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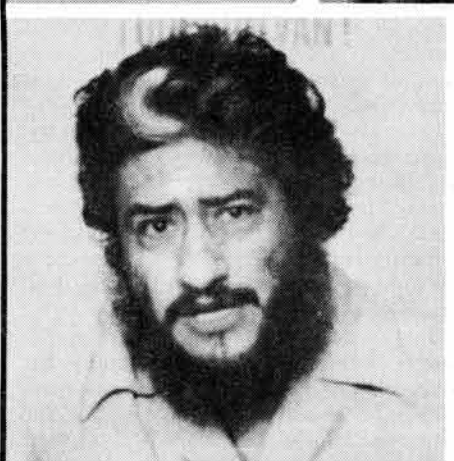
Nine Iranian Trotskyists Behind Bars in Khuzestan



HAMID SHAHRABI: One of nine Trotskyists jailed for support to Iranian Arabs.



Sandinista Offensive Shakes Somoza Regime



HUGO BLANCO

Hugo Blanco Arrested in Peru

Pol Pot Aide Admits Kampuchea 'Slaughter'

NEWS ANALYSIS

Hugo Blanco Arrested in Peru

By Fred Murphy

Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco was seized by State Security agents at the Arequipa airport on June 8, while on his way to a peasant congress in the southern city of Puno.

Blanco was transported under guard to State Security headquarters in Lima, where he was held briefly. He was then brought before the Executive Committee of the Constituent Assembly, accompanied by the deputy chief of security of the Peru Investigations Police (the political police). The Executive Committee ordered his conditional release.

Blanco was set free, but during subsequent days was being kept under close surveillance by the cops. By June 11, the authorities had presented no public accounting of the charges they are seeking to bring against the Trotskyist leader.

As a deputy in the Constituent Assembly from the Workers, Peasants, Students, and People's Front (FOCEP), Blanco is supposed to enjoy parliamentary immunity from prosecution, so long as the assembly does not vote to lift that immunity.

The case of FOCEP Deputy Hernán Cuentas—who was arrested during a miners strike in March—was to be taken up by the assembly on June 12. Blanco's supporters were pressing for the charges against him to be heard and resolved on that date as well.

It is possible, however, that the regime will seek to keep its charges against Blanco and Cuentas secret and pending until the assembly's term expires on July 28. After that date, no deputies will enjoy

immunity.

Blanco's arrest comes at a time when a new wave of labor ferment is sweeping Peru. On June 4, the 140,000 teachers of the United Union of Educational Workers of Peru (SUTEP) began a nationwide strike to demand union recognition, a 100% wage increase, and fulfillment of other pledges the regime made to halt an eighty-day teachers strike last July.

Ten thousand university workers began a strike on June 7, and the 25,000 workers in Peru's Social Security hospitals have been on strike since mid-May.

These work stoppages have been accompanied by daily street demonstrations of teachers and students in Lima and other cities. The cops have tried to break these up with tear gas and have arrested some 1,000 activists throughout the country.

Virtually the entire leadership of the SUTEP—some 300 unionists—was jailed in the days leading up to the teachers strike.

The SUTEP's 1978 strike became a focus for mass discontent and opposition to the dictatorship. By carrying out massive arrests and stepping up harassment of well-known working-class leaders like Hugo Blanco, the regime is trying to prevent that from happening again.

Letters and telegrams demanding the dropping of charges against Hugo Blanco and Hernán Cuentas and the release of the jailed students and teachers should be sent to Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez, Presidente de la República, Palacio Presidencial, Lima, Peru. □

Italy—Big Drop in Vote for CP

By Gerry Foley

The June 3 parliamentary elections in Italy registered a growing disenchantment with the policies of the Communist Party and the search for an alternative by a significant number of its supporters.

The vote also pointed up the dangerous lack of any political leadership defending the real interests of the working class. Millions of unemployed youth, workers and layers of the middle class are becoming infuriated by cuts in their standard of living and the disappearance of hopes for any answer to their problems. But they find no party prepared to lead them in fighting for solutions.

The biggest loser in the elections was the Communist Party, the major party in the Italian working class. Its vote for the

Chamber of Deputies dropped from 34.4% in 1976 to 30.4%. This was one of the biggest electoral setbacks in the party's history.

The CP's losses were the result of its policy of "historic compromise" with the Italian bourgeoisie.

The CP's support had begun to rise sharply with the deepening of the capitalist crisis, when it was seen as an alternative to the bourgeois government.

In the last parliamentary elections in 1976, the CP, following its "historic compromise" line, refused to fight for a workers government. As a result, the party's advance lost its momentum.

Since 1976, the Stalinists have used their votes in parliament to keep a Christian

Democratic government in office and to support its austerity policies.

The "historic compromise" line involved giving up any perspective of struggling for major social changes. The CP abandoned any fight for a solution to the problems facing the youth and the impoverished masses in the backward south. Its theoreticians even began to spin arguments about the need to defend the interests of the "producers," that is, the employed workers, against the "nonproducers," the unemployed youth and southerners. They also argued that austerity could be a means for "transforming" society.

The fact is that the CP did not even defend the immediate interests of the employed workers. The unions led by the CP tried, with increasing difficulty, to keep the workers from fighting back against the Christian Democrats' attempt to cut their living standards.

For several months before this election, there were clear signs that sections of those who voted for the CP in 1976 were becoming disillusioned.

The capitalist press had anticipated a decline in the CP vote, expecting that the Christian Democrats would be the gainers. But the bourgeois party's vote even declined slightly, from 38.7% to 38.3% for the lower house.

Thus, the setback for the CP did not reflect a significant political shift to the right.

The vote for the ultrarightist parties declined, as well.

On the other hand, neither the vote for the Socialist Party nor that of the centrist parties that claim to stand to the left of the CP increased significantly. The two centrist groups, Party of Proletarian Unity (PdUP) and the United New Left together got 2.2% of the vote. In the last parliamentary elections, there was only one centrist slate, Democrazia Proletaria, which got 1.5% of the vote.

The party that made the largest gains was the tiny petty-bourgeois Radical Party, which is considered antiestablishment, having played a prominent role in a number of struggles on democratic issues such as women's rights and the fight against repressive laws.

Those who switched their votes from the CP to the Radicals were looking for a way of fighting the evils of Italian bourgeois society, but they were diverted down a blind alley. This petty bourgeois group—it is hardly even a party—has no answer for the fundamental problems facing the Italian masses.

Only a clear line of class independence and uncompromising struggle against the bourgeoisie and all its political parties can offer hope for solving these problems. The longer the masses that want to fight their way out of the capitalist crisis do not get such political leadership, the greater the danger that sections of them will become disoriented. □

Chinese Dissidents Appeal for Support

By Dan Dickeson

Despite the arrests of at least thirty prominent dissidents in Beijing and despite official restrictions on their right to circulate critical literature, fighters for democratic rights in China continue to carry on public activity. Beijing's "Democracy Wall" is still a focal point of discussion and debate, and various underground publications, including *Beijing Spring*, continue to be sold there.

One group of dissidents has issued an appeal for international solidarity to help free their arrested comrades. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* reported May 21 that the appeal was made by the staff of the journal *Explorations*. The leader of their group, Wei Jingsheng, is among the best-known of those arrested since the regime launched its crackdown in March. Before his arrest, Wei wrote the famous article calling for "Democracy as the Fifth Modernization," as well as an exposé of conditions in Chinese prisons.*

A handwritten copy of the appeal, addressed to "every government, organization and man and woman loving democracy and freedom," was handed to a foreign journalist in Beijing. The text, in rudimentary English, reads as follows:

As such people who love democracy and freedom and mankind's dignity, we are fighting to oppose those brutal arresting. We appeal to you for support. To appeal to you to give pressure as possible as you can give to the Chinese government for releasing these arrested people.

We believe democracy, freedom and mankind's dignity will be bound to overcome every kind of despotism including the Chinese Communist Party's.

Long live the true friendship between all the people who love democracy, freedom and respect mankind's dignity.

A May 21 Agence France-Presse dispatch from Beijing reported that the April 5 Tribune, another dissident group, put up a poster on Democracy Wall May 20 denouncing an article in the official press that called for a ban on "inflammatory" wall posters.

Later that day, a man went to the wall and attempted to rip the poster down. He was immediately surrounded by a crowd of fifty angry poster-readers, who accused him of being a "supporter of the gang of four," and told him to either rewrite the torn poster or else "lick it and stick it back again."

The man was finally rescued by military security guards stationed nearby.

Several other posters replying to articles in the official press reportedly appeared on the wall that day. □

*For translated excerpts of that exposé, see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 21, p. 507.

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Free Imprisoned Trotskyists in Iran!

By Cindy Jaquith

The Socialist Workers Party of Iran (HKS—Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist) has launched a national campaign to win the release of nine HKS members imprisoned in Ahwaz. Because the lives of all nine are in immediate danger, the HKS has appealed for emergency protests from supporters of the Iranian revolution around the world (see box).

The case has already received wide media coverage in Iran, with reports on the arrests in every major daily.

The Trotskyists were arrested between May 30 and June 1 during the massive roundup of Arab protesters, oil workers, steelworkers, and others in Khuzestan Province, the center of the oil industry. The Khomeini-Bazargan government sent in troops in an attempt to crush opposition in the province after a strike by customs workers in the port city of Khorramshahr exploded into a major struggle of Arabs for their full national rights.

The Arab struggle in Khuzestan poses one of the most serious challenges to the capitalist central government to date. Of the many oppressed nationalities in Iran, the Arabs are the most proletarianized. Sixty to seventy percent of Arab workers are in industry, many of these in the oil fields. Their struggle will have repercussions throughout the Iranian working class.

Although the military conflict between Arabs and government troops has subsided, hundreds of people, including three members of the oil workers council and at least twenty steelworkers, are under arrest in the province.

HKS members Omid Mirbaha and Mohammed Poorkahvaz were picked up May 30 by officials of the local Imam's Committee, whose leadership is loyal to the pro-capitalist Ayatollah Khomeini. They are in Karoun Prison.

On June 1 seven more HKS members in Ahwaz were arrested at their homes by Imam's Committee guards. Their books, other political literature, and clothing were confiscated. The roundup occurred the day after the Ahwaz HKS issued a statement in support of Arab rights and for the lifting of martial law.

The Imam's Committee has refused to disclose the whereabouts of these seven Trotskyists or to allow lawyers to see them. The seven include five men—Mustafa Seifabadi, Hormoz Fallahi, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, Morteza Gorgzadeh, and Hamid Shahrabi—and two women—Fatima Fallahi and Maha Hashemi.

The Ahwaz prosecutor has told relatives of the HKS members that their case is "serious" and that a full investigation is under way.

No formal charges have been made. However, the Council of Revolutionary Courts in Ahwaz released a statement that was reported in the Tehran daily *Ettela'at*. The council said that among the many people who have been arrested are "CIA collaborators." It also said that four men and two women who had "provoked" the Arab masses were under arrest. No names were given.

These statements and the government's attempt to keep the Trotskyists' case shrouded in secrecy indicate the danger of the situation.

Nevertheless, the HKS has been able to publicize the case of the nine throughout Iran and mount an aggressive fight around democratic rights. Trotskyists in Tehran, in addition to holding two news conferences, have been leafletting on the case widely. They report that many people know about the arrests despite attempts by the government to prevent the facts from getting out.

In one incident where HKS supporters were leafletting in a park, Imam's Committee guards tried to arrest them. People in the park came to the defense of the Trotskyists, forcing the guards to back down.

The attempt to crack down on the HKS comes in the context of the government's

continued inability to establish stable capitalist rule. Where the Khomeini-Bazargan regime has tried to militarily suppress struggles, as in Kurdistan and Khuzestan, it has failed to decisively crush the militants and has had to back off. Nor has it been able to whip up a chauvinist fervor among Persian workers against the oppressed nationalities.

The masses remain vigilant in defending the gains of the revolution from imperialist threat. After the United States Senate condemned the execution of criminals from the shah's regime, large demonstrations against the U.S. government took place in Tehran.

In the industrial working class, where the decisive power to advance the revolution lies, political discussion continues unabated. The same is true in the armed forces.

The workers are looking for answers for how to carry through the economic and social changes they fought for in the February insurrection. The HKS is the only party presenting a concrete program of class struggle, the only party explaining how the workers and peasants can protect the revolution from imperialist threat. It is also the only party that has championed the rights of oppressed nationalities, explaining the need for class solidarity with their struggle as part of uniting all revolutionary forces to defend and extend their gains.

Thus the HKS has gained a wide hearing among the masses despite its relatively small size.

This was shown by the turnout of 70,000 people in Tehran May 30 to hear HKS leader Babak Zahraie debate Islamic Republic ideologist Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr. Thousands have also turned out in other cities for HKS rallies. Some 35,000

Tehran Picket Demands Release of Trotskyists

Three hundred supporters of the nine imprisoned Socialist Workers Party (HKS) members picketed Prime Minister Bazargan's offices in Tehran on June 9.

The protestors carried signs demanding "Free the Nine!" They also waved placards in defense of the three members of the oil workers council and the twenty steelworkers arrested in Khuzestan Province, and in support of a People's Fedayeen activist who was jailed by the government some time ago.

On June 10 the Tehran dailies reported on the picket line, and noted that protests against the arrest of the HKS militants were taking place in other countries as well.

The success of the picket line was a victory for democratic rights in and of itself. In the past, public meetings of the HKS have been attacked by right-wing thugs, sometimes forcing the gatherings to be postponed.

At the June 9 picket line, a gang of rightist goons arrived and tried to provoke a fight with the HKS supporters. But the picketers continued their demonstration, refusing to be drawn into a fight.

Toward the end of the picket, guards from the Imam's Committee showed up. Leaders of the guards, apparently under orders, intervened to prevent the right wingers from creating an incident.

copies of the Trotskyist newspaper *Kargar* (Worker) are being sold weekly.

The move to arrest nine HKS members is one of the regime's first attempts to victimize revolutionists known for years of struggle against the shah and his imperialist backers. Several of those arrested were active in exile in the United States, where they helped build the internationally

known Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI).

The HKS case can become a major test for the regime in the battle for democratic rights. Already in Tehran the arrests are becoming known as "The Case of the Nine."

By the aggressive stance it has taken to defend its comrades and others arrested in

Khuzestan Province, the HKS is taking the lead in combatting government attacks on democratic rights. Workers and others will be watching closely to see the outcome of the case. A victory for the Trotskyists can have a big impact on the struggle across Iran for free speech, freedom of the press, and the right to form political organizations. □

Why Trotskyists in Ahwaz Are Target of Government Attack

By Gerry Foley

For months before the arrests of nine Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) members in Ahwaz, the Trotskyists in this southern oil center had suffered systematic harassment by procapitalist forces, including former SAVAK agents, in the local Imam's Committee.

In an interview I conducted with Hamid Shahrabi, one of those recently arrested, and other Ahwaz HKS members in Tehran in early April, Shahrabi said:

"Our comrades are constantly being arrested while selling our paper, sometimes two or three times a day. They are taken to the Imam's Committee, given the third degree, and threatened."

The rightists also organized gangster-style attacks. Ali, another HKS member in Ahwaz, described an incident that happened in early March when HKS members were selling their newspaper in front of the oil refinery.

"First a man came by in a car and tried to provoke us. Then a group came in a minibus and attacked us with knives, axes, and brass knuckles. They tried to turn over our car, and they threw our papers in the gutter."

Fatima Fallahi, a woman HKS member, who is also among those arrested, said: "The man in the car called the women 'whores.' When they take us to the Imam's Committee, they tell us that it's not decent for women to sell newspapers. But even though there are a lot of backward attitudes about women in Iran, activists at the committee defend our right to sell."

Ali described a similar response at the oil company gate:

"People there we didn't know at all defended us. We found out later that the workers there took our papers out of the gutter and read them. It's very important for us to continue to work openly. Everywhere groups are developing that want to assert their democratic rights. They look to us as an example, and that includes groups of soldiers."

The HKS organized a news conference in Ahwaz to protest the attack by the thugs and to launch a petition in defense of their right to sell their paper. Most of the press attended and took a sympathetic attitude. But their reports were blacked out by

tightening censorship.

"After the news conference," Fallahi said, "a comrade of ours rushed off to the official press agency without combing his hair. The man there told him to take better care of himself because 'the Socialist Workers Party is so important for us.'"

"The other day," she continued, "I was talking to an old peasant. He is always giving us tea. I told him that he might be threatened, because everyone who talks to us is. He said, 'Don't worry about me, I have nothing to lose. Just take care of yourselves because we know that the Savakis are after you.'"

It was ex-SAVAK agents in the committee and not the group as a whole that were responsible for the harassment, another activist said.

"These people attacking us say they're Islamic fighters. We think that is not true. We think they're instigated by ex-Savakis.

"There are real militant fighters in the Imam's Committee, people who spend twenty hours a day giving protection, helping people. There is also another group that I can say without hesitation are ex-Savakis.

"To cite just one incident: We went to one of these committees to ask an ayatollah for a statement. One of us, an electrical worker, recognized well-known Savakis. They were actually running the committee, giving directions to the people coming in.

There is indignation among the radicalized committee activists about the role played by ex-Savakis.

"Members of the committee told us they have a list of SAVAK agents they got from the police files," Ali said.

Where to Send Protests

Emergency protests demanding the immediate release of the nine Socialist Workers Party (HKS) members arrested in Iran are needed from supporters of the Iranian revolution around the world.

Telegrams and phone calls demanding the government free the nine should be sent to:

Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan
Office of the Prime Minister
Tehran, Iran

Islamic Revolutionary Council
Tehran, Iran

Protests should also be directed to Iranian embassies and consulates around the world.

"To give you some idea of the spirit of these worker militants, we have just recruited one who had a house left him by his father. It was all he had. He came to the conclusion that he should sell it and give the money to the party. He told us, 'I have found my house, it is the Socialist

Workers Party. I don't need another one.' That is the sort of thing that encourages us."

The Arabs, who suffered double oppression under the old regime, were particularly angry about the assault on democratic rights, Shahrabi said.

"An Arab worker told me, 'We were shut in this hot building [Ahwaz is in a torrid desert area]. We finally managed to push our way out to the roof, and now they want to drive us back. But we like the open air too much. We're not going to let them shut us up again.'" □

Thai Army Steps Up Role in Kampuchean War

Pol Pot Aide Admits 'Slaughter' Under Khmer Rouge Regime

By Fred Feldman

"We no longer pay attention to the past or to political tendency. The priority is the struggle against Vietnam," Ieng Sary told correspondent R.P. Paringaux in an interview published in the June 2 *Le Monde*. (See p. 592 for text of interview.)

The former deputy prime minister in Pol Pot's regime is now second in command of the Khmer Rouge forces fighting to overturn the government of Heng Samrin in Kampuchea. The interview, one of several Ieng Sary recently gave to major international dailies, took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where a conference of ministers of "nonaligned" governments is meeting. The issue of who is the legitimate representative of Kampuchea has been hotly contested by participants there.

The *Le Monde* interview covered similar ground to one printed in the June 1 *New York Times*. [See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, June 11, page 570.] The Khmer Rouge commander is openly calling for a counterrevolutionary front and increased U.S. help to impose a proimperialist government on Kampuchea. He admits that the U.S.-dominated military regime in Thailand and the CIA-controlled Khmer Serei guerrillas are working closely with Pol Pot's forces.

