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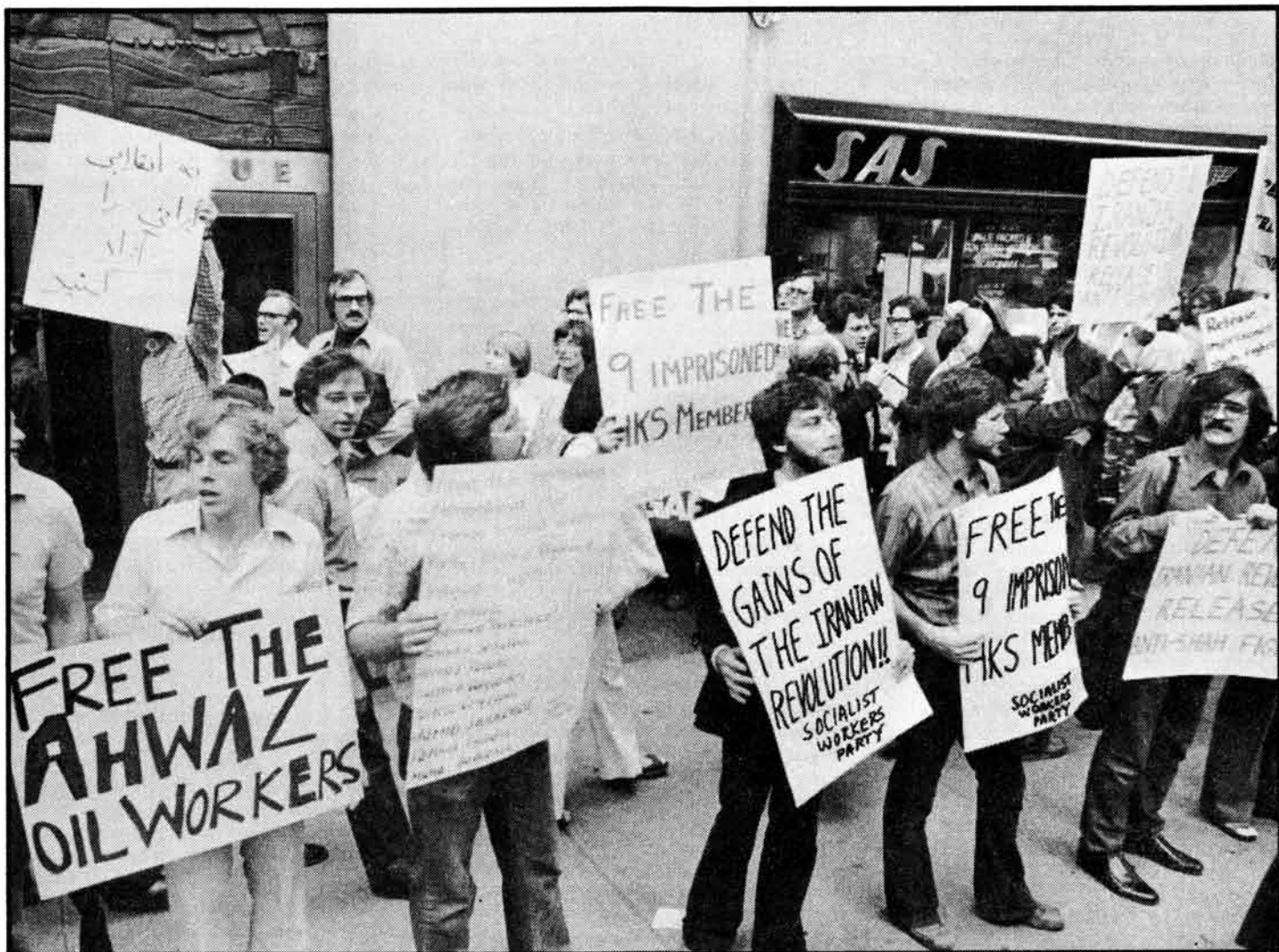
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**Demand Release of 9 Iranian Trotskyists!**

**U.S. HANDS OFF  
NICARAGUA!**

## 'Boat People' Campaign Aims to Smear Vietnam

By Will Reissner

The current imperialist propaganda campaign regarding the plight of emigrants from Indochina who are now refugees in other countries in Southeast Asia is one of the most brutally cynical political operations in a long time.

No one would dispute that the present situation of these refugees is difficult, in many cases even desperate. But the Western capitalist media is interested only in using their plight as a club against the Vietnamese revolution, while the real solution to the problem goes virtually unmentioned.

For years the U.S. rulers, echoed by the press, have lambasted the Soviet Union for its refusal to allow free emigration.

But now the American government is viciously attacking Vietnam for exactly the reverse policy—Vietnam allows those who wish to emigrate to do so.

On June 13 a United States congressional subcommittee likened Vietnam's policy on emigration to Hitler's expulsion of Jews in the 1930s. Assistant Secretary of State for Pacific Affairs Richard C. Holbrooke added that "the Vietnamese government has embarked on a deliberate effort to rid itself of those elements of society which it considers undesirable."

The only truth to the analogy with Nazi Germany is that the U.S. ruling class was as unwilling to open its doors to Jews from Germany in the 1930s as it is now to Indochinese in camps in Southeast Asia.

Who are the refugees, and why and how did they leave Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea?

Since the 1975 defeat of the U.S. military intervention in Indochina, somewhat more than 900,000 Vietnamese, Laotians, and Kampuchians have left their native regions. Of these, about 130,000, mostly collaborators with the U.S., left at the time the U.S.-backed regimes fell.

In the past year about 450,000 people have left their homes. Many were fleeing the fighting in Kampuchea, but most left following the overturn of the last bastions of capitalism in southern Vietnam in March and April of last year.

Kampuchians have been going to Thailand and Vietnam. A representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees noted that "the Cambodian refugees, as a group, are different from other refugees." They are waiting for developments that will allow them to return to their homes—that is, the crushing of the alliance of U.S. and Thai-backed Kampu-

chean counterrevolutionary forces.

The question of international resettlement, then, largely concerns those who have left Laos and Vietnam.

Larry Eichel, a reporter for the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, spent six weeks touring the refugee camps in Southeast Asia. His series of articles on the refugees was reprinted in the June 12, 1979, *Congressional Record*.

As a result of his discussions with refugees and camp administrators, Eichel concludes that many of those in the camps "might not be considered refugees in the usual sense of the word." With only a few exceptions, he states, "they are not fleeing government reprisals such as death or imprisonment." Rather "their motives for leaving Indochina are political, economic and sometimes simply personal." Their reasons "have little to do with ideology."

According to the refugees, "the situation at home is unpleasant rather than desperate. They leave because they choose to—and because the opportunity to do so exists."

The most common motivations expressed by refugees were that their businesses had been nationalized, their incomes had been cut, or they had been told they would have to settle in "new economic zones" that are being set up in the countryside to provide a living for the millions of people who flooded the cities before 1975 to escape U.S. bombing.

Many others are taking the opportunity to join relatives already living in the United States or France.

Nearly three-quarters of the people leaving Vietnam are ethnic Chinese. Both the U.S. government and the Beijing regime in China claim that this is evidence of widespread discrimination in Vietnam.

But the refugees don't agree. Eichel notes that despite growing tension between China and Vietnam, the Chinese in Vietnam found that "their lives remained largely untouched until March 23, 1978, the day communism arrived in Cholon," (that is, the day sweeping nationalizations of remaining industry and commerce were carried out in southern Vietnam). These hit the Chinese population especially hard since historically Chinese predominated in these property-owning classes.

The nationalizations, Eichel notes, convinced most of the former owners that their futures would be better served elsewhere. He points out that a great number

of the refugees remained wealthy and that "despite the confiscations, most still had enough gold to buy their way out" on ships.

In addition to merchants and capitalists, there are a large number of professionals, particularly doctors, among the "boat people." According to Eichel, the Pulau Bidong refugee camp in Malaysia "may have the highest doctor-patient ratio of any town—let alone refugee camp—in the entire world." Of the 25,000 refugees at the camp when he visited, there was one doctor for every 416 persons.

The same general rules hold true for Laotians in camps in Thailand, according to the *Inquirer* series. With the exception of about 80,000 Meo hill people who had been recruited to fight by the CIA, the bulk of those who have left Laos are what Eichel describes as "economic refugees" who "left because they did not like the new rules, not because they were being persecuted. . . ."

The overwhelming majority of those leaving Vietnam and Laos want to go to the United States. Eichel points out that "many are so insistent on pursuing their American dreams that they reject offers of resettlement from other nations, thus prolonging indefinitely their residence in limbo."

This desire to move to the United States to improve one's standard of living is not, of course, restricted to the Indochinese refugees. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and Border Patrol spend vast amounts of money and energy trying to turn back "illegal aliens" from all over the world.

The Vietnamese government is allowing those who want to leave to do so. Since they have no means of getting to their preferred destination, the United States, they set sail for various points in Southeast Asia and hope to be settled in camps until they are allowed to enter the U.S. At this point about 330,000 are in such camps.

Recently the governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have been talking about towing boats back to sea and refusing to allow boats to land. This is partly intended to pressure Washington to increase the number of Indochinese it allows in. However, in view of their proven record of brutal disregard for human life, there is no reason to doubt that such threats may be carried out.

Despite this ominous development, Washington and other imperialist governments are refusing to take in any significant number of refugees. Since late 1975, only 70,000 have been admitted to the U.S., and government plans call for the acceptance of another 119,000 over the next seventeen months, a rate of only 7,000 per month.

France has taken in slightly more than 50,000, mostly from Laos, and plans to accept 1,000 per month, including those

who emigrate directly from Vietnam to France.

Australia has let in 18,000, and plans to allow in another 14,000. Canada has admitted 8,500, and has agreed to take in another 5,000. Japan has given legal status to 3 refugees, all in one family.

Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie, the Malaysian home minister, has bitterly attacked the U.S. procedures for screening refugees. He notes that while Malaysia, a country of 13 million people, is expected to take in everyone who shows up wanting to go to the U.S., the Americans "do not in fact treat these people as refugees but [as] people from whom immigrants would be selected."

The U.S. has established five categories of refugees. Only categories 1 and 2—made up of those with close relatives now in the U.S. and former employees of the U.S. government—are given prompt consideration. The rest are considered only if they have already been rejected by other countries.

Vietnam acknowledges that many among the former ruling class would like to leave. Nguyen Trong Vinh, Vietnamese ambassador to China, agreed that "it is true that there are quite a few people among the bourgeois, the capitalists, the landowners and some of the high officials of the former regime who detest our system."

The Vietnamese government has offered to arrange for orderly emigration of those who want to leave. Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh proposed in January that arrangements be made for people to leave by plane. In June, Vietnam offered to arrange for 10,000 people to go directly to countries ready to give them permanent homes.

The United States *rejected this offer*. It wants to utilize the present situation to maximize its political campaign against the Vietnamese revolution. The aim is to portray the Vietnamese government as responsible for great human misery and suffering, while the U.S. has only humanitarian concerns.

However, the responsibility lies in Washington alone. The American government plans to spend only \$244 million in fiscal 1980 on resettling refugees. At the peak of U.S. military intervention in Vietnam, in 1968-69, Washington was spending more than \$550 million *per week* to wage war on that country. This is a clear example of the priorities the U.S. rulers follow.

In response to the propaganda campaign, we should point out that it was the U.S. imperialists who devastated Vietnam in their decade-long war against the Vietnamese people. It was the U.S. imperialists who reneged on their promise of reconstruction reparations. It was the U.S. imperialists who promoted the recent Chinese invasion of Vietnam. And now it is the U.S. imperialists who refuse to provide for the refugees. □

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# Washington Threatens Nicaragua, Cuba

By Fred Murphy

Fearing the collapse of the Somoza dictatorship in face of a mass upsurge of workers and peasants and a continuing military offensive launched by the guerrilla fighters of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the U.S. imperialists are threatening direct military intervention in Nicaragua to prevent what Washington fears could become "another Cuba."

On June 21, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance called on the Organization of American States (OAS) to send a "peacekeeping force" to Nicaragua that could guarantee the installation of a "transitional government." The aim was to restore capitalist stability and head off a Sandinista victory. On June 22 a White House representative confirmed that U.S. troops might be included if Vance's proposal were adopted by the OAS.

Seeking to justify such an intervention, Washington has singled out the government of Cuba for its support to the anti-Somoza struggle in Nicaragua.

In his OAS speech, Vance cited "mounting evidence of involvement by Cuba" as a major reason the OAS should act.

Speaking to a joint session of Congress on June 18, President Carter warned of "growing Cuban involvement in the problems of Central America and the Caribbean" and said he had told Soviet President Brezhnev that—along with "Cuban military activities in Africa"—this "can only have a negative impact on U.S.-Soviet relations."

The Cuban government has responded firmly to the threats. In a statement issued in Havana June 19, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations declared that Carter was "trying to rescue the bloodiest and most corrupt criminals in all of Latin America" and called for mobilization "to prevent a new and criminal armed intervention in Nicaragua. . . ." (See next page for more extensive excerpts from the Cuban statement.)

### Rebuff From OAS

Unlike on previous occasions—such as the after-the-fact OAS approval put on the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965—Washington this time met with total failure in its effort to gain OAS cover for military intervention in Nicaragua. In fact, not a single member government spoke up for Vance's proposal to send troops.

The Latin American governments' refusal to give Washington a blank check reflects the overwhelming support the Ni-

caraguan rebels enjoy among the workers and peasants of those countries, and the deep opposition throughout the continent to U.S. military intervention. The Cuban statement gave voice to this sentiment, declaring: "We must put behind us forever the time when the United States was the lord and master of our countries and the Yankee marines decided what government our peoples would have."

As a counterproposal to Vance's demands, thirteen OAS governments submitted a resolution affirming "the principle of non-intervention" and condemning the "inhuman conduct" of the Somoza regime.

Five Latin American regimes—Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, and Panama—have broken diplomatic relations with Somoza, and Grenada and Panama have recognized the provisional government established by the FSLN.

### What Washington Fears

Despite its failure to gain support among Latin American regimes, unilateral military moves by the Carter administration cannot be ruled out. The U.S. imperialists know, as a *Washington Post* editorial put it June 23, that "President Somoza . . . is through, even if he survives the current battle." So Carter must try to prevent what the *Post* editors called "the possible appearance, in a region ripe for further such revolutions, of a Cuban-type or Cuban-oriented regime—especially one that takes power in the heat of battle rather than in the cool of the election booth."

The provisional government set up by the FSLN includes prominent bourgeois figures and has pledged to "respect private property." But the U.S. rulers understand that the defeat and destruction of Somoza's National Guard would leave few guarantees that the Nicaraguan workers and peasants would not go much further than some of their current leaders, including the Sandinistas, might wish. Moreover, the FSLN has pledged to expropriate the holdings of the Somoza family, which alone would affect vast sectors of the capitalist economy in Nicaragua.

Twenty years ago, the young revolutionists of the July 26 Movement in Cuba found that, in order to carry out their program of sweeping land reform and an end to imperialist domination, they had to break with their initial bourgeois allies, mobilize the masses of workers and peasants, overturn capitalist property relations, and establish a workers state. Washington's nightmare is that a similar process could be unleashed in Nicaragua if

Somoza goes down at the hands of the rebels. The repercussions would extend throughout Central America and beyond.

Somoza was heartened by Washington's moves. After the OAS refused to go along, he complained in a television speech that a U.S.-sponsored "peacekeeping" force "would have pacified the country, but it was not approved because of the opposition of countries where there is great Communist influence."

The dictator still hopes that the U.S. marines will come to his rescue—if not to preserve his rule, at least to save his skin and safeguard his vast wealth and property. "I could say that there'll be no peace in Nicaragua if I don't get a square deal," Somoza told journalists on June 22. And such a deal is precisely what Carter is trying to impose:

"Washington reportedly favored [at the OAS] an interim regime that would include at least one representative of the Liberal Party and would be more conservative than the Sandinist junta," correspondent Alan Riding wrote in the June 23 *New York Times*. In the same article, Riding quoted Somoza as wanting a "political solution" that would "guarantee the institutionality of the National Guard, the Liberal Party and a democratic transition in Nicaragua."

Such calls for "democracy" are particularly cynical coming from Somoza's lips, in light of the bloody National Guard counteroffensive the dictator has ordered. Somoza's aircraft have continually bombed and strafed working-class neighborhoods in Managua, leaving hundreds dead and thousands homeless. The *Washington Post* reported June 25:

As residents of middle-class suburbs in the hills around Managua watched in awe, government helicopters yesterday hovered at several thousand feet over the low-lying slum areas of guerrilla concentrations while large, clearly visible bombs were rolled out of their hatches.

After what seemed interminable, slow motion drops to earth, the bombs exploded with a vibration that shook windows three miles away.

The dictator has clearly decided that even if he cannot win he will at least leave behind him a country in ruins and a terrorized population.

The rebel forces are holding firm in most areas, despite Somoza's brutality. FSLN forces control large sections of the country, including the second- and third-largest cities, León and Matagalpa. On June 24 they routed the National Guard from Masaya and Diriamba. In the south, some 1,000 Sandinista troops are putting up a stiff fight against elite Guard units as they try to continue their drive on the provincial capital of Rivas.

Morale is reportedly quite low among many of Somoza's infantry troops as well as among members of his government.

In deciding whether to risk an invasion of Nicaragua to rescue Somoza and the remnants of his regime, the U.S. warmakers must weigh carefully the response of the Castro government in Cuba. After seeing its counterrevolutionary designs in Angola and Ethiopia thwarted by Cuban military forces, Washington knows that Havana does not refuse aid to anti-imperialist forces when such is requested, even at great peril to Cuba itself.

Washington must take especially seriously Cuba's June 19 warning that "the intervention of the United States would create a Vietnam in the very heart of Latin America. The Nicaraguan people and those of Central America would undoubtedly rise up against this foreign intervention, and their other brothers in Latin America and the Caribbean could not remain indifferent to such genocide."

Thus any U.S. invasion of Nicaragua could well be accompanied by military moves against Cuba aimed at preventing Havana from aiding the invasion's victims. It is to try to prepare U.S. public opinion for such steps that Washington is now stepping up its propaganda against alleged "Cuban involvement" in Nicaragua. Richard Burt reported in the June 23 *New York Times*:

Carter Administration officials said today [June 22] that Cuba was heavily engaged in supplying arms and training instructors to guerrilla forces in the civil war in Nicaragua. . . .

Although the Administration is officially opposed to intervention by any foreign power, it is clear that officials are most concerned over the possibility that Cuban involvement could lead to a Communist-led government in Nicaragua. So while other countries are also aiding anti-Government forces, public criticism by United States officials has been directed only toward Havana.

There is deep opposition among American working people to military intervention abroad and widespread sympathy for the anti-Somoza fight. Such support can only have been deepened by the repeated broadcast on American television of the cold-blooded murder of ABC News correspondent William Stewart by Somoza's National Guard on June 18. Thus Carter's flimsy attempt to raise the Cuban specter is not likely to meet with great success.

#### U.S. Hands Off!

What is needed to stay Washington's hand is a broad action campaign in the United States and elsewhere in solidarity with the Nicaraguan rebels and in opposition to any U.S. military moves in Central America and the Caribbean.

Some activities of this kind have already taken place. On June 12, 3,000 Peruvians turned out for a protest at the Nicaraguan embassy in Lima. On June 17, thousands of Dominicans demonstrated at the OAS headquarters in Santo Domingo.

In Colombia and other countries, young people are volunteering to join international brigades to go and fight alongside the Sandinistas.

Shortly after Ecuador's military rulers broke diplomatic ties with Somoza, a Gallup Poll taken in Quito, the capital, revealed that 96 percent of the city's residents supported the move.

On June 19, all the major parties on the Venezuelan left signed a joint telegram to President Luis Herrera Campins saying "we request that Venezuela oppose any type of OAS intervention in Nicaragua, considering that this would favor the Somoza tyranny."

The OAS's failure to ratify military intervention complicates Washington's position, but it by no means eliminates the danger of a U.S. invasion of Nicaragua or the threat to Cuba. Supporters of the anti-Somoza fight and defenders of the Cuban revolution must mobilize to demand:

Hands off Nicaragua!  
Hands off Cuba!

## Statement by Cuban Government

# 'Mobilize to Stop U.S. Armed Intervention in Nicaragua'

[The following has been excerpted from a statement issued in Havana June 19 by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

Once again the danger of direct intervention by the United States hangs over the peoples of our America, an intervention that has left its unhappy mark on the history of the peoples of the Caribbean.

The government of the United States of America is maneuvering to gain an opportunity to establish its military presence in Nicaragua, utilizing the Organization of American States as a cover for this intervention.

Cuba denounces this maneuver by the United States and calls upon the peoples and governments of Latin America not to lend themselves to these plans.

Finding that it is impossible to save Somoza, the United States is trying to save Somozism, to save the butchers of the National Guard and thus to preserve the essence and the bases of a bloody and corrupt neocolonial regime dominated by

the United States. This regime has been a humiliation to the peoples of Latin America. It was imposed nearly a half century ago as a result of the intervention of the Yankee marines, an intervention that Augusto César Sandino, who was assassinated as part of this odious undertaking, fought with exemplary courage and dignity.

