is that under socialism a miraculous identity and identification comes about between the interests of the workers and the interests of the entire nation, which is, of course, a nation of workers," Castro said. In this framework, he next conjured up the bogey of economism, while adding that the problem does not arise in Cuba, and ruled out as absolutely fantastic the possibility of strikes taking place: "Strikes? Who talks about strikes in a revolutionary process, in a socialist process?"

Unfortunately for Castro, the experience of all transitional societies to this date, including Cuba, shows that things are not that simple, and that the "miraculous" identification of the workers' interests with those of "their" state has still not occurred!⁷

The conclusion that can be drawn is that the process of institutionalization and restructuring of the mass organizations has not culminated in a situation identical to what exists in other workers states. For example, despite the obvious parallels, the functioning of the assemblies is not characterized by the same bureaucratic rigidity as the "assemblies" in the USSR or Bulgaria. There is, in fact, much more living contact between elected officials and their constituents—because of the smaller size

5. For information on the composition of the CDRs, etc., see *Granma*, Nos. 40 and 41, 1977.

6. In his speech on the anniversary of the revolution, Raul Castro used a similar formulation in regard to the "three factors that explain the consolidation of the revolutionary government in Cuba," namely, "party internal unity based on democratic centralism and the purity of Marxist-Leninist principles; unity of the people around the party and the supreme leader of the revolution, Comrade Fidel; unity of all Cubans with the socialist community, and above all, with Lenin's great homeland, the Soviet Union" (*Bohemia*, No. 1, 1979).

7. See also the speech by Jesús Montané, member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, and head of the Central Committee's bureau of mass organizations. Montané reaffirmed the leading role of the party, while adding that "the party has a special interest in seeing to it that the mass organizations generally maintain the independent functions and authority that belong to them." To make this more specific, he added that it is necessary to follow the example of Lázaro Peña. The reference is anything but reassuring; Peña has long symbolized the Stalinist trade-union bureaucrat, and in 1966, he was relieved of his functions.

of the election districts, for one thing—and there may be a choice of candidates.

Another example: the ideology and practice of the trade unions is not identical to those of the degenerated and deformed workers states. As we have shown, there is a combination of conceptions and methods involving differences of emphasis, if not of interpretation, and thus, a broader latitude in practice.

The result of all of this is that forms of "horizontal democracy" exist in Cuba that either do not exist in other workers states or have existed only at certain conjunctures and in certain sectors (i.e., during the rise of self-management in Yugoslavia, or in the period of the gravest crises of leadership and biggest mass mobilizations in China), and that the ties between the leaders and the masses remain more direct and alive than in any other country.

Still, as to whether there exist in Cuba political structures and mass organizations such as would ensure genuine socialist democracy—that is, the exercise of decision-making power by the masses, along with real democratic debate on the big economic and political issues, the reply can only be negative. It is not necessary to point out that the lack of such revolutionary democratic structures has a much more serious meaning and impact today than in the wake of the victory of the revolution in 1959-60.

Matters are certainly not helped by the unconditional hymns of praise the Cuban leaders and press continually sing to the USSR and other bureaucratized workers states, nor by the arbitrary, indiscriminate condemnation of the dissidents in Eastern Europe as a group in terms reminiscent of the Moscow, Prague, and East Berlin press. This is all the more true since Cuba still systematically uses Soviet texts, both from the Stalin and post-Stalin eras, for the ideological training of cadres and activists. A mere reading of the press is sufficient to grasp this.

Meanwhile, any conception or position representing a revolutionary Marxist or far-left point of view (or that is presented as such) is belittled and falsified in a purely Stalinist style. Trotsky himself has continued to be the target of virulently polemical articles that monstrously distort his ideas.⁸ The police conception of history, which detects agents or spies everywhere, has found fervent followers in Cuba as well.

Cuba, Moscow, and Africa

We cannot analyze here in detail Cuba's international policy in various corners of the world. We will limit ourselves to a few major points.

8. See, for example, an article by Jesús Orta Ruiz, published in *Granma*, November 12, 1977, which we commented on in *Rouge*, December 27, 1977. (See "A Question for Fidel Castro," by Livio Maitan, in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, January 16, 1978, p. 52.)