Ieng Sary told Paringaux that the Khmer Rouge "will accept a regime with a mixed economy and the existence of a bourgeoisie" if the rightist front triumphs in Kampuchea.

One of the more interesting aspects of the *Le Monde* interview was Ieng Sary's account of the history and policies of the Pol Pot regime, which was overthrown last January by Kampuchean oppositionists and Vietnamese forces. He explained that the "radical" policies adopted by the Khmer Rouge when they came to power in 1975—such as the brutal evacuation of all cities, dispersal of families, and establishment of agricultural forced labor camps throughout the countryside—were dictated by the desire to prepare for war against Vietnam.

We cannot accept the legalization . . . of the Vietnamese presence [in Kampuchea]. That is a

question of life or death. Otherwise, what would have been the purpose of the sacrifice of the lives of hundreds of thousands of our inhabitants since the beginning? If we had accepted association with Vietnam, many deaths would have been avoided. . . .

We acknowledge that there have been excesses. They did not come from the leadership. They are excesses due to the ranks and to Vietnamese infiltration. We do not deny our responsibility for the slaughter, but our share is minimal. It is true that our revolution is radical, but we weighed the pros and cons before transferring the population, abolishing currency, and so forth. The necessity [in 1975] was to stabilize the country. We foresaw already the war with Vietnam.

In addition, widespread opposition to these reactionary measures within the Khmer Rouge apparatus had to be suppressed. Paringaux writes:

As for the purges and attempted coups within his own regime, the minister said that "Vietnamese infiltration" was the fundamental explanation. He said there have been six attempted coups. Some Khmer Rouge leaders—"agents infiltrated long ago"—took part in them: So Phim in May 1978; Vorn Vet, former minister of the economy, in November 1978. They were said to have committed "suicide" after their defeat. The subject of our interview was noticeably reluctant, however, to go any deeper into the question of internal dissent. Who remains of the leadership team of 1975? In the photos we saw four leaders—Pol Pot; Ieng Sary; Khieu Samphan, head of state; and Noun Chea, president of the former National Assembly.

For Ieng Sary, as for the imperialists, the admitted "slaughter," starvation, and disease that characterized Kampuchea under Pol Pot were a small price to pay for preventing "association with Vietnam"—that is, blocking the spread of socialist revolution in Indochina.

Far from the Vietnam-Kampuchea clashes being caused by "traditional national hostilities" between the workers and peasants of the two nations, it is clear that brutal repression of the Kampuchean masses was necessary in order to wage war against Vietnam.

Ieng Sary's interviews have been designed to promote the counterrevolutionary alliance imperialism has brought together against the Indochinese

revolutions. American and Japanese imperialism, the U.S.-dominated Kriangsak dictatorship in Thailand, the governments of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Kampuchean forces of every stripe—from the remnants of the supposedly pro-socialist Khmer Rouge to the CIA-built Khmer Serei—all have their assigned role to play in the drive to roll back the advances of the workers and peasants of Indochina.

The Carter administration hopes that the counterrevolutionary front now being openly put together will provide a cover for stepped-up U.S. involvement in military moves against Kampuchea and Vietnam.

Recent victories by Kampuchean government and Vietnamese forces in the Kampuchean civil war demonstrated that the Thai regime and the Kampuchean counterrevolutionary bloc don't have the muscle to single-handedly impose a proimperialist regime in Kampuchea.

Ieng Sary pointed to a basic reason for this when he admitted to Paringaux that between January and mid-April 1979 there were "people who went toward Heng Samrin and the Vietnamese, attracted by their program."

Carter fears—with good reason—that a victory for the Kampuchean workers and peasants, opening the prospect of a socialist revolution in that country, will give added impetus to the anticapitalist struggles in Thailand, further weakening imperialism's grip on that nation of some 45 million inhabitants.

Referring to the views of "authoritative diplomats," correspondent Louis Wiznitzer presented some of the Carter administration's thinking in the June 6 *Christian Science Monitor*.

The diplomats fear that the removal of Cambodia as an independent "buffer" between the two arch-rival nations of Vietnam and Thailand has created a permanent and dangerous instability.

The Vietnamese authorities, in turn, have made it clear, in private and public statements, that they are not interested in a Geneva-type conference aimed at neutralizing Cambodia under the rule of Prince Sihanouk. With the establishment of the Heng Samrin government,

they consider the Cambodia chapter closed. . . .

"The only hope to bring back stability in the area," according to a high-ranking and experienced diplomat, "depends on the will of the United States to play a more active role in Southeast Asia."

The effort to prop up the reactionary forces in Kampuchea in the wake of their military setbacks was a feature of the "nonaligned" gathering in Colombo. Most of the governments represented are neocolonial regimes deeply worried about the impact the spread of socialist revolution in Southeast Asia could have on workers and peasants in their countries.

The *New York Times* reported June 8 that the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore—all members of the U.S.-dominated Association of Southeast Asian Nations—are "solidly in favor of seating the Pol Pot delegates as the representatives of Cambodia at the current conference of third-world nations."

The imperialists hope this stand on the part of ASEAN nations will slow down other governments that might consider following India's example in recognizing the Heng Samrin government.

The military dictatorship in Thailand is growing more aggressive in its collaboration with the Khmer Rouge. The U.S.-supplied army has in turn been openly supplying the Khmer Rouge, helping them seek out weak points in Kampuchea's border defenses, transporting them miles into Kampuchean territory, blocking their capture by progovernment troops, and providing them with bases on the Thai side of the border.

Reports in the June 8 *Far Eastern Economic Review* and the May 31 *Latin American Daily Post* describe how the Khmer Rouge are extending their brutal antipeasant terror across the border. Thai peasants have complained that their homes, farms, and orchards are being plundered by Khmer Rouge gangs. Some peasants have been killed.

Despite a protest demonstration by more than a thousand peasants, Kriangsak's army has refused to stop the Khmer Rouge from pillaging.

The Thai army's active role in the fighting in Kampuchea is leading to clashes with forces supporting the Heng Samrin government as they seek to capture Khmer Rouge units or defend themselves against Thai military probes. Kriangsak announced May 27 that eighteen Vietnamese soldiers have recently been captured on Thai territory, according to the June 8 *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

U.S. imperialism's game plan includes the possibility of using such incidents as a pretext for a massive escalation of military action against Kampuchea.

The U.S. imperialists are also urging Beijing to increase military pressure on Hanoi. The Chinese Stalinist regime hopes to win economic aid in exchange for its counterrevolutionary services in Southeast

Asia. The invasion of Vietnam's border region last February was aimed at forcing Vietnamese troops out of Kampuchea so that a reliable capitalist government could be installed there.

Now the U.S. rulers are letting the Deng Xiaoping government know that so far its efforts have received a failing grade.

In the June 7 *New York Times*, Hedrick Smith wrote:

Six weeks after the Chinese-Vietnamese border war, American specialists believe that China failed to achieve most of its objectives, raising the danger of another, larger border conflict in the next year or so. . . .

"If there is a second war, it will be bigger than the first," a high-ranking American official said. "That war resolved nothing. The Vietnamese have not changed policy. They've showed no fear of China." . . .

By American reckoning, one Chinese objective was to force Vietnam to withdraw some of its troops from Cambodia, where they had led an insurgent Cambodian movement against the regime of Prime Minister Pol Pot, a Chinese ally. But instead of withdrawing, the Americans say, Vietnam has increased its forces in Cambodia by 30,000 to 40,000 troops. . . .

More recently, Vietnam has permitted Soviet naval vessels to use the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay.

Smith follows the current custom of imperialist spokesmen, describing U.S. imperialist goals and then ascribing them to the Beijing regime.

Thus Smith claims that it is primarily Beijing that objects to the reported Soviet use of Cam Ranh Bay as a stopover for its vessels. But it is the U.S. and Japanese imperialists who have expressed the most alarm.

The imperialist rulers are afraid that Soviet access to Cam Ranh Bay may strengthen the defense of the Vietnamese revolution, and mark a further breach in the imperialist military encirclement of the USSR. George C. Wilson reported in the May 10 *Washington Post*:

U.S. Navy strategists have long regarded Vladivostok, on the Sea of Japan, as a port they could bottle up easily if war came. But Cam Ranh Bay . . . would raise a whole new set of problems, according to Navy leaders.

To clear the road for stepped-up imperialist moves in Southeast Asia, capitalist governments and news media are on a concerted campaign to turn public opinion against the Vietnamese revolution.

A full-page advertisement that appeared in five major U.S. newspapers on May 30 is one example of this war propaganda. Signed by a combination of long-time bitter opponents of the Vietnamese revolution and onetime antiwar activists, the "Open Letter" describes Vietnamese society as a "nightmare" because of purported violations of human rights. (See article on p. 595.)

Another theme is the charge of Vietnamese "expansionism." According to this the Vietnamese people—having just won a

thirty-year war during which the French and U.S. imperialists devastated the country—have set off on a crusade to conquer Southeast Asia.

Thus Patrice de Beer wrote in the June 3 issue of the British *Manchester Guardian Weekly*:

The question is whether [Vietnamese] nationalism, once victorious, did not feel cramped on its own territory and has not now found itself a vocation on an Indochinese, even South-east Asian, scale. Isn't the "march toward the South," which has been a constant of Vietnamese history in the past few centuries, about to repeat itself, but this time towards the West?

Louis Winitzer warned in the June 6 *Christian Science Monitor* that the Vietnamese regime might "send their tanks all the way to Bangkok in an effort to topple the Thai 'domino' once and for all."

And the Beijing Stalinists have joined in this imperialist war propaganda. Winitzer wrote:

Peking is said to be convinced that Vietnam wants: (1) to create an "Indo-Chinese Federation" that would subject Cambodia and Laos to its rule; and (2) to march west and then south to bring Thailand and Malaysia under its control as well. China has, therefore, made it clear that it would come to the assistance of Thailand, should that country be attacked by Vietnam.

This is a classic example of the way imperialist propaganda tries to turn the victim into the criminal. Resistance by a workers state to imperialist aggression is portrayed as a war of conquest.

Neither the Beijing Stalinists nor the imperialist powers are suffering from the hallucination that Hanoi is scheming to conquer Indochina or Southeast Asia. They know that as a workers state, Vietnam is under no compulsion to seek new markets and arenas for investment through military conquest.

And they know that the Vietnamese regime seeks class collaboration, not war, with imperialism and its clients. That is why Hanoi has offered to politically support the Thai and Malaysian rulers against peasant guerrillas in those countries.

That is why the Vietnamese leadership sought peaceful coexistence with the Pol Pot regime despite its increasingly bloody attacks on the vital agricultural regions along Vietnam's borders. Hanoi maintained this stance until it became evident that Pol Pot was getting steadily increasing support not only from Beijing, but from U.S., Japanese, and Australian imperialism, and from the semicolonial Thai regime.

It is not Hanoi's nonexistent expansionism that the imperialists and their neocolonial allies fear, but the depth and attractive power of Vietnam's socialist revolution. The drive to crush the workers and peasants of Indochina remains the source of the escalating war danger in Southeast Asia today. □

Text of 'Le Monde' Interview With Ieng Sary

[The following interview with Ieng Sary was conducted by *Le Monde* correspondent R.-P. Paringaux. We have taken the text from the June 2 issue of *Le Monde*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

COLOMBO—Ieng Sary is the deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in the Cambodian regime that fell in January. He is in Colombo to try to save his government's seat in the nonaligned movement. In an interview here, he has declared that he is ready to make a blank slate of the past and to collaborate with his former enemies (Marshal Lon Nol; Lon Nol's former Prime Minister In Tam; the Cambodian exiles in France, and the Khmer Serei) to save Cambodia from Vietnamese domination.

"We no longer pay any attention to the past or to political tendency. The priority is the struggle against Vietnam. The Communist Party is prepared to take a back seat. We are ready to do anything to assure the effectiveness of the national struggle," he said.

The Pol Pot regime, whose troops have been bottled up on the Thai border by the Vietnamese offensive, "still considers Prince Sihanouk a patriotic personality."

Although the prince has not concealed his deep aversion for the Khmer Rouge, going so far as to state that Pol Pot is the enemy of the Cambodian people, "worse even than the Vietnamese," Ieng Sary told us: "The role to be played by the prince depends on him. If he really believes that the people are the principle force for the struggle against the invader, we think that our people will have confidence in him and perhaps accord him the honor of leading them." "We are prepared to forget everything, on condition that Sihanouk is ready to fight," added the man who, in the words of the former monarch, was his "jailer" during Sihanouk's first exile in Peking.

On the subject of the way the prince was treated after 1975, Ieng Sary said: "We protected him against Vietnamese agents [inside the Khmer Rouge regime] who wanted to sentence and execute him." He cited in particular So Phim, a former vice-president killed during a coup attempt in May 1978.

Modest and affable, serving tea to his interviewer, Ieng Sary continued in a soft voice to make proposals that a few months ago would have been inconceivable coming from someone who has been depicted as a butcher of his people.

In his palatial air-conditioned room he showed photos taken recently in the jungle. They were of him, Pol Pot, and other

leaders dressed in black, marching—or fleeing?—amidst columns of young Khmer Rouge soldiers. The words "forget the past" kept turning up in the conversation, but how will he persuade the adversaries who survived the most radical revolution of the century to become the allies of tomorrow?

Ieng Sary set forth guarantees, creating in words at least a Cambodia that seems quite utopian. "Our position," he said, "is the following: 1. All national forces must unite against Vietnam. 2. Cambodia (once rid of the yoke of Hanoi) will be independent, united, nonaligned, and peace-seeking. 3. The internal regime will be decided by elections supervised by the secretary general of the United Nations. We will accept a regime with a mixed economy and the existence of a bourgeoisie. This is our point of view today. We are beginning to put it into practice."

Even the pro-Vietnamese regime of Heng Samrin would have a place in the national community "if it ceases to betray and collaborate." In short, Ieng Sary is asking his former Khmer Rouge comrades to betray, this time, their new Vietnamese masters. "We cannot accept the legalization, through them, of the Vietnamese presence. That is a question of life or death. Otherwise, what would have been the purpose of the sacrifice of the lives of hundreds of thousands of our inhabitants since the beginning? If we had accepted association with Vietnam, many deaths would have been avoided," Ieng Sary said.

Are negotiations possible? Ieng Sary does not think so, but he does not formally reject them. "Sihanouk raised this question; Vietnam and the Soviet Union rejected it. Perhaps a certain amount of time is necessary, with the Vietnamese experiencing more and more difficulty on the ground. After that, perhaps. We are ready for anything."

Would the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops be a necessary precondition for negotiations? Here again, Ieng Sary showed an astonishing lack of firmness. He became evasive: "The question has not yet been posed; Hanoi does not want to negotiate."

As for the resistance, the situation of the Khmer Rouge is not as bad as the pitiful exodus into Thailand would lead one to assume, if the guerrilla minister is to be believed.

"We still have armed forces, an administration, and sufficient popular support. Conditions are difficult, but the population is cultivating, producing, and aiding us," Ieng Sary said. He admits that between January and mid-April, there were "people who went toward Heng Samrin and the

Vietnamese, attracted by their program." However, he said, "living conditions have not improved. People have one ration of rice to feed ten mouths. There have been popular uprisings against the Vietnamese."

The Khmer Rouge leader spoke of "barbarous and criminal acts committed by the Vietnamese, which I have seen with my own eyes." He added, "We consider the population in the zones under provisional control of the enemy as our population and not as an enemy population, and we let them know this." Before 1975 and even after, the Khmer Rouge considered millions of Cambodians living in zones controlled by the Lon Nol regime (the "new people") as enemies.

Ieng Sary believes that the Vietnamese plan for a rapid conquest of Cambodia has failed and that the rainy season now beginning will enable the resistance to better organize.

As for the purges and attempted coups within his own regime, the minister said that "Vietnamese infiltration" was the fundamental explanation. He said there have been six attempted coups. Some Khmer Rouge leaders—"agents infiltrated long ago"—took part in them: So Phim in May 1978; Vorn Vet, former minister of the economy, in November 1978. They were said to have committed "suicide" after their defeat. The subject of our interview was noticeably reluctant, however, to go any deeper into the question of internal dissent. Who remains of the leadership team of 1975? In the photos we saw four leaders—Pol Pot; Ieng Sary; Khieu Samphan, head of state; and Noun Chea, president of the former National Assembly. On the question of outside aid to the resistance, Ieng Sary remained highly discreet.

Finally, questioned about the crimes attributed to the regime of which he is one of the leaders, he said: "We acknowledge that there have been excesses. They did not come from the leadership. They are excesses due to the ranks and to Vietnamese infiltration. We do not deny our responsibility for the slaughter, but our share is minimal. It is true that our revolution is radical, but we weighed the pros and cons before transferring the population, abolishing currency, and so forth. The necessity [in 1975] was to stabilize the country. We foresaw already the war with Vietnam. The Vietnamese made use of this in propaganda so as to cover their own crimes at home and in Cambodia."

Referring to the work of transforming the countryside, he concluded: "It was very hard work, but it was not forced labor. If it had not been for the Vietnamese attack, we would have had an abundance of food to offer our people in 1980." □

Tens of Thousands Demonstrate Against Nuclear Power

By Russell Morse

The June 2-3 International Days of Protest against nuclear power brought out thousands of demonstrators in Western Europe, the United States, Canada, and Japan. The numerous rallies and marches were the first internationally coordinated antinuclear actions ever held.

Among the biggest protests were a rally of 25,000 in Gasselte, the Netherlands, against government plans to store nuclear waste near the town; a rally of 15,000 in Plogoff, France, against the Giscard regime's plans to build reactors in Brittany; and a rally of more than 15,000 at Shoreham, New York.

Other large actions were held in Kalkar, West Germany (8,000); Doel, Belgium (10,000); Plymouth Massachusetts (5,000); and Graben, Switzerland (4,000).

In Tudela, Spain, a demonstration of 2,000 against the Lemóniz nuclear plant on the Basque coast was brutally attacked by Civil Guards. A young Venezuelan woman, Gladis de Estal, was killed when a guardsman opened fire with a submachine gun.

The next day, trade unions throughout the four provinces of Euzkadi called a general strike to protest the police attack. Industrial production was brought to a halt in Bilbao, Vitoria, San Sebastián, Pamplona, and other Basque cities on June 4 and 5, while street demonstrations and clashes with the police took place in a number of locations. *Financial Times* correspondent Robert Graham reported that it was "the worst unrest in the troubled Basque provinces for almost a year."

The first antinuclear march in Portugal took place June 3 in Lisbon; one thousand persons participated.

A rally of 1,500 persons in Thionville, France, on June 4 was planned as an international action. But the French police blocked hundreds of demonstrators from Belgium, Luxembourg, and West Germany from entering the country. *Le Monde* reported June 6 that "thanks to their German colleagues, the French police had a list of 650 names of German citizens known for their opposition to nuclear power. So around 300 of these, interrogated at various border checkpoints, were turned back."

In the United States, a number of local demonstrations showed the rising opposition in the trade unions to nuclear power since the Three Mile Island accident.