President Carter, who has proclaimed himself the champion of human rights, is now trying to rescue the bloodiest and most corrupt criminals in all of Latin America. He is supporting them at a time when they are indiscriminately torturing and murdering Nicaraguans, and he is trying to thwart the self-sacrificing struggle of the Nicaraguan people for their freedom.

The intervention of the United States would create a Vietnam in the very heart of Latin America. The Nicaraguan people and those of Central America would undoubtedly rise up against such foreign intervention, and their other brothers in Latin America and the Caribbean could not remain indifferent to such genocide.

It is necessary to prevent this interven-

tion. It is necessary to forthrightly and courageously denounce it before world public opinion and in international bodies.

Cuba is sure that the new U.S. maneuver will be met by the firm resistance of those governments of Latin America that are true to the anti-interventionist tradition, and that through their presence in the deliberations they will prevent this threat from becoming a reality.

With this confidence, Cuba also calls on all the nonaligned countries, all the progressive governments, and all the peoples of the world to support the Provisional Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua. We must mobilize on an emergency basis to prevent a new and criminal imperialist armed intervention in Nicaragua, and to develop the broadest and firmest solidarity with the Nicaraguan fighters led by the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, in order to aid them in achieving a more rapid, complete, total, and definitive victory. We must put behind us forever the time when the United States was the lord and master of our countries and the Yankee marines decided what government our peoples would have. □

# Demand Release of 9 Iranian Trotskyists!

"Defend the Iranian revolution—free the fighters against the shah!" These chants echoed throughout Rockefeller Center in New York City June 22 as 150 persons picketed the Iranian consulate demanding the release of imprisoned socialists and oil worker leaders.

The picketers carried signs calling on the Khomeini-Bazargan government to release the nine members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) and leaders of the oil workers council who were arrested in Khuzestan Province during the recent Arab and labor struggles there.

The picket line, organized by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, focused on the role of the Iranian prisoners as leaders of the battle to overthrow the shah and as staunch opponents of U.S. imperialism.

A protest statement was also delivered to the Iranian consulate, signed by such figures as Abdeen Jabara, the prominent Palestinian attorney; human rights activists Philip Berrigan and Blase Bonpane; Jim Grant, a defendant in the Charlotte Three civil rights case in North Carolina; and Ali Shokri, the well-known Iranian airman who defected from the shah's Air Force in 1973.

In a provocative attack on the Iranian revolution and the defense of the jailed worker militants, a tiny sect called the Spartacist League physically attacked the picket line. The SL members arrived at the protest carrying signs attacking the Iranian revolution and were told they could not participate in the picket line. They attempted to force their way into the protest, but were quickly repulsed by organizers of the action. The SL then carried out a picket line on another corner of the street.

The SL's signs and chants focused on such slogans as "Down with Khomeini" and "Down with all the ayatollahs." These slogans reflect the SL's reactionary position that the February insurrection that overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty was a defeat for the Iranian masses. The SL openly states that Iran was better off under the butcher shah, in a total capitulation to imperialist propaganda against the Iranian revolution.

The SWP and YSA held a protest meeting of 125 that night to hear a report on the defense of the HKS and oil workers leaders and a talk on the Iranian revolution by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* staff writer Gerry Foley. A message to the meeting was read from Hormoz Rahimian, national secretary of the HKS.

Support for the imprisoned Trotskyists has continued to be expressed in other parts of the world as well.

In Greece, seven political currents participated in a united front meeting in Athens June 13 and signed a statement demanding the release of the jailed revolu-

tionists. In addition to Greek supporters of the Fourth International, the other organizations involved were the Rigas Fereos group (Second Congress), the Communist Internationalist League, the Machitis Communist Organization, the Youth of the Union of the Democratic Left, and Socialist Road.

A petition was also circulated, entitled: "For the Defense of the Iranian Revolution, for the Release of the Arrested Revolutionaries." It was signed by a number of trade unionists, civil libertarians, and journalists, including Manolis Glezos, a hero of the Greek resistance to Nazi occupation.

On June 15, a protest was held at the Iranian embassy in Athens, defying the repression of the rightist Greek regime. Police attacked the demonstration, brutally beating some of the protesters and arresting sixteen persons, who were later released without charge.

Thus far, the Iranian government has

## Pledges to Pay Compensation

## Iran Government Announces Property Takeovers

Faced with rising demands from workers and unemployed for action to deal with the worsening economic situation in Iran, the Bazargan government has begun carrying out some nationalizations of property.

Budget and Planning Minister Ali Akbar Moïnfar said in Tehran June 20 that the regime would take over "inefficient" industries and those abandoned by local or foreign owners who have fled the country.

"I don't want to use the word nationalization," Moïnfar was quoted by the Associated Press as saying. "I would rather say popular ownership and the transformation of industries into enterprises working for the interests of the people."

The minister was careful to explain, however, that his government would compensate the former owners of any seized property "if they come forward and prove they have legitimate claims."

Some seizures—especially of property belonging to figures closely linked to the old regime—had already been carried out before the June 20 announcement. For example, a 45% share in the Tehran General Motors plant held by shah associate Jafar Akhavan was nationalized after Akhavan fled to Paris. Also seized was a 10% share in the GM operation held by the Pahlavi Foundation. But the remaining 45% owned by the U.S. General Motors Corporation itself was not touched.

A General Motors official in Detroit, quoted in the *Detroit News* in mid-June,

given no reason for the arrests of the nine HKS members or the other worker militants.

Two of the HKS members, Omid Mirbaha and Mohammed Poorkahvaz, are being held in Karoun prison along with three oil workers leaders. The Imam's Committee in Ahwaz has allowed HKS representatives to see only the two women prisoners, Fatima Fallahi and Mahsa Hashemi. Both appeared to be in good condition.

The government has not allowed lawyers or anyone else to visit the five other arrested HKS members, Hamid Shahrabi, Mustafa Seifabadi, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, Morteza Gorgzadeh, and Hormoz Fallahi.

Protests demanding the release of the oil workers, steelworkers, and Trotskyists in Iran should be sent to: Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, Office of the Prime Minister, Tehran, Iran; and the Islamic Revolutionary Council, Tehran.

Copies of all messages should be sent to Kargar, Post Office Box 41/3586, Tehran.

said the Iranian government had appointed four new members to the Tehran plant's board of directors but GM's three representatives were continuing to serve. "We have no reason to believe our interests will not continue to be respected," the GM spokesman said.

Nonetheless, GM was holding up delivery to Iran of a shipment of 7,000 of the partly assembled vehicles that are turned into finished products at the Tehran plant.

All foreign- or privately-owned banks were taken over by the government on June 8, a move Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan said was to "safeguard people's savings and assets." Bazargan cited "unreasonable" outflows of capital from the country.

Budget and Planning Minister Moïnfar was quick to reassure the foreign shareholders in fourteen of the twenty-seven banks. "Their investment has neither been confiscated nor frozen," he said. "We will give them compensation."

The Iranian Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS) explained in a statement that the bank nationalizations were a positive step; at the same time, they pointed to the need to throw open the banks' books and records to public inspection.

Such a demand could gain wide support among Iranian bank workers, who before the insurrection exposed the vast sums being sent out of the country by members of the shah's regime. □

### Healyites on Opposite Side of Barricades in Iran

By Cindy Jaquith

[The following article appeared in the June 29 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

In a counterrevolutionary attack on the Iranian workers and peasants, the British Workers Revolutionary Party has rushed to defend the Khomeini-Bazargan government's arrest of nine Trotskyists.

The WRP, led by Gerry Healy, is a small sect that pretends to be Trotskyist. In an article titled "Iranian revisionists arrested," which appeared in the WRP's paper *News Line* on June 11, the Healyites try to make a case that the imprisoned members of the Hezb-e Kargar-e Socialist (HKS—Socialist Workers Party) are U.S. agents. The article, unsigned, was datelined Tehran.

The HKS members, according to *News Line*, "have been accused of having contacts with a network of United States agents operating in Iran."

First, as to the facts. No formal charges have been made by the Iranian government against the nine Trotskyists.

Moreover, *News Line's* article deliberately omits the fact that arrested along with the HKS members were three members of the oil workers' council, some twenty steelworkers, and hundreds of other militants. They were rounded up as the central government attempted to put down strikes and protests for Arab rights in Khuzestan Province.

But facts are of little importance to the WRP or to its supporters in the United States, the Workers League. Ever since the Iranian masses overthrew the shah and the Khomeini-Bazargan government was installed, both *News Line* and the Workers League's *Bulletin* have demanded that the workers and peasants subordinate their struggles to the needs of the new regime. Those who refuse have been branded U.S. agents.

Echoing statements made by members of the Khomeini-Bazargan regime, *News Line* claims that "the CIA has been involved in spurious calls for 'self-determination' in order to stir up national minorities." It adds that "U.S. agents have also tried to make an issue out of so-called 'women's rights. . . .'"

The Trotskyists of the HKS are known as prominent supporters of the rights of oppressed nationalities and of women—and as long-standing leaders of the fight against the shah and the CIA. It is their uncompromising stand on these questions,

in fact, that is one of the important reasons why the arrest of nine HKS members, rather than winning support in Iran, has provoked deep protests both within that country and internationally.

But the *News Line* article goes so far as to offer its own tidbit for the Iranian government's campaign against Trotskyists and other worker militants: "The United Secretariat of the Fourth International has engaged in a sustained cover-up for the late Joseph Hansen, longtime leader of the SWP in the United States, who was exposed by the International Committee of the Fourth International [i.e., the Healyites] as a double agent of the Russian GPU and the American FBI."

Thus the Healyites have taken their years-long slander campaign against Hansen and Trotskyism to a new and more dangerous level—actively promoting the arrest of Iranian socialists.

The betrayal runs even deeper. By helping Khomeini and Bazargan go after Iranian revolutionaries, the Healyites are objectively aiding the very force they claim to be combating—world imperialism.

*News Line* says that "The strategy of United States imperialism is to stir up as many divisions as possible within revolutionary Iran."

But what is the fundamental division today in that country? It is between workers and their allies, who are striving to deepen their revolution and counter imperialist threats, and the procapitalist government, which is desperately trying to hold back their struggle.

Who stands to gain if the leaders of the oil workers are victimized and their struggle pushed back? Who gains if oppressed

### Seven More Trotskyists Arrested in Ahwaz

Seven more members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) were arrested in Ahwaz on June 23. The socialists were picked up while petitioning at the city's main oil works on behalf of nine HKS members who have been imprisoned for almost a month. Many oil workers had signed the petitions when the arrests came.

The seven Trotskyists arrested are: Haid Adib, Kambiz Lajejardi, Firooz Farzinpour, Mahmoud Kafaie, Hojabr Khosraji, Ali Hashemi, and Kia Mahdevi.

On June 24 the HKS held a successful news conference in Tehran to protest the new arrests and demand release of all sixteen Trotskyists in jail.

nationalities and women are denied equal rights? Or if members of a workers party are imprisoned for exercising their right to free speech?

It is the Carter administration and world imperialism—the forces that suppressed democratic rights in Iran for decades, that aided the shah in crushing strikes and backed his suppression of national struggles.

Just as *News Line* went to press with its counterrevolutionary article, the oil workers of Khuzestan Province gave their own answers to these questions when 200 of them began a strike for the release of their jailed leaders.

The oil workers, who led the revolution that toppled the shah, know which side they're on. The Healyites have placed themselves on the opposite side of the barricades.

### Hugo Blanco Still Faces Frame-up

Protests are still urgently needed to stop the frame-up of Peruvian Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco. The military dictatorship is accusing him of a long list of crimes including "wrecking and sabotage" and "attacks against the state," but the charges actually involve Blanco's activities as a deputy in the Peruvian Constituent Assembly.

Blanco was arrested on June 8, held for several hours, and then released on the orders of the Assembly's Executive Committee. Thirty-five Assembly deputies have signed a petition demanding a special

session to rule on the regime's charges, but as of June 22 no hearing had been scheduled.

It appears that the two main bourgeois parties in the Assembly are collaborating with the dictatorship to prevent a hearing before the Assembly's term expires July 15. If the Assembly fails to act before then, Blanco could again be jailed.

Send telegrams demanding that the charges against Blanco be dropped to Peruvian embassies or to Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez, Palacio Presidencial, Lima, Peru. □

# 'Why Does the Government Ignore our Demands?'

[Because of the lack of any broadly recognized workers leadership above the level of the individual factory, the massive mobilizations of the Iranian workers in the struggle against the shah did not lead immediately to the formation of independent mass workers organizations. In the first months after the insurrection, the capitalist forces acting through the Shi'ite clergy were able to block temporarily the advance of the working-class movement.

[But this halt proved to be only a pause for reflection by the majority of the Iranian working class. Very quickly workers began to see that the Khomeini-Bazargan government had no intention of meeting their demands or defending their interests. And so, they began thinking about alternatives to the government and its policies. This process was revealed very clearly by the response to the April 10 TV debate between Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) leader Babak Zahraie and Khomei-

ni's main ideologist, Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr.

[Zahraie's presentation of a socialist program for solving the economic crisis facing the country got a favorable reaction from large sections of workers. They saw him as the articulator of the views they were developing.

[Since the debate, there has been an increase in workers struggles throughout the country, indicating that the pause for reflection is coming to an end. These battles are not yet generally on a large scale, sustained, or organized. But they are symptomatic of a new rise in militancy and political consciousness.

[The following articles from the May 18 issue of *Kargar*, the weekly newspaper of the HKS, give an indication of the discussions going on among militant sections of the working class in Iran and of the sort of demands they are beginning to raise. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

a single step toward this.

"Didn't we take part in the revolution? Why does the government ignore our demands?"

When asked if they had a message for our readers, the weavers' representatives said:

"We members of the Weavers Guild of Tabriz who have gathered here for nine days are neither homeless nor crazy. We have been exploited by the capitalists.

"We workers who played an important role in the revolution ask the provisional revolutionary government to grant us interest-free loans so that we can meet our daily expenses, so that the merchants and bosses can no longer suck our blood.

"We ask the Islamic government to set up workplaces where the only boss is the government. If it is incapable of doing this, it should give us sufficient funds to organize a cooperative so that we can work for ourselves, purchase directly the goods we need, and sell our own products. We are completely fed up with the capitalists, and that's that.

"We, the Weavers Guild, need the help of the government and of all workers, for our livelihood is directly endangered. We want pensions for old workers, and for those who do not have the capacity to work.

"Our income—from what is in fact a cultural skill—has been drastically reduced. We have always labored but everything has been taken from us.

"If the Islamic government wants to protect the weak, we are the first it would be appropriate to help and pay attention to.

"We are asking that the government set up factories to provide us with work, for there is no security in weaving. And we don't want the pay of a new employee.

"For example, we who have worked for fifteen years should be hired at a pay equal to that of workers with fifteen years seniority, and not that of new employees." □

## Carpet Weavers Fight for 35-Hour Week

Carpet weavers in Tabriz, along with the unemployed, dismissed, and part-time workers of the city, have been waging an extensive struggle against unemployment and for respect for their trampled rights since late March.

The weavers met and issued a statement calling on the government to immediately meet thirteen specific demands, the most important of which are the following:

- Immediate interest-free loans.
- Free medical insurance.
- Abolition of reactionary labor legislation, and the drafting of new laws with direct participation of genuine representatives of the workers.
- Reduction of the workday to seven hours, and of the workweek to thirty-five hours.
- Establishment of state cooperatives to purchase and market woven rugs.
- Participation of workers representatives in such cooperatives to set a fair price for the carpets.
- Retirement at full pay for old and disabled workers.

The unemployed, fired, and part-time workers held their own assembly, approved the thirteen demands of the weavers, and also raised their own, which include the following:

- The immediate rehiring of dismissed and unemployed workers at their old jobs, with full back pay.
- Equal pay for equal work for women.
- Establishment of an unemployment fund.

- An end to interference by capitalists, foreign or otherwise.

In support of these demands, 7,000 weavers and 5,000 unemployed gathered for more than a week at the Tabriz Workers Club. In an interview with *Kargar*, one of the representatives of the weavers told us:

"The goal of the revolution was to raise the standard of living of the workers and toilers and to bring down the capitalists. But nothing at all has been done so far to accomplish this.

"We have the necessary means at our disposal to build houses for all working people who need them—architects, cement, everything. So why doesn't the government take advantage of our being unemployed and use us to build houses? All of us know that most Iranians need better housing, but the government has not taken

## Statement by Tabriz Unemployed

The struggle against unemployment is moving forward throughout the country. The first step toward forming an all-Iran union of the unemployed and establishing links between unemployed and employed workers was taken recently when representatives of unemployed organizations throughout the country met in the Teheran Workers Club.

In addition, unemployed college and high-school graduates and graduates of special courses have joined in the struggle

and begun to organize in several cities and to raise demands.

*Kargar* supporters in Tabriz report that, following a successful struggle, unemployed college and university graduates have organized a union and announced this publicly. Unemployed holders of Master's degrees plan also to organize and join in the struggles of the union of unemployed high-school and college graduates.

Similar struggles have been organized in other cities in Azerbaijan, including Aru-



mia [formerly Rezaiyeh].

The first meeting of the unemployed graduates union in Tabriz was held in late March. A central committee of six persons was elected. One of those chosen, Davar Alevi, proposed the following program for struggle by the Union of Unemployed Graduates of East Azerbaijan-Tabriz. It was accepted as the basis for discussion in upcoming meetings. The text is as follows:

\* \* \*

In fighting for their demands today, the unemployed more than ever need a mass organization of their own, one for all the unemployed. The only way to extend the struggles for the rights of the unemployed is to build solidarity among the unemployed, semiemployed, and employed workers, over and above the different levels of education that tend to divide them.

With regard to unemployment, the following demands are basic. The problem cannot be solved except by meeting them in full or in part.

1. It is the responsibility of the state to provide jobs for the unemployed.

2. The government must immediately draw up an extensive plan for public works to create jobs in the cities and countryside through building homes for the working people, roads, networks to provide drinking water and electricity, improving public transport and the railroads, building schools, hospitals, parks, and so on. In this way, it can put all the unemployed to work.

3. In order to redress the last fifty years of flagrant national oppression imposed by the Pahlavi monarchy, priority must be given to public works in Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Baluchistan, and other regions inhabited by minority nationalities such as the Arabs and Turkmenis.

4. Some of the ways to assure that such a program of public works could be carried out would be to nationalize the holdings of the Pahlavi family, the imperialists, and the big absentee capitalists, and to cut the country's huge military budget.

5. The workweek should be reduced to thirty hours with no cut in pay so as to provide work for the unemployed.

6. The capitalists say that they are bankrupt and therefore have to shut down their factories. Open the books so that the workers can judge for themselves whether this is true. The factories that the capitalists are not prepared to open must be nationalized immediately and run under workers control, the profit from their operations to be used for projects to benefit the public.

7. A national unemployed fund should be established under the control of the unemployed themselves.

8. Unemployment benefits of at least two thousand tumans a month [about US \$200] should be made available for the



entire period of unemployment, with no obligation to pay any of it back.

9. Equal pay for equal work for women

## Caspian Fishermen Want to Form Union

[The following speech was given April 27 at a mass meeting of 6,000 in Bandar-e-Enzeli (formerly Bandar-e Pahlavi), a fishing town of about 50,000 on the Caspian coast, by Ali Qomrian, a leader of the local fishermen.]

[Also speaking at the assembly was Babak Zahraie, a leader of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party who has been on tour explaining the socialist answer to the economic crisis facing Iran.]

\* \* \*

In the name of the heroic people of Iran: People of Enzeli:

As you know fishing is a very important question in this town. Apart from those employed in the port offices and on the docks, virtually all the working people in this region make their living from the sea and from the rivers.

We fishermen are more concerned than anyone else in this area about the fishing industry and the growth and development of the fish stocks. This is especially so in the conditions you are familiar with, namely that there is not enough meat to go around in this town.

About two weeks ago we held a meeting, which was also attended by the governor of this province, Mr. Darsalan. We discussed setting up a fishermen's union organizing committee. For this purpose, some fishermen, including myself, were chosen to talk over the problems of the fishing industry and ways of solving them. We came to a series of conclusions.

We were assigned to deal only with Enzeli and Ghazian. So, we stopped fishing on the rivers in this area for a few days. But fishing continued in the other places in the north. Therefore, we proposed that the question be studied on the level of

and men. To compensate for the double oppression women have lived under for centuries, they should be given preference in hiring.

10. Unemployed workers who are members of oppressed nationalities and therefore suffered discrimination in the past must be given preference in hiring.

11. In hiring no distinction must be made between diplomas from training programs for officers and enlisted men.

12. The training of those who have completed special courses and received high-school and college diplomas must be put to use to eliminate illiteracy, especially in the rural areas.

13. Training classes in such subjects as electronics and computer science should be established for unemployed men and women, with all expenses paid.

14. Centers of continuing education should be established, with all expenses paid for the students who attend them. □

the northern region as a whole and that union committees be set up in all the areas and all the fishermen be able to participate in discussion and exchange views. But unfortunately this was not done. And we fishermen went out fishing again.

In the exchange of views that we had with the governor, we raised nine points concerning the marsh and fish breeding. We got a long written response. But so far there has been no positive result.