First, it should be recalled that Castro gave as early as 1972 a clear explanation of the turn that had been made. As a "small country surrounded by capitalists and blockaded by the Yankee imperialists," Cuba could not wait for the revolution to conquer the rest of Latin America in "ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years." It was forced to enter the "socialist camp" and enlist in political and diplomatic maneuvers with bourgeois governments in Latin America and elsewhere.⁹ This policy has been followed systematically ever since.

It could be argued that, in the realm of theory, documents written by the Cuban leaders have stated the need to give an international dimension to the construction of socialism, and, above all, that Havana's most important foreign-policy initiatives over the last three or four years were motivated by an internationalist conception of the struggle against imperialism.¹⁰ We neither deny nor minimize such aspects; in particular, we in no way question that the Cuban intervention in the Angolan war, and Cuba's aid to the Ethiopian revolution, have helped to weaken the foothold of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism in general in Africa. But this overall judgment cannot make us lose sight of a number of other elements.

1. Cuban foreign policy follows that of the USSR as far as the major questions are concerned. For years it has been impossible to detect the slightest criticism or reservations toward Moscow on the part of the Cubans. The Soviet Union and its loyal allies are glorified in extravagant terms and held up as a beacon of internationalism and socialist democracy.

Here are two examples among the many

Lack of revolutionary democratic structures is a serious problem . . .

that could be given. *Granma* has not hesitated to describe the Soviet constitution as "a monument to fundamental human rights" without worrying about whether the proclamations in that constitution are actually carried out!

During his visit to Moscow in February 1979, Raul Castro made this statement to the head of the Soviet bureaucracy:

You are the highest-ranking leader of the party that is leading the Soviet state toward new and higher peaks of progress and prosperity for the people, and that practices a Leninist foreign policy in the interest of the peoples, of peace, of security, and of the future of humanity.

9. See Castro's speech on July 26, 1972.

10. See, for example, a text published by *Granma*, December 11, 1977.

The positions taken toward the United States in a more recent period have not involved any concession that can legitimately be criticized. But they fall within the framework of peaceful coexistence, which has traditionally been the recurring theme of the Soviet bureaucracy's policies.

2. The Cuban leaders have renounced all criticism of the Communist parties of Latin America, whose strategic conceptions and tactical approaches are presented in a favorable light, and with whom they have signed joint documents. Occasional hesitations—for example, in regard to the Argentine CP's attitude toward Videla¹¹—have never been translated into explicit criticisms, and, in any case, they change nothing in the overall picture. This picture includes the Cuban CP's acceptance of the policy of collaboration with sectors of the "national" bourgeoisie and with governments that reflect their interests, and, what is even worse, the glorification of bourgeois movements, governments, and individuals as revolutionary (Peru is a classic example of this).

3. While during the 1960s the Cuban leadership clearly explained that the Sino-Soviet conflict, because of the forms it had taken and its dynamic, was having a negative effect on the anti-imperialist struggle, particularly on the struggle of the Vietnamese against U.S. imperialism, it later took the side of the Soviet bureaucracy without any reservations, becoming a leading participant in the polemic against Peking (in his twentieth anniversary speech, Castro compared China to Hitler's Germany).

4. The Cuban leadership not only maintains cordial relations with the capitalist countries of western Europe, but it also hands out good marks to some of their representatives. For example, during the visit of the Spanish premier to Cuba, Castro said verbatim: "The transition in Spain is being carried out in a brilliant and progressive manner. Spain's future seemed doubtful at first, but it has become clear that nothing amiss is happening there. . . . Suárez is a capable and brilliant man, and, together with Juan Carlos, has written a very important chapter in Spanish history." This indicates, for one thing, that Castro no longer has any reservations about the policy of the West European Communist parties, particularly the Spanish CP (except, of course, where their attitude toward Moscow is concerned).