Six locals of the United Auto Workers union (UAW) endorsed the rally of 2,500 held in Monroe, Michigan, on June 2. At



least 100 auto workers participated in the action, along with steelworkers from two Michigan locals.

Four presidents of United Steelworkers (USWA) locals spoke at a rally of 300 in Michigan City, Indiana, on June 3. Many of the protesters were steelworkers and their families. The action demanded a halt to construction of the Baily nuclear plant, which is located just a few hundred yards from one of the biggest steel mills in the Chicago-Gary area.

Another speaker at the Indiana rally was James Balanoff, director of the largest Steelworkers district in the country. "We must start to alert as many people as we can," Balanoff said, "and I pledge that that's going to be one of my major jobs in the next few months—to start to educate the members that I represent."

Speaking to a rally of 250 in Beaver, Pennsylvania, on June 2, United Mine Workers (UMWA) official Joe Jurczak explained that "coal is a safe alternative to nuclear power" and that it can be "mined safely and burnt cleanly."

The UMWA is the first major U.S. trade union to come out squarely against nuclear power. In the May issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal*, a six-page article reviews the history of nuclear power in the United States, hails the May 6 antinuclear march of 125,000 in Washington, D.C., and explains the UMWA's call for replacing nuclear energy by expanding coal production.

The *Journal* makes it clear that the UMWA is for burning coal *cleanly*, just as the union is for mining coal *safely*. It takes

the opposite stance from the coal industry and the power companies, which insist that government safety and pollution laws be relaxed.

In a statement quoted in the *Journal* article, UMWA President Arnold Miller said, "... the irony of the Three Mile Island accident is that this nuclear plant sits atop one of the nation's richest coal regions."

"America—and the world—needs all the energy supplies that technology can provide," Miller continued. "Coal is being ignored, while nuclear energy—without proper technology—is expanding to deadly proportions. They have us by the throat. It is time for the American people to wake up to the dangers."

The call for the International Days of Protest against nuclear power was initiated in 1978 by a number of antinuclear groups in Switzerland. The Swiss Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR) played an important role in this effort.

The response to the call in many parts of the world shows the potential for future efforts to make the fight against nuclear power an international one.

Among the other cities and towns where protests occurred during the June 2-3 weekend were the following:

France. Nogent-sur-Seine, Chinon, Penly (1,000), Lodève, Brennilis, Lons-le-Saunier, Fessenheim, Malville, Cruas, Tricastin, Pierrelatte, and Marseille.

Spain. Barcelona, Vandellós, Hornachuelos, Cofrentes, La Coruña, Xove, and Madrid.

Switzerland. Leibstadt, Kaiseraugst, Bâle.

West Germany. Grohnde, Essen-shamm, Gorleben.

United States. Inola, Oklahoma (339 arrested in civil disobedience action); Russellville, Arkansas (100); Rowe, Massachusetts (21 arrested); Hartford, Connecticut (200); Atlanta, Georgia (250); Platteville, Colorado (1,500); Louisa, Virginia (900, with 120 arrested); Sheboygan, Wisconsin (750); Cambridge, Massachusetts (250); Prairie Island, Minnesota (800); Limerick, Pennsylvania; North Perry, Ohio (2,000); Wiscasset, Maine; Marble Hill, Indiana; Braidwood, Illinois; Byron, Illinois; and Brideman, Michigan.

Actions were also held in Darlington, Ontario, **Canada** (1,100); Tokyo, **Japan** (800); Remerschen, **Luxembourg**; **Britain**; Caorso, **Italy**; and Helsinki, **Finland**. □

Somoza Regime Under Siege

By Fred Murphy

The guerrilla fighters of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) have launched a military drive throughout Nicaragua to bring down the brutal dictatorship of President Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

By June 10 a nationwide general strike was in its seventh day and heavy fighting was reported within blocks of Somoza's "bunker" in Managua, the capital. Several members of Somoza's cabinet had sought refuge in the Intercontinental Hotel. Guerrilla forces held strong positions in several major cities as well as large sections of the countryside.

What Sandinista communiqués have termed the "final offensive" against Somoza began May 29 when heavily armed guerrillas launched attacks against National Guard positions in the south near the Costa Rican border.

At the same time, the FSLN called on the people of Nicaragua to begin a general strike on June 4, which they did in massive numbers. The strike was joined not only by the workers and peasants but also by most opposition businessmen, merchants, and shopkeepers.

León, Nicaragua's second-largest city, was almost wholly under FSLN control by June 5. The guerrillas bottled up the local National Guard garrison in its barracks and distributed arms to residents of the city. They also confiscated Guard vehicles and used them to distribute food to the population.

Guerrillas attacked the city of Masaya—just twenty miles from the capital—on June 6, and by the morning of June 7 controlled most of it. On June 9, the Sandinista forces burned down the National Guard barracks in Masaya.

Fighting began in Matagalpa, the third-largest city, on June 6. On June 9, an FSLN communiqué reported that the Guard garrison there had surrendered.

By June 9 the FSLN was claiming control over the cities of Chichigalpa, Ocotal, Granada, Diriamba, Masaya, Matagalpa, and León. The first major fighting in Managua began on that day. *New York Times* correspondent Alan Riding reported:

"The guerrilla-backed uprising . . . spread today to the capital of Managua, with rebels seizing several outlying slums and reportedly inflicting heavy casualties on the National Guard.

"With roads into the occupied slums

blocked by barricades and trenches, the National Guard this morning sent in light planes to strafe the guerrilla positions. Last night, however, several military convoys trying to enter the slums were ambushed, with unofficial reports of more than 50 soldiers killed."

Facing the biggest threat in the forty-five years of his family's dictatorship, Somoza decreed a state of siege June 6 and mobilized all National Guard reserves as well as retired officers and soldiers. This would bring the dictator's total troop strength to some 16,000; the FSLN is reported to have as many as 5,000 persons under arms.

Trying to repeat the strategy that proved successful in putting down a nationwide insurrection last September, Somoza has kept the bulk of his forces in Managua while sending convoys of troops and tanks to reinforce the embattled garrisons in the outlying cities. But the Sandinistas are better armed than in September and have successfully ambushed and destroyed several Guard detachments on the highways. The guerrillas have also used land mines and roadblocks to stop Somoza's troops from reaching the cities under FSLN control.

Somoza's air force has repeatedly shelled and strafed guerrilla positions, but heavy rains and FSLN fire have lessened its effectiveness. The Sandinistas have downed several air force planes.

The new Sandinista military tactics were explained to Riding of the *New York Times* in this way by an FSLN representative: "We have to confront the Guard directly this time. We have to defeat it or at least divide it."

Some desertions by National Guard troops have been reported. The FSLN's military successes are also having an impact on the Nicaraguan masses, who have been on the defensive since the smashing of last September's insurrection. According to Karen DeYoung of the *Washington Post*, the guerrillas "appear to have the strong backing of much of the population in the occupied cities. The fact that they have begun for the first time to give the impression they are capable of victory has been a large morale factor among their civilian supporters."

Washington and the semicolonial regimes throughout Latin America are deeply worried that the offensive, which has massive popular support, may actually bring down the Somoza regime—a victory

that would have tremendous impact throughout Central America and beyond.

Despite the Carter administration's public "hands off" stance, U.S. cargo planes are reported by the FSLN to have flown fresh military supplies to airfields in eastern Nicaragua from bases in the Panama Canal Zone.

More direct military backing for Somoza has come from the other dictatorial regimes in Central America. Salvadoran air force planes have been sighted at the Managua airport; Honduran jets have been in action against the FSLN forces in the south; and Guatemalan troops have landed on the northern Nicaraguan coast. On June 5, the FSLN reported capturing Guatemalan military attaché Col. Oscar Rubén Castañeda near León; the Guatemalan embassy in Managua confirmed this the next day.

The regimes in Latin America that purport to be "democratic" have taken their distance from Somoza, thus seeking to provide a cover for their own possible intervention. In particular, the five governments of the Andean Bloc—Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia—have offered their services to "mediate" the conflict, hoping to put an end to the fighting and achieve a "compromise" solution that could restore capitalist stability to Nicaragua.

According to the June 10 *New York Times*, State Department officials "left no doubt that they hoped [the Andean Bloc move] would succeed and relieve the United States of taking the lead."

But Washington is also weighing more direct aid to Somoza. This was indicated on June 8 by Assistant Secretary of State Brandon Grove, who cited the "growing threat to peace in the region" and said alleged foreign arms shipments to the FSLN were "of great concern to the State Department." The absence of a peaceful solution to the conflict, Grove said, was "due to the hands of forces unfriendly to the interests of the United States."

The officials cited by the *New York Times* on June 10 said that "the United States was considering a number of ways to cope with problems caused by Nicaragua's civil war but that these did not include either military intervention or a show of naval force."

As Somoza's position grew more precarious, State Department spokesman Thomas Reston told reporters that one of Washington's "options" was "withdrawal of dependents of the officers and staff of the United States Embassy in Managua." Such evacuations have often provided the cover for U.S. military intervention, so Reston's statement and the official "denials" should be taken as alarm signals. All supporters of the Nicaraguan people's fight against the Somoza dictatorship should demand, "U.S. hands off Nicaragua!" □

Fraser-Baez 'Open Letter' Attacks Vietnamese Revolution

By David Frankel

[The following article appeared in the June 15 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

The publication in five major American newspapers May 30 of an "Open Letter to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" has given the U.S. government a big victory in its offensive against the Vietnamese revolution.

Under the guise of protesting human rights violations in Vietnam, a number of prominent figures from the movement against the Vietnam War in the 1960s signed an utterly reactionary apology for imperialism.

Cosigners of the letter (there were eighty-four in all) represented a mixed group. They included a number of top trade-union officials: Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers; Jacob Sheinkman, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; and César Chávez, head of the United Farm Workers.

Auto workers, farm workers, and others should be outraged at this misuse of their unions' name to serve a reactionary cause. Fraser and Sheinkman never tried to seriously mobilize the union ranks during the Vietnam War, despite the overwhelming antiwar sentiment that existed. And today they are helping Carter prepare for future wars.

Also represented among the signers are Democratic Party hacks such as former California governor Edmund Brown and Frank Mankiewicz, who served in the Kennedy administration during the early years of the war.

Using pacifist folksinger Joan Baez to front for them, these forces were successful in roping in a layer of suckers who—unlike them—were known as opponents of the Vietnam War. These include Bradford Lyttle, Daniel Berrigan, Nat Hentoff, and Staughton Lynd.

A Country at War

In an unrestrained attack on the Vietnamese revolution, the open letter charges that "instead of bringing hope and reconciliation to war-torn Vietnam, your government has created a painful nightmare. . . ."

Before looking at the specific charges in the open letter, it is useful to review the context in which they are made—something that the signers fail to do.

Vietnam today is a country at war. The



"Open Letter" tries to turn Vietnamese—victims of thirty years of uninterrupted imperialist war—into the criminals.

reason is that American imperialism, after its defeat in 1975, is attempting to prevent the extension of the Vietnamese revolution and, if possible, to overturn the socialist revolution in Vietnam itself.

Washington is backing rightist armies in Laos and Kampuchea that are trying to reestablish proimperialist regimes, and it is increasing its aid to the military dictatorship in Thailand.

The very day after the open letter appeared in print, an aide to former Kampuchean Prime Minister Pol Pot announced the formation of a right-wing front uniting the counterrevolutionary forces in the area.

Meanwhile, the Stalinist rulers in Beijing (Peking), also taking their cue from Washington, threaten Vietnam with a new invasion.

What is behind this ominous build-up against Vietnam?

The answer given by imperialist propagandists is that the Vietnamese regime is out to conquer all of Indochina, perhaps even all of Southeast Asia.

We are asked to believe that the Vietnamese workers and peasants—after thirty years of uninterrupted war that left their agriculture disorganized, their industry and cities in ruins, and much of their land ravaged by defoliants and high explosives—don't want to be left in peace to rebuild their country.

According to the capitalist media these victims of a century of imperialist aggression have now suddenly embarked on an unprovoked campaign of conquest.

Fear of Revolution

This explanation, so reminiscent of Washington's original charges of "Communist aggression" in Vietnam, is false to the core. What explains the new developments in Indochina is the advance of revolution in Indochina, and imperialism's fear that the social revolution will spread even further.

There is good reason for the U.S. ruling class to fear the effect of the Vietnamese revolution on the workers and peasants in Southeast Asia.

Despite the staggering difficulties faced by the Vietnamese workers state, it has been able to carry out a major expansion in health care and education. It has made rapid strides in reducing unemployment, reorganizing agriculture and industry, and returning the land to the peasantry. And it has decisively thrown off the yoke of imperialist domination.

While you would never know it to read the open letter, these social changes—which U.S. imperialism and its Saigon clients fought desperately to prevent—have improved the lives of tens of millions of working people.

These are the accomplishments made possible by a social revolution, by the elimination of the exploitation of the workers and peasants by capitalism.

The completion of the overturn of capitalism in South Vietnam in March 1978 led to the intensification of an imperialist-inspired border war carried out by the right-wing regime in Kampuchea, and to a sharp increase in the capitalist propaganda campaign against Vietnam. The open letter's dismissal of the revolution as a "nightmare" is a part of this campaign.

When Vietnamese-supported forces overthrew the Pol Pot government in Kampuchea in January 1979, the hatred of the

imperialists reached a crescendo.

Although Carter was successful in getting the Beijing Stalinists to invade Vietnam in February, he has not been able to achieve the desired result—Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea.

Carter and his advisers have learned again and again that they cannot rely on surrogates such as the shah of Iran or the military dictatorship in Thailand to preserve imperialist interests. They have to free their hands for direct intervention with U.S. forces.

Propaganda War

Side by side with the U.S.-financed shooting war now going on in Indochina, there is a propaganda war designed to cover up Washington's responsibility in the whole criminal operation and to prepare the American people for new imperialist interventions.

The open letter signed by Fraser and company is a major development in that propaganda war. It has been seized upon by all those who want to discredit the anti-Vietnam War movement and the ideas that it fought for.

Rewriting the history of the Vietnam War and undermining antiwar sentiment among the working class is absolutely necessary for the imperialists if they hope to carry out their war plans.

In this vein, the open letter asserts that the new government in Vietnam is, if anything, worse than the U.S.-sponsored dictatorship. It tells the Vietnamese that "the cruelty, violence and oppression practiced by foreign powers in your country for more than a century continue today under the present regime."

Accusing the Vietnamese government of "brutal disregard for human life," the statement calls on it "to establish real peace in Vietnam."

But there is one reason, and one reason only, that Vietnam remains at war today: *the continuing U.S. intervention in Southeast Asia*. The statement completely ignores this central fact.

Citing "verified reports" from the same capitalist press that lied about the slaughter in Indochina for years, and that is today lying about everything from the gas shortage to the Iranian revolution, the open letter recounts a tale of horrors.

Without bothering to point out the legacy of thirty years of civil war and the continuing imperialist-inspired war against Vietnam, it charges that "the current number of political prisoners [is] between 150,000 and 200,000."

As with its other claims, the statement provides no solid evidence for its figures. Not does it back up its assertion that a substantial number of the prisoners were not connected with the Saigon dictatorship.

The fact is that when the new regime in Vietnam came to power, it released hundreds of thousands of political prison-

ers. It dismantled the "strategic hamlet" concentration camps in which vast numbers of peasants were penned. And it also freed thousands of prisoners of war.

But the Vietnamese government had to contend with the fact that the Saigon dictatorship had built up a repressive apparatus numbering some 1.4 million. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Vietnamese don't feel that they can allow all of the former Saigon officer corps, police force, and functionaries to run loose.

Guerrilla groups organized by former U.S.-trained officers of the Saigon Army are still operating in some sections of Vietnam. A report in the June 1 *New York Times* described the account of three "refugees, including a former captain in South Vietnam's elite airborne division, [who] reported having taken part in ambushes of Communist trucks on lonely jungle roads and the killing of Communist policemen in a provincial town."

'Starvation Diet'

Another complaint in the open letter is that prisoners are "fed a starvation diet of stale rice"—the same charge that was made in regard to American prisoners of war by right-wing forces during the Vietnam War.

Because of the ruin brought by the U.S. war to Vietnam's agriculture, the country has difficulty feeding itself. Prisoners are not the only ones who are suffering. In 1977, floods, drought, and attacks on border areas by Kampuchean forces led to a 25 percent reduction in the rice ration for all Vietnamese. (Under the new regime, rationing assures that all have food—something the pro-U.S. government never tried to accomplish.)

Union members who—unlike Fraser and Sheinkman—are really concerned about hunger in Vietnam should demand that these labor officials call on the Carter administration to lift the U.S. trade embargo, and that Washington provide massive aid to help the Vietnamese restore their ravaged land.

A particularly gory charge raised by Fraser and the other signers of the open letter is that "people are used as human mine detectors, clearing live minefields with their hands and feet."

Once again, some pertinent facts are left out. Not just prisoners, but ordinary Vietnamese farmers are continually falling victim to the unexploded bombs and mines left behind by U.S. forces in Vietnam. And thousands of Vietnamese, not just prisoners, are mobilized to detect and remove the mines.

What Unions Should Demand

Instead of sniping at the Vietnamese workers and peasants, as the signers of the open letter do, the unions should be demanding that Washington provide Vietnam with modern mine detectors and other

equipment to safely restore its agricultural areas.

Instead of blaming the Vietnamese for trying to remove unexploded U.S. bombs and mines, they should demand that Washington pay the massive reparations it owes the peoples of Indochina for the most brutal bombing in the history of the world.

Union officials such as Fraser and Sheinkman—if there is an ounce of sincerity in their talk about peace and freedom—should be demanding that the U.S. government stop its aid to the Thai dictatorship and rightist guerrillas so that the Vietnamese people can devote their full energy and resources to rebuilding the country.

Such solidarity with the Vietnamese workers and peasants—instead of with the imperialists who are still trying to subjugate them—is directly in the interests of working people in the United States.

Fraser has talked about the "one-sided class war" being waged against American workers by the employing class. But in signing the open letter, he is doing his best to help the U.S. rulers in their class war against the workers and peasants around the world—from Detroit to Indochina. If the rulers get their way, working people will pay the price in blood.

Despite all its advances, Vietnam is still reaping a harvest of death. But the crop was sown by American imperialism. That is where the blame should be placed.

To their credit, most of the former antiwar figures approached by Baez refused to sign the open letter. Only eighty-three out of the 350 people she said she asked agreed to sign.

However, the continuing offensive of the imperialists means that the pressure continues. Baez, for example, in response to the refusal of figures such as Jane Fonda, Philip Berrigan, and Daniel Ellsberg to sign the open letter, launched a red-baiting attack that has been given amplification by interviews in the *New York Times* and on NBC television's "Today" show.

Meanwhile, the June 9 issue of the *New Republic* ran an article attacking the American Friends Service Committee for refusing to enlist in the campaign against the Vietnamese revolution.

An editorial in the June 1 *Washington Post* welcomed the new additions to imperialism's counterrevolutionary campaign. The hypocrites of the *Post*, while pretending concern for human rights, suggested that perhaps Baez and her friends should have come out against the Vietnamese revolution ten or twenty years ago.