People of Enzeli, we oppose uncontrolled fishing. And on the basis of our years of experience in the industry, we can offer positive solutions. But we came to the conclusion that no one was paying any attention to our suggestions. Briefly, our proposals were as follows:

1. Formation of a union so that we could hold assemblies every once in a while and exchange views.

2. Dredging of the Enzeli marsh with the help of the fishermen. This work should be done in all seasons of the year, including during the period that we propose fishing be stopped.

3. That professional fishermen be given a special card to distinguish them from nonprofessionals. All of us know that 60 to 70 percent of those fishing now are not professional fishermen.

4. That there be a study of the situation of those farmers who by engaging in fishing harm both agriculture and the fishing industry.

5. Control of fishing in the sea and rivers and over the marketing of caviar in other countries.

6. Formation of genuine fishing cooperatives on an all-Iran level.

7. Impounding of the boats used in uncontrolled fishing operations that destroy the small fish that provide food for

the more valuable larger types of fish. The state must consider how to solve the problems of those who work on such boats and do not differ from the rest of us working people.

8. Guaranteed health care, housing, pensions, and other benefits for fishermen and their families.

9. That state officials work together with the fishermen in cleaning up the rivers and the sea, in particular in cleaning up the chemicals dumped in the rivers by the factories around Gilan and Mazdaran.

10. Halt the uncontrolled fishing done by the fisheries. The fisheries should handle the distribution of fish, not do the fishing themselves. When the sturgeon come to lay their eggs, they catch them and then accuse us working people of poaching.

I would like to ask all of you gathered here a question. The fishermen did not tolerate the oppression of Tagh'oot.\* During the struggle, they shed their blood so that the flame of the revolution would burn brighter. They fought to assure that this country would have enough to eat. What did this revolution bring, what did it achieve?

In this very city, you saw fishermen shot down, the rivers ran red with blood. You saw the way those corrupt killers treated us. They raked us with bullets. They even stole the fishing equipment from our fisheries and then burned them. But now the age of Tagh'oot has passed. All the people of Iran want to play the main role in determining their own fate. We want to help the Bazargan government, which is acknowledged to be weak.

We want to organize fishermen's committees. We want to systematically eliminate uncontrolled fishing throughout the north, which is a problem that disturbs us even more than you.

We expect the government to help us in solving this vital question, and to send a committee to study the problems of the fishing industry. We expect it to help us so that we fishermen and toilers working on the sea and the rivers can make the decisions concerning our livelihood and be the shapers of our own fate and that of Iran. □

\*A figure used in the Koran to symbolize oppression of the faithful by pagan tyranny. Khomeini equated the shah and his regime with Tagh'oot.—IP/I

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## Trotskyists Blast 'Prefabricated Constitution'

### For a Constituent Assembly in Iran!

[The following statement was issued June 2 by the Executive Committee of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), and featured on the front page of the June 13 issue of *Kargar*, the HKS newspaper. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

After months of promises and several contradictory statements, the Khomeini-Bazargan government has finally made it clear that it intends to reject the demand for a constituent assembly. Behind closed doors, it has decided that the constitution will be imposed from above and that the Iranian people will not be given any real chance to discuss it.

Thus, the government has decided to go against the broad upsurge of the Iranian people, who fought to take their fate into their own hands, seeking a government based on the mass movement itself.

The deep crisis into which our society has been plunged by the Pahlavi monarchy and world imperialism can only be solved through the setting up of a constituent assembly based on free elections. This would make it possible for direct representatives of the working people and oppressed to conduct a broad discussion of the new constitution and on that basis determine the form of the future government.

Establishing a genuine constituent assembly is the most basic step that needs to be taken to defend and consolidate the achievements of the insurrection carried out by the people of Iran. The attempt to prevent the holding of a genuine constituent assembly is a plot against our revolution. Unless the government's steps in this direction are defeated by mass struggle, we will lose an opportunity to force respect for popular sovereignty.

The authorities' proposal for a yes-or-no referendum on a prefabricated constitution represents an attack on the right of the people to run the country. By taking these steps to set up a mere façade of a constituent assembly, the authorities want to lay the basis for suppressing the demands of the great majority of the society.

This government's aim is to legalize capitalist oppression in Iran. The authorities want to open the way again for the imperialists to extend their influence in our country, for denying the right of self-determination of the oppressed peoples, for keeping women in slavery, and for continuing the exploitation of the workers and poor peasants.

The course of the Iranian revolution is toward establishing a government of the workers and toilers. But the present gov-

ernment wants to consolidate a capitalist state. Every day it places new obstacles in the road of the revolution. The experience of the past months has shown that the program of the state machine is not the program of the revolution.

A victory for the program of the capitalist state would mean the defeat of the program of the revolution; it would mean poverty, repression, slavery, and civil war for the people of Iran. The present government came to power talking about holding a constituent assembly. By failing to honor such promises, it has revealed its real aims. It is clear that only by relying on their own strength will the masses of workers and the oppressed be able to win their rights.

The time has come for the working class, taking the leadership of all the oppressed layers of society, to put forward its own action program for solving the present crisis. And this involves offering a strategy for breaking the power of the capitalists.

By going back on its promises, this "provisional" government is trying to turn back our historic revolution. The only way to advance the revolution is to build independent mass organizations that can guarantee that the constituent assembly will be held. This government, which is the defender of the capitalists, has dropped the banner of democracy. In fighting for a constituent assembly, the oppressed masses will raise it again from the dust and carry it aloft.

Long live the constituent assembly!

### Amnesty International Hits Arrest of Czech Dissidents

Amnesty International announced on June 27 that it is asking for permission to observe the trial of ten human-rights activists now being held in Czechoslovakia and facing possible prison terms of one to ten years.

The ten, all signers of Charter 77 and members of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS), are Petr Uhl, Otta Bednarova, Jarmila Belikova, Dr. Vaclav Benda, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Havel, Dr. Ladislav Lis, Vaclav Maly, Dana Nemcova, and Dr. Jiri Nemec.

Amnesty International has adopted all ten as prisoners of conscience and charges that "their detention infringes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Czechoslovakia has ratified."

Petr Uhl faces charges of grave "subversion" while the other defendants are accused of "activities inimical to the interest of the Czechoslovak state." □

## U.S. Corporations Organize Gasoline Shortage

By William Gottlieb

In the last several months there has been a flareup in the "energy crisis" similar in many ways to the one that immediately preceded the 1974-75 worldwide recession. This time it is workers in the United States who are feeling the initial blow.

As the price of gasoline climbs and shortages become chronic, long lines have formed in front of filling stations around the country. Only the season has spared working people the discomfort—and sometimes the fatal consequences—of inadequate heat at home and work.

Working farmers and truck owner-operators have been especially hard hit by the rapid increase in fuel prices. This has threatened agricultural production and transport (thereby increasing the prospects of zooming food prices) and set off stormy, nationwide protest actions by truck drivers.

In mid-May, as gasoline prices began rising and stations without fuel began to shut down or shorten hours, the New Jersey Industrial Union Council organized one of the country's first protests against the oil monopolies. Picketing near a huge Exxon refinery May 21, 300 demonstrators—mostly trade unionists—carried placards denouncing the phony shortage and Exxon's recent 40% jump in profits.

### World's Richest Capitalists Want More

The oil trusts and their government in Washington are using the squeeze to greatly increase the profits of the oil bosses, already probably the world's richest capitalists. President Carter has ordered that all price controls on domestically produced petroleum be removed by October 1981.

The fact that the oil barons are reaping superprofits from the shortage is openly admitted. For example, Barry Bosworth, director of Carter's Council on Wage and Price Stability, told reporters in early June: "We find retail prices have increased far more than we would have expected from crude oil prices."

These are push times indeed for the capitalist owners of the energy trusts. The picture is different for working people.

Alfred Kahn, head of President Carter's phony anti-inflation (actually wage-freeze) program, told reporters May 30: "I need only look at the arithmetic"—the American "standard of living is going down."

Kahn made clear that his concern is not for reversing or even halting this decline, but how the American people will adapt to



Bill Schorr/Los Angeles Herald Examiner

"an inevitable lowering of living standards, without tearing ourselves apart."

In other words, how in the face of a general decline in living standards of working people, and soaring profits for the oil companies, is a big explosion of the class struggle to be avoided?

### Threat of New Economic Slump

Declining purchasing power, triggered by skyrocketing fuel prices and inflation generally, brings with it the threat of a new economic downturn with sharply rising unemployment. Already figures indicate a weakening of business activity in April. May retail sales in the United States showed signs of weakness, paced by a decline in auto sales. Meanwhile, the Carter administration is continuing its austerity drive.

What lurks behind this developing economic crisis? Unlike the situation in 1973-74, this time the capitalist rulers do not have an Arab oil embargo to falsely hold responsible. Instead, they blame the Iranian revolution and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), along with the American working people, whom they claim are selfishly using "too

much" fuel.

### Real Cause of Shortage

The real causes of course are quite different. The present fuel shortage in the United States stems from the oil companies' deliberate decision to restrict production until prices are driven up, combined with extensive hoarding by big-business consumers of fuel. This, in turn, is an expression of trends toward general crisis in the capitalist economy.

An extensive article that appeared in the May 20 *Los Angeles Times* gave a glimpse of how the sudden apparent shortage in gasoline was created:

With few exceptions, refineries have not expanded or updated their plants for years, meaning that there has been scant increase in capacity to match the state's increasing appetite for gasoline. In fact, it has been seven years since a new refinery has been built on the West Coast.

Why is this so? The *Times* goes on:

Despite oil companies' significant profits, their executives continue to argue that Washington has not provided sufficient financial incentive for them to build new refineries. Such construction also often faces environmental opposition,

but the key reason may be oil company concern about the future of the gasoline market.

By 1985, some industry officials believe Americans will be using less gasoline because of federal economy rules. Under the rules, for instance, an auto maker's new car fleet must average 27.5 miles per gallon that year, compared with the 19-mile average for 1979.

In Detroit, one auto industry analyst said an official of a major oil company acknowledged to him that this projected drop in gasoline consumption was responsible for his company's decision not to build any more refineries.

In plain English, better a shortage and superprofits today than a glut and depressed profits tomorrow.

#### Hoarding by Big Business

But why is demand for gasoline so great today that there is an apparent shortage? The *Los Angeles Times*, offers the following useful bit of information:

As usual, the smart money was in there first.

On May 10, a week after the paralyzing gas crunch hit with seeming suddenness, many Southern California business leaders were congratulating themselves on having seen it coming.

That evening, lines of motorists stretched around parked cars and busy corners toward any open gas station, and inside the Biltmore Hotel's Gold Room, 150 purchasing agents for General Motors, Rockwell International, Coca-Cola and other companies large and small sat down to dinner.

A show of hands was requested to determine which companies were having difficulty getting fuel supplies.

Two hands were raised.

Frank P. Alcock, president of the Purchasing Management Assn. of Los Angeles, who recounted the surprising results, said his group had issued a "commodity alert" to its members as far back as the Iranian oil shutoff last year.

The warning had its intended effect. Today, Alcock says, inventory levels of fuel and gasoline at industry terminals in this area are at 60% of capacity compared with the normal 40%

This is but one statistic revealing a startling pattern of stockpiling by industrial and institutional users of gasoline and other fuels earlier this year—months before the typical driver had any inkling of the coming crunch. In fact, the *Times* inquiry found, the abrupt change in commercial purchasing patterns appears to have been a significant contributing factor to the crisis that hit the first days of May.

One of the consequences of the capitalist system based on private profit is that any commodity whose price is rising rapidly is held off the market in expectation of still higher prices. This creates "shortages" that drive the price even higher in a speculative spiral.

The process of price decontrol itself can thus contribute to apparent shortages. Since massive price increases are assured with decontrol, the capitalists have every incentive to withhold products from the market in the period immediately preceding decontrol.

Oil drilling, to take one example,

dropped 16% from November to March as price decontrols going into effect in June approached. Similar disruptions in production and supply through 1981 can be expected as price controls are removed.

#### Oil Barons Demand \$1.50 a Gallon

The fact that withholding of production until sharp price increases occur is oil company policy has been affirmed by John E. Swearingen, chairman of the board of Standard Oil Company of Indiana and chairman of the oil-industry mouthpiece the American Petroleum Institute. U.S. oil companies will not make any major efforts to increase oil production until the price of gasoline reaches \$1.50 a gallon, Swearingen said in the *New York Times* June 4.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), a government agency, admits that fuel is being held off the market. In a letter to New York Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal, the FTC said that the "current gasoline shortage may be contrived." The FTC explained:

The bureau's concern results from reported figures revealing that in the first quarter of 1979 there was a reduction in gasoline production by domestic refineries that significantly exceeded the reduction in crude oil imports to the United States.

Further evidence of hoarding by the oil companies appears in a report by the American Petroleum Institute itself that U.S. gasoline inventories rose by nearly five million barrels from May 25 to June 1 (from 224.9 million to 229.7 million).

Such a sharp increase in inventories—in a period that included heavy driving over a national three-day holiday—would hardly be possible if there was a genuine shortage of crude. Indeed, the institute admits that inventories are not much below last year, when there was no "shortage."

Even Carter's widely despised secretary of energy, James Schlesinger, stated that the oil companies have been "unduly conservative" in their stockpile of crude oil.

Perhaps the situation was best summarized by an unnamed government "energy expert" quoted in the June 13 *Wall Street Journal*:

What the companies have done is perfectly rational, even sensible from a business point of view. It isn't sinister or evil. But that doesn't mean it's in the national interest.

In other words, what enriches the billionaire owners of the oil trusts (the "business point of view") is by no means in the interests of the great mass of working people. This reality has not prevented the Carter administration and the oil monopolies from trying to use the manufactured shortage to convince the American people that they must accept huge price boosts, turn down thermostats and air conditioning, and accept a lower standard of living in general.

#### Impact of World Monetary Crisis

What lies behind this massive wave of hoarding by the oil companies and their largest commercial customers? The key factor is the growing world monetary crisis. Since the 1974-75 worldwide recession, capitalist governments have been employing deficit financing and monetary inflation to keep the business recovery going. The U.S. until recently has carried out the policy with greater vigor than most of the other imperialist countries. This, combined with growing "overproduction" (overproduction, that is, relative to the profit needs of the capitalists, not the needs of the great mass of working people), led to an acute dollar crisis last November, with the dollar plunging against both gold and other currencies.

In the wake of this crisis the currencies of Europe and Japan began to decline rapidly in value. This appears as a sharp rise in the value of the dollar relative to these currencies. However, the actual value of the dollar rose only briefly following the November crisis. Against gold the decline of the dollar soon resumed.

With gold trading at nearly \$280 an ounce by mid-June, the dollar was at an all-time low against the precious metal (the exchange rate with gold constitutes the dollar's value). Unlike last year, however, such currencies as the West German mark, Japanese yen, Swiss franc, and others have joined the downward plunge.

#### Flight From Paper Currencies

The response of the capitalists has been much as it was in 1973-74. There has been a flight out of the depreciating paper currencies and into tangible commodities. Fuel, because of its crucial importance in industry, had been especially sought after. The result has been that the price of fuel has soared above the high general rate of inflation and apparent shortages have begun to appear as the oil companies withhold supplies and big business builds stockpiles.

The real problem for the capitalist economy is not a shortage of commodities but the exact opposite. That is the threat that a large portion of the great mass of commodities being produced will not find buyers at prices that are sufficiently profitable to the capitalists, thereby throwing the world economy into a depression.

With currencies slumping in value and inflation consequently increasing rapidly in all capitalist countries, the traditional Keynesian pump-priming remedies for recession are of little use. This greatly increases the danger of a severe depression.

In response to the social irresponsibility of the energy trusts prompt measures must be taken by working people using the power of their own organizations, the trade unions. First the books of the energy companies and other big businesses must be opened to public inspection. Only in this way can the real reserves of fuel and the

extent of hoarding be uncovered.

The energy industry must be taken out of the hands of the billionaires. All energy companies must be placed under public ownership and merged under a single administration. The nationalized industry must be managed by a directly elected

board whose meetings and decisions are completely open to the public.

Such a board would not be under the thumb of the oil monopolies. It would be composed of trade unionists, working farmers, and consumers. Workers in each branch of the industry would have the

power to control working conditions and police the operations of the management.

So long as this nationalization under workers control is not carried out and the energy companies remain under private ownership, there will be more and worse shortages, and higher energy prices. □

## Role of Oil in World Capitalist Economy

# 1. From Era of Cheap Energy to 1973-74 Crisis

By Jon Britton

*[First of two parts]*

Once again working people in the United States are being hit by a full-blown energy crisis. As in late 1973 and early 1974, long lines are forming at service stations in many areas of the country. The price of gasoline is soaring to \$1 per gallon and more.

Utility bills are rising sharply as higher fuel costs are being passed along to consumers.

Government and oil industry officials are warning of heating-oil shortages when cold weather hits later in the year.

### 'Use Less, Pay More'

President Carter wasn't kidding when he told the American people April 5, you "will have to use less oil and pay more for it."

The energy crisis "is real," he stressed. And "time is running short."

The problem, Carter said, is that "our national strength is dangerously dependent on a thin line of oil tankers stretching halfway around the earth; originating in the Middle East and around the Persian Gulf—one of the most unstable regions in the world."

This growing dependency, Carter continued, "has left us dangerously exposed to sudden price rises and interruptions in supply. In 1973 and 1974, shipment of oil was embargoed and the price quadrupled almost overnight. In the last few months, the upheaval in Iran again cut world supplies of oil and the OPEC cartel prices leaped up again."

### \$10 Billion in Extra Profits

This was the basic justification Carter gave for his decision to phase out controls on the price of domestically produced crude oil beginning June 1. As a result of this action, which Carter can take under past legislation, the oil industry will reap more than \$10 billion in extra profits (part of which would go into government coffers if some variant of Carter's proposed "wind-fall profits tax" is adopted). Working people will be forced to pay still higher prices for gasoline to power their cars and for fuel oil

to heat their homes.

At the same time, Carter announced that he was moving to cut through "Federal red tape" holding up "important new energy projects" such as pipelines, seaports, and refineries. In plain English this means going full-speed ahead with such projects—and with nuclear power plants—despite widespread and growing opposition from citizens concerned about grave threats to the environment and to their health and welfare.

### Eyeing Mexico's Oil

Earlier, oil was in the news in connection with Carter's mid-February visit to Mexico, which was to pave the way for future negotiations on widened U.S. access to that country's huge reserves of oil and natural gas.

The U.S. imperialists are pushing the Mexican government to develop these resources as rapidly as possible to provide a major alternative source of energy supplies and slow down growing U.S. dependence on Mideast oil.

The Mexican rulers, on the other hand, are worried that too-rapid development of this natural wealth could exacerbate already severe social contradictions and lead to an explosion of mass revolt such as that taking place in Iran.

They must also contend with widespread anti-imperialist sentiment against any deal that would further subordinate the Mexican economy to the needs of U.S. imperialism. It was this pressure that caused President López Portillo to complain publicly, with Carter present, of "deceit and abuse" in U.S. relations with Mexico.

An analysis of the current world energy picture and of Mexico's economic prospects is beyond the scope of these articles. But a good deal of light is shed on both questions by reexamining the 1973-74 energy squeeze and how Iranian society was affected by the influx of petrodollars that followed.

This article will take up the roots of the earlier energy crisis and the part played by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting

Countries (OPEC). The second article will examine the effects on the shah's "modernization program" and on Iranian society of a sharp rise and then a decline in Iran's oil revenues from 1973 to 1978.

### Era of Cheap Energy

The energy crisis of 1973-74 had its roots in the era of cheap energy that preceded it. At the same time, it was a product of the economic conjuncture. Contrary to the claims of the Nixon administration and the capitalist press at the time, the Arab oil boycott was a factor of little importance.

In contrast to today, the governments of the oil-exporting countries had minimal say in the 1950s and 1960s over how much oil was to be produced or what their share of the profits would be.

True, the liberal-bourgeois Iranian government of Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, pressured by an earlier nationalist and working-class upsurge, tried to exert some control over Iran's oil wealth. In 1951 Mossadegh's regime nationalized the oil at the expense of the once mighty but by then increasingly senile British lion, and in 1953 the shah was sent packing.

But the big capitalist powers were much less dependent on Mideast oil then. And in that pre-Vietnam War era their domestic politics allowed much more freedom of action in carrying out imperialist foreign policy.

So they could and did use the boycott weapon against the Mossadegh government, refusing to buy oil and cutting off a major portion of its revenues. Washington followed up that blow with a CIA-organized coup in 1953 that overthrew Mossadegh, returned the shah to power, and opened the door to U.S. exploitation of Iranian oil, previously monopolized by Britain.

### Military Threat Keeps Prices Low

The always-present threat of economic retaliation, covert action, or open military intervention (such as occurred when the U.S. marines landed in Lebanon in 1958)

"encouraged" the governments of the oil-exporting countries to keep their tax and royalty levies on oil production at a modest level. What taxes and royalties the American oil companies did have to pay cost them relatively little, since under U.S. law the outlays abroad reduced the taxes paid at home.

Mideast oil was further cheapened as a result of changes taking place in the world market. At the end of World War II, the biggest international oil companies (the so-called seven sisters) monopolized oil supplies in the capitalist world outside the United States, accounting for 92% of oil reserves and 88% of production. This monopoly began to break down in the 1950s after the Korean War and then the accelerating postwar boom caused oil consumption to soar.<sup>1</sup>

The resulting increased prices of oil and refined products brought superprofits to the oil giants. In 1955, they raked in an extraordinary 30% on their capital invested abroad, with an even higher rate of return on their Mideast investments.