But let us examine Cuba's policy in Africa. Castro's view that Africa is now

11. Nevertheless, the Cuban press has published analyses such as the following: "Some sectors within the government try to enforce the ban by prohibitions, arrests and other such measures, while other officials (including President Jorge Videla) have held certain limited forms of dialogue with politicians and labor leaders" (*Granma*, December 31, 1978).

the weakest link of imperialism is at least disputable. But this is a secondary question. What is not secondary is that the Cubans present as socialist or "working toward socialism" not only Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, and Ethiopia, but also Benin and Guinea. (With regard to Ethiopia, Castro characterized the revolution in that country as a combination of the French and Bolshevik revolutions.) Even more serious is their acceptance of one of the founding principles of the Organization of African Unity, a veritable "holy alliance" in Africa, namely, the principle of the inviolability of borders determined, as we know, by the interests of the colonialists and neocolonialists without ever consulting the peoples or nationalities concerned.¹²

The Cuban intervention in the Angolan war played, we repeat, a progressive role. It was motivated by an internationalist impulse. But the same cannot be said for the presence of Cuban troops in Angola now. The Angolan regime, which signed agreements with some of the most reactionary neocolonial regimes, and established a *modus vivendi* with imperialism itself, notably in regard to the oil reserves in the Cabinda enclave, is a neocolonial regime and in no sense a workers state. It has not hesitated, nor does it hesitate, to harshly repress its left opponents, who have ties with sectors of the masses and speak for their legitimate struggles around economic demands and democratic rights. Whatever the subjective intentions of the leaders—and that goes double for the sentiments of the Cuban masses—the Cuban contingent is objectively helping to build or consolidate a neocolonial regime.

Similar considerations apply to Ethiopia. The Cubans must be given credit for intervening, with heavy sacrifices, to support the struggle of a neocolonial country against imperialist attacks or maneuvers, direct or indirect. But their participation in the military operations in the Ogaden already raised questions, inasmuch as a national question might have existed (it is necessary to consider how independent the Somali question was or could have been, in the broader context of an operation in which reactionary forces hostile to the Ethiopian revolution were unquestionably involved).

In any event, when the war shifted to the north, with the objective of crushing the Eritrean fighters, no more doubt was permissible. The Addis Ababa regime was denying the right of self-determination to a people who had been struggling for their independence for about twenty years. Of course, Cuba partly took its distance by not participating directly in the military operations, and by declaring on several occasions that the Eritrean question had to be settled through negotiations. But

12. See *Granma*, December 11, 1977; May 22, 1977; and July 17, 1977.

such a declaration was by and large theoretical, inasmuch as, on the one hand, it maintained its military support to the Ethiopian regime, allowing it to concentrate its efforts in the north, and on the other hand, it stated that a political solution could not put the unity of the Ethiopian state in question. Since the crucial point is precisely that the Eritreans do not

The Cuban intervention in the Angolan war played a progressive role . . .

want to remain within that state and are struggling for their independence, the Cuban position in fact took the side of the Addis Ababa regime.

The question of whether or not Cuba acted independently of Moscow is, from this angle, relatively unimportant. In the specific case, Moscow's and Havana's positions are not entirely identical. It is probable, furthermore, that the decision to intervene in Angola was originally made independently of Moscow. But in the first place, an independent decision does not signify a conflicting decision. Second, and more importantly, Cuba could not and cannot get involved to the degree it has without an agreement with the USSR, which it heavily depends on, from the economic as well as military standpoint. In the last analysis, whatever the partial differentiations, Cuba's international policy today is, on the whole, part of the international policy of the Soviet bureaucracy. The repeated proclamations of friendship and loyalty are not just rhetoric tailored to the occasion, but reflect a real situation.¹³

Cuba and the Other Workers States: Similarities and Differences

In a 1975 article (see "Problems of the Cuban Workers State," *Intercontinental Press*, March 15, 1976, p. 408), we drew attention to the fact that "aside from some differences stemming from specific factors (socioeconomic context before the revolution, the formation and evolution of leading groups), largely analogous conceptions and methods have tended to prevail in the transitional societies that have emerged to date." Since then, this tendency has intensified further, not only in the macroscopic case of China, but also as far as Cuba is concerned.

We will not go back over the typical features of a workers state, which naturally show an identity between Cuba and the other workers states. But increasingly

13. A recent confirmation is provided by the complete identity of views on the Indochina crisis of the end of 1978 and beginning of 1979. It is significant, among other things, that Raul Castro paid a visit to Moscow at the height of the armed conflict between Vietnam and China.

close affinities are appearing in other areas, such as forms of economic management that exclude real participation by the masses in the major decisions; the priority placed on material incentives; acceptance and even attempts at theoretical justification of the supposed inevitability of variations in income and standard of living within the working class and all the more so between working classes and other social layers.