"No good purpose would be served, however, by ideological recrimination," they say.

Recriminations, as far as the *Post* is concerned, are for those who stand up to the crimes of imperialism, not for new recruits to its camp. □

Why Socialists Oppose Any Boycott of Soviet Union

By George Saunders

During the past year a number of calls have been made for boycotting the Soviet Union as a way of supporting the struggle for democratic rights there. These have been proposed or endorsed by various former Soviet dissidents. Such demands raise important questions of principle and have provoked a sharp debate that is worth looking at more closely.

One such call, an "Appeal to Western Socialists and Communists" by nine Soviet civil-rights campaigners in exile, was issued in France in late 1978. An English version appeared in the "Letters" section of the British publication *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* in its January-February 1979 issue.¹ (See p. 599 for text of this appeal.)

In addition, a Committee to Boycott the Moscow Olympics (COBOM) has been formed in France, with the support of a number of left-wing intellectuals. A statement by exiled Soviet civil-rights activists Leonid Plyushch, Viktor Fainberg, and Natalya Gorbanevskaya has been issued separately, endorsing the call for boycotting the 1980 Moscow Olympics.²

Supporters of the boycott tactic argue that such campaigns have been used by the left against repressive regimes elsewhere in the world.

Cited as examples are boycotts against sports representatives from South Africa, against the shah of Iran's cultural festival in 1976, and against the World Cup soccer match in Argentina in 1978.

Therefore, they conclude, there is no reason why the labor movement and its allies should not turn the weapon of a boycott against the repressive regime in the Soviet Union. The nine, for example, state:

"Communists, Socialists and trade unionists should have started a struggle for a boycott of the Soviet Union and its representatives by social, trade union, academic, cultural and athletic organisations and associations in the West; for the

exclusion of the USSR from all social international federations; for the refusal of workers, including by means of strike action, to carry out any work for the Soviet Union, except food deliveries."

Would such a boycott of the Soviet Union aid the struggle of antibureaucratic fighters for democratic rights? Should such a campaign be supported by those in the labor movement who defend the conquests of the Russian Revolution, despite the character of the bureaucracy and its crimes against the world working class?

The answer is clearly no. Such a campaign serves only the interests of imperialism.

A False Analogy

In the first place, the main argument in favor of a boycott of the USSR is based on a false analogy. Lumping together the shah's Iran, Argentina, South Africa, and the Soviet Union completely leaves out of account the most fundamental difference between them—their class character.

The first three countries are capitalist. South Africa, moreover, is an imperialist power. Their brutal regimes have only one goal—defense of private property and the superexploitation of the toiling masses. They represent the interests of their own capitalist classes in alliance—above all—with U.S. imperialism.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is a workers state. Private ownership of the means of production was eradicated by the workers of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party in one of the greatest mass mobilizations in history. When capitalism was overturned in Russia at the end of World War I it represented a historic blow against imperialism.

The aim of the imperialist powers is to turn back any extension of this deadly threat to their class rule, and ultimately to crush it altogether. They are driven to regain for direct exploitation the one-third of humanity that now lives in countries where capitalism has been abolished.

Who the Nine Dissidents Are

It is not the conscious intent of the nine Soviet dissidents to strengthen the drive by the imperialists against the most powerful of the workers states. Many of the nine consider themselves socialists. All were leading figures in the just struggle for democratic rights in the USSR.

Turchin, Alekseyeva, and Shragin have endorsed statements defending such Amer-

ican political prisoners as the Wilmington Ten and Charlotte Three.

Turchin and Shragin have defended the right of asylum in the United States for the victimized Mexican socialist Héctor Marroquín.

Plyushch spoke out for Chilean political prisoners and for the right of the sons of the Rosenbergs to have access to the government documents concerning the frame-up of their parents.

Lubarsky is publishing a newsletter in exile that provides detailed information on a current case involving a large "revolutionary communist youth" movement in Leningrad.

Boris Weil and Vadim Belotserkovsky participated in the West Berlin conference in defense of the East German dissident Marxist Rudolf Bahro.

And Pyotr Grigorenko, although he has now become religious and anti-Leninist, once understood that the Soviet workers and peasants were the first in the world to show they could run their own country without any capitalists.

A Grave Political Error

But precisely because the appeal for a boycott comes from such figures its disorienting impact is greater.

What is involved is not a question of tactics. The appeal assumes that the way to combat the Soviet bureaucracy is by mobilizing the labor movement to support the anticommunist campaign of the imperialist governments.

This is made explicit by the section of their appeal that openly calls for communists, socialists, and trade unionists in the West to "organise pressure on *their own governments* to demand that they adopt real diplomatic and political methods" to counter violations of human rights by the Soviet authorities. (Emphasis added.)

In other words, they are telling the workers to place confidence in and give backing to their deadliest enemy—their own capitalist class.

This stance, if consistently carried through in action, would provide a left cover for imperialism's drive to turn back the gains won by the workers of the USSR. Economic boycotts have been used by the imperialists against every workers state since the Russian revolution.

An Earlier Boycott of USSR

When they imposed a blockade on the Bolshevik government in the Soviet Union

1. The appeal was signed by Ludmilla Alekseyeva, Pyotr Grigorenko, Valentin Turchin, Vadim Belotserkovsky, Anatoli Levitin-Krasnov, Kronid Lubarsky, Boris Weil, Leonid Plyushch, and Boris Shragin. Its publication provoked a debate in the "Letters" column of the following issue of *Labour Focus* (March-April 1979).

2. The text of the COBOM appeal appeared in the March 15-22 issue of the French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge*.

during the civil war of 1918-21, it was part of their drive to restore capitalism in the USSR by directly backing counterrevolutionary White Russian armies and actually invading Soviet territory.

Although the attempt to restore capitalism failed, the imperialists nonetheless accomplished a secondary purpose. They bled the new workers government and caused it endless difficulties that could then be denounced as "proof" that socialism was economically unsound.

After World War II, the imperialists imposed a trade blockade against the new workers states that emerged out of that vast upheaval.

They imposed the same economic isolation on the new Chinese workers state for nearly thirty years.

Blockade of Cuba and Vietnam

In 1960, when the revolutionary government in Cuba expropriated the million-dollar investments of the American trusts, ending more than half a century of U.S. imperialist domination, Washington's response was to organize an economic blockade that continues to this day. Not even medicine is allowed through.

In Vietnam, imperialism has mounted an all-out effort to isolate and bleed the newest workers state. A total blockade has been imposed.

In each instance, revolutionists opposed these campaigns, exposing their reactionary nature. This position was correct in 1918, 1950, and 1960. It is still correct today.

Any support for maintaining or reinstating such boycotts—whatever the aims of the organizers—can only aid imperialism, and can thereby be used to discredit the cause of antibureaucratic fighters in their own countries.

Such proposals to line up behind the ruling classes of the capitalist countries are also guaranteed to lose the support of the only real ally the dissidents in the workers states have in the West—the working class. A recent incident is instructive in this regard.

Case of Georgy Vins

Georgy Vins, one of the five imprisoned Soviet dissidents exchanged for two alleged Soviet espionage agents, was being treated to dinner by the mayor of New York on May Day this year. Outside, thousands of workers employed by New York City were demonstrating against the mayor's plan to close down nine hospitals.

Referring to the labor demonstration, Vins told reporters, "I felt that these people are demanding something that is just—I had a desire to join them."

"But," he added, "I'm the guest of the Mayor."

Guest? Or captive?

The workers of New York City would be a powerful ally in defense of Soviet citizens' basic rights, including the rights of



Moscow sports complex under construction for 1980 Olympics. Call by some exiled dissidents for boycott of Moscow games has provoked sharp debate.

Soviet workers. But they will not be won over to support that fight if they identify the dissidents with the mayor who is slashing their wages, cutting back their social services, and eliminating their jobs.

Imagine the powerful impact if Vins had walked out on New York's mayor and unambiguously demonstrated his support for those exploited and oppressed by capitalism. That would have brought a rise in sympathy with the cause of Soviet dissidents.

But if they are seen as dupes of Western capitalist politicians and part of the imperialist drive against the workers states—as the appeal by the nine makes them sound—they will lose the very allies they themselves acknowledge to be "an important influence."

Response by Tamara Deutscher

Tamara Deutscher, for example, a distinguished figure who in the past has written effectively and influentially in behalf of Soviet dissidents, has expressed this clearly.

Following publication in *Labour Focus* of the boycott appeal by the nine, Deutscher wrote to the editors asking that her name be withdrawn as a sponsor of the journal. Her letter, published in the March-April issue, said in part:

"The Appeal calls for nothing less than a wholesale boycott of the USSR and a complete break of all relations between West and East—in other words, for isolating the Soviet Union and putting it into quarantine. Such methods in no way help the process of democratisation in the East. On the contrary, they would only strengthen all reactionary forces in both camps. The not so distant past has taught us that Stalinism was at its worst in the period of the Soviet Union's isolation."

The right road for dissidents is an alliance with the labor and social protest movements under capitalism. It is not an easy road. There would be no soft university jobs, lucrative contracts for books that might not sell, disguised but lavish CIA subsidies, and well-financed attentions of every sort. But it is the only road that will ultimately lead to the release of those in prisons, labor camps, and psychiatric hospitals today—and the mobilization of the Soviet workers to wipe out the bureaucracy that maintains its power through such methods.

Why Appeal for Boycott of Moscow Olympics Is Wrong

COBOM's appeal for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics appears to try to avoid some of the pitfalls of other proposals. It explicitly opposes Carter's "human-rights"

campaign and stresses the imperialist nature of U.S. foreign policy. It also points out that some of the facilities to be used for the Winter Olympics in the U.S. in 1980 are to be slated to become prison buildings after the games. That is a symbol no less telling than the fact that Soviet prisoners' labor is being used to build facilities for the Moscow Olympics.

But at bottom COBOM's appeal is just as reactionary. It is a dangerous breach of principle to advocate *any measure* against a workers state that can be seized on, carried further, and incorporated in the imperialists' ongoing offensive against the workers states.

Even on a purely practical level, far more effective than a boycott of the Olympics would be to have left-wing supporters of the struggle for democratic rights in the USSR go to Moscow and express that support right there.

What Kremlin Fears Most

This prospect already has the Soviet leaders worried as the games draw closer. This was made clear in a recent speech by Viktor V. Grishin, head of the Moscow party committee and a Politburo member.

As reported in the May 9 *New York Times*, Grishin told a writers meeting that there was a need for "strengthening the patriotic and internationalist upbringing" of Moscow's citizenry.

"This assumes special importance in connection with the 22nd Olympic Games," he explained. "It is necessary to insure that, in relations with foreigners, residents of the capital show cordiality and hospitality, stress the advantages of the Soviet way of life and the achievements of our society, and at the same time repulse the propaganda of alien ideas and principles, the onslaughts on our country and on the ideas of socialism and communism."

This sounds like a good opportunity precisely to discuss the "ideas of socialism and communism." For example, why does the Communist Party of Comrade Grishin put workers in psychiatric hospitals?

The residents of Moscow may have some interesting comments on these cases. They may even appreciate information on them, in case Comrade Grishin hasn't informed them of these particular advantages of the current way of life under the Soviet bureaucracy.

Taking a different line from COBOM, a group of socialist activists in West Germany has appealed to those who will participate in the Moscow Olympics to "transform them into an international tribunal for the defense of human rights both East and West."

They propose to hold a protest in Moscow, organized by individuals who are known for their activity in combating violations of human rights by the Western capitalist regimes.

The signers of the appeal include Heinz

Brandt, Jacob Moneta, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Rudi Dutschke, and Peter Von Oertzen. All have been active in the fight for civil liberties in West Germany and in the campaign to free East German Marxist Rudolf Bahro.

Appeal by Nine Exiled Soviet Dissidents

[The following is the appeal for a boycott of the Soviet Union, signed by nine exiled Soviet dissidents, that is referred to in the preceding article. We have taken the English-language text from the January-February 1979 issue of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*.]

* * *

Now, before the advent of changes in the higher party-state leadership of the Soviet Union, there is, in our opinion, a possibility for people who support democratic socialism in the West to influence the direction of changes in the political life of the Soviet Union and of the countries in the Soviet bloc.

The current situation in the Soviet Union is marked by a growing crisis in all branches of life—spiritual, political and economic. Severe repression against the civil rights movement is a result as well as a reflection of this growing crisis. With a change in the leadership there are two possible turns: either a turn in the direction of democratic development, or a turn towards a more dangerous form of totalitarianism.

In our opinion, the response of left-wing circles in the West has an important influence on the consciousness of the majority of people in the USSR, including a significant section of Party workers. By protesting against the systematic violation of human rights in the USSR and the countries of the Soviet bloc, by supporting civil rights campaigners in those countries, by putting forward new constructive ideas of democratic socialism, left-wing circles in the West increase the chances of a turn in the direction of democratic development. And the stronger the pressure the greater is the probability of a positive change in the political life of countries of the Soviet bloc.

Nevertheless, at present the pressure from Left forces abroad on the CPSU is, in our opinion, still very weak. Communists, if they are genuinely interested in a movement towards democratic socialism, should have pursued this aim by putting forward—let's not be afraid of the word—an *ultimatum* to the leadership of the "fraternal" CPSU: either uphold basic human rights—and in the first place release all political prisoners—or face a rupture of inter-party relations.

Communists, Socialists and trade union-

ists should have started a struggle for a boycott of the Soviet Union and its representatives by social, trade union, academic, cultural and athletic organisations and associations in the West; for the exclusion of the USSR from all social international federations; for the refusal of workers, including by means of strike action, to carry out any work for the Soviet Union, except food deliveries. They should, furthermore, carry out a struggle for the organisation of campaigns protesting against political repression in the USSR and in the countries of the Soviet bloc. And last, but not least, they should organise pressure on their own governments to demand that they adopt real diplomatic and political methods in response to the Soviet authorities' obvious violations of humanitarian articles and principles in international agreements and documents, which have been recognised or ratified by the Soviet Union.

In outlining the contours of such a programme we do not consider it to be maximalist. We are not proposing to demand a change in government for the USSR or the countries in the Soviet bloc—this is, naturally, a matter for the nations of those countries—but just the adherence to basic human rights, just the creation of conditions for free expression to be exercised by citizens.

By crushing the basic rights of its citizens, including the working class, the governments of the so-called socialist countries throw down a challenge, in the first place to the international socialist movement. And it would be very painful if the Left circles in the West failed to make a real response to this challenge and failed to make use of all possibilities to dislodge the "socialist camp" from its death-point.

Signed by: *Ludmilla Alekseyeva, Pyotr Grigorenko, Valentin Turchin, Vadim Belotserkovsky, Anatoli Levitin-Krasnov, Kronid Lubarsky, Boris Weil, Leonid Plyushch, Boris Shragin.*

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Héctor Marroquín Interviewed by Mexican Weekly 'Proceso'

[The following has been excerpted from an article by Rafael Rodríguez Castañeda in the May 14 issue of *Proceso*, a widely read weekly newsmagazine published in Mexico City. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

NEW YORK—"Are you a communist?"

The answer to this simple question is apparently the key to whether or not one receives political asylum in the United States.

Other ingredients are also involved in the case of the Mexican Héctor Marroquín Manríquez, to whom the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) denied asylum last month: racism ("He's just a wet-back," the prosecutor said), and the U.S. government's desire not to harm its relations with Mexico.

Marroquín has lived in the United States since 1974, when, falsely accused of involvement in terrorist acts, he entered the country illegally to flee persecution by the Mexican police. For five years Marroquín's life has been one of flight and illegality—his only crime having been political activism in Monterrey, where he was born twenty-six years ago.

Marroquín firmly believed a year ago that he would obtain asylum (see *Proceso* No. 75, April 10, 1978).¹ But on April 11 of this year, Immigration Judge James Smith of Houston, Texas, ordered him deported within thirty days.² The young Mexican has taken his case to the INS Board of Appeals, where it is still pending. If the response there is negative, he can still go to the U.S. Court of Appeals and finally to the Supreme Court. "I will appeal that far if it is necessary," Marroquín says.

Interviewed here at the headquarters of the Héctor Marroquín Defense Committee—organized by the Socialist Workers Party, to which he belongs—the Mexican refugee says:

"The judge's decision focuses on two questions. Political asylum is denied because of my ideology, since I am a socialist. This was very clear at the hearing from the type of interrogation the prosecutor conducted—are you a Marxist, do you support the U.S. government, and so on.

"Secondly, the question of political repression in Mexico. The judge admitted



Arnold Weissberg/Militant

HECTOR MARROQUIN

that it once existed, at least until September 1978. But he tries to give Mexico a democratic image based on the fact that an amnesty law was decreed at that time."

"For the judge, that is the philosopher's stone," Marroquín adds. "The amnesty has converted Mexico into the most perfect bourgeois democracy. We presented documentary evidence that the amnesty was partial and conditional, and by no means guarantees that political repression has ceased. It was only an attempt by the Mexican government to wash its hands and recover the democratic image that it had been able to maintain abroad."

Behind the judge's decision, Marroquín finds the guiding hand of the State Department, whose main concern is to protect the prestige of the Mexican government. Accordingly, the United States cannot grant political asylum because that would mean exposing Mexico as a violator of human rights, as repressive. They will not do that because they do not want to damage their diplomatic and political relations with the Mexican government—particularly at a time when oil and gas negotiations are under way.

"Do you think the denial of asylum is inconsistent with Carter's human-rights policy?" [Marroquín was asked.]

"On the contrary—it is perfectly consistent. The U.S. government's human-rights policy has been selective and hypocritical. It is applied only to socialist countries or to countries that are not allies of the United States. When it is a question of human rights in the USSR or Cuba, there is a big hue and cry. But if it's the situation in Chile or in Nicaragua, or the situation that once existed in Iran, you never hear them say anything. In denying me asylum, Carter has been consistent with his own policy."

Marroquín was jailed for several months after having been captured as an "illegal alien." Now free on bond, Marroquín cannot work or attend school in the United States. Every two weeks he must secure a renewal of his permit to leave New York City, and he has to keep the Immigration Service informed of where and how he intends to travel.

Using the Freedom of Information Act, the Marroquín Defense Committee obtained a series of documents from the FBI's archives last year. According to these, the U.S. federal police have had Héctor Marroquín's name in their files since he participated in a demonstration in Monterrey in 1968, when he was fifteen years old. Although extensively censored by the FBI, the documents show how this agency has infiltrated Mexico and even uses its agents to interfere in Mexican political parties and organizations.

"In my particular case," Marroquín explains, "I have every reason to believe that the FBI was involved in fabricating charges against me. The way that I and other Monterrey activists were persecuted was quite similar to the tactics the FBI utilized in its COINTELPRO plan (Counterintelligence Program), which was launched to combat the Black, Chicano, feminist, and socialist movements. It involved using spies and provocateurs, and discrediting political activists by publishing their pictures in the press, accusing them of crimes. They did that here for some time.

"They worked in collaboration with the gutter press, just as in Mexico the press accused me of being a guerrilla and a terrorist—even on Jacobo Zabludovsky's *24 Horas* program.³ Zabludovsky took the trouble to accuse me of having participated in a confrontation with the police, but he has not taken any time to publicize even

1. *Proceso's* April 1978 interview with Marroquín was reprinted in the May 15, 1978, issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, page 578.

2. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 23, p. 408.

3. *24 Horas* is the most prestigious television program in Mexico. It is produced by the Televisa network, which is partially owned by the Mexican government.

the smallest bit of news about the type of campaign we have carried out here, the trial we had, or the evidence we presented of my innocence. The magazine *Alarma*⁴—I don't know how similar this is to *24 Horas*—published several photos putting me in the gallery of the worst enemies of the people."

Marroquín explains that according to his committee's findings, the so-called legal attachés of the U.S. embassy in Mexico are no more than FBI agents, whose duties involve gathering information about political parties and activists. The FBI also used spies, provocateurs, and informers inside political organizations—an enormous network of political espionage.

According to the documents obtained from the files of the FBI itself, [Marroquín says,] "Everything indicates that the U.S. police rely on the collaboration of the Mexican government, or of high-level officials. They apparently have infiltrated all departments of the government."

Judge Smith's ruling claims that Marroquín cannot prove that if he returns to Mexico he will really be the victim of political persecution.

"The judge wanted me to tell him just when, where, how, and at what moment I would be detained if I arrived in Mexico. That is impossible. We explained to him that there is political persecution against me. They are accusing me of crimes, of clashes with the police, of assault, and even of homicides. Two of the others accused along with me were murdered; the third (Jesús Piedra Ibarra) was disappeared. This is the basis for my belief that I cannot return to Mexico.

"Although the Mexican government has approved an amnesty, it continues to hold political prisoners, continues to use torture, continues the activities of the Brigada Blanca [White Brigade—a paramilitary terrorist group organized by the Mexican government]. There is talk of a political reform, but this has not meant any substantial progress toward democratic procedures in Mexico."

According to Marroquín the Mexican police remain in close touch with the FBI regarding his case. Last year, at a time when his defense was gaining important support—from the United States Student Association, the National Education Association [the largest U.S. teachers union], and other organizations—Marroquín's name was included on the second list of those amnestied for political crimes.

"The amnesty was only a maneuver to deny me legal standing. And the immigration prosecutor understood this. 'If you have already been amnestied,' he asked, 'what makes you think you are going to be

Steelworkers Back Asylum for Marroquín

Mexican socialist and trade unionist Héctor Marroquín is continuing his fight to gain political asylum in the United States. In addition to the support noted in the *Proceso* interview, further backing for his case has come in recent weeks from two locals of the United Steelworkers Union at the huge Sparrows Point, Maryland, U.S. Steel company mill.

"On behalf of the 7,000 steelworkers and their families in my local," USWA Local 2609 President Dave Wilson wrote INS Director Leonel Castillo, "let me advise you that we strongly protest

the decision by your department to go ahead with deportation proceedings against Héctor Marroquín. . . .

"Political asylum for all victims of political repression must be the cornerstone of a just human rights policy."

Letters and telegrams demanding asylum for Marroquín should be sent to INS Director Leonel Castillo, Washington, D.C. 20536. Copies of such messages, as well as financial contributions or requests for more information, should be sent to the Marroquín Defense Committee, Box 843, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.

a victim of political repression?"

"I answered him that that was what happened to two other compañeros, and they were rearrested and tortured again. We presented a report from *Proceso* as proof of that."

Marroquín believes that the best thing he can do to fight repression in Mexico and to defend his own safety is to proceed with his campaign demanding the right to asylum in the United States for citizens of Latin American countries (the U.S. has never granted political asylum to a Mexican) and exposing the real situation of political freedoms in our country.

At the same time, the fact that the INS prosecutor carried on the deportation hearing in the style of a "witch hunt"⁵ has

5. Along with this interview, *Proceso* printed selections from the transcript of the deportation hearing, including INS prosecutor Daniel Kahn's red-baiting cross-examination of Marroquín. Portions of this were also printed in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 23, p. 409.

brought Marroquín further support among independent political organizations, large sectors of combative trade unions (such as Steelworkers Local 1010), and student groups throughout the country.

"Before he asked anything else," Marroquín says, "the prosecutor asked all my witnesses 'Are you a communist?' His entire line of questioning was just a cheap imitation of McCarthy. But people here are tired of McCarthy-style anticommunism, and they don't want to see it repeated. The racist, anticommunist judge is my best hope of obtaining still more support for winning the appeal."

Marroquín concludes: "I don't have many illusions, but I'm not pessimistic either about the asylum effort. Whatever happens, it is helping to expose ideological repression in the United States, and political repression in Mexico, and at the same time it is showing the possibilities for solidarity toward the cause of Latin American liberation among U.S. workers, students, and community groups." □

Journalist on Trial for Support to Abortion

Amidst a storm of protest, Portuguese authorities have brought charges of "incitement to crime" and "activity prejudicial to public morals" against journalist Maria Palla.

The charges stem from a three-year-old television broadcast "Abortion Is Not a Crime," for which Palla wrote the script. The program was aired over Portuguese TV in February 1976.

Despite condemnation from the International Federation of Journalists, the French abortion-rights organization Choisir, and a former cabinet minister, the case was brought to court in mid-May. If convicted, Palla faces a possible sentence of two to eight years in prison under reactionary terms of the penal code of 1850.

The charges, which boil down to making support for legalizing abortion a crime, call to mind a similar case prosecuted under the Caetano dictatorship—the "Three Marias." But that prosecution of authors Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Velho da Costa, and Maria Teresa Horta for having "outraged public morals" by describing in a book the repression of Portuguese women, was dropped after the fall of the dictatorship.

To assure that all charges against Maria Palla are dropped, supporters of women's rights and freedom of the press around the world are urged to send messages of protest to President Ramalho Eanes, Palácio de Sao Bento, Lisbon, Portugal. □

4. *Alarma* is one of the most lurid of Mexico's tabloids. It features sensationalist crime stories.

Profits Prove the Culprit in DC-10 Crash That Killed 275

By Nancy Cole

[The following article appeared in the June 15 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

Facts sifting to the surface about the nation's worst air disaster are fast confirming a trio of culprits:

- McDonnell Douglas Corporation, which designed and manufactured the DC-10 jet;

- American Airlines, which failed to adequately inspect and repair it;

- the federal government, which consistently ignored its unsafe features.

On May 25, 272 passengers and 3 workers on the ground were killed when American Flight 191 lost an engine shortly after takeoff and plunged to the ground a half-mile from the end of a runway at Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

The trio's first response was to dismiss it as a freak accident. Investigators discovered a three-inch bolt on the runway. The bolt was said to have split because of metal fatigue, in turn causing the engine to drop off.

On May 28, the Federal Aviation Administration ordered quickie inspections of all 138 domestic DC-10s. Bolts were to be checked or replaced and engine mounting components glanced over for cracks.

No interruption in service was planned for the planes, which carry some 135,000 passengers daily. Only if the inspections were not made by 3 a.m. on Wednesday, May 30—well past the busy and profitable Memorial Day weekend—were the DC-10s to be grounded.

Asked why he had not immediately grounded the jumbo jets, FAA head Langhorne Bond answered that "the risk seems sufficiently small." Asked if he would fly in one of the DC-10s before it was inspected, he responded, "I will and I have," adding that the plane is a "very fine aircraft."

Meanwhile, in Chicago, two United Airlines mechanics—Ernest Gigliotti and Lorin Schluter—finished the FAA-required inspection, but then decided they would take it further. In order to do so, they no doubt had to break some company rules, and maybe even dodge a foreman.

"We removed the access panels and found cracks so big you could trip over them," said Gigliotti. "Rivets were broken, fasteners were sheared. It gives you a funny feeling in the pit of your stomach to



Herblock/Washington Post

see the extent of that damage."

Despite all the industry and government experts "investigating" the crash, it was the mechanics' discoveries that forced the FAA to order all DC-10s grounded until inspections could be made. It was the first time in the history of commercial jets that the FAA grounded a plane.

By May 31, airline mechanics had reportedly found problems in the engine mounts of thirty-seven DC-10s.

Then on June 1, the FAA revised the figures upwards, announcing that problems were discovered in nearly half of all DC-10s—sixty-eight instead of thirty-seven. Nonetheless, the majority were soon back in the air.

On June 4, the National Transportation Safety Board suggested that maintenance procedures might have caused the accident. It seems that American and other airlines use shortcuts when removing the pylons, or engine mounts, from the plane. The engine is supposed to be lifted out of the pylon first, but it is faster—and thus cheaper—to do it all in one operation. But it can damage the pylon.

Finally, on June 6 mounting evidence of a basic design defect in the plane's engine mount forced the federal government to order all 138 DC-10 jets operated by U.S.

airlines to be grounded indefinitely.

The full scope of the problems with Flight 191 can be traced back to 1970 when the DC-10 was rushed into production to beat out its wide-body competitors. Since then it has been involved in at least seventeen serious accidents. With the Chicago crash, the death toll climbed to 623.

This includes the worst single aircraft disaster in world history—the 1974 crash of a Turkish plane near Ermenonville, France, which killed 346 people.

The Ermenonville crash occurred after a rear cargo door fell off, a problem with the DC-10's design that McDonnell Douglas and the FAA were aware of in 1969 before the DC-10 was even ground-tested. In 1972, the loss of a cargo door on one DC-10 caused part of the cabin floor to collapse, forcing an emergency landing in Windsor, Ontario.

"After the near-miss over Windsor," reports *Newsweek*, "FAA chief John Shaffer arranged a 'gentlemen's agreement' with McDonnell Douglas, allowing it to carry out necessary door changes on a voluntary basis. A full year later, the recommended modifications had not been made on eighteen domestic DC-10s, and at least one plane had left the factory without the cargo door adjustments. The FAA was still gently pestering McDonnell Douglas to run studies on the cabin floor when the Turkish jet went down at Ermenonville."

It was four more years before the cabin-floor modifications were completed.

Of course, such design problems are not confined to DC-10s. "Economics dictate the basic design of a plane," explained the *New York Times* June 2. A major aim is to reduce weight of the plane, which cuts down on operating costs. Thus the lightest materials possible are used.

Another cost reducer is to cut down on maintenance checks and overhauls.

In that, the airlines and manufacturers have the full backing of the FAA. The engine support area on a DC-10 is scheduled for inspection only once every 3,600 flying hours, or about once a year.

Some airplane parts are checked as infrequently as once every eight years!

DC-10s "haven't been flying that long," explained Los Angeles United mechanic Ray E. Ray, "yet every time you get behind panels and look at things you don't inspect routinely, there's always cracks."

Even when a mechanic reports finding a crack, Ray told *Newsweek*, a foreman can override the mechanic's decision, ruling

that it isn't necessary to do much work on the plane.

But will this tragedy at least mean that it's curtains for the DC-10?

Not likely. "Airlines aren't going to give up their current fleets of DC-10s, if only because of the huge amounts of money already invested in the planes," predicted the *Wall Street Journal*.

McDonnell Douglas is even on a drive to sell a new "stretched" version of the jet, which would hold up to 500 passengers.

The Chicago crash is the latest in the ongoing saga of disasters, from the Three

Mile Island nuclear accident to the chemical dumps that have disrupted the lives and health of thousands of people across the country.

The DC-10 disaster certainly did little to restore the public's faith in capitalist corporations, or in the Democratic and Republican officials entrusted with regulating them.

But the two United mechanics, who had no interest in protecting industry profits but sought only to find the crash's cause, prove that catastrophe will be averted when working people run the country. □

Gains for Labor in Canadian Elections

[In federal elections held May 22, Canada's Conservative Party gained a narrow edge over the governing Liberal Party. Conservative leader Joe Clark is to replace Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who leaves office after eleven years in power.]

[More significant than the switch in capitalist rulers, however, was the substantial rise in support for Canada's labor party, the New Democratic Party. The NDP won more than 2 million votes—18 percent of the total—and went from seventeen seats in Parliament to twenty-six.]

[The following editorial assessing the results of the election appeared in the June 4 issue of the Canadian revolutionary-socialist fortnightly *Socialist Voice*.]

* * *

Before election night was over many of Joe Clark's big business backers were already having second thoughts about whether his government would be able to resolve the deep crisis of Canadian capitalism and its federal state.

Virtually all newspaper editorialists pointed out that the Conservative minority government is in a weak position to deal with the PQ [Parti Québécois] and the independence movement. And Clark does not hold a very strong hand in relation to the labor movement either.

Since the 1974 federal elections we have seen a sharp rise in trade-union militancy. This was reflected in the deepening of labor struggles against the bosses and the federal government (October 14, postal, Sudbury, and Murdochville strikes).¹ One consequence of these battles was the loss of the Liberals' working-class base.

While the Conservatives took up some of those votes, the NDP did so to a much greater extent, especially where the Tories (or in B.C. the Socreds)² were widely seen as being part of the anti-working-class

offensive. As a result, Clark was prevented from winning a majority government.

The increasing hostility of workers to the big-business parties and their governments was the main reason behind the decision of the Canadian Labor Congress [CLC] to launch a "parallel campaign" to win greater working-class support for the NDP. The success of this campaign, although largely limited to the Atlantic region and the West, has strengthened the working class and undermined the capacity of the Clark government to mount a strong antilabor offensive.

However, the failure of [NDP leader Ed] Broadbent and [CLC President Dennis] McDermott to link their election drive to

under way by nickel miners employed by Inco in Sudbury, Ontario, and by copper miners in Murdochville, Quebec.—IP/I

2. The right-wing Social Credit Party governs the province of British Columbia with a slim plurality over the NDP.—IP/I

the defense of workers' interests or to defend workers where they are engaged in struggle (Inco, Murdochville) weakened the NDP election effort and weakened labor's interests.

Nevertheless, the important regional successes of the labor movement's campaign, especially where the unions went beyond passive electioneering, indicates what is possible when labor gets involved in political action. It points the way forward to the day when the working class, united by its common class interests, will finally succeed in establishing its own government.

Election '79 is over. But the struggle continues. So too should the campaign of the labor movement. The tremendous resources that the CLC threw into the campaign to elect NDPers could easily be committed to mobilizing workers in support of the Sudbury and Murdochville miners, in solidarity efforts with other groups of workers who are locked in struggle with the government and the employers. We should demand this from the leaders of our unions and the leadership of the NDP.

We should also renew our efforts to build links with the labor movement in Québec. The weakness of the NDP and the lack of any independent labor campaign in that province during the election weakens our capacity to deal the death blow to the federal government.

By solidarizing with the struggles of Québec workers and by standing firmly in defense of their national rights, especially in the upcoming referendum, we can build labor unity on a cross-Canada basis, a unity that will strengthen us in our economic struggles with the bosses, and build our political power too. □

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1. On October 14, 1976, 1 million workers went on strike across Canada to protest the Trudeau government's wage controls. Late last year, postal workers defied Trudeau and struck across the country. At present, militant strikes are

Blowup at Spanish SP Congress

By Gerry Foley

A general crisis that has been brewing in the Spanish Socialist Party for more than a year came out into the open at the party congress held the third week in May.

A head-on confrontation developed between the leadership, which has been trying to carry out a right turn, and an opposition that is anxious for the party to maintain a left image. The result was a resounding defeat for the SP general secretary, Felipe González.

By a vote of 61 percent, the congress rejected González's openly procapitalist orientation, adopting instead a resolution defining the party as "class-based, of the masses, Marxist, democratic and federal."

In face of this blow to his attempt to make the party acceptable to the capitalists as a governmental alternative to Premier Suárez's Democratic Center Union, González resigned his post. He told the delegates, "You have wounded me badly."

He quickly added, however, that his wounds were "already healed over." In fact, as a procapitalist politician masquerading as a "socialist," his sensibilities are not all that tender. Before the parliamentary elections this March, he went on a tour of the businessmen's luncheon circuit to assure the capitalists that an SP government would not be unfriendly to them. He was rebuffed, but did not complain then about his feelings being hurt.

The Spanish SP leadership, like those of most of the southern European SPs, has had a two-stage strategy. First they present the image of a militant socialist party, broad and democratic enough to include revolutionists. Then, once they assemble a vote big enough to make them a credible contender for governmental office, they drop the socialist rhetoric and dump the militant elements so as to win the acceptance of the bourgeoisie.

Both stages of this policy have already been carried out, for example, by the Portuguese SP leadership. In Spain, however, the conditions have not been favorable for completing this operation.

The party's electoral strategy is already in trouble. The SP has lost the momentum it gained in the first parliamentary elections in 1977, when it appeared to be the major party opposing continued rule by Franco's heirs. Its oppositionist image has become tarnished by its cooperation with a repressive bourgeois government and its failure to fight to defend the living standards of the working people against brutal cuts.

Moreover, the SP has largely become



GONZALEZ: Uses resignation as ultimatum.

exposed among the oppressed nationalities, especially the Basques, as a defender of the Spanish bourgeoisie's centralized state.

The pressure of the working people who want to fight back against the cuts in their standard of living and against government repression is tending to tear apart the loosely knit SP party, union, and youth organizations. The SP leadership has already had to admit that it can no longer sign any austerity pacts with the government and employers. In order to survive, the union federation it dominates, the UGT, is going to have to take a more militant stance.

In this situation, the attempt to drop the SP's left trappings and openly adopt the posture of a house-broken parliamentary party has set off an uproar.

Defense of formal adherence to Marxism has become the symbol of resistance to turning the party into a bureaucratic electoral machine. The opposition, in fact, had no Marxist program. Many of those opposing the shift appear to have been motivated mainly by resentment at the arbitrary and high-handed methods used

by the bureaucracy, which threw even the lower echelons of the leadership off balance.

For example, one of the opposition leaders, Francisco Bustello, said in an interview given to the Madrid daily *El País* just before the congress:

"The problem was not agreeing to an only halfway break with the regime, signing the [class-collaborationist] Moncloa Pact, writing a constitution by consensus, or recognizing the monarchy. What was grave was that all this was not discussed in the party or explained to the members and sympathizers."

González, for instance, had launched his campaign to drop the reference to Marxism without warning the membership and the lower leadership.

Moreover, the right turn had been accompanied by a series of measures designed to break or drive out militants from the party and its trade-union and youth organizations.

In its May 28 issue, *Der Spiegel* quoted a representative of the National Committee of Those Expelled from the SP as saying: "We were given no opportunity to defend ourselves. Most of us just got a letter signed by Comrade Alfonso Guerra."

For a year there had been a steady departure of militants from the SP, both as a result of purges and of disgust with the dictatorial methods and procapitalist policies of the party.

But it was difficult for the SP leadership to "normalize" a party that had grown from a grouplet to an organization of about 100,000 members in a couple of years. As it grew, moreover, the SP absorbed smaller and local groups with their own traditions and leaders. The head of one of these groups, Professor Tierno Galvan, now SP mayor of Madrid, while far from being a militant socialist, emerged as one of the leaders of the opposition in the congress.

Given the nature of the opposition, González's resignation did not represent an acknowledgment of defeat. It was an ultimatum. And the opposition yielded. They did not put forward a representative of their own to take the leadership and they pleaded with González to stay.

In the SP parliamentary fraction of nearly 200, only one person voted against González remaining fraction leader and six abstained. Since the SP is basically built around elections and parliament, this outcome means that González will have control of the party apparatus over the

next six months prior to the special party congress that has been called. So, he can continue his campaign to bring the party to heel.