### Twentieth Century 'Gold Rush'

The lush profits, in turn, sparked a huge inflow of new investment in oil drilling and refining—a twentieth-century "black gold" rush. Between 1953 and 1972 more than 300 private companies, the so-called independents, and 50 government companies entered or significantly expanded their activities in the oil industry outside the United States.

Collectively, between 1953 and the end of 1972, firms other than the "seven sisters" increased the area of their exploration concessions from 36% to 76% of the "foreign non-Communist world" total, multiplied their ownership of crude oil reserves from 8% to about 33%, and expanded their production of crude oil from 13% to 29%.

After 1953 the Soviet Union entered the export market on a significant scale. By 1972 its sales accounted for about 4% of the capitalist market outside the United States.

### Chronic Oil Glut

As a result of this flood of new investment and the greatly expanded supply of oil that was its consequence, a long-term glut developed in the world oil market, beginning with the 1957-58 economic recession. The delivered price of Mideast crude fell 25% to 35% between 1957 and 1962 and remained at this depressed level until the

early 1970s.

The dirt-cheap price of crude oil during this period was a boon to the "seven sisters" and other integrated oil companies (those combining the operations of production, refining, transporting, and marketing), as well as to independent refiners. For the cost of production of refined products such as gasoline was slashed as a result, fattening profits.

But this profit bulge soon led to an overexpansion of refining capacity, causing a glut of refined products in turn. By the late 1960s the rate of profit in the oil industry had fallen sharply from its previous highs. The annual return on foreign investment fell to 13%, although in absolute terms profits continued to flow in on a colossal scale.

### Cheap Fuel and High Profits

The relatively low prices of fuel oil, gasoline, and other refined products in the 1960s were a real blessing to other sectors of capitalist industry as energy and raw material costs were cut, boosting profits. Industries that particularly benefited included auto, highway construction, air transport, steel, chemical, aluminum, and electric utilities.<sup>2</sup>

Agriculture benefited from low-cost fuel and chemical fertilizers. As farm productivity soared, food prices remained relatively stable despite rising wages and expanding demand.

In short, imperialist exploitation of Mideast oil on the most favorable terms contributed significantly to the relative prosperity of the advanced capitalist countries in the late 1950s and the "soaring sixties."

### Birth of OPEC

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed in September 1960 in direct response to oil-company reductions in the posted price of Mideast crude.

The term "posted price" refers to an imaginary price, set for extended periods, that is used as the basis for computing tax and royalty payments on oil production.

The prices at which oil is actually sold on the market fall into two basic categories: the "spot price," which fluctuates daily and most accurately reflects market conditions at any given time; and "contract prices," which are negotiated for extended periods such as a year or two. Most international oil transactions are carried out on a contract basis.

Prior to 1973, most of the oil pumped out of the ground in the Mideast belonged to the integrated oil companies participating in the producing consortiums such as the Arab-American Oil Company (ARAMCO).<sup>3</sup> It was not sold on the market but rather shipped to the companies' refineries all over the world for processing into gasoline and other products.

For the big U.S.-based companies, the cost of this crude oil was not the prevailing market price (spot or contract). Instead, it was determined by the cost of production (extremely low in the Mideast, sometimes less than 20 cents a barrel), plus the tax levies and royalties paid to the "host" governments, and minus the amounts the companies' U.S. taxes were reduced by tax credits and deductions deriving from those payments.

This situation continues to hold true today, except that varying portions (depending on the country) of the oil now produced belong to the host governments through partial or complete nationalizations. Most of this crude is sold to the oil companies at negotiated contract prices that may or may not correspond to the posted price, depending on market conditions.

### Payments Cut to Oil-Exporting Countries

In the late 1950s the oil monopolies, which at that time formally set posted prices, progressively reduced those prices in line with falling market prices. Since these reductions directly lowered per-barrel tax and royalty income, the governments of the oil-exporting countries were financially squeezed as a result. It was this that provided the impetus for the formation of OPEC.

The attempts by these governments in the 1960s to decisively reverse this price trend were unsuccessful, as it turned out. They were nonetheless able to keep posted prices from being further reduced, even while market prices continued to fall.

OPEC's relative ineffectiveness in this period was due both to the chronic oil glut and to fear of imperialist retaliation.

### A Historic Shift

By the early 1970s, however, political and economic changes had occurred that enabled the OPEC governments to put limits on the oil monopolies' previously unrestrained exploitation of their petroleum resources and to boost their revenues many times over. The new situation was marked most dramatically by the Arab oil boycott and OPEC's unilateral quadrupling of the posted price of oil in late 1973.

The economic basis for this turn of events had been laid by investment deci-

1. The "seven sisters" include the five biggest American oil firms (Exxon, Texaco, Gulf, Mobil, and Standard Oil of California) along with British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell. They are truly enormous, filling seven of the top eleven slots in the list of the world's largest industrial companies.

The facts and figures that follow are largely taken from *Multinational Oil: A Study in Industrial Dynamics* (New York: Macmillan, 1974) by Neil H. Jacoby.

2. Marx was well aware of the relationship between the price of raw materials and industrial profit: "Other circumstances remaining unchanged, the rate of profit falls and rises . . . inversely as the price of raw material. This shows . . . how important the low price of raw materials is for industrial countries. . . ." —*Capital* Volume III, p. 127 (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1909).

3. In 1966 the owners of ARAMCO were Exxon, then known as Standard Oil of New Jersey (30%); Standard Oil of California (30%); Texaco (30%); and Mobil (10%). The Saudi government since bought a 60% share of the company.

sions made by the oil industry during the period of oil glut. In response to depressed profit rates, first the "seven sisters" and then the smaller "independents" began to cut back on new investment in the Mideast and elsewhere, including in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The investment cutbacks in the Mideast undoubtedly also stemmed from rising class struggle in that region during the 1960s, which raised the specter of expropriation without "adequate" compensation.

#### Oil Glut Vanishes

In 1972-73, as a consequence of these cutbacks, the rapid growth of demand for oil brought on by the worldwide inflationary boom ran up against a relatively static supply, causing prices to rise. The long-standing glut suddenly disappeared when the oil companies and other capitalist concerns began to hoard oil on a large scale in anticipation of still higher prices.

The hoarding and the earlier investment cutbacks led to shortages of fuel oil, gasoline and other refined products beginning in early 1973. In April of that year, President Nixon scrapped import quotas on foreign oil and refined products. These had been imposed in 1959 to protect the profits of the domestic oil industry and to keep the U.S. economy from becoming "overly dependent" on vulnerable Mideast oil supplies.)

#### Profit Bonanza for Hoarders

Nevertheless, prices continued to rise, and the hoarding and investment cutbacks by the oil companies paid off in huge profits when the flow of Mideast crude was partially cut off by the Arab oil embargo late in the year. (The embargo, aimed particularly at the United States, was imposed to protest imperialist support to Israel in the October 1973 Mideast war and not to further boost oil prices, although it temporarily had that effect.) Exxon's net income shot up by 59% in 1973, and the profits of most other oil companies rose by comparable amounts.

Seeing these fabulous profits being raked in by the oil companies, the OPEC governments, acting out of capitalist self-interest, decided that the time was ripe to get their share.

The political basis for the OPEC actions of late 1973 had been partly laid by the looming U.S. defeat in Vietnam and the

4. U.S. oil production reached a peak in 1970 and has never regained that level, even with oil from Alaska now flowing through the pipeline.

While cutting back new investments in oil production and refining, the oil giants moved to increase their control over other energy sources. They now own about 25% of all U.S. coal reserves, and since the 1960s have invested some \$2.5 billion in uranium exploration, mining, and processing.

They have also diversified into such non-energy fields as grocery chains, newspaper publishing, insurance, chemicals, and electronics.

rise of antiwar sentiment and protest in the United States.

Another important factor was the earlier rise of anti-imperialist ferment in the Arab countries, culminating in the overturn of the monarchy in Libya in 1969. The radi-



Herblock/Washington Post

calization of the Arab masses forced all the regimes in the region, including the most reactionary, to use anti-imperialist rhetoric and sometimes even to engage in limited anti-imperialist actions to cover up their basically dependent character.

#### Qaddafi Wins Price Increase

The first serious steps by an OPEC government toward significantly increasing its share in oil profits (as opposed to begging the oil companies for crumbs) were taken in Libya.

After coming to power in a military coup, the bourgeois-nationalist regime of Muammar el-Qaddafi had taken over the imperialist banks, forced the United States and Britain to give up their military bases, and carried out a number of other anti-imperialist measures.

In mid-1970 Qaddafi curtailed exports of Libyan oil by some 600,000 barrels a day and forced new price negotiations with companies operating in the country. In September of that year, after threatening to nationalize the companies' assets, Qaddafi won agreement for a 30-cents a barrel increase in the posted price (from \$1.80), and an increase in the tax rate from 50% to 55%.

The most significant thing about these increases was not the size, which was modest, but the fact that Qaddafi took effective action and got away with it. Soon the other OPEC governments were also demanding upward revisions in their

posted prices, which the oil companies conceded. These were codified in the Tehran Agreement of February 1971, followed shortly by the Tripoli Agreement (in which Libya extracted further concessions).

The Tehran and Tripoli agreements were followed by the Geneva agreements of January 1972 and June 1973, adjusting prices to compensate for the devaluations of the dollar in 1971 and 1973. By this time it was clear that the capitalist governments belonging to OPEC had gained a significant voice in the determination of posted prices and could thereby command a larger share of surplus value circulating in the world market.

During the same period, OPEC members negotiated shares of ownership, or "participation," in the production of oil, shares that are projected to increase gradually in future years. This raised OPEC revenues further, since in addition to levying taxes and royalties the governments were now able to sell a portion of the oil produced back to the oil companies and directly share in the profits of the producing consortiums.

#### The Shah Steps In

It was the shah of Iran who took the lead in the effort to extend the gains wrung from the oil companies by Qaddafi to the other oil-exporting countries—most importantly, of course, to his own treasury. This is explained by the fact that the rising capitalist interests in Iran were centered on the shah and his immediate family, and they were anxious for their own profit-making and competitive reasons to maximize the government's oil revenues.

In late 1973, the free-market price for crude oil soared far above the Mideast posted prices negotiated in previous years. This widening gap encouraged the OPEC governments to abrogate the earlier agreements and to boost posted prices, along with tax rates, very sharply.

#### Nationalizations in Libya

Again Qaddafi led the way. On September 1, following months of inconclusive negotiations, the Qaddafi regime seized 51% of all foreign oil operations and the next day announced sharply higher oil prices.

Nixon's response was a none-too-subtle threat that "oil without a market, as Mr. Mossadegh learned many, many years ago, doesn't do a country much good." In fact, Washington appeared to be preparing strong measures against Libya, including a boycott, but beat a retreat after the October war broke out and sentiment in the United States against new imperialist adventures made itself felt.

Soon the other OPEC members followed Libya's lead.

As a result of these actions, the OPEC governments experienced a tremendous rise in their revenues, from just under \$2 a

barrel prior to the boycott to more than \$9 by January 1974.

The extraordinary increase in oil income was, as already explained, partially due to changed market conditions. But it also reflected a long-term shift in the degree of control over their countries' oil wealth exercised by the national bourgeoisies represented by the OPEC governments, made possible by a change in the world class relationship of forces.

As the shah of Iran put it at the end of 1973: "The industrial world will have to realize that the era of their terrific progress and even more terrific income and wealth based on cheap fuel is finished. They will have to find new sources of energy and tighten their belts." (*Facts on File*, 1973, p. 1071.)

That such a shift occurred is confirmed by what happened to posted prices and OPEC tax levies when the 1974-75 slump (commonly but mistakenly blamed on the preceding rise in oil prices) hit the capitalist world. This classic overproduction crisis, which brought the steepest decline in U.S. industrial output since the downturn of 1937-38, caused a big fall-off in demand for oil. This in turn resulted in an average 14% drop in Mideast production in the first half of 1975 compared to the same period in 1974. But posted prices and OPEC revenue remained far above their preboycott levels.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Imperialist Response

The Arab oil boycott and the pricing actions of OPEC in 1973-74 were in some respects an actual blessing to the oil industry and U.S. imperialism. The fact that these actions coincided with and helped to precipitate the energy crisis made it possible for the oil companies and the Nixon administration to partially deflect the blame from the real culprits—themselves—to the "greedy oil sheikhs" and "foreign oil cartel."

Using this smokescreen, Nixon was able to get Congressional approval for the Alaskan oil pipeline despite protests from environmentalists. Likewise, Carter is us-

ing the current energy squeeze—with Iranian workers added to the list of scapegoats—to further roll back restrictions on environmental pollution and to decontrol oil prices.

The U.S. rulers made full use of these scapegoating techniques to try to prepare the way for once again directly intervening militarily in the Mideast. They knew that eventually they would have to "send in the marines" if the region's oil riches, which they have no intention of ever giving up, were not to fall into "unfriendly hands." Although the U.S. rulers were not able to turn public opinion around sufficiently to take such actions in 1973-74, or since then, Carter is using the new energy squeeze to intensify the campaign.<sup>6</sup>

#### Why Nixon Set Price Controls

The U.S. oil companies did not reap the full benefits from the shortages they were instrumental in creating. That is because the Nixon administration imposed controls in 1973 holding prices of domestically produced crude oil and refined products such as gasoline and fuel oil substantially below world-market levels.

These controls were partially aimed at blunting the outrage, directed at both the oil companies and the Nixon administration, of large numbers of working people who were not fooled by the racist anti-Arab diatribes in the capitalist media. The controls also gave major sectors of U.S. industry a competitive edge on rivals abroad, particularly Japan and West Germany, which were much more dependent on higher-priced Mideast oil.<sup>7</sup>

#### Why Carter Wants to Dump Them

Carter is now dispensing with these controls because U.S. corporations have gained on their imperialist competitors thanks to their antilabor offensive of the last eight years, and because growing political instability in the Middle East, exemplified by Iran, is causing the U.S. rulers to put a higher priority on slowing their steadily increasing dependence on overseas energy supplies. This requires increased production at home, which will only be forthcoming if the oil industry gets its pound of flesh in the form of higher energy prices.

Besides the confusion the oil companies and the Nixon administration were able to

6. One reason this campaign is being pursued so relentlessly is that nearly half of the capitalist world's total supply of oil moves through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, separating Iran from the Arabian Peninsula. U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern oil, though far less than Europe's and Japan's, is substantial. About half of U.S. oil consumption is now imported, and one-fourth of that amount comes from the Persian Gulf.

7. Only 23% of total U.S. energy requirements are met by oil imports, whereas this figure is 92% for Japan and 67% for West Germany.

sow in regard to who was really to blame for the energy crisis, the big jump in OPEC revenue in 1973-74 benefited imperialism in other ways.

#### Where the 'Petrodollars' Ended Up

In the first place, most of this revenue ended up back in the coffers of the imperialist banks in the form of "petrodollar" deposits. This money was then "recycled" in the form of highly profitable loans.

A major portion of the increased OPEC revenues went to build up huge military machines in Iran and Saudi Arabia, designed to crush any revolutionary threat. It was hoped that this military might would relieve the United States and other imperialist powers of the financial and political costs of policing the Mideast themselves or depending entirely on Israel for this role.

Another portion went to subsidizing shaky proimperialist regimes such as those in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as to aiding counterrevolutionary military campaigns in North Yemen, Oman, and elsewhere.

Finally, imperialist firms stood to reap fabulous profits from sales of weapons, luxury goods, and other products to the newly enriched OPEC rulers.

#### Dangerous Precedent

Nonetheless, the 1973-74 actions of the OPEC governments to increase their share of oil profits were hardly in the overall interest of the imperialists. First of all, imperialist control over a vital raw material and energy source had been loosened. And this loosening took the form of a series of unilateral political acts, including nationalizations, by the OPEC governments—a bad precedent from the standpoint of the imperialists.

Moreover, the increase in OPEC government revenue and the immense transfer of wealth that it represented (in the form both of commodities and of securities and real estate in the oil-consuming countries) had to be paid for.

Of course, capitalist governments around the world tried to get working people to foot the biggest part of this bill, through a combination of higher taxes, inflation, and other austerity measures. Once again the "greedy Arabs" were blamed for these exactions, in hopes that working people would accept lowered living standards without protest. Instead, workers fought back and class struggle intensified, helping to destabilize capitalist rule. The employing class itself ended up having to pay part of the new costs.

#### Threat to World Banking System

Several of the weaker imperialist powers, such as Portugal and Spain, and many of the oil-importing semicolonial countries were hard pressed to pay the increased cost of their imports. They had to borrow billions from imperialist banks and the

5. At the end of 1978, after a two-year OPEC price freeze forced by a renewed oil glut, the posted price of Mideast crude was still about \$6.25 a barrel in 1967 dollars, compared to about \$1.70 in 1972. Also, taking into account higher tax and royalty rates, government revenue on Arabian light crude increased from about \$1.20 a barrel in 1972 (in 1967 dollars) to about \$5.80 (also in 1967 dollars) at the end of 1978.

These figures are calculated from data taken from a bulletin issued by the Continental Oil Company entitled *The Oil Companies and OPEC: No Case for Collusion*. The magnitudes involved are confirmed by figures on posted prices and "government take" provided in *Iran: An Economic Profile* by Jahangir Amuzegar (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1977), and in *Arabia Without Sultans: A Survey of Political Instability in the Arab World* by Fred Halliday (New York: Vintage, 1975).



International Monetary Fund to finance the resulting balance-of-payments deficits. Since in many cases the governments involved were extremely poor credit risks, the whole international banking system was threatened.

Thus, it is not surprising that the imperialists reacted strongly to the OPEC tax hikes and nationalizations. Capitalist politicians and other mouthpieces of the ruling class came forth with howls of rage, hypocritical complaints about the use of an economic boycott as a political weapon (so unlike what the imperialists did to Iran in 1951-53 and still do to Cuba to this day!), and thinly disguised threats of war.

Emergency conservation measures were imposed, some of which have been made permanent (such as the fifty-five miles-per-hour speed limit in the United States). Washington passed legislation mandating sharply reduced automobile fuel consumption in future years, forcing a drastic "down-sizing" of American cars.

The aim of these measures was to cut energy consumption, or at least the rate of growth of consumption, thus slowing the trend toward greater U.S. dependence on Mideast oil.

#### **Pumping Oil Back in the Ground**

Another response of the imperialists was to establish or greatly expand strategic petroleum stockpiles. Washington adopted a plan to store a total of one billion barrels of oil in underground caverns in Louisiana and Texas. At current world-market prices this will cost U.S. taxpayers some \$18 billion.

The aim of this mammoth project is to insulate the U.S. economy for a few months should there be another large-scale oil cutoff. The rulers, we can be sure, would then use the extra time to whip up public sentiment for direct military intervention to regain control over their industrial lifeblood.

#### **Huge New Market Opens Up**

From the standpoint of the political consequences, the most important response of the imperialist powers to the 1973 events was to mobilize their financial and economic might to blunt OPEC's blow and to exploit the gigantic new market that had suddenly appeared in the Mideast.

The rise in revenues for the OPEC governments was of such magnitude that collectively their balance-of-payments surpluses went from a mere \$2 billion in 1972 to \$9 billion in 1973 and \$62 billion in 1974.

For countries with low population and with backward social structures warped by imperialism—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and others—there was no possibility of spending all this revenue on imports, despite lavish outlays for armaments, luxury goods, and "industrial development." So the prospect was

that these countries would have huge petrodollar surpluses for many years to come.

While the biggest Western banks were going after these surpluses in the form of deposits, arms manufacturers and industrial concerns were getting in line to win orders for items ranging from jet fighters to petrochemical plants to steel mills to highly advanced communications networks. Many of the transactions involved outright boondoggles.

#### **Swindlers Move In**

For example, the tiny sheikhdom of Ras al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates has only 700 telephones in its 650 square miles of territory. But it has a \$10 million earth satellite station should one of the privileged elite wish to place or receive long-distance calls by the most modern means.

The United Arab Emirates as a whole has a population of only 700,000, yet it boasts four international airports with four more on the drawing boards.

The swindling is compounded by the fact that the contracts are padded and the bids submitted by foreign contractors are grossly inflated—"sometimes [amounting to] three or four times cost estimates made by highly qualified outside consultants" (*Wall Street Journal*, October 14, 1977). Such price gouging underlines once again the dependence of all the Mideast semicolonies on imperialism, despite their oil wealth.

#### **The Case of Iran**

In the case of Iran, with a population of 34 million and a capitalist monarch who had already initiated an ambitious "modernization" program, the prospects appeared much brighter for cutting down and finally eliminating the oil-revenue surpluses.

In addition to industrialization, a key aim of the shah's program was to convert Iran into a major regional military power, equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry money could buy. The scope of this effort is indicated by the fact that in 1978 spending on Iran's armed forces accounted for 40% of total government outlays.

In the context of the acute overproduction crisis of 1974-75 and a highly explosive situation in the Mideast focused on the Palestinian struggle, U.S. finance capital saw definite advantages in humoring the shah and selling him all the military, industrial, and other goods he wished to buy in furtherance of his grandiose goals. In 1975, Iranian imports jumped 90%.