Still more important is the fact that, although to a different degree and as a result of different processes, Cuba, like the other workers states, is characterized by the absence of institutions of socialist democracy. The big decisions remain the prerogative of small leading groups that dominate the state and the party. Then, like the other workers states, Cuba theorizes about and practices the principle of the single party and its leading role in regard to all the mass organizations and political and social structures. Within this party—as in the trade unions—it is forbidden to form tendencies or groupings. Finally, whatever the nuances of expression, the construction of socialism is conceived also by the Cuban leaders within the framework of a national state. Hence the inevitable tendency to subordinate the interests of the world's struggling masses to the needs of maintaining and defending that state.

Some will counter this assessment by recalling the specific historical origin of the Cuban revolution and the Castroist leadership, the role that they played in the 1960s, and the subjective intentions of the leading group, including up to the present.¹⁴ But the decisive criterion is: What mechanisms were or are operating, what results have they produced, what is the dynamic that is taking shape?

We repeat: It is a primary observation that, twenty years after the victory of the revolution, a genuine socialist democracy does not exist. Historical experience has demonstrated that it is precisely the lack of organs of socialist democracy—or the crushing of them—that opens the road to bureaucratization. Especially in a country still marked by poverty, despite the progress made, bureaucratization is inevitable within the framework of a national state and the given political conditions. The problem is to find out what proportions this phenomenon has reached, whether or not the bureaucracy has become a genuine crystallized social layer, cut off from the working class and other working layers;

14. We should explain, in passing, that changes in the composition of the leading group from the standpoint of origins are not in themselves decisive. In other words, we do not believe that coming from the "historic Castroist" movement is an absolute guarantee and that coming from the PSP is a danger. To our mind, a man like Carlos Rafael Rodríguez has shown himself on several occasions to be less "Stalinist" than Raul Castro.

whether it is now essentially conditioned by the desire to defend by any means necessary its powers and privileges.

Revolutionary Marxists have always tried to distinguish the different phases of a process, not to confuse the seeds of a phenomenon with its full flowering, or incipient tendencies with their culmination. At the same time, they have rejected any and all fatalist attitudes; sociopolitical processes do not take place with the inevitability of meteorological occurrences. It is a well-known fact that Trotsky began to criticize tendencies toward bureaucratization beginning in 1923 (Lenin did so as well), but it was not until the beginning of the 1930s that he postulated the qualitative degeneration of the workers state, and then stated the necessity for a political revolution against the bureaucratic regime. He did this on the basis of an overall assessment, taking all the factors of a combined process into account.¹⁵

We say explicitly that we do not possess all the necessary data at the present time. There is a particular deficiency in regard to a crucial point—the extent of bureaucratic privileges. Still, there can be no question that such privileges exist, and that the bureaucrats—not necessarily the central leaders—enjoy a higher standard of living than the masses from all standpoints. It also seems clear to us that the bureaucrats generally tend to defend the positions of power or authority that are the source of their privileges. The fact that it is the middle-echelon bureaucrats who play the most conservative role has only a relative importance; the same phenomenon occurred in the beginning in the Soviet Union.

But we consider that at the present stage the privileges have not assumed the proportions they have in the other workers states. What is more, the extent to which there has been a crystallization of bureaucratic layers and their powers is smaller beyond comparison. This is also reflected in the fact that the leaders have and tend to maintain relations with the masses which, while marked by paternalism, do not exhibit the same authoritarian traits as in the other workers states, and the fact that the masses do not, in general, consider their leaders as an alien or hostile group.

Moreover, there is not and has not been the same type of repression in Cuba as in the USSR, Eastern Europe, or China. The political prisoners—whose number is rapidly diminishing—are nearly all actual counterrevolutionaries, usually guilty of concrete actions against the workers state. In addition, as we have said, the political structures are not completely ossified, and do allow for some partial forms of democracy.