By publicly bemoaning González's withdrawal from the leadership post and by failing to offer any programmatic alternative, the opposition has shown that it is unwilling and unable to fight the turn he is carrying out.

In commenting on the outcome of the SP congress, the Spanish Trotskyists told the oppositionists that they would have to look to a different kind of party to achieve their aspirations.

"No leadership worthy of the name of Marxist will ever arise in the SP," the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria said in an edi-

torial in the May 23 *Combate*.

"The revolutionary workers party that thousands of SP comrades are looking for will not arise in the Social Democracy. It is being built by the LCR. A few weeks ago, hundreds of comrades from the SP and UGT joined us. We are going to try to use the experience of this congress and the experience that will be gone through in the coming months to bring many more of them to us.

"Let them come to a party where you don't have to fight for Marxism but where you can practice it daily, a party that has internal democracy and is trying to continually expand it, a party that has never permitted, and will never permit any of its leaders to subject it to blackmail." □

RCL Fuses With Palestine Communist Group

A Step Forward for Israeli Trotskyism

By Jan Vogt

HAIFA—A convention was held in Jaffa April 12-16 to unify the Revolutionary Communist League (Matzpen-Marxisti) (RCL), the Israeli section of the Fourth International, with the Palestine Communist Group (PCG).

The PCG arose several years ago from a split in the Workers League, a Trotskyist group that at one time was affiliated with the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The RCL and the PCG began drawing closer together in 1977. Discussions and common activities led to the joint publication of a monthly newspaper for five months and culminated in the preparation of common resolutions for the fusion convention.

The resolutions demonstrate the broad agreement reached by the two organizations on the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in Israel. This is based on common adherence to the program and traditions of the Fourth International and on the desire to build a Leninist party based on the principles of democratic centralism.

The first session of the convention heard special greetings from representatives of other revolutionary anti-Zionist groups, from a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, and from a member of the Central Committee of the Austrian section, the Revolutionary Marxist Group.

Among the other speakers were representatives from the Workers League (who also took part in the discussion on the political resolution), from the Abne al-Balad (Sons of the Village) of the Arab town of Umm al-Fahm, from the Progressive National

Movement of Palestinian students in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and from the Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners.

Of the messages received, special mention should be made of those from the Lebanese section of the Fourth International and from the Union of Communists in Syria, a group that has very broad programmatic agreement with the RCL.

Many of the speeches and messages emphasized the importance of the unification of the RCL and PCG as the first step toward uniting all the anti-Zionist forces in Israel.

The convention sent a special message saluting the comrades of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) and pointing to the importance of the revolutionary process in Iran for the entire Arab world.

Also at the first session of the convention, more than 39,000 Israeli pounds [US\$1,600] was collected for the RCL's fund drive to establish a central headquarters in Tel Aviv.

The resolutions discussed and adopted by the convention included the following:

- "The Imperialist Offensive and the Perspective of the Arab Socialist Revolution." This emphasized the importance of the Iranian revolution at a time when the American imperialists are trying to make a deal behind the backs of the Arab masses and particularly at the expense of the Palestinian people who are being bombed night and day because of Begin's "sincere desire for peace."

- "Two Years of the Begin Government—A Deepening in the Crisis of

Zionism." This analyzed the political, economic, and ideological crises the Jewish state is going through. The Israelis can no longer deny the existence of the Palestinians and their struggle, and the Zionist ethic cannot eternally cover up the crimes of Zionism. Not only did it not solve the Jewish question, but it has placed the Jews in a ghetto that survives only through wars and conquest.

The independent organization and mobilization of the Palestinians within Israel is growing daily. They are opposed to the conciliationist attitude taken by the Israeli CP (Rakah) toward Zionism and the Jewish state. Revolutionary Marxist ideas are gaining increasing influence.

All of this makes the perspective of a joint Jewish-Palestinian struggle more concrete, even though a majority of the Jewish population is still tied to Zionism and to the material privileges the state grants them simply for being Jews.

- "The Struggle for Women's Liberation and the Role of the RCL" takes up the present situation of Jewish and Palestinian women. Both are oppressed, although to different degrees since Arab women live within the framework of a more backward society and are part of an oppressed people struggling for national rights. This means that the characteristics of the struggles are different. They are at different stages and for the time being are separate.

This resolution marks the first time an organization on the Israeli left has made a thorough analysis of the oppression of women—its roots, present state, and short- and long-term solutions.

Organizational perspectives were taken up on the final day of the convention. Participants in different areas of activity pointed to the possibilities for the growth of the RCL and the dissemination of revolutionary-Marxist and anti-Zionist ideas.

The final point was the vote on the resolutions, together with the amendments that were the product of the democratic discussions that took place before and during the convention. A new Central Committee was elected, composed of members of the two fused organizations. The new group will continue to function under the name RCL (Matzpen-Marxisti).

The tasks of the RCL are immense, and the road ahead is very difficult. However, the fusion is an important step toward the construction of the revolutionary communist party of Palestine and the Arab world.

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Trotskyist Unionists From 12 Countries Meet in Antwerp

By Colleen Levis

ANTWERP, Belgium—More than 250 European Trotskyist unionists met here June 2-3 to exchange experiences and discuss strategy in trade-union work.

Delegates were present from twelve European sections of the Fourth International. Countries represented were Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and West Germany. Nearly a third of the conference participants were women.

The conference was organized on the theme "Workers in Struggle Against the Bosses' Europe" as part of the campaign of the Fourth International for the elections to the European Parliament.

The conference focused on the profound effects of the current worldwide economic crisis on European workers.

Charles-André Udry, a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and a central leader of the Swiss section, made opening comments. He stressed that today, unlike the situation in the 1930s, the European working class has not suffered major defeats.

Big battles lie ahead, he said. To play a key role in these struggles, the sections of the Fourth International must be present where they will take place—that is, in basic industry, transport, and communications.

This question and the demands that have arisen in the fightback against the austerity offensive being waged by workers throughout Europe were discussed in workshops.

A particularly important demand to emerge in many European struggles is for a thirty-five-hour workweek with no cut in pay. (See accompanying article.)

This demand was central in recent strikes of German, Italian and French steelworkers against massive layoffs.

In fighting for this and other demands against the attempts by capitalists to make them pay for the economic crisis, workers have run up against the class-collaborationist policies of the leaderships of the trade unions and mass working-class parties.

The bureaucracies that control the workers movement today have systematically supported the austerity measures of capitalist governments. In some countries, such as Spain and Italy, the leadership of the workers parties took prime responsibility for the introduction of such measures.

One of the workshops discussed the appearance in several countries of opposition within the unions and the mass workers parties to these class-collaborationist policies. The most important example discussed was the opposition inside the metal workers union (FIOM) in Italy.

Cutbacks in social services and the attempts to return public services into private capitalist hands were also discussed. The role of demands for nationalization under workers control in struggles in France and Luxembourg were examined. In another workshop, experiences in Belgium of struggles for workers control were cited.

A very important question for European Trotskyists was discussed in a workshop on immigrant workers. Among the hardest hit by unemployment and attacks on living standards, these workers are an important proportion of the industrial working class in almost every European country. They will play an important role in the fightback.

Another key question discussed was whether women members of sections of the International should seek to join unions in which women are now predominant or those which are strategic.

Several delegates argued that Trotskyists should lead the fight for women's right to work in basic industry as a key part of the turn toward industrial unions.

Reports from different countries revealed that a series of demands have emerged within the unions relating to the fight of women workers against the ruling-class offensive.

Delegates pointed to the systematic attempts of the ruling class to drive women out of the work force, to keep them in traditional "female" jobs, or to drive them out of basic industry.

Some women in Spain are beginning to fight to have access to traditionally "male" jobs such as driving trucks. Some have demanded that contracts guarantee the employment of a certain percentage (quotas) of women workers to prevent women from being eliminated by layoffs.

In Italy, auto workers at an Alfa plant have demanded that women have parity with men on waiting lists for hiring. Some of the women marched into the plant's foundry, demanding decent working conditions and the elimination of the night shift for all workers in order to allow women to have access to those jobs. They are also

demanding training courses for women in "nontraditional" jobs.

Women in the metal industry in Germany have demanded that government subsidies be withheld from companies that refuse to hire women.

In Italy and the Netherlands, part-time work has been used to keep women from playing a central role in unions.

The possibility of women winning the right to get into traditionally "male" jobs through a political campaign was also raised. A successful fight of a woman Trotskyist in Canada to get into the rail industry was cited.

The workshop also discussed the effect of cutbacks on the right to abortion and to child-care facilities. This is particularly posed in Sweden and Britain. Conference participants stressed the need for the unions to fight for these rights and to prevent undermining of present gains.

Udry outlined the central conclusions of the conference. He noted the need for the Fourth International to lead a campaign in Europe for the thirty-five-hour week.

The conference showed the need for further such gatherings in the future. Udry made the suggestion that auto workers in the Fourth International in Europe should meet soon to map out their work together. The twenty-five auto workers at the conference made up the biggest contingent from a single industry.

He also suggested the establishment of a European-wide secretariat to coordinate the union work of the sections in the fight for a class-struggle tendency in the unions.

But most important, he stressed, is the need for a serious, conscious turn of all the sections, led by the central leaderships of each section, with the aim of placing a majority of the members of the Fourth International in Europe in the key industrial, transport, and communications unions. He stressed the need for work in industrial unions to be totally central to all the work of European Trotskyists.

This conference was an important step in that direction. □

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[The following article was prepared as part of the discussion material for the June 2-3 conference of European Trotskyist trade-unionists.]

* * *

The crisis of the capitalist economy has struck a hard blow at workers' jobs. Whether we are in a recession or an economic recovery, massive unemployment persists and grows. The capitalists speak of "restructuring" and "adapting" production to "the new conditions of the world market." In practice, that means continual declines in employment, massive layoffs, and actual and projected factory closures.

There are now 16 million workers who are officially counted as unemployed in the imperialist countries alone, without even considering the countries of the so-called Third World. This figure threatens to rise considerably over the next year, in light of the prospects for another recession.

In the Common Market countries, official statistics acknowledge that 6.5 million persons are unemployed. But all the bourgeois governments have adopted procedures to reduce the official unemployment figures. The real number of jobless is thus much higher, probably around 8 million.

It is certainly much easier to eliminate certain categories from the unemployment statistics—especially immigrants, women, youths, and older people—than it is to provide them with jobs. In fact, the present governments have shown themselves totally unable to ward off the scourge that is dragging down the working class. This despite all the sermons that a "mixed economy will assure full employment and a continually rising standard of living," a myth that the leaders of the big workers organizations have themselves swallowed and are helping to spread within the working class.

The employers are not unhappy with the rise in unemployment. As they see it, workers' knowledge that they could lose their jobs leads to greater "wisdom" on their part and on that of their unions—that is, to a drop in their combativity and a moderation of their demands.

The abrupt reappearance of unemployment after a long period of full employment has led to a certain disarray among wage earners, in view of the fact that their mass organizations were little prepared for the change in situation. The bosses, governments, and union bureaucrats have profited from this by making the workers accept various austerity policies or by preventing them from putting up a united



Der Spiegel

West German steelworkers out on strike last year. Bottom placard reads: "We're standing firm—5% pay increase, 35-hour week."

struggle against those policies. "Absolute priority to employment, even at the cost of wage sacrifices" was the slogan they tried to get the workers to accept during 1976 and 1977.

But the workers have been able to draw a balance sheet. In exchange for the "social pacts" (Italy and Spain), "incomes policies" (Britain and Denmark), and a "moderation of wage demands" (West Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands), unemployment has not disappeared or fallen. It has tended to increase.

The workers had thus been played for fools by the class-collaborationist policies imposed upon them. They are now realizing that. Today there are rumblings of anger against unemployment in France, Britain, and Spain, and discontent is rising in West Germany, Italy, Portugal, and elsewhere.

The curve of workers struggles, strikes, and violent reactions to the capitalist crisis, formerly in decline, is beginning to rise.

Witness the actions of the French steelworkers in the east and north and of the workers in Caen, Nantes, Saint-Nazaire, La Rochelle, and Saint-Etienne; the impressive wave of strikes in Britain that won wage increases on the order of 15 and

20 percent, breaking the "5 percent ceiling" the Labour government wanted to maintain; the rise of no less impressive strikes in Spain, approaching the "historic record" of strikes in the first half of 1976; the long German steelworkers strike in the Ruhr in December 1978 and January 1979.

All these explosions demonstrate the determination of the workers to reject the burdens of the capitalist crisis that the employers and governments are trying to get them to shoulder.

At the same time, we must have no illusions. Within the framework of a capitalist regime, no limited measures affecting the length of vacations or the age of retirement, no marginal reduction of the work day will stop massive unemployment.

Employment will be maintained and extended only if there is a *radical and immediate reduction* of the workday, in all industries at the same time, of at least 10 percent, pegged to the actual annual rate of increase of productivity.

Only the immediate introduction of a thirty-five-hour workweek, with no reduction in pay, with mandatory affirmative-action hiring quotas, and with workers control over the pace of work can effectively and rapidly produce jobs for the 8

million unemployed in the Common Market.

There must be no reduction in wages, otherwise a fall in buying power will reduce purchases, therefore demand, and therefore production. The jobs lost in this way will cancel out those created by the reduction in the workweek.

There must be mandatory hiring quotas and workers control over the pace of work, otherwise the bosses will manage to foist the costs of reduced working hours onto the backs of the workers through speedup, "rationalization" of the labor process, and imposition of additional tasks. The unemployed will remain unemployed.

For several years, only a minority of the vanguard workers have fought for thirty-five hours. But the hard lessons of the economic crisis have opened the eyes of ever broader strata of unionized workers.

The pressure from the ranks has been so great that a number of union federations have added the demand for a thirty-five-hour workweek (thirty-six hours in Belgium) to their official program of demands. These include the FGTB and CSC of Belgium, the CGT and CFDT of France, the British TUC, the DGB and IG Metall of West Germany, the Italian FIOM, and the Danish LO.*

The union bureaucrats, of course, have given only lip service to this demand. They have tried to water it down (calling for a one-hour reduction of the workweek . . . each year!), have tried to eliminate its effectiveness as a weapon against unemployment, or have cynically abandoned it.

The bureaucrats of IG Metall, for instance, recently backed off from the demand at the end of the Ruhr strike. They did so against the wishes of an absolute majority of the striking steelworkers, who had struggled with such determination to achieve a breakthrough on this question for the entire working class of Europe.

One of the main arguments used by the bureaucrats to justify their reluctance, in opposition to the wishes of their members, is that the introduction of a thirty-five-hour workweek in only one country will weaken the "competitiveness" of "national industry," reduce "our exports," and thereby wipe out more jobs than are created.

That is the employers' argument. Like their protectionist proposals, it is aimed at dividing the workers along "national"

lines. It ignores the fact that the example of an important working-class victory in one country against unemployment—which is recognized as the main problem by workers in all the European countries—will be quickly followed by their class brothers and sisters in neighboring countries. History has proven this. The countries where the working class was the first to win the forty-eight-hour week, and then the forty-hour week, were hardly ruined by those gains.

This argument can be turned against its proponents by asking them a question: You tell us that you are partisans of the "building up of Europe," of a "Europe of the workers." Then what are you waiting for? Why don't you call a joint action for the thirty-five-hour workweek in all the countries of the Common Market?

In fact, the need for such a joint action is felt so deeply by the union and the mass of workers that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions organized a European-wide action in support of a thirty-five-hour week on April 5, 1978. But it was just for show: a five-minute halt in work, demonstrations after the end of the workweek, and other ridiculous steps.

Actions must be called by other forces that can stand up to the resistance of the bosses, which promises to be fierce.

Even the super-reformist leaders and partisans of class-collaborationism of European Social Democracy have inscribed

the demand for a thirty-five-hour week at the top of their platform for the June 1979 European elections. The French CGT has decided to sound out other European trade unions with the aim of launching a "common initiative" in favor of the thirty-five-hour week.

Let's demand that all these organizations meet their responsibilities. The struggle against unemployment, layoffs, and factory closures cannot be limited to vague electoral promises or "initiatives" for consultation and negotiation, which have little future.

The Fourth International, on the occasion of its international campaign, in all the European countries, for the European elections, calls on all militants of the workers movement and all rank-and-file workers to intensify agitation among their workmates and within their mass organizations with the aim of reaching immediate agreement for unity in action among all the unions of the Common Market countries. The unions should soon call a broad action, on a national and international level, for a thirty-five-hour workweek, with no reduction in pay, with mandatory hiring quotas, and with workers control over the work pace.

Unemployment will not be reduced, unless we win, at a single blow, the demand for thirty-five hours!

Toward action for the thirty-five-hour workweek!

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*Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique (Belgian General Federation of Workers), Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens (Confederation of Christian Trade Unions), Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor), Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labor), Trades Union Congress, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Federation), Industriegewerkschaft Metall (Metal Industry Union), Federazione Impiegati e Operai Metallurgici (Federation of Metal Employees and Workers), and Landsorganisasjonen (National Union Federation).

Brazil Metalworkers Gain Partial Victory

By Fatima Oliveira

SÃO PAULO—The two-month-long dispute between metalworkers in São Paulo's industrial suburbs and the management of Brazil's auto industry ended May 13 when workers in Santo André, São Bernardo, and São Caetano (ABC) voted reluctantly to accept the terms of a compromise agreement.

"I know the compromise is bad," Luis Inácio da Silva (Lula), president of the São Bernardo metalworkers union, explained to more than 70,000 metalworkers assembled in that city's municipal stadium on May 13. "But I think we must accept it. If we go on strike tomorrow, the working class will lose because we would have no union headquarters, no stadium, no church in which to meet."

The 200,000 ABC metalworkers carried out the most important strike in Brazil's recent history from March 13 to March 28. They suspended that work stoppage only after the government declared the strike illegal and intervened in the unions, expelling the elected leadership.

The strike demands of a 78% wage increase, union representatives inside the plants, full compensation for days on strike, and an end to the intervention were to be negotiated over a forty-five-day period. Despite the intervention, the union's elected leaders participated in these talks.

The agreement reached on May 12 provides wage hikes of up to 63% with time lost during the strike to be discounted from paychecks and made up in overtime.

Many metalworkers expressed dissatisfaction with this accord. When the terms were read out to the São Bernardo assembly, the speaker was drowned out by booing. But the overwhelming majority of the assembled workers voted to accept the offer.

To force an end to the government intervention in the unions, metalworkers leaders announced at the May 13 gathering that an assembly would be held at the São Bernardo union headquarters on May 26 with the full participation of the deposed officials. "The strike movement in the ABC area, especially in São Bernardo, is taking on a political aspect," declared metalworker Enilson Simões, who proposed the union assembly. "We're going to meet together in our headquarters whether or not the government intervenor has been removed from his post."

Two days later, government officials announced that the metalworkers leaders would be reinstated, since "social peace"

had been reestablished in the ABC industrial belt.

Other strikes by sectors of the Brazilian working class that have taken place during the past two months are nearing an end, although this does not indicate acceptance of the government's settlement proposals.