#### **\$14 Billion in U.S. Weapons**

From 1972 on, the shah bought a staggering \$14 billion worth of American military goods. As of late 1978, \$11.56 billion worth of orders for weapons made in the USA were outstanding. And Iran was

buying another \$6 billion worth of nonmilitary goods and services from the United States each year.

The other imperialist powers also got into the act. By 1978, West Germany's manufactured exports to Iran (in the first nine months) has surged to \$2.3 billion, 2.7% of West Germany's total exports for the same period. Japan's exports to Iran in the first ten months of 1978 soared to \$2.6 billion, a rise of 57% over the same period in 1977.

Overall imports, including military purchases, were running at a \$17.5 billion annual rate last year before the economy was paralyzed by striking Iranian workers.

#### **Schemes Upset**

Thus, it looked for a time as if the imperialist powers had gone a long way toward turning around the economic shift brought on by the OPEC actions of 1973-74.

By 1978 the petrodollar surpluses of the OPEC countries (collectively) had fallen back to an estimated \$18 billion, less than one-third of the 1974 total, while their imports had soared to an estimated \$99 billion, triple what they had been four years earlier.

The imperialist banking system had also weathered the oil-price shocks. This was mainly due to a cyclical upturn in the world capitalist economy, beginning in mid-1975. But in addition the successful imposition by the banks of drastic austerity measures in many of the debt-ridden semicolonial countries enabled the governments of those countries to keep up their interest payments and refinance new loans.

And while capitalist governments were (and remain) extremely shaky in a whole series of oil-importing countries, in none was there an immediate threat to capitalist rule.

But then, ironically, the revolutionary upsurge began in Iran—the world's second biggest oil exporter—posing a dire threat both to continued capitalist rule in Iran and weakening imperialist domination all over the globe.

[To be continued]

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## El Salvador—Growing Challenge to Romero Dictatorship

By Eduardo Medrano

[The following article appeared in the June 10 issue of *Combate Socialista*, the newspaper of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Colombia. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

Hours after fourteen members of the Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR) were gunned down on May 23 by Salvadoran police near the Venezuelan embassy, Salvadoran Minister of Education Carlos A. Herrera was executed by guerrillas of the People's Liberation Forces—Farabundo Martí.<sup>1</sup>

A dispatch by the EFE news agency stated that the guerrilla group had explained by telephone that its action was a "response to the events of last night," a reference to the new massacre.

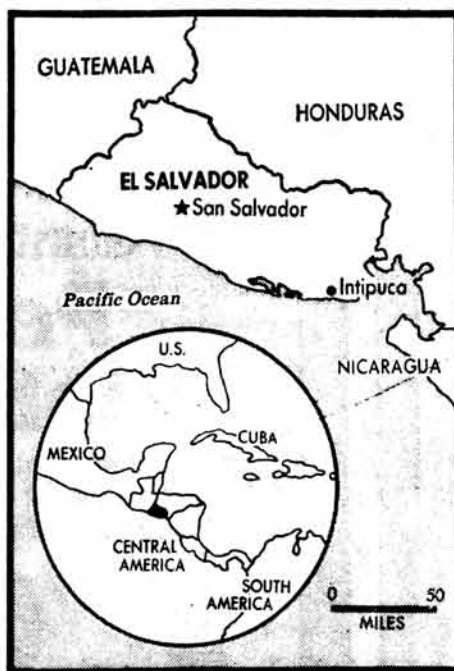
On the afternoon of May 23, the government suspended all constitutional guarantees throughout the country for a period of thirty days, including the right to assemble, the right to enter and leave the country, freedom of expression, and the right not to have one's home searched or mail opened.

On the morning of May 22, the capital, San Salvador, was without public transport. The day before, students clashing with police had burned six buses. They were demanding freedom for various political prisoners and showing their support for the continuing occupation of the Metropolitan Cathedral by the BPR.

The BPR is a coalition of trade unions, peasant organizations, and student and community groups that has been struggling since Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero seized power through fraudulent elections in 1977. The BPR's program centers around demands for higher wages, full employment, and municipal and agrarian reform. Its methods of struggle have been to hold protests and occupations to publicize its demands.

With considerable popular support, the BPR occupied the French and Venezuelan embassies, the Metropolitan Cathedral, more than eight churches, and five schools. These actions began May 4. The archbishop of San Salvador refused to call on the government to eject those occupying the cathedral.

The occupations were launched to demand the release of BPR General Secre-



Washington Post

tary Facundo Guardado and four other BPR leaders who were arrested at the end of April.

The government reacted by declaring that it would never negotiate with "subversive groups." However, it had to partly swallow its words. On May 10 it was forced to free Facundo Guardado, who immediately addressed a crowd of 2,000 persons at the University of San Salvador to condemn the torture he had been subjected to in prison.

Two days before, the police had carried out a cold-blooded massacre in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral. A crowd that had gathered to hear speeches by those occupying the cathedral was suddenly machine-gunned. Nineteen persons were killed on the spot, and many more were wounded. The protesters fought back, and two police were wounded.

After the occupations of the cathedral and the embassies, groups of 200 to 300 persons demonstrated in the streets in solidarity with the occupations. They were brutally dispersed by the police. Shortly before the massacre at the cathedral, supporters of the BPR seized a radio station and broadcast demands for the freedom of the five imprisoned leaders.

On May 10, members of the Salvadoran Revolutionary Student Movement (a BPR affiliate) clashed with the police, who killed four high-school students.

So vigorous have been these struggles and the solidarity they have aroused that the bloodthirsty Carlos Humberto Romero had to call on May 18 for a "dialogue with the legal opposition" and promise to "enact electoral reforms" to overcome the crisis.

But this crisis can hardly be settled by "electoral reforms."

El Salvador has had a long history of repression and popular insurgency since the 1930s. El Salvador's economy revolves around agriculture, but 38 percent of the land in this country of 4.2 million is owned by fourteen Salvadoran families. Unemployment has risen to 60 percent in the countryside, and the average wage is US\$1.41 a day.

Modernization of the plantations has left an enormous number of peasants without work or land, reducing a large part of the population to poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

Military dictatorships have ruled the country since 1932. In that year a peasant uprising was crushed with the army's massacre of between 15,000 and 20,000 persons. Armed and financed by Washington, the regular army is aided in its repression by a rightist paramilitary organization called ORDEN.<sup>2</sup> The atmosphere in the country is one of continual violence—police raids, arrests, kidnappings, torture, executions of peasants, and so on.

Against the background of this crisis, the workers have gone into struggle.

A wave of strikes and occupations began last year when the BPR and the Christian Federation of Salvadoran Peasants seized the Venezuelan, Costa Rican, Panamanian, Mexican, and Swiss embassies to protest the brutal repression against the peasants of Cuscatlán Province.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of this year, several strikes broke out. Workers at the Pesca fishing company, the PRONACSA packing plant, and the Tropical and La Constancia bottling factories struck in early March. More than 1,200 electrical workers belonging to the STECEL union went on strike March 13. On March 19 they cut off electrical power in the entire country for twenty-three hours, with the support of the

2. The Democratic Nationalist Organization, founded and led by General Romero.

3. According to the BPR, fifty persons were killed and hundreds wounded in late March 1978 when troops and paramilitary forces swept through Cuscatlán to put down peasant actions demanding land and protesting against high rents. See *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 8, 1978, p. 546.

union at CAESS, the company responsible for electricity distribution.

Barricades went up in San Salvador, Mejicanos, and Soyapango during the strikes. On March 11, groups of BPR members for the first time occupied the cathedral in San Salvador, which they left the following week after demonstrations in the center of the city.

The workers at the La Constanca and Tropical plants eventually won their struggle, but they had to pay a severe price. One day during the strike, the army surrounded the factories while a helicopter machine-gunned workers, family members, and leftist militants who had congregated there. Six persons lost their lives in the assault.

The mass response to this attack was not long in coming. Other strikes erupted within hours of the machine-gunnings. By May 20, more than fifteen companies were paralyzed by workers who had walked out in solidarity with their comrades at La Constanca. The bosses were finally forced to concede, and the workers at the bottling plants and the STECEL workers were victorious.

That was the background of mass struggle that preceded the events at the cathedral and the occupied embassies.

Nor has the May 8 massacre at the cathedral terrorized the inhabitants of San Salvador. More than 20,000 persons went into the streets on May 10 during the funeral for the victims of the massacre, condemning the murderers and calling for the downfall of the government. On the day of the massacre itself, teachers, bottling and construction workers, and other unionists struck in solidarity with the occupiers of the cathedral.

Terrorist actions by some groups isolated from the real mass struggle have thrown up additional obstacles to the advance of the masses.

The example of what happened in early April to the workers at the Adoc shoe factory in Soyapango should be noted. The workers had occupied two buildings in

response to threats and firings by the employer during their struggle to establish a union. The occupation indicated that the strength and confidence of the workers was rising.

But one day a guerrilla unit of the People's Liberation Forces—Farabundo Martí executed the head of personnel for the factory because of his antiunion activities. The army used this as a pretext for occupying the plant and driving out the

## Statement of Salvadoran Trotskyists

[The following has been excerpted from a statement issued by the Grupo Socialista Internacional (GSI—International Socialist Group), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in El Salvador]

\* \* \*

The International Socialist Group, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, considers that in the present circumstances unity is an urgent necessity for the left and for popular currents. The aim must be to guide and centralize the struggle of exploited sectors with the goal of forging a united response to the present policy of the dominant sector of the bourgeoisie, represented by the Romero regime, and of beginning to build a class alternative independent of the bourgeois currents.

The immediate task imposed on the left by the popular sectors is the struggle for the conquest of political rights and improved living conditions, both of which are necessary to create favorable conditions for the organization and political education of the oppressed layers.

This will be accomplished if the left unites and awakens the consciousness of the mass movement to its own strength and organization. In other words, these objectives can be accomplished if workers, peasants, teachers, and students unite against the repression, under the leadership of the revolutionary left.

That is why the GSI is launching an

workers with bursts of machine-gun fire. Many were wounded and the rest were arrested.

Instead of such terrorist actions, the road toward victory is the one that has been chosen by the workers and students of San Salvador, Mejicanos, and other parts of the country—ongoing, massive mobilizations against the regime and its allies. □

appeal to the organizations of the left—the Revolutionary People's Bloc, United People's Action Front (FAPU), Communist Party, Revolutionary Workers League (LOR),\* February 28 People's Leagues, Association of Independent Revolutionary Workers (AORI), and others—to form a revolutionary left front. Such a front, based on a broad mass movement independent of any bourgeois current, can serve as an instrument to guide, centralize, and lead the struggles of the exploited against repression.

Unity of the left must be attained without betraying the fundamental interests of the proletariat. This means, in particular, absolute political independence from all bourgeois currents, including those that seek to disguise themselves as "progressive." For the aim of any bourgeois or progovernment orientation can only be to preserve the same capitalist system that we seek to destroy.

In addition, such a front must assure from the outset broad participation by the ranks and the democratic rights of all organizations involved.

### A Program of Struggle for Revolutionary Front

*Against the repression:* Abolish the Public Order Law and dissolve all paramilitary organizations. Free all political prisoners and declare a general amnesty. Stop persecutions against the Catholic church. Immediately reopen the National University, with no police on campus.

*For the conquest of political rights:* Freedom of organization and legalization of all political organizations. Freedom of the press, assembly, and expression. Recognition of right to strike.

*Better working conditions for all workers:* Wage increases and a seven-hour day for all. Freedom to organize trade unions both in the cities and countryside. Bread for the workers, land for the peasants, and freedom for all.

Workers, peasants, teachers, students—all together in a revolutionary left front against the repression!

Struggle, win, workers to power!

\*Also a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.—IP/I

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## SALT II Pact—Political Cover for U.S. War Drive

[The following appeared as an editorial in the June 29 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

\* \* \*

Progress toward peace was the promise held out by President Carter as he signed the SALT II arms pact June 18. But the difference between Carter's promises and his real plans is the difference between peace and war.

From the standpoint of nuclear disarmament, the SALT II pact is a miserable fraud.

In his nationally televised speech on the treaty, Carter bluntly declared that "no operational United States forces will have to be reduced" under the provisions of SALT II.

On the contrary, between now and 1985, when the treaty expires, Washington can increase the number of nuclear missile launchers in service by nearly 200 without violating the accords.

"With or without SALT II," Carter told Congress, "we must modernize and strengthen our own strategic forces. And we are doing so."

SALT II, he boasted, "constrains none of the reasonable programs we've planned to improve our own defenses."

Among these "reasonable programs" is construction of the MX missile system. Each one of the 200 MX missiles the U.S. ruling class has decided to build will carry more explosive power than all the bombs dropped in World War II plus the Korean War.

Washington already has enough nuclear warheads to hit every Soviet city of more than 100,000 thirty-four times. SALT II enables Carter to continue this nuclear build-up while posing as a man of peace.

But Carter's expanding nuclear weapons program is not the only aspect of his war policy. Determined to defend their international economic empire, American capitalism is preparing for new Vietnam-style wars.

In his speech to Congress, Carter placed the SALT accords in this context. Speaking of "our strength, our resolve, our determination, our willingness to protect our own interests," Carter declared:

"For instance, I made it clear to President Brezhnev that Cuban military activities in Africa sponsored by or supported by the Soviet Union, and also the growing Cuban involvement in the problems of Central America and the Caribbean, can only have a negative impact on U.S.-Soviet relations."



CARTER: Boasts that SALT II "constrains none of the reasonable programs we've planned to improve our defense."

As the Nicaraguan workers and peasants advance their heroic struggle against the Somoza dictatorship, Carter has now had to add Central America on his list of trouble spots. These already include Iran, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Indochina and southern Africa.

U.S.-backed dictatorships have been toppled or are now being challenged by mass rebellions in every one of these areas. The imperialists recognize and fear the possibility that these struggles may culminate in new socialist revolutions.

Carter, of course, is unable to admit that such upheavals reflect the will of the toiling masses in these countries. He tries to blame them on "Cuban military activities" and "Cuban involvement."

Even before the Iranian revolution Carter was increasing the U.S. military budget in the neighborhood of 10 percent each year and carrying out a strident propaganda campaign against Cuban aid to the African liberation struggle.

In just the four months since the Iranian revolution, Carter has:

- Rushed U.S. weapons and advisers to Yemen;
- Negotiated a Mideast deal that includes billions in new military aid for the Israeli and Egyptian regimes;
- Stepped up support for the right-wing

rebellion in Afghanistan; and

- Increased aid to the military dictatorship in Thailand as part of his general offensive against the Vietnamese revolution.

SALT II is political cover for Carter's war policy. In light of the antiwar sentiment of the American working class, such a cover is essential.

By playing along with Carter in this charade, the Stalinist regime in Moscow is actually increasing the danger of nuclear war. The more Carter can convince the American people that he is pursuing peace, the easier it will be for him to intervene militarily against the struggles of workers and peasants around the world.

Such interventions turned into major wars in Vietnam and Korea. When they are conducted near the borders of the Soviet Union, they automatically raise the danger of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation and a nuclear holocaust.

But the Stalinists persist in the utopian delusion that peace and stability can come through collaboration with Washington. Thus the *Daily World*, newspaper of the Communist Party USA, featured on its front page June 16 the headline: "Handshake Opens Road to Peace."

According to the CP, the ruling-class supporters of SALT II—everybody from Carter and Zbigniew Brzezinski to CIA Director Stansfield Turner and the Joint Chiefs of Staff—are "peace forces," who must be supported against the anti-SALT "warhawks."

This is precisely the political trap that the ruling class set when it ran "peace candidate" Lyndon Johnson against "warhawk" Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election. The disorientation fostered by those who supported Johnson—including the CP—made it easier for the imperialists to escalate the Vietnam War.

The road to peace cannot be opened by magic handshakes, nor by any deal with the imperialist warmakers.

It is the consistent opposition by working people to the war plans of the employers' government that can tie the hands of the warmakers. This means that the American labor movement should take the lead in demanding:

No new nuclear weapons such as the MX missile.

Eliminate the entire U.S. atomic arsenal and the military budget that sustains it.

Stop Washington's military aid to governments around the world.

No reestablishment of the draft.

No sending young American workers to crush the struggles of fellow workers and toilers in other countries. □

## Notes for Introduction to Book on 'War and Peace'

By Leon Trotsky

To begin with, I am printing an article first published in May 1929, i.e., several weeks after my deportation to Turkey.<sup>1</sup> This article will, to a certain extent, serve as an introduction to several of the other articles, providing a perspective on the overall development. It has undergone eleven years of serious testing since that time. The article was printed in the American magazine *The New Republic*, before its editors had received their revelation of the "true word" from the Kremlin. The editors supplied my article with their own commentary, which now, eleven years later, acquires special interest. My principal misfortune, in the opinion of the editors, consisted in a "rigid Marxism," which prevented me from fathoming or grasping the "realistic view of history." The most glaring lack of a realistic view of history was shown in my evaluation of formal democracy, i.e., the parliamentary regime, which, I said in that article, had for the first time come into conflict with the development of society and would necessarily disappear from one country after another. The *New Republic* editors contended against me that democracy was subject to ruin only in those countries where it had established only "the feeblest beginnings" and in countries where "the industrial revolution has hardly more than started." The editors did not explain, or thoubt themselves with the impossibility of explaining, why these feeble beginnings of democracy, if it is a viable form, did not undergo further maturation, as had happened with the older capitalist countries, but instead were swept away by various systems of dictatorship. The second reference, to the inadequacy of industrial development, or, more correctly, of capitalist development, holds relatively true for Russia, Italy, the countries of southeast Europe, the Balkans, and Spain. But one can hardly speak of the inadequacy of industrial development in Austria and Germany. Moreover, in these two countries democracy held out for about fifteen years before giving way to fascist dictatorships. The *New Republic* editors did not foresee this, although my own "rigid Marxism" and lack of "a realistic view of history" did not prevent me from forecasting such developments.

The third argument of the then editors of *The New Republic* is still more striking. Kerensky,<sup>2</sup> with his weakness and indecisiveness, was, you see, "an historic accident, which Trotsky cannot admit, because there is no room in his mechanistic schema for any such thing." The weakness of Kerensky's character as an individual was, to be sure, an accident from the point of view of historical development. But the fact that a historically belated democracy, condemned from its very beginnings, could not find anyone but the weak and vacillating Kerensky to be its leader is no accident.

\* \* \*

Democrats of various shadings ruled in Germany and Austria for a number of years. All allowed themselves to be removed from the political scene without resistance. One may say, of course,

1. The article in *The New Republic*, May 22, 1929, which had the title "Which Way, Russia?" was the first translation of "Is Parliamentary Democracy Likely to Replace the Soviets?" Trotsky also discussed it in the unfinished article he was dictating the day he was assassinated, "Bonapartism, Fascism, and War" in *Writings 39-40*.

2. Alexander Kerensky (1882-1970), a right-winger in the Social Revolutionary Party, never led or directed any revolution, but he was prime minister of the Provisional Government that held power after the February revolution until it was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

### Background of This Article

Toward the end of the "phony war" in March or April 1940, Trotsky, then living in Mexico, got the idea of collecting several of his articles as a short book to be entitled *War and Peace*, if a publisher in the United States could be found for it. While his literary agent and friends were searching for a publisher, Trotsky dictated these notes to be used in writing the preface for the book. He gave up the project in the summer, after the German victory over France, a few months before he was assassinated.

The proposed contents of the book were:

"Is Parliamentary Democracy Likely to Replace the Soviets?," February 25, 1929 (in *Writings 29*);

"Disarmament and the United States of Europe," October 4, 1929 (in *Writings 29*) (on second thought, Trotsky decided to omit this article from the book);

"What Is National Socialism?," June 10, 1933 (in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*);

"Before a New World War," July 15, 1937 (in *Writings 36-37*);

"The Totalitarian Defeatist in the Kremlin," September 12, 1938 (in *Writings 37-38*);

"Only Revolution Can End War," March 18, 1939 (in *Writings 38-39*);

"The Riddle of the USSR," June 21, 1939 (in *Writings 38-39*);

"The Kremlin in World Politics," July 1, 1939 (in *Writings 38-39*);

"The U.S. Will Participate in the War," October 1, 1939 (in *Writings 39-40*);

"The Twin Stars: Hitler-Stalin," December 4, 1939 (in *Writings 39-40*).

A copy of Trotsky's unfinished notes was found in the Cannon archives at the Library of Social History in New York. It was translated from the Russian by Ron Allen for a supplement to the twelve-volume *Writings of Leon Trotsky* series published by Pathfinder Press, with whose permission it is used here. The main problem in preparing the material was deciding the sequence of the different unnumbered pages and parts. In a few places, a word or phrase has been added in brackets to clarify meaning.

—George Breitman

that the weakness of Scheidemann, Ebert,<sup>3</sup> Renner,<sup>4</sup> and others was "an historic accident." But why were these people allowed to assume the leadership of the democracy? Are we not entitled to conclude that a historically belated democracy, torn by internal contradictions and condemned to historical death, cannot find anyone for its leadership other than people without clear ideas and strong wills? Or, if not, are we not justified in asserting that, independently of their personal character traits, the leaders of

3. Philipp Scheidemann (1865-1939) and Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925) were the right-wing leaders of the German Social Democracy principally responsible for derailing and crushing the German revolution of 1918. Scheidemann was the head of the party's fraction in the Reichstag until 1933, when he emigrated. Ebert was president of the Weimar republic, 1919-25.