Finally, despite its alignment with Mos-

cow and a number of positions taken in the course of the last decade, the Cuban leadership has not shown itself to be insensitive to the needs of internationalist struggles. Above all, it has never been guilty of any crime or betrayal comparable to those the leaderships of other workers states and Communist parties have been guilty of.

What Attitude to Take?

Some will say that if the tendencies we ourselves have pointed to continue to develop, bureaucratic degeneration in the strictest sense is inevitable, and that there is little evidence pointing to the possibility that these tendencies will be reversed in the short or medium term.

We repeat: any and all fatalist approaches must be rejected.

In a 1933 article on the class nature of the Soviet state, Trotsky wrote:

Can it be cured? Will not further attempts at cures mean a fruitless expenditure of precious time? The question is badly put. By cures we understand not all sorts of artificial measures separate and apart from the world revolutionary movement but a further struggle under the banner of Marxism. Merciless criticism of the Stalinist bureaucracy, training the cadres of the new International, resurrecting the fighting capacity of the world proletarian vanguard—this is the essence of the "cure." It coincides with the fundamental direction of historic progress.

During the last few years—appropriately enough—our opponents have told us more than once that we "are losing time in vain" by occupying ourselves with curing the Comintern. We never promised anybody that we would cure the Comintern. We only refused, until the decisive test, to pronounce the sick as dead or hopelessly ill.¹⁶

Such a methodological approach is needed today in regard to Cuba. The point is not to draw conclusions on the basis of insufficient data, or to declare that, in any case, the process of bureaucratization is irreversible. It is practice that will decide, and it is precisely the possibility of a test of practice that exists.

The characterization of Cuba, not as a degenerated workers state, but as a workers state with very grave bureaucratic deformations, in no way prevents us from affirming the need for a struggle against the bureaucratic tendencies and methods that have existed for a fairly long time now. It does not prevent us from making a critique of the crucial questions, condemning whatever gets in the way of building a genuine socialist democracy, or fighting for substantial changes.

This means that, in the field of propaganda, revolutionary Marxists must explain all their conceptions of the structure and functioning of a society of transition, including, in the first place, freedom of

16. "The Class Nature of the Soviet State," in *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1933-34]*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972, p. 105. It should be recalled that at the time, Trotsky had not yet called for political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

expression, the press, organization, and so on. Moreover, to demand the right of organization—in the framework of a new society, and with obedience to its basic laws—does not automatically mean one favors the formation of a new Communist Party, just as the struggle for the right to self-determination does not automatically imply the goal of separation.

In an arena of more immediate struggles, it will be necessary to fight for freedom of discussion of all economic and political questions at all levels (including the right to be informed about discussions that take place, including in the top leadership bodies), and for the freedom to publish newspapers, books, journals, without any censorship whatever. At the same time, it will be necessary to fight for real democratization of the trade unions, for their real independence from the party and the state, for the right to form tendencies while adhering to discipline in action. The same right must be demanded inside the party.

On international questions, there will have to be a struggle for a clear distinction to be made between the foreign policy of the government and the international policy of the party. If, for example, the government considers it tactically useful to establish good relations with Peru or Panama, this should not involve praise of the governments or leaders of those countries in the party's propaganda.

Cuba must continue to engage in internationalist actions against imperialism and the native ruling classes, but it must refuse to offer any military or political aid that helps to consolidate neocolonial regimes. In the case of Ethiopia, it will have to recognize that the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination takes priority over maintaining the unity of the Ethiopian state, and that goes double for the "principle" of the inviolability of African borders.

Finally, Cuba will have to establish normal relations with all the workers states, and, linking up with Che Guevara's fight during the 1960s, take the initiative in the struggle to reconstitute a united front of the workers states against imperialism, putting a stop to a division that has already had tragic consequences, and is giving rise to an even more dangerous dynamic.

A struggle for such goals would allow for the test of practice we have spoken of. If it had an impact on sectors of the masses, it would inevitably have repercussions on the cadres and the leadership itself, leading to differentiations and realignments. This is an extremely difficult perspective to implement, given the subjective forces. But it is a matter of a potential created by objective conditions. It would be an error to ignore it and resign ourselves in a fatalistic way to an "irreversible" process of bureaucratization.

February 25, 1979

15. See also, in this context, my 1975 article mentioned previously.