More than 30,000 striking teachers and other public employees marched through downtown São Paulo on May 14 chanting slogans against the state and federal governments. Their calls for "Education, not repression" and "Better pay, better educa-

tion" were received with enthusiasm by onlookers. Workers in office buildings showered the marchers with confetti. After the march the public employees held an assembly and voted to return to work, although their wage demands had not been met.

Striking workers and professors at São Paulo University also voted May 14 to end their month-long strike.

On May 2, more than 2,000 São Paulo busdrivers began a two-day strike that paralyzed the sprawling metropolis. More than 5 million people were unable to get to and from work as a result. Armed guards patrolled a few scab buses that picked up passengers free of charge on the second day of the strike, but in general the city remained at a standstill. After intense negotiations a compromise wage accord was reached and the transit system returned to normal. The government is trying to pass on the wage hike to the public by raising bus fares. □

Leftist Monthly 'Versus' Under Government Attack

SÃO PAULO—Police agents from the Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS) invaded the offices of the leftist monthly *Versus—Afro América Latina* here on May 15 with a search-and-seizure order. The raid has meant a temporary shutdown of the paper and the confiscation of its books and records.

The attack marked the second time in less than a week and the third time in less than six months that *Versus* has been subjected to police "inspections" on the pretext of a financial audit.

Versus was slapped with a \$10,000 fine on April 3 for alleged irregularities discovered during a government-ordered audit begun in September 1978. On May 9 a Technical Police official showed up with orders for another audit. He was met by a delegation of supporters of *Versus's* right to publish, which included several deputies from the federal Congress and the state legislature, the president of the São Paulo state Union of Professional Journalists, and representatives of the Brazilian Press Association and the Order of Brazilian Attorneys.

The cop left without beginning his inspection, but vowed to turn the case over to the DOPS.

In seizing *Versus's* records the dictatorship is seeking both to stifle the independent press and augment its frame-up case against twenty-five leaders of the legal political group Socialist Convergence who are currently on trial here for "subversion." (See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 12, p. 245.)

"The fact that members of Socialist Convergence work for *Versus* does not

justify such pressure against the paper," *Versus* editor Enio Bucchioni told the press after the May 9 visit from the police. "Members of Socialist Convergence also work for the big dailies, and those papers aren't facing audits."

"Two weeks ago," Bucchioni pointed out, "*O Estado de São Paulo* [Brazil's most prestigious daily] published a confidential government document stating that the military's new tactic to silence the alternative press in this period of the so-called 'democratic opening' is through investigations of any violations of the civil code and administrative irregularities by the paper.

"We will not be intimidated by this current wave of indirect censorship against small papers such as *Versus* that question the political status quo," Bucchioni declared. "We intend to stand firm against this attack by the military government." □

Chinese Losses in Vietnam

The Chinese army lost 20,000 killed and wounded during the four-week invasion of Vietnam in February and March, according to figures released by Gen. Wu Xiuquan, Beijing's deputy chief of staff. Wu claimed that Vietnamese losses were two and a half times as high.

"Senior officers at the Pentagon were surprised at the extent of Chinese casualties," military correspondent Drew Middleton reported in the May 3 *New York Times*.

"The American officers pointed out that the Chinese were unlikely to inflate their own losses although they might inflate the Vietnamese casualties."

Iranian Kurds Fight for Sovereignty Over Their Homeland

By Gerry Foley

On the eve of the March 30-31 referendum on the "Islamic Republic," which was designed to help the new authorities stabilize the Iranian bourgeois state, the Bazargan-Khomeini government faced in Kurdistan its first explosive crisis.

The newly reconstituted Iranian armed forces were sent into their initial test in action. In the third week of March, they attacked the Kurdish population in the city of Sanandaj, the hub of the old regime's military and administrative apparatus in Kurdistan.

Units of the Imperial Guard that only a few weeks before had been shooting down insurrectionists fighting in Khomeini's name were ordered by the ayatollah's government to fire on civilians once again. Military helicopters strafed the city. Hundreds of Kurds were killed in four days of fighting, March 18-21.

But the Kurds fought the army to a standstill, forcing the new government to recognize de facto control of the Kurdish areas by Kurdish organizations.

The regrouped remnants of the Iranian state's military forces suffered a major setback. The Kurdish victory opened the way for struggles by the other oppressed nationalities, which had already been set in motion by the mass upsurge that swept away the shah's regime.

The government was obliged to negotiate with the Kurdish organizations and to promise autonomy for the Kurdish nation.

About a week after the fighting in Sanandaj ended, I talked with Salah ed-Din Muhtadi, a community leader in the town of Bowkan and one of the members of the Kurdish delegation chosen to negotiate with representatives of the Tehran government.

Bowkan is a town of between twenty and thirty thousand inhabitants, one of the first Kurdish towns on the road from the Azerbaijani-Turkish areas to the north. It is a bazaar town, with open-air trading throughout its central streets.

In the central square stands a large pedestal that used to hold a statue of the shah. As I passed it, I noticed that a big nest of storks had replaced the monarch on the monument.

The old regime had disarmed the Kurdish mountaineers. But now guns were being enthusiastically bought and sold in the bazaar, along with a mimeographed journal filled with poems in the previously banned Kurdish language.

I was introduced to Muhtadi as a jour-

nalist who knew the Irish national liberation movement well and had worked for many years to explain it to an international readership. Muhtadi thought the Irish struggle was similar in many respects to the Kurdish one.

The interview took place in Muhtadi's home not far from Bowkan. It was a traditional Kurdish farm house, in a courtyard surrounded by a wall built of mud and straw. But the wall did not block a view of the encircling mountains.

The house was very simple. The rafters were peeled saplings.

I asked Muhtadi how the people in Bowkan had responded to the events in Sanandaj. He told me:

"Everyone capable of carrying a weapon went to Sanandaj, not just from Bowkan but from all over Kurdistan. They helped to hold the city for a week. To give you a concrete example of what we did, I can tell you that one of our local people was killed in Sanandaj."

The Bowkan leader showed obvious pride at the fact that a Bowkan man had given his life for the Kurdish cause. He continued:

"The help to Sanandaj took many forms. Old people and shopkeepers would load and send goods to distribute among the people. The peasants brought food. In front of the hospital here, a long line formed of people wanting to give blood. More or less the same thing happened in the other cities and towns."

I wondered how people throughout Kurdistan had learned so quickly of the fighting in Sanandaj, since there is no local daily press or radio and there was not much news about it in broadcasts over the national network. Muhtadi said that for the most part word was passed spontaneously, by telephone and over the roads.

Some organizing work, he said, had been carried out by the *Jamiat-e Defez-e Enqelab va Azadi* (Society for the Defense of the Revolution and Liberty), with which he identified. This is one of several organizations in Kurdistan that present themselves as broad, community-based national liberation organizations. It is the strongest one in Bowkan. Its political profile seems to differ from place to place.

I asked what he thought had been accomplished by the negotiations with the representatives of the central government. The Tehran press was claiming that there had been a most harmonious reconciliation between the central government and the Kurds on the basis of the promised

autonomy.

Muhtadi said that while the members of the government delegations had been personally well-meaning, no fundamental progress had been made. I asked what the perspective was now. He stressed:

"We seek a political and a peaceful solution. We will seek it with all our strength. We hope that the central government will not force us to seek another kind of solution."

How, I asked, could the Kurds win respect for their rights in Iran? The key to this, he said, was an alliance with the other oppressed nationalities, especially the Azerbaijani Turks, "since they are the closest to us geographically."

During the battle in Sanandaj, he said, many Azerbaijanis offered help, although he did not know of any organized support activity in the Azerbaijani areas.

The "progressive wing" of the Kurdish movement, Muhtadi said, had decided that a new approach was necessary with regard to alliances. The past struggles of the Kurds had been defeated for two kinds of reasons. The first was "internal." That is, the leadership of the Kurdish movement had always come from the "feudal" class, which by its nature was localist and therefore could not unite the forces of the Kurdish nation.

A bourgeoisie began to develop in the Kurdish areas around the time of the Second World War. But it remained very weak and was unable to challenge the "feudalists" for leadership.

Therefore, the wing of the Kurdish movement that Muhtadi represented had decided that the Kurdish struggle had to be based on the "toilers" as a class and had to be led by an organization with a socialist perspective.

The second category of reasons for the failure of the previous Kurdish struggles was "external." What this meant was that the Kurds had not formed alliances with other forces in the countries in which they found themselves.

"We stand at a crossroads between truth and reality," Muhtadi said. "The truth is that the Kurds are one people divided among several states. The reality is that we do live in these countries, and that we can get more effective help from the other peoples living in this country than from the Kurds in Turkey or Iraq."

However, Muhtadi thought that it was important to study the example of Iraq, since "that is the one place that the Kurd-

ish people are conducting an armed struggle."

The Kurdish leader seemed not to think in terms of alliances with Persian workers as such. However, at the time of our discussion the only active mass resistance to the attempt by Khomeini and Bazargan to rebuild the bourgeois state was coming from the oppressed nationalities. In reaction to this, even some elements that claimed to base themselves on a socialist, internationalist viewpoint—such as the Fedayeen guerrillas among the national minorities—were tending to adopt a narrow nationalist perspective.

Muhtadi expressed a particularly strong feeling of identification with the Turkmeni people—even though in some areas of Turkmenistan the landlords and rich peasants who oppress the Turkmenis are transplanted Kurds. The distinction between oppressed and oppressor was thus more important to him than national differences as such.

Since he thought the Kurds should base themselves on the forces set in motion by the Iranian revolution, Muhtadi was not thinking in terms of the Kurds breaking away to form a separate state. He explained:

"We think that the nationalities in Iran, basing themselves on their culture and numbers, should decide how they want to exercise their rights. Iran should be a republic based on equal rights for all the nationalities. We want an autonomous government for the Kurds, with economic, cultural, and political sovereignty."

I asked what he meant by "sovereignty." He said:

"Basically, it means that we want to be the masters in our own house. How far it would go, what specific powers it would involve, will depend on the concrete situation we face—in particular on the attitude of the Tehran government."

I asked Muhtadi whether he regarded the present central government as democratic or having legitimate authority. He replied:

"We want the government to use democratic methods. We will judge it on the basis of its practice."

I asked him if he was surprised by the government's actions in Sanandaj. He said:

"If a government is a national and democratic government, it will use democratic methods. A problem arises when one group imposes itself [by this, he apparently meant the Shi'ite clergy]. The revolution [against the shah] was based on many groups and ideas. So, we are against one grouping trying to impose itself."

"The first step toward democracy is recognizing that people have different ideas and are divided geographically and culturally. This is the very first step."

I asked how he saw a democratic government being established in Iran. He said:

"It will be achieved through the solidarity of the oppressed nationalities." He went on to explain that "we are in favor of a constituent assembly for Iran in which all groups will be represented, but we also want congresses of the nationalities to decide how to run their own affairs."

Talking about the various political currents among the Kurdish people, Muhtadi gave the following explanation for the existence of the group he supports:

"There have long been underground Kurdish organizations. Now an area of legal work has opened up. This has made possible the formation of the Society for the Defense of the Revolution and Liberty. It is a group that sees the Kurdish national question in a class context and starts off from the reality that the Kurdish people are one people, whatever country they live in. It represents the progressive wing of the movement."

I asked what wing of the movement he thought was reactionary. He said:

"It's the Democratic Party of Kurdistan [DPK—the Kurdish CP]. It's reactionary because it wants to make deals with the religious leaders, the reactionary tribalists, and the central government."

The DPK's concept of Kurdish self-government differs from that expounded by Muhtadi and other radicalized Kurdish nationalists. The Stalinist representatives define autonomy in a negative way. They begin by explaining how modest their demands are, since the autonomy they want would leave all essential powers in the hands of the central government. They start out by imposing limitations on how far Kurdish self-rule could go.

In contrast to the DPK's approach, the call made by radicalized nationalists for sovereignty of the Kurdish people—the concrete forms of which are to be determined by the needs of the struggle—does not concede anything to the Tehran government in advance. It puts the national rights of the Kurdish people first. It rejects separation for the present, but on the basis of the need for solidarity among the struggling nationalities in Iran and not out of

any eternal loyalty to the Iranian state.

The Iranian Stalinist movement historically has had one of its strongest bases in the Kurdish areas, since for its own reasons Moscow supported the independent Kurdish republic set up in Iran immediately after World War II. But the DPK is apparently losing ground rapidly.

Even DPK supporters I talked to admitted that the party's influence declines the further south one goes from Mahabad, becoming clearly weaker than that of the radicalized nationalists in Sanandaj, in the center of the Kurdish country. South of Sanandaj, the DPK is virtually nonexistent.

Support for the traditional Kurdish nationalist factions based in Iraq (the Barzani and Telebani groups) was only a marginal factor in Iran, Muhtadi said.

I asked him if the Kurdish leaders had sought support for their struggle outside Iran. He said that so far they had not given that much thought, since their minds were on developing alliances with other forces in Iran. But he hoped that other oppressed nationalities would take up their cause. In particular, he stressed, "It would be very good if Bernadette Devlin and other Irish leaders would speak out on our behalf in Britain."

In talking to other Kurdish leaders, I found a feeling of isolation, that the Kurdish struggle was not understood internationally, that it was hopeless to expect sympathy. As soon as I mentioned international support, one Kurdish writer in Tehran responded: "The Kurds are completely alone."

But now the Iranian revolution has put the Kurdish people's struggle in a central position in world politics. Whether this revolution goes on to bring real freedom for the masses that overthrew the shah's regime depends in no small part on the success of the Kurds' fight. The world workers movement and all oppressed nationalities have a big stake in defending the Kurdish people against bourgeois repression and in helping to assure their victory. □

Israeli Secret Police Arrest Anti-Zionist

Uri Davis, a prominent Israeli anti-Zionist, was arrested May 24 by Israeli secret police. An Israeli court ruled the following day that Davis could be held without charges for eight days of interrogation.

For the past year, Davis had been teaching at the University of Bradford in Britain. He was arrested as he returned to Israel after hearing that the regime was trying to implicate him in a frame-up.

In mid-May the Begin government rounded up fifteen Palestinian students belonging to the Democratic Progressive Movement. Members of the campus group

had earlier issued a statement of opposition to the Israeli-Egyptian treaty and stated their political solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Reports in the Israeli press indicate that the regime is trying to link Davis and the DPM as participants in a common "conspiracy." Government officials have already charged that the DPM is a front group for al-Fateh.

Having been arrested for thinking the wrong thoughts and saying the wrong things, the Palestinian students in the DPM now face torture at the hands of the Israeli secret police. □

Thatcher's Strategy for Offensive Against Labor Movement

By John Ross

[The following article appeared in the May 17 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, newsweekly sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The vast scale of the Tory battle plan is dictated by the state of British and international capitalism. The world economy is moving into a new recession following the limited recovery of 1976-78.

The much vaunted prize of North Sea oil can actually make the situation of the British economy worse. Without an attack on the working class to drive up the rate of profit, the influx of oil revenues can infect Britain with the "Dutch disease" of soaring exchange rates, high levels of imports and collapse of production levels.

So Thatcher cannot just maintain the status quo but has to rob the working class of most of the gains made since 1945. That's why this Tory administration is an authentically reactionary government.

But haven't both Labour and Tory governments since the '60s tried to carry out such policies? After all, the last government's incomes policy drove down real wages by no less than 12.5 percent between 1975-1977.

What makes the Thatcher government original is not what she intends to do, but how she intends to do it.

Sir Keith Joseph's famous "Centre for Policy Studies" drew some definite conclusions both from the defeat of Heath's government and from the successes of Wilson and Callaghan in 1975-77.

Joseph [the new industry minister] and Thatcher concluded that Heath made a disastrous mistake in openly assaulting the working class without even the most basic preliminary preparation.

Heath refused to meet the TUC [Trades Union Congress] for the first year and a half of his government. He introduced the openly anti-trade-union Industrial Relations Act. He even refused to give a way out to the ultra-right-wing electricians' union boss Chapple in the power workers' strike of 1970.

Heath never tried to politically undermine the inevitable resistance to these policies—a resistance founded on ideas of maintaining the welfare state, of full employment and therefore existing nationalisations, of a "liberal" legal



TORY PRIME MINISTER THATCHER

system, and a foreign policy based on détente.

As a result a mighty defensive reaction swamped Heath. Even sections of the trade union bureaucrats such as [engineers union leader Hugh] Scanlon, convinced that the Tories were threatening the very existence of the organisations on which they were based and under huge pressure from their membership, made gestures of defiance and on occasions left the door ajar for militants to mobilise mass action.

Without breaking from its reformist ideas, without a clear socialist perspective, the working class, committed to defence of its post-war gains, smashed Heath.

If this was the conclusion from the Heath experience what did the Tory pundits glean from the Labour government which followed it?

Wilson immediately scrapped Heath's war machine. The Industrial Relations Act was repealed. The Employment Protection Act and the Industry Act were offered to the working class as olive branches. Yet in the years to come Wilson and Callaghan were to mark up a series of successes in attacking the working class.

At the root of these victories was a

complete reversal of Heath's attitude to the trade union bureaucracy. Where Heath attacked the Labour leaders Callaghan brought the union bosses into the very seat of government.

Consultation was the guiding theme at every stage. The details of the first round of incomes policy in 1975 were proposed by Jack Jones, then leader of the transport workers.

The chief weapon and common starting point were labourist politics centred on appeals of "national interest above class interest," to weakening of classes rather than class conflict, opposition to what they termed "violence and extremism" and the final argument of "the sovereignty of Parliament."

Where such stirring battle cries had no effect the trade union leaders did the government's dirty work by such organisational sabotage as the threatened expulsion of the toolmakers from the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers [AUEW].

Apart from its defeats in the winter of 1978-79 at the hands of the Fords workers and lorry drivers, Wilson and Callaghan led the most successful right wing governments in Britain since the war. They made the capitalist core of Labour reformism directly serve the ruling class.

Thatcher aims to repeat the experience. That's why the description of her as an "ideological politician" is accurate.

Of course, certain political weapons used by Wilson and Callaghan—anti-Toryism, "the unity of the labour movement," or the idealisation of the post-1945 welfare state—are not open to her.

But Thatcher calculates that these are the most fragile parts of Labourist politics and ideology.

This assessment was based on the rapidity with which Callaghan ignored Labour's traditional hostility towards coalition when the need arose to form the pact with the Liberal Party. Equally significant was the fact that the Labour left accepted the pact with scarcely a rumble.

Likewise it was the party based on the myth of the "caring" Beveridge state which was to move to make cutbacks in social services beside which Barber's 1973 economies paled in comparison.

Thatcher calculates that those parts of Labour's ideas which are resistant to Tory use can be confronted by claiming

continuity with the record of the last Labour government.

So, far from shunning the trade union bureaucracy, Thatcher has no difference with [Employment Minister James] Prior in wanting to involve them as closely as possible with her government.

Where Heath refused even to meet the TUC, within the first three days of his ministry Prior has already had lengthy conversations with [TUC General Secretary] Len Murray—the first of many this summer.

While these talks are to some extent a cosmetic device, Thatcher is nonetheless convinced that she has a genuine identity of interest with the trade union bureaucrats—a view shared by such important mouthpieces of ruling class opinion as the *Economist* magazine.