4. Karl Renner (1870-1950) was the right-wing leader of the Austrian Social Democracy, chancellor of Austria, 1918-20, and president of its national assembly, 1931-33.

formal democracy in times of crisis lose their composure under the pressure of historical contradictions and give up their positions without a fight? If this kind of historical accident repeats itself time after time in states at various levels of development, then we have the right to conclude that before us are not isolated historical exceptions, but instances of a general historical law.

The most recent verification of this law was the fate of the Spanish republic.<sup>5</sup>

One may say, to be sure, that the personal characters of Zamora,<sup>6</sup> Azaña, Caballero, Negrín,<sup>7</sup> and others are their unfortunate personal property and, in this sense, "an historic accident." But it was no accident that precisely these people assumed the leadership of the decadent, belated democracy and, although they put up a fight this time, they did surrender all their positions to a worthless clique of generals. I will therefore allow myself to think that a "mechanistic schema" is not so bad, if it allows one to foresee major events.

\* \* \*

In the bourgeois press of the world it has now become the custom to depict the [present situation] as the product of the evil will of one man. The initiative for this concept belongs to France: "Isn't it really because of the will of one person, a single madman, that Europe and all humanity will again be plunged into the abyss of war?" This concept then crossed over to England and the United States. The story goes that the whole world is generally the flourishing site of peaceful and fraternal relations. But a dictator appeared from somewhere and this one person was able to plunge the whole world, with its millions of inhabitants, into war. This is the same concept *The New Republic* elaborated in regard to Kerensky and the October Revolution. There the trouble was that a weak person assumed the leadership of the democracy and did not know how to prevent strongmen from toppling the democracy and replacing it with a dictatorship. Here the misfortune is that in Germany a strongman in power has upset the peace that is favored by the more powerful democracies.

\* \* \*

That which has happened is not, by far, what was foreseen in these articles. And what they foresaw is not, by far, what has happened. Such is the fate of every political prognosis. Reality is immeasurably richer in resources, variants, and combinations than any imagination. That the war would begin with the division of Poland between Germany and the USSR, we did not predict. A more attentive, detailed analysis might well have suggested that variant too. But when all is said and done, the division of Poland is only an episode.

A prognosis is valuable not insofar as it expresses or finds photographically exact confirmation in subsequent developments but rather in the extent to which, by projecting historical factors ahead, it helps us to orient ourselves in the actual development of events. From this point of view it seems to us that the articles collected in this volume have withstood the test. The author feels he has the right to add that even now, by illuminating the present in the light of the past, they [can still be of value].

\* \* \*

Events work at such a pace that some predictions are realized or confirmed much earlier than one could suppose. Thus, when we

5. A reference to the end of the civil war in 1939.

6. Niceto Alcalá Zamora (1877-1949), a large landowner and liberal Catholic, was head of the Progressive Party in Spain. He became the first prime minister of the republican government established in 1931, and was president of the republic, 1931-36.

7. Manuel Azaña (1880-1940) was prime minister in the Spanish republic from 1931 to 1933 and president throughout the civil war until his resignation in Paris in 1939. Francisco Largo Caballero (1869-1946) was the leader of the left wing of the Spanish Socialist Party. He was premier from September 1936 to May 1937. Juan Negrín López (1889-1956) replaced Largo Caballero as premier.

spoke in an interview [with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 14, 1940] of the inevitability of United States intervention in the war, it was seen as heresy which every party and every shading of party opinion in the United States rejected. That was only about a month ago, and today, as these lines are being written, the American press, commenting on the invasion of Scandinavia by the Germans, is saying that intervention by the United States is entirely possible in the year ahead.

\* \* \*

On March 9, 1939, Mr. Chamberlain<sup>8</sup> assured foreign correspondents that the international situation had improved, that Anglo-German relations had thawed, and that disarmament could be placed on the order of the day. Six days later the German army occupied Czechoslovakia.

In 1937 Mr. Roosevelt<sup>9</sup> proclaimed neutrality, not foreseeing at all the incompatibility of that doctrine with the global position of the United States.

Such examples can be cited without end. One can almost state it as a law that the ruling posts in contemporary democracies are filled only by those who have demonstrated for a period of years that they cannot orient themselves in the present situation and can foresee nothing.

\* \* \*

In June 1939 I had a chat with a group of American travelers on questions of world politics.<sup>10</sup> The talk touched upon the World's Fair in New York. This exhibit is undoubtedly a magnificent triumph of human genius. But when they call it "the world of tomorrow," they give it a one-sided name—one-sided at the very least. Tomorrow's world will appear differently. To give a true picture of tomorrow's world, they should have had bombers fly over and drop their loads for hundreds of miles around. The presence of human genius side by side with terrifying barbarism—that is the image of tomorrow's world. Here too our "rigid schema" have proved to be correct.

What is important in scientific thinking, especially in complicated questions of politics and history, is to distinguish the basic from the secondary, the essential from the incidental, to foresee the movement of the essential factors of development. To people whose thinking goes only from day to day, who seek comfort in all kinds of episodic occurrences without bringing them together into one overall picture, scientific thinking that proceeds from basic, fundamental factors seems dogmatic; in politics this paradox is met with at every turn.

\* \* \*

If the author has foreseen some things correctly, the credit for this belongs not to him personally, but to the method which he applied. In any other field, people—or at least specially trained people—consider the application of a definite method to be essential. It's a different matter in politics. Here sorcery predominates. Highly educated people believe that, for a political operation, one's powers of observation, eye measurements, a certain stock of slyness, and common sense are sufficient. The illusion of free will is the source of this subjective arbitrariness. In America, the view of the politician as an "engineer," who takes the raw material and builds according to his own blueprints, is especially widespread. Nothing is more naive and barren than this point of

8. Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) became Conservative prime minister of Britain in 1937. In 1938 he tried to appease Hitler through the Munich agreements on Czechoslovakia.

9. Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945) was Democratic president of the United States, 1933-45. Soon after taking office in March 1933 he began his experiment, called the New Deal, which sought through reforms to overcome the Great Depression while containing the militancy of the American workers.

10. Trotsky's discussion with members of the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America (the correct date was July 23, 1939) is printed under the title "On the Eve of World War II" in *Writings* 39-40.

view. However, as in any philosophy, including the philosophy of history, there is a correct way of conceiving the interrelation of the subjective with the objective. In the final reckoning the objective factors always predominate over the subjective. Therefore correct politics begins with an analysis of the real world and an analysis of the trends at work within it. Only thus can one arrive at a correct scientific prediction and a correct intervention into a process on the basis of this prediction. Any other approach would be sorcery.

People of a vulgar turn of mind could now allude to the defeat of that political current to which the author of this book belonged and still belongs. How could it happen that the empiricist Stalin defeated the faction which followed the scientific method? Doesn't this mean that common sense has the advantage over doctrinaireism? Every sorcerer has a certain percentage of patients who recover. And every doctor has a certain percentage of patients who die. From this, many primitive people are inclined to give preference to sorcery over medicine. But in fact, science can demonstrate that in the one case the patient recovered in spite of the intervention of the sorcerer, and in the other the patient died because medical science, at least at its present state, could not effectively overcome the destructive powers affecting the organism; in both cases one must correctly determine the relation

between the objective and subjective.

In politics the scientific method cannot provide victories in all cases. Sorcery, on the other hand, in certain cases provides a victory when this victory is founded on the objective alignments and general tendencies of development.

\* \* \*

There are people who consider themselves educated but who permit themselves such summary judgments as that "the October Revolution was a failure." And what about the French Revolution? It ended in the restoration, though episodic, of the Bourbons. And the Civil War in the United States? It led to the rule of the Sixty Families. And all of human history in general? So far it has led to the second imperialist war, which threatens our entire civilization. It is impossible not to say, then, that all of history has been a mistake and a failure. Finally, what of human beings themselves—no small factor in history? Isn't it necessary to say that this product of prolonged biological evolution is a failure? No one is forbidden of course to make such general observations. But they derive from the individual experience of the petty shopkeeper, or from theosophy, and [do not] apply to the historical process as a whole or to its overall stages, its main chapters, or its episodes. □

## Acheampong Executed

# Will Ghana 'Go the Ethiopian Way'?

By Ernest Harsch

Pledging to carry through a "house-cleaning exercise" against corrupt officials and businessmen, a group of junior officers and rank-and-file soldiers seized power in Ghana June 4, toppling the military junta of Gen. Frederick Akuffo.

Scores of top-ranking officers were arrested, and army commander Maj. Gen. N.A. Odartey-Wellington was killed. Akuffo himself managed to evade arrest, taking refuge in a church.

The new rulers established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), chaired by Air Force Lt. Jerry Rawlings. The council has only one officer of commander rank; the rest are junior or non-commissioned officers and one private.

Opposition to price-gouging, hoarding, and rampant corruption among military, government, and business circles has been a constant theme of council statements. A radio broadcast the morning after the coup declared that "we have plans for a house-cleaning exercise and we are going to act on it immediately."

An editorial in a government-owned newspaper stated a few days later that the AFRC "is not after the ordinary man but the big shot who for all this time has been cheating the ordinary man in the street."

Similar points had been raised by Rawlings before the coup, during an earlier abortive attempt to topple Akuffo in May. The prosecutor in Rawlings's subsequent court-martial trial charged that Rawlings had stated that Ghana should "go the

Ethiopian way," by purging the country of its corrupt rulers.

According to a report in the June 9 London *Economist*, "Students who flocked by the busload to the court-martial cheered every alleged statement. The news of this support quickly spread and the flight-lieutenant evidently became the hero of the army's other ranks."

On the day before the coup, Rawlings was freed by rebellious infantry troops, who with the support of air force units then moved against the regime itself.

The new military council has set up special tribunals to try individuals accused of corruption. On June 16, Lt. Gen. E.K. Utuka and Ignatius K. Acheampong, a former general who had ruled Ghana with an iron fist for six years, were found guilty of "using their positions to amass wealth while in office and recklessly dissipating state funds to the detriment of the country." They were promptly taken before a firing squad and executed.

In one indication of popular backing for the regime's anticorruption moves, 500 students demonstrated in support of the executions at a school near Accra, the capital, carrying signs that read: "The wages of sin is death" and "Let the blood flow."

The same day as the executions, a council representative revealed that eighty senior officers and half a dozen civilians had been detained on charges of profiteering and embezzlement. He added that they

would be tried, and, if convicted, would be shot.

According to a report by correspondent Leon Dash in the June 18 *Washington Post*, "The coup that brought a junior military officer to power in Ghana two weeks ago, in sharp contrast to many of Africa's military upheavals, shows clear signs of moving in behalf of the country's poor and against the privileged few."

Two days later Dash reported that Rawlings "has been cheered and applauded at public and trade union rallies as a hero since the June 4 takeover."

Against the background of an inflation of more than 100 percent, the AFRC has imposed rigid price controls. Traders and businessmen caught hoarding goods or charging high prices have met with swift reprisals. Dozens have been arrested, and, Dash reported June 22, "Public canings of merchants accused of hoarding continued throughout Ghana as their homes were blown up by soldiers."

The June 4 coup has come after two years of mounting mass ferment, in which demands for free elections, higher wages, and an end to inflation have featured prominently. Student demonstrations and strikes by professional associations had led to Acheampong's ouster in mid-1978. Massive strikes by industrial workers later that year forced Akuffo to lift the ban on political parties and to promise democratic elections.

Following Akuffo's overthrow, the new military government allowed the previously scheduled elections to take place June 18. According to early returns, two bourgeois parties, the People's National Party and the Popular Front Party, were leading.

Rawlings has, however, postponed the planned installation of a civilian regime until October 1, ostensibly to allow time for the completion of the purge. □

## The Character of the Cuban Leadership

by Alan Jones

In an article entitled "Cuba—Twenty Years of Revolution," which appeared in the February 19 issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Comrade Jack Barnes has set out an analysis concerning the character of the Cuban leadership. He asserts with the greatest possible emphasis that this is a *revolutionary* leadership—not merely in the past but also at the present time. He approvingly states that:

At the 1961 convention of the SWP, Morris Stein, one of the experienced veteran leaders of the party, explained to a minority grouping inside the SWP that was opposed to recognizing the realities of Cuba that the Castro leadership team was superior to the Bolshevik leadership, once you leave aside Lenin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, and people like that.

That was what we were dealing with historically, that is what our responsibilities were, and are.<sup>1</sup>

The Cuban leaders were revolutionists of action. In one of Trotsky's discussions with members of our party at the end of the 1930s, he predicted that the next great revolutionary leaders would not be great theoreticians like Marx, writing things like *Capital*. We are in an epoch now where we will see great revolutionists of action come forward, and we must come forward and meet them.

That's what we saw in Cuba: an installment on that promise by Trotsky.<sup>2</sup>

We have never seen a revolutionary leadership in power for this length of time.<sup>3</sup>

Barnes also states that there exists only one basic divide with regard to Trotskyists, the Cuban leadership, and counterrevolutionaries:

... the real line to be drawn is the line between the revolutionists—meaning Castro and those around him, including us—and the counterrevolutionaries on the other side, including the Stalinists and the so-called "Third Camp" social democrats.<sup>4</sup>

The basic situation is therefore logically characterized as one of "the existence of a workers state with a revolutionary leadership."<sup>5</sup>

These characterizations are evidently of great importance. Not merely was the Cuban revolution one of the most important events in the history of the international class struggle, but the Castroist international policy, in particular in Africa, is a major element in world politics. Furthermore, if there existed in even one country, regardless of its numerical weight, a workers state with an authentically *revolutionary* leadership, then this would be a fact around which revolutionists would have to organize their entire view of the world. A decisive, probably *the* decisive, task would be that of united anti-imperialist struggle, a united anticapitalist and antibureaucratic struggle, and the fight for the creation of a common revolutionary party with this current.

Unfortunately, however, the characterizations and the argumentation given by Comrade Barnes are seriously wrong and could dangerously disorient revolutionists. We will look in this article at some of the theoretical and political issues involved.

### The Theoretical Issues

The first theoretical question raised by Comrade Barnes's

1. "Cuba—Twenty Years of Revolution" by Jack Barnes, in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 19, p. 158.

2. Barnes, p. 158.

3. Barnes, p. 155.

4. Barnes, p. 157.

5. Barnes, p. 159.

analysis is obviously whether there can be revolutionary forces that are non-Trotskyist—for obviously whatever its nature the Castroist leadership is not a Trotskyist one. The answer to this is undoubtedly that there can be revolutionists who are not Trotskyists and that this was the position of Trotsky himself.

Of course, in noting this Trotsky refused to characterize any current as revolutionary merely because it itself claimed to be so. Currents that existed at the time Trotsky wrote in the late 1930s—for example the Independent Labour Party in Britain, the POUM<sup>6</sup> in Spain, the London Bureau<sup>7</sup>—might well claim to be revolutionary forces but in reality they supported collaboration with bourgeois parties in Popular Fronts, refused to come out against Stalinist repression in the USSR, capitulated before imperialist wars, etc. They were not revolutionary but *centrist* forces. In this situation Trotsky did not hesitate to state of the initial Trotskyist forces in the Fourth International that "outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name."<sup>8</sup>

However, this absolutely correct statement by Trotsky concerning the situation in 1938 did not mean that he considered that there could not be in other places and at other times authentically revolutionary forces which were not Trotskyist. On the contrary, he explicitly held the opposite position. He wrote: "The Fourth International will not be composed only of Bolshevik-Leninists [the name Trotskyists gave themselves at this time.]"<sup>9</sup> He stated: "The Bolshevik-Leninists consider themselves a faction of the International which is being built. They are completely ready to work hand in hand with other truly revolutionary factions."<sup>10</sup>

The reason why Trotsky held such a position is no mystery to anyone who has studied the history of the Marxist movement. Trotsky knew not merely from theory but from the experience of the Bolsheviks and the Comintern, in its revolutionary period, that any serious revolutionary party and International will inevitably have different ideological and political currents and trends within it. Even inside the Bolsheviks there had been different trends on certain questions, with "left" and "right" currents existing. On an international scale, Bolshevism had undoubtedly constituted the most consistently revolutionary trend in the workers movement. But that did not prevent there being other currents, which, while less consistently correct than the

6. Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (Workers Party of Marxist Unification), a left-centrist socialist organization that participated in the Popular Front government during the Spanish Civil War.—*IP/I*.

7. A loose association of centrist parties in the early 1930s which were not affiliated with either the Second or Third Internationals, but were opposed to the formation of a Fourth International. Among its members were the POUM of Spain and the SAP (Socialist Workers Party) of Germany.—*IP/I*.

8. Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973) p. 111. Trotsky is here of course using "revolutionary" in its serious sense and not in the misleading way in which "revolutionary left" is sometimes used to mean all those organizations *claiming* to be revolutionary. This latter term is used in a false way that lumps together organizations that *are* revolutionary with those that are centrist. The term revolutionary throughout this article is used in this strict sense of organizations that are proletarian in political position and not centrist.

9. Trotsky, *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36)*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pathfinder, 1977) p. 151.

10. Trotsky, *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-36)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1977) p. 47.



Bolsheviks, nevertheless were *authentically* revolutionary. Indeed, such currents could even be correct against Lenin on a number of questions. For example, Rosa Luxemburg was not a Leninist; she was precisely a "Luxemburgist." But that did not at all mean that she was not one of the greatest of all working-class leaders and actually correct against Lenin on certain issues. As Trotsky wrote:

If one were to take the disagreements between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg in their entirety, then historical correctness is unconditionally on Lenin's side. But this does not exclude the fact that on certain questions and during definite periods Rosa Luxemburg was correct as against Lenin.<sup>11</sup>

When Stalin, on the basis of particular issues on which she was wrong, attempted to claim that Luxemburg was not a revolutionist because she had not been a Leninist, Trotsky denounced this as nonsense. He wrote: "This great revolutionist is enrolled by Stalin into the camp of centrism!"<sup>12</sup> He said that although Luxemburg was obviously not a Leninist, "the disagreements [between Luxemburg and Lenin], despite their importance and at times their extreme sharpness, developed on the basis of revolutionary proletarian policies common to them both."<sup>13</sup> Lenin completely shared this assessment:

Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken on the question of the independence of Poland; she was mistaken in 1903 in her appraisal of Menshevism; she was mistaken in July 1914, when, together with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others, she advocated unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; she was mistaken in what she wrote in prison in 1918 (she corrected most of these mistakes at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 after she was released). But in spite of her mistakes she was—and remains for us—an eagle. And not only will Communists all over the world cherish her memory, but her biography and her *complete* works (the publication of which the German Communists are inordinately delaying, which can only be partly excused by the tremendous losses they are suffering in their severe struggle) will serve as useful manuals for training many generations of Communists all over the world.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, after the formation of the Communist International, and even after its degeneration, Trotsky was clear that not all revolutionary forces were Leninists—or that only Trotskyists could be revolutionaries. Thus, for example, Trotsky noted of one such case that: "The so-called left faction of the Italian Communists (Prometeo group or Bordigists) has its own traditions which are sharply distinguished from the traditions of the Bolshevik-Leninists."<sup>15</sup>

However, despite the fact that unity with these Bordigists was obviously not possible in the framework of a faction, which is what at that time of 1932 the Trotskyists defined themselves as, nevertheless Trotsky specifically stated that "the Bordigists represent a serious revolutionary group."<sup>16</sup> Although in this particular case, in the unfavorable conditions of the 1930s, the Bordigists underwent a rapid degeneration, and no one would any longer consider them revolutionary; nevertheless, once again this shows that Trotsky did not at all consider that *only* Trotskyists could be revolutionaries. James P. Cannon was therefore perfectly following Trotsky's position, and drawing the organizational conclusions that Trotsky had drawn, when he wrote in 1961 that:

Trotsky never envisaged the Fourth International as a monolithic, purely Trotskyist organization, but as a broad revolutionary movement in which we, orthodox Trotskyists, might possibly, under certain conditions and for certain periods, be a minority. He stated this explicitly in one of his letters prior to the Founding Congress in 1938. He proposed that Chen Tu-hsiu, who at that time was in sharp conflict with our Chinese section over some

11. Trotsky, *Writings (1932)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973) p. 136.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

14. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966) Vol. 33, p. 210.

15. Trotsky, *Writings (1932-33)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1972) p. 58.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

important questions, should be invited to be a member of the International Executive Committee.

The internal regime of our international movement during the lifetime of Trotsky never tried to enforce monolithism. . . . The Discussion Bulletins of our international movement throughout this period show that differences of opinion on the most important questions arose again and again and were freely discussed. A large part of our education in fact was derived from these discussions.

The recognition of the Soviet Union as a workers state, and of the obligation to defend it against imperialist attack, was a central principle of our international movement all the time. This characterization and this attitude was challenged time and again, year after year, and freely discussed without expulsions or threats of expulsion.

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In the classic battle of 1939-40 with the Burnham-Shachtman faction, they were about as wrong as it was possible for a faction to be in America under conditions of that time. Shachtman thought we were engaged in a 'polemic' and conducted himself like a high school debater scoring points. He didn't really know that he was dealing with a question of a revolution and that it was dangerous to play with such a question. He didn't know it because he didn't feel it.

It was a red hot question for us at that time, just as the Cuban Revolution is at present, because public opinion was being mobilized every day by all the imperialist agencies against the Soviet Union. It was particularly reprehensible for Shachtman to choose that period to wash his hands of it. But despite this deep and terrible difference on such a burning question as one's attitude toward a revolution in existence, Trotsky did not advocate a split, not even if we should turn out to be a minority in the Convention struggle. The split followed only after the minority refused to accept the Convention decision.

That is still not the end of the story. *Seven years later* we conducted serious negotiations for unity with the Shachtmanites, despite the fact that they had not changed their position on the Soviet Union in the meantime. Those who may be playing with the idea of a 'monolithic' party and a monolithic international will have a hard time finding any support for it in the teachings and practice of the Old Man [Trotsky].<sup>17</sup>

Flowing from his characterization of the Cuban leadership as revolutionary, and from Trotsky's method of approach, Cannon also drew the necessary organizational conclusions. Talking of the discussion in Cuba on a new constitution after the declaration of the socialist character of the revolution, Cannon wrote:

. . . the projected new constitution should provide for a representative workers' government based on workers' organizations or councils.

Second, stemming also from the May Day declaration, our Cuban resolution should declare that this representative workers' government has to be led by a mass revolutionary party, formally organized and open to the most conscious and active revolutionary fighters.

Third, the leadership of this party at its formal organization cannot be any other than that of the present leadership of the revolution and the defence of the country against the invasion.

Fourth, the new constitution should provide for a regime of genuine workers' democracy, in which all tendencies supporting the revolution have full freedom of expression and association.

Fifth, the Trotskyists, organized as a propaganda group, representing the tradition and unbroken continuation of revolutionary theory and practice will take their place as a definite tendency, like all other tendencies supporting the revolution, within the new revolutionary party.<sup>18</sup>

This position of Cannon's flowed logically from his characterization of the Cuban leadership. From the fact that they constituted a *revolutionary* current flowed the demand for unification in a single party based on internal democracy. From the fact that they were less consistently revolutionary in their positions than the Trotskyists flowed the rejection of the liquidation of Trotskyist forces, but instead their constitution as a definite organized tendency within the united party.

This conclusion of fighting for a perspective of organizational unification and tendency discussion obviously also applied to the international field. As Joseph Hansen pointed out, and against

17. Cannon, in a May 22, 1961, letter to the SWP Political Committee, in *Trotskyism versus Revisionism* (London: New Park Publications, 1974) vol. 3, p. 80.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Healyite views to the contrary, the fact that a non-Trotskyist current could overthrow capitalism in a particular country in no way invalidated the need to build the Fourth International or for Trotskyists to participate as a tendency in the party of that country. As always, the character of a force, and its necessity or otherwise, had to be considered not from the national but from the world character of the class struggle:

Now when we talk about a party, we mean an international party, one that is commensurate with tremendous international goals. We mean a party that is capable of taking the world working class and leading it forward to overthrow capitalism, which is an international system. From then on, leading the world out of capitalism to the socialist world of the future. That's what we mean by a revolutionary socialist party. A tremendous thing. One that is of the greatest historic importance. It's probably the greatest task that has faced humanity, the building of such a party.

Now let me say right now that such a party has never been built yet. Marx didn't build one. Lenin didn't build one. They started the core of it. Their aim was absolutely clear—where they were headed. But they never conceived this party as simply a narrow, national party. They conceived it as an international one, one that is capable of the greatest task that has faced humanity, taking us from capitalism to socialism.

When we say that capitalism is rotten-ripe for revolution, we also say that the conditions on an international scale are rotten-ripe for the construction of such a party, a tremendous international party that has all the knowledge and capacity, both political and theoretical, for accomplishing these great tasks. How are we going to build such a party? Will it be built in advance of the revolution? It would be very good if it could be—at least that's what the Cubans themselves say now—it would be good to have such a party in advance. The fact is that such a party has got to be built in the very process of revolution as revolutions occur with varying degrees of success. That's the fact that faces us. In some countries I think we will be able to build national sections of the party before the revolution occurs, and in some countries, like ours, I think that is an absolute condition for success. In other countries the revolution forges forward faster than the party. That's an evident fact of politics now. So, when we say a revolutionary party, a revolutionary socialist party, we don't just mean a revolutionary socialist party in little Cuba or in little Guatemala or in little Costa Rica or in little Nicaragua. Those will be important sections of it. We are thinking of an international party on a major scale, in which these are component parts.

Thus we come to the conclusion that there is great unevenness in the growth and development of this party. Great unevenness. Some countries can forge forward faster than others. In some cases the action can transcend the political consciousness of it. Given this great unevenness in the development of an international party, we have to ask ourselves this question: Does this signify that it is impossible for the masses to overthrow a capitalist power in certain countries until the international party appears in full force and completeness? That's the question that faces us. We probably wouldn't even have asked this question if we hadn't already gotten certain answers. The answers are that in certain countries it is possible. Yugoslavia, China, and Cuba. That's the fact sheet. We have to look at it and say that's what it is. I would say that in the light of those three facts, we would have to conclude that it is possible in certain situations, in certain countries, under certain conditions—it is possible for the masses to go as far forward as establishing a workers' state.

Having said that, we immediately come to the question of limitations. These are tremendous. Let's just take the case of Cuba. First of all, there were great and costly errors committed in the Cuban revolution. Great and costly ones. The revolution established a coalition government with bourgeois democrats. That didn't help the revolution any. It led to a very ragged differentiation between the revolutionary forces and those that were counterrevolutionary—a process that's still proceeding in Cuba. That's the reason for all these "defections" that take place in Cuba; it's the flight of the counterrevolutionaries.

There was a great error made in the relations between the Cuban revolution and the American workers. One of the first things they did down there was to immediately break off all connections with the trade union movement in the United States. And George Meany said, "Thank you." He couldn't have asked for anything better than such an error on the part of the Cuban revolutionaries. Cut off their relations with the American trade unions.

They've made considerable errors in the extension of their revolution in Latin America. They realized the general importance and need of it, but so far as actually carrying it out in a coordinated, organized way, it has been very, very slipshod, with any number of errors. We can see that in a practical way in our experience with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. The thing never seemed to get off the ground. It operates in a way that is

completely alien to all our concepts—not only our concepts, but alien to the needs of the Cuban revolution. That's one of the problems that has arisen because of the lack of a revolutionary party in Cuba.

Take it from the economic side. Look at the delays that occurred down there in the process of the revolution, in expropriating the properties; they had to wait until they were pushed into it by American imperialism, slapped around, then there was a response, a defensive reflex to these blows struck by American imperialism. They were stumbling, fumbling, losing all kinds of valuable time which the bourgeoisie in the United States utilized in order to prepare the ground psychologically for their counterrevolution. Two years of time—a year and a half at least—was wasted almost, while the bourgeoisie in the United States, step by step, got prepared psychologically for the counterrevolution.

Finally, we come to this big error in the Cuban revolution, its big limitation; and that is the lack of the development of democratic forms of rule. To any Trotskyist, any revolutionary socialist, it jumps out before your eyes, the weakness of the revolution on that side. And that weakness derives primarily from the weakness of the leadership, of its consciousness. All these things tell us the limitations of this workers' state that has appeared in Cuba. And this side is just as important as the other side. That is, the recognition of what is positive about that revolution.

So, a success like the one in Cuba demonstrates not that a party has become superfluous—instead, what it demonstrates is just the opposite. It brings forward with new imperativeness the need for an international party of the kind I've tried to indicate in just a few sentences. That is, the need it has demonstrated is the need for Marxist political consciousness that takes the organized form of a party.<sup>19</sup>

These positions of Cannon and Hansen are, as we have seen, those of Trotsky himself. Comrade Barnes is therefore entirely within Trotsky's own framework in considering both that there can be authentically revolutionary forces that are not Trotskyist, and in rejecting any view that this leads to the liquidation of the Fourth International or the struggle for the specifically Trotskyist program.

However, this setting of the framework of analysis, while important, does not by itself solve the question of whether in the actual case of the Castroist forces we are confronted with an example of a non-Trotskyist revolutionary current. To determine this we have to look more closely at the issues involved and at the specific political character of the Cuban leadership.

### How to Judge Revolutionists

The first thing we can note is that *prima facie* Comrade Barnes's characterization of the Cuban leadership as revolutionary does not make sense even by his own statements concerning their analysis and line. Comrade Barnes affirms:

that the Cuban leaders "do not believe it is possible to think seriously about victorious revolutions in France, Britain, West Germany, Japan, or the United States. They do not believe it is possible in their lifetimes, or their children's lifetimes";

that "from the beginning, they would remain silent about reactionary actions of some governments, such as Mexico's, that maintained friendly diplomatic relations with Cuba. They have often taken an uncritical stance toward governments that take some anti-imperialist stands or actions, as in Chile under Allende and Peru under Velasco";

that "the Cuban revolution occurred without the creation of large-scale democratic committees of the working masses—what the Russians call red 'Soviets'. . . . The party and the government got all mixed up together as a result";

that "the Cuban leadership never developed a Leninist-type organization, with the right of minorities to argue for their point of view in front of the entire membership";

and that, in a considerable understatement by Comrade Barnes, the Cuban leaders "fail to understand and take the right line on questions like the Eritrean national liberation struggle."<sup>20</sup>

This, it must be said, is a pretty important list of objections to characterizing the Cuban leadership as revolutionary. It is some-

19. Hansen, "Cuban Question: Report for the Political Committee (January 14, 1961)," in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder, 1978) p. 90.

20. Barnes, p. 156.



Eritrean guerrilla fighters advancing on Ethiopian position.

what hard to conceive of a revolutionary force, in the serious sense, which does not think that it is seriously possible to think about revolution in the imperialist countries, that takes an uncritical attitude to left-bourgeois governments, and that does not understand the need for socialist democracy or the construction of Leninist-type parties!

Nevertheless, we would agree with Comrade Barnes that the theoretical attitude of the Cubans on these questions cannot be the *finally* decisive criterion. Contrary to the views of various idiotic sects, one cannot judge the government of a workers state by utterly utopian, abstract norms according to which any deviation from "ideal line" determined by some individual immediately transforms those who wander into "counterrevolutionaries." Furthermore, we agree with Comrade Barnes that:

It was inevitable, given the relationship of forces, that the Cubans would be forced to pay a political price. Some price would have to be paid by the best and most conscious revolutionary leadership.<sup>21</sup>

Anyone who has seriously studied the history of the Bolsheviks after the revolution knows that even they took a number of positions that were not exactly of total clarity, and that the method of judging any revolution and its leadership by comparing it to textbook norms is hopeless.

In the final analysis, it is not any *theoretical* political position of a current that is decisive in defining its character; the ultimate determinant is its relation to the real *material* clash of class forces. When Marx defined those who were revolutionists he did not say that they were those who held such and such a theoretical position but that the Communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole."<sup>22</sup> Or, as Engels put it, "Communism . . . proceeds not from principles but from facts."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, significant as the theoretical errors of the Cubans may be, they cannot be the finally decisive issue. The crucial question is the relation of the Cuban leadership to the clash of class forces.

It is this attitude that determined the fundamental *revolutionary* character of the Bolsheviks. Theoretical lack of clarity, or even straightforward confusion, over revolutionary prospects and the character of a particular regime is something even authentic revolutionists can commit. Lenin, for example, continued with confused formulations on the class character of coming revolutions in the colonial countries right up to the second congress of the Comintern, and the policy of the Bolsheviks with regard to the

regimes in Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan following the 1917 revolution, for example, was not at all free from errors. But the fundamental question was what happened when such errors collided with the real revolutionary movement of the masses.

The revolutionary character of the Bolsheviks was seen in the fact that no matter what theoretical lack of clarity might have sometimes existed, there is no doubt that when it came to the key clashes of the masses against any regime, the Bolsheviks supported the progressive struggles of the workers and peasants. It was Stalin who instead began not merely to systematize theoretical confusions into wholesale revisions of Marxist theory, but also began to place tactical relations to regimes above the revolutionary mobilizations of the masses. This is the clear difference between particular theoretical confusions made even by the Bolsheviks and cases such as China in 1926-27, not to speak of later examples, where the fundamental element of policy was not relations with the working-class and peasant masses but instead support to allegedly "progressive" currents, governments, etc. It is therefore to this relation of political line to the real clash of material forces that we have to turn if we want to characterize finally the nature of the Cuban leadership. As Joe Hansen put it on Cuba:

In the school of Leon Trotsky and James P. Cannon—which is also the school of Lenin—I was taught that important as the books are and for all the time that must be put into mastering them, what is decisive is the revolution itself.<sup>24</sup>

#### The International Class Struggle

In evaluating the character of a current by its relations to the real material clash of class forces, however, a further crucial criterion must be observed. *The class struggle by its nature is international. Therefore the criteria for determining the character of a current are also international.* When Marx wrote the Communists "have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement,"<sup>25</sup> he therefore also clearly defined this on an international terrain.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the

21. Barnes, p. 156.

22. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970) p. 27.

23. Engels, "The Communists and Karl Heinzen," in *Marx and Engels Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1976) vol. 6, p. 303.

24. Hansen, p. 184. For further discussion on the question of the decisive role of materialist criteria in judging the class character of a force, see "Healy's Rejection of Dialectical Materialism," by Alan Jones, in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, August 28, 1978, p. 966.

25. *Communist Manifesto*, p. 27.

bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.<sup>26</sup>

It is therefore on this terrain of *international* class struggle that the class character of a current can finally be determined. *More precisely, in relation to the question of the Cuban leadership, the fact that a current can take power on a national terrain does not make it revolutionary on a world scale* and, like all characterizations, the nature of the Cuban leadership cannot be determined solely from its orientation on the terrain of Cuba itself but only from its positions on the most fundamental issues of *world* politics.

Indeed, comrade Barnes himself has dealt quite correctly with the theoretical issues involved in characterizing a current. He pointed out against forces disoriented by events following the Second World War that "they failed to see how petty-bourgeois parties, including Stalinist parties, for the first time in history could stand at the head of revolutions that led to the establishment of workers states, but at the same time could not become, in a historical sense, a substitute for the Leninist party on a world scale as well as in their own countries."<sup>27</sup>

This position is entirely that of Trotsky himself, who noted that:

The depth of disintegration of the enemy camp, its political demoralization, the worthlessness of its leaders, can assure decisive superiority to the proletariat for a certain time even if its own leadership is weak. But in the first place, there is nothing to guarantee such a "fortunate" coincidence of circumstances; it represents the exception rather than the rule. . . . To weaken the struggle against Stalinism on the grounds that under *certain* conditions even the Stalinist leaderships would prove unable to prevent the victory of the proletariat . . . would be to stand all of Marxist politics on its head.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, Trotsky did not confine this possibility of victory in particular countries merely to Stalinists but extended it to other nonrevolutionary, more particularly centrist, leaderships as well. Thus, for example, he noted that:

. . . under *certain* historical circumstances the proletariat can conquer even under a left-centrist leadership. . . . The strategy of the party is an exceedingly important element of the proletarian revolution. But it is by no means the only factor. With an exceptionally favorable relation of forces the proletariat can come to power even under a non-Marxist leadership.<sup>29</sup>

And that "in some situations victory is possible even with a very bad policy."<sup>30</sup>

We therefore reject, as does comrade Barnes, any argument of the type that runs either that "this party made a revolution in a particular country, therefore it cannot be a Stalinist party," or that "this particular Stalinist party overthrew capitalism in a specific country, therefore Stalinism on a world scale is not counterrevolutionary." It has never been the case, as the above quotations from Trotsky show, that the position of Trotskyism on Stalinism is that it is counterrevolutionary because it cannot overthrow capitalism in some particular country. On the contrary, even when Trotsky was alive Stalinism did smash capitalism in particular instances—the transformations in eastern Poland in 1939-40 being the best-known case. The rejection by Trotsky, and Trotskyism, of Stalinism is because it cannot overthrow capitalism on a world scale, and indeed constitutes a counterrevolution—

any obstacle to this task. The fact that it can overthrow capitalism in *particular* countries in no way alters that fundamental character. All basic characterizations are derived from positions and character on a world scale. On that we have fundamental agreement with Comrade Barnes in the comments of his quoted above.

But what applies to the method of characterizing Stalinism applies to *all* currents. The character of the Cuban leadership *cannot* be derived from the fact that it overthrew capitalism in a particular country, by some equation of the type "making a revolution in Cuba, therefore character is revolutionary." To understand the nature of the Cuban leadership it is necessary to understand its international positions. These show it is *false* to characterize the Cuban leadership, particularly today, as revolutionary. What is involved with the Cubans is not particular mistakes of the type that even the most revolutionary leaderships would inevitably make, but a fundamental false line that does not correspond to the interests of the international working class and that on a whole number of questions is in conflict with it.

#### Attitude to the Cubans

Furthermore, we would note that the actual position expressed by Comrade Barnes on the Cubans is absolutely wrong, even if his own characterization of them were correct. What Trotsky said in relation to centrists applies also to a revolutionary leadership that was merely making grave mistakes:

The theoretical possibility of a victory under centrist leadership must be understood, besides, not mechanically but dialectically. Neither the official party as a whole nor even its apparatus represents something immovable and unchangeable. . . . At the same time, it is completely indisputable that in the party's change of position the decisive role was played by the Left Opposition, if only through the fact that it posed the problem of fascism clearly and sharply before the working class. To change this course of ours, to adapt ourselves to the prejudices of the Stalinists instead of appealing to the judgment of the Communists, would mean to imitate the desperate centrists of the SAP.<sup>31</sup> . . . To blur our differences with centrism in the name of facilitating "unity" would mean not only to commit political suicide, but also to cover up, strengthen, and nourish all the negative features of bureaucratic centrism, and by that fact alone help the reactionary currents within it against the revolutionary tendencies.<sup>32</sup>

Even if we considered that the Cuban leadership were an authentically revolutionary leadership making mistakes, our task would not be to cover up these errors but on the contrary to clearly criticize them. Any other course, as Trotsky put it, would be to "help the reactionary currents within it against the revolutionary tendencies."

Unfortunately, however, Comrade Barnes takes the opposite course when it comes to certain key events. Instead of fundamentally criticizing the wrong positions of the Cubans he blurs over their line. This is most obvious with respect to one of the central pillars of Cuban foreign policy—their relations with the Ethiopian regime. Here Comrade Barnes states: "Fortunately, the Cubans have sharply differentiated themselves from the all-out support offered by the Kremlin to the Dergue's war against the Eritreans. However, they have failed to come out in favor of the right of Eritrea to independence."<sup>33</sup>

Bluntly put, we consider this statement totally false. What in fact is occurring in Eritrea, and the Cuban leadership has perfectly enough people in Ethiopia to be absolutely clear as to what is taking place, is one of the most bloody counterrevolutionary wars we have seen, even in the colonial world.<sup>34</sup> To root out liberation movements that have the almost total support of the Eritrean people, the Dergue and its backers have necessarily been

26. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

27. Barnes, "The Unfolding New World Situation," in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* (New York: Pathfinder, 1974) p. 106. In order to bring out the issue at stake in the discussion on Cuba more clearly we deal in this article only with the chief characteristics of the line of the Cuban leadership in respect to that one area, the colonial world, where their line might most readily be thought revolutionary. It is obvious that the case could be made even more strongly by dealing with their line on the imperialist countries or their positions on the Soviet bureaucracy itself—for example, the Cuban position on the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

28. Trotsky, *Writings (1932-33)*, p. 35.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

30. Trotsky, *Writings (1930-31)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973) p. 293.

31. See footnote 7.—*IP/I*

32. Trotsky, *Writings (1932-33)*, pp. 35-36.

33. Barnes, p. 156.

34. For the more extended discussion of Cuban policy in Ethiopia and Eritrea on which this section draws heavily, see the excellent article "Eritrea: The Guilty and the Silent," by Richard Carver, in *Socialist Challenge*, January 25, 1979 [Reprinted following this article—*IP/I*].

forced to utilize methods qualitatively no different from those adopted by the Americans in Vietnam. Around a third of the Eritrean population have been made refugees. Famine and depopulation have become key tools, and effects, of the offensive—with, to take merely one example, the population of Asmara falling from 250,000 to 100,000 following its capture by the Ethiopians. Among the chief weapons used by the regime are Napalm B, cluster bombs, and defoliant poisons. As the Ethiopian regime is absolutely aware it has no way of winning over the Eritrean people, its only aim is to pulverize and atomize the population to a point where its society is disintegrated and incapable of further resistance. The almost genocidal character of this conflict is not accidental or an “excess” but flows inevitably from the degree to which the Eritrean people have demonstrated their virtually unanimous demand for independence in the long war against the various Ethiopian regimes.

The role played by the Cubans here has been to fall in behind the war waged by the Mengistu leadership of the Dergue. Far from having “sharply differentiated themselves from the all-out support offered by the Kremlin to the Dergue’s war,” the Cubans are in fact a key cornerstone of that war effort. Without the Cuban military training, weapons, and support work, the Ethiopian forces would be totally unable to undertake their offensive. Furthermore, although even if they were nowhere near the front line Cuban agreement would still be indispensable for the war, reports indicate that Cuban units and advisers are directly participating in the fighting—in particular in the specialized forces such as the air force and artillery.<sup>35</sup> And on the key question of political support to the major policies of the Ethiopian regime, the Cuban press is full of constant declarations of the revolutionary character of the leadership of Mengistu and the Dergue.