Chief planks of Tory policy on secret ballots, attacks on picketing and strikers are similar to those used by the right wing inside the engineers' and electricians' unions. Other areas such as the closed shop could be easily negotiated to find mutually agreeable formulas.

The initial Tory aim is to boost the building of a powerful right wing, not to seek immediate confrontation with the whole union bureaucracy.

Apart from her own election victory, the sweeping gains made by the right wing of the AUEW must rank as the most important gain for the Tory Party of recent times.

In some areas the going will not be so smooth. Tory attacks on the public sector will be so savage that even the trade union leaders such as Alan Fisher of the National Union of Public Employees [NUPE] may have no choice but to resort to left-sounding phrases to keep abreast with the response of his members.

But Thatcher knows that the TUC refused to come to the aid of the Fire Brigades Union, NUPE or other public sector unions and instead collaborated with Callaghan. She aims to promote the same process.

The coming years will see the strongest ever Tory bid for close collaboration with the trade union bureaucracy on economic and union issues.

Those who will first receive the brunt of the offensive will be those traditionally ignored or attacked by the union leaders; low-paid women workers, youth and blacks. An attempt will be made to isolate and then pick off the most militant and active trade unionists.

But these are only the means. The eventual aim for the ruling class must be to significantly raise the rate of profit. That can only be achieved by defeating the strongest of all sections of the working class—those in the industrial unions.

Thatcher knows that the Tories could not win a head-on confrontation with a powerful union such as the National

Union of Mineworkers. But she aims to change that situation with her policy of "divide and rule."

The power of even the strongest group of workers does not lie in their industrial muscle alone. It lies in their ability to unite the rest of the working class behind them in struggle.

Heath could not use force to defeat the miners in 1972 or 1974 because they enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class. When the five dockers were imprisoned under the Industrial Relations Act in 1972 even the TUC was forced by mass pressure to threaten a general strike.

These workers were seen as fighting not only for their own interests but for those of the whole working class. The miners were acting against a hated government. The dockers against a hated law.

This sort of unity Thatcher fears most of all. Her policy is to anticipate it by using political methods to keep the working class divided. Racism, attacks on abortion, "law and order" campaigns will be grist to this mill. New tactics such as referendums may be used in extremes.

This Tory strategy is a real challenge to activists in the labor movement. That movement has a long record of solidarity and unity in trade union and economic struggles, but is weak in the political field.

It has succumbed to its leadership in failing to end Britain's imperialist role. Women's rights for many a year were abandoned. In too many industries it remains sectoralised. It has been lulled by the tune of "parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law."

Thatcher aims to use this political weakness to firstly disunite and secondly boost the right in the unions and in society as a whole.

Thatcher and her government can be defeated. The working class in this country is enormously strong—economically, socially, and organisationally. Thatcher can

make any number of deals with the trade union leaders and still be defeated by mass struggles.

Once again the outcome of British politics in the next five years will be decided by the fight in the trade unions. The central goal of socialists must be to build up a powerful left wing based on class struggle policies against the Tories.

Those policies must take account of Thatcher's strategy.

Defence of trade union rights and democracy, opposition to wage controls and defence of living standards, defence of the public sector and campaigning for the right to work will remain the most central of issues in the coming months.

Fighting for these policies means building committees for the defence of trade unions, coordinating the fight against the cuts and organising solidarity for all workers in struggle.

But increasingly the workers movement will have to fight on every political question. The struggle against racism, against the oppression of women, for the rights of young people, on international issues, and in defence of almost every single social and democratic right will be needed.

Building organisations such as the National Abortion Campaign, the United Troops Out Movement, and committees against racism is an integral part of the fight for a class struggle left wing.

The working class in Britain has more than enough organisational power to smash the Tories. If it uses this struggle to also develop its whole range of political understanding it will open up the door to liberation from all the human oppression Thatcher represents. It will begin to create the path to socialism.

This is the real challenge facing us in the next years. Thatcher's is one of the most dangerous of all Tory governments. If the working class takes up the challenge it could also be the last. □

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3. Black Revolt vs. White Reaction

By Ernest Harsch

[Third of a series]

On the morning of November 16, hundreds of Black workers pile onto the 7:10 commuter train running from the township of Atteridgeville to Pretoria, where they work.

A Black minister begins preaching. "God has given a white man a black one to care for," he proclaims. "Why should we fight against him? A white man is our parent."

The incensed passengers silence him. At the next station, they throw him off the train. . .

The mood in South Africa's Black townships today is one of anger: anger at the deteriorating living conditions; anger at the lack of any meaningful concessions; anger at the Black collaborators who counsel "patience"; anger at the detentions, bannings, and police shootings that are a constant feature of daily life.

There is also a feeling of hope and of confidence, however, fed by the gains of the Black liberation struggle in the rest of southern Africa and encouraged by the growing realization among Blacks of the strength of their numbers.

There is likewise a stubborn determination among young Black militants to continue their political activities as best they can, to organize, to prepare for the coming battles, and to not be intimidated by the threat of repression. This determination was expressed by a number of activists I met in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban.

The continued spirit of resistance is especially remarkable coming after some of the fiercest repression South Africa has yet seen. The ability of the Black townships to withstand the mass killings of 1976 and the outlawing of the most important Black political organizations in 1977 gives testimony to a deepgoing process of radicalization that has affected large sections of the urban population.

From Awakening to Rebellion

That radicalization has its immediate roots in the political and social developments of the past decade.

The emergence of the Black Consciousness movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s marked the first significant political stirrings among Blacks since the lull fol-

lowing the Sharpeville massacre of 1960.

The new ferment began among Black university students, who formed the South African Students Organisation (SASO) in 1968.

They focused on building up the confidence of Blacks through advocacy of Black pride and opposition to the racist values propagated by white supremacist society. They rejected any participation by Blacks in collaborationist institutions like the Bantustans or the government-imposed Coloured and Indian councils. They resisted the regime's divide-and-rule policies by seeking to foster unity among all the Black peoples—Africans, Coloureds, and Indians.

By the early 1970s, the ideas of the Black Consciousness movement, as expounded by SASO, began to gain a wider following with the establishment of such groups as the Black People's Convention (BPC), the Black Allied Workers Union, the South African Student Movement (SASM), the National Youth Organisation, and others. It was no longer strictly a student-based movement.

The rapid urbanization of the 1960s and 1970s and the emergence of significant manufacturing industries meant that the Black working class could make its weight felt more than ever before. This it began to do in 1973 with a series of strikes that shook Natal for several weeks.

The strikes, and the subsequent rise in Black union organization, spurred some leaders of the various Black Consciousness groups to try to draw workers more actively into the liberation struggle.

A few of the younger militants, including a couple whom I spoke to, had already begun in that period to see the struggle against white supremacy as both a national and a class struggle, one that challenged not only the racist institutions but also the capitalist system on which they are based.

The Black Consciousness movement as a whole, however, did not elaborate a clearly defined political strategy of how Blacks could attain their liberation. Nor was it entirely homogeneous. Some figures stressed community self-help projects or religious pursuits. Others emphasized the need to organize Blacks politically.

Nonetheless, the Black Consciousness movement had a profound impact in awakening political life in the Black townships. Some of its ideas spread far beyond the ranks of the movement itself, affecting the political outlook of much of the Black

population. Most of all, it was the confidence that the movement instilled in the townships that helped set the stage for the massive upheavals of 1976 and after.

The upsurge in Soweto began with a series of boycotts among high-school students against the enforced use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in half the courses. The police shooting of student protesters on June 16, 1976, was enough to set off the pent-up anger and frustration of Black youths and adults, who poured into the streets to vent their opposition to the white minority regime.

Within just a couple of months, the rebellions had spread spontaneously to at least 160 Black communities around the country. In most areas, the students took the lead. In Johannesburg and Cape Town, several hundred thousand workers actively participated through a series of general strikes called by the students.

Despite the tremendous power displayed in these actions, the upsurge had no real political or organizational leadership that could effectively channel the energies of the masses.

The repression of the state, while partially of an indiscriminate character to terrorize the masses, was also carefully directed at the leaders of the Black Consciousness movement, whom the authorities feared could provide greater direction to the upsurge (and who in some cases had already begun to do so from behind the scenes).

In face of this brutal police crackdown, the massive urban rebellions had died down considerably by late 1976. But the struggle itself had not.

The Legacy of Soweto

The events of 1976 had a tremendous radicalizing effect on Blacks throughout South Africa. The Soweto upheavals—and the regime's reactions to them—swept away whatever illusions may have remained that the basic conflict between white supremacy and Black aspirations was somehow reconcilable.

The battlelines were now clearly drawn. Pausing barely long enough to catch their breath, activists in the townships quickly moved on to new campaigns. They demonstrated for the release of political prisoners, marked the anniversary of the March 21, 1960, Sharpeville massacre, and in April 1977 mobilized to prevent the West Rand Administration Board from imposing rent hikes in Soweto.

The Soweto Urban Bantu Council

(UBC), which openly collaborated with the authorities, had been a favorite target of opposition. In May and June 1977, the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC), which had considerable political authority in the township for its role in organizing many of the demonstrations the previous year, put enough pressure on the UBC to force a majority of its members to resign, leading to the council's collapse.

Soweto, Mamelodi, Kabah, Kwanobuhle, and other townships around the country were swept by a new wave of mass demonstrations and uprisings in June 1977, around the first anniversary of the initial Soweto actions. Tens of thousands marched in the streets to commemorate the victims of the police killings and to demand the release of political prisoners. In Johannesburg, more than half the Black industrial work force stayed home in response to a two-day strike call issued by the SSRC.

These new upheavals pressured even the "moderate" *Weekend World*, a Black-staffed Johannesburg newspaper, to adopt a more militant editorial stance. "We say to the Government and the whites in general, your choice is simple," it declared June 19. "Either abandon all your privileges now and submit yourselves to majority rule in a nonracial society, or face certain destruction in the future."

The growing political consciousness of Soweto's inhabitants was expressed to an extent through the formation in late June of the Committee of Ten, chaired by Dr. Nthato Motlana and including four current or past officials of the Black People's Convention among its ten members.

In a direct challenge to the regime's attempts to impose a new community council to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the UBC, the committee proposed the establishment of a popularly elected body in Soweto, representative of the township's real interests. The government quickly moved to stifle the committee's plans to display its popular support by banning the committee's scheduled mass rallies.

In July, the BPC called a conference of ten major Black organizations to mobilize opposition to Pretoria's Bantustan policies. The same month, high-school students near Pretoria began a boycott of classes to protest the racist system of Bantu Education. Within a few months, the boycott had spread to townships across South Africa, as well as to some of the Bantustans, involving as many as 300,000 students.

Especially significant, though it was less visible at the time, was the political evolution of some of the younger leaders of the Black Consciousness movement. They began to acquire a clearer picture of South African society, of the role that capitalism plays in the oppression and exploitation of Blacks.

One former leader of the Black People's



William Nkosi/Agence Gamma

Protest at Heinemann Electric plant near Johannesburg in March 1976. Entire work force was fired for demanding recognition of Black union.

Convention, who is now banned, told me that he and other militants favored the establishment of socialism following the overthrow of the white supremacist regime. "Our struggle against apartheid is a struggle against capitalism," he said. "We do not want to just take over the government and leave everything else as we find it. We want to run the economy in the interests of the masses, to their benefit, not to profit some capitalist, white or Black."

Similar ideas found their way into public declarations of the South African Students Organisation. The June 1977 *SASO Bulletin* declared, "When we talk about freedom, we mean freedom from poverty and its associated evils, freedom to enjoy basic rights of food, shelter and clothing, education which teaches creativity not destruction, and access to the world of culture in which all those who have the gift can participate."

Diliza Mji, the president of SASO at the time, stated in a speech published in the same issue, "Apartheid as an exploitative system is part of the bigger whole, capitalism. . . . If Black Consciousness must survive as a viable philosophy and continue to articulate the aspirations of the masses of the people, it must start interpreting our situation from an economic class point of view. . . . We have to align ourselves with the majority of the working people and be with them."

Fearful of the increasingly radical drift of some of those within the Black Consciousness movement—especially at a time of mounting opposition in the streets—the government moved to try to crush the movement outright.

On October 19, 1977, following weeks of massive protests against the police murder of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko,

the regime outlawed almost every one of the major groups identified with the movement, including the BPC, SASO, SASM, and SSRC, and detained or banned many of their leaders.

The crackdown was a serious blow. In one quick stroke, it eliminated the most active channels of open Black political opposition. It placed further restrictions on many of the more experienced Black leaders.

The Buthelezi Option

By outlawing the major Black Consciousness groups, the regime hoped to create a vacuum of political leadership in the Black community, thus providing greater opportunities for the Bantustan figureheads and other collaborationist or reformist elements to try to dominate political life in the townships.

The most concerted effort to take advantage of the bannings has been that of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the chief minister of KwaZulu.

Despite his participation in the government-created Bantustan system, Buthelezi has carefully sought to nurture an image of himself as an opponent of apartheid. He loses no opportunity to verbally condemn Pretoria's racist policies, including the imposition of "independence" on the Bantustans. He says he is for the unity of all Blacks and even claims that "no one has worked all his life for the unity of all Black people more than I have done." He frequently tries to strike a radical pose by giving clenched-fist salutes and shouting "Amandla!" (Power!).

In 1975, Buthelezi established a predominantly Zulu formation, the Inkatha Ye-Nkululeko YeSizwe (National Cultural Liberation Movement), which claims to favor

the "liberation" of South Africa from racist rule. Its main function, in fact, is to provide Buthelezi with an organizational base, primarily in KwaZulu itself, but elsewhere as well.

Although some government officials may chafe at Buthelezi's strident rhetoric, Pretoria has so far not sought to gag him.⁴ While Black leader after Black leader is detained, banned, or killed, Buthelezi is allowed to carry on.

The main reason is that the authorities view him as essentially a tribal politician, a Zulu chief who goes along with much of Pretoria's divide-and-rule approach. His vocal criticisms, in fact, help lend a degree of credibility to the Bantustan system; they may convince some Blacks that it is possible to exercise their political rights through the Bantustans after all.

Buthelezi and others like him also serve a useful role in their efforts to undercut the popular demands for a withdrawal of foreign investments from South Africa. Presenting themselves as "true leaders" of the Black masses, they appeal to imperialist companies to continue investing in South Africa, thus providing a cover for the imperialists' collaboration with the apartheid system and exploitation of South Africa's cheap Black labor force.

According to a report in the July 12, 1978, *Rand Daily Mail*, "To an extent, elements within the Government—possibly the Security Police for a start—believe Chief Buthelezi is in fact an asset.

"They argue that at the time of the Soweto riots, Natal, where he exercises his greatest influence, was relatively quiet.

"At the same time his growing influence is regarded as an asset of sorts simply because it provokes such intense rivalry with the black consciousness movements."

Since the October 1977 bannings, Buthelezi has moved quickly to try to extend his influence beyond KwaZulu, into the townships. His Inkatha organization has been expanded considerably, and now claims 200,000 dues-paying members. He has held several rallies in Soweto, drawing audiences of around 10,000. The National African Federated Chambers of Commerce has declared its backing for Inkatha.

In early 1978, Buthelezi's Inkatha held a series of meetings with the Indian Reform Party and the Coloured Labour Party, two groups that collaborate with the regime through their participation in the South African Indian Council and the Coloured People's Representative Council. The three organizations established the South African Black Alliance (SABA), which was later joined by the Dikwankwatla Party of

the QwaQwa Bantustan.

SABA's proclaimed aim is to work toward Black unity. However, if it ever gains any real influence, it would actually serve to further Pretoria's divide-and-rule aims by reinforcing ethnic particularism among Blacks and by drawing more of them into involvement with the Bantustans or the Coloured and Indian councils.

The reaction among Blacks to Buthelezi and the SABA has not been as enthusiastic as the white-run news media would have it appear.

Those who attend Inkatha rallies in Soweto tend to be from the older or more traditionalist sectors of the population, indicating that Buthelezi still has almost no real following among township youth. One banned Black activist in Durban told me that Inkatha organizers and government officials used some pressure to recruit members to Inkatha (by refusing to allo-

cate houses to township residents in Durban who did not have Inkatha membership cards). Only 6 percent of Soweto's eligible voters turned out for the elections in early 1978 to the Soweto Community Council, despite the "popular" Inkatha's fielding of several candidates in them.

When Buthelezi attempted to attend the funeral of Pan Africanist Congress leader Robert Sobukwe in early March 1978, he was forced to leave by young Black radicals.

Although the crackdown of October 1977 put a damper on many antigovernment opposition activities and enabled figures like Gatsha Buthelezi to monopolize more newspaper headlines, it by no means ended the period of mass struggle opened up by the Soweto rebellions.

[Next: *Continuing Struggle for Freedom*]

Casualty of Corruption Scandal

Butcher of Soweto Forced to Resign

By Ernest Harsch

After more than two decades as one of South Africa's leading architects of white supremacy, John Vorster was forced to resign as president June 4—not because of his many crimes against Blacks, but because he got caught lying to his fellow whites.

On the same day as his downfall, Vorster was accused by a government-appointed commission of having taken part in a cover-up of "gross irregularities" in connection with a corruption scandal involving several former officials.

The resignation marks the effective end of Vorster's political career, which began in the 1930s when he joined a pro-Nazi organization.

Known for his staunch opposition to any advance by the country's Black majority, Vorster was named to various government posts. In the early 1960s, as minister of justice, police, and prisons, he instituted a fierce crackdown that was successful in crushing most open dissent. After becoming prime minister in 1966, he presided over the further extension of the racist system of apartheid, the South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76, the stripping of citizenship rights from many Blacks, and the massacre of more than 600 young Black protesters during the urban uprisings of 1976.

In September 1978, Vorster resigned as prime minister to take up the largely ceremonial post of president, at a time when the first revelations of corruption and secret foreign influence-peddling operations by the Department of Information began to break. Several of his lieutenants,

including Minister of Information C.P. Mulder and Gen. Hendrik van den Bergh of the secret police, were driven from office.

Vorster's fall from power and the extent of the scandal itself are reflections of the extreme pressures bearing down on the white minority regime.

The advances of the Black liberation struggle in the rest of southern Africa and especially the growing militancy and activism of South Africa's urban Black population have tended to sharpen the political differences within the ruling National Party over what course to follow to best preserve white supremacy and the capitalist system on which it is based.

Those in the party leadership who favor a major overhaul of the apartheid system, such as Vorster's successor as prime minister, Pieter W. Botha, were able to take advantage of the scandal to advance their own "solution" to the crisis.

At the same time, Botha realizes that if the scandal gets out of control, or continues much longer, it could undermine his own efforts to make apartheid more effective. In particular, signs of serious division or weakness within the government could encourage Blacks to step up their opposition.

In an attempt to squelch any further revelations of corruption or secret government projects, Botha has pressed for the adoption of the Advocate-General Bill, which would bar newspapers from publishing scandal disclosures without official permission. The ruling class cannot afford many more casualties like Vorster. □

4. A few officials of Inkatha have been questioned by the Security Police, however, and an occasional Inkatha publication has been banned. These actions are probably intended as warnings to Buthelezi not to take his assumed role as a "militant" too seriously.