Of course, we do not doubt that the Cubans had some differences with Mengistu on tactics for dealing with Eritrea. With their considerable experience of popular guerrilla war, we think it is likely that the Cubans feared that what is in fact happening would be the inevitable result of any attempt to settle the Eritrean question by force—i.e., that the Ethiopian regime would find itself in a totally bloody conflict in which it would still not be totally victorious and which would sap its forces over a long period. Furthermore, the Cubans were in a somewhat embarrassing political position because of their previous support for the Eritrean struggle and because of the consequences that would flow from their involvement in a totally counterrevolutionary war. Finally, perhaps even the Cubans genuinely supported the Eritrean people, or were opposed to war against them.

But no matter what the niceties or psychology involved, the Cubans have *never* shifted on the fundamental position of support to the Dergue and therefore to rejecting the sole solution to Eritrea that is in the interests of the international working class, the Eritrean people, and the Ethiopian revolution itself. Right at the time of Castro’s visit to Addis Ababa in September of last year, the joint communiqué issued made clear that the “Cuban side also reaffirmed its absolute opposition to any kind of secession and expressed its firm belief that Ethiopia would solve all its problems in line with the principles of Marxism-Leninism.” Once the secession of Eritrea is rejected, then in fact the kind of ferocious counterrevolutionary war that is taking place was inevitable. All history shows that there is no other way to try to fight a movement so massively supported by a people as in Eritrea except by the type of means the Ethiopians have in fact used.

There is in fact no doubt concerning the character of the Cuban policy in Ethiopia. It does not matter about the psychological motivation of their position. The root of the Cuban line in Eritrea lies in total failure to distinguish that support to the Ethiopian revolution is not the same thing as support to the Dergue, and that in fact that the two are incompatible. The *objective* character of the Cuban policy in Ethiopia is not qualitatively different in

35. For this and the quotations given below, see the article by Richard Carver.

politics, although doubtless more audacious in tactics, than the general one of building “progressive” bourgeois and petty-bourgeois regimes that doubtless cause some important temporary annoyance to imperialism but whose fundamental historical character is clearly *capitalist*.

The Cuban policy furthermore is not different in the other African states from its nature in Ethiopia. A particularly clear case is that of Angola. Here the Cubans intervened militarily, following the collapse of the Portuguese empire and the start of the Angolan civil war, to prevent the formation of a puppet regime of South African and U.S. imperialism. We totally support and hail that military intervention—although we would also point out, against any illusions to the contrary, that it could not have been sustained without the agreement of the Russians.

Once the military victory was achieved, however, the Cubans took no steps whatever—quite the reverse—to encourage the overthrow of capitalism in Angola. And this is no academic point when, with the prestige of their intervention and their great

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### We consider the Cuban international line centrist, not counterrevolutionary . . .

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military weight, there is no doubt that a Cuban call for the overthrow of bourgeois rule in Angola would have had every chance of succeeding. Instead, the Cubans have constantly upheld the regime of Neto and backed it in all fundamental questions. These have included the smashing of the mass movements and organizations opposed to the leadership of the MPLA,<sup>36</sup> the covert agreement with the imperialists to end the incursions into Zaïre aimed at overthrowing Mobutu, and the rebuilding of key links with imperialist firms and regimes that can, or could, operate in Angola. The consolidation of a left-bourgeois regime, and not the overthrow of capitalism, has been the constant thread of Cuban policy in Angola just as in Ethiopia. This line has been repeated in the other African states in which the Cubans have a serious involvement.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, we may note that this policy in Africa, while by far the most audacious tactically and militarily of the Cubans’ interventions, is not distinct in its political line from their intervention in other parts of the world. Already at the Havana Conference of Communist Parties of Latin America of June 1975 the Cubans affirmed their support for a bloc with the so-called national bourgeoisie. Chapter 6 of the declaration unanimously adopted at the conference is clear. It states that:

... without abandoning the struggle for democratic rights and for the conquest of new structures in our countries . . . we communists are prepared to support the positions of Latin American governments that can stand for the defense of our national resources or can assert their will to put an end to the attempts of the multinational corporations to preserve and increase their control of our economies every day.

This historical reality does not at all mean that there do not exist sectors within the Latin American bourgeoisie that because of the contradiction between their interests and those of imperialism adopt certain positions analogous to those of the proletariat, peasantry, and other noncapitalist layers of the population in struggle against imperialism and for the conquest of economic independence and complete national sovereignty.

Consequently, these bourgeois sectors can contribute to the unity of democratic and anti-imperialist action jointly with the popular forces.

The CPs and all other anti-imperialist fighters . . . accord great importance to this possibility . . . which constitutes an indispensable factor in this complex and multifaceted struggle.

The incorporation into the broad anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic struggle front of forces and organizations that represent sectors of the

36. Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola).

37. See the article by Claude Gabriel, “Cuba’s Role in Africa,” in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 19, p. 148.

bourgeoisie is of great importance.

To leave absolutely no ambiguity as to what such a policy means, specific reference is made to the Popular Front decisions of the Comintern in lauding the attempts of the Latin American CPs before and during the Second World War "to form national, antifascist, and anti-imperialist fronts." The declaration states that "the resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (1935) played an important role in this sense."<sup>38</sup> Such a policy is, of course, in complete accord with the attitude taken not only to Allende and Velasco but also to Neto and Mengistu. It is furthermore carried out in the Caribbean in relation to the government of Manley. *In short, the present policy of the Cubans in Africa toward the left-bourgeois regimes of that continent is not some accident based on lack of information but rests clearly on the international line of the Cuban leadership.* That line cannot be characterized as revolutionary—unless of course someone is proposing a startling revision of Marxism whereby the supporting of left-bourgeois regimes, and the opposing of the creation of workers states, has now become the hallmark of a revolutionary line.

There is of course no doubt that the practical means utilized to pursue this Cuban policy have sometimes been very audacious. It may well be the case that the Cubans have given Brezhnev some sleepless nights, and even heart attacks, with the tactical pursuit of their line. Whatever are the telephone conversations and secret discussions in which the Russians lay down the qualitative limits of what they will accept, we think it probable that the Cubans generally take the most left leeway they can grab and probably add a few surprises of their own that Brezhnev accepts only after the event. We think it quite likely that the Cubans may have their own reasons, which are not simply those of collaboration with imperialism, for not seeking the overthrow of capitalism in the African states. It is possible that the Cubans have drawn from the balance sheet of the blockade they have suffered, and the limits placed by material reliance on the Russians, that a more practical policy for some other states is not to break totally with capitalism and therefore suffer the inevitable total imperialist counterattack.

But whatever the reasons and tactical disputes, this does not alter the qualitative character of Cuban policy in Africa. That policy is not to overthrow capitalism and establish workers states but to build and sustain left-bourgeois regimes that will, objectively, finally collide with and oppose the working class and the

construction of workers states. It is also for this reason, incidentally, that no matter what their differences over practical means, there is no evidence of a qualitative clash between the Cubans and the Russians over policy in Africa—and it would in fact be very easy to see if this existed. Brezhnev has his own inimitable means, such as a few cargoes of oil turning up late in Havana, to let the Cubans know of his displeasure. However, all the evidence is that far from a qualitative rift between Castro and the Russians, the Soviet bureaucracy is providing the material means that are allowing Cuban policy in Africa to be carried out. All reports concur that the Russians have stepped up supply of heavy cargo planes to the Cubans for the practical execution of their African policy, and Russian pilots have been supplied for the defense of Cuba, to replace the Cuban pilots in Africa.

Of course, we stress that pursuing a policy that does not clash on qualitative questions with that of the Russians is not the same as the Cubans being Stalinists. The policy of Brezhnev is not fundamentally based on ideology or political line but on the existence in the USSR of a hardened privileged caste with material interests qualitatively different from those of the Soviet or international working class. That is, among other reasons, why the Soviet regime, and those of Eastern Europe, can maintain itself in political power only by police terror and ruthless suppression of the masses. There is no serious evidence, aside from the mouthings of sectarians, that such a hardened caste exists in Cuba in any way qualitatively comparable to the USSR, China, and so forth. The regime, far from ruling by terror, by all analyses enjoys mass popular support and would be overwhelmingly supported against any intervention and in any elections based on workers democracy—which makes it all the worse that the Cuban leadership has resolutely opposed any such system in the country and thereby reinforced the conditions for the major quantitative growth of bureaucracy that has taken place. It is for this reason that we consider the line of the Cubans internationally as a *centrist* one and not that of a counterrevolutionary bureaucratic caste.

But the reasons for the Cuban policy do not alter its objective character. Extremely audacious tactics and lack of aversion to utilization of violence do not constitute revolutionary politics by themselves. It is the *political line* that is decisive. *The international policy of the Cuban leadership today is not a revolutionary one.* Comrade Barnes's analysis and characterization is false.

#### The Nature of the Cuban Leadership

Finally, therefore, what is the character of the Cuban leader-

38. Cited by Pablo Rojas, "Havana Conference of Latin American Communist Parties: Apology for Defeat," in *Inprecor*, November 20, 1975, p. 30.

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ship? Comrade Barnes unfortunately gives us a theoretical framework within which it is impossible to solve the problem. He provides very clear evidence that the Cuban leadership cannot be characterized as Stalinist if that term, for the sake of argument, is defined as constituting a crystallized and hardened bureaucratic caste with clear material interests differing from those of the working class.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, there is no serious, as opposed to purely demagogic, evidence that such a crystallized caste exists in Cuba in any way that is qualitatively comparable to the USSR, China, North Korea, Vietnam, etc. We therefore, with Comrade Barnes, reject the slogan of political revolution in Cuba. This latter call would flow not from a situation where a wrong line is being pursued, even of an extremely serious type that disqualifies a force from being considered revolutionary, but where these positions are rooted in the existence of a caste with *material interests* separate from and opposed to those of the working class.

However, having demonstrated the non-Stalinist character of the Cuban leadership, Comrade Barnes then goes on to state, as we have seen, that "the real line to be drawn is the line between the revolutionists—meaning Castro and those around him, including us—and the counterrevolutionaries on the other side, including the Stalinists and the so-called 'Third Camp' social democrats." But the categories of "revolutionary" and "counterrevolutionary" do not at all exhaust all the phenomena in the workers movement. It is therefore *false* to pose things in the framework provided by Comrade Barnes. By ascertaining that the Cuban leadership is not Stalinist, let alone "Third Camp" social demo-

39. By this we do not necessarily mean that this is in itself a sufficient criterion for a party to be Stalinist. However, for the present purposes the really key question is whether such a crystallized bureaucracy with distinct social interests exists or not in Cuba and therefore we do not object to the use of the term "Stalinist" in the present context to indicate the existence of such a layer. By saying that we do not consider the Cuban leadership Stalinist we indicate we do not believe it is based on such a layer qualitatively comparable to that of the USSR. The semantic dispute of whether this is a correct definition of Stalinism, or whether that term must include that a particular party is not merely bureaucratized in the qualitative sense but also tied to the Kremlin, can be left on one side here provided there is agreement on the substance of what is involved.

cratic, we do not thereby determine that the situation in Cuba must be characterized as "the existence of a workers state with a revolutionary leadership." There is within the workers movement not merely revolution and counterrevolution but also *centrism*. Or, put in the analogies of the Russian revolution, there exist not merely the situation of 1917-1923 with the existence of a revolutionary leadership, and that of a post-1933 where the call for a political revolution was needed, but also that of 1923-33—i.e., a period of transition in which the leadership of the Soviet state was not revolutionary but where the slogan of political revolution was still not the correct one.<sup>40</sup>

This is the situation faced today in respect to Cuba. Although a crystallized bureaucratic caste, with not merely wrong political positions but *material interests* which are different from those of the working class, has not been hardened out, nevertheless a false international and domestic policy is being pursued. Lack of socialist democracy provides a permanent situation in which conditions for the crystallization of such a bureaucracy exist. *Rejection of the slogan of political revolution does not lead to the conclusion that the Cuban leadership is a revolutionary one.* Comrade Barnes's analysis and characterizations should be rejected. Without this being done political disorientation and later even sectarian disillusion will occur both with regard to Cuba's current policy and in the face of new turns that will take place in the future—including quite possibly new orientations not merely with respect to colonial states and the Stalinist bureaucracy but also in relation to imperialist powers.

April 7, 1979

40. This analogy should not of course be stretched too far and be taken, in particular, as applying to the origins of the Cuban workers state. It is not necessary here to enter into the discussion of whether the Castro leadership was always centrist in character. We may merely note that the fact that it made a revolution in Cuba settles nothing either way on this issue. As we have seen, Trotsky specifically allowed for the possibility that in particular countries the working class could conquer power even under a centrist leadership; this flows inevitably from the correct understanding that forces can only be correctly characterized by their position in relation to the *international class struggle*.

## Eritrea—the Guilty and the Silent

By Richard Carver

[The following article, cited extensively by Alan Jones in "The Character of the Cuban Leadership," is reprinted from the January 25 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, weekly newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

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"Russia's Vietnam" is an inexact and incorrect description. But on the emotional level it does sum up what is going on in Eritrea.

Led by Soviet generals and serviced by Cuban and Soviet "advisers," the Ethiopian military regime launched its most serious offensive against Eritrea on 18 November. Subsequent fighting has led to the recapture of all the major towns held by the nationalists since early 1977.

The result has been the uprooting of large sections of the population, the exacerbation of food shortages to famine pro-

portions and the retreat of the nationalists into the countryside.

Perhaps as many as a third of the four million Eritreans are now refugees. By last July the numbers in Ethiopian-occupied Asmara had shrunk from 250,000 to less than 100,000. Thirty thousand more were made homeless in the Ethiopian capture of Keren in November.

The civilian casualties in this latest offensive have been horrific. The Eritrean Relief Association reports:

"In large areas crops have been burnt to ashes. About 160 villages have suffered heavy damage and 40 of them have been completely ruined. 5,000 civilians are reported seriously wounded or dead, and 8,000 others require medical attention."

Even worse is the nature of those casualties. People are not just killed and maimed; they are killed and maimed with Napalm B, cluster bombs and defoliant poisons. And all this in the name of socialism.

The plight of the Eritreans is forgotten

on all sides. Being victims of the Soviet Union does not qualify them for Western aid. The British government has sent a measly £75,000 to the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

It refuses to send to the Eritrean Relief Association, the only such organisation operating in the war zones, because it is linked to the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front.

What aid there is never reaches those who need it. When the Eritreans took Massawa they discovered undistributed Red Cross food supplies.

John Pilger, one of an honourable handful of journalists to take up the Eritreans' case, has reported the human cost caused by the lack of medical supplies. Eritrea's 16—yes sixteen—trained doctors have virtually none of the most basic medical aids. For example, an Eritrean doctor writes to Pilger on how amputations are performed:

"The lucky few are given anaesthetic. But for most there is only surgical spirit

and a mouth gag. This is terrible for the younger boys . . . but there is nothing we can do. We have nothing."

Almost all the refugees suffer from malaria and dysentery and one child in three has tuberculosis or trachoma or severe malnutrition or all three.

The two major Eritrean liberation organisations have disciplined, numerous and effective guerilla forces—probably militarily superior to anything of their type since the Vietnamese NLF.

Previously they have easily overrun their raggle-taggle opponents. In the past Ethiopia has attacked with massive but hastily levied "peasant armies." This time the Eritreans faced preliminary air and artillery bombardments followed by swift, disciplined and sophisticated manoeuvres.

EPLF communiques repeatedly point to Soviet and Cuban officering as the explanation for this sudden transformation.

These claims are difficult to substantiate since they come only from the Eritrean political organisations and a tiny number of journalists who have visited the country in recent weeks.

Nevertheless the evidence is impressive. Many refugees report the presence of Cuban troops operating the Ethiopian artillery and flying their MIG-19s, 21s, and 23s. One of them told Dan Connell of Reuters:

"We saw white men with the Ethiopians. Most of them were Cubans. . . . I saw them firing. The Ethiopian militia was in front, and the whites were behind them firing the big weapons which were on heavy trucks."

The EPLF claims that the offensive is being led by two Soviet generals. Connell says that one of these is General Petrov, who led the assault on the Ogaden last year.

Under Petrov are 11 top Soviet officers and more than 1,000 other commissioned and non-commissioned officers. The EPLF also says Soviet warships have been bombarding the coastline and landing troops and supplies.

These reports are not definitive proof. But they offer strong evidence of one of the most brutal crimes against socialism by its self-styled proponents.

Yet, even on the rare occasions it mentions Eritrea, the left has almost totally ignored the possibility that Cuban and Soviet troops have been used.

The *political* evidence of Cuban and Soviet support for the Derg, the Ethiopian ruling military council, is there for all to see. Mengistu, the Derg leader, is the regular recipient of large arms supplies from the Soviet Union and treacherous panegyrics in *Granma*, the Cuban party paper.

Much is made of the insistence of the Cubans, in particular, on a "political solution" to the problem of Eritrea. Even the way the question is posed is revealing.

Nations are not "problems" which have

solutions, political, military or otherwise. They are entities with the indivisible right to determine the territorial allegiance of their state. This applies however "progressive" the state in question.

For example, one of the first acts of the Bolshevik Revolution—and a major reason why it had such widespread support—was to recognise the right to self-determination of the many nations of the Russian empire.

Ethiopian rulers from Haile Selassie to Mengistu have trumpeted the need for unity.

But what unity is possible between oppressed peoples when one of the nations is burning the flesh off the other with Napalm B or penetrating its guts with the deadly needles of anti-personnel cluster bombs?

Eritrea has every claim to nationhood and self-determination. It was federated to Ethiopia in 1952 by United Nations mandate—not the choice of the people. By imperial fiat, without even the UN's stamp of legality, the regime then destroyed all autonomous, Eritrean institutions and deprived its people of the most basic rights, such as the use of their languages.

In those days imperialism, particularly American, was Addis Ababa's major backer and the Cubans, no doubt to their present embarrassment, trained and supported the Eritrean liberation movement.

When the upsurge came against the old regime in 1974 it was a general strike of the Eritrean workers which struck the first and most decisive blow against the monarchy.

Haile Selassie fell because of the most enormous mobilisation of workers and peasants, Eritrean and Ethiopian. Yet it was not the masses who seized power but a small clique of army officers.

Because of the chronic weakness of the state apparatus and the native capitalist class the Derg continued to rely upon mass mobilisations and to move to the left, implementing probably the most radical land reform in Africa.

But in doing this it did not cease to be a capitalist military regime, as the thousands of murdered working class opponents of the regime are not able to testify.

The most obvious and tragic reflection of the class character of the Derg is its policy on the national question.

The Soviet Union and Cuba have had well-publicised differences with the Derg on this issue. But these were more pragmatic than principled.

The Soviet Union's interest comes first from Eritrea's long Red Sea coastline. Realpolitik alone warned the Kremlin of the dangers of driving the Eritreans into the hands of hostile Arab regimes.

Cuban caution was also prompted by a residual internationalism combined with guilt at past associations with Eritrea. They argued it out with Mengistu, but finally gave way so as not to lose their ally.

A joint Ethiopian-Cuban communique issued at the time of Fidel Castro's visit to Addis Ababa last September said that the "Cuban side also reaffirmed its absolute opposition to any kind of secession and expressed its firm belief that Ethiopia would solve all its problems in line with the principles of Marxism-Leninism."

The latter phrase is in danger of becoming newspeak for genocide.

As in Angola the Cubans are doubtless moved by some healthy considerations. But the root of the betrayal in Eritrea lies in their failure to understand that support for the Ethiopian revolution is not the same thing as support for the Derg—indeed the two are incompatible.

The reasons for such mistakes—the initial peculiarities of the Cuban revolution, the all-important role of a single crop in the Cuban economy, the absence of socialist democracy, and dependence on the Soviet Union—lie outside the scope of this article.

But effectively the Cubans fall into line with Soviet foreign policy, which flows from far more cynical considerations. Strategy demands that Moscow builds up its relations with African regimes, especially those as geographically key as Ethiopia. But relations with the imperialist world and the interests of the bureaucracy demand that socialist revolution be actively discouraged.

That is how such farces can occur as the switch around of alliances in 1977, when Soviet-backed Somalia and US-backed Ethiopia swapped sides. If class affiliations are a matter of indifference, alliances can be shifted at will: yesterday's "progressive" becomes today's "reactionary" and vice versa.

This is not nit-picking. For it is the counter-revolutionary nature of the Soviet leaders and the collaboration of the Cubans which have led to the Eritrean tragedy—another emotional word, but not one which is used lightly.

It is left to revolutionaries to argue Eritrea's case in the Western labour movements. But it is not simply one long horror story, a case for humanitarian aid.

Despite the enormous Ethiopian gains the Eritrean organisations are not crushed. The EPLF has made an orderly retreat and is returning to its old tactics of rural guerilla warfare. Already it has resumed attacks on the Ethiopian supply lines down the Asmara-Massawa road.

Dan Connell has told *Tribune* that 75 percent of the population remains in EPLF-controlled territory and 15 percent in areas controlled by the Eritrean Liberation Front. He puts the number of men and women the EPLF has under arms at more than 25,000.

They are prepared to rely solely on their own strength—they have had to in the past. But they should not have to fight alone. □